



Document title	HELCOM Questionnaire on alternative fishing gears or fishing techniques
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Submitted by	Poland
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Background

Currently, trilogues (between EP, Council and EU Commission) have been established to decide on a new EU Regulation on technical measures (2016/0074(COD))¹.

Taking the above into account, the HELCOM Questionnaire on alternative fishing gears and fishing techniques has been developed in order to provide information on a trials of different gears or fishing techniques with less impact on the marine environment than the currently commercially used gears or techniques have. If the trials have positive results, they can potentially be used in the Baltic Sea in the future for example in Natura 2000 sites, on the condition that they are in compliance with the new EU Regulation on technical measures, and accepted under the regional cooperation on conservation measures (regionalization). The questionnaire also includes information on tests of more selective gears which may contribute to achieving the Common Fisheries Policy aim of having at least less discards in the Baltic Sea.

The Questionnaire has been discussed during the HELCOM FISH 6-2017 meeting. During the meeting, Poland was requested to amend the document further and also to establish a cooperation with the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) on this issue.

It was presented to the BSAC sub group on ecosystem based management taking place on 3 of October 2017, and also during the BSAC ExCom workshop on selectivity on 7 of November 2017. Poland has obtained BSAC comments to the questionnaire in December 2017. The general suggestion made by BSAC was that we should have two files: one should only cover the gears which are in use. The second one should include gears which are at research level e.g. Nordic gillnets or cod trap nets which should await further results and development. Further comparison with the gears which are in use should be done.

Also, detailed comments were obtained as in the attached questionnaire. The BSAC comments are in the orange colored boxes and wording in italics.

Sweden has also recently provided additional amendments and updates to the questionnaire (amendments marked in red).

In addition, Sweden suggested that the questionnaire could be implemented to a website and be an active tool in order to provide information to a wide range of interested parties and stakeholders concerning trials on alternative fishing gears and fishing techniques.

¹ EU Regulation on technical measures (2016/0074(COD): Proposal for a 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 - COM(2016) 134

As an example of such a tool, there is one UK initiative which is a GearingUp project led by CEFAS (UK) <https://gearingup.eu/news/article/introducing-gearingup-a-tool-for-fishermen-to-make-their-own/> currently focusing on selectivity of fishing gears in different marine regions, including Baltic Sea. The target group for the tool seems to be fishermen, so it provides a direct connection with gear users.

Other platforms developed to ensure more selective gears, are also available such as http://www.discardless.eu/selectivity_manual.

The questionnaire is available as a separate attachment [3-1-Att.1](#) on the HELCOM Meeting Portal.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to provide comments and updates to the document including questions, comments and suggestions obtained from BSAC.

The Meeting is further invited to consider if the questionnaire could be put on a website ensuring opportunity for further updates, as a separate HELCOM initiative or for example as a part of such existing initiatives as GearingUp project CEFAS.

The Meeting is also invited to discuss what kind of platform or a tool for the questionnaire would be the most suitable taking into account e.g. its aims.