



LancewadPlan Final Conference

Wilhelmshaven

19 June 2007

Terramare

Conference Report

1. Introduction

On 19 June 2007, the final conference of the LancewadPlan project was held in Wilhelmshaven and highlighted the results of three-year transnational collaboration in the field of cultural landscape and heritage in the Wadden Sea Region.

The variety and diversity of the cultural heritage reflects the historical interaction of human activity and a changing natural environment. The cultural heritage is a central resource for modern life. It has a powerful influence on peoples' sense of identity and civic pride. Its enduring physical presence contributes significantly to the character and 'sense of place' of rural and urban environments. In the Wadden Sea, this resource is rich, complex and irreplaceable; it has great potential both with regard to its intrinsic value and its role in economic development. As a critical aspect of the region's environmental infrastructure the cultural heritage has a major role to play in the future of the Wadden Sea.

However, the cultural heritage is sensitive to changes, and in the Wadden Sea Region, it is under pressure from structural changes, often driven by issues at national, European or even global level, leading to rapid transformation. The pressures are mainly caused by economic development across all relevant sectors but also by changes in the natural environment, notably sea-level rise and global warming. Careful consideration is required as changes are planned in order to ensure that the cultural heritage can be part of a sustainable future for the Wadden Sea Region.

2. Aim of the Conference

On the basis of a presentation of results of the LancewadPlan project, the aim of the conference was to discuss:

- The landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region in a trans-boundary context and the specific values, amongst others, within a historic framework as well as the potentials and challenges in terms of conserving and managing the heritage for future generations.
- The linkage of knowledge and expertise with planning and management on the different levels.
- The enhancement of the awareness of the outstanding heritage and, in this respect, the role of the dense network of institutes, museums and associations that are available in the area.
- The role of those who use the landscape (in the widest sense), in particular the interests of agriculture and heritage management.

3. Program

The conference started at 10:00 h with a welcome speech by Jens Enemark, head of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, and an opening address by Hauke Jöns, Lower Saxony Institute for Historical Coastal Research and conference moderator.

In the following, 4 key note presentations were given and intensively discussed in view of the aims. They were:

- Cultural landscapes in history and present times by Ludwig Fischer, D.
- The common heritage in the Wadden Sea Region characteristics, potentials, awareness by Nigel Brown, UK.
- Landscape characterization and planning by Vibeke Nellemann, DK.
- People in Charge, Making the Best of Local Resources by Willem Foorthuis, NL.

4. Outputs and Discussion

The keynotes also emphasized the worthwhile results of the project which provide extensive information as well as sound and multilayered instruments for the sustainable dealings with our cultural heritage. One of the main outputs was the striking characterization of the whole Wadden Sea Region by the description and analysis of 60 cultural entities along the coast. A synthesis of this characterization gives an overview about the vulnerabilities and potentials of the heritage with regard to conservation, development and sustainable use.

The emphasis of LancewadPlan was laid on the development of an overall, transnational management plan for the conservation and development of the cultural landscape and heritage. It entails visions and strategies for the coming 20 years, defines obstacles and finally specifies projects and recommendations as concrete actions to overcome the obstacles and to implement the strategies.

The discussions aimed at building bridges between sectors, science and the administrative and political level. Finally, the conference on 19 June resulted in an agreement of the participants to use the results of the project in the future dealings with our cultural heritage, to increase the efforts in awareness building as a central point and to extend and strengthen the network for further cooperation and collaboration.

5. Recommendations

As an important output, the conference developed recommendations aiming at continuing and enhancing the interest in the conservation and wise management of the landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region.

The recommendations were in particular:

- To intensify the work on the transnational level because of its great importance.
- To identify the background for conservation, development and maintenance of the heritage by using the entity characterization as a good basis.
- To better involve the local people and communities.
- To taken the opportunities offered by the heritage and transfer them into actions.
- To analyse the prediction of environmental hazards and also use them to find solutions for the threatened cultural landscape and heritage.
- To consider assessing the cultural heritage values of an area in order to get agreements to protect the heritage.
- To analyse and characterize in more detail the natural and cultural environment as an instrument for spatial planning (landscape character zones).
- To develop training courses for responsible authorities to best implement the characterization method, elaborated by the project.
- To use the method on different levels, small scale on municipality level and a broader scale on county level.
- To conserve and develop the cultural landscape and heritage in the Wadden Sea Region, many more work groups with different tasks have to be implemented. Only working together will lead to results (not debating and discussing).
- To emphasise and integrate the expert's work a lot more in the social environment.
- To convince politicians to develop visions for the region.
- To have problems solved by independent persons and not by the originator because of their possible bias involvement.

6. Network

A worthwhile result of the LWP final conference was the agreement to intensify and maintain a network in cooperation and collaboration with regard to the conservation, development and sustainable use of our cultural landscapes and heritage.

The network will be used to increase the awareness for our heritage among politicians, stakeholders and the public. To maintain the network, regular meetings are necessary.

Also the steering group of Lancewad and LancewadPlan, Wadcult, needs to continue as a working group under the umbrella of the trilateral cooperation on the protection of the Wadden Sea.

