

Terms of Reference for the HELCOM Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture (HELCOM EG Aquaculture)

Purpose

The Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture (HELCOM EG Aquaculture) of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission works to exchange information and knowledge on sustainable aquaculture practises, focusing on the major pressures and opportunities of aquaculture, towards the goal of a healthy and resilient Baltic Sea ecosystem in line with the goals and relevant actions of the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The Expert Group secures sufficient technical expertise within the HELCOM framework and ensures that information is available to support national and regional decision making and implementation processes, for the purpose of ecosystem-based management of aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region. The Expert Group takes account of heterogeneous nature of aquaculture, existing national and international legislation and variability in technology and geography with the need for a differentiated approach.

Duties

The duties of the Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture are to:

- I. Maintain and suggest updates for a comprehensive set of **BAT/BEP descriptions on sustainable aquaculture** for the benefit of the Baltic Sea region and exchange information and experiences gained on BAT/BEP on aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region,
- II. Advice on the need to update HELCOM Recommendation on Sustainable Aquaculture, support the efforts to maintain an updated Recommendation and its implementation
- III. **Lead reporting** on the Recommendation and BAT/BEP descriptions on sustainable aquaculture as well as an analysis of the reporting results, their dissemination and utilization as appropriate.
- IV. Identify current and **emerging opportunities and issues** related to sustainable aquaculture.
- V. **Take note of** relevant activities within, and if appropriate cooperate with relevant actors and/or other international organizations and seek synergies with the work carried out relevant for the Group.
- VI. Support the **implementation of other relevant HELCOM commitments** related to aquaculture, such as the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and Ministerial Declarations.
- VII. Ensure that the **contact list** of Baltic Sea aquaculture experts remains current.

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of the work conducted by the Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture are detailed in the 2-year workplan of the Expert Group, regularly updated by the Group and approved by the HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish).

Organization of work

The Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture consists of nominated delegates from the Contracting Parties and is open to Observers according to HELCOM procedures. Additional experts and representatives of organizations can be invited as guests to the meetings by the HELCOM Secretariat in consultation with the Chair.

The Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture will meet online at least every two years. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that at least one delegate with sufficient knowledge on aquaculture attends the meetings whether physical or online.

Within HELCOM the Expert Group will, as relevant, seek synergies and cooperate with other HELCOM Groups.

The Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture will elect a Chair/Co-Chairs and a Vice-Chair for a 2-year mandate period. The maximum mandate period for the Expert Group Chair/Co-Chairs should be three consecutive mandate periods, consisting of 2 years per period, resulting in a maximum consecutive mandate period of 6 years.

The current Terms of Reference are to be reviewed periodically, every four years, or as the need arises.

The HELCOM Secretariat will provide administrative support to the Expert Group.

The Expert Group on Sustainable Aquaculture reports to the HELCOM Working Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (WG Fish).

The updated (2024) HELCOM organigram is available [here](#) on the HELCOM website.