

Baltic Sea Accelerators: Pioneers for Better Pollution Monitoring and Reporting - Problem Solution Workshop

28 November 2017 , Wodociągi Słupsk (Elizy Orzeszkowej Str. 1, Słupsk)

Background

The City of Słupsk together with Race For The Baltic (RFTB), and other Swedish, Finnish and Lithuanian municipalities have participated in the "Baltic Sea City Accelerator" programme – an open knowledge-sharing platform, where municipalities, partnering with stakeholders from various areas, e.g. science, business, NGOs, solution providers and water institutes, such as SIWI Swedish Water House (SWH) jointly work to clean up the Baltic Sea.

The programme seeks to catalyze the transformation of challenges into opportunities bearing in mind nutrient pollution, one of the greatest threats to the health of the Baltic Sea, its coastal areas and inland waters. By strategically addressing nutrient pollution, the pioneer cities aim to capture economic, social, and other benefits for their community and the region at-large.

As a result of their work with the cities in the Baltic Sea City Accelerator, SWH and RFTB initiated a project focusing on "Pollution Monitoring and Reporting", to address the need and opportunity for further investigation with respect to the municipalities' monitoring and reporting of nutrient data to regional and national authorities, as well as HELCOM. The City of Słupsk is a participant in this project which comprises research, network building, and dialogue (workshops and seminars).

The project is led by SIWI Swedish Water House, in partnership with Race For The Baltic and the Action Platform for Source-to-Sea Management (S2S platform). The project is being carried out with financial support from the Swedish Institute (SI).

Problem Solution Workshop – Water Roundtable II in Słupsk

On 28 November 2017, the "Problem Solution Workshop" was held in Słupsk, Poland. The Workshop constituted Słupsk's "Water Roundtable II" – a forum that brings together representatives from the City of Słupsk, the regional water company, and participants from the maritime authority, parks services, academia and NGOs – all from the Słupia river basin.

The meeting focused on coordinating water management efforts between various stakeholders at the local and Słupia river basin level and explored possible avenues for closer engagement between local stakeholders and HELCOM with respect to reducing pollution to the Baltic Sea.

Morning Session

Beata Maciejewska, Commissioner of the Mayor for Sustainable Development, City of Słupsk, opened the meeting and thanked Andrzej Wójtowicz, Director of Wodociągi Słupsk (Słupsk Water Company) for hosting the meeting.

Marc Klaus from Race For The Baltic initiated the workshop with a presentation of the “Baltic Sea Accelerators: Pioneers for Better Pollution Monitoring and Reporting” project, including the background and objectives, as well as the initial research study on how municipalities can work for better pollution monitoring and reporting.

Johanna Sjödin from SIWI presented the role of Swedish Water House in the project, as well as the Source-to-Sea Platform (S2S) and the concept of source-to-sea management.

These presentations were followed by a “tour de table” during which all the participants introduced themselves, presented their expectations for the workshop and experience on working with local water management and Baltic Sea issues.

Dariusz Szwed, adviser to the City Office of Słupsk and a participant in the Baltic Sea City Accelerator programme, then presented and led a discussion on the potential benefits and modalities for local level stakeholders to work towards a sustainable Baltic Sea and HELCOM pollution reduction objectives.

The following points were emphasized during this discussion:

- Stakeholders on the local level need to be made aware of the issues and find their roles to undertake pollution prevention measures that are relevant to HELCOM BSAP objectives
- There is interest in having a list of pollution reduction measures that can be implemented on the local level from HELCOM
- Citizens need to be made aware of the local and regional issues and engaged in water management and co-governance – “water democracy” and “Baltic Society”
- Stronger coordination on the local/river basin level is needed and mechanisms to enable this could be supported by national and regional bodies

Afternoon Session

The second part of the workshop was a broader information-sharing dialogue and discussion on how to improve coordination among the Słupia river basin stakeholders present at the Water Roundtable. The discussion was moderated by Beata Maciejewska.

The following points were emphasized during this discussion:

- Important to create a water “policy/plan” and later share these objectives with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Important to raise awareness that investment in prevention can safeguard against future costs, e.g. reconstructing damaged infrastructure, cleaning polluted waters, health-related costs
- There is a large degradation of rivers by the development of buildings around and above their banks. Good spatial planning is the best way to avoid flooding.
- The problems of water and rivers should be treated regionally and not just locally – one of the solutions are joint talks at the regional level and inter-municipal agreements. The basis for these agreements could be an association between municipalities, which sets strategic objectives for the river and its tributaries, that are implemented with various partners, e.g. non-governmental organizations, municipal companies.

- Roundtables and cooperation are important. Next steps could include: defining the goals and benefits of cooperation and vision, seeking ways to revitalize the connection of the towns and municipalities in the basins of the Słupia and Łupawa rivers.

Summary and Next Steps

The results and the summary of the workshop will be reported to and used in the “Baltic Sea Accelerators: Pioneers for Better Pollution Monitoring and Reporting” project.

Further, the opportunity to enhance communication and coordination of activities on the local level will continue to be explored by the Roundtable participants, pending interpretation of new water management legislation scheduled to enter into force on 1 January 2018.