



10th Steering Committee meeting of the Policy Area Nutri “To reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels” of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2016

Opening:

The 10th meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 08:30 on 10th November, 2016, at the premises of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Swedish EPA) in Stockholm, Sweden by the Policy Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs). The meeting was organized as a back-to-back meeting to the 7th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR and Policy Area Hazards (PA Hazards) steering group meeting.

Present:

1. Sanni Turunen, chair, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
2. Andrzej Podscianski, chair, PAC Nutri Poland, National Water Management Authority
3. Laura Saijonmaa, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
4. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, HELCOM Secretariat
5. Josefin Hjort, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
6. Marit Ristal, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
7. Alexander Somoza, DG REGIO, European Commission

Apologies:

1. Airida Deimontate, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency
2. Adriana Dembowska, PAC Nutri, National Water Management Authority, Poland
3. Anne-Mette Hjortebjerg Lund, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment and Food
4. Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment
5. Kristiina Isokallio, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
6. Wera Leujak, NFP Germany, Federal Environment Agency
7. Agne Lukoseviciene, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of the Environment
8. Rene Reisner, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
9. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment

A. Introduction

The meeting started with joint session with PA Hazards. Marianne Tegman, the Head of EU and multilateral environmental agreements unit at Swedish EPA, warmly welcomed the both steering committees. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky gave a short wrap-up of the joint workshop of PAs Hazards and Nutri held in the EUSBSR Annual Forum, which focused to waste water treatment sludge handling. The final conclusion of the workshop was that there is a need to continue the work on regional approach regarding utilizing sewage sludge in order to minimise negative impact on environment.

After the joint session, Sanni Turunen presented the PA Nutri agenda of the meeting. The meeting discussed the following topics: flagship proposals, seed money proposals, special report NO 3/2016 from the European Court of Auditors and work plans for 2016 and 2017.

B. PA Nutri flagship proposals

Sanni Turunen introduced two flagship proposals: *BASROD - Studies of Baltic Sea restoration by oxygenation of the deepwater* (project leader: University of Gothenburg, Sweden) and *CIL - Combating internal leakage and recycling of phosphorus* (project leader: TechMarket Sweden AB). The project leaders had presented the project plans at the previous PA Nutri SC meeting (27 April 2016) after which the SC and PACs have given feedback to the project proposals to better fit in the PA Nutri flagship criteria¹. The project leaders sent their updated project descriptions by 14 October 2016 in order to allow the SC members to familiarise with the new plans and provide comments to the SC meeting. The project proposals were also discussed in the 5th HELCOM Pressure group meeting. The PACs received written comments to the project proposals from Germany and Latvia and presented them in the SC meeting during the round table discussion.

The SC discussed the project proposals and noted that the topic of internal loading was actively presented in the 7th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR. The SC found the topic both interesting and challenging at the same time. The SC admit the importance of the topic, but at the same time agreed that before going to deep sea the potential of reducing internal loading / internal storage needs to be studied and tested on a smaller scale or in coastal areas to assess the environmental

¹ http://files.groupspaces.com/eusbsr-nutrient-inputs/files/1708073/9kM1XZNhZpel6nrKisbD/9_SC_PA_Nutri_Warsaw_Minutes.pdf

impacts and sustainability of the measures. The SC, however, noted that the main focus should still remain on reducing the external loading to the sea. The SC concluded that the updated project proposals are still not in line with PA Nutri flagship criteria and policy goals. Comprehensive risk and sustainability assessment procedures are missing from both project descriptions. The SC decided not to support the BASROD and CIL projects as PA Nutri flagships.

The SC addressed a need for an in depth discussion between the scientific community and the implementers to further evaluate the risks and potential. The SC noted that both Finnish and Swedish Programmes of Measures of Marine Strategy Framework Directive have measures to assess the importance of internal nutrient stores and the possibilities for cutting these. The SC suggested organising a workshop on the topic with HELCOM in the future to evaluate what the situation is in different countries and to allow open discussion and a concrete way forward on the matter.

C. Seed Money proposals

Andrzej Podscianski described the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Seed Money process, time table and the pre-selection criteria². The PACs received four Seed Money proposals by the deadline of 28 October 2016 and the proposals were submitted to SC for comments before the meeting. The PACs, together with the SC, can pre-select up to three applications and will send a list of pre-selected draft applications to the Interreg Managing Authority / Joint Secretariat by the second week of December 2016. The PACs received written comments from Latvia and presented them in the SC meeting during the round table discussion.

General pre-selection criteria from the Programme manual Chapter J³:

- The draft application demonstrates potential for a high macro-regional impact;
- The draft application contributes to fulfilling the objectives, indicators and targets of the EUSBSR;
- The draft application is related to the implementation of one or more actions of the policy area/horizontal action concerned;
- The draft application has a clear transnational dimension;

² <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/applying-for-funds/seed-money-calls/first-call-open.html>

³ https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/about_programme/Main_documents/Programme_Manual_clean.pdf



- The draft application demonstrates added value to already implemented activities/initiatives in the region.

The criteria for a PA Nutri flagship status were used as a rough guidance that the project should:

1. fulfill [the general Flagship criteria stated in the Action Plan for the EUSBSR](#)
2. be in line with at least one of the Actions of the PA Nutri
3. not overlap with other existing Flagships or any other projects
4. have concrete sustainable results for reducing nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea
5. submit transferable results which shall become public - a practical outcome

The PACs will send the SC meeting minutes to the project leaders. Based on the SC comments the project leaders of DESIRE and QWATERA can adjust their applications. The updated project applications should be sent to PACs by 30 November 2016. The PACs will discuss the updated applications with the SC via email and make the final pre-selection by the second week of December 2016.

BSFF - Baltic Sea Friendly Farming (project leader: Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Center in Minikowo, Poland)

The project aims to create a single tool to analyse all risks of environmental pollution associated with the operation of a farm to increase awareness of farmers, institutions and advisors on the risks and to promote sustainable farming. The SC recognised that there is a need to improve agricultural advisory. The SC expressed some concerns about the model feasibility regarding the variety of practices, approaches and conditions around the region and, hence, attractiveness to farmers. For instance, it is not specified what would be the language of the tool. Added value to already implemented activities has not been indicated enough. The application, focusing on promoting sustainable farming methods, demonstrates a link to PA Bioeconomy goals. It would be desirable to establish a link with HELCOM and EU requirements regarding farming in Nutrient Vulnerable Zones. Overall, the SC did not recognise the application to fulfil the general pre-selection criteria in a sufficient way and decided not to support it for the Seed Money call.

URBLUME - Blue green cities towards mitigation of eutrophication problem (leader: Kaunas university of Technology, Lithuania)

The main objective of the project is to set conditions of storm water retention and treatment in urban areas with respect to optimizing nutrient removal and energy efficient operation.

The SC agreed that the issue of storm water management is of environmental importance in the Baltic Sea region. However, it is not clear enough how the project fits into PA Nutri criteria. The SC noted that the project applied PA Nutri flagship status in the previous SC meeting (27 April 2016) where the SC decided not to support the project as a flagship. Some hesitations in this regard, have not been fully addressed. It is not entirely clear what is the added value to already existing, similar in scope, NonHazCity and iWATER projects. The project idea seems to be much of theoretical nature and focus too little on concrete measures. Overall, the SC recognised the application as neither fulfilling the general pre-selection criteria in a sufficient way nor having a strategic value to PA Nutri, and decided not to support it for the Seed Money call.

DESIRE - Development of sustainable wetland management restoration and biomass utilisation of peatlands in the Neman river catchment to improve water quality of the Baltic Sea (project leader: Michael Succow Foundation)

The project aims at changing the currently unsustainable practice of intensively used or abandoned drained peatlands by rewetting and restoring their nutrient and water retention function and saving the peat as a carbon store. The drainage water management is an important measure to reduce nutrient loads, especially from agriculture. The project proposal also supports the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The SC, however, would like to elaborate how the project is linked to many other activities related to wetlands, especially to PA Nutri flagship projects SIGWET and SUWMAB. The SC recognised that the application fulfilled the general pre-selection criteria in a sufficient way and had strategic value to PA Nutri.

Before making the final selection the SC wishes to provide the following comments to the project leader to improve and clarify the application:

- In the Seed Money call Belarus is not an eligible partner and therefore adjustment in the project partnership is needed. In general the SC is in favour of including activities in Belarus when preparing the main project.
- The project description should elaborate publicly available information on other regional projects and activities of similar nature (e.g. PA Nutri flagships SIGWET and SUWMAB) in order to ensure possible synergies and avoid any overlaps.



- Only nitrogen mineralisation is described in the application. Reduction potential of phosphorus should be included as well.
- The SC was also in favour of better clarification on the process of collecting biomass.

QWATERA - Evaluation of water quality and territories vulnerability in Daugava River basin (leader: Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Centre)

The main objective of the project is to improve nutrient load data in transboundary Daugava River Basin and increase cooperation in the region when updating the river basin management plans of the EU water framework directive. The SC noted that the result of the project would be additional and benefit HELCOM work and also implementation of UN Geneva Convention on Transboundary Waters, Water Framework Directive, Russian Water Code and possibly for Belarusian legislation. Reliable data of transboundary load through Daugava river will support achieving reduction targets, and the project would promote cooperation in transboundary rivers, especially with regard to river basin management plans. The SC recognised that the application fulfilled the general pre-selection criteria in a sufficient way and had strategic value to PA Nutri.

Before making the final selection the SC wishes to provide the following comments to the project leaders to improve and clarify the application:

- In the Seed Money call Belarus and Russia are not eligible partners and therefore adjustment in the project partnership is needed. In general the SC is in favour of including activities in Belarus and Russia when preparing the main project.
- It should be clarified that the proposed project doesn't overlap with the planned activities of PA Nutri flagship RelNutData or any other ongoing projects. The SC recommends the project leaders to discuss with the Latvian and Finnish partners of the RelNutData project idea, if the two ideas could be combined in the main project.
- River basin management commissions should be involved as additional partners to identify most cost efficient measures and to implement them in order to get concrete sustainable results for reducing nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea.



D. Special Report NO 3/2016 from the European Court of Auditors entitled 'Combating eutrophication in the Baltic Sea: further and more effective action needed'

Alexander Somoza presented the Special Report and noted that the reply of the Commission is included in the report. Sanni Turunen presented the draft paper from PACs on PA Nutri lessons learned and response on the report as a basis for the discussion. There are no direct recommendations to PA Nutri in the report, but PA Nutri could evaluate how to do its part better in the whole context. PACs noted that many activities to improve the situation have already been started. For example the new flagship proposals are evaluated in the SC meetings against the PA Nutri criteria in order to have concrete sustainable results and avoid duplication. Andrzej Podscianski informed that the work on the Polish National Programme of Marine Water Protection, which supports the goals of the EUSBSR in combating eutrophication, has been accomplished and is now waiting for final approval.

The SC noted that roles of HELCOM and PA Nutri have been clarified and cooperation with Pressure and Agri working groups shows good example. HELCOM sets the policy targets and PA Nutri facilitates the implementation of activities between the member states and also reports back to HELCOM on successful activities and main findings.

The SC also welcomes a representative from DG ENV to participate in the SC meetings.

E. Work Plans for 2016 and 2017

Sanni Turunen presented the fulfilled work plan for 2016 and planned work plan for 2017 including specific objectives and main activities. For 2016 the main objectives were to promote identification and development of new flagships, further developing cooperation with HELCOM and other EUSBSR policy areas and organising stakeholder events in Poland, Finland and Sweden.

During 2017, PA Nutri plans to facilitate development of flagship projects into mature projects for funding, assess the effectiveness and share knowledge of the measures and environmental instruments applied in the river basin management plans of EU Water Framework Directive and the programmes of measures of marine strategy framework directive in relation to agriculture and follow up and monitor the progress of ongoing flagships. The planning of the assessment of the



effectiveness starts in spring 2017 and it will be implemented in autumn 2018 following by a seminar or set of workshops. The PACs will send a set of questions to the SC during spring 2017.

PA Nutri plans to organise a nutrient recycling workshop 23-24.1.2017 in Berlin, Germany, together with PA Hazards and HELCOM Agri working group. The SC members can propose speakers and participants to the workshop, which deals mainly nutrients in sewage sludge and manure.

The 8th EUSBSR Annual Forum will be organised 13.-14.6.2016 in Berlin, Germany. Proposals for PA Nutri activities are welcome. The PACs proposed to have the next PA Nutri SC meeting as back-to-back meeting of the forum.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 by the PACs.