



Networking event 1: Cities Forum

Time: 21 January 2014

Place: Helsinki, Finland, Helsinki City hall

The first of two big CITYWATER networking events, Cities Forum, was organized on 21 January 2014. The event was as part of the official opening of the Gulf of Finland Year 2014 (GoF) and it was entitled “Benefits of water protection – a range of concrete measures for local actors”. About 70 participants representing different kinds of organizations from Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Sweden participated in the Networking event. A range of examples of concrete water protection measures done by local actors were brought up, connected through a cost-benefit perspective. The themes were storm waters, food, and waste water treatment and waste water reception in ports. After the Networking event, the participants could take part of the official opening of the Gulf of Finland Year 2014. In parallel with the Networking event Cities Forum, a Marine Science for the Society forum was organized.



The opening words were held by Mr Jussi Pajunen, mayor of Helsinki.

Action at the local level is crucial

In the opening words, the mayor of Helsinki, Mr. **Jussi Pajunen**, said that a clean environment contributes to all dimensions of sustainability; economic, social and ecological. Mr Pajunen also mentioned the Port of Helsinki and their decision to accept waste water from cruise ships free of charge as a good example of concrete action.

The importance of action at the local level was emphasized by Mr **Pekka Kansanen**, Director General, City of Helsinki Environment Centre. Mr Kansanen referred to the The Gulf of Finland Year and said it is a joint initiative of 3 countries, but reminded the audience of that the cities and municipalities level is where much of the concrete action takes place. For this, the Baltic Sea Challenge is a very useful tool and Mr Kansanen invited actors from around the Baltic Sea to join the network.

In relation to concrete action at the local level, the monetary benefits of water protection are crucial to bring up, since most of the time only the costs are presented, without comparing them with the benefits in the economic calculations. There are methods to equate the benefits to the costs, which was the topic of Professor **Kari Hyytiäinen**, professor in the Economics of Baltic Sea Protection at the University of Helsinki.



Other speakers in the opening session were Mr Pekka Kansanen from the City of Helsinki Environment Centre and Mr Kari Hyytiäinen from the University of Helsinki.

Storm waters, food and waste water

Furthermore, the Networking event brought up concrete water protection measures in parallel sessions: storm water handling, waste water reception in ports, food and waste water treatment plants. The theme storm waters and whether they are a threat or possibility as well as where to find investment money was discussed by Mr. **Mika Rekola**, University of Helsinki and Mr **Lari Pitkä-Kangas**, City of Malmö.

Food and the impact it has on the Baltic Sea was the topic of Ms. **Sirpa Kurppa**, MTT Agrifood Research Finland (in the picture to the left) and Mr. **Petteri Huuska**, City of Helsinki Environment Centre.

Waste water treatment plants and clean tech was discussed by Ms. **Sajariina Toivikko**, Finnish Water Utilities Association (FIWA) and Mr **Tommi Fred**, Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority.

Waste water reception in ports and preparedness for the special area status of the Baltic Sea were dealt with by Ms. **Anita Mäkinen**, Finnish Transport Safety Agency and Mr. **Kimmo Mäki**, Port of Helsinki.

The seminar was concluded by a cities think-tank where the chair Ms. **Päivi Kippo-Edlund** and the moderators Ms. **Lotta Nummelin** and Ms. **Marjukka Porvari** summed up the discussions.

After the Networking event, the official opening ceremony of the Gulf of Finland Year 2014 was held.

The Cities Forum could also be followed online. The presentations were made available on the website shortly after the event, and they can be downloaded at <http://www.citywater.fi/eventsupcoming-events/citywater-organized/cities-forum/> .



Parallel sessions. Mr Mika Rekola and Mr Lari Pitkä-Kangas discussed storm water issues. Ms. Sirpa Kurppa and Mr Petteri Huuska talked about the theme food. Moderator: Lotta Nummelin (not in the picture).



Parallel sessions. Ms. Saijariina Toivikko and Mr Tommi Fred discussed waste water treatment plants and clean tech. Ms. Anita Mäkinen and Mr Kimmo Mäki talked about Waste water reception in ports. Moderator: Ms. Marjukka Porvari.

Text: Tina Nyfors

Photos: Lotta Henriksson/Tina Nyfors