



LancewadPlan Final Conference

Wilhelmshaven

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Terramare

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Opening speech

When we look today to the landscape of the Wadden Sea and the clay districts along the North Sea Coast, we have to be aware that the visible part of our landscape is a result of more than 800 years of human attempt of winning fertile areas for agriculture and settling by dyking, drainage and other measures. These attempts started in the Netherlands already in the 11th century, along the German and Danish coasts during the 12th and 13th century. The dominant visible elements of the cultural heritage are historical dykes and dwelling mounds, built in the iron age or the early Middle Ages. Churches, sluices, mills, and lighthouses are characteristic elements as well.

In addition a large amount of archaeological sites is covered in the ground. This becomes already obvious, when we look to the Wadden Sea. This landscape is a large sheltered tidal flat area that lies below the mean-high-water level. Together with small areas of still today existing salt marshes, this landscape can give us an impression of the environmental conditions before the dyking period of the high Middle Ages. At the time, there were only a few areas in Europe where habitation was so dependent on developments in the natural landscape as in the coastal zone of the southern North Sea. Both landscape changes and settlement history were directly determined by sea-level changes. It is not surprising that during the phases of low tide, still today, partly well preserved remains of settlements become visible, indicating that the Wadden Sea is also part of the cultural landscape.

The Holocene Clay District resulted from continuous deposition of sediments by marine and brackish waters that flooded and covered the flat areas of the undyked marshes along the coasts and the rivers depend on the respective sea level.

While in the North Sea itself, the Holocene deposits are generally thin and the sequence often incomplete, there are many areas in the Wadden Sea and especially in the Clay District behind the present-day dikes, where complete sequences of sedimentation can be observed.



The above presented profile is taken from the bronze age site of Rodenkirchen, positioned on the western banks of the Weser river. Here culture layers from the bronze age (1 and 2), from the pre-roman iron age (3) and from the roman iron age and the Middle Ages (4 and 5) are clearly separated by light coloured strata, indicating that the area was flooded several times. On other locations the record extends back over the last 8000 years.

The wet conditions and the low rate of oxygen in the clay districts causes that also plant and animal remains as well as other organic material, such as wood and even textiles, can be extremely well preserved. That has been recorded at numerous sites. To sum up, the clay district and the Wadden Sea can be regarded as an archive of high value for the history of culture, landscape and environment.

But the Wadden Sea and the clay districts are not reservation-areas for archaeological research but changing landscapes where different interests have to be taken into consideration. Traditionally, the most important have been fishery and agriculture, but today industry, the production of wind-energy, and tourism are gaining importance. The changing of the landscape is not troublesome as long as its characteristic elements are still recognizable. To be able to respect the cultural heritage in the actual planning processes, it is necessary to raise the awareness about the heritage and to inform the responsible institutions about the needs and aims of the heritage. Planning is based on maps, so it simply is necessary to produce maps of the cultural heritage to visualize the spatial distribution and the significance of the sites and monuments.

For this purpose partners from the three countries Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have firstly initiated a joint cross-boundary project, LANCEWAD (**L**andscape and **C**ultural **H**eritage of the **W**adden Sea Region), also co-financed by the EU North Sea Programme. Lancewad aimed to make a map-based inventory of the landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region.

Based on the data base of the former Lancewad project, the project LancewadPlan has developed a common strategy for the sustainable development and preservation of the cultural landscapes and heritage of the Wadden Sea region.

The project has delivered some outputs, on which a future collaboration can build on. During the conference the most important keywords and points will be focussed on:

- An integrated strategy, including relevant sector strategies, for the management of the heritage.
- Regional management plans, elaborated as examples in pilot areas in the different regions.
- An assessment of the common, transnational values of the cultural historic heritage.
- A description and first characterization of 59 cultural entities, including statements regarding potentials concerning the cultural landscape and heritage in those entities.
- Best practise examples in planning and management of cultural landscapes and heritage, compiled in a handbook.

On the basis of a presentation of the results of the LancewadPlan project, the aims of the conference are:

- 1) To discuss the landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region in a transboundary context. What are the specific values, also within a historic framework, and what are the potentials and challenges in terms of conserving and managing this heritage for future generations?
- 2) To discuss the problems of linking knowledge and expertise with planning and management: How can we best ensure that the knowledge we have about the heritage is taken into account in government policies, what can we learn from different approaches and how can this also be promoted in a transboundary context.
- 3) To discuss how knowledge and awareness can be linked: How can we enhance the awareness of the outstanding heritage and what is the role of the dense network of institutes, museums and associations that is available in the area.
- 4) To discuss what demands does the heritage have to people, communities and enterprises, using and changing the landscape (in the widest sense), in particular how can we accommodate the interests of agriculture and management of the heritage.

Following these goals, today we will have four lectures informing us about the key-issues of the LancewadPlan-project. They shall be the starting point of a hopefully fruitful discussion. So, I already now, would like to ask you to give your comments and to bring in your ideas.