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<b>Document title</b>	Mussels to combat eutrophication
<b>Code</b>	5-1
<b>Category</b>	DEC
<b>Agenda Item</b>	5 – BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture
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## Background

An Intereg Project – Baltic Blue Growth – running since Nov. 20-2015 finished April 30 -2019. The purpose of the project was to farm mussels in different parts of the Baltic Sea. The mussels eat algae. Algae have digested nutrients. When you harvest the mussels, nutrients are removed from the Baltic Sea. Large mussels contain about 1,06% nitrogen and 0,08% phosphorus. (Source: Kombi-opdræt report on Oct. 2015). The numbers are for large mussels. Small mussels have a higher content of nutrients.

Mussel-farming therefore contributes to the combat of eutrophication.

Most of the HELCOM-contracting parties – being members of EU - participated in the project. Region Östergötaland in Sweden had the lead of the project.

The project was a success. It showed that mussels indeed can contribute to the combat of eutrophication.

More information on the project can be seen at:

<https://www.submariner-network.eu/projects/balticbluegrowth>

FEAP is naturally also open to any questions the meeting may have on the project.

Denmark has already acknowledged mussels as a measure. In June 2017 the Danish Folketing adopted a law on “Compensating marine measures for the licensing or expansion of offshore fish farms”. Mussels are the most prominent measure.

Also the Nordic Counsel on Ministers has recommended mussels to combat eutrophication. (Source:

<https://www.norden.org/da/node/7399> )

Lastly FEAP can also inform HELCOM that the Norwegian MOM-system for aquaculture also has emphasized mussels as a way to combat eutrophication.

The Swedish Agriculture Institute (SLU) has stated:

“To conclude: These new data show that mussel farming throughout the Baltic Sea, including the Baltic Proper is economically justifiable and can be a measure to recover nitrogen and phosphorus”.

“Recommendations 1. .... The Baltic countries and their organisations as HELCOM should therefore consider mussel farming as a tool in the national water management plans and in the Baltic Sea Action,”

Please confer link below:

<https://www.slu.se/en/ew-news/2019/5/new-positive-data---mussel-farming-in-the-baltic-sea-as-an-environmental-measure/>

The capacity of mussels to help combat eutrophication has earlier been discussed in HELCOM. It was discussed at HOD 50 in 2016. And save one contracting party endorsed. Furthermore HELCOM answered a letter from BBG on July 17-2017 stating that HELCOM was positive, save one contracting party, but also ran the BONUS FORUM-project.

As far as FEAP is informed the BONUS FORUM project is not a success at all.

Document 4-20-Rev.2 from HOD 50-2016 (15-16 June 2016) is available in HELCOM Meeting Portal via [this link](#).

Document 6-3 from GEAR 19-2018 (7-8 November 2018) is available in HELCOM Meeting Portal via [this link](#).

It contains all earlier correspondence between BBG and HELCOM on mussels.

Excerpts from the outcome of HOD 50-2016 and GEAR 19-2018 are also enclosed (**Annex**).

As you can see GEAR 19 decided to ask FEAP to send the document to the next PRESSURE meeting. FEAP however decided first to ask for the opinion of the FISH-group on mussels, ref. agenda point 5 on BAT/BEP for aquaculture. With an expected positive response FEAP will send an amended document to the next PRESSURE meeting.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to discuss this paper, and hopefully decide to integrate mussels-development in its future work. FEAP expects that all the Contracting Parties now can agree on mussels as a way to combat eutrophication.

**Excerpts from outcome of HOD-50 June 15.-16. 2016**

“4.59 The Meeting discussed possible future HELCOM action on "Blue catch crops / mussel farming and nutrient reduction" as proposed by Estonia, EU and Sweden (document 4-20) and exchanged views on possibilities to include specific activities at the regional level, as part of HELCOM's work.

4.60 The Meeting took note that Germany dissociated itself from the activity “Blue catch crops / mussel farming and nutrient reduction” as possible future HELCOM action, but Germany did not want to get in the way of interested Contracting Parties that wish to exchange information and experience on this form of aquaculture. Germany did not support any approach to Guidelines as being too early. Instead, this delegation proposed to undertake the necessary information exchange in the margins of the Expert Group FISH (CG Aquaculture) with collaboration of WG PRESSURE, and to add two new aspects for consideration: on adverse environment impacts and economic viability.”

**Excerpts from outcome of GEAR 19 Nov 7.-8. 2018**

“6.17 The Meeting took note of the possible use of mussels as a method to reduce the quantity of nitrogen (N) and phosphorous (P) in the Baltic Sea (**document 6-3**).

6.18 The Meeting discussed the topic and results of national work and provide the observer organisation with input.

6.19 The Meeting agreed however that the technical expertise for a discussion on this approach as a mitigation measure is not to be found under the remit of the GEAR Working Group and suggested FEAP to submit the document to the next Pressure meeting for consideration.”