



Document title	Work plan of Fish for 2017-2018
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Background

This document contains the work plan for Fish for 2017-2018 as adopted by HELCOM Heads of Delegation in December 2016 (HOD 51-2016, §6.51 of the Outcome). HOD 51-2016 took note that, the work plan will be further polished for the next meeting of the group.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider and revise the work plan 2017-2018 of HELCOM FISH.

Contracting Parties and Observers are invited to prepare in advance for this work plan revision by identifying concrete priority tasks as well as consider leading these proposed tasks with assigned contact persons.

Work Plan for HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish Group) 2017-2018 (approved by HOD 51-2016)

No.	ACTION	LEAD/RESPONSIBLE	INTERLINKED ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
Action 1 Integrated assessment of human impacts¹				
1	Contracting Parties to support the future joint ICES/HELCOM VMS data calls for the ICES & HELCOM advice on the spatial distribution and impact of fishing activities (confidentiality of VMS data for both data transfer and use to be ensured) To formulate a request for ICES advice on fishing intensity e.g. affecting the seabed per a type of fishing gear based on VMS data	HELCOM Secretariat in cooperation with ICES Secretariat Possibly in coordination with OSPAR	The data will support assessing pressures within HOLAS II and mapping human activities affecting seafloor integrity (activity under HELCOM Gear Group) ICES Working Group on Spatial Fisheries Data	2016-2017
2	Provide an overview of data collection activities Contracting Parties workplans, related to i.a. on: incidental catch of marine mammals recreational fisheries Based on this overview, assess the presence of data gaps Support other HELCOM processes in their further specification of data needs for the HOLAS II assessment, the MSFD and the implementation of BSAP	FISH group	Supporting information for use in HOLAS II as well as in mapping human activities affecting seafloor integrity (under HELCOM Gear Group) ICES WG on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities	2016-2018
3	Contribute to operationalization (ensuring quality assured data flow) of fish-related HELCOM regional core indicators (BSAP, and MSFD and CFP for EU countries)			
4	Create a common knowledge base on ghost nets distribution and abundance as well as an estimation of their impacts on the ecosystem	FISH Group	Projects e.g. WWF Poland project on retrieval of ghost nets Danish initiative on ghost net distribution and abundance assessment	2017-2018

¹ Contribute to recognizing **the data gaps** that prevent adequately assessing human pressures on the ecosystems in cooperation with relevant bodies, thus contributing to HELCOM **holistic assessments**, and contribute to operationalization of HELCOM **fish-related core indicators** from point of view of biodiversity, food webs and seafloor integrity (indicators on commercial fish are dealt with by ICES)

Action 2 Sustainable fisheries practices ²				
5	<p>Provide tools for sustainable fishing practices, including to address by-catch of fish, birds and mammals: Follow the outcomes of projects such as BalticBOOST and Baltic SCOPE Compile best practices on sustainable fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas Testing and use of the tools when implementing sustainable fishing methods and practices into MPA management plans Promotion of research of fishing gear impacts on marine species and biotopes Input to development of fisheries management and technical measures to minimize: unwanted by-catch of fish, birds and mammals (BSAP target: close to zero by-catch rates and minimized damage to sea bed habitat, [actions agreed in FISH 2-2015 on hot spots and measures]) seafloor impacts from fishing gear damage to catches by marine mammals</p>	Contracting Parties	<p>Utilise the outcomes of updated work on red listed species and habitats in the Baltic Sea, HELCOM MPAs database</p> <p>Possibly utilize information from coastal fish monitoring and assessment (FISH-PRO II)</p>	<p>2017-2018</p> <p>Continuous</p>
6	Follow up on the development of principles for setting an environmental target for seafloor integrity	Lead by GEAR group [a project]	BalticBOOST project work on joint or coordinated measures for physical loss and seafloor damage led by GEAR BENTHIS project work on the Baltic/North Sea	2017
Action 3. Migratory fish species ³				
7	Exchange of information on national eel management in the coastal countries including i.a. tackling assumed illegal catches (to assess the scale of the problem and look for solutions for proper enforcement), traceability/tracking of eel	FISH-M	Seminar/targeted meeting under Fish-M to present national management plans and consider regional collaboration related to the implementation of national	summer 2017

² In cooperation with relevant authorities and scientific institutions, address fishing practices which have a potential negative impact on conservation goals and/or threatened or declining species and habitats, especially within **coastal** and **marine protected areas**. When doing so, take into account environmental issues and processes, such as oxygen depletion, pollution, habitat destruction, and migratory barriers which may affect the quality, abundance and distribution of fish

³ Further develop co-operation to implement best practices with the view to achieve the established objectives of HELCOM related to **migratory fish species**, including the corresponding BSAP targets, and in particular taking into account the commitments 19(B) and 23(B) of the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting.

	<p>data gaps and collection methods</p> <p>links to international eel management (e.g. CMS)</p> <p>development and financing of dedicated projects</p> <p>other relevant issues as appropriate</p> <p>The above is carried out with the aim of a Baltic wide stock status assessment and facilitating subsequent action, to be further developed at the appropriate fora.</p>		<p>management plans on eel, for EU countries in relation to the EC regulation on eel⁴ 2017.</p> <p>Participants should preferably include representatives from management bodies, scientific experts and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Workshop Report/publication on eel in the Baltic Sea by 2017</p>	
8	Compile best best practices on River restoration	Fish-M	<p>Seminar/targeted meeting on river restoration best practices in 2017</p> <p>Workshop Report/publication on river restoration in the Baltic Sea 2017</p> <p>If funded, RETROUT project WP on river restoration 2018</p>	summer 2017
9	<p>Reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 and following up on the below activities:</p> <p>the active conservation of at least ten endangered/threatened wild salmon river populations in the Baltic Sea region as well as the reintroduction of native Baltic Sea salmon in at least four potential salmon rivers, by 2009, common practices for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon as reintroduction in potential salmon rivers,</p> <p>investigating needed improvements for stocking practices (e.g. biological and genetic guidelines), as well as</p> <p>model recommendations for protection and conservation measures such as fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, fishery regulation for the river and estuaries;</p>	Fish-M	<p>Updating of 2012 report by May 2017</p> <p>Evaluation on the status and revision needs of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 based on updated information and EU Salmon management plan developments by 2018</p>	
Action 4 HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture⁴				
10	A follow up on the HELCOM Recommendation on Sustainable Aquaculture on BAT and BEP	Fish Group in consultation with the CG on Aquaculture	Translation of existing reports and application to support continuation of the work	2017-2018

⁴ Develop a new HELCOM **Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture** by 2014 to substitute the existing HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 aiming at limiting potential environmental impacts of aquaculture activities taking into account the upcoming EU guidelines for aquaculture

Action 5 Cooperation between authorities and with stakeholders ⁵				
11	Look for the ways how to cooperate in practise, e.g. with BALTFISH Liaise with Aquaculture Advisory Council soon to be operationalized	[Country acting as a liaison between Fish and BALTFISH]		continuous
Action 6 Follow up of the Baltic Sea Action Plan ⁶				
12	Support the follow up implementation of the of BSAP and Ministerial commitments regarding fisheries impact and conservation of fish species Identify ways and propose actions to fill any gaps and shortcoming identified in the follow up.	Fish Group	Contribution to work of the Gear group	Continous

⁵ Enhance communication and cooperation between the fisheries and environmental administrations of the HELCOM Contracting Parties as well as relevant bodies and institutions, seek to establish **stronger cooperation with ICES, BALTFISH and JBSFC, and Baltic Sea Advisory Council** in order to facilitate mutually supportive agenda and maximize synergies between the different bodies

⁶ Provide support for the **implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, Ministerial Declarations and HELCOM Recommendations** as well as propose strategies, guidelines and recommendations in the area of its expertise according to the existing priorities as well as requests by the Heads of Delegations and subsidiary bodies