



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature  
Conservation

STATE & CONSERVATION  
3-2015

Helsinki, Finland, 9-13 November, 2015

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<b>Document title</b>	Provisional Annotated Agenda
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<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	1 – Adoption of the Agenda
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### Background

The Third Meeting of the Working Group on the State of the Environment and Nature Conservation, (STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015) will be convened on 9–13 November 2015 according to the decision by HELCOM HOD 48-2015 (paragraph 3.68). The Meeting will be held at the premises of the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) (Mechelininkatu 34 A, FI-00260) in Helsinki, Finland.

The Meeting will start on **Monday 9 November 2015 at 13.00** and is expected to end on **Friday 13 November 2015 at 13.00**. Monday and Tuesday until mid-day are planned for issues related to monitoring and assessment (Agenda Items 1MA-5MA), Tuesday from 13:00 to Wednesday will be dedicated to joint themes (Agenda Item 1J-7J), and Thursday morning until the end of the meeting on Friday will be dedicated to nature conservation and biodiversity related issues (Agenda Items 1N-6N).

Meeting documents will be submitted by the Secretariat to the [Document Library](#) of the [STATE&CONSERVATION 3-2015 Meeting Site](#) via the [HELCOM Meeting Portal](#). The Secretariat has prepared a document template and recommends using the template when submitting documents to the Secretariat. The Secretariat kindly requests the Contracting Parties and Observers to observe the deadlines for submission of documents to a HELCOM meeting. The basic documents and documents requiring action or a decision to the Meeting should be submitted in electronic form to Professional Secretary, Ms. Ulla Li Zweifel ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)) **by 16 October 2015**. Bulky documents should include abstracts embodying the essence of the proposals and action requested from the meeting. Documents containing comments to the basic documents as well as information documents should be provided to the Secretariat by **2 November 2015**.

Please register for the Meeting by answering the [Participation Survey](#) in the HELCOM Meeting Portal **by 2 November 2015 the latest**. Instructions for the use of the new Meeting Portal are available on the [HELCOM Website](#).

## Monitoring and assessment

Agenda Item 1MA                      Adoption of Agenda: Monitoring and assessment

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, Items 1MA-5MA, as contained in documents 1-1 and 1-2.

Agenda Item 2MA                      Revision of HELCOM monitoring

### *Update of HELCOM Monitoring Manual*

The HELCOM Monitoring Manual will be updated annually and Contracting Parties were invited to propose and agree on changes at State and Conservation 2-2015. Contracting Parties were furthermore requested to submit information on monitoring of contaminants.

Contracting Parties that have not yet done so are invited to submit information on monitoring of contaminants using the [template](#) (State and Conservation 2-2015 meeting document 2MA-3-Att.1) to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **12 October 2015**.

The Meeting is invited to agree on including the new information on monitoring of contaminants to the Monitoring Manual.

### *Update of HELCOM Assessment units*

State and Conservation 2-2015 agreed to modify HELCOM Assessment unit divisions of Åland Sea and Western Gotland Basin based on input provided by Finland and Sweden. In addition to the earlier agreed modification, the Secretariat together with Sweden and Denmark is currently preparing a slight modification of division of assessment units in The Sound and Great Belt to be harmonized with MSFD region border between Baltic Sea and North-East Atlantic Ocean.

The Meeting is invited to accept the modifications to the HELCOM assessment units.

### *Review and update of HELCOM monitoring guidelines*

The review of the COMBINE manual and need to develop new monitoring guidelines for topics lacking guidelines was discussed at the second meeting of State and Conservation. A Lead Country approach was agreed for the review and development of specific HELCOM monitoring guidelines. The role of Lead Countries is to review the existing guidelines, taking into account the information on [current use of monitoring guidelines provided by Contracting Parties through the previous reporting request](#), and to present a proposal on how the guidelines could be updated to State and Conservation 3-2015. The Lead and assisting countries for specific HELCOM monitoring guidelines are outlined in document 2MA-1.

The Lead Countries for monitoring guidelines are invited to present the outcome of the review and propose how the guidelines can be updated and provide this information to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)) by **19 October 2015**.

Estonia is invited to review and propose a general text and associated references to substitute Part B Annex B1-B5 of the current COMBINE manual.

The Secretariat has prepared a proposed template for revised HELCOM monitoring guidelines (document 2MA-2).

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on the further work on revising existing monitoring guidelines with a view of including updated monitoring guidelines in the HELCOM Monitoring Manual by mid-2016.

### Agenda Item 3MA Environmental monitoring and data

#### *Development of data arrangements for HELCOM monitoring data and assessments*

State and Conservation 2-2015 agreed that Contracting Parties will regularly inform State and Conservation meetings on possible issues encountered with the COMBINE reporting format and procedure in order to facilitate the reporting process. Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Secretariat ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)) on any such issues by **12 October**.

ICES is invited to inform on the status of national reporting to the COMBINE database and on the labelling of data in COMBINE (cf. outcome of State and Conservation 2-2014, paragraph 3MA.11).

ICES and Russia are invited to inform on the status of including Russian data in the COMBINE database (cf. outcome of State and Conservation 2-2014, paragraph 3MA.8).

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

#### *Operationalization of HELCOM eutrophication assessments (EUTRO-OPER)*

The Meeting is invited to consider the progress with the project “Making HELCOM Eutrophication Assessments Operational (EUTRO-OPER)” (document to be submitted later).

#### *Assessing the state of contaminants with pharmaceuticals*

The second meeting of State and Conservation agreed to carry out an assessment of pharmaceuticals in collaboration with the Pressure Working Group and the Coordinator of EUSBSR PA Hazards from Sweden. A template for data submission has been sent to Contracting Parties with a request to report available data to the Secretariat ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)) by **25 September 2015**.

The Secretariat will inform on the status for finalizing the initial analysis of pharmaceuticals (document to be submitted at a later stage). The Meeting is invited to agree on how to finalize the HELCOM assessment of pharmaceuticals by February 2016.

#### *BalticBOOST*

HELCOM has received funding from the European Commission for the “BalticBOOST” project. The project aims to improve regional coherence in the implementation of marine policies to reach Good Environmental Status of the Baltic Sea. The project will last for 15 months and will start in autumn 2015. It will among other things contribute to the HOLAS II project through the development of assessment tools for biodiversity and hazardous substances.

The Meeting will be informed on the plans for the BalticBOOST project.

## Joint session

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

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, Items 1J-7J, as contained in documents 1-1 and 1-2.

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

The Secretariat will inform the Meeting of the outcome of HOD 48-2015, and other relevant recent meeting outcomes (document to be submitted later).

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

### *Recommendations*

Recommendation 12/1 'Co-operation and coordination of research vessel based monitoring in off-shore areas and procedures for granting permits for monitoring and research activities' was discussed at HOD 48-2015 and it was agreed that paragraph d), related to granting of permits, should be further elaborated and discussed at State and Conservation 3-2015 (document to be submitted later) with the view of adopting the Recommendation at HELCOM 37-2016.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on the wording of paragraph d) of Recommendation 12/1.

State and Conservation 2-2015 agreed to revisit the draft Recommendation on using autonomous devices for monitoring at the next meeting (STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015) and Contracting Parties were requested to consult their national authorities on the draft Recommendation and inform the Secretariat. Contracting Parties are invited to inform the Secretariat ([ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi](mailto:ullali.zweifel@helcom.fi)) on the outcome of the consultations **by 9 October 2015**.

State and Conservation 2-2015 scrutinized the valid Recommendations and Lead Countries under the Working Group and agreed on their follow-up and review. Lead countries and tasks for each Recommendation are outlined in document 3J-1.

Contracting Parties are invited to present the outcomes of reviewing the Recommendations, proposing next steps and considering if the proposed format for follow-up of Recommendations (Annex 3 of meeting document 5J-1 of STATE & CONSERVATION 2-2015) can be used, as agreed by State and Conservation 2-2015 (Paragraphs 5J.13-5J.30 in the Outcome).

The Secretariat will present the outcome of the review of Recommendation 29/2 'Marine litter within the Baltic Sea region'.

The Meeting is invited to consider the reports by Contracting Parties, identify which Recommendations are still valid, when they should be reported next time and in what format.

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

The Roadmap on HELCOM activities includes an activity to carry out a survey among HELCOM groups and projects on knowledge and research needs for the implementation of marine policies and achieving good environmental status (activity 32). Updated guidance for the survey, based on comments from Contracting Parties, will be circulated to State and Conservation contacts with a request to submit their contribution before State and Conservation 3-2015. A compilation of input from Contracting Parties will be presented to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to discuss the compilation of knowledge and research needs and agree on any needs for further activity to finalize the input from the State and Conservation Group.

## Agenda Item 4J HELCOM indicators and assessments

### *Continued development of HELCOM indicators*

The CORESET II project ended in June 2015. HELCOM HOD 48-2015 agreed on indicators and GES boundaries and further development of pre-core and candidate indicators as proposed by State and Conservation 2-2015, pending study reservations from Denmark and Germany (outcome of HOD 48-2015, para 3.63). HOD 48 also agreed that the further development of indicators will be based on a Lead Country approach with appointed national experts and that the development should be taken forward using HELCOM expert groups, projects and networks as a platform for the development of the indicators.

The Meeting will be informed on the ongoing work to develop HELCOM indicators (document to be submitted at a later stage).

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

The Meeting is invited to consider the progress HOLAS II project to produce a 2<sup>nd</sup> Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (document to be submitted later).

Agenda Item 5J                      Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updates to the existing HELCOM Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets (document to be submitted later). The Meeting is also invited to consider and approve the publication of possible new indicators.

Agenda Item 6J                      Mapping and monitoring of landscapes and biotopes

*Mapping of landscape and biotopes*

Development of detailed landscape maps is among the actions for State and Conservation (Point 9.2 in the Work Plan). State and Conservation 2-2015 requested Contracting Parties to inform on relevant metadata and to propose a set of key species and biotopes for the production of maps to support HELCOM activities. The information received will be compiled and presented to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree for which species and biotopes HELCOM should aim to develop Baltic-wide maps, primarily with the view to provide distribution layers to the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> holistic assessment of the Baltic Sea. The Meeting is further invited to agree on the submitting of relevant data and map layers by the end of the year 2015, based on a request to be formulated by the Secretariat.

*Monitoring of benthic habitats*

State and Conservation 2-2015 agreed that the intersessional network on benthic habitat monitoring will provide definition for the terms 'landscape' and 'detailed landscape mapping' and proposed that the network would develop monitoring guidelines for the use of the proposed methods for soft sediment benthic habitats, developed by the BALSAM project, taking into account the development of HELCOM core indicators.

The Chair of the intersessional network on benthic habitat monitoring is invited to present the definitions for the above mentioned terms and recent activities of the network, including possible plans for developing the monitoring guidelines.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree on the further work of the expert network.

Agenda Item 7J                      Any other business

Germany and Poland are invited to inform the Meeting on the ongoing activities on the reintroduction of sturgeon.

The Meeting is invited to consider and update the list of contacts and observers of the Working Group (document 7J-1).

Contracting Parties are invited to consider the possibility to host future meetings of the Working Group.

The Meeting is invited to discuss any other business related to the mandate of the Working Group.

Agenda Item 5MA and 8J      Outcome of Monitoring and assessment and Joint themes

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by attendants of the respective sessions on Monitoring and Assessment and Joint themes.

## Nature conservation

Agenda Item 1N Adoption of Agenda: Nature Conservation

The Meeting is invited to adopt the Provisional Agenda, Item 1N-6N, as contained in documents 1-1 and 1-2.

Agenda Item 2N Development of HELCOM work on birds

### *Follow-up of HELCOM agreements related to birds*

State and Conservation 2-2015 agreed to use monitoring guidelines, prepared by the bird experts of the EU co-funded BALSAM project Work Package 3: 'Seals and seabirds', as HELCOM guidelines for coordinated monitoring of birds. The guidelines have been amended based on comments by Germany and Sweden (document to be submitted later). Contracting Parties are invited to take note of the amended guidelines.

In 2013 HELCOM 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", Contracting Parties are recommended to e.g. "map migration routes and staging areas (i.e. wintering, feeding, moulting and resting) of birds in the Baltic Sea Area and to enhance research and monitoring in order to improve the understanding of the impacts of wind energy facilities, both during and after construction, on birds in the Baltic Sea". Sweden has offered to take the Lead on this activity and to update the HELCOM layers on important bird areas and wintering grounds for birds and to organize a request to Contracting Parties for the submission of data for mapping migration routes and staging areas.

Sweden is invited to inform the Meeting on the time-plan for the activity and intended request for data.

Agenda Item 3N HELCOM network of coastal and marine Baltic Sea Protected Areas

### *New database for HELCOM MPAs<sup>1</sup>*

The modernized HELCOM database for Baltic Sea Protected Areas (HELCOM MPAs<sup>1</sup>) was finalized in early July 2015 and the deadline for Contracting Parties for all national data update is **by 30 September 2015**. The database will be launched for the public by the end of October 2015.

The list of contacts of HELCOM MPA Task Group as of September 2015 is contained in document 3N-1.

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updated list of contacts of the MPA Task Group and agree on a future review procedure for the structure of the modernized database.

### *Assessment of ecological coherence of the Baltic Sea MPA network*

The assessment of ecological coherence of the HELCOM MPA<sup>1</sup> network and other MPAs in the Baltic Sea will be carried out based on data to be extracted from the new database. The HELCOM MPA Task Group will be engaged in the assessment. A detailed document on the methods and contents of the ecological coherence assessment will be submitted to the Meeting at a later stage.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and provide guidance on the assessment of ecological coherence of the Baltic Sea MPA network.

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

Scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs) in need of protection in open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats have been developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD COP 12 (2014) invited Parties and other Governments to apply these criteria<sup>2</sup> in marine areas within national jurisdictions to describe areas meeting the EBSA criteria. Several regional workshops have been convened or held in partnership with Regional Seas Conventions, e.g. OSPAR and the Barcelona

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<sup>1</sup> Former HELCOM BSPAs

<sup>2</sup> or other relevant compatible and complementary nationally or intergovernmentally agreed scientific criteria for EBSAs

convention/UNEP-MPA to address EBSAs at a regional level. The ongoing process will be presented to the Meeting.

The Meeting is invited to consider a tentative role of HELCOM for proposing EBSAs in the Baltic Sea region and for how work under such role could be taken forward.

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

*Draft Recommendation on species*

HELCOM 36-2015 adopted the draft Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea species categorized as threatened according to the HELCOM Red List pending a study reservation by Denmark. HOD 48-2015 took note of the concerns of the remaining Danish study reservation and was of the view that these concerns should be possible to resolve and welcomed the offer by Germany to seek a solution together with Denmark and other interested countries and that an amended version of the Recommendation should be presented to STATE & CONSERVATION 3-2015 with the view of endorsing it at HOD 49-2015 and adoption at HELCOM 37-2016.

The Meeting is invited to consider the amended version of the Recommendation to be provided at a later stage with the view of proposing its endorsement at HOD 49-2015.

*Upcoming Recommendation on biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes*

The first meeting of State and Conservation agreed to continue the development of a Recommendation on Conservation of Baltic Sea underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes threatened according to the HELCOM Red List at a later stage (paragraph 4.10) and to carry out a number of analyses to support the development and implementation of the Recommendations on both species and biotopes (Annex 2 of the outcome of STATE 1-2014).

The Meeting is invited to agree on how to continue the development of the Recommendation on conservation of underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes.

*Analysis to support the implementation of the Recommendations*

The Meeting is further invited to consider the analyses to support the development and implementation of the Recommendations and revise the timetable of the analyses (Annex 2 of STATE 1-2014 outcome, document 4N-1).

Contracting Parties are invited to submit information for which species/biotopes conservation plans (national/regional) already exist and to specify measures that are indicated in those plans, by **12 October 2015** by filling in the template in document [4N-2-Att.1](#) and sending it to the Secretariat ([petra.kaaria@helcom.fi](mailto:petra.kaaria@helcom.fi)).

The Meeting is invited to discuss and agree for which species/biotopes it is suitable to develop joint conservation plans (e.g. involving two or more Contracting Parties, or the whole region).

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

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

The 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Declaration agreed to “develop by 2015 regional targets for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity<sup>3</sup>, including the completion and further development of a set of HELCOM core indicators for biodiversity and their monitoring”. State & Conservation 1-2014 agreed to make a plan for this work at the second meeting of the Working Group (Annex 4, Work plan, task 3.3).

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<sup>3</sup> UN Convention of Biological Diversity

Based on a proposal to be provided by the Secretariat and Finland, the Meeting is invited to consider if the ongoing work to develop HELCOM core indicators is sufficient to cater for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and otherwise plan for how regional targets can be developed.

*Marine ecosystem services*

State and Conservation 2-2015 took note of a proposal from Finland on integrating the ecosystem service concept in assessing the state and conservation of the marine environment e.g. when setting up goals for conservation of marine biodiversity and in the implementation of marine and maritime strategies. The Meeting agreed to address the issue at the third meeting of the Working Group.

Finland is invited to present a further developed proposal for how the State and Conservation Working Group could pursue the integration of marine ecosystem services in its work.

The Meeting is invited to discuss and consider the proposal.

Agenda Item 6N                      Outcome: Nature conservation

A draft Outcome with main decisions will be prepared by the Secretariat for consideration and approval by the attendants of the Nature Conservation session of the Meeting.