

3rd Steering Committee meeting of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, Priority Area Nutri “To reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels”

Meeting Minutes

Aug 26, 2013

Opening:

The third meeting of the Steering Committee of the EUSBSR Priority Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order at 14:00 on 26th August, 2013, at the premises of the Ministry of the Environment in Helsinki (Finland) by the Priority Area Nutri Coordinators (PACs).

Present:

Anna Sosnowska, PAC, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland
Joanna Charytonowicz, PAC, Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Poland
Kristiina Isokallio, PAC, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Marja Kaitaniemi, PAC, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Laura Saijonmaa, PAC, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Josefin Walldén, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, representative of the NFP Sweden
Saija Vuola, HELCOM Secretariat, BASE Project
Marta Plichta, HELCOM Secretariat, BASE Project

Apologies:

Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of the Environment, Latvia
Charlotte Betina Mogensen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment
Aiste Kubiliute, NFP Lithuania, Environment Protection Agency
Heike Imhoff, NFP Germany, Ministry of the Environment
Enn Liive, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
Thomas Johansson, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
Mikhail Durkin, HELCOM Secretariat

A. Introduction, Seed Money.

Anna Sosnowska presented the main aim of the meeting - assessment of the projects proposals, submitted to PA Nutri, which would like to apply for funds from the Seed Money Facility managed by the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein (IB.SH.) Present in the meeting was

representative of the NFP Sweden and representatives from HELCOM Project BASE. NFP Latvia sent the comments on the projects via e-mail.

Joanna Charytonowicz presented the idea of seed money and the examples of the seed money instruments available for developing the idea of the main project – possible future flagship project within the EUSBSR. Project leaders can apply for:

- Seed Money Facility (SMF) managed by Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein (<http://seed.eusbsr.eu>),
- Seed Money from Swedish Institute (<http://eng.si.se/areas-of-operation/scholarships-and-grants/baltic-region-seed-funding-grants/>) - The SI prioritizes participation of Russia and Belarus in its projects.
- CBSS – Project support facility (<http://www.cbss.org/project-support-facility/>) - CBSS gives priority to SEBA (South-East Baltic Area) projects.
- the Eco-innovation initiative of EC (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eco-innovation/apply-funds/selection-criteria/index_en.htm).

Joanna Charytonowicz noted that according to the rules of the Seed Money Facility (SMF) managed by IB.SH there is a possibility to choose maximum 2 project proposals which best fit to the PA NUTRI Actions and lead to reduction of nutrient loads based on the targets established in the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. PA Nutri Coordinators were asked to provide the chosen projects with a support letter and send them to IB.SH by 30th September. Until the meeting started PACs received 8 project proposals, and 2 other new project ideas during the meeting.

B. Project proposals applying for SMF

Anna Sosnowska and Joanna Charytonowicz briefly presented and commented the following projects:

CIRCUNUTS, IWAMA, SUWMAB, WaterNets, FLOW Baltic, Evaluation and promotion of rural wastewater treatment for reduction of nutrients load to the Baltic Sea, BEST and CLEAR WATER.

It was noted that all current project proposals which were developed according to the Project Application Form details fit under the actions of PA Nutri. However, as it was concluded at the previous SC meeting, the priority is to get high-quality projects with strategic impact and concrete results on reducing nutrient loads. The meeting decided to encourage projects which goals respond to other Priority Areas to ask other PACs for letter of support.

1. CIRCUNUTS. The idea of CIRCUNUTS is to take the treatment of nutrients to the next level: not only to clean up wastewater, but to bring them back to use by recycling them.

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Investigate cost-efficient nutrient reduction mechanisms" - study and cooperating in developing new sustainable innovative and socio-economic mean for phosphorus reduction.

2. "Managing nutrients more efficiently" - promoting measures and practices which support nutrient recycling and reduce nutrient losses from farming and waste-water treatment sludge.

- It was agreed that although the results of the project are meaningful for PA Nutri at this stage it will not directly help to reach the PA Nutri targets until 2020. It was decided to suggest project CIRCUNUTS to be developed under PA Agri or PA Inno.

2. IWAMA. The focus is on capacity building through the creation of a Baltic Smart Water Hub, which would continue running on its own after the project finishes. It is focused on supporting municipal WWTPs in reaching HELCOM recommendations.

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Improving waste water treatment" - in urban areas

2. "Managing nutrients more efficiently" - improving and developing sludge management

3. "Co-operate with non-EU Member States"

- Although it was noted that the project application is well prepared, after the discussion it was decided that the project proposal doesn't describe sufficient added value taking into account already existing water hubs or other networks.

3. SUWMAB. The focus is on treatment wetlands that can used as wastewater treatment facilities in scattered settlements and small municipalities (<2000 p.e.) As a large number of households in rural Poland is still without proper wastewater treatment systems, treatment wetlands could constitute a low-cost option improving the quality of wastewater into watersheds, with no need for heavy regulatory procedures.

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Managing nutrients more efficiently" - in rural areas.

2. "Improving waste water treatment" - in small scale.

- The project was considered as a strong candidate for a support letter. Meeting underlined pros of the project: it will focus on scattered settlements in rural areas, especially in Poland – where the problem is the most demanding, one of the effects will be pilot wetlands established, new partners will be involved in the nutrient issue.

4. WaterNets. The project is built around the concept of Water Users' Partnerships (WUPs), which means networks of all actors influencing or being influenced by the water of a river basin.

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Facilitate cross-sectoral policy-oriented dialogue" - river-basin level cooperation such WUPs is encouraged in the AP + local level

- Although it was noted that the project concept is interesting and application is well prepared, the project's impact on nutrients reduction may remain rather small. It was decided to suggest project WaterNets to be developed under HA Involve (possible using of Swedish Institute Seed Money)..

5. FLOW Baltic. The project focuses on agri-environmental measures combined to landscape-level planning, with the aim to increase capacity to apply water flow and drainage related measures by promoting the SCIEN-technologies (e.g. controlled sub-surface drainage).

- It was decided to suggest project FLOW Baltic to be developed under PA Agri

6. Evaluation and promotion of rural wastewater treatment for reduction of nutrients load to the Baltic Sea. The project's aim is to evaluate and promote technologies for small-scale wastewater treatment suitable for rural areas - small-scale WWTPs.

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Improving waste water treatment" - in small scale, rural areas.

- Within the discussion it was noted that similar project (within Base Project) is currently in action in Russia. Although the results of the Base project will be mainly disseminated for Russian stakeholders it is based also on Swedish practices, so it should be noted by the project leaders to avoid the double work. As it was noted that the need to promote the rural wastewater treatment is important in Poland and the project application is well prepared, the project was considered as a strong candidate for a support letter. Meeting decided that however similar work was done in Sweden and is going on in Russia, such project might be needed with special focus on Polish region and its specification.

7. BEST. The project's aim is to reduce point-source load of nutrients and hazardous substances to the Baltic Sea by technical audits, practical trainings, small-scale pilot investments and disseminating practices and knowhow on treatment of nutrients and hazardous substances. It focuses on better wastewater treatment in Russia and Belarus with a special attention to Poland. Based on results of earlier projects (PURE, PRESTO, COHIBA).

PA Nutri ACTIONS:

1. "Improving waste water treatment" - in urban areas - technical audits on nutrients and hazardous substances removal and treatment of industrial wastewaters

2. "Co-operate with non-EU Member States"

- The SC noted that the project proposal is concrete, expected to bring tangible results (trainings, small-scale pilot investments, special focus on Poland— where the nutrient problem is the most demanding) with direct impact to nutrient inputs to the Sea, and in line with PA Nutri targets.

- The project was considered as a strong candidate for a support letter.

8. CLEAR WATER. The project aims to raise awareness on the relevant EU Legislation.

- In view of the fact that it was just the first Project Idea proposal it was considered not ready enough for the current assessment process

Kristiina Isokallio informed about the latest received new project proposals:

9. NuRFB-BSR - "Nutrient Reduction and Friendly Beaches in the Baltic Sea Region". (Denmark)

10. Baltic Blue Growth. (Sweden)

- As they were just the first Project Idea proposals, like the CLEAR WATER project they were considered not ready enough for the current assessment process.

At the final stage of the discussion 3 best suitable projects were discussed: SUWMAB, Evaluation and promotion of rural wastewater treatment for reduction of nutrients load to the Baltic Sea and BEST.

Therefore, the chosen projects to provide with a support letter for SMF are:

1. BEST – Better Efficiency for Sewage Treatment (City of Helsinki, Finland).

2. SUWMAB – Strategies for sustainable communal waste-water management in the BSR. (Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland).

This projects were chosen because of their practical results (pilot investments, trainings) and the area concerned.

However, the decision will be consult with other SC members by email. PACs decided as well to wait till 15 of September to confirm decision taken during the meeting.

C. Identification of new Flagship Projects

It was noted that the prioritization of projects for seed money does not mean that only the prioritized would be able to apply for flagship status under PA Nutri, but the flagship status can be given to a project fulfilling the PA Nutri flagship project criteria.

Kristiina Isokallio informed about the results of the recruitment of the consultancy team responsible for the identification of new project proposals for PA Nutri and suggested his/her attendance in the next SC Meeting back-to-back with the Annual Forum in Vilnius.

- It was decided to continue the work on the Flagship Projects, among other things possibilities to cluster relevant projects and refine ideas on rural settlements, after the workshop and the consultant study commissioned by the Finnish PACs.

D. Other issues

The Annual Forum of the EUSBSR will be held in Vilnius on November 11-12. PA Nutri together with the Flagship Projects PRESTO and Baltic Deal will have a stand in the Networking Village.

- It was decided to prepare leaflets/information brochures/ posters on PA Nutri for a stand.

- It was decided to discuss potential new Flagship Projects in the next Steering Committee meeting in Vilnius in November

As it was noted at the previous SC meeting, HELCOM has indicated their interest into a **workshop** on wastewater treatment in small municipalities and scattered settlements. The possibility to have the workshop together with [HELCOM Base Project](#) representatives was discussed. The workshop would be focused on sharing legislative practices and experiences with a special focus on the need to present them to Polish stakeholders. This issue will be further discussed with the SC Members.

- It was decided to continue planning a workshop on scattered settlements, with focus on Poland, together with HELCOM

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 16:30 by the PACs.

Minutes submitted by Joanna Charytonowicz