



# SIGWET

## Increasing significance of midfield wetlands to combat Baltic Sea eutrophication

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## Background:

- *More than 50% of nutrient inputs come from diffused source from agriculture (HELCOM 5.5 PLC report)*
- *Wetlands act as natural retention places for nutrients, therefore reduce their run-off to ground and surface waters and thus contribute to decreasing the eutrophication of waters*
- *The lack of political commitment has been proven during last HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in 2013 by unsuccessful attempt to further reduce nutrients inputs by 2020 and showed the weakness of HELCOM.*
- *Constraints in proper implementation of EU water legislation (Nit. Dir. WFD)*

## SIGWET in short:

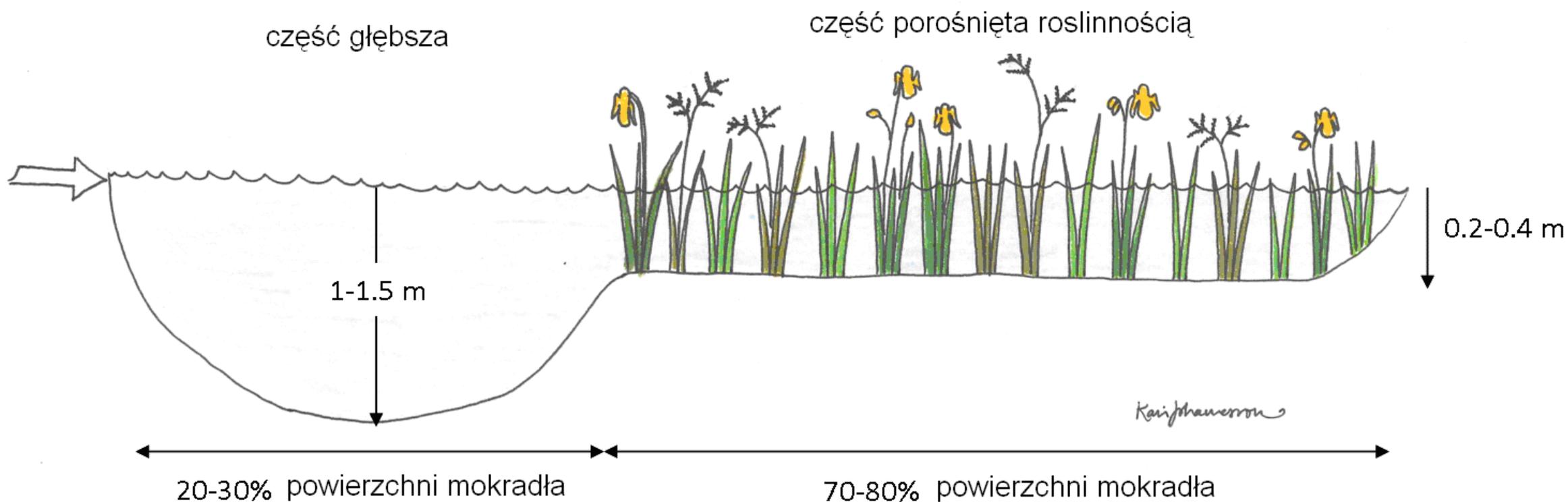
- *The main aim is to decrease nutrients run-off from farms in 6 countries of the Baltic Sea Region in order to combat the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea*
- *Activities: Restoration of natural and construction of new midfield wetlands , Monitoring of nitrogen and phosphorus concentration, report and manual*
- *Restoration of midfield wetlands on farms would significantly reduce nitrogen and phosphorus run-off to waters up to 60% [depending on weather and water conditions in each country], due to their retention capacity*
- *Partners from 6 countries: PL, DE, LT, LV, SE, EE*
- *Project's estimated budget: 3 500 000 euro (including 1 000 000 euro for investment)*
- *The project will contribute to the effective implementation of EU Nitrates Directive, Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)- by correlation with programmes of measures*

### Main activities:

- *Designation of farms all around the Baltic Sea catchment area which would participate in the project. These regions have the most intensive agricultural production. The farms will be chosen on the basis of their biggest environmental impact, using the experience from Baltic DEAL, project as well as on scientific expertise on nitrate vulnerable zones within Nitrates Directive.*
- *Restoration of natural and construction of new midfield wetlands on farm and sow appropriate vegetation to increase its natural retention capacity.*
- *Conservation of wetlands restored/constructed in the frame of the project and at least 5 years after finishing the project*
- *Monitoring of nitrogen and phosphorus concentration (run-off before and after construction) in wetlands and assessment of their efficiency with regard to the protection of water resources.*
- *Preparation of the report on the results for agricultural and environmental stakeholders as well as practical manual for farmers and agricultural advisors. The report will be disseminated through various channels, such as conferences, events, seminars for farmers and advisors, etc.*
- *Communication of the project results- including its presentation during various macro-regional conferences and events in the Baltic Sea Region.*
- *Preparation of recommendations for the water management authorities of countries participating in the project regarding water protection measures in scope of agricultural pressure - including analysis of gaps in legislation. Delivering recommendations to the policy level during bilateral meetings with governmental institutions, conferences, etc.*
- *Set of workshops for farmers and advisors organised in 6 BSR countries.*
- *Set of seminars for public water management authorities organised in order to present the results and recommendations.*
- *Final regional conference organised with stakeholders from different sectors and different levels of governance (i.a. farmers, advisors, policy makers, public and local authorities, scientists, NGOs).*

## Investments:

- *Investments will include technical construction/ revitalization of wetlands which will be partly covered by vegetation for water retention and nutrient absorption. The investment would also include water filters to capture elements of P left which have not sedimented before. The cost of such investment vary in different countries of the Baltic Sea Region from approx. 20 000 Euro in Germany to approx.7 000 Euro in Poland.*



*Wetlands designed for the purification of sewage from the fields should be deeper at the inlet, where the particles are settling. Shallower section allows to create better conditions for vegetation, which assimilates nutrients.*

## Main output:

- *100 midfield wetlands constructed or revitalized in 6 countries supporting water protection measures under crucial legal instruments*
- *Filling the gap in Rural Development payments for 2014-2020*
- *- Report on the role of midfield wetlands in reducing nitrogen and phosphorus runoff from farms as well as description of its costs and effectiveness in different countries published and disseminated (also on webpage)*
- *- Manual for farmers on construction and conservation of ponds published and disseminated among crucial stakeholders (also on webpage)*
- *- Webpage presenting wetlands solution in practice including guidelines for farmers*
- *- Recommendations for the governments (water management authorities) regarding water protection measures in relation to agricultural pressure published (also on the webpage) presented on the final conference and disseminated among stakeholders*
- *- Final regional conference organised with different stakeholders.*

## Target groups:

- *Farmers and agricultural advisors: will receive practical guidance on how to construct and maintain midfield wetlands on farms in order to decrease negative impact on waters*
- *Policy makers (water management authorities): will get the recommendations on filling the gaps in the legislation in order to promote best agricultural practices with regard to water protection in order to contribute to the goals of crucial EU legislation and HELCOM BSAP.*

## Partnership:

- *Institute of Technology and Life Sciences- Lead partner. Formed part of Baltic COMPASS consortium. Will be responsible for wetlands construction in PL and monitoring of N and P levels.*
- *Agricultural Advisory Centre in Radom – governmental institution, responsible for contact with farmers in Poland. Partner in Baltic Deal.*
- *Grüne Liga- NGO, responsible for creating wetlands in Germany.*
- *Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service – public institution responsible for contacts with farmers in Lithuania. Partner in Baltic Deal, Compass and Bridge.*
- *University of Tartu - responsible for the monitoring and spatial analysis of wetlands in Estonia.*
- *Latvian Farmers' Parliament - Farmers' association- education services for farmers. Will be responsible for contact with farmers from Latvia.*
- *Uppland Foundation- public foundation for nature conservation, responsible for wetlands construction in Sweden.*
- *WWF Poland, Germany, Sweden- international organisation dealing with nature preservation and environmental protection. Lithuanian Fund for Nature, Estonian Fund for Nature, Pausales Dabas Fonds (Latvia)- partner organizations to WWF in the Baltic states. All will be responsible for communication and transferring results to the political level.*

*Possible associated partners (TBC):*

- *National Water Management Authority of Poland- public administration responsible for water management i.a. for the implementation of Nitrates, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directive in Poland*
- *Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management-public administration, implementing MSFD in Sweden*
- *Ministry for Environment and Agriculture Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany - local government*

*Thank you*

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