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*Coalition
Clean Baltic*

LIFE

Quiet Waters



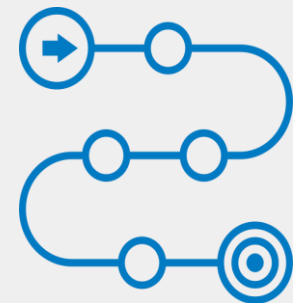
Andrea Cervantes, Biodiversity Officer
Coalition Clean Baltic

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Aim:

To foster regionally coordinated actions to reduce underwater noise emissions from existing and future recreational crafts in the Baltic Sea



Timeline:

2026 - 2030 (4 years)



Consortium: 17 PPs

12 Beneficiaries (CCB - lead)

5 Associated partners

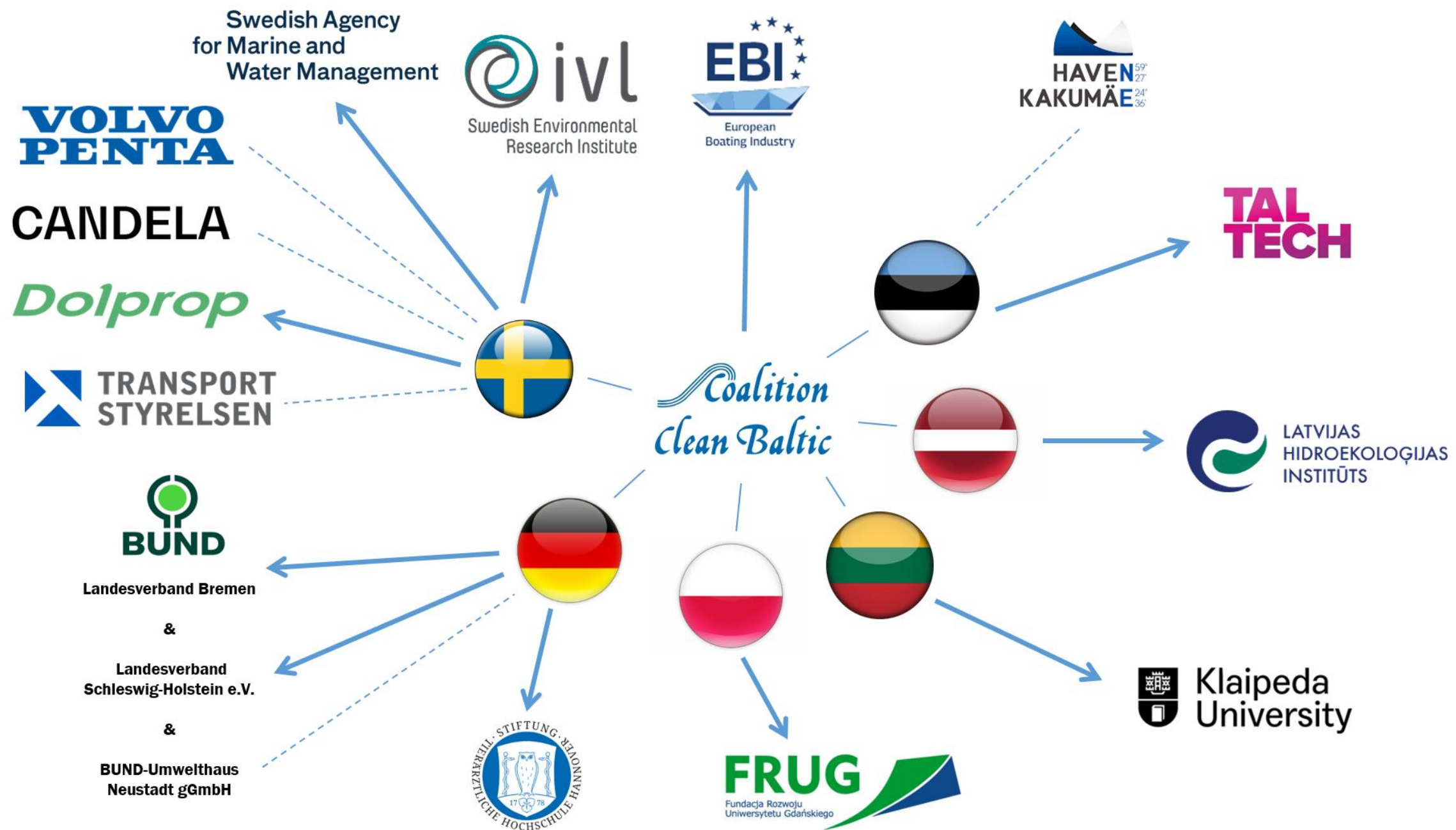


credit Oliver Sjöström from Pexels

EU LIFE - Circular Economy and Quality of Life
LIFE-2025-SAP-ENV-ENVIRONMENT

CONSORTIUM

LIFE QuietWaters Consortium



- Civil society
- Research institutions
- Industry representatives
- National Agencies



Beneficiaries: bold lines
 Associated Partners: dashed lines

BACKGROUND



Continuous underwater noise from recreational crafts

An unrepresented topic in many fields (research, mitigation, policy, awareness)



Baltic Sea

Recreational craft use exceptionally high



Underwater noise impacts

Marine mammals (harbour porpoises, seals), fish, invertebrates



Policy development and implementation challenges:

- Recreational Craft Directive → underwater noise not yet addressed
- AIS → rarely integrated in recreational boats (not an obligation), therefore monitoring is affected (location, speed)
- Not established mapping methods for underwater noise from recreational crafts and regional assessments (HELCOM HOLAS) do not yet include such activity
- Very few MPAs considering measures linked to underwater noise reduction from this source



credit Oliver Sjöström from Pexels

Still... mapping and monitoring required under MSFD and MSPD and pressures remain unaddressed to reduce impacts on noise-sensitive species

LIFE QUIETWATERS' CONCEPT

Aim of the LIFE QuietWaters project



Project activities

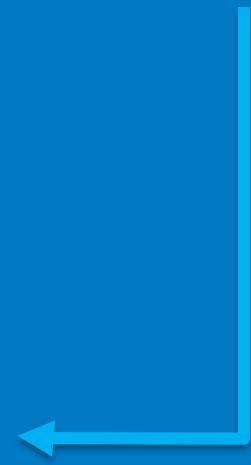


Contribute to implementation of MSFD (D11C2), MSPD, HELCOM BSAP and RAP Noise

Reduce negative impacts on marine life and contribute to GES



- 1) Implementation of measures and best practices
- 2) Improved monitoring
- 3) Reduced underwater noise emissions



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

QuietWaters: Work Plan (2026 – 2030)

WP1: Project management and coordination

WP2:
Baseline
assessments

WP3:
Innovations, modelling and
recommendations for
underwater noise mitigation

WP4: Knowledge transfer and awareness raising

WP5: Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results



WP2: Baseline assessments



Regional framework for underwater noise assessment

Baseline assessments (3 pilots: DE, PL, SE, 2 followers EE, LT)

- DE: Geltinger Birk, PL: Puck Bay, SE: Nämdö Archipelago
- C-Pods to be deployed alongside hydroacoustic recorders to monitor potential presence of harbor porpoises during measurements – DE and PL
- Drone-based (UAV) imagery – number and type of crafts - PL

Soundscape characterization & biodiversity indicators (ecological interpretation to baseline measurements)

- Soundscape analysis, machine-learning models (C-Pods validation), and acoustic biodiversity indicators for noise sensitivity

Boat signatures (30)

WP3: Innovation, modelling and mitigation



Industry advisory board (validation)

Innovative technologies and operational solutions (innovations, retrofits, speed, cleaning, coating)

Soundscape modelling (3 pilots) – DEMASK

- Area-wide seasonal maps for recreational craft noise

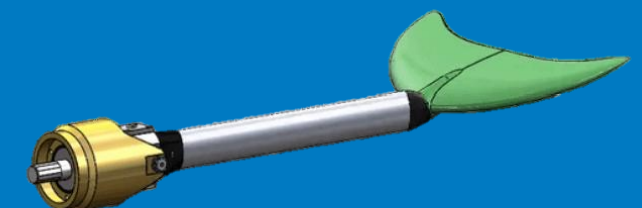
Assessing noise impacts on harbour porpoises (Puck Bay - PL)

- Noise measurements, aerial surveys, boat/density relationships, and prevailing sound pressure levels – into model and combined with FRUG's Underwater Acoustic Simulator (UAS)
- Determination of risk zones for disturbance on harbour porpoises and identification of noise exposure areas where traffic-related underwater noise exceeds biologically relevant thresholds

Site-specific recommendations for noise mitigation



Credit: Candela



Credit: Dolprop

WP4: Knowledge transfer & awareness

raising



Local stakeholder engagement

Policy engagement and collaboration

- EU, HELCOM, ASCOBANS, national
- Networking and collaboration with other projects (SAMBAH II, CUMBIAH?)

Communication & dissemination

- Industry, science, stakeholders, civil society (incl. boat users)



WP5: Sustainability, replication & exploitation



Common technical guidance and best practices

Baltic-wide recommendations (policy/measures)

User application for individual mitigation (RECRAFT)

Exploitation plan (collection of recommendations, guidelines, etc.)



Key project results

A regional framework for recreational craft underwater noise assessment to ensure consistent measurement, analysis and reporting (under MSFD)

3 MPAs (pilot areas: DE, PL, SE) with seasonal baseline assessments for underwater noise from recreational crafts and 2 follower areas (EE and LT) + soundscape characterization

Area-wide noise maps of the QuietWaters pilot sites: Total area for which underwater noise maps are produced: 633.79 km² – Tentative maps for HOLAS4

Risk zones for harbour porpoise identified in N2000 Puck Bay, PL

Assessment of mitigation measures (innovations and operational)

Technical and policy recommendations for Baltic Sea level

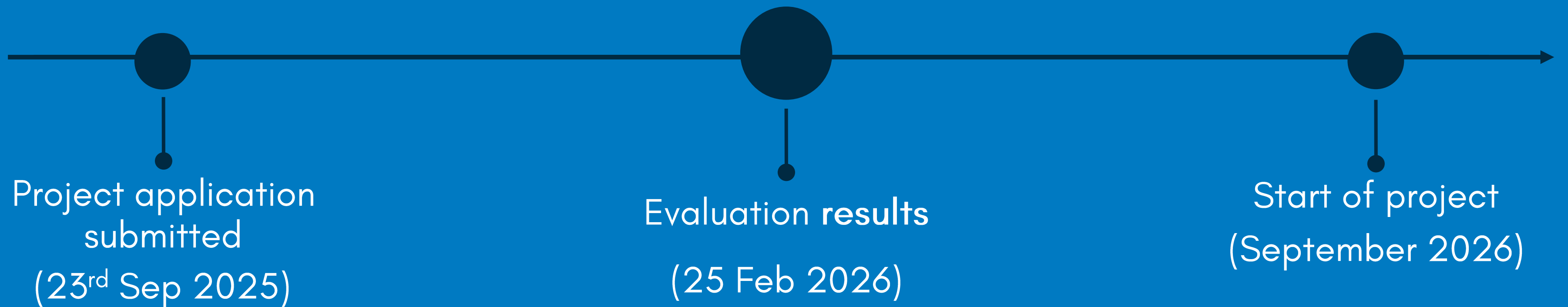
Concrete implementation of specific BSAP and RAP Noise actions at HELCOM level, EUSBSR actions, as well as ASCOBANS actions on underwater noise and recreational crafts at the regional level



credit Oliver Sjöström from Pexels



Current timeline





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