



## Outcome of the Third Meeting of the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 3-2016)

### Table of Contents

Agenda Item 1	Adoption of the Agenda .....	2
Agenda Item 2	Matters arising from other HELCOM work of relevance for the Group .....	2
Agenda Item 3	Farm nutrient management and balanced fertilization .....	3
	3.1 Development of national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure	
	3.2 Promotion of nutrient accounting at farm level	
Agenda Item 4	Nutrient recycling .....	6
Agenda Item 5	Future work .....	7
Agenda Item 6	Any other business .....	8
Agenda Item 7	Outcome of the Meeting .....	9
Annex 1	List of participants	
Annex 2	Initial suggestion on Work Plan for HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group) 2017-2018	
Annex 3	Contact addresses of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group)	



- 2.7 The Meeting took note of the information by Germany that the nutrient input reduction to the Baltic Sea is considered as a national priority environmental task.
- 2.8 The Meeting took note of the information that Finland has recently published a programme of measures for the development and implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The programme aims to improve the status of the marine environment and reduce the pressure on it. It focuses on preventing eutrophication, decreasing hazardous substances, protection of biodiversity, prevention of alien species, enhancement of sustainable use of natural resources, decreasing human impacts on the sea bottom and decreasing marine litter and subsurface noise. The activities for reduction of nutrients are focusing on promotion of nutrient recycling and improving current and future environment schemes.
- 2.9 The Meeting further took note that Poland is finalizing the MSFD Program of Measures containing measures for reducing input of nutrients and that additional information can be provided later in 2016.
- 2.10 The Meeting took note of the draft Status report on pharmaceuticals in the Baltic Sea, which will be further considered by HELCOM STATE&CONSERVATION 4-2016 (11-15 April 2016) and HELCOM PRESSURE 4-2016 (19-21 April 2016) and with an intention to be adopted for publication as Baltic Sea Environmental Proceedings by HOD 50-2016 (15-16 June 2016) (document 2-2, **Presentation 3**).
- 2.11 The Meeting noted that the report mainly focuses on human use of pharmaceuticals and their discharges into the Baltic Sea environment via waste water and that agricultural aspects/veterinary uses of pharmaceuticals are not covered comprehensively in the report. The topic has however been identified as a priority for further studies.
- 2.12 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Germany to circulate the national study on emissions of antibiotics into the ground water from animal farming for publication at the HELCOM web site and the offer by Poland to provide contact information to the national authority responsible for pharmaceuticals in veterinary use, if more explanation is required.
- 2.13 The Meeting took note of the new system to follow-up of the implementation of the commitments of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and HELCOM Ministerial commitments (**Presentation 4**). A web-based platform for visualization of results of the follow-up (BSAP explorer) assessment will be made available on the HELCOM web page in due time. Next step will be to initiate the follow-up of the implementation of HELCOM Recommendations.

### **Agenda Item 3**

### **Farm nutrient management and balanced fertilization**

#### **3.1 Development of national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure**

Documents: 3.1-1, 3.1-2, 3.1-3, 3.1-4

- 3.1 The Meeting took note of the conclusions of the HELCOM Workshop on manure nutrient content in the Baltic Sea countries, which was co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) and HELCOM on 19-20 November 2015 in Vantaa, Finland (document 3.1-3, **Presentation 5**).
- 3.2 The Chair of the workshop, Ms. Marja-Liisa Tapio-Biström, Finland, further underlined the importance of nutrient management in reaching the overarching aim of nutrient recycling. She stressed the need to safeguard efficient use of manure in an environmental sustainable way instead of considering it as waste. It is important to exchange knowledge and experiences between the countries and transfer the knowledge to farmers for better understanding of the use of nutrients and to be able to find economical ways to go forward.
- 3.3 The Meeting thanked Finland for the successful organization of the workshop.
- 3.4 The Meeting took note of the draft proceedings of the Workshop, which are under preparation by Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) with the assistance of the Secretariat and will be published in

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the Luke report series (document 3.1-4). The Meeting invited the Contracting Parties to check and approve the national contributions in the proceeding and inform Luke ([sari.luostarinen@luke.fi](mailto:sari.luostarinen@luke.fi)) and the Secretariat ([susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi](mailto:susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi)) accordingly **by 29 April 2016**. The draft proceedings in Word will be circulated by the Secretariat by 8 April 2016.

3.5 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Ms. Sari Luostarinen, Luke, on the draft concept for the project on advanced manure standards aimed for the second call of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme (document 3.1-1, **Presentation 6**). The aim of the project is to reach common understanding on how to determine nutrient content in manure. The concept note will be submitted by 1 June 2016. A decision of the first stage is expected in September 2016 while final financial decision will come in May 2017.

3.6 The Meeting took note of the information by Poland that proposals on the project concept was forwarded to the project coordinator and Poland would like to have feedback from the project coordinator in a written form to both documents sent on the 21st of January via email. The project coordinator will be in contact with the Polish partners in this matter.

3.7 The Meeting was of the opinion that the development of standard values is a vital part of efficient nutrient recycling in agriculture.

3.8 The Meeting stressed the importance of the standard values for practical work of farmers, which requires close cooperation of the project team with farmers' society which can be organized through involvement of professional association (e.g. BFFE) into discussion on the project outcomes.

3.9 The Meeting pointed out that different methodologies are used in the countries and agricultural practices remarkably differ (e.g. feeding, breeds, genetics etc). These parameters are to be taken into account when developing standard values.

3.10 The Meeting also noted that the project outcomes will serve for a common understanding of methodologies rather than establishing unified standard value.

3.11 The Meeting in general agreed to the concept of the project taking into account all the comments mentioned above.

3.12 The Meeting discussed the role of the Agri group in the project and agreed that the Group will provide the link between the scientific results of the project and the authorities and policy makers. This will ensure sustainability of the project and utilization of the project results for enhancing sustainable nutrient management in the agricultural practices in the region.

3.13 The Meeting also stressed the need to promote the project results on the farm level. The Agri group will also secure this promotion through cooperation with farmers' associations and other NGOs being HELCOM observers, which will discuss the project outcomes with national farmers' associations via national branches and provide the Group with feedback.

3.14 The Meeting discussed the scope of the regional guidelines/recommendation on the use of national manure standards (document 3.1-2) and agreed that the objective of such a recommendation would be to guide how to replace mineral fertilizers with nutrients from manure through best available technology and best environmental practice.

3.15 The Meeting made the following proposals on the aims and outline of the recommendation:

- To provide guidance on how to use standard values in nutrient bookkeeping.
- Standard values to be used to identify ammonia emissions and for reporting under the NEC Directive. The standard values can also be used for identification of the greenhouse gas emissions.
- To assist farmers in fertilization planning which depends on regional soil and climate parameters.
- To provide guidance on how to comply the requirements of Nitrates Directive taking into account the national specific geographic, geological and socioeconomic parameters and to also take into account the requirement of water protection regulations providing guidance for sustainable fertilization.

- Economic efficiency of the use of manure for fertilization will be taken into account.
- To provide a recommendation on the frequency for updating standard values.

3.16 The Meeting agreed on the suggestion to start preparing a HELCOM Recommendation providing the guidance on the use of national manure standards integrating all the above mentioned aspects.

### **3.2 Promotion of nutrient accounting at farm level**

Documents: 3.2-1, 3.2-2

3.17 The Meeting took note of the Proceedings of the HELCOM Workshop on status of nutrient bookkeeping in the Baltic Sea countries, which was held in Oldenburg, Germany, on 28-29 April 2016 (document 3.2-2). The proceedings have been made available on the [HELCOM web page](#), including the corrections by Poland.

3.18 The Meeting took note of the remark by CCB on lack of the information on the limit values for phosphorus from livestock in Table 12 of the proceedings compared to previously reported information by the Contracting Parties to HELCOM (c.f. 2013 Ministerial Meeting [document](#)) and invited Contracting Parties to check the data and inform the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)) **by 29 April 2016**. Table 12 will be updated if new information is received.

3.19 The Meeting took note of the national developments concerning nutrient accounting since the workshop:

- Estonia: A new version of a web calculator of nutrient balances on farm level is under development. A new project aimed at development of the system to collect statistical data from electronic field books is under consideration as the electronic field books are mainly used by farmers.
- Finland: The advisory system, which is part of the new rural development programme offering advice on also environmental issues, has further developed. Around 1000 new credited advisers available.
- Germany: Germany is not in line with Nitrates Directive nor the National Emissions Ceilings Directive and thus the regulations on fertilizer are under revision. The expected changes will be: reducing ammonia emissions by compulsory integration of manure into arable soil within one hour or equivalent method of emission reduction, farm gate balances being introduced by 2018 for farms with more than 3 LSU per hectare, fertilizer planning will be compulsory, lower the tolerable limit for nutrient balance to 50 kg N/ha and 10 kg P/ha all over the country. Also, fermentation leftover will be included in the 170 kg N/ha of organic fertilizer allowed.
- Latvia: No changes since the workshop for nutrient balances. There are requirements for fertilizer plans but nutrient accounting at farm level is still voluntary.
- Poland: The situation has not changed since the workshop as the new strategy on bioeconomy is under development. In 2016 Poland observes a decrease in phosphorus balance from 3 kg/ha to 1 kg/ha while the nitrogen balance is around 48 kg/ha and is still under the EU average (ca 55 kg/ha).
- Russia: Not much has happened since the workshop but internal discussions are ongoing.
- Sweden: Working with farm gate balances on a voluntary level in "Focus on nutrients" project. The results have been evaluated showing that both surplus of nitrogen and phosphorous are decreasing.

3.20 BFFE highlighted the need for economic incentives for farmers to take the new advisory services provided in Finland into use.

3.21 The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by CCB and WWF regarding the lack of progress in the majority of the Contracting Parties, except for Denmark and Germany, in promoting nutrient accounting at farm level and encouraged the Contracting Parties to undertake activities to advance towards implementation of the HELCOM 2013 Ministerial commitment.

3.22 EU Commission expressed its support to the work by the countries towards nutrient bookkeeping to reach the HELCOM 2013 Ministerial commitment.

3.23 The Meeting welcomed a suggestion by Germany to assist Contracting Parties in promotion of nutrient accounting at farm level.

3.24 The Meeting took note of the document 3.2-1 and the proposals for the next steps to advance nutrient accounting at farm level in the Baltic Sea region and requested the Contracting Parties to provide information on that to the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)) **by 29 April 2016**.

#### **Agenda Item 4 Nutrient recycling**

Documents: 4-1, 4-2, 6-2

4.1 The Meeting took note of the presentation by EU Commission on the EU Circular Economy Package adopted by the European Commission on 2 December 2015 and the Fertilizer Regulation being updated (document 4-2, **Presentation 7**).

4.2 The Meeting discussed the impacts of the new draft [fertilizer regulation](#) from an economic and environmental point of view and was of the opinion that the new limit values for cadmium could increase the use of organic and waste based fertilizer products. The draft was newly adopted by the EU commission and is now passed on to the EU Parliament and the Council.

4.3 The Meeting took note of the following information by the Contracting Parties on the national policy priorities related to nutrient recycling in the light of implementation of the nutrient recycling commitments of the 2010 and 2013 HELCOM Ministerial commitments:

- Estonia: There is a management plan 2020 for which the main focus is on waste recycling and the use of waste material. One target is to reduce production of waste. Industrial waste is a problem and especially waste from oil shale industry. An ongoing project in Pärnu is looking into producing biogas for transport. In 2015 4-5 new biogas plants using manure and organic waste were set up.
- Finland: Finland has a strong national commitment to nutrient recycling. In the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 there are two key issues to tackle the environmental challenges related to water, soil and climate change: nutrient recycling and good soil condition. The Ministry of the Environment is coordinating a financing programme for promoting nutrient recycling which complements the RDP. A new government programme includes a spear head project on nutrient circulation. The target is to include 50% manure and 50% of sewage sludge into advanced processing by 2025. A new funding mechanism is under development. A kick-off event "[Recycle Nutrients for Clear Waters Forum for Action](#)" will be held on April 19-20, 2016 in Helsinki. There is also a specific programme for horse manure aiming at improved nutrient circulation.
- Germany: The Government intends to pass a phosphorus strategy by 2020. At the moment Germany is dependent on phosphorus import. The goal is to get 50% of phosphorus recovered from waste water and sludge ashes utilizing new techniques. A law on compulsory P recycling is under preparation within the framework of revising sewage sludge regulations.
- Latvia: There is a low density of animals in Latvia and not enough manure produced thus the use of mineral fertilizers is increasing. There is regulation on sewage sludge in force.
- Poland: The national priorities concerning nutrient recycling are under revision at the moment. Many activities regarding to the nutrient recycling are in use. Legal act on the use of sewage sludge in agriculture exist. Manure is used after digestion in biogas production. Natural fertilizers are used directly on a fields and composts are used as the soil improvers.
- Russia: In the Federal programme for agricultural development there is a sub-programme on improvement of soil fertility containing recommendation on liming, increase of soil fertility, organic fertilizers and limits for nitrates or phosphates in the soil. The use of sewage sludge is under discussion but concerns have been raised over the heavy metal content.
- Sweden: Swedish EPA was commissioned by the Government in 2012 to look into sustainable recycling of phosphorus. The study was carried out in 2013 with a proposal for a law. The law has not entered into force possibly pending information from EU Circular Economy Package

4.4 The Meeting took note of the suggestion by CCB to elaborate a stepwise process/roadmap towards reaching the ministerial commitments on nutrient recycling and also noting the need to involve other HELCOM groups due to the cross sectoral character of nutrient recycling. A possible starting point could be a state of play report based on information reported by the Contracting Parties.

4.5 The Meeting took note that activities on phosphorus recycling and good agricultural management practice have taken place in Baltic21 and should be considered to avoid overlaps with HELCOM activities.

4.6 The Meeting took note of the activities within the research network Leibniz ScienceCampus Phosphorus Research Rostock and the 8<sup>th</sup> International Phosphorus Workshop (IPW8) "Phosphorus 2020 — Challenges for Synthesis, Agriculture, and Ecosystems", which will be held in Rostock, Germany, on 12-16 September 2016 (document 6-2).

4.7 The Meeting discussed how to progress towards the 2013 Ministerial commitment and a proposal for a workshop was presented in document 4-1.

4.8 The Meeting decided to establish a drafting group consisting of representatives of the Contracting Parties and Observers to prepare an overview on the state of art on nutrient recycling and the need for further actions within the HELCOM framework. One part of the overview will be short descriptions by the Contracting Parties on national policy priorities related to nutrient recycling.

4.9 The Meeting welcomed the offer by Finland and Germany to co-lead the drafting group with the assistance of the Secretariat.

4.10 The Meeting agreed on the following timeline for preparing the overview:

- nominations by the Contracting Parties and Observers to the drafting group **by 20 April 2016**,
- Secretariat to circulate a questionnaire **by 29 April 2016** to work as the framework for Contracting Parties to report national overviews including request for national maps on phosphorus sensitive areas **by 31 May 2016**,
- first draft of the overview to be circulated **by 5 August 2016**,
- feedback to be provided by the Contracting Parties and Observers **by 1 September 2016**,
- overview to be finalized **by 15 September 2016**.

4.11 The Meeting decided to consider further together with the HELCOM Pressure Working Group the need for a HELCOM workshop on nutrient recycling.

4.12 The Meeting took note that Poland is in favour of scientific knowledge sharing, if such a workshop will be organized.

## Agenda Item 5

### Future work

Documents: 5-1

5.1 The Meeting took note of the [Terms of Reference](#) for the Agri group and the [Work Plan](#) for the Agri group 2014-2016 (document 5-1), recalled that the mandate for the Agri group is for five year according to the Terms of Reference starting from 2014 and elaborated some initial suggestions for the Work Plan 2017-2018 (**Annex 2**) with the view to submit the Work Plan to HOD 51-2016 (December 2016) for adoption.

5.2 The Meeting noted the position by Finland to focus on actions which clearly can bring added value and to identify clear and simple measures to implement.

5.3 The Meeting discussed the revision of part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention which is one of the duties of the Agri group.

5.4 The Meeting recalled the efforts made for going forward with the issue (e.g. project proposal) and the difficulties with agreeing on the scope of the revision by the Contracting Parties.

- 5.5 The Meeting noted of the concern expressed by some Contracting Parties for opening the Annex III Part II due to varying views among the countries on the matter and to instead focus on developing the tools for nutrient management.
- 5.6 The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by CCB and WWF on the delay in the revision process of Annex III Part II and noted the suggestion by CCB and WWF to elaborate steps on how the Contracting Parties plan to progress with the revision and to keep the HODs updated on the issue.
- 5.7 The Meeting took note that CCB provided suggestions on the scope of the review and updating of the part II of Annex III to AGRI 2-2015 to HOD 48-2015 (cf. docs 3-25, HOD 48-2015).
- 5.8 The Meeting discussed the identification of areas critical for N and P losses. The Meeting noted that there are existing maps of phosphorus content in soil prepared by JRC within the EU. EU Member States are already reporting the information on critical areas e.g. within the Nitrates Directive. The Meeting was of the opinion that identification of areas with phosphorus saturated soils could be improved.
- 5.9 The Meeting took note of the point made by Finland that countries are aware of their phosphorus rich areas and have national detailed plans for how to tackle the problem. Finland also reminded that the Rural Development Programs have just been adopted and one of the central aims is to improve water quality.
- 5.10 The Meeting welcomed the proposal by Finland to include the activity on identification of the areas critical for N and P as part of the nutrient recycling and agreed, as part of the overview of nutrient recycling to be prepared (c.f. paragraphs 4.8-4.10), to request the Contracting Parties to provide information on the existing maps of phosphorous content in soil.
- 5.11 The Meeting was informed by Poland about the project on natural fertilizers monitoring.
- 5.12 The Meeting noted that innovative water management measures (action 5) are extremely important and that there are activities and projects ongoing.
- 5.13 The Meeting took note of the exclusion of cattle farms from the BREF on industrial rearing of poultry and pigs and noted a proposal by WWF and CCB to address the issue on regional HELCOM level.
- 5.14 The Meeting welcomed offer by Finland to co-lead the action 5 and invited Sweden to consider co-leading and to clarify their position **by 29 April 2016** and inform the Secretariat accordingly.
- 5.15 The Meeting decided that the next meeting of the group (AGRI 4-2017) will be held in April 2017 and welcomed the Contracting Parties to consider hosting the meeting and to inform the Secretariat ([dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi](mailto:dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi)) **by 13 May 2016**.
- 5.16 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to look into the possibilities to organize an agriculture related session at the Annual EUSBSR Stakeholder Forum to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 8-9 November and to keep the Agri group updated on the possibilities. The Meeting agreed that the possible topics to be discussed could be nutrient standards in manure, continuing discussion on the scope of the guidelines/recommendation and overview on nutrient recycling priorities.
- 5.17 The Meeting took note of the information that the Baltic Sea Farmer of the year award ceremony will possibly take place during the Forum.

## Agenda Item 6

### Any other business

Documents: 6-1, 6-3

- 6.1 The Meeting checked and updated the list of contact addresses and observers of the Agri group (document 6-1) as contained in **Annex 3**.
- 6.2 The Meeting took note of the CCB activities on promotion of sustainable agricultural practices within BSR in 2015 including publication of report on promotion of BAT within industrial animal farming and application of EU CAP instruments (document 6-3).



6.3 The Meeting thanked Mr. Dietrich Schulz for acting as the Chair for the Agri group for many years as well as for his dedication to the work and wished him all the best for his retirement days.

6.4 The meeting also thanked Ms. Leena-Marja Kauranne, Finland, for her valuable contribution to the group and previous HELCOM groups and wished her all the best for her retirement days.

6.5 The Meeting further thanked Estonia for hosting the meeting and for excellent arrangements and kind hospitality.

**Agenda Item 7**

**Outcome of the Meeting**

Documents: 7-1

7.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Outcome of AGRI 3-2016 as contained in document 6-1.

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

## Annex 1 List of Participants

Representing	Name	Organization	E-mail address
<b>Chair</b>	Dietrich Schulz	Federal Environment Agency	dietrich.schulz@uba.de
<b>Estonia</b>	Allan Kaasik	Estonian University of Life Sciences	allan.kaasik@emu.ee
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<b>Invited guest</b>	Sari Luostarinen	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)	sari.luostarinen@luke.fi

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## Annex 2 Initial suggestion on Work Plan for HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group) 2017-2018

No.	ACTION	LEAD/RESPONSIBLE	INTERLINKED ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
Action 1 Review and revise part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention and implementation of the provision <sup>1</sup>				
1	Review and revise part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention I. A scope of the review will be identified based on the results of activities 2, 3, 4.	Contracting parties Drafting Group Lead country(ies) to be identified	To use the input from activities below	
Action 2. Annual accounting at farm level <sup>2</sup> :				
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The action is to be implemented nationally and reported to the AGRI group in 2018.</li> <li>The group will discuss progress in implementation in the regular group meetings and identify what kind of assistance is needed from the contracting Parties.</li> <li>Elaboration of the national roadmaps to promote nutrient accounting</li> </ul>	Germany to lead national experts		
Action 3. Guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure <sup>3</sup>				
3	Implementation of the project on nutrient standards in manure. The activity will be performed based on outcome AGRI 3-2016  The Group will discuss the project implementation at the regular meetings and facilitate exchange of information between the project partners, authorities and other stakeholders.	Finland to lead national experts		

<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 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

<sup>3</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

3a	Develop HELCOM Guidelines/recommendations for the use of standards The scope of the document is according to outcome of AGRI 3-2016	lead country to be identified		
Action 4. Promote development of appropriate methodology for phosphorus recycling				
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting a regional policy relevant document on the priorities in nutrients recycling.</li> <li>• Compilation of the regional map of nutrient, in particular, phosphorus sensitive areas.</li> <li>• Agri-environmental measures to be implemented in the sensitive areas</li> <li>• Road map on implementation of the regional priorities</li> </ul>	Finland and Germany	In cooperation with PRESSURE	
Action 5. Enhance transfer of knowledge and technology and exchange of good examples				
5	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.	Finland offered co-lead	Cooperation with PA AGRI of the EUSBSR	
5a	With regard to application of BAT for intensive rearing of poultry and pigs at least equally ambitious EU's BREF document as well as for cattle and conclusions throughout the region, especially within areas critical to nutrient losses Launch an activity to collect information on national BREFS for cattle farming. Consider a project application based on the results of the stock taking. Consider a HELCOM document providing guidance to develop BAT for cattle farming.	Contracting Parties		
Action 6. Exchange experiences and ideas for potential development of policy instruments, both voluntary and mandatory				

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of the pallet of measures.</li><li>• Exchange of the experience on agricultural advisory services.</li><li>• Exchange of experiences and analyses of impact of CAP (midterm review and next reform period).</li></ul>	Contracting Parties		continuous
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## Annex 3 Contact addresses of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group)

### Contact addresses of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group) in the Contracting Parties

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