



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

Germany, 11-15 April, 2016

STATE & CONSERVATION
4-2016, 1-2-Rev.1

Document title	Provisional Annotated Agenda
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Agenda Item	1 – Adoption of the Agenda
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Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	Outcome of HOD 49-2015, Para 4.108

The Agenda has been revised to reflect the agreed change of wording related to “Further actions to be considered” under Agenda Items 2N, 4N and 4MA.

Background

The Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation, (STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016) will be convened on 11-15 April 2016 according to the decision by HELCOM HOD 49-2015 (paragraph 4.108), in Germany.

The Meeting will start on **Monday 11 April 2016 at 10.00** and is expected to end on **Friday 15 April 2016 at 16.00**. Monday and Tuesday until midday are planned for issues related to nature conservation and biodiversity (Agenda Items 1N-7N), Wednesday morning to Thursday until midday will be dedicated to joint themes (Agenda Item 1J-8J), and Thursday midday until the end of the meeting on Friday will be dedicated to monitoring and assessment related issues (Agenda Items 1MA-6MA).

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [Document Library](#) of the [STATE&CONSERVATION 4-2016 Meeting Site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared a [document template](#) and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat. The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. The basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted in electronic form to Professional Secretary, Ms. Ulla Li Zweifel (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi) **by 17 March 2016**, at the latest. Bulky documents should include abstracts embodying the essence of the proposals and action requested from the meeting. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat **by 3 April 2016**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal **by 28 March 2016 the latest**. Instructions for the use of the new Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

Nature conservation

Agenda Item 1N Adoption of Agenda: Nature Conservation

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2N HELCOM network of coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas

Refinement of the database for HELCOM MPAs¹

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 noted that some features of the modernized HELCOM MPA database could still be improved and agreed to submit feedback on the database to the Secretariat (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi) by **11 March 2016** (para 3N.6).

The Meeting will be informed on comments received, amendments already made, and additional proposals for how to improve the HELCOM MPA database at this time (document to be submitted at a later stage). The Meeting is invited to agree on the final steps to refine the HELCOM MPA database.

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 supported the further development of Finnish guidelines for standardizing the MPA pressure evaluation towards Baltic-wide guidelines for use by HELCOM (para 3N.13) and agreed to submit comments to Finland (matti.sahla@metsa.fi) by **15 February 2016**.

Finland is invited to present the comments received and propose how they can be incorporated into the guidelines. The Meeting is invited to agree on the finalization of Baltic guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation.

Follow-up of agreed "Further actions to be considered" related to marine protection areas

In the process of regional coordination of programmes of measures in 2015, a number of "further actions to be considered" within HELCOM were identified including actions proposed by State and Conservation. Future actions considered at HOD 49-2015 of relevance to marine protected areas are;

- Coordination of management measures of pressures and impacts on MPAs, in particular for adjacent transnational MPAs
- How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa?" (to be considered at the 12 Meeting of the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (MSP WG), 24-25 February 2016)
- Develop joint tools/approach for assessing effectiveness of spatial protection measures for individual sites as well as network level.

The Meeting is invited to follow-up on the implementation of the respective action, including in coordination with MSP WG for the MSP related action.

Follow-up of the biogeographic seminar for marine Natura 2000 sites

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed to follow-up at the next meeting the biogeographic seminar for marine Natura 2000 sites which took place on 5-7 May 2015.

Agenda Item 3N Mapping of important bird areas and migration routes for birds

HELCOM Recommendation 34E/1 'Safeguarding important bird habitats and migration routes in the Baltic Sea from negative effects of wind and wave energy production at Sea', recommends the Contracting Parties to e.g. map migration routes and staging areas of birds in the Baltic Sea Area. Sweden has offered to take the Lead on this Recommendation including coordination of the development of relevant maps.

¹ Former HELCOM BSPAs

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed to nominate national contacts and provide written comments to the work plan to Sweden and the Secretariat (by 30 November 2015)(para 2N.2).

Sweden is invited to present the progress achieved and any outstanding issues to finalize the work.

Agenda Item 4N Recommendations on conservation of Baltic Sea species and underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes

Draft Recommendation on species

The Draft Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM red list was addressed at HOD 49-2015, taking note of the remaining study reservation by Denmark (para 4.112). The finalization of the Recommendation will take place through bilateral consultation between Lead Country Germany and Denmark and intersessional activities of State and Conservation contacts with the view of adoption at HELCOM 37-2016.

The Meeting is invited to consider the Outcome of HELCOM 37-2016 in this regard (document to be submitted at a later stage).

Upcoming Recommendation on biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed not to continue the development of the 'Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes threatened according to the HELCOM Red List' until the associated Recommendation on species has been adopted (para 4N-5).

The Meeting is invited to agree on how to continue the development of the Recommendation on conservation of underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes, pending the Outcome of HELCOM 37-2016.

Analysis to support the implementation of the Recommendations

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed to submit information to the reporting request on national conservation plans (para 4N.6) by STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016.

The Contracting Parties are invited to provide the requested information according to the template in [document 4N-1](#) and submit it to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) **by 11 March 2018**.

In the process of regional coordination of programmes of measures in 2015, a number of "further actions to be considered" within HELCOM were identified, including actions proposed by State and Conservation. A future action relevant to conservation of species and biotopes considered at HOD 49-2015 and still to be considered by the Contracting Parties intersessionally and at HELCOM 37-2016 is:

- Activities to support conservation of Baltic Sea species and biotopes/habitats categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List.

The Meeting is invited to follow up on the decision by the Contracting Parties on the action.

Agenda Item 5N Plans for implementation of work plan and emerging issues

Marine ecosystem services

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 addressed the evaluation and mapping of marine ecosystem services and noted that such activities are ongoing in Estonia, Finland and Sweden and that also other countries would be interested in participating (para 5N.5).

The Contracting Parties are invited to provide written information on ongoing projects and make proposals for a coordinated or joint activity to the Secretariat **by 11 March**. The Meeting is invited to discuss how the Working Group can proceed with the topic, i.a. in relation to activities under the HOLAS II project.

Planning the next HELCOM Red List assessment

The next HELCOM Red List assessment has been planned for 2019. HABITAT 16-2014 discussed the next Red list assessment (paras 5.5-5-7) and concluded in short the following:

- that the comprehensive review and update of the macro species checklists should be made as part of an initial phase of the Red List assessments, meaning that the next assessment should start in 2017.
- that the Red List Assessment should be produced at least every 12 years and that in the future it should be aligned to the MSFD and other international legislation and reporting demands.

A draft project description will be submitted in advance of the meeting. The Meeting is invited to plan for the next Red List assessment and further develop the draft project description with the view of possible submission to HOD 50-2016.

Regional targets for the implementation of the strategic plan for biodiversity

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting agreed 'to develop by 2015 regional targets for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity'. STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 supported the approach to achieve this agreement as presented by the Secretariat, being based on the alignment of existing HELCOM agreements and indicators with the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (para 5N.2). A further developed proposal will be submitted at a later stage.

The Meeting is invited to identify potential gaps in the existing regional targets and agree on how to complete the task.

Issues to be raised jointly by HELCOM countries at CBD STSTTA 20

The Meeting is invited to discuss issues to be raised jointly at the upcoming meeting of CBD SBSTTA 20, on 25 - 30 April 2016.

Information on ongoing work to identify ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 discussed ongoing work to identify ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and was of the view that the whole Baltic Sea could possibly be considered as an EBSA (para 3N-32).

The Meeting is invited to follow-up the considerations made at the previous meeting.

Agenda Item 6N Any other business

Germany and Poland are invited to inform the Meeting on the ongoing activities on the reintroduction of sturgeon.

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the Nature Conservation theme.

Agenda Item 7N Outcome: Nature conservation

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the attendants of the Nature Conservation session of the Meeting.

Joint session

Agenda Item 1J Adoption of Agenda: Joint themes

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2J Matters arising from other meetings of relevance for the Working Group

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of the outcome of HOD 49-2015, and other relevant recent meeting outcomes (document to be submitted later).

Agenda Item 3J Follow-up of HELCOM agreements and activities

Recommendations

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 continued the review of valid Recommendations under the Working Group and agreed to address the following (paras 3J.5-6) at State and Conservation 4-2016:

- Denmark to report on the implementation of Recommendation 16/3.
- Estonia to lead Recommendation 10/1 and provide a suggestion on its revision.
- Finland, Estonia, Germany and Denmark to establish a drafting group to jointly review Recommendations 15/1, 24/10 and 16/3. Finland will initiate co-operation between the countries.
- Poland to present a revised draft reporting format for HELCOM Recommendation 17/2 after consultation with SEAL 9-2015.
- Latvia to report if a revision of Recommendation 21/3 should be considered.
- The Secretariat to present the outcome of the review of Recommendation 29/2 'Marine litter within the Baltic Sea region'.

The Contracting Parties are invited to submit reports and proposed revisions according to this agreement to the Secretariat **by 17 March 2016** (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi). The Meeting is invited to consider the reports by the Contracting Parties, identify needs for revision and to agree when valid recommendations should be reported next time and in what form.

Survey of knowledge and research needs for achieving good environmental status

The Roadmap on HELCOM activities includes an activity to carry out a survey among HELCOM groups and projects on knowledge and research needs for the implementation of marine policies and achieving good environmental status (activity 32). STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 invited the Contracting Parties to provide input to the survey and agreed to come back to the survey at the next meeting (3J.11). The deadline for submission to the Secretariat (ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi) has been extended to **11 March 2016**. A compilation of input from the Contracting Parties will be presented to the Meeting (document to be submitted at a later stage).

The Meeting is invited to discuss the compilation of knowledge and research needs and agree on any needs for further activity to finalize the input from the State and Conservation Working Group.

Follow-up of HELCOM agreements

STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2015 considered and supported a new follow-up system for HELCOM agreements, including Recommendations (paragraphs 5J.6-7). The follow-up system was approved by HOD 49-2015 that also agreed that the Contracting Parties will report, as a first step, on national actions agreed in the Baltic Sea Action Plan and Ministerial Declarations from 2010 and 2013.

The Meeting will be informed on the current status of implementation of reported actions.

Agenda Item 4J HELCOM indicators and assessments

Continued development of HELCOM indicators

The Meeting will be informed on the ongoing work to develop HELCOM core indicators (document to be submitted at a later stage).

Lead countries on indicator development are invited to submit updated indicator reports in the case of timely endorsement steps by STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016, i.e. if GES boundaries and the associated assessment protocols have been developed.

Lead Countries on indicator development are also invited to submit information on how comments related to study reservations have been taken into account. The Contracting Parties that have remaining study reservations are invited to inform on the current situation of the reservations.

Reporting from experts groups, networks and project

Chairs of the Seal Expert Group, Intersessional network of benthic experts, Intersessional expert network on eutrophication, Expert network on Hazardous Substances, ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM JWG Bird and projects FISH-PRO II and ZEN ZIIM are invited to report the work and progress of the respective expert body. The Meeting is invited to take note of and guide the work of the expert bodies as appropriate.

Development of the second holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II)

The Meeting is invited to consider the progress of the HOLAS II project to produce a 2nd Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (document to be submitted later).

Agenda Item 5J Mapping of ecosystem components

Mapping of benthic landscapes, biotopes and species

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed that for purpose of the HOLAS II assessment, EU Member States will provide maps on habitats as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive, and 'predominant habitats' according to the MSFD, i.e. at EUNIS level 2. The Meeting furthermore agreed to develop Baltic wide maps for *Fucus* spp., *Zostera marina*, *Mytilus* spp., *Furcellaria lumbricalis* and Charales and complement the list as needed and feasible. As agreed by State and Conservation 3-2015, a call for relevant data and existing national maps was made on 4 February with submission deadline on **14 March 2016**.

The Meeting will be informed on the status of available data and progress of mapping benthic species and biotopes (document to be submitted later).

Agenda Item 6J Session on underwater noise

The HELCOM BalticBOOST project includes a theme dedicated to underwater noise, including to identify spatial and temporal distribution of sound sensitive species and habitats in the Baltic Sea and to propose principles for defining Good Environmental Status (GES) for noise. The Meeting will be informed on the ongoing work to compile and review the available knowledge on impact of anthropogenic noise in the Baltic Sea and to identify priority species for further work related to the development of an indicator on impulsive sound (document to be submitted at a later stage). The Meeting is invited to provide guidance to the selection of species and relevant spatial scales for defining GES based on common principles.

In accordance to the outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015, the BIAS project is invited to present a proposal for a monitoring programme for underwater noise in the Baltic Sea.

Agenda Item 7J Any other business

The Meeting is invited to consider and update the list of contacts and observers of the Working Group (document 7J-1).

The Contracting Parties are invited to consider the possibility to host future meetings of the Working Group.

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the mandate of the Working Group.

Agenda Item 8J Outcome of Joint themes

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by attendants of the Joint themes.

Monitoring and assessment

Agenda Item 1MA Adoption of Agenda: Monitoring and assessment

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2MA Revision of HELCOM monitoring

Update of HELCOM Monitoring Manual

The HELCOM Monitoring Manual will be updated annually. The Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Meeting on tentative revision of national information and to propose changes to the introduction and general segments of the Manual **by 11 March 2016**, in a format to be prepared by the Secretariat (document 2MA-2).

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on proposed changes to the Monitoring Manual.

The Meeting will be notified on the update of HELCOM assessment units.

Review and update of HELCOM monitoring guidelines

A Lead Country approach has been agreed for the review and development of HELCOM monitoring guidelines. The review should take into account the information on [current use of monitoring guidelines provided by the Contracting Parties through the previous reporting request](#). The Lead and assisting countries for specific HELCOM monitoring guidelines are outlined in document 2MA-1.

The Lead Countries for monitoring guidelines are invited to present the outcome of the review and propose how the guidelines can be updated and provide this information to the Secretariat (petra.kaaria@helcom.fi) by **17 March 2016**, according to the following:

- Sweden and Poland on hydrography and hydrochemistry, Estonia and Finland on use of satellite data under hydrography and hydrochemistry,
- Sweden on marine bird health (white tailed eagle), health status of mammals, TBT-imposex, reproductive status,
- Sweden and Finland on Phytoplankton pigments, Finland on use of satellite data under Phytoplankton pigments,
- Finland soft-bottom invertebrate fauna, including survey of current use of methods for offshore monitoring,
- Finland on ship-based measures on chl-a and water column physical characteristics, including survey on current use of methods,
- Germany on contaminants in water, Germany and Poland on contaminants in sediment, Germany, Poland and Sweden on contaminants in biota,
- Lithuania and Germany on a monitoring protocol data fulfils data needs for the HELCOM NIS trend indicator.

STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 agreed to substitute Annexes B1-B5 of the COMBINE Manual (document 2MA-6), based on the proposal prepared by Estonia and comments to be provided by the Contracting Parties (by December 2016).

Estonia is invited to present an updated version of the Annexes B1-B5 of COMBINE. The Meeting is invited to agree on the text.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on the further work on revising existing monitoring guidelines with a view of including updated monitoring guidelines in the HELCOM Monitoring Manual by mid-2016.

Agenda Item 3MA Environmental monitoring and data

Development of data arrangements for HELCOM monitoring data and assessments

ICES is invited to inform on the status of national reporting to the COMBINE database.

ICES and Russia are invited to inform on the status of including Russian data in the COMBINE database (cf. outcome of STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2014, paragraph 3MA.8).

The Meeting will be informed on the ongoing work to develop databases on coastal fish, seals and birds under the BalticBOOST project and plans for further development of HELCOM data services under the TAPAS project (document to be submitted later).

Agenda Item 4MA Progress of relevant HELCOM projects and assessments

Assessing the state of contaminants with pharmaceuticals

STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2015 agreed to carry out an assessment of pharmaceuticals in collaboration with the Pressure Working Group and the Coordinator of EUSBSR PA Hazards from Sweden. The report will be submitted for intersessional review by State and Conservation contacts as agreed by the last meeting of the Working Group (para 4MA.7).

The Meeting is invited to discuss how to consider results for future development of indicator and how to include pharmaceuticals in the 2nd HELCOM holistic assessment.

Follow-up of agreed "Further actions to be considered" related to monitoring and assessment

In the process of regional coordination of programmes of measures in 2015, a number of "further actions to be considered" within HELCOM were identified including actions proposed by State and Conservation. A future action considered at HOD 49-2015 of relevance to monitoring and assessment is:

- Micropollutants in effluents from wastewater treatment plants

The Meeting is invited to follow-up on the implementation of the action.

Agenda Item 5MA Any other business

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the Monitoring and assessment theme.

Agenda Item 6MA Outcome of Monitoring and assessment

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by attendants of the Monitoring and assessment theme.