



12th 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
February 1, 2018

Opening:

The 12th meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 09:00 on 1st February 2018, at the Baltic Sea Center of the Allas Sea Pool, Helsinki, Finland by the Policy Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs).

Present:

1. Sanni Turunen, chair, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
2. Kristiina Isokallio, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
3. Laura Saijonmaa, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
4. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, HELCOM Secretariat
5. Robert Almstrand, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

Invited guests:

1. Saara Bäck, Head of unit of Waters and Marine Areas, Ministry of the Environment of Finland
2. Björn Grönholm, BSR WATER, Union of the Baltic Cities - Sustainable Cities Commission
3. Susanna Kaasinen, Agri project platform, HELCOM
4. Malgorzata Loga, BigRivers4Baltic, Warsaw University of Technology, Poland
5. Marina Abramchuk, DESIRE, Michael Succow Foundation
6. Lena Tasse, Baltic Blue Growth, Region Östergötland
7. Katrine Möller Sörensen, Baltic repair, The Tullstorp Project

Apologies:

1. Andrzej Podscianski, co-chair, PAC Nutri Poland
2. Airida Deimontate, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency
3. Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment
4. Helle Knudsen-Leerbeck, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment and Food
5. Wera Leujak, NFP Germany, Federal Environment Agency
6. Agne Lukoseviciene, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of the Environment
7. Rene Reisner, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
8. Alexander Somoza, DG REGIO, European Commission
9. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment



A. Introduction

Saara Bäck welcomed the meeting and thanked for the work done under PA Nutri and its flagship projects. She highlighted the need of the Baltic Sea region member states to influence the EU-financing instruments to secure financing for the 'Save the Sea' -objective also after 2020. She noted the importance of HELCOM and PA Nutri cooperation and the flagship projects in implementing the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP)a, the national River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and Programme of Measures (PoMs) under the EU Water Framework and Marine Strategy Directives. She also noted the forthcoming revision of the BSAP and the RBMPs & PoMs as well as the development of the new EU multi-annual financing framework and emphasised the need to ensure that the EUSBSR 'Save the Sea' objective is incorporated into these plans and financing instruments.

Sanni Turunen presented the PA Nutri agenda of the meeting. The meeting was divided into two sessions: the first session for the SC members and invited guests and the second session for the SC members only. The meeting focused on the following topics: presentation and discussion of platform proposals and a PA Nutri flagship, presentation, discussion and decisions on flagship proposals, discussion of existing PA Nutri flagships, updating PA Nutri terms of references and events related to PA Nutri. Presentations will be published at the PA Nutri webpage: <http://groupspaces.com/eusbsr-nutrient-inputs/pages/documents>

B. Presentation and discussion on platform proposals

Interreg Baltic Sea Region -programme has an open call for applications for project platforms. The main aim of the platforms is to increase the impact of EU-funded projects in the Baltic Sea region and ensure cooperation with the coordinators of the EUSBSR. Therefore, the platforms should engage the relevant EUSBSR coordinators as partners or associated partners. The call closes 28 February 2018.

Björn Grönholm presented the 'Platform on integrated water cooperation in the Baltic Sea region (BSR WATER)' proposal. In the platform, projects related to water management from different sectors, such as wastewater, storm water and coastal areas, could work in cooperation and share results. The platform activities include collecting and sharing good practices, solutions and expertise synthesis, reaching out and engaging new experts and users of the Baltic Smart Water Hub online platform developed in IWAMA project, and facilitating development of policy recommendations.



Susanna Kaasinen presented the 'Sustainable manure and nutrient management for reduction of nutrient loss in the Baltic Sea Region' proposal. The aim of the platform is to support the region and EU to create holistic strategy for sustainable management of nutrients, to help farmers to estimate and implement best practices in their farms and to achieve healthier Baltic Sea and less impact on climate.

The SC thanked for presenting the platform ideas and encouraged SC members to provide input to the applications. The meeting noted that the original aim was to combine these two platform proposals into one strategic platform to support the HELCOM nutrient recycling strategy, but now both proposals support the strategy and work in close cooperation. HELCOM will participate in both platforms to ensure the holistic view and linking to the policy work. The SC welcomed the platform proposals, expressed willingness to work in cooperation with them and supported PA Nutri to participate as associated partner.

C. Presentation and decision of new potential flagships

In the first session, invited project representatives presented three new flagship proposals (BigRivers4Baltic, DESIRE and Baltic rePAIR). In the second session, the SC members discussed the proposals and decided on the potential to approve them as new flagships for PA Nutri. Germany and Latvia sent written comments to the flagship proposals, which were taken into account in the discussion.

BigRivers4Baltic - River basin management in Oder, Vistula, Nemunas and Daugava oriented on decrease of N and P inflow to Baltic (project leader: Warsaw University of Technology)
Presented by Malgorzata Loga

The objective of the proposed project is to enable a harmonised approach to nutrient loads assessment and reduction by Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Russia and Germany through four biggest rivers flowing to the Baltic Sea. The project aims to support water management boards with calibrated models for simulating nutrient transport within river catchments and by building and analysing various scenarios related to agricultural, environmental and social policy decisions, which are likely to be implemented in participating countries, in terms of their influence on the future nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea. The project would build a harmonised decision support tool for water managers based on SWAT-model, prepare a set of regional trajectories of decreasing the load to the southern Baltic and designate the most sensitive areas in terms of their relevance to the overall nutrient load from each catchment.



The project involves partners from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Sweden, associated partners from Belarus and is looking for partners or associated partners from Germany and Russia.

The SC discussed the proposed project and in general supported the idea of harmonisation of measures. However, the SC raised several questions and comments concerning the proposal, such as lack of partners from Germany and HELCOM PLC group, relation of the proposal to seed project QWATERA and flagship project RelNutData, clarification of hot spots and alternative scenarios and assessments and the relation of the proposed SWAT model to other models used in the Baltic Sea region.

Before making the flagship decision the PACs will compose written comments from the SC and send them to the project leader. The project leader will get a possibility to update the project plan according to the comments. The SC will consider the updated plan via email and ad hoc skype meeting. If the updated project plan fulfils the criteria for flagship projects and requirements of the SC sufficiently, the SC can recommend the BigRivers4Baltic proposal as a new PA Nutri flagship project.

DESIRE - Development of Sustainable peatland management by Restoration and paludiculture for nutrient retention in the Neman river catchment (project leader: University of Greifswald)
Presented by Marina Abramchuk

The objective of the proposed project is to increase efficiency of peatlands management in the Neman catchment for reduced nutrient release to its waters and the Baltic Sea. The project aims to formulate peatland chapters in river basin management plans, to provide guidelines for paludiculture for nutrient reduction, implement pilot sites, form a transnational platform for knowledge exchange and harmonise policies and coordinate joint implementation of sustainable river basin management.

The project involves partners from Germany, Poland and Lithuania and associated partners from Belarus and Russia.

The SC discussed the proposed project and in general supported the idea and found it interesting. However, the SC raised several questions and comments concerning the proposal, such as considering biodiversity, what is the goal of the project in terms of restoration versus creating bioeconomy, what is the potential of the project and the method in general in nutrient retention and a need to strengthen the transnational value. The SC also discussed the possibilities to merge/integrate actions from flagship SIGWET to the proposal.



Before making the flagship decision the PACs will compose written comments from the SC and send them to the project leader. The project leader will get a possibility to update the project plan according to the comments. The SC will consider the updated plan via email and ad hoc skype meeting. If the updated project plans fulfils the criteria for flagship projects and requirements of the SC sufficiently, the SC can recommend the DESIRE proposal as a flagship project.

BALTIC rePAIR - A private landowner initiative (project leader: Trelleborg Municipality)
Presented by Katrine Moeller Soerensen

The objective of the proposed project is to demonstrate how landowners can take responsibility for reducing nutrient flow to the Baltic Sea by working together in watersheds, restoring and creating wetlands and river sections, circulating nutrients through biogas production and developing climate adaptation plans.

The project involves partners from Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

The SC discussed the proposed project and in general supported the idea, but noted that the implementation scheme and future sustainability requires further elaboration. The SC raised several concerns and questions towards the proposal. It is not clear in what concrete terms the project will reduce nutrient flow and improve the state of the Baltic Sea. What are the experiences of the operation of the WAB-model and how they could be transferred into other countries? How the varying size and type of farms and landowners in different countries affects distributing the knowledge and the model?

The SC concluded that the proposed project is not mature enough and decided not to support it as a flagship.

D. PA Nutri flagships

Lena Tasse presented the activities and achieved results of the flagship Baltic Blue Growth. The project is funded from Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for May 2016 - April 2019. The objective of Baltic Blue Growth is to advance mussel farming in the Baltic Sea from experimental to full scale to improve the water quality and create blue growth in the feed industry. The project has already established five new



mussel farms around the Baltic Sea and completed two successful harvests. The project has created first drafts for nutrient models and licensing guides and tested the mussel meal processing with insects.

At the moment, PA Nutri has 14 projects listed in the EUSBSR Action plan out of which four are completed, five are ongoing and the remaining five are under development to apply for funding. The SC discussed the problem of having flagships listed in the EUSBSR Action plan without clear implementation plan in case the flagship has failed to secure funding after seed/planning phase. Some of the PA Nutri flagship projects have been prepared with seed funding already some years ago, e.g. 2014-2015. Therefore, the SC decided to set a three-year deadline when granting new flagships in case they receive the status before securing financing for main activities. After three years the flagship status would then be evaluated, if extension is needed.

After the last PA Nutri SC meeting, the PACs were in contact with all flagships under development, but in all cases not clear implementation plan was achieved from the project leaders. The PACs will ask the project leaders/representatives of BaRuWa, SUWMAB, SmallWWTPs and SIGWET to send an updated plan for implementation, including financing, before the next PA Nutri SC meeting. If the PACs receive no response or the plan is not realistic, the SC will propose those projects to be removed from the Action Plan. Additionally, the PACs will be in contact with RelNutData, QWATERA and BigRivers4Baltic -project representatives in order to clarify how they would cooperate or merge the project ideas.

G. Other issues

The SC noted the recent organisational changes in Poland that affects the Polish PA Nutri co-ordination. The SC regretted that Poland was not able to send a representative to the meeting. The PACs will inform the SC when more information is available.

Sanni Turunen presented the PA Nutri SC Terms of References (ToR) and indicated that no updating has been made since adopting the ToR in 2012. The PACs suggested that guidelines in handling potentially confidential information in projects applying financing could be added to the ToR. The SC noted that for example the PAC organisations and used terminology is outdated and therefore supported the addition and update of the document according to the EUSBSR Action Plan. The PACs will create a proposal during 2018, pending on the co-ordination decision in Poland.



The proposal will be circulated within the SC via email and decided in a coming SC meeting.

Upcoming events:

- Flagship project BEST Kick-off meeting in Helsinki 6.-8.2.2018. The event is mainly for project partners. Sanni Turunen will participate 8.2.2018 to present EUSBSR and PA Nutri and to discuss communication issues.
- HELCOM Ministerial meeting 6.3.2018 in Brussels. PA Nutri will follow and support the update of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and continue cooperation with issues related to nutrient recycling strategy, internal nutrient reserves and effectiveness of measures.
- Baltic Sea Day in St Petersburg 22.-23.3.2018 will hold a roundtable on sustainable water management to protect the marine environment from land based pollution.
- 9th EUSBSR Annual Forum 4.-5.6.2018 in Tallinn with main theme "After 2020". PA Nutri PACs and flagship Nutritrade proposed a seminar to the event to pitch ideas for a clean Baltic Sea. The SC is welcome to propose speakers to the seminar, if it is approved as part of the Annual Forum.

The SC regretted the lack of participation of many focal points in the meeting and encouraged all SC members to participate in the coming meetings.

The SC decided preliminarily to organise the next PA Nutri SC meeting back-to-back with the Annual Forum in the morning of 6.6.2018.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 15:50 by the PACs.