

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR HELCOM GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

(adopted by HELCOM HOD 46-2014)

The Group will deal with agriculture in relation to the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach. Agriculture sector has been identified in the Baltic Sea as having important potential for environmental gains in relation to the nutrient losses and thus the status of the marine environment, and the group will respond to the need to find solutions how the sector could further contribute to reaching Good Environmental Status of the Baltic Sea by 2021.

The new group will involve representatives from agriculture and environment authorities of the Baltic Sea countries, as well as EU, and HELCOM Observers. It will provide a platform for agri-environmental policy measures and instruments and joint discussion on the Baltic agriculture in the context of the protection of the marine environment, in order to address nutrient inputs and emissions from agriculture.

The Group will facilitate implementation of part II Annex III of the Helsinki Convention "Prevention of Pollution from Agriculture". Further it will support the implementation and follow-up the progress in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and Ministerial Declarations, including the 2013 Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration and its Palette of measures for reducing phosphorus and nitrogen losses from agriculture and contribution of agricultural sector to reaching nutrient reduction targets, as well as relevant HELCOM Recommendations.

The Group will produce and contribute, as appropriate, to relevant deliverables and milestones of the Roadmap of HELCOM activities on ecosystem approach in a manner coordinated with other ongoing HELCOM processes. The group will cooperate with other subsidiary bodies i.e. on cross cutting issues, including with GEAR to the extent necessary for GEAR to ensure integration and coherence of work to reach Good Environmental Status of the marine environment across the working groups. It will utilize in their work relevant information produced by HELCOM subsidiary bodies and projects, and elsewhere, such as results of Pollution Load Compilations, follow-up of the nutrient reduction scheme, holistic assessments.

It should be recognized that for the EU Member states, the European Union has exclusive competence in the matter of agriculture policy. The Group should create added value, for the HELCOM countries being EU members, in relation to the work on implementation of EU legislation, taking into account the specific needs of the Baltic Sea.

The Group will meet once per year / three times per two years taking into account any window of opportunities for contributing to or interacting with other processes. The ToR of the Group will be time-limited (5 years) and could be extended upon agreement of the HoDs.

Terms of Reference of the Group Sustainable Agricultural Practices

The duties of the Group are to:

- A. Advise the Commission in carrying out its duties under Article 20 of the Helsinki Convention, especially in relation to Articles 3, 6, 16, 24 as well as Annexes II and III (Part II);
- B. Provide support and make proposals for the implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, Ministerial Declarations and HELCOM Recommendations in the area of its expertise according to the existing priorities as well as requests by the Heads of Delegations and subsidiary bodies. This may include proposals for strategies, guidelines and recommendations.

To fulfill these duties the Group will:

1. By 2016 review and an update part II of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention, in order to better serve the purposes of reaching Good Environmental Status, and implementation and enforcement of the provisions, in particular taking into account the following commitments of the Contracting Parties of the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting:

4(N) WE AGREE to initiate activity to identify/verify areas critical to N and P losses, utilizing the available data and as a starting point, to enable directing targeted and cost-effective measures where they can bring the greatest environmental effect, e.g. compulsory measures on manure handling (storage and application) for installations of intensive rearing of cattle, poultry and pigs;

7(N) WE DECIDE to investigate measures to reduce nutrient surplus in fertilization practices to reach nutrient balanced fertilization with the objective to come to an agreement on national level by 2018;

8(N) WE AGREE to promote and advance towards applying by 2018 at the latest annual nutrient accounting at farm level taking into account soil and climate conditions giving the possibility to reach nutrient balanced fertilization and reduce nutrient losses at regional level in the countries, noting the positive examples of mandatory requirements on nutrient bookkeeping in some HELCOM countries and with an aim to apply it region-wide, as a first step, in areas critical to nutrient losses;

2. Support development by 2016 of national guidelines or standards for nutrient content in manure, and develop by 2018 guidelines/recommendation on the use of such standards;
3. Promote development of appropriate methodology for phosphorus recycling (especially in agriculture and waste water treatment);
4. Enhance transfer of knowledge and technology and exchange of good examples;
5. Exchange experiences and ideas for potential development of policy instruments, both voluntary and mandatory, as well as measures for improved farm nutrient management.

The Group will report to the Heads of Delegation.