



11th 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
June 13, 2017

Opening:

The 11th meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 09:00 on 11th November, 2017, at the premises of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) in Berlin, Germany by the Policy Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs). The meeting was organized as a back-to-back meeting to the 8th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR.

Present:

1. Sanni Turunen, chair, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
2. Andrzej Podscianski, co-chair, PAC Nutri Poland, National Water Management Authority
3. Kristiina Isokallio, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
4. Laura Saijonmaa, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
5. Robert Almstrand, 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
8. Wera Leujak, NFP Germany, Federal Environment Agency
9. Monika Luxem-Fritsch, NFP Germany, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety

Apologies:

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



A. Introduction

Monika Luxem-Fritsch welcomed the meeting and provided greetings from the high-level United Nations Ocean Conference held 5-9 June 2017 in New York, USA.

Sanni Turunen presented the PA Nutri agenda of the meeting. The meeting discussed the following topics: Commission's first joint report for four macro-regional strategies, outcome of the HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on nutrient recycling, plans of the HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves, PA Nutri flagships, PA Nutri activities to support nutrient reduction from agriculture, next meetings, KEEP database and project platforms.

B. Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies

Alexander Somoza presented the key findings from the report on the implementation of the four EU-macro-regional strategies¹ adopted on 16 December 2016 together with a staff working document, and the Council conclusions adopted on 25 April 2017. Commission intends to draft a single report every two years describing the progress made towards the implementation of the strategies and presenting recommendations. The macro-regional strategies cover 19 EU Member States and 8 non-EU countries. The Baltic Sea region has area specific problems, but acts as a forerunner, for example in maritime safety, and has a long history of cooperation. Future challenges remain to create monitoring for the strategies and further improving funding possibilities and communication to stakeholders. For the Save the Sea objective of the EUSBSR, however, HELCOM provides a relevant framework for monitoring progress.

C. HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on nutrient recycling

Andrzej Podscianski presented the main outcomes² of the HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on nutrient recycling held in 27-18 March 2017 in Berlin, Germany. The workshop was organised as a joint activity of HELCOM Agri and Pressure working groups and EUSBSR policy areas Bioeconomy, Hazards and Nutri. The workshop had 40 participants from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russia and Sweden. A starting point for the workshop was a draft Overview of nutrient recycling in the Baltic Sea countries³. The workshop was divided into two parallel

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/

² <https://portal.helcom.fi/meetings/HELCOM%20Workshop%20on%20nutrient%20recycling-418/MeetingDocuments/Outcome%20of%20HELCOM%20Workshop%20on%20nutrient%20recycling%20in%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20countries.pdf>

³ <https://portal.helcom.fi/meetings/AGRI%204-2017-419/MeetingDocuments/6-1%20Overview%20of%20nutrient%20recycling%20in%20the%20Baltic%20Sea%20countries.pdf>



sessions devoted to recycling phosphorus from manure and sewage sludge. The main conclusion was that nutrient recycling is not yet an established concept within the Baltic Sea region and more information is needed on nutrient cycles. There are needs for regional projects to identify areas of high nutrient surplus and suitable measures to manage these and to elaborate a regional palette of technological solutions for phosphorus recycling from sewage sludge.

D. HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves

Robert Almstrand presented the plans for HELCOM-EUSBSR workshop on internal nutrient reserves to be held in November/December 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The two-day workshop will be arranged jointly by Finland and Sweden. The principle focus areas are to:

- a) identify scientific knowledge gaps concerning the extent, distribution and mobility of phosphorus reserves in the Baltic Sea;
- b) discuss the issues related to the policy and legal framework required for mitigation measures.

The aim of the workshop is to highlight the knowledge-base across Baltic Sea region countries, to promote open discussion and to identify concrete ways forward. Participation is by invitation only and there is room for 50 participants per day.

The SC supported organising the seminar on preliminary dates 28-30 November 2017 in order to bring the results to the HELCOM HOD meeting in December 2017. The SC members were encouraged to think of possible speakers and participants and inform all suggestions to robert.almstrand@havochvatten.se and sanni.j.turunen@ym.fi by 31 August 2017.

E. PA Nutri flagships

Andrzej Podscianski presented the results from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme's (BSRP) second call and seed money call. PA Nutri gave support letters for six concept notes (BaRuWa, SmallWWTPs, SUWMAB, BEST, SIGWET, RelNutData) out of which three (SmallWWTPs, SUWMAB, BEST) were selected to submit full application and one was approved for funding (BEST - Better efficiency for industrial sewage treatment, lead by City of Helsinki, Environment Centre, Finland). Altogether 39 projects were approved for funding including 10 projects for Natural resources priority. There are still 19 million euros left for the next call for Natural resources priority. PA Nutri gave two support letters (DESIRE, QWATERA) for Interreg BSRP seed call and both proposals received the seed funding. The next seed money call will open in the end of 2017.



At the moment PA Nutri has 14 projects listed in the EUSBSR Action plan out of which four are completed, four are ongoing and the remaining six are either running with seed funding or otherwise under development to apply for funding. Additionally, the two new seed projects would like to apply for flagship status.

The SC noted with concern that out of six flagship projects of PA Nutri applying for funding from the Baltic Sea Region Programme five applications were rejected. This is an issue to be discussed in the joint meeting of the NCs and the Programme's monitoring Committee on 15th June 2017 to clarify whether the reasons for rejection were e.g. technical or the proposals were not considered relevant for the programme.

The SC discussed the PA Nutri flagship status and the procedure of when to grant the flagship status. The SC supported to continue the practice that flagship status could be given to project initiatives that have received seed funding for project preparation in order to support the process of searching funding and suitable partners. The SC also discussed if there should be a time limit or other criteria for 'unsuccessful' project ideas, after which the project would be removed from the action plan.

PACs proposed that PA Nutri flagships and flagship candidates would be invited to the next PA Nutri SC meeting(s) to present preliminary results and their monitoring, planned activities and future wishes from PA Nutri.

E.1 Ongoing flagships

NutriTrade was funded from Interreg Central Baltic Programme 2015 and has one year of implementation left. Baltic Blue Growth and IWAMA received funding from the Interreg BSRP first call 2016 and have two years of implementation left. BEST received funding from Interreg BSRP second call 2017 and will start its activities after summer. The PACs will discuss with the project leaders about their possibilities to attend the next PA Nutri SC meeting(s).

E.2 Flagships under development

BaRuWa, SUWMAB and SmallWWTPs have applied for Interreg BSRP first and second calls, but have not been approved for funding. Over the course of summer PACs will discuss with the project leaders whether the project initiatives are still relevant for the Baltic Sea region and if the project leaders have considered applying funding from other sources. Based on the information the PACs might invite the project leaders to the next SC meeting(s) after which the SC will decide whether to keep the flagships in the EUSBSR Action plan or not.



SIGWET and CONSUME are currently developed under seed funding. PACs will discuss with the project leaders and invite them to the next SC meeting(s) where the project plans can be discussed and further developed with the SC.

PACs received a notice from RelNutData project leaders that the project initiative will be developed under seed project QWATERA. Therefore the project leader will not continue with the RelNutData project initiative, but they will cooperate with QWATERA. Once there is more information on the final contents, the SC will come back to consider whether RelNutData flagship would be deleted or merged/replaced with QWATERA in the EUSBSR Action Plan.

E.3 New candidates

The SC discussed about granting a flagship status to DESIRE and QWATERA which received seed funding from the Interreg seed money call 24 May 2017. PACs reminded that in the past PA Nutri has had a procedure to invite the project leaders to a PA Nutri SC meeting before making the final decision. Therefore it was agreed that PACs will ask the project leaders to send an updated project descriptions during summer with possible partners for main funding and invite the project leaders to the next SC meeting to present the project plans. SC members will familiarise with project plans accordingly and decide on the flagship status in the next SC meeting.

F. PA Nutri activities to support nutrient reduction from agriculture

Sanni Turunen informed about the PA Nutri activity to facilitate and develop environmental instruments and models for Baltic Sea region to manage nutrient reduction from agriculture and asked for feedback and ideas from the SC. The activity is part of PA Nutri technical assistance grant from EU and the activity is planned from late 2017 to early 2018.

The current plan is to hire a consultant to process and facilitate networking and development. The work consists of a small baseline study and organising 2-3 targeted transnational workshops for experts working with River Basin Management Plans and agriculture in the Baltic Sea region. The meeting noted that the topic of the activity is quite broad and it could focus on either animal production or traditional agriculture. The workshops could for example highlight case examples of potential environmental instruments and how to make implementing of measures feasible. PACs will draft Terms of References for procuring a consultant and circulate them for SC for comments during summer.



G. Other issues

The 8th EUSBSR Annual Forum 13-14 June 2017 in Berlin, Germany, includes many interesting seminars and parallel sessions for PA Nutri, such as HELCOM's session on 'Latest status of the sea revealed', HA Neighbour's sessions on 'Cooperating with Northwest-Russia' and 'Cooperation with Belarus, UBC's session on Smart water sector' and NutriTrade's session on 'Harnessing the digital revolution'.

The 9th EUSBSR Annual Forum will be organised 4-5 June 2018 in Tallinn, Estonia with theme of 'After 2020 - EUSBSR and future of EU policies, especially cohesion policy, funds and programmes'. PA Nutri will seek for possibilities to organising a seminar at the Forum and having a SC meeting back-to-back with the event.

The meeting discussed the dates for the next PA Nutri SC meeting. It was agreed to look for possibilities of having a full day meeting together with PA Nutri flagship leaders. The next meeting could be for example back-to-back with either HELCOM-EUSBSR nutrient reserves workshop in Gothenburg, Sweden or HELCOM HOD meeting in Helsinki, Finland. The PACs will look for possibilities and suggest place and time for the SC via email.

Robert Almstrand informed about a coming EUTRO Conference to be organised in 18-20 June 2018 in Denmark.

Alexander Somoza informed about the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 and the request from DG ENV to raise issues from the EUSBSR.

Andrzej Podscianski informed about the updated KEEP⁴ database, including seven PA Nutri flagships that have received funding for main project activities.

Andrzej Podscianski informed about the Interreg BSRP plans to launch a call for Project Platforms in autumn 2017 to deepen the knowledge base and exchange activities of Interreg projects. PACs participated in the workshop to develop the call in March 2017. The level of PACs involvement in the Platforms is still being discussed.

Laura Saijonmaa informed about the opening of the Kaliningrad waste water treatment plant in spring 2017 as a good milestone for the protection of the Baltic Sea.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 by the PACs.

⁴ <https://www.keep.eu/keep/>