Outcome of the Sixth Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 6-2017)

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Introduction

0.1 In accordance with the decision of HOD 51-2016 (paragraph 6.61),) the Sixth Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 6-2017), was held on 22-24 May 2017 at the premises of the HELCOM Secretariat in Helsinki, Finland.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by delegations from Denmark, EU, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden and Observers from BSAC, CCB, FEAP and MSC. The List of Participants is attached as Annex 1.

0.3 The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary and Mr. Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Professional Secretary. Mr. Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Professional Secretary and Ms. Minna Pyhälä, HELCOM Associate Professional Secretary, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

0.4 The Meeting was welcomed to Helsinki by HELCOM Executive Secretary, Ms. Monika Stankiewicz.

Agenda item 1 Election of Chair

Documents: None

1.1 The Meeting elected Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, HELCOM Executive Secretary as chair for the first day of the Meeting and Mr. Hermanni Backer, HELCOM Professional Secretary, as the chair for the second and third days of the Meeting.

1.2 The Meeting elected Ms. Marianne Goffeng Raakil, Sweden, as Chair of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Fisheries (Fish) for the next two-year period, 2017-2019.

1.3 The Meeting elected Ms. Katarzyna Kaminska, Poland, and Mr. Stanislovas Jonusas, EU (pending the positive outcome of EU rules of procedure), as Vice-Chairs of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Fisheries (Fish) for the next two-year period, 2017-2019.

Agenda item 2 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 2-1, 2-2

2.1 The Meeting adopted the Agenda of the Meeting as contained in documents 2-1 and 2-2.

Agenda item 3 Matters arising from HELCOM work of relevance of the group

Documents: 3-1, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4

3.1 The Meeting took note of the outcomes of recent HELCOM meetings of relevance for Fish (document 3-2).

3.2 The Meeting took note of the work plan of the EU chairmanship at HELCOM (2016-2018) and the planned Ministerial Meeting to be held in Brussels on 6 March 2018.

3.3 The Meeting took note of the publication "Sustainable Development Goals-Measuring progress for the same targets in the Baltic Sea" (BSEP 150), which highlights HELCOM's efforts in the context of implementing ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals. The publication includes, on pages 4-5, "HELCOM's Implementation Outlook of the Ocean-related SDGs in the Baltic Sea - A Roadmap to Agenda 2030 (HELCOM-A2030)", adopted by the high-level representatives of the HELCOM Contracting Parties on 28 February 2017.

3.4 The Meeting took note of the draft Agenda of the fourth meeting of the Task force group on migratory fish (FISH-M) (document 3-3), to be held as a workshop on river restoration and best practices in Denmark on 29-30 May 2017. The Meeting noted that the outcome of the workshop will be submitted to FISH 7-2017 meeting for information and consideration.

3.5 The Meeting welcomed the initiative of Sweden, with the support of the department of Aquatic Resources at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, to arrange a workshop on eels as defined in Task 3.7 of the HELCOM Fish Work Plan. The plan is to hold the eel workshop (FISH-M 5-2017) during autumn (likely in November) 2017 and more information and invitations will be provided to HELCOM FISH contacts when available.

3.6 The Meeting took note of the report of the First Range States Workshop on the European Eel held in Galway, Ireland, on 13–14 October 2016 (document 3-4), organized to consider follow up the decision that the European Eel has been included in Annex II of the Convention of Migratory Species.

3.7 The Meeting took note of information on coastal recreational fisheries in the HELCOM countries collected by the HELCOM FISH-PRO II group as presented by Mr. Jens Olsson, FISH-PRO II Project Manager (document 3-1). The Meeting noted that Denmark will provide some additional national information and invited also other Contracting Parties to submit possible additional or updated national information to the Secretariat (minna.pyhala@helcom.fi) and Jens Olsson (jens.olsson@slu.se).

3.8 The Meeting discussed how to make use of the compiled information on recreational fisheries in the future. The Meeting acknowledged that there is an ICES group on recreational fisheries and that FISH-PRO II does not duplicate their work. The Meeting noted that FISH-PRO can support the updating of the information also in the future.

3.9 The Meeting noted that a draft proposal for FISH-PRO III will be submitted for consideration by FISH 7-2017.

Agenda item 4 HELCOM Assessments & Indicators

Documents: 4-1-Rev.1, 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7

4.1 The Meeting took note of the outcome of the request for reporting on the national implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 on conservation of Baltic salmon (*Salmo salar*) and sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations by the restoration of their river habitats and management of river fisheries (document 4-1-Rev.1). The Meeting noted that input was received from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Poland and Sweden.

4.2 The Meeting took note of the remarks concerning the assessments of trout and salmon in Sweden (document 4-2) and the links of Swedish national activities to ongoing work in ICES working groups. Sweden suggested that the information could be incorporated into the report on implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1.

4.3 The Meeting noted the comment by EU that some of the reported information does not seem to be in line with ICES advice and requested Contracting Parties to crosscheck their information.

4.4 The Meeting noted that Denmark does not have any Baltic Sea -bound salmon rivers and therefore Danish information is not included in Annex 2 of document 4-1-Rev.1.

4.5 The Meeting was of the view that in the future, reporting on implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32-33/1 should be streamlined with other international processes, e.g. reporting to ICES, and suggested that this be further discussed during FISH 7-2017.

4.6 The Meeting discussed the publication of the report and was of the view that it should be edited to make it more readable and by adding an introduction with some key messages. Furthermore, it would be valuable to include information from those countries that have not yet reported their national information, before publication.

4.7 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to revise the document, add a summary and circulate it for commenting, additional information and updating during autumn 2017 so that it can be reconsidered by FISH 7-2017 as a basis for the possible revision of the Recommendation 32-33/1.

4.8 The Meeting noted that some national experts had trouble understanding some of the questions in the questionnaire and was of the view that it would be good to review the reporting format in the future.

4.9 The Meeting noted the information by Sweden that the International Year of the Salmon will be organised in 2019 with the theme 'Salmon and People in a Changing World' (http://www.nasco.int/iys.html). The two lead organisations are the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). The Meeting requested HELCOM FISH 7-2017 to consider HELCOM involvement in the International Year of the Salmon 2019.

4.10 The Meeting took note of the progress within the initiative to draft the Second Holistic Assessment of the Ecosystem Health of the Baltic Sea (HOLAS II) and the draft first version of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report (document 4-3).

4.11 The Meeting noted that Denmark and Sweden had provided comments to the material on fisheries in the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report before the meeting of State & Conservation 6-2017. The Meeting also noted the Danish study reservation concerning chapters on cumulative impacts and disturbances to the seabed, specifically regarding the assessment methodology and that Denmark is not in a position to approve the report in its current version.

4.12 The Meeting noted that there are some errors in the fisheries chapter of the 'State of the Baltic Sea' report and that several Contracting Parties would like to have the possibility to comment on the draft. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to provide corrections via their nationally coordinated commenting processes as soon as possible prior to the meeting of HOD 52-2017.

4.13 The Meeting took note of the recent work within fish related indicators, including:

- 'Abundance of key coastal fish species' - updated core indicator report (document 4-4);
- 'Abundance of salmon spawners and smolt' – updated core indicator report (document 4-5);
- 'Abundance of coastal fish key functional groups' - updated core indicator report (document 4-6).

4.14 The Meeting requested Contracting Parties to inform FISH 7-2017 on their views on how the Large Fish (LFI) indicator could be further developed so that it can be adopted as a core indicator, taking into account ongoing work by ICES for Descriptor 3.

4.15 The Meeting took note of the information on the preparation of HELCOM Maritime Assessment and the planned timetable for the finalization process (document 4-7). The Meeting took note that fifteen chapters of the foreseen twenty are available on the HELCOM Sharepoint site, but that there has been a delay of one week do deliver the remaining chapters. A complete draft should be available by the end of May after which it will be circulated for comments to the relevant groups, including FISH, as well as to HOD.

Agenda item 5 BAT/BEP for sustainable aquaculture

Documents: 5-1, 5-1-Rev.1, 5-2

5.1 The Meeting recalled that FISH 6-2016 welcomed the proposal by Denmark to base the work on aquaculture BAT/BEP on a translation of the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) report "Bat for fiskeopdræt i Norden", as well as necessary updates and other material relevant to Baltic Sea countries that are not covered by the NCM report.

5.2 The Meeting further recalled that FISH 6-2016 welcomed the proposal by Denmark to consider the possibility to enable such a translation and reworking and circulating the resulting document to the HELCOM Correspondence Group (CG) Aquaculture email list for comments and possible revisions before the next meeting of the FISH Group.

5.3 The Meeting took note that Denmark facilitated the connecting of one of the report lead authors (Jesper Heldbo) with the Secretariat, but that no resources have been available in Denmark for the translation work.

5.4 The Meeting noted that HELCOM 38-2017 took note of the seed money application and requested the Secretariat to establish contact with the relevant groups of the NCM in order to make NCM material available for further HELCOM work on Sustainable Aquaculture, especially the report TemaNord 2013:529 "Bat for fiskeopdræt i Norden" including the necessary translations.

5.5 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat has submitted in April 2017 a NCM project application to the working group on sustainable use (HKP) to enable translation and updating of the information in the NCM report. NCM has come back with a request for further clarifications.

5.6 The Meeting took note that the Secretariat has also submitted an Interreg seed money application (in February 2016) on supporting the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 37/3 on sustainable aquaculture, with the intention to use some of the funding to draft and consider a BAT/BEP review.

5.7 The Meeting recognized the delay in implementing Recommendation 37/3 and was of the view that in order to start the translation work as soon as possible the Secretariat is requested to use any available means, including Google translate.

5.8 The Meeting welcomed the information by Sweden that the main outcomes of a similar Swedish literature study, compiling an overview of different aquaculture techniques, will be available after the summer 2017 and agreed that this might be a good starting point for the work in the CG Aquaculture, in addition to the NCM report.

5.9 The Meeting welcomed the offers of Finland and Germany to take the lead (chair) the work of CG Aquaculture.

5.10 The Meeting discussed how to proceed with the work related to Recommendation 37/3 and agreed that a physical meeting of CG Aquaculture should be arranged on 26 September 2017 at the HELCOM Secretariat premises in Helsinki to consider the availability of material (NCM report, Swedish study and other available material), conclude on CG leads, and assign tasks.

5.11 The Meeting noted the Swedish suggestion that in the immediate future the CG Aquaculture could start its work by compiling examples of judgments (court decisions) from the Contracting Parties that refer to definitions of BAT and BEP.

5.12 The Meeting welcomed the offer from Sweden to draft, for this purpose, a questionnaire on definitions of BAT and BEP used in court rulings, which should be circulated by the Secretariat to the CG Aquaculture contacts in early June 2017.

5.13 The Meeting considered the list of nominated contacts of the CG Aquaculture (document 5-1) and updated it as contained in document 5-1-Rev.1. The Meeting invited those Contracting Parties who have not yet nominated a contact for CG Aquaculture to nominate contacts to the Secretariat (minna.pyhala@helcom.fi) as soon as possible.

5.14 The Meeting took note of information that the Danish government has recently released eight reports on modelled effects of sea-based aquaculture at different positions in the Kattegat. A screening report, which identifies possible areas for sea based aquaculture, is also included.

5.15 The Meeting took note of information from FEAP about drafting a law on marine fish farming and compensation farming with e.g. mussels being discussed in the Danish Parliament.

5.16 The Meeting took note of information from FEAP about Baltic Blue Growth, an Interreg – EU project on mussels to compensate for discharges from aquaculture facilities. FEAP invited for information on any similar projects from e.g. HELCOM.

5.17 The Meeting took note of information by CCB about a recent court case related to aquaculture, linking to the ECJ court ruling in Weser, settled in Sweden (document 5-2).

5.18 The Meeting took note of information by Denmark that the court decision is specifically related to specific locations in Sweden and has no effects in Denmark.

5.19 The Meeting acknowledged that despite BAT and BEP, the need for environmental impact assessment needs to be determined case by case.

5.20 The Meeting noted the comment by Denmark that HELCOM BAT and BEP descriptions will not be binding but rather a basket of useful descriptions for guidance of the Contracting Parties.

Agenda item 6 Interactions between fisheries and marine ecosystems

Documents: 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4, WP1, WP2

Testing alternative fishing gears/fishing techniques

6.1 The Meeting recalled that information on trials of alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques is being gathered by HELCOM, with the aim of compiling a list of gear trials and developments in fishing equipment.

6.2 The Meeting noted the updated results of the questionnaire on alternative fishing gears and fishing techniques contained in document 6-1 and thanked Poland for the valuable work carried out so far.

6.3 The Meeting noted the comment by EU that it should be clarified in the accompanying documentation to what purpose trialled gears are included, i.e. to focus on mitigating environmental impacts.

6.4 The Meeting discussed how the information in the document can be used, and emphasized that the purpose of the document is to serve as information for Contracting Parties, and that it does not serve as a recommendation for legislation.

6.5 The Meeting noted that Sweden will submit some updated information for the table and requested other Contracting Parties to also provide possible additional information to Poland (k.kaminska@mgm.gov.pl) **by mid-September 2017**.

6.6 The Meeting requested Poland to update the document based on the comments from the Meeting and additional information submitted by Contracting Parties.

6.7 The Meeting highlighted that it would be useful to include to the table more information on the results (successes/challenges) of the tests of alternative gears.

6.8 The Meeting considered the cooperation with a newly established BSAC sub group on ecosystem based management (c.f. Agenda Item 7), regarding the sharing of information on the development of alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques which can be used in the Baltic Sea.

6.9 The Meeting agreed to establish cooperation with the newly established BSAC sub group on ecosystem based management, regarding the development of alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques that can be used in the Baltic Sea and as a first step submit document 6-1, as revised by Poland, to the next Meeting of the BSAC sub group on ecosystem based management (planned for end of October 2017), as a HELCOM submission.

6.10 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised document with the cover page to the FISH Contacts for commenting and final corrections before submission.

6.11 The Meeting took note of updated information from Denmark about testing of seal safe fishing gear, together with Germany and Sweden. Poland has initiated cooperation with Sweden on this issue.

6.12 The Meeting noted the comment by BSAC and CCB that there are several on-going small national projects for developing seal safe gear and the recommendation that Contracting Parties join forces in these projects to make more large-scale developments.

6.13 The Meeting agreed to consider seal-fisheries interactions at FISH 7-2017 and proposed to invite external guests to present relevant information.

Incidental bycatches and utilization of EU data collection framework (DCF)

6.14 The Meeting considered the document "Draft HELCOM proposal as end user, for data to be collected under DC-MAP in order to effectively assess the impact of Baltic fisheries on the marine ecosystem in the Baltic Sea", as elaborated by Poland, with input from Germany (document 6-2, **Presentation 1**).

6.15 The Meeting recalled that the meeting of STATE & CONSERVATION 6-2017 took note of the document 6-2 and noted (S&C 6-2017, Outcome, § 4J.59) the information by European Union that EC recognizes HELCOM as an end user of the DCF and welcomes the initiative to match the data needs across marine and fisheries policies. STATE & CONSERVATION 6-2017 took also note that this issue will be on the agenda of the Marine Directors meeting in June 2017 at which the European Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations (EFARO) will give a presentation on exploring possible synergies between MSFD and fisheries (CFP) monitoring programmes.

6.16 The Meeting discussed further the concept of DCF end user and its relation to the usage of EU-MAP data by HELCOM.

6.17 The Meeting noted the view of Finland that is debatable whether HELCOM falls under the definition of end user of scientific data according to CFP basic regulation.

6.18 The Meeting took note that while document 6-2 identifies certain HELCOM data needs and highlights the potential role of DCF in meeting these needs, such data could be available also from other sources (e.g. EMFF projects and environmental funding sources).

6.19 The Meeting agreed that the content of document 6.2 should be restructured and revised in such a way that the core document would focus on highlighting the HELCOM data needs for assessing impacts of fisheries on the marine environment - which can then possibly be met by data from various sources (including, but not limited to, EU-MAP).

6.20 The Meeting highlighted that information on the following points should be covered:

- parameters needed (including prioritization of species covered, taking into account national considerations of the costs involved)
- the scientific justification for needing the data and the desired data quality
- existing data and data sources
- missing data

6.21 The Meeting took note that even though other pressures affect the listed species, the document is geared toward specifying data needs for operationalizing two indicators focusing on the impact of fisheries.

6.22 The Meeting drafted a document based on document 6-2 to reflect HELCOM data interests (Working Paper 1) in order to specify HELCOM data needs, and revised it as contained in Working Paper 2 (**Annex 2**).

6.23 The Meeting took note of the Danish and Finnish reservations on the Working Papers and Annex 2.

6.24 The Meeting requested the Secretariat and Poland to incorporate outstanding comments and submit the draft for national consideration with a deadline for comments by FISH Contacts **by 1 September 2017**.

6.25 The Meeting requested that the State and Conservation working group review the document from the perspective of the data needs (i.e. tables on biotopes and species).

6.26 The Meeting agreed that a revised draft, incorporating comments from the commenting with deadline 1 September 2017 (cf. paragraph 6.24) should be submitted for the meeting of the HELCOM State and Conservation WG in October 2017 and suggested that a joint (FISH and State & Conservation) online meeting should be arranged with the interested State and Conservation WG contacts in the end of September (date and time to be agreed by correspondence).

6.27 The Meeting took note that one regional body to be considered as a recipient of the material based on Working Paper 2 is the Baltic Sea "Regional Coordination Meeting" (RCM) which will be reshaped and renamed during the next meeting in September 2017 to the "Regional Coordination Group" (RCG).

6.28 The Meeting acknowledged that the aim of the DCF, and the RCM/RCG work, is to fulfil data needs for implementing the EU CFP, even if this also covers ecosystem issues such as incidental bycatches. As the DCF budget is tight, and the purpose of the DCF is defined in the basic regulation of CFP, requests to gather completely new data for HELCOM needs is likely unrealistic and may not meet the requirements of the CFP basic regulation. However, it is relevant to optimise use of public resources by mobilising CFP –related data also for other purposes (e.g. HELCOM).

6.29 The Meeting took note of the information from Finland that due to the restructuring of the RCM/RCG group it might have limited capacity to properly considering HELCOM input this year.

6.30 The Meeting discussed how HELCOM should interact with the Baltic Sea RCM/RCG. The Meeting agreed to discuss this issue at a later stage when appropriate.

6.31 The Meeting was of the view that there is a need to ensure good national coordination between national delegates in the HELCOM FISH group and national contacts of the RCM.

6.32 The Meeting took note of the analysis of National EU-MAP Work Plans (2016) in the Baltic Sea with respect to incidental bycatch of marine mammals and waterbirds submitted by BirdLife International/ Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany (NABU) (document 6-3).

6.33 The Meeting noted that document 6-3 includes only some national activities and is meant to be a brief overview indicating types of data collection activities in the coastal countries and is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment.

Ghost nets

6.34 The Meeting took note of the information by Denmark on assessing marine litter and ways for involving various stakeholders, including fishermen, in removing waste from the marine environment. DTU-Aqua is involved in an NCM funded project on mapping areas where there is potential to find ghost nets. The project will provide an assessment of the amount of ghost nets expected to be found at three different sites.

6.35 The Meeting took note of information by Sweden on the MARELITT project and welcomed that Sweden will present the results to the FISH group when they become available.

6.36 The Meeting took note of the CCB proposal to estimate the amount of recreational fishing nets and traps used with intent to address potential lost gears (document 6-4). The Meeting considered the proposals from CCB on possible approaches for obtaining more data on ghost nets, e.g. via questionnaires or compiling data of net sales, and invited the Contracting Parties to consider the feasibility of including the proposed three questions in national surveys for fishermen. The Meeting agreed to come back to this issue at HELCOM FISH 7-2017.

Fisheries and maritime spatial planning (MSP)

6.37 The Meeting took note of the following information by the Contracting Parties on fisheries and maritime spatial planning (MSP):

- Denmark plan to have their MSP ready by 2020. Work has started and is focused on identifying possible conflict areas. There is a lack of data on boats <12m and for spawning grounds, which challenges the MSP work.
- Finland has foreseen three spatial plans and work is ongoing to draft these plans. A maritime portal is being developed during the next two years.

- Sweden has drafted three initial proposals for MSPs which are currently under initial dialogue. Potential impacts on Swedish commercial fisheries are currently in the process of being analysed. Formal consultation will take place in the beginning of 2018.

6.38 The Meeting acknowledged that the fisheries industry organizations have not been very involved in HELCOM-VASAB MSP and BalticSCOPE discussions, despite MSP being likely to have important impacts on fisheries.

6.39 The Meeting discussed how foreign fishing interests are reflected in national MSP processes. The Meeting noted that Sweden is has carried out initial dialogues with neighbouring countries in order to gather information on their interests in Swedish waters when developing their MSPs. Any inputs regarding foreign fisheries interests that concern Swedish MSPs should be channelled through the Swedish dialogue with neighbouring countries. The Meeting invited Contracting Parties to inform the meeting of HELCOM FISH 7-2017 on how they are addressing this issue nationally.

Agenda item 7 Closer regional cooperation on Fisheries & Environment

Documents: 7-1, 7-2

7.1 The Meeting took note of the plan for closer cooperation between marine environment and fisheries management in the Baltic Sea supported by HOD 51-2016 (document 7-1) as well as of the intersessional developments around implementing the plan based on information from the Secretariat.

7.2 The Meeting noted that the BALTFISH forum meets twice a year (or more frequently as needed) and that the next meeting will be held on 31 August 2017 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

7.3 The Meeting took note of an error on page 4 of document 7-1 in relation to the role of BALTFISH and proposed the deletion of the last sentence in the 3rd paragraph of Point 4.

7.4 The Meeting noted the comment by Finland that the word “effectiveness” on page 4, the third bullet, in the roadmap and framework of improved information exchange, should be clarified as it seems to suggest more than simple exchange of information.

7.5 The Meeting agreed to come back to the developments around the cooperation with BALTFISH at the next Meeting.

7.6 The Meeting took note of the report of the meeting of the BSAC Sub-group on ecosystem based management held on 28 March 2017 in Copenhagen (document 7-2).

7.7 The Meeting welcomed the setting up of the new BSAC sub-group and the possibility to bring HELCOM input to the group. The Meeting supported further collaboration between HELCOM and BSAC including HELCOM attendance at the next meeting of the BSAC sub-group.

7.8 The Meeting recalled that the list of trialed alternative fishing gears would be forwarded to the next meeting of BSAC Sub-group on ecosystem based management as a first substantial step of cooperation (cf. paragraph 6.9).

7.9 The Meeting agreed to consider in the future how to update the HELCOM FISH Work Plan by specifying possible linkages with the work of other organizations.

Agenda item 8 Future work

Documents: 8-1

8.1 The Meeting considered the work plan 2017-2018 of HELCOM FISH (document 8-1) and revised it as contained in **Annex 3**.

8.2 The Meeting agreed that the next meeting of the Group will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 14-15 November 2017 hosted by the Danish AgriFish Agency.

8.3 The Meeting welcomed the offer of Poland to explore the possibility of hosting the meeting of FISH 8-2018 in May 2018.

8.4 The Meeting agreed that it would be valuable to include the following issues on the agenda of FISH 7-2017:

- discussion on possible inputs from FISH to the 2018 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting
- Information about the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) launched by NPAFC and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) and other partners. The IYS focal year will be 2019, with projects and activities starting in 2018 and continuing into 2020
- Information about Interreg project Baltic Blue Growth

Agenda item 9 Any other business

Documents: 9-1

9.1 The Meeting took note of the list of contacts and observers of FISH (document 9-1) and updated the list as contained in **Annex 4**.

Agenda item 10 Outcome of the Meeting

Documents: draft Outcome

10.1 The Meeting adopted the draft outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available on the FISH 6-2017 meeting site.

Annex 1 List of participants

Delegation	Name	Organization	Email address
CONTRACTING PARTIES			
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Annex 2 Working Paper 2

HELCOM data interests to assess incidental by-catches and cumulative impact on benthic habitats in the Baltic Sea

Aims of this document

The Terms of Reference of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries covers “operationalization” of a number of fish related indicators, including indicators on incidental by-catches in the Baltic Sea as well as cumulative impact on benthic habitats. In order to enable the FISH Group to fulfil its task with these two indicators there is a need to identify the data gaps, look for sources of data –come back to discuss how to prioritize data needs and how to access data.

This document has been drafted to identify the data needs of HELCOM indicators and assessments (see below), especially for incidental by-catches in the Baltic Sea and cumulative impact on benthic habitats -and subsequently reach out for data collection activities which could help in closing the identified data gaps. For Contracting Parties this includes for instance national data collection/ monitoring activities, as well as the EU-MAP data collection activities for those countries which are EU members.

Introduction

The 1992 Helsinki Convention is an international treaty has been ratified by Denmark, European Union, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation and Sweden (hereafter “Contracting Parties”).

As an example of the obligations emerging from the 1992 Helsinki Convention is its Article 15 on Nature conservation and biodiversity, according to which:

> “The Contracting Parties shall individually and jointly take all appropriate measures with respect to the Baltic Sea Area and its coastal ecosystems influenced by the Baltic Sea to conserve natural habitats and biological diversity and to protect

ecological processes. Such measures shall also be taken in order to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources within the Baltic Sea Area. To this end, the Contracting Parties shall aim at adopting subsequent instruments containing appropriate guidelines and criteria."

The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is the governing body of the 1992 Helsinki Convention, an intergovernmental organization whose members are the above Contracting Parties of the Convention.

According to Article 20 of the Convention the duties of HELCOM are:

a) to keep the implementation of [this] Convention under continuous observation;

b) to make recommendations on measures relating to the purposes of [this] Convention;

c) to keep under review the contents of this Convention including its Annexes and to recommend to the Contracting Parties such amendments to this Convention including its Annexes as may be required including changes in the lists of substances and materials as well as the adoption of new Annexes;

d) to define pollution control criteria, objectives for the reduction of pollution, and objectives concerning measures, particularly those described in Annex III;

e) to promote in close co-operation with appropriate governmental bodies, taking into consideration sub-paragraph f) of this Article, additional measures to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea Area and for this purpose:

i) to receive, process, summarize and disseminate relevant scientific, technological and statistical information from available sources; and

ii) to promote scientific and technological research; and

f) to seek, when appropriate, the services of competent regional and other international organizations to collaborate in scientific and technological research as well as other relevant activities pertinent to the objectives of this Convention.

2. The Commission may assume such other functions as it deems appropriate to further the purposes of this Convention.

Monitoring and assessment work is one of the ways for HELCOM to discharge the duties included in Article 20e above. This work is further defined in practice in the HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy[1] which lays out an indicator-based assessment system to enable follow-up of the goals and objectives set by the Contracting Parties for the Baltic Sea marine environment as

[1] HELCOM Monitoring and Assessment Strategy adopted at 2013 HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in Copenhagen: http://helcom.fi/Documents/Ministerial2013/Ministerial%20declaration/Adopted_endorsed%20documents/Monitoring%20and%20assessment%20strategy.pdf

part of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP, 2007) and the ecosystem approach it is based on. In other words the Strategy provides a system that enables linking the quality of the environment to its management, and thus following up the implementation of the 1992 Helsinki Convention, via a number of HELCOM indicators.

In order to be in a position to discharge its duties under Article 20e and follow-up later decisions by the Contracting Parties, HELCOM coordinates an extensive regional environmental monitoring programme.[2] However, besides this environmental monitoring data, also data on human activities - including certain aspects of fisheries -is required by HELCOM to enable it to discharge its duties.

This is needed to allow following up the implementation of the Strategy and thus the 1992 Helsinki Convention, its Article 15, and related later decisions of the Contracting Parties, including i.a. those included in the 2007 BSAP as well as, for those Contracting Parties which are also EU members, the EU MSFD.

HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2010 (Moscow) agreed on HELCOM to serve as a regional platform for the implementation of the MSFD for those Contracting Parties being EU member states. This among others relates to preparing HELCOM assessments in such a way that Contracting Parties can fulfil their other national obligations such as under MSFD.

Among the fisheries related data needed by HELCOM is data on incidental by-catches in the Baltic Sea (e.g. HELCOM core indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear" endorsed by Contracting Parties at the meeting of HOD 48-2015), as well as data on impacts of fisheries activities to the Baltic Sea seafloor (e.g. HELCOM core indicator ”Cumulative impact on benthic habitats”).

No regular monitoring, or data from such monitoring, on incidental by-catch rates of targeted species exist for the HELCOM core indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear".[3] For the HELCOM indicator “Cumulative impact on benthic habitats” some data is available in the Contracting parties fisheries administrations (fisheries effort data and high resolution VMS data), but HELCOM processes would benefit from further information on additional details on the available data.

[2] http://www.helcom.fi/action-areas/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring-manual/

[3] see e.g. the report of this indicator under the section “current monitoring”.

I. Data needs of HELCOM Core Indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear"

A prerequisite for the assessment of the HELCOM Core Indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear" is a sufficient knowledge of incidental by-catch rate of each species to be assessed, as well as metrics on the fishing effort. From these two an estimate of the absolute numbers for incidental by-catch can be derived. This information should preferably be collected by dedicated monitoring activities which are today non-existing in the Baltic Sea.

Incidental catch rates and targeted species

A species list for which data on incidental catch rates is needed in the Baltic Sea is given in Table 1. The species list is based on Chapter III 3(a)4 of the EU-MAP and also includes following criteria: protection status, listing in the HELCOM Red lists[5], including data deficient species, species with declining populations, species which have been identified as being affected by incidental catch.

Please note that Table 1 represents a list for the Baltic Sea as a whole. As species distribution may in some cases not cover the whole sea area, data may not be necessary for all the species listed in all geographical areas. Due to this certain level of national priorization should be carried out to identify the relevant species.

Fishing effort with gear known to cause incidental catch

In order to account for different gear-specific risks of entanglement or to identify local hot-spots of incidental catches, it is also necessary to collect data on fishery effort (Table 2) including data on gear type, mesh size, technical settings of the net (e.g. drop and slack of the net), vessel size, location and date. In order to calculate absolute incidental catch numbers, it is further necessary to calculate data on fishing effort in the métier "nets" in a relevant metric (net length * soak time).

Fisheries variables characterising fishing effort of gear known to cause incidental catch of protected species as well as the identified data gaps are given in Table 2.

[4] III3. Data to assess the impact of Union fisheries on marine ecosystems in Union waters and outside Union waters: Those data shall consist of the following: (a) For all types of fisheries, incidental by-catch of all birds, mammals and reptiles and fish protected under Union legislation and international agreements, including the species listed in Table 1D, including absence in the catch, during scientific observer trips on fishing ships or by the fishers themselves through logbooks.

[5] The 2013 HELCOM Red List of species in danger of becoming extinct. http://www.helcom.fi/Lists/Publications/BSEP140.pdf,

Table 1: List of species for which dedicated incidental catch monitoring is needed in the Baltic Sea (Status on the HELCOM Red List of species in danger: CR Critically endangered, EN Endangered, VU Vulnerable, NT Near Threatened).

Fish[6] European eel *Anguilla Anguilla* (CR) European whitefish *Coregonus maraena (*EN) *Habitat Directive Annex II, IV & V species* Baltic sturgeon *Acipenser oxyrhynchus* (RE: reintroduction programme in the Baltic Sea) [Twaite shad *Alosa fallax (LC)-please reconsider]* [Allis shad *Alosa alosa (NA-please reconsider)]* River lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis* (NT) Sea lamprey *Petromyzon marinus* (VU)Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* (VU) Additional fish species from the HELCOM Red List of fish and lamprey species still to be added. This is especially important for data deficient species (Red List category DD). Since fish biodiversity indicators are under development, it may be necessary to include more species (as suggested in Table 1D of the DC_MAP) in some geographical areas. Typical marine fish species of the HELCOM Red List however, may not be added for areas in the Baltic Proper, Gulf of Finland and Gulf of Bothnia.
Mammals[7] Harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* (Western Baltic population: VU, Baltic Proper population: CR) Grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* (LC) Harbour seal *Phoca vitulina vitulina* (Kalmarsund population: VU, Southern Baltic population: LC) Baltic ringed seal *Phoca hispida botnica* (VU) [European otter *Lutra lutra* (NT) –please reconsider]
Birds[8] Black-throated diver *Gavia arctica* (wintering population, CR) Red-throated diver *Gavia stellata* (wintering population, CR) Long tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis* (wintering population, EN) Razorbill *Alca torda* (breeding population; wintering population) Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* (wintering population)

[6] Protected fish species under Bonn Convention: Eel, under Annex V of the EU Habitats Directive: Allis shad, twaite shad, European whitefish, Baltic sturgeon, river lamprey

[7] All mammals in the list are protected under the EU Habitats Directive, further Bonn Convention (harbour porpoise, [Baltic grey and harbour seals]) and Berne Convention (harbour porpoise, European otter)

[8] All birds in the list are protected under the EU Bird Protection Directive, Bonn Convention (AEWA), Berne Convention

Common guillemot *Uria aalge* (breeding population; wintering population)

Black guillemot *Cepphus grylle* (breeding population, NT; wintering population, VU)

Goosander *Mergus merganser* (breeding population; wintering population)

Red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator* (breeding population; wintering population, VU)

Smew *Mergellus albellus* (wintering population)

Common goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* (wintering population)

Velvet scooter *Melanitta fusca* (breeding population, VU; wintering population, EN)

Common scooter *Melanitta nigra* (wintering population, EN)

Common eider *Somateria mollissima* (breeding population, VU; wintering population, EN)

Steller's eider *Polysticta stelleri* (wintering population, EN)

Tufted duck *Aythya fuligula* (wintering population)

Common pochard *Aythya ferina* (wintering population)

Slavonian grebe *Podiceps auritus* (wintering population, NT)

Red-necked grebe *Podiceps grisegena* (wintering population, EN)

Great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus* (wintering population)

Great cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* (breeding population; wintering population)

Table 2. Variables[9] necessary to ensure that the collected data on the impact of fisheries on the marine environment serve the scientific purpose intended for HELCOM and the HELCOM Core Indicator "Number of drowned mammals and waterbirds in fishing gear" becomes fully operable including identified data gaps.

Variables	Explanation	Currently available information	Identified data gap
incidental catch rates for target species	Incidental catch rates of important marine mammals, waterbirds and protected fish species (Table 1) in numbers per fishing effort in relevant gears. Urgently needed as core data of the indicator.	No reliable information available (collected on a regular basis with a targeted monitoring programme)	YES
Fishing effort data	For the métier "nets": km net and soaked hours (including data from small vessels and part-time fishermen, if possible also from recreational fisheries using nets) - this variable is urgently needed to calculate incidental catch numbers from the catch rate (see above)	Partly available for larger vessels. Set nets poorly covered in existing data collection.	PARTLY
Date and location of incidental catches	This variable needs to be collected more detailed than ICES statistical rectangle only and as detailed as possible. The incidental catch position serves to identify possible local hot spots for incidental catches to be compared to distribution of species. Such	Partly available. Better spatial resolution of incidental by-catches needed. Current resolution is according to ICES statistical rectangle.	PARTLY

[9] Variables are collected under Control Regulation 1224/2009 and utilized for the purposes of the DC-MAP (some needed variables may not be obligatory under Control Regulation e.g. soak time, detailed location of catches for the vessels below 12 m. For smaller vessels, DC-MAP allows certain additional variables to be collected at marine region level (DC-MAP Chapter III 4 and Table 4: Fishing activity variables).

	Bycatch Risk Assessment (BRA) is being followed by ICES WGBYC (ICES 2015)[10] and could be conducted in scientific studies or pilot projects (e.g., Kindt-Larsen et al. 2016)[11]		
Delivery of specimen for scientific investigations	Chosen samples of incidentally caught individuals should be delivered for scientific investigations such as species, sex, age, health status, genetics in order to identify population structure and spatial distribution of populations as well as health data[12]. Some of these investigations can be conducted in scientific studies or pilot projects.	Partly available. Some specimen are delivered.	PARTLY
Type of gear with unwanted catch, mesh size	Incidental catch rates are gear specific. For an analysis it is important to collect gear data at métier level[13] 4 (Gear code), level 5 (Target species) and level 6 (Mesh size) at least. Further variables of importance could be technical settings of the net	Partly available.	PARTLY

[10] ICES 2015 Report of the Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WKBYC). 80 pp.

[11] Kindt-Larsen et al. 2016 Identification of high-risk areas for harbour porpoise Phocoena phocoena bycatch using remote electronic monitoring and satellite telemetry data. Mar. Ecol. Prog.Ser. 555: 261–271

[12] The projected Technical Regulation (REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1967/2006, (EC) No 1098/2007, (EC) No 1224/2009 and Regulations (EU) No 1343/2011 and (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 894/97, (EC) No 850/98, (EC) No 2549/2000, (EC) No 254/2002, (EC) No 812/2004 and (EC) No 2187/2005) allows delivery of by-caught species for scientific investigations (art. 12).

[13] for definition of métier level refer to table 2 in Commission Decision

Small vessels below 12 meters	Vessels below 12 m are the majority of gillnetting vessels in the Baltic Sea. In order to get more detailed information on effort it is necessary to collect additional (more detailed) data beyond control regulation obligations. This could be done in pilot studies such as the German project STELLA (Annex 1)	Partly available from pilot projects. No regular monitoring.	PARTLY

II. Data needs of HELCOM Core indicator "Cumulative impact on benthic habitats"

For HELCOM Core indicator "Cumulative impact on benthic habitats", aiming to assess the impact of fisheries on marine habitats (see Chapter III 3.(b) of EU-MAP), data on the impact of fishing gears on the seafloor (habitats/biotopes) is needed. This can be derived from detailed effort data combined with information on the location of priority habitats.

In terms of fisheries related data the indicator needs precise effort data with respect to gear type, vessel size, length and width of trawl track, high resolution location information and date/time of fisheries activities. In terms of gear type the detail should be at least level 3 according to EU-MAP. However, higher detail may be needed, in particular within marine protected areas.

Habitat[14] data is also needed for the location of following priority habitats:

- AA.D and AB.D Baltic photic and aphotic maerl beds
- AB.H2T1 Baltic aphotic muddy sediment characterized by sea-pens
- AB.H1I2 Baltic aphotic muddy sediment dominated by Haploops spp.
- 1130 Estuaries
- 1170 Reef structures (stone reefs)
- 1180 Submarine structures made by leaking gases
- 1150 Coastal lagoons
- 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time

The above habitat information is being compiled/modelled for certain areas of the Baltic Sea but is not available everywhere and thus needs further work. Please note that this is a type of data not expected to be covered by any fisheries management related data collection activities but rather national marine biodiversity mapping initiatives.

A compilation of the data needed for this indicator is given in Table 3 (next page).

[14] Listed habitats are categorized in the 2013 HELCOM Red List of Baltic Sea underwater biotopes, habitats and biotope complexes (BSEP 138)
http://www.helcom.fi/Documents/Ministerial2013/Associated%20documents/Supporting/Red%20List_Baltic%20Sea%20underwater%20biotopes%20habitats%20and%20biotope%20complexes_BSEP138.pdf

Table 3. Data needs to assist in the assessment of the impact of fisheries on marine habitats.

Variables	Explanation	Currently available information	Data gaps
Habitat affected (comparison with reference site needed)	Collecting this information is not an EU MAP or fisheries administration responsibility but should be covered by somehow ("habitat mapping" activities).	Partly available depending on area based on pilot studies and projects.	PARTLY
Gear type/size[15]	Gear group (level 3) (but preferred gear code e.g. OTB - level 4 or more detailed)	Available	Available
Size of vessel	Power of vessel has an influence on the benthic impact.	Available for vessels above 12 m.	Available
Location of the studied impact	In some cases more detailed information than ICES statistical rectangles may be needed (e.g. higher resolution VMS positions).	Partly available. Higher resolution VMS data needed in some cases.	Partly available.
Fishing effort	Most of the necessary fishing effort data is available. However, length and width of trawl track is needed. length and width of trawl track is necessary to assess the benthic impact.	Most of the necessary fishing effort data is available Length and width of trawl track not available?	Partly available.
Date of operation	Available	Available	Available

[15] See EU-MAP, Table 2

Annex 3 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 impacts[16]				
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 related to i.a.: • incidental catch of marine mammals and water birds • 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 MARELITT	2017-2018

[16] 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[17]				
5	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	Contracting Parties	Utilise the outcomes of updated work on red listed species and habitats in the Baltic Sea, HELCOM MPAs database Possibly utilize information from coastal fish monitoring and assessment (FISH-PRO II) Poland is leading an activity on compiling information on low impact fishing gears. Cooperation with BSAC to be explored.	2017-2018 Continuous
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[18]				

[17] 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

[18] 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.

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 • data gaps and collection methods • links to international eel management (e.g. CMS) • development and financing of dedicated projects • other relevant issues as appropriate 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.	FISH-M	Seminar/targeted meeting under Fish-M to present national management plans and consider regional collaboration related to the implementation of national management plans on eel, for EU countries in relation to the EC regulation on eel[i] 2017. Participants should preferably include representatives from management bodies, scientific experts and relevant stakeholders. Sweden to host a workshop ~~Report/publication~~ on eel in the Baltic Sea ~~by~~ in autumn 2017	summer 2017
8	Compile best practices on River restoration	Fish-M	~~Seminar/targeted meeting~~Workshop on river restoration best practices in May 2017 hosted by Denmark ~~Workshop Report/publication on river restoration in the Baltic Sea 2017~~ If funded, RETROUT project WP on river restoration 2018	summer 2017
9	Reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 and following up on the below activities: • 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, • investigating needed improvements for stocking practices (e.g. biological and genetic guidelines), as well as model recommendations for protection and conservation measures such as	Fish-M	Updating of 2012 report by May 2017 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	

	fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, fishery regulation for the river and estuaries;			
Action 4 HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture[19]				
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 Swedish report compiling existing technologies [Seed money project if funded] [NCM project if funded] Meeting of CG Aquaculture 26 September 2017	2017-2018
Action 5 Cooperation between authorities and with stakeholders[20]				
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[21]				
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	Continuous

[19] 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

[20] 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

[21] 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

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