

6th 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 September 24, 2014

Opening:

The sixth meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) of the EUSBSR Priority Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 14:00 on 24th September, 2014, at the premises of the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection in Warsaw (Poland) by the Priority Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs). The meeting was organized as a Back-to-Back to the 6th Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea conference.

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. Enn Liive, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment, Estonia
5. Josefin Walldén, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
6. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, HELCOM Secretariat
7. Laura Meski, HELCOM Secretariat
8. Joanna Kirylo, DG REGIO, European Commission
9. Sara Almqvist, financial institution, Swedish Institute

Invited project leaders, part-time:

10. Bo Gustaffson, project leader, Baltic Nest Institute
11. Marja Koljonen, project leader, Baltic Sea Action Group
12. Magdalena Gajewska, project leader, Gdańsk University of Technology
13. Hanna Obarska-Pempkowiak, project leader, Gdańsk University of Technology
14. Ewa Wojciechowska, project leader, Gdańsk University of Technology

Apologies:

1. Kristiina Isokallio, PAC Nutri, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
2. Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment, Germany
3. Aiste Kubiliute, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency, Lithuania
4. Greta Srėbaliene, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency, Lithuania
5. Charlotte Betina Mogensen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment, Denmark
6. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment, Latvia
7. Leena Anttila, PAC Agri, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland - *Observer*

A. Introduction

Anna Sosnowska welcomed the participants and presented the agenda of the meeting. The topics planned to be discussed were: discussion and decisions on the potential Flagship Projects of PA Nutri, financing possibilities offered by Swedish Institute, a review of the EUSBSR Action Plan, priorities of the Estonian chairmanship of HELCOM. It was reminded that at the 5th PA Nutri SC meeting two projects were approved as flagship projects: BEST (Better Efficiency for Sewage Treatment) and BBG (Baltic Blue Growth).

B. Decisions on Potential Flagship Projects of PA Nutri

Joanna Charytonowicz informed about five projects to be decided for approval to become new PA Nutri flagship projects. Additional information and updated proposals were sent by the project leaders at the beginning of September 2014. The project proposals were circulated among the SC by email. A short summary of the projects discussed at the last two Steering Committee meetings (in November 2013 and in June 2014) was presented and SC notes and decisions reminded. The projects taken into consideration were: NutriTrade, BaRuWa, SUWMAB, SmallWWTPs and Baltic Deal Bridge.

Nutri Trade – Nutrient Trading Scheme to enable cost-efficient reductions of nutrients in the Baltic Sea (project leader: John Nurminen Foundation, FI)

The main objective of the project is to define the best possible nutrient trading scheme for the Baltic Sea region that would enable a cost-efficient and transparent reduction of nutrients in the Baltic Sea.

At the 5th PA Nutri SC meeting it was agreed to approve the project as Flagship Project, when the list of confirmed partners will be completed. The project leader submitted information on established partnership with Vitebsk Vodokanal (**BY**) and Sustainable Seas Initiative (**SE**). Therefore the criterium on cooperation between at least two EU Baltic Sea Region states if other Baltic Sea Region state is involved was fulfilled.

The project was approved by PA Nutri SC to become a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

BaRuWa and **SUWMAB** projects leaders confirmed their interest in becoming PA Nutri Flagship Projects. Therefore, a week before the meeting Steering Committee members were reminded via e-mail about issues raised during a discussion on BaRuWa and SUWMAB projects at the 4th PA Nutri SC meeting in November 2013.

BaRuWa – Evaluation and promotion of rural wastewater treatment for reduction of nutrient loads to the Baltic Sea (project leader: POMInnO, PL)

The main objective of the project is to evaluate and promote technologies for small-scale wastewater treatment suitable for rural areas.

The main obstacle to consider project BaRuWa as FP was a discussion on similarities between BaRuWa and SUWMAB project - it was agreed that some kind of cooperation between projects would be needed. Project leaders confirmed cooperation by signing an agreement.

The project was approved by PA Nutri SC to become a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

SUWMAB – Strategies for sustainable communal wastewater management in the Baltic Sea Region (project leader: Gdańsk University of Technology, PL)

The main objective of the project is to promote constructed wetlands in rural municipalities as a measure of domestic wastewater treatment.

At the 4th PA Nutri SC meeting it was asked whether such wetlands exist and could work in other northern countries as well. Project leaders sent explanations on possibilities to apply constructed wetlands in SE and FI based on examples from Norway.

At the 4th PA Nutri SC meeting it was noted that the partners of the project are all research organisations and that participation of local authorities and communities should be involved. Project leaders were asked to take into account these comments while preparing the main project. In the current project description they have already written that: “Partnership shall consist of R&D and academic institutions with expertise in ecological engineering as well as local authorities and municipalities as implementing bodies.”

The main obstacle to consider project SUWMAB as FP was a discussion on similarities between SUWMAB and BaRuWa project - it was agreed that some kind of cooperation between projects would be needed. Project leaders confirmed cooperation by signing an agreement.

At the current meeting project leaders were suggested to clarify the scope of this cooperation to take into consideration the extreme weather conditions as heavy rains and floods and to clarify approach on promoting constructed wetlands in Finland where this technology is not included in recommended palette of measures for waste water treatment in rural areas.

The project leaders accepted the suggestions and informed that BaRuWa and SUWMAB projects have different scopes: BaRuWa focuses on collecting the knowledge and various ready to implement solutions in the catalogue which will be available online; SUWMAB will focus on pilot investments and promoting constructed wetlands. The project leaders added that project will be based on Norwegian experience and that there are solutions which enable to use constructed wetlands in the Scandinavian countries.

The project was approved by PA Nutri SC to become a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

Small WWTPs – Small wastewater treatment plants (project leader: Turku University of Applied Sciences, FI)

The main objective of the project is to improve the treatment of municipal wastewater in small WWTPs (300- 2000 persons) in the Baltic Sea region.

At the 5th PA Nutri SC meeting the lack of operational issues in the scope of the project was noted. It was also suggested to involve more partners from other regions, especially WWTPs. Project leader confirmed partners from Germany, Lithuania and Poland - scientific institutions (**DE, LT**) and NGO (**PL**).

Before the SC meeting the project received critical comments from DG Environment. Project leader submitted answers that received a positive reaction from the DG ENV.

The meeting was informed that the project is still being consulted with the Polish National Water Authority, therefore the comments will be submitted later.

The PA Nutri SC Members noted that more time is needed to assess the project and agreed to submit opinions via e-mail.

Baltic Deal Bridge – Agricultural practices, measures and investments on demo farms & in advisory (project leader: Federation of Swedish Farmers)

The main objective of the project is to further improve the environmental status of the BS through promoting sustainable agricultural practices and maintaining the network.

At the 5th PA Nutri SC meeting it was noted that there is a need for clarifying the differences between Baltic Deal Bridge project and Baltic Deal Network project. Baltic Deal Bridge Project leader informed that is ready to cooperate, but due to the fact that Baltic Deal Network got no seed money funding, the issue is not valid anymore. Project leaders sent the answers for SC comments clarifying that the project does not have any means to implement agricultural measures and is focused on maintaining the existing network. The SC was in the opinion that although knowledge exchange is essential, without farm-level measures it alone does not bring such concrete results and clear added value as is required from flagship projects of the EUSBSR.

It was decided that Baltic Deal Bridge Project cannot be considered as a PA Nutri Flagship Project.

D. New Flagship Project proposals

In the second part of the meeting the new proposals of flagship projects were presented by invited project leaders: Nutri-Bus, RelData (merged with OldNewSpots) and NVZ.

NutriBus – Creating business by nutrient cycling (project leader: **Baltic Sea Action Group, FI**)

Marja Koljonen, Baltic Sea Action Group (**FI**), presented a new proposal for a future PA Nutri flagship project, that aims at creating profitable businesses in the field of nutrient cycling.

The project has already established a partnership with business that owns biogas plants (manure, wastewater sludge, combustion): Biokasvu Oy (**FI**), Biovakka Oy (**FI**), Scandinavian Enviro Systems AB (**SE**). Other partners are scientific institutions: JTI-Swedish Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering (**SE**), Julius Kühn Institute (**DE**).

During a discussion it was noted that the idea of recycling nutrients is worth supporting and that the project is in line with PA Nutri Actions (Managing nutrients more efficiently and Investigate cost-efficient nutrient reduction mechanisms). It was questioned if the project brings an added value comparing to other similar projects, such as Baltic Manure and CIRCUNUTS (CIRCUNUTS project was supported by PA Agri to receive funding from the EUSBSR Seed Money Facility and is currently ongoing, developing a main project idea). In addition, a question of the unclear purpose of the project was raised.

Project leader informed that the partner of the Baltic Manure project is involved in the work and it will ensure the use of already gathered knowledge. She underlined that the purpose of the project is to create business and demonstrate nutrient recycling technology chains in a pilot scale together with the partner enterprises.

The meeting agreed that there is a need to clarify the differences between NutriBus project proposal and ongoing CIRCUNUTS project supported by the PA Seed Money Facility. Project leader was advised to contact CIRCUNUTS project leader (MTT Agrifood Research Finland) to consult the cooperation possibilities e.g. to consider merging both projects or share the knowledge to avoid duplication of work. It was agreed to ask PA Agri Coordinators for help in assessing the project and finding a solution.

RelData – Reliable nutrient load of the Baltic Sea Catchment (project leader: **Baltic Nest Institute, SE**)

Bo Gustafsson from Baltic Nest Institute presented the idea of the project RelData – Reliable nutrient load of the Baltic Sea Catchment, merged with a project proposal: OldNewSpots – Nutrient discharges from deleted and active industrial and municipal Hot Spots.

The project addresses the bottlenecks in nutrient load monitoring and modelling.

HELCOM Secretariat confirmed that the project goal (improving country-wise reporting data and the assessment) is in line with the current political mainstream, therefore it is highly important to

support these efforts (HELCOM Ministerial Declaration 2013, Priorities of Estonian Chairmanship in HELCOM).

During a discussion it was noted that the project may overlap with the RECOCA project (funded by BONUS+), it may duplicate the work of HELCOM PLC-6 group, and the implementation of the project results should be assured by involving and receiving an approval from relevant authorities from all Baltic Sea Region countries, otherwise the sustainability of the project cannot be seen.

The project leader responded that RECOCA was strictly a scientific project and no institutions involved in the PLC work were partners. He informed that the project is in an early stage of development, and a workshop is being planned among relevant stakeholders, particularly the institutions involved in HELCOM PLC work to develop the project further.

The meeting agreed that there is a need to involve experts working in HELCOM LOAD and thus avoid duplication of work being currently done within HELCOM PLC-6 group. The meeting agreed that when project idea is developed in more detail it should be presented at the relevant HELCOM meeting.

HELCOM NVZ project - Reduction of nutrients discharge in the areas highly vulnerable to nutrient losses (project leader: not confirmed)

Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky presented the project idea on reduction of nutrients discharge in the areas highly vulnerable to nutrient losses (NVZ) developed further within HELCOM.

The progress on project idea was noted and that it would be a good transition of knowledge to Russia and Belarus. The project leader is not established yet and under negotiations.

The meeting agreed to wait with the final assessment of the project until it is more developed and the project leader is clarified.

C. Financing possibilities offered by Swedish Institute

Sara Almqvist presented the financing possibilities offered currently by the Swedish Institute.

There is seed money for developing a project idea available, for projects with a leader from Sweden. The call is open until June 2015. Approximately 45 000 EUR is available per project, which is 100% of the project budget (no co-financing needed).

The call for big projects will be opened in late 2015 or in 2016.

The Baltic Leadership Programme was presented as a possibility for Priority Area Coordinators and the Steering Committee members to improve their skills and enhance the coordinating of their PA by sharing effective tools for successful cooperation. The Programme consists of 2 modules : first week in Sweden, second week in Brussels. The possibility of participating in the Programme together with



PA Agri Coordinators was raised. Participating in the Programme is worth considering. More information about the Baltic Leadership Programme is available at <http://www.bsr-secure.eu/showcase/baltic-leadership-programme/>.

D. A review of the EUSBSR Action Plan

Joanna Kiryłto briefly informed on the process for the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan (AP) in 2014/2015. Based on the discussions between the Commission, PACs/HALs and other stakeholders during the course of the revision, DG Regio sent a questionnaire to NCPs who were invited to send the positions of the MS by the beginning of September 2014. The first draft of the AP will be sent to NCPs by 5th October 2014. DG Regio is going to organize a meeting with NCP in the middle of November to discuss and hopefully agree on the new structure of the AP. After the meeting the new structure will be consulted with PACs/HALs.

The updated action plan should be ready for decision by NCP/MS and endorsement by HLG at spring 2015.

E. Other issues

There was no time left for a presentation on Priorities of the Estonian chairmanship of HELCOM, however the presentation will be available at the PA Nutri website: <http://groupspaces.com/eusbsr-nutrient-inputs/pages/6th-meeting-of-the-priority-area-nutri-steering-committee-24.09.2014>

There will be a big information campaign in Poland focused on the Baltic Deal project, prepared by the DG Communication. There is a request from DG Regio to Polish PAC Nutri to help presenting the project in a bigger picture by involving and interviewing various actors from the BSR: Chief Inspector of the Environmental Protection as PAC Nutri, Baltic Sea Region Programme as a financial institution, Advisory institutions leading a project, farmers participating in the project – target group.

Joanna Kiryłto reminded about the LIFE+ programme, which provides possibility for international cooperation and thus could be a potential financing source for flagship projects. She also informed that DG Environment representative Chris Mainz (christof.mainz@ec.europa.eu) is eager to help PA Nutri with assessment of the projects, especially regarding the wastewater treatment projects.

Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky informed that a new HELCOM group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (HELCOM AGRI) has been established.

The meeting agreed that there is a need to share and ensure the exchange of the knowledge between PA Nutri, PA Agri and HELCOM AGRI group. It was suggested to present the PAs at the first meeting of the group (20-21 Nov 2014).



DG Regio informed about a civil society fora: EU-Russia Civil Society Forum and EU-Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. It was suggested to inform and involve Russia and Belarus in PA Nutri work via these fora.

F. Next steps

PAC Nutri suggested to organize the next SC meeting back-to-back to the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 Conference, which will be held in Warsaw on 26-27 November 2014. There was a preliminary agreement on this issue. The exact date will be consulted with the SC Members via e-mail.

Laura Saijonmaa suggested to have a joint workshop with HELCOM and PA Agri back-to-back HELCOM stakeholder meeting in March 2015. The idea will be discussed during next SC meeting.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 17:30 by the PACs.

Minutes submitted by Joanna Charytonowicz