

15th December 2016

BÚNAÐARSTOVAN INVOLVED IN PROGRESSIVE COLLABORATIVE EUROPEAN WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Nine partners from Northern Europe, including lead partner Savonia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) and of course the local Búnaðarstovan met in Sweden at the end of November 2016 to discuss ideas, look at pilot initiatives and make suggestions on how to address nitrate run off problems from agricultural and mining water sources. At the meeting, which is part of the Northern Peripheries Transnational Interreg Programme, each of the partners gave a presentation on the main agricultural and mining sites associated with their own area, highlighting particular run-off problems whilst proposing research based solutions.

Jens Ivan í Gerðinum stressed that the problems created by nitrate and phosphate run off in the Faroe Islands are mainly from agricultural sources. He noted that, “The biggest concern regarding farm run-offs is not the contaminating effect on river basins and lakes but to a much greater concern the discard of valuable resources i. e. the slurry. Therefore better utilization of the slurry by means of e.g. biogas-plants and pelletizing the dry-matter of the slurry into more commercial based products. As well as using them as an aid in preventing and reversing land degradation due to erosion is of essence”. He also stated that, “it is important to consider other methods being used in other parts of Europe to see if these can be transferred to the Faroe Island.”

The meeting kicked off in Lulea University of Technology before moving north to Kiruna, home to the largest Iron Ore Mine in Europe supplying 60% of all iron to the European market. The mine has a history of nitrate run off issues hence practical mitigating suggestions were provided by the Swedish partners on how to address this pollution concern.

A previous meeting of all the partners was held in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Hillsborough, Northern Ireland in June 2016, where the benefits of planting a Short Rotational Willow Coppice System were explained and the key mitigation measures of the system were identified, including environmental protection for streams, rivers, lakes, environmental compliance, and biomass energy production. It is intended that the transfer of this practical knowledge from the different sites and partners can be brought back to the Faroe Islands and utilised to address nitrate and phosphate run off in some of the smaller catchments around lakes and rivers so as to compile practical proposals to start addressing and reversing this water quality problem.





WATERPRO

Nutrients in agricultural runoff are one of the major contributors to eutrophication which can lead to a loss of biodiversity in our local lakes and rivers; whilst Ammonium Nitrate based explosives used in mining operations can result in nitrogen leaching via runoff. It is inevitable that global climate change will increase the frequency of floods and water volumes in the Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) areas, thus increasing further the potential for pollution. Hence the Waterpro project, championed by the Northern Peripheries Transnational Interreg Programme, aims to provide more eco efficient runoff management tools and models in the Northern Periphery Area, in anticipation of the effects of climate change. The project intends to facilitate faster transfer of knowledge and develop wider cooperation within the Northern Periphery Area, improving runoff management systems and techniques.

Image caption



WaterPro Project Partners photographed outside Lulea University of Technology



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014–2020



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WATERPRO

WaterPro is part of the Northern Peripheries Transnational Interreg Programme involving the following partners:

- Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Lead Partner (Finland)
- Geological Survey of Finland (Finland)
- Luleå University of Technology (Sweden)
- Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland)
- Lough Neagh Partnership (Northern Ireland)
- Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (Northern Ireland)
- Heriot Watt University (Scotland)
- Donegal County Council (Ireland)
- Agricultural Agency (Faroe Islands)

Also including 17 associated partners from the NPA areas (including local and regional authorities, enterprises, sectoral agencies and interest groups representing the main target groups and stakeholders)

The overall goal of WaterPro is to develop eco-efficient tools and models for good water quality management and protection for the Northern Periphery sparsely populated area. This will be done through development of a toolbox of good management practices and a communication platform for the agricultural and mining extraction industries. In addition, several innovative, low cost practices will be implemented in actual pilot sites and their treatment and cost-efficiency evaluated. WaterPro will also enhance the preparedness of responsible authorities and local resource users to protect water quality, human health, ecosystems and stimulate economic growth and development.

WaterPro Aims:

- 1) Provide more eco efficient runoff management systems in the Northern Periphery Area in anticipation of the effects of climate change.
- 2) Provide a faster transfer of knowledge and develop wider cooperation within the Northern Periphery Area and improve runoff management systems and techniques.

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