



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM Fish Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture)

CG AQUACULTURE 3-2020

Online meeting, 25-26 June 2020

Document title	Extracts from recent HELCOM meeting outcomes of relevance for CG Aquaculture
Code	3-2
Category	INF
Agenda Item	3 – Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group
Submission date	3.6.2020
Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

The following HELCOM meetings that are relevant for the CG Aquaculture group have taken place since CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018:

1. [HOD 55-2018](#), Helsinki, Finland, 4-5 December 2018
2. [FISH 9-2019](#), Tallinn, Estonia 30-31 January 2019
3. [FISH 10-2019](#), Copenhagen, Denmark, 25-26 June 2019
4. [HOD 57-2019](#), Helsinki, Finland 10-11 December 2019
5. [FISH 11-2020](#), Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-12 March 2020

This document contains extracts from the outcomes of the aforementioned meetings, detailing matters of particular relevance to CG Aquaculture. The full meeting outcomes are available on the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the attached extracts from the outcomes of relevant HELCOM meetings and make use of the information as appropriate.

Extracts from HELCOM meeting outcomes of relevance for CG Aquaculture

1. [HOD 55-2018](#), Helsinki, Finland, 4-5 December 2018

The Meeting:

- adopted the Terms of Reference and approved the draft revised Work Plan for HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture), as set out in document 4-17, Annexes 2 and 3.
- welcomed the confirmation by Finland, that they are willing to co-lead the work on BAT/BEP together with Germany.
- expressed appreciation for the progress made by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, as well as the commitment by the Contracting Parties that participated in the meeting, the identified thematic leads and in particular Germany and Finland for offering their leadership. The Meeting recognized the importance of all Contracting Parties contributing with missing information, including national contact points for the work, noting that the work on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture should originally have been finalized already by the end of 2017.
- A question was raised with regard to the validity of HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming. The Meeting noted that the matter had been raised also by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 and that while Recommendation 25/4 is to be maintained until adoption of BAT/BEP based measures, the Secretariat had been invited by CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 to provide further information to FISH 9-2019 of its validity and to what extent the reporting requirements still apply.
- In response to a question posed by FEAP on whether any Contracting Parties had provided further information to the Secretariat on national BAT/BEP definitions by 23 November 2018 as agreed at CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, the Meeting noted the information by the Secretariat that no such information had been received.
- encouraged all Contracting Parties to nominate experts to participate in the work of CG Aquaculture.

2. [FISH 9-2019](#), Tallinn, Estonia 30-31 January 2019

The Meeting:

- took note of the Outcome of the second meeting of the HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018; document 5-1), as presented by the Secretariat.
- further noted that HOD 55-2018 considered matter regarding CG Aquaculture (Outcome para. 4-85-4.90).
- noted that CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018 invited the Secretariat to provide further information to FISH 9-2019 of the validity of HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on *Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming*, and to what extent the reporting requirements still apply, and that the matter was also raised at HOD 55-2018. On this matter, the Meeting was informed by the Secretariat that while Recommendation 37/3 on *Sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region* was developed to substitute Recommendation 25/4, it also recognizes the need to maintain Recommendation 25/4 until sufficient progress on BAT and BEP has been made. Work on this matter is still ongoing in CG Aquaculture.

Following the provided clarification on the matter, the Meeting agreed that Recommendation 25/4, as well as its reporting requirements, are still valid and applicable and encouraged Contracting Parties to provide reports in accordance with Recommendation 25/4.

The Meeting further:

- took note of information on recent activities relevant to the development of sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea as well as the BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture, and specifically that ICES has a new strategic initiative on aquaculture, with nine different working groups touching upon aquaculture, focusing on specific topics such as genetics, ecological carrying capacity, environmental impact etc.

- welcomed the progress made and thank the lead countries, and also thanked Germany for allowing CG Aquaculture contacts and observers to comment on a German project proposal with the aim of appointing staff to work further on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.
- agreed that, in addition to the themes presented at CG AQUACULTURE 2-2018, parasites and pathogens could be a useful additional theme to be considered in the future work on BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.
- noted the view of Denmark, that the Nordic Council of Ministers report on sustainable aquaculture may be valuable for the work of CG Aquaculture.

3. [FISH 10-2019](#), Copenhagen, Denmark, 25-26 June 2019

The Meeting:

- took note of information by the Lead countries on the ongoing work regarding the development of BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture. A German project on developing BAT/BEP for nutrients and hazardous substances from aquaculture has recently started and will contribute to this work. The project will be carried out by the AquaBio Tech Group and will run for approximately five months.
- noted that FEAP has expressed interest to contribute to this project and is liaising with Germany in this regard.
- took note of the information on recent activities relevant to the development of sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea as well as the BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture. The Meeting took note of the recent publication of an [Overview of farming techniques for aquaculture in Sweden](#).
- discussed document 5-1 “Mussels to combat eutrophication” submitted by FEAP. The Meeting also noted that a law (L111) on the matter has recently been passed in Denmark, and that such compensation measures should be based on scientific and practical knowledge supporting that the measure is sufficiently efficient. The Meeting noted that in some countries, mussel farming is not seen as a viable solution to combat eutrophication in the Baltic Sea, nor to compensate for nutrient input from fishfarming. The Meeting also noted a comment by CCB, that mussels could be used to address internal nutrient load in enclosed sea areas, but should not be used to compensate for nutrient input from new fish farms or other new sources.
- noted that the BONUS Optimus Project is also studying the matter and may be invited to present their results at a future meeting.
- noted a comment by ICES that naturally occurring bivalves and associated healthy seafloor habitats, via the function they provide, are some of the most cost-effective reducers of nutrients. ICES further commented that both impact from bottom contacting fishing gear and oxygen depletion affect this natural filtering capacity. Focusing management measures to improve the health and functioning of seafloor habitats, may help reduce further nutrients from the system.

4. [HOD 57-2019](#), Helsinki, Finland, 10-11 December 2019

The Meeting approved the Work Plan for the HELCOM Fish Group for 2020-2021 as contained in Annex 4 to the [Outcome](#) (including the actions “Develop and agree on BAT/BEP for Sustainable aquaculture” and “Review and report on implementation of HELCOM recommendations 25/4 and 37-3 on sustainable aquaculture”).

5. [FISH 11-2020](#), Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-12 March 2020

The Meeting

- took note of ongoing work regarding the development of BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.
- reiterated the invitation for Contracting Parties to consider Chairing the Group and contributing to the work.
- noted that the next meeting of CG AQUACULTURE will be held in Mariehamn, Åland Islands, on 25-26 June 2020.
- noted that CCB is working on a compilation of legal cases related to aquaculture.
- invited the Secretariat to inform FISH 12-2020 on progress in the development of BAT/BEP, highlighting any need for further action to complete the task.