



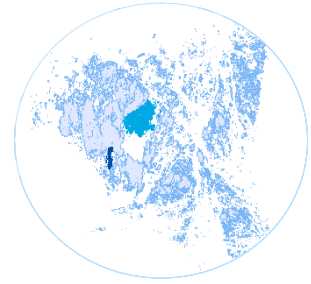
COAST4US

THE GOVERNMENT OF ÅLAND

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

PILOT AREAS

MARIEHAMN AND SUND



Coast4us is an EU-funded Central Baltic project that focuses on sustainable coastal zone planning. 16 partners from Åland, Sweden, Estonia and Latvia are collaborating on the project.

Sea and coastal areas are of great importance for several activities and face similar challenges when it comes to the environment and physical planning in the Baltic Sea region. The increasing demands to exploit these areas create potential conflicts with other interests, such as the conservation of natural resources and ecosystem services. It is important that different values and interests are recognized in the sea and coastal plans in order to achieve long-term sustainable development in the Baltic Sea region.

On Åland, two pilot areas have formed the basis for the work, and they represent urban and rural areas with different challenges. The biggest challenges for sustainable development in these areas have been to plan to prevent climate change, maintain biodiversity and reduce eutrophication.

A big priority has been to take advantage of all the knowledge that the local population in the pilot areas has and to engage and involve them in the planning process at an early stage. The government has arranged meetings, ditch walks and various workshops during the project. Mapping of various social, ecological, economic and cultural values was carried out in Sund (Eco-mapping) while the focus in Mariehamn was on mapping the locals' opinions and wishes regarding the city's green areas (Maptionnaire mapping).

Measures

During the project, together with the municipality and the local population, we have developed some alternative measures that can be done both in Mariehamn and in Sund to increase the attraction, increase biodiversity, clean the water that flows into Slemmern and Lumparn and to adapt to climate change. These measures include Nabben and Sviby multifunctional wetlands in Mariehamn as well as Skarpans wetland along Finbydiket and Gunnarsby wetland by the composting plant to name a few. Suggestion to preserve and increase pollination has also been developed for both areas.

Conclusions

When planning sustainable coastal areas, it is important to keep nature in focus. In many cases, there are many benefits to planning within the boundaries of nature. People feel good when spending time in green areas, at the same time as biological diversity can be preserved and recreated. Planning for sustainable coastal areas is also of great importance for achieving several national and international goals for good water quality. From a purely economic point of view, there can also be benefits, as sustainably planned coastal zone areas are resistant to change. All societies are dependent on nature, in that nature provides us with, among other things, clean water and food. Therefore, it is of great importance to take care of nature. Future climate change is likely to pose challenges for society. By preparing society already now, future restoration costs can be reduced. There is a lot to be gained from planning for sustainable coastal zone areas.

Through various activities, the Coast4us project at the Government of Åland has come to the conclusion that:

- Local collaboration, knowledge and participation are important at an early stage of planning processes. Based on the IPBES concept.
- It is difficult to reach a consensus on exploitation versus conservation when different interests are to be weighed against each other.
- Children need to be involved as they are tomorrow's planners, politicians and citizens.
- Planning must be based on well-founded knowledge so that irreplaceable values do not risk disappearing. No development can take place outside nature's own carrying capacity and a holistic approach to the problems, opportunities and conditions of the Baltic Sea is required. It is important to value ecosystem services and to make the benefit from them visible to everyone.
- Fragmentation of landscapes must be avoided. Develop blue and green coastal zone plans as a basis for all planning. Blue and green infrastructure as well as pollination plans aim to strengthen biodiversity, are climate preventive and improve water quality in the long run. This is especially important in the coastal zone areas.
- Education, communication and information about biodiversity and valuable ecosystem services as well as what you can do for the environment is important to reach all target groups such as planners, municipalities, decision-makers, business, culture and the general public, etc.
- Decision makers and planners must plan for long-term sustainable action. A budget must be set aside for necessary investigations. Support opportunities must be highlighted so that even volunteers within the local population can make measures on their own land.
- It is important that the measures from the ground up meet the basic system conditions for sustainability and that there is no risk of planetary boundaries being exceeded, the supply of drinking water being destroyed or contributing to reduced biodiversity or the extinction of protected species and biotopes.

No development can take place outside nature's own viability and a holistic approach to the problems, opportunities and conditions of the Baltic Sea is required. Exactly how a coastal zone plan needs to be built up depends entirely on the area's local conditions, the need for development and what surveys are required. Sustainable development is mainly about preserving the long-term production capacity of water, the earth and other ecosystems and reducing the negative impact on nature and human health.