



Terms of Reference for the HELCOM-Baltic Earth Expert Network on Climate Change (EN Clime)

Approved by the HELCOM Working Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach via correspondence in June 2025.

Purpose

The purpose of the network is to facilitate regional cooperation in relation to climate change and its impacts, including transferring quality assured science to end users, and to provide clear guidance on the level of confidence in information which is presented. The work can also vicariously support the identification of knowledge gaps and identification of possible future research priorities. The main goal of the network is to condense the large body of scientific research into a form that is directly utilizable in developing HELCOM core indicators, implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan, and in preparation of future HELCOM assessments on climate change.

The Expert Network will handle the operational production and delivery of the scientific products of the dedicated work on climate change, e.g. the Climate Change Fact Sheet and supporting material, as well as other tasks agreed by HELCOM WG GEAR and the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group and assigned to the group.

Furthermore, the network functions as a coordinating framework and a platform to harness the expertise of leading scientists on both direct and indirect effects of climate change on the Baltic Sea environment, and to make this expertise available to, and open for closer dialogue with, policy makers.

The Expert Network contributes to the delivery of BSAP actions HT1, HT2, HT4, and HT5.

Duties

The duties of the Expert Network on Climate Change are to:

- I. Periodically update the HELCOM-Baltic Earth Climate Change Fact Sheet as a means of transferring recent climate change research to the policy level (HT1).
- II. Contribute to incorporating the possible effect of climate change into the HELCOM holistic assessment of status as well as effectiveness of measures (HT1).
- III. Advice on necessary actions and measures on how HELCOM's policies could be adapted to support resilience of the Baltic Sea to climate change (HT2).
- IV. Develop concepts for scientific products and promote research as requested or identified by the HELCOM Working Group GEAR and the Baltic Earth Science Steering Group, including research that increases understanding of the role of the Baltic Sea land-sea system in the carbon cycle (HT4).
- V. Contribute to the HELCOM strategic approach to ocean acidification (HT5).
- VI. Collaboratively frame user requirements for the next set of regional climate projections, and ensure their usability in the policy context.
- VII. Exchange information on climate change in the Baltic Sea region, highlighting priority issues that might need addressing.
- VIII. Take note of relevant activities within and if appropriate cooperate with relevant actors and/or other international organizations and seek synergies with the work carried out relevant for the network.

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of the work conducted by the Expert Network on Climate Change are detailed in the 2-year workplan of the Expert Network, regularly updated by the Expert Network and approved by the HELCOM Working Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (WG GEAR).

Organization of work

The Expert Network on Climate Change consists of nominated delegates from the HELCOM Contracting Parties as well as experts representing Baltic Earth and is open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited as guests to the meetings by the HELCOM Secretariat in consultation with the Co-Chairs.

The Expert Network on Climate Change will meet online or in person as needed. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that at least one delegate with sufficient knowledge of the focus topic attends the meetings whether physical or online.

Within HELCOM the Expert Network will, as relevant, seek synergies and cooperate with other HELCOM Groups.

The Expert Network on Climate Change will elect Co-Chairs for a 2-year mandate period. The maximum mandate period for the Expert Network Co-Chairs should be three consecutive mandate periods, consisting of 2 years per period, resulting in a maximum consecutive mandate period of 6 years.

The current Terms of Reference are to be reviewed periodically, every four years, or as the need arises.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Expert Network.

The Expert Network reports to the HELCOM Working Group on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (WG GEAR).

The updated (2024) HELCOM organigram is available [here](#) on the HELCOM website.