

Work programme for the Baltic Sea Advisory Council (Draft)

1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

Background to the BSAC

The Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) was set up in March 2006 after a decision by the EU to create so-called Regional Advisory Councils in the fisheries sector (Council Decision 2004/585/EC). (Decision was later repealed by the new Basic Regulation.)

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 consists of organisations representing the fisheries and other interest groups affected by the CFP (e.g. environmental, sports and recreational fisheries organisations). The structure of 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, because they share issues of common interest. Issues relating to salmon and sea trout, eel and predatory interactions are dealt with by the working group for ecosystem-based management. 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

¹ The ExCom and the General Assembly meetings in 2018 dealt with the election of the Executive Committee members, the Honorary chair, and the Demersal and Pelagic WG chairs, all of whom were elected for a period of three years. The BSAC Executive Committee chair was elected on 6th November 2018 for a period of 2½ years. The vice chair was elected on 7th November 2017, so his period of office will run until 2020. The chair of the working group on EBM was elected by ExCom on 11th May 2017, so his chairmanship will also 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. The contract with the rapporteur was agreed in 2017 (for 1.4.17-30.3.18); it includes the possibility for 2 extensions of one year each. The rapporteur has confirmed that she is ready to accept a second extension for the year 2019-2020.

Introduction to the Work Programme 2019-2020

In implementing its work programme for 2019-2020, the BSAC will be taking a dual approach. A long-term approach will focus on overarching issues, relating to the Common Fisheries Policy. The short-term approach, covering specific meetings and activities, will feed into the long-term approach and provide input.

The long-term approach

A discussion on the future Common Fisheries Policy will be initiated already now, in order to produce a communication from the BSAC to the Commission. The key question is: what should the future CFP contain? This work should be initiated already now, so as to communicate the BSAC position to the Commission.

The BSAC will be investigating what the European Commission's approach to the Common Fisheries policy will be from 2023. According to Article 49 Basic Regulation², the Commission shall report on the functioning of the CFP on 31st December 2022.

The short-term approach

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

- **Cod**

The BSAC recommendations for the fishery for 2019 gave particular focus to the two cod stocks in the Baltic. The BSAC has expressed its continued concern at the critical condition of the eastern cod stock, as reflected in the ICES advice of 2018. Some of the mechanisms behind the generally bad condition of the stock are beginning to be understood. The BSAC has made it a priority for the BSAC to address this issue. Moreover, the problem of how to deal with the cod of eastern origin in the western management area is complex and now becomes even more complex as the size of the western cod stock increases.

- **Western Baltic herring**

The ICES advice for this stock was for a zero catch in 2019. The BSAC recommended that ICES be requested to advise on a recovery plan for western Baltic herring. The BSAC has taken the initiative to propose remedial measures and find a solution to the particular situation that has arisen as a consequence of the new proposed reference points for this stock and has formed a focus group which will analyse the potential of applying varying strategies that will lead to SSB recovery ($SSB > B_{lim}$) within a varying timespan. The BSAC will work further on this.

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>

- **Ecosystem based management**

Work will continue in the framework of the BSAC working group on ecosystem-based management. The following issues are anticipated: management of fisheries in marine protected areas/Natura 2000 areas, further work with ecosystem based fisheries management, implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the Baltic, integrated sea use management/maritime spatial planning, and predator interactions.

- **Selectivity and the landing obligation.**

The BSAC will maintain a proactive approach with regard to selectivity and to enhancing improved co-operation between fishermen, scientists and net-makers, within the regional co-operation with BALTFISH.

- **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.

- **Multiannual management plan for salmon**

The BSAC is still waiting to get involved in further consultations of a draft plan, which has not been dealt with since the end of 2017. This will include specific technical measures for salmon.

- **Eel**

The BSAC activities devoted to eel will depend on the outcome of the consultation initiated in December 2018 by the Commission.

- **A new control regulation**

After specific working group meetings held in August 2018 and January 2019, the BSAC will continue the work on this as necessary.

- **Producing recommendations on fishing opportunities for 2020**

Once ICES releases its advice for the Baltic stocks on 29th May 2019, the BSAC will hold a two-day working group to deal with this, and develop recommendations for the Baltic fishery in 2020.

- **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 Swedish Presidency (until 30th June 2019) and Finnish Presidency (from 1st July 2019)

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]

4 Working Groups [the BSAC will hold more 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 meeting/activity agenda
(BSAC welcomes help with the provision of meeting rooms)**

Meeting	What for	Date	Place
A Focus Group	As required by work programme	TBD	TBD
Working Group	???????	April 2019 ?????	
Executive Committee	Preparatory meeting for General Assembly	Tuesday 14 th May 2019 afternoon	Copenhagen
General Assembly	Annual Meeting	Wednesday 15 th 2019 morning	Copenhagen
Joint Demersal and Pelagic Working Group	To deal with the annual Baltic stock advice	11 th and 12 th June 2019	To be decided (hopefully Finland)
Working Group EBM		September / October 2019	
Executive Committee	Admin matters + selected topics	November 2019	
Executive Committee	Admin matters + selected topics	January 2020	
Working Group		February 2020	

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.

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 compensation³ to small scale fisheries representatives at meetings of the BSAC. The budgeted maximum is for 14 during the year. This is to compensate for loss of earnings. This will continue during the work programme year 2019-2020. 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.

³ 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