

Work programme for the Baltic Sea Advisory Council

1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

Background to the BSAC

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) was established in March 2006 after a decision by the EU to create so-called Regional Advisory Councils in the fisheries sector.

The main aim of the BSAC is to prepare and provide advice on the management of Baltic Sea fisheries in order to achieve a successful running of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. The Commission has produced a Delegated Regulation laying down detailed rules on the functioning of the Advisory Councils.

The BSAC membership is made up of organisations representing fisheries interests and representative of other interest groups affected by the CFP (e.g. environmental, sports and recreational fisheries organisations). The BSAC consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee, three working groups: for demersal fisheries, pelagic fisheries, and for ecosystem-based management. The demersal and pelagic working groups have been holding joint working groups since 2010; they will be separated and focus on specific issues. When necessary, they will merge to cover shared topics. The chair and vice chair of the Executive Committee, the honorary chair of the General Assembly, and the chairs of the working groups are elected according to the provisions of the BSAC statutes.¹ Together with the Secretariat they form a Management Team established to facilitate the running of the organisation.

Introduction to the Work Programme 2020-2021

In implementing its work programme for 2020-2021, the BSAC will continue the dual approach taken last year. The long-term approach will continue to focus on overarching issues relating to the Common Fisheries Policy. The short-term approach will continue to feed into the long-term approach and provide input.

¹ At the ExCom and the General Assembly meetings in 2018 the Executive Committee members, the Honorary chair, the Demersal and Pelagic WG chairs, were elected for three years. The BSAC Executive Committee chair was elected on 6th November 2018 for 2½ years. The vice chair stepped down on 31st December 2019: election pending. The chair of the working group on EBM was elected by ExCom on 11th May 2017; his chairmanship will run until 2020. The Secretary is appointed by the Executive Committee to lead the Secretariat, with the annual approval of the Executive Committee, in the first instance for three years. A new contract for rapporteur-information assistant for 2020-2021 applies from 1st April 2020.

The BSAC intends to carry out an external performance review of the organisation. Objectives, including Terms of Reference for such a review, will be discussed and agreed with the BSAC Executive Committee. The draft operating budget includes this.

The long-term approach

According to Article 49 Basic Regulation², the Commission shall report on the functioning of the CFP on 31st December 2022. The BSAC will clarify with the European Commission its approach to the Common Fisheries policy from 2023.

A discussion on the future Common Fisheries Policy began at a BSAC meeting on 3rd September 2019, with a second meeting on 17th March 2020. This will continue into the WG 2020-2021 as necessary.

The short-term approach

The main focus of the year's work will be:

- **Cod**

During the WP year 2019-2020, the BSAC made it a priority for the BSAC to address the challenges facing the Baltic cod stocks and held a specific meeting on 29th January 2019.³ The BSAC recommendations for the fishery 2020 also reflected concerns regarding cod.⁴ Relevant work to address cod in the Baltic will be dealt with.

- **Western Baltic herring**

During the WP year 2019-2020, the BSAC recommended that ICES be asked to advise on a recovery plan for western Baltic herring. The BSAC proposed remedial measures and a solution to the consequences of new proposed reference points for this stock. A focus group was formed to analyse varying strategies that will lead to SSB recovery ($SSB > B_{lim}$). The BSAC will work further on this with a view to developing a re-building strategy for this stock.

² Basic Regulation: The Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the functioning of the CFP by 31 December 2022. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:354:0022:0061:EN:PDF>

³ [http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Executive-Committee-meeting-\(4\)](http://www.bsac.dk/Meetings/BSAC-meetings/BSAC-Executive-Committee-meeting-(4))

⁴ <http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/BSAC-Statements-and-recommendations/BSAC-recommendations-for-the-Baltic-fishery-2020/BSACRecommendationsTACs2020FINAL.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB>

- **Ecosystem based management**

The following issues are anticipated under ecosystem based fisheries management: implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the Baltic, integrated sea use management/maritime spatial planning, predator interactions and collaboration with HELCOM on the update of its Baltic Sea Action Plan.

- **Selectivity and the landing obligation.**

The BSAC will continue a proactive approach with regard to selectivity and to enhancing improved co-operation between fishermen, scientists and net-makers. There may be particular focus work related to the adoption in 2019 of the new technical measures regulation 1241/2019.⁵

- **Multiannual multi-species management of the Baltic fish stocks, taking into account ecosystem interactions**

The BSAC will continue to provide advice and recommendations which take into account multi-species considerations and interactions.

- **The Directives on single use plastics and port reception facilities**

These Directives were adopted during 2019. The BSAC is aware of their importance within its scope of work and will address them where necessary under relevant working groups and where relevant in collaboration with the other Advisory Councils.

- **Multiannual management plan for salmon**

The BSAC has awaited developments. It attended a meeting of the ICES WKBaltSalMP in November 2019. The BSAC anticipates being consulted on a draft management plan, once ICES has delivered its report. Specific technical measures for salmon are also anticipated.

- **Eel**

The BSAC anticipates the release by the Commission of a Staff Working Document on the results of an evaluation of the EU eel management plan performed by an external consultant. The BSAC will base its further work and recommendations on the outcome of this evaluation.

⁵ http://www.bsac.dk/getattachment/BSAC-Resources/Documents-section/European-Parliament-and-Council/Techmeasures2019_1241ENG.pdf.aspx?lang=en-GB

- **A new fisheries control regulation**

After specific working group meetings held in 2018 and 2019, the BSAC will continue the work, and if necessary, conclude during the WP year. In the broad context of fisheries control and inspection, the BSAC intends to hold one of its Executive Committee meetings in Vigo in order to strengthen collaboration and interaction with and understanding of the work of the EFCA.

- **Producing recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2021**

ICES will release its annual advice for the Baltic stocks at the end of May 2020. The BSAC will hold a working group to deal with this, and develop recommendations for the Baltic fishery in 2021.

- **Other topics and subjects of relevance to the BSAC**

These will be dealt with within existing working groups or can be the subject of a specific working group/seminar.

- **External meetings**

The BSAC will take part in relevant external meetings. **The key external meetings for BSAC participation are:**

BALTFISH Forum under the Finnish Presidency (until 30th June 2020) and the Estonian Presidency (from 1st July 2020).

European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) Advisory and Administrative Board meetings

Commission Inter-ACs meeting (the annual meeting with the Advisory Councils)

Commission organised EU Russia meeting

Commission organised State of the Stocks meeting, as well as other relevant seminars or meetings

ICES annual meetings with the Advisory Councils, as well as relevant working groups/benchmarks

HELCOM Group on ecosystem-based sustainable fisheries (FISH) and related HELCOM meeting activities

Meetings/activities provisionally planned and to be budgeted for:

1 General Assembly

3 Executive Committee meetings, one of which will be held on the day before the General Assembly [the BSAC will hold a fourth ExCom if needed and if it can afford one more]

3/4 Working Groups [depending on the expenditure]

1 Focus Group

Management Team meetings during the year where necessary (anticipated prior to ExCom or other BSAC meetings, thus not budgeted for separately).

**Provisional draft meeting/activity agenda
(BSAC welcomes help with the provision of meeting rooms)**

Meeting	What for	Date	Place
Working Group or Focus Group	Western Baltic herring and Cod	April 2020	Copenhagen
Executive Committee	Preparatory meeting for General Assembly	Tuesday 19 th May 2020 morning	Riga
General Assembly	Annual Meeting	Tuesday 19 th May 2020 afternoon	Riga
Demersal and Pelagic Working Groups – joint if necessary	To deal with the annual Baltic stock advice	9 th and 10 th June 2020	Copenhagen
Executive Committee	Finalisation and adoption of annual Baltic stock advice	June	
Working Group EBM		September / October 2020	
Executive Committee	Admin matters + selected topics	Late September/2 nd half October 2020 (avoid weeks 37, 41 and 42)	Vigo
Executive Committee	Admin matters + selected topics	January 2021	
Working Group		February 2021	

Guidelines on interpreting

At the BSAC management meeting on 5th December 2018, it was decided, for reasons connected to budgetary limitations, to provide interpretation only at ExCom and General Assembly meetings. Interpretation in the language of the country hosting the meeting should also be provided, to allow wide participation of local stakeholders. Based on experience, there is a need for two languages per meeting, plus provision of the local language. The ExCom should decide whether to increase the budget in this category by moving some of the funding allocated to meetings.

The budget for interpreting is thus based on the guidelines above.

Reimbursement of members to attend BSAC meetings

The BSAC will continue its practice of reimbursing actual costs for travel and hotel incurred by the members. In addition, it will reimburse taxi costs and/or airport parking costs in connection with travel to and from BSAC and relevant meetings, where necessary and justified.

The payment of per diem to small scale fisheries representatives

At its meeting on 8th May 2018, the Executive Committee decided to continue to give additional compensation⁶ to small scale fisheries representatives at meetings of the BSAC. The budgeted maximum is for 16 during the year. This is to compensate for loss of earnings. This will continue during the work programme year 2020-2021. The participant will be asked to provide a signed confirmation that he/she is an active fisherman representing one of the BSAC member organisations and that in order to attend the meeting, is unable to fish. The per diem is 125 EUR per day of meeting.

⁶ Per diem of 125 Euros and reimbursed travel and hotel costs. Fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of less than 12 m and not using towed fishing gear. EMFF Regulation 508/2014