



14th 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 18, 2019

Opening:

The 14th meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order in Skype 18 February 2019 at 10.00 EET by the Policy Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs).

Present:

1. Sanni Turunen, chair, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
2. Magdalena Dawidowicz, PAC Nutri Poland, Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation
3. Laura Saijonmaa, PAC Nutri Finland, Ministry of the Environment
4. Josefin Hjort, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency of Marine and Water Management
5. Martin Ott, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
6. Pekka Jounila, DG REGIO, European Commission

Apologies:

1. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, HELCOM Secretariat
2. Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment
3. Wera Leujak, NFP Germany, Federal Environment Agency
4. Helle Knudsen-Leerbeck, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment and Food
5. Jolanta Lapinskiene, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of Agriculture
6. Monika Sakalauskaitė, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of the Environment
7. Valentina Tuskenyte, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of the Environment
8. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment

A. Introduction

Sanni Turunen presented the agenda of the meeting: Informing and discussing the EUSBSR Action Plan revision and EU Commission Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, deciding on the contribution of PA Nutri coordinators to the HELCOM ad hoc Group MINUTS and informing the SC about upcoming events.



B. Informing the EUSBSR Action Plan revision and the EU Commission Report

Pekka Jounila presented the Commission's note on a roadmap for the revision of the EUSBSR (Annex I). The National Coordinators (NCs) will discuss the road map and thematic part of revising the EUSBSR Action Plan in their next meeting on 21 February 2019. The Commission has hired a consultant (Ms Bettina Rafaelsen, COWI) to help the process and PACs Nutri will have a Skype meeting in the coming weeks.

The report from the Commission on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies¹ and the report on macro regional strategies and Cohesion Policy² serve as a background for the discussions.

The steering committee members as national focal points (NFP) were encouraged to discuss with their NCs about the revision and its priorities. The Commission also encouraged members to contribute particularly to the mainstream programmes in their countries to support alignment of funding for the Strategy in the new financing period.

The discussion of the details of the revision in regards of PA Nutri will continue at the next SC meeting.

C. Deciding on the contribution of PACs to the HELCOM ad hoc Group MINUTS

Sanni Turunen presented the background and previous cooperation with HELCOM in regards internal nutrient reserves topic. The HELCOM HOD 55-2018 meeting approved the ad hoc Group MINUTS to draft the risk assessment framework and regional principles as guidance for nutrient reserves management. Nominations from countries have been received and the first online-meeting is planned in mid-March 2019. The SC decided that PACs Nutri should follow the work of the group and PA Nutri could support organising the workshops that are foreseen to facilitate the work of the group and to help engaging stakeholders.

¹ 'Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies' – January 2019: <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/news-room/news/591062-new-report-on-the-implementation-of-eu-macro-regional-strategies>

² 'Macro-regional strategies and their links with cohesion policy' – November 2017: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/mrs_links_cohesion_policy.pdf



D. Informing about past and upcoming events

Flagship IWAMA Final Conference was organized in Turku, Finland 30-31.1.2019³.

Exchange days for Agri-Environmental Knowledge was held in Jyväskylä, Finland 12.-13.2.2019⁴ presenting results of EUSBSR flagship projects;

Flagship DESIRE⁵ Kick Off meeting will be held in Greifswald, Germany 20.-21.3.2019.

XX Anniversary International Environmental Forum - Baltic Sea Days will be held in St. Petersburg, Russia 21.-22.3.2019⁶. HELCOM is planning a panel discussion on nutrients recycling and also round table on solutions for phosphorus recycling in waste water sector. Flagships IWAMA and BEST are represented at the event.

Project BEST event: Management of effluents from food and dairy products with high content of nutrients and BOD will be held in Riga/Jelgava, Latvia 2.-4.4.2019.

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Conference will be held in Lübeck, Germany 9.-10.4.2019⁷. The conference aims to talk about the achievements of projects funded via the programme. Platforms BSR WATER and SUMANU are organizing thematic seminars at the event.

HA Capacity organizes an EUSBSR Support Module 5 in Berlin, Germany 10.-11.4.2019 to develop capacity building of PACs and HACs on building flagship processes.

10th EUSBSR Annual Forum will be held in Gdansk, Poland 12.-13.6.2019⁸. The theme of the Forum is “Circular and sharing economy as an answer to demographic changes and environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region”. PA Nutri, PA Hazards and HELCOM Secretariat organizes a seminar “Safe Nutrient Recycling for cleaner Baltic Sea” at the forum.

The SC decided to organise the next PA Nutri SC meeting back-to-back with the 10th EUSBSR Annual Forum in Gdansk, Poland 11 June 2019 at 15-18:00 followed by a joint dinner with the steering group of PA Hazards.

³ IWAMA conference materials: <https://www.iwama.eu/event/iwama-final-conference-turku>

⁴ Webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIm3Sk6cM4k>

⁵ DESIRE webpage: <http://www.succow-stiftung.de/desire.html>

⁶ BSD materials: http://www.helcom.ru/baltic_sea_day/2019_year

⁷ Interreg conference materials: <https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/event-detail/event/interreg-baltic-sea-region-programme-conference.html>

⁸ EUSBSR Annual Forum materials: <https://strategyforum2019.eu/10th-annual-forum-of-the-eusbsr>



F. Other issues

The SC thanked for a possibility to organise an online meeting. The SC regretted the lack of participation of some focal points and encouraged all SC members to participate in the next SC meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:50.

Commission's note on a roadmap for the revision of the EUSBSR

There is a need to revise the EUSBSR Action Plan in order to have a relevant up-to-date document in place when the ESIF-programming for the 2021 – 2027 period starts. Furthermore, many of the targets for the objectives and sub-objectives are set for 2020. The last up-date of the EUSBSR Action Plan was in 2014/2015 since then updates of policy areas have been made in 2017.

A revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan should cover a review of the EUSBSR Action Plan itself and an update of the work programmes of the PAs/HAs. In addition it should cover both thematic and governance issues.

Working approach*Thematic*

With regard to thematic issues, there are three areas, which need to be covered. They are:

- Discussion on whether the objectives and sub-objectives of the strategy still are relevant or if they should be changed
- A revision of the target indicators for the sub-objectives, which are mostly related to 2020 and
- A discussion on the continued relevance and thematic focus of the policy areas and horizontal actions in light of the discussions of the objectives and sub-objectives

The objectives and sub-objectives of the strategy define what issues of macro-regional relevance we want to address with the EUSBSR. A discussion on the objectives and sub-objectives of the EUSBSR will therefore be a discussion on what we want to focus on. Relevant questions in this connection is what are the most important and macro-regional challenges in the Baltic Sea Region, how can new and emerging needs and priorities like, for example, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) be integrated.

A revision of the target indicators for the sub-objectives, which are mostly related to 2020 is necessary.

A discussion on the continued relevance and thematic focus of the policy areas and horizontal actions in light of the discussions of the objectives and sub-objectives. Relevant questions are how to align the PAs/HAs to the objectives and sub-objectives of the EUSBSR, EU priorities and the relationship to other initiatives. What is the macro-regional added value. How alignment and macro-regional added value can be strengthened within a future framework.

Governance

There should also be a review of organisational and governance issues of the EUSBSR. This covers a range of issues including the functioning of the PAs/HAs, how PAs/HAs should intervene, measuring performance of the PAs/HAs and funding.

“The report on MRS and Cohesion Policy”⁹ points to several factors, which influence how PAs and HAs are functioning so called barriers and drivers. Are there ways to remove barriers and enhance drivers within the framework of the EUSBSR. One key recommendation the report on MRS and Cohesion Policy makes is with regard to indicators on PA and HA level, how this can be incorporated into revised action plan.

Funding. How well aligned are PAs/HAs to national funding or to mainstream ERDF/CF/ESF programmes.

Communication and cross-strategy cooperation. Are there possibilities to re-enforce communication and increase cross-strategy cooperation and coherence with other MRS.

Preliminary roadmap for the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan

Date	
11.12.18	NC meeting discussion on process and scope of update
12.12.18	Module 4 Revision and monitoring
Jan 2019	Start of consultants work
Jan - March	Focus on thematic issues
March 2019	Input paper on thematic focus (consultant to Commission)
16 th of April 2019	NCs discuss on the future scope of EUSBSR
May 2019	Agreement on the future scope of EUSBSR (NCs)
May 2019	Request to PACs/HACS to submit revision on their own policy area chapters of the Action Plan
March – June(May)	Focus on governance issues.
May 2019	Input paper on governance (consultant to Commission)
June 2019	Conclusions on governance issues (NCs)
16.09.2019	Proposals for revision are submitted to DG Regio by PACs/HACs
14.10.2019	Send draft updated EUSBSR Action plan to NCs for comments
28.10.2019	Receive comments from NCs
02.12.19	Send draft updated EUSBSR action plan as European Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) to DG REGIO hierarchy
06.01.2020	Start of interservice consultations (ISC) in Commission
27.01.2020	End of Interservice consultations
04.02.2020	Respond to comments (from ISC), proof reading, transmission
02.20 (tbc)	High level group meeting

The general idea/plan is to use the spring to discuss the revision and the summer and autumn to revise the action plan. We plan to have the revised action plan as a staff working document of the Commission. This requires the revised to Action Plan to be sent on interservice consultations (ISC) and there are different procedures to be followed internally in DG Regio and the Commission.

⁹ ‘Macro-regional strategies and their links with cohesion policy’ – November 2017:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/mrs_links_cohesion_policy.pdf

The Commission has hired a consultant (Ms Bettina Rafaelsen, COWI) to help the Commission with the review. The assistance from the external expert includes an input paper covering the thematic focus of the EUSBSR, input paper on governance and facilitating workshops with key stakeholders of the EUSBSR.