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OECMs in Sweden and a common approach in the Baltic Sea

Understanding and accelerating actions on OECMs in marine and coastal areas of the Asian seas,

Iloilo City, the Philippines, August 2025

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The responsible Government agency tasked to protect, restore and ensure sustainable use of freshwater resources and seas including fisheries management

The 10 Contracting Parties (CPs)

DK EE EU FI DE

LV LT PL RU SE

HELCOM

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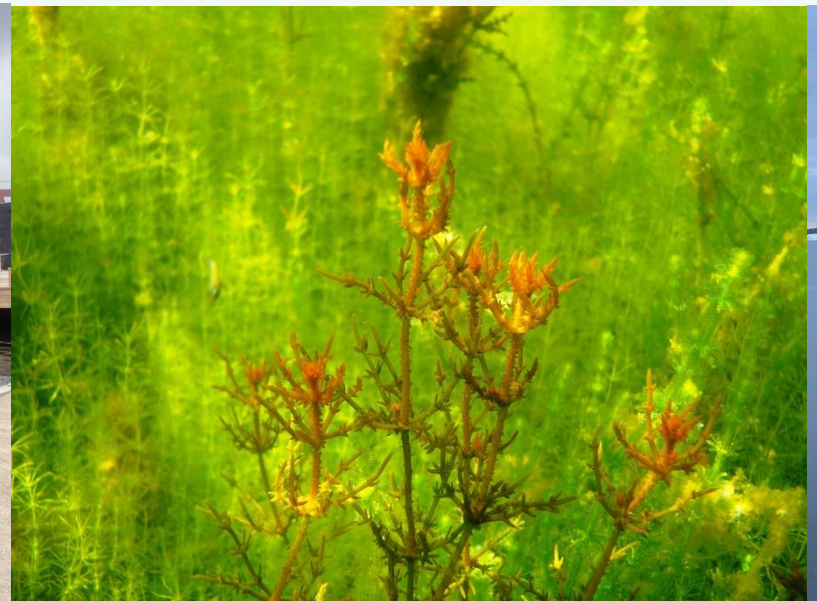
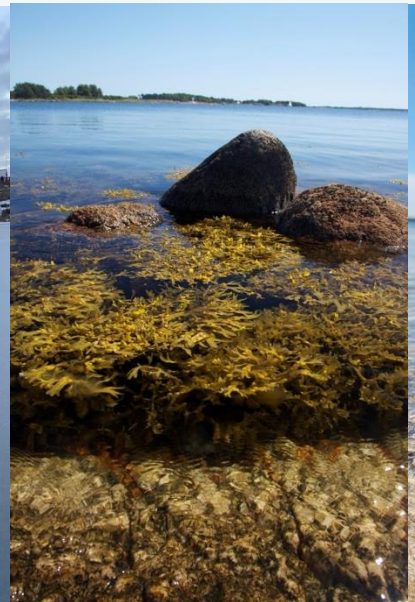
HELCOM's vision for the future is...

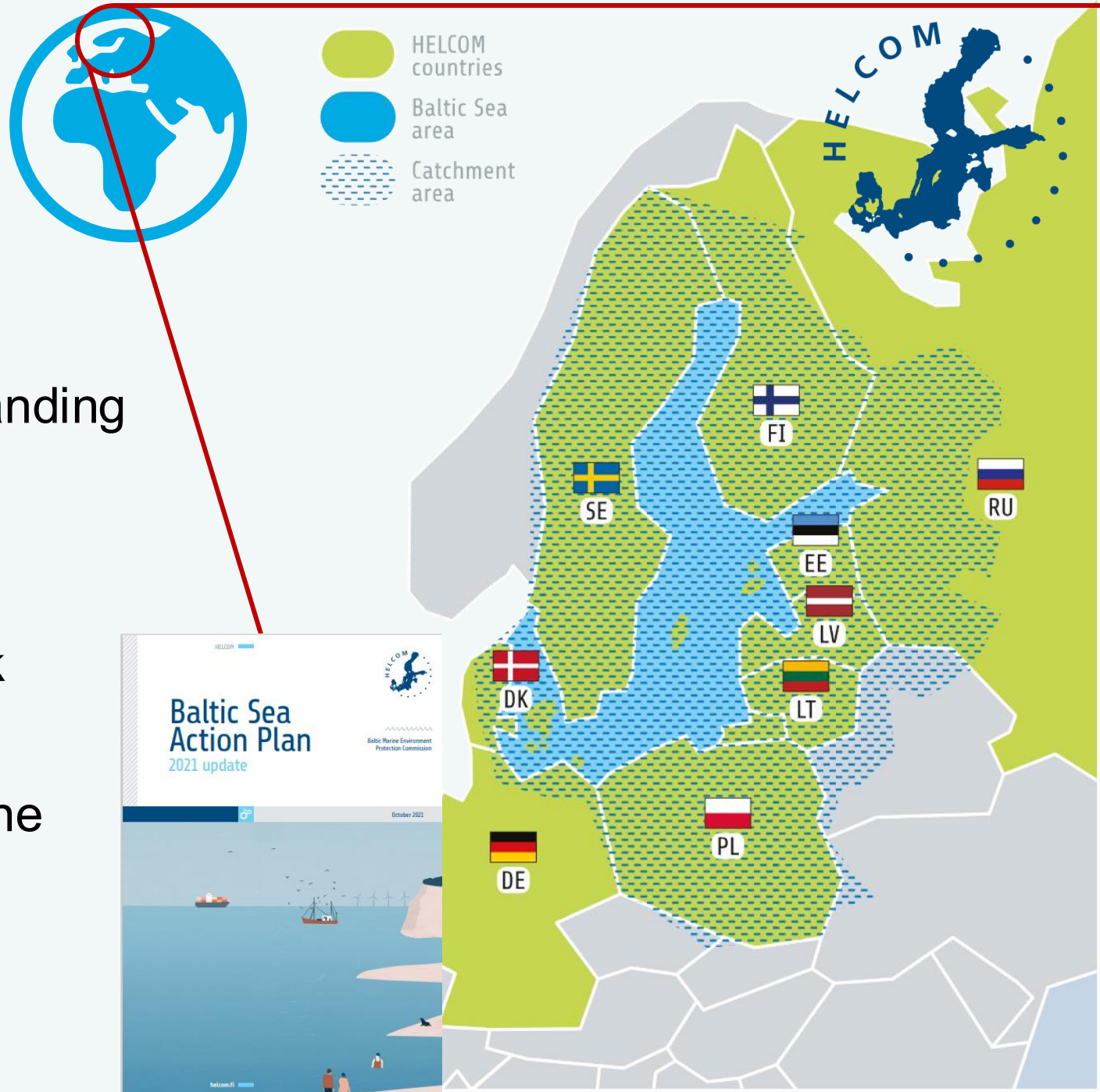
... a healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities.




Baltic Sea Action Plan

- Action Plan adopted 2021
- By 2022 come to a common understanding on OECMs and their use in HELCOM
- Define how OECMs can support the coherence of Baltic Sea MPA network
- By 2025 Identificiation of OECMs in the Baltic Sea region



A co-created **regional understanding** of how to interpret the OECM criteria in the Baltic Sea marine context.

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Criteria	Interpretation	CBD guidance	IUCN guidance	HELCOM common understanding	Recognized furhter work
	outcomes for biodiversity conservation. Relevant authorities and stakeholders are identified and involved in management. A management system is in place that contributes to sustaining the in-situ conservation of biodiversity. Management is consistent with the ecosystem approach with the ability to adapt to achieve expected biodiversity conservation outcomes, including long-term outcomes, and including the ability to manage a new threat.	biodiversity conservation outcomes. Relevant authorities, rightsholders and stakeholder should be identified and involved in management. Unlike protected areas, OECMs do not require a primary objective of conservation, but there must be a direct causal link between the area's overall objective and management and the in-situ conservation of biodiversity over the long-term. "Managed" can include a deliberate decision to leave the area untouched. Management of OECMs should be consistent with the ecosystem approach, with the ability to adapt to achieve expected long-term biodiversity conservation outcomes and to manage emerging new threats (https://www.cbd. int/ecosystem/). Accordingly, the management of OECMs should include "effective means" of control of activities that could impact biodiversity, whether through legal measures or other effective means (such as customary laws or binding agreements with the landowners). To the extent relevant and possible, management should be integrated across OECMs and integrated with surrounding areas. An area where there is no management regime is not an OECM, even though its biodiversity may remain intact. For example, unmanaged areas of the high seas, areas under military conflict, and other areas currently in a natural or near-natural state should not be considered as OECMs in the absence of a management regime that provides effective and enduring in-situ biodiversity conservation. Management regimes can include deliberate decisions to leave the area untouched.		**OECM. If a previously recognised OECM is no longer under management, it can no longer be recognised as an OECM.** **Management should support the long-term positive biodiversity conservation outcomes, i.e. it should be possible to prove that the management contributes to the in-situ conservation of naturally occurring biodiversity attributes over the long-term. Such links need to be presented for review by national authorities competent in conservation prior to the OECM being officially recognised.** **Management of OECMs should include effective means of control of activities that could impact naturally occurring biodiversity, and ensure positive effects are maintained. The type, amount and intensity of activities in an area should secure positive biodiversity outcomes for the OECM in the short and long term.** **"Managed" can include a deliberate decision to leave the area untouched.** **Management should include established stakeholder involvement.**	

The Swedish context - challenges

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- On a case-by-case basis, it is not possible to list activities that ***always*** give rise to OECMs
- How do we evaluate the net impact of an activity if it has both positive conservation measures and negative impact on biodiversity?
- What does it mean to be governed and managed long-term?
- Do we need an agreement to ensure the long-term perspective of relevant management and governance? Who will be the parties to the agreement and how binding is it?

National adaptation – suggested approach (Sweden)

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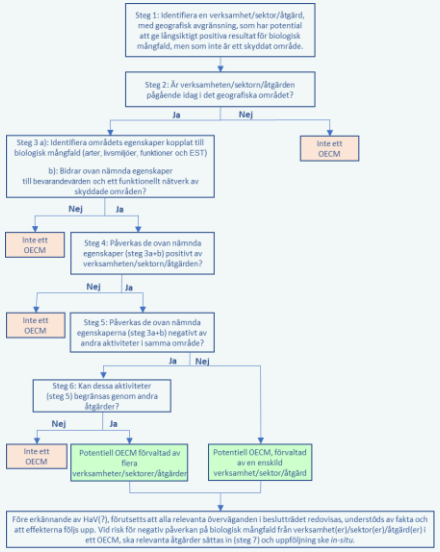
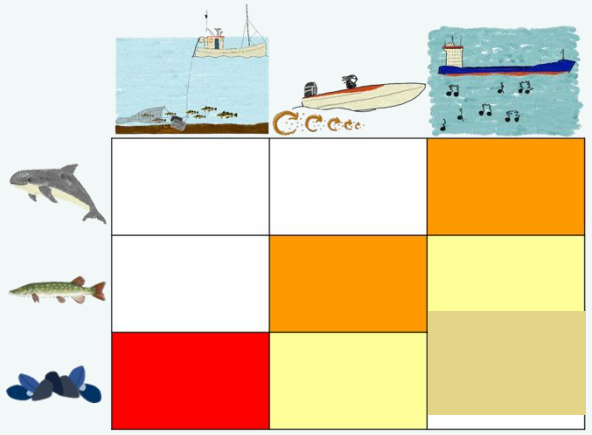
Process
Who does what?

- Förslag
  - Förslag skickas
  - Lämpliga förslag
  - Olämpliga förslag
- Erkännande
  - Lämplig aktör (H
  - Eventuellt skrivs
- Drift
  - NV meddelas b
  - Uppföljning av a

Guidance
How is it done?



Data – supporting documents
What data is considered?



National adaptation – Process (Sweden)

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Potential OECMs

- Proposals are sent to the Supervisory Board for consultation
- Scientific investigation of the data
- Suitable proposals are sent out for consultation
- Inappropriate suggestions get feedback

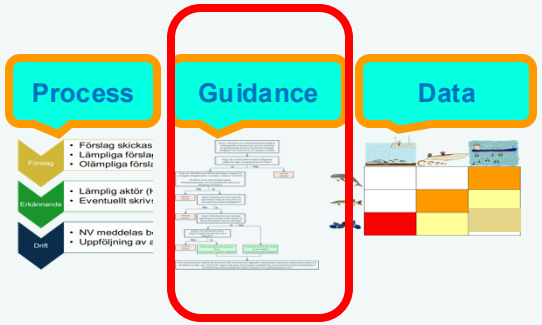
Recognition

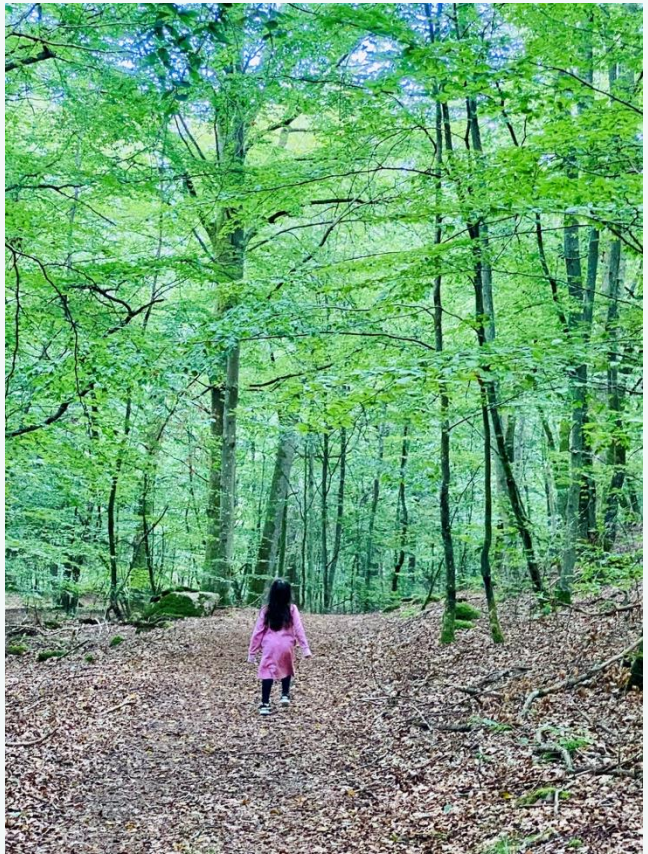
- SwAM (?) makes a decision on recognition
- Agreement with the sector or authority

Operation

- The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency will get the decision and is responsible for reporting
- Monitoring and evaluation of the OECM takes place

Decision Tree to recognise OECMs





Step 1: Identify an activity/sector/measure, with geographical delimitation, that has the potential to produce long-term positive results for biodiversity, but is not a protected area.

Step 2: Is the activity/sector/measure ongoing today in the geographical area?

Yes / No

No → Not an OECM

Step 3 a): Identify the site's biodiversity characteristics (species, habitats, features and ecosystem services)

b): Contributes to the above mentioned characteristics conservation values and a functional network of protected areas?

Must contribute qualitatively, otherwise not meaningfully allocate resources

No → Not an OECM

Yes → Step 4: Are the above-mentioned characteristics (steps 3a+b) positively affected by the activity/sector/measure?

No → Not an OECM

Yes → Step 5: Are the above mentioned traits (step 3a+b) negatively affected by other activities in the same area?

Yes → Step 6: Can these activities (step 5) be restricted by other measures?

No → Not an OECM

Yes → Potential OECM managed by several activities/sectors/measures

No → Potential OECM, managed by a single activity/sector/measure

Method and supporting documents

Prior to recognition by SwAM (?), it is assumed that all relevant considerations in the decision tree are accounted for, supported by facts and that the effects are followed up. If there is a risk of negative impact on biodiversity from activity(s)/sector(s)/measure(s) in an OECM, relevant measures must be implemented (step 7) and follow-up must take place in-situ.

Please note that this is resource demanding.

Key points & Conclusions

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- A regional and common understanding of the criteria - *mandate and basis for collaboration.*
- How do the OECMs contribute to the network of MPAs?
- A case-by-case recognition or a general approach?
- Design a process to assess if the positive biodiversity effects exceed potential negative impacts of the OECM.
- Agreement of long-term governance and management.

Contacts

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Thank you!

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