

Good Practices Guide

Improving joint governance of straits toward preservation
of biodiversity and natural heritage

www.nostraproject.eu



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Preface

NOSTRA, a step in the reinforcement of cross-border governance within European straits



NOSTRA project (Network Of STRAits) gathers sixteen partners from eight European straits around a common ambition: showing that joint governance at the scale of a strait can improve public policies and ensure a sustainable development of these territories.

For Pas-de-Calais County Council as for the other partners involved in NOSTRA, the observation is shared: straits are traffic areas that connect and separate two lands and two seas; they are places where multiple and intertwined issues are concentrated and criss-crossed. This is why this project is capital: it enables to devise solutions to the challenges.

During three years, the partners met, exchanged and reflected together around 7 major issues of European straits: governance, marine planning, tourism, transport, maritime security, economic development and conservation of the environment.

This guide gathers 50 exemplary practices identified by all partners in the framework of the management of a strait. Despite differences between each territory due to the local context and regional issues, these good practices are a source of mutual enrichment and answers to common challenges daily faced by authorities bordering European straits.

First major embodiment of the European Straits Initiative, which gathers since 2009 most of the project partners; NOSTRA enabled to consolidate this partnership and to contribute to the recognition of the European straits' peculiarities.

This Good Practices Guide shows all the complexity and the richness of European straits, exceptional territories that we are proud to honour today.

On behalf the 16 project partners,

The President of Pas-de-Calais County Council,
Michel DAGBERT



Part I | **About NOSTRA**

What is INTERREG IVC?

INTERREG IVC is one of the programmes from the EU Regional and Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 and is funded thanks to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It responds to the territorial cooperation objective and aims to develop **interregional cooperation** across Europe with a budget of EUR 445 million for 2007-2013.

The objective of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments through the exchange of experiences among partners.

Two priorities are defined, with sub-themes:

- Innovation and the knowledge economy:
 - Innovation, research and technology development
 - Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
 - Information Society
 - Employment, human capital and education
- Environment and the risk prevention
 - Natural and technological risks
 - Water management
 - Waste management
 - **Biodiversity and conservation of natural heritage** (NOSTRA theme)
 - Energy and sustainable landscape

There are two types of projects: Regional Initiative Projects and Capitalisation Projects. In Regional Initiative Projects (such as NOSTRA), partners work together to exchange experiences in a policy field of their interest and can choose between three levels of intensity for their cooperation, from networking to the development of policy instruments or the establishment of mini-programmes. In Capitalisation Projects, partners build on already identified good practices to transfer them into mainstream programmes of EU Structural Funds.



What is NOSTRA?

Origin

NOSTRA (Network Of STRAits) is an output of the European Straits Initiative (ESI) signed in November 2010 on a proposal of both Pas-de-Calais County Council and Kent County Council. The ESI aims to:

- Gain recognition within European policies of the particular characteristics of European Straits and to integrate these within European programmes and European Structural Funds
- Work towards the emergence of cooperation projects such as NOSTRA

Website www.europeanstraits.eu



Objectives

NOSTRA is an INTERREG IVC project that aims to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of experiences between partners from different European straits, in order to implement more efficient and sustainable policies at the scale of a strait. The main objective of the project is the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage. It aims to show that joint (cross-border) governance of straits, based on an integrated and inclusive approach, can improve public policies in respect of the preservation of biodiversity and natural heritage, allowing the sustainable economic development of an area. The project activities were organized around three main themes:

- Environmental impact of point-to-point maritime transport and logistics
- Local partnership for sustainable and environmentally-friendly economic and tourism development
- Marine and terrestrial planning to combine conservation of the environment, improvement of inhabitants' quality of life and economic development

Key information

16 partners from 10 different countries
8 straits and one research institute on the Danube delta
A budget of EUR 2,36 million with a ERDF contribution of EUR 1,79 million
2 study visits, 4 workshops and 3 seminars from 2012 to 2014

Website www.nostraproject.eu

Methodology

Overview

In order to meet its objectives, the three year NOSTRA project was divided into three periods. The first objective was to assess the issues raised around straits, especially considering governance questions. The second period was dedicated to the presentation of practices by each strait. Finally, the last year of the project was dedicated to the analysis and selection of good practices, to the preparation of this guide and the development of implementation plans that aim to put the good practices into action.

During the three years, each activity organised at partnership level was followed by territorial meetings within each partner's territory, to allow dissemination of the knowledge gained to local stakeholders and to feedback on further expectations, through top-down and bottom-up processes.

The final conference, in October 2014, closes the project. Attended by elected partner representatives, it contributes to the promotion of the Good Practices and Policy Recommendations Guide at regional, national and European levels.



2012: see and learn

After the Launching Conference of the project in April 2012 in the Strait of Dover, the first period of the project was dedicated to visiting two straits that already work with joint governance tools:

- Visit n°1, Kvarken, June 2012: Kvarken Council
- Visit n°2, Bonifacio, October 2012: European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio (EGTC-PIMBB)

During the visits, the partners met local stakeholders involved in the different aspects of the straits (environment, transport, etc.) to see how they are dealt with in the governance. These events enabled the partners to raise questions around such governance tools and their efficiency considering the project goals.

In parallel, a baseline study was launched as an initial assessment of the state of the different straits involved in NOSTRA and to gain an understanding of the type of governance tools that exist.

2013: analyse and study

During the second year of the project, four workshops were organised on the four subthemes of the NOSTRA project, in order to identify and analyse good practices for the sustainable development of straits:

- Workshop n°1, Kent, January 2013: Seascapes and Marine Spatial Planning
- Workshop n°2, Lecce, April 2013: Tourism and Cultural Heritage
- Workshop n°3, Fehmarn Belt, June 2013: Maritime Safety and Green Traffic
- Workshop n°4, Uusimaa, October 2013: Coast and Hinterland Economy

2014: think and act

During the final year of the project, three cross-cutting seminars were organised to highlight the link between all the issues tackled previously and to help in the selection of the ideal governance tools to ensure the conservation of the straits:

- Seminar n°1, Reggio Calabria, February 2014: Link between the coast and the hinterland
- Seminar n°2, Bonifacio, June 2014: Capitalising on European projects for better knowledge and management of biodiversity in the Strait of Bonifacio and work on the good practices for the implementation plans
- Seminar n°3, Danube delta, September 2014: Finalising of policy recommendations and implementation plans

This Good Practices Guide is the result of a long process and shows some of the best practices implemented in the European straits in order to address the many issues facing these exceptional areas.

The NOSTRA baseline study

A baseline study was launched in 2012 in order to have an initial assessment of the state of the different straits involved in NOSTRA and to gain an understanding of the types of governance tools that exist.

As a result of the study, the consultancy team BIO Intelligent Service produced a general report at the partnership scale and a report at the scale of each strait. Each report gives an overview and highlights the main issues faced by the strait. Then, it presents the main responses that have been used to address the key challenges for the natural environment (with a particular focus on EU policies and governance practices). Finally, it gives recommendations for future actions.

Main results at the partnership scale

The study identifies several drivers impacting on straits ecosystems and natural environments. In particular: tourism, transport, maritime security and infrastructure. The study also highlights the significance of biodiversity and the natural environment in the straits, as often recognised at national or international levels through the designation of protected areas, with the presence of rare and endangered species and the existence of migratory routes for birds, marine mammals and fish. The study sketches the main pressures exerted on biodiversity and the natural environment and their related impacts, while distinguishing two kinds of pressures:

- Pressures resulting from human activities such as pollution (due to land-based activities or to high levels of maritime traffic and accidents), eutrophication (due to wastewater or to the use of fertilizers in agriculture) and invasive species (introduced by accident or intentionally, they threaten native species)
- Natural pressures such as climate change (one of the major threats: it impacts economic, social and environmental features of coastal zones)

The baseline study also puts forward the responses that have been addressing these main challenges for the natural environment, especially EU policies such as the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the Environmental Liability Directive.

Recommendations for future actions at the partnership level

The baseline study has resulted in several key recommendations at the partnership or network level:

Governance:

- Build one formal entity representing the network with representational responsibilities at European and international levels, being able to gather and communicate the voices of each strait and all straits
- Structure this entity to ensure the rotation of the board, with the election of Presidency nominated by one strait each year (or period) and the selection of priority topics for each period
- Build a European Strait Committee with elected regional deputies to talk about issues, hold regular meetings, draft initiatives, and apply for funds to support common activities (improving management or projects)
- Build strategies (short, medium and long term) and related action plans
- Identify priorities for different straits – raising up priorities to the European Commission in a formal document
- Participate in stakeholder consultations and events at EU level

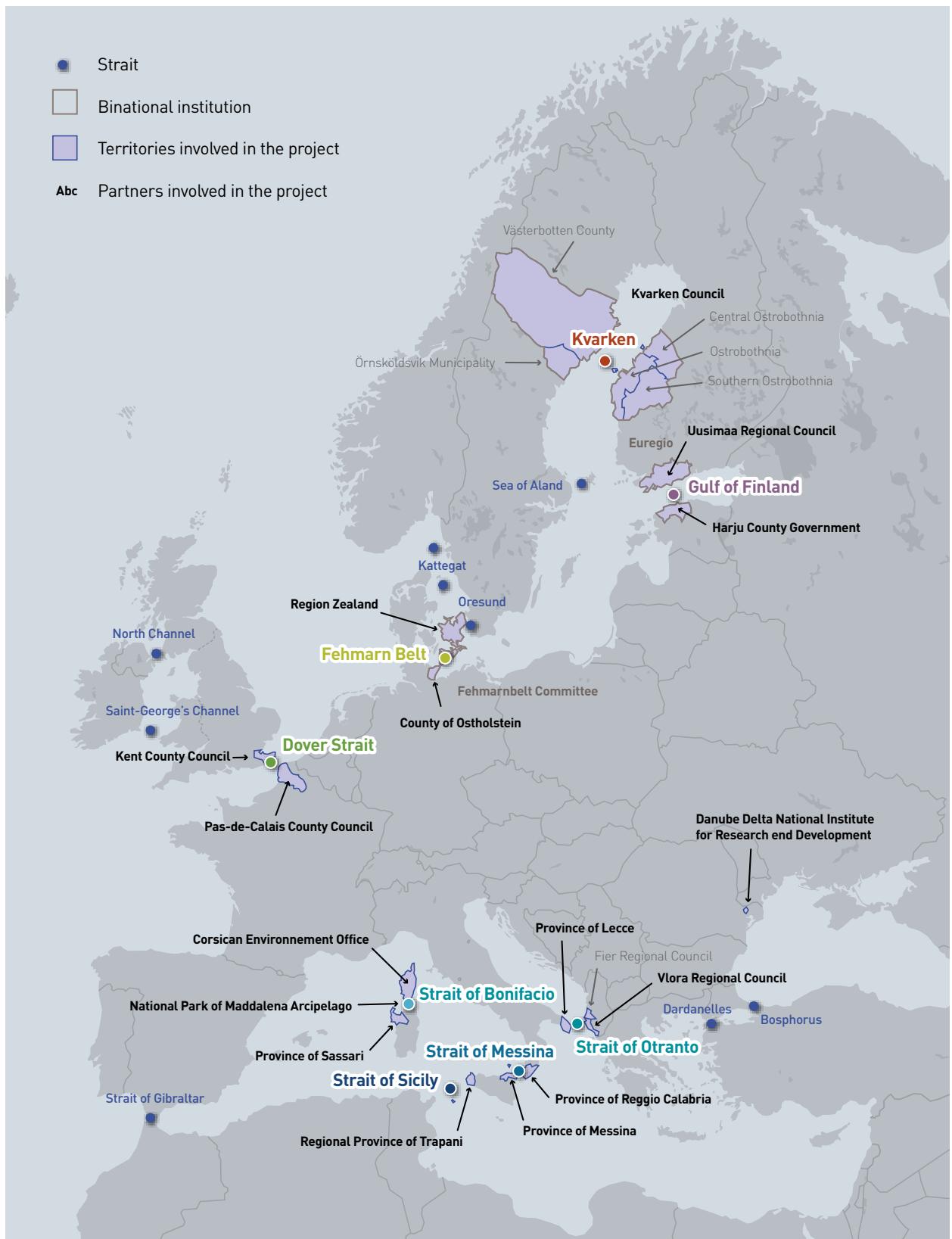
Capacity building/knowledge sharing:

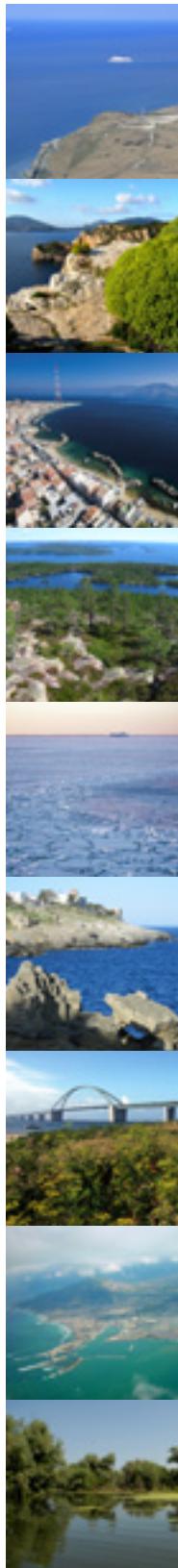
- Collect socio-economic and scientific environmental information and data at several scales: local, regional and cross-border
- Build common databases or a common database
- Make data available to different partners of the network, informing of the methodological approaches and tools used to collect such data
- Implement tools, formal processes and structured initiatives to continue the sharing experiences and knowledge between European straits
- Build relationships and share experiences and knowledge with non-European straits to build initiatives and identify common issues
- Establish a network of experts specialising in strait-related and cross-border issues that will support the network in developing expertise on common issues
- Develop new research projects (because of data limitations) on biodiversity systems and impacts of pressures on biodiversity

Fields of action to develop jointly:

- Maritime security in the context of increasing traffic
- Opportunity to develop new services and activities in order to secure additional value from maritime transport
- Opportunity to create
- Impacts and benefits of inland activities and development of the coastal and marine areas

Who are the 16 NOSTRA partners?





8 straits

- **Dover Strait** (France/United Kingdom)
- **Strait of Bonifacio** (France/Italy)
- **Strait of Messina** (Italy/Italy)
- **Kvarken Strait** (Finland/Sweden)
- **Gulf of Finland** (Finland/Estonia)
- **Strait of Otranto** (Italy/Albania)
- **Fehmarn Belt** (Germany/Denmark)
- **Strait of Sicily** (Italy/Tunisia)

1 delta

- **Danube delta** (Romania)

Though the Danube delta is not a strait, it has been associated with the project as an Eastern Europe partner was needed and the Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development was part of the INTERREG IVC project DELTANET; it was an opportunity to establish a link between two projects that are similar (networks of regions with geographic specificity, issues of conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage) and to bring added value to NOSTRA.

Strait of Dover



Characteristics of the strait

The Dover Strait is defined as the territory that marks the passage of the sea basin of the English Channel to the North Sea and the border between Great Britain (Dover) and the European continent (Calais, France). The Strait is only 32km (20 miles) wide and shallow (sometimes only 20 metres).

For the benefit of NOSTRA and the baseline study, the strait has been defined as the area that runs from the border between East Sussex and Kent (Dungeness) across to Berck with the northern line running from North Foreland (near Margate) to the French /Belgian border.

The strait is one of the busiest seaways in the world. On both sides of the strait, ports are of particular importance: the ports of Dover and Calais are Europe's busiest passenger ferry ports, despite the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994. This confirms the importance and the almost continuous growth of the cross-channel flows. Dover Port is equally important for freight, with the busiest roll on roll off (RORO) in Europe; 90% of UK freight goes through the strait. Air pollution, a trend of increasing traffic and the impact of sulphur oxide legislation make transport a key issue for the strait, and the ports and Channel Tunnel are vital for economic development. The ports of Boulogne-sur-mer and Calais are, respectively, the most important French port for sea fishing and the fourth most important for commercial traffic. The strait is also particularly important for its biodiversity value, fisheries, landscape value, cultural significance and tourism. The seabed features many wreck sites, with examples of boats and shipping going back to the bronze age.

Protected landscapes such as the 2 Caps and Kent Downs AONB featuring chalk cliffs and chalk downland are a key part of the identity and cultural heritage of the strait and hold a place in respective national historical events.

These landscapes, with views of the Dover Strait, are important for both tourism and quality of life; international designation for these areas and the wider strait is an aspiration which both Kent County Council and Pas-de-Calais County Council hold. Developing the identity of the Dover Strait as a shared marine area and focusing on associated tourism initiatives such as place making is an area both authorities would like to develop.

Partners involved

Lead Partner : Pas-de-Calais County Council – France
The Pas-de-Calais County Council is a French local authority on the Strait of Dover. It develops activities related to social inclusion, local transport, territorial planning and the environment. It supports the conservation of the Strait's biodiversity, in particular through the Great Site operation on the Grand Site des Deux-Caps which has been labelled Grand Site de France.

Website www.pasdecalais.fr

Kent County Council (KCC) – United Kingdom
KCC is the strategic authority for Kent in relation to coastal issues, but there are also 8 district authorities around the Kent coast, with 3 having a coastline along Dover Strait. KCC works in partnership with these authorities on coastal issues and on national marine issues with several organisations, but particularly the Marine Management Organisation.

Website www.kent.gov.uk

Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: implement a unique structure to represent the strait, clarify governance on biodiversity-related issues, develop a network of stakeholders representing public institutions, the private sector and researchers in key sectors.

Knowledge: develop, update and share common and cross-border knowledge on biodiversity and the natural environment and the impacts of human and natural pressures on biodiversity and the natural environment.

Action: share experiences and best practices between cross-border partners, implement cross-border actions to tackle the common challenge of air pollution due to traffic, address the integration of biodiversity challenges in the agricultural sector in Kent, create job opportunities through the development of cross-border business opportunities to address the economic deprivation, implement a common strategy to assess and reduce the impact of transport infrastructure on the strait.



Strait of Bonifacio



Strait of
Bonifacio



Characteristics of the strait

The Strait of Bonifacio lies between Corsica and Sardinia. It joins the Sea of Sardinia and the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is governed by the legal “right of unimpeded transit passage”, although the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) designated the strait and adjacent areas as a particularly sensitive sea area (PSSA). The strait is subject to intensive commercial traffic and yachting, and it is known for its dangerousness due to winds, currents, shoals and reefs. The strait comprises a geomarine national park and a marine protected area on both shores, and is jointly managed by the O.E.C and P.N.A.L.M. that have created the E.G.T.C – International Marine Park of Bouches de Bonifacio (GECT-PMIBB).

Partners involved

■ Corsican Environment Office (O.E.C) – France

The Corsican Environment Office is an industrial and commercial public body, responsible for strategic planning and protection and the promotion of the region's natural heritage. The OEC is the environment authority for the Corsican Territorial Authority's interventions.

Website www.oec.fr

■ Province of Sassari – Italy

The Province of Sassari coordinates the joint action of North-West Sardinian public and private stakeholders for the sustainable development of the area.

Website www.provincia.sassari.it

■ National Park of Maddalena Arcipelago – Italy

The National Park of Maddalena Arcipelago (PNALM) is a geomarine park which includes the Sardinian part of the Strait of Bonifacio. The PNALM is responsible for the protection and the promotion of the natural heritage of the area.

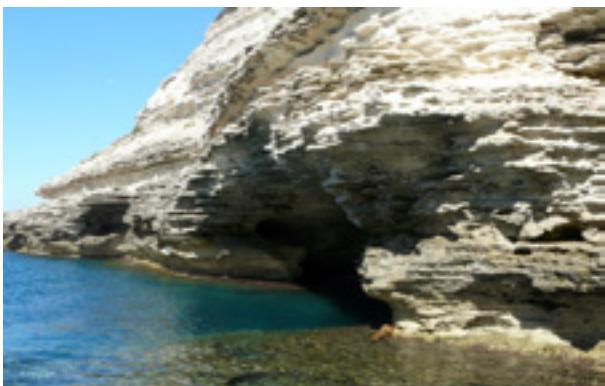
Website www.lamaddalenapark.it

Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: develop a network of stakeholders representing public institutions, the private sector and researchers in key sectors.

Knowledge: address pressures exerted on biodiversity and the natural environment and related impacts, evaluate the impacts of hazardous substance dispersal on the natural environment of the strait (it could lead to action at the international level), develop knowledge and analyse economic and social flows between the two sides of the strait and develop tools to monitor such flows.

Action: promote jobs and training, identify employment opportunities in relation to the integrated management of biodiversity and the natural environment with cross-border partnerships (for example in marine transport, tourism, local planning, local artisanal fishery and agriculture), highlight and value the cultural identity of the Strait and develop new business opportunities in relation to this identity, develop common strategies and actions to support the development of sustainable transport (in particular the transport of goods by road from the ferry ports), develop common actions to manage yachting activity consistently.



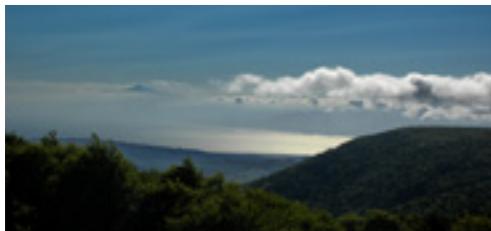
ENTE PARCO NAZIONALE
ARCIPELAGO DI LA MADDALENA



Strait of Messina



Strait of Messina



Characteristics of the strait

The Strait of Messina, located at the centre of the Mediterranean, connects Sicily to Europe and constitutes a bridge towards Afro-Asian countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Historically the strait represents a connection between east and west, north and south in the Mediterranean Sea. It is unique thanks to the shape of its landscape, its image as a mythical land, its function as an invaluable science laboratory due to its natural and historical features (thalassographic, seismic, biological). Its hydrogeological conditions are unique and its flora and fauna are equally uncommon. At the international level, the strategic position of the strait is key to transforming this area into a logistics platform for local-global relations. The territories of the Province of Messina and the Province of Reggio Calabria, as they have identical geo-climatic conditions, attract significant tourist traffic and are strategic tourist areas in southern Italy.

Partners involved

■ Province of Messina - Italy

The Province of Messina participates in the regional strategic planning and programming, including environmental protection and risk prevention. Unfortunately, the Province of Messina had to leave the NOSTRA project before the end.

Website www.provincia.messina.it

■ Province of Reggio Calabria – Italy

The Province of Reggio Calabria develops planning activities related to environmental protection and risk prevention.

Website www.provincia.rc.it

Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance:

- creation of a single entity for strait management (lack of integration between terrestrial and marine management) via the NOSTRA project, the EU could help by starting coordination at the local level.
- Initiatives may include aid for training local youths to recognise the cultural and natural heritage of the area as something to be valued and developed, and helping young people to join the local authorities bringing with them a fresh and different view.



Kvarken Strait



Kvarken Strait



Characteristics of the strait

The narrowest part of the Gulf of Bothnia, between Sweden and Finland, is called Kvarken. The distance from coast to coast is about 80km and between the outermost islands is only about 25km. The Kvarken divides the Bothnian Bay in the north from the Bothnian Sea in the south and forms a shallow underwater threshold in the Gulf of Bothnia. The Kvarken Region consists of the counties Ostrobothnia, Southern Ostrobothnia and Central Ostrobothnia in Finland and the County of Västerbotten and the municipality of Örnsköldsvik in Sweden. On the Finnish side there is a large archipelago with numerous islands: many of them have permanent inhabitants. The coastline and the shores are shallow and as the land is rising about 0.8mm every year, the scenery in the archipelago changes rapidly. The Ostrobothnian mainland is low with small rivers and fertile soil. On the Swedish side the archipelago is smaller and the shores are steeper. Particularly in the southern part of Västerbotten and in Örnsköldsvik in the High Coast area the archipelago is quite different than in Finland. The Kvarken Archipelago together with the High Coast in Sweden form a transboundary UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. The UNESCO World Heritage status was received because of the unique geological formations in the area, and because the area is the best place in the world in which to witness land uplift.

Partner involved

■ Kvarken Council – Finland/Sweden

The Kvarken Council is a cross-border bi-national cooperation association formed by municipal and regional authorities. The Kvarken Council was founded in 1972 and has since carried out over 100 cross-border projects in tourism, transport, culture and protection of the environment.

Website www.kvarken.org

Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: the differing governance structures (centralisation vs decentralisation) on either side of the strait may provide opportunities for the two countries' regional authorities to learn from each other, the involvement of the private sector should be supported.

Knowledge: enhance capacity building (balance the knowledge sharing between Sweden and Finland, more technical experts in Finnish regional authorities...), carry out basin-specific studies, develop knowledge exchange between academic researchers (from the local universities) and regional government officers.

Action: strong inter-governmental collaboration on the Finnish side to respond to marine coastal management issues, more decentralised decision making on the Swedish side to allow quicker reactions to environmental issues, develop action plans and guidance to help business sectors to better understand their business dependency on marine biodiversity and ecosystems, identify new employment opportunities associated with biodiversity and ecosystems, build a common database regarding marine biodiversity.



Gulf of Finland



Gulf of Finland



Characteristics of the strait

The Gulf of Finland is the easternmost arm of the Baltic Sea that extends between Finland (to the north) and Estonia (to the south) to St. Petersburg in Russia. Major cities around the Gulf include Helsinki, Tallinn and St. Petersburg. The Port of Tallinn (including ports of Muuga and Paldiski) and the Port of Helsinki are among the busiest ports in the Baltic Sea. The eastern parts of the Gulf of Finland belong to Russia, and some of Russia's most important harbours are located near St. Petersburg. The Gulf of Finland is a crucial sea route and maritime area to the regions of Harju (Estonia) and Uusimaa (Finland) from an economic, environmental and social perspective. More than 7.5 million passengers cross the seaway between Helsinki and Tallinn by ferry annually. The Gulf is usually frozen from late November to late April and has a rich variety of aquatic and terrestrial species.

Partners involved

■ Harju County Government – Estonia

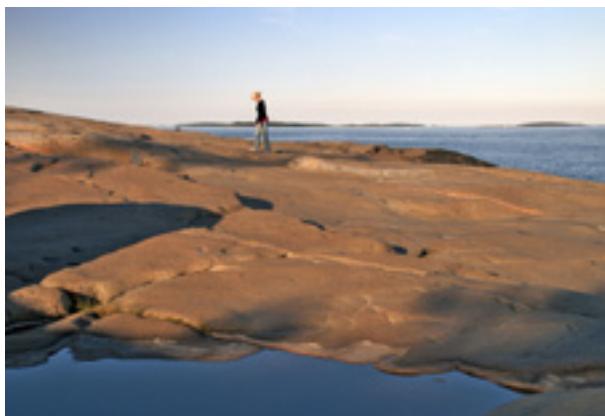
Harju County Government (HCG) is an Estonian regional authority responsible for regional planning and sustainable and balanced development and development cooperation at a regional level.

Website harju.maavalitsus.ee

■ Uusimaa Regional Council – Finland

Uusimaa Regional Council is responsible for regional development plans and implementation of strategic activities with local public and private stakeholders.

Website www.uudenmaanliitto.fi



Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: creation of an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) dedicated to the management and implementation of territorial cooperation projects co-financed by ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) or ESF (European Social Fund), creation of working groups to gather experts on particular subjects on the Finnish side, joint projects targeting marine spatial planning.

Knowledge: improve the Estonian database on marine protected areas using research work, encourage knowledge sharing between the two sides of the Gulf by developing, updating and sharing a common and cross-border knowledge on marine diversity and the environment (webportal), encourage knowledge sharing with other countries around the Baltic Sea.

Action: maritime management (develop a common logistic corridor) to help improve the infrastructure of logistics areas and ports, nature conservation (in particular migrating birds), transport infrastructure (feasibility study of Helsinki-Tallinn fixed link is highly recommended).



Helsinki-Uusimaa
Region

Straight of Otranto



Straight of Otranto



Characteristics of the strait

The Strait of Otranto connects the Adriatic Sea with the Ionian Sea and separates Italy from Albania. Its width from Kepi I Gjuhes, Karaburun, Albania to Punta Palascia, east of Salento is less than 72km (45 miles). The strait is named after the Italian city of Otranto. The Strait of Otranto has a very strategic position and for centuries has been a key to controlling all traffic flow from the Mediterranean to Adriatic seas. It is crossed by a high volume of legal and illegal shipping traffic. The tourism sector has experienced a steady growth trend in recent years. The sea of Otranto, among the cleanest in Italy, offers a wealth of fish and fishing activity is widely practiced.

Partners involved

■ Province of Lecce – Italy

The Province of Lecce is competent in the fields of economic development, tourism, territorial planning and transport.

Website www.provincia.le.it

■ Vlora Regional Council – Albania

The Regional Council of Vlora is responsible for regional strategies for economic development and environmental protection.

Website www.qarkuvlore.gov.al



Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

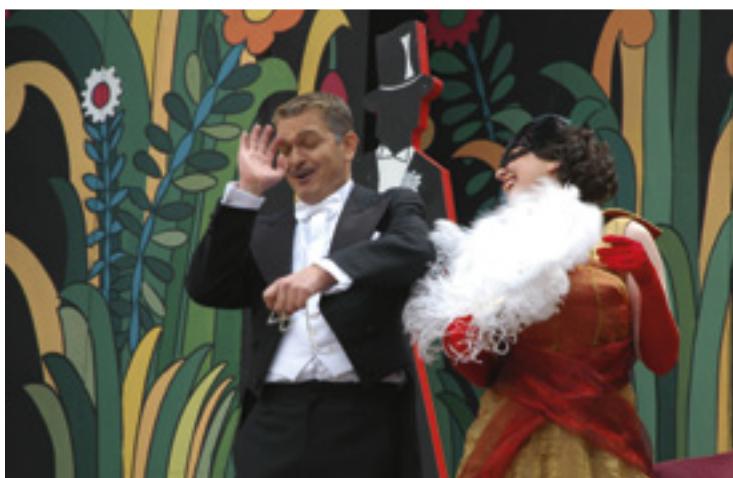
Governance: implement a unique structure that could represent the strait, giving a long term perspective to cooperation between the countries of the Adriatic, develop tools for cooperation at the regional or provincial scale, clarify governance for making decisions on biodiversity-related issues, develop a network of stakeholders representing public institutions, the private sector and researchers in key sectors, develop cooperation between Albania and Italy within a framework of technical initiatives, develop a formal structure to work on the responsibilities of stakeholders in relation to damage to biodiversity in international waters.

Knowledge: develop, update and share a common and cross-border knowledge on biodiversity and the natural environment and on the impacts of human and natural pressures on biodiversity and the natural environment, clarify the pressures responsible for coastal erosion and the impacts of maritime traffic on natural resources, establish the impacts of tourism on coastal and inland environments.

Action: share experiences and best practices between cross-border partners, enhance the promotion of jobs and training and the identification of job opportunities in relation to the integrated management of biodiversity with cross-border partnerships (in marine transport, tourism, local planning, fisheries and agriculture), work with local communities in protected natural areas to develop local benefits and at the same time improve the protection of biodiversity.



Fehmarn Belt



Fehmarn Belt



Characteristics of the strait

The Fehmarn Belt is a strait connecting the Bay of Kiel and the Bay of Mecklenburg in the western part of the Baltic Sea between the German island of Fehmarn and the Danish island of Lolland. Ferry transport connects the Puttgarden and Rødby harbours on the two islands. The strait incorporates an 18km (10 nautical miles) wide area with depths of 20–30 metres. Currents in the strait are weak and mostly dependent on wind. The Fehmarn Belt strait is a vital route for the transport of passengers and goods between Scandinavia and northern Europe. It is also one of the most important shipping routes between the Baltic Sea through the Great Belt and into the Atlantic, where large container carriers and oil tankers with considerable depths need to pass. The Danish and German authorities plan to build a tunnel across the strait for commercial and private traffic. The bi-national Fehmarnbelt Committee represents the joint interests of the Fehmarnbelt region.

Partners involved

■ Region Zealand – Denmark

Region Zealand is the regional authority for regional transport planning, soil and water conservation and regional development. Region Zealand plays a central role in a network of cooperating partners from Region Zealand and neighboring German, Danish and Swedish regions, who work for a dynamic and coordinated development, i.a. for business, education, urban development, public transport and certain environmental areas.

Website www.regionsjaelland.dk

■ County of Ostholstein – Germany

The County of Ostholstein is the German authority for the public cross-border dialogue processes around the management of the Fehmarn Belt and contiguous territories.

Website www.kreis-oh.de

Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: creation of an EGTC, rationalisation of the number of cooperation structures (too many cross-border cooperation structures).

Knowledge: need for increasing knowledge-sharing based cooperation (in particular on the theme of biodiversity), need to systematically study various factors impacting biodiversity and ecosystems in the region.

Action: concern for long-term sustainability (sustainable use of biodiversity resources) that should be integrated into the regional development plans on both sides of the strait, need to strengthen the biodiversity and nature conservation measures in both regions (which may lead to the creation of green jobs and enhance local livelihoods).



KREIS
OSTHOLSTEIN

Strait of Sicily



Strait of Sicily



Characteristics of the strait

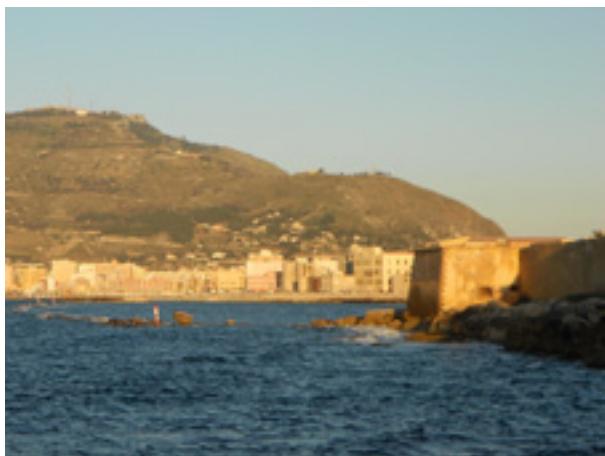
The Strait of Sicily lies between Sicily and Tunisia. The island of Pantelleria lies in the middle of the strait. At the narrowest point of the strait, between Capo Feto, near Mazara del Vallo, Cape Bon and near El Haouaria, the width is about 145 km. Its maximum depth is 316 m. Deep currents in the strait flow from east to west, whereas a current close to the surface of the water travels in the opposite direction. This unusual water flow is of interest to oceanographers. The Strait is one of the world's most important underwater heritage sites. It is also one of the main marine seaways and one of the most used fishing areas in the Mediterranean Sea. It is the European gateway to Maghreb Area and northern Africa.

Partner involved

■ Regional Province of Trapani – Italy

The Province of Trapani is the Sicilian border of the Strait of Sicily. It carries out cross-border cooperation programmes (scientific research, environment and culture).

Website www.provincia.trapani.it

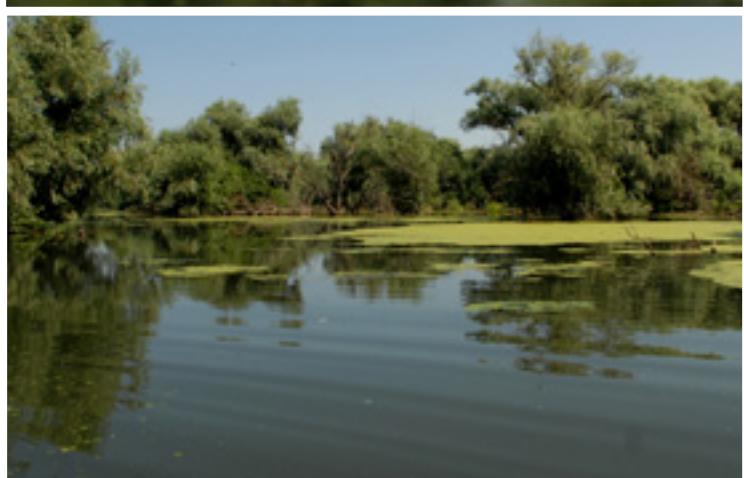
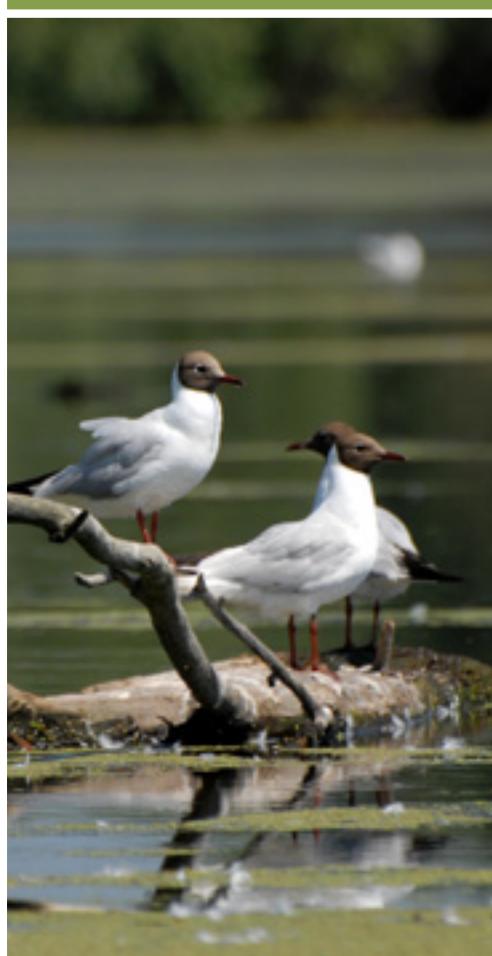


Main recommendations of the NOSTRA baseline study for the strait

Governance: there is a lack of planning and coordination measures targeting the management of private and public funding. In this context the integrated EU management of straits could help to eliminate some blockages. However, the specific position of the strait (Italy-Africa) and the difficult relationship with the Tunisian authorities, who are very rigid in relation to the national marine areas, are key issues for the area, notably in terms of fishing practices since EU and Tunisia do not share the same legislative approach to fisheries in international marine areas. To solve the situation and to have integrated management, international agreements, which are lacking at the moment, would be needed. At a more local level, there is a lack of entities for the environmental certification of fishery products and for an integrated network to promote tourism.



Danube Delta



Characteristics of the area

The Danube Delta (Delta Dunarii) is the best preserved delta on the continent. It is located in the south-eastern part of Europe, at the end of the Danube river which has a hydrographic basin of 817,700 km² (representing 8% of the continent). Most of the Danube Delta lies in Romania (Tulcea county), while its northern part, on the left bank of the Chilia arm, is situated in Ukraine (Odessa Oblast). The Danube branches into three main distributaries in the delta: Chilia, Sulina, and Sfântul Gheorghe. At the mouths of each channel the gradual formation of new land takes place as the delta continues to expand. This low alluvial plain, mostly covered by wetlands and water, hosts 23 natural ecosystems and 7 anthropic ecosystems.

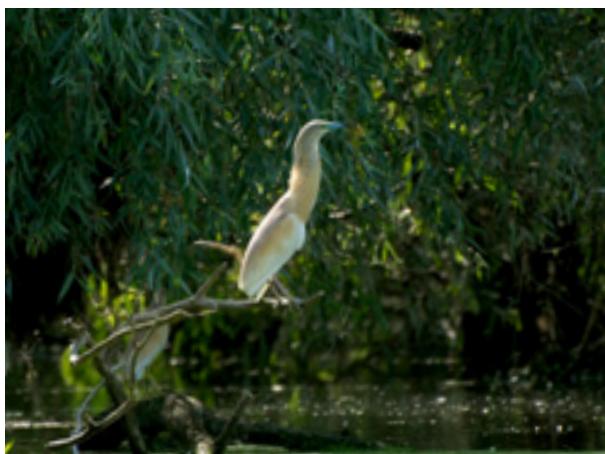


Partner involved

■ Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development – Romania

The Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development (DDNI) is most experienced in the research and safeguard, conservation and management of natural heritage in sensitive geographical areas.

Website www.ddni.ro





Part II

NOSTRA Good Practices

A joint governance

Why work on cross-border governance?

The straits have many unique features and are often cross-border regions. The issue of governance is of great importance in addressing the challenges faced by the straits, especially environmental challenges such as biodiversity conservation or protection of natural heritage that need to be tackled at a large scale.

As highlighted by the NOSTRA baseline study, a lack of formal governance structure or of a common strategy for a strait, often comes to light when local authorities from each part of a strait work together. Governance issues can be considered in many ways and at different levels:

- Who? cooperation between cross-border local authorities, involvement of private companies or research and higher education organisations
- What? formal governance structure, informal regular cooperation through common initiatives
- How? common development strategy, common planning documents

How to tackle the issue of straits' common governance?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several good practices linked with governance issues have been presented. They all give an answer to local issues but can also be a source of inspiration for straits that do not yet have a formal structure of cross-border governance.

The Kvarken Council was established in 1972 by Finnish and Swedish local authorities from each side of the Strait of Kvarken. It is a cross-border regional organisation with board and staff members from each country.

The Fehmarnbelt Committee coordinates cooperation on cross-border (Danish-German) work in the Fehmarnbelt region. The committee is composed of Danish and German politicians and representatives from municipalities and county authorities as well as representatives from organisations and associations. The goal of the Fehmarnbelt Committee is to position the Fehmarnbelt region as a destination on the axis of development between Copenhagen/Malmö and Hamburg and to ensure an integrated process through recommendations and support for cross-border activities.

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (E.G.T.C) of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio unites the French Environment Office of Corsica and the Italian National Park of La Maddalena Arcipelago within a single cross-border organisation recognized by European law.

The Gulf of Finland Year is organised by Finnish, Estonian and Russian local authorities in order to seek solutions for sustainable exploitation of the sea through the joint efforts of the three countries as well as an active collaboration within the scientific and decision-making communities and society through a variety of events.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a partnership between a European region and a region of a candidate country to facilitate the (sustainable) development of the two territories. It has been implemented in the Strait of Otranto between Italian and Albanian local authorities.

The Fehmarn Belt Days are an event that aims to create connections between the German and the Danish sides of the Fehmarn Belt and to identify new opportunities of cross-border cooperation for the strait.



The Kvarken Council

- **Location** Kvarken Strait (Finland/Sweden)
- **Partner(s)** Kvarken council
- **Timescale** 1972 onwards
- **Funding** Nordic Council of Ministers, member fees



What is it?

The Kvarken Council is one of the Nordic Council of Ministers' official border organisations. It includes several municipal and regional authorities: Örnsköldsvik municipality, Region of Västerbotten Vaasa, Seinäjoki, Kokkola, Pietarsaari, Regional Councils of Ostrbobothnia, Southern Ostrobothnia and Central Ostrobothnia. It is an organisation registered in Finland, but its staff are from both Finland and Sweden and there are 6 board members per country. The Chairmanship of the council is rotated between Umeå and Vaasa every two years. The administration of the council is financed by member fees and the Nordic Council of Ministers funds are mainly used for co-funding cross-border cooperation projects.

Origin of the practice

The Kvarken region is united by its long history of cross-border communication, relations, trading and common cultural heritage. It is also one of the 19 transboundary UNESCO world heritage sites since 2000 (High Coast) and 2006 (Kvarken archipelago). Therefore, it does make sense to consider the region's development in its cross-border dimension.



Objectives and implementation

The aim of the Kvarken Council is to work for regional integration and to promote cooperation within public and private sectors in order to eliminate border barriers and to develop the regional assets. Currently, the Kvarken Council is working towards securing and developing the international E12 transport and communications corridor across the Kvarken Strait by a TEN-T project called the Midway Alignment of the Botnian Corridor. The Kvarken Council is also helping to develop the regional infrastructure, to strengthen the region's businesses and higher education and to develop tourism and culture.

To do so, the Council develops networking and lobbying activities, organises conferences, leads studies, provides travel grants and translation services and helps organisations to initiate regional border projects.

Key success factors

The Kvarken Council is considered a good practice as it involves local and regional authorities from each part of the strait and encourages cross-border development and cooperation projects. It is currently considering becoming an EGTC: that would be the first in Northern Europe. This practice could be transferred to other straits in order to improve joint governance and facilitate common projects within a strait.



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Website www.kvarken.org

EGTC in Bonifacio

- **Location** Strait of Bonifacio (France/Italy)
- **Partner(s)** Corsican Environment Office, National Park of Maddalena Archipelago
- **Timescale** 2012 onwards
- **Funding** Member fees (with regional, national and European contributions)



What is it?

Since 2006 (EC No 1082/2006), a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is a cross-border structure with a legal personality dedicated to the management of an international territory. The EGTC of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio (EGTC-PMIBB) unites the French Environment Office of Corsica and the Italian National Park of the Maddalena Archipelago within a single cross-border organisation recognised by European law. The main aim of this EGTC is to focus on the protection, management and use of the natural and cultural heritage of the Strait of Bonifacio, in order to implement a common strategy for the sustainable development of the Strait.

Origin of the practice

The National Park of the Maddalena Archipelago (in Sardinia) and the Natural Reserve of the Strait of Bonifacio (in Corsica) were created in 1994 and 1999 respectively. The idea to create an international marine park between Corsica and Sardinia dates from the beginning of the 1990s. In the French-Italian Memorandum of Understanding of 1993, there was a real will to obtain international recognition of the unique ecology of this Strait.



Objectives and implementation

The aim of the EGTC is to consider the Strait of Bonifacio as a functional unit and to improve the knowledge of the Strait at this scale. It allows issues to be addressed at a larger scale and to help in finding solutions to difficult issues (maritime traffic, tourism flows...) on both sides of the Strait. Among other things, it helps with the implementation of measures needed to reinforce or optimise maritime safety in the strait. The EGTC is also the voice of the strait and tries to obtain recognition of local concerns on the European and international stages. The assembly of the EGTC is composed of members from both institutions (8 votes each) and the Presidency is rotated every 3 years.

Key success factors

The EGTC-PMIBB is considered as good practice as it involves public organisations from each part of the Strait in a single organisation with a legal personality. It contributes to good management and promotion of the Strait. This practice could be transferred to other straits in order to improve joint governance and facilitate a common vision and strategy for a strait; it does not necessarily need to focus on environmental issues and can be adapted to other local issues.



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Website www.pmibb.com

Gulf of Finland Year 2014

- **Location** Gulf of Finland (Finland/Estonia)
- **Partner(s)** Harju County Government, Uusimaa Regional Council
- **Timescale** 2012-15
- **Funding** Partners' participation and some State financed projects (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment etc.)



What is it?

The Gulf of Finland Year 2014 is co-organised by the Ministries of Environment of Finland (lead partner), Estonia and Russia, through an international steering committee and national steering groups and a network of cities, research institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations, foundations and private companies. The patrons of the Gulf of Finland Year 2014 are the Presidents of the Republic of Finland, of the Russian Federation and of the Republic of Estonia. It gathers experts, decision-makers and citizens from Finland, Estonia and Russia. The idea is to find solutions for the sustainable use of the Gulf of Finland. It is an opportunity to analyse the ecological status of the Gulf through the joint effort of the three countries.

Origin of the practice

The Gulf of Finland Year addresses a need for accurate scientific data on the ecological state of the Gulf in order to implement cost-effective and well-targeted actions to stop the deterioration of the Gulf. The first Gulf of Finland Year took place in 1996 and was primarily for scientists.



Objectives and implementation

The aim of the Gulf of Finland Year is to assess in detail the ecological status of the Gulf of Finland through the joint efforts of Finland, Estonia and Russia. It aims to produce up-to-date research information to support ecosystem based decision making and to raise public awareness through various events and media visibility. This requires deeper international cooperation as well as the engagement of many stakeholders, from public authorities to private companies and the general public. To do so, joint research projects are organised, as well as Scientific Forums in the three countries. Public events are planned to gain visibility on the national and international stages. One of the focuses is education with courses for pupils and students, but it also targets politicians and decision-makers through tailored seminars.

Key success factors

The Gulf of Finland Year is a good example of cross-border governance as it involves not only local and national authorities but also people from research and from the private sector as well as the public. It is particularly interesting as it should lead to political agreement between the ministries of the three countries on the most important measures to implement in order to improve the state of the Gulf: the Gulf of Finland Declaration.

This practice could be transferred to other straits in order to create a network of stakeholders representing public institutions, private sector and researchers in key sectors. It could facilitate a common vision for a strait and actions in favour of its sustainable development.

Contact Kai Myrberg, Finnish Environment Institute

Website www.gof2014.fi

Fehmarnbelt Days 2014

- **Location** Fehmarn Belt (Germany/Denmark)
- **Partner(s)** Region Zealand, County of Ostholstein
- **Timescale** 2014
- **Funding** Partners' participation and sponsors



What is it?

The Fehmarnbelt Days is a three day event that provides a platform for stakeholders from the cross-border region of Fehmarnbelt. The partners jointly organising the Fehmarnbelt Days are Femern A/S (in charge of preparation, research and planning in relation to the establishment of a fixed link across the Fehmarnbelt), STRING (Region of Scania, Copenhagen Region, Copenhagen City, Region Zealand, Schleswig Holstein, Hamburg), Fehmarnbelt Committee, Fehmarn Belt Business Council (FBBC), Danish Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs and Baltic Development Forum.

The Fehmarnbelt Days 2014 focuses on Creating Connections and takes place in Copenhagen on 30 September-2 October 2014.

Origin of the practice

The Fehmarnbelt Region covers northern Germany, the eastern part of Denmark and southern Sweden. It is a region which is under development, with a project to provide a fixed link across the Fehmarnbelt that would improve access between the region's urban areas and contribute to development, growth and prosperity in the region. There is a high



level of desire from the population for the development of a common labour market through the joint efforts of the three countries (poll in 2012) and a need to put the Fehmarnbelt regional development on the public and political agenda.

Objectives and implementation

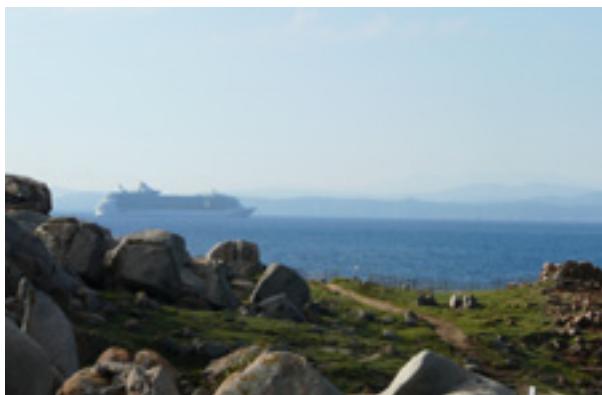
The objective of the Fehmarnbelt Days is to enable the exchange of ideas and experiences between stakeholders from the region and beyond, with representatives from industry, tourism and business as well as politicians, civil society and students. It is a unique opportunity to discuss key issues, develop cross-border collaboration and tap into the growth opportunities of the region. The Fehmarnbelt Days address many areas such as infrastructure, tourism, business, labour market, transport and logistics, education and research, with a number of conferences and events. Each partner is responsible for one event and pays all the costs of their event.

Key success factors

The Fehmarnbelt Days are an interesting example of cross-border governance as they involve people from the economic world, researchers, politicians etc., within a flexible structure. It is an event that can contribute to the existence of a sense of belonging to an emerging cross-border region. This practice could be transferred to other straits in order to create a network of stakeholders and to facilitate the emergence of a sense of belonging to a cross-border region.

Website www.fehmarnbeltdays.com

Seascapes and marine spatial planning



Why work on seascapes and marine spatial planning?

The straits are territories that often combine an incredible environmental richness with a high density of human activities and traffic. An important issue is combining the conservation of the environment, inhabitants' quality of life and economic development. This is particularly true in cross-border regions where a small portion of sea is subject to the influence and the activities of several countries.

To answer these issues, one solution is marine spatial planning, whether on one side of the strait or, ideally, on both shores. This can enable integrated management of the strait's resources, with a real (and joint) strategy of development and conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage.

Seascapes are also an important element to consider. Indeed, it is not only an essential resource for economic activities such as tourism or representative of specific habitats, but also a key element for the sense of belonging to a particular area. Finally, as the example of the UNESCO World Heritage designation of the Strait of Kvarken shows, a unique seascapes can also contribute to the international reputation of the strait.

How to tackle the issue of high concentrations of activities and conservation of the environment in the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, two good examples have been given to illustrate the pertinence of marine spatial planning to straits' territories.

Seascape character assessment and marine planning processes have been implemented in Kent in order to address the intensified use of the marine space and its resources, which impact the sustainability of the marine environment. The MMO (Marine Management Organisation) was tasked with putting in place "marine plans", incorporating a strategic approach that integrates social, economic and environmental objectives. In addition, work to characterise the coastal landscapes of the south of England is underway for the purpose of informing decisions on coastal and marine development projects and of capturing the strait's unique seascapes value.

Marine planning has been initiated in the Gulf of Finland by HELCOM and VASAB, with the objective to move towards the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea space, balancing the use of resources with protection of a unique natural heritage. The idea is to consider jointly how the various activities (tourism, coastal defence, ports, shipping, military activities, oil/gas extraction, fishing etc.) can co-exist within a small space bordering nine countries.



Seascape Character Assessment (SCA) and Marine Planning

- **Location** Dover Strait (English side)
- **Partner(s)** Kent County Council
- **Timescale** Pilot study for English side of Dover strait in 2013, to be completed in 2014 on French side thanks to NOSTRA
- **Funding** UK government for strategic seascapes work as part of Marine Plans and INTERREG funds for Dover Strait



What is it?

SCA is a technique which has been developed from Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in the UK and the seascapes approach is being incorporated into the first ever Marine Plans, which are being drawn up in the UK under the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009. Utilising a wide variety of data, seascapes can help to identify the natural, cultural and aesthetic characteristics of an area to assist with better informed decision making and policy development. There are 11 Marine Plan Areas in England, and the objective is to have all plans in place by 2021. They will be the basis of decision-making and licensing in these areas. The seascapes approach is an important element of the Marine Plans, providing a key democratic input on how people perceive and value their marine environment.

Origin of the practice

In the UK, the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) provides a legislative basis for a marine planning system. The Marine Policy Statement (MPS) is the framework for marine plans and making decisions. Marine Plans translate the MPS into detailed policy and spatial guidance for each Marine Plan area. The Marine Plan Areas of the South of England play an important role in this marine planning process and were selected for the size of their fishing sectors (shellfish in particular), ports and shipping, the high proportion of marine protected areas and tourist activities (marinas etc.).

Objectives and implementation

Since it was established in 2009, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is, among other things, in charge of implementing a new marine planning system to address the increasing use of marine space and resources, impacting on the sustainability of the marine environment. This process involves a lot of stakeholders at different levels (local, regional, national and even international). Terrestrial

planning documents have to be taken into account when they deal with relevant marine issues. The Marine Planning Portal is an online tool that enables stakeholders to interact with the planning process.

Seascapes work will contribute towards the writing of policy within the Marine Plans.

The NOSTRA SCA study will also be utilised by the MMO as a more detailed example of how an SCA can nest within broader strategic seascapes work and to explore the importance of cross border working within Marine Planning.

Key success factors

The English Marine Plans are a good example of a marine planning strategy as they take into consideration economic, social and environmental aspects of the marine areas. It would be interesting to implement such a policy at a cross-border scale. Both the Marine Plans and the Seascape Character Assessment are considered as good practice as they contribute to better knowledge of the marine and coastal areas and could be transferred to other straits. The SCA is particularly interesting for its contribution to the global comprehension of the coastal areas, not only in a technical way but also in a sensitive way; it contributes to the recognition of the natural and cultural heritage of the Dover Strait and is currently being implemented on the French side of the strait.

Contact Chris Drake, KCC, chris.drake@kent.gov.uk
David Hutchinson, MMO, david.hutchinson@marinemangement.org.uk

Websites

- > planningportal.marinemanagement.org.uk
- > www.nostraproject.eu/News/NOSTRA-Workshop-n-1-Seascapes-Report-Available

Sustainable tourism

Why work on sustainable tourism?

The straits are often attractive areas for tourists due to their unusual landscapes and rich environment. The difficulty is then to enable economic development of the area through tourism without endangering biodiversity and natural heritage, which are resources of great value.

The idea is not to prevent tourism in the straits because of the fragile areas but to control tourism flows and to encourage environmentally-friendly tourist behaviours. Indeed, even if it can limit short-term tourism profits, it ensures the long-term sustainability of tourism activities as it contributes to the protection of the natural resources that attract tourists, whether it is a particular flora or fauna, the quality of seawaters or the beauty of seascapes.

How to tackle the issue of tourism and environmental protection in the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several examples of environmentally-friendly tourism strategies have been presented.

CAST (Coastal Actions for Sustainable Tourism) is an INTERREG IVA project between Northern France, Belgium and southern England. It combines innovative activities to boost coastal tourism and change the perception of the coastlines through the identification of new opportunities to attract and retain visitors and to guarantee sustainable tourism.

GREET (Creating a new tourist destination) is another cross-border project on the Dover Strait. Its objective is to provide a response to issues around the development of the tourist economy (developing skills, obtaining recognition of cultural assets, retaining visitors etc.), in particular through the promotion of the two countries as a single destination and the opportunity offered to the region by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Friendly Islands Route (FIR) is a project which is born of the need to connect various services in order to be in a position to attract tourists to the coasts and small islands of the Gulf of Finland. Studies have permitted mapping of needs and

shortfalls so as to improve the offer. A brochure including the whole gamut of services offered at the home ports has been published.

Joint management of boating traffic and maritime tourism has been developed under the auspices of the EGCT (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio. In order to minimise the impact of anchoring on the habitats of protected species, several actions have been implemented: a ban on casting anchor in fragile areas, the installation of mooring buoys and a trial cross-border team for marine surveillance of the area.

Managing tourism in a biosphere reserve was a challenge for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA) after the classification of the Danube Delta. In partnership with tour operators, the DDBRA established 24 tourist routes (15 of which are waterways) to limit the areas used for tourism and to minimise the environmental impact of these activities.

Development of tourism economy in the region of Salento has been encouraged thanks to the actions of the Province of Lecce, which has set up a number of projects aimed at developing tourism and culture, both from a territorial point of view (in particular by developing the rural heritage) and a sectorial point of view.

UNESCO World Heritage of the Kvarken Archipelago has been highlighted thanks to storytelling in order to respond to a lack of tourist resources (events, guides etc.). A LEADER project was set up by the municipalities of Korsnäs and Malax, with a project leader in dialogue with local enterprises, local authorities, NGOs and, in particular, schools. The project leader used as his starting point a very old book (1894) which tells the story of a lighthouse keeper at the end of the eighteenth century, defending his lighthouse against the Russians. This book served as the basis for the use of storytelling as a method of unlocking local history and culture for tourist groups, in particular by means of a walking trail leading to a miniature replica of the lighthouse where, overlooking the sea, tourists are told the romanticised story of the lighthouse keeper. The project leader was made World Heritage Ambassador for the Kvarken Archipelago.

CAST (Coastal Actions for Sustainable Tourism)

- **Location** Dover Strait (France/United Kingdom)
- **Partner(s)** Kent County Council,
Pas-de-Calais County Council
- **Timescale** 2010-2014
- **Funding** INTERREG IVA
and partners of the project



What is it?

CAST is a cross-border project under the INTERREG IVA 2 Seas programme. This project consists of a number of innovative activities that aim to strengthen coastal tourism by identifying new opportunities to attract and retain visitors and improve products and services, while guaranteeing the sustainability of this important economic activity.

Origin of the practice

Kent, Pas-de-Calais and West-Flanders experience similar issues in coastal tourism, which is declining despite its significant value at international and European level; therefore, they sought common solutions.

Objectives and implementation

The first objective of the CAST project is to inspire a new and innovative program of change to influence the future development of coastal assets by identifying the basic tourism infrastructure and product in the cross-border area to prevent its decline. The second objective is to change perceptions of the coast by strengthening the image and collectively developing new target groups to generate increased spend in the economy of the 2-seas area and communicating with them in different ways using new technologies. Finally, the aim is also to involve local people to help shape the future development of the tourism economy, in particular young people through education establishments, local residents, second home owners and businesses. To develop sustainable tourism, the project seeks improvements in product quality, communication, marketing and research development.

Key success factors

The CAST project is considered as good practice as it benefits local governments (better insight into the current situation that enables them to plan for more specific investments), tourism businesses (more motivation to work on quality issues), local population (enjoy better quality infrastructure and more engaged in the development of the region) and visitors (enjoy enhanced environment and quality welcome). It contributed to the competitiveness of the cross-border region in respect of the natural environment. It could be transferred to other straits that face specific issues about tourism and would like to challenge them on both shores.



Contact Visit Kent, enquiries@visitkent.co.uk, and Pas-de-Calais Tourisme, accueil@pas-de-calais.com

Website

www.visitkent.co.uk and www.pas-de-calais-tourisme.com

Friendly Islands Route

- **Location** Gulf of Finland (Finland/Estonia)
- **Partner(s)** Uusimaa Regional Council and Harju County Government
- **Timescale** 2008-2011
- **Funding** National funding and Central Baltic INTERREG IVA



What is it?

Friendly Islands Route was a project resulting from the need to connect different tourism services to make the region more attractive. The project took into account the history, individuality and natural environment of the islands.

Origin of the practice

Many small harbours of the Gulf of Finland lacked in quality and well-organised services as well as a connection to the tourism activities in the region. There was a need to connect different services into a chain of services capable of attracting tourists.

Objectives and implementation

The objectives of the project were to facilitate travel in the coastal areas and smaller islands of the Gulf of Finland and to make the region more attractive to tourists. The FIR project enhanced travel in the coastal areas and smaller islands of Estonia and Finland. By analysing the situation concerning existing routes, the project created proposals on how to make improvements. To do so, mapping of data about the existing tourist routes and services has been carried out. Surveys and research studies supporting accessibility to and information about the archipelago and the islands have been undertaken. The project involved both public and private sectors. As a result, a very informative and attractive brochure including maps, locations, services etc. of guest harbours in the coastal area has been published. This brochure is updated every year with accurate information.

Key success factors

This project is considered as good practice as it assisted in the development of tourism in the Gulf of Finland (identification of the needs and gaps) and also because it contributed to the reinforcement of its identity. Indeed, the coast of the Baltic Sea is heavily populated and throughout history people have used the sea and the coast as a resource for various activities (fishing, shipping, tourism, industry etc.)



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Website <http://fir.viimsi.ee>

Development of tourism economy in Salento area

- **Location** Strait of Otranto (Italy)
- **Partner(s)** Province of Lecce
- **Timescale** 2000 onwards
- **Funding** Regional, LEADER, ERDF



What is it?

The Province of Lecce has developed a strategy for the development of the tourism economy. It takes the form of a number of projects that aim to develop tourism and culture in the regional territory from a territorial perspective (in particular highlighting the rural heritage) and by theme (environmental and cultural resources). It is also incorporated into strategic documents such as the Local Development Plans of the Province of Lecce, that include as an objective the development of non-agricultural activities and the encouragement of tourism activities.

Origin of the practice

The region has many tourism assets including natural and cultural heritage and tourist facilities. In the last decade, there has been an increase in tourist arrivals and of nights spent in the area.

Objectives and implementation

There are several objectives, in particular the wish to consolidate the area's tourist attraction through an integrated programme to promote and enhance its image among foreign clientele, in order to prompt seasonal adaptation, improved consideration of environmental impacts, better profit for tourist enterprises, the resultant economic development, the involvement of the local community etc. This takes the form of strategic projects such as the creation of tourist routes. It also includes the enhancement of cultural heritage, the involvement of public and private sectors, a labelling system, the networking of regional resources and the development of an agri-food district and of manufacturing industries. Cultural and Environmental Systems (SAC) have been implemented at a territorial level for efficient integrated management.

Key success factors

The practice developed in the Province of Lecce appears interesting as it is a global strategy for the development of tourism as a sustainable economic strength. It highlights several themes and territorial objectives, and targeted projects are implemented to address these objectives.



Contact

Tourism and Marketing office, turismo@provincia.le.it
Community Policies Office, Politiche.ue@provincia.le.it

Website www.provincia.le.it

Sustainable transport

Why work on sustainable transport?

The straits are the narrowest parts of sea in between two areas of land. Thereby, they are key passage routes and most of the NOSTRA straits have important traffic, whether marine or terrestrial, concentrated in a compact, so more vulnerable, space. This traffic generates a range of pollution (air, water, noise...) that can threaten biodiversity and be harmful for the environment and quality of life on the coasts and in the hinterlands.

Therefore, it is important to consider new transport solutions that would be more sensitive to the environment without endangering the economic development of the regions bordering the straits: alternative modes of transport, improvement of transport technologies, green logistic corridors etc.

How to address transport needs in a more sustainable way in the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several examples of innovative and more environmentally-friendly transport solutions have been presented.

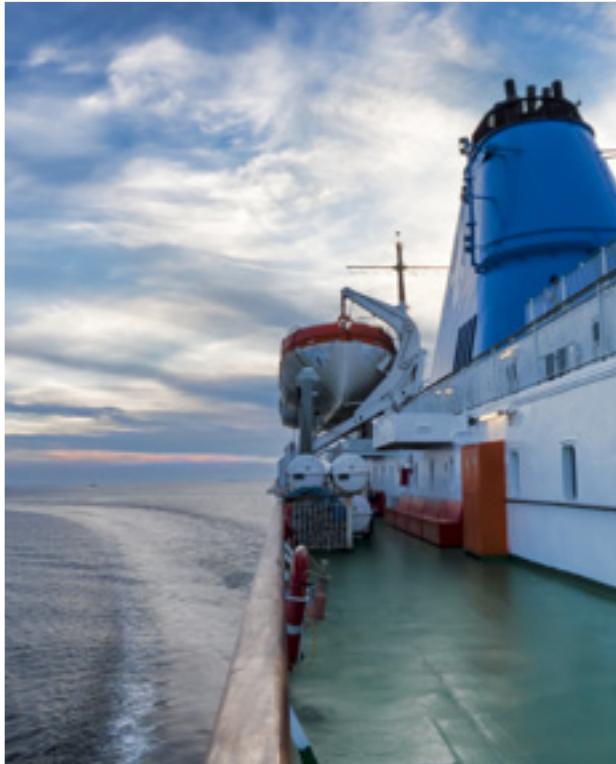
The Green STRING Corridor is an answer to the need to reduce the increase in road traffic and its negative effects without creating obstacles to economic growth. This INTERREG IVA project aims to develop a rail corridor between Hamburg (Germany) and Öresund (Sweden) in order to enable a modal shift. In addition, the project aims to reduce CO₂ emissions through the use of new fuels and zero-emission technologies. The stakeholders involved intend to create a true logistic hub at the link between Scandinavia and mainland Europe, with a particular view to fully benefitting from the planned opening of the Fehmarnbelt Tunnel in 2021.

Safe and green boats are another solution presented by the Romanian partner of NOSTRA. Considering the pollution generated by boats, either when sailing (water and air pollution, noise pollution, accidents etc.) or during their recycling process, the idea is to design more ecological and safer vessels, for example by means of a double hull that is more resistant to impacts. Limiting the emissions generated by ships can be achieved by reducing their energy consumption (optimisation of hull shape, new propulsion system, energy recovery and the use of renewable energies), reducing their speed and/or increasing their capacity.

The Fehmarnbelt Tunnel project arose from the desire to increase economic exchange and encourage the region's economic development. The construction of the 19 km long underwater tunnel was decided upon in 2011, to establish a fixed link between the two banks of the strait and reduce the environmental pressures associated with shipping.

Sustainable ferry operations are an alternative to the tunnel proposed by the Germano-Danish company Scandlines, operating crossings on the Baltic Sea. It has developed a pilot programme financed from private investment ahead of impending regulations. This programme consists of converting its ships into "zero-emission" ferries through the use of hybrid propulsion (fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions reduced by almost 20%) and the installation of filters in the exhaust stacks.

The Bothnian "Green Logistic Corridor" is a transnational project involving a large number of public and private partners. It aims to develop the infrastructure and connections of the existing logistics corridor in order to meet pressing needs for the improvement of the system and to find solutions for more sustainable and environmentally responsible goods transport, in particular through inter-modality and the development of rail freight. The idea is to achieve optimised use of the existing infrastructure (with a transnational approach) and to identify needs for the improvement of the infrastructure and all Scandinavian logistics chains.



Transport and development scenarios have been developed in the Gulf of Finland to provide local and regional developers with data and analyses by means of common work on transport and urban planning for the twinned towns of Helsinki and Tallinn, involving university research and public and private stakeholders on both sides of the Gulf. Several scenarios on the feasibility of the transport systems and their impact on the region's competitiveness have been produced, along with a roadmap leading to several common strategic projects. Particular attention has been focused on issues of sustainable development, the socio-cultural impacts of the regional integration initiative and the region's competitiveness and economic development.

The “**Nordic Logistic Corridor**” is a cooperation project to improve East-West connections in the northern region of the Baltic by combining local and regional development strategies on the issue of transport and logistics. This logistic corridor constitutes an intermodal link allowing the transport of goods and people across the Strait of Kvarken, as an alternative to using the railway or the road which skirts the Gulf of Bothnia (longer by several hundred kilometres).

A strategy for sustainable mobility has been developed by the Pas-de-Calais County Council thanks to its Regional Development Plan for Mobility, intended to serve as a strategic guide for sustainable transport and mobility. Four points are stressed: to promote sustainable mobility for all, to develop inter-modality and efficient transport systems, to offer alternatives to the use of cars wherever possible and to make mobility contribute to the territorial excellence of the Pas-de-Calais.

Rewards for sustainable boating have been implemented in the Strait of Bonifacio: environmental rewards are given to boats that meet a certain number of environmental requirements. Thus, yacht owners receive a 40% discount on their sailing permit, boats equipped with wastewater holding tanks can continue to moor after sunset in some areas and small crafts can sail close to the coastline. In addition, the EGTC of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio plans to organise events to promote this policy and to run awareness-raising campaigns in order to encourage environmentally responsible conduct.

Fehmarnbelt Tunnel

- **Location** Fehmarn Belt (Germany/Denmark)
- **Partner(s)** Region Zealand, County of Ostholstein
- **Timescale** 2008-2021 and onwards
- **Funding** Danish state-guaranteed loans, German and Danish public funds on each side, European funding (TEN-T)



What is it?

After an agreement between the Danish and German authorities in 2008, the construction of the 19 km long immersed tunnel was decided upon in 2011, to establish a fixed link between the two banks of the strait. The tunnel will have no lasting impact on the environment (survey 2008-2013) and will contribute to economic development while at the same time reducing the environmental pressures associated with shipping in this very busy strait.

Origin of the practice

The idea of constructing a tunnel (motorway and railway) between Germany and the Zealand region in Denmark arose from the desire to increase economic exchanges and encourage the region's economic development.

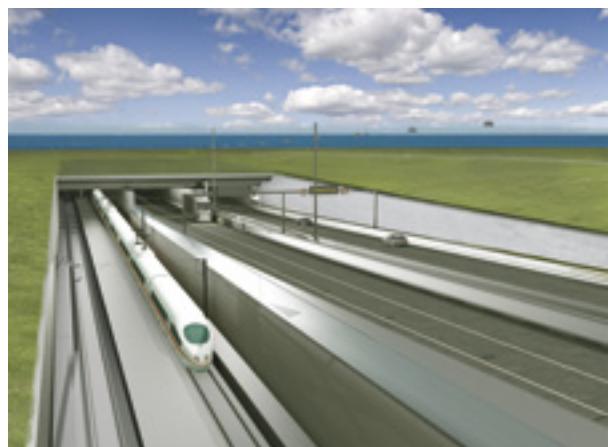
Objectives and implementation

The challenge of building the world longest immersed tunnel has been entrusted to Femern A/S, a 100% Danish state owned organisation that will be in charge of the planning, the construction (2015-2021) and the maintenance of the tunnel. According to the 2008 agreement, Danish authorities will be the owners of the fixed link financed by state-guaranteed loans that will be repaid by the users of the fixed link during the first 30-40 years after the construction. They will collect the revenues that finance it and determine the ticket price. They also provide guarantees for the financing of the project. The land works (improved roads, rail tracks and connecting road/rail bridges) are paid by Danish and German public funding on each side. During the construction, safe navigation will be ensured in the Fehmarn Belt thanks to a Vessel Tracking System (VTS) to guide shipping, guard vessels and limited offshore activities.

Key success factors

Although the tunnel is not constructed yet, we can consider it as good practice as it will contribute to a stronger link between the two sides of the strait and greater regional economic integration with little environmental impact.

Thanks to the NOSTRA project, an exchange of experiences has been possible between Fehmarn Belt and Dover Strait partners on the implications of such infrastructure for local development and the environment.



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Website www.femern.com

Nordic Logistic Corridor

- **Location** Kvarken Strait (Finland/Sweden)
- **Partner(s)** Kvarken Council
- **Timescale** 2011 and onwards
- **Funding** INTERREG, ERDF, Nordic Council of Minister funding and regional funds from Finland, Sweden and Norway



What is it?

The Nordic Logistic Corridor is a strategic partnership of logistic centres, ports, railroads, highways and ferries, stretching over Finland, Sweden and Norway. Indeed, in order to prosper, regional economies must have access to cost-efficient and environmentally friendly transport solutions while at the same time being able to reach bigger markets. The Nordic Logistic Corridor creates attractive transport connections not only to Russia but also to the Baltic States and beyond and to northern Norway and the ice-free ports on the Atlantic Coast. The dynamic development of the entire region is being created using transport and logistics as the means.

Origin of the practice

The project was born from ongoing shifts in transport patterns that required new multimodal solutions. There was also a need to secure a reliable and long term transport solution for goods and passengers across the Kvarken Strait instead of taking the longer road around the Gulf of Bothnia, in order to reduce the transport route from 800 to less than 100 km, save several hours and reduce CO2 emissions.

Objectives and implementation

The project aims to create better East-West connections in the Northern Baltic Region by combining the local and regional development strategies in Helgeland/Nordland, Region Västerbotten and Vaasa-Ostrobothnia. The Nordic Logistic Corridor was an existing transport corridor before the project but it has been strengthened thanks to reinforced cooperation between the partners and a secured public-private partnership. This strategic partnership is functioning quite well so far: the brand “Nordic Logistic Corridor” is known, a common marketing strategy has

been implemented, infrastructure investments have been made etc. A joint shipping company has even been created by the Municipality of Umeå and the City of Vaasa to secure the Kvarken link, which is a crucial part of the corridor. Currently, a joint port company is being implemented.

Key success factors

This project can be considered as a good practice as it is implementing EU-policies in cooperation with national, regional and local involvement, together with private stakeholders. The Corridor is based on the EU's Green Corridors concept and is an environmentally friendly multimodal transport alternative, largely based on rail and sea freight, hence gaining a lot of environmental benefits. It has also resulted in the TEN-T project Midway Alignment of the Bothnian Corridor which aims to strengthen the region's TEN-T network and secure the Kvarken ferry link through cooperation between private and public stakeholders. It also proves that cross-border cooperation can result in permanent structures and economic growth for the whole region and serve as a good example for other straits.

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Website www.nordiclogisticcorridor.com

A strategy for sustainable mobility

- **Location** Strait of Dover (France)
- **Partner(s)** Pas-de-Calais County Council
- **Timescale** 2012 onwards
- **Funding** Pas-de-Calais County Council funds and ERDF



What is it?

The Regional Strategic Framework for Mobility is a document that presents consistent strategic and operational policy guidelines in order to meet local, regional and European issues in 2020. Indeed, mobility is a central and cross-cutting issue and a real challenge for planning and sustainable development of the territories: Pas-de-Calais is now committed to a proactive approach within the framework of its own responsibilities.

Origin of the practice

This strategy was implemented to address to the current challenges of mobility in relation to the evolution of society (suburbanisation, increasing forms of mobility...) and the need to reduce pollution as a result of the high levels of car use.

Objectives and implementation

There are four main objectives: promote mobility for all and equal access to sustainable mobility; develop intermodal and efficient transport systems to facilitate the transition from one mode of transport to another limiting waiting time; propose alternatives to car use wherever possible, such as carpooling, "transportation on demand" and soft modes of transport (walking and cycling); put mobility as an asset of the territorial excellence of Pas-de-Calais at the European, regional and national levels. Sixty-nine actions were planned to implement the scheme in the territory through Territorial Contracts with local governments (municipalities for example) and assistance in engineering. Some actions have already been implemented, such as the creation of carpooling areas, 1€ pricing for bus transport, the development of cycling routes, intermodal hubs and the implementation of a multimodal information platform in the Audomarois.

Key success factors

This Strategy for sustainable mobility is an interesting example of a local authority action to promote more environmentally friendly transport solutions for the public. This practice could be transferred to other regions and improved with a broader cross-border vision that would involve both sides of the strait.



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Maritime safety

Why work on maritime safety?

The straits are particular routes of passage for ships, vessels and ferries. Within the NOSTRA straits are some of the busiest international seaways in the world. However, straits are, by definition, a narrow passage of water connecting two large bodies of water: the risk of collisions and navigation accidents is therefore higher than everywhere else.

In this respect and considering that navigation accidents are major causes of pollution and environmental damage, it is necessary to consider the issue of maritime safety in the straits, which are often of a rare environmental richness that it is our duty to protect.

Therefore, NOSTRA sought to look for innovative solutions to prevent accidents, to encourage safer navigation and to limit environment damage and human loss when accidents occur.

How to tackle the issue of security of maritime traffic in the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several examples of innovative and collaborative solutions have been presented.

Estimating the number of collisions with the IWRAP software developed by the Danish Maritime Authority provides a means of estimating changes in this number. By 2030 the number of boats in the Fehmarn Belt is expected to increase by half, generating a 110% rise in the estimated number of collisions, which could be reduced with technological advances and training.

Voluntary pilot use or offshore pilotage is a solution encouraged by international and regional regulations (OMI and HELCOM) to minimise the risk of accidents and collisions that has been developed in the particularly dangerous Danish straits of the Baltic.

Safety of maritime traffic in the Fehmarn Belt is managed by a maritime traffic services centre (VTS – Vessel Traffic Service). The experience of the Fehmarn Belt was presented within the context of the 2015-2021 construction

of the tunnel linking the two banks: use of radar equipment, remote detection, use of coastguards, offshore pilotage, traffic regulation measures etc. are needed to secure the construction site.

Voluntary maritime search and rescue has been developed in the Gulf of Finland thanks to an INTERREG IVA project that aims to re-establish maritime rescue activities in the eastern part of the strait and to establish cooperation between the systems of the Estonian and Finnish voluntary maritime rescuers. This project involves relaunching four equipped rescue vessels in Estonia and providing new similar vessels for Finnish rescuers. This also involves training volunteers in rescue and emergency techniques.

MIRG-EU (Maritime Incident Response Groups) is a cross-border team of fire-fighters in the Strait of Dover, between the United-Kingdom, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. It aims to provide a response to incidents involving boats at sea, with the prime objective of saving lives.

Strengthening of maritime safety in Bonifacio was needed to solve problems relating to the traffic of ships carrying hazardous or polluting materials and to protect the outstanding natural heritage. The creation of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio in 1993 was followed in 1998 by the adoption of a Franco-Italian measure requiring both States to prohibit or limit the transit of certain boats, with a maritime traffic organisation system and a mandatory reporting system for ships of a tonnage greater than or equal to 300 UMS. In addition, both Italian and French maritime rescue coordination centres work together to monitor the area, and a regulation was introduced in 2001 authorising them to patrol and intervene in the national waters of the neighbouring country.

Risks for oil transportation in the Gulf of Finland have been addressed by measures adopted to reduce the risks of hydrocarbon and also chemical pollution in the strait (speed reduction, rerouting, modelling).

MIRG-EU (Maritime Incident Response Groups)

- **Location** Strait of Dover (France/United kingdom)
- **Partner(s)** Pas-de-Calais County Council, Kent County Council
- **Timescale** 2012-2014
- **Funding** INTERREG IV 2 Seas programme



What is it?

A Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG) is a team of fire-fighters specialising in solving on board problems such as fires, chemical incidents and persons trapped. MIRG-EU is an INTERREG IVA 2 Seas project that aims to create a European MIRG with Dutch, Belgian, French and English fire brigades. Both Kent Fire & Rescue Service and SDIS 62 (Regional fire and rescue service of Pas-de-Calais) are involved in the project. Their mission is to intervene in cases of maritime accidents to save the ship and to facilitate safe transport to a port for repair, in order to make the evacuation of crew and passengers unnecessary and to limit the effects of the incident on the natural environment. The partners work on the waters in the 2 Seas area: Strait of Dover, North Sea and Western Scheldt River.

Origin of the practice

The Strait of Dover is one of the busiest seaways in the world. Therefore, the risk of maritime incidents is very high and teams need to be ready to intervene when accidents occur.

Objectives and implementation

The main objective of the project is to build capacity and resilience in the Strait of Dover, and more widely in the 2 Seas area, by combining fire brigades and implementing three steps: risk analysis (type of ships expected, risks for MIRG to get on board), selection of willing fire-fighters and their equipment, and composition of a Standard Operations Manual so that every team can carry out its actions according to the same procedures. Uniform training and exercise programmes are also organised to reach optimum collaboration and combination of knowledge. In 2014, a Large Scale Exercise took place on board the DFDS Princess Seaways. MIRG-EU aims to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the safe transportation of crews.

Key success factors

This project is an interesting example of coordination of stakeholders of different countries towards a more efficient response to maritime incidents in a busy strait. This practice could be transferred to other straits where there is a risk of maritime incidents and of environmental damage.



Website www.mirg.eu

Responsible economic development

Why work on responsible economic development?

The straits are routes of passage and, therefore, particular areas for economic development, especially in a cross-border context. However, economic activities linked to the strait (fishery, industries, logistics, tourism etc.) often create a risk of environmental damage: emission of polluting materials into the air or water, trampling or physical damage to biodiversity and threats to local ecosystems. Many of the economic activities depend on the straits' ecosystems, as shown in the NOSTRA baseline study. Therefore, environmental protection should not be considered solely as an end but also as a means by which to promote local economic development: the protection of natural resources is necessary to ensure the long-term survival of economic activities in the straits.

In this respect, it is necessary to consider the issue of responsible economic development in the straits, which are often of a rare environmental richness that we need to protect.

How to tackle the issue of responsible economic development in the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several examples of practices aimed at environmentally-friendly economic development have been presented.

The PNA Saline project is an ideas competition open to all European architects that was launched in 2011 in Reggio Calabria, with the aim of finding innovative and sustainable solutions for renovating the run-down industrial area of Saline Joniche, constructed in the 1970s. Seventy teams took part in the competition and the jury of experts selected the winners, whose projects have been published and are pending financing for implementation. This competition provided a means of broadening and renewing the vision for this territory.

The ODISSEA project enabled the restoration of the region's environment, from the Tyrrhenian coast in the Province of

Reggio Calabria to the heights of the Aspromonte Massif (conservation of biodiversity etc.). It aimed to reduce the economic and infrastructure gaps between the various parts of the territory, while at the same time reducing the impacts on the environment.

The use of ICT has been implemented in Estonia to reduce administrative burdens and the use of paper and to facilitate economic development projects. ICT Demo Centre is a not-for-profit group of companies working in the field of ICT and seeking to exploit new communication and information technologies for administrative use (bank transfers, tax returns, elections, censuses, e-receipts and e-tickets etc.) and to promote electronic official documents (93% of Estonians have an electronic identity card, allowing them to authenticate an electronic signature).

Coordinated management of leisure diving has been implemented in the Strait of Bonifacio to face the development of diving in the strait and the risk it presents to biodiversity. The Corsican Environment Office has introduced a charter signed up to by the Nature Park and the diving centres, has installed mooring buoys at certain sites with access quotas and has contributed to the training of diving centre staff. Although at first sight these regulations appear to limit the immediate profit of diving centres, it offers them the possibility of ensuring the long-term survival of their businesses and of expanding in the longer term thanks to the protection of the natural heritage and the promotion of their work sites.

The PATCH project (Ports Adapting To Change) is an INTERREG IVA project (2009-2012) which aims to make port and logistics activities more resilient to change, more open to the spirit of enterprise and innovation and more adaptable to market changes. In order to achieve this, the idea is to strengthen the logistics operations of the port in the context of an increasingly cross-border and inter-connected freight and transport market. In the short term, the aim of the project was to provide a response to the economic recession by identifying the options for safeguarding jobs in the ports. In the long term, the idea is to strengthen cross-border effectiveness and the feasibility of inter-port cooperation.

Rail Baltica Growth Corridor is an experiment linked to the Rail Baltica project of the European Union, whose ambition is to link Finland to Poland by rail. The strategy pursued by



the city of Helsinki (Finland) is to promote the development of infrastructure, to create multi-modal hubs and to encourage multi-level cooperation, taking account of the assets of the territories crossed in terms of economic sector (markets) and labour, and also migration flows.

Sustainable economic development of freight is developed in the Strait of Dover by John Shirley Ltd, which is a company seeking to reduce its environmental impact, in particular through its involvement in the Low Carbon Kent Business network and European projects such as FUSION. The company is developing a number of innovations to reduce its carbon footprint and is promoting "green transport" by encouraging modal transfer from trucks to containers. It has won awards for its approach which also makes it competitive in the market, since many companies approve of this strategy and choose the company precisely for its environmental approach.

The Belt Trade project (financed by the European INTERREG and FEDER funds and by private financing) aims to boost the region's economic growth and to promote job creation in connection with the tunnel project in the Fehmarn Belt. The objective is to prepare SMEs to seize the new opportunities arising from the opening of this infrastructure project, in particular by promoting connections between SMEs on either side of the strait and by encouraging them to develop clean energy technologies, for example.

Reed harvesting with exclusive rights for local populations has been implemented in the Danube Delta in order to compensate for the restrictions after its classification as a biosphere reserve in 1990. Indeed, this classification imposed a specific organisation of economic activities, with activities only authorised in buffer zones (traditional activities) and in economic activity zones: an exclusive right was granted to local populations and enterprises (those living or established inside the reserve) allowing them to exploit natural resources through traditional economic activities, reed gathering being among them.

Scenarios for sustainable socio-economic development have been developed in the Vlora region of Albania, around

the development of tourism, rural and agri-food development and the development of services, networks and light industries.

VASEK is a regional development corporation owned by the municipalities of the Region of Vaasa, in Finland, and financed to the tune of €14 per year per inhabitant. Its primary objectives are to advise and guide business owners, to promote regional development through development programmes and projects and to promote the region. The idea of the development programmes and projects run by VASEK is to improve the conditions for entrepreneurship in the region and to coordinate and finance projects supported by other organisations in addition to its own projects.

Energy Vaasa is the Nordic leader in energy technology; in view of environmental challenges and European requirements, energy technologies are a promising sector and a key sector for the Finnish economy. In the Region of Vaasa, over 120 enterprises specialise in this field and are enjoying great international success (export rate above 70%). Among these, Energy Vaasa offers innovative products and services for energy generation and energy efficiency improvement.

The port of Vuosaari is a new port constructed on the outskirts of Helsinki to free up space in the city centre for housing or recreational activities, reduce the congestion, noise and pollution associated with traffic and provide a port that is more easily accessible for ships. The construction of this port has necessitated decontamination work and soil stabilisation in what was formerly an industrial zone. Environmental protection lay at the centre of this process, with the requirement for the port to obtain an environmental permit that is renewable but valid for only five years, the construction of tunnels to serve the port without creating an impact on the nearby Natura 2000 sites and residential areas, and the construction of a noise barrier. In addition, the port has implemented a number of strict rules limiting noise levels, imposing the collection of all waste from ships, exotic species control etc.

ODISSEA project

- **Location** Strait of Messina (Italy)
- **Partner(s)** Province of Reggio Calabria
- **Timescale** 2004-2006
- **Funding** National funds (Ministry of Environment)



What is it?

The ODISSEA project was an environmental certification process in the Province of Reggio Calabria, aiming to secure better consideration of the impacts of economic activities on the environment and on biodiversity by local communities.

Origin of the practice

There was an economic and infrastructural gap between the different areas of the region. It generated serious repercussions on the natural environment and a depletion of biodiversity.

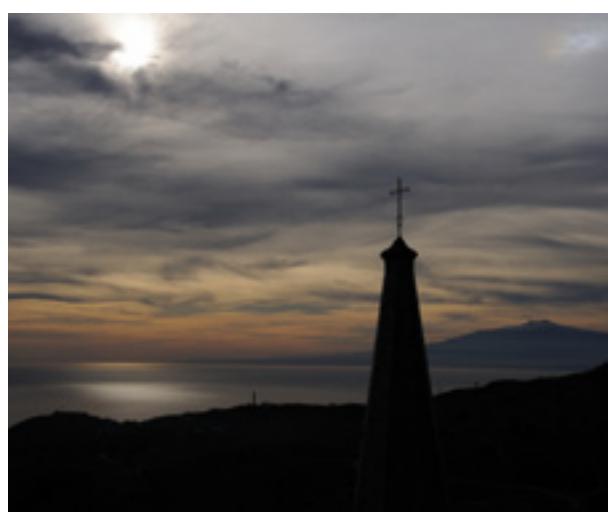
Objectives and implementation

The project aimed to restore the region's environment, from the Tyrrhenian coast in the Province of Reggio Calabria to the heights of the Aspromonte Massif (preservation of biodiversity etc.). One of the objectives was to reduce the economic and infrastructure gaps between the various parts of the territory, while at the same time reducing the impact on the environment. There was also consideration as to how to improve the use of undervalued tourism and cultural assets. An environmental analysis (using environmental indicators) was financed by the Italian government thanks to this project. Following specific studies about the condition of the natural environment in particular territories, an EMAS (Eco-Management & Audit Scheme) certification was released to the municipalities of Santo Stefano in Aspromonte and Scilla.

Key success factors

The ODISSEA project can be considered as an interesting practice as it contributes to improved environmental awareness of local communities.

Such an environmental certification process could be transferred to other straits and enriched with a cross-border vision.



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Scenarios for sustainable socio-economic development

- **Location** Strait of Otranto (Albania)
- **Partner(s)** Regional Council of Vlora



What is it?

The Regional Development Plan of Vlora put forward the following strategic aims: the development of sustainable tourism, rural and agri-business development, the development of aquaculture, energy, industries and services, gender equality and social inclusion. The aim is to achieve the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. In view of the current state of the policies implemented, three strategies are presented to demonstrate the potential future development of the region, based on its assets and priority economic sectors.

Origin of the practice

The region of Vlora has many assets to support it as an important tourist destination (cultural heritage, magnificent natural beauty, handicrafts, great hospitality etc.) but there are many aspects that prevent its economic development (low quality tourist services, lack of information and education, quality of coastal waters, management of waste and road connections.).

Objectives and implementation

Three possible future directions of the region were identified, based on present conditions and the trends outlined by ongoing policies. The first scenario envisages the development of managed tourism, with efficient soil management and territorial planning, effective waste management, coast-hinterland integration and protection of the environment. The second scenario considers development based on rural development and agribusiness around the typical local products (branding), the association of producers, land protection, organic agriculture etc. The final scenario envisages the development of services, networks and light industries, with pollution control and renewable energy production, business innovation and development of a green economy.

Key success factors

This practice is interesting because it considers the socio-economic development of the region with a sustainable approach. Each scenario contains environmental objectives. Similar strategies could be developed in other strait-bordering regions and adapted according to the local potential.



Direct actions for the natural environment

Why work on direct actions for the natural environment?

As stressed in the NOSTRA study, straits have rich ecosystems. They often house rare or endangered species and many migratory routes for birds, marine mammals and fish, are located in the areas of the European straits. This rich natural environment is threatened by human and natural pressures (pollution, invasive species, climate change...). As this Good Practices Guide explains, actions can be taken on the drivers impacting the ecosystems (maritime transport, economic activities, tourism etc.) in order to reduce their impact. But it is also necessary to consider direct actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity and the natural environments of the straits.

How to act directly for the natural environment of the straits?

During the NOSTRA project's workshops, several examples of practices aiming at direct protection of biodiversity or natural environment have been presented.

Adaptation to climate change in the coastal area has been anticipated in the Province of Lecce by the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Climate Change, which has set up an "Ocean-Lab" mission with the aim of developing and producing short-term ocean forecasting: coastal modelling, development of applications for maritime safety, estimating the impacts of climate change on the coastal area... The Sea Conditions portal, for example, offers free online access to meteorological and ocean forecasts for the entire Mediterranean Sea.

Environmental conditions of marine and transition ecosystems assessment has been implemented in the Strait of Otranto. It aims to develop mapping and distribution tools for habitats and species in the Adriatic and Ionian region using information technology to create data platforms, evaluate man-made pressures and services provided by ecosystems and to assist in the planning of protected marine areas.

The BALTIC FLYWAY project has been implemented in the Strait of Fehmarn, which is located on a bird migration route, the "Baltic Flyway". The idea of the project is to overcome

linguistic difficulties on both sides of the border in order to work together for the protection of nature, informing the German and Danish public about the birds and natural areas and raising awareness of the services the natural environment provides to human needs, in terms of health, recreation and tourism.

The HEALFISH project aims at sharing good practice for the management of river basins and the restoration of rivers in the two countries on either side of the Gulf of Finland, by means of actions in a few pilot rivers to facilitate the migration of salmonids. In fact, a stock of healthy salmonids (trout and salmon) is a good indicator of the environmental condition of a river.

A cross-border action plan for the preservation of biodiversity has been developed by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio, created in 2012, which is the first EGTC to be dedicated to environmental protection. Its aim is to permit a common action plan and integrated management of the Strait of Bonifacio, taking account of environmental aspects at a wider scale. Joint actions can thus be developed in order to address the major issues: shipping, fishing, tourism etc.

The SeaGIS project aims to expand knowledge of the Strait of Kvarken and make it more accessible by means of a common platform in order to enhance the potential for planning marine areas at a regional scale, with a view to a future European Directive on maritime development and the integrated management of coastal areas.



The BALTIC FLYWAY project

- **Location** Fehmarn Belt (Germany/Denmark)
- **Partner(s)** Region Zealand, County of Ostholstein
- **Timescale** 2010-2013
- **Funding** INTERREG and partners



What is it?

The BALTIC FLYWAY project is an INTERREG IVA project that aims to overcome linguistic difficulties on both sides of the border in order to work together for the protection of nature, informing the German and Danish public about the birds and natural areas and raising awareness of the services the natural environment provides to human needs, in terms of health, recreation and tourism. This project is a pilot for a more ambitious project that is expected to involve several countries and partners.

Origin of the practice

The Strait of Fehmarn is located on a bird migration route, the “Baltic Flyway”. These natural areas are important refuges for nesting birds but they are very vulnerable and must be protected. To do this, it is necessary to look beyond borders, which do not exist for the birds.

Objectives and implementation

The objectives of the project were to ensure nature conservation, bird protection and communication on these subjects on both shores of the strait. The partners used the project as a contribution to the implementation of a vision of relay centres on the “straight line” with a focus on breeding birds, Natura 2000-friendly farming and nature conservation, development of locally produced quality products as well as improvement of public health and opportunities for outdoor recreation. To do so, the German and Danish project partners shared professional knowledge and experience in respect of nature conservation, bird protection, dissemination and marketing. These cross-professional skills and competences were used to build cross-national coordinated development plans for the areas and to create dissemination activities for tourists and local citizens.

Key success factors

This project is an interesting practice as it shows that it is possible to act beyond the limitations of national systems on each side of the strait and create a fruitful cooperation to reach mutual goals. It also important to point out that nature conservation purposes can be successfully combined with tourism within the natural environment.

This practice could be transferred to other straits that face similar issues with bird migration and who wish to tackle these issues in a cross-border way.



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A cross-border action plan for the conservation of biodiversity

- **Location** Strait of Bonifacio (France/Italy)
- **Partner(s)** Corsican Environment Office and National Park of Maddalena Arcipelago
- **Timescale** 2012 onwards
- **Funding** Member fees (with regional, national and European contributions)



What is it?

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) of the International Marine Park of the Strait of Bonifacio, created in 2012, is the first EGTC to be dedicated to environmental protection. A common action plan for the two marine protected areas has been implemented. It aims to integrated management of the Strait of Bonifacio, taking account of environmental aspects at a wider scale. Joint actions can thus be developed in order to address the major issues: shipping, fishing, tourism etc.

Origin of the practice

The main features of the cross-border action plan lie in the shared distinctiveness of each side of the strait: cultural identity (traditions) and biodiversity (species and landscapes richness). The idea to create an international marine park between Corsica and Sardinia dates from the beginning of the 1990s, with a real will to obtain international recognition of the ecological distinctiveness of this Strait and to protect its richness.

Objectives and implementation

The cross-border action plan aims to improve the coordinated management and the scientific knowledge of the strait. A shared database has been created, with an inventory of species, habitats and taxa of the International Marine Park: its objective is to characterise and to follow the evolution of biodiversity in the strait, with a harmonised scientific method in each Marine Protected Area. Two pilot projects are associated with the action plan: a cross-border guards team and a common PMIBB (Parc Marin International des Bouches de Bonifacio) brand. In addition, the action plan gives a shared model for the use of renewable energy. Another project arising from the action plan is the French-Italian application for UNESCO World Heritage status.

Key success factors

This cross-border action plan is interesting as it aims directly at protecting biodiversity in the strait by acting at a cross-border level.

This practice could be transferred to other straits that face biodiversity protection issues, but it requires an existing high level of joint governance (here, the EGTC).



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The SeaGIS project

- **Location** Kvarken (Sweden/Finland)
- **Partner(s)** Kvarken Council
- **Timescale** 2011-2014 and onwards
- **Funding** INTERREG and national funds



What is it?

The SeaGIS project is an INTERREG IVA project that aims to provide developers and decision-makers with tools and data, given the extra difficulties involved in doing spatial planning in a three-dimensional marine environment. The project has the further purpose of communicating this information to the general public.

Origin of the practice

The SeaGIS project is anticipating the EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning & Integrated Coastal Management: regional environmental and planning agencies wanted to be ready for the implementation of cross-border marine spatial plans in the region.

Objectives and implementation

The objective of the SeaGIS project is to expand knowledge of the Strait of Kvarken and to make it more accessible to enhance the possibilities for planning marine areas at the regional scale. The general public will have access to an internet based multilingual knowledge platform, in which the available data concerning the environment, infrastructure and socio-economic will be presented. All responsible environmental and planning authorities on both sides of the Kvarken strait are involved in the project. Municipalities are involved in pilot studies and provide relevant data to be uploaded onto the platform. Universities on both sides of the Kvarken have looked into existing (maritime, environmental and planning) national legislation and have researched how the current planning system works and how to approach forthcoming ecosystem based planning in the Kvarken area.

Key success factors

The SeaGIS project is an interesting practice because it anticipates the EU directives on marine spatial planning and preservation of coastal ecosystems at a cross-border level. It leads to a deeper and shared knowledge of the strait's natural environment, which is not always an easy thing considering the difficulties for some authorities to share data for free.

Similar studies and reflection on the current planning system could be transferred to other straits to improve their capacity-building and to address the needs identified by the NOSTRA baseline study.



Website <http://seagis.org/>



Part III | Conclusion

The NOSTRA project's main objective is the conservation of biodiversity and natural heritage. Though, as this guide shows, this is a cross-cutting subject that can require action on a variety of influences, including governance, marine spatial planning, tourism, transport, maritime security and economic development. The 16 partners of NOSTRA have been exchanging experiences for 3 years on all of these subjects, in order to implement more efficient and sustainable policies at the strait level.

2014, the end of NOSTRA but a new beginning

The NOSTRA project is ending, but this is not the end of the reflection on biodiversity and natural heritage conservation of European straits. Indeed, besides this Good Practices Guide, each partner has written an implementation plan that aims to transfer some of the good practices presented above to their own strait. Furthermore, the end of the NOSTRA project does not mean the end of the partnership: most of the partners involved in NOSTRA are also represented in the European Strait Initiative (ESI), whose memorandum of understanding is expected to be renewed very soon and should lead to new cooperation projects in the coming years.

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	Dover Strait		Strait of Messina	Kvarken	Strait of Sicily	Danube Delta	Gulf of Finland
Themes	Pas-de-Calais County Council	Kent County Council	Province of Reggio Calabria	Kvarken Council	Regional Province of Trapani	Danube Delta National Institute	Harju County Government
Joint governance							
Council of Kvarken				X			
EGTC in Bonifacio							
Gulf of Finland Year 2014							X
Fehmarn Belt Days							
Seascapes and marine spatial planning							
Seascape Character Assessment and marine planning		X					
Sustainable tourism							
CAST (Coastal Actions for Sustainable Tourism)	X	X					
Friendly Islands Route							X
Development of tourism economy in Salento area							
Sustainable transport							
Fehmarnbelt Tunnel							
Nordic Logistic Corridor				X			
A strategy for sustainable mobility	X						
Maritime security							
MIRG-EU	X	X					
Sustainable economic development							
ODISSEA project			X				
Scenario for sustainable socio-economic development							
Direct actions for the natural environment							
The BALTIC FLYWAY project							
Across-border action plan							
The SeaGIS project				X			



network of straits