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<b>Document title</b>	Report from yearly partnership meeting of the RETROUT project
<b>Code</b>	7-1
<b>Category</b>	INF
<b>Agenda Item</b>	7 – Salmon and sea trout including HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1
<b>Submission date</b>	18.02.2020
<b>Submitted by</b>	Secretariat

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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 2019 yearly partnership Meeting was held on 23-25 October 2019, in Stockholm, Sweden. The Meeting was hosted by County Administrative Board Stockholm at their premises (Friday 25 October) and in Stockholm City Conference Centre (Wednesday 23 October). The Meeting was attended by participants from the project partner organisations.

The three-day event started with a common session with general presentations of the Work Package statuses and with focus on project economy and communication matters. The Meeting continued with dedicated Work Package-specific sessions on Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning. The aim of the dedicated work package sessions was to have a status update and to agree on upcoming tasks to be done. On Thursday 24 October, between the two meeting days, a full-day excursion to the project’s Swedish river restoration sites took place.

The Report of the WP 4 session at yearly partnership meeting of the RETROUT project is set out in the Annex to this document.

## Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the Report from the yearly partnership meeting of the RETROUT project.

## **REPORT FOR RETROUT YPM 2019 WP4 SESSION**

23.-25.10.2019

Stockholm, Sweden

Hosted by County Administrative Board Stockholm

### Introduction

The third RETROUT partnership Meeting was held on 23-25 October 2019, in Stockholm, Sweden. The Meeting was hosted by County Administrative Board Stockholm at their premises (Friday 25 October) and in Stockholm City Conference Centre (Wednesday 23 October).

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

The welcoming words to the partnership Meeting were given by Håkan Häggström, the RETROUT Project Lead manager from the County Administrative Board of Stockholm, Sweden. The three-day event started with a common session on Wednesday morning with general presentations of WP statuses and with focus on project economy and communication matters, chaired by Lead partner Project Manager Håkan Häggström (CAB, Sweden). During Wednesday afternoon dedicated WP sessions took place and continued Friday morning. On Thursday 24 October a full-day excursion to the project's Swedish river restoration sites took place. The YPM-19 was ended with a brief common closing session, with short summaries from the WP-sessions by WP leaders, discussions about the project end conference, and brain storming for potential extension phase topics.

The dedicated WP 4 sessions of the Partnership Meeting were 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.

WP4 sessions (*Wednesday 23. October, 14:15-17:00 and Friday 25. October, 09:00-11:30*)

### Agenda list

**AI 1 – Dedicated session on GoA 4.3 river restoration demonstration projects**

**AI 2 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.1**

**AI 3 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.2**

**AI 4 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.4**

Decision summary

**AI 1 – GoA 4.3 [Thursday]:**

- The given presentations on the river restoration demonstration cases will be shared to the working group. *[page 4]*

**AI 1 – GoA 4.3 continued [Friday]:**

- After jointly going through the stakeholder communication Guidelines document, the Meeting agreed to use the document in its current form as basis for organizing stakeholder communications under GoA 4.3. *[page 8]*
- It was agreed that GoA 4.3 stakeholder workshops should be organized **at the latest by mid-February 2020** with a ready and submitted conclusion report **by mid-March 2020**. Closer to these deadlines, reminders will be sent out, and N. Singh will prepare a reporting format instructions/template to be used for the conclusions reporting [no decision on when this is to be produced and sent out to PPs]. *[page 8]*
- The Meeting agreed to use the document ‘Instructions/guidelines for documentation and preparation of a case study report on the restoration demonstration projects’, with a few amendments regarding stakeholder contact matters, as the basis for GoA 4.3 restoration demonstration case documentation and reporting. *[page 8]*
- Regarding the GoA 4.3 demonstration case reporting schedule, it was recalled that it was agreed already during the 2018 YPM that first complete reports should be finalized and submitted at the latest **by the end of period 5 (i.e. by 31 March 2020)** regardless of the status of the restoration case at that point. *[page 8]*

**AI 2 – GoA 4.1:**

- The Meeting took note that a detailed work plan has been developed to guide the 4.1 sea trout river habitat and stock assessment work and report compilation and writing, and agreed that it should be used as the basis for the assessment work and consecutive report writing. *[page 9]*
- It was agreed that an issue with missing permission from Lithuania regarding the use of one (of two) ICES data sets needs to be sorted out between H. Jokinen and RETROUT PP contacts at Klaipeda University who also are the Lithuanian national contacts in the ICES WGBAST. *[page 9]*
- The meeting took note that based on the preliminary schedule set out, a first draft of the 4.1 assessment report should be ready **by end of this year**. *[page 10]*
- The possibilities and concrete steps for enabling a review process of the 4.1. assessment report by ICES WGBAST experts, as suggested by the WP4 WG, will be sorted out and prepared by H. Jokinen together with Martin Kesler (PP 5), who also is the new chair of ICES WGBAST. *[page 10]*
- The Meeting agreed that the work with the ‘Methods report’, covering both Task 4.1.1 ‘Methods descriptions’ and Task 4.1.4-4.1.8 ‘Testing experiences of the methods in PP countries’, will actively continue by the task lead (CABS/H. Häggström) with support from H. Jokinen, and that the developed methods testing reporting instructions will be sent out for feedback to the concerned PPs **in short**. The concerned PPs will be kept informed about the reporting matter and schedule. *[page 10]*

**AI 3 – GoA 4.2:**

- The redoing of missing Lithuanian past river restoration cases stakeholder interviews should be completed, and ready transcripts submitted **before Christmas holidays this year**. [page 10]
- Considering the analyses phase of 4.2, the parametrization and initial testing would need to be completed as soon as possible, but **at the latest by end of November 2019**. [page 11]
- The quantitative analyses were estimated to be ready **by end of the year**, as confirmed by H. Häggström [author comment: poor notes, statement and schedule to be checked]. [page 11]
- The qualitative data template analysis and following interview reports are to be done by N. Singh in January 2020, so that all analyses are completed **by February 2020**, and a draft 4.2 study report is ready **at the latest by mid-March 2020**. After that, the draft report would be circulated to the WG for comments, input and feedback to be delivered within two weeks. [page 11]
- It was also agreed that N. Singh will develop and send out, **in January 2020**, a format together with needed instructions for the responsible PPs to write a one-pager with a general description of each example case included in the data set. [page 11]

**AI 4 – GoA 4.4:**

- Whether the term ‘Toolbox’ will be the most suitable for describing the output was considered in brief by the Meeting, but it was agreed that the matter of the report name can be discussed and decided upon at a later stage. [page 11]
- Regarding the scope of the 4.3 river restoration best practices report, the Meeting preliminarily agreed that the ‘best practices’ to be developed could include both a process and a technical component, striving for providing the essence of river restorations in terms of factors for successfulness. [page 12]
- Considering the planned structure and outline of the report the Meeting considered that legal aspects and procedures for river restorations are important and could be included in the report, and agreed to further investigate the possibilities for this. H. Häggström informed that he could look into possibilities to involve a legal expert from CABS on this matter [author comment: poor notes, check if statement correct]. [page 12]
- In general, the Meeting was of the opinion that the provisional report outline presented in the working plan document seems suitable for its purpose. It was agreed that based on the minor comments by the Meeting a revised working plan document with the provisional report outline should be sent out the WG for input **in short** by H. Jokinen. [page 12]
- Regarding how to synthesise the input materials, identify best practices and develop recommendations for Baltic Sea river restorations for the 4.4 best practices report, it was suggested that a dedicated workshop for the concerned PPs would be arranged for further developing and finalizing this part of the report. The suggestion was commonly considered good by the Meeting, and it was agreed that possibilities for organizing such a workshop **during first half of 2020** should be investigated by H. Jokinen together with concerned PPs. [page 12]
- According to the tentative schedule for the 4.4 best practices report set out in the presented working plan, a first full draft by HELCOM should be ready and circulated to WG **by end of April 2020**. [page 12]

- The Meeting stressed the importance of striving to have a finalized report with presentable results ready **by the end conference in September 2020**. [page 13]

## Minutes

*Wednesday 23. October, 14:15-17:00*

### **AI 1 – Dedicated session on GoA 4.3 river restoration demonstration projects**

According to agreed plans and the provisional Agenda for the WP 4 sessions, the Wednesday afternoon was dedicated to the GoA 4.3 ‘Demonstrating efficient river restoration measures’.

The rationale behind the dedication of one whole session to GoA 4.3, was the identified need for a better sharing of demonstration case details and progress among the group during and after implementation. This need corresponds to the project’s Application document that states, regarding the GoA 4.3 restoration demonstration cases, that partners will have opportunities to peer review the applied methods during the implementation of the demonstration projects.

PPs involved in the restoration demonstration cases had internally organized and prepared for presenting the respective cases. Presentations were given for each of PP country involved in the project’s restorations. In general, the presentations covered the background/problem in the site, the aim and measure(es) to be taken, description of the workflow/process, presentation on design/plans, and lessons learned as well as main problems encountered. Also, the matter of establishing stakeholder contact and communication was considered. The detailed presentations and afterward discussions were useful both from an information sharing and learning perspective as well as from the viewpoint of making use of the joint expertise to find solutions and improve plans.

The presentations given will be shared to the working group. Below the essence of each presentation and following discussions are summarized.

#### *Estonia*

The Estonian demonstration cases were presented by Martin Kesler (PP 5, EMI). In Estonia, there are all-in-all 6 demonstration cases in 3 rivers. These are: Linnamäe hydropower station and dam on River Jägala, Kotka dam on River Valgejõgi, Nõmmeveski dam on River Valgejõgi, Kunda lowermost hydropower station dam, Old Kunda manor mill dam, and Aravuse fish farm and hatchery dam. The responsible project partner for the tasks is University of Tartu (PP 5, EMI). The Estonian demonstration cases contain the planning phases of river restoration activities such as removal of dams, fish pass solutions, bank enforcement, and building of artificial rapids. That is, within RETROUT these cases will not cover the construction phase. The overarching idea is to develop detailed plans and design documents that can later be used by the Ministry of Environment or private land owners to execute the measures. Chosen through a procurement process, two designing companies are working together to produce the plans and design documents. At the moment all is in schedule and working well. The design work has been finished for all other cases except for the Linnamäe hydropower station and dam on River Jägala and Kunda lowermost hydropower station dam, which are the most difficult object and for which the design work is still ongoing. During the projects, stakeholder communication

between EMI, designers, land owners, Counties and the Ministry of Environment has been established and work sufficiently well.

#### *Latvia*

The Latvian demonstration cases were presented by Edvins Drigins (PP 7, Kurzeme Planning Region) and Kaspars Abersons (PP 8, BIOR). In Latvia, the restoration activity concerns planning and building a fish passage in Rīva river around an old paper mill dam. The responsible project partners for the task is Kurzeme Planning Region (PP 7) and Ventspils Regional Municipality (PP 14) together with BIOR (PP 8). The roles of the involved partners are divided so that Kurzeme Planning Region is responsible for the planning phase and to produce a construction design for the fish pass, Ventspils Regional Municipality will be responsible for the construction work to be done based on the developed design, and BIOR will provide expert support for the throughout the process.

The major challenge so far in the project was a landowner issue in relation to the Interreg Programme/ERDF rules, which was however, successfully solved by a long-term land leasing contract for the area on the river bank where the fish pass is to be built on.

The ongoing phase of the project is to elaborate and finalize technical design documentation for the construction. Through a procurement process a state-owned designing company (Meliorprojekts) with competence on water construction is working with the planning. A technical solution was designed, and documents already provided earlier. However, based on expert consultation the project management team was not satisfied in this suggestion and, after negotiations the designing company agreed to redo the planning with a focus on a more natural like fish pass solution having in mind the much better experiences from other countries on these sorts of constructions compared to technical fish passes. To finish the redesigning is estimated to take about 2 months.

The evolvement and the different consecutive versions of the plans and designs were presented and discussed. As a basis for converting the design from a technical to a more natural like solution, certain still open issues were high-lighted, including e.g., details on the down-stream entrance part of the fish pass (width issues, proximity to dam, and direction and form of the entrance), as well as on water level control and regulation possibilities during high flows. Making use of the expertise and experiences available in the working group, different ideas and solution to the remaining issues were discussed and welcomed by the involved PPs as concrete possibilities to take forward the planning with and to use as basis for decisions to be taken on the final design of the fish pass. Based on the discussion the responsible PPs will also further explore the possibilities to have parts of the upper concrete construction removed to stabilize water flow and water level fluctuations.

#### *Lithuania*

The Lithuanian demonstration cases were presented by Nerijus Nika (PP 9, Klaipeda University). In Lithuania, project restoration cases take place in river Smiltelė/Smeltale. The responsible project partner for the tasks is Administration of Klaipeda District Municipality (PP 15). Klaipeda University (PP 9) is involved with a role of providing technical and scientific support. 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 stretches including e.g. adding of gravel and stones. The other activity consists of cleaning and fixing a non-working sedimentation pool constructed within a wetland project in the 1996 in order to improve general river conditions through nutrient retention and cleaner water.

The planned restoration works were successfully finished during this year, with trout monitoring and evaluation as remaining ongoing and oncoming tasks. There are plans to organise a stakeholder workshop /information event about the restorations done.

Along the work process it has become known that some other additional problems exist in the river. These 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 are to plant trees along a river (funded by Klaipeda Municipality) and improve a culvert in bad condition for migration. These measures would be addressed outside the RETROUT budget but could still be included as experiences in the RETROUT river restoration best practices Guidelines.

#### *Poland*

The Polish demonstration case was presented by Marcin Kalinowski (PP 17, Marine Institute). MI is not the implementing authority but acts as an expert/observer organization. Within the project, a fish pass construction is being built at a migration obstacle in Reda River. The main implementing responsibility in this project is with the local and regional water management authorities ("Polish Water" main responsibility), who manage this state-owned river. The role of MI is to follow and monitor the process. There is no RETROUT budget funding allocated to this project, but resources are secured for the project through Polish national funds and EU-money.

The restoration activity concerns the construction of fish pass with adjacent Training and Restocking Center, on the Reda river in the town of Reda (Wejherowo district, Pomeranian region). The fish pass will be located in Reda town on the left bank of the Reda river. The planned work consists of the deconstruction of an old fish pass suffering i.a. from flow problems, and of the construction of a new fish pass over an old dam structure in the Reda river. In detail, plans are to build a new technical fish pass (Vertical – Slot type) and an adjacent training and restocking center with a hatchery, including necessary water intakes for the hatchery and two pools for migration salmons and sea trouts. Plans exist also for instillation of permanent continuous fish migration monitoring by fish scanners and cameras. The needed stages of project have been planned and after some reorganizations and other issues at the implementing agency, the project is currently at the beginning of the construction phase. Once started the construction work is estimated to be finished within approximately 10 months, and the fish pass ready in summer 2020.

In addition to observe the process and monitor effects, MI could pro-actively provide guidance based on the gained RETROUT experiences and existing expertise in the RETROUT working group to attempt to positively affect/improve the choice of solutions and thereby the outcome of the restoration project. This could be done/initiated e.g. by organizing a stakeholder workshop about the Reda river restoration case.

#### *Sweden*

The Swedish demonstration cases were presented by Håkan Häggström (PP 1, County Administrative Board of Stockholm). 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 (PP 1), together with Haninge municipality (PP 3). The restoration measures in are done in the rivers Bränningeån, Erstaviksbacken, Vitsån, Skeboån, Moraån, and are implemented with funding outside of the RETROUT budget. Three of the restoration cases have by now already been completed. These are the cases in Vitsån, Moraån, and Bränningeån. For these finished cases, monitoring and evaluation of the process and successfulness will still be done. Two of

these rivers were also visited and more closely inspected during the Study visit during the second day of the YPM event.

The remaining two unfinished restoration cases were presented. In river Erstaviksbäcken the restoration activity consists of finding a solution for a migration obstacle. The site is a small-scale creek currently with a non-working technical fish pass. Optimally a natural fish pass would be built, but the land owner refuses this. Currently plans and design documents for a wooden fish ladder have been produced.

In river Skeboån the restoration activity consists of planning and building a fish pass around a pulp factory dam in Hallstavik. As the mill uses most of the water in the river, currently the project stands in a conflict situation with the pulp factory concerning issues of securing sufficient water flow through the fish pass. CABS (PP 1) wants to cooperate with the paper mill to find the best solution for solving the situation. There are plans to offer to pay the factory for a fish pass and make a hydrological model for the whole river basin. With a better regulation of the lakes in the system, a better and more stable water regime is hoped to be achieved, which would secure enough water for the paper mill, the fish pass and drinking water for the municipality.

*Friday 25. October, 09:00-11:30*

#### **AI 1 – continued**

The Meeting started off by thanking CABS (PP 1) for a nice meeting dinner at Wednesday evening and for the excellently organized excursion day to the Swedish river restoration sites [PP 1 will prepare and distribute a summary report on the excursion].

Before proceeding with the Agenda, a few remaining matters from Wednesday's program regarding GoA 4.3 were considered.

As the first matter, establishing and organizing stakeholder communication under GoA 4.3 was considered. As a background for the matter it was recalled that according to the Work Plan, the matter of stakeholder consultation under GoA 4.3 is to be supported by UCV/CR (PP 16). It was further recalled that the matter of GoA 4.3 stakeholder communication has been discussed also during previous WP 4 online meetings (please see minutes), and consequently Nandita Singh (PP 16) has now developed guidelines for organizing communication with the stakeholders of the GoA 4.3 river restoration demonstration projects. It was noted that a document with 'Guidelines for organizing communication with the stakeholders of your demonstration project' had been sent out to WP 4 WG before the YPM (email Monday 21 October 2019) for concerned PPs to familiarize with. N. Singh was thanked for her efforts to develop the stakeholder communication Guidelines and the support she provides the involved PPs on these matters.

The Guidelines and the rationale behind them were presented by N. Singh: In every river restoration project, stakeholders have an important role to play, with potential immediate and/or long-term consequences for the project. Therefore, stakeholder communication was planned as a sub-activity under GoA 4.3. (with reference to the RETROUT Application document Work Plan). In the process of implementing WP 4 plans, there were different delays and changes to the original set up, and consequently, a steered and structured stakeholder communication part from the start of GoA 4.3 never took off. However, stakeholder communication continues to remain important for the effectiveness and sustainability of the restoration measures implemented under RETROUT. Hence,

what is intended now is to establish effective communication with the stakeholders of the restoration projects completed /under implementation, so that both sides can draw maximal mutual benefits on a long-term basis. The lessons learned from the stakeholder communication experiences will also be analyzed and included in the 4.4 Baltic Sea River Restoration Guidelines.

The given justification for the need of organizing stakeholder communication, even at a late stage of a restoration project, was generally understood and accepted by the Meeting. After jointly going through the stakeholder communication Guidelines document, the Meeting agreed to use the document in its current form as basis for organizing stakeholder communications under GoA 4.3.

It was noted that the suggested method for organizing stakeholder communication according to the stakeholder communication Guidelines document was to conduct a stakeholder workshop. On this matter it was noted that some PPs in some of the cases have already organized a stakeholder workshop or a similar event, and that in such cases there might necessarily not be a need to organize a new workshop, but instead the experiences from those earlier events should be compiled and reported to N. Singh as explained in the stakeholder communication Guidelines.

Finally, it was agreed that the stakeholder workshops should be organized at the latest by mid-February 2020 with a ready and submitted conclusion report by mid-March 2020. To this end it was also agreed that closer to these deadlines, reminders will be sent out, and that N. Singh will prepare a reporting format instructions/template to be used for the conclusions reporting [no decision on when this is to be produced and sent out to PPs].

As the second remaining 4.3 matter, the document 'DRAFT instructions/guidelines for documentation and preparation of a case study report on the restoration demonstration cases' developed by H. Jokinen (PP 13) was considered. This document had been prepared and distributed already for the mid-term Meeting in Gdansk, where it was first discussed. The purpose of the document is to support the concerned PPs in their 4.3 restoration demonstration case documentation and reporting obligation, and to ensure standardized reporting from all cases containing all necessary information in a processed and structured format. After the mid-term Meeting in Gdansk, it was agreed that the reporting Guidelines document should be resent to concerned PPs for input and feedback. This was done by H. Jokinen, but only comments from UCV (PP 16) were received.

During the Meeting this reporting Guidelines document (with the received comments included) was displayed and jointly gone through. The Meeting found the reporting Guidelines document to be well structured and useful for the oncoming case study reporting, and hence accepted it with a few small amendments regarding stakeholder contact matters and agreed to use it as the basis for restoration case documentation and reporting. Regarding the reporting schedule, it was recalled that the originally planned deadlines for the 4.3. case study reports and the 4.4. River Restoration Best Practices Guidelines (that need the 4.3 reports as input) overlapped, and that it was agreed already during the 2018 YPM that first complete 4.3 case study reports should be finalized and submitted at the latest by the end of period 5 (i.e. by 31 March 2020) regardless of the status of the restoration case at that point. This because, enough time and at least some input need to be secured for the compilation of the 4.4. River Restoration Best Practices Guidelines. However, it was pointed out that although a first case study report needs to be sent in by end of period 5, the reports can be complemented, and relevant information included as long as it is time-wise possible considering the 4.4. River Restoration Best Practices Guidelines compilation process.

## AI 2 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.1

Under this AI the status and next steps for GoA 4.1 “Assessment of sea trout river and stock status, impacts of recreational fishing and management options” were considered. First, the matter of Task 4.1.2 (Assessment of sea trout river and stock status...) was considered. Task lead H. Jokinen briefly presented the current status of the work with the assessment. The Meeting took note that a detailed work plan has been developed by H. Jokinen to guide the work on the assessment and the report compilation and writing. This plan document has been sent out to the WG for feedback and input several times during the past half a year, the last time a over a month before the YPM following the wish by the WG expressed during one of the WG’s monthly online meetings. Unfortunately, however, no feedback had been received at any point, which was regretted by the Meeting. Following a brief discussion, the Meeting considered the plan to be suitable for its purpose and jointly agreed that it should be used as the basis for the assessment work and consecutive report writing.

The Meeting recalled that the aim of the task is to produce a BS-wide assessment report of the status of sea trout rivers and stocks, with the rationale to include more rivers than in earlier/existing assessments (i.e., not bound to selection criteria of ICES or HELCOM indicators), enable higher resolution (assessment done on the scale of rivers/river systems instead of different larger assessment units), and attempt to compare rivers with and without any restoration activities. The Meeting took note that data (trout parr densities, THS and habitat data) for the assessment work have been secured through the ICES WGBAST with permission granted from the national data providers. It was agreed that an issue with one missing permission from Lithuania regarding the use of one (of two) ICES data sets needs to be sorted out between H. Jokinen and RETROUT PP contacts at Klaipeda University who also are the Lithuanian national contacts in the ICES WGBAST.

On this matter, the Meeting further took note of the rationale and logical sequence for sorting the available data for the use in the assessment according to different qualities and possibilities, as presented by H. Jokinen. It was emphasized that the idea is to try to make use of as much data as possible of best with best available approaches, also enabling the use of different approaches for different data according to data quality as long as the different approaches applied are clearly and openly presented in the assessment report as methods descriptions and as some sort of marking of the assessment results with different data and approaches used. Also, the meeting briefly took note of a preliminary comparison of sea trout river statuses using the ‘normal’ THS-based approach for obtaining potential parr density estimates, and a width-based approach for the same rivers in a sub set of the data, as conducted and presented by H. Jokinen. This comparison coarsely demonstrated that the status results obtained by these two methods were to a large part similar (same status level reached in approx. 80% of the compared cases), which together with the known importance of river width as a sea trout river habitat factor, was interpreted as good support for justifying the use of such a width-based approach in the assessment for cases where THS is not available.

Finally, the Meeting took note of a proposed outline of the assessment report as set out in the agreed plan document. It was noted that one of the chapters in the assessment report will be based on the so called ‘Methods report’ (see below) to be produced by CABS, and one chapter will be an overview of the existing knowledge about recreational fishery of sea trout in the Baltic Sea region being compiled by MI, in accordance to the work plan. The meeting took note that based on the preliminary schedule set out, a first draft of the report should be ready by end of this year. After that it will be circulated to the WG for comments and input. The possibility to send a complete draft version of the report also to the ICES WGBAST for a review, to anchor the assessment report at the ICES-experts for securing wide acceptance, was suggested and the idea was supported by the WG. The possibilities and concrete steps for enabling such a review process will be sorted out and prepared by H. Jokinen together with Martin Kesler (PP 5), who also is the new chair of ICES WGBAST.

As a last matter under this AI, the so called 'Methods report' was also considered. The Meeting recalled that, as agreed by the WG (see previous meeting minutes), the so 'Methods report' should cover both Task 4.1.1 'Methods descriptions' and Task 4.1.4-4.1.8 'Testing experiences of the methods in PP countries'. The methods mainly to be covered were agreed by the WG at the 'Methods workshop in Klaipeda 2018' (Task 4.1.3) to be 1) the River Habitat Survey (RHS), 2) the Trout Habitat Score (THS), and 3) parr density estimation from electrofishing. The task is to write a stand-alone report about sea trout habitat and stock monitoring/assessment methods that should then be included in the sea trout river habitat and stock assessment report as a modified chapter on sea trout stock and river habitat monitoring and assessment methods. Specifically, the report would first need to present the three methods to be considered, and then contain a compilation/synthesis of the country wise summaries on available information/experiences of the testing/use of these methods.

The Meeting took note of the progress on this matter with ongoing work by the responsible PP (H. Häggström) together with WP4 lead H. Jokinen (PP 13). It was noted that as guidance for carrying out this task a working plan has been developed. The plan was shared with the Meeting. As a part of the plan there are draft instructions for the reporting of the country-wise methods testing results and experiences. The Meeting was of the opinion that having such instructions as a basis for the reporting of the methods testing would be useful. The Meeting agreed that the work with this task will actively continue by the task lead (CABS/H. Häggström) with support from H. Jokinen, and that the developed methods testing reporting instructions will be sent out for feedback to the concerned PPs in short. The concerned PPs will be kept informed about the reporting matter and schedule.

### **AI 3 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.2**

Under this AI the Meeting took note of the status and next steps for GoA 4.2 "Joint evaluation of completed restoration projects", as presented by the GoA lead Nandita Singh (UCV/CR; PP 16). Due to unfortunate time shortage the presentation and discussion on this GoA was kept rather brief. Details on the background, aims, collected data, and planned analyses have been presented before during earlier meetings (please see earlier meeting minutes, e.g. from the mid-term meeting).

In short, the Meeting recalled that most data on past river restorations, including interview transcripts, have been received already earlier. However, some interview data still are missing from Lithuania. The Meeting took note that situation with the missing Lithuanian interviews is that due to unsuccessful first round of some of the interviews these need to be redone, which explains the current delay. As informed by Nerijus Nika (PP 9, Klaipeda University), Lithuanian responsible for the interviews, the redoing of missing interviews should be completed, and ready transcripts submitted before Christmas holidays this year. additional, non-partner data on past river restoration cases have been requested for several times, again this fall. Despite numerous attempts and much effort, to get even a few example cases from Finland have turned out to be difficult. However, Denmark has promised to now compile and send information on some cases [author insert: the contribution from Denmark was received on 1 November].

In addition to complementing the data sets, the ongoing phase of the GoA concerns the analyses. According to plans both quantitative (excel template data) and qualitative (data template + interview data) analyses methods are to be used. the analyses work is carried out by N. Singh (qualitative analysis + main responsibility for the analysis phase) and H. Häggström (quantitative analysis). Currently joint preliminary analysis and exploratory work have been done together by N. Singh and H. Häggström. First steps have involved developing data classification and parametrization as well as initial testing and application of the parametrization on the whole data set. The parametrization and

initial testing would need to be completed as soon as possible, but at the latest by end of November 2019. After having the parametrization in place, the next is to proceed with conducting both the quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analyses were estimated to be ready by end of the year, as confirmed by H. Häggström [author comment: poor notes, statement and schedule to be checked]. The qualitative data template analysis and following interview reports (13 cases) are to be done in January 2020, so that all analyses are completed by February 2020, and a draft 4.2 study report is ready at the latest by mid-March 2020. After that, the draft report would be circulated to the WG for comments, input and feedback to be delivered within two weeks. The finalized report will then feed in to the 4.4 Baltic Sea River Restoration Best Practices Guidelines report. Finally, it was also agreed that N. Singh will develop and send out, in January 2020, a format together with needed instructions for the responsible PPs to write a one-pager with a general description of each example case included in the data set.

#### **AI 4 – Status update and next steps for GoA 4.4**

The scope of this AI was to consider preliminary working plan for the “*river restoration best practices*” report, as presented by H. Jokinen, responsible for this GoA and the best practice report. The Meeting recalled that this task has been once preliminarily discussed by the WG at the WP 4 session of the RETROUT mid-term meeting in Gdansk, in May 2019, and took note that the presented working plan for the best practice report is based on the descriptions in the Application and Work Plan as well as on the discussions during the mid-term meeting.

The working plan document (*‘4.4 best practices Guideline report plan’*) was displayed and considered by the Meeting. As a background for the work it was first recalled that the key task of GoA 4.4, according to Application, is to jointly develop a Baltic ‘Toolbox’ for river restoration, with the main objective 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”. Whether the term ‘Toolbox’ will be the most suitable for describing what will be produced – since any specific ‘tools’ will not be developed – was discussed already in Gdansk, and the matter was further considered in brief by this Meeting as well. Possibly better suited alternatives such as ‘Manual’, ‘Guidelines’, ‘Best practices’, ‘White book’ were suggested. It was agreed that the matter of the report name can be discussed and decided upon at a later stage.

Going through the working plan, the Meeting further recalled that it is important to acknowledge that a number of river restoration manuals already exist and what type of manuals they are, and that it needs to be clear what this outcome will produce and how it will complement to what already exists in this field. In relation to this, it was noted most existing river restoration manuals give detailed practical instructions for the restoration work itself, whereas the RETROUT report could distinguish on this point by focusing on the best practises for the whole process of conducting successful restoration projects. However, comments were also given that in this field in many countries there is a need for very clear steps-to-be-taken type of guidelines for restoration activities, due to the growing interest and demand for river restoration measures. The Meeting concluded this important discussion about the scope of the report by preliminarily agreeing that the ‘best practices’ to be developed could include both a process and a technical component, striving for providing the essence of river restorations in terms of factors for successfulness.

The Meeting further noted that the best practices report can be used by local, regional, national authorities, but will also serve the macro-regional level by providing input for policy recommendations at HELCOM and EU levels. As informed by H. Jokinen, the Meeting took note that there is concrete

interest towards this RETROUT output in HELCOM context and work, as it has been proposed, as part of the Baltic Sea Action plan review and update process, 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. To this end the Meeting was of the opinion that striving for a high quality and useful output is desirable to ensure its wide applicability.

Considering the planned structure and outline of the report, the Meeting recalled that the best practices report will consist of summary inputs from GoAs 4.2 (Joint evaluation of completed restoration projects) and 4.3 (Demonstrating efficient river restoration measures), and further that based on the experiences from the restoration demonstration cases and on the results from the study on success and failure factors from past restoration projects, a list of a best available practices and recommendations for cost-efficient and effective river restoration will be developed. Additionally, it was suggested that other national successful restoration cases could be presented as examples in the report. Further, it was suggested that a section about the juridical procedure in general and with main characteristics and differences between countries could be included in the Guidelines report. H. Häggström informed that he could look into possibilities to involve a legal expert from CABS on this task [author comment: poor notes, check if statement correct]. The Meeting considered that the legal aspects are important and could be included in the report, and agreed to further investigate the possibilities for this. In general, the Meeting was of the opinion that the provisional report outline presented in the working plan document seems suitable for its purpose. It was agreed that based on the minor comments by the Meeting a revised working plan document with the provisional report outline should be sent out to the WG for input in short by H. Jokinen.

Regarding the last but the perhaps most important part of the report some more discussion took place. Particularly the questions how to synthesise the input materials, identify best practices and develop recommendations for Baltic Sea river restorations, were considered unclear and as something that needs to be further planned and decided upon. On this matter it was suggested that a dedicated workshop for the concerned PPs would be arranged for further developing and finalizing this part of the report. The suggestion was commonly considered good by the Meeting, and it was agreed that possibilities for organizing such a workshop during first half of 2020 should be investigated by H. Jokinen together with concerned PPs. Preliminary potential workshop locations brought up were HELCOM Secretariat in Helsinki and Riga back-to-back with study visits. These possibilities need to be further looked into.

According to the tentative schedule for the report set out in the presented working plan, a first full draft by HELCOM should be ready and circulated to WG by end of April 2020. The Meeting also recalled that the plan is for the best practice report to finally be published as a HELCOM report when finished. Before publication by HELCOM the report must be circulated to members of the FISH Group for comments. The HELCOM FISH Group convenes twice a year, however the report can perhaps be circulated and accepted intersessionally, if needed. It was recalled that it was already previously suggested and preliminarily agreed that it would be realistic to strive for a finalized output first 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, the Meeting stressed the importance of striving to have a finalized report with presentable results ready by the end conference in September 2020.

The Meeting recalled that according to the work plan the best practices report should be translated to national languages and disseminated to relevant local and national stakeholders. This task is to be completed by the end of the project duration.

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Finally, the Meeting thanked CABS for hosting YPM-19. The WP 4 sessions were closed on Friday 25 October at 11:30. The Minutes report from the WP 4 sessions was prepared by H. Jokinen and circulated to participants for approval (no comments are to be considered as approving the minutes).