

## The Kvarken Council MittSkandia – SE/ FI

### 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Managing impacts of climate change and safeguarding resilience of coasts/coastal systems
- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Integrating coherent strategies covering the risk-dimension (prevention to response) into planning and investment
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Developing Europe's regional seas sustainably
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

### 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Quantitative indicators have been developed for measuring and monitoring quality of sea, air and land environment. The indicators were developed for assessing and monitoring coastal biodiversity. A participatory planning procedure with about 30 stakeholders (hunting and fishing communities; authorities; universities and high schools) was created for coastal planning. Awareness raising via internet and meetings was also of great importance.

### 4. Overview of the case

Sweden and Finland have been co-operating since 1995 to better manage the Kvarken region with respect to water contamination, air quality and the quality of the Kvarken Islands.

### 5. Context and Objectives

#### a) Context

Geographically, Kvarken-MittSkandia covers Helgeland in Norway, the county of Västerbotten and Örnsköldsvik Municipality in Sweden and the provinces of Österbotten, Central Österbotten and South Österbotten in Finland. Västerbotten County and the Gulf of Bothnia region form a natural area of co-operation for both Sweden and Finland. The sea and the rivers which flow out of there, the issues of air quality and the Kvarken Archipelago knows no boundaries and therefore requires co-operation. Problems like sea water or air quality or the quality of the Kvarken islands are common to both, Finland and Sweden, and their management presumes co-operation. The Kvarken Miljö projects (2001-2007) were a continuation of environmental co-operation in this which region started in the 1990s.

Knowledge of the region's environment and development provides a basis for planning of environmental protection and nature conservation. In Kvarken, where nature is changing rapidly by natural means, it is necessary and scientifically very interesting to follow this natural development. Current information also increases the area's image and status since Kvarken is environmentally attractive.

#### b) Objectives

Key themes for environmental work has been to co-ordinate environmental monitoring in the common maritime, anchoring co-operation in nature conservation areas and preparing a Kvarken Heritage proposal. One of the objectives is to develop this area into a kind of new 'power center' in the area.

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

#### a) Management

Kvarken Miljö I (2001 – 2003) consists of three initiatives, and Kvarken Miljö II (2004 – 2007) of two. They have common management and were carried out in various themes with their own operational working groups. The Board of the Regional Council in Västerbotten, Umeå municipality, the Regional Environmental Centre Western Finland, the City of Vasa and Kvarken Council (Nordic Council of Ministers) were responsible.

#### b) ICZM tools

These initiatives were a continuation of the environmental co-operation undertaken within the Kvarken Council in the 1990s. Under the Green Bridge project, in the years 1995 - 1998, Kvarken nature was described. Also opportunities to co-ordinate management and the use of protected areas were investigated. The latter work was continued in the Achibal project. The goal of that project was to formulate general principles for the use of protected areas, and in particular the planning of their use for recreation and tourism.

The Kvarken Miljö initiative can be divided into two phases: Part I and II. Part I lasted from 2001 to 2003 and was divided into the Green Bridge II, Urbana cultural sites and Environmental monitoring. The second part was from 2004 to 2007 and was divided into Green bridge III and Environmental monitoring and follow-up. It sought to increase the cross-border co-operation between authorities and present the cross-border work to a wider group, regionally and nationally. In the Green Bridge II, the preparation of Kvarken's World Heritage application was taken to the end. Co-operative organisations were to be created and management of service structures were planned and implemented in Kvarken nature protection areas. Information and communication of this in various forms will be improved. In the monitoring work, a common environmental monitoring system was created for sea, air and land environment. The results were disseminated to the authorities and the public in the form of web pages and reports. In the work concerning urban cultural environments, proposals have been developed for legal protection, maintenance and renewal of the green structure in Vaasa and Umeå.

The overall objectives of the Kvarken Miljö II was to achieve sustainable development in the coastal region, raise awareness and understanding of nature conservation and environmental protection and encourage the sustainable use of natural protected areas. More specifically, to identify common targets, deepen co-operation in coastal waters under the EU directives on water resources, involve more stakeholders in environmental and conservation work and create conditions for a broader dialogue on conservation issues.

### 7. Cost and resources

The costs of Kvarken Miljö I (2001-2003) was about €1,1 m and Kvarken Miljö II (2004 – 2007) about €1 m. They were co-financed with ERDF funds.

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

It seems that in Kvarken Miljö I, ambitions and objectives were quite high. Differences between Finland and Sweden existed in methodology on how to measure air quality in Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten; the sea monitoring programme was not prepared or presented. Finnish studies concerning bio-indicators were not directly applicable in Sweden; reference data concerning the impacts of tourism on nature was not utilised. Both of the initiatives were, however, productive, taking time-table and resources into account.

### 9. Success and Fail factors

The world heritage status of Kvarken area has a great absolute value. The work emphasised joint investments from Finland and Sweden in the common waters. The initiative has also intensified participation between stakeholders (local people, land owners, authorities etc.) in planning of nature protection areas; it has reduced the distance between authorities and civil servants on both sides of Kvarken; the project has in general raised awareness of interests and other stakeholders participating in environmental planning procedures, and, at the same time, created a common identity in the Kvarken region.

In the environmental sector, environmental objectives are directly connected to national planning, decision-making and monitoring systems. Finland and Sweden applies, at least partly, planning practices of their own which may complicate co-operation between them. The Finnish environmental legislation is partly dissimilar to that of Sweden, which also may, from time to time, make co-operation in environmental issues more difficult. Quantitative and qualitative indicators for measuring water, air and environmental quality were important tools in this case. Participatory planning was of great importance in integrating development of the Kvarken area. Awareness raising via internet and participatory working processes was a necessary pre-requisite for implementation of the Kvarken miljö initiative.

### 10. Unforeseen outcomes

The idea of developing common principles for municipal planning procedures seemed to be a more difficult task than the developers could anticipate in advance. One of the reasons was different environmental planning systems in Finland and Sweden. The other reason was the character of the planning processes: because of participatory planning, it was not possible to steer the planning procedure from above.

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### 13. Sources

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- [http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_url=66VCD-481NNN3-2&\\_user=949824&\\_docId&\\_fmt=&\\_orig=search&\\_sort=d&\\_docanchors&view=c&\\_searchStrId=1100608231&\\_repnOrig=google&\\_acct=C000049124&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=949824&md5=](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_url=66VCD-481NNN3-2&_user=949824&_docId&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_docanchors&view=c&_searchStrId=1100608231&_repnOrig=google&_acct=C000049124&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=949824&md5=)
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