



Document title	Outcomes of CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 and informal meeting of CG Aquaculture
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Agenda Item	6 – BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture
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Background

The fourth Meeting of the HELCOM Fish Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021), was held as an online meeting on 16 June 2021.

The meeting considered drafts and proposals for several chapters of the draft BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in accordance with HELCOM Recommendation 37/3. The meeting further agreed on a schedule for finalization of the BAT/BEP descriptions during 2022. The full Outcome of CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 can be found via [this link](#).

An informal meeting of CG Aquaculture was organized online on 30 November 2021 in order to consider new drafts for a number of chapters of the BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture, and to plan the intersessional work to be undertaken until the next official meeting of the group. The memo of the informal meeting of CG Aquaculture 2021 is set out in the attachment to this document.

Next steps

[CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022](#) will be held on 24-25 March 2022 as an online meeting. CG AQUACULTURE 6-2022 will be organized on 21-22 June 2022, tentatively in the Åland Islands, Finland.

In accordance with the 2021-2022 Work Plan of CG Aquaculture the tasks of the group, including the BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture, should be completed during 2022.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the information provided in this document and to guide CG Aquaculture, as appropriate.



Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM Fish Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture)
Online, 30 November 2021

Informal meeting

Memo of informal meeting of HELCOM Fish Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE)

Introduction

0.1 With reference to the outcome of CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 (paragraph 4.15) an informal Meeting of the HELCOM Fish Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture) was held as an online meeting via Zoom on 30 November 2021.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, and Poland as well as Observers from CCB and FEAP. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Anita Künitzer, Germany and Orian Bondestam, Finland, co-Chairs of CG Aquaculture.

Consideration of ongoing work under the Correspondence Group

1.1 The following documents, available on the [Workspace](#) of CG Aquaculture, were considered by the informal meeting:

- Proposal for an overall structure for BAT/BEP (Germany);
- Proposal for chapters 1-5 and chapter 11 for BAT/BEP (Germany);
- Proposal for chapter 6 BAT/ BEP hazardous substances (Germany);
- Further developed proposal for BAT/BEP to avoid or minimise nutrient pollution, comments by Poland;
- A first proposal for BAT/BEP to avoid or minimize hazardous substances pollution, comments by Denmark and Poland;
- BAT/BEP wastes in aquaculture developed (Poland);
- BAT/BEP on monitoring (Estonia); and
- HELCOM RAS report by Natural Resource Institute (Finland)

1.2 In discussing the documents, inter alia the following comments and agreements were noted:

Proposal for an overall structure for BAT/BEP

The Meeting supported in general the overall structure and indications of the length of the various chapters, noting however that the document may become quite lengthy as it covers various impacts of aquaculture and also various types of aquaculture.

The introduction should not include a separate sub-chapter on defining sustainable aquaculture, but the introduction should instead outline the goal of the document, as well as linking it to Recommendation 37/3.

Germany would need help in drafting Chapter 2. Poland offered to draft section 2.2.1 on pond aquaculture. Finland offered to draft section 2.1.2 on semi-enclosed and closed containment systems.

Noting that some types of aquaculture systems can be applied both in freshwater and marine water, as well as on land or on sea, the different types should only be described once in Chapter 2.

The Meeting discussed the need to include a sub-chapter on extractive aquaculture (section 2.1.3) and noted that although it is not allowed in all HELCOM Contracting Parties, developments are ongoing in other Contracting Parties (e.g. <https://originbyocean.com>) and the issue should be mentioned in the document, including also a brief description on aquaponics. Germany (Ulfert Focken) offered to draft this sub-chapter.

Regarding Chapter 3 (Recommendations for locating aquaculture operations), the Meeting discussed whether only marine operations should be included, or if also land-based operations should be included in the chapter. There was a preference for focusing on marine operations in this chapter, noting also that text has not yet been drafted related to locating land-based operations. However, the chapter should explain why land-based operations are not included, and also briefly explain how their location can impact the Baltic Sea environment.

Poland agreed to draft chapter 7 on marine litter, while the chapter on biowaste drafted by Poland for this meeting will be incorporated in the chapter on nutrient pollution.

Regarding Chapter 8 (Non-indigenous species) the Meeting discussed the need to consider also covering locally absent indigenous species, parasites, diseases etc. It was agreed that the chapter should be broadened and also renamed as appropriate. It was noted that EU guidance on the matter is available, which could be useful in the development of this chapter.

Germany is currently working on a draft for Chapter 9 regarding animal welfare.

Climate change should be included, but only be addressed briefly on a general level, noting however the risks (including economic risks) climate change can have on sea-based aquaculture systems. The Meeting agreed that the HELCOM-Baltic Earth [Climate Change Fact Sheet](#) should be taken into consideration in this regard. Input may also be received from ongoing EU work on the matter.

The economic risk of aquaculture systems as linked to the different types of systems should also be considered (e.g. closed controlled systems are less exposed to risks such as climate change and red tides).

Regarding Chapter 11 on Recommendations for permitting, the Meeting noted that Recommendation 37/3 already contains guidance on the matter, which should be considered when drafting the chapter. Development of guidance on aquaculture licensing will begin in the EU in 2022 and some material can already be provided for the development of this chapter. A lead country would be needed to draft text for the chapter.

The Meeting noted that the EU has recently adopted guidelines for sustainable development of aquaculture, which cover some of the same issues as envisaged for the HELCOM BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture.

Germany offered to update the draft structure document based on the discussions and upload it in the workspace.

Proposal for chapters 1-5 and chapter 11 for BAT/BEP

Germany has already incorporated the comments provided by Poland for Chapter 4.

The Meeting agreed that the text in Chapter 3 regarding not locating new aquaculture operations in areas with eutrophication needs to be considered in more detail at a later stage.

The Meeting discussed synergies with aquaculture and other businesses, such as windfarms, noting that such combinations are being explored in the North Sea at the moment. The Meeting noted that in Germany windfarms would preferably be used as no-take-zones and that there are higher security

limitations in areas around windfarms. No conclusion was reached whether or not such synergies should be mentioned in the document.

The inclusion of quantitative nutrient discharge limits in Chapter 4 was discussed, as included also in Recommendation 25/4. There was general support for this, as well as support for considering lower limits than in the Recommendation and possibly different categories by including e.g., RAS farms. Total discharge limits were also considered as an option rather than based on N/P discharge per unit of fish produced. The Meeting supported in general that the discharge limits should be reviewed at a certain time in the future, with a view to possibly lowering the limits as appropriate. A review clause should consequently be included in this context. The Meeting invited interested participants to consider the different options further and to submit a proposal to the next meeting.

The Meeting noted that further discussion will be needed on whether and how to recommend aquaculture management zones (AMZ) in Chapter 4, as well as possibly defining maximum allowable production in AMZs. The Meeting recalled that CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 did not support recommending AMZs. Denmark reiterated that they do not support AMZs.

The Meeting agreed that Germany will revise the text based on all comments received with a view to submitting an updated version to the next meeting. The Meeting invited Poland and Finland, who agreed to lead the drafting of 2.2.1 and 2.1.2 to also consider the corresponding texts on such systems in Chapter 4.

Proposal for chapter 6 BAT/ BEP hazardous substances developed by Germany

The Meeting discussed the previously received comments to the chapter provided to date in order to seek clarification where needed.

The Meeting agreed that Germany will revise the text for veterinary medicinal products and cleaning and disinfection agents (6.1.1 and 6.1.3 as well as 6.2.1 and 6.2.3) based on all comments received and the discussions at the Meeting. An updated version will be submitted to the next meeting. Denmark agreed to consider rewriting section 6.1.2 on anti-fouling based on the comments provided on this sub-chapter to date.

A lead country would be needed for drafting text on staff training covering different topics (hazardous substances, nutrients, wastes etc.), either as a separate section or as a couple of sentences in the main introduction to the BAT/BEP document.

BAT/BEP wastes in aquaculture

Marine litter from aquaculture is not yet included, but text will be drafted by Poland. The Meeting agreed that Poland will continue drafting the document, to be circulated for comments in due course, with a commenting deadline on 31 January 2022 and with the view to submitting an updated version to the next Meeting.

BAT/BEP on monitoring

The Meeting noted that only Denmark had commented on the draft chapter on monitoring and invited interested participants to provide comments to kaspar.anderson@envir.ee by **31 January 2022**. Estonia will thereafter submit an updated version to the next meeting. The Meeting noted that finalization of the chapter may only be possible when the rest of the chapters are available, to ensure that the text is in line with the overall document.

Recirculation Aquaculture Systems (RAS)

The Meeting invited comments on the second version of the RAS report to be provided to Jouni.vielma@luke.fi by **31 January 2022** and invited Finland to submit a new version to the next meeting for further consideration.

Any other business

1.3 The Meeting took note of two upcoming Horizon Europe project calls related to aquaculture as follows:

- Integrated and sustainable freshwater bioeconomy: Combining aquaculture, biodiversity preservation, biotechnology and other uses
- Biosecurity, hygiene, disease prevention and animal welfare in aquaculture

1.4 The Meeting noted that the Natural Resources Institute of Finland is involved in consortia applying for both calls.

1.5 The Meeting recalled that CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 had agreed that an online meeting could be organized in spring 2022, the need for which could be discussed in November 2021. The Meeting discussed the need to organize such a meeting and agreed that CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022 should be held on 24-25 March 2022 as an online meeting for 1.5 days.

1.6 The Meeting recalled that CG AQUACULTURE 4-2021 had agreed that a physical meeting of CG Aquaculture should be organized on 15-16 June 2022, tentatively in the Åland islands, Finland. The Meeting noted that HELCOM HOD 62-2022 has, however, been scheduled for 14-15 June 2022 and consequently agreed that CG AQUACULTURE 5-2022 should be organized on 21-22 June 2022, tentatively in the Åland Islands, Finland.

1.7 The Memo from the informal meeting will be available on the [Workspace](#) of CG Aquaculture via the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

Annex 1 List of participants

Representing	Name	Name of organization	E-mail address
Co-Chairs			
Co-Chair	Anita Künitzer	German Environment Agency	anita.kuenitzer@uba.de
Co-Chair	Orian Bondestam	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	orian.bondestam@mmm.fi
Contracting Parties			
Denmark	Michelle Mortensen	Ministry of Environment of Denmark (Team Aquaculture)	mimor@mim.dk
Denmark	Jonathan Staff Norgaard	Ministry of Environment of Denmark	jonsn@mim.dk
Estonia	Kaspar Anderson	Ministry of the Environment, Marine Environment Department	Kaspar.anderson@envir.ee
Estonia	Katrina Lang	Ministry of the environment of Estonia	katrina.lang@envir.ee
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Estonia	Ketter Kärp	Ministry of Rural Affairs	ketter.karp@agri.ee
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Finland	Heikki Lehtinen	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	heikki.lehtinen@mmm.fi
Finland	Jouni Vielma	Natural Resources Institute Finland	Jouni.vielma@luke.fi
Finland	Mikael Wennström	Government of Åland	mikael.wennstrom@regeringen.ax
Finland	Johanna Helkimo	Ministry of Environment	johanna.helkimo@ym.fi
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Germany	Ulfert Focken	Thünen Institute of Fisheries Ecology (on behalf of Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture)	Ulfert.focken@thuenen.de
Lithuania	Laura Stumbrienė	The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	laura.stumbriene@zum.lt
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FEAP	Irja Skytén-Suominen	Finnish Fisfarmers' Association	irja.skyten-suominen@kalankasvatus.fi

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