



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Correspondence group for fisheries

CG FISHDATA 1-2018

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Background

This document includes the first draft of a Roadmap submitted by Poland to the HELCOM FISH 7-2017 Meeting (HELCOM FISH 7-2017 document 5-4).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to use the material drafted by Poland.

ROADMAP First draft by Poland

Aim, scope and further steps concerning the

“Inventory of HELCOM data needs to assess incidental by-catches, fisheries impact on benthic biotopes, in the Baltic Sea to support HELCOM indicator assessment work”

Aim

Aim of preparing an Inventory is to fill data gaps in order to fulfill HELCOM commitments. The following compilation directly refers to these HELCOM commitments as well as links to European legislation:

Baltic Sea Action Plan

Therefore **WE AGREE** to increase knowledge on and protection of Baltic Sea marine habitats,

communities and species

- *by 2010 by further developing in co-operation with the 1991 Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) a coordinated reporting system and database on Baltic harbour porpoise sightings, bycatches and strandings;*
- *by the promotion of research aiming at developing additional methods for the assessment of, and reporting on, the impacts of fisheries on biodiversity;*
- *by the development and implementation of effective monitoring and reporting systems for by-caught birds and mammals;*

Ministerial Declaration 2010

DECIDE

- *to establish, for those HELCOM Contracting States being also EU-Member States, the role of HELCOM as the coordinating platform for the regional implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (EU MSFD) in the Baltic Sea¹ including striving for harmonised national marine strategies for achieving good environmental status according to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the EU MSFD; and*

ALSO DECIDE

- *that core set of indicators with quantitative targets shall be developed for each of the segments of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, while ensuring that the indicators can also be used for the other international monitoring and reporting requirements inter alia the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and that a full indicator-based follow-up system for the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan be further developed and placed on the HELCOM website by 2013;*
- *that the already initiated revision of the HELCOM monitoring programmes be finalized by 2013 and that it results in cost-effective joint monitoring, which fully supports the indicator-based assessment approach and monitoring of the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, and is in line with other international monitoring and reporting requirements;*

ACKNOWLEDGE

- *that with the activities and programmes of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Fisheries and Environmental Forum, HELCOM took a step towards the implementation of an ecosystem- based approach allowing for improved coordination and cooperation between fisheries and marine environment protection authorities, and insofar has begun to develop the Baltic Sea as a model of good management of human activities;*

Ministerial Declaration 2013

WE DECIDE to implement on a regional level the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for the 2011-2020 period of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, taking into account the special characteristics of the Baltic Sea, bearing in mind that the implementation of the Plan in the EU and its Member States is carried out through the EU Biodiversity Strategy, and more specifically **DECIDE** to:

- take decisive action to work towards a favourable conservation status of the harbor porpoise based on implementation of the CMS ASCOBANS Jastarnia Plan for the harbor porpoise in the Baltic Sea, in particular by addressing the pressing problem of by-catch;

WE SUPPORT the further development and testing of the HELCOM generic decision-support tool to map possible negative impacts of specific gear types on threatened or declining species and habitats, and which helps to develop and/or recommend measures to address these;

WE DECIDE to take action to reduce the negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem and to this end, **SUPPORT** the development of fisheries management and technical measures to minimize unwanted by-catch of fish, birds and mammals in order to achieve the close to zero target for by-catch rates of the Baltic Sea Action Plan and minimize damage to sea bed habitats;

WE AGREE to continue the work on strengthening ecosystem-based management for coastal fish populations, utilizing, and enhancing as far as possible, monitoring for assessment of coastal fish communities;

WE AGREE to continue to work to develop common procedures to facilitate the sharing of aggregated data on fisheries activities in the Baltic Sea in an applicable format for the purpose of assessing pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems e.g. to be applied in maritime spatial planning.

RECOGNIZING that recreational fisheries conducted e.g. from boats using commercial gears at a certain scale may contribute to fishing mortality of certain commercially exploited fish stocks and impacts on biodiversity, **WE AGREE** to ask for advice from Regional Coordination Groups within the EU Data Collection Framework and ICES on how to improve data collected on such recreational fisheries, with a view to evaluate the impacts of such recreational fisheries on the marine environment;

WE SUPPORT the first set of core indicators of environmental status and pressures with the intention that they will form the basis of an indicator-based follow-up system for measuring progress towards achieving good environmental status with a full set of operational core indicators, and further **STRESS** that the joint coordinated monitoring by the Contracting Parties should provide the data necessary for regular updating of the HELCOM core indicators and assessments;

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

HELCOM also supports countries being EU members in implementation of Marine Strategy Framework Directive (highly relevant is especially new Commission Decision laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU – Member States should establish threshold values for biodiversity criterion D1C1 (by-catch) including sea mammals, birds and non-commercially exploited fish species, and Descriptor D6 (sea floor integrity). Reporting under Article 8 of the MSFD currently is based on national MSFD indicator assessments (where they exist) and otherwise on evaluation criteria according to other EU Directives, including the

Habitats Directive which i. a. obliges EU members to monitor bycatch of protected species (art. 12 Habitats Directive: *Member States shall establish a system to monitor the incidental capture and killing of the animal species listed in Annex IV*).

Scope

Basic scope of the Inventory: To make two HELCOM core and pre-core indicators needed for assessments of Descriptors 1 and 6, operational:

- "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear"
- "Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes".

The rationale of preparing the Inventory, is to identify significant data gaps, and possible sources of necessary data in case some data has already been collected by a number of Contracting Parties. Based on the CORE indicators species and habitats to be monitored should be identified. Another prerequisite is the monitoring of fishing effort in a way which could be used for both, fishery and environmental assessments. In order to make best use of available data, additional data collection activities should be conducted only where the data gaps exist.

Obvious significant data gaps exist in case of collection of data on by-catch of protected species of mammals and birds with respect to the CORE indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear" and the Habitats Directive. Though some data are collected in pilot studies. Data gaps regarding by-catch of protected species, are also reinforced by ICES¹.

In case of the pre-core indicator "Cumulative impact on benthic biotopes" some data have been collected and analysed by ICES (on a basis of logbook data and VMS data), however, still some data gaps exist in order to operationalize the indicator. These involve fisheries data as well as biological and hydrographical data.

Next steps

The Inventory should be ready and finally accepted by HELCOM by mid-2018. The current DC-MAP covers the years 2017 to 2019. In 2019 when the new DC-MAP is to be negotiated, there is an opportunity to include fishery related data needs in the work plan. For this purpose, precise information what kind of data coming from fisheries are urgently needed, should be provided to the RCM Baltic (Regional Coordination Meeting organized under DCF) and BSAC. Co-operation of HELCOM with these institutions should be sought. As part of the co-operation HELCOM could send observers to their meetings and also invite experts from these groups to their meetings.

The discussion within RCM should include the following issues:

- additional species to be monitored as by-catch
- additional fleet segments which should be focused on by-catch of protected species,
- the use of other monitoring methods which would allow to monitor more vessels of various fleet segments with funds available
- and details on monitoring of fishing effort such as metrics, small vessels, recreational vessels

1 Reference: ICES WGBYC REPORT 2017

The aim is to include monitoring and pilot projects targeted at fulfilling HELCOM commitments in the national work plans for data collection in such a way to make it comparable and coherent within the Baltic Sea region and to make best use of data collection activities.

The first step is to endorse the Inventory by the HELCOM FISH and STATE&CONSERVATION groups.

Then it should be submitted to HOD/HELCOM meeting for the final adoption.

When the document is adopted at HELCOM level, it should be submitted for consideration and discussion under the Regional Coordination Meetings and Baltic Sea Advisory Council.