

Clean Sea Fund Report 1/2017 (6 March 2017)

Status as of 31 December 2016	€
Funds in the Clean Sea Fund	MEUR 13.6
Project expenditure	MEUR 11.7
Funds reserved for ongoing projects	MEUR 1.9

The objective of the John Nurminen Foundation's Clean Baltic Sea projects is to improve the status of the Baltic Sea with concrete measures that reduce the nutrient load and environmental risks faced by the sea.

All of the Foundation's Clean Baltic Sea projects and their support activities employ nine people, two of them part-time.

Project progress

The NutriTrade project, launched in 2015, will create a voluntary nutrient trading system for the Baltic area, which, in turn, will enable the identification and implementation of cost-efficient load reduction measures. At the same time, the project pilots various promising methods which reduce the nutrient load of the Baltic Sea, such as treating fields with gypsum, and also methods for removing nutrients already in the sea, such as blue mussel farming, and fish stock management. All pilot projects are already underway, as is the planning of a crowdfunding platform aimed at projects that reduce the nutrient load of the Baltic Sea. Also, a study has been launched, focusing on the possibilities of utilising flexible and cost-efficient mechanisms, such as nutrient trading, more widely in Baltic Sea protection.

The Local Fishing project, launched by the Foundation in March 2015, seeks to remove nutrients from the sea to land through fish stock management of cyprinid fish, which are then used for human consumption. The catch is used to prepare fish patties and other fish products. In 2016, the project's set goal for the volume of the catch was doubled compared to the previous year, and 12 fishermen, who started working with fish stock management in April, were recruited. In 2017, fishing will have the same volume as in 2016. Fish patties will be available in 2017 in institutional kitchens of the Turku area, Espoo, and Helsinki. In spring 2017, the Foundation and Kesko will jointly launch the Pirkka archipelago fish patty, a consumer product marketed nationwide. The final goal is to commercialize the entire production chain so that at the end of the project, fish stock management in the marine area will run without the phosphorus removal fee now paid to the fishermen.

The phosphorus removal system provided by the Foundation to the wastewater treatment plant of Gatchina, the second largest city of the Leningrad region, was deployed in November 2015. Similar equipment was also deployed in Vyborg in October 2016. These two measures can reduce the nutrient load of the Gulf of Finland by 50 tonnes per year, equalling twice the volume of discharges from the Helsinki Viikinmäki treatment plant. The next step in the wastewater projects of northwestern Russia is improving the efficiency of phosphorus removal from the wastewaters of the city of Kingisepp: the target is to implement this in 2017. The project will cut the phosphorus load entering the sea by 13 tonnes annually.

An agreement concluded with the Belarusian city of Vitebsk states that nutrient loads leaving the treatment plant will be cut by improving treatment efficiency beyond national minimum requirements. More efficient phosphorus removal at the city wastewater treatment plant will begin in autumn 2016, and enable a reduction of nearly 50 tonnes in the Baltic Sea's eutrophication-inducing load.

In connection with a project led by the Foundation and the BSAP Trust Fund, the enormous Udarnik poultry farm near Vyborg will acquire a filtering system for nutrient-rich runoff waters. A treatment system for runoff waters from fields was installed in the autumn of 2015, and a filtering system for manure pools is currently under construction.

In May 2016, the Foundation approved a new project which seeks to manage the phosphorus discharges from the biogas plant currently under construction in Lviv, Ukraine. The project can prevent a load of more than 100 tonnes of phosphorus from entering the Baltic Sea via the Poltva River.

Fundraising and realised objectives

Funds raised for the Clean Baltic Sea projects in 2005 - 2016 amounted to a total of approximately €13.6 million, of which roughly €11.7 million has been used in project implementation. The remaining monies in the Fund, i.e. €1.9 million, have been reserved for projects that are currently ongoing or being planned.

In the summer, the Save a Piece of the Baltic Sea donation platform was revamped, and during autumn and before Christmas the renewed platform was marketed in Sanoma media. During the year, the platform was used to donate €35,386 to the Foundation.

The largest fundraising event of the year was the Clean Baltic Sea benefit concert, organised on 19 April 2016 at the Helsinki Music Centre, which, in addition to raising funds, had the goal of making the status of the Baltic Sea the topic of general discussion. The Foundation invited 500 Baltic Sea heroes to the concert: these were young people who had worked for the best interest of the sea. Companies were provided the opportunity to sponsor the participation of these young people, but this did not turn out a success. After the concert's mandatory costs had been paid, no income remained for the Clean Baltic Sea projects. Even though the fundraising goal of the concert was not reached, it still generated a lot of good visibility for the Baltic Sea and its protection.

So far, projects have been implemented in a total of 21 targets, of which 15 have been completed. As a result of the projects, annual phosphorus discharges entering the Baltic Sea have been reduced by a total of 2,100 tonnes. Moreover, the John Nurminen Foundation has provided technical expertise at two project sites, namely the Kingisepp fertilizer factory and the Warsaw wastewater treatment plant, thereby also contributing to the significant reduction of phosphorus discharges. The projects that are underway now will reduce the annual phosphorus load of the Baltic Sea by many hundreds of tonnes, and will, moreover, create new and efficient ways to reduce nutrient loads that are also applicable in Finland.

New projects

This report monitors the implementation of projects launched up until the year 2016. Projects that are implemented on the basis of a later decision will be financed from the Clean Baltic Sea project fundraising account, established in 2016.

The BEST project (Better Efficiency for Industrial Sewage Management) is currently being prepared: its goal is to reduce the load of nutrients and other harmful substances originating in industrial wastewaters and entering the Baltic Sea via municipal treatment plants. The project has applied for funding from the EU's Baltic Sea Region Programme, and it is set to launch in the autumn of 2017. Moreover, the Foundation has now initiated an extensive survey on assessing the risk of nutrient discharges originating in biogas production in the Baltic Sea area.