

Meeting minutes September 29th, 2022

Opening

The 20th meeting of the Steering Group (SG) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order in Teams and in person at Lappeenranta 29th of September, at 14:00 EET by the policy area coordinators (PACs).

Present:

1. Josefin Hjort, chair, NFT Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
2. Elsi Kauppinen, PAC Nutri Finland, ELY Centre
3. Pekka Paavilainen, interim PAC Nutri Finland, ELY Centre
4. Andrzej Kachorek, PAC Nutri Poland, State Water Holding Polish Waters
5. Przemyslaw Gruszecki, State Water Holding Polish Waters
6. Laura Saijonmaa, NFP Finland, Ministry of the Environment,
7. Liis Kikas, 2nd NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
8. Egidija Dudaite, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of the Environment

Apologies:

1. Ann Riisenberg, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
2. Wera Leujak, NFP Germany, Federal Environment Agency, Protection of the Marine Environment
3. Heike Imhoff, 2 NFP of Germany, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
4. Lasse Tor Nielsen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment
5. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
6. Damian Bojanowski, NFP Poland, State Water Holding Polish Waters
7. Magda Chreptowicz, 2nd NFP Poland, State Water Holding Polish Waters
8. Marcin Zieleniak, 2nd NFP Poland, State Water Holding Polish Waters
9. Lotta Ruokanen, observer, HELCOM
10. Johan Magnusson, Strategic advisor, European Commission, DG REGIO

A: Introduction

Chair Josefin Hjort opened the meeting, with forewords that now is the time to start work after the changes in rules and organisations, and that we need to find the most relevant issues to work on first. Elsi Kauppinen presented the agenda of the meeting

A round of introductions was done, since there are new PACs, who are not familiar with everybody. Two new members to the SG are Liis Kikas from Estonia and Egidija Dudaite from Lithuania. The new Finnish and Polish coordinators presented themselves and their organisations.

It was discussed whether Finland can continue as the leading PAC, since there were organisational changes in both countries. Finnish and Polish PACs were both happy to continue in their roles as they are. SG agreed to the arrangement.

The slides for next topics were presented by both PACs (Elsi Kauppinen and Andrzej Kaczorek).

B: Funding of PA Nutri work: Situation in Finland and Poland

The Finnish PAC role was changed from Ministry of the Environment of Finland to Centre for Economic Development, Traffic and the Environment (ELY-centre) in the beginning of year 2022. SG approved the change. ELY-centre applied and was approved for funding of PA Nutri coordination work by Interreg BSR. The funds cover salaries for fulltime work, but no additional funds were applied for project generation.

The Polish PAC role was changed from the Ministry of infrastructure to State Water Holding Polish Waters. The new organisation did not apply for additional funds and will use existing resources.

C: EU Strategy for Baltic Sea region and it's effect on PA Nutri

The third revision of Action Plan was completed, bringing some changes. A current change is that Baltic Sea Strategy Point begins operations at the beginning of October. It's role has become broader in comparison to Let's Communicate, and can help with capacity building, strategy management and also acts as a institutional memory of EUSBSR.

In Action Plan the format for a "Flagship" has changed. A Flagship does not have to be a project anymore but can be anything (even a process, a webpage, a platform, etc) the SG sees as important. It was discussed whether the SG has previously concluded what kind of Flagships should there be in PA Nutri in the future. Apparently, the discussion was started, but no decisions have been made. It was suggested to find out how other policy area coordinators have worked with this issue.

At the time when Action Plan (AP) was updated there were several ongoing projects and flagships. All these have come to an end, and no new projects or platforms are running under PA Nutri. In the

Action Plan PA Nutri has four actions, which cover all nutrient sources. The fourth action covers nutrients already accumulated in the Baltic Sea. It was pointed out, that in the last few last years there have been no Flagships under this action, and that the lack of projects should be considered in long-term planning of work.

D: Brief description of previous work

A short overview of the latest projects was shown. In 2022 there have been no running Flagship-projects. As a side-event to the 2022 EUSBSR Annual Forum a seminar about sustainable biogas production was held in 27th of September.

E: Short-term and long-term planning of work

The main goal of the SG meeting was to get ideas from SG members for planning the future work to be done in Nutri. Some general ideas were presented for discussion. Also, the SG was asked how the SG members see their involvement in the PA Nutri, how could they participate more.

Next short-term goals for PA Nutri based on the AP are drafting a working plan and at the end of the year an annual substantial report. It was suggested that the work plan could cover the year 2023 and have some rough ideas for longer term goals for year 2024.

It was discussed that the work plan should focus on finding ways to get new projects. However, it is not yet clear how PA Nutri can add value to projects. Some ideas that were suggested:

Help spread information through new channels, for example in the frame of International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River against Pollution

Help by improving continuation between project cycles, by organising a workshop for completed projects and collect ideas that need more work → spread that information to funding organisations and to new applicants

The SG found the suggested ideas good but wished for more concrete suggestions which could then be discussed in more detail. It was suggested that PACs will write a draft of the work plan and then discuss its details with each SG member separately (“one on one”) before the next SG meeting. This will help in activating the SG into the work done in PA Nutri. The work plan will be presented for SG’s endorsement in next meeting.

Polish PAC suggested that there could be benefit in involving Ukraine to PA Nutri. The idea was first mentioned at the kick off -meeting of Swedish presidency in Stockholm. Lviv-area is still one of the HELCOM hot spots. Poland and Ukraine have ongoing cooperation, and the existing communication channels can be used to scope what kind of cooperation could be fruitful at this stage. SG found this idea recommendable.



During EUSBSR Forum the importance of involving youth to the work of all policy areas was highlighted several times. Baltic Sea Youth Platform prepared the Baltic Sea Youth Declaration 2022, where they present general ideas also specific ideas for each policy area on how to involve the youth. It was discussed if the involvement of the youth should be elaborated on in the work plan. The SG found this idea agreeable.

According to the AP SG meetings should be held at least twice per year. It was discussed if two meetings per year is too few. It was suggested that SG could meet two more times during this ongoing year, but it seems like one meeting in December is more realistic due to time limitations. When possible, SG could meet more often, but with shorter meetings.

It was agreed that the next SG meeting will take place around mid-December. PACs will send a doodle-link for finding a good meeting time. Poland suggested, that if the meeting will be hybrid, they could possibly offer a meeting place either in Warsaw or in Gdansk.

F: AOB and closing of the meeting

The Rules of Procedure for PA Nutri states, that the SG presidency rotates among the SG members. It is recommended that the policy areas' SG presidency rotations follow the rotation of the National Coordinators Group (NCG). It was brought to the attention of the SG that, if PA Nutri follows the rotation of the NCG presidency, then the next countries responsible for the role are Latvia in 2023/24 and Poland in 2024/25. PA Nutri's Rules of Procedure allow for flexibility in the rotation, and no SG member suggested that there would be a need to change the rules to say specifically that the NCG presidency rotation should be followed.

Chair gave as closing words some information about the Swedish presidency. In general, the goal of the Swedish presidency is to emphasize implementation of actions and of the overall strategy. Now is time to act. Another issue is cooperation with other macro-region strategies – it would be good to find out, if there are similar issues to Nutri and if there could be chances for mutual benefit. A meeting with the national coordinator is coming soon, and after that there will be more information about the goals of the Swedish presidency to share.

No other issues arose for discussion, so the chair closed the meeting at 15.50 o'clock.