



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature
Conservation

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Background

HELCOM HOD 50-2016 (paragraph 4.49) recognized the need to reach clarity regarding the use of indicators in HOLAS II and urged the Contracting Parties with study reservations to clarify their position as soon as possible.

This document provides a summary of the core indicators with remaining study reservations, the underlying issues, and the steps taken to resolve the remaining issues.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the remaining study reservations.

Contracting Parties with remaining study reservations are invited to clarify their position.

Core indicators with remaining study reservations

Table 1 lists the HELCOM core indicators with study reservations. The table provides information on when the study reservation was placed, information on underlying issues provided by the countries concerned, and a summary of discussions held to resolve the issues at HELCOM meetings or as intersessional discussions.

Germany has, in addition to the specific study reservations, a general study reservation (State and Conservation 2-2015). Only the specific German study reservations are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Adopted core indicators with remaining study reservations on GES-boundaries indicated

Core indicator	Study reservation
Theme: Hazardous substances	
Metals	<p>Poland: use of proposed values GES boundaries for Cd and Pb in offshore assessment units (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48)</p> <p>Sweden: use of proposed values GES boundaries for Cd and Pb in offshore assessment units under MSFD descriptor 8 (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48)</p> <p>Denmark: use of proposed values for GES-boundary for Pb in fish muscles in offshore assessment units. 'Study reservation on GES boundaries that are not environmental quality standards derived from EU directives or nationally agreed environmental quality standards' (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48).</p> <p>The countries with remaining study reservations discussed the underlying issues at the fourth meeting of the Expert Network on hazardous substances and developed a new proposal for the GES boundary that would resolve the technical issues (agenda item 2 and Annex 2 of the outcome). See proposal in meeting document 4J-9.</p>
Polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and their metabolites	<p>Denmark on the GES boundary on metabolite 1-hydroxypyrene and secondary GES boundary on anthracene. 'Study reservation on GES boundaries that are not environmental quality standards derived from EU directives or nationally agreed environmental quality standards' (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48).</p>
Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) and dioxins and furans	<p>Denmark on the GES boundary for non-dioxin like PCBs and secondary GES boundary for CB-118. 'Study reservation on GES boundaries that are not environmental quality standards derived from EU directives or nationally agreed environmental quality standards' (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48).</p>
TBT and imposex	<p>Denmark on TBT in sediment, TBT in mussels (secondary). 'Study reservation on GES boundaries that are not environmental quality standards derived from EU directives or nationally agreed environmental quality standards' (HOD 50-2016, para 4-48).</p>
White-tailed eagle productivity	<p>Denmark: Danish expert review 2015 e.g: Swedish reference data to set the limit values is appropriate, not appropriate that that all limit values must be observed, density dependence may not be accounted for, use population modelling and/or compare with populations in other parts of the world to set limit values that are useful in a longer perspective (HOD 49-2015, doc 4.33).</p> <p>Core indicator lead country Sweden and Denmark have worked intersessionally to clarify remaining issues through an online meeting 3 October 2016. At the online meeting the two main issues on density dependent effects in relation to the GES boundary in the long-term perspective and the relevance of applying all three parameters in the analysis from a bio-effect point of view were clarified. The online meeting concluded that the current indicator proposals are considered correct and acceptable from a technical point of view.</p>
Oil-spills affecting the marine environment	<p>Germany: Not specified (HOD 49-2015, para 4-93).</p>

Core indicator	Study reservation
Theme: NIS	
Trends in arrival of new non-indigenous species	<p>Denmark: Danish expert review 2015 listed concrete issues including a request to accommodate the indicator to Danish waters (HOD 49-2015, doc 4.33). Intersessional discussions between Danish expert and indicator lead country Finland concluded on the following: The GES boundary definition is well suited to assess the criteria as it is phrased in the draft of the revised EU Commission Decision on GES. Currently the section of the boundary stating 'no new introductions' is not considered to be problematic by Denmark. Until the final vote on the revision of the EU commission decision on GES is completed, Denmark is not able to conclude on the issue. Denmark considers the section stating that introductions are 'minimized' problematic when the Ballast Water Management Convention is not in force, a wording of 'is sought to be minimized' would be preferable by Denmark. It is noted that the BWMC has recently been ratified, and will be in force 8.9.2017. Denmark is of the view that referring to the aim of 'decrease in introductions' in the GES boundary as a trend could be considered, however the approach is not optimal as the reliability of a trend assessment is heavily dependent on the monitoring effort. Denmark has further submitted a national report with NIS trend assessment data until 2013 and impacts of NIS in specified regions that can be used when developing the indicator results to be submitted to HOLAS II.</p>
Theme: Biodiversity and food-web	
Distribution of Baltic seals	<p>Germany: inconsistent definition of GES and assessment results (SEAL EG 9-2016, paras 6.8-6.10), not in positions to lift study reservation at State and Conservation 4-2016. SEAL EG 10-2016 noted that major concerns by Germany on the indicator have now been settled (para 8.6). Denmark: not in positions to lift study reservation at State and Conservation 4-2016. SEAL EG 10-2016 reviewed the issues behind the Danish study reservation and invited Danish experts to verify as soon as possible if the current version of the indicator report is satisfying (para 8.3 and 8.4).</p>
Population trends and abundance of seals	<p>Denmark: request to adjust the indicator to Danish waters (State and Conservation 4-2016). SEAL EG 10-2016 concluded that with the agreement to set the 10 000 LRL for the harbour seal metapopulation (two subpopulations combined) the issue is resolved (para 8.8).</p>
Nutritional status of marine mammals	<p>Germany: blubber thickness is not considered as suitable indicator for health of marine mammals (SEAL EG 9, State and Conservation 4-2016). SEAL EG 10-2016 concluded the indicator on nutritional and reproductive status of mammals are indicators for the demography of seals and a complementary indicator to study trends in occurrence of pathological changes is required to capture other important changes in the environment and causes behind changes in the current indicator on nutritional status (para 8.14). The Meeting supported the further development of new health indicators (8.13). Denmark: request to adjust the indicator to Danish waters (State and Conservation 4-2016). SEAL EG 10-2016 noted that the issues behind the Danish study reservation have been acknowledged by the Lead Country (para 8.15).</p>
Reproductive status of marine mammals	<p>Germany: reproductive status is not considered as suitable indicator for health of marine mammals (SEAL EG 9, State and Conservation 4). SEAL EG 10-2016: see above for Nutritional status of marine mammals. Denmark: request to adjust the indicator to Danish waters (State and Conservation 4-2016). SEAL EG 10-2016: see above for Nutritional status of marine mammals.</p>

Core indicator	Study reservation
Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear	Denmark: the indicator 'Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear' is less relevant compared to, e.g. the indicators on population condition of mammals (HOD 50-2016, 4.44)
Abundance of coastal fish key functional groups	Germany and Denmark: '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' (State and Conservation 4-2016, para 4J-37).
Abundance of key coastal fish species	Germany and Denmark: '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' (State and Conservation 4-2016, para 4J-37).
Abundance of salmon spawners and smolt	Denmark: Not specified (HOD 48-2015, para 3.63)
Abundance of seatrout spawners and parr	Denmark: Not specified (HOD 48-2015, para 3.63)
Zooplankton mean size and total stock	Denmark: Not specified (HOD 48-2015, para 3.63), noted that Denmark will look into the possibility to participate in the 2016 ZEN-ZIIM meeting and provide data for the GES boundary calculation (State and Conservation 4-2016, para 4J.26).