



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)

Online, 16 June 2021

CG AQUACULTURE
4-2021

Document title	Updated Terms of Reference and Work Plan for CG Aquaculture
Code	2-1
Category	INF
Agenda Item	2 – Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group
Submission date	3.5.2021
Submitted by	Secretariat
Reference	Outcome of FISH 12-2020

Background

This document contains the updated Terms of Reference and Work Plan for CG Aquaculture, as approved by FISH 12-2020.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the updated Terms of Reference and Work Plan for CG Aquaculture and make use of them as appropriate.

Updated Terms of Reference and Work Plan for CG Aquaculture

In order to implement the Work Plan and as a follow up on HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 on sustainable aquaculture, the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish Group) suggested to establish an intersessional Correspondence Group on Best Available Technology/Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture) (c.f. outcome of HELCOM FISH 3-2015, §3.5-3.8). This suggestion was agreed HOD 49-2015 (c.f. outcome of HELCOM HOD 49-2015, paragraph 4.45).

Recalling HELCOM Recommendation 37/3, which:

- recalls the 2013 HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting agreement to develop a new HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture by 2014 to substitute the existing HELCOM Recommendation 25/4;
- has regard to HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 on Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from fresh water and marine fish farming, as far as it is not overridden by HELCOM Ministerial Declarations and Recommendations or other legal requirements;
- recognizes the need to maintain Recommendation 25/4 until adoption of BAT and BEP based measures for application in marine and freshwater fish farming;
- desires to limit the negative impacts on the environment from aquaculture facilities located in the catchment area of the Baltic Sea and in the Baltic Sea by applying Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP); and hence
- recommends to the Governments of the Contracting Parties to the Helsinki Convention to jointly develop by 2018 BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region and apply them based on Annex II of the Helsinki Convention;

the purpose of CG Aquaculture is to work towards adoption of BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region.

The CG shall take account of the heterogeneous nature of aquaculture, variability in technology and geography with the need for a differentiated (if not locally- and/or sub-regionally concentrated) approach and aim at a developing comprehensive set of BAT/BEP descriptions on sustainable aquaculture for the benefit of the Baltic Sea region.

Objective

The HELCOM Correspondence Group on sustainable aquaculture (hereinafter – CG Aquaculture):

- exchanges BAT/BEP information and experience gained on aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region; and
- develops BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture for the Baltic Sea region, by:
 - i. defining environmentally acceptable, economically viable and socially equitable standards;
 - ii. differentiating between land- and sea-based aquaculture, where appropriate
 - iii. promoting innovation; and
 - iv. not prescribing any specific technique to be applied by all Contracting Parties.

Status and working procedures

The CG Aquaculture is:

- an ad hoc sub-group to the Fish Group which it reports to;

- supported by the Secretariat;
- established for a period of 48 months (the work to be finalized by the end of 2022); with a possibility to extend the mandate by HELCOM HODs decision;
- working mainly by correspondence, face-to-face or virtual meetings, as needed; and
- co-led by Germany and Finland.

Membership

Members of the CG Aquaculture are:

- nominated Contracting Party experts on aquaculture and other relevant matters;
- HELCOM Observers, as appropriate;
- additional experts may participate in meetings by invitation by the Co-Chairs of the CG Aquaculture (such as representatives of other organizations, technical experts, etc.); and
- the group should be led by a Chair or Co-Chairs appointed by the lead countries.

In executing its duties, the group shall

- base its work to the Helsinki Convention Articles 3 and 6 and Annex II;
- be guided by HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 on Sustainable Aquaculture and its Annex, and Recommendation 25/4 to the extent it is not overridden by HELCOM Ministerial Declarations and Recommendations or other legal requirements;
- be guided by matters related to nutrition impacts and thresholds of the Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration;
- promote innovation by considering the available new (open/closed) technologies/systems, such as IMTA or RAS;
- be guided e.g. by the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM Ministerial Declarations, EU and national legislation, the report on existing BAT techniques applied in the Nordic countries (Nordic Council of Ministers report on aquaculture), national strategies and other relevant documents as deemed relevant; and
- recognize the commonalities between Contracting Parties, especially with regard to how BAT/BEP is expressed in national legislation.

Detailed tasks for the group are:

- a) to compile latest information on aquaculture techniques for different types of production, possibly contributing to the BAT/BEP descriptions;
- b) to jointly develop BAT/BEP descriptions for the aquaculture operators, relevant for both existing and new, sea-based aquaculture and land-based¹ aquaculture with a potential impact on the Baltic Sea;
- c) to develop an appropriate reporting format for demonstrating compliance with Recommendation 37/3;
- d) review and update Recommendation 37/3 as necessary; and

¹CG AQUACULTURE 1-2017 considered and discussed different types of aquaculture to be covered by distinct BAT/BEP agreed with regard to land-based aquaculture that the focus should be on intensive inland aquaculture (see Annex 2 of the outcome of CG AQUACULTURE 1-2017, intensive in accordance with FAO definitions)

- e) to identify possible research and development needs and knowledge gaps, with a view to improving the BAT and BEP descriptions for the Baltic Sea region.

The results of CG work shall be subject to consideration by the Fish Group and high-level HELCOM bodies as deemed necessary.

Draft revised work plan of CG Aquaculture 2021-2022

Tasks of the CG Aquaculture TORs	Responsible	Milestone	Output deadline
<p>To compile latest information on environmental and economic performance of various aquaculture techniques for different types of production, possibly contributing to the BAT/BEP descriptions,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by inviting CP's to provide information in the first instance. - in the long term, investigate opportunities for producing a more advanced compilation e.g. through collaborating with the Nordic Council of Ministers BAT Group, or by using EMFF funding from the CP's to conduct the work. 	<p>Lead country Finland All participants to contribute</p>	<p>Report to meetings of CG Aquaculture Report to meetings of HELCOM Fish</p>	<p>First draft by the end of 2020 (2021 for more advanced compilation)</p>
<p>To jointly develop BAT/BEP descriptions for the aquaculture operators, relevant for both existing and new, sea-based aquaculture and land-based aquaculture with a potential impact on the Baltic Sea.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BAT/BEP for the establishment of aquaculture operations (site selection, permitting regulations, MPAs etc.); – BAT/BEP for aquaculture operation considering for example the following issues: hazardous substances, eutrophication, biodiversity impacts, marine litter and sustainable feeds; and – BAT/BEP for the monitoring of impacts from aquaculture operations. <p>The work should be initiated by the thematic leads (Germany for nutrient input and hazardous substances, Estonia for monitoring of aquaculture operation) and Poland to prepare a first draft for marine litter in consultation with the Correspondence Group.</p>	<p>Overall coordination by Lead Countries supported by the Secretariat</p>	<p>Report to meetings of CG Aquaculture</p>	<p>By end of 2022 (individual themes should aim to finalize earlier)</p>

Following completion of BAT/BEP descriptions, develop an appropriate reporting format for demonstrating compliance with Recommendation 37/3.	All participants to contribute	Report to meeting of CG Aquaculture 2022	2022
Review and update Recommendation 37/3 as necessary.	All participants to contribute	Report to meeting of CG Aquaculture 2022	2022
To identify possible research and development needs and knowledge gaps, with a view to improving the BAT and BEP descriptions for the Baltic region.	All participants	Report to meeting of CG Aquaculture 2022 Report to meeting of HELCOM FISH in 2022	2022