



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION
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Document title	Proposal on support to CPs to facilitate the approval processes under the HOLAS III assessment
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Category	INF
Agenda Item	3J – Progress of relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects
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Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

STATE & CONSERVATION 14-2021 invited the Secretariat to prepare an initial proposal for STATE & CONSERVATION 15-2021 on ways to provide additional support to CPs, mainly the national focal points included in the Correspondence Group of national HOLAS III focal points (CG HOLASIII), to facilitate the approval processes under the HOLAS III assessment.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and provide guidance or additional proposals as relevant.

Proposal on support to CPs to facilitate the approval processes under the HOLAS III assessment

Correspondence Group of national HOLAS III focal points (CG HOLASIII)

In order to ensure clear, transparent and directed flow of information between the Secretariat, the CPs and national experts within the HOLAS III process a time-bound correspondence group of national HOLAS III focal points will be established. The group will consist of one or two national focal points for HOLAS III per country. The focal point is envisioned to be a person who manages the national coordination of HOLAS III work (e.g. engages experts in the various processes, organises reviews, collates input etc.), and who would thus benefit from a more in depth overview of the progress of the HOLAS III process as a whole. The CG would be a formalized communication channel between the Secretariat and the CPs regarding the practical processes surrounding HOLAS III. It is not foreseen that the CG would have any meetings. However, should any major changes in the agreed process occur the focal points may jointly be briefed on the proposed way forward, to ensure structured and direct flow of information.

The national representatives to the group will support the management and coordination of the HOLAS III-related activities at the national level (e.g. data reporting, review processes etc.) to ensure that the integrity of the process is maintained. They will also function as the natural communication point for the information flow to and from the Secretariat and would help to ensure that CPs can stay informed on progress of the overall work. A mail list containing all focal points will be prepared by the Secretariat. The national focal points will then be included in all relevant correspondence concerning HOLAS III, as well as informed regarding any foreseen obstacles or deviations from the agreed processes. This is done both to ensure the focal points are up to date regarding the progress of the work and to support approval processes by providing CPs will the possibility to flag if they notice issues which might cause challenges nationally but which the Secretariat might be unaware of.

Should clearly conflicting input be provided as part of the review processes, by experts either representing the same CP or different CPs, the relevant focal points will be contacted and informed accordingly by the Secretariat and invited to clarify the position nationally and thus facilitate the approval process.

Support for general overview of processes

The Secretariat will arrange an online CG HOLASIII information event in early 2022 the focus of which will be the agreed plan and process for the HOLAS III assessment, including deadlines, review periods and approaches for commenting. The CG HOLASIII mail list will be used to provide reminders as different steps in the assessment process are approaching or deadlines are coming closer. The possibility to set up a dedicated workspace, including timelines and workflow overviews, to help focal point keep track of the processes and groups involved is being explored.

In addition, the Secretariat will prepare and provide the national focal points with overview lists presenting the national representatives in the various Expert and Working Groups that will take part in the review and commenting on HOLAS III products. This will be done with the aim of facilitating coordination of national review processes.

Review and commenting processes

Input from the review processes under HOLAS III is to be provided using a dedicated amendment table prepared by the Secretariat. The intention is for each input to be labeled by the expert making the comment based on the intended action, e.g. red signifying a revision, amendment or new text being introduced into the document, yellow representing comments or views on the content or process which the reviewers

would like to lift but which are not foreseen to lead to a direct amendment in the HOLAS III document, and green signifying input which requires not action (e.g. agreement and support).

This aims to facilitate the work of national focal points by collating the input in a way which clearly indicates where action is needed and enables a more targeted national discussion. One consolidated national position per EG and WG is strongly recommended.

All input from the review is to be uploaded to the review site 10 days prior to the target meeting, allowing the Secretariat and the contributors to consolidate the information and provide proposed amendments. A table listing input and proposed amendments, together with prepared revised drafts will be provided to CPs prior to the HELCOM meeting, to provide an overview of changes and function as the basis for further input and approval at the meeting.

Please note that for the sake of the integrity of the process, which is extremely time-dependent, late input or input provided in formats other than the table will regrettably not be considered.

[Data reporting](#)

To facilitate the technical aspects of the data reporting for the HOLAS III assessment the Secretariat will arrange a HOLAS III data reporting helpdesk session (see also document 2J-13). Such sessions aim to provide Contracting Parties with support for the data reporting, share information and give rapporteurs the chance to lift any foreseen or encountered issues with the reporting for discussion. Any national issues flagged during these sessions will be forwarded to the relevant focal point, thus providing the focal point with opportunity to address possible barriers in advance of reporting deadlines.

[Streamlined indicator report template](#)

To facilitate the review and approval process all the indicator reports will be presented in the same updated indicator template. This is done to improve accessibility and comparability across reports and topics and facilitate the coordination of review and approval processes.