

**INVESTMENT****Total USD 3,894,947****PROJECT DURATION**

2003–2007

NUTRIENT CHALLENGES

- 161 of 172 coastal areas in the Baltic Sea region affected by eutrophication

EARLY NUTRIENT BMP “WINS”

- Building awareness among farmers through materials on best agricultural practices
- Capacity building among farmers; coastal communities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; national and local authorities responsible for the implementation of the EU Nitrates Directive and Water Framework Directive; and regional organisations (scientific, political and financial)

BALTIC SEA

The Baltic Sea Regional Project

Project Summary and Scope

The aim of the project was to facilitate the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to natural resources management in the Baltic Sea. The project comprised two thematic components:

Component 1: Promoting the large marine ecosystem approach.

Component 2: Introducing the ecosystem approach in agriculture and critical coastal areas according to the principles of integrated coastal zone management.

Activities under component 2 were therefore focused on both reducing nutrient losses from farms and increasing the nutrient retention capacity of coastal wetlands, in accordance with the conclusions of the Baltic Agricultural Run-off Action Programme and the Programme Implementation Task Force Working Group on Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands.

In the context of direct nutrient load reduction in the Baltic Sea, the most relevant activities were:

- Agricultural interventions, comprising the training of agricultural advisors and farmers, as well as the design and implementation of a comprehensive farm environmental management system, including investments in manure management on a medium-sized farm.
- Low-interest loans, arranged through the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO), which administered the entire financing scheme for participating farms. Some investments were also made to strengthen and upgrade the existing system for monitoring agricultural run-off.
- Coastal zone activities, for example the restoration of grasslands and wetlands in the priority area and the provision of equipment to enable local NGOs to continue to manage the target areas.

Component 2 of the project comprised pilot investments to demonstrate measures and technology to reduce nutrient run-off from farms and to retain nutrients in selected wetlands in previously defined priority areas. Activities also included the comprehensive training of agricultural extension agents and farmers.



Best Practices

- **Sustainable farming practices** — A change of attitude towards more environmentally sustainable farming practices with clearly demonstrable economic benefits among farmers in the Baltic States, and to some extent in the Kaliningrad region of Russia.
- **A combination of solid and semi-solid slurry for fertiliser** — A shift of over 60 percent from exclusive use of solid manure to a combination of solid and semi-solid manure and slurry for fertilisation, increasing the percentage of nutrients recirculated from manure to fertilisation on farms. In Lithuania, 80 percent of participating farms have shifted completely to slurry use.
- **Innovative financing mechanisms** — Mechanisms for business development and financing have been developed and tested, making agro-environmental investments more attractive and pooling resources for their realisation. Interest has been raised among commercial banks for financing agro-environmental investments in small enterprises.
- **An international platform and network** — Connection between governments, scientific institutions, agricultural extension services and NGOs to facilitate continued cooperation and the development of follow-up projects.
- **A dedicated team for outreach to farmers** — Support to the establishment of a local project implementation team in the Leningrad region of Russia, to work with farms and to implement agro-environmental investments. This team is part-financed by NEFCO for an indefinite period.

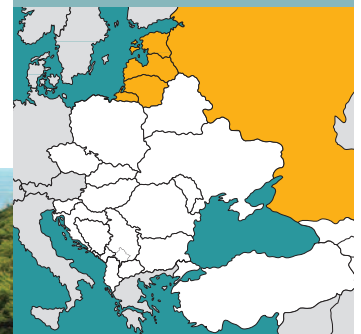
Key BMP Indicators

- Reducing annual nutrient loads by 864 tons of nitrogen and 47 tons of phosphorus through farm investments (financed with or without resources from the GEF Baltic Sea Regional Project).
- Increasing grassland areas to allow manure spreading to maintain grazing land for cattle.
- Restoring two wetland areas to increase the retention of nutrients otherwise flowing into the Gulf of Riga and the Curonian Lagoon.

Further Information

<http://www.ices.dk/projects/balticsea.asp>

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About the Living Water Exchange

The Living Water Exchange, a GEF/UNDP project promoting nutrient reduction best practices in Central and Eastern Europe, will share information and accelerate the replication of the most appropriate nutrient reduction practices developed from GEF and other investments in the region.

For more information, please visit <http://nutrient-bestpractices.iwlearn.org/> or email Chuck Chaitovitz chuck@gef.org