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Background

The HELCOM Workshop on regional nutrient recycling strategy was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland and HELCOM in cooperation with the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Nutri on 7 November 2018 in Warsaw, Poland. The workshop was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Latvia and Lithuania as well as HELCOM Observers BFFE, BSAG, CCB, EurEau, John Nurminen Foundation, WWF and invited guests. The aim of the workshop was to identify the drivers and challenges for nutrient recycling in the Baltic Sea Region and discuss the common vision and objectives for the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy.

The attached document contains the notes from HELCOM Workshop on regional nutrient recycling strategy. A complete workshop report, documenting all outcomes of group work and joint sessions of the workshop will be published later.

The document has been revised based on the discussion in the AGRI 6a-2018 Meeting.

Action requested

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information.



Notes from the HELCOM Workshop on regional nutrient recycling strategy 7 November 2018, Warsaw, Poland

Introduction

The HELCOM Workshop on regional nutrient recycling strategy was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland and HELCOM in cooperation with the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Policy Area Nutri on 7 November 2018 in Warsaw, Poland. The workshop was attended by all HELCOM Contracting Parties except for Latvia and Lithuania as well as HELCOM Observers BFFE, BSAG, CCB, EurEau, John Nurminen Foundation, WWF, the coordinators of EUSBSR PA Nutri and Hazards and invited guests. The list of participants is included in Annex 1. The workshop was chaired by Ms. Tarja Haaranen, Vice-Chair of HELCOM and Chair of HELCOM Agri group.

The aim of the workshop was to identify the drivers and challenges for nutrient recycling in the Baltic Sea Region and discuss the common vision and objectives for the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy. The programme of the workshop is included in Annex 2.

Background

The HELCOM Ministerial Meeting, held on 6 March 2018 in Brussels, committed to elaborating by 2020 a Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy that aims for reduced nutrient inputs to and eutrophication of the Baltic Sea. The agreed principles for the strategy include focusing on measures at source rather than end-of-pipe solutions, best available scientific knowledge and safe recycling of nutrients especially from manure and sewage. The strategy will be elaborated by a step-by-step approach that includes creating first a vision, secondly, the objectives and finally possible nutrient recycling measures to be included in the updated Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The HELCOM Group on Sustainable Agricultural Practices (Agri group) is leading the work in cooperation with the HELCOM Working Group on Reduction of Pressures from the Baltic Sea Catchment Area (Pressure Working Group). Finland is the lead country and developing the Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy is one of the priorities of the HELCOM chairmanship of Finland 2018 - 2020. A nutrient recycling strategy drafting group consisting of Contracting Parties and Observers has been formed to support the work. The group held its first online meeting on 28 September 2018 discussing the work plan and vision for the strategy.

The vision

Defining the vision is the starting point for the work on the regional nutrient recycling strategy. This work has already been launched by the drafting group. The initial draft of the vision was presented by Ms. Marja-Liisa Tapio-Biström, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland (Annex 3) in three versions. The participants agreed that the vision should be a short memorable description. However, the version C was too short and required specification.

General reflection on the other versions of the vision was that the term “sustainability” was to be further specified in the strategy text to avoid its misinterpretation. Objectives in their turn are to identify specific aspects of the vision and are to be equally ranked, forming, together with the measures intended to reach the objectives, a tree-like structure of the strategy. The vision will be further elaborated by the drafting group.



Drivers and challenges

The participants identified multiple drivers that will promote nutrient recycling from both manure and sewage in the Baltic Sea Region (Annex 4) including environmental, economic and political aspects. The participants also defined many challenges that could be hindering the recycling of nutrients in the region.

Objectives

A number of possible objectives for the strategy were recognized such as a holistic view of food system and nutrient recycling, nutrient efficiency and closing the nutrient cycles as well as independence of external nutrient supplies. Also environmental objectives like reducing eutrophication, greenhouse gases and ammonia emissions, improving soil quality and taking into account the total environmental impact were highlighted. Minimizing the risk for humans and the environment, raising awareness and improving knowledge base, enabling business opportunities and improving economic viability were identified as possible objectives as well. An ambitious overarching objective for the strategy could be that the Baltic Sea Region is to be the world forerunner in nutrient recycling.

Next steps

The notes of the workshop will be submitted to AGRI 6a-2018 meeting. A complete workshop report, documenting all outcomes of group work and joint sessions of the workshop will be published at the HELCOM web page later. The report will be used as background material for the discussion on the vision and objectives in the nutrient recycling drafting group in the beginning of 2019. The drafting group outcomes will be submitted to AGRI 7-2019 and PRESSURE 10-2019 Meetings for further commenting.



Annex 1. List of participants

Name	Representing	Organization	Email address
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Annex 2. Programme

7 November 2018

Venue: Room A, Falenty Centrum Szkoleniowo-Konferencyjne (address: al. Hrabaska 4b, 05-090 Raszyn-Falenty)

Chair: *Ms. Tarja Haaranen, Vice-Chair of HELCOM, Chair of HELCOM Agri group, Ministry of the Environment, Finland*

Time	Activity
9:00 – 10:30	Welcoming words <i>Ms. Monika Zabrzeńska-Chaterera, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Poland</i> Nutrients in the Baltic Sea region and HELCOM nutrient recycling commitments <i>Ms. Susanna Kaasinen, HELCOM Secretariat</i> Work plan and vision of Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy <i>Ms. Marja-Liisa Tapio-Biström, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland</i> Common discussion on the vision
10:30 – 12:00	Manure & sewage parallel sessions part I: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• drivers and challenges
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 15:00	Parallel sessions part II: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regional objectives
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Common discussion on main findings of the parallel sessions Discussion and conclusions on scope, limitations, timeline and main objectives for the strategy
18:00 -	Dinner



Annex 3. Three versions of the vision

Version A

Nutrients are managed sustainably in all HELCOM countries, securing the productivity of agriculture through efficient use of nutrients and cost effective nutrient recycling and minimizing nutrient loss to the Baltic Sea environment.

Nutrient rich organic residues originating from areas with high nutrient surplus and accumulation are utilized for production of safe and economically viable fertilizer products.

Nutrients are recycled using best available technologies for the specific conditions and ensuring environmental safety.

Regional challenges are solved by applying scientific research and knowledge exchange bringing added value for the whole Baltic region.

Version B

VISION

Nutrients are managed sustainably in all HELCOM countries, securing the productivity of agriculture through efficient use of nutrients and cost effective nutrient recycling, minimizing nutrient loss to the Baltic Sea environment.

OBJECTIVES

Nutrient rich organic residues originating from areas with high nutrient surplus and accumulation are utilized for production of safe and economically viable fertilizer products.

Nutrients are recycled using best available technologies for the specific conditions and ensuring environmental safety.

Regional challenges are solved by applying scientific research and knowledge exchange bringing added value for the whole Baltic region.

Version C

Nutrients are managed sustainably in all Baltic Sea countries



Annex 4. Drivers and challenges

The following drivers and challenges for nutrients recycling in agricultural sector were identified:

Drivers

1. Status of the environment including eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, climate change and soil
2. Environmental commitments, e.g. BSAP and climate change convention
3. Circular economy
4. Legislation and support system
5. Concentration of nutrients in “hot spot” areas
6. Consumer demand and public concern
7. To improve the profitability of agriculture

Challenges

1. Economic issues
2. Awareness and motivation of farmers, public and stakeholders
3. Harmful substances
4. Policy coherence
5. Challenges in farming practices and technologies
6. Environmental impact as a whole
7. Splitting agriculture production in plant and animal production

The following drivers and challenges for nutrients recycling in waste water sector were identified:

Drivers

1. Awareness & understanding of the need to protect the Baltic Sea
2. Independence of external P supplies and closing the loop
3. Economic model to reduce the costs of sewage handling
4. Coherence & consistency of legal framework

Challenges

1. Lack of understanding why to recycle nutrients
2. Lack of the system to assure that sewage based products are safe to use
3. Risk of contamination
4. Unacceptance of recycled fertilizers
5. Lack of holistic cross-sectoral approach