



Outcome of the Intersessional Meeting of the Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 11A-2021)

Introduction

0.1 The Intersessional Meeting of the HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (AGRI 11A-2021) was held online on 20 May 2021.

0.2 The Meeting was attended by all Contracting Parties except for Denmark, EU and Russia, as well as Observers from the Baltic Farmers' Forum for Environment (BFFE) and Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB) (**Annex 1**).

0.3 The Meeting was moderated by Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, Professional Secretary, HELCOM Secretariat.

0.4 Mr. Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky, and Ms. Susanna Kaasinen, Associate Professional Secretary at the HELCOM Secretariat, acted as secretaries of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 1 Adoption of the Agenda

1.1 The Meeting adopted the agenda as contained in document 1-1.

Agenda Item 2 Additional information for the actions in the updated BSAP

2.1 The Meeting recalled that AGRI 11-2021 considered the additional information on BSAP actions related to the Agri group, agreed on the proposals for some actions as well as agreed to organize an intersessional meeting to complete the task.

2.2 The Meeting took note of the clarification that the additional information will be included in a supporting document for the updated BSAP and, though, it will be presented at HELCOM Ministerial Meeting in October 2021, it will not be included in the list of documents for adoption at that meeting. The additional information will be approved by the Heads of HELCOM delegations at a intersessional HOD meeting in September 2021 and further utilized to support the implementation of actions and follow up of the actions with the HELCOM Explorer online tool.

2.3 The Meeting took note of the draft additional information for the remaining actions relevant for the Agri group (document 2-1) and agreed on the additional information to be submitted to HOD 60-2021 as contained **in Annex 2**.

2.4 The Meeting took note that countries still need national consultations on some parts of additional information which are indicated in the Annex 2 by square brackets.

2.5 The Meeting took note that Sweden keeps their study reservation on action EN13 together with all related additional information.

2.6 The Meeting took note that the guidance regarding finalisation of the additional information in due time will be given by HOD 60-2021 after consideration of the achieved progress.

Agenda Item 3 Any other business

3.1 The Meeting did not consider any other business.

Agenda Item 4 Outcome of the Meeting

4.1 The draft outcome was prepared by the Secretariat and adopted via correspondence.

Annex 1. List of participants

Name	Representing	Name of organization	Email
Sari Luostarinen	Chair	Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)	sari.luostarinen@luke.fi
Katrina Lang	Estonia	Ministry of the environment of Estonia	katrina.lang@envir.ee
Ann Riisenberg	Estonia	The Ministry of environment	ann.riisenberg@envir.ee
Sonja Pyykkönen	Finland	Ministry of the environment	sonja.pyykkonen@ym.fi
Stefan Lorenz	Germany	Julius Kuehn-Institute (JKI)	stefan.lorenz@julius-kuehn.de
Katrin Kuka	Germany	Julius Kuehn-Institute (JKI)	katrin.kuka@julius-kuehn.de
Ieva Branicka	Latvia	Ministry of Agriculture	leva.Branicka@zm.gov.lv
Rovena Grikiene	Lithuania	Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania	rovena.grikiene@zum.lt
Piotr Skowron	Poland	Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation	pskowron@iung.pulawy.pl
Annika Svanbäck	Sweden	Swedish board of agriculture	annika.svanback@jordbruksverket.se
Kjell Ivarsson	HELCOM Observer	BFFE	kjell.ivarsson@lrf.se
Gunnar Noren	HELCOM Observer	CCB	gunnar.noren@ccb.se
Lotta Ruokanen	Invited guest	City of Helsinki, Baltic Sea Challenge	lotta.ruokanen@hel.fi
Dmitry Frank-Kamenetsky	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	dmitry.frank-kamenetsky@helcom.fi
Susanna Kaasinen	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	susanna.kaasinen@helcom.fi
Kaisa Riiko	HELCOM Secretariat	HELCOM Secretariat	kaisa.riiko@helcom.fi

Annex 2. Additional information on the BSAP actions relevant for the Agri group

Table 1. Draft supplementary information to be provided for the actions relevant for the Agri group in the eutrophication segment

Code	Action	Type of action	Rationale	Potential effect (if available)	Implemented by	Overseeing WG/ EG	Indicator for achievement	Activities	Pressures
<i>Theme: Agriculture</i>									
ENO1	Establish site specific buffer zones to reduce nutrient losses from agricultural land, for example on parts of fields where surface runoff and erosion occurs, along ditches or at surface water inlets	Measure	A site-specific buffer zone (perennial crop such as grass) can be established and maintained on parts of the agricultural land where erosion and surface runoff frequently occur. It can, for example, be on erosion-prone parts of a field, along ditches, streams and lakes or at surface water inlets to the drainage system. The location, size and shape of the buffer zone is adapted to the specific site.	Buffer zones reduce the risk of nutrient losses caused by soil tillage close to ditches and watercourses and fertilizers being unintentionally spread outside the field or directly into the water. The effectiveness is higher in places where there is a high risk of erosion or runoff.	National	AGRI	Relevant regulation or support scheme in place for establishing site-specific buffer zones. Advice and/or modelling available for farmers to find suitable sites.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
ENO2	Balance fertilization rates site specifically and promote precision fertilization practices to improve nutrient use efficiency and reduce nutrient losses	Measure	To balance fertilization rates site specifically conditions at the specific site and in the specific year are considered <u>Balanced fertilization means consideration of conditions for the specific site, year and crop when deciding fertilization rates.</u> For nitrogen, relevant techniques <u>can</u> include <u>applying application of</u> nitrogen fertilizer in multiple doses. For	The measure can reduce over-fertilization and thus nutrient losses. The effectiveness of the measure depends greatly on how efficiently nutrients are currently used, i.e. how much efficiency can be improved.	National	AGRI	Relevant regulation, ^{or} support scheme or advice in place to support farmers in site-specific fertilization and precision farming.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources

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			example , unfertilized plots, N-sensors and satellite photos remote sensing data can be utilized to assess how much nitrogen to apply during the season, and to adapt the application rate within different parts of a field. For phosphorus, information on the soil phosphorus content is utilized to target the fertilization site specifically.]						
EN03	Develop [by 2025] and apply [by 2027] the best practices to improve soil structure and aggregate stability on clay soils to reduce phosphorus losses from agricultural lands, for example by using soil structure lime or gypsum	Measure	A large proportion of phosphorus losses from clay soils are in particulate form and measures that improve soil structure and increase aggregate stability have potential to reduce phosphorus losses from these soils. Incorporation of structural lime (mix of CaO and Ca(OH) ₂ with CaCO ₃) or gypsum (CaSO ₄ · 2H ₂ O) into the topsoil are measures which immediately improve the soil structure. There could be also other measures to improve soil structure with justified environmental effect.	Studies on structural liming have showed 0-60% reduction of phosphorus losses from clay soils. Studies have demonstrated that gypsum amendment of fields reduces phosphorus loads from clay fields by around 50%. Gypsum contains sulphate, which is gradually flushed away from soil to nearby waterways, and thus gypsum can only be utilized in arable fields along waterways running into the sea.	Joint/national	AGRI	Best practices to improve soil structure and aggregate stability on clay soils to reduce phosphorus losses from agricultural lands are compiled in a regional document. The best practices are applied nationally in areas where the measures are applicable e.g. with the help of support schemes, regulation or guidelines.	Agriculture	Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EN04	Promote organic farming to increase its proportion to at least	Measure	The main difference between organic and conventional farming	Organic farming can reduce nutrient losses. A study shows that	National	AGRI	The proportion of organic farming is 25% of the <u>utilized</u> agricultural land.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point

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	25% of agricultural land by [2030].		systems are significant restrictions for the use of fertilizer and pesticides on organic farms. Additionally, import of fertilizers, fodder, manure, pharmaceuticals, cleansing agents and stocking densities are limited. Therefore, organic farming has a high potential to contribute to the protection of the Baltic Sea. It reduces the emissions of nutrients, pesticides and veterinary medical products, thereby protecting surface and groundwaters and the Baltic Sea. There can also be added benefits for the biodiversity and human health.	conventional farming emits on average 27.3 kg N/ha, while organic farming emits only 17 kg N/ha. Organic farming also reduces phosphorus losses through a reduction in erosion. In organic farming erosion is reduced by 26% compared to conventional farming. Due to a prohibition of the use of chemical-synthetic pesticides in organic farming their input is reduced to zero.					sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources; Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
EN05	Discourage application of manure and other organic fertilizers in the autumn at fields without green plant cover in winter	Measure	Timing of manure use is one of the most important aspects for ensuring a high utilization effect of manure and field trials document that leaching risk is highest for manures that are applied in autumn.	Reducing the post harvest application of manure is an effective way of addressing nutrient loss as most nutrient leaching occurs during winter, when soils are frozen, water saturated and plant growth is minimal.	National	AGRI	Relevant regulation or support scheme in place and advice available to discourage application of manure and other organic fertilizers in the autumn at fields without green plant cover in winter <u>and to promote nutrient-balanced fertilization at fields with winter green crops.</u>	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EN06	Improve knowledge exchange by establishing dialog between farmers,	Supporting action	Improved knowledge exchange from farmers to the decision makers and		Joint/National	AGRI	Organization of a regular Baltic Sea regional forum to exchange knowledge	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point

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	authorities and decision makers		vice versa is important for making decisions that are applicable in the farming practices, and communicating the reasoning behind the decisions in an understandable way is important to make them better acceptable among farmers. Direct contacts should be promoted for communication between scientists, policymakers and farmers.				between farmers, authorities and decision makers Ensuring ways or means for regular exchange of knowledge nationally		sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EN07	Enhance mutual learning among farmers on best practices and innovative technologies	Supporting action	Transfer of innovations and mutual learning among farmers across several BSR countries can be one of the effective and relatively cost-efficient measures that could help to disseminate and adopt nutrient abatement sensitive technologies for less price and at the same time save spending in other cost categories.		National	AGRI	Farmer mutual learning groups, cross visits, demonstration activities, collaboration with researchers, advisors and technology companies in disseminating and introducing new technologies.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EN08	Develop [by 2025] recommendations for BAT/BEP to reduce ammonia and GHG emissions from livestock housing, manure storage and spreading.	Measure	Certain technologies and practices for handling and spreading manure have long been surpassed by newly developed technologies in terms of environmental performance. These outdated practices are often still used because they are cheaper or easily	Utilizing the Best Available Technologies and Best Environmental Practice will reduce the emissions of ammonia and greenhouse gases.	Joint	AGRI	Regional document such as Recommendation or guideline on BAT/BEP to reduce ammonia and GHG emissions from livestock housing, manure storage and spreading	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition

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			accessible. Utilizing the best available technologies is needed to reduce the emissions.						
EN09	Develop [by 2025] recommendations for manure management specifically for horses, sheep, goats, and fur farming	Measure	There is no consistent approach to manure management for horses, sheep, goats, and fur farming across the Baltic Sea region. The situation regarding these animals (number of animals and current regulation) varies in different Baltic Sea region countries.	Improving the manure management for these animal groups will reduce the nutrient emissions especially if the number of animals is large and there is currently no proper management.	Joint	AGRI	Regional document such as Recommendation or guideline for manure management specifically for horses, sheep, goats, and fur farming	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EE01	Apply as a minimum the updated EU's BREF document and Conclusions on BAT for intensive rearing of poultry and pigs, especially for the facilities located within areas critical to nutrient losses	Measure	The EU BAT reference document (BREF) presents the Best Available Technologies for intensive rearing of poultry and pigs. Utilizing BAT especially within areas critical to nutrient losses is important to minimize nutrient emissions.	Implementing BAT will reduce nutrient emissions. The possibility to prevent or reduce nutrient emissions by using BAT is described in the document for different technologies.	National	AGRI	The EU BREF or similar national document is utilized when permitting intensive rearing of poultry and pigs.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EE02	Review national regulation and voluntary measures and – if relevant – implement further or revised measures, as compiled in the revised palette of measures for reducing phosphorus and nitrogen losses from agriculture.	Measure	The revised palette of measures for reducing phosphorus and nitrogen losses from agriculture adopted at the Ministerial Meeting 2013 is intended to support implementation of part II Annex III of the 1992 Helsinki Convention "Prevention of pollution from agriculture". The Palette contains technical, managerial and legislative measures,	Implementing the measures can reduce nutrient inputs from agriculture. The potential effect of the different measures is included in the palette of measures.	National	AGRI	Review of national and voluntary agri-environmental measures. Measures included in the palette of measures implemented into regulation or voluntary measures based on the review, if found relevant.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources

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			based on best available knowledge and sought to help in implementation of the aforementioned provisions.						
EE03	Implement and enforce the provisions of part 2 of Annex III "Prevention of pollution from agriculture" of the 1992 Helsinki Convention	Measure	Part 2 of Annex III of the Helsinki Convention sets out provisions for prevention of pollution from agriculture. By 2021 the provisions have yet not been implemented by all HELCOM countries.	Implementing the provisions of the annex on plan nutrients, plant protection products and environmental permits will reduce the input of nutrients and hazardous substances.	National	AGRI	Provisions of part 2 of Annex III "Prevention of pollution from agriculture" of the Helsinki Convention implemented and enforced nationally.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources; Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
EE04	Agreement on national level by 2023 on measures to reduce nutrient surplus in fertilization practices to reduce nutrient losses	Measure	A large nutrient surplus in fertilization practices increases the risk of nutrient losses. There are several measures, technologies and restrictions that can be applied to reduce the nutrient surplus.	Reducing the nutrient surplus in fertilization practices will decrease the risk of nutrient losses. The potential effect of some of the possible measures that can be utilized is included in the palette of measures.	National	AGRI	Agreement on national level on measures to reduce nutrient surplus in fertilization practices to reduce nutrient losses Information on measures for reducing nutrient surplus, e.g. limits for surplus	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EE05	Investigate opportunities for taxation of mineral	Measure	Financial instruments such as taxes or payments can be utilized	Potential effects will be investigated as part of the action.	Joint/national	AGRI	A HELCOM report on experiences in the BSR countries and the effects of	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point

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	fertiliser and/or taxation of nitrogen surplus and/or payments for agri-environment measures [by 2024], and implement them building on the experiences available in various countries.		to incentivise making better use of nutrients available in manure and other organic fertilizers, thus reducing mineral fertilizer use, enhancing nutrient recycling and reducing nutrient losses.				financial instruments such as taxation of mineral fertiliser and/or taxation of nitrogen surplus and/or payments for agri-environment measures to enhance nutrient recycling and reduce nutrient losses. Suitable measures implemented nationally building on the experiences available in various countries.		sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources
EE06	Apply innovative water management measures where appropriate, for example, lime filter ditches, sediment traps and controlled drainage, and nature-based solutions, such as two-level ditches and constructed wetlands, when upgrading and renovating agricultural drainage systems	Measure	Upgrading and renovating agricultural drainage systems is currently topical in many Baltic Sea region countries. Applying innovative water management measures where appropriate, for example, lime filter ditches, sediment traps and controlled drainage, and nature-based solutions, such as two-level ditches and constructed wetlands, can reduce nutrient losses.	Innovative water management measures can reduce the input of nutrients from agriculture. The potential effect of some of the proposed measures is included in the palette of measures.	National	AGRI	Relevant legislation, advice and/or support schemes is in place to support the application of innovative water management measures.	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
<i>Theme: Atmospheric nitrogen emissions</i>									
EE16	Revise [by 2023] the HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 on “Measures aimed at the reduction of emissions and discharges from agriculture” ensuring reduction of agricultural	Measure	According to the EMEP assessment of emissions of nitrogen in the region and its deposition on the Baltic Sea water area, proportion of nitrogen emissions from agriculture has increased and it has been	The revised HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 will be a tool to reduce ammonia emissions in the Baltic Sea region.	Joint	AGRI	Revised HELCOM Recommendation 24/3 on “Measures aimed at the reduction of emissions and discharges from agriculture” ensuring reduction of agricultural ammonia emissions and	Agriculture	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition

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	ammonia emissions and considering relevant BAT and BEP		acknowledged that some countries are at risk to exceeding national ammonia emission ceilings of the NEC directive. It has been agreed that the Recommendation 24/3 is outdated and requires revision.				considering relevant BAT and BEP		
<i>Theme: Nutrient recycling</i>									
EE07/ EN10 a/ EN10 b	<p>Develop [by 2025] legal and institutional tools to advance towards making annual field-level fertilization planning and farm-gate nutrient balancing for nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) a requirement for all farms in the Baltic Sea Region to reduce nutrient surplus on farmlands to the highest possible degree.</p> <p><i>Alternative version by SE:</i> Create legal and institutional tools to advance towards introducing annual field-level fertilization planning and farm-gate nutrient balancing for nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) for all farms in the Baltic Sea Region to prevent nutrient surplus on farmlands.</p>	Measure	Making a field-level fertilization plan before sowing and farm gate nutrient balance after harvesting are tools to follow the nutrient use efficiency of the farm and help reduce overfertilization and nutrient surplus that increases the risk of nutrient losses to the environment. Nutrient balances can be also made on the field level to follow the nutrient flows even more precisely.	Reducing the nutrient surplus and increasing nutrient use efficiency reduces the risk of nutrient emissions.	National[/joint]	AGRI	<p>Legal and institutional tools to advance towards making annual field-level fertilization planning, and farm-gate nutrient balancing for nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) a requirement</p> <p>[Calculation of nutrient surplus demonstrating how fertilization planning and farm-gate nutrient balancing prevents/reduces nutrient surplus (joint)]</p>	Agriculture;	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources

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EN11 / EE08	Implement adequate measures, especially in agriculture and wastewater management, to achieve the objectives of the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy [by 2027]	Measure	The Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy includes six objectives: Baltic Sea region as a model area for nutrient recycling, Reducing environmental impacts, Safe nutrient recycling, Knowledge exchange and awareness raising, Creating business opportunities and Improving policy coherence. The Strategy includes a list of possible measures and the BSAP includes priority actions on nutrient recycling.	Implementing the adequate measures to achieve the objectives of the Strategy will reduce the nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea and minimize the input of hazardous substances.	National	AGRI; PRESSURE	The actions on nutrient recycling in the BSAP are implemented as well as other measures as relevant.	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources; Input of heavy metals; Input of microbial pathogens; Input of pharmaceuticals; Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
EN12	Enhance the use of recycled nutrients in agriculture making use of best available technologies and fertilize according to crop needs	Measure	To increase nutrient recycling, the use of recycled nutrients should be enhanced, and the use of mineral fertilizers and imported feed reduced.	Making use of the best available technologies for recycling the nutrients and fertilizing according to crop needs reduces the risk of nutrient losses by ensuring high nutrient use efficiency.	<u>National/ [joint]</u>	AGRI; PRESSURE	<u>Support schemes and advice in place to enhance the use of recycled nutrients in agriculture making use of best available technologies and fertilizing according to crop needs</u> <u>[Demonstration of substitution of mineral fertilizers by recycled fertilizers (joint)]</u>	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources

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EN13	Develop [by 2027] safety requirements for recycled fertilizer products and minimise the occurrence of harmful compounds in these products to comply with the requirements.	Measure	Developing safety requirements for recycled fertilizer products is a tool to ensure safe nutrient recycling by minimizing the release of hazardous substances.	Requirements for the safety of recycled fertilizer products will reduce the release of hazardous substances to the environment.	Joint/National	AGRI; PRESSURE	Regional document on the safety requirements for recycled fertilizer products Compliance with the requirements nationally with relevant regulation	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of heavy metals; Input of microbial pathogens; Input of pharmaceuticals; Input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances, non-synthetic substances, radionuclides) — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition, acute events
EN14	Increase the knowledge and promote education and advisory services on nutrient recycling	Supporting action	To increase nutrient recycling, there is a need to increase knowledge and promote education and advisory services on nutrient recycling. The topic is still not widely known and there are many misconceptions on what it means.	N/A	National	AGRI	Matters about nutrient recycling are integrated into the relevant education and training programs [Information and communication campaigns about nutrient recycling conducted]	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources
EN15 / EN17	Improve the conditions for the development of a market for recycled fertilizer products by setting incentives with the aim of making the use of such products equally attractive to farmers as the use of mineral fertilizers	Supporting action	Currently, mineral fertilizers can be more attractive to farmers than recycled fertilizers products due to e.g. lower prizes and familiarity. To reallocate nutrients from regions where there is an excess of nutrients to other regions, the excess nutrients should <u>can</u> be	N/A	National	AGRI; PRESSURE	Incentives set to improve the conditions for the development of a market for recycled fertilizers	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources

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			processed to recycled fertilizer products and there should be a market for these products. Incentives such as support for the use or production of such products could facilitate creating the market.						
EN16	Enhance cooperation and share experiences between sectors and actors to create a holistic view on sustainable food systems including nutrient recycling across sectors	Supporting action	Nutrient recycling requires a system change in the society. A holistic view on the sustainable food system is needed across various sectors	N/A	National/ <u>joint</u>	AGRI; PRESSURE	<u>[Identification of sectors and organizations that should be part of the national discussion on nutrient recycling]</u> <u>Organization of Baltic Sea regional and national conferences, webinars, visits, collaboration with researchers etc. to share experiences and exchange knowledge between sectors and actors</u>	Agriculture; Waste waters (urban, industrial, scattered dwellings, stormwaters)	Input of nitrogen — diffuse sources, point sources, atmospheric deposition; Input of phosphorous — diffuse sources, point sources