

5th Steering Committee meeting of the Priority 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 5, 2014

Opening:

The fifth meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Priority Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 13:00 on 5th June, 2014, at the premises of the Hotel Radisson Blue in Turku (Finland) by the Priority Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs). The meeting was organized as a Back-to-Back to the 5th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR.

Present:

1. Joanna Charytonowicz, PAC Nutri, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland
2. Anna Sosnowska, PAC Nutri, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland
3. Laura Saijonmaa, PAC Nutri, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
4. Sanni Turunen, PAC Nutri, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
5. Enn Liive, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
6. Josefin Walldén, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
7. Mikhail Durkin, HELCOM Secretariat
8. Joanna Kirylo, DG REGIO
9. Philipp Schwartz, INTERACT Point Turku
10. Leena Anttila, PAC Agri, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland - *Observer*

Apologies:

1. Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment
2. Aiste Kubiliute, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency
3. Charlotte Betina Mogensen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment
4. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment, Latvia

A. Introduction

Laura Saijonmaa (Finnish PAC Nutri) welcomed the participants and presented the agenda of the meeting. The topics planned to be discussed were : current issues in financing Flagship Projects, EUSBSR governance, cooperation with HELCOM, decisions on the new Flagship Projects and a review of the EUSBSR Action Plan.



Anna Sosnowska (Polish PAC Nutri) and Sanni Turunen (Finnish PAC Nutri) summarized the involvement of PA Nutri Coordinators and Flagship projects in the Turku Baltic Sea Days, 2-5 June 2014. The PACs participated on the 1st Finnish national stakeholder meeting of EUSBSR and the [Baltic Sea Forum](#). Ways to get involved to the EUSBSR through Flagship Projects were presented at the working group “Saving the Baltic Sea” at the [Baltic Sea NGO Forum](#). At the [5th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR/16th Baltic Development Forum](#) PA Nutri organized the parallel work stream session: “Involving new partners to Save the Sea – cooperation with Belarus in waste water treatment sector”. During the session the past and present PA Nutri Flagship Projects in cooperation with Belarus were presented and discussed with Belarusian representatives. PA Nutri was also presented at the parallel work stream session organized by BONUS: “Successful cooperation: research, development and innovation”. Flagship Project PRESTO was presented at the stand at the Networking Village.

B. Current issues in financing

Philipp Schwartz (INTERACT Point Turku) presented a summary of funding possibilities for projects and tips of how and where to find a right source of funding. In some cases there can be just one source of funding and in some cases there might be three funding sources available for different actions within the project (feasibility study, developing joint strategy, investment). There are ways to combine national, regional and international funding – [a Swedish proposal for a Transnational Cooperation Component](#) and [a text is included in all nine Swedish ERDF Operational Programmes](#) to support the implementation of the EUSBSR was distributed as a good practice. There are Cohesion Policy factsheets by country available at the [DG Regio website](#). As it is important to maintain a dialogue with bodies in charge of implementation of programmes and other financial instruments on alignment of funding or implementation of the PA and flagship projects, it is recommended to contact Programmes directly for more information (for research: BONUS, Horizon 2020; thematic: LIFE; ETC/INTERREG: Baltic Sea Region Programme, Central Baltic Programme, South Baltic Programme). A database on funding sources is to be created by beginning of 2015.

Philipp Schwartz presented also a scheme of how to look for a funding source for PA Nutri projects and underlined the importance to note a specific area or countries eligible for funding. Early approval of BSR Programme 2014-2020 projects would be at spring, but more detailed information will be available after November 2014.

[Seed Money Facility sheets](#) were presented. The currently available seed money facilities in the Baltic Sea region are: Swedish Institute, EUSBSR Seed-Money Facility operated by IB.SH, CBSS – Project support facility, NCM Seed money, Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Public Administration.

More information about “financing the future” is available also in the latest Interact newsletter publication – [Interact spring 2014](#).

C. EUSBSR governance and cooperation with HELCOM

Joanna Kirylo (DG Regio) informed the participants that the BSR Programme is accepted among EU countries together with Norway, Russia and Belarus. However, it is still to be decided how much money will be available for Russia and Belarus - two independent documents will be elaborated. She also informed that Norway and Russia will add some funds for Seed Money Facility in ERDF funds.

Regarding TA financing for PA coordination, in the new programming period of 2014-2020 it will be more difficult to get funds and requires more professional approach and commitment. There is also a big change in the way of using funds to support PACs work – in the BSR Programme there is a rule “you first have to pay, then you will be reimbursed”. Polish PACs informed that because of this issue currently it is impossible to use these funds by Polish PACs. A discussion on how to use the funds of BSR Programme will be taken in mid November 2014 in Tallinn (Estonia) where a new consultative meeting with PAC/HAL/NCP will be organized.

Joanna Kirylo mentioned that DG Regio was screening Partnership agreements e.g. of Poland, Germany, in regards of embedding EUSBSR. It was noted that Polish Partnership Agreement is very good and there is a structured coordination. However, Polish Operational Programmes were not satisfactory – it was noted that for a call for comments the only Polish PACs who answered were PACs Nutri.

A [report from the Commission](#) on governance for all macro-regional strategies was recently published. Political leadership is the most important topic of the document. There was a suggestion to organize ministerial meeting on macro-regional level, however it was not welcomed positively, as there are already many meetings, e.g. within CBSS and HELCOM. The idea of rotating of NCP chairmanship is a success – until now it was Finland, thereafter Estonia and Latvia. Poland will be leading during the Polish Presidency of the CBSS 2015/2016.

Joanna Kirylo informed that during latest discussion with Commissioner Johannes Hahn were risen issues like: how many Priority Areas can be a real priority, a need to dedicate much more time for work as PAC.

The problem with SC members activity was raised by PACs Nutri. In response, Mikhail Durkin (HELCOM) suggested to organize back to back -meetings to HELCOM meetings to ensure the presence of SC members that are in the same time representatives of HELCOM Contracting Parties. Estonian representative notice that it is a national problem to solve if the persons to represent PA Nutri and HELCOM common issues are the same.

In the middle of September 2014 there will be a decision on a new HELCOM structure, but it was already mentioned that Sustainable Agriculture group will be created.

Finnish PACs Nutri underlined, that there is a need to communicate PA Nutri actions to HELCOM, and HELCOM work to PACs. The added value comes from implementation of regulations and recommendations and agreement on actions of HELCOM BSAP. There is a need to have DE, DK, LT, and LV on board to know the countries situation. Representative of HELCOM suggested, that clustering work would be an issue. If e.g. PA Nutri and PA Agri could combine resources and resorts

it probably would improve the participation of countries. In the same time, it is crucial to use HELCOM work.

D. Flagship Project proposals

Sanni Turunen (Finnish PAC Nutri) informed about five projects to be decided for approval as PA Nutri flagship projects based on proposals sent by the project leaders at the beginning of May 2014. The proposals were circulated among the SC by email. The projects taken under decision were : BEST, BBG, NutriTrade, SmallWWTPs, Baltic Deal Bridge.

The participants were informed that the decision on other projects (SUMWAB, BARUWA, RelData, OldNewHotSpots, Nutri-Bus and NVZ) will be taken during next SC meeting. The new project descriptions will be submitted before the meeting.

BEST – Better Efficiency for Sewage Treatment

HELCOM noted that there is a need to translate the project to site specific targets – HELCOM Hot spot programme has a deadline of 2016 so this issue can be raised by the project BEST.

The project was approved to get a status of a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

BBG – Baltic Blue Growth

The meeting was informed that BBG project had already kick-off meeting and the second meeting of the project will take place soon.

Leena Anttila (PAC Agri) raised a question of what kind of livestock project leaders are planning to use as a target group for mussel feed and it was explained that it would be probably used for fish and poultry. It was agreed that this issue should be clarified.

Mikhail Durkin (HELCOM) noted that the project idea is in line with HELCOM works towards sustainable aquaculture. HELCOM is working on new recommendation covering this topic. However, there is a need to first of all think about nutrients. It is good if the BBG project can contribute to an Integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) approach.

Polish PAC Nutri informed that comments from the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the project will be sent later.

The project was approved to get a status of a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

SmallWWTPs – Small wastewater treatment plants

Enn Liive (NFP Estonia) noted that the projects leaders are planning to have three pilot WWTPs but currently there is lack of WWTPs as partners of the project. Estonia supports the project idea. However, more partners from other regions are needed and operational scope is missing.

It was agreed to send comments to project leaders to further develop the project idea.

Nutri Trade – Nutrient Trading Scheme to enable cost-efficient reductions of nutrients in the Baltic Sea

Mikhail Durkin (HELCOM) noted that this project also goes in line with HELCOM ministerial declaration, and that there is a future in such instruments.

Sweden supports the project idea. Josefin Walldén (NFP Sweden) informed that they are looking for additional Swedish partner for the project.

Generally it was agreed to approve the project as Flagship Project, however to fulfill the PA Nutri flagship project criteria there is a need to wait until the list of confirmed partners will be completed by WWTP partners from Russia and Belarus. Afterwards, a decision of giving FP status can be confirmed by e-mail.

Baltic Deal Bridge – Agricultural practices, measures and investments on demo farms & in advisory

The participants agreed that there is a need for clarifying the differences between Baltic Deal Bridge project and Baltic Deal Network project – a suggestion of making an agreement to cooperate and avoid duplication of work.

The comments from Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development were presented, underlying, among others, a need for concrete objectives.

It was agreed to send comments to project leaders to further develop the project idea and ensure (in a form of an agreement) that Baltic Deal Bridge and Baltic Deal Network projects will be complementary and avoid unnecessary duplication of work.

HELCOM NVZ project

Mikhail Durkin (HELCOM) briefly presented an idea for a project on improvement of manure storage/handling practices in BSR. The project focuses on the idea of creating Nutrient Vulnerable Zones (not only nitrate) in Belarus and Russia including Kaliningrad region. Neither in RU nor in BY such methodology exists yet. First part of the project would address sharing knowledge in RU and BY. Second part of the project would focus on concrete potential investments on manure storage capacities. The project would help to implement Annex III of Helsinki Convention.

The project idea still needs to be developed. Potential partners of the projects: MTT Agrifood Research Finland, Swedish partner, RU and BE partner. More proper project proposal is planned to be elaborated by HELCOM within summer 2014.

D. Action plan

Joanna Charytonowicz (Polish PAC Nutri) briefly presented the plan for the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan in 2014/2015. The first draft of calendar for an update has been already changed and all dates are prolonged. According to the latest discussions of DG Regio with NCPs, NCPs are invited by

the European Commission to reply to questions by the beginning of September 2014. (PACs will be involved in submitting answers for these questions). At the beginning of October DG REGIO should send proposal of adjusted structure of the Action Plan to NCPs, justified both by NCPs replies and DG REGIO overall analysis. The updated action plan should be ready for decision by NCP/MS and endorsement by HLG at spring 2015.

PACs informed that the time for revising the PA Nutri description in the Action Plan will be done about October 2014. PACs will inform the SC accordingly, and the issue will be discussed at the next SC meeting.

E. Other issues

Anna Sosnowska, Polish PAC Nutri informed about:

1. GABBS

The meeting was informed that next *A Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea* conference (GABBS) will take place in Warsaw, 23rd – 24th of September 2014. The Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection of Poland is one of the organizers of the conference.

2. Next SC meeting

There was discussion if the next SC meeting should take place back-to-back to GABBS 23rd – 24th of September 2014, Warsaw or HELCOM Pressure Group meeting 27th – 30th of October 2014, Helsinki. It was decided that the date and place of the next SC meeting should be consulted by email with all SC members. However, Polish PACs and Swedish representative supported the idea of having this meeting back-to-back to GABBS conference. There was as well suggestion that workshop with SC PA Nutri, SC PA Agri (if it will be established) and HELCOM could be organized back-to-back to the GABBS conference.

3. Other issues

The meeting discussed also on Alleco Oy's potential participation in the identified flagship projects, establishing smaller targets (milestones) for the PA Nutri, and on a rotating chairmanship of the SC as a future option.

The meeting was informed that it is last meeting with Sanni Turunen (Finnish PAC Nutri). The meeting thanked Sanni for her fruitful work as PAC of PA Nutri. It was underlined that because of the lack of funding there will be one person less in the PA Nutri PACs team.

Mikhail Durkin informed that it is his last meeting as well, because his contract at HELCOM Secretariat is going to be finished soon.

Adjournment:

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

Minutes submitted by Joanna Charytonowicz