



Document title	Outcome of the second workshop of the correspondence group for fisheries data (CG FISHDATA 2-2018)
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Background

This document contains the outcome of the second workshop of the correspondence group for fisheries data (CG FISHDATA 2-2018), held on 22 May 2018, in Warsaw, Poland.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.



Outcome of HELCOM workshop on fisheries data (CG FISHDATA 2-2018)

Organized as part of the activities of the HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group on fisheries data for operationalizing indicators used for the purposes of MSFD implementation, for the CPs which are also EU members (CG FISHDATA)

Introduction

The second meeting of HELCOM correspondence group for fisheries data (CG FISHDATA 2-2018) was held on 22 May 2018 at the premises of the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation (Nowy Świat 6/12 Street) in Warsaw, Poland. The Meeting was held back-to-back with the eighth meeting of the HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (FISH 8-2018) organized on 23-24 May, at the same premises.

Opening of the Meeting

Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Marta Szulfer, Head of Unit of Structural Policy and Marine Environment, Fisheries Department, Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of Poland. The Workshop Chair Anja Gadgård Boye, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked the Polish Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation for making facilities available for the workshop.

The Workshop was attended by representatives from the following Contracting Parties: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland and Sweden, and an observer from Birdlife International. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex 1**.

The Workshop was chaired by Anja Gadgård Boye, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark. Markus Helavuori, Professional Secretary and Petra Kääriä, Assisting Professional Secretary, acted as secretaries for the workshop.

Following a round of introductions, the Workshop agreed to use the agenda as provided in Document 1.

Discussion of scope and planned outcome of the meeting

The Workshop recalled the [Outcome of CG FISHDATA 1-2018](#) (27 to 28 February 2018). In this regard, the Workshop thanked Poland for submitting Document 8, which accurately reflects the way forward agreed at the previous meeting.

The aim of the second Workshop was to follow up on the progress made since CG FISHDATA 1-2018 and in particular to produce a joint overview of data availability, to discuss how to merge the data stemming from various sources and to identify tasks for how to improve this data.

The Workshop discussed possible next steps for the work on the basis of data availability, information and data quality issues in relation to cumulative impact of fisheries on benthic biotopes as well as by-catch of marine mammals and water birds.

Denmark, supported by Finland, stated that they wish to see a more prominent role for data generated through ICES. Poland suggested that also cooperation with OSPAR could provide added value to the work regarding fisheries data. The Executive Secretary informed the Workshop that Contracting Parties had at GEAR 18-2018 expressed interest in organizing a joint HELCOM/OSPAR workshop on indicators.

Presentations by Contracting Parties

Contracting Parties were invited to inform the Workshop on the present situation inter alia regarding quality validation analysis of national commercial data, national analysis on combining logbook information with available AIS data (for vessels 10 – 12m and for cod fishing vessels 8 – 12m), considerations on to what level the data called for by ICES is available at a national level, present recreational gill net fisheries and descriptions of national monitoring schemes (including those within the framework of DCF) for by-catches of marine mammals and water birds in order to get a comprehensive overview of available additional data sources.

In this context, the Workshop took note of and discussed the information contained in the following documents:

- Document 2 (and Presentation 1) containing the Danish contribution on data availability, information and data quality issues in relation to i) Cumulative impact of fisheries on benthic biotopes and ii) by-catch of marine mammals and sea birds. The Workshop discussed means of increasing coverage for VMS and AIS data;
- Document 3 containing information on other sources of data (fisheries control data and logbook data) in Germany. The Workshop in particular noted that while logbook data is collected to some extent, it does not cover e.g. soaking time or length of the net;
- Document 4 containing a description of marine recreational gillnet fisheries in Denmark. The Workshop noted that the end of page 2 contains an inaccuracy, as incidental by-catches of marine mammals and birds are in fact monitored to some extent in Danish recreational fisheries; and
- Document 5 containing a description of marine recreational gillnet fisheries in Sweden.

In addition, the Workshop took note of *inter alia*:

- a presentation by Poland (Presentation 2) on data on impact of fisheries on the seabed, AIS use by the Polish fishing fleet, incidental by-catch data, “last haul” controls as well as recreational fisheries;
- a presentation by Sweden (Presentation 3) on fisheries data. Sweden informed *inter alia* that approximately 19% of the national fishing fleet has operational AIS systems, that a long-term national plan to identify monitoring needs to increase the knowledge on recreational fisheries is under development, and provided information on by-catch monitoring schemes; and
- information provided by Finland regarding *inter alia* the limited cod fisheries, challenges related to estimating magnitude of recreational gillnet fisheries (land owners control fishing areas and rights) and other recreational fisheries (persons under 18 and above 65 years of age are excluded from fishing permit requirements), and by-catches of birds.

The Workshop discussed the benefits of Automatic Identification System (AIS) data, which is mainly available for larger fishing vessels. In this context the Workshop noted that HELCOM has a comprehensive AIS database, which the participants were encouraged to use as appropriate. The Workshop also noted that

Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) are very accurate but to increase frequency from once per hour to 6 times per hour would be likely to increase costs significantly.

The Workshop recalled that ICES has a working group that focuses on recreational fisheries, and agreed that it may be useful for Contracting Parties to keep in mind.

The Workshop discussed that commercial gillnet fisheries have declined quite significantly in recent years, as compared to figures seen in literature. Increased number of grey seals is one contributing factor to this development. Denmark informed that more political attention is currently being paid to the matter.

The Workshop discussed the reliability of data on incidental by-catches gathered from logbooks. It was noted that fishermen may not always have sufficient motivation for logging by-catches, and also that data regarding very rare occurrences, such as caught harbor porpoises, does not provide reliable statistics. With regard to practical difficulties on reporting incidental by-catches of birds, the Workshop considered that reporting of numbers of birds could be a pragmatic option instead of requiring reporting on the species level.

On a general note, the Workshop agreed that in considering by-catches, other human induced pressures (such as hunting) to birds, should also be taken into account and addressed at the appropriate fora.

Roadmap

The Workshop considered Document 8 containing a draft Roadmap on collection of fisheries data in order to assess incidental by-catches and fisheries impact on benthic biotopes in the Baltic Sea.

Some concerns were expressed with regard to proposals for additional monitoring needs. The Workshop agreed that for any such proposals, the budgetary implications would need to be considered by the HELCOM Heads of Delegation before adoption.

The Workshop noted that more work is needed to finalize the Roadmap and in this context discussed the feasibility of having it endorsed by HELCOM 40 in March 2019, as envisaged in Document 8. Following discussion, the Workshop agreed that the matter is complex, and that before suggesting any concrete actions for filling data gaps, the data availability and data gaps are to be properly assessed as a first step.

The Workshop took note of concerns expressed by Birdlife International regarding the possible delays in collecting by-catch data.

The Workshop agreed to invite comments to the draft Roadmap set out in Document 8, with a view to discuss and finalize it at the next Workshop as a living document, focusing on data availability and data gaps. The Workshop further agreed that the scope of the Roadmap could be broadened in the future to include options for filling data gaps and addressing the associated implications, such as costs. In addition, the Workshop recognized the importance of keeping the Heads of Delegation informed about the progress with the work on how to increase data availability for the two indicators on by-catches and benthic habitats. The Workshop agreed that FISH 8 could consider appropriate ways forward in that regard.

The Workshop agreed that the upcoming proposal for a revised EU control regulation and the revised technical regulations could also be taken into account in the work.

Discussion of next steps

The Workshop agreed that templates will be prepared by Denmark and circulated to Contracting Parties by the Secretariat, as further clarity is needed with regard to how to present information on available data. The templates should incorporate any previous requests for information.

The Workshop further welcomed the offer by Denmark and Poland to update the draft Roadmap based on the discussions at the Workshop. The Workshop invited the Secretariat to circulate the revised draft Roadmap with the templates as annexes to the CG FISHDATA contacts, copied also to the contact points of the Fish group. Contracting Parties will be requested to fill in the templates and to comment on the draft

Roadmap by **29 June 2018**. The Workshop further agreed that after collecting comments, a revised draft of the Roadmap will be circulated with a view for agreement and submission to STATE & CONSERVATION 9-2018 (22-26 October 2018) for comments that could be taken into account by the next Workshop before finalization and submission to the Fish Group for approval. The Workshop also emphasized that the Roadmap itself should reflect the need for a dialogue with State and Conservation on an ongoing basis.

The Workshop noted that three HELCOM Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States have not attended the CG FISHDATA workshops. The Workshop discussed options for involving all Contracting Parties in the work and invited FISH 8 to invite Contracting Parties to formally nominate members to CG FISHDATA.

The Workshop further agreed that changing the status of the CG to an Expert Group would provide more clarity to the scope and methods of work of the group.

The Workshop took note of the information by Denmark on the ongoing process to prepare a project proposal under the recent MSFD call. There are tentative plans to include by-catch as a topic in the proposal, which would support the ongoing work on by-catch under CG FISHDATA and the Fish group. The proposal will also cover a theme on seafloor integrity, aiming at complementing and contributing to the work on the topic at the European level.

The Workshop tentatively agreed that CG FISHDATA 3 should be held in late November 2018 with the exact dates and host country to be agreed by correspondence at a later stage.

Outcome

The Workshop adopted the outcome of the Meeting. The Outcome of the Meeting, together with the documents and presentations considered by the Meeting are available on the [CG FISHDATA 2-2018 meeting site](#).

Annex 1. List of Participants

Country	Name	Name of organization	E-mail address
Chair			
Denmark	Anja Gadgård Boye	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs	anjboy@um.dk
Contracting Parties			
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