



EMPEREST – Eliminating Micro-Pollutants from Effluents for Reuse Strategies

The EMPEREST project, funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021–2027, supports local authorities, service providers and policy-making community by strengthening the sustainable water management cycle. PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) discharge management is one of the most pressing environmental challenges in the Baltic Sea Region. The holistic approach of the project to the elimination of PFAS and other persistent organic pollutants incorporates regional strategies for monitoring and assessment, technological advances in wastewater treatment, and risk management assessment for cities.

The EMPEREST project has four activity strands to fulfil its aims. First, during the implementation years, the project in close cooperation with HELCOM will prepare methodological recommendations to monitor PFAS group in the aquatic environment. At the same time, local authorities will address the subject on the city level by developing a PFAS risk assessment framework to identify and assess PFAS-related risks and propose relevant risk mitigation strategies.

Further, a large part of the project will look into the wastewater treatment as a point source of organic micropollutants to the environment. EMPEREST will support water utilities to make informed decisions about cost-effective treatment strategies and investment roadmaps for removing PFAS from wastewater streams. The project will pilot advanced treatment technologies with mobile pilot containers to collect a comprehensive picture from the region and evaluate its effectiveness and economic viability to remove micropollutants. The aim is to demonstrate the efficient technologies to other water utilities in the region and to scale up their application.

To support this and other activities, capacity development will take place for both local authorities and public service providers to inform them about the recent developments in the field and train them with tailored materials and tools. The training programme will improve professional skills of wastewater management experts to be better prepared to the upcoming regulatory changes regarding micropollutants in effluents, thus strengthening the overall water sector resilience to emerging risks.

About the project

Funding: Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021–2027 (Priority 2 Water-smart societies, objective 2.1 Sustainable waters)

Budget: 5 432 044 EUR (ERDF co-funding: 4 345 635 EUR)

Implementation: January 2023 – December 2025

Project website: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/project/emperest/>

Partnership

1. Union of the Baltic Cities Sustainable Cities Commission c/o City of Turku (FI)
2. Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission – Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) (FI)
3. University of Tartu (EE)
4. Berlin University of Technology (DE)
5. Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) (FI)
6. Gdańsk Water Utilities (PL)
7. Water and Sewage Company Ltd of Szczecin (PL)
8. Tartu Waterworks Ltd (EE)
9. Tallinn Water Ltd (EE)
10. “Kaunas water” Ltd (LT)
11. Turku Region Wastewater Treatment Plant (FI)
12. DWA German Association for Water, Wastewater and Waste DWA Regional group North-East (DE)
13. Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology (LT)
14. City of Riga (LV)