



Document title	Comments from Working Groups and the BSAP update process
Code	3-1
Category	CMNT
Agenda Item	3 – Comments from Working Groups and BSAP update process
Submission date	30.11.2020
Submitted by	Secretariat

Background

When discussing the proposed new actions for the BSAP in autumn 2020 the Working Groups did in some cases not endorse the proposals for submission to HOD 59-2020 but mentioned that they could be suitable to instead include in the HELCOM Science Agenda. The actions proposed to be included in the Science Agenda are listed in this document together with proposals on how they could be dealt with.

The HELCOM Science Agenda report was also submitted intersessionally for commenting by HELCOM Working Groups in November 2020 with the invitation to add additional knowledge and science needs to the comprehensive survey of HELCOM knowledge and science needs as found relevant. Comments were received from Denmark as contained in this document.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to:

- consider the listed actions in this document that have been indicated as suitable for the Science Agenda by HELCOM Working Groups, and agree on their inclusion in the comprehensive HELCOM survey on knowledge or how they could be re-formulated and included in the Science Agenda,
- consider comments from Denmark on the Science Agenda report.

Proposals from BSAP update process for inclusion in the Science Agenda

Several proposed actions for the BSAP have been rejected by HELCOM Working Groups on the basis that the potential effect of the actions are not sufficiently known (1-10). In some cases they have not been rejected but there are still proposals to consider them for the Science Agenda rather than the BSAP (11-12). The actions in question are:

- 1) Elimination of invasive plant Elodea
- 2) Harvesting of reed and excessive vegetation
- 3) Rehabilitation of hypoxic areas by oxygen pumping
- 4) Reducing internal phosphorus loads by metal bounding
- 5) Biomanipulation to remove cyprinids and sticklebacks and rehabilitate coastal ecosystem function
- 6) Rehabilitation of anoxic, nutrient rich or polluted sediments by removal or coverage
- 7) Restocking of marine areas with fry of European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)
- 8) No further expansion of fishing effort to areas not already impacted by existing fishing activities
- 9) Reporting estimates on the effects of agri-environmental measures on the main phosphorus (P) fractions [*Needs reformulation for the Science Agenda*]
- 10) Establishing a harmonized eDNA methodology and start a baseline monitoring system throughout the Baltic Sea
- 11) Analysis of pressures affecting fish stocks in order to identify complementary measures
- 12) Initiate the process with the aim to conclude a more complete set of criteria to indicate the health of relevant fish stocks, besides fishing pressure and biomass criteria also including size and age distribution.

Comments from Secretariat:

Proposals 1-11 are considered as too detailed for inclusion as highlighted knowledge needs in the main Science Agenda report. It is proposed that they are instead included in the comprehensive survey of HELCOM knowledge and science needs. More substantial background information can be taken from the synopses that have been prepared for each proposal.

Proposal 11 is considered as too general for inclusion in the Science Agenda, e.g. complementary to what? Needs reformulation for inclusion in the Science Agenda.

Proposal 12 has been drafted by the Fish Group. It can be noted that the following highlighted science need is already included in the Science Agenda report: "Development and optimization of methodology for the assessment of age and size distribution in coastal fish populations to provision and support ecosystem based management efforts". As it appears the proposal 11 is not limited to coastal fish the existing highlight could be reformulated so that it does not only apply to coastal fish (e.g. ...age and size distribution of Baltic Sea fish populations..)

Comments from Denmark

- 1) Pressure, eutrophication:

"The headers listed under section 2.2 Highlighted science needs covers the overall needs with regards to eutrophication. However, we find that the underpinning topics are rather detailed described. Unfortunately, this also inadvertently excludes other topics of interest. One example could be research into measures that target safe removal of internal nutrient loads."

- 2) Activities:

"FISH proposed to conduct a data collection package for bycatch, including revised versions of the following to new proposed measures:

- Agree to collect fisheries data on both large and small-scale vessels
- Collect representative data on by-catch of birds, mammals and non-targeted fish species on species level

Our suggestion is to include revised versions of these two measures in the Science Agenda”.

Comment from the Secretariat:

With regard to the first comment related to eutrophication the Meeting may, if considered as relevant, agree to broaden one of the existing highlights so that it covers the aspect lifted by Denmark. Another option is to add the suggestions to the comprehensive HELCOM survey on knowledge and science needs.

With regard to the second comment it should be recalled that Science Agenda should address knowledge and science needs and as agreed it will not include promotion of monitoring or the collection of data per se. Thus, the proposals as currently formulate do not fit to the Science Agenda. It can however be noted that the following highlighted science need is already included in the Science Agenda:

- Intensified research on bycaught species of all métiers to assess bycatch rates of seabirds, marine mammals and protected fish species.