Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries

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This document has been prepared by the HELCOM RETROUT Project manager

Background

Following the agreement by HOD 49-2015 (Outcome para. 4.35), HELCOM is involved as a partner in the three-year (10/2017–09/2020) Interreg project RETROUT (Development, promotion and sustainable management of the Baltic Sea Region as a coastal fishing tourism destination). HELCOM is leading Work Package 4 "Assessment of status and management of seatrout rivers and stocks" in the project.

The RETROUT partnership mid-term Meeting was held on 8-9 May 2019, in Gdansk, Poland. The Meeting was hosted by the Maritime Institute in Gdansk at the premises of the Maritime Culture Centre of National Maritime Museum in Gdansk. The Meeting was attended by participants from the project partner organisations.

The two-day Meeting consisted of a joint first day with presentations of the current status of the project work packages and with special focus on project communication matters, and dedicated work package sessions on the second day. The general matters discussed concerned i.a. reporting of the third (of six) project period, possibilities for an extension stage project, and establishment of a formal high-level steering committee. The aim of the dedicated work package sessions was to have a status update and to agree on upcoming specific tasks to be done within the planned work package activities.

The Outcome of the mid-term meeting for the RETROUT project is set out in the Annex to this document.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Outcome of the partnership mid-term meeting for the RETROUT project.

MINUTES, RETROUT Mid-Term Meeting, Gdansk

The RETROUT partnership mid-term Meeting was held on 8-9 May 2019, in Gdansk, Poland. The Meeting was hosted by the Maritime Institute in Gdansk at the premises of the Maritime Culture Centre of National Maritime Museum in Gdansk (Ul. Tokarska 21/25 Gdansk).

The Meeting was attended by participants from the project partner organisations.

The two-day Meeting consisted of a joint first day with general presentations of WP statuses and with special focus on project communication matters, and dedicated WP sessions on the second day. The welcoming words to the mid-term Meeting was given by Marcin Kalinowski (Head of the Economics and Law Department, Maritime Institute in Gdansk) from the host organisation, and the main activities of the MIG were presented. The first day was chaired by the RETROUT Lead partner Project Manager Håkan Häggström (CAB, Sweden) and the project's Communications Manager Christina Rehnberg (CAB, Sweden).

Contents

Communication session

Wednesday May 8, 2019

Part one – internal communication

First Christina presented what internal communication is about and the purpose of it. It is important that everyone that participate in the project have the right information and that a well-functioning internal communication motivates, creates commitment and make the participants feel connected to what is happening within the project.

After that the group discussed each one's expectations on the project and how well the work has corresponded to the expectations so far.

Each work package leader, Gustaf, Zane and Henri, gave a report of the current work.

We ended the session by discussing how we can improve the internal communication.
We decided on common ground rules for our communication which is the following:

- All communication within the project must be in English to include everyone.
- If email is sent with question to appointment persons, it should be answered. If you are on cc, you don't need to answer.
- When a deadline is set to answer a request you should answer, and if you don't it's considered that you agree with the suggestion in the request. If you replied that you can't answer in time you have to tell when you can reply.
- We will use our homepage as a project platform where we can: store documents, work in documents and follow the work process.
- We need a document that sum up all activities and show the current situation, like a Gantts schedule.
- We need updated contact lists.

Part two and three – external communication

Christina presented what external communications is about and the purpose of it. It is a two-way process that involves both the sending and receiving of information. You cannot expect to reach a target group exactly when you want to. If someone is to be there and take part of the final result /a new product / an event you must awaken interest. It's important to communicate in the way our target groups want.

We went through and discussed the draft of the Communication plan, which will be updated after the meeting. The purpose of the plan is to achieve the best effect for the project and to have an internal discussion base and common agreement.

Andrzej Chybicki presented the assignment of making a project webpage for the project and showed us a first draft. The webpage www.retrout.org will be published in the middle of June.

After that the group discussed the newsletter. The first one will be sent out in June after the webpage is published and it will be an introduction of the project and the work so far. Christina will plan and coordinate the newsletters, but everyone is responsible for producing text and photos for it. The newsletter will have 3-4 issues per year. Everyone will forward the newsletter in their regional channels.

We had workshops about our target groups, which media channels they use and what triggers them to take interest in messages.
The results are the following main target groups:

1. Sport fishing community
   Channels: social media, films, magazine, fairs, info tours, website
   Triggers: sustainability, adventure

2. Tourists (person interested to try fishing)
   Channels: social media, films, magazine, fairs, info tours, travel agencies, website
   Triggers: more big fish, ethical, secure, high quality

3. Companies working with fishing tourism (e.g. hotels, tourist guides, travel agencies)

Channels: direct communication (p2p), social media
Triggers: money, profitable, longer season, opportunities

4. Authorities working with tourists (municipals, tourism organizations)
   Channels: newsletter, events, social media
   Triggers: more visitors=money, regional development
5. Authorities working with restoration (municipals, international, national and regional state agency, organizations)
   Channels: conferences, events, newsletter, direct communication, field visits, publications, toolbox
   Triggers: sustainability, positive visibility, best practices methods
6. Other stakeholders (researcher, universities, NGO)
   Channels: conferences, websites, events, publications
   Triggers: know how, new knowledge, sustainability

We also had a workshop to come up with a boilerplate for the project. The result was a text that will be used as a basis for further elaboration.

The RETROUT project develops and promote sustainable and ethical fishing tourism in the Baltic Sea region. We improve the environmental conditions in rivers to strengthen migratory fish populations, an important element for fishing.

WP 2 & 3 SESSION

Thursday May 9, 2019

The session for WP 2 and 3 on the second day of the mid-term Meeting was chaired by WP2 lead Gustaf Almquist and WP3 lead Zane Gaile. The Session was attended by 11 participants from 8 project partners.

Participants: Sandra Oisalu, Kai Klein, Zane Gaile, Feliksas Zemgulys, Amelia Strömberg, Marcin Kalinowski, Jacub Piotrow, Nerijus Nika, Christina Rehnberg, Daumantas Bockus, Gustaf Almqvist

10:00-12:00 WP2 & 3 session part 1

12:00-12:45 Lunch

12:45-14:00 WP2 & 3 session part 2

Economics in seatrout fishing tourism, review and evaluation (Zane)

Zane described the procurement of a person to compiling the report, timeline and scope of the task. It was discussed how broad the study should be in relation to geographical limits. The report encompasses a review of methodologies and tools to evaluate importance of sea trout sportfishing to regional and local economies, as well as showing specific results from the Kurzeme region as a case study. The meeting recommended to formulate the procurement also in English, besides in Latvian, to facilitate and attract non-Latvians to bid.

Web portal and promotion film clip (Gustaf)

The meeting had a quick discussion about possible changes of the promotion film. It was concluded that the film was good in its current state but could be improved by following some of the editing comments earlier provided to the working group by Nerijus Nika. Gustaf will communicate these comments to Freewater's production, who is producing the film.

Andrzej Chybicki from Inero Software join the meeting and answered questions about what is feasible and not to develop the web portal using the selected Enfold theme plus plugins. Daumantas presented reservation concept ideas proposed during previous Lithuanian workshop. These were discussed with Andrzej and his colleagues who examine possibilities to include this function in the portal. One set up of the reservation function is by means of different filtering layers with multiple choice functions. It was suggested by the meeting to be accessible for potential clients by a "Create your trip" button on the Baltic Sea Fishing landing page.

Ethical code (Kai)

It was decided to continue work on layout, translation and detailed language of Version 2 of the ethical code for Baltic Sea Fishing, which includes aspects of safety, service quality, and ethical/environmentally friendly sportfishing. It should be modified to on-line versions and paper versions in different languages.

Gustaf will ask Inero Software if they can take on the task to align the layout with the visual identity of the web portal.

Market plan (Gustaf)

Gustaf presented some slides about how to market the Baltic Sea Fishing (BSF) web portal and sportfishing tourism offers provided, separated in a joint marketing plan for all destinations and national marketing opportunities.

The CAB of Stockholm will procure someone to be responsible of arranging fairs and social media/traditional media campaigns in connection with the fair exhibitions.

Gustaf will find out more and inform about specific fairs so that the working group can decide in what fairs BSF should be marketed in.

DMO (Gustaf, ALL)

Potential structures of a Destination Management Organization (DMO) were discussed. Gustaf had before the meeting circulated a document in which responsibilities and functions of a DMO was listed, divided into Strategic directions/responsibilities/ Operational Management/ Eco label; as well as some ideas about a potential setup, including at least one administrative and one strategic resource.

To find a realistic solution for the DMO, given the at least initially economic restrains, is a challenging task. The meeting decided to have a Skype meeting the 24:th of May 09:30 – 11:30 CET, with a broader invitation so that also destination coordinators are included to the discussion. Please, see that this time is open in your calendars. Gustaf will send an invitation.

MOOC (Daumantas)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in Baltic Sea sportfishing destination development should be produced by the project. Daumantas who coordinates this task, asked the meeting to send him edited slideshows, videos etc. from the respective trainings in the different destinations. This

material, or links to other sites where it is stored, will be found at the new version of the project website which is under development. He also wanted to have summaries from the trainings before the autumn, all in English.

WP4 SESSION

Thursday May 9, 2019

The dedicated WP 4 session on the second day of the mid-term Meeting was chaired by WP4 lead Project Manager Henri Jokinen (HELCOM Secretariat). The WP4 Meeting (below referred to as "the Meeting") was attended by 10 participants from 8 (of 11) WP 4 project partners (Annex 2).

WP 4 session, Thursday 9 May 2019, 10:00-14:00 (with lunch break)

Agenda list

1 Opening and general set-up and aims for the session
2 GoA 4.1
3 GoA 4.2
4 GoA 4.3
5 GoA 4.4
6 Any other WP-level matters

Summary

AI 1

- The WP4 session of the mid-term meeting contained an overhaul of the main Activities, with status updates and next steps.

AI 2

- Due difficulties at the start the task of *Assessment of sea trout river and stock status* cannot realistically be completed by end of Period 4 and will need more time in order to enable a good and useful output.
- The current situation and plans for task 4.1.2 were summarized:
  - detailed plan carrying out the task has now been developed
  - rationale is to produce a Baltic-wide river specific status assessment update
  - need for sea trout parr density data and river habitat information
  - request sent to ICES WGBAST members for permission to use relevant existing, compiled databases (positive answers already obtained)
  - completive targeted request for additional needed data/information to be sent to PPs and WGBAST members
  - compilation and analyses to be done in fall 2019
  - draft report ready by end 2019

  - finalization and approval for publication in HELCOM during spring 2020
- The rationale and details of the task 4.1.2 were discussed
- H. Jokinen will prepare an updated version of the working document to be circulated by end of May 2019 to the WG/concerned persons for a view and feedback
- H. Jokinen will send out a request about possible additional sea trout and river habitat data to the concerned PPs as soon as possible within May 2019

AI 3

- The current situation and next steps of GoA 4.2 were summarized:
  - data on past river restoration projects received from all PP countries
  - data on 87 completed and 6 non-realized restoration projects in about 70 rivers received
  - stakeholder interviews finished by most PP countries
  - complete reports from stakeholder interviews received from 2 of 5 PP countries
  - quantitative data analysis of all reported restoration projects (to be supported by the H. Häggström)
  - qualitative data analysis of all reported cases and the interview-based data (to be done by N. Singh)
  - preparation of a report on success factors based on the analyses
  - report included as a chapter in the Baltic Toolbox (to be prepared under GoA 4.4)
- N. Singh will again contact the Finnish contact for possible past river restoration case data
- H. Jokinen will continue to investigate other possible key person/organization in Finland from which useful data could be obtained
- Complete interview reports should be submitted by concerned PPs to N. Singh as soon as possible but at the latest by end of May 2019.
- The rationale and possibilities for combining restoration cases from the same river, for the sake of analyses, should be investigated and N. Singh will approach the concerned PPs on this later by a separate email.

AI 4

- The work under GoA 4.3 was discussed by updates given by concerned PPs.
- In most of the cases planning and procurement for the restoration work has been done, with transition towards the implementation phase. In three sites the of the Swedish cases restoration work has already finished during by the end of Period 3.
- The draft instructions for documentation and preparation of a case study report on the restoration demonstration projects (pre-circulated to WG) were considered.
- The Meeting in principle approved the draft instructions, although some concerns were raised.
- H. Jokinen will resend the draft instructions to the WG for feedback with a defined deadline.

AI 5

- The Meeting noted that GoA 4.4 is formally active from the beginning of the current project period 4.
- The Baltic Sea Toolbox for river restoration best practices was discussed based on the existing plans.
- The structure of the Toolbox report was considered:
  - introduction

  - methods & approaches chapter
  - a chapter with the main results from GoA 4.2
  - a chapter with summarising the demonstration cases GoA 4.3
  - synthesis with list of best available practices and recommendations for cost-efficient and effective river restoration
- The importance of ensuring the relevance of the Toolbox for all Baltic sea coastal countries was stressed.
- The procedures for publishing the Toolbox as a HELCOM publication was briefly discussed
- Schedule issues were discussed.
- Due to uncertainties a realistic approach would be to strive for a finalized Toolbox as a RETROUT project report version by the end of period 6, after which the HELCOM publication process could start as an own procedure.
- H. Jokinen will continue to keep the relevant HELCOM Groups informed about the plans and achievements in order to anchor the WP 4 work in the HELCOM context.

Outcome

1 Opening and general set-up and aims for the session

The Meeting adopted the draft Agenda as circulated prior to the Meeting. The aim of the WP4 session was to have a status update and to agree on oncoming specific tasks to be done within the four WP Activities. This was agreed to be done by an activity-by-activity briefing and discussion on the achievements so far, current status and next steps, as set out in the Agenda (AI 1-5). Discussions on other general WP-level matters, such as e.g. communication, management, and other challenges or concerns (AI 6), were not considered due to lack of time.

Håkan Häggström and Henri Jokinen agreed to take notes of the discussions. Henri Jokinen agreed to prepare a summary outcome of the session to be circulated to participants after the meeting. Although the AIs were discussed in another order than what was set out in the Agenda, the Outcome follows the original order.

2 Activity 4.1 Assessment of sea trout river and stock status, impacts of recreational fishing and management options

The Meeting took note of the past advancements, current status and plans for this GoA, as presented by the Activity lead, Henri Jokinen (HELCOM). It was reminded that the GoA 4.1 main scope is on the methodologies for monitoring and assessing sea trout river habitat and stock status and on Baltic Sea-wide assessment of sea trout river habitat and stock statuses.

Concerning task 4.1.2 (Assessment of sea trout river and stock status...), it was recalled that in the start there was some unclarity of the proper approach for implementing the task, which has caused a considerable delay in this task. Due to the early difficulties the original schedule of completion by end of Period 4 is not any more realistic and needs to be postponed in order to enable a good and useful output from this task. It was also recalled that this situation and solutions to it, in terms of agreed plans for carrying through the task successfully but realistically, were extensively considered during the Yearly Partnership meeting in Stockholm last October.

Based on the discussions and agreements from the Yearly Partnership Meeting (YPM) in Stockholm effort has been made on clarifying the plans for the chosen approach, and now this task is progressing. H. Jokinen summarized the current situation and plans for task 4.1.2 as follows:

> According to the RETROUT project workplan, the Baltic Sea-wide assessment will be largely based on existing data and information available via project partners, HELCOM Contracting Parties and ICES WGBAST. In short, following what was agreed by the working group at the YPM in Stockholm, the current aim is to update the HELCOM SALAR project report (BSEP 126A) from 2011 to the parts concerning sea trout, although with slightly renewed approaches (parr densities to be used instead of estimated smolt numbers as basis for status measurement). The assessment within RETROUT project could potentially take into account more rivers with existing data, and hence provide a more comprehensive status evaluation with higher single river resolution than what has so far been done by ICES WGBAST or HELCOM.
>
> With the rationale to produce a Baltic-wide river specific status assessment update, there is a need for data on estimated sea trout parr densities (based on electrofishing) and associated river habitat information. To be able to progress with the work planned for the HELCOM/RETROUT project would need to access these or similar data – preferably all or as much as possible of the relevant data existing. ICES WGBAST has been and is collecting these data from the Baltic Sea countries for the yearly assessment of sea trout. Therefore, much of the relevant data already exist in a compiled database at WGBAST, and the most convenient alternative is that data owners (individual countries) permit HELCOM to access these to be used in the RETROUT project. This to ensure a fast access to the data and to minimize additional burdening of the countries with overlapping data requests.
>
> Key persons in the ICES WGBAST were first contacted about the ideas and preliminary plans of the 'RETROUT assessment' and after fruitful discussions a request for permissions to access and use sea trout river data sets gathered by ICES WGBAST was sent to the data contributors, of which most have already granted permission. After accessing the ICES WGBAST data sets possibilities of these will be explored and additional data/information need will be mapped. A completive targeted request for any additional needed data/information will then be sent out to the countries. After receiving all needed data, compilation and analyses are to be done in fall 2019. A draft report should be ready by end 2019, and finalization and approval for publication in HELCOM working structures could be done during spring 2020. During this process the RETROUT working group will be tightly involved for feedback and potential targeted contributions. The ready draft version could also be circulated back to ICES WGBAST for review, thus confirming common approval of the report by the data contributors being also central BS sea trout expert. However, the details of this still need to be sorted out.
>
> The rationale for conducting the sea trout river habitat and stock status assessment would in short be the following:
>
> The articulated justifications for doing the 'RETROUT assessment' in view of what already has been/is being done on this matter elsewhere (SALAR report, ICES WGBAST work, HELCOM core indicator work, etc.) is
>
> - a possibility to include more rivers (not bound to selection criteria of ICES or HELCOM indicators)

- higher resolution: assessment done on the scale of rivers/river systems instead of different assessment units
- the attempt to compare rivers with and without any restoration activities

The status assessment would principally be based on the same method as used in ICES WGBAST and HELCOM core indicator (i.e. Recruitment Status (RS) = observed parr dens/potential parr density*100). The observed parr density is based on electrofishing results, while obtaining the potential parr density might have /need a few different approaches. In the ICES WGBAST sea trout assessment the potential maximum parr density is predicted with an equation based a multiple linear regression analyses from Trout Habitat Score (THS), river width, air temperature and coordinates. This requires detailed habitat data from the electrofishing occasions for calculation of THS. In data for THS do not exist, the potential parr densities could be obtained through expert elicitation or derived from information on river/stream width based on its known importance for predicting parr densities. In cases with non-available THS some basic habitat data, such as river width, usually still exist. Using such a width-based approach would be beneficial compared to expert opinion in that it would be more objective and for a coarse status evaluation potentially accurate enough.

By the calculating RS for each river/river system, the results are evaluated for status against pre-chosen thresholds determining e.g. three status classes: red (=poor; RS<50 %), yellow (=moderate; RS=50-80%) and green (=good; RS>80%).

The outputs of the assessment would be i) an assessment report, and is feasible, ii) a map with all sea trout rivers in the BS region, made available on the HELCOM maps and data service. The report can include in addition to the assessment results itself also e.g. a chapter on common, standardised methodologies for assessing sea trout river and stock status (summary of task 4.1.1+4.1.4-…), a chapter on fisheries, including recreational fisheries (based on existing available information), and a possible chapter about sea trout management options.

A possible map could contain all evaluated (and non-evaluated) sea trout rivers in the BS region with different categorization (e.g., according to THS Habitat Classes (0-3), water quality (good, int., poor), population type (wild, self-sustaining – historical/disappeared; as in SALAR), and status evaluation result (red, yellow, green according to the criteria/thresholds to be determined).

After the summary by H. Jokinen it was concluded that it is an ambitious task with the aim of including as many as possible of the ~700 rivers with sea trout populations, but it is doable. When achieved it will provide a useful update and addition to the already existing work on this matter. The presented approach was in principle approved by the Meeting, with certain questions expressed.

It was pointed out that this currently outlined plan and approach does not entirely correspond to what was originally planned. Optimally, this exercise would have had a strong focus on different management scenarios, thus more directly linking to recreational fishing opportunities. However, it was again concluded that such and approach would need a population dynamics model of Baltic Sea sea trout to enable estimations of total smolt production in different areas taking into account the reproductive capacity and the mortality factors of sea trout over its life cycle. Such a complex model is currently being developed by ICES WGTRUTTA, but is unfortunately not ready or available for the needs of the RETROUT project.

To this end, it was recalled again that this was discussed and agreed by the WG at the YPM 2018: there the WG 1) had noted that a agreeing on aims and tasks that are realistically achievable within the course of the project and given the current circumstances and resources available, is a prerequisite for successfully carrying out and finishing the task and the Activity, and 2) had agreed that the task 4.1.2 should be kept as clear and simple as possible allowed by the interpretation of the work plan in order to successfully achieve finishing of the task, and 3) had further noted that the loosely described plans for the task in the application and work plan can cause unclarity, but also enables freer interpretations of how the task can be executed.

With regard to the currently planned approach, the Meeting recalled that a working document about this task prepared by H. Jokinen was circulated to WP4 working group for consideration, comments and views from interested and concerned PPs. This document contained a plan for the task and as a back-ground information an overview on the already done or ongoing BS regional work on sea trout, including the past HELCOM SALAR report, ICES WGBAST assessment(s), HELCOM core indicators on sea trout parr in rivers, and implementation on HELCOM recommendation 32-33/1. The Meeting regretted that no feedback was received on the working document. The task and activity lead H. Jokinen urged the concerned persons in the WG to more actively participate in the development of this task by reviewing and sending constructive feedback when requested. It was further emphasised that the WG comprises strong expertise in this field with valuable insight to be shared. On this matter it was agreed that H. Jokinen will prepare an updated version of the working document to be circulated by end of May 2019 to the WG/concerned persons for a view and feedback.

Concerning the matter of the parr density and river habitat data needed for the assessment, it was acknowledged that some countries might have additional data to that to that gathered by ICES WGBAST. On this matter Kaspars Abersons (BIOR) informed that valuable additional information to that compiled by the ICES group also exists, and it would be beneficial also to use as much additional information as possible. The Meeting unanimously concurred with this remark, and it was agreed that H. Jokinen will send out a request about such additional data to the concerned PPs as soon as possible within May 2019.

Regarding the suggested alternative approach for obtaining potential parr densities based on river widths, comments were given on the how well justified such a 'new' approach would be. In order to use the width-based approach it first need to be tested, e.g. by comparing assessment results of same rivers done both with the THS- based and the width-based approach. If used, the approach and its justification need to be well described in the report. Regarding this, H. Jokinen informed that once he gains access to the data files, this among other questions will be explored, and the WG group will be kept informed through regular updates.

The 'methods report' (combined tasks 4.1.1 Common methodology on trout river habitat monitoring and electrofishing, and 4.1.4-… Tests of assessment method [in countries]) was, contrary to the Agenda, not discussed due to shortage of time.

3 GoA 4.2 Joint evaluation of completed restoration projects

The Meeting first recalled the scope and idea of this GoA as described in the Work Plan, as presented by the GoA lead, Nandita Singh (Campus Roslagen, PP16): GoA 4.2 aims to undertake a joint evaluation of completed and non-realized river restoration projects with respect to ecological effects of habitat restorations and fish ways already installed, as well as gathering data on

costs, construction time, stakeholder involvement and project difficulties. The purpose is to identify the factors that could play an important role in making a river restoration project successful or lead to its failure, with a focus on the ecological outcomes in sea trout rivers. The implementation approach includes the three main work phases; 1) data collection, 2) analyses, and 3) reporting.

The Meeting further recalled that the first phase consists of the collection of data regarding completed restoration projects on sea trout rivers from partner as well as HELCOM non-partner countries, following a common data template and based on existing quantitative and qualitative descriptions (environmental issues, sea trout production, biodiversity, ecological status, cultural heritage, energy production, recreational value, other stakeholder interests, etc.). Phase 1 also consisted a selection of the received past restoration cases for in-depth analysis of the factors leading to success or failure, for which detailed interview-based data with key stakeholders for each selected case are compiled. The second phase of the GoA contains quantitative data analysis of all reported restoration projects supported (to be supported by the Project leader, CABS, PP1) as well as qualitative data analysis of all reported cases and the in-depth interview-based data (to be done by the Activity leader, UCV, PP16). The final phase of the GoA covers the preparation of a concise report on success factors based on the analyses, comprising descriptions of selected projects and comparison of successful and unsuccessful ones, as well as identified best practices. The report will be included as a chapter in the Baltic Toolbox (to be prepared under GoA 4.4). It was noted that an additional output could be a scientific paper published in a leading journal, co-authored by all involved partners.

The Meeting took note of the current status of the GoA (Annex 1), as presented by N. Singh. It was noted that regarding the data request on past river restoration projects, compiled data was received from all PP countries. Additionally, some information was received from a Russian NGO. On this note, there might still be a possibility to obtain useful data from Finland, and it was agreed that N. Singh will again contact the Finnish contact point to advance the matter. Additionally, H. Jokinen will continue to investigate other possible key person/organization in Finland from which useful data could be obtained. All in all 87 completed and 6 non-realized restoration projects in about 70 rivers had been reported. The type of restorations included migration improvements (dam removals, fish ways) and habitat restorations (adding gravel & stones, planting trees on river banks, etc.).

Further, the Meeting noted that the stakeholder interviews had been finished by most PP countries as well as regarding one interview case in Finland. Complete reports from the stakeholder interviews for the selected restoration cases had, by the time of the Meeting, been received from 2 out of 5 partner countries. It was recalled that the interview reports should be as detailed as possible to enable the qualitative analyses, they should be written in English, and follow the report instruction circulated to the PPs. It was agreed that the complete interview reports should be submitted to N. Singh as soon as possible but at the latest by end of May 2019 to facilitate the advancement of the activity tentatively predicted to be finished during fall 2019.

Lastly, it was discussed how different restoration measures done in the same river might have affected the evaluation of success of each case, and how these situations should be considered. For, instance, what is the time frame within which different restoration measures should be considered jointly. It was suggested that the rationale and possibilities for combining these sorts of cases from the same river should be further investigated and that N. Singh will approach the concerned PPs on this later by a separate email.

4 GoA 4.3 Demonstrating efficient river restoration measures

The Meeting first recalled the scope and basis of the GoA 4.3: The involved partners intend to demonstrate efficient river restoration measures and implementation methods based on national and transnational knowledge from research and dialogue. The purpose of the restoration projects is to demonstrate solutions for improving quality of sea trout river habitats with the aim to increase and secure sustainable stock production. The river restoration demonstration projects are carried out independently and in internal coordination by concerned PPs in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (PP1, PP3, PP5, PP7, PP8, PP9, PP14, PP15, PP17). A total of 12-14 restoration cases are included, covering measures such as building of fish ways, biotope restorations, water quality improvement, and dam removal plans.

The work under GoA 4.3 was discussed by status updates given by each PP involved in demonstration cases. In most of the cases planning and procurement for the restoration work has been done, with transition towards the implementation phase. In three sites the of the Swedish cases (implemented by external non-project funding) restoration work has already finished during by the end of Period 3. Summaries on the statuses of the restoration projects are give below at the end of this AI (also a short summary is given for Estonia based on pre-received information, although it was not presented during the Meeting).

In addition to the status updates for the river restoration demonstration cases, draft instructions/guidelines for documentation and preparation of a case study report on the restoration demonstration projects were considered based on a pre-circulated document prepared by H. Jokinen, as agreed on the last WP4 online meeting in April 2019. It was noted that no comments/feedback on the draft instructions had been received prior to the Meeting although it was requested. Regarding this the Meeting in principle approved the draft instructions, but some PPs were of the opinion that at this stage it is difficult to take a concrete stand on this matter with detailed feedback as the reporting phase is still ahead and hence the matter appear somewhat abstract at the moment. To this end it was, however, noted that it is important to have these common instructions developed well before the time of the reporting, and that concerned partners should actively participate in this process for a jointly accepted version of the instructions to be achieved. It was agreed that H. Jokinen will resend the draft instructions for feedback with a defined deadline. It was also recalled that at the YPM 2018 it had been agreed that due to the mismatch in the timing outlined in the original Application/Work plan (both demonstration cases and the Baltic Toolbox to be completed by end of period 6), the first demonstration case reports should be completed by the end of period 5 at the latest, in order for it to be possible to compile and prepare the Baltic Toolbox report in due time.

Estonia – Tasks 4.3.1-4.3.4

In Estonia, four demonstration cases are included. The responsible project partner for the tasks is University of Tartu (EMI; PP5). They contain the planning phases of river restoration activities such as fish passes and removal of dams. I.e., they will not cover the construction phase. It as been already earlier informed that the Loobu river demonstration case has been changed to an additional site in Valgejõgi.

The fish pass plans are currently being made, for which there was previously a procurement process. At the moment all is in schedule.

Lithuania – Task 4.3.5

In Lithuania, restoration activities in river Smiltelė River are included in the task of restoration projects. The responsible project partners for the tasks is Klaipeda University (PP9) together with Administration of Klaipeda District Municipality (PP15). The project has two parts: a bio pond system recultivation to reduce nutrition load, and a sea trout spawning and nursery habitat rehabilitation. The latter activity consists of restoration and improvement of three 50 m streches including e.g. adding of gravel and stones. The other activity consists of cleaning and fixing a non-working sedimantation pool constructed within a wetland project in the 1996 in order to improve general river conditions through nutrient retention and cleaner water.

There has already been public procurement procedures and a signed agreement exists with the company that will implement project activities and the technical documentation of the project is ongoing. The spawning habitat restoration will be conducted during summer 2019. The practical work on the biopond re-cultivation was also planned for summer 2019, but risks being postponed; originally Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this activity was not necessary according to authorities but emerged knowledge of a previously unknown waterpipe buffer zone protection might limit the possibilities to advance as planned as an EIA process might be required. In such case the EIA process will be done this summer and construction work in spring 2020.

It is known that there are other problems in the river as well that could be addressed outside the RETROUT budget but still included in the RETROUT river restoration best practices report ('toolbox'). These problems include biotope improvement needs along the river, intense nutrient loads from sewage problems, and excessive macrophytes overgrowth. A few additional concrete already planned measure to be done is to plant trees along a river (funded by Klaipeda Municipality) and improve a culvert in bad condition for migration.

Latvia – Task 4.3.6.

In Latvia, the restoration activity concerns planning and building a fish path in Rīva river. The responsible project partners for the task is Kurzeme Planning Region (PP7) and Ventspils Regional Municipality (PP14) together with BIOR (PP8).

The first phase of the project is to elaborate technical design documentation for the construction. This part is under the responsibility of Kurzeme Planning region. The second phase contains the actual construction work and will be handled by Ventspils Regional Municipality. The task of PP7 has been to prepare all necessary documents for procurement process, organize tender, select best provider of service, receive elaborated documentation and hand it over to PP14, who will organize the construction work of fish path based on elaborated technical design documentation.

A main challenge during the process has been to get a long-term land lease contract, acceptable by the Interreg Programme rules, with the land owner of the river bank where the fish path is intended to be constructed. Now this was positively solved by achieving a long-term lease contract.

The current status and next steps of the restoration project are as follows: procurement documents for the technical design tender are ready and the tender will be announced in May 2019 (with a dead line September 2019); a contract for the further use of technical design documents by a 3rd party is being prepared, to meet all necessary legal aspects concerning copy rights and processes of transferring the documents to Ventspils Regional Municipality to be used for the construction work; the technical design documents will be elaborated and handed over to PP14 by the end of summer

2019; building will start and finish within spring 2020; trout and habitat data exist from before the restoration, and data from after the completion of the fish way can be collected in summer 2020 and included in the final restoration case report during fall 2020.

[*Swedish and the Polish restoration cases do not yet have task numbers in the Work Plan, but will be considered in the project regardless that they are (partly) implemented by external non-project funding*]

Poland

In Poland, the restoration activity concerns the construction of fish pass, including the supporting infrastructure, on the Reda river in the town of Reda (Wejherowo district, Pomeranian region). The RETROUT project partners for the case is MIG (PP17), although the main responsibility in this project is with the Polish Water Authority (a Polish governmental organization), who manage this state-owned river. The fish pass will be located in Reda town on the left bank of the Reda river. The fish pass construction is limited to the area between Mrzezino Canal and Reda riverbed and the surrounding area. A dike made of reinforced concrete is located in the Reda-Ciechocino town and it is used for farm irrigation and two fish farms.

The planned work consists of the deconstruction of an old and the construction of a new fish pass over a dam structure in the form of a stone-walled ramp to restore the biological continuity of the Reda river. The construction of a new dike is not planned. The stages of planned construction work include:

- the deconstruction of the existing, degraded inlet including the floodgate to Mrzezino Channel,
- the construction of a new inlet with a floodgate to Mrzezino Canal and new flood bridge used for servicing,
- the construction of slope stairs on the left bank before the new inlet and floodgate on Mrzezino Canal,
- the sealing of sheet pilings defining the outline of the fish pass structure, the execution of a frame culvert which is an inlet part to a fish pass enabling access to the Ciechocino dike,
- the creation of the bottom plate and fish pass slopes with the assembly of stone blocks and lining of embankments with a stone and pouring out a layer of stone bedspread in the bottom between stone blocks,
- the assembly of protective barriers along the trough of fish pass, and frame culvert from the side of the Mrzezino Canal which protects outsiders from accidentally falling into the trough of the fish pass,
- the strengthening of the bottom and slopes of the Mrzezino Canal at the upper station before and after the construction of the valve at the inlet to the fish pass
- the strengthening of the gabion mattress of the bottom of the Reda river at the bottom of the fish ladder
- the profiling and strengthening of the embankment using a stone slope between the fish pass and the Reda riverbed

Currently a positive decision have been given to start the procurement process for the construction work. There is no RETROUT budget funding allocated to this, but a sum of 250 000 € is secured for the project through Polish national funds and EU-money. Adjacent to the planned fish pass also educational exhibition facilities will be built. The costs of construction work has in general grown in Poland recently, which may cause a delay in the project. However, the delay will enable conducting

electrofishing for evaluation of the before-state prior to the beginning of the construction work. Once started the construction work is estimated to be finished within 10 months, and the fish pass ready in summer 2020.

Sweden

In Sweden, the restoration activity concerns several smaller habitat restorations as well as a fish path construction. The responsible project partners for the task is County Administrative Board Stockholm (PP1), together with Haninge municipality (PP3). The restoration measures in are done in the rivers Bränningeån, Erstaviksbäcken, Vitsån, Skeboån, Moraån, and are implemented with funding outside of the RETROUT budget. Three of the restoration cases have by now already been completed.

The restoration activity in river Bränningeån consist of improvements of spawning and rearing habitats. The measures taken include additions of 280 tons of natural stone and pebbles in three different river sites. Electrofishing for parr density has been conducted prior to the measures and will be done after completion, to enable evaluation of the restoration success. The concrete work is conducted by Södertälje municipality.

In river Morån the restoration activity consists of habitat improvement by adding large amounts of natural gravel to potential spawning stretches. So far the project has been in its planning phase with background assessments and initial evaluations of restoration needs. The practical work will be done during the second half of year 2019, and are conducted by 'Sportfiskarna', a Swedish sports fishing association. Currently the project has faced resistance and criticism from the local community, possibly due to insufficient information sharing, involvement and indenting of the concerned people. Currently the conflict situation is being solved.

In river Vitsån the restoration activity consists of river biotope improvement by adding different sized stones to increase complexity. Also, coarse dead wood was placed in the river and alder trees were planted along the river banks. The restoration activities were successfully completed by Haninge municipality (PP3) during 2018.

In river Erstaviksbäcken the restoration activity consists of the construction of a fish ladder. So far, the project has been in its planning and preparation phase, with the actual construction work taking place during the summer 2019 starting with deconstruction of an old fish way following by the construction of the new planned fish ladder. In adjunction to the planned fish ladder measures for biotope improvement has ben done within the school project "School river". The is managed by the City of Stockholm. Additional work for biotope improvement will be conducted upstream from the location of the fish ladder.

In river Skeboån the restoration activity consists of planning and building a fish pass around a pulp factory dam. Currently the project stands in a conflict situation with the pulp factory concerning issues of securing sufficient water flow through the fish pass. To solve the conflict different approaches are being investigated and evaluated, with a lengthy court proceeding process as one possible outcome.

5 GoA 4.4

The Meeting first recalled the scope and idea of this GoA as described in the Work Plan: The key task of is to jointly develop a Baltic Toolbox for river restoration to be used by local, regional, national public authorities. The Toolbox will also serve the macro-regional level by providing input for policy recommendations at HELCOM and EU levels. The Toolbox will consist of summary inputs from GoAs

4.2 (*Joint evaluation of completed restoration projects*) and 4.3 (*Demonstrating efficient river restoration measures*). The main objective is to provide a list of best available practices and recommendations for cost-efficient and effective river restoration for enhancing ecological quality and increasing sea trout productivity. The main output will be a Baltic Toolbox for River Restoration published as a HELCOM report.

The Meeting noted that GoA 4.4 is formally active from the beginning of the current project period 4. The Best practice toolbox – what it would contain, who it will serve, how it will be done, was briefly discussed based on the existing plans. It was *i.a.* acknowledged that a number of river restoration manuals already exist, and that it is important to be clear on what this project outcome will produce and how it will complement to what already exists in this field. To this end it was noted that most existing river restoration manuals give detailed practical advise on how do the restoration work itself, whereas the RETROUT report strives to describe the best practises for the whole process of conducting successful restoration projects from initial evaluation of the problem and need for a restoration to, planning, practical implementation and impact evaluation.

It was also considered whether the term 'Toolbox' will be the most suitable for describing what will be produced, since any specific 'tools' will perhaps not be developed as the objective, according to the GoA 4.4 description, is to "*provide a list of best available practices and recommendations for cost-efficient and effective river restoration*" based on the experiences from the restoration cases and the results from the evaluation past restoration projects for factors of success and failure. Possibly better suited alternatives such as 'Manual', 'Guidelines', 'Best practices' were suggested. [However, 'Toolbox' is still used in these minutes to refer to the output of GoA 4.4]

The Meeting also shortly considered the structure of the Toolbox report; it should have an introduction, methods & approaches chapter, a chapter with the main results from 4.2, a chapter with summarising the demonstration cases 4.3 (the full case reports could be annexed to the Toolbox), and some sort of synthesis with list of best available practices and recommendations for cost-efficient and effective river restoration. It was also brought up if additional national evaluations or information on best practices or successful restoration factors could be used to contribute to the Toolbox, and in such a case how this could be done. It was concluded that all information is valuable but that it needs to be considered how the inclusion of potential additional information can be justified from the view point of having a coherent approach to be presented.

As the Toolbox strives to provide Baltic sea-wide guidance for successful river restoration practices, it was stressed that it would be important to ensure its relevance for all Baltic sea coastal countries, including all non-partner countries as well. to this end it was noted that this were already strived for earlier in the process of GoA 4.2 when the request for information of past restoration cases was sent out as HELCOM request also to all HELCOM countries, in addition to the internal project level request circulated to PPs. Unfortunately though, comprehensive information of past restoration cases (as a filled-in request template) were not received from any non-partner country, despite many reminders and some initial promises from Denmark, Germany and Finland. It was agreed that it could be worth trying to contact these countries once more and stress the importance of their contribution for achieving the desired Baltic-wide applicability of the Toolbox.

Finally, the procedures for publishing the Toolbox as a HELCOM publication was briefly discussed. Before publication by HELCOM the report must be circulated to members of the FISH Group for comments. This is also acknowledged in the RETROUT Application: "*HELCOM will coordinate and be responsible for quality control of the Baltic Toolbox for River Restoration in close cooperation with the*

other WP partners. The Toolbox will be reviewed by the experts in the HELCOM FISH group, representing all Baltic Sea coastal countries.". It was noted that the FISH Group convenes twice a year, once in winter once in summer, but the exact meeting dates are not yet known. It was again noted that the original time plan for the WP 4 activities will not enable a ready report published by HELCOM by the end of the project in September 2020. Already, the completion of the restoration demonstration cases directly overlap with this schedule as also they are set to be finished by the end of the project. as the restoration case reports will be a central ingredient of the Toolbox, it was agreed already at the YPM 2018 that the case reports (first full versions) need to be delivered at the latest by end of period 5 (i.e. March 2020), regardless of the status of the restoration project at that time. If all needed information would be delivered by that time (unlikely, since at least part of the valuable restoration case information will be available only during/after the summer 2020), there could be a theoretical possibility to have the report reviewed during spring/summer by the HELCOM Group(s) through correspondence or prior to the summer meeting of the FISH Group. However, there are several uncertainties in achieving this, and hence it was concluded that a more realistic approach would be to strive for a finalized Toolbox as a RETROUT project report version by the end of period 6, where after the HELCOM review and publication process could take place as an own procedure. However, it was agreed that H. Jokinen will continue to keep the relevant HELCOM Groups informed about the plans and achievements in order to anchor the WP 4 work in the HELCOM context.

General information from the Lead partner

Håkan Häggström provided us with general information concerning reporting of the third period, extension stage projects and a steering committee.

Reporting

Deadline for sending the signed reports to the lead partner is June 13. It is now half-time audit and the MA/JS will check spending to budget. If we are underspending, we risk having large Budget cuts. It is extremely important to have all the partner reports by that date for LP to be able to compile all the partner results and submit the form in BAMOS in time for the project FLC to check it before their deadline of July 1.

Extension Stage Projects

The extension Stage is a new funding possibility for projects within the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme. It is meant for implementing and strengthening the outcomes of the regular project. The activities shall focus on practical application of the results from the regular project. It is not a simple prolongation of regular project activities. The partnership shall be based on partners from the regular project, but it is possible to involve organisations that were not included in the partnership of the regular project. Russian organisations are encouraged to be included. There must be 3 project partners from 3 different countries. The call is launched in the autumn of 2019 and the projects may last at the most 9 months; October 2020-June 2021.

Possible projects are restoration of rivers using the toolbox of river restoration, to include more fishing destinations using the toolbox of destination development or an expanded study of the economic contribution to fishing tourism to the regional economy.

Steering committee

The possibility to create a steering group was discussed. According to the programme rules, a steering group is not mandatory. However, it is stated in the application that we intend to create

one. And the MA/JS has pointed out in the last clarification report, that we shall create one. We have explained the delay of the formation of a steering group by the fact that such a group have a very limited mandatory power. A decision must follow the plan of the application and the programme rules. In addition, the MA/JS has the final word in all changes.

That being said, we have promised to create a steering group, and will do so. The tasks of a steering group could be to

- decide on issues not specified in the application
- decide to direct a request of change of the work plan as expressed in the application to the MA/JS
- decide to direct a request of budget change to the MA/JS
- form a channel of information to the managers of partners organisations (the higher the better)

The steering group will constitute of one (1) representative per partner and be chaired by lead partner representative. The group will have on-line meetings 2-4 times per year.

Håkan will distribute an invitation to participate in the steering group to all partners.

Annex 1. GoA 4.2 Current status

Status of data submission

Country		Data submission status	
		Phase 1	**Phase 2**
RETROUT partners	Estonia	Complete	Submitted
	Latvia	Complete	Revised report awaited
	Lithuania	Complete	??
	Poland	Complete	Submitted
	Sweden	Complete	Interviews being conducted by UCV
Additional data	Russia	Complete	Detailed report awaited
	Finland	X	Detailed reports awaited

Details of river restoration projects reported

Country		**Number of completed projects**	**Number of non-realized projects**	**Nature of interventions reported**
RETROUT partners	Estonia	35, on 23 rivers	1	Nature-like bypass fishway, nature-like fishway, fish lift, culvert reconstruction with rapids, pool pass fishway, beaver dam removal, migration obstacle removal, creating new spawning area
	Latvia	12, on 17 rivers	1	Adding of gravel, stones and boulders, removal of beaver dams and fallen trees, removal of old dam, fishway
	Lithuania	24, on 14 rivers	0	Water quality treatment through wetland construction, spawning gravel bed, fish pass on dams
	Poland	9, on 8 rivers	0	Fish pass, artificial spawning ground, dam removal, removal of fish obstacles, restoration of natural riparian habitats
	Sweden	7, on 5 rivers	4	Habitat improvement, new spawning areas and holding spots, exchange of culvert to a larger culvert, fish ladder construction, dam removal, fish pass
TOTAL		**87**	**6**	
Additional data	Russia	X	1, on 3 rivers	Dam removal and restoration of habitats
	Finland	Unknown, but 2 cases for interview	X	