

THE FUTURE OF THE COASTAL ZONE



A coastal management strategy for Southwest Finland



THE BIGGEST ARCHIPELAGO IN THE BALTIC SEA

The Southwest Finland archipelago comprises more than 22,000 islands. The largest are forest-covered and inhabited, and the biggest, Kemiö, covers three municipalities. The smallest are little rocky skerries barely rising above the sea.

The region and its islands have a combined coastline of over 14,000 kilometres, and the natural conditions are in many ways distinctive. Due to the low salinity of the water, there are few underwater species of flora and fauna, but the species populations are large. The Archipelago Sea is, for example, an important breeding ground for Baltic herring (stromming).

The Southwest Finland archipelago has a year-round population of around 33,000. This is, however, greatly increased in summer by the residents of its 21,000 holiday homes. The traditional occupations include fishing, hunting, forestry and agriculture. There are also some large industrial and power plants along the coast. The holiday homes, boating and other recreational uses keep the region alive even though the permanent settlement has decreased in the past hundred years.



Life COASTRA in a nutshell

The Life COASTRA project was carried out in the coastal zone of Southwest Finland in 2001–2004. It furthered regional cooperation and reduced the conflict between environmental and economic interests. The findings have been compiled as a strategy for use as a tool in managing the coastal zone. The Life project was coordinated by the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. The other partners to the project were the Southwest Finland Regional Environment Centre, the fisheries unit of the Employment and Economic Development Centre of Southwest Finland, the Department of Geography at the University of Turku and the Municipality of Uusikaupunki.

Work on behalf of the Archipelago Sea continues. The Member States of the European Union approved the model for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in 2002, ensuring ongoing commitment to the improvement of the state and environment of the Archipelago Sea.



NUMEROUS EXPECTATIONS

The coastal zone is subject to various conflicts arising from its economic and recreational use and the demands of nature conservation. Agriculture, for example, is important to the preservation of Finland's domestic food production and the rural landscape. Allowing cattle to graze in the coastal zone is the only means of preserving the ancient grazing grounds. On the other hand, agricultural runoff is causing eutrophication, and holiday makers find the smell of dung objectionable.

The holiday homes in turn support the rural occupations, but the interests of, say, sports and commercial fishermen do not always coincide. The extension of the summer cottage season in the spring and autumn is also aggravating the impact of



traffic on the archipelago as people commute to work from their cottages.

These examples illustrate the conflict of interests in the Southwest Finland coastal zone. There are likewise greater or lesser conflicts surrounding fishery, nature conservation, natural resources, industry, and other uses of the archipelago.

LIFE SEEKS TO STRIKE A BALANCE

The European Union granted Life funds in support of the coastal zone 2001–2004. Life COASTRA has furthered cooperation between various groups in the region and sought to strike a balance between environmental and economic interests. It has paid special attention to the planning of the marine areas supporting this objective.

One of the results of the Life initiative has been an integrated coastal management strategy for Southwest Finland. The strategy surveys the state of the marine area and proposes measures for solving the problems. It is not binding, being merely a proposal for use as a tool in planning water and coastal areas. It works on the principle that all stakeholders can take part in strategy work. The inhabitants of the coastal zone will occupy a focal role in this.

Life COASTRA interacts with the Pro Archipelago Sea programme launched in 1999, the primary objective of which is to reduce the eutrophication caused by the runoff of nutrients. This programme involves 70 actors from NGOs to government officials and large-scale enterprise.



THE UUSIKAUPUNKI PLAN

During the second stage of Life COASTRA 2003–2004 a pilot ICZM plan was drawn up for the municipality of Uusikaupunki. This town was chosen as a pilot area because of its diverse environment and economic structure.

Uusikaupunki is a town of 16,400 inhabitants on the west coast of Southwest Finland. A considerable proportion of its area is covered by sea. The local people make their living from the car, metal-working and chemical industries, fishing, fish farming and the port. Tourism is mainly confined to the summer months, when the boats arrive at the visitors' marinas. The outermost islands in the Uusikaupunki archipelago are covered by the extensive Natura programme.

The Uusikaupunki marine areas have suffered from eutrophication in the past few decades due to agricultural, industrial and

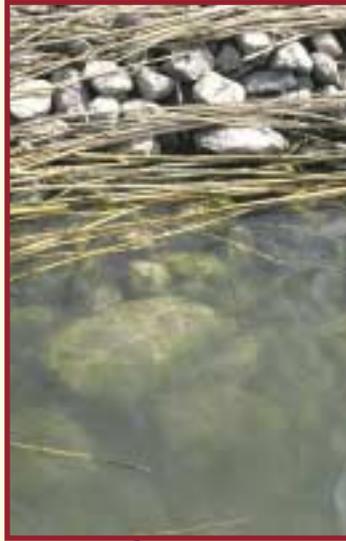
other emissions. Technological advances, the environmental protection norms and growing environmental awareness have reduced the emissions, but changes in the coastal nature are slow to correct.

The objective of the Uusikaupunki ICZM plan is to ensure an environmentally sustainable future that promotes vitality and permits economic growth yet respects the characteristic features of the area and its natural values. The pilot project began with a meeting of local actors. Four working groups were appointed to collect data and to debate the necessary measures. The subjects addressed by the groups were:

- 1) Tourism and recreational use
- 2) Industry and seafaring
- 3) Fishing and fishery
- 4) Nature conservation

The groups met six times and proposed concrete measures to be included in the management plan. The awareness among residents, tourists and others of conditions in the Uusikaupunki coastal zone could, for example, be increased. To serve this objective, a map of the Archipelago Sea was published on the Internet (at www.lounaispaikka.fi/saaristomerikartasto). The use of areas is particularly prominent in the planning of tourism and recreation. The adverse impact of traffic and other holiday settlement can be reduced by confining new holiday homes to particular areas.

The status of local commercial fishermen should be safeguarded by confining trolling by sports fishermen to a single area





stretching from Uusikaupunki to the waters of nearby Rauma. The increase in the seal population was recognised by the working groups as a problem for fishing and it was suggested that seal hunting should be intensified in places.

The conflicts over nature conservation can best be prevented by means of information, instruction and guidance. The management plans for the Natura areas satisfy these requirements. The growth in boating should be matched by an increase in control. The downsides of boating can be reduced by developing the marina services, since this reduces the strain on other areas.

ICZM - COOPERATION ON BEHALF OF THE COASTAL ZONE

Various tools have been developed internationally with a view to sustainable development. Integrated coastal zone management is becoming increasingly common and allows for human action as a whole in addition to the natural environment. ICZM operates on the principle of striking a balance between the environment, the economy and the community.

In the Archipelago Sea ICZM means commitment to the achievement of this balance and to the ongoing improvement of the state of the Sea and its environment. ICZM defines various tools for achieving these objectives: the legislation must follow the times, the state of the coastal zone must be monitored, and any data collected must be disseminated as openly as possible. Training and funding must be provided for any development projects that may be necessary.

In 2002 the EU Member States agreed to apply the principles of ICZM in the management of their coastal zones. According to

the recommendation, Member States should draw up a national coastal zone strategy and submit a progress report to the European Commission in early 2006.

The work begun on the Archipelago Sea observes the ICZM model in many respects. The coastal management strategy contains proposals for further measures. The resources of those working on behalf of the coastal zones should be consolidated in a joint ICZM coordination unit responsible for continuity. Natural partners would be the Pro Archipelago Sea programme, the Lounaispaikka Regional GI Service and Network and the Agenda 21 network. Operations could be coordinated by, for example, the Regional Council of Southwest Finland in partnership with other authorities. The strategy further proposes the establishment of a multidisciplinary training unit serving ICZM work in collaboration with the Turku universities.





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Further information:

Life COASTRA
www.varsinais-suomi.fi/COASTRA

The Ministry of the Environment
www.ymparisto.fi

The European Commission, Life pages
europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/project/index.htm

The Pro Archipelago Sea programme
www.ymparisto.fi/prosaaristomeri

Lounaispaikka
www.lounaispaikka.fi

The Southwest Finland Agenda 21
www.vsagendatoimisto.fi



LIFE COASTRA PUBLICATIONS

The Future of the Coastal Zone

- Finnish version
- English version
- Swedish version

The Draft Coastal Management Strategy for Southwest Finland

- Finnish version
- English version
- Swedish version

Legislation on Coastal Management

- Finnish version

The Uusikaupunki Coastal Zone

- Finnish version

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