

## Guidance document to be used by Contracting Parties when updating the HELCOM and OSPAR Target Species lists

This document provides guidance for HELCOM and OSPAR Contracting Parties to assist them in updating the HELCOM, OSPAR and common target species (TS) lists.

According to the Joint Harmonised Procedure for the Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR on the granting of exemptions under International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, Regulation A-4, "*species found during the port surveys which have not been documented before should be evaluated based on the TS selection criteria. At least all the following criteria should be considered:*

### Primary criteria:

1. *relationship with ballast water as a transport vector, i.e., when the species was already found in a ballast tank or if the life cycle of the species includes a larval phase or planktonic adult which makes a ballast water transport likely;*
2. *impact on human health, economy and/or environment and its severeness, i.e., does the species cause unacceptable high impact ([TS selection criteria background document](#)); in case the impact is not known, the species will automatically appear as TS;*

### Supporting criteria:

3. *evidence of prior introduction(s), i.e., the species showed its capability to become introduced outside its native range; and*
4. *current distribution within the native biogeographic region and in other biogeographic regions.*

*It is recommended performing the evaluation in a transparent format, i.e., develop a species evaluation sheet that the reader can see which criterion applies and which not. This may be done in a table format (Annex 1) and with references where available.*

*In summary, TS are species that:*

- *Criterion 1, relationship with ballast water,*
  - *have a relationship with ballast water as a transporting vector; and*
- *Criterion 2, impact,*
  - *have been assessed to cause human health impact; and/or*
  - *have been assessed of having potential to cause economic impact; and/or*
  - *have been assessed to potentially cause unacceptable environmental impact. "*

Criterion 3, evidence of prior introductions, should be considered as a supporting criterion to criteria 1 and 2. The number of Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) (UNDP, 2023) a species has managed to colonize outside its native range gives a risk indication.

Criterion 4, current distribution, is also a supporting criterion to criteria 1 and 2. This criterion should be used for cases when the invaded biogeographic region has similar water temperatures and salinities as the HELCOM and/or OSPAR areas. The wider the species' range of distribution in the native area, the higher may be the species' tolerance to environmentally similar abiotic conditions, and more tolerant species may have a greater potential to become introduced and established.

The TS lists of OSPAR and HELCOM are considered living documents under periodic review by the HELCOM Maritime Working Group and the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC), which means that species can be included to or removed from the TS lists, if further knowledge is available.

TS lists should be updated with the following procedure:

- i) Contracting Parties of HELCOM and OSPAR should select the species that they would like to add to/remove from the TS list. The proposal to add/remove species to/from the TS list should then be submitted to a meeting of the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) and Biofouling (JTG Ballast & Biofouling) at least one month in advance of the meeting so that national experts can be contacted as needed, data can be verified, and the proposal can be revised prior to the meeting.
- ii) Contracting Parties preparing the proposal should use all applicable criteria in the TS selection criteria to justify their proposal regarding the addition/deletion of the species of interest, based on the best available and preferentially peer-reviewed scientific evidence.
- iii) The proposal should be submitted to the JTG Ballast & Biofouling meeting by using the template in Annex 1 to this Guidance.
- iv) Following the recommendation from the meeting on whether the considered species should be added to or removed from the TS list, HELCOM WG Maritime or OSPAR BDC will be invited to agree on the matter depending on whether the species in question belong to the HELCOM or OSPAR TS list, respectively.
- v) If consensus is not reached on the species during the JTG Ballast & Biofouling meeting, follow-up activities to reach a common understanding should be agreed upon by the meeting, including a timeframe to implement such activities.

Annex 1 Template for a proposal to add to/remove a species from the TS list

Species x is proposed to be added to/removed from the HELCOM and/or OSPAR Target Species List	
Proposal made by: (Country, contact information and affiliation)	The proposed species: <i>Latin name</i> (Aphia ID)
Criterion 1 – Relationship with ballast water as a transport vector, i.e., when the species was already found in a ballast tank or if the life cycle of the species includes a larval phase or planktonic adult which makes a ballast water transport likely for that species.	Justification for criterion 1 regarding the proposed species:
Criterion 2 – Impact on human health, economy and/or environment and its severeness, i.e., if the species may cause unacceptable high impact (TS selection criteria background document); in case the impact is not known, the species will automatically appear as TS.	Justification for criterion 2 regarding the proposed species:
Criterion 3 – Evidence of prior introduction(s), i.e., the species showed its capability to become introduced outside its native range.	Justification for criterion 3 regarding the proposed species:
Criterion 4 – Current distribution within the native biogeographic region and in other biogeographic regions.	Justification for criterion 4 regarding the proposed species:
References:	