



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Joint Research Centre
Institute for Environment and Sustainability
Water Resources Unit

MINUTES OF THE 9TH MEETING OF THE
MSFD TECHNICAL GROUP ON MARINE LITTER (TG ML)

DUBLIN, IRELAND

29.6-1.7.2015

The 9th meeting of the Technical Group on Marine Litter (TG ML) was held from 29.6.2015 until 1.7.2015 in Dublin, Ireland. 22 participants were present, including EEA, 8 Member State delegates (France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden, Portugal, Italy, Greece), RSCs (OSPAR, Barcelona Convention) NGO representative (EUCC, Waste Free Water, Seas at Risk, Surfrider, AWARE) and project coordinators (CLEANSEA, EUNOMIA). G.Hanke (group co-chair, EC JRC IES) conducted the meeting.

After a kind welcome by Richard Cronin, Irish Ministry of Environment, Francois Galgani (group chair, IFREMER, France) opened the meeting and provided the background for the group's current and future work. The leader's declaration after the recent G7 summit is also of particular interest, as it puts the need for research, monitoring and reduction of marine litter in a global context.

MSFD D10 implementation

G.Hanke briefed the group on the latest status of the MSFD D10 implementation, monitoring programs are being analysed and Programs of Measures being in preparation. The technical phase of the MSFD Commission Decision 2010/477/EU review process has concluded and the reports outcome (outstanding issues, way forward and tentative revised text) is currently being commented by Member States.

Regional Sea Conventions

The important role of Regional Sea Conventions and their Regional Action Plans was emphasized. OSPAR, Barcelona Convention (MEDPOL) and the Black Sea Commission (in writing) reported on their current work and progress.

OSPAR

The OSPAR Regional Action plan, also the basis for G7 recommendations, is being implemented. In 2015 draft assessments are prepared and will be discussed during the ICG ML in November. Beach litter, ingestion by Fulmar and IBTS bottom trawl surveys are elements of the assessments. OSPAR has prepared a Beach litter analyst tool for the evaluation of beach litter data.

Barcelona Convention

Through drafting by an on-line group, a presentation of an updated report of Marine Litter in the Mediterranean Sea and discussions within the CORMON process the implementation of the EcAp process is being prepared. A meeting of the MEDPOL focal points was held recently (19.6.2015) preparing monitoring programs and documents. The documents will be discussed, finalized and adopted through upcoming meetings of the MAP focal points and finally by the contracting parties. These provisions will then be mandatory for the Barcelona convention contracting parties.

Black Sea Commission

The Black Sea Commission has provided an overview about the recent developments, which include among else, the planning for a Regional Action Plan (lead by Bulgaria) and the linking to global marine litter initiatives.

The Black Sea State of Environment report will include Marine Litter. The BSC proposes to use the Guidance for Marine Litter monitoring provided by the TG ML.

No delegate from the Black Sea Commission or the two EU countries on the Black Sea has been able to join the meeting due to funding restrictions. It should be sought after solutions for this, in particular to foresee the meetings by the MS.

TG ML practicalities

The Delegates are reminded to check with their institutions and communicate eventual changes in the nominations, so that the members list remains updated. A review of the members list will take place still within 2015. While the basecamp communication tool is useful and fully operative, it was reminded to post in the correct "project", as otherwise information will be difficult to retrieve. In general posting (except literature) should be notified to all members.

Knowledge brokerage

The development, review and implementation of the MSFD depends on scientific knowledge. There is need to identify relevant research results and make them available to the policy implementation process. While this is a major undertaking, across all MSFD Descriptors, Marine Litter is, due to the major knowledge gaps and recently increased research activities a special case. The TG ML acts as a specific science-policy interface by performing knowledge brokerage. Through the groups network it is possible to be aware of most EU and nationally funded research activities. Several key research projects have therefore been invited to report to the TG ML on their research results and the outcome which can be expected.

CLEANSEA: H. Leslie, the FP7 project coordinator presented the project. The project tackles many different aspects of marine litter, socioeconomic, toxicological, technological and else. The project coordinator was encouraged to provide the outcome in a format which can be used for support to the TG ML. CLEANSEA will end in December 2015.

MICRO: T. Maes presented the outcome from the finished MICRO project "MicroPlastics-Is it a threat for the 2 Seas Area?" (InterregIV A 2 Seas). The project investigated the occurrence of microplastic particles and different potential impacts of microlitter, such as through ingestion, toxicological, bacteriological and socioeconomic impact

EEA Litterwatch: C.Belchior presented the EEA Litterwatch project. The project collects data on beachlitter monitoring by use of a tablet computer app. The project is targeting both, monitoring schemes, currently with 20 communities, so far 242 events have been documented, and citizen monitoring. Workshops aim at a further development of the tool.

JPI OCEANS, Microlitter project: Contacts have been made with the JPI OCEANS coordinators in order to ensure a close collaboration as monitoring and analytical methods are needed for MSFD implementation. A slide set with basic information about the call, currently the proposals are under evaluation, has been kindly provided by JPI Oceans and was presented to the group.

DEFISHGEAR: T. Vlachogianni reported on the current state of the project and its activities. The project activities are currently focused on carrying out marine litter (macro and micro) pilot surveys in all marine compartments (beach, sea surface, seafloor, biota) of the 7 countries of the Adriatic Sea by deploying a harmonized and coordinated monitoring approach (defined at an earlier stage). The project activities and expected outcomes are developed to be useful also in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the implementation of the Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. A major project conference will be held at Venice from 13-15 of October 2015 (.

PERSEUS: F.Galgani presented the activities of the FP7 project PERSEUS. The project on Policy oriented Research in the Southern European Seas provides research on marine litter with particular focus on the cross basin applicability of approaches. The applied methodologies include beach litter monitoring, bottom trawl surveys and the JRC Sealittercam.

RIMMEL: G.Hanke presented the JRC exploratory research project RIMMEL, Riverine and Marine floating macro litter Monitoring and Modelling of Environmental Loading. The project is aiming at the comparable quantification of marine macro litter fluxes in Europe and will build a statistical inverse model of litter loading based on the characteristics (flows, population, economic factors) of the catchments upstream of the observation points. The project will start in 2015.

Study to Support the Development of Measures to Combat a Range of Marine Litter Sources: Simon Hann, (EUNOMIA) presented the outline for work on a DG ENV commissioned study on sea derived marine litter and microparticles from cosmetic products. The group will support the study by providing relevant links to information sources.

Links to the project information will be provided on the MSFD Competence Centre website in the D10 knowledge brokerage section.

Outstanding issues and proposed way forward

A number of technical issues have been identified within the TG ML and during the ComDec review, which require future work. They have been included in the review report and are currently under commenting by the MS.

Baselines, aggregation and trends

With the progress towards GES being defined as reduction trends, the establishment of baselines is of high importance and urgency. The group concluded that this is closely related to aggregation rules for marine litter data and to the calculation procedures for trend assessments. OSPAR and Barcelona Convention agreed that there is need for technical work in order to develop harmonised concepts taking into account previous work, as e.g. the development of the OSPAR Beach Litter analyst tool and the discussions in the CORMON process. The group would need support in order to be able to perform such work.

Monitoring protocols

While the TG ML has provided a Guidance for monitoring of marine litter, only few of the monitoring methodologies are fully harmonized and accepted across all stakeholders. In the review process it has been identified as one of the priority work areas. In order to start work in 2015 this was communicated to the MSCG and approved. The feasibility of monitoring protocols development will depend on the collaboration with external partners, including projects.

The development of the River Litter Monitoring report is one example of such an activity. While being performed as activity of the TG ML, it depends much on the work performed within the project on "Identification and Assessment of Riverine Input of (Marine) Litter SFRA0025" and by the JRC RIMMEL project.

The monitoring methodology for the quantification of floating macro litter requires further development, as recent literature reviews have shown that data collected by non-harmonized methods will not be comparable. JRC and the DEFISHGEAR project will propose therefore a dedicated scientific-technical workshop, planned for October 2015.

Marine Litter Category Masterlist

The monitoring of marine macro litter is based on a list of items developed by UNEP, OSPAR and the MSFD TG ML. The comparability of monitoring data is depending on the structure of the list and the item categories. There is interest by RSCs to eventually adjust and adapt the list to local/regional specificities. This triggered some concern that this could lead, over time, to a diverging of the different list versions and finally to technical incompatibilities and non-comparability of data, e.g. through the increased difficulty in managing informatic datasets with a different structure.

The group agreed with the OSPAR and Barcelona Convention delegates that it is desirable to keep a common list structure, also in view of the international importance of the work performed by the TG ML and the appreciation of its products even at global level. It was thus proposed to keep a single category masterlist. Updates to the list should be communicated to the TG ML resulting in a commonly agreed category masterlist. The opinion and possible agreement of HELCOM and the Black Sea Commission to this proposal should be asked for.

It should be kept in mind that the category list is the only tool that provides direct access to information about the sources of marine litter, therefore information should be as detailed as possible, and that electronic monitoring aids, such as tablet computer applications will make in future the documentation of even more detailed information feasible.

Technical reports on SOURCES, HARM, RIVERINE LITTER MONITORING and SOURCE MODELLING

The group is working on 4 reports mandated in support to the MSFD D10 implementation. There have been delays in the execution of this mandate due to the additional workload through the ComDec review process. The second day of the meeting was dedicated to work on the reports, in the morning by presenting the reports status and discussions in plenary, in the afternoon by separate sessions on Sources/Harm and Riverine Litter monitoring.

In the morning of the third meeting day, the progress on the report drafting was presented and discussed.

Sources

The sources report should support the identification of the litter sources, as requested in the Commission Decision on D10. The major access for information supporting source attribution for marine macrolitter is through the category masterlist. The report clarifies concepts of sources and pathways and evaluates different approaches for tracking litter sources, as e.g. the indicator-items used in OSPAR and the Matrix Scoring Technique, based on a likelihood approach, and provides a list of additional parameters that can support the identification of priorities and loopholes in the waste cycle.

An advanced draft of the report is available, intense discussion have been held, including agreement on terminology and the different parameters, and drafting of the report was continued. A final draft will be submitted to the GES meeting on 12.10.2015, and the editorial final work be finished within 2015.

Harm

The concept of harm caused by marine litter and in particular the different types of harm at different levels of organisation (individual/population/habitat/community) including socioeconomic harm are being elaborated in this report. The link between harm information and some features of MSFD and other EU policies (e.g red-listed species, and species and habitats in the Nature 2000 annex) could be included into the report.

As further research on this issue has just recently been started, it needs to be taken into account that research findings are not consolidated and therefore the related uncertainties and knowledge gaps should be clearly communicated in the report.

An advanced draft of the report is available, intense discussions have been held and drafting of the report was continued. A final draft will be submitted to the GES meeting on 12.10.2015, and the editorial final work be finished within 2015.

Riverine Litter monitoring

The quantification of riverine litter input is of importance for the prioritization of efforts and should support the development of measures. Currently there are no harmonized methodologies available. The group has developed an outline of the report which will now be further developed and finalised within 2015. Literature has been distributed among the core authors, for content evaluation. As the work has started later than the other reports, an advanced draft will be submitted to the GES group meeting. The WFD chemicals group, a mandate regarding riverine litter monitoring was endorsed by them, is informed about the progress. A close collaboration with the JRC exploratory research project RIMMEL is envisaged.

Source modelling

The physical pathways of litter can include transboundary transport.

While there are different modelling efforts (oceanographic current modelling, oil spill back-tracking modelling, biological connectivity modelling), only recently specific efforts targeted on the issue of marine litter are being made. As modelling results are important for the further development of the D10 Descriptor, the group supported the development of a short report which provides background information, lists the current options and ongoing work and provides a set of questions potentially to be answered by modelling work. The final draft report will be available for the next MSFD GES meeting.

Wrap-up and conclusions

The final wrap-up of the meeting presented the discussion outcome and the decisions taken on the different reports and issues. Deadlines and timing have been discussed and agreed, providing a roadmap for finalization of the 4 reports and discussing the feasibility for the work on the upcoming issues in a future work mandate by MSCG. A meeting in early (February) 2016 would be timely to kick-off next work items. The different follow-up actions will be organised through the TG ML basecamp.

At the end of the meeting the group thanked the host, Richard Cronin, for the hospitality and the support. The group thanked the chair group for conducting the meeting. The meeting was closed on 1.7.2015 at 12:00.

G.Hanke, Francois Galgani 4.8.2015

Participant list:

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Costanca Belchior | European Environment Agency |
| Ania Budziak | Project AWARE Foundation |
| Richard Cronin | Ireland |
| Sandy Cruickshank | United Kingdom |
| Jean-Baptiste Dussaussois | Surfrider |
| Francois Galgani | France |
| Georg Hanke | European Commission |
| Simon Hann | Eunomia |
| Tatiana Hema | UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan |
| Heather Leslie | CLEANSEA project |
| Thomas Maes | United Kingdom |
| Sandra Moutinho | Portugal |
| Per Nilsson | Sweden |
| Lex Oosterbaan | Netherlands |
| Andreja Palatinus | Slovenia/EEA |
| Emma Priestland | Seas at Risk |
| Cecilia Silvestri | Italy |
| Richard Thompson | Plymouth University |
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| Joana Veiga | EuCC |
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