Strategies for an integrated Management of the Elbe Estuary

- Handling Complexity and Conflicts of Interest -

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In the EU funded research project ARCH – Architecture and Roadmap to manage multiple Pressures on Lagoons and Estuaries a participatory workshop methodology was used to evaluate strategies and actions for an integrated estuary management in 10 different case sites all over Europe. The German case site is the Elbe Estuary. This workshop methodology based on the European Awareness Scenario Workshop (EASW).

Challenges for Integrated Management
- Highly dynamic and complex system
- Many risks and high uncertainty
- Involvement of many different interests, institutions and stakeholders

The Elbe Estuary – a complex system

The Elbe River – a border river

Institutions and Interests
- 3 federal states (Bundesländer), 3 parliaments, 3 different structures of administrations
- 3.8 million inhabitants
- Manifold and in part contradictory interests
- High pressure to utilize resources
- Agriculture, Flora-Fauna-Habitats, bird sanctuaries, recreation, fishery, flood protection
- Hamburg is the economic centre of the region
- The harbour is the biggest German seaport, the tidal Elbe is a federal waterway

Preparation
State of the Estuary Report
- General Description of the Region
- Natural System
- Human System
- The Human-Nature Relationship

Stakeholder Analyses
For example:
- Environmental and Citizen NGOs
- Administrations from Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony
- Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber of Agriculture
- Scientists

Stakeholder Interviews
- Are we talking to the right person?
- What is the most urgent problem?
- What are the most serious conflicts?
- How should the Estuary look like in the future?

Workshop 1: Understanding the System - System Analysis with the Sensitivity Model Prof. Vester -
Finding a common Language
Understanding the System
Identifying Problems and Objectives

Workshop 2: Challenges for the Future
Creating a common future vision

Common Future Vision Elbe Estuary 2050
“We believe, that it is necessary to adapt the development of the Elbe Estuary to the natural conditions to preserve and form the quality of life in this region for the future. A consistent and integrated management in connection with a trustful and constant communication between all parties will be indispensable.”

“The resolution of conflicts of interests under equal representation of all stakeholder and the adaption to climate change will be the biggest challenges for the future.”

Workshop 3: Strategy for the Elbe Estuary
Development of an Elbe Estuary Forum

Organisation Structure
- Elbe Estuary Board
  - Governance
- Elbe Estuary Secretariat
  - Implementation and Support
- Plenary Assembly
  - Stakeholder Forum
- Working Groups
  - Information and Meeting

Functions:
- Constant communication
- Stakeholder Meeting
- Conflict Facilitation
- Policy Consulting
- Access to Information
- Enabling Participation
- Creation of Transparency
- Realisation of the Future Vision
- Public Relation Works

Establishment of an Integrated Management Board

Working group
- Independent from policy and election periods
- Management plans will be inspected for transparency, participation and integration

Principles
- Guiding theme for the preparation of management plans must be integration
- Prove of integrated management must be part of the plan approval procedure
- Integration is more important than single expertise