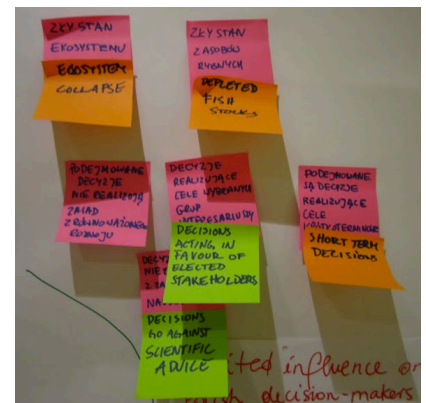
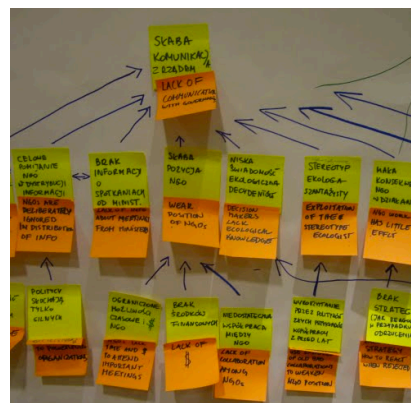


# STRATEGIC WORKSHOP ON SECURING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN FISHERIES: INCREASING THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF POLISH NGOS

## MEETING REPORT



### *Analysis using Problem Tree Methodology: Key Insights and Action Points*

February 23, 2012

**Warsaw, Poland**

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## Background/Context

Fish stocks in the Baltic Sea are in a vulnerable position. They are most significantly affected by commercial fishing. Advanced eutrophication and pollution compounds the problem, resulting in poor reproduction and high levels of toxins in some species. Moreover, future climate change effects could further deteriorate the spawning conditions for several species, such as Baltic cod.

Despite political commitments to secure the health of the Baltic Sea, the necessary policies have not followed. Civil society therefore has a crucial role to play in ensuring that decision-makers are living up to their obligations.

Poland has one of the largest fishing fleets in the Baltic and is a large EU Member State, giving it political importance in fisheries discussions. To date, Poland's influence has been rather negative. A lack of public debate on fisheries issues has enabled the government to employ short-term measures, which often fail to adequately consider the environmental dimension.

There is a tradition of non-inclusive and non-transparent government in Poland, which does not involve participation of civil society. In addition, NGOs are still relatively young in Poland, the oldest ones being established in the mid-1980s. This means that the context for NGOs wishing to influence policy is rather difficult, with opportunities for engagement and influence still quite limited. The fact that NGOs have not been heard is not only due to government not listening, however, but also to the weak voice of NGOs. It is arguably the case that the 'closed' nature of Polish fisheries management has been able to continue because NGOs have not presented a credible and vocal front.

In the absence of effective intervention, Poland will likely continue being a damaging force in Baltic Sea fisheries management, to the detriment of Baltic Sea fish stocks and the wider marine ecosystem. It is clear to Polish NGOs that they need to engage with their government on the fisheries policy level in order to shift the current imbalance and create a positive influence in the Baltic Sea fisheries management. The challenge is to respond effectively to this need, by providing tailored training in fisheries policy advocacy, and other related matters, which the NGOs themselves identify as important.

The Fisheries Secretariat (FISH) decided to organize a strategic workshop to further analyse the lack of influence and the barriers that prevent this, as well as identify the needs of Polish NGOs with the aim to build an adequate and representative curriculum for future training sessions, which address and strengthen their strategic, technical and political capacity.

## Welcome

*Niki Sporrang, Director, The Fisheries Secretariat (FISH)*

## Purpose and Framing

*Iwona Roman, Regional Policy Officer, The Fisheries Secretariat (FISH)*

Głównym celem dzisiejszego warsztatu, to identyfikacja barier, wobec których stoją polskie organizacje pozarządowe pragnące wywierać wpływ na polski rząd,

parlamentarzystów i europarlamentarzystów w zakresie unijnej i krajowej polityki rybołówstwa.

Na podstawie dzisiejszego warsztatu, istnieje cel zaplanowania serii sesji szkoleniowych mogących wzmocnić zdolności strategiczne, polityczne i techniczne i tym samym pomóc w pokonaniu barier, które obecnie blokują wywieranie wpływu na stanowisko polityczne dotyczące polskiego rybołówstwa.

Sesje szkoleniowe będą koncentrować się na wypełnieniu rzeczywistych luk w umiejętnościach, zidentyfikowanych wspólnie. Mylimy że działania projektowe będą realizowane w Polsce, przez specjalistów w dziedzinie rybołówstwa z Polski i z Unii Europejskiej, trenerów w dziedzinie technik partycypacyjnych, oraz specjalistów zajmujących się tworzeniem polityki i kampanii wsparcia dla organizacji pozarządowych

Projekt ten powstał na podstawie rozmów z wami, i potrzeba szkoleń w dziedzinie polityki rybołówstwa została wyrażona podczas ostatnich strategicznych warsztatów na temat procesu reformy wspólnej polityki rybołówstwa, jakie FISH zorganizowała w czerwcu 2011r, i forum innych spotkań, np.. spotkanie członkowskich OCEAN2012, czy nawet rozmów w kulisach

Proponowany zasadniczy problem na dzisiejsze sesje to:

*„Ograniczony wpływ na polskich decydentów w dziedzinie krajowej i unijnej polityki rybołówstwa”.*

### **Kontekst ekologiczny**

Stan zasobów rybnych w Bałtyku jest w trudnej sytuacji. Stada ryb są bardzo uszczuplone w wyniku przełowienia komercyjnych gatunków. Ponadto, problemem jest rosnąca eutrofizacja i substancje zanieczyszczające, co ma negatywny wpływ na warunki reprodukcyjne gatunków i powoduje wysokie stężenie toksyn w niektórych gatunkach.

Ponadto, skutki zmian klimatycznych mogą w przyszłości jeszcze bardziej pogorszyć warunki życia wielu gatunków, takich jak dorsz bałtycki.

Polska ma jedną z największych flot rybackich na Bałtyku i jest znaczącym członkiem Unii Europejskiej-- jej głos w dyskusjach na temat rybołówstwa ma duże polityczne znaczenie.

W przeszłości ci wpływ Polski był raczej negatywny. Brak publicznej debaty na temat kwestii rybołówstwa umożliwiła również wprowadzanie działań krótkoterminowych, które często nie uwzględniały wymiaru ekologicznego.

Mimo politycznego zaangażowania w poprawę zdrowia Bałtyku, nie wypracowano żadnej niezbędnej polityki. W związku z tym, społeczeństwo obywatelskie, a w tym my jako organizacje pozarządowe, ma do odegrania istotną rolę w zapewnieniu, aby decydenci wywiali się ze swoich zobowiązań.

W Polsce istnieje tradycja pracy rzędu w mało transparentny sposób, bez uwzględniania uczestnictwa społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. Ogranicza nam to możliwość zaangażowania się i oddziaływania na decydentów na poziomie krajowym

Od 2007 roku, w reakcji na krytyczną sytuację dwóch stad dorsz bałtyckiego, wspólnie pracujemy wszyscy razem, i w 2010 powstała Polska czarna koalicja OCEAN2012 która koordynuje Justyna Niewolewska z Naszej Ziemi.

Niektóre z waszych organizacji pozarządowych współpracują o komponent rybołówstwa do swoich rocznych programów działań i prowadzone są teraz w Polsce długoterminowe projekty w dziedzinie rybołówstwa, w celu podniesienia świadomości i opinii publicznej na temat komercyjnych połowów i ich wpływu na środowisko Bałtyku.

Dzisiaj na pewno jesteśmy my mocniej zaangażowani w kwestię rybołówstwa, i w kwestię polityki rybołówstwa, w porównaniu do 2007. Wydaje mi się też że w coraz większym zakresie chcemy się angażować w kwestię polityki rybołówstwa. Mam nadzieję że nasz dzisiejsze warsztat będzie krokiem do przodu w kierunku wzmocnienia zdolności strategicznych, politycznych i technicznych i tym samym pomóc w pokonaniu barier, które obecnie blokują wywieranie wpływu na stanowisko polityczne dotyczące polskiego rybołówstwa.

## Participants

The workshop was attended by 16 participants, 13 of those representing 10 Polish NGOs. In total 6 participants cancelled, last minute, due to unforeseen circumstances (4 representatives from WWF, Ewa Kos from Foundation from Our Side, and Dariusz Szwed from the Green Institute). To start, each participant shared one challenge and one success in their current work. Below is a complete list of all the participants.

1. Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, President, Nasza Ziemia
2. Justyna Niewolewska, OCEAN2012 coordinator, Nasza Ziemia
3. Agnieszka Wieczorek, OCEAN2012 Press Officer, Nasza Ziemia
4. Malgosia Izdebska, 'Clean up the World' Foundation
5. Jacek Bozek, President, Klub Gaja
6. Radek Gawlik, President, Eko Unia
7. Artur Furdyna, President, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Rzeki Iny i Gowienicy (TPRIIG)
8. Piotr Gruszka, Member, Polski Klub Ekologiczny
9. Agata Gojska, Lead in Baltic Sea Harbour Porpoise project, Mediatorzy.pl
10. Jacek Winiarski, Press Officer, Greenpeace Poland
11. Magdalena Figura, Coordinator of the Marine Campaign, Greenpeace Poland
12. Irenerusz Mirowski, Director of Environmental Protection, OTOP (Polish BirdLife partner)
13. Dawid Szescilo, Lawyer, Client Earth
14. Niki Sporrang, Director, FISH
15. Iwona Roman, Regional Policy Officer, FISH
16. Marcin Ogonowski, Policy Officer, FISH

## Methodology: Problem Tree Analysis

*Ian Chandler, Workshop Facilitator, the Pressure Group*  
(Power Point presentation attached)

This workshop was facilitated by Ian Chandler, using Problem Tree Analysis to further explore the lack of concrete influence of Polish NGOs, its causes or barriers and effects.

The aim of this analysis was to identify support interventions, such as training, to help increase the impact of NGO work.

### **What is the Problem Tree Methodology?**

Problem Trees are used to help analyse a situation or problem that one wishes to address. Being a visual mapping tool, the Problem Tree is appropriate for a participatory approach, thus strengthening the analysis, improving its objectivity and generating ownership. It can be used for strategic planning, advocacy planning and organisational development work.

Each Problem Tree is created around a powerful statement, called the CORE PROBLEM, which is put at the centre of the tree (the trunk of the tree). Next, the roots (causes of the problem) and branches (effects of the problem) are identified by participants.

To develop a problem tree:

1. Agree the core problem that you want to analyse. This should be expressed simply and clearly and written on a post-it note and placed near the centre of a very large piece of paper (perhaps 4–6 sheets of flip chart paper stuck together).
2. Discuss and agree the most direct causes of the problem and write them on different post-it notes, placing them below the core problem. Do not draw any arrows at this stage – you may want to change the position of the causes.
3. For each of these causes, discuss and agree what causes them and write these causes on different post-it notes, placing them below the factor that they caused.
4. Keep repeating this process until you feel that you have a comprehensive “root” analysis of the different causes of the problem. You have now created the roots of your Problem Tree.
5. Discuss and agree the most direct effects of the problem and write them on different post-it notes, placing them above the core problem.
6. For each of these effects, discuss and agree what further effects they result in.
7. Keep repeating this process until you feel that you have a comprehensive analysis of the different effects of the problem. You have now created the different branches that make up the crown of your Problem Tree.
8. Ensure that every post-it note is very clear and specific, and that the links between them show clear cause-and-effect relationships. You may need to re-position some post-it notes and add new ones throughout the process.
9. When you are all happy with the position of every post-it note and you feel that your analysis is complete, you should draw onto the paper the arrows that link the factors.
10. Take a photograph of your Problem Tree (in case the post-it notes fall off), or capture it in some other way.
11. You should now be in a position to identify some tangible barriers to your work that you would be able to overcome. Other barriers will be impossible to shift. Making this distinction is important.

### **OUR core problem**

The *Core Problem* for the workshop was proposed by FISH, based on earlier discussions with the NGOs themselves and our long-term engagement in Poland:

*“Limited influence on Polish decision makers on national and EU fisheries policies”.*

Participants were invited to send their own proposals and/or feedback on the core problem prior to the workshop; however, we did not receive any suggestions to rephrase the problem from any of the attending NGOs.

## Creation of our Trees

Participants were divided into three groups to create 3 separate Problem Trees, based on our chosen Core Problem. The groups were as follows:

### Cod (Group 1)

Justyna Niewolewska, Nasza Ziemia

Malgosia Izdebska, Nasza Ziemia

Artur Furdyna, Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Rzeki Iny i Gowienicy (TPRIIG)

Piotr Gruszka, Polski Klub Ekologiczny

Marcin Ogonowski, FISH

### Herring (Group 2)

Radek Gawlik, Eko Unia

Jacek Winiarski, Greenpeace

Irenerusz Mirowski, OTOP

Jacek Bozek, Klub Gaja

Mira Stanisławska-Meysztowicz, Nasza Ziemia

Iwona Roman, FISH

### Sprat (Group 3)

Agnieszka Wieczorek, Nasza Ziemia

Agata Gojska, Mediatorzy.pl

Magdalena Figura, Greenpeace

Dawid Szescilo, Client Earth

Niki Sporrang, FISH

The three groups had about 1.5 hours to create the Problem Trees, which were later presented to all the participants. All participants had the possibility to ask questions and seek clarification on anything that was presented. Please see Appendix 1, 2, 3 for the results of the three Problem Trees.

## Causes defined

Since there was so much information contained in the Problem Trees (see Appendix 1, 2, 3), the participants proceeded to identify the main causes to our core problem and then aggregated them into 5 themes or “focus areas” (which included issues that had come up in all the discussions). This served as the initial analysis of the trees, and provided a ‘big picture’ vision of what barriers the NGOs are facing.

Below is a list of causes that have to be addressed to tackle our core problem:

**“Limited influence on Polish decision makers on national and EU fisheries policies”.**

### **Political CAUSES:**

- Nepotism
- Lack of effective communication between decision makers and NGOs
- Short termism of political vision for the environment
- Lack of trust and openness of decision makers
- Lack of democratic rules and procedures
- Political priority given to economy not environmental impact
- Lack of awareness about environmental issues on the government level
- Low competence of government representatives
- Decision makers view NGOs through a stereotypical lens ('activists', 'hippies', etc)

### **NGOs CAUSES**

- Limited NGO capacity (number of organizations involved, number of people within organizations)
- Low impact on fisheries policy (often working in isolation)
- Complicated funding structures (often funding is government based)
- Lack of time and resources
- Inability to hire highly competent staff due to financial restrictions
- Lack of trust towards government
- Lack of adequate strategy if messaging rejected
- Lack of adequate technical knowledge
- Great need of better communication tools and strategies

### **Public CAUSES**

- Lack of awareness among the general public on environmental issues
- Historical/cultural values created a situation where the public does not put enough pressure on the government
- Generally, lack of societal respect for fish as living creatures – seen as food only
- Lack of societal interest in the Baltic Sea and fisheries

### **Science-related CAUSES**

- Lack of collaboration between scientists and NGOs and fishermen
- Scientists tied to government (funding)
- Few scientists speak with an NGO voice or independently
- Lack of time to seek out scientists who would be willing to work with NGOs

### **Media CAUSES**

- Lack of interest in Baltic Sea fisheries
- Lack of collaboration on fisheries issues
- Lack of knowledge on fisheries policy and generally issues affecting the Baltic Sea
- Not a 'sexy' topic for media to write on

## **Selected Themes**

In an overall group discussion led by Ian Chandler, the participants created a number of themes by clustering the main causes from the Problem Trees. Next, the participants had an opportunity to vote on which barriers they found the most pertinent and most likely to be able to change.



Once the themes had been selected, we had another round of group work, with 4 groups circulating through the themes and suggesting solutions –adding proposals on how and what would be needed to overcome the identified barriers.

Therefore, below is a list of themes (extracted from the general causes to the core problem as identified by the Problem Trees) the NGOs identified as the most critical, and which the NGOs believe can be addressed through *action now*. Included are also the possible solutions, which emerged during the discussions.

#### THEMES:

##### 1. Political engagement/participation & Strategy/coordination

- NGOs don't understand rules and procedures
- NGOs and politicians speak a different language
- No formal framework for civil society consultation/participation
- Input of local NGOs not valued by decision makers

##### **Suggested solutions:**

- Procedures and laws need to be designed and used to facilitate and ensure public participation;
- Change public participatory methods by putting pressure on the government to change the law;
- NGOs need to learn the rules and procedures in order to engage on a political level, be respected and provide valued input.
- NGOs to speak to politicians in language they can relate to – include the economic perspective.

##### 2. Funding

- Lack of NGO staff who only deal with funding issues
- NGO financing dependent on the government
- Strategic approach of NGOs short-term due to limited and insecure funding

##### **Suggested solutions:**

- Look at non-government funding sources
- Delegating a staff member to deal with fundraising
- Securing multi-year funding, as this would allow for a longer term perspective in planning action for 'greening' fisheries policy in Poland.

##### 3. NGO messaging/media

- Sustainability not presented in economic terms – benefit for people (the 'why get engaged')
- NGOs not trusted or respected by the public
- NGOs not presenting arguments relevant to the audience
- Poor communication among the NGOs
- Lack of united NGO voice: need a common message
- Lack of media coverage
- Fish seen as vegetables (religious ties)
- Lack of public interest

#### **Suggested solutions:**

- Improve cross-NGO collaboration in Poland through an NGO platform which includes frequent communication, such as Skype conferences, physical meetings, etc.
- Developing a common NGO message in relation to fisheries policy
- Engage the public by presenting arguments relevant to them, including the economic consequences of NOT engaging.
- Work to improve relations with media
- Work to increase media interest in fisheries policy

#### **4. Science**

- Lack of scientific support to the NGO community
- Lack of NGO technical knowledge
- Lack of scientific data
- Scientific evidence disrespected/discredited by sector
- Lack of scientific capacity in Poland

#### **Suggested solutions:**

- Create an online space where scientific information will be posted on Polish and international fisheries issues (who would maintain this?)
- Increase scientific capacity in Poland, by taking the time to identify scientists willing to speak independently.
- Collaborate with the sector through scientists

## **Recommendations for Action**

Below we have summarised the proposed action points generated through this second round of discussions in small groups, many of which can be acted upon immediately.

### **1. Political Engagement and Participation combined with Strategy and Coordination**

**ESSENCE: Polish NGOs need a better understanding of rules and procedures in policy making and should push for a change in social consultation methods**

#### *Action Proposals*

- Training in order to fully understand decision-making processes (national and EU level)
- Process to identify suitable tools to influence policy
- Greater participation in political processes
- Continuing with actions, campaigns and happenings
- Making documents public
- LONG-TERM action: Lobbying to influence a change in rules and procedures for government organized public consultations in Poland
- Developing closer connections with decision-makers, in the context of the CFP (EU level) but also with national government representatives, MEPs, etc.

- Engage decision-makers on a local level in order to demonstrate the potential benefits of collaboration with NGOs – provide them with a platform and support.
- Develop practical and concrete solutions to the problems we are trying to tackle.

NGO LEAD NEEDS TO BE IDENTIFIED:

## 2. Funding

**ESSENCE: Insecure funding often dependent on the government, and lack of long term strategy (due to funding insecurity)**

### *Action Proposals*

- Hire staff to research funding opportunities and try to access them
- Start looking for funding from non-government sources
- Create a catalogue of potential funders (available to all)

NGO LEAD NEEDS TO BE IDENTIFIED

## 3. NGO messaging/media:

**ESSENCE: The need for a united NGO front (collaboration) and speaking to politicians in their language (the importance of the economic dimension)**

### *Action proposals*

- Create opportunities to develop/formulate a common message (with other NGOs)
- Use simple language when communicating science to the public
- Lead organisations (such as Greenpeace or OCEAN2012) to formulate proposals for joint messages, and asks contributions or support from others (as has been done by OCEAN2012 and FISH in the past)
- Get help from PR professionals when formulating the message: on a regular basis
- Stay open/prepared to change the method of communicating the main message
- Make messages on fisheries simple: take out the essence of what is already available
- Try to include financial arguments, such as the economic value of our natural resources
- Attend available training on PR and communications
- Create partnerships to achieve one goal
- Exchange of internal experts
- Create opportunities for teleconferences on pertinent issues
- Establish working groups
- Organize informal meetings

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY:

Jacek Winiarski of Greenpeace, offered to lead a workshop on PR and communications, *pro bono*, for interested Polish NGOs.

NGO LEAD: Greenpeace Poland

#### 4. Science

**ESSENCE: Lack of scientific knowledge and capacity working with NGOs, and the need for more technical knowledge and scientific data.**

##### *Action Points*

- Informing Polish scientists about interesting workshops, conferences (i.e. international focus, as well as NGO conferences/workshops)
- Easier access to scientific advice/evidence/data through an internet based portal (i.e. HELCOM). Funding to develop and maintain this type of website operation can be allocated through collaborative effort
- Identification of scientists who are supportive of NGOs (universities, private institutions) and can be used in communication and collaboration
- Integrating scientists with NGOs (workshops, joint meetings)
- Identify international scientists that share our views and engage with them
- Joint NGO positions supported by scientist (for instance regarding fishing limits)
- Internal education projects: inviting scientists to teach NGOs about scientific data and create knowledge needed to be able to communicate complex messages in an understandable way
- Sharing interesting articles/information (science based) among Polish NGOs

NGO LEAD NEEDS TO BE IDENTIFIED

#### Next steps

Overall, the participating NGOs found this workshop to be very helpful in seeing the greater picture of working with fisheries policy on a national (focus) and EU level. The workshop illuminated the substantial work needed in order to improve and strengthen the political engagement of NGOs Poland on fisheries issues. Some of the participants found the amount of issues to deal with on this level daunting, yet very helpful in identifying the next steps.

There were questions on how to proceed with all this gathered information. It was decided that Iwona Roman at FISH would compile this report, including *steps forward* by way of delineating possible training themes, which are in line with the needs expressed/identified at the workshop. It was also decided that the participants will be able to vote for different suggested topics in order to select the most appropriate training curriculum.

#### Suggested training

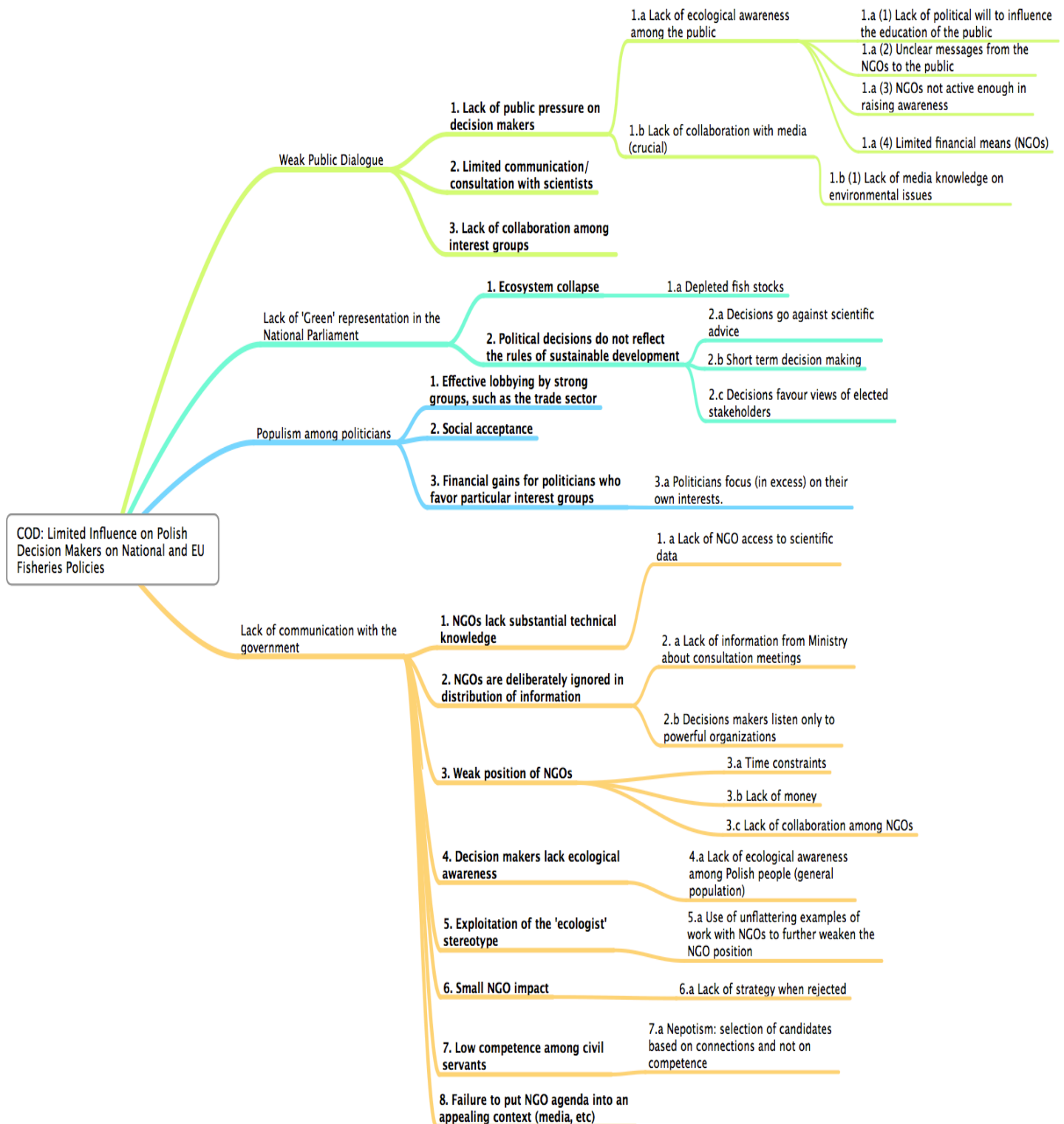
Based on the Problem Tree Analysis and the barriers identified by the Polish NGOs, below is a proposal for a series of workshops, which will aim to gradually dissolve the barriers felt by Polish NGOs. These workshops will build organisational capacity in terms of technical and strategic knowledge on how to work with fisheries issues in Poland and in the European Union.

**Proposed Training Workshop Themes:**

1. Fisheries Policy in Poland and EU: how does it work?
2. Fisheries within the wider ecosystem: interactions and effects.
3. Integration of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) with wider marine issues: the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP).
4. How to access and communicate scientific information: the Do's and Don'ts
5. Let's collaborate on fish policy: NGOs and scientists meet
6. Political Engagement: Process design for NGO strategy to work with fisheries policy
7. Funding: What's out there?
8. Market research: What does the Polish public really think?
9. Communications/Messaging and Public Relations: effective methods
10. Media and the Baltic Sea: how can they fall in love?

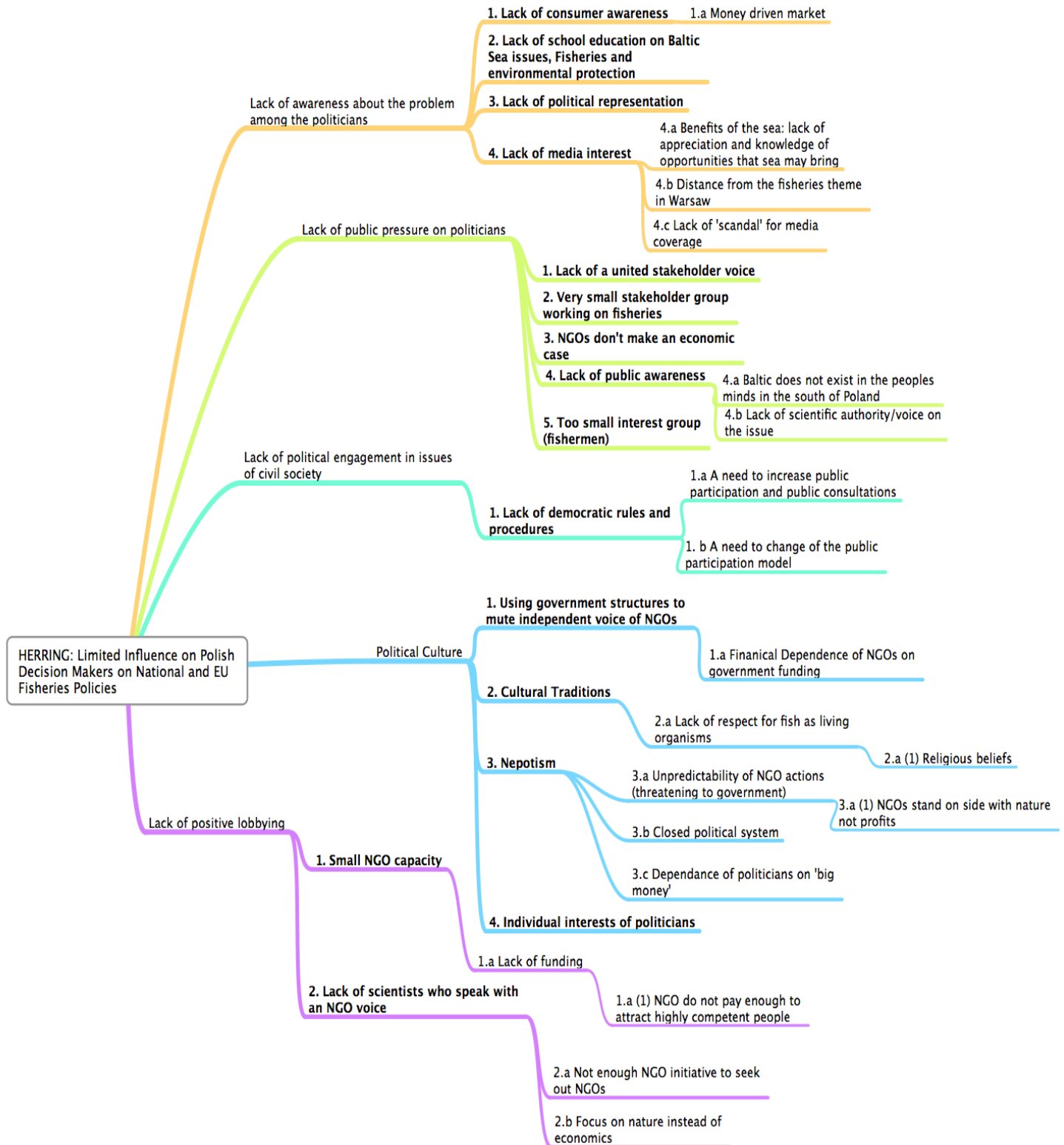
## APPENDIX 1

### Group COD (1): Problem Tree



## APPENDIX 2

### Group HERRING (2): Problem Tree



### APPENDIX 3

#### Group SPRAT (3): Problem Tree

