
Attachment 2

HELCOM Data and Information Strategy

1. Principles

1.1 The HELCOM data and information activities should make possible reliable assessment as described in the HELCOM Assessment system. The HELCOM data and information activities should facilitate access of the general public to environmental information and this is done e.g. by making spatial data and information available in the HELCOM Map and Data Service on the [HELCOM web page](#).

1.2 In order to avoid duplication of reporting by the HELCOM Contracting Parties the HELCOM data activities should be compatible with those of other international organizations such as ICES and data activities of the European Union, to the fullest extent possible.

1.3 Basic activities in the HELCOM data and information management system should include:

- a) using agreed formats and up-to-date tools for data exchange;
- b) implementing relevant quality control and validation procedures
- c) making data and information available using harmonized standards and practices, following the Aarhus Convention and recommendations and guidelines and standards reflected in the INSPIRE directive,
- d) presenting data and information in suitable ways for indicator reports as well as thematic and holistic assessments to support policy formulation and decision-making.

2. Collection of data

2.1 HELCOM data and information system rely on data derived from publicly funded monitoring programmes by the Contracting Parties but the Contracting Parties may also report data collected by private bodies, e.g. compliance monitoring related to environmental permitting.

2.2 HELCOM follows and influences relevant international marine-related monitoring and assessment programmes and data sharing and management initiatives at regional, European, and global levels and aims to avoid any duplication of data reporting and collection e.g. by facilitating the use of shared environmental information systems.

2.3 HELCOM contributes with its data and information system to availability of high-quality spatial information relevant to Maritime Spatial Planning on status of the marine environment, pressures and human activities.

3. Data handling

3.1 The HELCOM data will be handled by data centre(s), preferably thematic data centres, working in cooperation with national data providers and on contractual agreement with HELCOM. The data centres will be responsible for ensuring that

- a) adequate data exchange formats, data handling and access procedures are prepared and updated, as necessary,
- b) relevant quality control and validation procedures are in place including quality flagging of data,
- c) adequate inventories and compilations are prepared of the data sets, and
- d) HELCOM data product requirements are met.

3.2 The role of national institutions as data providers, and capacity building at the national level should be given a priority attention.

4. Access to data and information

4.1 All HELCOM monitoring data should be openly accessible online via web services or downloading functionality using common standards and ensuring that relevant quality control and validation procedures are implemented.

4.2 Access to data contained in working documents presented to HELCOM or its subsidiary bodies can be restricted.