

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM FISH Correspondence Group concerning a draft document on BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG Aquaculture)

As agreed by HELCOM 37-2016.

In order to implement the work plan and as a follow up the HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture (Rec. 37/3), the HELCOM FISH Group suggested to establish an intersessional Correspondence Group on Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) for sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region (CG AQUACULTURE) (c.f. outcome of HELCOM FISH 3-2015, §3.5-3.8). This suggestion was agreed by HOD 49 meeting (c.f. outcome of HELCOM HOD 49, § 4.43).

The CG shall take account of heterogeneous nature of aquaculture, variability in technology and geography with the need for a differentiated (if not locally- and/or sub-regionally concentrated) approach and aim at a developing comprehensive set of BAT/BEP descriptions on sustainable aquaculture for the benefit of the Baltic Sea region.

These TORs were agreed by HELCOM 37-2016.

Objective

The HELCOM Correspondence Group on sustainable aquaculture (hereinafter – CG Aquaculture)

- a) exchanges BAT/BEP information and experience gained on aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region,
- b) develops a menu of BAT/BEP descriptions for sustainable aquaculture for the Baltic Sea region, by:
 - i. defining environmentally acceptable, economically viable and socially equitable standards
 - ii. differentiating between land- and sea-based aquaculture, where appropriate
 - iii. promoting innovation
 - iv. not forcing any specific BAT/BEP description to be applied by all contracting parties

Status and working procedures

The CG Aquaculture is

- an ad hoc sub-group to HELCOM FISH which it reports to
- supported by the Secretariat, including financial assistance where feasible
- established for a period of 18 months (the work to be finalized by the end of 2017), with a possibility to extend the mandate by HELCOM HODs decision
- working mainly by correspondence, face-to-face or virtual meetings, as needed
- led by a [Lead Country/Countries] [Chair of FISH group] [other options]

Membership

Members of the CG Aquaculture are

- nominated Contracting Party experts on aquaculture and other relevant matters
- HELCOM observers, as appropriate
- additional experts may participate in meetings by invitation by the chair of the CG Aquaculture (such as representatives of other organizations, technical experts, etc.)
- the group shall be led by a chairperson appointed by the lead country

In executing its duties, the group shall

1. base its work to the Helsinki Convention Articles 3 and 6 and Annex II,
2. be guided by the HELCOM Recommendation on Sustainable Aquaculture xx/201x and its Annex,
3. be guided by matters related to nutrition impacts and thresholds of the Copenhagen Ministerial Declaration,
4. promote innovation by considering the available new (open/closed) technologies/systems, such as IMTA or RAS,
5. be guided e.g. by HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, HELCOM Copenhagen Ministerial declaration, EU and national legislation, the report on existing BAT techniques applied in the Nordic countries (Nordic Council report reference), national strategies and other relevant documents as deemed relevant

Detailed tasks for the group are:

- a) to provide by October 2016 a concise compilation of existing BAT and BEP techniques applied in the Contracting Parties or otherwise relevant for the Baltic Sea area/region and, if possible, the relevant experiences (pros and cons) gained in applying such techniques from ecological, social and economic points of view,
- b) to provide assistance for a (scientifically condensed) Literature Study by May 2017 on feasible BAT/BEP descriptions for the Baltic Sea region including gap analyses against the needs and specificities of the Baltic Sea region; in parallel,
- c) to provide other relevant latest information on innovative aquaculture techniques;
- d) to jointly develop a menu of BAT and BEP descriptions for the aquaculture operators to choose from;
- e) to [draft a list of most suitable BAT and BEP aquaculture techniques, based on the information collected under a-d), by October 2017;
- f) to identify possible research and development needs and knowledge gaps, with a view to improving the BAT and BEP menu of techniques for the Baltic region.
- g) Potentially address the needs identified, in between, through a dedicated project, and report accordingly.

The results of CG work shall be subject to consideration by HELCOM FISH and high-level HELCOM bodies as deemed necessary.