

# The German/Polish Agenda 21 "Szczecin Lagoon" - DE/PL

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

## 2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

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 and indicators measuring the implementation progress are beneficial.

## 4. Overview of the case

In 2002, the Federal State Minister for the Environment in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, and the Polish Vice-Marshall for the Environment of the Voivodship Western Pomerania the regional Agenda 21 "Szczecin Lagoon" was signed. This German-Polish cross border Agenda 21 serves as an umbrella for local Agenda initiatives and aims at an intensified co-operation between both sides of the border. The agenda contains a list of 10 priority issues where joint actions shall be taken. One priority issue is ICZM.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

The Agenda 21 covers the entire Oder/Odra estuary region, with the city of Szczecin in the south, the large shallow Szczecin Lagoon and the two Islands of Usedom and Wolin at the Baltic Sea coast. The region has about 840,000 inhabitants (420.000 in the city of Szczecin). The countryside is sparsely populated (about 50 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) and suffers from economic problems, a high unemployment rate and on-going decline in population. Especially young people leave the region. Further, strong social and economic gradients between Germany and Poland as well as between coast and hinterland exist. Tourism, agriculture and shipping are the most important economic activities in this coastal zone. Along the coastline, tourism is the exclusive economic factor and more than 10 million tourists visit the estuary region per year. However, present economic activities are not sufficient to ensure a sustainable development.

### b) Objectives

The general objectives are: a) to improve the economic, social and ecological development ; b) to ensure cross-border

environmental protection; c) to increase the awareness of, and the identification with, this joint coastal zone and d) to mobilise and to enable the regional population to develop a joint future vision for the coastal zone.

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

### **a) Management**

To implement the regional Agenda 21, 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 of ICZM within the regional Agenda 21, projects on both side of the border were initiated. The German project was carried out by an interdisciplinary scientific consortium (10 institutes). The project was guided by a separate board which met twice a year and consisted of local and regional authorities as well as district administrations. The project established a contact office in the region.

### **b) ICZM tools**

The regional Agenda 21 "Szczecin Lagoon" is a high ranking political commitment and the basic strategy for a cross-border co-operation between Germany and Poland in the Oder estuary region. It outlines topics for a joint co-operation, defines ICZM as a major focus theme and serves as an umbrella for local and regional initiatives and supports local Agenda 21 activities. Based on the regional Agenda 21 "Szczecin Lagoon", several permanent coastal working-groups have been establishment to support a joint sustainable development of the coastal region. Communication, education, awareness-raising, information and information dissemination with respect to coastal issues, activities and initiatives are important aspects in the regional Agenda 21 "Szczecin Lagoon". For this purpose a bilingual website, a regional electronic newsletter and a bilingual German/Polish magazine (Zielona Arka/Grüne Arche, one issue per year) have been established.

## **7. Cost and resources**

For the regional contact office in Germany, funding of about €180,000 was provided by the German National Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) within the project 'Research for an Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Oder Estuary Region' (ICZM-Oder, phases I-III) between 2004 and 2010. The office in Rothenklempenow was supported by the district Uecker-Randow. A Polish contact person was nominated within the Voivodship administration. Some budget for meetings and publications was provided by the Environmental Ministry of the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

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

The regional Agenda 21 does not include an implementation schedule. It has to be regarded as a long-term Memorandum of Understanding between two cross-border coastal regions.

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

The regional Agenda 21 is a high ranking commitment. It 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 of ICZM and a lack of funding which hampered the progress.

The EC Recommendations on ICZM stimulated national coastal management activities and were the background for the funding of the project ICZM-Oder by the German National Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). This project allowed significant scientific and practical progress but was spatially limited to the German territory. Funding for a counterpart project on the Polish side was not available and lead to an imbalance in activities.

## 10. Unforeseen outcomes

None so far.

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