

## Proposals for Sustainable Development and Calls for More Shipping Safety

Folkert de Jong, Wadden Sea Forum Secretariat, Wilhelmshaven, FRG

What is sustainable development of the Wadden Sea region and how can it be achieved?

Providing answers to these questions is the main task of the trilateral Wadden Sea Forum (WSF), an independent international platform of stakeholders in the Wadden Sea region, chaired by Ed Nijpels, the Queen's Commissioner of the Dutch Province of Fryslân.

At the fourth meeting of the WSF, which was held in Hjerting, just north of Esbjerg, on 15 and 16 April 2004, proposals for sustainable strategies for agriculture, fisheries, energy and industry and harbour were presented and discussed, as well as ideas how to integrate these strategies into an overall Wadden Sea approach.

The working groups of the WSF had drafted the strategies in the foregoing year.

An important element of the strategy for agriculture is the recognition that scale enlargement is necessary for the survival of the sector, but that it should be done in balance with the typical Wadden Sea landscape, be socially acceptable, avoid conflicts with tourism and respect biodiversity and environmental quality. The strategy also acknowledges the importance of broadening the income spectrum of farmers by, amongst others, nature and landscape management schemes.

The fisheries strategy in the Wadden Sea and the adjacent coastal zone will be based upon Integrated Resource Management. The aims of Integrated Resource Management are to reduce impacts on the ecosystem and to guarantee the reproduction of the stocks. Integrated Resource

Management will, as much as possible, make use of long-term licenses and flexible rules and regulations, tuned to the dynamics of the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

Both in the fisheries and the agriculture strategies there is a mentioning of a common Wadden Sea product label. It was proposed to investigate the pros and cons of such a label, amongst others, by analysing the successes and failures of existing labelling systems in the Wadden Sea region.

The strategy for energy generation and consumption aims, amongst others, at reducing the use of energy by 20% in the coming 20 years. The extension of wind energy generation, mainly through offshore wind energy farms, was hotly debated within the forum and the question about the limits of wind energy raised. Important aspects of the discussion were safety of offshore wind farms and the disappearance of fishing grounds.

The meeting supported the recommendation of the Energy Group not to install wind energy farms inside the twelve-mile zone.

Important elements of the proposed strategy for industry and harbours in the Wadden Sea region are the clustering of industrial plants and the development of a concept for cooperation between harbours with the aim of optimising the capacities.

In the coming months the sectoral strategies will be integrated into a first draft of the final report of the Wadden Sea Forum. The integration work will also take into account the recommen-



From left to right: Vice-chairmen Jörn Klimant and Jens Andresen, Chairman Ed Nijpels, Secretary Jens Enemark.

dations of the Thematic Group on Policy and Management that has elaborated proposals for an integrated coastal zone management strategy. Other important themes to be addressed in the integration work are coastal protection, international aspects of infrastructure and traffic, and the results of the Netforum project about sustainable tourism.

In October and November 2004, the proposals of the WSF will be discussed with a wider audience in a series of four regional conferences.

The full report of the WSF-4 meeting, as well as the reports of all thematic groups, can be downloaded from the Wadden Sea Forum website [www.waddensea-forum.org](http://www.waddensea-forum.org).

### Shipping safety

Are there gaps in shipping safety and how can shipping safety be improved in the Wadden Sea and the adjacent North Sea? These were central issues at a special session of the Forum.

In order to answer the above questions, the 3<sup>rd</sup> WSF meeting had commissioned a study into gaps in shipping safety. The results of this study, carried out by the Bremen based consultant GAUSS, were presented at the WSF-4 meeting and commented by shipping authorities from the three Wadden Sea countries.

A series of 47 recommendations to improve shipping safety has been identified by GAUSS on the basis of their analysis, which also included interviews with shipping experts in the Wadden Sea countries.

Of the recommendations, six are regarded as having priority. These all concern the still outstanding implementation or ratification of international agreements. Especially the Netherlands with five and Germany with three agreements waiting for implementation or ratification are being addressed in the priority recommendations.

There are also recommendations about the need for the positioning of buoys on both sides of shipping lanes in the Netherlands and the improvement of oil spill response capacity and emergency towing capacity in Denmark.

At a trilateral level, the study recommends, amongst others, a supra-regional vessel traffic management system for the Wadden Sea, compulsory deep-sea pilotage for high-risk ships, a port state control inspection rate of at least 25% and the investigation of the feasibility of a joint trilateral coast guard.

The national shipping authorities generally supported the priority recommendations about the necessary implementation of international agreements. They were very critical, however, of several

of the other proposals from the GAUSS study. The Danish expert, Mr. Andersen, made clear that his government would not install emergency towing capacity in the Danish Wadden Sea. The German official, Mr. Litmeyer, rejected the idea of compulsory pilotage outside the 12-mile zone. He stated that the ship's captain is responsible here and should be expected to have the necessary expertise.

Mr. van der Woude from The Netherlands was critical of a joint coastguard. In his view there were too many different competencies involved for such an organisation to be efficient.

The Forum reached agreement on most of the recommendations from the report. For a number of proposals additional discussion is necessary. To this end an ad-hoc working group was established, which will report to the next WSF meeting in September 2004.

The full GAUSS report, as well as the replies by the national shipping authorities, can be downloaded from the WSF website [www.waddensea-forum.org](http://www.waddensea-forum.org).

## Publications

### Published Studies

Review of International Legal Instruments, Policies and Management in respect of the Wadden Sea Region Oxford Brookes University, 2003, 110 pp, Wadden Sea Forum Report No. 1, (English).

Inventory and Evaluation of Socio-Economic and Socio-Cultural Data in the German Wadden Sea region Planco Consulting, Essen, 2003, 144 pp, Wadden Sea Forum Report No. 3, (German, English summary).

Report and assessment of socio-economic data in the Danish sector of the Wadden Sea region. COWI A/S Denmark, 2003, 142pp, Wadden Sea Forum Report No. 2, (English and Danish).

Sustainable Development Strategy for the Wadden Sea Region. COWI A/S Denmark, March 2004, 102pp, Wadden Sea Forum Report No. 4, (English).

The Wadden Sea: Maritime Safety and Pollution Prevention of Shipping, Version 3.0, GAUSS mbH, Bremen, March 2004, 83pp, (English).

### Studies in progress

Inventory and Evaluation of Socio-Economic Data in the Wadden Sea Region. Regional Analysis, PROGNOS AG, 2004 (English)

Sector Specific Analysis and Perspectives of the Wadden Sea Region. PROGNOS AG, 2004 (English)

The Operation of the EIA Directive in the Wadden Sea Region. Oxford Brookes University, 2004 (English)

Folkert de Jong

Wadden Sea Forum Secretariat  
c/o Common Wadden Sea Secretariat  
D - 26382 Wilhelmshaven  
[dejong@waddensea-secretariat.org](mailto:dejong@waddensea-secretariat.org)