PEER REVIEW OF CASE STUDIES -3

Peer review of available methods for the SEA of the development projects and ICZM in TW areas dedicated to the 2nd Policy Objective – Sustainable use of resources

1. **Integration**. How the different layers of governance and sectors have been organised and integrated within the ICZM approach.
2. **Participation**. How the general public and stakeholders have been involved in the ICZM implementation.
3. **Knowledge-based**. Types of knowledge that were used by decision-makers and planners, and how they have been integrated in the ICZM approach.
4. **Ecosystems based approach**. Integrated and science-based approaches aiming to sustain the health, resilience and diversity of whole ecosystem while allowing for sustainable use of the goods and services it might provide.
5. **Socio-economic**. Approaches to socio-economic activities that result in benefits for the society and to its economic growth and are based in a sustainable use of resources.
6. **Technical**. Aspects at the operational and technical levels of ICZM approaches.

- The common public acceptance seams to be the most important factor here and establishing common system of managing sites would be welcome.
- The key issue is to build public acceptance for cross-border cooperation measures in nature conservation by showing the very best examples, where nature in conserved and sustainable economic development are going hand-to-hand.
- Management mobilized stakeholders on different tiers comprising a local community, a local forestry unit, as well as regional water management and nature conservation bodies. The entire network is maintained and facilitated by a national NGO supported by an international coastal and marine cooperation network and international funding.
- The interest of local communities on both sides of the border could be maintained by their direct involvement in economic activities, such as offering nature tourism services along the cross-border tourist trails (nature guiding, hiking, biking and horse-riding tours, lodging, boating etc.).
- Benchmarking to evaluate NATURA 2000 management coherence and application of trans-boundary park qualification benchmarks?
- Please, provide a comparative description of the NATURA 2000 site management emphasizing any coherence with the German side of the Szczecin Lagoon – from the identification of Natura 2000 sites – Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to imposed or at least suggested functional zoning and nature management principles.
- Benchmarking of the Odra Delta Nature Park together with is potential counter-part on the German side of the lagoon for the assessment if they could qualify as a European trans-boundary protected area would be very useful.
- The description is future oriented and gives not yet a sufficient basis for a good management practice linked to a trans-boundary approach for transitional water bodies. There is not yet a sufficient experience.
- A continuous funding base for sufficient time is required to ensure progress in some economically disadvantaged areas.
- Multi-project funding over a lengthy period clearly has benefits. Too often single, short-tem grants are awarded in the expectation, or hope, that the work can become self-sufficient within this limited time-frame. Most often, the work stops at the end of the grant.
- Although it is understandable that grant-giving bodies do not want to endlessly fund one operation, many grants kick-start a process which can take a decade to mature enough for self-sufficiency.

- Here, there was also the benefit that Latvia and Estonia were already building on several years of co-operation.
- International expertise was also available in the projects.
- An agreement on the ministerial level is a necessary prerequisite to establish a cross-border framework facilitating the management of nature conservation in a transboundary context. It should establish a joint commission on nature areas in a cross-border context for the implementation of the provisions of the agreement.
- Yet, strong and committed local NGOs interested in cross-border cooperation on nature conservation are also critically needed.
- A third precondition for successful cross-border efforts in nature conservation is continuous funding from various funding sources, most probably, from series of one-time cooperation projects.
- Yet, as cross-border nature conservation plans (transboundary master plans) are prepared and agreed upon by relevant national bodies in both countries permanent parallel funding might be available from national sources supporting nature conservation of complementary areas on each side of the border.
- Then, additional cross-border cooperation funding might facilitate cross-border coordination of efforts and further exchange of experience and joint augmenting of know-how.
- Setting up a cross-border monitoring system is an important requirement for the management of transboundary RAMSAR areas as anticipated in the „STRATEGY 3.5 Transboundary wetlands, basins and species“ of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands.
- There is a transboundary GIS database with digital maps.
- How to manage marine environments on a cross-border basis for both conservation and development interests on an ecosystems-basis despite conflicting jurisdictions and political uncertainty. This is achieved through a dedicated management agency with specified legal responsibilities.
- The Loughs Agency established within the North-South Governmental Agreement aims to provide sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits through the effective conservation, management, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas on a cross-border basis.
- In order to achieve sustainable development in the regions surrounding both Loughs it is necessary not only to engage with direct users but also essential to raise awareness of the loughs, their associated rivers and catchments and “to highlight vulnerability of the impacts.
- The resources that the Agency manage require conservation, protection, management and development and these objectives are achieved through forming working partnerships and involvement with direct users of the Loughs along with other stakeholders.
- Involvement with direct users of the transitional waters is usually achievable as these areas are comparatively sparsely inhabited.
- The success of the management regime undoubtedly results from the fact that there is a dedicated agency tasked with very specific management objectives. This Agency has a formal legal mandate with dedicated resources, both financial and personnel.
- The Agency operates in four separate business areas: aquaculture, conservation and protection, corporate and development.
- The Agency’s Strategy for the Development of Marine Tourism and Leisure represents a unique opportunity and challenge to plan the development of the two water bodies and their catchment areas as complete entities for marine tourism, without political boundaries.
- Focus Groups meet approximately six times per year and work on ‚hot issues‘, e.g., regulation of catches etc.
- Regular meetings ensure sufficiently flexible approaches to adapt to changing environmental conditions and in this way take the precautionary approach into account. This is particularly pertinent in relation to management of the fisheries resource.

- A greater focus on information and communication has been addressed by two innovative elements. Firstly, the newly formed Foyle and Carlingford Area Advisory Forum and secondly, an educational outreach programme known as 'Riverwatch'.
- The Loughs Agency organises an annual Angling Fair.
- The activity of the Agency is also supported by dedicated joint research projects.
- Regional ICZM requires a high ranking political commitment and a joint understanding of major issues and potential solutions. This is especially true for cross-border coastal regions.
- A joint Agenda 21 document which outlines major fields of activity and which has been approved by regional parliaments can serve as an umbrella for, and a promoter of, regional ICZM.
- The implementation of a regional coastal Agenda 21 requires a high-ranking advisory board, motivation and permanent commitment of major actors, the establishment of a regional contact and promotion office as well as a long-term perspective.
- Commitments concerning funding, a schedule for implementation, a contact office in the region and indicators measuring the implementation progress are beneficial.
- The Agreement serves as an umbrella for local initiatives and aims at an intensified co-operation between both sides of the border. It contains a list of priority issues where joint actions shall be taken.
- Several thematic German/Polish working-groups were established. They meet once a year and consist of ministry as well as local and regional authority representatives. To support the implementation, projects on both side of the border were initiated.
- The project was carried out by an interdisciplinary scientific consortium. It was guided by a separate board which met twice a year and consisted of local and regional authorities as well as district administrations.
- Communication, education, awareness-raising, information and information dissemination are key aspects. For this purpose a bilingual website, a regional electronic newsletter and a bilingual magazine (one issue per year) have been established.
- The high ranking commitment ensured the co-operation between the actors and increased the motivation of regional authorities and administrations. It facilitated the regional communication, the cross-border co-operation and the search for financial support.
- Changes in responsibilities, transfer of staff and the loss of key-persons decreasing motivation due to slow development of concrete projects, the lack of a joint understanding and a lack of funding hampered the progress.
- Coastal zones in the vicinity of large rivers cannot be managed independently from the rivers and their catchments. Spatially integrative management approaches are needed.
- The WFD has accelerated cross-border cooperation and, due to clear implementation time schedules, asks for concrete plans and actions within a given deadline.
- However, the focus of the present approaches is in practice very much on the river basin; coastal and marine issues are lacking.
- Furthermore, the thematic scope of the WFD is too limited to serve as a general management concept.
- Experiences concerning the implementation of the WFD in other river basins revealed that a small coastal community usually faces many representatives from the river basin.
- Therefore, the challenge for the coastal communities and communities adjacent to the transitional water body is to become capable to attract attention for their issues and problems.
- Another challenge is to overcome the cultural, economic and social differences between two countries and two legal systems and to find a common ground for cross-border cooperation.
- An umbrella high-level agreement particularly supported by a dedicated project funding can facilitate the co-operation between the actors and increase the motivation of regional authorities and administrations. It can facilitate the cross-border co-operation and the search for financial support.
- In general, the lack of a joint language reduces the efficiency of cross-border activities.

- Critically important questions: How the outreaching towards the target groups comprising national networks should be managed? What specific trans-boundary cooperation tools should be applied to ensure smooth trans-boundary cooperation on various levels – regional, sub-regional, local?
- The main focus should be on the assessment of the key tools to ensure the effectiveness of the cross-border cooperation in the management of the system river basin – transitional water body – foreshore sea

- The development of a cross-border ICZM plan requires a joint understanding of what ICZM is and what the purpose and function of the plan shall be.
- It requires an analysis of existing national legal and spatial planning systems.
- Discussions of how an ICZM-plan can support existing planning tools are needed.
- The options for implementation have to be explored as well.
- Further, the plan's function with respect to the Water Framework Directive and the Habitat Directive has to be discussed.
- Two separate ICZM Plans are to be developed covering land and water comprising a report and maps addressing the following aspects; a) present uses, structures and responsibilities, b) a discussion of future challenges and potential conflicts, and c) lists with priority issues and recommendations.
- The maps increase the awareness of present and future use conflicts and form a basis for spatial management.
- Both plans aren't legally binding.
- A different understanding, spatial coverage and thematic focus of ICZM approach must be ensured.

- The project involved the disciplines of ecology, water quality, technology and education. It encompassed environmental and scientific education and transfer of technical knowledge.
- This was a bottom-up process with the development of skills among young children who created a scientific database that was available via the website to the public, with particular interest to angling organisations and local statutory bodies.
- Development of the *Vital Signs* program was the result of collaboration between IT development institutions, the trans-boundary cooperation agencies, educators, local communities, and scientists.
- *Vital Signs* used the latest technology, and software developed by an advanced ICT institute.
- An education booklet that integrates the Vital Signs programme with the curricula of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was developed for use by the teachers to support the pupils learning.
- All trans-boundary catchment areas and transitional waters were covered by the project activities.
- The Ordnance Survey maps used for the website were costly, but subsequent lobbying considering that the data was primarily being used for educational purposes resulted in a significant cost reduction.
- Neither GIS system proved to be sustainable due to difficulties in amateur data management and updating without a dedicated system administration agency.
- There was no integration of the *Vital Signs* with the governmental trans-boundary cooperation between Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- The transfer of this example to other areas may be difficult if the same significant resources were not available.
- The tool doesn't necessarily have to be used in a cross-border context. Some incentives may be needed for the tool to work cross-borderly. In this particular case the tool seem to have had a good transboundary value but part of the reason to this may be found in will to seek transboundary cooperation here, now, more than in other places.
- The level of success of the tool also requires that the teachers are given the time needed for understanding and using the tool properly. It also requires a certain amount of financial back up which if not found may constrain the usage capacity of the tool.
- Well established and functioning EU trans-boundary regulation drivers for transitional and coastal water bodies: WFD, MSFD and SEAD.
- Solid regulatory framework for international river basin management.
- Strong technical and local expertise in marine and transitional waters' monitoring, planning and management.
- Powerful datasets and interactive databases covering trans-boundary transitional, coastal and marine waters.
- Focus on ecosystem approach in the management of trans-boundary transitional, coastal and marine waters.

- There are specially tailored comprehensive Transitional and Coastal Waters Action Programmes (plans) developed, agreed upon and implemented for both International River Basin Districts – the Neagh Bann IRBD and North Western IRBD.
- No integrated regulatory framework for transitional waters' management combining WFD and MSFD requirements in both jurisdictions of Ireland.
- No integrated trans-boundary plan in operation for marine monitoring in both jurisdictions of Ireland.
- Perceived "complexity" of coastal zone management and integration of WFD and MSFD requirements in a trans-boundary context.
- Fragmented and ad hoc decision taking by the transitional waters' stakeholder bodies.
- Economic valuation conveys useful information for economic values, including assessment of the lost passive use values.
- Coherent systematic cross-border economic valuation survey using a consistent and approbated methodology in both parts of the trans-boundary area could deliver valuable comparative data on the conservation priorities in both neighboring countries and enable better understanding of conservation policy differences.
- Sharing and exchange of knowledge across the border facilitates establishing and fosters maintenance of a new partnership and the possibility to take into account the issues of sustainable development.
- The approach relies simultaneously on a collective, theme-based action, a study of environmental issues and GIS.
- As the first step of integrated cross-border management of the river basin and transitional water body, sharing and exchange of knowledge across the border allows the increased awareness on sustainable development issues and strengthen the committment for cross-border cooperation among the local stakeholders, especially the elected representatives.
- A steering committee, which is formed with all the institutional and elected representatives and a technical group, has to follow up the study on environmental issues.
- In this framework, the consultation of the local population is also important.
- The GIS, ideally, should cover at least the lower-stream basin, the transitional water body and the marine nearshore where the impact of the discharged river water creates salinity, siltation and ecosystem gradiants.
- A regular and comprehensive information exchange is possible only if it is based on the long-term commitment of the research institutions on both sides of the border of a trans-boundary water body and depends on personal relationships and collaboration projects of the co-operating institutions on the decision-taking level.
- Governmental institutions are usually unwilling to share data at their possession, particularly with institutions in another country, even if that institution collects similar data in the same trans-boundary water body.
- No integrated regulatory framework for transitional waters' management combining WFD and MSFD requirements in both jurisdictions sharing Vistula Lagoon and its catchment area.
- No integrated trans-boundary plan or other legally-biding agreement in operation for monitoring of Vistula Lagoon in Poland and Russia.
- Progress of networks in coastal zone management.
- Strong technical and local expertise in marine and transitional waters' monitoring, planning and management in both countries.
- There exist international instruments financially supporting cross-border co-operation between Poland and Russia specifically addressing cross-border management needs of Vistula Lagoon.
- The cross-border information exchange system can be sustainable only if rules and principles for information exchange are agreed upon and the committed personnel and funding sources are available on both sides of the border for a longer period of time.
    - Especially in cross-border regions, multi-lingual regional information systems are important tools to provide information, to give access to data and to support co-operation.
    - Integrated GIS can increase the awareness of spatial utilisation conflicts and support integrated management processes.

    - Integrated coastal zone planning and management requires information across all relevant policy and authority levels and across all relevant sectors.
    - In the various management and planning processes information is essential for decision-making and stakeholder involvement.
    - In particular the regional level has been identified as an important level to ensure the success of ICZM.
    - A regional internet platform should a) provide a meta-data editor and electronic databases storing and delivering background information on major regional policy issues and management themes in the region; b) making data, information, project results, publications and maps easily accessible to specialists and to a broad public; c) support integrated management and planning processes.
    - A close co-operation between technical developer, content provider and end-users must be ensured.
    - Information, data and maps muat be easily accessible to facilitate the growth of the system.
    - Internal evaluations must ensure a demand driven development of the content and technical effectiveness of the system.
    - To index the content according to international meta-data standards is very resource consuming and must be carefully considered.
    - Critically important questions: What are the contents of the information and challenges of the bilingual maintenance of the information system addressed? What are the end-users and how they are integrated into the information exchange? What efforts are made to ensure the long-term sustainable maintenance and regular updating of the system from both sides? How the target groups in both countries are motivated to use the information system as a tool? Is it possible to create the information system rich enough (comprehensive & detailed) to be helpful for ICZM processes?
- Increased awareness of the importance of managing land and sea in a consistent and integrated way has led to the production of the joint management of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a trans-boundary European Marine Site by English and Scottish authorities.
- A joint management plan has been drawn up that will integrate the management of two, adjacent conservation areas which had previously been managed separately.
- A two step process: First, the close ecological relationship between the two areas has called for an equally close working (informal) relationship in their management.
- Second, the success of this collaboration in recent years has led to a vision of a more formalised collaboration.
- With AONB and EMS management documents due for review, the opportunity has been taken to realise this ambition with the production of an integrated management plan following consultation with the AONB Partnership, the EMS Management Group and wider stakeholders.
- The integrated plan was informed by the previous plans and the success of their implementation.
- A concurrent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the SEA Directive, and an Appropriate Assessment, under the Habitats Regulations, have also been undertaken. The results of these assessments will be incorporated into the final plan which will be signed off by the competent and relevant authorities and partners.
- This plan incorporates policies that are intended to direct and influence the subsequent formulation of policy by local authorities (and other public bodies) in all relevant areas of activity that impact on the AONB, including development management, local transport and conservation.
- There are four broad management policies that apply to all themes and the entire plan across land and sea viz. ICZM including the ecosystem approach and constructive observation for cultural heritage, partnership working, climate change mitigation and sustainable development.
- Consideration has also been given to issues such as biodiversity, economic development, land and sea planning and tourism.
- An Action plan will guide implementation and form the basis of an annual work programme which will identify the necessary level of resources, the various organisations responsible for implementation and the role of the AONB and EMS staff teams. It will also set annual targets.
- Full, public consultation will be undertaken throughout the review and development of the plan.

- Monitoring is required in order to identify whether or not the plan is achieving the purposes of the respective designations. This monitoring will take two forms: monitoring performance to establish how well the partnership is progressing in delivering the plan's policies and actions; and monitoring condition to establish whether the special features of the AONB and qualifying features of the EMS are improving or deteriorating.
- The effects of "coastal squeeze" on land use as a result of climate change are managed effectively and equitably. Ecosystems are allowed to function freely and adapt to climate change.
- Community members are involved in projects to conserve, enhance, understand and enjoy the AONB and EMS.
- A regular and comprehensive information exchange is possible only if it is based on the long-term commitment of the research institutions on both sides of the border of a trans-boundary water body and depends on personal relationships and collaboration projects of the co-operating institutions on the decision-taking level.
- The project was the responsibility and implemented by the regional authorities. 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 framework.
- Close cooperation among Polish and Russian scientists and improved cooperation between local authorities from Gdansk in Poland and Kaliningrad in Russia.
- Democratization process. Local authorities are becoming more participatory, and more responsive to the priorities of society.
- Identified large number of detailed environmental, social and economic problems necessary to solve for restoration of the Lagoon.
- Step-wise approach and commitment of international financial institutions to support implementation of the planned measures.
- The groundwork for future co-operation and further development of practical trans-boundary management.
- 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.
- Different administrative and legal systems in Poland and Russia.
- Local governments in Poland have been given a significant amount of administrative and economic freedom, while administrative bodies in Russia remain centralized.
- How the different approaches and even different measuring methods used by scientists and economists were discussed and partly agreed.
- Problems were identified separately and solved separately on the national level, but definitely with the help of trans-boundary cooperation.
- A sustainable development strategy for the Wadden Sea Region must integrate policies for the Wadden Sea and the adjacent mainland.
- The implementation of the Action Plan and Strategy is the task of six Working Groups working within the framework of the common integrated project based on the WSF Strategy and the Action Plan.
- The dedicated working groups of the Wadden Sea Forum are comprised of the professionals in the field work to find a balance between different interests in the Wadden Sea Region.
- Wadden Sea Forum is acknowledged as independent trilateral advisory and consultation body to the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation which prepares relevant statements and background information.
- According to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and WSF, it will be consulted and prepare advice on matters regarding sustainable development of the Wadden Sea Region in the framework of the further progress on the implementation of the Wadden Sea Plan, the national ICZM strategies and other issues of relevance for the Wadden Sea Region.
- The Technical Scheldt Commission (TSC), directed by a Flemish and Dutch chairman, has as its primary task to implement various treaties between the Netherlands and Flanders relating to shipping, pilotage and the deepening of the waterway and to advise Flemish and Dutch politicians on technical issues such as water infrastructure and general management.

- A special project organisation, ProSes, was created in order to draw up a 2010 Development Outline which aims at a more sustainable trans-boundary management of the Scheldt estuary.
- The aim of the 2010 Development Outline was to define those projects and measures which, in a first stage, must be started up no later than 2010 to ensure the realisation of the long term vision for 2030.
- SEA, a social cost-benefit analysis and measures for developing the natural environment were carried out. In December 2004 the official version was presented to the government representatives, after intensive communication with the stakeholders and a consultation into the general public's views on the outline.
- This is being done in close consultation with all stakeholders and under the supervision of TSC.
- In order to compensate for loss of habitat due to losses caused by the widening of the shipping channel, mud-flats and salt-marshes are being created in flood control areas along the river.
- Both countries will jointly monitor the evolution of the estuary and the effects of the implemented projects in order to extend the knowledge of the estuary and to facilitate possible corrections.
- "From conflict to cooperation, towards common policy and management".
- The Development Outline resulted in a higher knowledge and understanding of the estuary of the Scheldt, bilateral networks on all levels, a legal framework for future cooperation and growing awareness of the public.
- Cooperation between the research institutions enabled the cross-border comparison of existing monitoring systems and available data and application of a single simulation model for the assessment of ecological status and forecasts of the entire trans-boundary TW.
- The participation of end-users from both countries assured the proper dissemination of the project results.
- Strengthening trans-boundary cooperation between monitoring and managing institutions.
- Developing of the new modeling tool and providing the first estimates of the Ecological Quality Ratios under different scenario conditions.
- Formulation of the final management recommendations.
- Operational data exchange expired after project completion.
- Even the overall goal regarding the water quality improvement is obviously widely supported by the management and scientific institutions in the Kaliningrad Region, the EU WFD is not binding for RF and therefore it is unlikely to expect the full implementation of EU law.
- Formulation of the final management recommendations.
- SEA provides necessary understanding how the Strategy relates to the existing legal framework. This allows for synergies between the Strategy and other plans and policies identified and conflicts resolved.
- Each SEA topic encompasses a number of receptors and the assessment considered the potential effects on each of these.
- Potential environmental effects have been identified and assessed at a strategic level arising from the content of the draft Strategy.
- As is good practice the level of detail in the SEA is commensurate with the level of detail in the draft Strategy.
- The SEA helped identify implementation options which presented opportunities for, or environmental constraints against.
- The SEA does not replace the need to collect detailed environmental data, including the carrying capacity models and baseline data.
- The SEA did not conduct detailed surveys or develop a carrying capacity model and did not examine the commercial viability of development or provide cost benefit analysis.
- Where there are various permutations in policy implementation, SEA did not determine how different management approaches are implemented.
- Strengthening of the trans-boundary cooperation.
- Developing of the new modeling tool.
- Providing the lagoon current condition and the assessment of nutrient load reduction consequences.
- Providing a list of practical management recommendations.
- Sometimes a limited access to the relevant data.
- Sometimes data quality is poor e.g. due to the lack of inter-calibration between different monitoring agencies.

- Limited information on the local management strategies.
- Compiling data in terms of the historical and current lagoon quality as well as management plans of investments in reduction of point and defused nutrient sources made possible construction and validation of the MIKE 21 eutrophication model for the whole lagoon enabling analyses and visualization of the load reduction consequences.
- Project provided a current status description of the Vistula Lagoon and a list of concrete recommendations.
    - The International Commissions for the Protection of the Meuse (ICPM) and the Scheldt (ICPS) play an important role in drawing up international agreements.
    - One of the first steps that need to be taken in the making of a trans-boundary management is to reach an agreement on the present state of the river system.
    - A common knowledge base is important both because it offers a basis for further cooperation and provides a more thorough understanding of why the negotiating positions of the participating countries differ.
    - The countries involved are often not aware of these differences.
    - Insight into these differences will result in an improved understanding between the countries that can serve as a starting point for further harmonisation of the policy.
    - Similar practical problems and common concerns offer the most fruitful elements for co-operation through a step-by-step approach.
    - The ultimate objective is to establish a cooperation plaftorm for the common concerns taking into account the differences in national policy, legal aspects and regulations.
- The key to the successful management coherence was the joint development of the initial master plans for both parks in the early 1990s, applying identical functional zoning, forest management and dune conservation approaches.
- The coherent foundations support the common transboundary cooperation framework in the long-term. This common framework is resilient to any further deviations in protected area conservation.
- Russian Federation hasn't signed the Bern Convention, which is a binding international legal instrument in the field of nature conservation covering most of the natural heritage of the European continent.
- Due to strong state level influence and a lack of full stakeholder inclusion, different philosophies and priorities on both sides of the border challenge common management efforts and co-operation.
- If coherent basic management and planning coherence is absent at the early development stage of neighbouring protected areas, then it is advisable to establish a joint team of the and external experts to build it.
- The integrated ecosystem approach is multifaceted: it is coherent with applying and integrating relevant EU Directives and ICZM principles.
- It aims at trilateral harmonization of conservation objectives and good ecological status at different levels of implementation, ranging from the definitions to harmonised methodologies for their assessment.
- Ecological quality objectives (EcoQOs) are used as a tool in integrated ecosystem approach for setting clear operational environmental objectives directed towards specific management and serving as indicators for the ecosystem health, as agreed at the 5th North Sea Conference in Bergen 2002 (Bergen Declaration, 2002), in coordination with the marine indicators in the European Environment Agency (EEA) and environmental objectives in the EU Water Framework Directive.
- There are clear quality level targets set for the maintenance of the key habitats of the Wadden Sea to measure the success.
- The Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program (TMAP) is implemented in the framework of the Wadden Sea Cooperation.
- Potential lucrative mega-projects, which take place even in the national park area of the German part of the Wadden Sea, might obstruct the integrated ecosystem approach for the trilateral management the area.
- Application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment.
- The ban on trawling in the Sound is part of the reason to why fish productivity here is bigger than in Kattegat where there is no such ban.

- An additional positive side effect is the increased availability of the fish for the recreational fishing in the Sound.
- The Sound Water organization has managed to gather all municipalities and regions on both sides of the Sound in a joint effort.
- It builds its results on local expertise from both Sweden and Denmark with hands-on knowledge of the area.
- It is de facto the only cross-border organization that gathers all Swedish and Danish municipalities surrounding the Sound.
- However a change of status of the organization into a governing body of the Sound would improve possibilities of cross-border managing.
- The strength lies in the historically long term cooperation between local and regional actors on both sides of the Sound.