

## Meeting minutes

December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### Opening

The 24th meeting of the Steering Group (SG) of the EUSBSR Policy Area Nutri (PA Nutri) was called to order online in Teams 7th of December, 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. Tom Schumacher, Baltic Sea Strategy Point, Administrative Officer
4. Johan Magnusson, observer, Strategic advisor, European Commission, DG REGIO
5. Lotta Ruokanen, observer, HELCOM
6. Vida Kučinskienė representing Tomas Želvys, NFP Lithuania, Ministry of Environment

#### Present part-time:

7. Pekka Paavilainen, 2nd PAC Nutri Finland, ELY Centre
8. Baiba Zasa, NFP Latvia, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
9. Henna Rinne, NFP Finland, Ministry of the Environment
10. Magdalena Dawidowicz, NFP Poland, Ministry of Infrastructure

#### Apologies:

1. Ann Riisenberg, NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
2. Heike Imhoff, 2 NFP of Germany, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
3. Wera Leujak, NFP of Germany, Federal Environment Agency, Protection of the Seas and Polar Regions
4. Lasse Tor Nielsen, NFP Denmark, Ministry of the Environment
5. Liis Kikas, 2nd NFP Estonia, Ministry of the Environment
6. Przemyslaw Gruszecki, 2<sup>nd</sup> PAC Nutri Poland National Water Management Authority (PGW Wody Polskie)
7. 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. It was brought to attention that Lithuania's member Tomas Želvys was represented by colleague Vida Kučinskienė.

## **New SG members (Poland)**

It was announced that a new member representing Poland is joining the Steering Group, Magdalena Dawidowicz.

## **Updates from DG REGIO and BSP**

Johan Magnusson shared updates from DG REGIO. Bi-annual reporting from Macro-Regional Strategies will happen in 2024. It will require input and clear messages of results from all Policy Areas. The next EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week will be held on 12.-14.6.2024 in Brussels.

Tom Schumacher from the Baltic Sea Strategy Point (BSP) shared updates from the EUSBSR. Reporting for year 2022 came to end in September with reports to the National Coordinators Group (NCG). Questionnaire for reporting for year 2023 will hopefully be mailed to PACs before the holiday season. It will follow the same structure as reporting for year 2022 and follow-up on activities that were started in 2022 about their development in 2023.

BSP shared news that the NCG will start preparations of the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan in 2024 with a questionnaire about need and interest to update PAs' Actions. For this purpose, the coordinator added a task to the Nutri's Work Plan for year 2024 to discuss the need for updating Actions.

In addition, BSP is also working on the update of the EUSBSR website.

## **Change in presidency from January 2024**

As previously decided, the Poland's presidency of Nutri's Steering Group will start in January 2024 and last until June 2025.

## **Interact-Interreg networking**

Discussion about the networking meetings organised by Interact for all Interreg-programmes in the Baltic Sea Region. Interact invites one Policy Area per meeting to discuss how they work and what

kind of cooperation would be needed with the different Interreg-programmes. PA Nutri presented their work, and it was discussed that especially more cooperation with the smaller programmes would be beneficial to improve the knowledge-exchange between projects from different programmes.

### **Experiences from second PA Nutri Talks**

Second PA Nutri Talks was held on 4 December, and it was organised as a workshop, in contrast to the first PA Nutri Talks that was a seminar. It was also co-organised with PA Bioeconomy and Coalition Clean Baltic. The amount of people participating was much smaller (about 20) than on the first round (about 80), but the smaller number of participants was on purpose, to have more easily manageable discussions. One of the goals of the event was to scope for interest and need to create a continuous dialogue around the topic. The Talks discussed a Policy Brief published by HELCOM and how its implementation in practice could be supported at country level. There seemed to be a lot of interest to continue with the topic.

### **Common workshop with PA Hazards & in-person SG meeting in Stockholm**

PA Nutri and PA Hazards are co-organising a common Steering Group meeting and a workshop. The event is meant for the Steering Group members of both PAs and it will be held in-person only in Stockholm. The idea is to scope possible overlaps in Actions of both PAs that are related to sediments and to form a plan how to proceed with advancing the Actions.

### **Possible Youth observer for PA Nutri Steering Group & other updates on Youth-engagement**

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) has established a Baltic Sea Youth Working Group on Environmental Sustainability, a youth group focused on environmental issues. CBSS coordinates the group's work and has asked for PA Nutri to join one of their meetings to discuss concrete ideas about how youth could partake in PA Nutri activities or in shaping of policies.

Another idea presented by CBSS was to have a youth representative as an observer in Policy Area Steering Groups. It was discussed if PA Nutri would be open to the idea, and it received many positive comments. It was decided to have CBSS Youth Coordinator as a guest in a future SG meeting to discuss more concrete ideas about the proposal. The final decision about inviting a youth observer to SG will have to be taken by consensus and also approved by the NCG.

Information about a new initiative of opening Interreg Volunteer Youth -programme to Policy Areas was discussed. Starting from January 2024 it will be possible to have a youth volunteer also in Policy Areas.

### **Situation with Ukraine-cooperation**

Ukrainians have expressed on many occasions the need for more cooperation about environmental monitoring topic. PAs Nutri, Hazards and Bioeconomy have been discussing a possible cooperation project, but it is still in early stages.

Clean Baltic Source-project begun their work during autumn 2023, and are now organising events in Ukraine. One such event will be on 14 December about funding possibilities, how to find partners for projects and how to write a good application.

Interreg BSR has begun to encourage their projects to develop small projects to Swedish Institute for including a Ukrainian partner.

### **Preparations for reporting 2023**

Reporting activities from year 2023 will happen soon. It was discussed that all in all three different reports will be drafted (Interreg BSR, EUSBSR NCG, EU) and circulated among the SG. At least the report to NCG will have to be endorsed by the NCG, but they all contain the more or less the same information. It was discussed if silent procedure is enough to go through the reports or if there should be a separate SG meeting. Nobody wished for a separate meeting, so the reports will be circulated through email. It is always possible to ask for a meeting to discuss more.

Some indicators for progress were discussed and how they have developed in 2023.

### **Work plan 2024**

Work plan for year 2024 was drafted by coordinator and send as attachment to the meeting invitation. A questionnaire was also sent to the SG members to gather ideas and needs for activities. Only two answers were received, and the feedback was discussed at the meeting. One question was about policy processes and if there is need to discuss the topic more. In comparison to many other Policy Areas, Nutri is in a position where HELCOM does a lot of policy work in the same field. Tom Schumacher commented that there still has to be a role for Nutri and its SG in policy work and it would be worth to have a discussion about it. Lotta Ruokanen commented, that it is important to spread results from projects where HELCOM is not participating, and also the last PA Nutri Talks was a good example of how Nutri can support policy work HELCOM is doing (in the Talks HELCOM's Policy Brief was presented and it was discussed how Nutri could support its implementation at country-level).

The questionnaire also asked about the importance of cooperating with other PAs. Tom Schumacher commented that PAs have an advantage over HELCOM in cross-sectorial cooperation and cross-sectorial issues such as climate change. It was suggested that PACs from several PAs work out together what kind of cross-sectorial issues there are.

Main points of actions for year 2024 were discussed. One addition to the work plan was done that was not in the version send as attachment to the meeting invitation. It is about organising discussions during spring 2024 about needs for platform-projects. Interreg BSR has expressed that they will open workshops or other discussions with PACs about developing platforms. Before the discussions start, it would be beneficial to receive ideas and needs from the SG members about what subjects should be a topic of a platform project. It was suggested that during spring a workshop with HELCOM, relevant PAs and relevant projects will be organised to develop ideas for a platform. This addition was done to the Work plan.

Draft of Work plan that was in attachment had a couple of planned activities marked with colours (actions that have been in work plans from previous years). The actions were marked with colours because there has been changes in Flagships and Letters of Support. Flagship projects do not anymore exist and only some Interreg -programmes use Letters of Support. Tom Schumacher commented that it is still possible to choose policy processes as Flagships, so the actions wording was changed to reflect that.

A concern over decreased visibility of PAs was raised – since projects are not anymore chosen as Flagships, the projects also do not put PA-logos on their websites. It was hoped that BSP would take a look at that issue and think about possible solutions.

It was suggested that the modified Work Plan will be circulated through email for comments and after that its endorsement will be decided through silent procedure.

### **Other issues and closing of the meeting**

No other issues arose for discussion, so the meeting was closed at 12.03 o'clock.