Agenda Item 7 Relations with other Bodies

Document 7-08

HELCOM Project on Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (BALTFIMPA)

Action Requested

- Take note
- Nominate ASCOBANS representative for the HELCOM BALTFIMPA Reference Group

Submitted by Secretariat

NOTE:
IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING

Secretariat's Note

At the 8th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group (31 January - 2 February 2012), Katarzyna Kamińska (Poland) drew the Group's attention to a new project on fisheries in marine protected areas: HELCOM Project on Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (BALTFIMPA). She suggested that the Advisory Committee might be interested in hearing more about BALTFIMPA. It was suggested that ASCOBANS might wish to be an observer on the project steering committee, given that the Agreement was eligible as an observer to HELCOM. The Agreement could be represented by a national delegate already attending.

Action Point 12 agreed by the Jastarnia Group accordingly states:

By 1 March 2012 Parties should inform the HELCOM Secretariat that ASCOBANS is to be nominated to participate in the reference group for the BALTFIMPA project. The 19th Advisory Committee Meeting should nominate the ASCOBANS representative.

In collaboration with Poland, the Secretariat prepared a communication to that effect to the HELCOM Secretariat, as contained in this document. On 5 March, the HELCOM Secretariat acknowledged receipt and stated that they were looking forward to receiving the ASCOBANS nomination to the BALTFIMPA Reference Group following the AC19 Meeting.

Also included in this document are the official Minutes of the First Meeting of Project for Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (HELCOM BALTFIMPA).

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species
Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas
Joint Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme

Mr Mikhail Durkin

Professional Secretary

Helsinki Commission

Request to be included in the BALTFIMPA Reference Group

Bonn, 28 February 2012

Dear Mr Durkin,

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group, which deals with the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises.

During the Group's last meeting, which was held in Bonn from 31 January to 2 February 2012, we were informed about the initial meeting of the HELCOM study project for managing of fisheries in the Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BALTFIMPA), which had taken place in Helsinki in January. The Group was highly interested in this project and would like to request that ASCOBANS be involved as closely as possible to make our joint efforts to protect the Baltic Sea environment more effective.

Additionally, since this project – among other things – aims at the development of measures to minimize bycatch of marine mammals, including harbour porpoises, the Jastarnia Group would like to make available its knowledge in this regard. As you may be aware, this Group has the most specific expertise related to harbour porpoise conservation in the area and its advice could therefore be very useful in the course of the project.

Therefore, taking into account par. 5.5 of the Minutes from the BALTFIMPA project meeting, we would like to request that ASCOBANS be included in the Reference Group established for the HELCOM project for managing fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (HELCOM BALTFIMPA). Your confirmation of our inclusion would be much appreciated.

ASCOBANS Parties would decide on the person to represent the Agreement in the Reference Group of BALTFIMPA project during the 19th Meeting of Advisory Committee of ASCOBANS, which will take place in Galway, Ireland on 20-22 March 2012. Following this meeting, we will communicate the outcome to the HELCOM Secretariat promptly.

Yours sincerely,

Heidrun Frisch

ASCOBANS Coordinator

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MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF PROJECT FOR MANAGING FISHERIES IN BALTIC MARINE PROTECTED AREAS (HELCOM BALTFIMPA)

INTRODUCTION

0.1 The Kick-off Meeting of the HELCOM project on Managing Fisheries in Baltic Marine Protected Areas (BALTFIMPA) was held in Helsinki, Finland, in the premises of the HELCOM Secretariat on 23-24 January 2012. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all the Contracting Parties, except Estonia and Lithuania (cf. List of Participants in **Annex 1**).

0.2 The Meeting was welcomed by Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, incoming HELCOM Executive Secretary and Ms. Anne Christine Brusendorff, incoming ICES General Secretary.

0.3 The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Erkki Ikonen, Finland (fisheries), and Mr. Christian Pusch, Germany (environment) (cf. 2.1). HELCOM Professional Secretary Mr. Mikhail Durkin, assisted by Assisting Professional Secretary Ms. Johanna Karhu, acted as the Secretary of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

Documents: 1/1, 1/2

1.1 The Meeting adopted the provisional agenda as contained in document 1/1.

Agenda Item 2 Election of Co-Chairs

Documents: None

2.1 The Meeting elected Mr. Christian Pusch, Germany, and Mr. Erkki Ikonen, Finland, as co-chairs of the Meeting from environmental and fisheries side respectively.

Agenda Item 3 Information by the Chair, Secretariat and Contracting Parties

Documents: None

3.1 The Meeting took note of the information by the Secretariat regarding the outcomes of HELCOM meetings of relevance for the BALTFIMPA project, including the HELCOM Fisheries and Environment Forum, HELCOM HABITAT and HELCOM HODs.

3.2 The Meeting also took note of the information by the European Union about the EU "Development of a common methodology for assessing the impact of commercial fisheries on marine Natura 2000". The aim is to get the document finalised in April-May 2012.

3.3 The Meeting considered the presentations by

- Ms. Christina Morgado, ICES, on the ICES/Dutch FIMPAS project and the ICES/German EMPAS project (Presentation 1),
- Mr. Christian Pusch, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation on the EMPAS project and its follow-up (Presentation 2)

and agreed that both of presented projects provide good examples of the complexity of issues related to fisheries management within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Meeting also pointed that the proposed BALTFIMPA project should take into account the lessons learnt within existing projects such as EMPAS and FIMPAS, their follow-up and related activities.

3.4 The Meeting noted the comment by Germany supported by Poland on national position introduced in late 2011 that a Council decision procedure under the CFP was proposed to be applied for any new fisheries regulation measures within MPAs.

3.5 The Meeting briefly discussed the EC guidelines on a "Consistent approach to requests for fisheries management measures under the Common Fisheries Policy" and considered that it is often more difficult to resolve potential conflicts with stakeholders, including socio-economic and displacement effects.

Agenda Item 4 **Project Proposal, criteria for selecting MPA cases, organizational structure and establishing a regional steering committee**

Documents: 4/1

4.1 The Meeting took note of the updated BALTFIMPA Project Proposal as contained in document 4/1 and presented by the Secretariat (Presentation 3).

4.2 The Meeting noted general comments by the Contracting Parties on the content of the project proposal and specifically, that

- the project will aim to provide not only test case-based, but also region-wide/Baltic-wide experiences, knowledge and outcome;
- the project activities need to be in full compliance with EU fisheries management regulations, having in mind their exclusive competence in this matter for HELCOM Contracting Parties being also EU Member States;
- the project will be coordinated with ICES in order to ensure that ICES work will be properly integrated into project implementation and outcomes;
- the project is not duplicating the work done nationally within MPAs and that it should be in full coordination with national management bodies, avoiding too complicated structure of the project.

Agenda Item 5 **Selection of MPAs on the basis of criteria and nominations from the Contracting Parties**

Documents: 5/1, 5/2, 5/3

5.1 The Meeting took note of the introduction by the Secretariat to the Guidelines for presenting MPA cases as contained in document 5/1.

5.2 The Meeting considered the nomination of MPA cases

- by Finland on seals-fisheries interactions in the territorial waters of the Eastern Gulf of Finland as contained in document 5/2 and Presentation 4;
- by Denmark with a focus on protection of harbour porpoise in the Great Belt (preventing by-catches in gillnet fishery) and, together with Sweden, on protection of bubble/stone reefs in the Kattegat (from fishery with bottom contacting gear) as contained in document 5/3;
- by Poland on areas of island of Wolin and Uznam/Usedom in the Szczecin Lagoon, the Pomeranian Bay, and southern Baltic coastal waters, as contained in Presentation 5; it was also complimented by the presentation on most used fisheries gears within the proposed sites and about most numerous fish species caught in the last two areas;

5.3 The Meeting discussed the information by Denmark on designation of 89 marine areas falling under protection of Habitat/Birds Directive and about the enforcement/surveillance of fisheries regulations in smaller areas, by enhanced (more frequent) monitoring of VMS data in order to prevent fishing in areas designated for reefs protection.

5.4 The Meeting took note of the presentation by Russia (Presentation 6) on potential protected areas, where evaluation of impacts of fisheries management measures could be envisaged, taking into account existing administrative frameworks of federal and oblast/county level management of marine and land-based areas respectively, as well as proposed general prohibition of fisheries within certain areas, e.g. Ingermanlandskiy natural reserve (to be established by the end of 2012).

5.5 Based on the outcome of the discussion within smaller groups, the Meeting agreed that the Contracting Parties, Observers and the Baltic Sea RAC will be invited to provide the HELCOM Secretariat (johanna.karhu@helcom.fi) **by 1 March 2012:**

- comments to the project proposal and organisational structure (cf. 4.2);
- nominations to the Steering Committee (preferably representing both fisheries and environment field – applicable only to Contracting Parties);
- nominations to the Reference Group (applicable to BSRAC and HELCOM Observers);
- new/amended proposals for test case MPAs (cf. 5.2).

5.6 The Meeting discussed and agreed that the following criteria should be taken into account for prioritisation/selection of test cases

- commitment and willingness to cooperate between authorities;
- access to data;
- potential for resolving conflict(-s) between specific conservation objectives (specific habitats and/or species) and fisheries activities;
- transboundary aspects, regional/Baltic-wide coordination and replicability (either MPA shared by 2 or more Contracting Parties, affected by fisheries activities of 2 or more Contracting Parties or dealing with protection of migratory species);
- potential for developing/testing of environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective fishing gears.

5.7 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to propose the short list of nominations based on the above criteria and circulate it to the Contracting Parties **by 30 March 2012** to be finalised through the email procedure by the nominated Steering Committee members not later than **by 1 May 2012**.

Agenda Item 6 Activities of the inception phase and the work-plan

Documents: 6/1

6.1 The Meeting took note of the Work plan for Inception Phase presented by the Secretariat as contained in document 6/1, taking into account limitations in funding for the inception phase. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to include the table with the timeline of the Inception Phase to the Minutes of the Meeting (cf. **Annex 2**).

6.2 The Meeting also welcomed the information by the Secretariat on the efforts to obtain funding e.g. from the 5th Call of the EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 (open till the end of March 2012), to which an application containing BALTFIMPA as one component in a larger framework/umbrella project is intended. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate the project idea form as soon as it is ready to the parties concerned having in mind the need for clarification of partnership formalities and co-financing issue before final application.

Agenda Item 7 Preparing for the generic tool to assist decision making and listing of alternative fishing gear

Documents: None

7.1 The Meeting pointed out the need to use term "environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective" instead of "alternative" fishing gears.

7.2 The Meeting took note of the plan for preparing for the generic tool to assist decision making and listing of environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective fishing gear presented briefly by the Secretariat.

7.3 The Meeting considered the information presented by the Contracting Parties on available experiences for development/testing of environmentally-sound/ sustainable/selective fishing gears:

- Denmark informing about experiences of the DTU-Aqua in development of environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective gears and welcoming the development of the list;
- Finland describing development and availability of environmentally-sound/sustainable /selective gears for whitefish and salmon fisheries;
- Germany stressing the need to sort out pre-listed environmentally-sound/sustainable/ selective gears based on reasons for development of such gears and consideration of economic viability of proposed gears;
- Poland informing on preparation for application for funding for a project to test environmentally-sound fishing gears such as set nets and cod pots, as well as on application of different mesh size gears such as T90 to avoid by-catch of undersized fish;
- Sweden welcoming the idea for elaboration of the list, but also suggesting to elaborate a format for compiling the list that could include e.g. type, function, technique, reason for being considered as environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective, etc;
- Latvia reporting on experience from earlier projects e.g. "MPAs in the Eastern Baltic Sea" (alternative fishing report);
- EU informing on the study commissioned on the impacts of gears on by-catch of birds, the 2011 Communication on acoustic devices on cetaceans COM(2011)578 final), etc. and recently started research tender on assessing selectivity of currently applied gears in cod fisheries in the Baltic Sea (to be completed in 2013).

7.4 Based on the information presented and following discussion, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to develop a reporting format on environmentally-sound/sustainable/selective fishing gears and circulate it to the Contracting Parties **by 10 February 2012** with a view to receive reports back **by 10 March 2012**.

7.5 The Meeting considered the information presented by the Contracting Parties on experiences for development of a generic tool for guiding evaluation of impacts of different fishing modalities/gears on protected habitats/species:

- Denmark, generally welcoming the idea for a generic tool preparation, stressed the need to have clear objectives for such generic tool and that it should act as a guidance for the Contracting Parties;
- Finland stated that a generic tool should be applicable for both coastal and open sea areas, as well as on a case-by-case basis;
- Germany requested clarification for sharing responsibilities on development and testing of a generic tool within the Inception Phase and actual project;
- Latvia and Poland welcomed the proposal for a development of a generic tool;
- Sweden informed about existing national experience on application of similar tool for assessment of fisheries impact on MPAs (Marbipp), proving to be an efficient mechanism, also highlighting that a tool should be case-specific and the issue of keeping the matrix updated;
- ICES stressed the need to take into account lessons learnt from earlier projects (cf.3.3).

7.6 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to develop a Terms of Reference on elaboration of a generic tool to assist decision making and circulate it to the Contracting Parties **by 10 February 2012** with a view to receive feedback **by 10 March 2012**.

Agenda Item 8 Any other business

Documents: None

8.1 No information was presented under this agenda item.

8.2 The Meeting took note of the information by the Secretariat that invitations to other upcoming meetings within the Inception Phase will be circulated to the participants well in advance with a view to have them back-to-back with other relevant meetings.

Agenda Item 9 Closure of the Meeting

Documents: 9/1

9.1 The Meeting adopted the draft Minutes of the Meeting as contained in document 9/1. The Minutes of the Meeting were finalized by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Meeting and made available in the HELCOM Meeting Portal, together with the presentations given during the Meeting. The Meeting Portal can be accessed either directly at http://meeting.helcom.fi or via HELCOM web site => “Meetings and Documents”, “Meeting Portal”: under “Projects” => “HELCOM BALTFIMPA” => folder “BALTFIMPA 1/2012.

ANNEX 1 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX 2 TIMELINE FOR INCEPTION PHASE ACTIVITIES

Table. Timeline for inception phase activities in 2012

Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kick-off meeting: Initiation of activities, establishment of Steering Committee, selection of criteria, nominations of MPA cases, planning	x											
Proposal for generic tool and alternative fishing gear (outcome products)	x	x	x									
Email consultation, final deadline for MPA case proposals				x								
Steering Committee meeting: First drafts of outcome products ready, selection of MPA cases and preliminary stakeholder mapping, planning forward									x			
Work on outcome products				x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Outcome products ready, email consultation, regional workshop planning											x	
Regional workshop: sharing results and information about the project, way forward												x