



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
4-2016

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## Outcome of the Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016)

### Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decision by HELCOM HOD 49-2015 (Outcome of the meeting, paragraph 4.108), the Fourth Meeting of the Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation (STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016) was held in Schwerin, Germany, at the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

0.2 The Nature conservation and biodiversity session of the Meeting was attended by delegations from all Contracting Parties except EU, Latvia and Russia and observers from OCEANA and Nordic Hunter's Alliance. The joint session of the Meeting was attended by all Contracting Parties except EU and Russia, an observer from Nordic Hunters' Alliance and an Invited guest from FOI. The monitoring and assessment session of the Meeting was attended by all the Contracting Parties except EU and Russia and observers from ICES. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by the co-Chairs of the Working Group: Ms. Penina Blankett, Finland, nature conservation session and Mr. Urmas Lips, Estonia, monitoring and assessment session. The joint session was chaired jointly by the two co-Chairs. Ms. Ulla Li Zweifel, Professional Secretary, Ms. Marta Ruiz, Associate Professional Secretary and Ms. Petra Kääriä, Assisting Professional Secretary acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

0.4 Mr. Dieter Boedeker, Germany, welcomed the participants to Schwerin on behalf of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

0.5 Ms. Marina Carstens, Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, welcomed the participants to Schwerin and introduced practical issues to the meeting.

0.6 Mr. Peter Sanftleben, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Consumer Protection Mecklenburg-Vorpommern welcomed the participants to Schwerin, the capital city of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and wished them a fruitful meeting also on behalf of Minister Mr. Till Backhaus.

0.7 Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary, highlighted the important topics for the Meeting and expressed warm thanks to Germany that led the process of the HELCOM Red List Recommendation which was adopted at HELCOM 37-2016.

### Nature conservation and biodiversity session (N)

#### **Agenda Item 1N Adoption of Agenda: Nature Conservation**

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1N.1 The Meeting adopted Agenda Items 1N-7N as contained in document 1-1.

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

Documents: 2N-1, 2N-1-Add.1, 2N-2(, 4N-3, 3MA-1-)Rev.1, 2N-3, 2J-1

2N.1 The Meeting took note of recent HELCOM activities of relevance for State and Conservation related to the nature conservation topics (document 2J-1), as presented by the Secretariat.

*Refinement of the database for HELCOM MPAs<sup>1</sup>*

2N.2 The Meeting took note of the comments and improvements to the HELCOM MPA database (document 2N-1 and 2N-1-Add.1) as presented by the Secretariat.

2N.3 The Meeting welcomed that the following improvements have already been made to the database:

- a possibility to add a picture and description when reporting a site
- the full species list is available on the database and contains the whole macro species list in the Baltic Sea, including also 13 additional bird species proposed at S&C 3-2015
- additional biotope complexes have been included in the biotopes list
- a map feature has been implemented which shows species, biotopes/biotope complexes on a map
- an additional tab has been added for management plans (see point 7 on Table 2)

2N.4 The Meeting noted that all points in Table 2 of the document will be implemented into the database by end of April 2016 and provided comments to them as follows:

- point 1: noted that both national and English names can be added to the database and that currently the English name has been set as the primary field,
- point 3: noted that also threatened migratory bird species according to HELCOM Red List 2013 have been added to the species list.
- point 6: proposed to also include biotope complexes from the HELCOM Red List (BSEP 138).
- point 9: proposed that it would be important to keep the option “no plan” and add the option “No plans but regulations”.

2N.5 The Meeting considered the proposed additional improvements to the database and agreed to set up a drafting group to discuss the still open points on Table 2 and to select the most critical issues to focus on under the proposed additional improvements to the database (pages 4-5). The outcome of the drafting group is contained in **Annex 2**.

2N.6 Regarding point 2 in Table 2, the drafting group proposed that the question “**Does the species/biotope/biotope complex justify this sites designation as an MPA?**” should be complemented with the question “**Is this species/biotope/biotope complex legally protected within the MPA?**”. For the second option it was furthermore proposed to consider the option to specify the legal protection (see **Annex 2**). The Contracting Parties are invited to submit comments to the Secretariat by **13 May 2016** to clarify e.g. if both response options are needed, to define “legal protection”, and if for the second option further information on the protection should be specified. Revision of the database in this regard will be agreed through written procedure when comments from the Contracting Parties have been compiled. The Meeting noted that the revision will require the Contracting Parties to update information in the database.

2N.7 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to provide shapefiles of management plan areas to the Secretariat, to upload pictures and provide description texts of sites (optional), and to provide English and national names for the HELCOM MPAs as well as to finalize the data update to the HELCOM MPA database in order for the database to be used as a functional tool.

2N.8 The Meeting noted that the Secretariat will prepare video guidelines about the use of the MPA database shortly.

2N.9 The Meeting was of the opinion that clarified guidelines for the reporting of data to the database would be very helpful and noted the suggestion by Finland to organize a joint workshop to develop the guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> Former HELCOM BSPAs

2N.10 The Meeting took note that as regards the Finnish guidelines for standardizing the MPA pressure evaluation towards Baltic-wide guidelines for use by HELCOM, no comments were received. The Meeting agreed that the Contracting Parties will provide comments to the guidelines ([document 3N-2 of STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015](#)) to Finland ([matti.sahla@metsa.fi](mailto:matti.sahla@metsa.fi)) by **13 May 2016**.

*Follow-up of agreed HELCOM actions for further consideration related to marine protected areas*

2N.11 The Meeting took note of the further actions to be considered related to marine protected areas (document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1 Rev.1) and the identification of adjacent transnational HELCOM MPAs as input to the action 'Coordination of management measures of pressures and impacts on MPAs, in particular for adjacent transnational MPAs' (document 2N-3), presented by the Secretariat.

2N.12 The Meeting noted the suggestion by Finland to also consider MPAs in the Quark area and between Stockholm archipelago and Åland islands, although these MPAs are not bordering each other and by OCEANA to look into the Sound area more specifically to identify common management measures. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to update the map and lists of adjacent MPAs in document 2N-2 to also include areas at some distance from each other.

2N.13 The Meeting recalled that there are existing HELCOM management guidelines for protected areas, from 2006, and noted that a review of the guidelines has been proposed as part of the MareBaltica project application to which HELCOM is a partner. Information about the granting of the application is expected by April 2016.

2N.14 The Meeting recalled the particular relevance of focusing transnational coordination of measures on the topics fisheries and shipping, because in most cases respective management can only be adopted by competent authorities.

2N.15 The Meeting emphasized the importance of establishing contacts between responsible managers for the transnational adjacent HELCOM MPAs and agreed to initiate this action through establishing communication between the managers as well as to share previous experiences in the cooperation regarding transnational MPAs. The Meeting invited countries to provide names of relevant contacts in order to collate the information to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 at the latest and agreed to invite the Wadden Sea Secretariat and representatives of the World Heritage site of the Quark to participate in STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

2N.16 The Meeting considered the second action related to marine protected areas 'How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa' of document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1-Rev.1 and noted that the issue was discussed at the last meeting of HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group (MSP WG) that was positive towards the action as a joint activity between the HELCOM-VASAB MSP WG and State and Conservation and that it was agreed, as a first step, to request the Contracting Parties/Member States to inform how MPAs are taken into account in the MSP, which could be used to amend information in the country fiches. This information is anticipated to be available by the next meeting of HELCOM-VASAB MSP.

2N.17 The Meeting recalled that management of MPA lies in the competence of nature conservation authorities and that MSP shall consider respective spatial protection needs.

2N.18 The Meeting noted that the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group will convene a workshop on the ecosystem approach in maritime spatial planning in November 2016 (week 47) and proposed that MSP/MPAs could be addressed as a topic in the workshop. The Meeting encouraged the Co-Chairs of State and Conservation and the HELCOM VASAB MSP Working Group to initiate communication on further cooperation between the groups on this topic.

2N.19 The Meeting furthermore agreed to initiate the action by inviting the Contracting Parties to provide ideas and comments on their views on how to proceed with the action 'How to consider MPAs in Maritime Spatial Planning and vice versa' to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **31 May 2016**.

2N.20 The Meeting considered the third marine protected areas related action 'Develop joint tools/approach for assessing effectiveness of spatial protection measures for individual sites as well as network level' of document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1-Rev.1.

2N.21 The Meeting recalled that development of a HELCOM approach to assess effectiveness of MPA management is one of the activities proposed in the MareBaltica project proposal.

2N.22 The Meeting took note of the information by Germany on OSPAR activities regarding assessing management effectiveness of the OSPAR MPA Network.

- OSPAR is currently working on guidance for assessing management effectiveness of the OSPAR MPA Network. A respective workshop was conducted on 8-10 April 2014 in Gothenburg, Sweden. In a next step work shall be supported by gathering information from Contracting Parties on their implementation of management for OSPAR MPAs. OSPAR CPs explored two main questions:
  - *Consider implementation of the MPA management cycle:*
    - a. Is the MPA management documented?
    - b. Are the measures to achieve the conservation objectives being implemented?
  - *Review whether the MPA is meeting its conservation objectives:*
    - c. Is a monitoring plan in place to assess if measures are working?
    - d. Is the MPA moving towards or has it reached the conservation objectives?

In order to support CPs to answer in a common manner a draft guiding document for completing the management effectiveness questionnaire was developed.

2N.23 The Meeting noted the view from Germany as a Contracting Party of both HELCOM and OSPAR HELCOM activities on this issue should be harmonised with the OSPAR approach.

2N.24 The Meeting noted the view from OCEANA that the simplified approach taken by OSPAR may not be fit for purpose for HELCOM in addressing the effectiveness of management and furthermore encouraged Contracting Parties to make use of the HELCOM database in addressing this issue.

2N.25 The Meeting invited Germany to keep the State and Conservation Working Group updated on the progress and agreed to continue discussing this topic at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

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

2N.26 The Meeting welcomed the presentation on the outcome of the biogeographic seminar for marine Natura 2000 sites held in 2015 (**Presentation 1**), presented by Sweden. The Meeting noted that many proposed topics and recommendations from the seminar are ongoing activities in HELCOM and supported in principle the proposal for HELCOM to consider convening a seminar, in the future, to share relevant experience.

2N.27 The Meeting took note that in Sweden the methodology "open standards" has been used in some areas to define e.g. targets, set objectives, and identify threats to protected areas. The Meeting invited Sweden to look into the possibility of sharing experience regarding the open standards in STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

2N.28 The Meeting welcomed that Poland will present a list of actions stemming from the biogeographic seminar in STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

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

Documents: none

3N.1 The Meeting took note of the progress on updating of HELCOM maps on important bird areas and mapping of migration routes to follow-up 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', presented by Lead Country Sweden.

3N.2 The Meeting noted that national contact points have been nominated by Denmark, Finland, Germany and Poland and agreed that for other countries Sweden will contact members of the ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM JWG Bird group.

3N.3 The Meeting agreed that an online meeting with national contact points will be organized with assistance from the Secretariat to discuss and agree on outstanding issues related to data submission and collation of the maps. Based on the outcome of the online meeting the time plan for the activity (as presented in document 2N-2 of STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015) will be updated and distributed to State and Conservation contacts. The data submission will tentatively be requested by 1 June 2016 with the view of finalizing the update of the maps by mid-2016.

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

Documents: 4N-1, 4N-2, 4N-3(, 2N-2, 4MA-1-)Rev.1, 4N-4, 4N-5

##### *Recommendation on species*

4N.1 The Meeting welcomed that Recommendation 37-2 'Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the 2013 HELCOM Red List' was adopted by HELCOM 37-2016 (document 4N-2).

##### *Upcoming Recommendation on biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes*

4N.2 The Meeting took note of document 4N-4 'Drafting Recommendation on threatened biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes', presented by Germany and noted that the valid HELCOM Recommendation 21/4, which was based on the 1998 HELCOM Red List (BSEP No. 75), applies to both coastal and marine biotopes, whereas coastal biotopes were not included in the 2013 Red List assessment.

4N.3 The Meeting discussed two options i) to develop a new Recommendation based on the 2013 Red list on underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes, based on the same structure as the associated Recommendation on species or ii) to revise the existing Recommendation 21/4.

4N.4 The Meeting agreed to initiate the development of the Recommendation by updating key paragraphs of 21/4 with respect to threatened marine biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes according to the 2013 Red List, and based on this draft to decide which option to proceed with.

4N.5 The Meeting welcomed that the Lead County Germany will prepare such first draft by **27 May 2016** on an expert level, to be circulated by the Secretariat to the State and Conservation contacts and observers, and agreed to organize an online meeting to discuss the draft on **13 June 2016** from 9-11 CET. Based on the outcome of the online meeting, Germany will prepare a complete draft for STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 and time will be reserved to discuss and elaborate the draft at the meeting.

4N.6 The Meeting emphasized the intention to submit a draft for endorsement at the December HOD meeting and adoption at HELCOM 38-2017.

##### *Analysis to support the implementation of the Recommendations*

4N.7 The Meeting took note of the further action for consideration on 'Activities to support conservation of Baltic Sea species and biotopes/habitats categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List' (document 2N-2, 4N-3, 4MA-1 Rev.1) and noted that resources are available through a grant from Finland to support the implementation of activities 1 and 2 of the action.

4N.8 The Meeting took note of the compilation of national plans for threatened species and biotopes (document 4N-1-Rev.2), as presented by the Secretariat, based on information from Denmark, Finland,

Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The Meeting noted that the summary table on the contribution of national plans for species presented by the Secretariat is available as a meeting [document 4N-5](#).

4N.9 The Meeting agreed that those Contracting Parties that have not yet provided the contribution to the conservation/ recovery and or actions plans or other relevant programmes and measures, of plans, will submit the information by **6 May 2016** to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by using document [4N-1-Rev.2](#).

4N.10 The Meeting discussed how the information could be used to support carrying out the gap analysis outlined as activity 2.

4N.11 The Meeting supported the proposal by Sweden to focus the list of species to those species for which it is realistic to implement measures by first looking into the pressures identified in the 2013 Species Information Sheets.

4N.12 The Meeting furthermore noted that Sweden has already prepared a national matrix of species in order to identify those species that would benefit from concrete measures, and that this list could be used to initiate further work.

4N.13 The Meeting agreed that the Secretariat will proceed to compile information on national plans for species and pressures on those species with the aim to provide an overview to STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016. State and Conservation contacts will be invited to provide feedback during the course of the work.

4N.14 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to consider leading the work on preparing guiding documents for conservation plans (point 3 of the action) and to inform STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 on their willingness to lead the activity. The Meeting furthermore agreed to discuss in more detail the extent of such guidelines.

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

Documents: 5N-1, 5N-2, 5N-3, 5N-4

##### *Marine ecosystem services*

5N.1 The Meeting took note of national projects related to marine ecosystem services (document 5N-1), as presented by Finland and of the information provided by Sweden on a national project. The Meeting welcomed the information from Finland and Sweden and invited the TAPAS project to present information at the next meeting of State and Conservation on the ongoing work to develop a framework for economic and social analyses in the Baltic Sea region.

##### *Planning the next HELCOM Red List assessment*

5N.2 The Meeting took note of the draft project description for the development of updated HELCOM Red Lists by 2019 (document 5N-3), presented by the Secretariat. The Meeting recalled that the steering group of the previous Red List project proposed to make a new assessment by 2019 as a one-time event to update and improve the 2013 assessments while in the long-term a longer assessment cycle was proposed.

5N.3 The Meeting discussed the timing of the next Red List assessments, noting the view by Denmark, Germany and Poland that the level of new knowledge does not justify a new assessment already after 6 years from the previous assessments. The Meeting further noted the proposal by Denmark, Finland, Germany and Poland to have a 12-year assessment cycle, which would mean finalizing the next Red List assessment by the year 2025.

5N.4 The Meeting noted the view of Sweden, supported by Finland, that is important to keep the momentum going and take advantage of the experience gained through the previous Red List project and Sweden being in favour of carrying out an updated assessment by 2019. The Meeting also recalled that 2019 is one year before the CBD targets should be met.

5N.5 The Meeting noted the suggestion by Germany to indicate the individual salinity tolerance values in the macro-species check lists and to depict salinity tolerance maps in the next Red List species assessment.

5N.6 The Meeting agreed to convene a workshop back-to-back with the Nature conservation session at the spring meeting of State and Conservation in 2017 where experts should come together to take stock of data and available updated information on threatened Baltic Sea species and habitats/biotopes and to consider improvements needed for the purpose of an updated assessment. The Meeting agreed to discuss the planning of the workshop at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

5N.7 The Meeting furthermore proposed that the Contracting Parties should regularly report to upcoming State and Conservation meetings on the improvement of national data and work on Red Listed species and biotopes, to keep the needed development of background information going.

5N.8 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to inform the Secretariat on planned updates of the national Red Lists ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) with the view to compile a timetable of national and international reporting obligations.

5N.9 The Meeting agreed to come back to discuss the scope and timing of the next red list assessment after the planned workshop, however concluded that it will not be prepared by the year 2019. The Meeting agreed to come back to the presented project proposal at a later stage.

#### *Regional targets for the implementation of the strategic plan for biodiversity*

5N.10 The Meeting took note of the comparison of HELCOM and CBD Aichi Biodiversity targets (document 5N-2), presented by the Secretariat.

5N.11 The Meeting considered Target 1 and noted the suggestion by Sweden to initiate a pilot project relating to red listed species or a biotope since such an activity could be used for showcasing a scenario directing measures to protecting a species/habitat and raise awareness.

5N.12 The Meeting considered Target 3 and clarified that the agreement to “Increase positive incentives to enhance reduction of pressures on biodiversity and elimination by 2020 of incentives and subsidies which could be harmful to biodiversity” is on the Work Plan of State and Conservation and stems from the HELCOM 2013 Ministerial Declaration. The Meeting proposed that when pressures on species and biotopes have been identified, this agreement should be also considered under other relevant HELCOM Working Groups too.

5N.13 The Meeting revised the document as included in document [5N-2-Rev.1](#).

5N.14 The Meeting welcomed the document noting that it provides a good overview displaying the similarities between regional and international environmental policies. The Meeting noted that the information could be used for national reporting on actions taken to reach CBD targets related to the marine environment. The Meeting proposed to add a column to outline the relation between CBD targets with relevant European policies.

5N.15 The Meeting agreed to keep the document in the Agenda of upcoming State and Conservation meetings and to constantly update it according to new information.

#### *Issues to be raised jointly by HELCOM countries at CBD SBSTTA 20*

5N.16 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland on the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and noted that the outcome of the preparation meeting for SBSTTA20, held in Germany on the Isle of Vilm, is available as meeting document 5N-4.

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

5N.17 The Meeting recalled that STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 discussed ongoing work to identify ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).



5N.18 The Meeting supported the idea to organize a workshop together with the CBD Secretariat to explore the possibility to designate EBSAs for the Baltic Sea region and welcomed the offer from Estonia to look into the possibility to arrange such a workshop during the EU Chairmanship period in 2018. The Meeting agreed to come back and discuss the issue in more detail at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

#### **Agenda Item 6N Any other business**

Documents: 6N-1

6N.1 The Meeting took note of the ongoing activities on the reintroduction of sturgeon, presented by Germany. A LIFE+ project application on the reintroduction of sturgeon is still pending. Regional activities on sturgeon reintroduction in 2015 included the reintroduction of 250.000 individuals in the Oder catchment area, 150.000 in the Vistula area, 5000 in Russian rivers, and 15.000 in Latvia. In the Oder area some 100 individuals have been reported as bycatch by fishermen and some 10 individuals in the Baltic. An action plan on sturgeon will be finalized this year.

6N.2 The Meeting took note of the Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea area (document 6N-1), as presented by Finland.

6N.3 The Meeting took note of the view of Germany that the guidelines provide a compromise between VASAB and HELCOM and can as such be forwarded for endorsement by HOD.

6N.4 The Meeting took note of the statement by Germany that the following comments from HELCOM HABITAT (2014) are not reflected fully in the draft guidelines:

- An ecosystem approach to management is not for managing the ecosystem, but for managing human activities within the ecosystem (this is a clear HELCOM position).
- The term “ecosystem approach” used by OSPAR / HELCOM is replaced by “ecosystem-based approach” in accordance with the MSFD and the MSP Directives; however, the ecosystem-based approach in these Directives (particularly in the latter) is not equivalent to the ecosystem approach as understood by HELCOM.
- Relevant HELCOM basic / overall principles are only partly included in the list of “Key elements” (chapter 5). “Best Available Technology (BAT)” and “Polluter-Pays-Principle (PPP)” are missing here (although mentioned in chapter 4.1). The “Avoidance principle” is neither included in chapter 5 nor in the text.
- The “Precautionary principle” is not defined according to the Helsinki Convention Art. 3(2) in chapter 5 of the Guideline.

6N.5 The aim is that this document will be tested in practice and, subsequently, amended as may be needed according to experiences gathered.

6N.6 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Finland on the [map service](#) resulting from the VELMU project and congratulated Finland to the impressive work. The Meeting welcomed the offer from Finland to help the Contracting Parties with similar projects.

#### **Agenda Item 7N Outcome: Nature conservation**

Documents: draft Outcome

7N.1 The Meeting adopted the outcome of the nature conservation theme and noted that it will be available (together with the outcome of the monitoring and assessment and joint themes) at the [STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 Meeting Site](#) together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting.

## Joint Session (J)

### **Agenda Item 1J Adoption of Agenda: Joint themes**

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1J.1 The Meeting adopted Agenda Items 1J-8J as contained in document 1-1.

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

Documents: 2J-1

2J.1 The Meeting took note of extracts from the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings of relevance for the Working Group (document 2J-1), as presented by the Secretariat.

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

Documents: 3J-1, 3J-2, 3J-3, 3J-4, 3J-5

#### *Recommendations*

3J.1 The Meeting welcomed the report on the follow-up on HELCOM Recommendation 15-1 'Protection of the coastal strip' (document 3J-3), presented by Finland and took note of the view by Finland that the Recommendation is still valid but that updates are proposed to the pre-amble part of the Recommendation and that the reporting interval is proposed to be changed from 3 to 6 years.

3J.2 The Meeting took note that in Germany consultations on the proposed updates to the Recommendation are still ongoing and noted that Germany will present their view by STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

3J.3 The Meeting noted that Estonia, Poland and Sweden could agree to proposed changes and further noted the following specific comments:

- the support by Sweden to delete reference "in particular in countries with no protective legislation"
- the proposal by Poland to clarify that the Recommendation is related to the protection of the coastal environment and not to technical measures to protect the coast e.g. by revising the Recommends paragraph a) to make the protection purpose more explicit.

3J.4 The Meeting agreed to come back to the proposed revisions of Recommendation 15/1 at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 with the view of endorsement by the meeting.

3J.5 The Meeting noted that Estonia has started the review of Recommendation 24/10 'Implementation of Integrated Marine and Coastal Management of Human activities in the Baltic Sea Area', noted the proposed amendments and agreed to discuss the review of Recommendation 24/10 at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

3J.6 The Meeting welcomed that HELCOM Recommendation 37-1 'Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas' (document 3J-4) was adopted by HELCOM 37-2016.

3J.7 The Meeting recalled that the Recommendation includes the commitment under paragraph b) 'to use the HELCOM online platform to share information on planned and completed cruises' and requested the Contracting Parties to provide this information to HELCOM Data Coordinator ([jeni.kaitaranta@helcom.fi](mailto:jeni.kaitaranta@helcom.fi)) or Mr. Urmas Lips ([urmas.lips@msi.ttu.ee](mailto:urmas.lips@msi.ttu.ee)) according to instructions provided in Annex I of document 3J-4.

3J.8 The Meeting took note of a proposal for a reporting form for HELCOM Recommendation 17-2 (document 3J-2), presented by Poland, agreed on the form and that both non-Parties and Parties to ASCOBANS will use the same form for reporting on the Recommendation to HELCOM. The Meeting agreed that guidance for Parties to ASCOBANS will be prepared on how to extract information in the easiest way

from the ASCOBANS report to the HELCOM reporting form by the co-Chair and Poland in advance of STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

3J.9 The Meeting took note of the review of Recommendation 29/2 'Marine litter within the Baltic Sea region' (document 3J-1), as presented by the Secretariat and agreed that Recommendation 29/2 will be superseded by Recommendation 35/1 once the HELCOM monitoring guidelines for marine litter on beaches have been developed and included in the HELCOM Monitoring Manual.

3J.10 The Meeting welcomed that:

- Estonia is currently reviewing Recommendation 10/1 'Abnormal Situations in the Marine Environment' and will provide a report of the review in STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.
- Latvia will consider reporting the review of Recommendation 21/3 'Sustainable and Environmentally friendly tourism in the Coastal Zones of the Baltic Sea Area' for STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.
- In Germany national consultations on possible amendments on Recommendation 16/3 'Preservation of Natural Coastal Dynamics' are still ongoing. Germany will contact Denmark and Finland if any amendments can be suggested by STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 accordingly.

#### *Survey of knowledge and research needs for achieving good environmental status*

3J.11 The Meeting took note of the compilation of input to the survey of knowledge and research needs (document 3J-5) and invited the Contracting Parties and HELCOM expert groups and projects to provide further comments to the survey to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **15 June 2016** and agreed to make the results available on the HELCOM website thereafter.

#### *Follow-up of HELCOM agreements*

3J.12 The Meeting welcomed the presentation on the follow-up system for HELCOM agreements (**Presentation 2**), presented by the Secretariat and noted that the aim is to make the system available in May 2016 and agreed that actions still not accomplished under State and Conservation will be considered at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

### **Agenda Item 4J HELCOM indicators and assessments**

Documents: 4J-1, 4J-2, 4J-3, 4J-4, 4J-5, 4J-6, 4J-7, 4J-8, 4J-9, 4J-10, 4J-11, 4J-12, 4J-13, 4J-14, 4J-15, 4J-16

4J.1 The Meeting took note of the status of development of HELCOM core indicators (document 4J-15), presented by the Secretariat.

4J.2 The Meeting welcomed that Sweden is willing to support the development of the indicators 'Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes', 'Biomass ratio of opportunistic and perennial macroalgae' as well as 'Harbor porpoise distribution and abundance'.

4J.3 The Meeting welcomed that Germany will look into the possibility to take the Lead on the indicator 'Diatoms/dinoflagellates index' to be clarified at HOLAS II 5-2016.

4J.4 The Meeting considered the revised HELCOM core indicator on '**Populations trends and abundance of seals**' (document 4J-11), presented by Sweden, noting that the changes of the core indicator report are of editorial character.

4J.5 The Meeting took note that Germany could in principle agree to content of the document but that due to ongoing national consultations the German study reservation on the indicator cannot be lifted at this time.

4J.6 The Meeting furthermore noted the information from Germany that for seal indicators the national position is to use the HD assessment as far as possible also for the MSFD reporting purposes and that a way on how to combine the two approaches is also considered.

- 4J.7 The Meeting noted the view by Sweden that applying HD indicators in a regional status assessment of marine mammals is considered to be difficult as there is no alignment of targets and methods for the HD indicators between countries in the Baltic Sea region. Furthermore, Sweden recalled that HD-MSFD harmonization for assessment of abundance and distribution of seals is ongoing in the BalticBOOST project.
- 4J.8 The Meeting recalled that Denmark has requested the indicator to be adjusted to Danish waters and that a Danish expert has commented the draft report. Denmark is not in a position to lift the study reservation at this time. Denmark will clarify the study reservation when the revisions to the indicator are final.
- 4J.9 The Meeting took note of the request from Finland to reflect in the report that the method of counting of ringed seals is different depending on ice conditions and noted that 2015 data on ringed seal abundance is available and that the evaluation will be updated at the next meeting of the Seal Expert Group (SEAL 10-2016).
- 4J.10 The Meeting underlined the importance to clarify remaining substantial national issues well in advance of SEAL 10-2016 and STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016, e.g. by convening online meetings as needed.
- 4J.11 The Meeting considered the revised GES proposal for HELCOM core indicator '**Distribution of Baltic seals**' (document 4J-10), presented by Sweden.
- 4J.12 The Meeting noted the proposal from the Seal EG to base the GES definition for distribution of ringed seal on current ice conditions, i.e. only available haul out sites should be taken into account in the assessment. The Meeting noted that with the proposed amendments Finland has lifted the study reservation on GES for distribution of ringed seals.
- 4J.13 The Meeting noted that Germany for the same reasons as argued for the abundance indicator is not in a position to lift the study reservation. Comments and proposed changes to the document have been compiled by German experts and submitted to the Lead Country during the Meeting.
- 4J.14 The Meeting noted that Denmark is not in a position to lift the study reservation on the indicator, however Denmark will clarify the study reservation when the revisions to the indicator are final. A Danish expert has commented the draft report.
- 4J.15 The Meeting considered the revised proposal on HELCOM core indicators '**Nutritional status of marine mammals**' and '**Reproductive status of marine mammals**' (document 4J-9), presented by Sweden.
- 4J.16 The Meeting noted the clarification by Sweden and the proposal to first seek to agree on using the indicators as core indicators in the whole Baltic Sea area, while the proposal presented in the document, i.e. to only use the indicators in northern, central and eastern Baltic Sea, should only be considered if such agreement cannot be reached.
- 4J.17 The Meeting noted the view by Finland that the indicators are good indicators for the population status of seals in the whole Baltic area and the wish to seek for a compromise solution for the indicators so that they can be used in HOLAS II.
- 4J.18 The Meeting took note that Germany is not in a position to lift the study reservation on the core indicator. German experts have reviewed the documents and welcome that they have improved, however, the general concerns on the indicators remain i.e. whether they can be considered as good indicators of the health status of Baltic seals.
- 4J.19 The Meeting recalled the request to adjust the indicator to Danish waters and that Denmark is not in a position to lift the study reservation. Denmark also considers it challenging to get enough data from healthy seal populations for the indicator since only data from by-caught and stranded animals will be used in Denmark.

4J.20 The Meeting encouraged Lead country Sweden and the Seal Expert Group health team to find a solution and noted that Germany, as Lead country for the Seal expert group health team, is prepared to continue the discussion with a view to arrive at an agreement.

4J.21 The Meeting considered the progress update on the indicator '**Zooplankton mean size and total stock**' (document 4J-4), presented by the Secretariat.

4J.22 The Meeting recalled that the method for calculating GES was agreed at HOD 48-2015 while at that time the calculations were not made for all sub-basins. At the annual meeting of ZEN-ZIIM in 2015 GES values were calculated for some subbasins and they will be finalized by the next meeting of the ZEN-ZIIM project, planned for September/October 2016. The project has identified problems with access to data in the Southwestern areas of the Baltic Sea and not all countries have representatives in the project. The Meeting stressed the importance of making data available to the ZEN ZIIM project and national representation at the next meeting.

4J.23 The Meeting took note that Poland is working on calculations of GES and indicator evaluations according to the agreed procedure and that the results will be presented to the ICES/PICES Zooplankton Production Symposium, on 9-13 May 2016, Bergen, Norway, based on data from Gotland, Bornholm and Gdansk basins. The Meeting noted the view of Poland that the procedure needs to be updated for coastal waters.

4J.24 The Meeting took note of two ongoing national research projects in Germany in which zooplankton data is collected and the indicators are tested and that Germany is willing to share the data with the indicator Lead and ZEN-ZIIM project.

4J.25 The Meeting took note of the proposal by Sweden to discuss more closely with Finland about the calculations of the indicator in the Northern Baltic Proper in order to provide guidance to ZEN ZIIM regarding the significant difference between values for the coastal and offshore areas in this assessment unit.

4J.26 The Meeting noted that Denmark will look into the possibility to participate in the 2016 ZEN-ZIIM meeting and provide data for the GES boundary calculation.

4J.27 The Meeting considered the GES boundary proposal on hazardous substances (document 4J-6, (**Presentation 3**)), as proposed by the Expert network for hazardous substances and presented by the Secretariat.

4J.28 The Meeting expressed a general concern regarding the use of food safety thresholds values for assessment under Descriptor 8 and noted the proposal by Germany and Latvia that such threshold values should only be used for MSFD Descriptor 9.

4J.29 The Meeting took note that Sweden shares the concern but also finds that the proposals in document 4J-6 follow the guidance provided in the MSFD context and the Swedish view that Descriptor 8, which includes pollution effects, can also be considered to address risks to human health.

4J.30 The meeting took note of the view by Germany that the EQS values have currently not been suitably adjusted for use in the marine offshore areas, and that further work on developing the targets should ensure input from experts in the marine environment to the relevant EU working groups.

4J.31 The Meeting agreed to include a reflection in the HOLAS II report regarding the use of food safety values in environmental assessment, as well as on the use of thresholds generally considered to be set at too low a level, e.g. PBDE in biota for human health protection.

4J.32 Taking note of a general study reservation on the proposed GES-boundaries by Germany, the Meeting endorsed the proposed GES boundary values as presented in document 4J-6 and Annex 3, with the following remarks:

- regarding the use of foodstuff threshold values from the EC directive 1881/2006 for Cd and Pb in offshore waters, it is still to be decided whether these values are to be used for Descriptor 9 only

- the study reservation by Sweden on GES proposal for Cd and Pb in offshore waters which can be lifted when conversion factors for the biota matrix have been developed
- the study reservation by Denmark on proposed GES boundaries for TBT concentration measured in sediments based on the QS as the methodological detection limit is often above the threshold level

4J.33 The Meeting noted that the proposed GES boundaries (**Annex 3**) will be submitted for adoption at HOD 50-2016 and urged the Contracting Parties to clarify their position on the still open issues raised in paragraph 4J-31 in advance of that meeting.

4J.34 The Meeting took note that the EN on Hazardous Substances has proposed to consider a number of additional substances as the basis for HELCOM indicators or for inclusion as trends in HOLAS II in addition to the core indicators, namely DDEs (DDT), HCB, HCH, and total oil concentration in water based on spectrofluorometry.

#### *Reporting from experts groups, networks and project*

4J.35 The Meeting took note of the report on the work of the ad hoc HELCOM Seal Expert Group (document 4J-2), presented by the Secretariat and endorsed the Terms of Reference of SEAL 10-2016.

4J.36 The Meeting took note of the report on the work of FISH-PRO II (document 4J-3), presented by the Secretariat.

4J.37 The Meeting took note that the Danish and German study reservations on the coastal fish core indicators remain. Currently no routine monitoring of coastal fish is undertaken in Denmark nor Germany and it may furthermore be problematic to establish a reference period due to lack of 'historic' data from time periods without significant eutrophication. The Meeting invited Denmark and Germany to consider using also commercial catch data, as is currently done in Finland to complement their existing monitoring of coastal fish and noted this option is also presented in the coastal fish indicator reports.

4J.38 The Meeting suggested that the activities of FISH-PRO II would in the future concentrate more on the western parts of the Baltic Sea (Belt Sea and Kattegat) and agreed to come back to further suggestions for the continuation of FISH-PRO II at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

4J.39 The Meeting took note of the report on the work of ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM JWGBird (document 4J-5), presented by the Co-Chair of JWGBird, and that issues discussed included e.g. the planning of a coordinated HELCOM waterbird survey that was successfully carried out this winter, covering nearly the whole Baltic Sea. The Meeting noted that a data call for breeding and wintering birds has been issued and will support the update of the waterbird indicators during 2016.

4J.40 The Meeting further took note of the draft Terms of Reference 2016 for JWGBird (document 4J-5) and endorsed the Terms of Reference for 2016, pending the study reservation by Poland to be clarified by **29 April 2016**.

4J.41 The Meeting took note of the report on the work of the intersessional expert network on benthic habitat monitoring (document 4J-16), presented by the Secretariat.

4J.42 The Meeting took note of the draft Terms of Reference for the intersessional network of benthic experts (document 4J-1), presented by the Secretariat, provided amendments to it taking into account the benthic expert meeting in February and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the intersessional expert network (**Annex 4**).

4J.43 The Meeting took note of the report on the work of intersessional network on eutrophication (document 4J-14), presented by the Secretariat.

4J.44 The Meeting endorsed the further development of 'Shallow-water bottom oxygen' and 'Deep-water oxygen consumption' as eutrophication candidate indicators.

4J.45 The Meeting welcomed that the EUTRO-OPER project has been extended for a limited period of time enabled by financial contribution from Germany. The Meeting noted that the project will support the IN-Eutrophication in a number of tasks, and more specifically the development of the pre-core indicator on

Cyanobacterial bloom and the candidate indicator on Shallow water oxygen to core indicators, in cooperation with Lead Countries; operationalizing oxygen debt core indicator algorithms, with an opportunity of some funding also from the HELCOM budget to support the task; updating workflow for new core indicators and corresponding HEAT adjustments; adjustments of HEAT tool according to revised EU Commission Decision (depending on final decision) and overall assessment tool development.

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

- 4J.46 The Meeting noted the progress of HOLAS II (document 4J-13), presented by the Secretariat.
- 4J.47 The Meeting took note of the development of a biodiversity assessment tool for HELCOM HOLAS II (document 4J-7, **Presentation 4**), presented by the Lead Partner SYKE, Finland for WP 1.1. in the HELCOM coordinated EU co-financed BalticBOOST project.
- 4J.48 The Meeting noted that the tool is based on the integrated assessment tool NEAT, developed by the DEVOTES project, and that it will be further modified for HOLAS II purpose.
- 4J.49 The Meeting took note that based on recommendations of the HELCOM [workshop on the biodiversity assessment tool](#) (BalticBOOST Biodiv WS 1-2016), the project will test different integration approaches e.g. to use the OOA and weighted average approaches respectively on both lower (e.g. indicator) and higher (e.g. ecosystem component) level using the same data and thus making it possible to compare the outcome of the two approaches.
- 4J.50 The Meeting noted that the ongoing process to review and revise the GES Decision 2010/477/EU is considered in the development of the tool in the sense that the tests carried out in the project also cover the proposals as regards the latest draft GES decision.
- 4J.51 The Meeting took note that the assessment has been proposed to be carried out at the most detailed assessment scale (HELCOM assessment level 4), noting that this will require expert advice on how to down-scale results of indicators that have been developed for application at higher assessment levels.
- 4J.52 The Meeting noted that the BalticBOOST project will test how the number of indicators will affect the outcome of the assessment. This will be done by carrying out the assessment using HELCOM core indicators only as well as to complement the set of core indicators with e.g. national indicators in the test.
- 4J.53 The Meeting noted the comment by Germany that the OOA principle is not advisable to be applied between all related indicators.
- 4J.54 The Meeting noted that Denmark and Poland are not in favour of using the OOA approach between indicators and support the development of an integrated approach.
- 4J.55 The Meeting took note of the development of a hazardous substance assessment tool for HELCOM HOLAS II ([document 4J-8](#), **Presentation 5**), presented by the Secretariat and developed by NIVA Denmark as Lead partner WP 2.1 of the EU co-financed BalticBOOST.
- 4J.56 The Meeting noted that the tool is based on the integrated assessment tool CHASE 2.0, building on the CHASE tool used in HOLAS I and further developed by the HARMONY project, and that it will be modified as needed for HOLAS II.
- 4J.57 The Meeting noted that the tool builds on the integration of indicators within four compartments (water, sediment, biota and biological effects) and that in the current version of the tool OOA is used between the four compartments. The Meeting noted that the BalticBOOST project will test the OOA approach between indicators as well as the use of the CHASE tool in both coastal and open waters, and use of core indicators only as well as complementing the core indicators with additional indicators. For coastal waters the project will also compare the test results with WFD assessment results, pending that WFD assessment results are made available by the Contracting Parties.
- 4J.58 The Meeting recalled that the current four compartments were defined in the development of the CHASE tool in the HARMONY project and that their use in the testing of the tool was supported by the [HELCOM BalticBOOST workshop on hazardous substance assessment tool](#) (BalticBOOST HZ WS 1-2016).

4J.59 The Meeting noted the concern raised by Germany on the use of bioeffects compartment in the tool since Germany is of the view that the bioeffect indicators should be supplementary indicators.

4J.60 The Meeting noted that some countries wish to consider further the use of the four compartments. The Meeting recognized that further comments to the structure of the assessment tool need be provided as soon as possible, preferably by the HOLAS II 5-2016 meeting (26-28 April 2016), so that BalticBOOST project can continue the testing and development according to the time-table of the project.

4J.61 The Meeting noted that the results of testing will be available for discussion at the planned HELCOM workshop in September 2016. The Meeting recalled that the workshops convened under BalticBOOST are 'HELCOM workshops' and that participants are expected to represent national views.

4J.62 The Meeting requested that background documentation should be made available well in advance of the workshop to enable collecting national views and preparation prior the workshop and suggested that preferably also members of State and Conservation would attend the workshop. The Meeting agreed that the outcome of the workshop should be circulated for intersessional commenting by State and Conservation to facilitate preparation of the project report to STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016.

4J.63 The Meeting took note of the work plan for development of a pressure and impact index for HELCOM HOLAS II (document 4J-12), presented by SYKE, Finland, Lead partner of Theme 1 of the HELCOM coordinated EU co-financed project TAPAS.

4J.64 The Meeting noted that the project will test the assessment for the whole Baltic Sea if data layers are available.

4J.65 The Meeting requested HOLAS II 5-2016 to define dates for planned workshops related to HOLAS II work such as under BalticBOOST and TAPAS with the aim to identify possibilities to arrange some of the workshop back-to-back at the same location in order reduce travel efforts of experts.

#### **Agenda Item 5J Mapping of ecosystem components**

Documents: 5J-1, 5J-1-Rev.1

##### *Mapping of benthic landscapes, biotopes and species*

5J.1 The Meeting took note of the summary of reported data on benthic species and biotopes (document 5J-1-**Rev.1**), presented by the Secretariat, noting that requested information has been received from Denmark (partial), Estonia, Finland, Germany and Sweden. The Meeting noted that the pilot project of monitoring of the marine habitats and marine protected species in conducted in Poland (2015-2018). First data will be available in November 2016. The data obtained under the project will be used for actualization of the initial assessment of the Polish marine waters.

5J.2 The Meeting took note that for use in the Baltic Sea Impact Index the ecosystem component distribution maps need to be Baltic wide and furthermore that they need to be probability or high resolution presence/absence maps. For this purpose it is preferred that countries submit information based on modelled distribution or high resolution mapping data.

5J.3 The Meeting welcomed that Germany will be able to submit national maps of HUB level 2/EUNIS level 3 maps as an input to the development of distribution maps and invited all countries to do so and if possible also more detailed maps.

#### **Agenda Item 6J Session on underwater noise**

Documents: 6J-1, 6J-2

6J.1 The Meeting took note of the progress and upcoming work of the BalticBOOST project on underwater noise (document 6J-1, **Presentation 6**), presented by the Secretariat and appreciated the ongoing work.



6J.2 The Meeting took note of the proposals from Finland to also consider habitats, since certain habitats are more affected by underwater noise, and subsequently identify prioritized species in these habitats.

6J.3 The Meeting took note of the view by Germany that the protected areas may not be sufficient as a basis for identifying sound sensitive areas and that it could be improved by using other sources of information. The Meeting noted the comment by Finland that grey seal sanctuaries and moulting areas as well as spawning areas for fish species are missing in the draft maps.

6J.4 The Meeting further noted the suggestion by Finland for the Working Group to in the future to also consider above water noise. For example important bird areas are often affected by above water noise.

6J.5 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to provide feedback on the criteria for identifying noise sensitive species, on the proposed list of priority species, on the compilation map, available national data or projects that could support the development of the maps on biological sensitive areas, on the provisional draft programme of the HELCOM workshop on underwater noise on 5-6 October 2016 as well as on the possibility to host the workshop **by 6 May 2016** to the Secretariat ([marta.ruiz@helcom.fi](mailto:marta.ruiz@helcom.fi)).

6J.6 The Meeting took note of the proposed regional monitoring programme of ambient noise based on output from the BIAS project (document 6J-2-Rev.1, **Presentation 7**), presented by Ms. Emilia Lalander, representative of Lead partner of WP 4 of BalticBOOST, FOI. The Meeting noted that the proposal is based on two alternative monitoring programmes proposed based on yearly minor assessment in a few prioritized locations and major assessment every e.g. 6 years. More information is available via the [BIAS project's website](#).

6J.7 The Meeting took note about ongoing national monitoring programs as follows:

- Latvia: pending funding, but nothing is envisaged until 2017.
- Estonia: not as part of national monitoring programme, but there is funding for conducting monitoring this year.
- Denmark: one station which will be monitoring this year.
- Finland: monitoring yearly on a temporary basis
- Germany: temporary monitoring and a national monitoring programme is under development
- Sweden: monitoring yearly on a temporary basis

6J.8 The Meeting took note of the following comments regarding the regional monitoring proposal:

- Latvia propose to cover biologically sensitive areas for regional monitoring.
- Estonia supports continuation of underwater noise monitoring as described in the presented document. Nevertheless, more information is needed to decide on monitoring strategies and location of monitoring stations. At the moment only VMS and AIS data is considered for monitoring and modelling purposes, but also other activities, e.g. intense boating areas have to be taken into account.

6J.9 The Meeting noted that in the Polish waters a pilot project under the state monitoring programme for the Baltic Sea for monitoring underwater noise is ongoing including additional monitoring locations compared to the locations used by BIAS.

6J.10 The Meeting supported the continuation of the ongoing monitoring. The Meeting agreed that there is a need to have a monitoring programme on ambient noise, however that it is too early to decide on specific monitoring locations. The Meeting agreed to consider the issue at the upcoming State and Conservation meeting.

6J.11 The Meeting noted that a synthesis on underwater noise will be considered by the CBD SBSTTA-20 meeting<sup>2</sup> and work is also ongoing in CMS<sup>3</sup> family.

**Agenda Item 7J Any other business**

Documents: 7J-1, 7J-2, 7J-3

7J.1 The Meeting took note of the upcoming HELCOM workshop on fish indicators on 10 May 2016 in Gothenburg, Sweden (document 7J-3), presented by the Secretariat.

7J.2 The Meeting welcomed that Estonia will host STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016 on 7-11 November 2016 and will provide information on the location at a later stage.

7J.3 The Meeting appreciated that Sweden will look into the opportunity of hosting the meeting of the Working Group in spring 2017 and Poland in autumn 2017.

7J.4 The Meeting updated the contacts and observers of State and Conservation (document 7J-1-Rev.1), as included in **Annex 5**.

7J.5 The Meeting took note of the activities at Leibniz Science Campus Phosphorus Research Rostock and of the 8<sup>th</sup> International phosphorus workshop being held in Rostock in September 12-16 2016 (document 7J-2), presented by Germany.

7J.6 The Meeting warmly thanked Germany for the outstanding organization and hospitality during the Meeting.

**Agenda Item 8J Outcome of the Joint themes**

Documents: draft Outcome

8J.1 The Meeting adopted the outcome of the joint themes and noted that it will be available (together with the outcome of the nature conservation and monitoring and assessment themes) at the [STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 Meeting Site](#) together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity, 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the subsidiary body on scientific, technical and technological advice

<sup>3</sup> Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species

## Monitoring and assessment session (MA)

### Agenda Item 1MA Adoption of Agenda: Monitoring and assessment

Documents: 1-1, 1-2

1MA.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda Items 1MA-6MA as contained in document 1-1.

### Agenda Item 2MA Revision of HELCOM monitoring

Documents: 2MA-1, 2MA-2, 2MA-3, 2MA-4, 2MA-5, 2MA-6, 2MA-7, 2MA-8, 2MA-9, 2MA-10, 2MA-11, 2MA-12, 2MA-13, 2MA-14, 2MA-15

2MA.1 The Meeting took note that no proposed revisions to the Monitoring Manual were submitted by Contracting Parties prior to the meeting (document 2MA-2).

2MA.2 The Meeting agreed to the proposed revisions to the Monitoring Manual presented to the meeting by Finland (document 2MA-14) as follows: to add the spatial scope of monitoring of breeding birds and abundance in Finland, to add a link from on soft-bottom fauna monitoring to the HELCOM Data and Map service.

2MA.3 The Meeting took note that Sweden will submit editorial remarks to the Secretariat to be implemented in the Monitoring Manual.

2MA.4 The Meeting agreed that proposed updates to the Manual by Contracting Parties can be considered as needed at each meeting of State and Conservation.

2MA.5 The Meeting recalled that State and Conservation 3-2015 considered proposed modifications to the borders of HELCOM assessment units (document 2MA-8), and agreed to the proposed changes pending a clarification that the changes do not affect the MAI/CART assessment. The Meeting took note that the issue had been addressed at the last PLC6 meeting that advised not to change the borders, however that specific reasons to this position had not been provided. The Meeting invited Denmark, Finland and Sweden to contact their PLC contacts for further clarification.

2MA.6 The Meeting took note of the Extended Rapid Assessment Survey of Alien Species as proposed by Germany (document 2MA-3, and **Presentation 8**) and that it is a proposal for an integrated, cost-effective, minimum monitoring of non-indigenous species in the Baltic Sea.

2MA.7 The Meeting recalled there is no regular monitoring of NIS in the Baltic Sea, except in Estonia, and that data is currently collected through the documentation of NIS in regular biological monitoring programmes, or through the application of the HELCOM/OSPAR Port survey protocol developed to grant exemptions to the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention.

2MA.8 The Meeting noted that the Extended Rapid Assessment is restricted to benthic organisms while the Port survey protocol also includes planktonic organisms, mobile fauna and pathogens and that Extended Rapid Assessment cannot be used for the requirements under the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention.

2MA.9 The Meeting took note that Denmark and Sweden welcomed the proposal, however recommended that monitoring guidelines for NIS should be further considered before agreement by State and Conservation.

2MA.10 The Meeting noted that Estonia will continue to use the Port survey protocol for NIS monitoring.

2MA.11 The Meeting discussed the possibility to use both protocols for NIS assessment in the Baltic Sea, providing that the results are comparable, and to consider how to complement the two methods with NIS observations stemming from biological monitoring programmes.

2MA.12 The Meeting took note of the information that the German compilation studies comparing the Port sampling protocol and the Extended Rapid Assessment are not yet available and invited Germany to circulate the studies to State and Conservation as soon as possible.

2MA.13 The Meeting invited Lead Country Lithuania and co-Lead Country Germany to prepare draft monitoring guidelines for the Extended Rapid Survey for State and Conservation 5-2016.

2MA.14 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for monitoring reproductive status of seals in the HELCOM area (document 2MA-4), presented by Lead Country Sweden, noting that they are applicable for the whole Baltic Sea area.

2MA.15 The Meeting endorsed the guidelines for monitoring reproductive status of seals in principle, taking note of study reservations by Germany and Poland that will be clarified **by HOD 50-2016** to the Secretariat ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)).

2MA.16 The Meeting took note of the German proposal to address monitoring guidelines concerning nature conservation topics (e.g. marine mammals, birds) under the Joint session, to enable experts from the nature conservation session to participate in the discussions.

2MA.17 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for biological effect monitoring – imposex and intersex (document 2MA-5), presented by Lead Country Sweden.

2MA.18 The Meeting endorsed the guidelines in principle, taking note of a study reservation by Germany to be clarified by **29 April 2016** to the Secretariat ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)).

2MA.19 The Meeting considered documents 2MA-6 to 2MA-11 presented by Lead Country Sweden and agreed to discuss them but to consider endorsing them only at State and Conservation 5-2016.

2MA.20 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for determination of total alkalinity and the proposal from Sweden to include them in the sub programme ‘Water column chemical characteristics’ of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual (document 2MA-6 containing the draft). The Meeting supported the proposal.

2MA.21 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for determination of pH (document 2MA-7) and noted that two different methods are proposed and supported in principle the use of alternative methods as long as they provide comparable results.

2MA.22 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for determination of nitrite, nitrate and total nitrogen (document 2MA-8, 2MA-9, 2MA-10). The Meeting noted that only minor revisions have been made compared to the existing guidelines in the COMBINE manual. The Meeting noted the proposal by Germany to include more details on the handling of samples.

2MA.23 The Meeting considered the draft guidelines for physical oceanography (document 2MA-11) as presented by Sweden. The Meeting invited Sweden to transform the information to the format for HELCOM monitoring guidelines and to include more detailed information on the e.g. deployment of autonomous buoys.

2MA.24 The Meeting considered documents 2MA-12 and 2MA-13 submitted by Lead Country Finland and agreed to discuss them but to consider endorsing them only at State and Conservation 5-2016.

2MA.25 The Meeting took note of the information from Germany on the different size of Secchi discs used nationally. Thus the requirement of the guidelines to use specific device could be problematic for Germany. However, a national intercalibration exercise is planned for summer 2016.

2MA.26 The Meeting discussed the further work on revising the presented monitoring guidelines and agreed that comments already prepared should be immediately submitted to Lead experts on the guidelines. The Meeting agreed that the draft monitoring guidelines will thereafter be uploaded to a workspace on the HELCOM web-site where the guidelines can be reviewed and commented. The Meeting noted that the Secretariat will set up such workspace and inform State and Conservation contacts when it is available. Direct access will be given to State and Conservation contacts or Lead experts on the guidelines while Contracting Parties are invited to request access to other persons.

2MA.27 The Meeting agreed that further national comments to the guidelines should be provided by **15 June** and that a second round of commenting and revision will be conducted by **15 September 2016**. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to indicate their position towards the adoption of the guidelines when not providing further comments.

2MA.28 The Meeting agreed to shift the target for updating the Monitoring Manual to the end of 2016 e.g. on the Roadmap of HELCOM activities, noting that not all guidelines may be ready by this time.

2MA.29 The Meeting discussed the needed level of details in the guidelines, stressed that the common guidelines should be precise and ensure that monitoring results in comparable data.

2MA.30 The Meeting took note of the updated version of the Annexes B1-B5 of COMBINE as provided by Estonia (document 2MA-15), and agreed in principle on the text proposal pending comments from the Contracting Parties to Estonia by **15 May 2016** (urmas.lips@msi.ttu.ee).

2MA.31 The Meeting discussed the review process for monitoring guidelines together with proposals on how the guidelines can be updated as contained in document 2MA-1. The Meeting took note of the following information and progress on guidelines that will be addressed at STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016:

- Sweden continues the review of marine bird health guidelines;
- Finland is preparing guidelines on use of satellite data for monitoring of transparency;
- Sweden will check the tentative development of missing elements of ‘Water column hydrological conditions’ (temperature, salinity) and ‘Water column chemical characteristics’ (O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>S);
- Finland has started the review of guidelines for pigments, both for water samples and by use of satellites. Sweden is prepared to support the development;
- Finland will provide a review of existing guidelines on softbottom fauna for the next meeting;
- Germany plans to start the revision process on contaminants in water, sediment and biota early this summer. The Expert network in hazardous substance will take part of the development according to their Terms of Reference;
- ZEN-ZIIM will be invited to inform on the ongoing revision on zooplankton monitoring guidelines;
- regarding monitoring of ‘Ambient noise’ the Meeting recalled that proposed guidelines by the BIAS project were presented to STATE & CONSERVATION3-2015.

2MA.32 The Meeting clarified a number of additional issues regarding development of monitoring guidelines as contained in document 2MA-1 which will be reflected in a revision of the document. A column including contact details to national expert representatives of the Lead Country will be added to the table.

2MA.33 The Meeting noted that a Lead Country is missing for monitoring of hardbottom substrate. The Meeting noted the comment by Finland that the feasibility of monitoring of hard bottom species may be limited but that common guidelines could possibly be developed for e.g. offshore reefs. The Meeting took note of the information from Germany on the on-going monitoring regarding hard bottom substrate and the view that guidelines for hard bottom substrate may benefit from the planned work under the IN-Benthic habitats.

2MA.34 The Meeting noted the invitation by Finland to provide information on ongoing development of indicators for soft bottom flora ([samuli.korpinen@ymparisto.fi](mailto:samuli.korpinen@ymparisto.fi)).

2MA.35 The Meeting agreed to update the general text in the Monitoring Manual regarding monitoring of underwater noise to reflect the current knowledge and ongoing monitoring and invited the EN-Noise to revise the text.

2MA.36 The Meeting took note that Finland will submit comments on the monitoring guidelines for phytoplankton species composition, abundance and biomass to the annual PEG meeting.

### **Agenda Item 3MA Environmental monitoring and data**

Documents: 3MA-1, 3MA-2, 3MA-3, 3MA-4, 3MA-5

3MA.1 The Meeting took note of the Status of national data reporting to COMBINE as contained in document 3MA-1.

3MA.2 The Meeting recalled that the annual reporting deadline for the COMBINE database is 1 September, however that data can be submitted at any time of the year. By September 2016 entries to COMBINE should cover data from 2011-2015 that will be fed into the first version of HOLAS II report. The Meeting also noted that if there are any questions related to data submissions or formats, ICES Data Center can be contacted at any time ([marilynn.sorensen@ices.dk](mailto:marilynn.sorensen@ices.dk)).

3MA.3 The Meeting noted that in Latvia contaminants data are submitted to EMODNET. The Meeting noted that ICES can transfer data from EMODNET if all the quality elements required by the COMBINE reporting format are fulfilled. The Meeting noted that Latvia will investigate if this is the case and contact the ICES Data Centre for clarification on this issue.

3MA.4 The Meeting noted that the indication on data submissions in document 3MA-1 only reflects that data has been submitted, not if the submission is complete since this information is only known to the Contracting Parties. The Meeting proposed that this should be reflected in the Meeting document. The Meeting took note that a link to summaries of the ICES data submissions is found in the first chapter of document 3MA-1. In addition, the DOME views summary on the following link provide a detailed view of the actual data from the Contracting Parties available in the database <http://dome.ices.dk/views/ContaminantsBiota.aspx>.

3MA.5 The Meeting noted that document 3MA-1 is not up to date regarding submissions of Secchi depth data and that ICES is currently updating data submission summaries.

3MA.6 The Contracting Parties are invited to check the information on reasons for lack of data in table 2 of document 3MA-1 and submit corrections as needed to the Secretariat **by 29 April 2016** ([joni.kaitaranta@helcom.fi](mailto:joni.kaitaranta@helcom.fi)). A corrected version of the document will be prepared by the Secretariat when updated information is available.

3MA.7 The Meeting agreed to fill in the gaps in the COMBINE database as soon as possible, and agreed that countries that have reported data to other databases or that have many years back-logged data will contact the ICES Data Centre and discuss how the collation of data can be arranged.

3MA.8 The Meeting took note of arrangements for data reporting for HOLAS II (document 3MA-4), as presented by the Secretariat.

3MA.9 The Meeting took note that for relevant indicators used to assess ecological and chemical status under the WFD, the Contracting Parties will be asked to submit the WFD assessment results to the Secretariat. A call for assessment results will be issued with a reporting deadline in June 2016.

3MA.10 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by Sweden to inform State and Conservation contacts on matters related to the development of databases under e.g. the BalticBOOST project and related to problems in data arrangements for HOLAS II.

3MA.11 The Meeting welcomed the document on data arrangement (document 3MA-4), found it very useful for the planning of national data submission, and confirmed that the Contracting Parties will do their utmost to submit data according to the timetable.

3MA.12 The Meeting welcomed the development of simplified reporting formats and data views from the ICES Data Centre (document 3MA-2), noting that such simplified reporting formats have already been developed for contaminants and biological effects, and are being developed for phytoplankton and zooplankton data. The Meeting noted that the simplified reporting format can be used as the main reporting format if desired.

3MA.13 The Meeting took note of the clarification of required data and information to be extracted from the COMBINE database for phytoplankton indicator evaluation and that for this purpose ICES has produced a specific data view for HELCOM (document 3MA-3). The work has been carried out by the ICES Data Center

and HELCOM Lead Country experts on phytoplankton indicators. The Meeting noted that the document will be further discussed at the upcoming annual meeting of the PEG-project (25-29 April 2016).

3MA.14 The Meeting noted that indicator experts on zooplankton and benthic indicators have been asked to support a similar clarification on data requirements as regards relevant indicators and data hosted by COMBINE.

3MA.15 The Meeting took note of the information from Poland on the on-going process to compile data collected under State monitoring programme for WFD requirements from 2011 and onwards.

3MA.16 The Meeting took note of the issue observed by IN-EUTROPHICATION 2-2016 about lack of CTD profiles in some data submissions to COMBINE (document 3MA-5) and noted the importance of these supporting parameters (temperature and salinity) in the Quality Assurance process related to Chl-a and Nutrient measurements.

3MA.17 The Meeting took note that only salinity and temperature are to be reported, whereas pH data are not needed.

3MA.18 The Meeting agreed that supporting parameters and full CTD profiles should always be included in the data submissions to COMBINE and relevant guidelines (HELCOM Eutrophication Assessment Manual Annex 3A, which refers to ICES Guidelines for Discrete Water Sample Data) should be updated accordingly.

3MA.19 The Meeting noted that this issue will be addressed by the ICES Data Center in the upcoming ICES Data and Information Group (DIG) meeting in May 2016.

#### **Agenda Item 4MA Progress of relevant HELCOM projects and assessments**

Documents: 4MA-1(, 4N-3, 2N-2)-Rev.1, 4MA-2

4MA.1 The Meeting took note of the draft status report on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea region as included in document 4MA-2.

4MA.2 The Meeting recalled that the data included in the report was gathered jointly by the Pressure Working Group and State and Conservation and compiled with contributions from EUSBSR coordinator PA Hazards and UNESCO. The Meeting noted that the draft report was circulated for review to Pressure and State and Conservation contacts prior to the meeting and that comments received from Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden and also from the PA Hazards coordinator, are included in document 4MA-2.

4MA.3 The Meeting welcomed the compilation and supported the publication of the report pending revisions according to comments provided by Contracting Parties.

4MA.4 The Meeting noted that limited conclusions can be drawn from the report due to the shortage data and since the analytical detection limit often exceeds proposed threshold levels for pharmaceuticals substance on the WFD Watch list, i.e. for estrogens and diclofenac.

4MA.5 The Meeting proposed to analyze, in the future, available data to identify if current detections of e.g. diclofenac and estrogens are random or not and to determine how many samples are needed to detect relevant pharmaceutical substances reliably. Furthermore, development of technical advice for analyzing the pharmaceutical substances is needed.

4MA.6 The Meeting supported the continued development of the pre-core indicators on 'Diclofenac concentration' and 'Estrogenic-like chemicals and effects,' however noting that monitoring to support their evaluation will not be available for HOLAS II.

4MA.7 The Meeting noted the concern by Germany that national data may not have been used correctly in the report and asking to check in particular whether all data from coastal waters have been used on the overview on concentrations and effects and inform Germany about the results.

4MA.8 The Meeting noted that Poland delivered data to the project but that this is not reflected in Table 1.

4MA.9 The Meeting took note that in Latvia pharmaceuticals are monitored during 2016.

4MA.10 The Meeting considered how to initiate the agreed HELCOM actions for further consideration on 'Micropollutants in effluents from wastewater treatment plants' included in document 4MA-1(, 4N-3, 2N-2)-Rev.1.

4MA.11 The Meeting took note of the information from Sweden on a recent publication on techniques for removal of micropollutants in sewage treatment plants. The report is currently only available in Swedish and does not cover information from all the Contracting Parties. According to the report micropollutants encompass a broad group of compounds including e.g. pharmaceuticals, biocides, pesticides and flame retardants.

4MA.12 The Meeting welcomed the action and was of the view that State and Conservation could primarily contribute to step 1 of the action i.e. Compilation and assessment of available information and data of micropollutants of concern for the Contracting Parties in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting invited the Pressure Working Group to consider a possible contribution from State and Conservation in this regard.

4MA.13 The Meeting considered steps 2 (compile information from CPs treatment techniques) and 3 (summary report on advanced treatment techniques) and the proposal by Sweden to use the Swedish report as a starting point for implementation of these steps and to complement the information through the distribution of a questionnaire to the Contracting Parties. The Meeting supported in principle the proposal but was of the view that these steps are primarily in the remit of the Pressure Working Group and that this proposal should also be brought to the attention of Pressure.

#### **Agenda Item 5MA Any other business**

Documents: none

5MA.1 The Meeting did not have any other business to discuss.

#### **Agenda Item 6MA Outcome of Monitoring and assessment**

Documents: draft Outcome

6MA.1 The Meeting adopted the outcome of monitoring and assessment themes and noted that it will be available (together with the outcome of the nature conservation and joint themes) at the [STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 Meeting Site](#) together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting.



## Annex 1. List of Participants

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## Annex 2. Outcome of drafting group to discuss proposed additional amendments to the HELCOM MPA database\*

\*as outlined in document 2N-1, pages 4-5

1. How to enter data for the question “Does this species justify the sites designation as an MPA? (see also proposed revision in table 2, point 4)

*The drafting group proposed that the question: “**Does the species/biotope/biotope complex justify this sites designation as an MPA?**” should be complemented with the question “**Is this species/biotope/biotope complex legally protected within the MPA?**”. For the second option if was furthermore proposed to consider the option to use drop down choice menu to specify the legal protection e.g. whether is year around, temporal protection, concerns game species etc. It was however proposed to consider the two response options further before revising the database. The Contracting Parties are invited to provide comments and further proposals by 13 May 2016 i.e. are both options needed, what is meant with “legal protection”, should a drop down menu be used?*

2. Species status (resident, breeding, wintering, migratory or occasional) is not always clear despite the guiding text in the database.

*The term **occasional** should apply to all other alternatives.*

3. Authorities responsible for monitoring of a species /biotope /biotope complex is unclear. Does this mean inside the MPA or in general? Under which option would you put WWF, Birdlife or a corresponding national organization?

*The group recognized that some data may be collected by NGO however proposed to **keep the questions to “Authorities responsible for...”** and furthermore to **clarify that the question only applies to monitoring within MPAs.***

4. How should countries enter information on threatened species which are classified as secret (i.e. the information cannot be publicly visible)?

*A **technical solution could be sought for in the future** i.e. to be able to report the species name to HELCOM but not make the information publically available. Not a priority.*

5. A link is needed to show the connection between HUB biotopes and biotope complexes (i.e. Habitats Directive annex 1 habitats). In the current situation it seems that no HUB biotopes are justifying the sites designation, which is not true. The information is found behind the biotope complexes.

*To provide an alignment between HUB biotopes and biotope complexes is desirable but **not a database issue.** It was also noted that for many countries the HUB biotopes are not justifying the designation of the sites since information according the HUB classification is missing.*

6. The definitions for selection criteria are proposed to be reviewed and linked to EBSA selection criteria. Finland proposed to following first modifications to the selection criteria list:
  - i. add a selection criteria on naturalness
  - ii. add a selection criteria on representativity

- iii. create subcategories for geological & biological values: marine and terrestrial values as subcategories for both.

*At this time it was proposed to **keep the criteria as they are**. However, the full list of criteria should be made easily available for those that visit the MPA database and on the HELCOM website.*

7. Regulated activities

- i. A cross reference list between the regulated activities and pressures within the MPA is needed.
- ii. Entering data into the regulated activities table based on the information in the management plan of a MPA is experienced as difficult. The management plans may contain very detailed information about what is forbidden and what is allowed in the area, and translating this information into the 32 options of the regulated activities list in the MPA database requires interpretations and generalizations. This may create a source of error.
- iii. Consider harmonization of the current activities list to the activities listed in the Natura 2000 sites.
- iv. Guidance is needed on the difference between a regulated and partially regulated activity.

*To make a cross reference list regulated activities and pressures is desirable but **not a database issue**. It was noted that such list will be developed in the HOLAS II project.*

*The remaining issues were considered relevant but before such revisions are made further discussions are needed and it was thus not considered as **feasible to revise in the short-term**. Also, new lists will require updated reporting and it was proposed to **consider revision of lists with next assessment of ecological coherence**.*

8. Pressures

- i. Some pressure categories would need a more detailed description. Finland presented a document on this in STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 ([document 3N-2 Draft guidelines for MPA pressure evaluation](#)).

*State and Conservation is invited to provide comments to the draft guideline for MPA pressure evaluation. Addition of those guideline will be considered in the future.*

### Annex 3. Endorsement of GES boundaries for hazardous substance core indicators

Core indicator		GES boundary	Source	Endorsement type
<b>Metals</b>				
Cd	Offshore assessment units	50 µg/kg ww fish muscle 1000 µg/kg ww mussels	EC 1881/2006	Revision
Pb	Offshore assessment units	300 µg/kg ww fish muscle 1500 µg/kg ww mussels	EC 1881/2006	Revision
<b>Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and dioxin and furan</b>				
Dioxin and dioxin-like compounds		0.0065 TEQ/kg ww fish, crustaceans or molluscs	EQS biota human health	New GES proposal
		<i>Secondary GES boundary:</i> <i>CB-118 24 µg/kg lw fish liver or muscle:</i>	EAC	New secondary GES proposal
Non-dioxin like PCBs;		sum of congeners (28, 52, 101, 138, 153, 180) 75 µg/kg ww fish muscle	EC 1881/2006	New GES proposal
<b>Polyaromatchydrocarbons (PAH) and their metabolites</b>				
benzo(a)pyrene		5 µg/kg ww crustaceans and molluscs	EQS biota human health	New GES proposal
Metabolite: 1-hydroxypyrene		483 ng/g fish bile	Davies and Vethaak, 2012	New GES proposal
<i>Secodary: Fluoranthene;</i>		<i>Secondary GES boundary:</i> <i>30 µg/kg ww crustaceans and molluscs,</i> <i>2000 ug/kg dw sediment</i>	EQS biota human health QS	New secondary GES proposal
<i>Secondary: Anthracene</i>		<i>Secondary GES boundary</i> <i>24 ug/kg dw sediment</i>	QS	New secondary GES proposal
<b>TBT and imposex</b>				
TBT		1.6 µg /kg dw sediment (5% TOC)	QS	New GES proposal
		<i>Secondary GES boundary:</i> <i>0.2 ng/l water</i> <i>12 µg/kg dw mussel</i>	EQS water (AA) EAC	New secondary GES proposal
Imposex		<i>Peringia ulvae:</i> 0.1 VDSI Other species: OSPAR EcoQO class 2 as defined in Table 1 of this document.	Gercken & Sordyl 2009; Magnusson et al 2016 EAC	New GES proposal

## Annex 4. Draft Terms of reference Intersessional expert network on benthic habitat monitoring

The overall duties/aims of the expert network are to:

- A. Develop monitoring and survey methods suitable for different benthic biotope and habitat types, including to:
  - Share information on and summarize existing and planned national benthic habitat monitoring, methods and programmes
  - Review existing methods and techniques for benthic habitat monitoring for extent and quality of habitats and biotopes
  - Further develop monitoring and survey methods suitable for different habitat types
  - Develop proposal for harmonization of methods and develop joint HELCOM guidelines for methods and monitoring strategies, building on what has been developed in the BALSAM project and other relevant projects.
  - Consider in the development of methods and guidelines the different benthic habitat monitoring needs of e.g. the BSAP, MSFD, HD, MSP and WFD.
  - Strengthen the development of benthic habitat indicators in close cooperation with other HELCOM initiatives.
- B. Act as a platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on benthic communities and habitats being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts;
- C. Update the core indicator reports at regular intervals as decided in HELCOM;
- D. Support timely and quality assured delivery of indicator based assessments of benthic communities and habitats;
- E. Provide expert input to HELCOM work related to benthic communities, habitats and biotopes.

These overall aims provide the framework to guide the work of network on implementation which depends on availability of resources.

### A work plan for 2015-2018

~~To fulfill these duties the expert network will in the period 2015-2018:~~

1. Develop proposal for harmonization of methods and work on developing joint HELCOM guidelines for monitoring of benthic biotopes, based on the work to develop the HELCOM pre-core indicator on the distribution, extent and patterns of benthic biotopes, including to:
  - a. Prepare by STATE & CONSERVATION 4- and 5-2016:**
    - A summary of existing and planned national benthic habitat monitoring, methods, programmes and projects
    - A work plan on how to achieve harmonization of habitat monitoring methods in the Baltic Sea area
    - Review and comparison of monitoring needs for different relevant policies
  - b. Achieve by end of 2016:**
    - An update of the BALSAM catalogue on monitoring and survey methods, by widening the expertise through participation from all Contracting Parties of HELCOM, and with the aim of feeding into the HELCOM Monitoring Manual

2. Support Lead Countries in the further development of HELCOM core and pre-core indicators on benthic communities and habitats, namely,
  - a. in the development of GES-boundaries for the indicators for which the GES-boundaries have not yet been adopted with the aim of adoption by the end of 2016 at the latest,
  - b. review the further development of pre-core indicators according to the prioritizations of STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2015 and GEAR 11-2015.
  - c. coordinate the work plan of the expert network with Lead countries on development of benthic related core, pre core- and candidate indicators harmonized with other HELCOM activities such as HELCOM BalticBOOST and TAPAS project.
3. Support in cooperation with Lead countries and appointed experts the update of the core indicator reports and indicator evaluations on benthic communities and habitats by early 2017 and further update the reports as relevant by early 2018, or as otherwise agreed in the HOLAS II project;

The network will consist of experts nominated by the Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. The network will report to and receive guidance from the State and Conservation Working Group.

The mode of work for the expert network will be mainly via correspondence and online meetings facilitated by the Secretariat, with physical meetings being organized as needed. A Chair for the network will be elected. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspaces dedicated for the aim. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network.

## Annex 4. Contacts and observers of State and Conservation

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