



# **Application of Eco-innovative Technologies of Nutrients Removal in Wastewater – Case Study BARITECH Project**

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## **1. Introduction**

Eco-innovative technologies in wastewater treatment should provide not only stringent standards for the quality of treated wastewater but also ensure maximum recovery of energy and raw materials from wastewater. One of the ways to improve the removal efficiency of nitrogen and phosphorus compounds in existing conventional wastewater treatment plants is pretreatment of reject water generated during the mechanical dewatering of the digested sewage sludge.

In conventional wastewater treatment plants, where sludge treatment process is stabilized by fermentation, the most common way of handling return flow of reject water is recirculation to the mechanical part, resulting in small hydraulic load (not exceeding 1.5%) with high amount of nutrients in between 10 and 20% of raw wastewater load (Fux et al., 2003, 2006; Gajewska and Obarska-Pempkowiak, 2011a). Reject water (RW) generated during mechanical dewatering of digested sewage sludge is not only characterized by uneven formation in time but also irregular composition. Characteristic for RW are high concentrations of: organic matter in the form difficult to biodegradation (COD: 800-2850 mg O<sub>2</sub>/dm<sup>3</sup>), total nitrogen, primarily in the form of ammonium nitrogen (N-NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>: 450-1710 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>) and total phosphorus (up to 400 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>) (Fux et al., 2003, Wett and Alex, 2003, Fux et al. 2006,

Gajewska and Obarska-Pempkowiak, 2008). Phosphorus compounds are usually removed in process of precipitation with aluminum or iron salts and are constantly lost by becoming difficult manageable chemical sludge which in the end causes loosing the possibility of recovering phosphorus. The removal of nitrogen compounds is causing difficulties, due to their high concentration and adverse composition. For several years, to remove nitrogen compounds from RW the unconventional technologies with shorten removal path have been used. These processes allow to remove nitrogen compounds with limited oxygen access (energy) and easily accessible source of carbon. Unfortunately, according to literature reports, these processes in full scale are characterized by high sensitivity and instability, which in consequence do not provide proper quality of treated effluent. On the basis of studies and available literature data, it has been shown that the quality of effluent discharged after the SBR reactor in the nitrification/anammox process is variable in time. Particularly noticeable are changes in concentration of total nitrogen from 120 up to 500 mg N/dm<sup>3</sup>. At the same time the process of nitrification/anammox does not provide the removal of phosphorus compounds.

According to the concept of circular economy adopted on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, treatment technology should support the reuse of water, including the secondary use of water produced from treated wastewater. The approach applied in this circular economy assumes the closure of the product life cycle in the following sequence: production – usage – waste utilization. The essence of this approach is the use of waste generated during applied processes while at the same time limiting raw material consumption, reducing the amount of waste deposited and increasing the waste stream used for recovery and recycling.

The aim of this research is to select the technological parameters of processes to ensure effective removal of nutrient elements (N, P) from RW treated in a SBR reactor in the nitrification/anammox process. In project „Integrated technology for improved energy balance and reduced greenhouse gas emissions at municipal wastewater treatment plants” (BARITECH 2013-2017) among others the following goals have been established: stable treatment and quality of RW which does not interfere with main stream treatment of recirculation and treatment processes with minimal use of energy and raw materials consumption and possibilities to phosphorus recovery, in natural ecological process.

## **2. Methodology of research**

The study was divided into two stages. The first stage was carried out to optimize nitrogen removal and parallelly in the second stage the optimization of phosphates removal was carried out.

The idea of these innovative assumptions is in accordance with the principles of circular economy. There are many benefits of applying previously stated technical solutions, e.g. resulting in reduction of generated secondary and chemical sludge during nutrient removal from the reject water. In case of a phosphorus compounds removal method, the product might be easily recirculated and used as natural fertilizer. These proposed methods are characterized by having low influence for environment (Gajewska M. and Obarska-Pempkowiak, H., 2011b, Nastawny et al., 2015, Pempkowiak J. and Obarska-Pempkowiak, H., 2002).

### **2.1. Methodology of research, experimental design – nitrogen removal**

#### *Material and experimental design*

The installation consists of four single vertical subsurface flow (VSSF) beds located in stainless steel containers (LxWxH: 40 cm x 40 cm x 80 cm) working parallel marked as BED control “0”, “I”, “II” and “III”. Each bed consists of a filtration layer (45 cm), a thin geotextile and a 10 cm drainage layer made of 16-32 mm gravel. The substrate for each filter is: I – 0.5-1.2 mm sand; “0”, II and III – 2-8 mm gravel. Control bed remains unplanted, other three beds are planted with common reed. Each bed is equipped with a manual ball valve and a flexible ending pipe which are necessary in case of need to prolong the contact time for removal both forms of nitrogen ( $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$ ). The ending pipes are mounted to sampling tanks, which have a sealed lid to ensure minimum contact with atmospheric air. The effluent is discharged to the sewage system.

A main distribution stainless steel tank (LxWxH: 20 cm x 20 cm x 60 cm) is divided into five sections: 5, 10, 15, 20 and 24 dm<sup>3</sup>. It is equipped with stainless steel pipes, solenoid valves and sprinkler heads for automatic feeding and even distribution of influent on each filter. All valves are controlled by electronic timers. A HDPE tank (IBC – Intermediate Bulk Container) of volume 1000 dm<sup>3</sup> for preparation of synthetic wastewater is equipped with a pump to supply the distribution tank.

Common reed plants, around 1.8 m height with 50 cm root length, were excavated from a natural wetland and planted in the filter beds. Prior main investigation, the filter beds were washed through for one week to avoid future clogging. Start of laboratory research with synthetic sewage was on the 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

Due to limited light conditions (indoor), two CFL 85W light bulbs were placed above the beds to ensure photosynthesis and better growth.

### *Sampling and chemical analysis*

During the investigation, each day a new batch of synthetic wastewater was prepared with assumed concentrations of  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$  and  $6 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  of carbon source (glucose). The compounds used in this research are  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ ,  $\text{KNO}_3$  and simple carbohydrates  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$ .

The system was set for 4 feeds of  $24 \text{ dm}^3/\text{d}$  resulting in  $96 \text{ dm}^3$  per each bed per day with assumed hydraulic load of  $600 \text{ mm/m}^2/\text{d}$ . The filtration through the system lasts 1.5-2 hours depending on the bed. After the daily cycle samples were taken from each tank. Afterwards each tank was emptied to provide next day sampling. The temperature in the laboratory fluctuated from 19 to  $21^\circ\text{C}$ .

The concentration of  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$  and  $\text{NO}_2^-\text{-N}$  was measured with a spectrophotometer by using cuvette tests HACH Lange LCK 303 for ammonium ( $2.0\text{-}47.0 \text{ mg/dm}^3 \text{ NH}_4^+\text{-N}$ ), LCK 340 for nitrate ( $5\text{-}35 \text{ mg/dm}^3 \text{ NO}_3^-\text{-N}$ ) and LCK 341 for nitrite ( $0.015\text{-}0.6 \text{ mg/dm}^3 \text{ NO}_2^-\text{-N}$ ).

## **2.2. Methodology of research, experimental design – phosphorus removal**

### *Material and experimental design*

Phoslock® is an adsorbent based on lanthanum-modified bentonite clay, characterized by high capacity of phosphate binding. Removal of phosphorus compounds is based on their adsorption on the surface of the material, where they form an insoluble complex of adsorbed ions of orthophosphorus ion:  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  sediment (Phoslock General Brochure).

Lanthanum is a chemical element that binds phosphate ions in a 1:1 ratio. The product of this reaction is rhabdophane. Rhabdophane, a stable mineral of low solubility, is the only product of this process, and the lack of by-products is a very important benefit during the wastewater treatment (Haghseresht et al., 2009, Zamparas et al., 2015). The relative-

ly small size of adsorbent particles, with high specific surface area and pore volume, still allow to use maximum of adsorption area. According to Haghseresht et al. (2009), the adsorption capacity of phosphorus cannot be higher than 10.6 mg per 1 gram of adsorbent.

Phoslock® is able to operate in pH values from 4 to 11 (Ross & Haghseresht, 2008). The optimal range of pH is 5.0-9.0, but the maximum efficiency for phosphorus removal using Phoslock® is achieved at pH of 5.0-7.0, (PWS Report Number: IR 019/12, 2012).

To determine the sorption capacity of Phoslock®, the model solution was prepared with distilled water and potassium dihydrogen phosphate  $\text{KH}_2\text{PO}_4$ . Four beakers, each with a capacity of 2  $\text{dm}^3$ , were filled with 1.5  $\text{dm}^3$  of the model solution. The concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  was approx. 15  $\text{mg}/\text{dm}^3$ . Five series (repetitions) have been performed (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Initial concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  in control samples ("0") in each series  
**Tabela 1.** Początkowe stężenia  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  w kontrolnych próbach ("0") w poszczególnych seriach

Series	1 <sup>st</sup> (0 hour)	2 <sup>nd</sup> (24 hours)	3 <sup>rd</sup> (72 hours)	4 <sup>th</sup> (96 hours)	5 <sup>th</sup> (120 hours)
Initial concentration [ $\text{mg}/\text{dm}^3$ ]	15.2	15.0	16.1	15.1	15.6

Before the addition of Phoslock®, the following parameters of the synthetic wastewater were determined: concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$ , temperature, total suspended solids (TSS), conductivity, pH, turbidity and color. To each beaker 100 g of adsorbent was added. Stirring was provided by a magnetic stirrer (1000 rpm) in each beaker batches 5, 10, 20 and 30 minutes of mixing times followed by sedimentation. The sampling was made after 0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 24 hours of sedimentation from each beaker. When reduction of the entire  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  from model solution was observed, the whole process was repeated five times until reaching the exhaustion of sorption capacity of Phoslock®. All tests were conducted at room temperature approx. 20°C. In total there were 5 series of investigation resulting in 7.5  $\text{dm}^3$  synthetic wastewater treated per each batch reactor. 28 samples were taken from every beaker giving in total 112 samples.

### *Physical and chemical analysis*

Prior to the designation of the parameters of synthetic wastewater, the samples were filtrated to define total suspended solids (TSS). The concentration of TSS was calculated by gravimetric method. The concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  was marked by using cuvette tests HACH Lange LCK 049 (1.6-30  $\text{mg/dm}^3$   $\text{PO}_4\text{-P}$ ), LCK 348 (0.5-5.0  $\text{mg/dm}^3$   $\text{PO}_4\text{-P}$ ) and LCK 349 (0.05-1.5  $\text{mg/dm}^3$   $\text{PO}_4\text{-P}$ ). Conductivity was defined by conductivity meter HACH Lange HQ40D Multi. Turbidity and color were measured by using a spectrophotometer HACH Lange DR3900. The temperature and pH were performed with a pH meter: WTW inoLab pH 720. Sorption capacity of Phoslock® was defined according to the following equation (Nastawny et al., 2015):

$$q = \frac{(C_0 - C)}{m} * V \quad (1)$$

where:

q – the value of sorption [mg/g],

$C_0$  – initial concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  [ $\text{mg/dm}^3$ ],

C – final concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  [ $\text{mg/dm}^3$ ],

m – mass of the adsorbent [g],

V – volume of solution [ $\text{dm}^3$ ],

$(C_0 - C) * V$  – load of absorbed phosphates [mg].

## **3. Results and discussion**

### **3.1. Nitrogen removal**

#### *Influent concentration and working conditions*

Based on literature information (Fux et al., 2003; van Loosdrecht & Salem, 2005; van Hulle et al., 2010; van Kempen et al., 2001) about anammox, reject water (RW) a hydraulic load of 600  $\text{mm/m}^2\text{d}$  was assumed (Table 2). Additional source of carbon was used to enhance possible denitrification. After a few vegetation seasons decaying plant tissue will become a good source of. In this investigation a higher concentration of  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$  was assumed due to enhance nitrification process. The aim of the research was to define the influence and treatment efficiency of high concentrated anammox reject water on VSSFs with high hydraulic load.

**Table 2.** Parameters of synthetic reject water after SBR with ANAMMOX**Tabela 2.** Parametry ścieków syntetycznych po reaktorze SBR z ANAMMOX

Parameter	Inflow [mg/dm <sup>3</sup> ]			MEAN load of TN [g/m <sup>2</sup> d]	Synthetic influent load	
	Min.-Max.	MEAN	SD		Feed volume [dm <sup>3</sup> /bed per day]	Hydraulic load [mm/m <sup>2</sup> d]
NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> -N	60.4-65.4	63.0	±1.51	37.8	96	600
NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	23.8-28.2	26.0	±1.07	15.6		
NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	–	0.00	–	0.0		
TN	86.2-92.5	89.0	±1.81	53.4		

### Comparison of nitrogen compounds concentrations during treatment

The variation of influent and effluent concentrations of nitrogen compounds in each bed are presented in Table 3, 4, 5.

**Table 3.** Average characteristic of nitrogen form in outflow with efficiency removal**Tabela 3.** Charakterystyka frakcji azotu w odpływie wraz ze skutecznością usuwania

Bed	Parameter	Outflow [mg/dm <sup>3</sup> ]			Efficiency of removal
		Min.- Max.	MEAN	SD	Mean ± SD
‘0’	NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> -N	21.3-63.0	43.0	±16.6	32.9±16.2
	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	5.0-26.0	14.4	±7.6	45.1±27.9
	NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	0-2.5	1.3	±1.0	production
	TN	43.3- 89.0	57.5	± 11.8	34.3±17.8
‘I’	NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> -N	23.3-63.0	38.5	±13.9	40±21.4
	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	13-35,1	25.2	±8.7	2.3 ±35
	NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	0-4.6	1.8	±1.3	production
	TN	41.9-89.0	63.7	±13.1	26.9 ±23.2
‘II’	NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup> -N	25.4-63.0	35.7	±12.0	44.4±18.6
	NO <sub>3</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	7.0-39.1	21.6	±7.8	16.4 ±33.3
	NO <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup> -N	0-3.6	1.7	±1.0	production
	TN	37.5-89.0	57.3	±14.7	33.8±15.6

In case of bed “I”, with the smallest substrate, since 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016 until the first sampling no treatment was observed, a decrease of 2.2 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> of NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>-N was indicated. Significant decrease of NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>-N in the effluent was noticed in 2<sup>nd</sup> sample on 28<sup>th</sup> August resulting in a treatment

efficiency of 48.6%  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N indicating that nitrification is occurring due to significant increase of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ -N. In samples 2-10, there was a "stable" treatment efficiency from 48.6% up to 63.0%. A visual changes in plants was observed on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016. A significant increase of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N in last sample from 15<sup>th</sup> December indicate end of any treatment processes. Those observation prove that the plants have finally finished their biological cycle and changed into winter sleep.

**Table 4.** Concentration of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N in effluent from analyzed beds "0" – control, "I" and "II"

**Tabela 4.** Stężenie  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N w analizowanych złożach "0" – kontrola, "I" i "II"

Sampling date	$\text{NH}_4^+$ -N [mg/dm <sup>3</sup> ]		
	Bed 0	Bed I	Bed II
23.08	60.8	54.6	34.8
28.08	32.4	37.8	39.7
30.08	28.9	30.5	46.3
01.09	24.0	25.5	38.9
03.09	29.5	31.3	46.8
07.09	23.0	25.4	41.7
09.09	31.6	26.5	45.7
15.09	23.3	28.1	43.5
01.11	28.7	20.3	21.3
04.11	31.2	29.3	35.5
07.11	44.3	34.0	32.8
09.11	44.0	33.7	35.8
17.11	45.1	38.7	50.5
07.12	44.4	37.6	52.3
15.12	62.0	55.1	60.7

For bed "II", with core sand as a substrate, similar pattern of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N changes has been noticed, but the removal efficiency was higher than in bed "I" with a minimum 46.0% on the 7<sup>th</sup> November and maximum 67.8% on 1<sup>st</sup> November. What is surprising, the second highest removal efficiency of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N was observed for the bed "0". On 1<sup>st</sup> November it reached 21.3 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> which gives a 66.2% efficiency. This high effectiveness of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N removal in the first period of VSSF bed exploitation could be explained by sorption process described by other researchers (Saeed & Sun, 2012; Wojciechowska et al., 2017). Important

is, that when the sorption capacity has been exhausted, other removal processes become more importance Table 4, 5.

**Table 5.** Concentration of  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N in effluent from analyzed beds “0” – control, “I” and “II”

**Tabela 5.** Stężenie  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N w analizowanych złożach “0” – kontrola, “I” i “II”

Sampling date	$\text{NO}_3^-$ -N [ $\text{mg}/\text{dm}^3$ ]		
	Bed 0	Bed I	Bed II
23.08	60.8	54.6	34.8
28.08	32.4	37.8	39.7
30.08	28.9	30.5	46.3
01.09	24.0	25.5	38.9
03.09	29.5	31.3	46.8
07.09	23.0	25.4	41.7
09.09	31.6	26.5	45.7
15.09	23.3	28.1	43.5
01.11	28.7	20.3	21.3
04.11	31.2	29.3	35.5
07.11	44.3	34.0	32.8
09.11	44.0	33.7	35.8
17.11	45.1	38.7	50.5
07.12	44.4	37.6	52.3
15.12	62.0	55.1	60.7

Significant decrease of  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N in the effluent at the beginning of the process indicates either that sorption was occurring or assimilation by plants, more likely even both. The amount of  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N was rising till 7<sup>th</sup> August and staying stable up to 15<sup>th</sup> August indicating that production of  $\text{NO}_3^-$  was higher than the concentration assimilated by sorption and plants, possibly sorption capacity has been exhausted.

In general it has been already proven that faster and more effective nitrification occurs in beds with fine substrate – bed “I” (Kadlec & Wallace, 2009). In this research for the beginning of nitrification process the 1<sup>st</sup> November could be assumed since the concentration of  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N started to increase above the discharged concentration indicating the transformation of  $\text{NH}_4^+$  into  $\text{NO}_3^-$  in nitrification process.

The  $\text{NO}_2^-$ -N presence in the effluent could be explained only by occurrence of partial nitrification process. It is important to notice that in the first two weeks of investigation the concentration of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ -N was very low and in the third week rapid growth appeared in beds inhabited by reed indicating the initiation of nitrification process. Since then concentration of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ -N has been significantly various indicating that the transformation process was unstable. Concentration of  $\text{NO}_2^-$ -N in bed "II" effluent between 28<sup>th</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September indicates that the ammonia oxidizing bacteria (AOB) were in their highest function. AOB are the first group of nitrifiers in nitrification and are responsible for oxidizing ammonia to nitrite (Ward, 2013).

The input concentration of nitrogen is only present in the form of  $\text{NH}_4^+$ -N and  $\text{NO}_3^-$ -N due to treatment in VSSF bed models show different pattern of processes responsible for their transformation and removal, depending on the bed substrate and vegetation cycle.

### 3.2. Results and discussion for phosphates removal

#### *Effect of Phoslock® on phosphates reduction*

This investigation showed a significant sorption capacity of Phoslock®. The total amount of adsorbed  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ -P and sorption value defined according to (Nastawny et al., 2015) are presented in Table 6.

The 1<sup>st</sup> series have shown that the concentration of phosphates ions rapidly decreased after 30 minutes of sedimentation with the effectiveness over 99%. During each mixing the concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ -P has been reduced from the initial quantity to a value of 0.1-0.2 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>. In 4<sup>th</sup> series, a smaller decrease in concentration of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ -P was observed, but the reduction rate oscillated around 90%. After 5<sup>th</sup> series, the phosphorus level decreased by only 80% to approx. 3 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>, indicating the moment of exhaustion of Phoslock® sorption capacity. For each mixing time similar results were achieved.

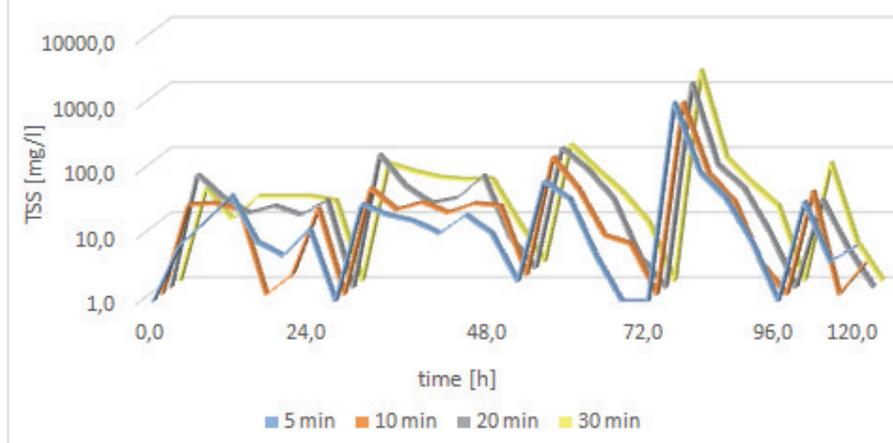
During the field study presented by Haghseresht (2009), 95% reduction of phosphorus compounds were achieved. The research of Van Oosterhout and Luring (2013) shows binding of phosphates by Phoslock® with effectiveness close to 100%. According to Ross (2008), in the optimal pH range, sorption capacity reached 4.37 mg/g, therefore this investigation demonstrated a higher efficiency of Phoslock® (Table 6).

**Table 6.** The value of sorption capacity of Phoslock® material for each time of mixing

**Tabela 6.** Pojemność sorpcyjna preparatu Phoslock® dla poszczególnych czasów mieszania

Time of mixing	Summary load of $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$ $L_0$ [mg]	Final load of $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$ L [mg]	Quantity of adsorbed $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$ [mg]	Sorption q [mg/g]	Removal efficiency [%]
5 min	77.00	2.41	74.59	5.59	96.9
10 min		2.39	74.61	5.60	96.9
20 min		3.33	73.67	5.53	95.7
30 min		2.70	74.30	5.57	96.5

*Effect of Phoslock® on total suspended solids (TSS)*



**Fig. 1.** Characteristic of total suspended solids (TSS) during the investigation (logarithmic scale)

**Rys. 1.** Charakterystyka zmian zawiesiny podczas trwania doświadczenia (skala logarytmiczna)

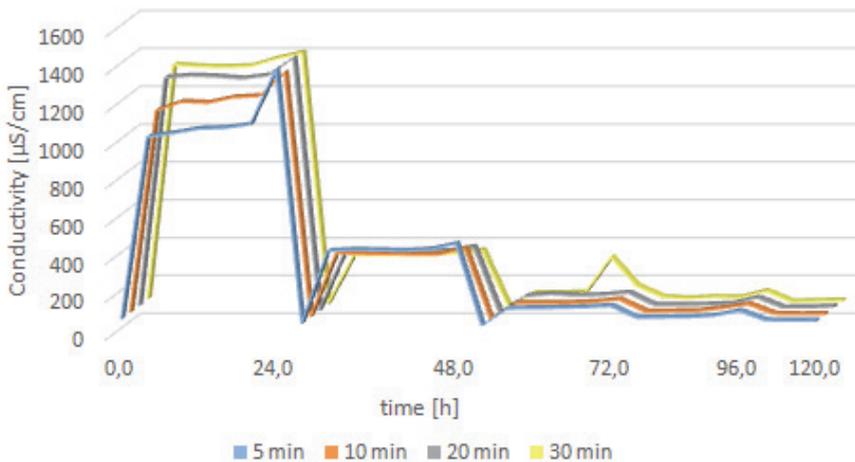
Figure 1 shows the variability in TSS concentration during the research. The initial value was 0-1 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> and was very low due to the use of model solution. Phoslock® caused the release of suspension after use. The increase in TSS concentration followed along with the course of the investigation.

The highest TSS concentration was noticed after 20 and 30 minutes of mixing time. In the 4<sup>th</sup> series (72 h) after 30 minutes of sedi-

mentation TSS reached approx.  $1000 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  (for 5 and 10 minutes mixing time) and  $1398 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  and  $1740 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  for 20 and 30 minutes of mixing respectively. In 5<sup>th</sup> series, samples were not collected after 30 minutes of sedimentation, due to high concentration of solids. In each series TSS decreased to average value of  $10 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  after 3 hours of sedimentation for 5 and 10 minutes mixing time, while for 20 and 30 minutes mixing time after 24 hours of sedimentation.

From the values of TSS, we can concluded, that the multiple use of the same deposits (resuspension) and extended mixing time have unfavorable influence to a solution with Phoslock®.

### *Effect of Phoslock® on conductivity*



**Fig. 2.** Characteristic of the conductivity during the investigation

**Rys. 2.** Charakterystyka przewodności podczas trwania doświadczenia

The conductivity of the control samples was fluctuating significantly (Fig. 2). Over 1<sup>st</sup> series the conductivity has increased to values  $1000\text{--}1400 \text{ }\mu\text{S/cm}$  (longer time of mixing gave higher conductivity). In each next series conductivity decreased gradually to average values: after 2<sup>nd</sup> series to  $400 \text{ }\mu\text{S/cm}$ , after 3<sup>rd</sup> series to  $150 \text{ }\mu\text{S/cm}$ , after 4<sup>th</sup> series –  $100 \text{ }\mu\text{S/cm}$ . After 5<sup>th</sup> series dropped to approx.  $90 \text{ }\mu\text{S/cm}$ , so the value of conductivity was close to the control sample. Investigation has not shown

correlation between conductivity and time of mixing. The conclusion might be stated that Phoslock® material, releases dissolved substances in the early stage of process. After resuspension ensue resorption of dissolved compounds and conductivity values decrease again.

#### *Effect of Phoslock® on pH*

During the experiment no significant changes in the value of pH have been observed. Investigation has proceeded in pH from 6.45 to 7.50. Only in 3<sup>rd</sup> series, after 24 hours of sedimentation for 30 minutes mixing time an increase of pH to 8.74 was noticed. To achieve the highest effectiveness in reduction of phosphorus compounds the optimal pH values were from 6.0 to 9.0 (PWS Report Number: IR 019/12, 2012).

#### *Effect of Phoslock® on color and turbidity*

This research has shown a significant influence of Phoslock® on color and turbidity of the model solution. Results for control samples "0" for color and turbidity were 2-5 mg Pt/dm<sup>3</sup> and 0.1-1.0 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> respectively. After 1<sup>st</sup> series, color and turbidity fluctuated slightly, but over time of subsequent series, both color and turbidity increased notably. In 2<sup>nd</sup> series, color was changing between 400-500 mg Pt/dm<sup>3</sup> and turbidity value reached 143.7 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> for 20 minutes mixing time. For 30 minutes mixing time did not present any readings on the spectrophotometer (absorbance>3.5). After 24 hours of sedimentation, lower values were noticed: color 278 mg Pt/dm<sup>3</sup>, turbidity 75.1 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>. In every next series higher values were observed. Many samples values were impossible to be analyzed. In 4<sup>th</sup> series measurements have been made for control samples and after 24 hours of sedimentation time, which shows values of 300-400 mg Pt/dm<sup>3</sup> for color and 80-100 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> for turbidity. For 30 minutes mixing time content of color and turbidity could not be analyzed due to high values. In 5<sup>th</sup> series, only for 20 minutes mixing time and 24 hours of sedimentation readings were made and reached values for color – 372 mg Pt/dm<sup>3</sup> and for turbidity – 95.9 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>.

Investigation described by Van Oosterhout and Luring (2013) either indicates a significant increase in turbidity after using Phoslock® from 0.15 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> to 218 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> and it decreases along with period of sedimentation. After 6 h turbidity values were about 13 mg/dm<sup>3</sup> and after 24 hours reached 6.5 mg/dm<sup>3</sup>.

## 4. Conclusions

Applied technologies: removal of total nitrogen (TN) in VSSF beds connected with removal of  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  in batch reactors (beakers) using Phoslock® secured the assumptions of circular economy. Based on the carried out investigations following statements could be concluded:

1. The investigation has shown different pattern of processes responsible for nitrogen compounds transformation and removal efficiency, depending on the bed substrate and vegetation.
2. The initial high removal of ammonia nitrogen in the "0" bed can be attributed only to the sorption process in the substrate. After exhausting the sorption capacity (after four months) no further ammonium nitrogen removal was observed in this process
3. In VSSF reed beds ("I" and "II")  $\text{NH}_4^+\text{-N}$  concentration decreased in wastewater and  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$  production with simultaneous  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  changes were observed, what indicated the nitrification process
4. VSSF reed beds("I" and "II") provide a better environment for the conversion of nitrogen compounds and in consequence they provide better removal of the N compounds.
5. Investigation has shown high sorption capacity of Phoslock® – 5.60 mg/g. The sorption of removed  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}\text{-P}$  was in average 5.5 mg/g and over 95.0% of phosphorus removal efficiency from model solution.
6. The optimal condition for adsorption in steady condition is: (1) mixing time should not exceeded 10 min and (2) sedimentation time is 3 h.
7. Conductivity of the solution was subjected to significant changes. It was noticed that resuspension of Phoslock® reduces its ability to increase the conductivity. The conductivity oscillation changes were not connected with mixing time.
8. Phoslock® material causes a slight fluctuation in pH, where the mixing time did not affect the changes.
9. Further investigation by using different loads and additional air input to recognized the processes responsible for N removal as well as working conditions of VSSF beds applied for treatment of effluent after the SBR with anammox need to be performed. In case of phosphorus removal there is necessity to lower the color and turbidity due to application of Phoslock®.

### Acknowledgements

The research was carried out within the subtask 2.3 of the project entitled "Integrated technology for improved energy balance and reduced greenhouse gas emissions at municipal wastewater treatment plants" with the acronym "BARITECH" co-funded by the Norwegian funds, under the Polish-Norwegian Cooperation Research carried out by the National Centre for Research and Development [197025/37/2013].

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## **Zastosowanie innowacyjnych technologii do usuwania związków biogenych ze ścieków – studium przypadku (BARITECH)**

### **Streszczenie**

Innowacyjne technologie stosowane podczas oczyszczania ścieków powinny spełniać nie tylko wysokie wymagania dotyczące jakości oczyszczonych ścieków, ale także zapewnić maksymalny potencjał odzysku energii i surowców z ścieków. Jednym ze sposobów poprawy skuteczności usuwania związków azotu i fosforu w istniejących konwencjonalnych oczyszczalniach ścieków, jest wstępne oczyszczanie odcieków powstających podczas mechanicznego odwadniania osadu ściekowego po biologicznym oczyszczaniu ścieków. Celem badań było określenie charakterystycznych parametrów procesów technologicznych, dla zapewnienia skutecznego usuwania związków biogenych (N, P) ze ścieków po oczyszczaniu w procesie nityfikacji/anammox zachodzącym w reaktorze typu SBR. Badanie zostało podzielone na dwa etapy. Pierwszy etap przeprowadzono w celu optymalizacji procesu usuwania związków azotu ( $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  i  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$ ) z odcieków powstających z mechanicznego odwadniania przefermentowanych osadów ściekowych. Odcieki oczyszczane były w reaktorze SBR w procesie ANAMMOX. Instalacja pilotowa składała się z pojedynczych złożeń o przepływie pionowym umieszczonych w zbiornikach ze stali nierdzewnej, pracujących równolegle oznaczonych odpowiednio jako złożo "0", "I", "II". Próbkę do analizy pobierano w celu określenia zmian  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  i  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$  w ściekach w każdym ze złożeń. W złożu "0" (nie zasiedlonym trzcina) usuwanie związków azotu spowodowane było jedynie przed sorpcją, aż do wyczerpania jego pojemności sorpcyjnej. Natomiast zmiany stężenia  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$  i wytwarzanie  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$  przy jednoczesnych zmianach stężenia  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  wskazywały na zachodzący proces nityfikacji w złożach "I" i "II" (oba zasiedlone trzcina). Doświadczenia wykazały różne mechanizmy procesów odpowiedzialnych za przemiany związków azotu i skuteczność ich usuwania, w zależności od podłoża i wegetacji. W drugim etapie badań przeprowadzono optymalizację procesu usuwania fosforanów. Natomiast doświadczenia związane z usuwaniem fosforu zostało przeprowadzone w laboratorium w warunkach nieprzepływowych przy zastosowaniu modelu z czterema reaktorami. Każdy reaktor zawierający ścieki syntetyczne o stężeniu fosforanów  $15 \text{ mg/dm}^3$  poddano mieszaniną. Próbkę do analizy zostały pobierane z każdej zlewki po założonym czasie sedymentacji. Badania przeprowadzono w celu określenia optymalnej dawki preparatu Phoslock® przy znanym stężeniu anionów fosforanowych  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  w roztworze modelowym, oraz znalezienia optymalnego czasu mieszania i sedymentacji. Próbkę poddano analizie i określono następujące parametry: pH, zawiesinę, przewodnictwo, mętność, barwę i stężenie fosforanów. Przeprowadzone badania potwierdziły wy-

soką skuteczność usuwania  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  (ponad 95%). Badanie nie wykazało zależności między czasem mieszania a stopniem redukcji związków fosforu.

### Abstract

Eco-innovative technologies in wastewater treatment should provide not only stringent standards for the quality of treated wastewater but also ensure maximum recovery of energy and raw materials from wastewater. One of the ways to improve the removal efficiency of nitrogen and phosphorus compounds in existing conventional wastewater treatment plants is pretreatment of reject water generated during the mechanical dewatering of the digested sewage sludge. The aim of this research was to select the technological parameters of processes to ensure effective removal of nutrient elements (N, P) from RW treated in a SBR reactor in the nitrification/anammox process. The study was divided into two stages. The first stage was carried out to optimize nitrogen compounds removal in the effluent from ANAMMOX process used to treat reject water after centrifugation. The installation consists of single vertical subsurface flow (VSSF) beds located in stainless steel containers working parallel marked as BED control "0", "I", "II". Samples have been taken for analysis to determine the changes of  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  and  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$  in the effluent of each filter. In bed "0" the removal of nitrogen compounds was caused only by sorption at last until its capacity was reached. In bed "I" and "II" the  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$  concentration in effluent and production of  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$  with simultaneous changes of  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  indicated that nitrification was occurring. The investigation has shown different pattern of processes responsible for nitrogen compounds transformation and removal efficiency, depending on the bed substrate and vegetation. In the second stage the optimization of phosphates removal was carried out. The investigation was conducted in steady conditions in laboratory model with four batch reactors. Each batch reactor of synthetic wastewater with given concentration of phosphates ( $15 \text{ mg/dm}^3$ ) was subjected to mixing. Samples for analyzing were taken from each beaker after assumed time of sedimentation. Studies were conducted to determine the optimal dose of Phoslock<sup>®</sup> with known concentration of phosphate anions  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  in model solution, time of mixing and time of sedimentation. Samples were analyzed with following parameters: pH, total suspended solids, conductivity, turbidity, color and phosphate concentration. The carried out investigations confirmed high efficiency of phosphate anions  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$  removal (over 95%). Also study showed no relationship between the mixing time and the degree of reduction of phosphorus compounds.

### Słowa kluczowe:

Usuwanie azotu, usuwanie fosforu, odcieki, oczyszczalnie hydrofitowe

### Keywords:

Nitrogen removal, phosphorus removal, reject water, constructed wetlands