



## Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

HELCOM Platform for sufficiency of measures

SOM Platform 2-2019

Helsinki, Finland, 16-17 September 2019

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<b>Document title</b>	Updated work plan for SOM analysis for coastal fish communities and commercial fish
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### Background

HOD 55-2018 agreed to establish an *ad hoc* platform for analyzing sufficiency of measures (SOM Platform) to support the update of the Baltic Sea Action Plan ([Outcome HOD 55-2018](#)). The aim of the SOM analyses is to evaluate whether existing policies are sufficient to achieve good environmental status (GES) in the Baltic Sea. To implement the framework and contribute with the required data and information for the analyses, topic teams were established for each of the topics addressed by the SOM Platform. The topic teams work intersessionally and report to SOM Platform meetings and relevant Working Groups during the course of their work.

The SOM Topic Team for coastal and commercial fishes submitted an [initial work plan](#) to FISH 10-2019 describing the work before them and how it was to progress. This document is an update of that work plan, outlining the progress and ongoing work of the topic team.

### Action requested

The Meeting is invited to consider the document and guide the topic team's ongoing work.

## Organization of work

SOM analyses for coastal fish communities and commercial fish are supported by a Topic Team led by Sweden. The Topic Team has been active working mainly via correspondence.

## Timetable

The timetable of work follows the preliminary timetable for action by the topic teams according to the below. Activities for 2020 are still to be outlined.

Task	Outcome/contribution	Timeline 2019
Identify relevant measures frameworks (step 1 SOM approach)	Very short information document	Complete
Identify presence of time-lags between measures and pressures (step 2 SOM approach)	Very short information document	Complete
Propose geographic scale of analysis	Proposal	Complete
Expert evaluation: identifying main pathways for pressures (step 3 SOM approach)	Participate in survey	data based, on-going
Pressure-state time-lags	Data (models, project outcomes, literature)	September-November
Measure-pressure time-lag verification	Verify time-lag effected measures from list provided by Secretariat	October
Measure list verification	Verify no missing relevant measures from list provided by Secretariat	October
Effect of measures data	Data (models, project outcomes, literature, national reports)	September-November
Expert evaluation: effectiveness of measures (step 4 SOM approach)	Participate in workshop	November
Expert evaluation: pressure-state linkage (step 6 SOM approach)	Participate in workshop	November
Projected development of human activities/pressures (step 5 SOM approach)	Data (models, project outcomes, literature, national reports)	Late fall
Synopses on potential new measures	Information document	End of year

## Updated plan for work

The general approach for the SOM analysis is described in [Document 2-3](#) for HOD 56-2019. This document outlines ongoing work related to the SOM analyses for coastal fish communities and commercial fish.

### 1) Analysis structure

Commercial fish will be analyzed based on results from stock assessments conducted by [ICES](#) (see pages 23-24 of linked document) as was done in [HOLAS II](#). The analysis will be based on estimates on *stock size* alone contrary to the approach from HOLAS II, as fishing pressure will be evaluated separately as a pressure component. The ICES analyses provide estimates based on either the MSY or Precautionary Approach (PA), for the different stocks. The PA is used if no MSY estimate exists. Stocks proposed to be assessed are:

- Cod in subdivisions 22-24, western Baltic stock
- Cod in subdivisions 24-30 and 32, eastern Baltic stock<sup>1</sup>
- Herring in subdivisions 20-24, spring spawners
- Herring in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga
- Herring in Subdivision 28.1 (Gulf of Riga)

<sup>1</sup> ICES sub-division 31 is listed in the ICES stock reports as relevant to the stock but, based on the approach from HOLAS II, is not included in the spatial range of this stock used for the SOM model.

- Herring in Subdivisions 30 and 31
- Sprat in subdivisions 22–30 and 32<sup>2</sup>

Each of these stocks will be analyzed individually. The geographic distributions will be tailored to the ICES sub-divisions listed with each species to exclude irrelevant measures from the analyses (i.e. spatial extent of the western Baltic cod stock is analyzed as one unit covering The Sound, Great Belt, Kiel Bay, Bay of Mecklenburg, and Arkona Basin). ICES sub-divisions can be closely approximated using the HELCOM scale 2 sub-basins and no issues are anticipated in this regard.

Coastal fish communities will be analyzed following the hierarchical spatial assessment structure applied in BEAT<sup>3</sup> to identified priorities area for identification of measures. The analyses will focus on:

- Abundance of key coastal fish species
- Abundance of key coastal fish functional groups (including the components piscivores and cyprinids)

## 2) Measures

The topic team is contributing to the assessment of effectiveness of measures in relation to pressures concerning fishing, by-catch of fish and any relevant species-specific measures linked directly to pressure or state. An inventory of measures has been developed by the Secretariat and distributed to the national contact points of the SOM Platform on 12 July. Responses were requested by 15 October. The initial measures lists include national EU MSFD reporting, HELCOM measures reporting, and online searches of global and regional measures frameworks.

The Topic Team will be involved in the final preparation of the measures lists once responses are received from the Contracting Parties. Contributions will primarily include issues of data completeness and measure-pressure time lags.

## 3) Activities introducing pressures

Commercial fish is directly related to two current activities in the SOM structure; Fishing using bottom touching mobile gear and Fishing using all other types of gear. The spatial distinction for these activities can be made based on existing data. However, for the pressure fish extraction (fishing pressure as expressed using the MSY or PA approach by ICES), the reference points apply per stock, directly at the spatial scale of the assessed stock. Hence, it may be appropriate to apply different geographical delineations for different pressures relating to fishing activities, such as fish extraction and physical disturbance of the seabed. Discussions are ongoing with ACTION WP6.

Coastal fish communities are also affected by fishing, as well as by other sources of mortality, reported for example by HELCOM Fish Pro<sup>4</sup>. In addition, the relative importance of physical and other pressures affecting the fish habitats is also high for coastal fish. A list and classification of activities and pressures affecting fish communities are elaborated by collaboration between the ACTION project and the topic team.

## 4) Effectiveness of Measures and Pressure-State

Efforts are being made to organize a workshop for all the SOM Fish topics (coastal fish communities, commercial fish, and migratory fish) in Warsaw during November to gather the required data on effectiveness of measures and pressure-state links.

<sup>2</sup> ICES sub-division 31 is listed in the ICES stock reports as relevant to the stock but, based on the approach from HOLAS II, is not included in the spatial range of this stock used for the SOM model.

<sup>3</sup> HELCOM (2018): HELCOM Thematic assessment of biodiversity 2011-2016. Available at: <http://www.helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/holistic-assessments/state-of-the-baltic-sea-2018/reports-and-materials>

<sup>4</sup> HELCOM 2018. Status of coastal fish communities in the Baltic Sea during 2011-2016 – the third thematic assessment. Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings N° 161