



**10th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy of Baltic Sea Region
12-13th of June, 2019
Gdańsk, Poland**

SUMMARY REPORT

**Seminar: *Safe nutrient recycling for cleaner Baltic Sea*
Time: 13 June 2019, 11:00 - 12:30**

The Baltic countries have set nutrient reduction targets to mitigate the eutrophication of the Sea. Although there are some signs of improvement, we are still lagging behind in phosphorus reduction in order to achieve good environmental status of the Baltic Sea. At the same time, EU considers phosphorus as a critical raw material in EU. There is huge potential to recycle nutrients, especially phosphorus, from manure and sewage sludge back to agriculture. Therefore, the HELCOM Ministerial Meeting 2018 committed to elaborate by 2020 a Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy. Currently, the member states have drafted a vision and objectives for the strategy. It aims to drive Baltic Sea region in becoming a model area for nutrient recycling, where nutrients are recovered and circulated back to agriculture in a sustainable, safe and efficient way.

There is variation between countries how sewage sludge is managed and there are several methods to recover phosphorus from different phases of sludge. The seminar reminded that sewage sludge can pose a risk to both human health and the environment as it may contain various different hazardous substances such as heavy metals, pharmaceuticals or microplastics, if not managed properly. For example Sweden is currently proposing a ban for spreading sludge on farmland and setting requirements to recover phosphorus.

Nutrient management in agriculture can be made more sustainable in all stages from feeding to manure handling, including housing, manure storage and field application. Smart nutrient management is essential in the regions with nutrient surplus caused by intensive animal farming. Incentives to collect and process manure in these areas are needed to lower transportation costs and make application of the nutrients contained by manure economically feasible in the areas with high demand of them for crop production.

Different sectors can benefit from enhanced nutrient recycling. For example for the waste water treatment plants nutrient recovery can serve as a potential to achieve even stricter nutrient reduction goals, increase energy efficiency and create new business possibilities and partnerships. Replacing inorganic fertilisers with recycled nutrients can save money, energy and resources. Shifting from linear to circular economy is also a key priority of the European Commission.



Further steps proposed in the seminar include engaging economic instruments, establishing even stronger cooperation between science and business, updating policy and legislative framework to support innovations and facilitate realization of solutions to recycle nutrients. The European Phosphorus Platform was highlighted as an efficient platform for dialogue on the issue.

The seminar was organised by policy areas Nutri and Hazards in cooperation with HELCOM and two project platforms BSR WATER and SuMaNu. It gathered more than 40 participants representing businesses, academia, international organisations, NGOs and governmental, regional and local authorities in the Baltic Sea region.