



Workshop on “Stakeholders interests and involvement in management planning and management of marine protected areas”

8-9 February, 2007, Palanga, Lithuania

REPORT

Opening of the workshop and introduction to the vision of the project with regard to stakeholders participation in management planning of marine protected areas (MPAs) *by Heidrun Fammler, BEF-Latvia*

Ms. Fammler introduced the goals of the LIFE project, one of which is also stakeholders' awareness rising and involvement. She explained that management plans are needed to evaluate and balance nature conservation and socio-economic interests; to make zoning of the MPA; to define protection and management measures for each of the zones and monitoring programme for assessing the effectiveness of the measures. Establishment of marine protected areas (Natura 2000 sites) does not mean that all economic activities will be restricted.

In the frame of the LIFE Baltic MPA project management plans will be developed for the following project areas: Väinameri (3 EST) and West-Saaremaa (4 EST) in Estonia; Western Coast of Gulf of Riga (8 LAT), Irbe Strait (9 LAT) and Nida-Pērkone (11 LAT) in Latvia; Palanga (12 LIT) and Neringa (13 LIT) in Lithuania.

She emphasized that the project aims to ensure active involvement of all concerned stakeholders in the management planning process.

This seminar was organised to discuss with the representatives of the stakeholders' groups their main concerns and interests, to learn from experience of other EU Member States, to define strategies for the stakeholders' involvement and to establish basis for further co-operation through the management planning process. This workshop would be the starting point of the dialogue with stakeholders followed by many national meetings.

SESSION I: SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE MARINE AREAS AND POTENTIAL CONFLICTS WITH NATURE CONSERVATION

The main fishing practices in the Baltic Sea, fears and conflicts regarding nature conservation and basis for co-operation,

by Markus Vetemaa, Estonian Marine Institute

Mr. Vetemaa gave an overview on fishing practices in the Baltic Sea and the main conflicts as well as introduced some solutions.

Ca 5000 commercial fishermen and 10 000-20 000 household fishermen of the Baltic States form a very insignificant part of the world's fisheries. However, together with the growing number of recreational fishermen they are very important group of stakeholders on the Baltic scale.

In Estonia and Latvia 1,1% and in Lithuania 0,5% of people depend on fisheries, which is much higher percentage than in other Baltic Sea countries.

¾ of the catch of the Baltic Sea commercial fisheries comes from trawling and only ¼ from the small-scale coastal fisheries but most of the conflicts are related to the latter. The “use value” is biggest in recreational fishery because of the big number of fishermen.

The **conflicts** appear between nature conservation and fishery. The **problems caused by fishery** are mainly related to bycatch of seals, birds and harbour porpoise (more relevant in the North Sea). The abundance of Grey seals in the Baltic Sea has increased 10 times compared to 1980-ies. Consequently also bycatch of seals in fyke nets has increased. But the data about bycatch are scarce and often unreliable. The LIFE project “Baltic MPAs” should bring some new information regarding this.

Another half of the problem is **seal damages to fisheries**, which can be direct and visible (damage to fishing gear and catch), direct but hidden (seal take out fish from nets and disturb fish near fishing gears) – this is the biggest damage – or indirect (interruption of fishing activities due to seals nearby, competition for resources).

For the Baltic States there are no good data about costs of damages but in Sweden it is calculated to be ca 5 Million EUR and for compensations 2,2 Million EUR per year.

Solutions

Mr. Vetemaa emphasized that a precondition for solving the conflicts was discussion between fishermen and nature conservationists where administration should act as mediator.

To decrease the bycatch of Harbour porpoise and birds, all drift net fishing will be prohibited from 2008 onwards. For detecting the Harbour porpoises, all trawlers should have observers on board.

For solving the seal bycatch problem the “push-up” fyke nets are used in Finland and Sweden. The seals cannot go in and cannot damage it but the price of this gear is very high (12000 EUR). Our LIFE-project has developed an easier and cheaper (ca 400 EUR) solution – modification of old fyke nets to make them seal-safe -, which has given also quite good results. For solving the bird bycatch problem, our LIFE-project is promoting using long lines instead of gill nets. The first tests in Lithuania show that long lines are quite effectively catching cod and also causing less bycatch.

Discussion:

- In Lithuania the conflicts between nature conservation and fishermen is not very big problem so far. It might become a problem regarding the Kuronian Lagoon because of high number of commercial fishermen there.
- In Latvia Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for fishery and they have dialogue with the Ministry of Environment. The seal problem is not so big in Latvia as in Estonia (at least according to the official statistics) but this issue might come up soon because the number of Grey seals is increasing. So far there has been no discussion with fishermen about marine areas because there are no marine sites designated yet.
- Finland tries to solve the problem through paying compensations to fishermen. But compensations should be paid for buying alternative fishing gear and for preserving nature values rather than for damages. The Baltic and Nordic countries should convince together the European Commission that the compensations for fishermen are needed for solving the conflicts between nature conservation and fishery.

- The methods for avoiding bycatch should be site-specific and tested in every country separately to ensure their effectiveness.

The main impacts of harbour development on marine environment in the Eastern Baltic Sea,

by Darius Daunys, Coastal and Planning Research Institute, Klaipeda University

Mr. Daunys described the **main impacts on marine environment** coming from harbour development: dredging, dumping, chemical pollution, accidental and catastrophic oil spills, invasive species, and development of port infrastructure. Currently, the most important existing impacts are dredging and dumping but when talking about potential threats then invasive species and catastrophic oil spills could probably cause most damage to the marine environment. The impacts are mostly very diverse and complex and can be visible only after several years.

He presented the example of Klaipeda port where dredging and dumping is going on already since 18th century. 0.4-2.4 Million m³ is deposited into the off-shore dump site every year. The effects are only local and most of sediments are stabilized in the area. The problems (destroying habitats) are caused by illegal dumping when the material is dropped into the sea before reaching the dump site (to save fuel).

An example about potential threats is the Comb jelly that was brought to the Black and Caspian Sea by ballast waters and caused collapse of several fish species there. The first records of this animal in the Baltic Sea were made few months ago.

Mr. Daunys tried to rank **impacts of harbour development on other activities.**

Dredging and dumping have quite serious impacts on fisheries. Pollution and accidental oil spills have had most significant impact on recreation and marine protected areas in last 10 years in Lithuania. He concluded that major impacts on fisheries can be solved by local dialog but impacts on MPA (pollution, accidental oil spills, invasive sp) need action on regional level.

He also pointed out that the impacts have increased during last 20 years and will do so in future as shipping and harbour development are increasing.

Solutions: Innovations in predicting and minimising impacts should be developed and applied, and the dialog between different users linked to marine environment has to be qualitatively changed.

Discussion:

Port authorities were concerned about Natura 2000 sites near the ports and consequent potential restrictions. - It was concluded that port development cannot be avoided but most of the problems can be solved through improved dialogue between all stakeholders and finding compromises. The impacts on environment can be minimized by choosing best places for dumping with help of scientists.

Safer Fairways to the Port of Göteborg and The Reef project

by Niklas Egriell, County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland, Sweden

Mr. Egriell described the development of the Göteborg port where nature conservation interests were taken into account. As beside the port there is an SPA, the transport had to be changed into another direction. The port development was planned in cooperation of Göteborg port, Swedish Maritime Administration, District of Göteborg and County Administration Board of Västra Götaland.

For meeting international standards 11,8 million m³ of clay and 0,5 million m³ of stone had to be dredged. A very thorough Environmental Impact Assessment was done and monitoring programme was developed.

The Swedish Environmental Court gave the permission in condition that the developer will follow the set requirements (time limitations, limits for suspended solids concentrations, spreading of segments not allowed in certain areas, monitoring programme must be approved by the controlling authority).

The port development had the largest impact on lobster grounds, which were important for fishing. The effects were monitored also during the activity. In case the clay spread to sensitive areas, the works were stopped for some time.

As result there was no negative impact on the archipelago. By good planning and guidance it is possible to carry out large construction works in environmentally sensitive area without negative impacts.

Mr. Egriell also gave an overview about the **Reef project** where artificial reefs were built in the archipelago of Göteborg to compensate the damage to fishery.

After searching information from other countries and careful planning, 7 artificial reefs were built in 3 areas. The reefs were 130-380 m long, 30-45 m broad and 4-14 m high and they were placed into depth of 20-30 m.

As result of a dialogue with fishery representatives a no-take zone was established to increase the production of shellfish and fish. The monitoring results show increase of lobsters near artificial reefs. Also size of cod has increased in the restricted areas.

More information about the Reef project can be found at www.o.lst.se/projekt/hummerrev.

Discussion:

- Latvian small ports operate on much smaller scale, they do not have money to pay for big compensatory measures. Therefore the borders of MPA should be thought through very carefully.
- It was concluded that we should learn from Göteborg example concerning dialogue between stakeholders and finding the balance between interests.
- Large efforts were put into the pre-study and EIA for Göteborg port development. Many different expert groups were established and EIA lasted 1,5 years.
- In Latvia it is not allowed to pay monetary compensations for damaging nature. Swedish legislation sets that negative impact on fishery must be compensated. Since the impact of artificial reefs was not known, also monetary compensation was paid to the Swedish Board of Fisheries.

The main impacts of the shipping and recreational activities on marine environment,

by Mindaugas Dagys, Institute of Ecology, Vilnius University, Lithuania

Mr. Dagys listed the main impacts from shipping: operational pollution (including ballast water), oil spill accidents (effects on birds and benthic organisms), alien species (related to harbour development and shipping), visual disturbance to birds (birds avoid areas with high traffic density), acoustic disturbance to marine mammals and fish (effects not known yet), emission of SO_x, NO_x and greenhouse gases (shipping is cheap means of transport but emissions are not lower than by land traffic), wash and swell – local effect on coasts caused by fast boats etc.

There are 200 harbours in the Baltic Sea and the intensity of shipping has increased in the last decades, which leads to higher probability of accidents. Mr. Dagys

demonstrated the main shipping routes, shipping intensity and accidents in the Baltic Sea (in 2005 there was 151 accidents in total) as well as pollution cases and oil tanker accidents on map.

Regarding recreational impacts, in Lithuania the beach maintenance (nourishment with sand) can be mentioned. Water sports (boating, yachting, kiteboarding, windsurfing etc.) have no impacts on birds because they are not practised in winter. Also non-commercial fishing or SCUBA diving have not caused any serious problems so far.

Discussion:

- There are international rules for prevention of pollution from ships, the Baltic Sea is an especially sensitive marine area and SO_x emission control area – the established requirements should be followed and enforced better in countries.
- So far there are no studies in the Baltic States on impact of recreational activities on marine areas but it is a developing field, which definitely has impacts, therefore such studies would be needed, as well as assessments of economic significance of recreation.
- Methods exist for such studies and there are some examples of such assessments from Sweden (studies on Salmon fishing) and Finland (on recreational fishing). In UK there are assessments made on tourism pressure.
- Sand excavation is needed also for feeding Palanga beaches where the storms have washed out the sand. It might impact the reef nearby. Sand will be taken from Neringa, which can cause erosion on Kuronian Spit.
- In Finland the erosion of beaches is not a problem yet but might arise in future as the storms are increasing.
- It is important to weigh carefully where the sand is taken from and put to and assess the potential impacts. In some erosion areas feeding the beach does not make sense since the next storm will wash the sand out again.
- The sand banks are important habitat but the problem is missing of clear interpretation of this habitat type. The interpretation will be agreed in the habitat workshop in May 2007. Also the Marine Expert Working Group of EC is dealing with this issue and has developed new descriptions of marine habitat types.

Military activities in Latvian coastal areas, potential conflicts and possibilities for co-operation

by Ivo Valters, Naval Forces, Latvia

Mr. Valters gave an overview about the Mine Countermeasures (MCM) related tasks of the Latvian Naval Forces (LNF), which include ensuring the defence of territorial waters, reducing mine threat under the water, searching explosive devices at sea and destroying them, performing practical national and international exercises for the operations in NATO MCM group.

At the moment MCM forces of LNF include 1 mine hunter, 3 MCM ships and a diving team. In future it is planned to increase the capacity.

Mr. Valters emphasized that the mine threat is still existing in various forms: under the water, ashore, mine burial and sunken shipwrecks with explosives. For example, in the Irbe Strait there should be more than 14913 mines, of which only 162 were disposed during 1995-2006.

Mr. Valters also explained the MCM techniques: mine hunting, countermining by sonar and ROV, mine identification and destroying by divers. For safety reasons the found explosives/mines are usually physically destroyed at place in the sea and not transported to anywhere.

The MCM operations are regularly carried out in Latvian territorial waters and in future even more frequently (to fulfil national and NATO tasks and make shipping routes safer). As the planned marine protected areas overlap with former mine fields and military exercise areas, then more planning and synchronisation work is needed between various institutions to find the best solution.

Discussion:

- The planning process for MCM operations takes ca 1 year, during that time the plans can be influenced (e.g. because of environmental reasons).
- Chemical weapons are not touched when found.
- It was proposed by the participants that the sophisticated equipment of the LNF and underwater video materials filmed by it could be a valuable information for biodiversity researchers. However, at the moment only institutions having NATO certificate can use these materials. It was concluded that this issue needs further discussion and such video materials should be made available for use by relevant national research institutes.
- It was concluded that cooperation between military forces and nature conservationists is necessary for both sides and should be developed further. It was proposed that filming should be done also after exploding mines to see what happens with sea life. Another proposal was to organise training for army divers on recognising habitats.
- There is not enough knowledge about impacts of military activities on birds, fish etc., so this also needs further investigation.

SESSION II: BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVMENT FROM THE OLD MEMBER STATES

Stakeholders' involvement in the Thanet Coast Project in UK,

by Tony Child, Project manager, UK

Mr. Child introduced the stakeholder involvement activities in the North East Kent European Marine site in UK. The site is established to protect chalk reef and caves, sand and mud flats and internationally important populations of wintering birds. But, there are nearly 130,000 people living in Thanet and 2 million tourists visit it every year. The coast is heavily used for recreational activities; $\frac{3}{4}$ of coast has sea defences; wastewater treatment works; there are one port and several small harbours with small fishing fleet.

To plan the management of the area, a **Management Group** was formed consisting of English Nature (now 'Natural England'), Environment Agency, local city and district councils, Kent & Essex Sea Fisheries Committee and port authorities. The Local Authority and Port objected to the proposed Natura 2000 site, perceiving as a threat to economic regeneration of the area. English Nature listened to issues and concerns of all relevant authorities. It was proposed to use independent facilitation with **stakeholder dialogue** to draw up the Management Scheme - involving a wide range of stakeholders working together to create mutually beneficial solutions to their

problems and find common ground. The process of stakeholder dialogue included preparations (gaining support and funding), training of facilitators, inviting / briefing stakeholders and 4 workshops. All activities and their impacts were assessed. As a result, the Management Scheme and voluntary codes were developed that everybody accepted

The Action Plan (2001-2006) covering all relevant recreational and economic activities was prepared for the authorities, organisations & coastal users. For wildlife protection a Scientific Coastal Advisory Group was established and a new project – the Thanet Coast project – was initiated. **The Thanet Coast Project** (www.thanetcoast.org.uk) was set up in 2001 to raise awareness of the marine & bird life, to work with local people and implement wildlife related action identified by local people; to promote coastal wildlife related events, including links to the arts and coastscape as well as to establish a focal point for information.

The Thanet Coastal Codes are voluntary codes that were drafted by stakeholders and include information about how to avoid harming the bird & marine life, encourage responsible use of the coast and include safety issues relating to the activity. They cover different activities, e.g. shore- and water-based recreation; fishing and harvesting. They will be kept under review and monitored to check whether they are working.

Also the **Thanet Coast Warden Scheme** was established to help safeguard the unique coastal and marine habitats. It gives people the opportunity to get involved, through reporting incidents, recording local marine and bird life and helping monitor visitor and coastal activities. People participating in the Warden Scheme are trained on role of the wardens, health and safety, activities survey as well as shorelife identification & survey. Also different optional courses are provided (about beach litter surveys, oiled seabirds and other interest topics: e.g. geology & erosion & archaeology).

Mr. Child concluded that working with local people and the organized public events have been especially successful in this project. The stakeholder dialogue has enabled local people to get involved and have more ownership of the management scheme. Potential conflicts are resolved by local people, who have helped produce their own ‘voluntary codes of conduct’ and are participating in coastal warden scheme. New green-tourism events and activities with links to the arts have been developed and are a great way for engaging local people as well as visitors about the sites.

The monitoring carried out by Natural England shows slight increase in coastal birds and a favourable condition of marine algal habitats. Regarding management effectiveness the weakest point is consistent funding but at least the relevant authorities are now completely supportive of progress.

Local people will be involved also in the review of the management scheme and planning activities for 2007-2012.

This voluntary management approach was wished by the community and developed in cooperation with all stakeholders. So far it works but if not anymore then other measures have to be taken by local authorities.

Greifswalder Bodden: Voluntary agreements with recreational stakeholders as basis for a NATURA 2000 Management Plan

by Christiane Feucht, WWF Germany

Greifswalder Boden is designated as a Baltic Sea Protected Area (BSPA), an SPA (Birds Directive) and a SAC (Habitats Directive). Parts of it belong to the Biosphere Reserve South-East Rügen and the core areas are protected as national Nature Reserves. But the area is also intensively used for recreation (angling, water sports), so there was a need for regulating the use of the sea.

The objective of the WWF project was to secure and if possible to improve the good conservation status of Greifswalder Bodden via a binding voluntary agreement between users, government and conservation NGOs for sustainable management of the NATURA2000 area, to implement it into practice and to transfer it into an official management regime. To achieve it, involvement of all concerned stakeholders was essential. WWF acted as a facilitator between authorities and users. Also other NGOs (BUND, NABU) joined the discussions.

The process started with a dialogue with Ministry of Environment. Info material for users was produced to start discussions and raise awareness. The area was divided in 4 sub-regions (because of different users as well as to reduce travel distances and make the dialogue more effective) where dialogue with local authorities and users was then carried out.

The rules for all participating parties were set to ensure a fair and partnership-based process. It was agreed that stakeholders would be involved in design and implementation of the project from the beginning. The precondition was willingness of all partners to commit time and ideas. The partners were aware that a solution would in many cases be a compromise between conservation and user interests but they committed to accept the commonly agreed results.

The negotiations lasted 18 months: the data from both sides was assessed, several round table discussions with the different user groups and authorities in four sub-regions were carried out. WWF secured fairness and transparency.

As a **result** 1 framework agreement (between Ministry of Environment, User umbrella organisations, NGOs and WWF) and 4 detailed agreements for the sub-areas (Ministry, local user associations, WWF) were signed in an official event.

The framework agreement covered the entire NATURA2000 area and from legal point of view it was a treaty according to public law. The duration of the agreement was 3 years + another 3 years, if no partner opposes. The users committed to fulfil the agreed restrictions and the Ministry committed to transfer the regulations directly into the management plan for the NATURA2000 area. The parties also agreed to implement an information system (leaflets, posters, information boards, web page, area guide, info campaign) as well as to continue the co-operation and to jointly monitor the implementation of the agreement.

Development of the Management Plan for the area started in May 2006.

Discussion:

- A zoning scheme was applied defining areas where navigation was prohibited; areas free for navigation and areas with certain restrictions (e.g. speed limits).
- People are also participating in voluntary monitoring – the methods are jointly developed, people are trained and the results are discussed with people.
- The Management Plan will be binding but include measures that were already agreed on voluntary basis.

SESSION III: PROCESS OF STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT PLANNING OF MPAS

Plenary discussion: National procedures for stakeholders' involvement in the Baltic States and specific conditions regarding marine territories.

Lithuania: There are 2 ministerial orders regulating management planning: one about strategic planning and the other about nature management plans. It is required that the Management Plan should be discussed with stakeholders and coordinated with regional environmental department, regional authorities and Ministry of Environment. Information about discussions with stakeholders (protocols of meetings etc.) must be submitted to the Ministry together with the Management Plan.

The rules are the same for terrestrial and marine sites.

The problem regarding marine sites is that municipalities are responsible only for terrestrial area, the entire sea belongs to the state, but municipalities coordinate the protected areas, so they should be still involved in management planning.

The list of stakeholders should be agreed with Ministry of Environment to ensure that all important landowners and land users are involved.

In opinion of the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment the stakeholder involvement should be easier in marine areas because there are not so many (land)owners as for terrestrial sites.

Latvia: Management planning is regulated by regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers that set the procedure for preparation of management plans and the content of management plans. The responsible and supervising authority for management plans is the Nature Protection Board (NPB). Regulations are made for terrestrial areas and therefore amendments concerning marine territories are planned to be made.

The procedure of development of management plans includes 3 public hearings (information meeting in the beginning, one meeting during elaboration and final meeting at the end). Public hearings should be announced in local and official state newspapers, in municipality offices and in home page of NPB. NPB has to establish a steering group consisting of the representatives of local municipalities and the main stakeholder groups. The steering group should meet at least 3 times, it can take decisions about the management plan and the final management plan should be signed by each steering group member to confirm that the plan is elaborated according to regulations. After that the management plan will be agreed with municipalities and finally approved by the minister of the environment. The management plan is not legally binding but usually followed by protection rules (that are binding).

Making management plan for marine areas can be more complicate than for terrestrial sites because of many users and unclarity how to do it.

Estonia: According to the Nature Conservation Act, the management plans are made for Natura 2000 sites (Special Conservation Areas) and nature conservation areas. Management plans are at first evaluated and approved by the Commission of Management Plans and finally adopted by the minister of the environment. The responsible organisation for management planning and implementation of management plans is State Nature Conservation Centre.

Requirements for stakeholder involvement are not defined, only the draft management plan must be made available for public and the final management plan must be published on the home page of the Ministry of the Environment. Manager of the protected area (county environmental board) is responsible for informing public and the stakeholders.

There are also guidelines for making management plans - an informal document accepted and usually followed by the management plan makers, but it is not binding. The guidelines advise that stakeholders should be mapped and involved in the discussion in early stage to avoid conflicts and identify potential implementers of the management plan.

Stakeholders' participation and communication – a guide developed by the BALANCE project

By Christiane Feucht, WWF Germany

Ms. Feucht introduced the principles of stakeholder involvement developed by WWF Germany in frame of the BALANCE project. She emphasized that for reaching acceptance of public and stakeholders, their involvement in the planning process is essential. Stakeholder involvement is a social process in which stakeholders can influence management planning. A higher level of participation requires also more communication.

Instruments to influence behaviour of people include laws and regulations; tax reduction and subsidies as well as social instruments: communication, education and public awareness.

For successful involvement a right message should be found highlighting the benefit for the other side. Participation is getting other people involved not just informing them. However, the need for participation should be weighed case by case.

The stakeholders should be contacted according to the extent that they are affected. It is important to clarify restricting factors (local authority busy with other things etc.) and important issues, to avoid mistrust (use appropriate participation procedures) and to assess willingness to participate.

For assessing willingness, interests and concerns of stakeholders, the BALANCE project has developed a **questionnaire** that was filled also by part of the participants of this workshop. The results show that the opinions are quite diverse because the stakeholders are different in countries.

Lithuanian stakeholders think that awareness is quite good but information on natural values would be needed. Input and information through website and e-mail was wanted. The stakeholders wanted to participate in implementation and monitoring planning phase. The public hearings were not wanted (legal procedures are ineffective?), but personal consultations were preferred.

From **Estonian** questionnaires it can be concluded that the awareness about marine environment is quite good. Information and input is wanted mainly through e-mail, website or letter (fishermen who do not have internet access). Estonian stakeholders want early and personal participation and are willing to provide spatial information and data.

The majority of **Latvian** stakeholders did not indicate any conflicts with nature conservation or other activities. Lack of information about marine protected areas was highlighted. Public hearings and thematic group discussions were wanted as well as information through website, newsletters, e-mail and phone. Latvian stakeholders

wanted to be involved in the planning phase (but not in implementation and monitoring). Willingness to provide data was diverse.

Ms. Feucht emphasized that **preconditions for good cooperation** are trust and reliance between parties, early involvement of stakeholders, agreement on common „rules of the game“, information exchange, enough time, creation of ownership among stakeholders, strong leadership of the process, support of scientific arguments. **For good communication** in participation process, clear outlines of the process and timelines should be set and transparency should be ensured. The thematic groups are good tool for participation. There should be frequent contacts (commitment decreases in time) and updating of documents but no pressure on stakeholders. It is important to communicate to stakeholders a clear view and facts about conservation objectives.

CONCLUSIONS

General conclusions

- Stakeholders are interested in the LIFE project work and have a lot of concerns and questions:
 - There were very lively discussions in thematic groups but it was difficult to focus the topics because of not enough knowledge on all sides;
 - The process of stakeholder dialogue has started at this seminar and there are great potentials to continue;
 - Info exchange on facts is currently most important to clarify each party's needs for information;
 - In general we can observe the fear among stakeholders that nature conservation requirements will “kill” their economic activities.

Core questions for project team and stakeholders

- What nature values do we have in our target sites?
 - Data exchange from other players (e.g. navy on sea bottom) would be crucial to achieve good results quicker!
 - What are the impacts from economic activities and other activities to the concrete sites?
 - What would be needed to restrict?
 - How the restrictions will be implemented and where?
 - How to estimate economic losses/potentials of activities?

The main questions from stakeholders

- Where exactly will be the boundaries of sites?
- What exactly means Natura 2000 area and what does it mean for marine sites???
- Attention: The map of LIFE project areas seems to be irritating for stakeholders, causing misunderstandings that these entire areas would be protected areas where all economic activities would be restricted.

Conclusion: The legend of the map must be changed and more meetings with stakeholders about the sites and in their localities are needed!

Conclusions on fishery

- A lot of restrictions already exist with regard to seasons, closed areas and technical measures
- Number of fishing gear is small and decreases
 - Small scale fishery will probably vanish similar to western Europe within coming 5-10 years but we want to keep it as traditional economic activity!
- The biggest problems are by-catch of seals and birds, trawling and illegal fishing.
- Bird by-catch can be handled by seasons, better gear, other methods (long lining in Lithuania/parts of Latvia), restricted areas.
 - The view of fishermen that by-catch is of minor importance (“there are many birds”) is misleading: favourable conservation status of certain bird species is not necessarily guaranteed.
- Obviously conflict between seals and fishery is the biggest problem in Estonia and Latvia:
 - Alternative fishing methods adapted to very local conditions are needed.
 - Money needs to be allocated as subsidies for better gear, but rather not for losses of catch.
 - Proposal to introduce seal hunting on moderate level?
- Recreational fishery will be THE threat in future, it will be very difficult to estimate and predict the developments and economic impacts.
 - Could be easier to regulate by local authorities?

Conclusions on military

- Navy is doing activities in marine areas: shooting/air defense; surveying coast and borders (shipping); lifting of old ammunition; manoeuvres.
- The biggest problem is that military areas are not defined properly and are partly inherited from Soviet times.
- Military needs information about protected species and habitats
- Military data/information is categorised as confidential – there is a need for opening and communication.
- Cooperation between military authorities and LIFE project is especially needed in Lithuania and Latvia as most of the sites are with overlapping interests due to mine cleaning, training sites. Irbe Strait also a high pressure area for military activities.
- Navy has a lot of valuable information on sea ground obtained with best technologies. Discussions are needed, how these valuable data could be made available for nature conservation experts.
 - It was proposed that the LIFE project team could give information and education to navy divers on the habitats of interest.
- Working groups with navy shall be organised in each country, a thematic group shall also meet Baltic-wide

Conclusions on harbours

- Dredging and dumping of sand, gravel and other materials are regular activities in Baltic States’ harbours, problem of disposal and of dredging activities as such seems to be especially relevant in Latvian and Lithuanian project sites.
- It is possible to carry out big infrastructure projects without having major impact on marine environment (the example of Göteborg harbour).
- However, it must be carefully weighed before including ports into Natura 2000 areas and the zoning needs to be carefully discussed through.

Conclusions on shipping

- There is too little information on impacts from shipping and more investigations are needed on pollution from fuel and bilgewater; oil tankers accidents and leakages during loading; disturbance of species (birds, mammals, fish) from fast ships and recreational shipping – boats, scooters, which movements are more difficult to control and enforcement of possible restrictions is also more problematic.

Conclusions on recreational activities

- It is not clear how to assess economic value of recreational activities in the sea.
- Recreational activities are developing quickly – it is difficult to define management measures if sector is in so early developments.
- Recreational activities are closely related to coastal area development as pure “marine” activities are rare.

Stakeholder involvement in countries

- Latvia: most defined practical requirements about stakeholder integration process in management plan development including at least 3 public hearings, establishment of a Steering group for each site with agreement/signature duty, obligatory acceptance by municipalities. However, for the marine areas amendments to current legislation are needed.
- Lithuania: requirements for “discussion” and “cooperation” with stakeholders exist, but they are unclear and very terrestrial site based.
- Estonia: no stringent requirements for stakeholder involvement, only duty to inform public. However, there are informal guidelines for development of management plans that recommend involving stakeholders already in early stages.
- The problem in the Baltic States is that requirements of stakeholder involvement are based on demands for terrestrial sites where stakeholders = land owners. For marine areas the owner is mostly the state but stakeholders include various users.
- In opinion of Lithuanian participants, it should be easier to cooperate with stakeholders in marine areas, as there are only few economic players to discuss with.
- Latvian representatives considered cooperation with stakeholders in marine areas more difficult as marine sites and related stakeholder interests are much wider than in terrestrial sites.
- In Estonia there are no legal demands but there is high potential for big conflicts in Väinameri area due to size and complexity of this site

Next steps in frame of the Baltic MPA project

- Stakeholder meetings in countries in an organised process spring 2007 – end 2008;
- Easy understandable information about Natura 2000 and its specifics for marine sites should be placed on project web site in all national languages and also on web sites of partners and authorities;
- Leaflet for stakeholders? (Check existing materials, may be new one's?)
- Project teams in countries have to define conservation objectives and prepare a clear scenario (time line) for management plan development at each site.

ANNEX 1 - Reports from working groups on concerns and interests of the different stakeholders' groups and possibilities for co-operation.

WORKING GROUP ON HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The group defined the activities related to harbour development, related problems/conflicts with nature conservation and possible solutions.

In Latvia there are 4 smaller cargo ports in the project area (Salacgriva, Skulte, Mersrags, Roja). The main development works planned to be done there are dredging, dumping and reconstruction of breakwaters. Location of the port and the dredged channel in the Natura 2000 area was considered to be a problem because of required additional impact assessments as well as because investors do not want to invest into ports in protected areas. For solution it was proposed that investigations of nature values would be needed to adjust the borders of Natura 2000 sites accordingly, and also a dialogue with stakeholders would help to find the best solutions. If possible, ports or at least the ship channels should be excluded from protected areas.

It was proposed that nature values could be also used for promotion of ports (practiced by the Göteborg port) but Baltic port administrations had doubts about this possibility.

Concerning Lithuania, the Klaipeda port and the planned Sventoja port were discussed. The planned activities there include dredging, disposal and reconstruction of breakwaters and the conflicts are mainly related to the impact of dredging/disposal on fisheries. However, the impacted Kuronian lagoon is outside of the project area, so the project cannot do much about it.

In Lithuania there are also plans to build windmill parks into the sea but these will be only offshore (deeper than 20 m).

Concerning Estonia, the problems related to Saaremaa port in Küdema Bay (West-Saaremaa project area) were discussed. Initially this port was planned to be only cruise port with seasonal use (in summer) but now there are plans to prolong the navigation time and bring in also ferries. As the port is located in the Natura 2000 site (SPA and pSCI) and an Important Bird Area, a new thorough impact assessment is needed before authorizing the new planned developments. The LIFE-project will contribute with inventories of nature values as well as management plan for this area.

WORKING GROUP ON SHIPPING AND RECREATION

Shipping

The main concerns of port authorities regarding Natura 2000 were related to possible restrictions on shipping, lowering competitiveness of ports, bad past experience with designation of Natura 2000 sites, expensive and complicated EIA procedure in/near Natura 2000 sites, need for more permits and time for port and shipping operations and also possible compromising of shipping safety (restrictions on mine sweeping). It appeared that port authorities do not have information about the designation process and purpose of Natura 2000 site designation; also the status of LIFE-project areas is not clear.

Recreation

Impacts of recreation are probably more relevant for breeding areas in Estonia. It was pointed out that fast (recreational) boats might cause more disturbance than e.g. cargo

ships. On the other hand, Natura 2000 sites may attract additional recreational activity and thus bring economic benefit to port authorities and local community.

The port authorities were concerned that it could be more complicated to establish appropriate facilities (infrastructure) for recreational boating in Natura 2000 sites and that additional control may force recreational boats to go to other ports/marinas.

Expected restrictions

It was concluded that probably there would be very few additional restrictions for shipping – it is important to enforce the existing laws. Stricter pollution control and speed limits might be established. It was pointed out that it is problematic to control the routes of recreational ships because they do not have AIS.

Concerning recreation, most probably some reasonable time- and site-specific restrictions will be applied.

WORKING GROUP ON MILITARY ACTIVITIES

Areas of concern

In Estonia one possible military area overlaps with the LIFE-project area 1 EST (East Gulf of Finland). In Latvia all areas except 7 LAT (Ainaži-Tūja) are of concern (mainly because of mine cleaning operations). In Lithuania all areas are concerned and 13 LIT is a military shooting area where it is planned to increase the activities.

Activities

The present military activities include mainly mine cleaning and shooting (incl. air defence). The problem is that the areas of military activities are not marked on maps (only soviet time training areas are marked).

Future plans

In Estonia it is planned to establish a new training area for air defence and cannon shooting. A Strategic Impact Assessment will be made (starts in beginning of March 2007) to find the best place.

In Latvia a new training site is planned to be established in the middle of Riga Gulf, which is not a marine protected area. In Irbe Strait more military training is planned to carry out in future (related to MCM).

In Lithuania the future plans include mine cleaning operations and cannon shooting.

Present/potential conflicts with nature conservation

The group identified the following problems: potential conflicts with fish, bird and seal protection, unclear noise impacts as well as lack of information exchange, cooperation and understanding between nature conservation and military administrations.

Solutions:

It was proposed that military activities should be categorized according to their range of impact, different options/alternatives should be considered taking into account environmental considerations and relevant procedures should be set up. Co-operation between the military and civilian institutions should be developed (exchange and accessibility of information, joint research projects, establishing a joint working group at least for first years).

WORKING GROUP ON FISHERY

The group concluded that there is a very long list of restrictions for fishery already today including closed seasons, closed areas, technical measures (legal mesh sizes, allowed fishing gears etc.).

The problems created to nature by fishery include bycatch of seals in fyke nets, bycatch of birds in gill nets, killing of fish by trawling, illegal fishing. It was also pointed out that we cannot decide about the overall conservation status of a bird species based on high number of birds present in our areas (might be the last ones of the entire population).

The other side of the problem is damage to fishery: fishing gears damaged by seals as well as competition for the fish resource. As the number of seals and cormorants is increasing then also the problem is escalating. Also Sea Gulls are damaging the catch in shallow waters.

Problem regarding compensation measures: Fish swimming in the sea do not have an “owner”, who could ask for the compensation. At the same time, fishing is regulated (quotas, gear number limits), so somehow fishermen “own” the fish in the sea. It was concluded that fishermen can ask only for the ridiculous compensation, like material for repairing the gear damages and not even for their working time. So, most of the people do not ask compensations. In Sweden ca 40% of damages is compensated, in Estonia probably less than 1%.

Negative impact of other branches of economy to marine environment – „polluter pays the bill” principle is not followed. Land-based economy is polluting, fish resources decline – however, this money is not received by the fishing sector. Another problem for fishery is complicate (re)construction of small ports. It was also concluded that although one occasional oil-spill kills more birds than fishermen in 10 years, the restrictions are applied for fishery but not for oil transport, which is continuously increasing.

Possible solutions:

Compensations for stopping fishery for ever are existing - in Estonia it is possible to get 10000 EUR compensation for stopping fishing (Structural Funds). However, this solution seems not to be acceptable for all fishermen and for the general public.

Modified fishing methods – good and useful, but if the number of competitors is increasing, then it is only a half of the solution. “Pingers” for distraction of seals must be still tested.

Set the upper limit for seals and allow seal hunt when it is exceeded – Acceptable number for nature conservation and fishermen should be found out. Also seal hunt close to fishing gears should be allowed.

HELCOM has set „minimum biological limit” for grey seals, 10000 animals – if the population is exceeding that number then hunting is allowed on condition that „favourable conservation status” is guaranteed.

However, hunting means not just killing the seal, but also using the animal therefore relevant possibilities must be investigated and developed further.

Recreational use (bird- or seal-watching) – could be alternative activity for fishermen but most interesting areas are closed for tourists, and nobody is interested to watch the empty open sea.

It was concluded that the wish of both stakeholder groups to decrease the bycatch is actually a good basis for finding compromises. However, it was stressed that it should be mutual compromise, meaning that also nature conservation could step backward if this is possible (if the species under question is not threatened), not only fishery.

Compensations for restrictions should be developed by responsible administrations and cooperation between Ministries of Environment and Agriculture should be improved.

ANNEX 2 - Reports from national working groups on practical aspects of stakeholders' involvement and participation in management of MPAs.

LITHUANIA

Stakeholders to be involved during management planning include county administration, municipalities (Palanga, Klaipėda), administrations of the protected areas, Seaport headquarters, regional environmental protection department, State Protected Areas Service, Military services, Ministry of Agriculture.

Expectations of stakeholders were identified.

Regional Environmental Protection Departments as well as municipalities do not have any special expectations/concerns but they want to be involved and informed. The Seaport is concerned about possible restrictions for shipping or port activities. The administrations of protected areas, State Protected Areas Service and Ministry of Environment are interested in mapping of values and clear management recommendations.

Military services want to be involved/informed about the decisions.

At the moment it is clear that there will be changes of the boundaries of the protected areas and there will be no evident restrictions to seaport activities. Compromises with military authorities are possible but most problematic issue will be fishery.

The **measures for stakeholder involvement** will be thematic meetings, information on internet, individual consultations and a final seminar.

Discussion in the plenary:

- Tourism stakeholders were not in the list but county administration is responsible for tourism and recreation. Also there will be probably no big problems concerning tourism because it is happening only in summer and therefore cannot harm the sites, and the restrictions for tourism are already set in legal acts. However, municipalities are interested in tourism development and the role of Natura 2000 in it.
- Commercial fishery is the biggest problem because of bycatch.
- The stakeholders for dumping are Klaipėda seaport authority, regional environmental department. Dumping sites are not in protected areas but the problem is illegal dumping, which should be controlled by Environmental Inspection.
- All stakeholders should be contacted about their future plans (development plans etc) to identify the potential conflicts.

LATVIA

The group listed the **stakeholders to be involved**:

From the governmental institutions it would be Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection Board, Environment, Meteorology and Geology Agency, Ministry of Agriculture - State Fisheries Board, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Justice, State Border Guard and Maritime Administration;

From interest groups windmill developers, Vessel Owner Association, Latvian Fishermen Federation, Latvian Fisheries Association, Transit Business Association, Fisheries Industry Union, Latvian Ornithological Society, Union of Local Authorities, Tourism Associations, Kurzeme Development Agency, Associations of Large and Small Ports, Yachting Society and fishermen.

As management plans will be elaborated for Western Gulf of Riga, Irbe Strait and Pape-Perkone project areas then for those sites the stakeholders were listed in detail.

Public involvement procedure should include: a public information meeting, a questionnaire to concerned stakeholders (with background information and precisely formulated questions); establishing a Steering group – according to the official procedure; thematic interest group meetings. The common agreement of the group was that stakeholders should have rights to represent their own opinion and obligations to provide information.

Discussion in plenary:

- Butinge oil terminal separates Latvian and Lithuanian site. However, it is difficult to handle impacts from outside and no management actions can be foreseen in this case. If Butinge oil terminal is influenced then they should be involved but if not then probably not needed. But it is still important to inform Butinge about the consequences of their pollution.

ESTONIA

The **stakeholders to be involved** during development of management plans for Väinameri & Lääne-Saaremaa (Küdema) include: local municipalities, Saare County Government, County Environmental Departments, State Nature Conservation Centre, Ministry of the Environment, fishermen (Saaremaa Fishermen Association), Ministry of Agriculture, local tourism associations and entrepreneurs, environmental NGOs (EOS, Fund for Nature, Green Movement), Environmental Inspection, small harbours, Saaremaa Shipping Company, Ferry Lines, diving clubs, Wind Energy Association, Ministry of Defence and Defence Forces.

The main **conflicts** will be related to fishery (potential new restrictions), Saaremaa port (all year round navigation?), permanent connection for Saaremaa (bridge) and restrictions to other activities (e.g. windmills, recreation).

The **process of stakeholder involvement** should include information distribution (info, articles in local newspapers); information meeting(s) for local municipalities and stakeholder organisations; information materials to local municipalities and stakeholder organisations, info materials (e.g. posters or films) to ferries, events for stakeholders.

For participation in management planning **local meetings for stakeholders** should be organised (starting in autumn 2007 when evaluations are made, the meetings should be in all involved municipalities). For Väinameri area at least five meetings are needed.

The **thematic groups** could be on shipping, tourism and recreation; fishing and hunting, and development of coastal areas (windmills etc.).