



DRAFT FOR SuMaNu Policy recommendation #6

The SuMaNu project platform produces a set of policy recommendations to support its aim of sustainable agriculture and nutrient recycling. These policy recommendations have been developed based on earlier projects and expert work in the SuMaNu project with a particular focus to serve the objectives and drafting process of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Regional Nutrient Recycling Strategy.

Please note that this is a draft. The final version will be published later.

Knowledge transfer between farmers, authorities and policymakers

- Policies and support mechanisms should foster knowledge transfer from research to practical action at regional, national and international level.
- Direct contact and communication between scientists, policymakers and farmers should be promoted.
- The language used by scientists, policymakers, officials and project experts should be simplified to deliver clear and understandable messages for practitioners and entrepreneurs. Digital solutions, for example YouTube and Wikipedia, could be utilized more in knowledge transfer.
- Multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches are essential preconditions for efficient and targeted development of measures.
- There is a need for more information exchange on the environmental efficiency of agri-environmental techniques and the effectiveness of agri-environmental measures.
- Evaluation and analysis on the combination of the efficiency of agricultural and environmental advisory system in the Baltic Sea Countries is needed.



Background

Transferring and acquiring the latest information and knowledge, as well as information exchange between different stakeholder groups, is the backbone for reducing nutrient leakage in agriculture.

Farmers in the EU member countries have long implemented measures to limit and minimize nutrient losses to the environment. New technologies and methods are constantly being developed and new policy incentives endorsed. However, the results have not met the expectations. One of the causes is that different stakeholder groups are functioning independently, in separate “information bubbles” which means that information exchange is not efficient. Often language used for communicating messages is too official and poorly understandable for the potential target groups.

Project Green Agri used several studies to obtain targeted and comprehensive information for direct communication with two main agricultural sector target groups – farmers and policymakers. Recommendations on the necessary changes for policy creation process, support mechanisms as well as methods for knowledge transfer and capacity building were developed and presented in the following paragraphs for further consideration.

Policies and support mechanisms should foster knowledge transfer from research to practical actions both nationally and internationally. The focus and level of research differs between BSR countries. Creating more focused and targeted research projects and innovation development requires international knowledge transfer. A multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach is an essential precondition for an efficient and targeted development of measures, to implement holistic, multipurpose/multi-target, multi-level and non-conflicting solutions in practice.

Direct contact is the most efficient way of transferring knowledge and it should be supported. This includes meetings, discussions and training on field and on farm, opening the communication and knowledge transfer to and between farmers.

Direct contact between scientists, policymakers and farmers should also be promoted. Information exchange improves policymakers’ and scientists’ practical understanding of the technicalities and challenges of recommended measures. Policymakers and scientists, who develop theoretical recommendations and policies, should be invited to learn about the possibilities and challenges of the farm practices. Farmers may be obliged to use production methods developed by scientists and directed by policymakers. Sometimes these methods do not meet the practical environment. Close cooperation between farmers and scientists should thus be promoted to facilitate short chain information flow in both directions, before particular method is recommended for a wide implementation. This would help to reduce bureaucracy and time and resources required. A significantly higher efficiency in the path of reaching common environmental targets could be achieved.

Language is sometimes a barrier between policy and practice. The language used by scientists, policymakers, officials and experts should be simplified to deliver clear and understandable messages for practitioners and entrepreneurs. Digital solutions, for example YouTube and Wikipedia, could be utilized more in knowledge transfer. When people are looking for information on any given topic, including agriculture and the environment, they most often google it. It would be important that there is correct information available online.

Evaluation and analysis of the combination of the efficiency of agricultural and environmental advisory system in the Baltic Sea Countries is needed. The aim would be to learn from the strengths of the other countries and to adjust the national advisory system accordingly. Currently, similar actions are recommended to policymakers of different countries, while baseline situations and available support systems in different countries differ.

There is a need for more information exchange on the environmental efficiency of agri-environmental techniques and the effectiveness of agri-environmental measures in the Baltic Sea countries. Although the national conditions may affect the effectiveness of measures, it would be important to have this information more widely available in the region.



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