Baltic blue growth – Initiation of full scale mussel farming in the Baltic Sea

→ One of the most serious challenges the Baltic Sea is facing is eutrophication, the enrichment of an ecosystem with chemical nutrients. The objective of this project is to remove nutrients from the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) by farming and harvesting blue mussels. This may be a stand-alone measure to counteract eutrophication, but can also become a business model for the feed industry and be used in symbiosis with fish farms.

Priority area	Natural resources
Specific objective	Blue growth
Project acronym	Baltic Blue Growth
Lead Partner	Region Östergötland, Sweden
Project partners	6 SE, 4 DE, 2 DK, 2 LV, 1 EE, 1 FI, 1 PL
Project budget*	Total EUR 4,6 MM

*preliminary figures before contract signature

Summary

Mussels farmed in Baltic Sea waters are less appropriate for human consumption, mainly due to their small size. Instead, they are used in the feed industry to replace e.g. imported fish and soybean meal. Previous projects have shown that mussel farming in the Baltic Sea is feasible and beneficial to the environment. This project aims to proceed from pilot stage to real cases and build up an awareness and capacity concerning blue growth and mussel farming among the private and public sectors. The project will follow four focus farms and two test farms where environmental, legal, commercial and maritime spatial planning (MSP) issues are clarified. The partners cover the essential target groups needed for such a wide range of interest and competence areas including mussel farmers, authorities, related associations, research organisations and commercial partners.

The main outputs of the project will be models and functional decision support tools based on environmental data collated from focus farms. Further outputs are four operational mussel farms, which contribute to business plans and manuals for mussel

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farmers in general. Different technology for farming mussels in BSR conditions will be tested and collated. A status report on legislation issues for mussel farming will be conducted.

The project will also give recommendations for a harmonised methodology in Maritime Spatial Planning and possible nutrient compensation measures. These outputs will be used by maritime spatial planners, potential mussel farmers and investors, fish farmers, technology providers, the coastal population, international organisations and strategies, regulatory authorities, policymakers, national and international bodies responsible for marine environment.

By the end of the project the aim is to have developed mussel meal for animal feed, going through the whole production chain: from mussel farmers, technique providers, logistics solutions via a well thought-out design for the mussel meal production line to finally have approved tests on animals for using mussel meal as a feed ingredient.

Through the project we expect to make a change in the Baltic Sea Region. Mussels will be considered an efficient way of counteracting eutrophication, a compensation scheme will be accepted for the ecosystem service provided by the mussels, mussel farming will be an attractive market for entrepreneurs to enter and mussel meal will be produced as ingredient in animal feed.