



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Workshop on Status Assessment of Commercial Fish

ComFish WS 1-2021

Online, 28-29 September 2021

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Background

The approved Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the workshop are provided in this document. These ToRs were reviewed by the State and Conservation Working Group (State and Conservation 13-2020, [Outcome paragraphs 4J-.85-91](#)) and approved by the Heads of Delegation ([HOD 59-2020, Outcomes paragraph 6.10](#)). The ToRs are to guide the work carried out under the workshop and any subsequent follow up from this.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information provided and use it to guide the work at the workshop.

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Workshop on Status Assessment of Commercial Fish (HELCOM ComFish WS 1-2021)

Approved by the 59th Meeting of the Heads of Delegation ([HOD 59-2020](#), para 6-10), based on the [document 6-16](#).

Background

The HELCOM Workshop on Commercial Fish (HELCOM ComFish WS 1-2021) will be a single event to bring together regional experts on the topic and synthesise information into a solid plan ahead, the ultimate goal of the process being an improved and functional assessment of commercial fish for the Third Holistic Assessment of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS III).

In addition to nominations from HELCOM Contracting Parties the Secretariat will contact ICES to directly invite participation in the Workshop and preparatory work and thereby ensure that relevant experts and knowledge are incorporated. The 'commercial fish' to be addressed under this process will be aligned to meet the needs, under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), for HELCOM Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States.

This Workshop will also establish plans for intersessional work required to achieve the improved assessment and, should the participants deem it necessary, will have the option to propose to State and Conservation that further Workshops would be valuable to achieve the planned work.

Validity of ToRs

Single event Workshop planned for March 2021 (Period of validity for the overall work: Autumn 2020 – autumn 2023). The period of overall work reflects the need for intersessional work to implement the strategy defined at this Workshop.

This Workshop will be a single event and any extension of the work or further meetings or Workshops will be carried out via discussion with, and decisions made by State and Conservation.

Main aims and focus of the group:

- 1) Review the topic specific work plan generated in the Second HELCOM Indicator Workshop ([Fish work plan](#));
- 2) Devise and review a list of species of relevance in the Baltic Sea – including review of ICES recommendations and national species lists;
- 3) Review policy requirements for an assessment of commercial fish;
- 4) Review the data available through ICES;
- 5) Devise a full assessment of commercial fish (including in ecological terms) to provide a improved status assessment in HOLAS III;
- 6) Identify if the proposed assessment would have financial implications (e.g. new data needs such as collecting, processing and analyzing) and sources for these resource requirements;
- 7) Establish valid indicators/assessment approaches that can be viable long-term components of HELCOM assessments;

The work in HELCOM on indicators and assessments needs to be driven by the best available scientific knowledge and should also consider aspects that may influence the design or application of assessment, including: the need for comparable and harmonized regional assessments, potential sub-regional variation, data availability and ecologically relevant assessments of status. These factors are key in the development of a solid assessment, and confidence evaluation, that offers the broadest and most inclusive regional coverage possible.

Organization of work

A core team, including Chair(s) for the workshop, will be identified to plan the agenda and preparatory work for the workshop.

The Workshop will be guided by the State and Conservation Working Group. Information flow to State and Conservation is a key factor after the workshop to maintain information flow, discuss future developments and gain approval on the proposed work ahead towards HOLAS III. Where relevant national or regional projects may also offer relevant input to the Workshop and work ahead. The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the workshop. The indicator coordinator (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) and the Professional Secretary responsible for State and Conservation (Jannica.Haldin@helcom.fi) will act as contact points to support the preparation and running of the Workshop.

Reporting

The Chair(s) of the workshop will report back to the State and Conservation WG on the activities of the workshop. For State and Conservation WG this will take the form of an agenda item at WG meetings.

Membership

Nominations for the core team to plan the workshop will be provide by the CPs.

Nominations for the workshop will be provided by the CPs. Where possible the Worksop will be formed of experts already active in HELCOM processes. Additional nominations are anticipated where Experts have knowledge on the assessment of commercial stocks and experience with ICES stock assessment processes for the relevant Baltic Sea stock.

Nominations should be submitted to the Secretariat (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) **by Friday 27 November 2020**.

Provisional time plan and proposed workflow

Step 1: Nominations to populate the WS – 27 November 2020

Nominations of national Experts will be made by State and Conservation Contacts to the Secretariat (owen.rowe@helcom.fi) **by Friday 27 November, 2020**.

The Secretariat will directly invite ICES to participate in the preparatory work and the Workshop.

Step 2: Identify preparatory work required – by 15 January 2021

Known preparatory work includes: 1) Identify a core team to plan the agenda and preparatory work, 2) Prepare a list of species including those listed as priority species for assessment or monitoring under relevant policy documents, 3) Summary of data available through ICES, 4) Summary of existing assessment approaches applied or previously developed/discussed (under HELCOM and ICES).

Devise a plan for the preparatory work to be available in advance of the Workshop.

Step 3: Workshop – March 2021

The following topics will be addressed at the Workshop:

- Aims of Workshop (short introduction)
- What was used in HOLAS II.
- HOLAS III and indicator development deadlines (short introduction)
- Topic specific indicator work plan (short introduction)
- Policy requirements, e.g. BSAP, MSFD D1 and D3 (short introduction)
- Species lists (presentation and discussion)
- Data availability through ICES (overview)
- Define plan ahead for HOLAS III
 - What will be done for HOALS III, what is needed for the assessment

- What indicators make an overall assessment
- Define and document the threshold values to be applied in selected indicators, including for their approval via State and Conservation and at HOD
- How is ecological status assessed by the proposed indicators
- What will be the required work ahead to achieve the assessment at HOLAS III and who will take it forward
- Outcome to be provided to State and Conservation (circa April 2021).