

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Economic and Social Analyses

Approved via correspondence by WG GEAR in December 2023

Purpose

Economic and social analyses (ESA) are a crucial tool for making informed decisions that protect and sustainably use the marine environment to secure the benefits for both society and environment. The overall aim of the expert group is to enhance regional cooperation on the economic and social analyses related to the Baltic Sea marine environment. The expert group will serve as a platform for discussion and information exchange on ongoing and planned ESA work throughout the region, 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.

Duties

The duties of the expert group are:

- Develop and agree on common principles for regional economic and social analyses.
- Secure continuation and develop institutional memory of national and regional economic and social analyses to enable improved integration of research outcomes from the Baltic Sea region.
- Engage with relevant projects to identify and utilize valuable ESA research and resources and identify potential knowledge gaps that could be filled through the work of the HELCOM community.
- Engage with peer groups such as the European Commission's Working Group on Programmes of Measures, Economic and Social Analysis (WG POMESA) and OSPAR's Intersessional Correspondence Group on Economic and Social analyses (ICG-ESA) to exchange experiences and best practices and contribute to coordination and standardization of approaches.
- Cooperate with relevant HELCOM groups for implementing tasks where multidisciplinary expertise and approaches are needed.

Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes of the work conducted in the frame HELCOM Expert Group on Economic and Social Analyses are detailed in the 2-year workplan of the group, approved by the GEAR Working Group.

Organization of work

The expert group 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 may also be invited to meetings. The group will cater for cross-sectorial expertise to carry out the tasks as needed.

The expert group will function under and receive guidance from the HELCOM GEAR Working Group.

The mode of work for the expert group will be mainly via correspondence and online meetings, with physical meetings being organized as needed, preferably back-to-back with other relevant meetings or events. A Chair for the group will be elected by the members of the group for a two-year period. The maximum mandate period for a Group Chair should be three consecutive mandate periods, consisting of two years per period, resulting in a maximum consecutive mandate period of six years. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the expert group.

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