



# ICZM Plan for Vistula Lagoon – PL/RU

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

## 2. Key approaches

- Integration
- Knowledge-based
- Ecosystems based
- Socio-economic

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

For the first time Polish and Russian managers and scientists has worked together on economic, social and conservation issues trying to treat the trans-boundary lagoon as one ecosystem, disregarding political borders. Many difficulties stemming from different economic and political systems, different historical experience, different approaches and even different measuring methods used by scientists and economists were discussed and partly agreed.

The project was the responsibility and implemented by the regional authorities in Poland and Russia. Some limited participation of local authorities as well as public hearing was accompanying management plan preparation. Hence, the study can provide experience on how some key local authorities can facilitate development and implementation of the ICZM Plan for a trans-boundary transitional water body as an integral part of concerted cross-border efforts in a broader international cooperation framework.

## 4. Overview of the case

At the Conference of Prime Ministers of the Baltic Sea States (Ronneby, Sweden, 1990), the Baltic Sea Declaration (1990) was signed. This Declaration initiated the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Action Programme (JCP). Component 4 of this Programme dealt with Management of Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands (MLW). The Vistula Lagoon was one of six selected Baltic lagoons where the first steps in preparation a transboundary management plan were attempted. This was done by the special team (Area Task Team – ATT) composed of local managers, scientists and NGOs from Poland and Russia.

Development of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP) for the Vistula Lagoon was established in order to protect the area of the Vistula Lagoon and its coastal wetlands. The project focused on:

- environment
- water resources
- tourism
- ports and water transport

The first version of the ICZMP for Vistula Lagoon was elaborated in 1995 and it was found necessary to begin further activities to verify and actualize this plan. Several tasks were pointed out to be completed, among them: consulting the Plan with local authorities, establishing a pilot project, preparing the list of decisions to be taken by appropriate authorities to implement recommendations, reinforcement of local environmental administration and its professional training, and others. Other problems affecting implementation of the Plan were legal aspects and financial resources.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

Region of Vistula Lagoon has a remarkable natural value and therefore it was a popular tourist area until 70ies of the last century when Lagoon was in a reasonably good environmental state. However, due to urban developments accompanied by poor treatment facilities and introduction of agriculture based on chemistry, the Vistula Lagoon experienced very high nutrients and contaminants loading. Lagoon lost its original values, particularly as a bathing area.

According to the HELCOM Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Action Programme, numerous “hot spots” are located near the Vistula Lagoon creating environmental multiple problems. The Lagoon itself has been identified as a priority “hot spot” which needs a comprehensive environmental management program and environmental improvement investment was estimated at 20 Mio ECU. These Hot Spots were by definition the most significant contributors to the pollution of the Vistula Lagoon and Baltic Sea.

During the last decade a sufficient number of sewage treatment facilities have been constructed, however sanitary conditions have not improved to the expected extent. This is most probably not only due to lack of efficient treatment facilities on the Russian side, but also due to the re-emission of pollutants deposited in sediments.

Information regarding the environmental effects of the pollution of the Vistula Lagoon is insufficient due to lack of new studies on topics such as the loss of biodiversity and contamination levels caused by toxic substances and the related biological effects.

### b) Objectives

1. To create and practically apply an integrated management plan on different economic and environmental levels.
2. To develop recommendations for politicians and managers on what steps are necessary to ensure sustainable economic developments.
3. To develop recommendations on how to preserve natural values of the Lagoon in a view of growing economic developments.
4. To support economic growth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.
5. To support protection of natural areas, natural resources and important habitats
6. To prevent pollution from land-based sources, shipping and coastal activities.
7. To monitor changes taking place in coastal areas due to development of urban, industrial and tourist infrastructure.
8. To restore degraded resources such as wetlands, river mouths and beaches.
9. To work-out mechanisms and tools for rational management of natural resources.

## 6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

### a) Management

The HELCOM Programme Implementation Task Force (PITF) planned and coordinated the Baltic Sea Joint Comprehensive Action Programme (JCP) (the Programme was approved by Environmental Ministers of the Baltic Countries in 1992). HELCOM 14 established Working Group on Management of Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands (HELCOM PITF MLW). HELCOM PITF 2 decided to assign the role of led party to WWF who prepared a set of guidelines- “Technical Manual on Elaboration of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans. Practical work on developing management plans was carried out by Area Task Team (ATT) composed of local managers, scientists and NGOs from Poland and Russia.

This “problem identification approach” has helped HELCOM JCP to design system of “hot spots” and to prepare national action plans for subsequent removal of “hot spots”. Further, this has helped to establish HELCOM Baltic Sea Protected Areas (BSPA) where Vistula Spit and adjacent marine waters were declared as BSPA, on both Polish and Russian sides. Further, the EU established Vistula Lagoon NATURA 2000 area, both under EU Bird and EU Habitat Directives.

## **b) ICZM tool**

Integrated Management Plan covered the whole natural system of the Vistula Lagoon: Vistula Lagoon itself, its catchment area and Vistula Spit. Large number of detailed management problems was identified within following sectors. For Polish part:

1. Environment.
2. Water economy.
3. Management.
4. Ports and waterway transport.

Regarding Russian part:

1. General problems for urgent solution.
2. Particular areas for planning.
3. Investment priorities.
4. Harbors.
5. Marine commercial ports and fishing ports.
6. River ports and shipping in the Lagoon.

HELCOM PITF MLW has initiated the preparation of transboundary approach to management. It was important "pilot" initiative. More effort is necessary to ensure that this Vistula Lagoon area will be restored to a sound multiple-use.

## **7. Cost and resources**

Complete costing is not available

## **8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)**

The project was implemented by the Regional Water Development Authorities in Gdańsk and Municipality of Kaliningrad Region. Some recommendations have been implemented, mainly within the national programmes for removal of problem areas from the HELCOM List of 'Hot Spots'. Some recommendations still need to be implemented and/or updated.

## **9. Success and Fail factors**

### **a) Success factors**

1. Close cooperation among Polish and Russian scientists and improved cooperation between local authorities from Gdansk in Poland and Kaliningrad in Russia.
2. Democratization process. Local authorities in Poland and in Russia are becoming more participatory, and more responsive to the priorities of society.
3. Identified large number of detailed environmental, social and economic problems necessary to solve for restoration of the Lagoon.
4. Step-wise approach and commitment of international financial institutions to support implementation of the planned measures
5. The groundwork for future co-operation and further development of practical trans-boundary management.

### **b) Fail factors**

1. Differing economic interests and priorities. A relevant example is the use of the Baltiysk Strait which is located in the Russian side of the lagoon. Its use is restricted for Polish commercial activity. This has led to discussions regarding the construction of a new channel across the southern part of the Vistula Spit within the Polish territory.
2. Different administrative and legal systems in Poland and Russia.
3. Local governments in Poland have been given a significant amount of administrative and economic freedom, while administrative bodies in Russia remain centralized.

## 10. Unforeseen outcomes

None as yet

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## 13. Sources

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## 14. Relevance for cross-border management of transitional waters

While developing Management Plan for the Vistula Lagoon, the experience for all participants of different tiers, especially for most of local managers, has been a first lesson about what is a transitional water body management plan in a trans-boundary context. Therefore, this study is so important for sharing experience of the cross-border management of transitional waters.