



Workplan of the HELCOM Expert Group on Environmental Risks of Submerged Objects (EG SUBMERGED), 2023-2024

Approved by the HELCOM response Working Group via correspondence in November 2022

No	Task	Lead, responsible bodies and interlinked activities	Next steps and comments	Output
1	Finalize the HELCOM Thematic Assessment on Hazardous Submerged Objects in the Baltic Sea (Submerged Assessment) for publication.	Lead: Poland and Germany Responsible: EG SUBMERGED, WG Response	Submission of draft Submerged Assessment for consideration by the Response Working Group. Approved by correspondence in November 2022.	Submerged Assessment is adopted by HELCOM.
2	Maintain the HELCOM thematic assessment on hazardous submerged objects as a living document, including munitions and wrecks and regularly update the information in the HELCOM Map and Data Service (MADS). (2021 BSAP)	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED, Contracting Parties, Secretariat	Contracting Parties to provide new data, to be considered by EG SUBMERGED. The Secretariat to include approved data in MADS.	A regularly updated Submerged Assessment and up to date interactive maps in MADS.
3	Develop Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for comprehensive risk assessment of munitions, wrecks and hazardous submerged objects by 2025 and implement the Best Available Techniques (BAT) for environmentally sound and safe management by 2028. (2021 BSAP)	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED; WG Response; WG BioDiv	Initiation of development of BEP/BAT during 2023, to be finalized by 2025. BET/BAP being implemented by 2028. The focus should be on a site specific environmental and technical risk assessments.	BEP/BAT and control of threats posed by munitions, wrecks and other hazardous submerged objects in the Baltic Sea are in place and are being implemented for environmentally sound and safe management.
4	Act as platform for discussions about further needed actions tackling the potential challenges posed by dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects.	Lead: Chair of EG SUBMERGED Responsible: EG SUBMERGED Interlinked activities: Research projects and discussions within other fora.	Continuously at meetings of EG SUBMERGED.	

5	Contribute to a common operational picture about the distribution of munitions and explosives of concern in the whole Baltic Sea region.	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED Interlinked activities: Research projects and discussions within other fora.	Understanding of the concept of common operational picture: consulting framework on dissemination of data	Having published data in the HELCOM Map and Data service (MADS)
6	Based on the picture and a common understanding of distribution processes of munition constituents it will support Contracting Parties to identifying hot spot areas, perform site-specific risk assessments and discuss a possible prioritization of affected areas for further coordinated actions in addition to existing national ambitions for comprehensive risk managements.	Responsible: Contracting Parties, EG SUBMERGED		Coordinated action and risk management efforts.
7	Seek cooperation with OSPAR relating to such objects close to the HELCOM area which could affect the convention area, especially in the Skagerrak.	Lead: Contracting Parties that are also OSPAR Contracting Parties, Secretariat		
8	Continuously assess, support and consult with specific research or scientific projects to keep previously issued recommendations up to date or to add recommendations as deemed necessary	Responsible: Contracting Parties, EG SUBMERGED	Continuous work intersessionally and at meetings of EG SUBMERGED	Fit for purpose and up to date recommendations related to hazardous submerged objects.
9	Acting as specific stakeholder and actively convey time-sensitive information on recent findings	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED	Continuous work intersessionally and at meetings of EG SUBMERGED	
10	Develop and maintain, as well as monitor, application of a HELCOM toolbox for assessment of site-specific environmental risks related to potential abandonment, relocation and intended recovery or clean-up of	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED Consultation with relevant HELCOM groups as needed, in particular related to environmental risks.	Consultation with relevant HELCOM groups as needed, in particular related to environmental risks.	

	dumped munitions and contaminated wrecks;			
11	Update previously issued guidelines or develop new guidelines for all potentially affected groups, as deemed necessary, taking into account existing national guidelines and contingency plans;	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED	Meetings of EG SUBMERGED to consider existing guidelines as well as the need for new guidelines.	Relevant guidelines in place and up to date.
12	Develop and maintain procedures for training of crews of response vessels that can be engaged in emergency response actions involving dumped munitions;	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED, WG Response	Meetings of EG SUBMERGED to develop and maintain procedures, for consideration by RESPONSE.	Procedures for training of crews of response vessels in place.
13	Review and, as appropriate, update the Guidelines for Fishermen on how to engage with submerged hazardous objects.	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED, WG Fish	EG SUBMERGED to review the Guidelines for Fishermen. Input requested from the Fish Group, as appropriate.	Up to date and fit for purpose Guidelines for Fishermen.
14	Facilitating exchange of information in relation to the Nairobi Convention in case a ship sinks and poses a threat to the marine environment, human health or navigation.	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED Interlinked activities: Developments within the International Maritime Organization (IMO).		
15	Develop and maintain a knowledge collection of best available technologies on dealing with dumped munitions and other submerged hazardous objects.	Responsible: EG SUBMERGED, Contracting Parties Interlinked activities: Relevant research projects and national activities	Contracting Parties to submit relevant information to meetings of EG SUBMERGED.	Publication of an up to date knowledge collection of best available technologies.