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| Document title | Concretization of existing HELCOM actions |
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| Category | DEC |
| Agenda Item | 3 – Implementation and update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan |
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Background

The current Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) includes a number of actions related to activities under the mandate of the Fish Group (Annex 1). The implementation of existing HELCOM actions, including from the current BSAP and Ministerial Declarations in 2010 and 2013 have been followed-up through a coherent scheme since 2016. In the case that existing actions are not implemented by 2021 they will be transferred to the updated BSAP. In this document an initial categorization of not yet accomplished actions has been made to indicate the need for possible rephrasing in case of transfer to the updated BSAP. For such actions, consideration should also be given to whether their current formulation is adequate, whether some specification is needed (smaller changes, adding target year etc.) or whether major changes are needed. Such rephrasing will require more discussion and guidance and is not necessary yet at FISH 10-2019. It is to be noted that any major changes are to be approved by HOD and that the ambition level of agreed objectives and actions should be maintained.

Among existing actions there are also some that were evaluated as too generically formulated to be followed-up through reporting, e.g. those lacking concrete aims and target years and those that were formulated as aspirations rather than commitments (we encourage, we strive for) (Annex 2). As agreed through the Strategic Plan for the BSAP update, these actions should be reviewed to check if some of them should be considered for uptake in the updated BSAP and in that case to concretize them as appropriate. The relevant actions related to the Fish Group are detailed in the Annex 2 of the [Outcome](#) of FISH 9-2019.

The Meeting is invited to make initial proposals for how to concretize the actions listed in Annex 1 and Annex 2. In the case the task is not completed the Meeting is invited to consider how to arrange further work. The initial proposal will be presented to HOD 56-2019 and the task is to be finalized within 2019 (cf. Work Plan activity 2.4).

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- to discuss and agree on existing HELCOM actions to be considered for further development and uptake in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan (see annexes 1 and 2);
- to make initial proposal for concretized actions; and
- to agree as needed on how to finalize the tasks before the end of 2019.

Annex 1. Plans and next step for implementation of not yet implemented joint actions

Follow-up of existing HELCOM actions

The below sections are divided by joint and national actions under the Fish Group that have not been fully implemented yet.

The follow-up of existing agreements has also identified the need to clarify some actions to ensure a common understanding on the intention of the action and coherent reporting on accomplishment by countries. In the below sections a proposal on clarification of the national actions have been made.

Actions have also been categorized according to their need for rephrasing in case of transfer to the updated BSAP. In this regard it should be noted that Contracting Parties have agreed to, as a first priority, make an effort to achieve already agreed HELCOM actions (HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration, paragraph 14). If however the existing actions from the BSAP and Ministerial Declaration from 2010, 2013 and 2018 are not fully implemented by 2021, they will be transferred to the updated BSAP. In case of transfer, rephrasing of the actions may be needed to ensure that they are up to date. Any major changes will be approved by HOD. A proposal for the categorization of not yet implemented actions with regard to need for rephrasing has been made according to the following:

- Category 1) The actions can remain with current formulation
- Category 2) Specification is needed e.g. smaller changes, adding target year, but the action will basically remain the same
- Category 3) Major changes might be needed. In this regard it should be noted that the updated BSAP should maintain the ambition level of agreed objectives and actions (HELCOM 2018 Ministerial Declaration, paragraph 20). When rephrasing of such actions is initiated guidance will be provided to the Working Group.

In the below sections proposals for categorization has been made for joint and national actions, for consideration by the Meeting.

Joint actions related to Fish

| Action (origin) | Current status | Comments from FISH 9-2019 | Proposal |
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| Further development and implementation of common practices for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon and sea trout as reintroductions in potential salmonid rivers (MD 2013) | Not accomplished | <p>Still a relevant HELCOM action; important for consideration of genetic affects and spreading of parasites and deceases.</p> <p>Sweden informed that a national strategy will be updated shortly that can contribute to the work. There are also guidelines developed within NASCO (North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization) that could inform the process. ICES WGPDMO (Working Group on Pathology and Diseases of Marine Organisms) could also give advice.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to take the action forward through the FISH-M, | <p>Aim to develop common guidelines for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon and sea trout as reintroductions in potential salmonid rivers by 2021. Lead country needed. If this is not accomplished, revision in the wording needed as proposed by FISH 9 (Category 3).</p> <p>Consideration could also be given to organizing a dedicated FISH-M workshop on such common guidelines (lead country and host country needed).</p> |

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| | | <p>e.g. through organizing a dedicated workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>proposed</u> to aim for development of common guidelines rather than common practices since the latter term can cover a broad range of issues that are necessarily essential for the activities. | |
| Further development and implementation of comparable methodology for data collection (salmon and sea trout) through surveys, especially on recreational fisheries (MD 2013) | Partly accomplished | <p>The Meeting <u>noted</u> that there are several activities established under DCF that address this topic and furthermore that HELCOM FISH-M and the RETROUT project have discussed methodological issues regarding seatrout. Harmonization of methodology also takes place in ICES WGBAST (Assessment Working Group on Baltic Salmon and Trout).</p> <p>If was furthermore underlined that development of such methodology would be resources demanding. National data collection is however still not harmonized so it is relevant that comparable methodology for data collection is developed. The Meeting <u>agreed</u> that it would be useful to receive information on whether FISH PRO also considers this to be an issue or whether the action is still considered to be valid and if there are any suggestions on further steps to be taken (Outcome paragraph 2.4).</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished - <u>proposed</u> to change the formulation of the HELCOM action; HELCOM is proposed to signal the need for data harmonization development, e.g. by establishing guiding principles, but not to develop the methodology as such. | Guiding principles for data harmonization to be developed by 2021. If this is not accomplished, revision in the wording needed as proposed by FISH 9 (Category 3). |
| Further development and implementation of recommendations for riverine and estuarine management and conservation measures, such as fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, concerning fisheries within rivers and estuaries (MD 2013) | Partly accomplished | <p>The RETROUT project will collate information on the effect of restoration measures for seatrout in the Baltic Sea region including, e.g. for spawning sites, fish ways. The Meeting further <u>noted</u> that FISH-M 4-2017 addressed a number of cases and best practices for river restoration.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> | Updated recommendation 32/33-1 to be adopted in 2021. Secretariat to draft a first proposal to the next Fish meeting. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished - <u>proposed</u> to update HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 by adding guidelines on restoration measures, taking into account conclusions from FISH-M 4-2017 and the RETROUT project. The Secretariat will draft a first proposal. When such guidelines are in place the action can be considered as accomplished. - <u>noted</u> that the action is originally related to salmon | |
| 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 (MD 2013) | Partly accomplished | <p>The HELCOM BalticBOOST project developed a tool to evaluate impacts of fishing gear on benthic communities but the specific tool that is referred to in the action (the ‘HELCOM generic tool’) has not been further developed. The Meeting <u>did not find it relevant</u> to continue working on the existing tool but found it relevant to share experience and compile information from different existing sources regarding the impacts of different gear types on species and habitats.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>proposed</u> to delete the action in its current formulation but to keep the topic on the work plan of the Fish Group. - <u>agreed</u> to convene a dedicated session on how far countries have come in implementing fisheries management measures in MPAs, how such measures are linked to other processes such as MSP, HOLAS, MSFD implementation and how information on impacts of fishing gear is used for management. | <p>FISH 10-2019 to propose to HOD that this action is deleted, but to be kept on the Work Plan of the Fish Group.</p> <p>Level of implementation on management measures in MPAs, as discussed by FISH 9-2019, could be done as part of the action on “Development and implementation of fisheries management measures for fisheries inside marine protected areas (BSAP)” below.</p> |
| Development and implementation of effective monitoring for by-caught birds and mammals (BSAP) | Partly accomplished | <p>The HELCOM roadmap on collection of fisheries data is under way. It was however noted that implementation of such monitoring may not be in place by 2021.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - agreed to change the status of accomplishment to partly accomplished. | Category 3. Action to be revised to reflect implementation of Roadmap, and Contracting Parties to implement effective monitoring. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proposed as a first step to finalize the roadmap on collection of fisheries data. - agreed to change the wording to the supporting information in column F of the excel-file to: "...is not considered as sufficient data for assessments of by-catch" | |
| Development and implementation of effective reporting systems for by-caught birds and mammals (BSAP) | Partly accomplished | <p>Reporting on by-catch takes place by EU MS to the EC and is further submitted to ICES. The reporting is however done in different ways by the countries and there is a need to further develop existing reporting systems. If a fit for purpose reporting system to support HELCOM work (e.g. indicator assessment) is in place it is however not necessary for HELCOM to set up a separate reporting system.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to specify what the reported data should be used for within HELCOM. - <u>proposed</u> to change the wording of the action to "Further development of existing reporting systems". | Category 3. This action could be combined with the above, and rephrased to focus on development of existing reporting systems. Contracting Parties to implement effective monitoring and reporting as appropriate. |
| Development and implementation of fisheries management measures for fisheries inside marine protected areas (BSAP) | Partly accomplished | <p>A relevant HELCOM action where several countries mentioned their implementation of such measures. The Meeting <u>was however of the view</u> that it is not suitable to assess the action in terms of being accomplished or not. It was furthermore proposed to label the action as 'national'. The Meeting <u>noted</u> that BALTFISH will also consider management measures in MPAs in the Baltic Sea.</p> <p>The Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>agreed</u> to consider the action as "national" and to request countries to report on the implementation of fisheries management measures in MPAs. The Secretariat will explore if it is suitable to use the HELCOM MPA database for this reporting purpose. Since the action is not suitable for assessing the level of accomplishment this should be indicated in the follow-up system with a link to relevant source of information. | <p>Category 3, some rewording needed and the action should become national rather than joint.</p> <p>Subject to funding being available, the Secretariat is planning to update the MPA Database to enable inclusion of data on measures (including fisheries management measures). At current, the MPA Database is not a practical tool for such data. Contracting Parties are encouraged to report on fisheries management measures in MPA already now, so that it can be included in the MPA Database in due course.</p> |

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| Continue the efforts underway and enhance coordination of measures within the Baltic Sea as well as with other European countries, for the conservation of eel stocks, in line with national eel management plans (BSAP) | Partly accomplished | The Meeting <u>acknowledged</u> that further coordination of measures in the Baltic Sea region is essential and proposed that this should be considered as a joint action to be followed-up regularly by the Fish Group. The Meeting also <u>noted</u> that BALTFISH will organize a workshop on eel in spring 2019 | This action has been moved from national actions to joint actions. Proposal to organize a workshop on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome, develop new or strengthened actions. (Category 3) . Such workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3) |
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National actions related to Response

| Action (origin) | Status in March 2018 | Comments from FISH 9-2019 | Proposal |
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| Competent authorities to take immediate action for development of long-term management plans for commercially exploited fish stocks so that they are within safe biological limits and reach agreed targets, such as maximum sustainable yield, improve their distribution and size/age range (salmon) | Partly accomplished (implemented by 2/9) | <p>Sweden: A national management plan on salmon as well as seatrout was developed in 2016 and is under implementation. Targets for salmon rivers exist and concerning trout conservation limits exist for rivers on the west coast of Sweden and are under development for the east coast. Progress has been made in implementing the national programme for eel recovery and work to classify eel rivers is being initiated.</p> <p>Poland: Development of management plans for plans for salmon and seatrout is ongoing. Classification and inventory of rivers with European eel has started.</p> <p>Finland: Finland has adopted national strategies for salmon and seatrout and a strategy for the migratory fish species. A priority for the present Government has been the recovery and re-establishment of migratory fish population in inland rivers and in rivers with inflow to the sea. New resources have been allocated to these activities.</p> | Category 1. Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome of the workshop project, proposals could be made for how to fully accomplish this action . Such workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3). |
| Competent authorities to take immediate action for development of long-term | Partly accomplished | Sweden: A national management plan on salmon as well as seatrout was developed in 2016 and is under | Category 1. Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for |

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| <p>management plans for commercially exploited fish species (sea trout) so that they are within safe biological limits</p> | <p>(implemented by 2/9)</p> | <p>implementation. Targets for salmon rivers exist and concerning trout conservation limits exist for rivers on the west coast of Sweden and are under development for the east coast. Progress has been made in implementing the national programme for eel recovery and work to classify eel rivers is being initiated.</p> <p>Poland: Development of management plans for plans for salmon and seatrout is ongoing. Classification and inventory of rivers with European eel has started.</p> <p>Denmark: With regard to management plans for seatrout, there are national measures to limit recreational fisheries on seatrout, but to have long-term management plans for commercial sea trout fisheries is not relevant for Denmark since there is very limited commercial fishing on seatrout. Denmark therefore proposed that the action should be considered as not applicable for Denmark. With regard to eel, Denmark has e.g. reduced gear, more than required by the eel regulation.</p> <p>Finland: Finland has adopted national strategies for salmon and seatrout and a strategy for the migratory fish species. Regional strategies for sea trout are close to being finalized during 2019. A priority for the present Government has been the recovery and re-establishment of migratory fish population in inland rivers and in rivers with inflow to the sea. New resources have been allocated to these activities.</p> | <p>migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome of the workshop and RETROUT project, proposals could be made for how to fully accomplish this action . Such workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3).</p> |
| <p>Competent authorities to implement national programs for the conservation of eel stocks as a contribution to a Baltic coordinated programme to ensure successful eel migrations from the Baltic Sea drainage basin to national spawning grounds</p> | <p>Partly accomplished (implemented by 8/9)</p> | <p>Finland: Finland has adopted a strategy for the migratory fish species. A priority for the present Government has been the recovery and re-establishment of migratory fish population in inland rivers and in rivers with inflow to the sea. New resources have been allocated to these activities. Finland has been implementing the national eel management plan and has implemented fishing ban during</p> | <p>Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome, develop new or strengthened actions (Category 3). Such workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to</p> |

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| | | certain months beyond the EU requirements. | evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3). |
| Competent authorities to take action to implement existing long-term management plans for eel | Partly accomplished (ongoing) | | <p>Remaining Contracting Parties are encouraged to accomplish the action by 2021, in which case the action can be deleted.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to strengthening the action or developing new concrete actions e.g. based on the outcome of FISH-M 5-2017 and the BALTFISH workshop on eels, as well as proposed workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout) (Category 3).</p> |
| Classify and make inventories of rivers with European eel | Partly accomplished (implemented by 2/9) | | <p>Remaining Contracting Parties are encouraged to accomplish the action by 2021, in which case the action can be deleted.</p> |
| Develop restoration plans (including restoration of spawning sites and migration routes) in suitable rivers to reinstate migratory fish species | Partly accomplished (implemented by 7/9) | | <p>Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome, as well as results of the RETROUT project, develop new or strengthened actions (Category 3). Such a workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3).</p> |
| Consider additional measures if necessary, such as reducing fishing mortality in accordance with the ICES advice, removing migration barriers, and re-stocking in eel-safe river systems, e.g. utilising the outcomes of co- | Partly accomplished (implemented by 3/9) | | <p>Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome, develop new or</p> |

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| operation between ICES, HELCOM and other stakeholders on this issue | | | strengthened actions (Category 3). Such workshop should also serve the ongoing SOM work, i.e. to evaluate the effect of current measures to improve the state of migratory fish (see also document 3-3) |
| Implementation of non-lethal mitigations measures for seals-fisheries interactions (HELCOM Recommendation 27-28/2) (2012) | Partly accomplished (implemented by 2/9) | | Outcomes of HELCOM SFI WS 1-2019 and the BALTFISH Symposium on seal to be used for revising this action (Category 3). |
| Implement existing long-term management plans for eel to improve their distribution size/age-range | Future target year (2021) | | Category 1. Proposal to organize a workshop* on developing measures for migratory fish species in autumn 2019 (focus on eel, salmon and seatrout). Based on the outcome, new concrete actions may be proposed. |
| Implement long-term management plans for cod to improve their distribution size/age-range | Future target year (2020) | | Category 1. Consider possibly options for revising and strengthening the action. |

*The proposal is for one workshop in autumn 2019, which would address several of the joint and national actions on migratory fish species, and should also serve the ongoing SOM work. In agreeing on the initial proposals for concretized actions, the Meeting is also invited to agree on the organization of this workshop.

Annex 2. Existing commitments that are not included in the follow-up system

The commitments listed below were previously assigned as “too general”, however, in the process of the update of the BSAP it should be considered if some of the actions could be concretized and included in the updated BSAP. FISH 9-2019 considered that these actions are still relevant however concurred that they are not suitable to follow-up in terms of accomplishment in their current formulation. The Meeting supported that also the updated BSAP should include visions and wider aims for HELCOM, however, that such visions should be accompanied with concrete actions and that indicators to follow-up their implementation should preferably be defined already when formulating the actions.

- Baltic Sea shall become a model of good management of human activities; all fisheries management be developed and implemented based on the Ecosystem Approach in order to enhance the balance between the sustainable use and protection of marine resources
- Introduction of additional fisheries management measures to achieve: - that all caught species and by-catch are landed and reported - continued designation of additional/improved spatial and/or temporal closures; designation of additional permanent closures - further development and application in all cases of appropriate breeding and restocking practices for salmon and sea trout (overlap with MD13 19B) - minimisation of by-catch of under-sized fish and non-target species (by 2008) and to introduce adequate new technologies and measures
- Elimination of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fisheries and further development of landing control
- Additional measures to reinstate migratory fish species
- 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
- 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
- Ensure that measures to address fisheries practices which have a negative impact on conservation goals and/or threatened or declining species and habitats are continued, including new measures to be initiated by 2015