

# 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee meeting of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Priority Area 1 “To reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels”

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## **Meeting Minutes**

**April 26, 2012**

### **Opening:**

The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the EUSBSR Priority Area 1 (PA1) was called to order at 11:00 on 26 April, 2012, at the premises of the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection of Poland in Warsaw by Ms Katarzyna Pirowska, Head of Division of International Cooperation and Promotion of the Inspection, .

### **Present:**

Mikhail Durkin, HELCOM Secretariat

Catharina Sørensen, DG REGIO

Enn Liive, PA1 Focal Point Estonia, Ministry of the Environment, Estonia

Baiba Zasa, PA1 Focal Point Latvia, Ministry of the Environment, Latvia

Hannamaria Yliruusi, PRESTO Project, Union of the Baltic Cities

Sindre Langaas, Baltic Deal, Federation of Swedish Farmers

Bjarke Wiehe Bøtcher, Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for PA 13 (Maritime safety and security) / PA 4 (Clean shipping) Focal Point Denmark, Danish Maritime Safety Administration

Laura Saijonmaa, PAC for PA1, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Kristiina Isokallio, PAC for PA1, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Marja Kaitaniemi, PAC for PA1, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Katarzyna Pirowska, PAC for PA1, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland

Małgorzata Ochorok-Jedynak, PAC for PA1, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland

Marta Kalinowska, PAC for PA1, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland

Anna Sosnowska, PAC for PA1, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland

Andrzej Podscianski, PAC for PA1, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland

### **Apologies:**

Thomas Johansson, PA1 Focal Point Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

Leena Anttila, PAC for PA9 (Agriculture, forestry and fisheries)

Marjatta Kemppainen-Mäkelä, PAC for PA9 (Agriculture, forestry and fisheries)  
Linda Gardstam, flagship project 1.2 “Cleaner Waste Water” Swedish EPA

## **A. Status of PA1**

The Coordinators Marta Kalinowska and Laura Saijonmaa, who co-chaired the meeting, noted that the Focal Points of Estonia and Latvia were present at the meeting and hoped that also representatives from Sweden and Lithuania will attend future meetings. Germany and Denmark have yet to appoint Focal Points for PA1.

The PACs noted that progress has been made in the PA1 both in the Flagship Projects and the revision of the strategy. The targets and indicators for PA1 have been drafted and got positive feedback from the Commission. PA1 will have a new website under the site of the EUSBSR (<http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>).

It was noted that the Steering Committee needs to discuss the management of the website: how can Flagship Project leaders get their contributions on the site?

### **Flagship Projects**

The Flagship Projects of PA1 were presented.

- 1.1 Phosphates in detergents. The aim was to support the implementation of a HELCOM recommendation to prohibit the use of phosphates in detergents by dissemination of information on the issue to the wide public. A brochure with frequently asked questions was published in three languages and distributed. In December 2011, the European Parliament approved a regulation to ban phosphate in laundry detergents in 2013 and in dishwasher detergents in 2017.
- 1.2 Cleaner Waste Water. Clustered into two subprojects: 1) a wider coordinating project of waste water treatment projects across the Baltic Sea Region, and a 2) concrete subproject (PRESTO) aiming at reducing nutrient loads from Belarus through investments in four urban wastewater treatment plants and through training and awareness raising. First fora and training workshops of PRESTO have been held, and a technical report with recommendations for investments at the urban wastewater treatment plants (UWWTPs) will be published in autumn 2012.
- 1.4 Baltic Deal. 118 demonstration farms, focus on dissemination of information. Actions taken from the agri attachment of BSAP, most focus on manure and fertilization. So far the project has showed that the best way to engage farmers is to talk in economic terms, investments, economic gains etc. EUSBSR has been extremely important in catalyzing the agri sector to act on their own initiative.

1.5 Belarus waste water. The objective is to identify hotspots and prepare actions and investment projects in municipal wastewater treatment plants, agriculture, industry etc. around the Baltic Sea. Status: Belarus partners established, contact with HELCOM established, the project currently on hold because of lack of funding.

## **B. EUSBSR revision**

Catharina Sørensen from DG REGIO explained the actual status of the EUSBSR revision. An important current development concerning the funding of the EUSBSR is to get the macroregional approach embedded in the EU regulations currently in the pipeline. In addition a seed money facility is being developed. A communications need study is being conducted by a Latvian consultant who will send stakeholders a questionnaire regarding their perceived needs for communication under the EUSBSR.

Sorensen stressed that this is the time to clean up the action plan, so if the SC observes dysfunctional actions, projects etc., now is the time to delete them from the action plan. The deadline for new Flagship Projects to be included in the new Action Plan is the end of summer. However, new FPs can be approved throughout the implementation of the Action Plan.

## **C. Roles and Responsibilities**

Bjarke Bøtcher from PA13 (Maritime safety and security) presented the work of the Task Force on Roles and Responsibilities, which was established to clarify the division of tasks between the stakeholders of the Strategy. Flagship Projects awakened some discussion with regard to what the PACs' role should be in the initial stages of a Flagship Project (FP), how the macroregional impact of the FPs should be assessed and what should be done with the FPs once they are finalized. Also the role of Priority Area Focal Points (PAFPs) was discussed and both the PAFPs of Latvia and Estonia supported the role description of the PAFPs.

## **D. Tasks of the Steering Committee**

Bjarke Bøtcher shared experiences from the formation and functioning of the Steering Committee of PA13 (Maritime safety and security). The core task of the SC in PA13 is to anchor each action and Flagship Project to the whole Baltic Sea Region. The SC has representatives from each country and the EC. Representatives from third countries as well as HELCOM have a standing invitation as observers. In general the SC has worked well and has proven a fruitful forum, although it has also increased the workload of the PACs and slowed down decision-making, which contradicts with the Commissions' expectations from quick action. Mr Bøtcher

gave three suggestions for consideration when establishing the Terms of Reference for PA1: to define the approval process of Flagship Projects, to ensure that Priority Area Focal Points consult other relevant institutions in their countries to get a solid position, and to define the process for appointing new SC members.

Laura Saijonmaa presented the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for PA1. Regarding the membership in the SC it was discussed if a distinction should be made between full members (representatives from countries, EC and HELCOM) and observers (FP Leaders, other PACs and Horizontal Action Leaders...). Many of the potential SC members seemed to be same people that have already participated in Stakeholder Meetings of PA1. It was proposed that the Steering Committee could convene as closed sessions back-to-back with Stakeholder Meetings.

Regarding the tasks of the SC as in the ToR, an addition was suggested referring to the cooperation and coordination of the work with other PAs. Also in the first point 'not overlapping' was suggested to be changed into 'coordinated'.

Another item of discussion was the approval of new Flagship Projects. It was decided to leave the approval process open until the work on the roles and responsibilities at the Strategy level is finalized.

It was decided that the PACs work on the draft so that members and observers are separated in the SC. The new version was agreed to be sent by e-mail to the SC, and the members are then expected to indicate their comments and approval to the ToR by e-mail.

## **E. Targets and indicators**

Laura Saijonmaa presented the targets and indicators for PA1. Sindre Langaas from Baltic Deal suggested the removal of target 2, good environmental status in the Baltic Sea regarding eutrophication. It was however decided to keep the target as presented as the target 2 complies with existing EU legislation.

## **F. Action Plan review for PA1**

The PACs presented the current version of the Action Plan for PA1 and suggested some changes. The actions concerning implementation of EU legislation were deleted. It was agreed that relevant EU Directives and regulations could be mentioned in the description part of the Action Plan as background information. The action on wetlands was agreed to merge with the first action on agricultural measures. The part of the first action concerning fisheries, and wetlands, needs to be coordinated with PA9 (Agriculture, forestry and fisheries) and possibly PA2 (Natural zones and biodiversity). It was decided to include these actions to especially encourage Flagship Projects that fall under several PA's with multiple benefits to the Strategy and the Baltic Sea

Region. Such projects could regard e.g. sludge handling. Another possible cooperative action for PA1 and PA4 (Clean shipping) could be working on port reception facilities to improve waste water management.

The PACs presented proposals for new actions which were then discussed. In the first proposed action on urban wastewater treatment plants (UWWTPs) the term 'nutrient removal' was proposed to be changed into 'nutrient management'. On small scale waste water treatment 'measures' could be changed into more specific language, e.g. promote prevention of nutrient loads from small scale waste water treatment. These two actions were also suggested to be merged. The wording of the action concerning support for HELCOM data was agreed to be changed so that it better reflects the added value of more accurate and complete nutrient load data to the EUSBSR and all the actions taken to tackle eutrophication. The action 'promote local initiatives and public participation' was agreed to be merged with the current action on facilitating dialogue. Local actions should also contain the network-forming idea of the Strategy. The proposed action In-Baltic-Sea measures was suggested to be removed as its content is already present in the current action on innovative measures. The action on detergents was agreed to be removed as it is very limited in scope compared to the rest of the actions. If a Flagship proposal is received with the aim of monitoring the phosphate phaseout, it could be approved under the action on public participation. It was suggested to change the wording of the 'innovative' action to reflect the economic nature of nutrient as inputs rather than just pollution.

It was also agreed to organize the actions in sections per pollution source or another factor. It was also agreed to include a short description of each Action in the Action Plan. As a general note, it was agreed to keep actions open and general rather than too detailed in order to be able to fit future Flagship proposals under them.

## **G. New Flagship proposals**

Two new proposals for Flagship Projects were presented: one on dredging and one on improving nutrient load data. Concerning the dredging proposal, it was noted that important information on the project was missing from the documents, such as its significance in reducing nutrient inputs to the sea and its macroregional impact. Furthermore, the project might result in adverse environmental impacts by e.g. mobilization of harmful substances from the sediments or damaging benthic fauna in shallow bays. This would contradict with the Guidelines for Flagship Projects of PA1. It was decided not to support the project as a Flagship Project. Concerning the data collection proposal, it was concluded that if the SC gets a new version of the proposal with some more information on the added value of the project as compared to the everyday work of HELCOM, the SC will discuss it further.

## **H. Future activities**

The PACs will send the draft revised actions to the SC by May 11<sup>th</sup>. The SC can comment them until May 25<sup>th</sup>. The Annual Forum will be held in Copenhagen on June 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>. The PA1 annual implementation report is due in June. The next Stakeholder Meeting of PA1, as well as PA9, will be held in Copenhagen in October back-to-back with an event by Baltic Deal, Baltic Manure and Compass. It would be possible to have the next SC meeting then as well.

### **Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 17:40 by the PACs.

Minutes submitted by Marja Kaitaniemi