WWF

REPORT

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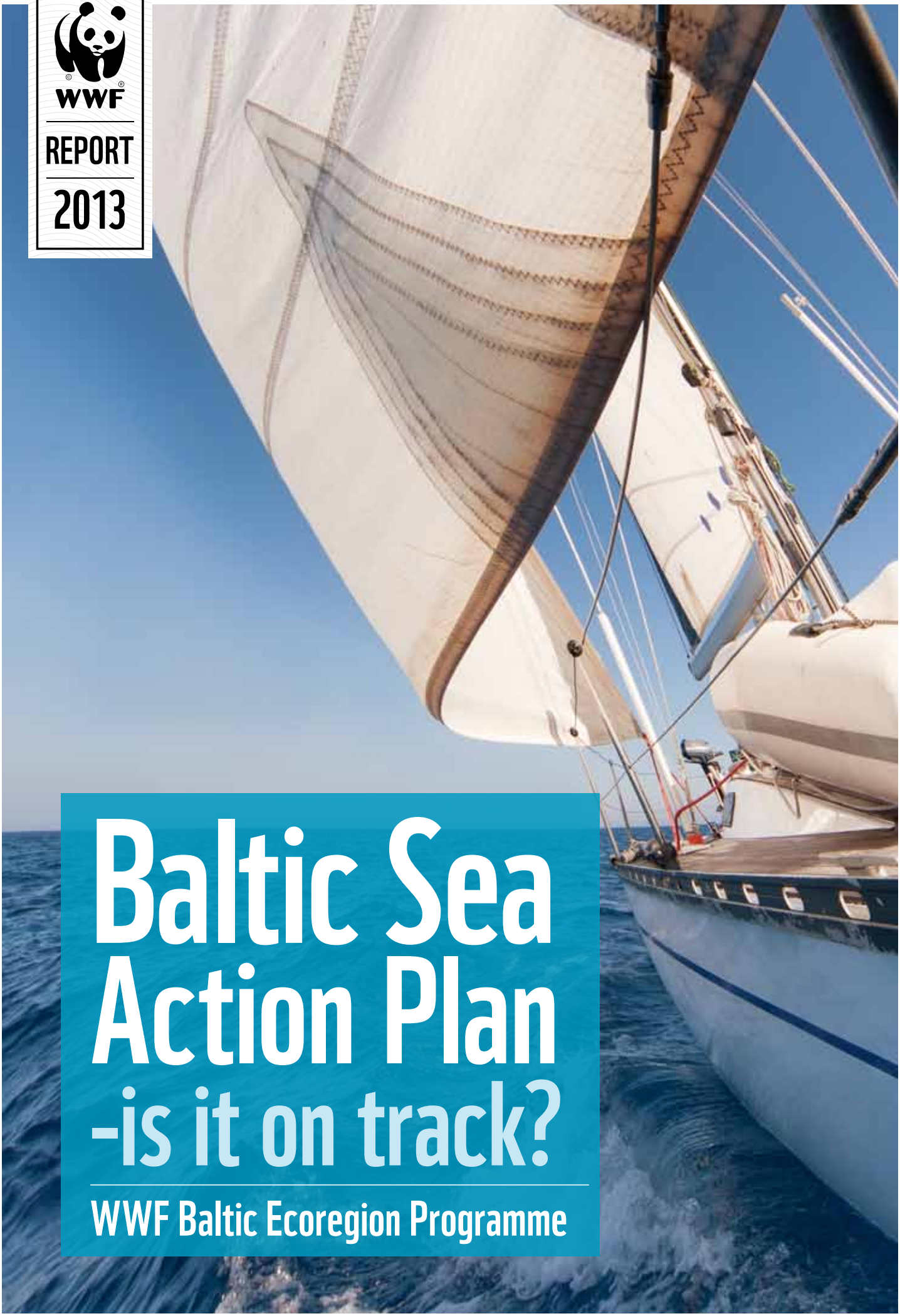


Baltic Sea Action Plan –is it on track?

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

PHOTO: KONRAD WEISS

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) was signed in Krakow, Poland, on November 2007, by the nine Contracting Parties[1] to the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM).

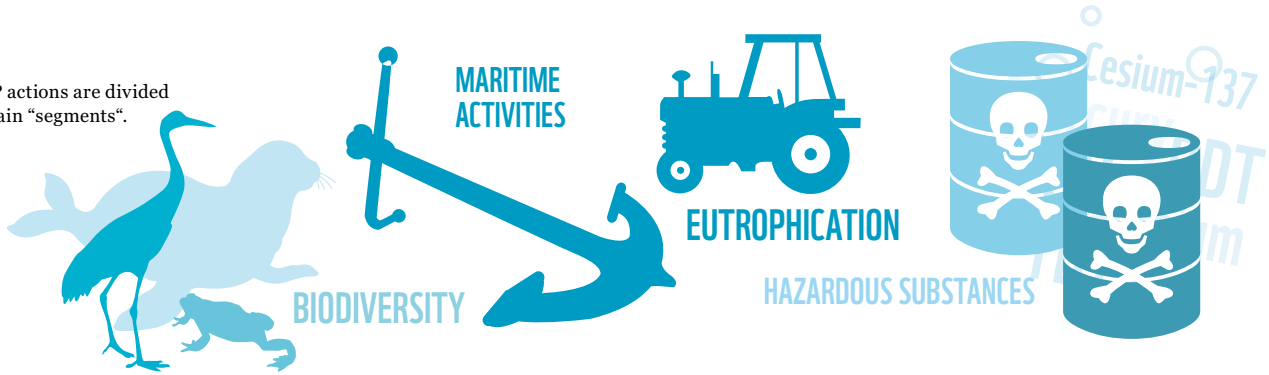
At the time of signing, it was widely heralded as the most important agreement to protect and restore the marine environment of the Baltic Sea, given its overarching vision of achieving *"a healthy Baltic Sea, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human, economic and social activities,"* by 2021 at the latest.

When the BSAP was launched, a series of ministerial meetings were agreed to ensure that the implementation of the BSAP would continue to receive high-level review and support by ministers in order to help facilitate its success. Three years later, in 2010, the first follow-up ministerial meeting was held in Moscow to review and discuss the National Implementation Programmes (NIPs) of the plan.

The next HELCOM ministerial meeting will be held in October 2013. This time the ministers will meet "*to evaluate the effectiveness of the national programmes and to review the progress towards the ecological objectives describing a Baltic Sea in good ecological status. Based on this review the Action Plan will be adjusted and the set of indicators with associated targets will be up-dated to ensure their relevance for achieving the objectives.*[2]"

[1] The Contracting Parties to HELCOM are: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the European Union.

[2] The Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM, Krakow, November 2007.



The BSAP actions are divided in four main "segments".

Preparations for this ministerial meeting are now ongoing and although signs have shown that most countries are far behind schedule on their implementation of the plan, very little is being said about the lack of progress on committed actions and, importantly, how ministers will address these challenges.

To assess the real status of the BSAP and to get an as clear and detailed picture as possible of how countries are doing and of the gap that needs to be filled for each HELCOM Contracting Party to meet their obligations according the plan, WWF has analysed:

- What was promised/committed to in the BSAP
- What has been delivered to date
- What still needs to be done to deliver on the commitments made

56 key actions (out of 113 in total[3]) have been evaluated and the result of this assessment is presented and discussed in this report. Three general conclusions can be drawn:

1. **The analysis shows a serious delay in national implementation of the BSAP.** The table below shows that although some countries are timelier than others, each country, as well as the whole region, is lagging behind schedule.
2. **A simple, honest and transparent reporting system is urgently needed.** The current reporting system is seriously inadequate. There are no clear standards for what, how and when progress should be reported and countries have so far blocked the development of a more transparent reporting system. At the same time, the way in which this reporting is currently being summarized for review by ministers in preparation for the October ministerial meeting lacks transparency and obscures accountability as it now omits country-wise reporting and only reports on the region as a whole. In addition, actions where next to nothing have been done yet are reported as "starting" or "in progress" instead of "not accomplished".
3. **Countries have not developed sufficient mechanisms for cooperation.** In other words, a lack of implementation by one country puts the entire plan in jeopardy. The BSAP is a joint effort and its success will depend on the willingness to cooperate to implement its actions.

The BSAP actions are divided in four main "segments": Eutrophication, Hazardous Substances, Biodiversity, and Maritime Activities. This assessment follows the same divisions in analysing the outcomes to date.

The study assesses the level of country-wise implementation of a set of key actions within each segment, presented more in detail later in this report. *The assessment is based entirely on data Contracting Parties have themselves actually reported to the HELCOM Secretariat before 1 June 2013*[4]. The 56 assessed actions were chosen based on three criteria:

- Relevance and importance for the health and recovery of the Baltic Sea
- Measurability
- Ability to contribute to a broad and encompassing assessment of the current status of the BSAP

3 The original "BSAP index" listed 113 actions. Some actions have been added since and some actions have been divided differently in some versions of the index table, therefore adding up to a different number.

4 Updated information on BSAP implementation can be found on HELCOM's website, www.helcom.fi

Each action has been given a score based on the level of, and deadline for, implementation. The scoring has been designed so that a timely implementation will produce a *score of zero*. Implementation ahead of time will produce a *positive score*, while delays in implementation, no implementation at all, or lack of reporting will produce a *negative score*. Failure to meet already passed deadlines will produce even lower scores. The reason for this is simple; without reporting what is being done and by whom there is no way to measure, and therefore manage, this plan.

Scoring

Deadline not passed yet:		Deadline already passed:	
1	Action implemented ahead of time	0	Action implemented
0	Implementation in progress	-2	Implementation in progress
-1	No action or unreported	-3	No action or unreported

Timely and adequate reporting is key to the monitoring and success of the BSAP. For the sake of this report, the lack of reporting has been treated equal to failure to implement an action. This means that some actions may have been implemented by some countries, but if these actions have not been reported to the HELCOM secretariat, they will also not be reflected in this analysis and therefore the country could still receive a low score. As the overall reporting by countries to the HELCOM secretariat is insufficient, it is important to note that differences in scoring may in some cases depend on the quality of reporting rather than on differences in implementation.

When this report was prepared, countries had been given a final deadline of 28 February to report their progress to the HELCOM secretariat. The report has accepted later reporting, but actions reported after 1 June are not reflected in the assessment.

Interpretation of colour scales[5]

Colour	Interpretation	Grade
	Ahead of schedule	"Good"
	On schedule	"Acceptable"
	Behind schedule	"Not acceptable"

The total scores clearly show that even if some countries have come further than others, no country has delivered what was promised on all segments. Activities to combat eutrophication in Finland and Germany are the only areas that are in phase with the implementation schedule. Activities for Hazardous Substances and Biodiversity are particularly behind schedule.

Total score

BSAP segment	DE	DK	EE	FIN	LT	LV	PL	RU	SE
Eutrophication	0	-8	-3	0	-11	-5	-6	-8	-2
Hazardous Substances	-4	-9	-13	-2	-8	-11	-13	-11	-2
Biodiversity	-22	-15	-13	-15	-24	-18	-18	-28	-28
Maritime Activities	-7	-7	-8	-8	-8	-6	-7	-5	-5
Total score All segments	**-33**	**-39**	**-37**	**-25**	**-51**	**-40**	**-44**	**-52**	**-37**

[5] The colour of the total scores for each segment and for the summary of all segments is based on the average score for each country. See a more detailed explanation in the "Methodology" section at the end of this report.

As all countries are lagging behind on more or less all areas, there is no reason to exemplify or blame individual countries more than others. The BSAP implies and requires a joint and collective effort to implement the plan. Failure to deliver by one country is a failure by all.

Ranking

Finland	Germany	Estonia	Sweden	Denmark	Latvia	Poland	Lithuania	Russia
-25	-33	-37	-37	-39	-40	-44	-51	-52

In fact, successful implementation of the BSAP depends on countries realizing the need for, and benefits of, cooperation across borders, across sectors, and across levels of government. Only a fully integrated approach to the management of the Baltic Sea can ensure effective actions to combat the continuing deterioration of the marine environment resulting from human activities.

The important task now is to to focus on what can be done to resurrect the BSAP. Environment ministers have a demanding responsibility to use the October ministerial meeting to acknowledge the present failures and agree an ambitious but realistic plan to set the Baltic Sea Action Plan back on track. This report aims at providing some suggestions for remedy.

The BSAP will only be fully implemented when countries realize the potential of co-operation across borders, across sectors, and across levels of government.

THE WAY FORWARD

The Baltic Sea Region is one of the richest and most educated regions in the world, and several surveys have shown that there is a massive public and political support for taking action to save the sea. So, why are governments failing to deliver upon their commitments to save the Baltic Sea?

A major part of the answer is to be found on governance level. Governments have simply not yet found the structures and mechanisms needed to deal with the management of a common sea.

SIMPLE TRANSPARENT REPORTING SYSTEM

OPENNESS ABOUT PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS

MAKE NECESSARY INVESTMENTS

INVOLVE ALL RELEVANT SECTORS OF GOVERNMENT

BRIDGE THE GAP

The following are some steps that WWF believes are important to set the BSAP back on track and to initiate a process towards better management of the Baltic Sea, based on the findings of this report. As some of the present shortcomings are results of failures on a broader governance level, some of these recommendations go beyond the mandate of environment ministers and address other sectors of government.

- **Introduce a simple, honest and transparent reporting system for the implementation of the BSAP.** *There is a clear need for a format for country-wise reporting with clear accountability that can provide support for decisions and promote cooperation and joint efforts to reach the agreed targets and objectives.*
- **Be open about problems and shortcomings in the implementation of the BSAP.** *Discuss honestly and openly what the hurdles are, in order to more accurately assess what is needed, and how countries can cooperate to overcome these.*
- **Realize the economic potential of a healthy Baltic Sea.** *Put the money on the table and make the necessary investments in the future of the Baltic Sea. Initiatives to improve the marine environment should not be seen as costs but as necessary and profitable investment for the future. To avoid or defer investments to protect and restore the Baltic Sea is not a responsible course of action. The later we act, the more expensive it will be.*
- **Involve all relevant sectors of government.** *Today environment ministers are asked to deal with problems caused or maintained by other sectors. A more integrated approach to the management of the use of the sea is needed, involving other departments and agencies. Finance ministers have a key role in decisions on investments and in finding the right balance between competing economic interests.*
- **Bridge the gap between policy making and implementing agencies.** *Today actions are stalled because policy makers in HELCOM delegations do not have access to the implementing powers of agencies like Boards of Agriculture, Fisheries Agencies, or local municipalities.*

More detailed recommendations for each of the four BSAP segments are provided in the final sections of this report.

TROUBLED WATERS

The Baltic Sea is unique in many ways. It is the youngest sea on the planet, one of the world's largest brackish water bodies and one of the world's busiest maritime areas. Compared to the small water volume, the catchment area is extensive with a total population of approximately 90 million.

The steadily increasing stresses brought about by human use of the sea, together with its natural characteristics such as its low salinity and limited water exchange, combine to put an immense pressure on the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

These growing stresses on the marine environment, together with current and future climate changes, are jeopardizing the Baltic Sea's ability to provide the ecosystem goods and services that we enjoy and in many cases depend on.

PHOTO: SVEN ZACEK / NATUREPL.COM

The steadily increasing stresses brought about by human use of the sea, together with its natural characteristics such as its low salinity and limited water exchange, combine to put an immense pressure on the Baltic Sea ecosystem.

The value of a healthy Baltic Sea

As these goods and services are coupled to economy and welfare, threats to the state of the ecosystem will have an impact on our economies and on our welfare. It is therefore important, also from a purely economic point of view, to identify cost-effective measures to restore the production capacity of the Baltic Sea ecosystem services. The HELCOM BSAP is one such attempt.

A recent report from the BalticSTERN Institute[6], commissioned by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (HaV), concludes that the cost of reaching the BSAP targets amounts to somewhere between 2,300 and 2,800 million Euros annually.

The same study also reports that a majority of the people living in countries around the Baltic Sea are willing to pay for a healthier marine ecosystem. Aggregated to the whole population in the region, people are willing to pay 3,800 million Euros annually, resulting in a net gain of 1,000 – 1,500 million Euros per year.

[6] BalticSTERN, The Baltic Sea – Our Common Treasure, Economics of Saving the Sea, Havs- och vattenmyndighetens rapport 2013:4

PHOTO: ANYA IVANOVA

AN AMBITIOUS PLAN TO SAVE THE SEA

The Baltic Sea Action Plan has a unique history as a cutting-edge international agreement. Although international law always recognized the general duty of States not to cause serious pollution to other States, regional co-operation on the environment was not on the political agenda until 1972 when the Stockholm Conference endorsed a regional approach to control of marine pollution.

When the ground-breaking *Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area* (the Helsinki Convention) was signed in 1974 by the environment ministers of the (then) seven Baltic Sea coastal states[7], it was the first regional seas convention in the world to be signed by the governments of all riparian countries. It has since been expanded to include the "new" Baltic Sea countries as well as the EU Commission, thereby providing an important delivery mechanism for EU policies, as well as a bridge between Russia and Europe.

After several decades of addressing threats to the Baltic Sea environment on a sector-by-sector basis, HELCOM became in the early 2000s the world's first regional seas convention to adopt a more holistic approach to protecting the marine environment. The new course included the application of an ecosystem approach to managing human activities affecting the sea.

[7] Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were at that time Soviet Socialist Republics under the USSR and Germany was divided in East and West Germany.

This development was accelerated in November 2007, when the environment ministers of the HELCOM countries adopted the *Baltic Sea Action Plan* (BSAP). The BSAP has an overarching vision of *"a healthy Baltic Sea, with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable human, economic and social activities"*, and is set to reach its goal by 2021 at the latest.

The novelty of the approach used in the BSAP is that it focuses on the ecosystem.

The novelty of the approach used in the BSAP is that it focuses on the ecosystem. Instead of the more traditional approach of addressing the sources of pollution on a sector-by-sector basis, it defines the status of the sea, as we want it to be in the future, and directs its management actions towards this goal.

The HELCOM BSAP is also instrumental to the implementation of other policies such as the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and is fully integrated into the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). Failure to execute the BSAP will jeopardize the timely implementation of the MSFD, not to mention call into question the realization of other EU policies that rely on effective regional coordination such as the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and expected future legislation on Maritime Spatial Planning.

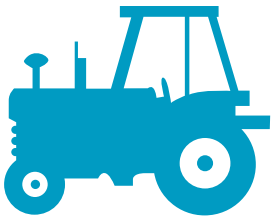
Unfortunately, however, despite the ambitions of the BSAP and the frequent reference to its innovative approach, it has hitherto failed to deliver upon its promise. At a checkpoint in May 2010, when the last ministerial meeting was held, a majority of the countries were lagging far behind on their National Implementation Programmes and, as this report shows, there are very few signs that they have caught up since then. Concerted initiatives and concrete actions to achieve a sufficient reduction of nutrient input from agriculture, to control the spread of hazardous substances, reduce the impacts from fisheries and to protect biodiversity are still largely lacking. In other words, the real work to deliver the BSAP is yet to be done.

HELCOM is due to hold a ministerial meeting in October 2013 – which was agreed when the BSAP was signed in 2007 *"to evaluate the effectiveness of the national programmes and to review the progress towards the ecological objectives describing a Baltic Sea in good ecological status."* If nothing drastic happens before October, the ministerial meeting risks falling far short of its original ambition and could instead be filled with empty proclamations by the Contracting Parties of HELCOM about their continued commitment to securing an 'ecosystem based management' of the Baltic Sea with few details or promises about actions they have or will deliver.

PHOTO: SOLOVYOVA LYUDMYLA

EUTROPHICATION

Eutrophication has been identified as the single biggest threat to the Baltic Sea. It leads to excessive algal blooms and causes dead zones where the lack of dissolved oxygen disables reproduction of several species. To curb the trend, inputs of nitrogen and phosphorous to the sea must decrease significantly.



Studies confirm that measures taken to reduce nutrient inputs, such as the more stringent requirements for manure and fertilizer management within agriculture, together with the construction of new and improved existing municipal wastewater treatment plants, are effective and can turn the negative trend around in the longer term.

With less eutrophication we are likely to see significant improvements in habitat quality and conservation status in many parts of the sea, as there is a strong link between eutrophication abatement and the health of the entire ecosystem, its species and habitats.

What was promised

The overall goal of the HELCOM BSAP is to have a Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication. This goal is described through the following ecological objectives:

- Concentrations of nutrients close to natural levels
- Clear water
- Natural level of algal blooms
- Natural distribution and occurrence of plants and animals
- Natural oxygen levels

EUTROPHICATION – What has been done

BSAP agreement	Action	Dead-line	DE	DK	EE	FI	LT	LV	PL	RU	SE
E-9	National programmes on nutrient reduction	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E-5	Actions to reduce nutrient load undertaken	2016	0	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0
E-10	Inclusion of BSAP targets in national programmes	2009	0	-3	0	0	-2	0	-2	-2	0
E-11, E-12	Advanced municipal waste water treatment	2018	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E-11, E-12	On site treatment for scattered settlements (transitional)	2017	0	-1	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0
E-11, E-12	On site treatment for scattered settlements (final)	2021	0	-1	0	0	-1	-1	-1	0	0
E-13	Substitution of phosphorus in detergents	2010	0	0	-1	0	-2	0	0	-2	0
E-16	Designation of zones vulnerable to nitrogen	2021	0	-1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
E-17	Permit systems for animal farms	2012	0	0	0	0	-3	-2	0	-2	0
E-19	List of agricultural hot spots	2009	0	0	-2	0	-3	0	-2	-2	-3
Total score			**0**	**-8**	**-3**	**0**	**-11**	**-5**	**-6**	**-8**	**-2**

The BSAP lists a set of actions to be taken to counter the increased eutrophication of the sea. These include setting up national programmes in each country; taking measures to reduce runoff from agriculture as well as improving wastewater treatment. There are also specific nutrient reduction targets agreed for each country.

The question is if these measures and targets are enough. HELCOM is, as a follow-up to the BSAP, developing an extensive monitoring programme and the results of this monitoring, if taken seriously, should provide basis for eventually strengthened measures.

What has been done

The analysis shows that all countries have taken the problem of eutrophication seriously and have initiated implementation of the actions. Still, out of the 10 actions analysed, only one action (the development of national programmes) has been fully implemented by all countries. Four actions are behind schedule and five have later deadlines. Most of all, the yearly anthropogenic contribution of nutrients to the Baltic Sea is still much too high.

The yearly anthropogenic contribution of nutrients to the Baltic Sea is still much too high.

What needs to be done

Here (as in the other segments) the sub-standard reporting by countries is a major problem, impeding accountability and action.

- *Countries must submit complete, transparent and timely reporting to the HELCOM secretariat. The reports must be made publicly available.*

Even if most, if not all, countries have commenced implementation of the actions, there are still some important measures that still need to be taken.

- *All Contracting Parties must promptly implement the agreed actions to curb nutrient emissions to the Baltic Sea.*

Some actions, e.g. the establishment of sufficient municipal wastewater treatment, need substantial financial investments and countries have unequal economic strength to provide these.

- *Countries must cooperate to make sufficient funding available to implement costly actions.*

MORE THAN HALF OF THE NUTRIENTS THAT REACH THE BALTIC SEA ORIGINATE FROM AGRICULTURE

More than half of the nutrients that reach the Baltic Sea originate from agriculture. Tackling agricultural runoff implies a special challenge, as we all are dependant on agricultural production for our daily bread. In addition, agricultural policy for eight of the nine countries is set on European level through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), thereby setting some limits to what measures can be taken regionally.

- *Contracting Parties should increase cooperation on the development of sustainable farming practices. EU Member States should work jointly to improve the use of Agri-environment Measures within the CAP to reduce nutrient runoff.*

The signatories of the BSAP agreed to periodically review the data and targets that serve as a basis for the Eutrophication actions. At the 2010 ministerial Meeting, the Contracting Parties agreed to carry out a review of the eutrophication targets and to evaluate the need for additional measures at the 2013 ministerial Meeting. A process to do so is under-way[8] but is impeded by individual countries' reluctance to accept stricter targets.

- *All countries must adopt the proposed revised targets, inputs and country-wise allocations and implement effective measures to reach these targets and allocations.*

[8] Through HELCOM's development of revised Maximum Allowable Inputs (MAI) and new Country Allocated Reduction Targets (CART) of the BSAP.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

The Baltic Sea is often referred to as one of the most polluted seas in the world. It has had an extensive exposure to chemicals since the beginning of industrialization in the region.

The brackish environment and the long timeframe required for water exchange in the Baltic Sea, more than 30 years, make it uniquely vulnerable to the negative effects of hazardous substances.

Hazardous Substances originate from different sources, including industries and municipal wastewater treatment plants, runoff from agricultural land, shipping and other activities at sea, as well as airborne contaminants from all types of combustion sources.

According to HELCOM, all open-sea areas of the Baltic Sea are disturbed by hazardous substances and very few coastal areas have been classified as undisturbed. A large variety of different substances exceed the threshold levels – most common are PCBs, DDT/DDE, cadmium, lead, TBT and cesium-137. Mercury also exceeds threshold levels in some areas as well as dioxins, furans and brominated substances.

What was promised

The overall HELCOM BSAP goal for this chapter is to achieve a Baltic Sea with life undisturbed by hazardous Substances, and the goal is specified through four ecological objectives:

- Concentrations of hazardous substances close to natural levels
- All fish safe to eat
- Healthy wildlife
- Radioactivity at pre-Chernobyl level

As many of the threats from hazardous substances are new, or not fully investigated, the BSAP contains actions aimed at both assessments and reductions of emissions and their consequences. The report has assessed several actions to restrict the use of several substances, including heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

PHOTO: ANDRÉ DE LOISTED

Every day, new chemicals, pharmaceuticals and other products are manufactured, consumed and eventually released, through sewage pipes and waterways, into the Baltic Sea.

What has been done

All the reviewed actions have deadlines that have already passed. Therefore, with the exception of two (National programmes and ratification of the Stockholm POPs Convention), the implementation of all actions is late.

The lack of decisive action to reduce emissions of dioxins is particularly alarming – emissions of these long-lived hazardous substances have actually *increased* in the period from 2001 to 2010![9]

[9] HELCOM Baltic Sea Environment Fact Sheets for 2012.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES – What has been done

BSAP agreement	Action	Dead-line	DE	DK	EE	FI	LT	LV	PL	RU	SE
H-5	National programmes to reduce pollution by hazardous substances	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-1, H-2	Reduction of dioxins and other hazardous substances from small scale combustion	2008	0	0	-3	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	0
H-7, H-8	Screening of occurrence and sources of hazardous substances	2009	0	-3	-2	0	0	-2	-2	-2	-2
H-10, H-11	Establishment of chemical product registers	2010	-2	0	-2	0	0	-2	-2	-2	0
H-14, H-12, H-13	Use restrictions, substitutions and/or bans on priority substances	2010	0	-3	-2	0	-2	-2	-2	-2	0
H-15	Assess possibility of restrictions for cadmium content in fertilisers	2009	0	0	-2	0	-3	0	-2	0	0
H-16	Strict restrictions on mercury in products and from processes	2010	-2	-3	-2	0	0	-2	-2	-2	0
H-21	Ratification of Stockholm POPs Convention	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total score			**-4**	**-9**	**-13**	**-2**	**-8**	**-11**	**-13**	**-11**	**-2**

What needs to be done

Reporting on the Hazardous Substances segment is insufficient and countries may in reality have done more than what is apparent in their reporting.

- *Countries must submit complete, transparent and timely reporting to the HELCOM secretariat. The reports must be made publicly available.*

Although there is progress on several fronts, actions on Hazardous Substances have some of the lowest scores in this evaluation.

- *All Contracting Parties must promptly implement all agreed actions to minimize the effects of Hazardous Substances in the Baltic Sea.*

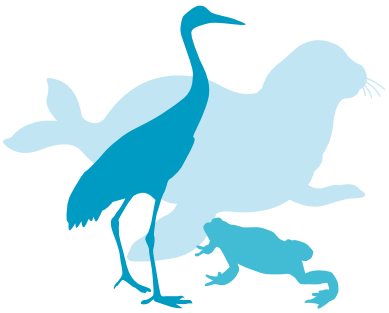
Every day, new chemicals, pharmaceuticals and other products are manufactured, consumed and eventually released, through sewage pipes and waterways, into the Baltic Sea. We are only beginning to understand the influence these substances have on the ecosystem.

- *HELCOM Contracting Parties should take urgent measures to control and limit the use of and emissions to the sea of the vast range of new and unknown chemical substances.*

PHOTO: JAN VAN DE KAM / WWF

BIODIVERSITY

The Baltic Sea is inherently low in species, and therefore the protection of biodiversity is central to ensure the stability of the ecosystem, its structures, functions and ecological processes.



Economic growth and the expansion of agriculture, maritime transport, offshore wind farms and other human activities can be positive developments but may put a further stress on the ecosystems of the Baltic Sea in the near future and studies of future trends show that maritime activities are likely to expand substantially over the next 20 years.[10]

What was promised

The BSAP aims at aligning the goal "favourable conservation status of marine biodiversity" with corresponding goals and objectives of already existing regulations that also address biodiversity and nature conservation. In accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity, HELCOM's overall goal of a favourable conservation status of Baltic Sea biodiversity is described by the following three ecological objectives by 2021:

- Natural marine and coastal landscapes
- Thriving and balanced communities of plants and animals
- Viable populations of species

What has been done

4/19

ONLY FOUR OUT OF THE 19 ACTIONS ON BIODIVERSITY THAT ARE REVIEWED HERE HAVE BEEN COMPLETED ON TIME

Only four out of the 19 actions on Biodiversity that are reviewed here have been completed on time and most of these are actions that have been implemented jointly by the HELCOM countries. Nine actions are behind schedule and six have later deadlines.

Delivery on actions related to fisheries policy is in some cases impeded by limitations of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), making progress by individual countries impossible. Differences in scoring on these actions are mainly due to differences in reporting.

Some actions have such broad objectives that it will be difficult to estimate if the objective is really met (e.g. action B10-11: *The Baltic Sea shall become a model of good management of human activities; and recommend that all fisheries management be developed and implemented based at the beginning on the Ecosystem Approach in order to enhance the balance between the sustainable use and protection of marine natural resources."*)

[10] Future Trends in the Baltic Sea, WWF 2010.

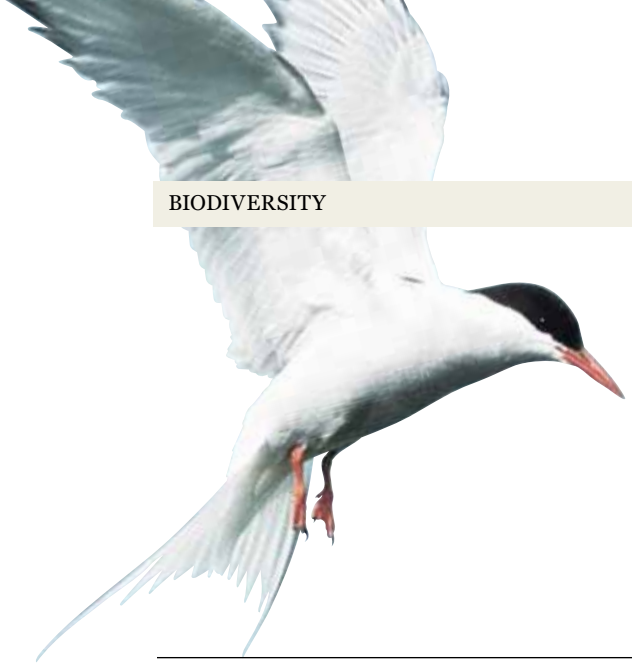


PHOTO: GERMUND SELLGREN

BIODIVERSITY – What has been done

BSAP agreement	Action	Dead-line	DE	DK	EE	FI	LT	LV	PL	RU	SE
B-1, B-2, B-3	Develop marine spatial planning principles	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-1, B-2, B-3	Broad-scale, cross-sectoral, marine spatial planning principles	2012	-2	-2	-2	-2	-3	-2	-2	-2	-2
B-4	Designation of HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA)	2010	-2	-3	-2	-2	-2	-3	0	-2	-3
B-5.a	Assessment of ecological coherence of the BSPA/MPA network	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-5.b	Management plans for BSPAs	2010	-2	-3	-2	-2	-2	-3	0	-2	-3
B-7.b	Producing a comprehensive HELCOM Red list of Baltic Sea species	2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-7.f	Assessment of the conservation status of non-commercial fish species	2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-7.g	Coordinated reporting system on harbour porpoise	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-7.i	Effective monitoring and reporting systems for by-caught birds and mammals	2021	-1	0	1	1	-1	1	0	-1	-1
B-8	Management measures for fisheries inside marine protected areas	2010	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3	-3	-2	-3	-3
B-10, B-11	Baltic Sea a model of good fishery management based on ecosystem approach	2021	-1	0	0	0	-1	0	0	-1	-1
B-12	Populations of commercially exploited fish species within safe biological limits	2021	-1	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
B-13.a	Long-Term Management Plans for commercially exploited fish species	2010	-3	-2	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3	-3	-3
B-13.b	Minimisation of by-catch of harbour porpoises etc	2012	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-3	-2	-3	-2
B-14.a	Elimination of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fisheries	"Now"	-3	0	0	-3	-3	0	-3	-3	-3
B-14.b, B-15	Implementation of existing long-term plans for cod and eel	2012	-2	0	0	0	-2	-2	-2	-3	-3
B-17	Additional fisheries measures such as national programmes for eel stocks	2021	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-1	-1
B-21.a	Promote the ecosystem-based management of coastal fisheries	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B-21.b, B-21.c	Development of long-term management plans for fish	2012	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Total score			**-22**	**-15**	**-13**	**-15**	**-24**	**-18**	**-18**	**-28**	**-28**

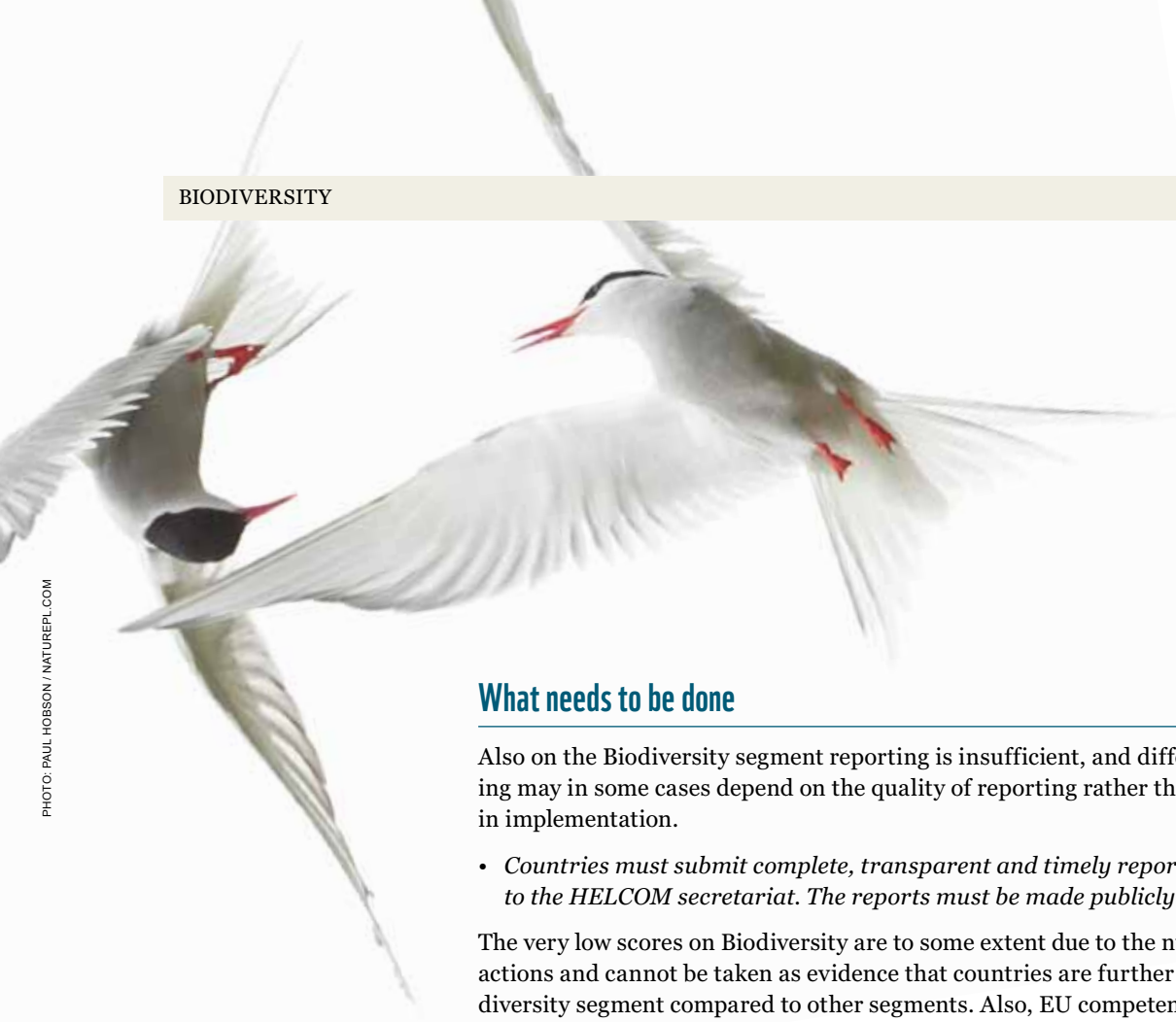


PHOTO: PAUL HOBSON / NATUREPL.COM

What needs to be done

Also on the Biodiversity segment reporting is insufficient, and differences in the scoring may in some cases depend on the quality of reporting rather than on differences in implementation.

- *Countries must submit complete, transparent and timely reporting to the HELCOM secretariat. The reports must be made publicly available.*

The very low scores on Biodiversity are to some extent due to the number of assessed actions and cannot be taken as evidence that countries are further behind on the Biodiversity segment compared to other segments. Also, EU competencies on fisheries policy have in some cases prevented countries from implementing appropriate action. Still, the assessment shows a clear lack of ambition and leadership to protect the Biodiversity of the Baltic Sea.

- *All Contracting Parties must promptly implement all agreed actions to conserve Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea.*

Over-fishing is, next to eutrophication, seen as the biggest threat to the Baltic Sea marine ecosystem. Establishing Long Term Management Plans (LTMPs) for all commercial fish stocks in the Baltic Sea was a commitment of the BSAP to be completed by 2010. Still, progress is very slow and fish stocks that lack long-term management plans, for example the Baltic Sea salmon, are in deep trouble.

- *Use the strongest provisions possible within the CFP to ensure sustainable fisheries, including the establishment of Long-Term Management Plans at regional level and other measures aiming at recovering or maintain all Baltic fish stocks at or above levels that can produce Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY).*

Over-fishing is, next to eutrophication, seen as the biggest threat to the Baltic Sea marine ecosystem.

The European eel stock is at a historical minimum and continues to decline. Overfishing combined with habitat alteration, including barriers to eel passage and deterioration of water quality, contribute to the present situation. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has repeatedly recommended that all anthropogenic impacts should be reduced to as close to zero as possible. Only with very radical measures can the eel population of the Baltic Sea be saved.

- *The BSAP must strengthen its measures to conserve the European eel stock and ban all directed fishing on eel.*

The establishment of ecologically coherent networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) is an important tool for protecting biodiversity. Still, implementation of actions to designate and manage marine protected areas is sorely behind schedule.

- *Countries must urgently implement measures to complete the development of a well-managed, ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas complete with individual management plans.*

PHOTO: BERGAMONT

MARITIME ACTIVITIES

The Baltic Sea is one of the busiest seas in the world and shipping traffic is predicted to more than double in the next 20 years. This heavy traffic is being carried out within narrow straits and in shallow water, covered with ice for a long period, making the Baltic Sea a difficult area to navigate and leading to an increased risk of shipping incidents.

The main negative environmental effects of shipping and other activities at sea include pollution to the air, illegal and accidental discharge of oil, hazardous substances and other wastes, and introduction of alien organisms via ships' ballast water and hulls.

What was promised

The strategic goal of HELCOM is to have maritime activities in the Baltic Sea carried out in an environmentally friendly way. To reach this goal the following eight management objectives, indicating areas of major importance, have been agreed upon:

- Enforcement of international regulations - No illegal discharges
- Safe maritime traffic without accidental pollution
- Efficient emergency and response capability
- Minimum sewage pollution from ships
- No introductions of alien species from ships
- Minimum air pollution from ships
- Zero discharges from offshore platforms
- Minimum threats from offshore installations

The BSAP segment on Maritime Activities includes actions to introduce and implement a number of international conventions as well as improved systems for monitoring, surveillance and response.

What has been done

2/3

TWO OUT OF THREE RATIFICATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

Many of the actions in the Maritime Activities segment are joint actions and will therefore not show any difference in the scoring between countries. Six actions have been completed on time, four are behind schedule and ten have later deadlines.

Two out of three ratifications of international conventions have been made (the AFS Convention and the Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78 Convention). The Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) is to be ratified *"preferably by 2010, but in all cases not later than 2013"*. So far, only Denmark, Russia and Sweden have ratified this convention.

The agreed joint submissions to IMO on sulphur emissions (SOx) and nutrient discharges have been completed but the status of the submission on nitrous oxides (NOx) remains highly unclear.

One reason for the relatively positive progress in the Maritime Activities segment is that seven out of the analysed twenty actions do not have set deadlines. The deadlines have therefore been assumed to be 2021, resulting in the majority of these actions being "in progress".

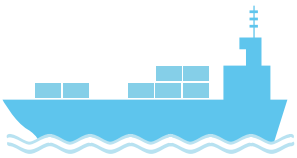
What needs to be done

Many of the actions in this segment have no agreed deadlines, discouraging a quick implementation.

- *HELCOM Contracting Parties should ensure that all BSAP actions have clear and progressive deadlines.*

The lack of ambition and leadership on ratification of the BWMC and on agreeing a joint submission on a Baltic Sea NECA are stalling progress on the BSAP.

- *The remaining countries must act to ratify the Ballast Water Management Convention.*
- *Contracting Parties should urgently agree a joint submission on a Baltic Sea NECA to the IMO.*



The remaining countries must act to ratify the Ballast Water Management Convention.

MARITIME ACTIVITIES – What has been done

BSAP agreement	Action	Dead-line	DE	DK	EE	FI	LT	LV	PL	RU	SE
M-2, M-3, M-4	Ratification of the AFS Convention	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-6, M-14	Extend monitoring of non-compliant ships using AIS	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-7	Ratification of Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78 Convention	2010	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-39	Joint SECA submissions to IMO	2008	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-39	Joint NECA submissions to IMO	2011	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
M-33	Joint submission to IMO on nutrient discharges in sewage	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-34, M-11	Improvements in the availability of port reception facilities for sewage	2015	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-10	Extension of “no-special-fee” to cover also waste caught in fishing nets	2021	0	0	-1	-1	-1	1	0	1	1
M-37	Ratification the Ballast Water Man-agement Convention (BWMC)	2013	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
M-37	List of non-indigenous, cryptogenic and harmful native species (BWMC)	2010	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
M-37	Baseline surveys of prevailing environmental conditions in major ports (BWMC)	2008	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
M-37	Request vessels to conduct ballast water exchange (BWMC)	2021	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
M-37	Develop criteria risk scenarios for ballast water management options (BWMC)	2009	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-37	Adjust HELCOM monitoring programme for BWMC	2010	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
M-32	Integrating oiled wildlife response into response/contingency planning	2021	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-21, M-22	Strengthening sub-regional cooperation in response field	2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-31, M-22	Develop best practices for shoreline response	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-8, M-13	Harmonized aerial and satellite surveillance in the whole Baltic Sea	2021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M-41	Development of the list on “red” and “black” chemicals	2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total score			**-7**	**-7**	**-8**	**-8**	**-8**	**-6**	**-7**	**-5**	**-5**

PHOTO: GERMUND SELLGREN

METHODOLOGY

All the data on country performance was collected by Gaia Consulting Oy, on commission by WWF, using the official reporting submitted to the HELCOM secretariat by each Contracting Party, including Country Reports, HELCOM Index Tables, and National Implementation Programmes.

56 key actions (out of 113 in total[11]) were evaluated. The assessed actions were chosen based on three criteria:

- Relevance and importance for the health and recovery of the Baltic Sea
- Measurability
- Ability to contribute to a broad and encompassing assessment of the current status of the BSAP

Timely and adequate reporting is key to the monitoring and success of the BSAP. For the sake of this report, the lack of reporting has been treated equal to failure to implement an action. *Thus, the assessment is only based on what Contracting Parties had actually reported to the HELCOM secretariat before 1 June 2013*. This means that some actions may have been implemented by some countries, but if they are not reported to the HELCOM secretariat, the country has still received a low score.

When this report was prepared, countries had been given a final deadline of 28 February to report their progress to the HELCOM secretariat. This assessment has accepted later reporting, but actions reported after 1 June are not reflected here.

The tables in the previous sections list those actions that have been assessed. Each number in the "BSAP agreement" column each refers to an agreement made in the BSAP as listed in the HELCOM Index Tables. Sometimes a deadline for an agreed action has been delayed. Each year in the "Deadline" column refers to the latest agreed deadline at the time of writing of this report.

11 The original "BSAP index" listed 113 actions. Some actions have been added since and some actions have been divided differently in some versions of the index table.

PHOTO: RODHO

Scoring

The BSAP actions are divided in four main "segments": Eutrophication, Hazardous Substances, Biodiversity, and Maritime Activities. This assessment follows the same divisions in analysing the outcomes to date.

Each action has been given a score based on the level of, and deadline for, implementation. The scoring has been designed so that a timely implementation will produce a *score of zero*. Implementation ahead of time will produce a *positive score*, while delays in implementation, or no implementation at all, will produce a *negative score*. Failure to meet already passed deadlines will produce even lower scores.

Scoring

Deadline not passed yet:		Deadline already passed:	
1	Action implemented ahead of time	0	Action implemented
0	Implementation in progress	-2	Implementation in progress
-1	No action or unreported	-3	No action or unreported

It should be noted that there is only one score for "Implementation in progress". This means that actions that are in the very early stages of implementation are given the same score as an action that is nearly finished.

The colours of the total scores for each segment and for the summary of all segments are based on the average score for each country. A country that on average is ahead on its actions would have been coloured green; actions implemented on time will produce yellow; and a country that is behind schedule is red.

Interpretation of colour scales

Colour	Interpretation	Grade
	Ahead of schedule	"Good"
	On schedule	"Acceptable"
	Behind schedule	"Not acceptable"

List of Acronyms

AFS Convention – Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling System on Ships Convention

AIS – Automatic Identification System

BSAP – Baltic Sea Action Plan

BSPA – Baltic Sea Protected Area

BWM – Ballast Water Management

CAP – Common Agriculture Policy

CFP – Common Fisheries Policy

DDE – Dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene

DDT – Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane

EEZ – Exclusive Economic Zone

GHS – Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

HELCOM – Helsinki Commission (Baltic Marine Protection)

EUSBSR – EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

HNS – Hazardous and Noxious Substances

ICES – International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

IMO – International Maritime Organization

ISUM – Integrated Sea Use Management

LTMP – Long-term Management Plan

MPA – Marine Protected Areas

MSP – Maritime Spatial Planning

MSFD – Marine Strategy Framework Directive

OPRC – HNS – Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Co-operation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances

PCB – Polychlorinated biphenyls

POP – Persistent Organic Pollutants

RBMP – River Based Management Plan

SRS – Ship Reporting System

TBT – Tributyltin

VASAB – Visions and Strategies around the Baltic

WFD – Water Framework Directive

WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

The following organizations are lead partners within the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme:

WWF Finland (www.wwf.fi)

WWF Germany (www.wwf.de)

WWF Poland (www.wwf.pl)

WWF Sweden (www.wwf.se)

Baltic Fund for Nature (Russia – www.bfn.org.ru)

Estonian Fund for Nature (www.elfond.ee)

Lithuanian Fund for Nature (www.glis.lt)

and **Pasaules Dabas Fonds** (Latvia – www.pdf.lv)

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WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme

DELIVERING RESULTS

We are an active and effective change agent for the conservation and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea

COOPERATION

We promote constructive interactions to create awareness, spread ideas and stimulate discussion among stakeholders and partners

REGIONAL NETWORK

We represent the largest membership network in the region and are present in every country surrounding the Baltic Sea

INFLUENCE REGIONAL POLICY

We are a diligent watchdog that monitors how governments manage our common resource, the Baltic Sea

WWF

Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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