

Meeting minutes September 18th, 2023

Opening

The 23rd meeting of the Steering Group (SG) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order online in Teams 18th of September, at 10:00 EET by the policy area coordinators (PACs).

Present:

1. Josefin Hjort, chair, NFP Sweden, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
2. Elsi Kauppinen, PAC Nutri Finland, ELY Centre
3. Pekka Paavilainen, 2nd PAC Nutri Finland, ELY Centre
4. Tom Schumacher, Baltic Sea Strategy Point, Administrative Officer
5. Johan Magnusson, observer, Strategic advisor, European Commission, DG REGIO
6. Ann Riisenberg, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
7. Lotta Ruokanen, observer, HELCOM
8. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
9. Henna Rinne, NFP Finland, Ministry of the Environment
10. Tomas Želvys, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of Environment

Apologies:

1. Heike Imhoff, 2 NFP of Germany, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
2. Wera Leujak, NFP of Germany, Federal Environment Agency, Protection of the Seas and Polar Regions
3. Lasse Tor Nielsen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment
4. Liis Kikas, 2nd NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
5. Przemyslaw Gruszecki, 2nd PAC Nutri Poland National Water Management Authority (PGW Wody Polskie)
6. Andrzej Kaczorek, PAC Nutri Poland National Water Management Authority (PGW Wody Polskie)

Introduction

Meeting was opened by the Chair Josefin Hjort. Elsi Kauppinen gave a short introduction to meeting agenda.

New SG members (Finland, Lithuania)

Welcomed new SG members (Henna Rinne Finland, Tomas Zelvys Lithuania) also short round of introductions.

Possible updates from DG REGIO and BSP

Johan Magnusson from DG REGIO shared updates from DG REGIO. The EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region organised a strategy week in Slovenia. This year and also in future the week covers all four macroregional strategies, it is recommended that the EUSBSR coordinators participate. All Macro-Regions have yearly forums almost at the same time during autumn. The next EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week will be held on 12.-14.6.2024 in Brussels. Now and in future important to show what we have done and how value has been added in the Strategy through the biannual reports. Good stories about the impact are needed. A simplified questionnaire is planned for early next year.

Tom Schumacher from the Baltic Sea Strategy Point shared updates from the EUSBSR. Reporting for year 2022 came to end in September. The aim is to give more information for the National Coordinators Group, but also cause minimum burden for the Policy Area coordinators. Eventually the aim will be to have only one deadline for all reporting and try to combine them. Climate change topic will be raised as an important issue for all PAs during 2024. Activities should be part of every PA, since it is a crosscutting issue. Now gathering information about ongoing activities related to climate change in PAs.

Other info (Polish SG member, Annual Reporting, new projects)

Coordinators have been trying to get information, if there will be a Polish Steering Group member nominated soon. Poland is supposed to take over the presidency of Nutri at the beginning of the 2024. No word from them at the time of Steering Group meeting, but at the time of writing the memo there is a preliminary agreement about the organisation.

It was discussed that the Polish coordinators have an opportunity to join the funding for PA Nutri coordination from the beginning of year 2025.

Annual Report of PA Nutri activities was endorsed by the Steering Group through silent procedure before the meeting and the report was submitted to the EUSBSR.

New projects contributing towards PA Nutri have been funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region - programme. Short information about them was shared.

Interact-Interreg networking

Discussion about the networking meetings organised by Interact for all Interreg-programmes in the Baltic Sea Region. A discussion was started about environmental projects in the region, and it will continue later.

Experiences from first PA Nutri Talks

It was discussed how the first PA Nutri Talks organised at the end of May went. There was a good amount of audience, so there is interest. The event was organised in a seminar-style, without workshop or other ways for the audience to participate. In that topic it worked as was, but in the future would be beneficial to engage the audience more.

Discussion about future topics for PA Nutri Talks, how to develop the concept

In future we hope to engage the audience more in discussions and also develop a “work plan” for Nutri related to the topic. We can for example use online questionnaires, menti and breakout rooms for more interaction. Sending questions and tasks beforehand is also a good way to give the audience a chance to prepare for discussions.

It is possible to share the organisation responsibility of PA Nutri Talks with external organisations or projects. However, it is yet early for that, and good to gather more experience with the concept.

Selection of next topic for PA Nutri Talks

During previous meeting was already discussed some early ideas for the next PA Nutri Talks. It was already then discussed that the PA Nutri Talks-sessions will cover each of the PA Nutri’s Actions one by one. The next session will cover a topic from Action 1 (“Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources”). After that the coordinators have had discussions with various stakeholders about needs and they were presented to the SG. It was suggested that the PA Nutri Talks should support ongoing processes. HELCOM is going to publish during the autumn a new Policy Brief on Integrated rural water management”. It is based on results from WaterDrive-project. Also, BSAP E19 is related to the topic. The PA Nutri Talks could cover solutions to the problems identified in the Policy Brief and needed by the E19.

It was discussed that meetings with projects can be organised separately, and possibly recorded. One event should not attempt to cover all possible projects running under a specific topic. Recordings of meetings can be shared online and form a library of information about ongoing activities.

After discussions the topic was narrowed down to: Extreme weather events and their impact on nutrient leakage from rural areas. The title was suggested for next topic for PA Nutri Talks, and the suggestion was accepted by the present SG members.

Situation with Ukraine-cooperation – workshop at Annual Forum & other info

Information about the upcoming Annual Forum and workshops planned there was shared. PA Nutri is the main organisers for a workshop related to Ukraine-cooperation. It is organised together with several other PAs, SI and CBSS. Clean Baltic Source-project has begun its work. Discussions about starting a network of cities that will be focused on helping Ukraine – will be lead by PA Inno, if the plan proceeds.

Possible unofficial in-person meeting in Riga

There were plans about organising an unofficial meeting for the SG in Riga, one day before the AF starts. Coordinators will share invitation when plans are ready.

Next formal meeting at the end of year – in-person, online or hybrid? How many per year in future?

Next SG meeting will be in December. Doodle questionnaire about a meeting time for weeks 49 and 50 will be circulated. It was discussed if the meeting should be in-person or online. It was discussed if there is interest to join in-person a common workshop with PA Hazards during January or February 2024. Since the suggestion got support, it was decided that the next PA Nutri SG meeting will be online, and the planning for the workshop with PA Hazards will start.

It was also discussed that how many SG meetings per year there should be. Present work related to development of PA Nutri's work takes a lot of time and leaves no room for project-presentations. The project meetings can be organised separately and possibly recorded, so that they can be shared and watched when possible. No decision yet about how many SG meetings per year there will be in future.

Other issues and closing of the meeting

No other issues arose for discussion, so the meeting was closed at 12.05 o'clock.