

BALTFISH Presidency discussion document
EMFF WORKING GROUP CONCEPT

In the context of a reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and in particular Article 18 of the CFP Basic Regulation¹, the recent work of Regional Fisheries Management Support Bodies (RFMSBs) in the European Union, such as BALTFISH, has gained a significant intensity and importance. The Presidency finds it useful to consider broadening the scope of BALTFISH activities to matters pertaining to the implementation of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The Presidency believes that a deepened and focused cooperation of EMFF Managing Authorities in a regional context of Baltic Sea, with active observer involvement from the European Commission, would improve the quality of implementation of national Operational Programmes. This in turn would lead to better use of EMFF public money, which is a widely shared objective.

The specific activities of the group could comprise, but not be limited to, the following matters:

- Dissemination of knowledge on best practices in EMFF use and implementation, both in shared and direct management context;
- Addressing technical questions concerning the EMFF implementation;
- Improved cross-border cooperation at project level where warranted by the scale of the phenomenon being addressed;
- Analysing the best ways to decrease error rates;
- Identify opportunities for cooperative research and innovation projects;

In principle, the working arrangements for the Group would ensure that administrative burden for administrations relating to its operation is minimal.

The Presidency thinking on this group is largely influenced by the outcome of the *workshop on improving the influence on the EMFF through cooperation* held in Tallinn, Estonia on 24 and 25 September 2015. The respective conclusions are annexed for reference.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC