



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
5-2016

Tallinn, Estonia, 7-11 November, 2016

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<b>Document title</b>	Remaining HELCOM actions under State and Conservation
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<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

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### Background

A follow-up system for HELCOM agreements – [the HELCOM Explorer](#) - was published in May 2016 based on criteria reviewed by Working Groups in 2015 and reporting by Contracting Parties on the implementation of national actions. HOD 50-2016 requested HELCOM Working Groups to consider and make plans for the implementation of the actions not yet accomplished under their area of responsibility (para 4.2).

The attachment to this document (6J-1 Att.1) lists the remaining joint regional actions to be implemented under the State and Conservation Working Group. This document contains background information and a summary of remaining actions.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- use the information to plan for the implementation of remaining joint actions under the Working Group.

## Background

The development of a system to follow up HELCOM agreements under the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), Ministerial Declarations and Recommendations was initiated in 2014 (GEAR 14-2016) and published on a web-based platform in May 2016 where actions can be viewed, sorted, and downloaded - [the HELCOM Explorer](#).

The follow-up system is based on the assessment of accomplishment of:

- joint regional actions, implemented by HELCOM Working Groups, Experts Groups and projects,
- national actions, implemented by the Contracting Parties.

The assessment of accomplished joint regional actions agreed under the BSAP and Ministerial Declarations is up to date (June 2016). Reporting on national actions by the Contracting Parties is nearly completed.

For the reporting of national actions HOD 49-2015 agreed on a step-wise approach firstly focusing on the commitments under the BSAP and Ministerial Declarations (para 4.102). The current follow-up therefore only includes a limited number of actions from HELCOM Recommendations, i.e. those that were specifically cited in the BSAP or those included under Recommendation 35-1 which was assessed as part of the HELCOM Ecological coherence assessment of the marine protected areas network in the Baltic Sea (BSEP 148).

Aggregated results of the current accomplishment of actions were presented at HOD 50-2016 ([document 4-25](#)).

## State and Conservation Working Group

Under the State and Conservation Working Group, there are 31 joint actions from BSAP and Ministerial Declaration. Nine of those were considered as accomplished already in the preparation of the Ministerial Meeting in 2013 and seven additional actions have been accomplished since then. Thus, 15 agreed joint actions remains to be accomplished. Regarding Recommendation 35-1, seven paragraphs of those that are follow-up through the same type of system (i.e. those recommends paragraph with clear targets and/or deadlines) are still to be accomplished.

## Remaining actions

The attachment to this document contains information on the joint actions still to be completed by the State and Conservation Working Group.

The remaining joint actions are sorted as:

- Not accomplished; indicating that no activity has been taken to carry out the action
- Partly accomplished; indicating that there are ongoing HELCOM activities related to the action
- Future target year; i.e. actions that are not yet scheduled for being accomplished but for which plans should be made for their implementation
- Recommendation 35/1 – indicating actions not or partly accomplished of the recommends paragraphs that have clear targets. In the case of this recommendation, national actions are also included to get a complete overview.

Information on accomplished joint actions under the State and Conservation Working Group are also included for information.

Note that some actions are indicated as related to several Working or Expert Groups. In this case the main responsible group is listed first.

Note that the excel file includes a column labelled “Comment on follow-up” which may support the discussion on how to implement the action.

For information on the implementation of actions implemented nationally linked to biodiversity and nature conservation or monitoring or assessment; please see [the HELCOM Explorer](#).

### Not accomplished

Currently there are three joint actions assessed as not accomplished that are linked to the State and Conservation WG. These actions are related to socioeconomic and biological impacts of marine litter, monitoring of by-catch, and to reach Favourable Conservation Status for harbour porpoise including by addressing by-catch. All actions are indicated as related to several Working Groups and main responsibility is not under State and Conservation.

### Partly accomplished

There are nine actions assessed as partly accomplished. Seven of those are anticipated to be accomplished by mid-2018 at latest through ongoing activities under the HOLAS II project, the review and revision of monitoring guidelines, or the ongoing work to develop a Recommendation on the conservation of threatened biotopes, habitats, and biotopes complexes.

One of the two remaining actions is related to the protection of birds where the Meeting may wish to discuss if existing HELCOM agreements (e.g. Recommendation 34/1) are sufficient to consider this action as accomplished or not. The other remaining action is related to setting up a reporting system for by-catch where the Fish Group is indicated as main responsible.

### Future target year

There are three actions with future target years.

To establish a set of indicators and technical standards for monitoring ambient and impulsive underwater noise in the Baltic Sea should be accomplished by 2016 according to the existing agreement. Work is ongoing to develop indicators and a HELCOM/OSPAR registry for impulsive underwater noise has been established. Technical standards for monitoring of ambient noise has been proposed by the Life+ BIAS project and was presented to STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 (para 2MA-18) but has not yet been agreed on as HELCOM monitoring guidelines pending a decision on a regional monitoring programme for underwater noise (STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 (para 6J-6). The work is thus well under way while decisions are still lacking as to the technical standards.

The other two actions with future targets ear are related to taking measures to halt the loss and ensure recovery of red listed marine habitats and biotopes by 2020. While measures are mainly to be taken on a national level, the actions were intended to be follow-up through the next HELCOM Red List assessment that was planned to be carried out by 2019. STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 however agreed to postpone the Red List assessment to a year yet to be agreed upon. Thus, it will not likely be possible to assess the accomplishment of this action by 2020.