



Workplan of EG MaMa 2023-2024

Approved via correspondence in April 2024 by the HELCOM Working Group on Biodiversity, Protection and Restoration

No	Task [BSAP action, support to BSAP action lead by another group or other task from ToR]	Lead, responsible bodies and interlinked activities	Next steps and comments [including the timeframe]	Output [most likely from the criteria for achievement, including the deadline]
Theme: Management plans for marine mammals				
1	The national representatives of EG MaMa are requested to review the new and updated marine mammals national management and action plans from their respective countries, for example against the guidelines developed by SEAL 8-2014 for seal species. Implementation of BSAP actions B19, B20, B21, B23	Lead: Secretariat to keep track of information flow, countries to contribute. Responsible: Countries and EG MaMa as well as Secretariat.	Ad-hoc report to EG MaMa	By 2023 finalise and implement national or local conservation and/or management plans for grey seals (B19). By 2023 finalise and implement national conservation and/or management plans for ringed seals (B20). Continuous: review management plans for harbour porpoise and harbour seals.
Theme: Monitoring and assessment / indicators				
2	Knowledge gaps regarding nutritional and reproduction indicators to be defined. The Marine Mammal Health Team will further develop existing and new indicators for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> health indicator 	Lead: Sweden (nutritional and reproductive status) and Germany (health indicator) Responsible: Indicators leads Interlinked activities: Review process of HOLAS 3	Annual report to EG MaMa on the progress to prepare the next holistic assessment (i.e. HOLAS 4). Presentation on the latest updates of the indicators.	Threshold for nutritional and reproduction and health indicators. Theoretical approaches for setting thresholds will be developed by the team under the responsibility of the indicators leads.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritional status of seals and porpoises. • reproduction status indicator to be expanded to ringed seal, harbour seal and harbour porpoise • considering including PCB in existing or future indicators. <p>Sharing updates on progress on the OSPAR PCB indicator for potential harmonization.</p> <p>Implementation of BSAP action B8 (i.e. contaminants) and HT6</p>			
3	<p>Continuation of the work on developing the “Abundance and population trends of harbour porpoise”, “Distribution of harbour porpoise” indicators as well as other indicators such as habitat quality, and report to EG MaMa.</p> <p>Coordination of Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM).</p> <p>BSAP HT6</p>	<p>Lead: Indicators lead (Sweden and Germany) together with the Harbour Porpoise Abundance and Distribution Team</p> <p>Responsible: Indicators co-leads</p> <p>Interlinked activities: Review process of HOLAS 3</p>	<p>Annual report to EG MaMa on the progress to prepare the next holistic assessment (i.e. HOLAS 4)</p>	<p>full operational indicators (i.e. data calls, threshold, etc.)</p>
4	<p>Continuation of the work on the development of the indicator “Number of drowned mammals and</p>	<p>Lead: Germany and Poland</p> <p>Responsible: Indicator co-leads</p> <p>Interlinked activities: Review process of HOLAS 3</p>	<p>Annual report to EG MaMa on the progress to prepare the next holistic assessment (i.e. HOLAS 4)</p>	<p>full operational indicators (i.e. data calls, threshold, etc.)</p>

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	waterbirds in fishing gears” and report to EG MaMa BSAP B8, S44, S48			
5	Review of indicator “Population trends and abundance of seals” (i.e. Grey seal, Harbour seal and Ringed seal abundance) and report to EG MaMa BSAP HT6	Lead: indicator lead/co-lead Responsible: Interlinked activities: Review process of HOLAS 3	Annual report to EG MaMa on the progress to prepare the next holistic assessment (i.e. HOLAS 4)	full operational indicators (i.e. data calls, threshold, , etc.)
6	Review relevant monitoring programmes related to marine mammals BSAP HT6	Lead: EG MaMa Responsible: EG MaMa	Continuous	Updated monitoring programmes in line with MSFD reporting.
Theme: Dataflows on marine mammals				
7	All Contracting Parties to provide annual quality data on the mortality, including information on bycatch and illegal killing, of seals. There is currently lack of data on bycatch and illegal killing of seals species and harbour porpoise. Implementation of BSAP action S48 (to support B5 and B8)	Lead: Secretariat for information flow and EG MaMa (CPs) to contribute Responsible: WG BioDiv.	Annual reporting to EG MaMa and communication with WG BioDiv and WG Fish.	Ensure to gather the best available/reliable/realistic data on marine mammals mortality in the Baltic Sea.
8	The Contracting Parties are requested to report to the HELCOM/ASCOBANS Database on Harbour Porpoise (sightings, strandings and by-catch) prior to EG MaMa meeting by providing the data to the HELCOM Secretariat. BSAP B10.	Lead: Secretariat for information flow, EG MaMa (CPs) to contribute Responsible: EG MaMa and Secretariat.	Continuous process Annual reporting and sharing information during EG MaMa meeting on the latest reporting by the CPs.	Continuation of data gathering

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9	The Contracting Parties are requested to report summarized data and metadata on PAM to the HELCOM Biodiversity Database. Sharing information on data reporting needs for the future. BSAP B10.	Lead: Secretariat for data flow with the EG MaMa (CPs) to contribute Responsible: EG MaMa and Secretariat.	Continuous process Annual reporting, sharing information.	Producing an overview of available data across the Baltic Sea.
10	Sharing information on the progress of the HELCOM-ASCOBANS databases for strandings of cetaceans, including geographic information, and to propose how to harmonize the HELCOM data collection with this initiative	Lead: [to be decided] Responsible: Secretariat	Continuous process	Recommendation on how to make available such data for the HELCOM Area.
11	The Contracting Parties are invited to share information on uncommon sightings in the HELCOM Area	Lead: Secretariat with contribution from EG MaMa (CPs) Responsible: Secretariat	Continuous. Ad-hoc reporting from CPs to the Secretariat and presentation of results during each EG MAMA meeting	Functional information flow to gather data on uncommon sightings of marine mammals
Theme: Monitoring and guidelines				
12	The monitoring guideline for the draft target organ health indicator for marine mammals will be further improved intersessionally and presented at EG MaMa. BSAP HT6	Lead: Indicator lead (Germany) Responsible: Indicator lead Interlinked activities: health team workshop in May 2023.	Continuous. The health team will annually share information to EG MaMa on the progress.	Draft of the monitoring guideline for the health indicator.
13	The Harbour Porpoise Distribution and Abundance indicator team will continue the work on drafting monitoring guidelines for distribution and abundance	Lead: Harbour Porpoise Distribution and Abundance indicator lead Responsible: Indicator lead	Continuous. The Harbour Porpoise Distribution and Abundance indicator team will annually share information with EG MaMa on the progress	

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	intersessionally and present at EG MaMa. BSAP HT6			
14	Follow-up of existing monitoring guidelines (i.e. nutritional and reproductive status, distribution and abundance) and to update them if needed BSAP HT6	Lead: Relevant indicator leads/co-leads Responsible: Relevant Indicator leads/co-leads	Continuous, sharing information during each EG MaMa meeting, if needed	Have up-to-date monitoring guidelines
Theme: cooperation with other organizations (e.g. international agreements) and relevant projects/initiatives				
15	Finland and Poland to report on activities of ASCOBANS and the Chair of Jastarnia Group, to report on activities of the Jastarnia Group to EG MaMa.	Lead: Finland (tbc) and Poland Responsible: Secretariat and relevant contacts.	Continuous, sharing information at each EG MaMa meeting	Operational information flow
16	Share information on potential future projects in the HELCOM Area and of relevance for EG MaMa. (Several BSAP actions under the segments on biodiversity and sea-based activities).	Lead: All CPs + Secretariat Responsible:	Continuous, sharing information at each EG MaMa meeting	Operational information flow
17	Sharing current knowledge and initiative on harbour porpoise prey depletion in line with the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee (AC) (and potentially for seals) Contribution to BSAP action B34 on food web assessment	Lead: [to be decided] Responsible: EG MaMa Interlinked activities: EG Foodweb	In 2023, sharing information at the next EG MaMa meeting. The Chair of EG FOODWEB to be invited to present the work at EG MaMa meeting in 2023 to initiate potential synergies.	Contribute to development of the definition of prey depletion in relation to small cetaceans (cf. ASCOBANS for harbour porpoise) and seals. Contribution to EG FOODWEB work (cf. BSAP action B34) by 2026 (indicator for food web).

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18	Initiate discussion with EG Noise to map impulsive and continuous noise exposure to marine mammals in the HELCOM Area. BSAP actions: S57, S59, S60, S61	Lead: Secretariat Responsible: Secretariat with the Chair of EG MaMa. Interlinked activities: EG Noise	In 2024, Chair of EG Noise to be invited to present the work at EG MaMa meeting to initiate this task.	Maps highlighting noise with the current knowledge of marine mammals potential distribution and suitable habitat Inclusion of such information in noise indicators / HOLAS 4?
Theme: Marine mammals and fisheries interaction				
19	Present progress from the data collection, assessment and mitigation measures related to bycatch. BSAP actions: S43, S44, S45, S46, S47	Lead: Poland (tbc) Responsible: EG MaMa Interlinked activities: cooperation / sharing information with BALTFISH and HELCOM FISH Working Group for the BSAP actions	Continuous, CPs sharing information during EG MaMa meetings.	Making available up to date information to EG MaMa
20	Follow up on the progress regarding the ICES Special Request Advice on Emergency Measures for Harbour Porpoise. BSAP actions S45, S46, S47, S48	Lead: Chair of Jastarnia Group Responsible: Interlinked activities:	Continuous, sharing information during EG MaMa meetings	Making available up to date information to EG MaMa
Theme: HELCOM recommendations and other relevant topic(s)				
21	Follow up of HELCOM Recommendations on Marine Mammals	Lead: Poland (Rec. 17/2) and Sweden (Rec. 27/28-2) Responsible: WG BioDiv Interlinked activities:	Continuous	Updated reporting to HELCOM recommendations
22	Present progress on drafting a preliminary project proposal for PAL (Precautionary Approach Level) for seals in the Baltic Sea.	Lead: Denmark Responsible: EG MaMa Interlinked activities:	Continuous	Project proposal / funding to further work on PAL for seals

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23	Update of Limit Reference Level for harbour seal and update management unit structure for harbour seal	Lead: Denmark Responsible: EG MaMa Interlinked activities:	Annual report to EG MaMa	Proposal for new LRL + management unit structure and supporting information.
Theme: intersessional activities of the EG MaMa teams				
The Marine Mammal Health Team is requested to inform on their intersessional activities at EG MaMa meetings which are not already covered in previous tasks, for example:				
24	Communication between team members	Lead: Team lead (Germany) Responsible: Team lead (Germany)	Continuous communication within the team	Up to date information shared with team members
25	Presentation from the team on intersessional activities and relevant topics.	Lead: Team lead (Germany) Responsible:	Continuous / inter-assessment update	Document submitted to EG MaMa meetings with up to date information shared with EG MaMa / communication flow between the team and EG MaMa
The Seal Population, Abundance and Distribution Team is requested to inform on their intersessional activities at EG MaMa meetings which are not already covered in previous tasks, for example:				
26	Communication between team members	Lead: Team lead (Estonia) Responsible: Team lead (Estonia)	Continuous communication within the team	Up to date information shared with team members
27	The Seal Population, Abundance and Distribution team is requested to collate metadata, with the support of the Secretariat, on the existing telemetry tag deployments and present the results.	Lead: Team lead (Estonia) Responsible: Team lead (Estonia) + Secretariat	Continuous	Up to date information shared with EG MaMa
28	Presentation from the team on intersessional activities and relevant topics.	Lead: Team lead (Estonia) Responsible: Team lead (Estonia)	Continuous / inter-assessment update	Document submitted to EG MaMa meetings with up to date information shared with EG MaMa / communication

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				flow between the team and EG MaMa
29	Countries to present the results of annual seal survey results for ringed, harbour seal and grey seal.	Lead: Team lead (Estonia)	Regular report to EG MaMa meetings - Continuous	Up to date information shared with EG MaMa
30	Follow up on the proposal to change the management unit status of the harbour seals in Kattegat and the western Baltic. (supporting many BSAP actions from B1 to B7)	Lead: Denmark Responsible: Denmark	Continuous	Up to date information shared with EG MaMa
31	Share information on genetic structure of seal populations	Lead: Team lead (Estonia)	Continuous	Up to date information shared with EG MaMa
The Harbour Porpoise Population, Abundance and Distribution Team is requested to inform on their intersessional activities at EG MaMa meetings which are not already covered in previous tasks, for example:				
32	Communication between team members BSAP HT6	Lead: Team lead / Indicators leads Responsible: Indicators leads	Continuous communication within the team	Up to date information shared with team members
33	Presentation from the team on intersessional activities and relevant topics.	Lead: Team lead (Germany and Sweden)	Continuous	Document submitted to EG MaMa meetings with with updated information shared with EG MaMa