



## Outcome of the First Meeting of the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 1-2014)

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## Introduction

0.1 The First Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 1-2014) was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 20-21 November 2014, upon invitation by the Danish Ministry of the Environment.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by participants from all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Latvia, Poland and the European Union as well as Observers from the Baltic Farmers Forum for Environment (BFFE), Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as well as invited guests (**Annex 1**).

0.3 The Meeting was welcomed by HELCOM Executive Secretary, Ms Monika Stankiewicz, noting that the Agri Group is a result of the HELCOM modernization process and a successor of the previous HELCOM Baltic Agriculture and Environmental Forum (AGRI-ENV FORUM). Ms. Stankiewicz stressed the importance of the work of the Agri Group to reach Good Environmental Status in the Baltic Sea by 2020 and underlined the ways of cooperation in the Agri Group, 1) between agri and environment authorities and 2) the regional dimension of the work. Ms. Stankiewicz introduced HELCOM Professional Secretary, Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, and Assisting Professional Secretary, Ms. Laura Meski, to the Group as they will act as the Secretariat contacts for the Group and wished the participants a fruitful meeting keeping in mind the common goals.

0.4 The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Dietrich Schulz, Federal Environment Agency, Germany

0.5 Ms. Stankiewicz, Mr. Frank-Kamenetsky, and Ms. Meski, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

### **Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda**

Documents: 1-1

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in document 1-1.

### **Agenda Item 2 Election of chair**

Documents: None

2.1 The Meeting elected Mr. Dietrich Schulz, Federal Environment Agency, Germany, as the Chair for the Agri Group for the next two-year period.

2.2 The Meeting congratulated Mr. Schulz for the election.

### **Agenda Item 3 Outcome of HELCOM modernization**

Documents: 3-1, 3-2

3.1 The Meeting took note of the presentation by the Executive Secretary on the streamlining and modernization of HELCOM activities and operations, including the new working structure (document 3-1, **Presentation 1**).

3.2 The Meeting took note of the comments from Sweden that the work of the Group should be relevant to agri-environmental policies; avoid overlapping with other national and international activities; should be driven by national interests and focus on the Ministerial commitments that require regional effort.

3.3 The Meeting took note of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Agri Group, adopted by the 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the HELCOM Heads of Delegation (HOD 46-2014) (document 3-2).

3.4 The Meeting highlighted the importance of having both environment and agriculture authorities participating in the Agri Group.

### **Agenda Item 4 Matters arising from other HELCOM work of relevance for the Group**

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Documents: 4-1, 4-2, 4-3

- 4.1 The Meeting took note of the HELCOM priorities during the Estonian Chairmanship (1 July 2014-30 June 2016) (document 4-1).
- 4.2 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the recent HELCOM meetings relevant to the Agri Group activities (HOD 46-2014, GEAR 8-2014 and PRESSURE 1-2014) (document 4-2).
- 4.3 The Meeting noted that the Group will be kept informed of relevant activities carried out by other HELCOM working groups such as on the next integrated assessment of the health of the Baltic Sea and Pollution Load Compilation results in order to ensure good cooperation.
- 4.4 Meeting took note of the work on the draft core pressure indicator on nutrient inputs which aims to follow-up on progress towards the maximum allowable inputs (MAI) of the HELCOM nutrient reduction scheme (document 4-3).
- 4.5 The Meeting recalled the content of the nutrient reduction scheme of the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) consisting of two parts MAI and CART (Country Allocation of Reduction Targets).
- 4.6 The Meeting took note of the ongoing work within HELCOM on developing core indicators for the status and pressure on the marine environment of the Baltic Sea, to serve the next holistic assessment called HOLAS II. The core indicators are under development within the HELCOM project [CORESET II](#) (Operationalization of HELCOM core indicators).
- 4.7 The Meeting took note of the clarification by the Secretariat that internal loading has been taken into account when setting the target of the MAI.

#### **Agenda Item 5                                              Review and updating of part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention**

Documents: 5-1, 5-2, 5-2-Add.1, 5-3

- 5.1 The Meeting considered the project proposal for review and updating of the Helsinki Convention in relation to prevention of pollution from agriculture (part II of Annex III) (AGRIREV) (document 5-2) as well as the suggestions by Finland on the scope of the review to be limited to a few topics (document 5-3).
- 5.2 The Meeting recalled the previous discussion at the level of the Heads of Delegation that the existing provisions of Annex III should be regarded as minimum requirements, thus giving an orientation as to the purpose of the review.
- 5.3 The Meeting in general supported to focus the revision on a limited number of issues based on the list proposed by Finland in order to be able to achieve the intended results within the given time frame. As not all Contracting Parties were in the position to reflect which are the issues to be prioritized, the Meeting agreed that possible additional feedback is to be provided at the latest **by 28 November 2014** to the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)).
- 5.4 The Meeting noted that in order for the review to start in spring 2015, the project proposal for how to organize the work will need to be forwarded for consideration by HOD 47-2014 in December 2014. The Meeting agreed to submit the proposal to HOD 47-2014 and develop the detailed activities further within the project (document 5-2) at the next meeting of the Group.
- 5.5 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to approach the Contracting Parties to confirm the nominated contacts to the Drafting Group on the revision of Annex III.
- 5.6 The Meeting agreed that finding a common understanding on the scope of the revision is a prerequisite for starting the project.
- 5.7 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consider co-leading the work within the review and revision of the Annex.
- 5.8 The Meeting took note of the study reservation by Sweden on the project proposal and the scope of the revision and requested Sweden to clarify it at the latest by HOD 47-2014.

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## **Agenda Item 6** **Farm nutrient management and balanced fertilization, including annual nutrient accounting**

Documents: 6-1, 6-2, 6-3

6.1 The Meeting considered the proposed outline for possible activities on introduction of annual nutrient bookkeeping at farm level in the Baltic Sea countries as presented by Germany (document 6-3) and appreciated the willingness by Germany to take lead on this topic within the Group.

6.2 The Meeting discussed in general the importance to link the work of the Group to needs on national level for which it would be useful to collect feedback from experts dealing with nutrient accounting in the countries, what are the issues of particular interest to exchange information on and to address on a regional level.

6.3 The Meeting briefly discussed the existing bookkeeping systems in the countries and in relation to the Nitrate Directive and noted that calculation of nutrient balances varies between the countries and it could be part of the foreseen activities to compare calculation methodologies and share lessons learned.

6.4 The Meeting supported to take the first step of the proposed activities and organize, possibly in spring 2015, a workshop to compile knowledge on the status of nutrient bookkeeping in the Baltic Sea countries. The Meeting suggested that the date of the workshop is carefully planned so it would not clash with any other planned event and requested the Secretariat together with Germany to consult the date with the Contracting Parties.

6.5 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide feedback on the desired content of the workshop as well as to inform on national experts dealing with bookkeeping that can be contacted in the preparation of the workshop **by 31 January 2015** to the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)).

6.6 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to look into the possibilities for financing of the activities including organizing of the workshop.

6.7 The Meeting took note of the suggestion that HELCOM could co-organize a symposium on fertilizers planned for October 2015 in Oslo.

6.8 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of the project "Implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan in Russia" (BASE) related to development of manure management plan for Kaliningrad oblast (document 6-2).

6.9 The Meeting appreciated the report on Industrial Livestock Farming in the Baltic Sea Region – Environmental Protection Context by Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) (document 6-1).

## **Agenda Item 7** **Prioritization of measures in areas critical to nitrogen and phosphorous losses**

Documents: 7-1, 7-2

7.1 The Meeting appreciated the draft project proposal on reduction of nutrient releases in areas critical to nutrient losses as presented by the Secretariat (document 7-1, **Presentation 2**).

7.2 The Meeting took note of information by Estonia that there is interest to participate in the project but additional information is needed.

7.3 The Meeting pointed out the need in further developing the project idea to first identify the needs of the countries and underlined that the first phase of the project should be aimed at stocktaking of designating nitrate vulnerable zones in the countries. Approaches to designation of nitrate vulnerable zones in the countries should be taken into account. It should also be clearly defined that the term 'area sensitive for nutrient losses' refers to both N and P and nitrogen vulnerable zones may differ from phosphorous vulnerable zones.).

7.4 The Meeting concluded that it might be too premature to submit the project proposal for funding by the Baltic Sea Region Programme by February 2015 but the project could instead be developed further taking into account the feedback provided and possibly to become a flagship project under EUSBSR.

7.5 The Meeting welcomed an offer by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) that the institute can provide an overview of available methodologies for up scaling the calculation of vulnerability to P and N relevant to the project development.

7.6 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to provide information to the Secretariat on relevant ongoing activities in this field, to feed into the further project development.

7.7 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to consult nationally on the interest to lead or participate in the project and to inform the Secretariat ([dmintry.frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmintry.frank-Kamenetsky@helcom.fi)) as soon as possible.

7.8 The Meeting took note of the information by Mr. Kaj Granholm, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) on an emerging project (FLOW Baltic, August 2014-July 2015), which is aimed to focus on agricultural drainage on field and landscape level (document 7-2, **Presentation 3**). The aim of this seed money funded project is to develop a full-scale project application.

## **Agenda Item 8 Nutrient content in manure**

Documents: 8-1, 8-2

8.1 The Meeting welcomed the renewed offer by Finland to lead the work on nutrient content in manure via supporting the creation of manure standards by 2018 and took note of the ongoing work in Finland as described in document 8-1.

8.2 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to provide input on their standards for nutrient content in manure and invited Finland to present the results of the project to the Group as soon as they become available.

8.3 The Meeting further took note of a draft project proposal by Russia on developing of manure handling guideline (document 8-2, **Presentation 4**). The plan is to begin the activity in January 2015.

## **Agenda Item 9 Phosphorous recycling**

Documents: 9-1, 9-2

9.1 The Meeting took note of the ongoing work within the HELCOM PRESSURE WG on drafting a new HELCOM recommendation on sewage sludge handling (document 9-2).

9.2 The Meeting took note of the information that:

- in Germany discussions are ongoing on phasing out the use of sewage sludge in agriculture due to its risks to soil protection and health,
- in Estonia sewage sludge is not in common use in agriculture.

9.3 The Meeting discussed the challenges on recycling phosphorous from sewage sludge including economic viability of available solutions and was of the opinion that such a recommendation on sewage sludge handling should be considered temporary.

9.4 The Meeting welcomed the information by Ms. Minna Sarvi, MTT Agrifood Research Finland, on ongoing activities and projects on efficient phosphorous recycling promoted by research at MTT document 9-1, **Presentation 5**).

9.5 The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to share the information on ongoing activities aimed at promotion of the phosphorus recycling at the national level and also in the frame of international projects.

## **Agenda Item 10 Work Plan**

Documents: 10-1

10.1 The Meeting discussed the Work Plan for the Agri Group for the years 2014-2016 based on a draft by the Secretariat (document 10-1) and took note of the explanation by the Secretariat that the Work Plan is to serve as a practical means for the Group to plan and organize its work according to the Terms of Reference. The Work Plan can be further detailed as the work progresses.

10.2 The Meeting agreed on the need to prioritize activities for the next two-year period to be able to deliver the promised results.

10.3 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties to continue domestic considerations on how to carry out the tasks included in the Terms of Reference in advance of the next meeting of the Group.

10.4 The Meeting agreed on the further developed Work Plan as included in **Annex 2**, to be forwarded to HOD 47-2014 for endorsement.

#### **Agenda Item 11 Any other business**

Documents: 11-1, 11-2, 11-3

11.1 The Meeting took note of the information by WWF on the plans for setting up a platform for Agri-Environment Cooperation in the BSR (document 11-1).

11.2 The Meeting took note of the information by Russia on the XXXVI CIOSTA Conference “Environmentally Friendly Agriculture and Forestry for Future Generations” (document 11-2).

11.3 The Meeting took note of the information by Finland, as co-leader of the Priority Areas Nutri and Agri of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), on the progress of the flagship projects, as well as in general the progress in implementation of the Strategy and future plans (**Presentation 6**).

11.4 The Meeting suggested that the meetings within EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region are organized back-to-back with HELCOM meetings and other relevant events for the sake of saving resources.

11.5 The Meeting requested the Contracting Parties and Observers to provide updates to the list of contacts for the Agri Group (document 11-3) and the list of contacts for the Drafting Group for Annex III part II (Document 5-2-Add.1) by 5 December 2014 and at the latest by HOD 47-2014.

11.6 The Meeting thanked Denmark for excellent arrangements of the meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 12 Future meetings**

12.1 The Meeting welcomed the invitation of Russia to have the next meeting of the Group in Saint-Petersburg on 25-26 May 2015 back-to-back with the XXXVI CIOSTA Conference (26-28 May) as well as the offer by Germany to alternatively have the meeting held in Germany on 27-29 May 2015 in Goslar (a farm visit on 27 May and the meeting on 28-29 May finalizing at noon).

12.2 Meeting requested the Secretariat to clarify with the countries the hosting options by HOD 47-2014.

12.3 The Meeting welcomed a preliminary offer by Estonia to host the third meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 13 Outcome of the Meeting**

Documents: 13-1

13.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of AGRI 1-2014 as contained in document 13-1.

13.2 The Outcome of the Meeting was finalized by the Secretariat and has been made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal together with the documents and presentation given during the Meeting.

## ANNEX 1

## List of participants

Representing	Name	Organisation	E-mail address
Chair	Dietrich Schulz	Federal Environment Agency	dietrich.schulz@uba.de
Denmark	Anette Pedersen	Environmental Protection Agency	andpe@mst.dk
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Sweden	Josefin Walldén	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	josefin.wallden@havochvatten.se
Observer	Airi Kulmala	BFFE	airi.kulmala@mtk.fi
Observer	Gunnar Noren	CCB	gunnar.noren@ccb.se
Observer	Jan Wärnbäck	WWF	jan.warnback@wwf.se
Invited guest	Kaj Granholm	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)	kaj.granholm@slu.se
Invited guest	Minna Sarvi	MTT Agrifood Research Finland	minna.sarvi@mtt.fi
Secretariat	Monika Stankiewicz	HELCOM	monika.stankiewicz@helcom.fi
Secretariat	Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky	HELCOM	dmitry.frank-kamenetsku@helcom.fi
Secretariat	Laura Meski	HELCOM	laura.meski@helcom.fi

**ANNEX 2**

Work Plan for HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri Group) 2014-2016

N	ACTION	LEAD/ RESPONSIBLE	INTERLINKED ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
Action 1. Revision and update of part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention and implementation of the provision <sup>1</sup>				
1	Review and update part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention I. Review (desk study, country visits) II. Drafting	[a project proposal & Agri-Environmental Advisor] Drafting Group Lead country(ies) to be identified	To use the input from activities below	I. in 2015 II. in 2016
Action 2. Identify areas critical to N and P losses to enable cost-effective measures <sup>2</sup>				
2	Provide feedback and input (e.g. on similar activities on national level) to the further development of the idea for a project (presented at AGRI 1-2014)	CP to offer leading		Possibly 2 <sup>nd</sup> Call of BSRP in 2016
Action 3. Annual accounting at farm level <sup>3</sup> :				
3	I. Workshop & Stocktaking of the ongoing activities related to the nutrient accounting including balance sheet at farm level II. [Outlining country-wise steps and requirements & National roadmaps]	Germany to lead national experts		I. workshop in spring 2015 II. by 2018

<sup>1</sup> By 2016 review and an update part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention, in order to better serve the purposes of reaching Good Environmental Status, and implementation and enforcement of the provisions, in particular taking into account the following commitments of the Contracting Parties of the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting

<sup>2</sup> To initiate activity to Identify/verify areas critical to N and P losses, utilizing the available data and as a starting point, to enable directing targeted and cost-effective measures where they can bring the greatest environmental effect, e.g. compulsory measures on manure handling (storage and application) for installations of intensive rearing of cattle, poultry and pigs

<sup>3</sup> To promote and advance towards applying by 2018 at the latest annual nutrient accounting at farm level taking into account soil and climate conditions giving the possibility to reach nutrient balanced fertilization and reduce nutrient losses at regional level in the countries, noting the positive examples of mandatory requirements on nutrient bookkeeping in some HELCOM countries and with an aim to apply it region-wide, as a first step, in areas critical to nutrient losses



Action 4. Guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure <sup>4</sup>				
4	Development of national standards for nutrient content in manure to enable better use of manure nutrients for fertilization practices: I. Baseline data collection II. Development of national manure standards where not existing III. Guidelines/recommendations for the use of standards	Finland, with involvement of Denmark		I. in 2015 (presentation at AGRI 2-2015) II. 2016 III. 2018
Action 5. Promote development of appropriate methodology for phosphorus recycling				
5	Information exchange		Cooperation with PA NUTRI of the EU Strategy of the Baltic Sea Region Projects PROMISE, Baltic Phoenix Development of Recommendation on sewage sludge handling under PRESSURE	continuous
Action 6. Enhance transfer of knowledge and technology and exchange of good examples				
6	With regard to application of innovative water management measures, to ensure that upgrading and renovation of the agricultural drainage systems aim at reducing nutrient concentrations.	Lead country to be identified	project Baltic Compact, Flow Baltic preparation project Cooperation with PA AGRI of the EUSBSR	
7	With regard to application of BAT for intensive rearing of poultry and pigs at least equally ambitious EU's BREF document	Contracting Parties		continuous

<sup>4</sup> Support development by 2016 of national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure, and develop by 2018 guidelines/recommendation on the use of such standards

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	as well as for cattle and conclusions throughout the region, especially within areas critical to nutrient losses			
Action 7. Exchange experiences and ideas for potential development of policy instruments, both voluntary and mandatory, as well as measures for improved farm nutrient management				