Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission

Plan for closer cooperation between marine environment and fisheries management in the Baltic Sea

HELCOM plan for bridging marine environment and fisheries management

1. A global movement toward closer cooperation between marine environment and fisheries management

Fish and other seafood in the Baltic Sea, including commercially exploited and other species, are sources of human well-being, livelihood and food as well as an important component of the Baltic Sea biodiversity. Integrated management is needed in order to ensure both of these dimensions simultaneously.

As part of recent global developments within UN General Assembly (e.g. Sustainable Development Goal 14 on "Life Below Water", Annex 1) as well as FAO, CBD and UNEP to ensure such integrated management the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Partnership Meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 26-28 September 2016 (Annex 5).

The event brought concretely together Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies to discuss how to achieve global targets related to sustainable fisheries jointly. Several examples of close cooperation and synergies between specific regional organisations working with fisheries and marine environmental management around the world were presented.

The same issues will be raised at the High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden in New York 5-9 June 2017 and its foreseen follow-up. The CBD COP 13, Cancun, Mexico, 4 - 17 December 2016 on Aichi indicators is another global milestone where further measures bridging the topics of marine biodiversity and fisheries will be considered.

2. A need for regional follow-up of global decisions

The achievement of these global commitments in the field of marine environment and fisheries requires that they are incorporated in regional work. Cooperation and information exchange between regional bodies responsible for marine environment and fisheries should be ensured. Practical work should be carried out to develop and implement related management measures and use quantitative indicators for measuring progress.

This includes concrete regional implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 on "Life Below Water" agreed in 2015[1], the Aichi Biodiversity Targets agreed in 2010 under the Convention on Biological Diversity[2], and related indicators of relevance for sustainable fisheries.

3. HELCOM work available to support global processes

Integration across the fisheries-environment divide, the aim of the global dialogue, has a long legacy in the Baltic Sea region. This is i.a. visible in the work of HELCOM in the field of environment and

[1] United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015

[2] 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD held in Nagoya, Japan, 18 - 29 October 2010

fisheries/aquaculture. Since the beginning of its work HELCOM has adopted a large number of measures and studies on these matters covering issues such as salmon and trout populations and habitats, fisheries within Marine Protected Areas, threatened and endangered fish species as well as sustainable aquaculture (see Annex 2 for further details).

In particular, the regular regional work across fisheries and environmental administrations, industry organisations and NGOs which takes place within the HELCOM Fish working group has great potential in helping the coastal countries to deliver in relation to these global calls for more integration in the junction between fisheries and environment. Topics included in this work are for example mitigation of incidental by-catch of birds and mammals, Best Available Technology (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for sustainable aquaculture, protection of migratory fish species (including salmon and trout river restoration and recreational fishing), linking Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)/Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and fisheries, protection of fish habitats and spawning areas and endangered fish species, assessments of coastal fish, assessment of fisheries pressure on the seafloor habitats, quantifying the effects of pollution, such as eutrophication-induced oxygen depletion and hazardous substances on fish, and evaluating the related monetary losses.

Specific issues that the HELCOM Fish Working Group has been dealing with during the last years are included in its work plan 2014-2016 (Annex 3). A number of other fisheries related issues, including MPAs and seals, are dealt with within the HELCOM State and Conservation Working Group (Annex 4). In addition the HELCOM Marine Litter Action Plan include actions of relevance related to fisheries.

4. Need for regular information exchange with other regional bodies engaged in fisheries/aquaculture

HELCOM had a close cooperation, and mutual observer arrangements, with the International Baltic Sea Fisheries Commission (IBFC) until its closure in 2005. Currently BSAC (Baltic Sea Advisory Council), Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) are, in their HELCOM observer capacity, part of the HELCOM work around fisheries, fishing and aquaculture issues. This close cooperation and partnerships for sustainability will continue in the future. When the Baltic Sea regional advisory council for aquaculture is established a similar relationship will be sought with them.

After IBFC was discontinued, fisheries management in the Baltic Sea -particularly quota allocations, were taken over by the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), as well as negotiations in the context of the 2009 bilateral treaty between EU and the Russian Federation. For those coastal countries of the Baltic Sea which are also members of the EU a regular meeting, BALTFISH, was established in 2013 by a memorandum of understanding to support the regionalisation of the EU CFP in the Baltic Sea. Both of these entities are focusing on negotiations on total allowable catches (TACs) but take also up other issues on their agenda.

There are currently no formal regular exchange of information between HELCOM groups and the fisheries management activities taking place within BALTFISH or the EU-Russia arrangement. Occasional information exchange has taken place via individual coastal countries who have orally reported on some BALTFISH/EU-RU treaty activities at HELCOM meetings.

A formal arrangement for direct information exchange would enable exploring synergies between activities taking place within the different bodies and remove uncertainties regarding overlap of activities, for the benefit of national work. The resulting regular information exchange and clarification of tasks would contribute to making the Baltic Sea one of the world's leading regions in integrated management, especially in the field of environment and fisheries.

5. A simple roadmap and framework of improved information exchange

The following three step roadmap is proposed to improve information exchange.

- Chairs of HELCOM and BALTFISH, as well as representatives of the EU-Russia fisheries treaty could be invited to initiate communication.
- The first step would be to agree on a regular (annual basis) exchange of 1) reports/main decisions of completed meetings of direct relevance as well as 2) a schedule of planned meetings with main anticipated agenda points/issues.
- After a period of [three years] the effectiveness of this information exchange could be jointly evaluated.

Annex 1 Targets and related indicators connected to Sustainable Development Goal 14 on "Life Below Water"

Targets with special reference to fish and fisheries/aquaculture included with black font, less directly relevant with grey font.

SDG Target(s)	SDG Indicator(s)	Aichi Biodiversity Target
14.1. By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	**14.1.1.** Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density	**8.** By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.
14.2. By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	**14.2.1.** Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches	**5.** By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced. **6.** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits. **14.** By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable. **15.** By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including

		restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.
14.3. Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	**4.3.1.** Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations	**10.** By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.
14.4. By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	**14.4.1**. Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels	**6.** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits. **7.** By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
14.5. By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	**14.5.1.** Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	**11.** By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
14.6. By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to	**14.6.1.** Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to	**3.** By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative

illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation	combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions. **6.** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
14.7 By 2030, increase the economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	**14.7.1** Sustainable fisheries as a percentage of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries	
14.a. Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries	**14.a.1.** Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology	**19.** By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

14.b. Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	**14.b.1.** Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries	**18.** By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.
14.c Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”	**14.c.1** Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources	

Annex 2 Timeline of regional work on Fisheries, Aquaculture and Environment under HELCOM

Milestone	Year
1974 Helsinki Convention signed Original 1974 Helsinki Convention signed by the coastal countries of the Baltic Sea, the HELCOM Interim Commission starts work	1974
HELCOM established Helsinki Convention enters into force after all coastal countries (DDR, Denmark, Finland, GBRD, Poland, Sweden, USSR) ratified it as part of their legislation. The Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) is established as a result.	1980
Baltic Sea Fish and Fisheries covered in HELCOM environmental assessments Effects of pollution on fish and fisheries and other management aspects are included in the HELCOM regular assessment reports on the state of the Baltic Sea.	1981 and onwards
Sustainable use becomes part of the amended 1992 Helsinki Convention – New Article 15 on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity covers measures to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources within the Baltic Sea Area. – New Annex II includes promoting and implementing Best Environmental Practice (BEP) and Best Available Technology (BAT) for fish farming. – Strengthened mutual cooperation with other organisations, including IBSFC, is enabled by the new arrangements for HELCOM observer organisations.	1992
Measures aimed at the reduction of discharges from marine fish farming (HELCOM Rec. 15/3). The HELCOM instrument includes general regional BAT and BEP for marine fish farming.	1994, 1997 (18/3), 2004 (25/4 valid)
System of coastal and marine Baltic Sea protected areas (BSPA) (HELCOM Rec.15/5). The HELCOM instrument includes aquaculture and harmful fishing practices as activities to be considered as part of management plans for MPAs.	1994
Protection and improvement of the wild salmon*) (salmo salar L.) populations in the Baltic Sea area (HELCOM Rec. 19/2) The HELCOM instrument includes management measures to improve wild salmon populations.	1998
Baltic Salmon Rivers-status in the late 1990s as reported by the Baltic countries (a HELCOM & IBSFC joint publication). A report on the status of salmon rivers including salmon stocks.	1999
The amended 1992 Convention enters into force as treaty law after all coastal countries and the EU have ratified it as part of their legislation.	2000
Implementation of integrated marine and coastal management of human activities in the Baltic Sea Area (HELCOM Rec.24/10). The HELCOM instrument aims at comprehensive spatial planning (MSP) and management of all human activities in the Baltic Sea including i.a. fisheries.	2003
Assessment of Coastal Fish in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM BSEP). A dedicated HELCOM report on coastal fish.	2006
Red list of threatened and declining species of lampreys and fishes of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM BSEP) A dedicated HELCOM report on IUCN threat status of fish species in the Baltic Sea. **Red List of Baltic Sea species in danger of becoming extinct** (HELCOM BSEP) HELCOM report on IUCN threat status of species, including fish and lampreys	2007, 2013
HELCOM Fish/Env Forum First Meeting of the dedicated HELCOM group gathering environmental and fisheries authorities of the coastal countries and the EU to address fisheries and environment issues.	2008
Biodiversity in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM BSEP) A comprehensive biodiversity assessment which included Fish and Fisheries as dedicated chapters.	2009
Salmon and Sea Trout Populations and Rivers in the Baltic Sea - HELCOM assessment of salmon (Salmo salar) and sea trout (Salmo trutta) populations and habitats in rivers flowing to the Baltic Sea. (HELCOM BSEP). A targeted assessment of salmon and sea trout populations and rivers.	2011
HELCOM Fish Working Group First meeting of the dedicated regular group gathering environmental and fisheries authorities of the coastal countries and the EU to address fisheries and environment issues, replacing the HELCOM Fish/Env Forum.	2014
Sustainable aquaculture in the Baltic Sea region. HELCOM Rec. 37/3 A HELCOM instrument on BAT and BEP for aquaculture.	2016

Annex 3 [Draft] Work Plan for HELCOM Group on Ecosystem-based Sustainable Fisheries (Fish Group) 2017-2018

No.	ACTION	LEAD/RESPONSIBLE	INTERLINKED ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME
Action 1 Integrated assessment of human impacts[1]				
1	Contracting Parties to support the future joint ICES/HELCOM VMS data calls for the ICES & HELCOM advice on the spatial distribution and impact of fishing activities (confidentiality of VMS data for both data transfer and use to be ensured) To formulate a request for ICES advice on fishing intensity e.g. affecting the seabed per a type of fishing gear based on VMS data	HELCOM Secretariat in cooperation with ICES Secretariat Possibly in coordination with OSPAR	The data will support assessing pressures within HOLAS II and mapping human activities affecting seafloor integrity (activity under HELCOM Gear Group) ICES Working Group on Spatial Fisheries Data	2016-2017
2	Provide an overview of data collection activities Contracting Parties workplans, related to i.a. on: incidental catch of marine mammals recreational fisheries Based on this overview, assess the presence of data gaps Support other HELCOM processes in their further specification of data needs for the HOLAS II assessment, the MSFD and the implementation of BSAP	FISH group	Supporting information for use in HOLAS II as well as in mapping human activities affecting seafloor integrity (under HELCOM Gear Group) ICES WG on the Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities	2016-2018
3	Contribute to operationalization (ensuring quality assured data flow) of fish-related HELCOM regional core indicators (BSAP, and MSFD and CFP for EU countries)			
4	Create a common knowledge base on ghost nets distribution and abundance as well as an estimation of their impacts on the ecosystem	FISH Group	Projects e.g. WWF Poland project on retrieval of ghost nets Danish initiative on ghost net distribution and abundance assessment	2017-2018

[1] Contribute to recognizing **the data gaps** that prevent adequately assessing human pressures on the ecosystems in cooperation with relevant bodies, thus contributing to HELCOM **holistic assessments**, and contribute to operationalization of HELCOM **fish-related core indicators** from point of view of biodiversity, food webs and seafloor integrity (indicators on commercial fish are dealt with by ICES)

Action 2 Sustainable fisheries practices[2]				
5	Provide tools for sustainable fishing practices, including to address by-catch of fish, birds and mammals: Follow the outcomes of projects such as BalticBOOST and Baltic SCOPE Compile best practices on sustainable fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas Testing and use of the tools when implementing sustainable fishing methods and practices into MPA management plans Promotion of research of fishing gear impacts on marine species and biotopes Input to development of fisheries management and technical measures to minimize: unwanted by-catch of fish, birds and mammals (BSAP target: close to zero by-catch rates and minimized damage to sea bed habitat, [actions agreed in FISH 2-2015 on hot spots and measures]) seafloor impacts from fishing gear damage to catches by marine mammals	Contracting Parties	Utilise the outcomes of updated work on red listed species and habitats in the Baltic Sea, HELCOM MPAs database Possibly utilize information from coastal fish monitoring and assessment (FISH-PRO II)	2017-2018 Continuous
6	Follow up on the development of principles for setting an environmental target for seafloor integrity	Lead by GEAR group [a project]	BalticBOOST project work on joint or coordinated measures for physical loss and seafloor damage led by GEAR BENTHIS project work on the Baltic/North Sea	2017
Action 3. Migratory fish species[3]				
7	Exchange of information on national eel management in the coastal countries including i.a.	FISH-M	Seminar/targeted meeting under Fish-M to present national management	summer 2017

[2] In cooperation with relevant authorities and scientific institutions, address fishing practices which have a potential negative impact on conservation goals and/or threatened or declining species and habitats, especially within **coastal** and **marine protected areas**. When doing so, take into account environmental issues and processes, such as oxygen depletion, pollution, habitat destruction, and migratory barriers which may affect the quality, abundance and distribution of fish

[3] Further develop co-operation to implement best practices with the view to achieve the established objectives of HELCOM related to **migratory fish species**, including the corresponding BSAP targets, and in particular taking into account the commitments 19(B) and 23(B) of the Copenhagen Ministerial Meeting.

	tackling assumed illegal catches (to assess the scale of the problem and look for solutions for proper enforcement), traceability/tracking of eel data gaps and collection methods links to international eel management (e.g. CMS) development and financing of dedicated projects other relevant issues as appropriate The above is carried out with the aim of a Baltic wide stock status assessment and facilitating subsequent action, to be further developed at the appropriate fora.		plans and consider regional collaboration related to the implementation of national management plans on eel, for EU countries in relation to the EC regulation on eel[i] 2017. Participants should preferably include representatives from management bodies, scientific experts and relevant stakeholders. Workshop Report/publication on eel in the Baltic Sea by 2017	
8	Compile best best practices on River restoration	Fish-M	Seminar/targeted meeting on river restoration best practices in 2017 Workshop Report/publication on river restoration in the Baltic Sea 2017 If funded, RETROUT project WP on river restoration 2018	summer 2017
9	Reporting on the implementation of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 and following up on the below activities: the active conservation of at least ten endangered/threatened wild salmon river populations in the Baltic Sea region as well as the reintroduction of native Baltic Sea salmon in at least four potential salmon rivers, by 2009, common practices for breeding, rearing and releasing salmon as reintroduction in potential salmon rivers, investigating needed improvements for stocking practices (e.g. biological and genetic guidelines), as well as model recommendations for protection and conservation measures such as fish ways for up and down migration, restoration and protection of spawning grounds, fishery regulation for the river and estuaries;	Fish-M	Updating of 2012 report by May 2017 Evaluation on the status and revision needs of HELCOM Recommendation 32/33-1 based on updated information and EU Salmon management plan developments by 2018	
Action 4 HELCOM Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture[4]				

[4] Develop a new HELCOM **Recommendation on sustainable aquaculture** by 2014 to substitute the existing HELCOM Recommendation 25/4 aiming at limiting potential environmental impacts of aquaculture activities taking into account the upcoming EU guidelines for aquaculture

10	A follow up on the HELCOM Recommendation on Sustainable Aquaculture on BAT and BEP	Fish Group in consultation with the CG on Aquaculture	Translation of existing reports and application to support continuation of the work	2017-2018
Action 5 Cooperation between authorities and with stakeholders[5]				
11	Look for the ways how to cooperate in practise, e.g. with BALTFISH Liaise with Aquaculture Advisory Council soon to be operationalized	[Country acting as a liaison between Fish and BALTFISH]		continuous
Action 6 Follow up of the Baltic Sea Action Plan[6]				
12	Support the follow up implementation of the of BSAP and Ministerial commitments regarding fisheries impact and conservation of fish species Identify ways and propose actions to fill any gaps and shortcoming identified in the follow up.	Fish Group	Contribution to work of the Gear group	Continous

[5] Enhance communication and cooperation between the fisheries and environmental administrations of the HELCOM Contracting Parties as well as relevant bodies and institutions, seek to establish **stronger cooperation with ICES, BALTFISH and JBSFC, and Baltic Sea Advisory Council** in order to facilitate mutually supportive agenda and maximize synergies between the different bodies

[6] Provide support for the **implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, Ministerial Declarations and HELCOM Recommendations** as well as propose strategies, guidelines and recommendations in the area of its expertise according to the existing priorities as well as requests by the Heads of Delegations and subsidiary bodies

Annex 4 Topics related fish/fisheries under the HELCOM State and Conservation Working Group

Work on HELCOM Marine Protected Areas

-database on HELCOM MPAs including *inter alia* information on fisheries and aquaculture activities and their regulation within the MPAs

HELCOM Seal Expert Group

-carries out tasks defined by HELCOM Recommendation 27-28/2 'Conservation of seals in the Baltic Sea Area'
-annual meetings, including *inter alia* discussions on seals-fisheries interactions and incidental catch
-incidental catch subgroup
-database for data on Baltic seals under development [situation in October 2016]

Work on coastal fish

-FISH-PRO II project for assessing coastal fish communities in the Baltic Sea
-third assessment of the status of coastal fish to be published in 2017
-database for coastal fish data under development [situation in October 2016]

HELCOM Red List work

-periodic assessments of the threat status of species and habitats/biotopes/biotope complexes using IUCN classification, latest Red List published in 2013 including inter alia fish and lamprey species

OSPAR-HELCOM-ICES Joint Working Group on Seabirds

- annual meetings, including *inter alia* discussions on incidental catch of seabirds and the effects or discard bands

Intersessional Network on Benthic habitats monitoring

- carries out specified tasks on developing benthic habitat monitoring efforts, including evaluating assessment methods of physical damage from human activities on the seabed (incl. fisheries with bottom contact gear)

Work of the HELCOM sturgeon rehabilitation PG

- addresses and coordinates sturgeon restoration measures and actions in the southern countries of the Baltic Sea as well as aims to secure financial support for the required material actions
- currently works on a Baltic Sturgeon Action Plan (in preparation)
- information on the activities are shared in the meetings of State and Conservation

Work of the BalticBOOST project

- assesses the pressure arising from multiple human activities (including fisheries) on the seafloor habitats
- develops a Tool to assess fisheries pressure and habitat sensitivities, ultimately producing spatial impact indices for fishing
- linkages between fisheries pressure levels and habitat integrity are explored with test cases

Annex 5 Outcome of SOI Global Partnership Meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 26-28 September 2016

You can find the Annotated Agenda of the Meeting HERE.

Outcome of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, held in Seoul from 26 to 28 September 2016 ("Seoul Outcome")

1. The Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fisheries Bodies on Accelerating Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets was convened by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Seoul from 26 to 28 September 2016. Financial support was provided by the Government of the Republic of Korea (through the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, the Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation), the Government of Japan (through the Japan Biodiversity Fund) and the European Commission. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Secretariat of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, the IUCN-CEM-Fisheries Expert Group, and the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative.

2. Participants comprised representatives of regional seas organizations, regional fishery bodies and relevant United Nations /international organizations/initiatives as well as experts from national governments and agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

3. The meeting was aimed at facilitating the exchange of experiences and discussing specific tools and guidelines in order to enhance science-based, cross-sectoral and ecosystem-based approaches for addressing biodiversity and fisheries issues, and identifying options and opportunities to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration among regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies, with a view to further strengthening their complementary roles in supporting national implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. Participants noted that this was the first time that such a global meeting had brought together regional seas conventions and action plans with regional fishery bodies.

4. Participants recognized that biodiversity, a healthy environment and resilient ecosystems underpin sustainable fisheries and food security, and that the ecosystem approach to fisheries contributes to sustained environmental functions and the provisioning of ecosystem services.

5. Participants recognized that the level of ambition posed by the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals necessitates action at multiple scales, including at the regional and national levels, and acknowledged the notable challenges facing the achievement of these global goals and targets, including gaps in capacity, issues related to governance, lack of cross-sectoral coordination, limited information base, and constraints related to monitoring, assessing and reporting progress in implementation.

6. Participants also affirmed the essential role played by regional organizations in supporting and facilitating actions by national governments for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, and in supporting and assessing progress towards global-level goals, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Participants stressed the need for enhanced cooperation and collaboration at the regional level, supported by continual exchange of information and lessons learned, exploring of shared objectives, and addressing issues of common interest.

8. Participants acknowledged the diversity of experiences, challenges, priorities and capacities among countries and regional organizations in different ocean regions, and noted the respective mandates of various regional and global intergovernmental organizations.

9. Participants also noted that there are many ongoing initiatives to enhance cooperation between regional seas conventions and action plans and regional fishery bodies, including in the North-East Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Western Indian Ocean, the Western South Pacific, West and Central Africa, and the ROPME/RECOFI[1] region, as presented during the meeting. For some regions, such cooperation is also facilitated by the regional scientific bodies and Large Marine Ecosystem projects, including through cross-sectoral ecosystem-based scientific assessment.

10. Participants noted that regional cooperation is at different stages of development in various regions, and, as such, that the appropriate next steps would vary among different regions, ranging from the establishment of dialogue to support cooperation where it does not exist, to strengthening this cooperation where it already exists.

11. In recognition of the above, participants highlighted various ways and means to further enhance cooperation and coordination among regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies to facilitate implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level through, among other things, scientific collaboration and cooperation as well as the use of tools, approaches and indicators in support of the application of the ecosystem approach and the precautionary approach, including:

(a) Interacting and exchanging information on the respective measures and activities of regional organizations to promote mutual understanding, build trust and ensure that they take their respective outputs into account, thereby complementing each other's work while respecting their different mandates;

(b) Developing joint regional-level strategies, memorandums of understanding, or other collaborative arrangements to identify common objectives, outline joint and/or complementary activities, and clarify roles and expectations of respective regional organizations;

(c) Identifying specific issues of common interest around which to structure cooperation and coordination on scientific and technical matters as well as management tools and approaches;

(d) Promoting harmonized approaches for collecting and accessing data, and exchanging scientific information produced by a wide range of entities, including governments, universities, research institutions/partnerships, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies, e.g., information on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) as well as from the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS) and the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS);

(e) Using the above information for the production of complementary and holistic assessments of the status and trends of the marine environment, fisheries, biodiversity and ecosystems;

(f) Supporting national reporting through regional frameworks, including through compatible approaches for data and reporting formats, using, where possible, existing indicators, and aligning this with reporting on progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. Participants also stressed that cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination at the regional level is underpinned by national-level coordination, and that effective regional coordination on scientific as well as managerial aspects can also facilitate national-level coordination.

[1] ROPME = Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment
RECOFI = Regional Commission for Fisheries

13. Participants affirmed that the meeting provided a valuable opportunity to share experiences from different regions, better understand the mandates and complementary roles of respective regional organizations/bodies in supporting national implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 for achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals, and engage in an interactive dialogue to identify ways and means to further strengthen synergies through collaboration and cooperation.

14. In this regard, participants emphasized the need to continue global dialogues with regional seas organizations and regional fishery bodies on accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and welcomed the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Korea to make this global dialogue a regular forum, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, regional seas organizations, regional fishery bodies, and other interested donors. Such regular global dialogues could continue, perhaps on a biennial basis, to facilitate, promote and take stock of regional-level cooperation.

15. Similarly, participants emphasized the need for capacity-building activities in support of cooperation at the regional level.

16. In order to prepare for future global dialogues, participants suggested that an informal working group be formed, consisting of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and interested United Nations/international/regional organizations, to prepare substantive elements of the meeting programme of future global dialogues and maintain intersessional communication among participants.

17. Participants expressed their deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for hosting the meeting and to the local organizers (the National Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea, the Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation) for successfully organizing the meeting and for their hospitality.