

CB0300177

BaltCOP

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A - Project identification

A.1 Project identification

Project id (automatically created)	CB0300177
Name of the lead partner organisation	Stiftelsen Världsnaturfonden WWF
Name of the lead partner organisation in English	WWF Sweden
Project title	Baltic Catchment Officer Project
Project acronym	BaltCOP
Programme priority	Improved environment and resource use
Programme objective PO4:	Improved coastal and marine environment
Project duration in months	36

A.2 Project summary

Give a brief overview of the project. The information written here will be used to produce content for various platforms, such as the project webspace, booklets etc. Make sure that the information provided in the project summary field is coherent, well-structured, catchy, and understandable for an external reader considering all the points mentioned below. For a first step application, please include the indicative budget of your project (total budget and budget per partner) to the end of the summary.

- the common challenge of the programme area you are jointly tackling in your project*
- the overall objective of the project and the expected change your project will make to the current situation*
- the main outputs you will produce and those who will benefit from them*
- the approach you plan to take and why a cross-border approach is needed what is new/original about the project*

Eutrophication is the main challenge for the Baltic Sea in relation to achieving good environmental status required by the EU legislation and HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. Currently, none of the basin

countries are achieving their targets. Agricultural diffuse load sources are particularly difficult to improve. There is a shared knowledge and experience gap on how to maximise the effect of nutrient retention measures on farm and forested land, and how to make them feasible in the long run. As a result, the threat from nutrient loading to ecosystem services provided by the Baltic Sea and the economic sectors (tourism, fisheries and others) and cultural values relying on them, continues to increase.

To address this, WWF Sweden, Nyköping's River Conservation Association, Pasaules Dabas Fond, Latvia University of Life Sciences, Technologies and Estonian Fund for Nature and Novia University of Applied Sciences have jointly

designed the Baltic Catchment Officer Project (BaltCOP). The project aims to contribute to InterReg Central Baltic's overall objective PO4: Improved Coastal and Marine Environment, through improving 3 or 6 catchment areas (agricultural load sources) in Estonia, Latvia and Sweden. Reduced nutrient loading will be achieved by recreating and restoring wetlands and other water retention measures. In addition, the effects of these measures will be optimized through implementation of an innovative catchment approach involving catchment area coordinators with a broader toolbox.

The partners have identified the catchment coordination approach, in particular regarding wetlands, as a useful way to scale up effects from measures to improve load sources in rural areas. Looking back at eutrophication reduction measures in the Baltic Sea region, catchment area coordination is a new and innovative way of working. It has been applied in Denmark, Finland and Sweden but it is not yet fully established (with the exception of Denmark), and there is good potential to improve and expand the approach to other Baltic Sea countries.

The model cannot however be copied from one country to another, as adapting to the different contexts of each country is key. There is an opportunity to collect existing lessons, co-create different types of models and share knowledge cross-border to scale up the approach and embed it as part of national and local water management. This approach has the potential to lead to more effective and sustainable implementation of existing legislation, but also to support work with biodiversity targets, the upcoming restoration law actions as well as climate adaptation measures – connecting the local

know-how with achievement of national goals.

Cross-border collaboration and peer support between wetland and catchment experts can inject new momentum into this challenging topic. It can give new perspectives on the issues in a specific national or local context. Countering eutrophication is a long-term effort where local dedication is crucial to success. Such dedication, especially from landowners, is assumed to become reinforced through exchange with peers from neighbouring countries, working on the same issue and with an interest to develop similar methods.

The project will produce two types of outputs. First, increased capacity in applying catchment coordination and constructing wetlands, primarily among future experts (university students), public officials, farmers' unions and landowners who will be given the opportunity to participate in cross-border trainings, field visits and policy events. Second, jointly implemented pilot actions in Estonia, Latvia and Sweden, that according to the context of each country, will advance the possibilities of embedding the role of catchment officers in national water and environmental management plans. This will benefit several stakeholder groups. Local, regional and national public authorities and sectoral agencies will gain capacity and recommendations for how to better fulfil HELCOM commitments and EU and other legislation. Farmers, running SME's and owning agricultural land and forests, will gain additional support when it comes to planning for and investing in wetlands and other measures. The general public will gain greater awareness of possibilities to counter eutrophication, not to mention a more sustainable local environment. Interest groups (in particular environmental NGOs) and academic institutions are important drivers of change, who will advance their strategic objectives through jointly implementing BaltCOP.

The BaltCOP indicative budget is in total 2840 TEUR, and the per partner WWF SE: 790 TEUR, NVVF:

780 TEUR, ELF: 650 TEUR, PDF: 250 TEUR, LBTU: 240 TEUR and Novia: 130 TEUR.

A.3 Project budget overview

A.4 Project outputs and result overview

Programme Output Indicator	Aggregated value per Prg output indicator	Measurement Unit	Output	Output Title	Output Target Value	Prg Result Indicator	Baseline	Result indicator target value	Measurement unit
						The number of improved urban and agricultural load sources	0,00	4,00	Improved load sources

B - Project partners

Partners overview

No	Status	Name EN	Country	Org abbr	Partner role	Partner total eligible budget
1	Active	WWF Sweden	Sverige (SE)	WWF SE	LP	
2	Active	Nyköping Rivers Water Conservation Association	Sverige (SE)	NVVF	PP	
3	Active	Estonian Fund for Nature	Eesti (EE)	ELF	PP	
4	Active	Pasaules Dabas Fonds in association with WWF	Latvija (LV)	PDF	PP	

5	Active	Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	Latvija (LV)	LBTU	PP	
6	Active	Novia University of Applied Sciences	Suomi/Finland (Fi)	Novia UAS	PP	

[Detailed tables for each partner data]

B.1 Lead partner

Partner number: 1

Partner role: LP

Name: **Stiftelsen Världsnaturfonden WWF**

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities

In the Baltic Sea region, WWF is the only civil society actor in the field of sustainability, with offices in all countries around the Baltic Sea (excluding Russia).. They have been working together in the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme (BEP) since 1992. BEP, hosted by WWF Sweden, works on the thematic areas of landscapes, seascapes and sustainable finance (blue economy), and has a long experience of leading international projects among their member organisations.

Since 2009, 8 rounds of the Baltic Sea Farmer of the Year award have been held by WWF. So far, it has resulted in over 70 good examples of Baltic friendly farming that can be replicated and disseminated in the region. Beyond the competition itself, each of the national winners serve as ambassadors of sustainable farming for the entire region – sharing their unique experiences and results for all to learn from. This award has helped the BEP partners to build valuable relationships with advisory organisations, farmers' associations and farmers themselves across the region.

Another important BEP activity was the co-organisation of the Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea Stakeholder Conference (GABBS). It was held annually from 2009-2015 and was an important forum for knowledge exchange between various environmental and agricultural stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region.

WWF Sweden has been working on wetland restoration, creation and management for a long time for example in Paviken on Gotland, Hjälstaviken, Kristianstad's water district, Tåkern, Asköviken as well as smaller wetlands in the Stockholm region and in Roslagen. In addition, WWF Sweden has been involved in three different catchment officer driven projects, in the Saxån-Braån and Tidans catchment areas as well as a project in Sala. Working closely with the catchment officers has given WWF Sweden a good understanding on how the work is organised and what are the challenges and potential of this type of work. WWF Sweden's work has also led to increased knowledge and understanding among many governmental, municipal and private stakeholders, so that increased consideration of wetlands has been achieved. Through the WWF BEP network we are able to bring in experiences from other WWF offices in the Programme, mainly WWF Finland and their vast experience in working with wetland restoration and using the catchment approach in their work. They will be involved in the project to share their know-how. Through the Programme we also have an existing regional and national networks through which we can share good examples to other countries in the region effectively.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

WWF Sweden will hold the leadership responsibility for the entire project, and take the lead for some of the individual activities. WWF is well suited to take this role since, in addition to expertise on biodiversity, climate change and nature, WWF is known for playing a convenor's role among stakeholders, facilitating cooperation as well as communication and outreach to the general public and

policy makers. The BEP Secretariat has a long experience of cross-border Baltic Sea multi-stakeholder project coordination. In terms of project leadership, WWF Sweden will:

- Monitor and coordinate for effective implementation and efficient results based management (including risk management).
- Ensure effective internal and external communication, maximise opportunities for mutual learning and

knowledge exchange between partners through the creation of a collaborative working environment; lead on external digital communication channels.

- Ensure effective communication with the InterReg Central Baltic secretariat, as well as timely reporting and compliance.
- Convene and lead the work of the project steering committee.

In terms of activities, WWF Sweden will:

- lead on the activities Pilot development workshops and Cross-border policy dialogue
- participate in all other project activities.

WWF Sweden will bring in a project coordination team with project management, technical, communication, and financial management skills, primarily with staff from the BEP secretariat.

The BEP director will contribute with strategic guidance, staff management and serve as the chairperson of the BaltCOP steering group. The BEP Director has several years of experience of project management, policy engagement on Baltic topics, both nationally in Sweden and internationally through e.g. serving as an Observer to HELCOM Heads of Delegation, and of staff management and strategic steer of programme and project activities.

An experienced project manager will be recruited to the BEP Secretariat, to lead and coordinate project partners towards project results, monitor activities and budget, and be responsible for quality assurance and reporting.

While the project manager will also have basic knowledge of relevant subtopics, an agronomist in the BEP Secretariat, with experience in working with both wetlands and catchment officer projects in Sweden, will be the key technical advisor in the team.

In addition, the BEP secretariat communications manager, with experience in Baltic wide communication and outreach, will contribute skills on information and outreach for the project (web and social media channels) as well as target group messaging.

From the financial department, a finance officer and a controller with experience from EU grant management will support on financial issues and ensure compliance with grant rules and regulations, in close cooperation with the project manager.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects. Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).

In the Baltic Stewardship Initiative WWF Sweden gathers actors from the entire food value chain, with the aim to jointly strengthen competitiveness of farmers in the Baltic Sea basin who reduce nutrient leakage and improve circularity. During 2019-2023 the project runs in Sweden, with a view to scale up to more Baltic countries. BSI has three focus areas: Baltic Sea friendly farm measures, market premiums

for Baltic Sea friendly products and closing the nutrient cycle between urban and rural areas. Total project budget: 9,2 MSEK. 70% of this is financed by EAFRD funds through Swedish Board of Agriculture.

WWF Sweden also participates in two EU-funded projects for increased demand for sustainable food. Eat4Change - mobilizing youth for sustainable diets, 2020-2024. EU DEAR contract CSO-LA/2020/414-

438. WWF Sweden is part of delivering all project outputs: creating awareness, engagement and fostering active global citizens among European youth; creating an evidence base on sustainable diets (notably through development of WWF's Meat Guide for consumers), influencing market and policy actors. From the Baltic countries, WWF Finland (coordinator) and ELF also participate. WWF SE project budget: 7 MSEK.

SchoolFood4Change is an EU Horizon2020 project, lead by ICLEI Europe and co-created by a

consortium of 43 European partners. Through a whole school food approach, the aim is to increase the demand for local and sustainably produced food, across Europe. WWF Sweden leads the work package on communication and policy outreach. From the Central Baltic area, the city of Tallinn, Municipality of Viimsi and Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn also participate. WWF SE project budget: 9 MSEK. Återskapa Östersjöns livskraft ("revive the Baltic Sea") is a project where a group of partners in three different parts of Sweden (Höga Kusten/Västernorrland, Stockholm archipelago and Kristianstad Vattenrike), through the leadership and facilitation of WWF Sweden, all work together for restoring the marine ecosystems in the Baltic Sea.

A significant share of WWF Sweden's work is funded through public sector partnerships, mainly with Sida and the EU. During the past 10 years we have managed Sida grants with a total value of around 1100 MSEK. Thereby, we have strong experience in managing and administering grant funding. Since 2020 we use a new project and programme management IT system, which is the result of thorough development work over two years. This has further strengthened our quality assurance and efficiency.

B.1 Project Partner 2

Partner number 2

Partner role: PP

Name: Nyköpingåarnas Vattenvårdsförbund

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities.

Nyköpingåarnas Vattenvårdsförbund (NVVF) possesses thematic competences and experiences that are highly pertinent to the project. NVVF's expertise centers around water management and restoration, specifically in the context of addressing nutrient runoff and promoting biodiversity.

NVVF's team includes professionals such as a limnologist, a marine biologist, a strategic water advisor, a wetland advisor, and an environment and water advisor specializing in agriculture. These experts bring practical knowledge and hands-on experience in water-related matters, which will be instrumental in implementing the project activities.

Furthermore, NVVF's executive manager had strong project management skills gained from previous projects, ensuring efficient project coordination. NVVF's specific know-how includes capacity building, implementing local measures, and creating wetlands, which align perfectly with the project's objectives. This experience has been accumulated through active participation in numerous past projects addressing similar issues, further solidifying NVVF's capacity to contribute effectively to the project.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

Knowledge Development Activities on Wetlands and Local Catchment Coordination: NVVF will lead the knowledge development activities within the project, particularly focusing on wetlands and local catchment coordination. NVVF's team of experts, including a limnologist, a marine biologist, and a wetland advisor, brings specialized knowledge in these areas. Their extensive experience in capacity

building and implementing local measures, such as creating wetlands, positions NVVF as a key contributor to the project's objective of enhancing wetland-related knowledge.

Field Visits in Sweden: NVVF will undertake field visits to Sweden as part of the project activities. These visits are essential for data collection, assessments, and the practical implementation of project initiatives. NVVF's local presence and deep-rooted connections in Sweden make it well-suited for conducting effective field visits and engaging with local stakeholders.

Pilot Action in Sweden: NVVF will take the lead in implementing the BaltCOP pilot action in Sweden. This role aligns with NVVF's extensive experience in working with a bottom-up approach related to the EU Water Framework Directive. Their involvement in consultative, multi-stakeholder water councils for the four catchment areas where they operate further underscores their suitability for this role. NVVF's ability to navigate complex regulatory frameworks and foster community engagement makes them an optimal partner for successfully executing the pilot action.

Active Participation in All Project Activities: NVVF commits to active participation in all project activities, demonstrating their dedication to the project's success and their willingness to fulfill responsibilities in accordance with the Partnership Agreement. This cooperative approach ensures that NVVF collaborates seamlessly with other project partners.

In summary, NVVF's expertise in wetlands, local catchment coordination, and their proven track record in implementing EU-cofinanced projects uniquely position them as a valuable partner in fulfilling specific project roles and responsibilities. Their ability to combine specialized knowledge with practical experience makes them instrumental in achieving the project's objectives.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects. Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).

Nyköpingåarnas Vattenvårdsförbund (NVVF) brings extensive experience in participating in and managing EU co-financed projects and other international projects, making them a valuable partner for the current project. While not an exhaustive list, the most relevant experiences and expertise of NVVF in the field include:

Coordination of LEADER Projects: NVVF has a significant history of coordinating LEADER projects since 2009. LEADER projects often involve rural development and sustainable practices, making them closely related to the thematic focus of the current project. NVVF's management of these projects demonstrates their ability to effectively handle EU co-financed initiatives and their experience in implementing activities aimed at improving water quality and promoting sustainable land use.

National Funded Projects (LOVA and LONA): NVVF has also acted as a coordinating and supporting organization in many national-funded projects, such as LOVA and LONA. These projects focus on improving water quality with a specific emphasis on mitigating eutrophication in agricultural areas and restoring wetlands. NVVF's involvement in these initiatives showcases their expertise in managing projects with environmental and water quality objectives at both the national and international levels.

Innovative Projects: NVVF has initiated several innovative projects, including pilot phosphorus dams and filters. These projects demonstrate NVVF's capacity for innovation and their commitment to implementing creative solutions to address water quality challenges, which align with the goals of the current project.

Participation in LIFE IP Rich Waters: NVVF's involvement as a project partner in LIFE IP Rich Waters, where they work with local water action groups to address internal eutrophication in lakes, highlights their engagement in larger international initiatives aimed at improving water quality and ecological conditions.

Participation in FORMAS Research Pilot Project: NVVF's participation in a FORMAS research pilot project called "Blue Innovation," where they study landowners' interest and motivation to create wetlands, showcases their expertise in understanding the dynamics of engaging stakeholders and promoting sustainable practices at the local level.

Management of Regional Environmental Target Programme: NVVF manages the majority of the water measures in the Regional Environmental Target Programme (Regionala åtgärdsprogrammet) of the County Board of Södermanland. This experience demonstrates their capability to oversee and implement complex, regionally-focused projects with environmental objectives.

Regarding plans to bring in relevant expertise, NVVF can leverage its network and partnerships with experts and stakeholders in the field to enhance the project's success. Their existing collaborations, as well as their proactive approach to capacity building and knowledge exchange, can contribute to the project's effectiveness in achieving its goals.

B.1 Project Partner 3

Partner number: 3

Partner role: PP

Name: **Eestimaa Looduse Fond**

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities.

ELF has been involved in Baltic Sea eutrophication issues since 1991, we have been carrying out independent projects and advocacy as well as been part of WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme to cooperate around the Baltic Sea. Our experts have been working with Estonian officials, landowners and farmers to promote nutrient use balance as well as construction of wetlands or other drainage system upgrades for catching nutrients.

ELF has dedicated personnel in areas of wetland restoration, eutrophication, agricultural policy and paludiculture. The staff is experienced in project administration and reporting as most of the organization's budget consists of different public funds projects.

ELF is also an experienced public communicator, we systematically publish agricultural and rural topics in our "Future of rural life" blog and raise awareness on Baltic Sea issues that are connected to the land based activities.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

ELF's main role is to coordinate activities in Estonia - develop and promote the catchment approach in Estonia, organise events and meetings for Estonian stakeholders, arrange modelling and works for investments for catching nutrients in agricultural lands in Estonia.

ELF will be also responsible for cross-border cooperation from the Estonian side: contributing knowledge and input to the Latvian and Swedish pilot actions and ensuring that the right stakeholders can take part in international events, trainings and study tours etc.

ELF will lead the pilot action in the Estonian Kasari river catchment where the staff is familiar with all the stakeholders in the area to make the project a success.

ELF is well suited for these tasks thanks to its long history in working with landowners and other partners to bring different stakeholders together for the same cause. In 2013 we built a constructed wetland in South Estonia to pilot the nutrient catching from agricultural lands. This was the first fully

functional constructed wetland in Estonia that targeted diffuse sources. In 2017-2019 we were part of a catchment approach solution analysis in the North Estonian river Jänijõgi.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects.

Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).
In 2009-2013 we were part of the Central Baltic Interreg project Active Wetlands where we assessed possibilities to implement an active wetlands method in Estonia.

In 2011-2013 we were partners in the Central Baltic Interreg project "Saving the Sea from Nutrient Overload by managing Wetlands/grasslands BALtically" where we worked with farmers in Estonian coastal areas to reduce nutrient leaking. We built a constructed active wetland to pilot the nutrient catching from agricultural lands in South Estonia.

We are currently a project partner in Horizon project Waterlands (2021-2026) that is dedicated to restoration of wetlands in Pärnu river catchment as well as EUKI project working on Paludiculture in Baltics. In both of those projects we work extensively with landowners and local stakeholders to engage them in wetland recreation and water level rising.

B.1 Project Partner 4

Partner number 4

Partner role PP

Name of the Organisation: **Pasaules Dabas Fonds sadarbība ar WWF**

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities.

The PDF director has been with the organisation for over 20 years, and has been directly involved in the construction of the first artificial wetland in the Baltics in 2013-2014, together with the project partner from LBTU. Under the current leadership, PDF has also managed and implemented several national and EU level large-scale projects.

The current Baltic Sea and Freshwater programme manager in PDF will contribute with good project management skills, combined with certain technical knowledge of agricultural policy, water and nutrient issues, and river basin management, as well as strong know-how in communications and educational activities.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

PDF's main role will be to lead the joint pilot action in Latvia, and contributing its expertise and experiences for the joint pilot actions in Estonia and Sweden. PDF will carry out gathering of data on existing wetlands, selection of the catchment area to work on in Latvia, coordinating permitting with local landowners, and communication activities for the project. PDF will also develop the guideline production for building effective wetlands, and legislation amendments which would need to be made based on the conclusions of the project.

PDF is well suited for this role thanks to its 30 years experience in nature conservation in Latvia, working in cooperation with various institutions, NGOs and businesses. Advocating for the environment when drafting planning documents, laws, regulations and standards is an important part of our daily work.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects. Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).

PDF has years of experience successfully implementing national and international projects related to the Baltic Sea and freshwater ecosystems. We have implemented an EU LIFE funded project about habitat restoration of the endangered bird species Eurasian bittern in two lake ecosystems in Latvia

(LIFE Coastlake, 2013-2017) and are currently implementing a large scale EU LIFE funded project "Goodwater IP", directly relevant to BaltCOP (see project synergies section). It aims to improve the quality of 5% of risk water objects in Latvia in the short term, and 30% in the long term. This project has 19 partners in the country, and a total budget of more than 14 million euros. The project works on diffuse, point source, and historical pollution in water sources and aims to address all of these. PDF is also working on a dam removal project in Latvia, first of its kind, where we have successfully negotiated with landowners to find a solution that everyone is on board with. PDF has also been an integral part of the CAP discussions, and has lobbied for wetland construction to be included in the CAP 2023-2027 budget. Because of this, the Ministry of Agriculture in Latvia has now included a budget of 1 million under the investments section for wetland construction. Additionally, PDF is also a part of the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme, working on implementing joint actions across the region, to reach good ecological status in the Baltic Sea.

B.1 Project Partner 5

Partner number 5

Partner role PP

Name: **Latvijas Biozinātņu un tehnoloģiju universitāte**

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities.

LBTU wetland expert, Linda Grīnberga, is currently the only wetland expert in the country. She will be the main person from LBTU who will be involved in BaltCOP. She has previously worked with PDF on building the first artificial wetland in the Baltics, and has done her PhD on the subject. Other staff from LBTU are competent in project management as they have years of experience in managing EU funded projects. LBTU also has their own laboratory for analysing water samples to monitor the effectiveness of the constructed wetlands, so no outsourcing will be necessary for this activity.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

In this project proposal the main goal of LBTU would be to monitor the water quality improvement method for agricultural runoff – constructed wetlands and to provide possible suggestions to the stakeholders. LBTU have expertise in constructed wetlands due to 7 years research of pilot sites and results are published and approved via PhD thesis.

Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LBTU) is the leading research partner (centre) of bioeconomy and related industries in Latvia, which ensures cooperation with public and private sector partners. LBTU provides support in the development of research-based policy in LBTU's areas of strategic specialisation, as well as offers innovative research methods for learning current issues in order to positively influence their resolution in the long term. LBTU promotes an interdisciplinary approach to conducting research and more active cooperation of various LBTU structural units, especially in areas of strategic specialisation, ensuring the practical use of results. To promote research excellence, LBTU initiates interdisciplinary research in biosciences, engineering and social sciences with the aim of ensuring synergy and an innovative approach to research.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects. Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).

Department of Environmental Engineering and Water Management is involved in water quality monitoring in Latvia since year 1996 and actively participate in national and international scientific projects related to water quality management. As most related realized projects could be mentioned LIFE GOODWATER IP, EU Cohesion Fund project for infrastructure, Baltic sea region Interreg project WATERDRIVE, Central Baltic Interreg project Nutrinflow, Bonus program project Miracle, ETC.

B.1 Project Partner 6

Partner number 6

Partner role PP

Name: Yrkeshögskolan Novia

Motivation

Describe the organisation's thematic competences and experiences that are relevant for the project. Avoid providing general information about the partner organisation. Indicate the relevant and concrete know-how which will be used to implement project activities.

At Faculty of Bioeconomy at Novia UAS we have longstanding tradition of RDI activities targeting the state of the Baltic Sea. In our roadmap for the future we have focused on blue ecosystem services, spatial planning, forestry management and local food systems. Novia UAS/Faculty of Bioeconomy offers education in agriculture, forestry, sustainable coastal management and natural resource management at both bachelor's and master's level. In recent years we have focused on wetlands in our education programmes through GIS-based wetland planning and wetland monitoring. In the monitoring we have focused both on wetland functioning for nutrient retention and biodiversity. Novia UAS has a training and research farm at Västankvarn in Inkoo where two wetlands have been planned and established in cooperation with WWF Finland. The wetlands are situated in the catchment area for Inkoo River in western Uusimaa area. The wetlands are utilized in both education and research at Novia UAS. A long-term monitoring scheme is currently being established together with WWF Finland, Raasepori municipality, Minun meren ry and Länsi-Uudenmaan vesi ja ympäristö ry. Currently we are analyzing and identifying suitable areas for wetland establishment in the western Uusimaa region.

Describe the main role (main activities and responsibilities) of the organisation in the project. Focus on why the partner organisation is optimal to fulfil the specific role and implement the specific tasks in the project.

1. Cross-border course and network development

The content of the course will focus on wetlands from a catchment perspective and will be developed in cooperation with all project actors to be relevant. As soon as the project starts, Novia UAS will investigate together with the project actors what knowledge is needed in the different countries and regions. What questions are relevant? What specific knowledge is required in the country and regarding the pilot actions? The course content needs to be general enough to suit participants from the different countries, but also specific enough to be useful. Finding common ground while still addressing specific enough issues will therefore be at the core of the course development. The course will focus on co-creating and reworking knowledge with stakeholders from all pilot areas.

After Novia UAS, together with all project partners, has assessed the training needs, Novia UAS will plan the course content with help from project partners and SLU, hire lecturers, and produce teaching materials (mainly in the form of lecture films). The material will, in a revised and lighter format, be able to be used by the project in other contexts than the course, e.g., in social media. The aim is also to rework some of the course content and material into a lighter and shorter version that will be available for self-study on the project website after the project is completed. It is also possible that Novia will organise the course after the end of the project and in this way the course can contribute to the continuation of the catchment approach.

The target group of the course is professionals and students in the project countries. They can be project planners, landowners, agricultural advisors, wetland planners, catchment officers and university students. The course will be organized during periods 4 and 5 of the project period. The scope is 10 ECTS credits which includes theory in the form of lectures and self-study, but also a development work that the participants do preferably on order of the project and pilot activities, e.g., a wetland planning, a management plan or something else that can

be of use in the catchment areas where the pilot activities are carried out or in the vicinity of where the participant lives. The digital tool for wetland planning that LBTU develops during the project will be integrated into the course content so that the participants can use and evaluate it. The development work will be done in the form of a Story Map, a GIS tool for place-based storytelling. The participants will also make at least one field visit during the course, if possible, preferably in the field visits that are also otherwise organized within the project. The goal is that the course is very much linked to the development work done within the framework of the project. Several experts from all countries involved in the project will also be used as lecturers on the course. The course will be based on co-creation so that course participants can share their knowledge. The course participants, together with Novia UAS, will contribute to the roadmap for the further work with catchment officers.

The aim is to have about 20-30 participants in the course from all project countries. Since both course participants and lecturers come from different countries and are connected to different organizations, projects and universities, a valuable network will be formed during the course and the project. Previous similar courses (with a different theme) at Novia UAS have shown that co-creation is a pedagogical method that enhances networking.

The course will be organized online, so that the participants can to some extent determine the time they spend on their studies (pre-recorded lectures, self-study assignments). However, the course also includes online sessions where participants meet simultaneously and discuss current topics with experts. Participants will work in groups and meet with the groups online to get to know each other. In this way, valuable contacts will be made across national borders.

At Novia UAS, there will be a project coordinator and a course coordinator who together plan and are responsible for the course. The project coordinator has the main responsibility and, together with the other project partners, plans the content of the course, develops course material together with the lecturers, organises and holds regular meetings with the participants, etc. The project coordinator will also be responsible for redesigning the course material so that it can be used in other ways within the project and after the end of the project. The course coordinator is a teacher employed by the university who is responsible for the curriculum, assessing study achievements and registering ECTS credits. The course coordinator has a more formal role that does not require so much time commitment, but is required by university rules.

2. Participating in and hosting cross-border development and activities

Novia will coordinate the Finnish stakeholder's participation in cross border activities as well as host cross-border activities in Finland.

In the southern part of Finland there are several catchment areas and wetlands. WWF Finland has built several wetlands in the Uusimaa region at the catchment area of Siuntio River, Ingarskila River and Inkoo River. The catchment area of Inkoo River is located at Novias teaching and research farm Västankvarn and WWF Finland has here built two wetlands that Novia UAS uses both in teaching and in research. Novia UAS has an agreement with WWF Finland, and other organizations to monitor several wetlands in the Uusimaa region. These catchment areas and wetlands are different in type, and knowledge from these areas can be valuable to share across borders.

Novia UAS will organize a two-day field visit to Finland. Participants from the other project countries will visit wetlands in two different catchment areas where the organizations are working with a catchment approach. The field visits will go to the catchment area of Inkoo River where WWF Finland provides several different types of water management solutions. And to the catchment area of Raasepori River where the municipality of Raasepori and the Raasepori river project are working with landowners to establish wetlands and other water management solutions. For example, this area has the longest two-stage ditch in Finland.

Novia UAS, together with Finnish actors, will also participate in cross-border activities such as workshops, field visits and seminars in the other countries. Novia UAS will present results from the project at the final seminar. The development work done by the course participants in the form of a Story Map will be published in a collective format.

3. Coordinate development in Finland

Novia will coordinate the development in Finland, by organizing a kick-off and on-boarding local stakeholders, planners, landowners. The goal is to promote the catchment approach in Finland and get stakeholders to participate in the cross-border activities. Novia will get stakeholders on board, and these will participate in cross-border development and activities.

Describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects. Instead of providing a long list of projects the organisation has participated in, mention the most relevant experience of the partner organisation from the relevant field: thematic experience, experience in management of and participation in international projects. Indicate if you are planning to bring in relevant expertise for the project to the partner organisation(s).

Novia UAS has been part of EU-projects since the start of the first EU-programme period in Finland. During this time Novia UAS has developed as organization in a major way, and our project work has developed and diversified during all these years. At the moment Novia UAS systematically runs and participates in EU projects from local LEADER financed projects via regional and national projects to Interregional projects. Our main EU financing programmes are Central Baltic, Interreg Aurora, ESF, and ERDF. Since we also have a research group at the Faculty of Bioeconomy we have experience in research funding from the Finnish Academy of Science and several private research funds. Horizon Europe is the newest of our research funding experiences with a newly financed project in automation and maritime simulation. As an organization the RDI-activities at Novia are divided into six different areas of expertise. Projects are managed and administered by a staff of project and research assistants together with RDI coordinators and project controllers. The project leaders can thus focus on achieving the project goals rather than administering funds. Novias main partnership base lies within the (applied) Universities, expert organisations, government organisations and NGOs within sustainability, rural livelihood and entrepreneurship, and municipalities. We plan to bring in the expertise we have in our own organisations different fields of expertise, but also partnerships from previous project work. We have expertise in formulating project results into continuous learning courses, providing platforms for co-creating new knowledge, bringing networks of experts and field practitioners together.

C - Project description

C.2 Project relevance and context

C.2.1 What are the common territorial challenge(s) within the scope of your Programme

Objective that will be tackled by the project?

Please indicate what is the joint cross-border challenge that you and your partners will address in your project.

Eutrophication is the main challenge for the Baltic Sea in relation to achieving good environmental status required by the EU legislation and HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. Currently, none of the basin

countries are achieving their targets and current policies are insufficient given the scale of the issue. The plans to achieve goals exist (mainly under the EU water framework directive (WFD)) but they are often not realistic and implementable at the local level where acceptance and involvement of private

landowners is needed. One of the main challenges in addressing diffuse loading has been that measures, such as creating and restoring wetlands, are largely voluntary to the landowners. The cost is often primarily born by the farmer while benefits become public goods. There also is a lack of sufficient incentives, support and available knowledge.

Wetland construction is often a complex process from landowner meetings, terrain surveying, planning, acquiring necessary permits, construction and monitoring. Many private landowners are willing to construct wetlands, but the process is too complicated. A link is missing between the landowners and the government institutions.

While the situation in the countries around the Baltic varies, the challenge of lack of implementation and missing structures to scale up the work is similar. There is a shared knowledge and experience gap in how to maximize the effect of measures and to make them feasible in the long run.

As a result, the threat from nutrient loading to ecosystem services provided by the Baltic Sea and the economic sectors (tourism, fisheries and others) and cultural values relying on them, continue to increase.

Biodiversity challenges

The situation for biological diversity is serious in the world and in the Baltic Sea region. For example, according to the reporting for the Habitats directive reporting from the participating countries, 40 to 60 percent of the species and 10 to 60 percent of the habitat types in the directive are considered to have good status. According to a report by the International and Independent Scientific Panel on Biological Diversity (IPBES), today's rate of extinction is already between ten and hundreds of times higher than the average for the last 10 million years. The central driving forces behind the loss of biodiversity are the unsustainable use of land and water, hunting and fishing, climate change, the spread of toxins and other pollutants.

Wetlands especially are among the most species-rich environments and therefore strengthen biological diversity. In Sweden, close to 600 red-listed animal and plant species, i.e. about 10 percent of all red-listed species in Sweden, depend on wetlands as habitat. This makes wetlands the third most important biotope, after forest and agricultural landscapes, for red-listed species. Wetlands have been traditionally build with one aim in mind, most often for nutrient retention or biodiversity - there is a need to think more about multifunctionality of wetlands and add-on several ecosystem services when designing wetlands. Wetlands also contribute to the Green Infrastructure, that is the natural network that links together habitats that are necessary for multitude of species to survive in the long term.

C.2.2 How does the project tackle the identified common challenges and/or opportunities?

Describe the approach the project takes. Describe the approach the project will take in addressing the common cross-border challenges and/or joint assets, e.g., describe main project activities to achieve project results. Please describe the cross-border elements in your project approach. Explain how activities will be organised in the project (e.g., how they will be structured, what will be their sequence, what specific methods will be applied, etc.).

The general approach of the project is to share knowledge around, and apply, the catchment approach to retain water and nutrients. Previous experience from agricultural advisors working with individual landowners has proven to be successful measures to prevent nutrient leakage, but focusing on the individual farm level and measures are not always implemented where they would be most effective – or at the scale that is needed to achieve concrete results in the state of the environment. A catchment approach makes it possible to have an overview of the catchment area to identify where measures can and should be implemented in order to reach the environmental goals for the water bodies in the catchment – and ultimately for the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, catchment officers play a central role to coordinate, motivate and support landowners with administration and finding financing for investments in effective measures.

National and local best practice examples exist in the region. In Denmark (2017) over 20 catchment officers were employed, as part of the strategy to ensure the implementation of constructed wetlands (albeit focussing solely on wetlands). The successful LEVA pilot project in Sweden employed 20 catchment officers (during 2019-21), resulting in a four-fold investment in measures through public funds (SWAM, 2021). In Finland, WWF Finland has worked since 2018 in three

catchment areas, Siuntio River, Ingarskila River and Inkoo River located in western Uusimaa area. The overall aim has been to reduce eutrophication by decreasing erosion and flooding of the agricultural areas, which in practice entails applying the catchment officer approach. The common experience from these pilots is that catchment officers significantly contribute to the value of restoration investments, mainly through advising landowners on available financial support, the design, administration and permit processes.

Looking back at eutrophication reduction measures in the Baltic Sea region, catchment area coordination is a new and innovative way of working. While it has been tested in DK, SE and FI, it is not yet fully established, and there is good potential to improve and expand the approach to other Baltic Sea countries, but adaptation to country contexts is key. There is an opportunity to collect existing lessons, co-create different types of models and share knowledge cross-border to scale up the approach and embed it as part of national and local water management. This approach has the potential to lead to more effective and sustainable implementation of existing legislation, but also to support work with biodiversity targets (as measures targeted at different environmental goals can be part of a catchment area planning), the upcoming restoration law actions as well as climate adaptation measures – connecting the local know-how with achievement of national goals. The added value will be the improved cooperation between various stakeholders within and between the participating countries. To multiply, share and test best practices cross-border can help speed up the processes of reducing nutrient runoff. In addition to reducing eutrophication, restoration of wetlands and other freshwater environments is key to stopping biodiversity loss and adaptation to the changing climate by increasing the resilience of the landscape.

The project is organised in two work packages (WPs).

WP 1: Cross border capacity development. Activities include sharing concrete know-how about wetland restoration (such as using GIS, developing a digital tool for assessing potential wetland sites) as well as training on catchment area coordination and how to work with nutrient and water retention in both agricultural and forested areas.. This is done through workshops on specific topics, a course developed by Novia UAS and field visits to project sites in SE, FI and EST. In addition, cross-border policy dialogue and sharing best practices to increase the awareness on the catchment approach and deliver recommendations (yr3).

WP 2: Joint pilot actions. Activities include pilot development workshops (lead: WWF SE, yr1-3) aiming to facilitate knowledge exchange and cross-border mutual contribution to each other's pilots through facilitated discussions around challenges faced by the partners. Tentative topics: national /regional financing for investments; engaging landowners; lessons learned in DK, SE, FI; forest areas in catchment coordination; multifunctionality; ecosystem services.

3 joint pilot actions (yr2-3):

1. EST: coordinated catchment approach tested and implemented in a catchment area.
2. SE: pilot on integrating landowners in forested areas into the catchment coordination.
3. LT: on analysing the efficiency of existing wetlands created under the current policies in the countries and where the expectation is that they are not well functioning in terms of retaining water and nutrients. The digital tool developed in WP 1 will be tested.

C.2.3 Why is cross-border cooperation needed to achieve the project's objectives and results?

Provide a concrete and specific description of the cross-border challenges and opportunities that will be tackled by the project (in relation to the needs of project target groups). Explain why your project is necessary for the involved regions/countries in terms of common challenges and/or joint assets addressed. Explain also why working on the Central Baltic scale is optimal for achieving the project results.

Reducing nutrient loads is a shared challenge for the project countries and there is a shared interest in finding more effective ways to address this. Cross-border cooperation and dialogue can give a larger push in each country to address its specific challenges, which in the long term will yield positive effects for the Baltic Sea.

The partners from the project countries face the common problem of reducing nutrient loads from agriculture and have a common interest in learning and developing optimal use of wetlands and other nutrient retention measures across a catchment. Cross-border collaboration and peer support between wetland and catchment experts can inject new momentum into this challenging topic. It can

give new perspectives on the issues in a specific national or local context. Countering eutrophication is a long-term effort where local dedication is crucial to success. Such dedication, especially from landowners, is assumed to become reinforced through exchange with peers from neighbouring countries, working on the same issue and with an interest to develop similar methods. Presenting joint policy recommendations to the responsible policy makers and convening them in an international policy forum is intended to create peer pressure for further commitment and action in each country. Cross-border collaboration creates this opportunity, which does not exist when working only in one country. WWF works in the entire Baltic region, but the interest for this specific project is strongest specifically in the Central Baltic countries.

C.2.4 Who will benefit from your project?

In the first column of each row, please select one of the pre-defined target groups from the drop-down list. Do not just categorically choose most or all the target groups but focus on and choose only the most relevant ones.

Local public authority:

Municipalities are an important target group for at least two reasons: they have a role in territorial planning process and decisions on land use activities. Länneranna municipality in Estonia is situated near Kasari river and has a general planning process going on that will map land-use activities in the area. Swedish municipalities in Nyköpingsåarnas catchment area are significant landowners that would benefit from improved advice and support on how to best implement eutrophication measures. They also have important knowledge about their lands. In each of the BaltCOP pilot actions, municipalities will be important stakeholders that project partners will involve as necessary. From Estonia, Länneranna municipality will also be represented in the BaltCOP reference group.

Regional public authority:

In Sweden, the water district authorities are an important target group, in particular the one for the Northern Baltic Sea Water District. Their mandate is to implement EU's Water Framework Directive in Sweden. The three main tools for this is the water management plan, the environmental quality standards and the program of measures. The water district authorities are in favour of continued work by local catchment officers. They can help make use of lessons learnt from BaltCOP pilot actions in advocacy for a long-term strategy for catchment coordination of measures in Sweden. A representative from the Northern Baltic Sea Water District is envisaged to be part of the BaltCOP steering group. In Finland the main regional authority is the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre). Novia UAS has good contacts with ELY Centre and will disseminate the results in fora as Rural Division (Maaseutujaosto) and the Sustainability group at the Uusimaa ELY centre.

National public authority:

National public authorities (ministries) are closely involved in negotiating and implementing international commitments, under the Baltic Sea Action Plan, EU legislation and strategies and others. Their need is to identify politically acceptable, efficient and robust approaches to addressing the challenges of the Baltic Sea. From the project countries, BaltCOP will particularly target organisations represented in the HELCOM PRESSURE and AGRI working groups. Ministries in Latvia and Estonia have a more active role, compared to Sweden and Finland, where responsibilities are more decentralized to sectoral agencies and regional authorities.

Specifically this group includes:

In Latvia: the Ministry of Agriculture regulate the funding for wetland construction, and the Cabinet of Ministers due to the need to change the regulation for wetland construction which at the moment it is too vague.

In Estonia: Ministry of Agriculture, Agriculture and Food Board, State Forestry Centre, Ministry of Environment, Estonian Environmental Board

In Sweden: Ministry of Climate and Enterprise and Ministry of Rural Affairs and Infrastructure

In Finland: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of the Environment

BaltCOP will involve this target group by developing policy recommendations for discussion in an international policy forum, as well as in dialogues at national level in Latvia and Estonia.

Sectoral agency:

In Estonia and Sweden, sectoral agencies play important roles for advancing catchment coordination of eutrophication measures. The Estonian State Forestry Centre is the Estonian state land manager and is planning activities related to Kasari river wetland restoration, BaltCOP is relevant to for their work to prepare restoration plans. Estonia State Forestry Centre has confirmed interest in the project and will be invited to join the BaltCOP reference group. Agriculture and Food Board, Estonian Environmental Board are also relevant and will be kept informed by the project. In Sweden several government (sectoral) agencies will be interested in the results from BaltCOP, including the Board of Agriculture, the Environment Protection Agency, the Marine and Water Management Agency (SWAM), the Forest Agency, and the Geological Survey. NVVF and WWF SE have established contacts with them.

SME:

Farmers in the project areas are both SMEs, landowners and stewards of water, soil, nutrients and landscapes. Many also own forests. They are under increasing pressure from global markets, they face high environmental standards of the EU and effects from climate change. Many are willing to invest in wetlands but find that it is too costly and complicated. Depending on the type of land use and size and location of the farm, eutrophication measures will have varying effects. In the pilot actions, landowners will be involved as key dialogue partners to raise awareness of the need and possibilities for constructed wetlands and catchment coordination, as well as to include their knowledge of each catchment. Where investments are made through BaltCOP, they have a key role in agreeing to create wetlands on their land.

Interest groups including NGOs:

Several interest organizations are important for the project: WWF Finland has more than a decade of experience in creating wetlands. They hold expertise on how to promote water retention through nature based solutions at catchment level by engaging private landowners. WWF Finland will be part of the BaltCOP steering group and will share their experience with project partners. National farmers' unions in each of the project countries advocate in the interest of their members (farmers and landowners). Their opinions may influence debates and national politics. They provide extension support to their members, and have good expertise in sustainable rural business development. BaltCOP will engage representatives of farmers' unions in the pilot actions, through stakeholder dialogues in each project country. They will also be invited to join the reference group of the project. In Finland organisations like Baltic Sea Action Group, Länsi-Uudenmaan vesi ja ympäristö ry and Vesikunnostusverkosto will be engaged in the development in the catchment area approach.

Higher education and research organisations:

Higher education and research organisations provide and develop important expertise that enable the development of innovative, sustainable and robust eutrophication measures. In all project countries, there is a need for more wetland and nutrient retention experts. Apart from the project partners LBTU and Novia UAS, Swedish University of Agricultural sciences (SLU), University of Tartu and Turku University of Applied Sciences will be involved in implementing activities under work package 1 - cross border capacity development. Higher education and research organisations will be invited to join either the steering group or the reference group of BaltCOP.

General public:

The general public are relevant both at the national and local levels. At the national levels, they influence national politics and the resources and priorities for national public authorities regarding Baltic, environmental and rural issues. At the local level, people living in the catchment areas and on the coast of the Baltic Sea are affected by the state of the environment and the opportunities for sustainable development. In Estonia, citizen engagement as well as public communication tools (awareness raising through media and social media) will be used to reach out to this group.

In Latvia communication activities targeting the general public will aim to raise awareness of the dire situation and the possible solutions. Focus will be on the problem of eutrophication, and how diffuse loading from agriculture influences it. Influencing the general public can help create an atmosphere in which raises the expectations on farmers to reduce their impact. In Sweden, NVVF will reach out to the general public through inviting them to guided field visits, participate in local public water events (such as Vattendagarna i Södermanland) and through developing wetlands info material. In Finland, Novia UAS will use social media to disseminate information to the public. The focus will be on good examples from both neighbouring countries and Finland. In particular, field visits, course participants' development work and pilot activities will be highlighted. WWF Sweden will coordinate the communication work within the project and set up a communications plan, and also use its own channels for reaching out to the general public.

C.2.5 How does the project contribute to wider strategies and policies?

Please indicate to which strategies and policies on international and national level your project will directly link and contribute to and describe in what way you will contribute to them. Focus on the most relevant ones.

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region:

EUSBSR PA Nutri

By testing, developing and providing tangible solutions to the reduction of nutrient emissions from agriculture and other diffuse nutrient sources, the project contributes to Policy Area Nutri under the EUSBSR. With its catchment approach to water management and the introduction of advisory catchment officers, the project helps meet Action 1 under PA Nutri, by trapping nutrients through establishing wetlands and other water retention measures, raising awareness among landowners and sharing best-practice. We strongly believe that the methodology and results of this project could serve as a flagship promoted by the PA on how to ensure reduction of nutrient emissions from agriculture and diffuse sources. One of the project deliverables is to share best-practice and policy recommendations to decision-makers at local, national and regional (Baltic Sea) level, which is in line with the PA target of promoting flagships.

Other

HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan

Through its focus reduction of nutrient runoff, the BaltCOP project can help meet the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), adopted in 2021, objective for eutrophication: "Baltic Sea unaffected by eutrophication". The project can help speed up the implementation of the BSAP actions on eutrophication, under the Agriculture theme. By testing and improving the catchment approach using digital tools and models, the project provides innovative water management measures with a focus on nature-based solutions, thus contributes to the BSAP action E19. Through both local and cross-border co-creation of best practice for the catchment approach during which farmers and landowners will be involved, the project will enhance mutual learning among farmers on best practices to nutrient reduction (BSAP action E12). Furthermore, the project aims at facilitating better knowledge exchange between farmers and local authorities and decision makers, which helps meet the BSAP action E11.

Other

Water Framework Directive

By reducing nutrient runoff the project contributes to the goals of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Currently, the implementation of WFD is insufficient as none of the project countries meet good ecological and chemical status nationally. For agricultural measures, only Latvia has reported positive progress out of the three countries. By recreating and restoring wetlands, and ensuring better water management within the project catchments, the runoff of nutrients is foreseen to be reduced, thus, contributing to improved ecological and chemical status in these locations. Furthermore, the project aims to showcase the catchment approach as a best practice to water management to decision-makers at various levels. Currently, water management measures at catchment level are being implemented in some countries, but not to the extent needed to meet the

WFD targets. If the approach used by the project is scaled and adopted elsewhere, the results of the project can help meet WFD targets at a larger scale.

Other

EU Nature Restoration Law

Depending on the local needs within each project location and catchment area, wetlands will be created and restored where needed. Such actions serve to meet the targets under the forthcoming Nature Restoration Law. More importantly, the methodology applied in the project on how to ensure better water management using a catchment approach, and how to involve and create stewardship among landowners and local stakeholders, can be applied to any water related restoration measures.

Other

Estonian River basin management plans:

the project helps to implement actively the West Estonian River basin management plan as the pilot activity site is situated in the Matsalu sub-riverbasin but the project Knowledge activities about catchment officers is aiming for implementation of all the plans, more details on the Environmental Board web page: <https://keskkonnaamet.ee/en/environmental-use-charges/water/river-basin-management-plan> . Estonian CAP Strategic Plan: the project will aim to amplify measures planned in Estonian CAP Strategic Plan - there are funds available for environmental investments in drainage systems inside agricultural lands but there landowners do not have enough knowledge about how to implement these measures, the project will show with pilot activities good example.

Other

Latvian National CAP Strategic Plan:

Similarly as in Estonia, also the Latvian national CAP strategic plan 2023-2027 includes funding under the investment schemes, for the construction of wetlands. However, due to lack of know-how and available experts, there is a risk that these wetlands could be built incorrectly and would not function to the best of their ability. The experience gained in this project, from other countries, as well as by training other technical experts could minimise this risk. Law Nr. 600 "The procedure for granting state and European Union support in the form of open project tenders for the "Investments in tangible assets" measure": At the moment, Latvian legislation provides financial support to landowners who wish to update their drainage systems and include environmentally friendly measures. One of these measures is artificial wetlands, but the guidance provided under the legislation is too vague. With the current legislation wetlands are being built, but there is no monitoring system in place to measure their effectiveness. With this project, we would evaluate how effective or ineffective these wetlands have been built, and will provide better and more precise guidance on wetland construction for the law.

National development plan of Latvia for 2027: The NDP 2027 emphasises the need for a healthy and functioning environment and ecosystems in Latvia, not just for the well-being of the people, but also for the economy. Through making legislation changes, raising awareness, and reducing the nutrient input in a pilot area, we can help improve the overall status of the environment in Latvia, helping to achieve the targets set in this plan.

C.2.6 Which synergies with past or current EU and other projects or initiatives will the project make use of?

LEVA - Local engagement for water

LEVA is run by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SWAM) together with the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Swedish Farmers' Union (LRF) and the water authorities. Local Engagement for Water (LEVA) is a support structure for local activities to improve water quality and biodiversity. They provide help and support, set up meetings and training courses, and also act as support for a coordinated approach. Currently the focus is mainly on measures to combat eutrophication in the agricultural landscape. In 2018-2021, SWAM funded catchment coordinators in 20 pilot areas against eutrophication. The aim was to create a new long-term approach and to implement more measures against eutrophication in lakes and seas. By monitoring the projects, we

were able to compile information on local action work to implement government mandates. The pilot areas have been very successful in creating local commitment to water and many actions have been implemented. Most areas will continue their work on action coordination beyond 2021. The pilot areas were located in coastal areas as well as inland areas, and different types of organisations were the main actors (including county councils, municipalities, water councils and non-profit organisations). Synergies: The catchment coordination approach from LEVA is one of the main inspirations for BaltCOP project partners. Project partner NVVF will further develop some of the LEVA results in the catchment areas of Nyköpingsåarna. In particular, the added value of doing this in BaltCOP, is that new perspectives, from peers in other countries, will enrich the continued development. NVVF and other Swedish stakeholders will also share their experiences from LEVA with the other project partners.

WaterDrive (InterReg Baltic Sea Region) <https://water-drive.eu/>

The EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region funded project Waterdrive ran during 2018-2021. It involved 23 partners representing advisory services, local authorities, interest organizations, national authorities and academia. The lead partner was the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The aim of the programme was to explore more holistic and integrated win-win solutions for agriculture and environment. Solutions that combine benefits for water, climate, drought, food security and rural development. Within Waterdrive, 9 case areas were involved in multi-actor water management engagement through focus group meetings between landowners, the local municipalities, government agencies, the advisory service, catchment officers and private companies. The stakeholders provided input to how the various environmental challenges as leaching of nutrients, loss of biodiversity, climate change, drought and flooding should be managed in the future in a more consistent way. The final report 'Waterdrive findings and strategic recommendations; Holistic water management for landscape- and field level action' includes the findings per activity as well as a set of 10 strategic recommendations for different actors.

Synergies: BaltCOP will build on methods and experiences for bottom up work that were successfully developed/applied in Water Drive. In particular, BaltCOP departs from the following recommendations of WaterDrive (quotes from the final report):

- Waterdrive findings reveal a significant lack of capacities and competencies to support a transition towards more holistic water and landscape management. Waterdrive has identified the need to expand the existing agricultural advisory services with competencies in integrated water management. Waterdrive recommends governments to invest in new services like catchment officers or similar water management experts either they are employed by agricultural advisory services, municipalities or related organizations.
- Emphasizing catchment initiatives involving innovation and living labs from the local context will be one of the most important change drivers for next generation programs.
- Waterdrive results indicate interest from local authorities and municipalities. However, local authorities and municipalities in general lack capacities and resources to work with water management.
- Waterdrive findings indicate a gap in availability of digital decision support. The availability is quite ok on national- and regional levels but there is a lack of digital decisions support with maps etc. on the catchment or farm level scale.

The added value is that BaltCOP can draw on and carry further the engagement and learnings that were made in Water Drive, and make a targeted, additional effort in the Central Baltic region. As mentioned above, continuity and dedication are important for nutrient reduction work.

LIFE CleanEst <https://lifecleanest.ee/e>

LIFE IP CleanEST is an Estonian integrated water management project that is focused on improving the status of water bodies in Ida-Viru and Lääne-Viru Counties. The project was launched by the Estonian Ministry of the Environment in 2019. Over a period of 10 years, the project is focusing on the processes of the existing water management plan, as well as on potential new solutions. For example, remote monitoring solutions are being developed and ecosystem services are being mapped. In total, the project covers an area of 240,000 hectares, involving a total of 574 km of bodies of watercourses and almost 160,000 hectares of coastal water bodies. As an integrated project, the water bodies of Ida-Viru and Lääne-Viru Counties are dealt with as a whole, taking into consideration diffuse and point

sources of pollution, pressure factors, as well as ecological condition. The project's main fields of activity are: reducing harmfulness of residual pollution, identifying and restoring the goods of ecosystems, developing solutions to reduce the pressure from agriculture on the environment, identification of the need for reclamation of the local management systems, liquidation of migration barriers to improve the ecological status of the rivers, increasing environmental awareness.

Synergies: BaltCOP project partners NVVF, PDF and LBTU are also project partners in one LIFE integrated project in their respective countries (Rich Waters and Goodwater). ELF is also in close contact with the LIFE IP project CleanEst. BaltCOP will have the added value of analyzing experiences from national LIFE IP projects in an international context, and draw on each other's experiences through the joint work on pilot actions. LIFE CleanEst is partly working on similar issues as BaltCOP but in another part of Estonia - Virumaa. BaltCOP would work closely with them to find synergies and common public messages for Estonian policy makers. Duplication of activities will be avoided through the different geographical locations and close dialogue with CleanEst.

LIFE IP Goodwater <https://goodwater.lv/en/home/>

The overall aim of LIFE GoodWater IP is to improve the status of water bodies at risk in Latvia by means of the full implementation of the measures laid down in the Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe and Venta River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). LIFE GoodWater IP has planned to address 164 water bodies at risk in Latvia (89 rivers and 75 lakes). The project expects to achieve good status for 9 (5%) of the surface water bodies currently at risk. In the long term, up to 50 water bodies (30%) affected by similar pressures and other common characteristics are expected to reach good status as an indirect result of the project. The specific project objectives include: reduce the runoff of nutrients and other pollutants from agricultural and forestry lands, especially in the winter period, in order to reduce eutrophication and diffuse pollution of water bodies at risk, with a special focus on reduction of phosphorus inputs. The project period for Goodwater is 2020-2027.

Synergies: BaltCOP project partners NVVF, PDF and LBTU are also project partners in one LIFE integrated project in their respective countries (Rich Waters and Goodwater). ELF is also in close contact with the LIFE IP project CleanEst. BaltCOP will have the added value of analyzing experiences from national LIFE IP projects in an international context, and draw on each other's experiences through the joint work on pilot actions.

BaltCOP can directly build on the work of LIFE Goodwater IP as through this project educational materials have been developed for farmers which discuss the importance of nutrient reduction in the agricultural sector, including through methods such as wetland construction.

Duplications of activities between Goodwater IP and BaltCOP would not happen, as Goodwater IP does not focus on wetlands. There might be a wetland constructed in the project, but that has not been

decided yet, and would only be decided by 2025, if a wetland is the most appropriate action for a certain project demo site. Additionally, Goodwater IP will not develop a tool to simplify and mainstream wetland construction or provide legislation guidelines or changes to improve wetland development in Latvia.

In Finland WWF Finland has been working with the catchment approach on projects like Vesiensuojelu 4K and VALUTA. At the moment they are working on for example projects like VALUTA 2 and RANKKU. These projects have funding from private funds and from the Finnish Ministry of Environment. Novia UAS has cooperation with WWF Finland on monitoring of the wetlands. Through the BaltCOP project, Novia UAS can strengthen cooperation with them further and help spread information and results cross-border. Novia UAS will host a cross-border field visit to WWF Finland project sites during the BaltCOP project period.

In the municipality of Raasepori in Finland, a project called Raasepori River is underway. The project is financed by the Finnish Ministry of Environment. The project has a catchment approach and Novia UAS has cooperation with the project including student work, monitoring and organizing joint seminars. Novia UAS will host a cross-border field visit to project sites of the Raasepori River project.

Two projects are underway on Åland; Smart Waters (funded by EAFRD) and Nature-based solutions (funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers). The projects are led by Ålands vatten Ab and both NVVF and Novia UAS have cooperation with them.

C.3 Project partnership

Describe the structure of your partnership as a whole and explain why these partners are needed to implement the project and to achieve project objectives. Describe the main role, tasks, activities, and contribution to the project results of each partner in the project, and why the partners are best to fulfil the specific roles and implement the tasks. Describe the partner's relevant key competences for that. Indicate the concrete know-how and tell what statutory mandate the partners have to implement the project and to confirm the durability and sustainability of its results.

The project partnership for "BaltCOP" comprises organizations with diverse competencies and mandates, each playing a crucial role in achieving the project objectives.

WWF SE serves as the project coordinator and plays a pivotal role in bringing together project partners, steering their activities, and ensuring they align with the project's objectives. WWF SE possesses technical competence in agronomy and Baltic Sea environmental issues. They are responsible for gathering lessons learned, creating communication materials, and disseminating project results. Their extensive experience in environmental conservation and policy outreach makes them the glue that binds the project together.

ELF is the project activities coordinator in Estonia, responsible for implementing pilot site activities in the Kasari river basin and conducting knowledge activities to raise awareness among the general public, landowners, and policymakers in Estonia. ELF's role is crucial in coordinating and executing project activities within Estonia, and their expertise in environmental issues and connections with relevant stakeholders make them a valuable partner.

PDF in collaboration with LTBU will be responsible for gathering information and mapping constructed wetlands in Latvia. They will also select a pilot catchment area and work on the development of a digital tool to simplify wetland construction. PDF's expertise in wetland projects, coupled with their ability to communicate project results effectively in Latvian media channels, contributes significantly to project implementation in Latvia.

LBTU will monitor water quality for pilot actions in Latvia and Estonia. They will collaborate with PDF and other partners to organize workshops and study trips for technical staff involved in wetland projects, enhancing their capacity and knowledge. LBTU will also develop recommendations for wetland construction to be integrated into national legislation, addressing the vague guidelines currently in place.

Novia UAS's role is to develop and organize a cross-border course with a catchment approach to wetlands. They will plan the course with input from all project partners and offer it to participants from Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, and Finland. Novia UAS has experience in organizing courses for lifelong learning and uses co-creation as a pedagogical method to foster networks. They will also coordinate cross-border activities in Finland and advocate for the catchment approach in the country.

This diverse partnership is essential for the successful implementation of the project. Each partner contributes specific technical competencies, expertise, and networks, ensuring that the project can address the complex challenges of reducing nutrient loads and conserving biodiversity in the Baltic Sea region effectively. The statutory mandates and strategic alignments of these partners with the project's objectives confirm the durability and sustainability of its results, as they are well-positioned to influence policies and practices in their respective regions.

The partnership has emanated from the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme, to which WWF SE, ELF and PDF are members, and have the common strategic goal to work “for public and private stakeholders at local, national and regional levels to commit to source-to-sea approaches in water management, sustainable agriculture and safeguarding species and habitats” (BEP landscape aim). BEP strategic actions include conserving and restoring land to enhance biodiversity, reduce nutrient runoff and help mitigate climate change; advocating for integrating landscape and water management into national policies and pushing to harmonise HELCOM, EU Directives and national policies.

The three BEP organisations have in turn identified the key actors to involve for achieving the BaltCOP objectives. Three of them, LBTU, NVVF and Novia UAS, are also project partners, while several others will

be part of the steering group or the reference group. Both LBTU and NVVF have in their competence and strategies or mandate to monitor water quality, which is an important contribution to the BaltCOP partnership. LBTU will monitor water quality for the pilot actions in Latvia and Estonia, and NVVF will do it for the pilot action in Sweden. Novia UAS has experience in organising training courses, globally and online, and can put together a course with a catchment approach that benefits all project partners and project activities.

ELF, PDF and NVVF will lead on one pilot action each since they have both relevant technical competence (including in water management, biology, agronomy) as well as established networks with landowners, municipalities, national authorities and other local stakeholders. The course organised by Novia UAS will provide training for, among others, those connected to the pilot activities. The course participants' development work will be linked to the pilot activities in Estonia, Latvia and Sweden, thus linking the course content and the pilot activities together.

WWF SE through its project coordination and policy outreach role, coupled with its technical competence in agronomy and wider Baltic Sea environmental issues, is providing “the glue” that brings the project partners together and steers their activities towards the project objectives, for impact in the Central Baltic region and beyond. In addition, WWF SE will be responsible in gathering the lessons learned and creating communications and information materials to support the partners as well as disseminate results of the project.

NVVF has experience and practical know-how in catchment officer work and their role is to share this experience to the project partners. In particular: skills building together with Novia UAS; implementation of

measures in the entire catchment area, forest as well as agricultural lands; development of mechanisms and strategies to secure long-term financing of local catchment officers (LCO); scale up LCO-approach, as well as capacity building via collaboration with Novia and SLU in creating a training program for students.

Pasaules Dabas Fonds in Latvia (PDF) and LBTU will gather information and do a mapping of what wetlands have been constructed; and a 'pilot' catchment area will be selected. Ideally, this area will be transboundary, between Latvia and Estonia, but since the constructed wetlands have not yet been mapped, it is hard to predict the location of the catchment. The monitoring will look at the effectiveness of the constructed wetlands in nutrient retention by LBTU. PDF and LBTU will also work on a digital tool which will help simplify wetland construction, to decrease landowner costs and speed up the planning process on the landowner's side. Novia UAS will integrate the tool to the course content and participants will use and evaluate it. LBTU and PDF, together with the other project partners organise workshops and study trips for engineers, project developers, and other technical staff involved in developing wetland projects, in order to increase their capacity and knowledge. This would be essential to mainstream wetland construction in Latvia as a measure to reduce nutrient runoff. Currently, the guidelines for wetland construction are too vague, and there is a lack of monitoring of their efficiency. PDF and LBTU will develop recommendations for the construction of wetlands, to be integrated by national legislation. PDF will communicate about the project and its' results in Latvian in various media channels, also on the benefit of wetlands in

nutrient runoff reduction as well as increasing biodiversity.

ELF: The project activities coordinator in Estonia, will implement the pilot site activity in Kasari river basin and also the Estonian Knowledge activity to raise awareness in Estonian a) general public b) landowners c) policy makers. ELF is a leading environmental NGO in Estonia and is well connected to other NGOs and work closely with policy makers, we also have dedicated personnel for marine and water related expertise. This makes us a good partner to coordinate Estonian activities inside Estonia as well as cooperate internationally. Together with Latvian colleagues we will implement the monitoring activity: help find needed sites and take samples etc. Together with Swedish and Finnish colleagues we will discuss the best practices, organise seminars and events and find best participants from Estonian target groups to take part in study trips to other countries.

Novia UAS: Applied Universities in Finland have the mandate and the responsibility for regional development. RDI-activities are focused on regional development and increasing competence among local actors such as SMEs, municipalities and organisations. Novia will put together a cross-border course with a catchment approach to wetlands. The course will be planned together with all project partners and offered to participants from Estonia, Latvia, Sweden and Finland. The course is aimed at professionals in working life and can be done alongside daytime jobs. The course participants will be committed to the objectives of the project and will each do development work related to the pilot activities. In addition, Novia UAS and the course participants will participate in the work of drawing up a roadmap for the catchment approach. Novia UAS has experience in organising courses for lifelong learning and uses co-creation as a pedagogical method to utilise the knowledge of both participants and lecturers. This has proven to be a good way for networks to arise and be preserved even after the end of projects. This is something that Novia UAS will be dedicated to contributing to the project. Novia will also coordinate cross-border activities in Finland and advocate the catchment approach in Finland. Novia UAS has cooperation with several organisations and projects working with wetlands in Finland including the Åland Islands, and especially with WWF Finland who has been working with a catchment approach.

REVISED TEXT SUGGESTION:

The partnership for the Baltic Catchment Officer Project (BaltCOP) is a collaborative effort that brings together organizations with diverse expertise and mandates, each contributing uniquely to the project's objectives. The project partnership is structured as follows:

WWF SE serves as the project coordinator and plays a pivotal role in aligning project activities with strategic objectives. They provide technical expertise in agronomy and Baltic Sea environmental issues. WWF SE is well-versed in landscape management, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation. Their mandate includes advocacy for environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture, making them an essential partner in promoting project objectives. WWF SE is committed to disseminating project results, ensuring that the project's catchment approach becomes a prominent strategy in future environmental and agricultural policies. WWF Sweden also hosts the longstanding WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme enabling it to strengthen regional water management efforts together with the 8 partner offices, which include Pasaules Dabas Fonds and Estonian Fund for Nature.

NVVF contributes practical experience and expertise in catchment officer work. They are actively involved in skills building, implementation of measures, and capacity building. NVVF specializes in catchment officer work, forestry, and agricultural practices. Their mandate includes monitoring water quality and contributing to sustainable water management. NVVF's knowledge sharing and capacity-building activities ensure the sustainability of catchment officer approaches.

ELF leads the pilot site activity in Estonia's Kasari river basin and conducts awareness-raising initiatives targeting the general public, landowners, and policymakers in Estonia. ELF is a leading environmental NGO in Estonia with expertise in marine and water-related matters, ensuring effective

coordination of activities. Their mandate includes advocating for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. ELF's involvement ensures the integration of project outcomes into Estonian environmental policies and practices.

PDF in collaboration LBTU conducts wetland mapping and monitoring activities. They also contribute to the development of digital tools for wetland construction. PDF specializes in biodiversity conservation and has expertise in wetland construction. Their mandate involves advocating for nature conservation and sustainability in Latvia.

LBTU is involved in wetland mapping, monitoring, and hosting workshops and study trips to increase capacity and knowledge among technical staff. They also participate in the pilot catchment area activities. LBTU specializes in landscape management, water quality monitoring, and wetland construction. Their mandate encompasses scientific research and environmental conservation in Latvia. LBTU's workshops and study trips contribute to the mainstreaming of wetland construction practices in Latvia, enhancing nutrient runoff reduction.

Novia UAS organizes a cross-border course on the catchment approach to wetlands, ensuring knowledge transfer and capacity building. They also contribute to the development of a roadmap for the catchment approach. Novia UAS specializes in regional development, organizing courses for lifelong learning, and utilizing co-creation for knowledge dissemination. They have a mandate for regional development and increasing competence among local actors. Novia UAS's course development and coordination ensure the continued dissemination of knowledge and practices beyond the project's lifetime.

The partnership emerged from the common goals and strategic alignment found within the Baltic Ecoregion Programme. It brings together a wealth of expertise and competencies needed to implement the project successfully. Each partner plays a crucial role in achieving project objectives, and their statutory mandates ensure the durability and sustainability of the project's results. Together, they aim to foster a lasting impact on the Baltic Sea region, drawing strength from their collaborative efforts within the Baltic Ecoregion Programme. Together, these partners form a comprehensive network capable of implementing water management and biodiversity preservation measures. Their mandates encompass environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, regional development, and capacity building, enabling them to work collectively towards the project's goals. The partnership is committed to ensuring the durability and sustainability of project results, with a focus on advocating for the catchment approach in water management policies across the Baltic Sea region.

C.4 Project work plan

Work package 1

Work package title: XXXX

Objectives:

Your objectives should be:

- *realistic and achievable by the end of the project*
- *specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this work package, and in which territory)*
- *measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for*

Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all activities in this work package are implemented and outputs delivered.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Think about the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Objectives:

The primary objective of Work Package 1 is to facilitate knowledge sharing and development among project partners and stakeholders, leading to increased capacity and expertise in addressing nutrient runoff and wetland restoration in the Central Baltic region. This work package aims to achieve the following:

By the end of the project, project partners and stakeholders in Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, and Finland will have enhanced knowledge and capacity in implementing catchment area approaches, wetland restoration, and nutrient retention measures to reduce eutrophication in the Baltic Sea.

Communication Objective:

To disseminate knowledge and best practices effectively among project partners, stakeholders, and target audiences, leading to behavior changes and increased awareness of sustainable practices related to wetland restoration, nutrient management, and catchment area coordination.

Activities and Tasks:

1. Conduct Workshops and Seminars:

Organize workshops and seminars in each project country (Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, and Finland) to share knowledge and experiences related to catchment area approaches, wetland restoration, and nutrient retention.

Invite experts and practitioners to provide insights and best practices in the field.

Facilitate interactive sessions for discussions and knowledge exchange.

2. Develop a Cross-Border Training Course:

Collaborate with Novia UAS to develop a cross-border training course with a catchment approach to wetlands.

Design course content that addresses the specific needs of professionals, including agricultural advisors, landowners, and wetland planners.

Ensure the course is accessible online to accommodate participants with daytime jobs.

3. Field Visits and Study Trips:

Organize field visits and study trips to project sites in Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, and Finland.

Allow participants to witness the practical implementation of catchment area approaches, wetland restoration, and nutrient retention measures.

Encourage cross-border interaction and learning during these visits.

4. Policy Dialogue and Recommendations:

Initiate cross-border policy dialogue sessions among project partners and relevant stakeholders.

Develop policy recommendations based on project outcomes to advocate for the integration of catchment area approaches and sustainable wetland practices in national and regional policies.

5. Digital Tool Development:

Collaborate with partners to develop a digital tool for assessing potential wetland sites and simplifying wetland planning.

Integrate the tool into the training course for participants to use and evaluate.

Ensure user-friendly features to facilitate adoption by landowners and practitioners.

6. Capacity Building and Networking:

Enhance the capacity of project partners and stakeholders in catchment area coordination, wetland restoration, and nutrient management.

Facilitate networking opportunities among participants to strengthen regional collaboration.

7. Roadmap Development:

Work with Novia UAS and project partners to create a roadmap for the continued application of catchment area approaches in the region.

Ensure that the roadmap includes practical steps for long-term sustainability and impact.

8. Communication and Dissemination:

Develop communication materials and channels to share project outcomes, knowledge, and best practices.

Implement communication strategies to engage target audiences and promote behavior changes related to sustainable practices.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Continuously monitor the progress and impact of knowledge sharing and capacity development activities.

Collect feedback from participants and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the activities.

10. Reporting:

Prepare regular progress reports on the activities and outcomes of Work Package 1.

Share these reports with project partners, stakeholders, and funding authorities to demonstrate project achievements and adherence to objectives.

The successful implementation of Work Package 1 will contribute to the overall project objective of reducing nutrient runoff and promoting wetland restoration in the Central Baltic region through enhanced knowledge and capacity among project partners and stakeholders

Work package 2

Work package title: Pilot activities

Objectives:

Your objectives should be:

- *realistic and achievable by the end of the project*

- *specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this work package, and in which territory)*
- *measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for*

Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all activities in this work package are implemented and outputs delivered.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Think about the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Investments

Objectives:

The main objective of Work Package 2 is to implement pilot activities in specific territories within Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden to demonstrate the effectiveness of catchment area approaches, wetland restoration, and nutrient retention measures. This work package aims to achieve the following:

By the end of the project, pilot activities will have been successfully implemented in selected territories within Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden, resulting in tangible reductions in nutrient runoff, improved water quality, and increased biodiversity. These pilot activities will serve as demonstrative models for future sustainable practices in the Central Baltic region.

Communication Objective:

To effectively communicate the outcomes and benefits of the pilot activities to project partners, stakeholders, and the broader community, leading to increased awareness and adoption of sustainable wetland and catchment area practices. The objective is to inspire behavior changes and knowledge acquisition among target audiences.

Activities and Tasks:

1. Pilot Development Workshops:

Organize pilot development workshops in each participating country (Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden) to engage project partners and stakeholders.

Identify suitable catchment areas and wetland restoration sites for pilot activities.

Discuss and plan the design, implementation, and monitoring of the pilot projects.

2. Implementation of Catchment Area Approaches:

Implement coordinated catchment area approaches in the selected territories.

Work closely with landowners, municipalities, and local authorities to secure their participation and support.

Execute activities to reduce nutrient runoff, enhance wetland restoration, and improve water quality in the chosen catchment areas.

3. Integration of Forested Areas:

Explore and implement pilot activities that involve landowners in forested areas to contribute to catchment area coordination and nutrient retention.
Develop strategies to engage forest owners and encourage sustainable land management practices within the catchment areas.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Conduct comprehensive monitoring of the pilot activities to assess their effectiveness in nutrient retention and biodiversity enhancement.

Gather data on water quality, nutrient levels, and biodiversity indicators to measure the impact of the implemented measures.

5. Digital Tool Testing:

Test the digital tool developed in Work Package 1 for assessing potential wetland sites and streamlining wetland planning.

Evaluate the tool's usability and effectiveness in the context of the pilot activities.

6. Lessons Learned Workshops:

Organize workshops to share lessons learned from the pilot activities among project partners and stakeholders.

Identify challenges, successes, and best practices to inform future actions and policy recommendations.

7. Policy Recommendations:

Based on the outcomes of the pilot activities and lessons learned, develop policy recommendations to advocate for the integration of catchment area approaches and sustainable wetland practices in national and regional policies.

8. Communication and Dissemination:

Develop communication materials and strategies to disseminate the results and benefits of the pilot activities.

Engage local communities, landowners, and policy makers to raise awareness and promote the adoption of sustainable practices.

9. Reporting:

Prepare comprehensive reports on the implementation and outcomes of the pilot activities.

Share these reports with project partners, stakeholders, and relevant authorities to showcase the achievements and contributions to project objectives.

The successful completion of Work Package 2 will demonstrate the feasibility and impact of catchment area approaches and wetland restoration in reducing nutrient runoff and enhancing biodiversity in specific territories within the Central Baltic region. The communication objective aims to foster

behavior changes and knowledge acquisition among target audiences, contributing to the long-term sustainability of these practices.

Etc.

C.5 Project Results

Define one project main result. Choose the result indicator your result will contribute to. The measurement unit will be automatically added once the indicator is chosen. Define a target value for the contribution and indicate in which period the result will be delivered. Provide a description of the results. Explain their contribution to the programme result indicator and explain also how the target value was calculated.

Result 1

Programme result indicator: PO4R1: The number of improved urban and agricultural load sources

Measurement unit: Improved load sources

Baseline: 0,00

Target value: 4,00

The project will contribute to reduced nutrient loading to the Baltic Sea by piloting water retention measures using an innovative catchment approach involving catchment coordinators equipped with a broader toolbox, capacity building, and knowledge transfer, ultimately leading to the improvement of 3-6 catchment areas (1 in Estonia, 1 in Latvia, and 1-4 in Sweden).

Contributions to Achieving the Programme Result Indicator:

Increased Capacity and Knowledge Sharing: The project will enhance the capacity and knowledge sharing among 80-100 landowners, water management professionals, and agricultural advisors through joint actions across borders. This will result in improved skills and expertise related to catchment-based water management.

Improved Analyses, Mapping, and Digital Planning Tools: The project will develop and provide access to advanced tools for analyzing, mapping, and planning water retention measures within catchment areas. These tools will facilitate more effective decision-making and implementation.

Three Joint Pilot Actions: The project will execute three joint pilot actions to demonstrate the catchment approach and the effectiveness of wetlands in reducing nutrient runoff. These practical demonstrations will serve as examples for other regions.

Policy Recommendations and Stakeholder Dialogue: The project will generate policy recommendations based on lessons learned and best practices from the catchment approach. It will engage in stakeholder dialogues to promote the adoption of effective policies for nutrient reduction.

Calculation of the Target Value:

The target value of 4.00 is based on the expectation that the project will successfully improve 3-6 catchment areas within the specified regions (Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden). While the baseline is currently at 0.00, it is anticipated that the project's results will lay the foundation for lasting

improvements in nutrient loading reduction in these areas. Measurable effects may take several years to materialize, but assuming project result delivery and durability, there is potential for a higher number of improved catchments over time.

3-6 catchments will be improved by

- i) Increased capacity and knowledge sharing of 80-100 landowners, water management professionals, agri-advisors in joint actions across borders;
- ii) Improved analyses, mapping and digital planning tools;
- iii) 3 joint pilot actions to demonstrate catchment approach and multifunctional wetlands;
- iv) policy recommendations, stakeholder dialogue.

Baseline for EST and LT will be established, measurable effects may however take several years to materialize. Assuming project result delivery and durability, there is potential for higher number of improved catchments. As known, nutrient retention effects of constructed/improved wetlands require long-term monitoring (>3ys) to be measurable.

C.6 Project Time Plan

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	After end
WP1							

C.7 Project management

In addition to the thematic work you will do in your project, you will need time and resources for coordination and internal communication. Please describe below how you plan to organise yourself to ensure the project work runs smoothly.

C.7.1 How will you coordinate your project?

Indicate who will be responsible for the coordination of your project. Tell what kind of management structures you will set up, and how the internal communication in the project will be organised.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Project Coordination will be handled by WWF Sweden (WWF SE). WWF SE will establish management structures to ensure the smooth operation of the project. The project will have a Project Manager responsible for day-to-day coordination, overseeing work packages, and ensuring project activities align with the project objectives and timeline. The Project Manager will work closely with work package leaders to ensure timely implementation.

Management Structures:

Project Manager: Responsible for overall project coordination, communication, and monitoring project progress.

Work Package Leaders: Each work package (WP1 and WP2) will have designated leaders responsible for overseeing the activities within their respective packages.

Steering Group: A steering group comprising representatives from all project partners will be established to provide guidance and strategic oversight.

Reference Group: A reference group consisting of relevant stakeholders, experts, and organizations will be formed to offer input and advice.

Internal Communication:

Internal communication within the project will be facilitated through regular meetings, emails, and virtual communication channels. The Project Manager will ensure that all partners are well-informed about project developments, activities, and timelines. Work package leaders will maintain open

channels of communication with their respective teams, and the steering group and reference group will meet periodically to provide feedback and guidance.

C.7.2 Which measures will you take to mitigate the risks and ensure quality in your project?

Describe the specific approaches and processes of risk and quality management and identify the partners responsible for those. If you plan to have any type of project evaluation, please describe its purpose and scope. Plan measures to identify and monitor any risks for successful project implementation and plan respective activities to mitigate them.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

To ensure project quality and mitigate risks, the following approaches will be implemented:

Risk Management:

A comprehensive risk assessment will be conducted at the beginning of the project to identify potential challenges and obstacles. Risks will be continuously monitored throughout the project, and regular risk assessments will be conducted. Mitigation plans will be developed for each identified risk, specifying actions to be taken if a risk materializes. Clear responsibilities will be assigned to partners and team members for risk management activities.

Quality Management:

Quality standards and best practices will be established and communicated to all partners to ensure the delivery of high-quality project outputs. Periodic reviews and evaluations will be conducted to assess the quality of project activities and outputs. Lessons learned from reviews and evaluations will be used to make improvements and adjustments to project activities as necessary.

Project Evaluation:

A comprehensive project evaluation will be conducted at the end of the project's duration. The evaluation will assess the achievement of project objectives, the quality of project outputs, and the overall impact of the project. The evaluation will be led by an external evaluator, ensuring an unbiased assessment. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide insights for future project planning and to measure the project's success in meeting its goals.

C.7.3 What will be the general approach you will follow to communicate about your project?

Give information on how the project communication will be coordinated and how will the involvement of all partners be ensured. How will the communication activities contribute to disseminating your project results? Please note that all communication activities should be included in the work packages, as an integral part of your project. There is no need to repeat this information here.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Project communication will be coordinated by WWF SE and integrated into the work packages as an integral part of the project. The general approach to communication will involve:

1. Regular Updates: Partners will be kept informed of project developments, milestones, and outcomes through regular communication channels.
2. Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder engagement will be a key focus, involving targeted outreach to relevant organizations, government bodies, and local communities.
3. Public Awareness: Public awareness campaigns and outreach will be conducted to disseminate project results and promote the project's objectives.
4. Online Platforms: An online platform will be established to share project information, resources, and updates.
5. Media Engagement: Media channels will be leveraged to raise awareness about the project and its impacts.

C.7.4 How do you foresee the financial management of the project and reporting procedures for activities and budget (within the partnership and towards the programme)?

Define the responsibilities, deadlines in financial flows, reporting flows, project related transfers, etc.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Financial management and reporting will follow the established guidelines and procedures agreed upon by the project partners.

WWF SE, as the Project Coordinator, will oversee the project budget and financial flows. Detailed reporting procedures, including deadlines, financial flows, and budget allocation, will be defined in the project agreement. Regular financial reports will be submitted to the program authorities as per the program's reporting requirements, providing transparency and accountability in financial matters. Additionally, partners will maintain clear records of their project-related expenditures to ensure accurate reporting.

C.7.6 Horizontal principles

You must define the impact of the project on each of these principles by choosing 'neutral', 'negative effects' or 'positive effects'. In general projects are not expected to have negative effect on any of the principles. If there are some specific measures planned to make a positive contribution, then 'positive impact' must be chosen, and an explanation provided.

Sustainable development: positive effects

Sustainable development is achieved when social, economic, and ecological factors are successfully integrated and when the efforts of all concerned stakeholders are aligned. These factors are interconnected, with the economy dependent on society and the environment while human existence and society are dependent on, and exist within the environment (as explained by Stockholm Resilience Centre in the famous "wedding cake" illustration of the sustainable development goals). BaltCOP primarily addresses the environmental dimension of sustainable development. It contributes to improved water resource management (SDG 6), reduced marine nutrient pollution from land (SDG 14), and benefits biodiversity (SDG 15). It also addresses good governance and the social dimension in the agriculture and environmental sectors. It will inform policy decision making based on bottom-up, multi-stakeholder dialogues and practical work (SDG 16), positively influence equality, non-discrimination (SDG 10; see next section) and gender equality (SDG 5, see below). The project objective will also contribute to developing sustainable rural communities (SDG 11). Lastly, agriculture's role in economic development will become more sustainable when negative effects are addressed in innovative and efficient ways (SDG 12). The intention is also to enhance the economic situation for farmers, through providing more support and tools which shall reduce the time and costs for their environmental work.

Through these approaches, BaltCOP aims to make a positive contribution to sustainable development.

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination: positive effects

Farming and land-ownership show substantial social heterogeneities. Farmland is mostly inherited in Sweden and Finland. This constitutes structural obstacles to social diversity among farmers, with respect to ethnic

origin and gender (mostly men inherit land). Land-ownership looks very different in Estonia and Latvia, including post-1990 privatizations and deprivatizations, land-concentration and emigration patterns.

Few young people are farmers. In the Swedish BaltCOP pilot area, most farmers are aged 60+.

Through EU agricultural policy focused on commercial production, large farms have been more successful compared to small farms. This relates in at least two ways to equality and non-discrimination. First, more men than women run farms which can be their sole livelihood, likely because they own more land. Secondly, power relations in the value chain imply that farmers need to abide by conditions set by food retailers and suppliers.

Farmers need to be production oriented, due to the value chain structures. It is rarely a business that you are in mainly for the money; farmers associate many other values with their job. For BaltCOP a key assumption is that increased support from catchment coordinators to farmers, will reduce the farmer's cost for applying measures, a benefit especially important for small farms. BaltCOP project partners see farmers as key drivers of change. A bottom up approach, listening openly to their

motivations, values and interests and identifying win-win options will be applied. This implies seeing beyond the media stereotypes of farmers as either "environmental heroes" or "environmental villains". Although a key feature of the project idea is identifying optimal locations for nutrient leakage measures, project activities will aim to invite widely: male and female farmers, young and old and from all farm sizes, in the areas of pilot actions.

Through these approaches, BaltCOP aims to make a positive contribution to equality and non-discrimination.

Equality between men and women: positive effects

All project countries have gender equality challenges. In many countries there is a green/feminine stereotype and structures that make men less likely to engage in environmentally friendly behaviour. Within the Swedish and Finnish agricultural sector, work traditionally done by men is valued more highly compared to women's work. Male farmers receive a disproportionate amount of public farm support funding (LRF, 2017). The number of female farmers has increased in recent years (Kuns, 2021).

In Estonia, one of the main tasks for the country to reach the SDGs is to reduce the pay gap for women, and to reduce women's risk of poverty.

Latvia, however, stands out among European countries with 44,8% female farm managers. The project will apply WWF's practical gender equality checklists, to avoid negative and strive for positive effects on gender equality in project activities. For example, efforts will be made to include female landowners, and to ensure equal opportunities for men and women to participate in project events and study trips.

Increased support to and knowledge on implementation of environmentally friendly measures on farms may in the long term favour small farms (since they are more sensitive to additional costs than large farms) and farms with an eco-agricultural orientation, both more often run by women.

Through these approaches, BaltCOP aims to make a positive contribution to gender equality.

C.8 Long-term plans

As a programme, we would like to support projects that have a long-lasting effect on the Central Baltic region and for those who will benefit from them. Please describe what you will do to ensure this.

C.8.1 Ownership

Please describe who will ensure the financial and institutional support for the outputs/deliverables developed by the project (e.g., tools), and explain how these outputs/deliverables will be integrated in the work of the partner institutions.

Ensuring the long-term sustainability and ownership of project outputs and deliverables is a fundamental aspect of BaltCOP. The project partners are committed to working closely with key stakeholders to integrate project results into the ongoing work of partner institutions and ensure their continued support.

In Estonia, the local municipality of Lääneranna will play a crucial role in ensuring the integration of project plans into the planning and licensing of land use activities. This collaboration will ensure that the project's impact extends beyond its duration. Estonian State Forestry will take responsibility for the implementation of wetland restoration activities in the Kasari River floodplain, incorporating the analyses and measures developed during the project into their long-term strategies.

In Sweden, the municipalities in the four catchment areas of Nyköpingsåarna will be central to driving the future use of project outputs and deliverables from the Swedish pilot action. These municipalities, which are significant landowners themselves, will work to integrate the project's results into their

ongoing land management practices, ensuring the sustainability of the project's impact. The project partners will work towards the integration of recommendations from this project into regional and national policies and strategies.

The wetland tool/calculator, developed during the project, will be maintained and further developed by the Latvian Fund for Nature Protection (LBTU). This tool will remain a valuable resource for LBTU and the Latvian government in their future dialogues with Latvian landowners, and will continue to support wetland restoration efforts.

The course developed and organized by Novia University of Applied Sciences (Novia UAS) will have a lasting impact. It can be offered multiple times after the project has concluded, providing ongoing capacity building opportunities. The course curriculum will become publicly available and can be adopted by other universities. Additionally, certain course materials will be adapted into a more accessible format for self-study and will be accessible online, further extending its reach and usefulness beyond the project's duration.

For investments made in wetlands during BaltCOP, the responsibility for maintenance will fall on the landowners once the construction is complete. Subsidies may be made available to landowners to cover these maintenance costs, ensuring the continued functionality of these wetlands.

Furthermore, the project partners are committed to continued advocacy work to promote the catchment officer approach and its benefits for environmental improvement in the Baltic Sea region. Through ongoing advocacy efforts, the project partners will work to ensure that the catchment officer approach becomes an integral part of regional and national strategies for addressing eutrophication and biodiversity loss in the Baltic Sea. This commitment reflects the project's dedication to long-term positive change in the region.

C.8.2 Durability

To have a lasting effect on the Central Baltic region and its population, outputs or deliverables should be used by relevant groups (project partners or others) also after the project lifetime. For example, new practices in urban transport need to be used by local authorities to have less CO2 emissions, and the whole population will benefit from this. Indicate how the project partners will ensure the durability and sustainability of project results and outputs.

The initial results from applying catchment area coordination of nutrient retention measures are very promising in terms of effectiveness and durable effects. BaltCOP aims to develop the method itself, in various country contexts, as well as the capacities of practitioners, experts and policy, to enable further scaling up of results.

This approach has the potential to lead to more effective and sustainable implementation of existing legislation, but also to support work with biodiversity targets, the upcoming restoration law actions as well as climate adaptation measures – connecting the local know-how with achievement of national goals.

Given that the objectives and activities of BaltCOP are derived from or aligned with the organizational strategies and mandates of all project partners, the results will be carried forward in their future joint and individual endeavours.

Wetlands and other measures constructed during BaltCOP are intended to continue their nutrient and water retention functions beyond the project period, contributing to reduced eutrophication for many years ahead. Continued functioning of wetlands constructed during the project will be an investment condition. Subsidies are likely to be available for landowners to cover maintenance costs.

A key strategy in the project to achieve durability and sustainability is the policy recommendations and involvement of decision makers, to identify what is needed in order to embed the method into water management policy and practice in the project countries.

Finally, a lasting effect on the Central Baltic region and its population is created by the flow of students taking part in the education measures linked to the project by Novia UAS, LBTU and external collaborators such as Turku University and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

The initial results obtained from the application of catchment area coordination for nutrient retention measures have demonstrated their effectiveness and potential for long-term benefits. BaltCOP aims to further develop this approach in various country contexts and enhance the capacities of practitioners, experts, and policymakers, thereby enabling the scaling up of results.

This approach holds significant potential to facilitate more effective and sustainable implementation of existing legislation. It also supports efforts to achieve biodiversity targets, address upcoming restoration law actions, and implement climate adaptation measures. By connecting local knowledge with the attainment of national goals, the project strives to create enduring positive impacts.

Given that the objectives and activities of BaltCOP align closely with the organizational strategies and mandates of all project partners, the results will naturally find their way into the partners' future joint and individual endeavors. The wetlands and other measures constructed during BaltCOP are designed to continue functioning for nutrient and water retention long after the project's completion. Their ongoing effectiveness will be a prerequisite for investment, and subsidies may be available to landowners to cover maintenance costs.

A key strategy for ensuring durability and sustainability is the formulation of policy recommendations and active involvement of decision-makers. These recommendations will provide insights into the necessary steps for integrating the catchment officer approach into water management policies and practices in the project countries.

Furthermore, the project's lasting impact on the Central Baltic region and its population will be achieved through the flow of students participating in educational measures linked to the project. Collaborative efforts with educational institutions such as Novia UAS, LBTU, Turku University, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences will continue to educate and inspire future generations, fostering a legacy of knowledge and sustainable practices.

C.8.3 Transferability

Some outputs/deliverables that you will deliver could be adapted or further developed to be used by other target groups or in other territories. What will you do to make sure that relevant groups are aware of your outputs/deliverables and are able to use them?

The capacity development work package will ensure that several target groups gain increased knowledge and tools, in order to be able to apply the catchment coordination and multi-functional improvement measures demonstrated by BaltCOP.

Outreach to relevant actors, beyond the closest stakeholders, will be ensured through several means and at several geographical scales: participation in conferences and network meetings, publishing news and information in the project web page, and sharing it in social media in the different project countries.

All the project partners, members of the steering group and reference group have important networks in the Baltic Sea region where knowledge can be shared to a considerably large number of concerned stakeholders.

Three of the project partners are members of the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme where results and knowledge is shared with partners in all nine Baltic Sea countries, as well as made use of for policy advocacy towards HELCOM.

WWF Sweden, being part of the global WWF Network, has good possibilities to share project results to similar contexts globally.

NVVF aims to share BaltCOP results during their participation in the Swedish national marine and freshwater forum organized by SWAM. Participants include officials, industry representatives, researchers, politicians, opinion leaders, decision makers and civil society organizations. .

ELF has initiated a network among Estonian environmental NGOs Toiduvõrgustik" (can be translated as "The Food Web"), for information sharing and joint, more impactful policy advocacy. Results from BaltCOP will be shared with this network and possibilities for joint policy advocacy activities, building on BaltCOP results will be explored.

LBTU also participates in national and international conferences on science in rural development, such as "Engineering for rural development" and "Balanced agriculture 2023" where BaltCOP results will be shared with academic peers.

PDF also participates in National Common Agriculture Policy working groups, as well as LIFE Goodwater IP meetings and working groups on agriculture.

Novia UAS will inform about the course developed during the project to the Baltic University Programme BUP where Novia UAS is a member.