



Document title	Follow up of the seminar for marine biogeographical regions
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Background

On 5-7 May 2015 a kick-off seminar for marine biogeographical regions took place in Saint Malo, France. So far it was the first seminar dedicated to the marine waters during the so called biogeographical process, initiated and coordinated by the European Commission. The aim of the process is to exchange experiences and best practices among Member States concerned, identify common objectives and priorities, and enhance cooperation and synergies in managing Natura 2000 sites¹.

The event focused on three key themes:

- setting conservation objectives;
- reconciling Natura 2000 objectives and marine activities / conservation management planning;
- regional integration of Natura 2000 issues.

It is vital to note that the seminar emphasized the importance of Regional Seas Conventions that provide a forum for discussion, assist regional decision making (for example by sharing databases) and can put positive pressure on contracting parties. An official report on the seminar is available².

During the STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 meeting Sweden gave a presentation on the outcome of the seminar. 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.

According to the conclusion 2N.28 of the STATE & CONSERVATION 4-2016 meeting, Poland offered to present a list of actions stemming from the biogeographic seminar during STATE & CONSERVATION 5-2016. In the document you may find the summary of the seminar's conclusions with those actions highlighted (bold font) that could be potentially taken up by the State and Conservation working group in reference to the Baltic Sea.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to discuss actions to be potentially taken up by the State and Conservation group as a HELCOM contribution to the seminar's conclusions.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/seminars_en.htm

² ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/documents/marine_biogeographical_kick_off_seminar_report_en.pdf

Follow up of the seminar for marine biogeographical regions

The table below contains actions and action types listed as a summary result of the Saint Malo seminar. Next to each action a HELCOM relevance assessment and – where necessary – a comment on HELCOM work or potential work were added. The two latter columns are a subject for discussion during the State & Conservation meeting. The actions to be potentially taken up by HELCOM have been bolded.

HELCOM relevance:

- + HELCOM already works with the subject
- ! Subject worth to be discussed
- Not particularly appropriate for HELCOM
- ? Uncertain status

Action type	Action	HELCOM relevance	Comments
Guidelines	Additional guidance on setting conservation objectives in the marine Natura 2000 network, including case studies	-	
	Guidelines on setting and managing objectives for recovery of marine habitats and species	!	Potential HELCOM work on Conservation plans and measures of threatened species and biotopes
	Develop common language and further elaboration of marine habitats in the Interpretation Manual of EU habitats	-	
	Guidance to standardise methodologies for data collection for different species/habitats and appropriate scale for monitoring	+	Ongoing HELCOM work on monitoring of species and habitats
	Use of Species Action Plans in defining conservation objectives	!	Potential HELCOM work on Conservation plans and measures of threatened species and biotopes
	Habitats/species sensitivity to non-fishing pressures	+	The issue is addressed in the HELCOM coordinated EU co-financed BalticBOOST project that is making a catalogue of impacts of non-fishery pressures on benthic habitats based on literature review.
Workshops/ seminars	Workshops on setting objectives and indicators for specific marine habitats	+	HELCOM Intersessional Network on benthic habitat monitoring
	Biogeographical workshops on marine habitats/species i.e. regional	+	As above HELCOM State & Conservation Group, Seal Group and FISH Group meetings
	Workshops on specific marine habitats/species across biogeographical regions	+	As above
	Workshops to develop common monitoring tools/methodologies (for particular species/taxa, to support adaptive management)	+	HELCOM State & Conservation Group meetings
	Seminar on methodologies for identifying threats and pressures and tools to apply them	+	The Baltic Sea Impact Index is developed under the HELCOM coordinated and EU co-financed TAPAS project. Through the BSII the cumulative impacts on ecosystem components are assessed. The HELCOM indicator on Cumulative impacts on benthic habitats is also relevant. Ongoing with S&C as main subsidiary body.
	Workshop on non-fishing sectors and their management in marine Natura 2000 (e.g. to identify knowledge gaps/research priorities/ share existing data)	+	HELCOM State & Conservation Group meetings, HELCOM Pressure Group meetings, HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Group meetings
	Seminar to elaborate on ecosystem services approach and how it can support marine Natura 2000	-	

	Seminar on sustainability of management and financing of marine Natura 2000 sites and projects	-	
	Seminar on approaches to delivering Natura 2000 management at different levels of governance	-	
Training	For site managers on EU funding opportunities	!	Carrying out a training on different funding opportunities (LIFE, EMFF, BONUS etc.) for MPA managers
Information sharing / collaborative work	Definition of pressures and mapping of these pressures	+	HELCOM work on e.g. fisheries' impact, marine litter, underwater noise, response to spills etc. Under the TAPAS project and linked to the 2nd HELCOM Holistic assessment; data sets and spatial information on pressures and human activities will be available in early 2017 and will be accessible at the Data and Map Service once verified by Contracting Parties.
	Encourage/support Regional Seas Conventions to collaborate (e.g. common indicators)	+	Ongoing HELCOM work
	On approaches to identifying hotspots and what makes them important for highly mobile species	+	HELCOM Biodiversity Map service, includes information on seals and harbour porpoises SAMBAH project Work of HELCOM Seal group HELCOM work on important areas for seabirds
	Share data and information on highly mobile species across their range	+	As above
	Cross-refer to discussions/clarifications on similar issues being covered by terrestrial colleagues	+	
	Technology and its application to support management of marine Natura 2000	-	
	Develop inventory of fisheries management measures used to implement marine Natura 2000	!	The HELCOM Fish Group has on its work plan the tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of guidelines on sustainable fisheries practices in Marine Protected Areas • Testing and use of the tools when implementing sustainable fishing methods and practices into MPA management plans An inventory of fisheries measures used to safeguard good status of protected habitats and species in managed MPAs could be carried out as guidelines with good practices for others
	Explore scope for open access data bases, data harmonisation and data sharing platforms	+	HELCOM Biodiversity Map service, HELCOM Marine Protected Areas database
	Funding opportunities e.g. links to PAF, EMFF	?	
	Awareness raising / use of Natura 2000 communication platform	Identify shared habitat types of concern	+
Reports on harmonised marine habitats information		!	HELCOM Red List of biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes (BSEP 138, 2013) Technical Report on the HELCOM Underwater Biotope and habitat classification (BSEP 139, 2013),

			There is still a need to develop a conversion key between HUB classification and EUNIS habitats.
	Awareness campaign on the value of marine Natura 2000	-	Indirectly – highlighting by HELCOM the value of MPAs
	Develop section of Natura 2000 platform to share experiences and information from all stakeholders	-	
	Highlight success stories on fisheries management measures	-	
	Identify "champions" at site or regional level to encourage stakeholder involvement in Natura 2000	-	
Improving funding opportunities	New financing initiative to research marine pressures/impacts/solutions as well as to improve information on the status and distribution of marine habitats and species	+	HELCOM work on e.g. fisheries' impact, marine litter, underwater noise, response to spills etc. HELCOM Biodiversity Map service
	Improved funding for cross-border regional co-operation	+	Role of HELCOM as a regional platform for cooperation, including implementation of numerous transboundary projects
	Look for opportunities to adapt eligibility criteria (incl. LIFE) to better match the needs of marine ecosystems actions	-	
	Explore how the characteristics and issues of working on marine projects can be better reflected in the application and assessment process for EU funding.	-	