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Background

The structure of the updated BSAP, including its goals and objectives, has been discussed at HOD 55-2018, HOD 56-2019 and HOD 57-2019 resulting in a provisional agreement to adjust the structure and on a set of new and revised objectives. HOD 56-2019 also supported that the operative sections of the updated BSAP should be shaped around the ecological objectives, management objectives and the associated actions for the achievement of the BSAP goals (Outcome, para 2.23).

HOD 57-2019 also discussed the style of writing of the updated BSAP. Accordingly, the updated BSAP should be a relatively short document written in a straightforward way but should at the same time provide sufficient supporting information to facilitate future follow-up of implementation (Outcome, para 3.27-3.28). Aspirations will therefore be differentiated from concrete actions and the operative sections will more clearly present the plan for action. Detailed information and supporting information on the actions will be made available as supplementary material.

This document summarizes the considerations and agreements so far on the outline, content and style of the updated BSAP. The provisional agreement on the structure and objectives for the updated BSAP are included in Annex 3.

The document also includes Annex 4 listing MSP related synopses that propose measures for the new BSAP. These were submitted to support the selection of new measures and actions for the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan. The preparation of synopses has followed a common template with the aim to summarize existing information in a format that can be used as background information for Working Group meetings and BSAP UP workshops. According to the BSAP workplan, thee Working Groups have to review the synopses in the preparation for the BSAP workshops that will be held in May 2020. The annex 4 to this document includes the three submitted synopses related to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the document when discuss reflection of MSP in the updated BSAP and update of the MSP Roadmap.

The Meeting is further invited to make technical review of the synopses based on the common guidance (see annex 4).

Outline of the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan

The outline of the updated BSAP is based on three main components as further detailed below:

1) Preamble, consisting of one overarching pre-amble and an introductory passage for each segment,
2) Operative sections for each segment, including the plan for action,
3) Supplementary information to the agreed actions.

1) Preamble

Overarching preamble

The preamble of the BSAP will address issues that cut across the segments. HOD 55-2018 agreed that the preamble should include overarching principles and higher-level aims from the Helsinki Convention, UN SDGs and other relevant policies, for example:

- Implementation based on ecosystem approach;
- Reach good environmental status;
- Be based on precautionary principle;
- Sustainable consumption and production;
- Clean and environmentally sound technologies;
- Efficient use of natural resources;
- Integration of climate change into policies.

Climate change will also be addressed as a key component of the preamble.

Introductory passage for each segment

In the current BSAP text of preambular character is included under the operative section for each segment. HOD 57-2019 supported that the updated BSAP will instead have layered preamble that will also include segment-specific introductory text. Such text could focus on aspirations and strategic decision for the respective segment and also recall HELCOM recommendations and other relevant legislation associated to the respective segment.

With the more strategic and higher level ambitions being expressed in introductory passages, the operative sections will focus on the plan for action.

2) Operative sections for each segment

Operative sections, including the agreed actions, will be presented for each segment and associated goal of the updated BSAP:

- Biodiversity: Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient
- Eutrophication: Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication
- Hazardous substances and litter: Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter
- Sea-based activities, including maritime issues: Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities

A preliminary overview of the pressures and activities that are anticipated to be addressed through actions under each segment is included in Annex 1. It still remains to be agreed if there should be separate sections for e.g. monitoring and assessment, awareness raising, financing, such as in the current BSAP, or whether these aspects should be addressed under the respective segment as relevant.

Each operative section will be initiated by a brief description of the state of the Baltic Sea based on the latest HELCOM assessments (Outcome HOD 56-2019, para 2.23). This will be followed by an account of the HELCOM

ecological objectives, representing the desired state of the environment or the acceptable level of pressure. The agreed actions will be sorted as appropriate according to the new and revised HELCOM objectives.

With regard to the formulation of actions, to facilitate the reading and to clearly outline the plan for action the following was agreed by HOD 57-2019:

- Initiating words (WE AGREE, WE PROMOTE) will not be used in the operative segments.
- More detailed information on actions such as any lengthier descriptions of rationale behind them and potential effects of their implementation is to be provide as supplementary material (see also section3);
- Measures that can contribute directly to improving the state of the Baltic Sea will be presented separate from those actions that are aimed at supporting implementation of actions or other HELCOM activities (e.g. actions related to databases, mapping, assessments, guidelines).
- Actions should be formulated as concrete as possible in terms of aim or output and should specify a target year for implementation.

With this approach the operative sections will include a straightforward plan of actions to be followed up by future reporting, structured according to the objectives and a common outline for each segment.

3) Supplementary material

In addition to the main BSAP document additional information and guidance for future assessment of implementation can be included as supplementary material. Such information could summarize the agreed actions and also include e.g.:

- rationale behind actions,
- tentative information on effect of actions,
- if feasible, indicators to follow-up the implementation of the action.

The last point, to agree on 'indicators' for when an action is to be considered as accomplished would greatly facilitate the future follow-up and reporting but will depend on availability of time. An example of how supplementary material could be collated in tabular form is provided in Annex 1. The supplementary material could also be provided in the form of fact sheets if more practicable.

Regional action plans (RAPs) for specific topics in the updated BSAP

Documents that are adopted alongside the updated BSAP, e.g. HELCOM Recommendations, roadmaps, topic specific action plans etc., will remain as separate documents and not merged with the main BSAP document. HOD 57-2019 however agreed that the updated BSAP should include strategic decisions and central points from the RAPs and that they could be adopted in the revised RAP on marine litter and the new RAP on underwater noise, which is under development. The Meeting underlined that the follow-up of the RAPs should also be established when they are adopted.

Drafting of the updated plan

HOD 57-2019 requested the Secretariat to prepare a first drafts of the pre-amble and the introductory text for the respective segment with regards to state of the environment. The Meeting furthermore agreed that lead countries should be identified for development of each segment of the BSAP update and that the Secretariat will support the drafting of these segments.

The proposal on actions for the updated BSAP will in 2020 continue to be developed by HELCOM Working Groups through the review existing actions and proposals on new actions to be considered at BSAP UP workshops in spring 2020 and further worked on at autumn meetings in 2020. The formulation of actions should consider the agreements outlined under sections 2 and 3 in this document.

Annex 1 Provisional structure of updated BSAP

Preliminary activity-pressure linkages based on mapping of land-based and sea-based activities vs proposed BSAP segments and the pressures they are causing; from document 2-4, HOD 56-2019. Goals have been updated based on outcome of HOD 57-2019. Verification of the lists will be carried out through information on main activities contribution to pressures collected through the analysis of sufficiency of measure.

Box 1. Eutrophication; input from land-based activities

Goal addressed:

- Baltic Sea unaffected by Eutrophication

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients and organic matter

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching the objectives for eutrophication is a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal and objectives for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for eutrophication.

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Urban land uses (e.g. stormwater)
- Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
- Aquaculture, land-based

Box 2. Hazardous substances and litter, input from land-based activities

Goal addressed:

- Baltic sea unaffected by Hazardous substances and litter

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching the objectives for hazardous substances and litter is a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for hazardous substances and litter.

Pressures addressed:

- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of litter

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions with regard to;

1) Input of hazardous substances:
- Agriculture (e.g. pesticides, pharmaceuticals)
- Forestry
- Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
- Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
- Production of energy (fossil fuel, nuclear)
- Transportation

2) Input of litter:
- Industrial uses (e.g. oil and gas refineries, industrial plants)
- Waste treatment and disposal (including waste water treatment)
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Urban uses (e.g. construction sites)
- Transportation (e.g. release from tires)

Box 3. Sea-based activities, including Maritime

Goal addressed:

- Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities

Cross-references with other segments:

- Reaching objectives for sea-based activities a necessity to meet the goal of a 'Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient'.
- Reaching the goal for sea-based activities is a requirement for reaching the goal for eutrophication and hazardous substances and litter.

Pressures addressed:

- Input of nutrients
- Input of hazardous substances
- Input of marine litter
- Loss and disturbance to the seabed
- Disturbance of species
- Extraction and mortality species (e.g. extraction of target species, incidental catches)
- Introduction of non-indigenous species
- Introduction of underwater noise

Tentative activities addressed by HELCOM actions:

- Shipping (e.g. transport and transport infrastructure)
- Production and transport of energy (e.g. operational wind farms, transmission cables)
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure and activities
- Extraction of living resources (e.g. fishing, hunting, marine plant extraction)
- Extraction of non-living resources (e.g. mineral extraction, oil and gas extraction)
- Restructuring of coastline and seabed morphology (e.g. dredging)
- Aquaculture, marine (including infrastructure)

Box 4. Biodiversity

Goal addressed:

- Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient

Cross-reference to other segments:

- A healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem is the ultimate objective of the Baltic Sea Action Plan against which its entire performance is measured[1].
- Achieving the goal of a "Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient" requires that the goals of all other segments are met.

Pressures addressed:

- Not applicable; human activities and associated pressures are addressed in other segments.

Tentative activities addressed:

- Marine Protected Areas
- Restoration of habitats
- Reintroduction of species
- Conservation and management plans

[1] Note that this sentence is a proposed rewrite of the what was written in the original document 2-4 to HOD 56-2019. Original text was: Biodiversity serves as a holistic controlling element for the performance of the whole Action Plan.

Annex 2. Example of supplementary information to the BSAP document

Actions to improve the state of the Baltic Sea, Eutrophication

Action	Target year	Rationale	Potential effect (if available)	Implemented by	Indicator for achievement
Implement recycling measure X	2027	Output from wastewater treatment plants is the second largest contribution to input nutrients to the Baltic Sea. Recycling of nutrients is furthermore…	The action is estimated to result in the reduction of input nitrogen and phosphorus to the Baltic Sea with X tonnes per year	Contracting Parties	Implementation of recycling measure X by Contracting Parties [further specification as relevant for the action]

Supporting actions, Eutrophication

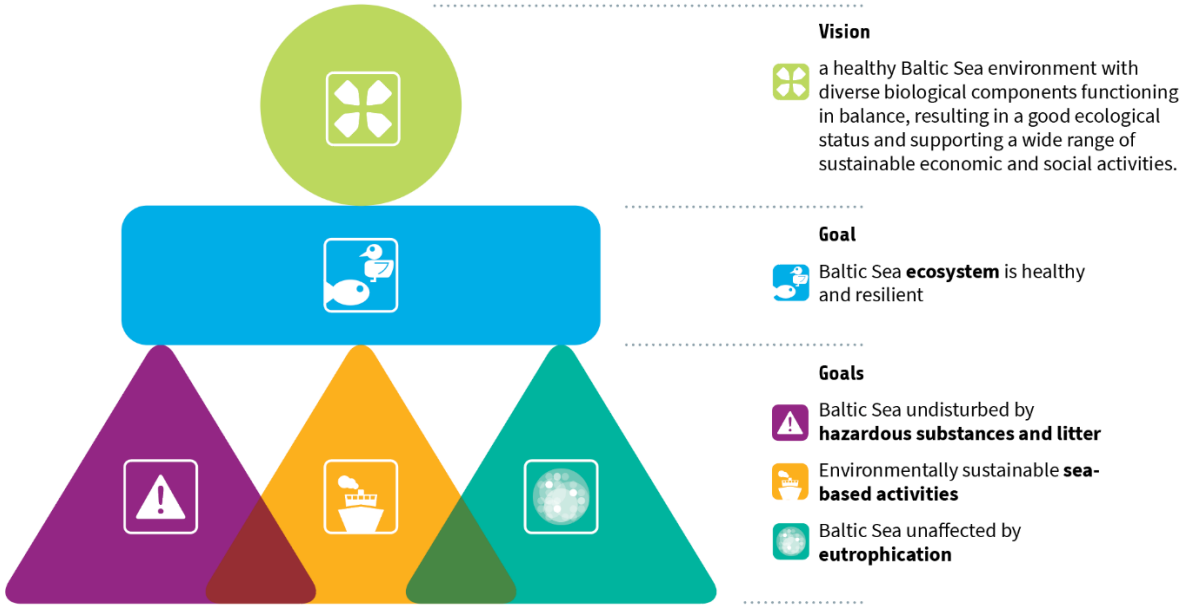
Action	Target year	Rationale	Implemented by	Indicator for achievement
Develop regional principles and a risk assessment framework to manage internal nutrient reserves	2022	Large amounts of nutrients have accumulated in the Baltic Sea during the past decades and the flux of in particular phosphorus may hinder the recovery of the Baltic Sea from eutrophication. To assess the potential management of internal nutrient reserves…	HELCOM	Agreed principles and risk assessment framework agreed in HELCOM

Annex 3. Provisional agreement on the structure and objectives of the updated BSAP.

Structure of updated BSAP

HOD 55-2018 agreed that the Vision of the current BSAP will remain in the updated BSAP and HOD 56-2019 agreed on a provisional adjustment to the BSAP structure to better reflect the topics that are currently addressed in HELCOM. The updated goals are illustrated in the figure below and include:

- to address litter primarily under the segment on hazardous substances and change the associated strategic goal to '*Baltic Sea unaffected by hazardous substances and litter'*;
- to include under the maritime segment a broader set of sea-based activities and change the associated strategic goal to '*Environmentally sustainable sea-based activities*'. The topics underwater noise and loss and disturbance of the seabed are primarily assigned to this segment as they mainly originate from activities that will be addressed under this segment.
- to revise the goal of the biodiversity segment to '*Baltic Sea ecosystem is healthy and resilient*'.



Tentative illustration of structure of the updated BSAP; work in progress.

Annex 4. MSP related synopses

Background

To support the selection of new measures and actions for the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan, an invitation to submit synopses on potential new HELCOM actions was put forward in spring 2019 with an indicative closing date by end of 2019. HELCOM 40-2019 agreed that such synopses could be submitted by the Contracting Parties, HELCOM subsidiary bodies, international projects and HELCOM Observers.

The preparation of synopses has followed a common template with the aim to summarize existing information in a format that can be used as background information for Working Group meetings and BSAP UP workshops. The template also required data and information on the effect of proposed measures so that their contribution to reaching good status can be estimated as part of the analysis of sufficiency of measures. References to scientific articles, project deliverables and/or reports has also been requested to justify the proposals. All of the MSP related synopses do not follow these requests.

According to the workplan for the BSAP update Working Groups are to review the synopses in the preparation for the BSAP workshops that will be held in May 2020. This document includes the submitted synopses related to the HELCOM-VASAB MSP Working Group.

It should also be noted the synopses could be considered also in connection to the update of the MSP roadmap.

In addition, the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference organized on 3 March 2020 discussed and commented the proposed synopses during the session on sea-based measures. In fact, the synopsis 3 presented in this document was initiated during the conference.

Synopsis 1

Title Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) applying an ecosystem-based approach to support BSAP-objectives and targets and contributing to sustainable sea-based activities
Submitted by: The Pan Baltic Scope Project
Description Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) applies an ecosystem-based approach to contribute to sustainable use of marine resources and the protection of the marine environment. MSP can thus support the achievement of the BSAP-goals and targets. MSP is a process and tool for spatial governance/steering of sea-based human activities. Through this steering MSP can influence anthropogenic pressures, pressures resulting from human activity, on marine habitats and species. MSP can also enhance nature conservation objectives, thereby supporting effective networks that extend beyond designated marine protected areas alone. In accordance with the EU's MSP directive the member states are preparing MSP plans latest in March 2021, which means that when the updated BSAP comes into force all Baltic Sea waters except for Russia are spatially planned. This can provide for a significant added value to implementation of also the BSAP.
Activity: MSP has potential to influence a number of activities including:

- Offshore structures (other than for oil/gas/renewables)Offshore structures (other than for oil/gas/renewables)
- Restructuring of seabed morphology (dredging, beach replenishment, sea-based deposit of dredged material)Restructuring of seabed morphology (dredging, beach replenishment, sea-based deposit of dredged material)
- Extraction of minerals (rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell)Extraction of minerals (rock, metal ores, gravel, sand, shell)
- Renewable energy generation (wind, wave and tidal power), including infrastructure Renewable energy generation (wind, wave and tidal power), including infrastructure
- Transmission of electricity and communications (cables)Transmission of electricity and communications (cables)
- Aquaculture – marine, including infrastructureAquaculture – marine, including infrastructure
- Transport – shipping (incl. anchoring, mooring)Transport – shipping (incl. anchoring, mooring)
- Transport – shipping infrastructure (harbours, ports, ship-building)Transport – shipping infrastructure (harbours, ports, ship-building)
- Urban uses (land use)Urban uses (land use)
- Tourism and leisure infrastructure (piers, marinas)Tourism and leisure infrastructure (piers, marinas)

Pressures:

MSP has potential to influence a number of pressures, most of them regulated by law. Climate change should be added.

- Disturbance of species: Visual, presence, boating, recreational activities, above-water noiseDisturbance of species: Visual, presence, boating, recreational activities, above-water noise
- Disturbance of species: Other (e.g. barriers, collission)Disturbance of species: Other (e.g. barriers, collission)
- Extraction of target fish and shellfish species and incidental fish catchesExtraction of target fish and shellfish species and incidental fish catches
- Physical disturbance to seabed (temporary or reversible and recovers within 12 y)Physical disturbance to seabed (temporary or reversible and recovers within 12 y)
- Physical loss (due to permanent change of seabed substrate or morphology and to extraction of seabed substrate)Physical loss (due to permanent change of seabed substrate or morphology and to extraction of seabed substrate)
- Changes to hydrological conditionsChanges to hydrological conditions
- Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute eventsInput of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
- Input of anthropogenic sound (impulsive, continuous)Input of anthropogenic sound (impulsive, continuous)
- Input of other forms of energy (including electromagnetic fields, light and heat)Input of other forms of energy (including electromagnetic fields, light and heat)
- Loss of, or change to, natural biological communities due to cultivation of animal or plant speciesLoss of, or change to, natural biological communities due to cultivation of animal or plant species

State:

MSP has potential to impact activities affecting pressures affecting the state of the marine environment, including:

- Seabed habitatsSeabed habitats
- Pelagic habitatsOther
- BirdsBirds
- MammalsMammals
- FishFish
- Red listed species and habitatsRed listed species and habitats
- Hazardous substancesHazardous substances
- NoiseNoise

Choose an item.

Extent of impact

The application of MSP is carried out at the national level while coordination is carried out at the Baltic wide scale. Scale varies between contracting parties. Interaction between national, regional and local planning may also be relevant depending on the planning context.

All Baltic Sea countries except Russia have their marine waters spatially planned by March 2021. This means that when the updated BSAP comes into force, this measure covers almost the whole Baltic Sea waters with the limitations in some coastal waters.

Effectiveness of measure

MSP, offers the potential for a holistic spatial planning approach that can steer or guide future uses of sea areas. MSP will influence the spatial distribution and locations of wide range of sea based activities, many of which may have environmental impacts. It is hence essential that MSP as a governance tool is used in line with BSAP-goals and targets, as well as other relevant environmental objectives. MSP is a relatively new form of coordinating the marine sectors activities. Few practical examples of how MSP has contributed to sustainable use are available.

Cost, cost-effectiveness of measure:

MSP is already carried out by contracting parties. How MSP is carried out effectively is a significant factor in the future. MSP, applying an ecosystem-based approach, will contribute to long term cost-effectiveness and likely towards supporting Good Environmental Status. Additional costs may relate to development of planning evidence, cost for staff involved in environmental integration in MSP, costs related to impact assessments or costs related to trade-offs between uses.

Feasibility:

Ecosystem based MSP is feasible and a formal cooperation procedure is established in the BSR through the HELCOM-VASAB MSP working group. Common guidelines on ecosystem based MSP are agreed.

Follow-up of measure:

Criteria for follow up have to be developed. The issue of follow up is included in the HELCOM/VASAB MSP work group’s workplan.

Background material:

Information is available on the Pan Baltic Scope project website: www.panbalticscope.eu

Particularly relevant information on green infrastructure and cumulative assessments in MSP, monitoring and evaluation, Ecosystem-Based MSP-handbook and guidance including Strategic Environmental Assessment and economic and social analysis. In addition to recommendations on HELCOM/VASAB MSP WG EBA guidelines revision and an EBA in MSP and SEA inclusive handbook.

References

- www.panbalticscope.eu
- Guideline for the implementation of ecosystem-based approach in MSP in the Baltic Sea area, HELCOM and VASAB 2016
- HELCOM RECOMMENDATION 24/10 IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND MARITIME SPATIAL PLANNING IN THE BALTIC SEA AREA https://helcom.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Rec-24-10-R.pdf

Synopsis 2

Title

Areas around windfarms as potential refugia

Submitted by:

ACTION Project and associated HELCOM ACTION WP2.2 workshop

Description of measure

Maintain areas around windfarm construction free from fishing activities, particularly those impacting the seafloor, to support benthic habitats and communities and the associated food web. The role of such areas, particularly within a broader network of benthic habitats or protected zones, should be regulated and researched to understand the potential benefit in supporting Good Environmental Status. Construction of windfarms create an initial and often immediate impact on the benthic habitats, the footprint of the structures clearly creating a loss of habitat. These areas, however, may subsequently attract and provide refugia for species, mobile (e.g., pelagic) and more sedentary (e.g., benthic species). In addition, the new constructions provided by hard structures could perceivably represent habitat for certain species associated with hard substrates. More significantly, these areas may represent important staging points for certain species and the associated food webs, and processes linked with them. These areas should be tightly regulated to prevent activities (e.g., prevention of fishing or shipping) that cause disturbance of the seafloor and pelagic habitats (and associated biota), and the biodiversity and status of these zones should be monitored and researched to fully understand their potential contribution to Good Environmental Status in the Baltic Sea region.

Activity:

- Fish and shellfish harvesting (bottom-touching towed gears, professional, recreational)
- Multiple other activities also relevant

Pressure:

- Physical loss (due to permanent change of seabed substrate or morphology and to extraction of seabed substrate)
- Physical disturbance to seabed (temporary or reversible and recovers within 12 y)

State:

- Seabed habitats
- Pelagic habitats

Extent of impact:

Local in most direct sense but with broader regional importance (e.g. refugia and reference areas).

Follow-up of measure:

The overall impacts could be encapsulated with existing (under development) assessments, though focussed assessment on reference areas would likely be valuable.

Synopsis 3

Title

A holistic systems perspective for all HELCOM BSAP measures

Submitted by:

During the HELCOM Stakeholder Conference by Andrea Morf from NordRegio and further developed during the session on Sea-based measures

Description of measure

The synopsis proposes an integrative, holistic approach for thinking of the whole BSAP with a special reference to spatially differentiated MSP-like approach.

Departing in:

- Integrative Coastal and Ocean Management and marine spatial planning thinking
- Land-sea interactions both ways
- both strategic & general and specific & managerial
- Analytical systems perspective to understand and describe the management issues
- Continous general principles
- Regularly revised measures
- Regularly revised data collection and checklists

Implying:

- Social-ecological systems view
- Differentiated in time and space (aware of 4-dimensional time-space)
    - Including past and future needs
    - Scale sensitivity
- Cross-sectoral
- Multi-level governance
- Continuous participatory process - dialogue/integrative societal debate and learning
    - Adaptive/agile management/constant checking and learning
    - Evaluation
    - Knowledge and learning - group/level specific communication (facilitation of learning)