



EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Nutri

Steering Group meeting

Date: 18/12/2024

Time: 14:00–16:00 EST

Location: online

MINUTES

1. Opening of the meeting

The Chair welcomed the participants and declared the meeting open.

2. Approval of the agenda

It was suggested to change the order of agenda points, to leave more time for discussion about Action Plan update. The agenda was approved with the suggested changes.

3. Updates from BSP, DG REGIO

Tom Schumacher noted that at the end of January there will be three different deadlines about documents required by the EUSBSR: Action Plan, work plan for year 2025 and report of year 2024. All three documents need to be approved by the Steering Group.

4. Possible change to the Rules of Procedure

National Coordinators Group has made a decision to update the Common Structure for Steering Group Rules of Procedure. The change was about shortening the required minimum time for decision making through silent procedure. Original time requirement was 10 working days and it was shortened to 5 working days (Article 7 - Decision making).

It was brought to discussion, if the Steering Group of PA Nutri would like to adopt the change. Nobody was against the change, but it was discussed if 5 working days is too short. **It was decided that the change will be adopted.** Its impact will be followed, and a discussion will be had later if it has caused challenges. There will be several silent procedures during January 2025, so the PAC will follow up after January to question about the experience.

PAC brought to discussion a line in Nutri's Rules of Procedure, Article 11 - Reporting: "*All meeting materials are published on the Nutri website taking into consideration the need for confidentiality*". This line is not included in the Common Structure of Rules of Procedure, and PAC was not clear on its meaning. For now, PA Nutri publishes all meeting materials instead of



just Meeting Minutes as is common in other Policy Areas. It was asked from the Steering Group, if they want to continue with the practice. It does not cause additional work. It was discussed that being as open as possible is preferable, so as much of the materials should be published as possible. However, to help with taking into account the confidentiality-cause in the sentence, it was suggested if the word “All” should be removed. This would make the sentence: *“Meeting materials are published on the Nutri website taking into consideration the need for confidentiality”*. **This change was also approved.**

5. Platform-project call

Three platform-project applications relevant for PA Nutri were submitted to Interreg Baltic Sea Region-programme’s call. PA Nutri is an associated partner in all of them, but could not join as a full partner. Results are expected around 5 March 2025.

- Circular Bioeconomy Platform promoting sustainable practices that utilise biological resources for economic growth in the Baltic Sea Region (CircuBioHub), led by Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences
- Circular Nutrients Platform - accelerating nutrient recycling in the Baltic Sea Region through improved collaboration and coordination, led by HELCOM
- Consolidation Platform for Closing Water and Nutrient Loops (WaterNutriLoops), led by Chamber of Economy Polish Waterworks

6. Report of year 2024 and work plan for year 2025

Report of year 2024 and work plan for year 2025 are still to be drafted, and will be circulated in January. A short overview of work done in 2024 was presented. Work plan for year 2024 included PA Nutri Talks about Action 1 (water management -topic) and about Action 4 (internal loading). However, the only PA Nutri Talks organised was about Action 3 (nutrient recycling). Next PA Nutri Talks is in early stages of planning (Action 1, water management-topic), and can be organised some time early 2025. Other small changes include: no workshop organised at the MRS Week, since there was no possibility offered by the organisers for that, more effort instead put to the EUSBSR Annual Forum where Nutri had three workshops, stand at the Networking Village and participated as workshop chair to Engagement Day.

For work plan 2025 some dates of events or other goals are already known:

- Annual Forum: 28-30 October 2025, Gdansk, Poland
- Macro-regional and sea-basin strategies Days: 24-26 September 2025, Brussels, Belgium
- CiNURGi-Nutri joint event: 20 October 2025
- Panellist in a discussion about “Nutrient Recycling in the Baltic Sea Region” at the Baltic Sea Region Forum of Finland in Turku, 12 May 2025
- Opening event for platforms, organised by IBSR: 20 May 2025, Tampere Finland



- Invitation to write about “challenges of BSR cooperation on sustainable nutrient management” to the Baltic Rim Economies -review’s “Sustainable Nutrient Management in the Baltic Sea Region” themed issue, deadline 15 March 2025

Next steps:

- Drafts for reports and work plan will be drafted during January, and circulated for silent approval
- Deadline for EUSBSR report and work plan: 31 January 2025
- Deadline for Interreg BSR report: 1 February 2025

It was discussed if having a silent procedure for approval will be enough, or if the Steering Group would like to have a separate meeting to discuss the reports and work plan. It was decided that silent procedure would be enough.

7. Action Plan update

Process this far for updating the Actions in PA Nutri:

- Joint workshop with PA Hazards about joint activities/Actions on 12.9.2024
- Workshops at the Annual Forum: Stakeholder involvement, Joint activities with other PAs
- PA Nutri SG workshop on 14.11.2024
- Drafts circled with SG twice: 26.11., and 13.11.

Drafts that were circled were written based on the discussions had in the various workshops, especially in the PA Nutri SG workshop on 14.11.2024.

The deadline for submitting the drafts for new Actions was delayed until end of January, so there is bit more time for final changes in text. The main decisions to be made during this Steering Group meeting were:

- Number of Actions
- Titles of Actions
- Order of Actions

During the SG workshop the number of Actions was already preliminarily narrowed down to three, and the titles were drafted together. These preliminary ideas were now confirmed and decided to keep to them. In the workshop it was discussed that the diffuse sources should be in focus in PA Nutri. It was now discussed if this should be reflected in the order of Actions. **The following order and titles were confirmed for the new Actions:**

1. *Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources*
2. *Reduce nutrient emissions from wastewater treatment*
3. *Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling*



New comments to the texts for the Actions were received during the same day, and several Steering Group members mentioned that they have also new comments. It was the preference of the PAC to send the comments through email, so that new versions for text can be once more circulated. Suggestions for even big changes are still welcome.

Tom Schumacher pointed out that Nutri's drafts were quite good already, but especially Outcome-parts could be improved, especially regarding the "alignment of funding"-part. He sent more specific suggestions for improvement after the meeting. He also recommended to be as ambitious as possible.

It was discussed that handling of sludge should be included in some way to the wastewater-Action. Inclusion of farmers to the agriculture-Action is relevant, but should not focus on just communication to farmers, but rather find ways how to meaningfully involve them (two-way street of interaction instead of one-way street). Agriculture-Action is the least developed from the three Actions. The PAC hoped that the Steering Group members could come up with good ideas on how to develop that Action towards bigger ambition.

It was pointed out that in texts there is too much emphasis on publications. The type of publications should be defined in text and the emphasis put on events. This will be changed in the texts.

It was decided that PAC will draft new versions for texts by the end of December and send them for comments. Deadline for new comments will be 15.1.2025. After that a consolidated version will be sent to the Steering Group and a decision will be had through a very short comment round (deadline 17.1.2025), if the consolidated version is ready to be accepted through silent procedure or if there is need for a short round of final comments.

8. AOB

No other matters arose for discussion.

9. Timelines for next meetings, end of the meeting

Next meeting was decided to be held on

Chair closed the meeting at 15:43 o'clock.



PARTICIPANTS

Estonia	Ministry of the Environment	Ann Riisenberg
Finland	Ministry of the Environment	Henna Rinne
Poland (chair)	Department of Water Management and Inland Navigation, Ministry of Infrastructure	Magdalena Dawidowicz
Sweden	Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management	Josefin Hjort
PACs	ELY-Centre of South-West Finland	Elsi Kauppinen
	ELY-Centre of South-West Finland	Pekka Paavilainen
Observers	BSP	Tom Schumacher