

HELCOM expert network on Economic and Social Analyses Terms of Reference (ToR)

Rationale

Economic and social analyses (ESA) and information have previously only occasionally been included in HELCOM assessments and work, and coherent information across the Baltic Sea region has often been lacking. There is a need to enhance regional collaboration to produce comparable information on the economic and social importance of the Baltic Sea marine environment. The need for further development of ESA has been a highlighted commitment, for example, in the Ministerial Meeting in 2013.

Economic and social analyses are needed to fully apply ecosystem-based management in the Baltic Sea and to support the sustainable use of marine resources. The ESA provide a set of tools for examining e.g. the benefits from the use of marine waters, and the costs and benefits of achieving a healthy marine ecosystem. Economic and social analyses contribute to ecosystem-based marine management, marine spatial planning, pollution mitigation, and integration and implementation of policies.

Overall aims and tasks

The overall aim of the expert network on economic and social analyses is to enhance the regional cooperation on the economic and social analyses related to the Baltic Sea marine environment. This will contribute to using comparable data and approaches across countries. The analyses will support the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, including maritime spatial planning, and other policies in the Baltic Sea region, notably EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹ by the HELCOM EU countries.

The network will serve as a platform for discussion and information exchange on the ongoing and planned ESA work, and it will act to develop and agree on regional approaches for ESA. The work will be set up to support both regional and national ESA work to fulfil HELCOM and other commitments of the Contracting Parties. The network will contribute to the implementation of the HELCOM Roadmap on economic and social analyses.

More specifically, the network will:

- Develop and agree on common principles for regional economic and social analyses
- Support HOLAS II with economic and social analysis (as outlined in the Roadmap)
- Contribute to other future assessments, as well as regional work on maritime spatial planning by better linking cost of degradation and the use of marine waters analyses, including economic indicators and as far as possible social indicators to MSP and initiating planning to incorporate future perspectives in the pressure and impact indices of HOLAS II to create scenarios of development of human activities and impacts on ecosystems
- In consultation with OSPAR ICG ESA, work with national and European statistical agencies and Eurostat to utilize the available data uniformly and to propose how, in case of Contracting Parties that are EU member states, Eurostat could generate data on economic indicators in regionally standardized format

¹ Including analyses on the use of marine waters and cost of degradation (art 8.1c), as well as cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses in the programmes of measures (art 13.3).

- Work towards a common understanding for assessing the future development of the Baltic Sea (baseline)
- Identify the needs and possibilities to conduct regionally coordinated studies on the valuation of marine ecosystem services, cost-effectiveness analysis and cost-benefit analyses for collective approach/measures and support initiation of research projects in this field and propose new activities
- Follow similar developments in other Regional Sea Conventions and contribute to the European level work on ESA by exchanging information and sharing experiences e.g. on economic data
- Interact with research projects to explore ways to utilize the research knowledge and benefit from the project outcomes

Participants

The expert network will consist of experts nominated by the 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 network will cater for cross-sectorial expertise to carry out the tasks as needed.

Working procedures

The expert network will function under and receive guidance from the HELCOM GEAR Working Group. The network will also interact with other groups/projects in HELCOM, and in particular continue coordination of its activities with the activities within HOLAS II project and seek cooperation with the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group.

The mode of work for the expert network will be physical meetings and via correspondence and tele-meetings. A chairperson for the network will be elected by the members of the network for a two-year period. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the network.