



# Final Project Conclusions

COMPLETE

<b>Project title</b>		<b>Project duration</b>	
Completing management options in the Baltic Sea Region to reduce risk of invasive species introduction by shipping		October 2017 - September 2020	
<b>Priority</b>	<b>Specific objective</b>		
Sustainable Transport	Environmentally friendly shipping		
<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spent budget</b>	<b>Flagship project</b>	<b>EUSBSR Policy Area/Horizontal Action</b>
3.23 million	3.12 million	x	PA Ship
<b>Link to the project library</b>		<b>Link to the project's website</b>	
<a href="https://projects.interreg-baltic.eu/projects/complete-113.html">https://projects.interreg-baltic.eu/projects/complete-113.html</a>		<a href="https://www.balticcomplete.com/">https://www.balticcomplete.com/</a>	
<b>Lead partner (country)</b>		<b>Countries involved</b>	
Kotka Maritime Research Associatino (KMRA) (Finland)		FI, LT, PL, SE, DE, EE, LV	
<b>Project summary</b>			
<b>Teaser</b>			
The Interreg project COMPLETE contributed to the reduction of the uncontrolled introduction of invasive species in the region by introducing a unified approach to monitoring and operational risk assessment on a national level.			
<b>The challenge</b>			
Shipping contributes to the uncontrolled introduction of invasive species to the Baltic Sea, which has severe environmental and economic consequences. Such concrete challenges as loss of native species, habitat change, reduced landings of coastal fisheries, damage to aquaculture, threatened biodiversity and natural ecosystems of the Baltic Sea are to mention a few. Invasive species introduction and spreading of alien species can be reduced by introducing harmonized solutions shared on a regional level.			
Monitoring of new introductions and assessment of the main introduction vectors are needed to optimise management and to be able to meet the targets of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (no new introductions of invasive species) and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (non-indigenous species introduced by human activities at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems).			
For the harmonised implementation of the International Maritime Organization Ballast Water Management Convention better tools and guidance would be needed. On this background, the project came with the proposal for a regional biofouling management roadmap for the Baltic Sea region and a monitoring programme of non-indigenous species (NIS) for the Baltic Sea.			



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DE	DK	EE	FI	LT	LV	NO	PL	RU	SE

## Project's highlights

The highlights present the project's main achievements and results, e.g. change brought for the target groups, pilots or tests carried out, and exemplary transnational work.

The COMPLETE project developed practical tools and proposals for preventing the introduction of alien species to the Baltic Sea.

### Streamlined actions

For preventing the spread of harmful invasive species and potentially pathogens, the project developed the tools for harmonised implementation of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention. By updating the AquaNIS information system, which is a multipurpose data provider on non-indigenous species, the project equipped the public authorities and shipping companies with useful tools in assessment, selection of Target Species and storage of port baseline data. New approaches to the storage of metadata on molecular markers of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens as well as selection of likely biofouling organisms ensured a more aligned, holistic and reliable way of addressing the challenges.

### Biofouling Management mapped

Based on best practices on biofouling management, the project additionally elaborated a proposal for Regional Baltic Biofouling Management Roadmap which serves as a recommendation for policy makers to implement sustainable biofouling management strategies in shipping and boating. By integrating the contents of the Roadmap into official HELCOM documentation in the project extension phase, the project paved the way for positioning the Roadmap strategically and created value added for the implementation of the coming HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. The upgraded Risk Assessment tool under the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure equipped authorities and shipping companies with needed knowledge. Evaluation of non-indigenous species appearance risks between two ports in the OSPAR and HELCOM areas has become feasible.

### Non-indigenous species better monitored

Thanks to the project, non-indigenous species (NIS) in the Baltic Sea can be monitored in a coordinated and consolidated way by the HELCOM countries. The upgraded monitoring programme will facilitate reaching the targets of the Baltic Sea Actions Plan (no introductions of alien species



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from ships) and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems).

Thanks to EUR 3.12 million of support from the European Union, the Interreg project COMPLETE ensured the reduction of the uncontrolled introduction of invasive species and introduced a unified approach to monitoring and operational risk assessment to streamline the national actions across the Baltic Sea region.

### Main Outputs

*The main outputs present the project's main deliveries which are tangible and can be used by others outside the project.*

#### **Proposal for a Regional Baltic Biofouling Management Roadmap**

Proposal for a Regional Baltic Biofouling Management Roadmap serves as a recommendation for policy makers to implement harmonised biofouling management strategies for the entire Baltic Sea region. The document combines the findings in the COMPLETE project outputs and deliverables related to biofouling management in the Baltic Sea region. It delivers concrete recommendations for a sustainable biofouling management in the region for the shipping and boating sector.

As a part of the proposal for a Regional Baltic Biofouling Management Roadmap, the Guide on best practices on biofouling management provides information and guidance for effective biofouling management strategies suitable for the Baltic Sea region.

<https://balticcomplete.com/publications/project-reports/320-proposal-for-a-regional-baltic-biofouling-management-roadmap>

#### **Guide on best practices on biofouling management**

<https://balticcomplete.com/publications/project-reports/321-guide-on-best-practices-of-biofouling-management-in-the-baltic-sea>

#### **The upgraded Risk Assessment tool under the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure**

The upgraded Risk Assessment tool under the HELCOM-OSPAR Joint Harmonised Procedure allows authorities as well as shipping companies to quickly evaluate the risk of non-indigenous species introduction between two ports in the OSPAR and HELCOM areas when applying and granting exemptions for ballast water management under certain low-risk conditions of the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention. In addition, the Risk Assessment tool hosts an extensive database of species observations and environmental data publicly accessible for research institutions.

[https://maps.helcom.fi/website/ra\\_tool/](https://maps.helcom.fi/website/ra_tool/)



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### Monitoring programme of non-indigenous species (NIS)

The monitoring programme of NIS proposed by the COMPLETE project is an important tool for all HELCOM countries in conducting monitoring in the Baltic Sea. This makes NIS monitoring of utmost importance as its description has been updated to fulfil the requirements of present legislation.

Monitoring of new introductions and assessment of the main introduction vectors are needed to optimise management and to be able to meet the targets of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (no new introductions) and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (non-indigenous species introduced by human activities are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems). Monitoring programme on NIS will be part of the official monitoring programme of HELCOM and used by all Contracting Parties as part of their national monitoring programmes.

<https://portal.helcom.fi/meetings/STATE%20-%20CONSERVATION%2014-2021-824/MeetingDocuments/3MA-2%20Draft%20HELCOM%20monitoring%20programme%20on%20NIS.pdf>

### Follow-up/spin-off activities

*These include specific new activities that have been inspired by or initiated during the project work and will be continued after its implementation.*

Monitoring programme on non-indigenous species will be part of the official monitoring programme of HELCOM and used by all Contracting Parties as part of their national monitoring programmes depending on the resources.

The upgraded risk assessment tool under the Joint Harmonized Procedure will allow authorities as well as shipping companies to evaluate the risk of alien species introduction between two ports in the OSPAR and HELCOM areas when applying and granting exemptions under regulation A-4 of the IMO BWMC.

The Proposal for a Biofouling Management Roadmap delivered concrete recommendations for a sustainable biofouling management in the Baltic Sea region. It will be of high value for the implementation of the coming Baltic Sea Action Plan. The roadmap will serve as one source of information for the review of the IMO Biofouling Guidelines as well as for their regional implementation.

### Administrative matters

*These include specific good practices, financial implications, challenges as well as synergies and cooperation with other projects and the main drivers of the project (core partners).*

In the COMPLETE project, scientists and experts from seven Baltic Sea states cooperated with the competent authorities dealing with environmental and maritime issues to find solutions for managing the risks of alien species transported by shipping. This cooperation was carried out together with shipowners and other relevant stakeholders. Involvement of the stakeholders and target groups in the project activities has been key for the good results in COMPLETE. Various means



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of engagement were applied: workshops, interviews, questionnaires and conferences. The overarching role of HELCOM was invaluable, as the joint decisions on these issues are to be taken among the HELCOM countries to achieve regionally harmonized decisions.