



EUSBSR EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Regional policy perspective and future outlook

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Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
the European Union

Cooperation this far

- Joint events during City Blues life cycle:
 - Europe Forum 28.8.2024: Riding the wave – Sustainable water management in the Baltic Sea Region,
 - EUSBSR Annual Forum 30.10.2025: Counteracting Baltic Sea Region Scarcity – Building water-smart cities through regenerative water and nutrient cycles
- Project platform Symbioter starting
 - Main aim: Local water symbioses that use the results from past projects relevant to reuse, recycle, recover
 - Mainly spreading information
 - Participating projects: ReNutriWater, WaterMan, NurseCoast II, NOAH, VillageWaters, City Blues, Catch, Aquares, NENUPHAR

What is to be expected next - general policy direction

- Water management, climate adaptation, biodiversity restoration and urban planning are no longer separate policy fields
- Cities will increasingly be expected to manage water through a **nature-based, catchment-oriented and resilience-focused approach**

General future focus:

- retaining water
- slowing runoff
- storing water
- reuse of water
- managing both floods and droughts simultaneously
- improve biodiversity (and carbon sinks?)

(Green) sponge city

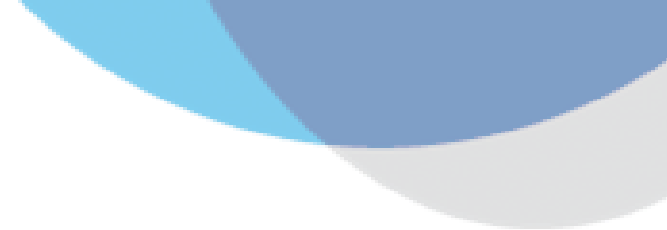
Updated EUSBSR Action Plan 2026 - regional policy focus

PA Nutri Actions:

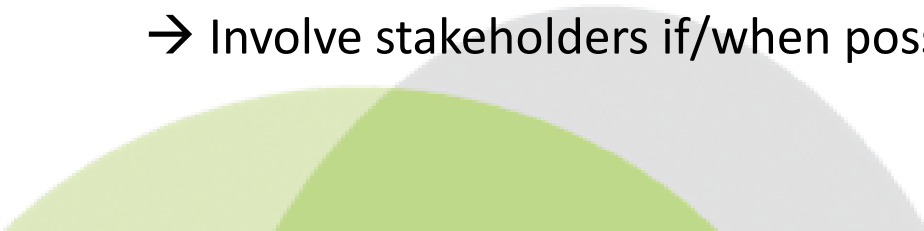
1. **Reduce nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse sources**
 - A holistic and cooperative catchment-based approach to water management in different scales
 - Integrated land- and water-management solutions
2. **Reduce nutrient emissions from wastewater treatment**
 - BSR countries face similar challenges in implementing the new UWWTD but currently have only limited or fragmented cooperation platforms to address them
 - Objectives of the revised Urban Wastewater Directive will be addressed in multilevel dialogues supported by PA Nutri → focus on small and medium municipalities
 - **Integrated stormwater management is well-known and practiced in urban areas around the region**
3. **Develop and promote safe and sustainable nutrient recycling**

HELCOM recommendation "REDUCTION OF DISCHARGES FROM URBAN AREAS BY THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF STORM WATER SYSTEMS", 2002

- "In order to improve quality of urban environment, the ecosystem services approach should be applied in storm water planning; this means that storm water should be seen as a resource for increasing wellbeing of the environment and citizens, maintaining biodiversity and promoting a good condition of surface and groundwater."
- "Storm waters should be managed according to a priority order, adapted to local circumstances. The following general priority order should apply:
 1. storm water to be treated and utilized at the source,
 2. storm water to be conveyed away from the source with a system that retains and detains the water,
 3. storm water to be conveyed away from the source in a storm water sewer to retention and detention areas located on public areas before conveying the water to a water body (brook),
 4. storm water to be conveyed in a storm water sewer directly to the recipient water body; and
 5. storm water to be conveyed in a combined sewer to wastewater treatment plant."
- Recommendation should be reconsidered in 2035



Preparations for next funding period

- Get involved with consultations organised by Interreg programmes in preparation of next funding period
 - Cooperation needs
 - Get involved with the EUSBSR Policy Areas with your project needs, already before next funding period
 - Project ideas are identified well in advance
 - Network in advance, discuss your challenges, ask for webinars/workshops about a topic that you need information on
 - Cooperation with Ukraine still important. Now Norway also joining cooperation more closely.
 - Involve stakeholders if/when possible
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