

Socio-economic Monitoring

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Socio-economic Monitoring in the Wadden Sea of Schleswig-Holstein

Within the national park region, human and natural systems are closely interlaced. Therefore, the characterization of economic sectors and the analysis of their development is just as important as the description and assessment of the natural ecosystem.

This idea was already included in one of the guidelines of the Ecosystem Research Project, which was finalized by the contested 'synthesis report' (Stock et al., 1996, Enemark, 1997) in 1996. One part of the research within the project was carried out by the DWIF institute ('Deutsches Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Institut für Fremdenverkehr', Munich). It focussed on socio-economic aspects in the national park region, analyzing the population structure and the economic system in detail and identifying the economic importance of tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

The National Park Office in Tönning is in the process of installing a socio-economic monitoring program (*SÖM Watt*) which is connected to the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Program

(TMAP). The ministers of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands agreed upon a 'common package' of the TMAP, which is obligatory for all three countries at the Ministers Conference in Stade in 1997. The common package lists only three isolated socio-economic parameters under the topic 'Recreational Activities': boats at sea, number of guided tours and civil air traffic.

The *SÖM Watt* program covers more aspects than the TMAP common package. It aims at

- detecting changes and trends in population structure and economy within the national park region,
- optimizing visitor information, visitor guidance, care of visitors and protection of sensitive areas,
- taking into account the interests of the inhabitants of and the visitors to the region in order to - improve acceptance for protection measures implemented within the national park,

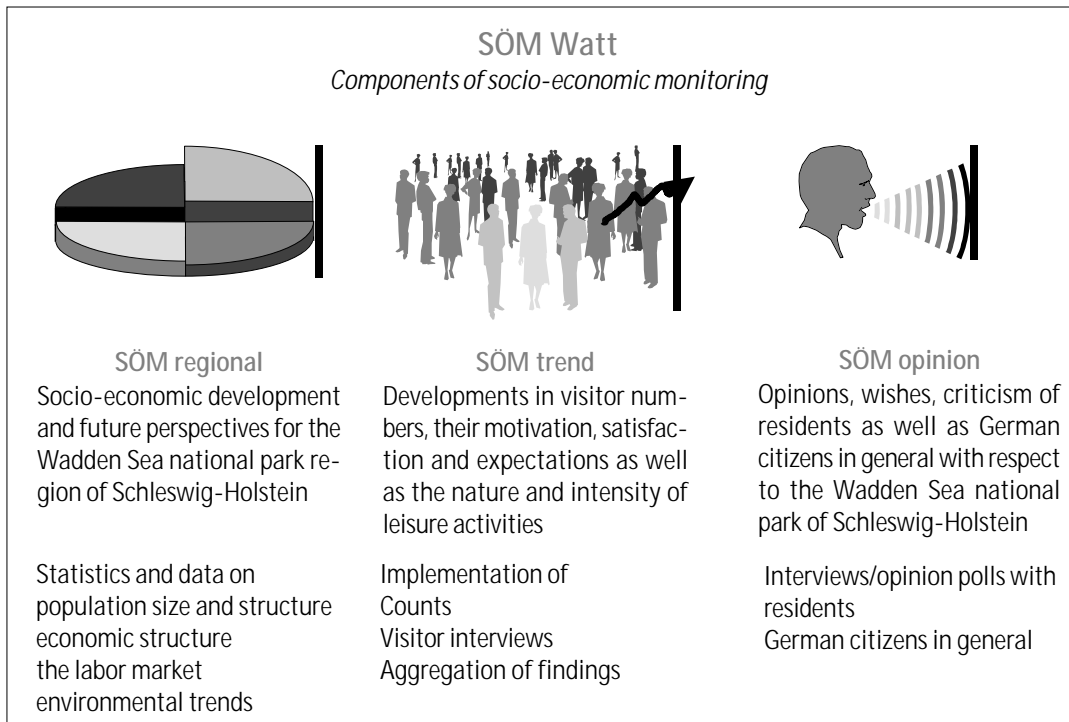


Figure 1
Components of the socio-economic monitoring (SÖM Watt)

- finding and supporting solutions to conflicts between the economic development of the region and national park policy.

The socio-economic monitoring program includes three components (see Fig. 1):

SÖM regional

Analysis of selected data from official statistics.

SÖM trend

Opinion polls. In 1999, more than 500 interviews were carried out by the National Park Service at 8 locations along the coast. The target group was visitors to the national park (people on holidays or day-trippers and residents visiting the area for recreation purposes). The local authorities, where surveys were carried out, could add a question of their choice to the questionnaire. These investigations will be continued in 2000 and are planned for future years.

SÖM opinion

This component is still in preparation. First activities will probably start in 2000. An opinion poll is planned in the two counties adjacent to the Wadden Sea, addressing the local inhabitant's perception and acceptance of the national park policy. Cooperation with regional partners is welcome. First contacts on this topic have taken place. These include an exchange of information and opinions with the World Wide Fund for Nature, representatives of the regional tourism sector, of

the regional trade and business sectors and with the Technical College "Westküste".

Hopefully, these activities will contribute to what has been declared by the three Wadden Sea countries as a shared vision in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Plan: "Integrated management of human activities which takes into account the socio-economic and ecological relationships between the Wadden Sea area and the adjacent areas."

References

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