



Document title	Proposed update procedure for the HELCOM Monitoring Manual
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Agenda Item	2MA – Update of HELCOM Monitoring Manual
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Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

The first version of the HELCOM Monitoring Manual was published online and made available as a pdf-download in 2014. Since then the Contracting Parties have been invited to annually propose revisions which have been considered by the State and Conservation Working Group. At STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 it was agreed that updates to the Manual by the Contracting Parties can be considered as needed at each meeting of State and Conservation (Outcome, para 2MA-4).

Proposed revisions by the Contracting Parties have so far mainly concerned updates related to the national monitoring programmes. The Monitoring Manual however contains several general sections that describe e.g. the monitoring programmes, sub-programmes and related assessment requirements.

To complement the review by the Contracting Parties and keep the Monitoring Manual up to date, this document contains a proposal to request relevant HELCOM expert groups and projects to regularly review selected components of the Monitoring Manual.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the proposed review of selected components of the Monitoring Manual by HELCOM expert groups and projects (table 1),
- agree on a suitable timetable for such periodic review, e.g. every second year.

Proposal on distribution of the review task

The HELCOM Monitoring Manual consists of several components which are proposed to be reviewed by different bodies depending on the content.

The Contracting Parties through the State and Conservation Working Group are proposed to review:

1. the '[Introduction](#)' to the Monitoring Manual with exception of section 7, HELCOM Monitoring programmes, which is proposed to be reviewed by relevant expert bodies (see below),

INTRODUCTION	Introduction
<p>1. BACKGROUND</p> <p>Monitoring is a well-established function of the Helsinki Convention. Coordinated monitoring of physical, chemical and biological variables of the open sea of the Baltic Sea has been carried out since 1979.</p> <p>HELCOM monitoring is closely linked to environmental assessments and periodical assessment reports have been published since the 1980s. Since the 2000s the occasional production of reports evolved to regular publications of Baltic Sea thematic and holistic assessments. This development was supported by the first version of the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy in 2005.</p> <p>The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), adopted in 2007, further emphasizes the need to monitor and assess the change in the marine environment and the progress towards the visions, goals and objectives of the BSAP.</p> <p>In 2010, the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting decided to establish, for those HELCOM Contracting Parties being also EU-Member States, the role of HELCOM as the coordinating platform for the regional implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in the Baltic Sea. The Meeting also agreed that a common understanding of Good Environmental Status (GES) should be</p>	<p>CONTENTS</p> <p>1. Background</p> <p>2. Structure of the HELCOM Monitoring system</p> <p>3. Aims of HELCOM monitoring</p> <p>4. Contracting Parties commitments</p> <p>5. HELCOM Working structure in support of regionally coordinated monitoring</p> <p>6. Baltic Sea Action Plan and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive</p> <p>7. HELCOM Monitoring programmes</p>

2. the information related to national monitoring contained in the '[Monitoring concepts table](#)' of each individual sub-programme.

MONITORING CONCEPTS TABLE											
Coordination	Elements Q9a (Q5c)	Parameter Q9a (Q5c)	Method Q9c, Q9d	QA/QC Q9e, 9f	Frequency Q9h, 9i	Spatial resolution Q9g, 9i	Link to HELCOM core indicators	Link to MSFD GES characteristics Q5b	Spatial scope Q4i	Monitoring started Q4h	CPs monitoring
National	White-tailed eagle	Population size (abundance)	Population abundance and offspring	National	Yearly	Identified territories	White-tailed eagle productivity	1.2.1 Population abundance and/or biomass	Coastal Waters	1972	FI, DE, PL, DK, RU, EE
National	Barnacle goose	Population size (abundance)	Population abundance and offspring	National	Yearly	Selected coastal areas	Abundance of waterbirds in the breeding season	1.2.1 Population abundance and/or biomass	Territorial Waters	1989	FI

Expert bodies are proposed to review (for details see Table 1):

1. general text on '[Monitoring Programmes](#)' included in section 7 of the introduction of the Monitoring Manual,

[7. HELCOM MONITORING PROGRAMMES \(Q4D,4F\)](#)

[Biodiversity - Birds](#)

The aim of the programme is to provide data to assess the status, abundance, distribution and population structure of waterbirds in the Baltic. Waterbird monitoring can also give information on the state of the sea and of the benthic habitats. The monitoring supports the HELCOM core indicators and corresponding MSFD GES criteria and methodological standards (indicators) for Descriptors 1 and 4.

There are two types of monitoring activities in the Baltic Sea region: monitoring

2. general texts describing 'Programme topics' and sub-programmes ,

Monitoring and assessment strategy	Home / Action areas / Monitoring and assessment / Monitoring Manual / Birds
Monitoring Manual >	BIRDS
Introduction	
Birds >	GENERAL INFORMATION
Mammals	The monitoring of birds covers seabirds in the Baltic, including the abundance and distribution of breeding and wintering birds and marine bird health.
Fish, fisheries and shellfish	At present monitoring of birds is partly coordinated in HELCOM and the information presented in the Monitoring Manual is based on national monitoring programmes.
Hydrography	
Hydrochemistry	
Phytoplankton	
Zooplankton	Sub-programme: Marine breeding birds abundance and distribution
Benthic community species	

3. information included under the following headings of 'sub-programmes': **Regional coordination, Brief description of monitoring, Assessment requirements, References.**

The **Secretariat** is proposed to keep information up-to-date on:

1. information included under the following headings of 'sub-programmes': **Purpose of monitoring, Data providers and access**
2. general information and links included in the 'Monitoring concepts table'.
3. **benthic physical loss and change** (no monitoring; based on reporting of activities)

A **Lead country approach** is proposed to be taken for topics where there are no clear links to established expert bodies. This is the case for programme topics and sub-programmes related to:

- **hydrography and hydrochemistry**
- **contaminants in seafood**

For monitoring of fish, **Fish group** is proposed to review:

- general text on '**Monitoring Programmes**'
- general text on '**Programme topics**'
- information on the '**sub-programmes**' related to fish, with the exception of coastal fish.

Proposal on responsible expert body for specific topics

Note that for the monitoring programmes several expert bodies are at times proposed to review the text, focusing on the parts which are relevant under their area of expertise.

Table 1. Proposed share of responsibilities to regularly review the HELCOM Monitoring Manual.

Proposed responsible WG or expert body	Monitoring programme	Programme topic	Sub-programme(s) ¹
HELCOM <i>ad hoc</i> Seal Expert Group (Seal EG)	Mammals	Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seal abundance - Health status - Harbour porpoise abundance
Expert group on monitoring of radioactive substances in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM MORS EG)	Contaminants	Concentration of contaminants	Relevant components of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contaminants in water - Contaminants in sediment - Contaminants in biota
New expert network under Maritime working group (outcome maritime 16-2016 §3.6)	Non-indigenous species	Non-indigenous species	Non-indigenous species
ICES/OSPAR/HELCOM JWG Bird	Birds	Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine breeding birds abundance and distribution - Marine bird health, - Marine wintering birds abundance and distribution
HELCOM Intersessional Network on benthic habitat monitoring (IN Benthic habitat)	Seabed Habitats	- Seabed habitat distribution and extent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Habitat-forming species and substrates - Seabed habitat physical characteristics
		- Species distribution and abundance (benthic community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hardbottom Species - Softbottom fauna - Softbottom flora
ZEN-ZIIM	Water column habitats	Zooplankton	Species composition, abundance and biomass
PEG	Water column habitats	Phytoplankton	Species composition, abundance and biomass
FISH-PRO II	Fish	Fish, shellfish and fisheries	Coastal fish
Fish group	Fish	Fish, shellfish and fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Migratory fish - Offshore fish - Commercial shellfish - Fisheries bycatch

¹ Refers to the information under the headings: Regional coordination, Brief description of monitoring, Assessment requirements, References.

Proposed responsible WG or expert body	Monitoring programme	Programme topic	Sub-programme(s) ¹
HELCOM Intersessional Network on eutrophication (IN Eutrophication)	Eutrophication	Hydrochemistry	- Nutrients
		Phytoplankton	- Pigments
		Hydrography	- Water column hydrological characteristics (transparency, secchi)
HELCOM expert network on Hazardous Substances (EN Hazardous substances)	Contaminants	Concentration of contaminants	- Contaminants in water - Contaminants in sediment - Contaminants in biota
		Biological effects of contaminants	- Imposex
HELCOM expert network on marine litter (EN Marine Litter)	Litter	Litter	- Macrolitter characteristics and abundance/volume - Microlitter particle abundance and characteristics
HELCOM expert network on underwater noise (EN Noise)	Energy, including underwater noise	Underwater noise	- Ambient noise - Registry of impulsive sounds
RedCore	Eutrophication	Inputs	- Nutrient inputs from atmosphere - Nutrient inputs from landbased sources - Nutrient inputs from seabased sources
	Contaminants		- Contaminant inputs from atmosphere - Contaminant inputs from landbased sources
IWGAS	Contaminants	Inputs	Acute pollution
Lead country	Water column habitats Hydrographic changes	Hydrography	- Water column hydrological characteristics (except transparency, secchi) - Water column physical characteristics - Ice
		Hydrochemistry	- Water column chemical characteristics
Lead Country	Contaminants in seafood	Contaminants in seafood	Contaminants in seafood
Secretariat	Seabed habitats	Benthic physical loss and change	