

## Terms of Reference for HELCOM Expert Network on Marine Litter for 2019-2021 (as approved by HOD 55-2018)

The call for establishing this network has been raised through the need to (i) facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, (ii) develop regional core indicators on marine litter and (iii) carry out regional assessments on occurrence and impacts of marine litter in the Baltic Sea.

The duties of the expert network are detailed in the following sections to be fulfilled in the period 2019-2021, in coherence with similar work undertaken by Contracting Parties in other relevant fora. PRESSURE will regularly revisit the progress of the work according to these ToR and will consider, together with STATE&CONSERVATION, arrangements for further work beyond 2021.

### Facilitate the implementation of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter

As part of the work of the Pressure Working Group and in cooperation with Maritime Working Group and other groups as appropriate, the HELCOM EN-Marine litter will:

- Provide expertise to facilitate practical implementation of the HELCOM Recommendation 36/1. More specifically, the HELCOM EN-Marine Litter will support the Lead Parties for the implementation of individual regional actions and provide expertise to facilitate implementation of actions with currently no lead.
- Seek synergies with other Regional Seas Conventions, namely OSPAR, the Barcelona Convention and the Bucharest Convention, Northwest Pacific Action Plan, but also other international fora, such as the UN, its specialized agencies and EU. Contracting Parties being the EU member states will regularly coordinate with the MSFD Technical Group on Marine Litter.
- Provide expert input, as may be requested by HELCOM working groups e.g. Maritime WG, on relevant measures to reduce further inputs of marine litter from sea- and land-based the sources and impacts of marine litter in the HELCOM area.
- Provide expert input to the process of updating BSAP as needed.
- Contribute to the revision of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter to be held in 2021.

### Monitoring and assessment

The HELCOM EN-Marine Litter will act as the platform for discussion and review of HELCOM indicators on marine litter being developed by Lead Countries and appointed experts as part of the work by State and Conservation Working Group. More specifically, the HELCOM EN-Marine Litter will support Lead Countries in the further development of HELCOM indicators on marine litter, taking account, as appropriate, of developments on these topics under the EU MSFD for the EU member states namely:

- Further develop the HELCOM pre-core indicator on beach litter aiming at shifting it to core indicator.
- Further develop the HELCOM pre-core indicator on marine litter on the seafloor aiming at shifting it to core indicator.
- Assay the adequacy of the existing HELCOM candidate indicator on microlitter in the water column as a microlitter indicator. Based on the results of the assay further work on the development of a regional microlitter indicator.
- Consider the development and establishment of biological indicators to predict for the impacts of marine litter in the Baltic Sea area.
- Building reliable knowledge base on monitoring of microlitter in storm water, effluents of sewage treatment plants and sewage sludge applied as fertilisers in the environment.

- Develop a regionally coordinated monitoring sub-programme on macrolitter characteristics and abundance/volume.
- Develop a proposal of a regionally coordinated monitoring sub-programme on abundance and characteristics of micro-plastics as well as other types of anthropogenic particles constituting microlitter.
- Work on developing baselines and threshold values for maximum levels of marine litter in the Baltic Sea in coherence with similar work undertaken by CP under other relevant fora.
- Update the indicator reports at regular intervals as decided in HELCOM.
- Ensure timely and quality assured delivery of indicator based assessments of marine litter.
- Provide suggestions for regional action on monitoring of litter and micro-plastics as well as other types of anthropogenic particles constituting microlitter in rivers in order to identify sources of marine litter.

### Working procedures

The network consists of experts nominated by Contracting Parties and will be open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited to the meetings. The expert network will function as a joint network of Pressure WG and State and Conservation WG receiving guidance from both HELCOM working groups according to their mandates (Pressure WG overall coordination of the RAP ML; State and Conservation indicators, monitoring and assessment) and providing support to other groups, in particular Maritime WG, as may be requested.

The mode of work for the expert network will be mainly via correspondence and tele-meetings, with at least one physical meeting organized annually. A Chair for the network will be elected. The products will be handled at HELCOM Meeting Portal workspace dedicated to this use. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network.