

1

# **Marine Spatial Planning in Belgium – Lessons learned and the need for the future context:**

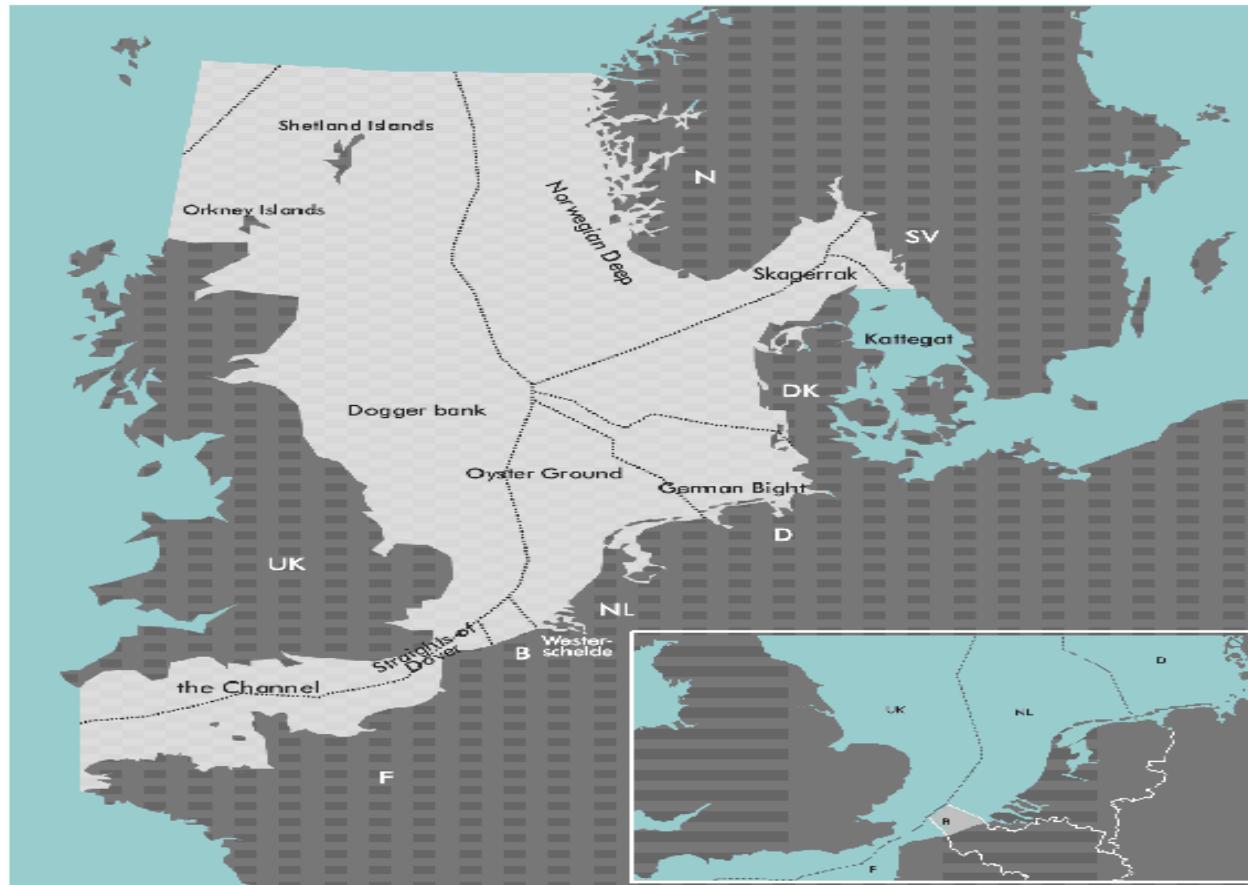
**“From mapping to planning,  
in consultation based on information”**

**Geert Raeymaekers, Belgium, Directorate-General for Environment**  
[geert.raeymaekers@health.fgov.be](mailto:geert.raeymaekers@health.fgov.be)



2

## The Belgian part of the North Sea: negligible...?



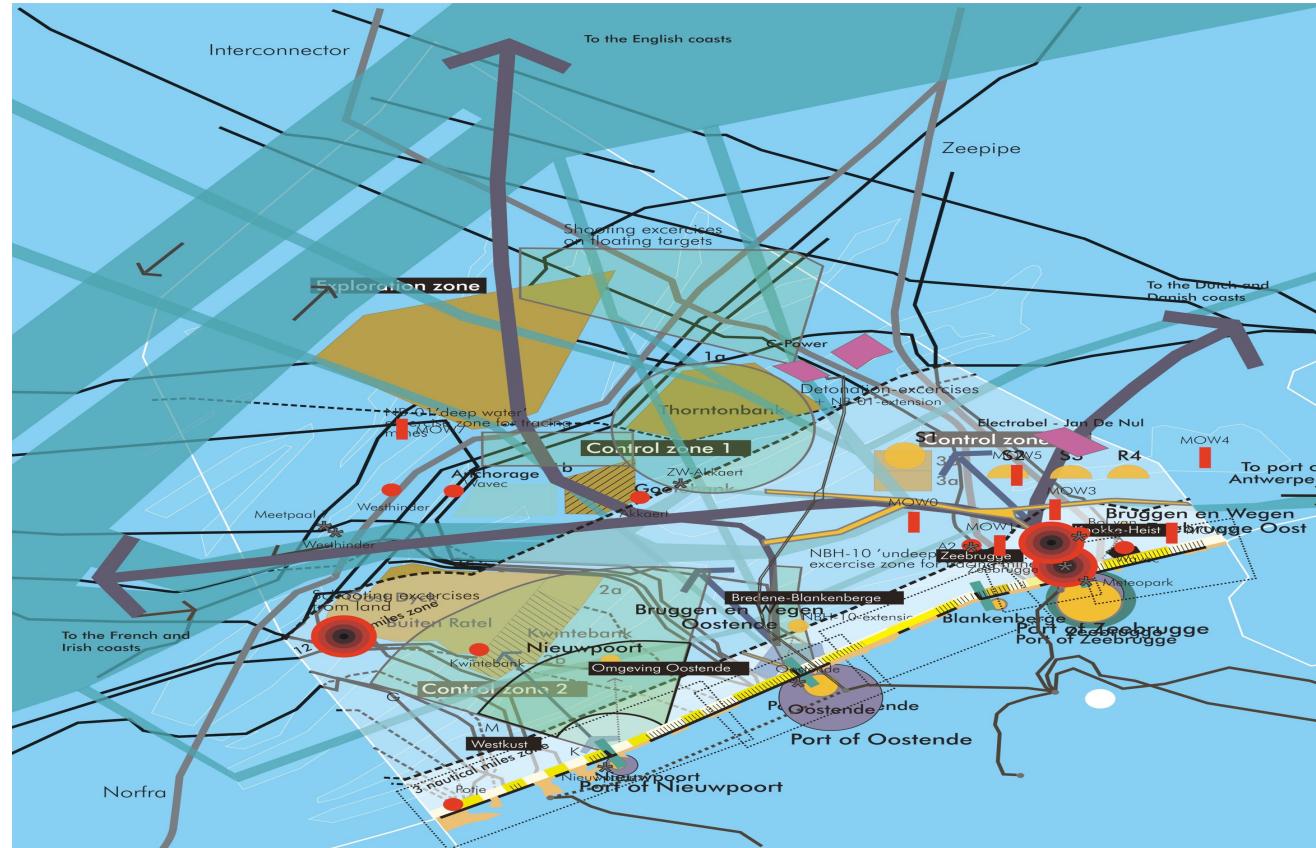
Source: Map geographical demarcation North Sea.

(GAUFRE report "Towards a Spatial Structure Plan for Sustainable Management of the Sea")



3

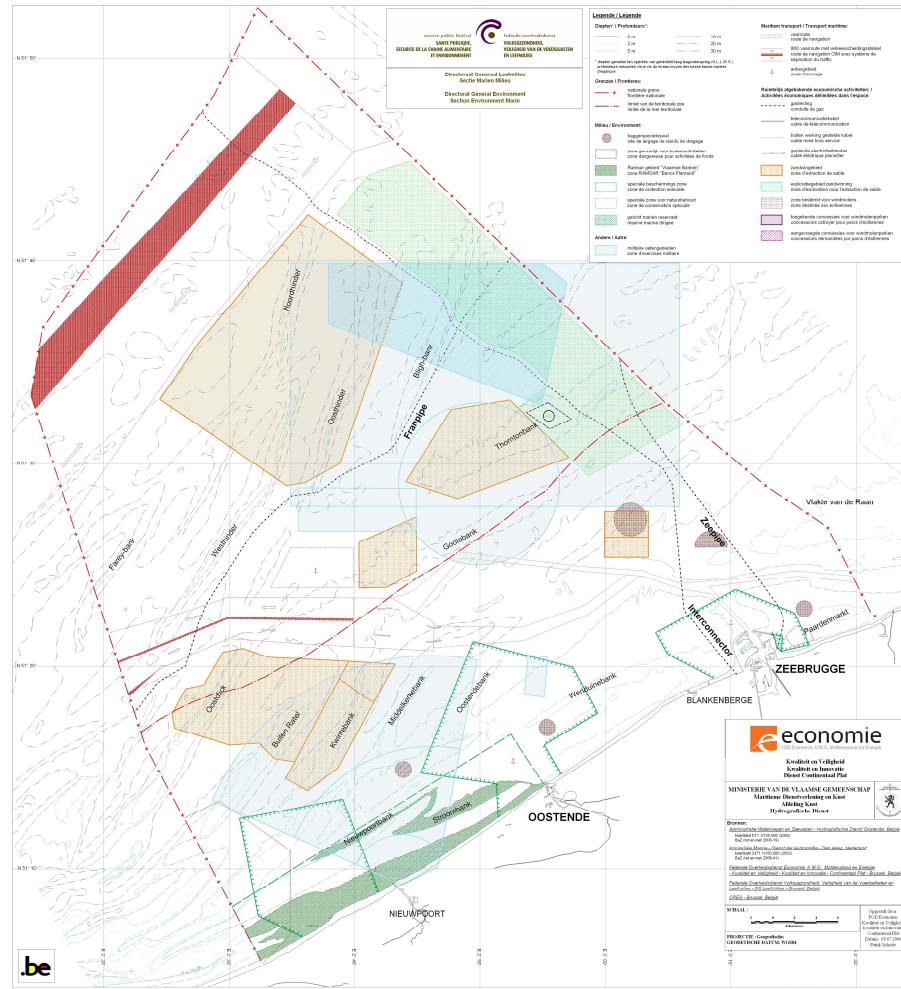
...Or dramatically underrated?



Source: Map Mare Liberum. Superimposed projection of all users of the BPNS.  
(GAUFRE report “Towards a Spatial Structure Plan for Sustainable Management of the Sea”)



# A snapshot – map 2005-2009



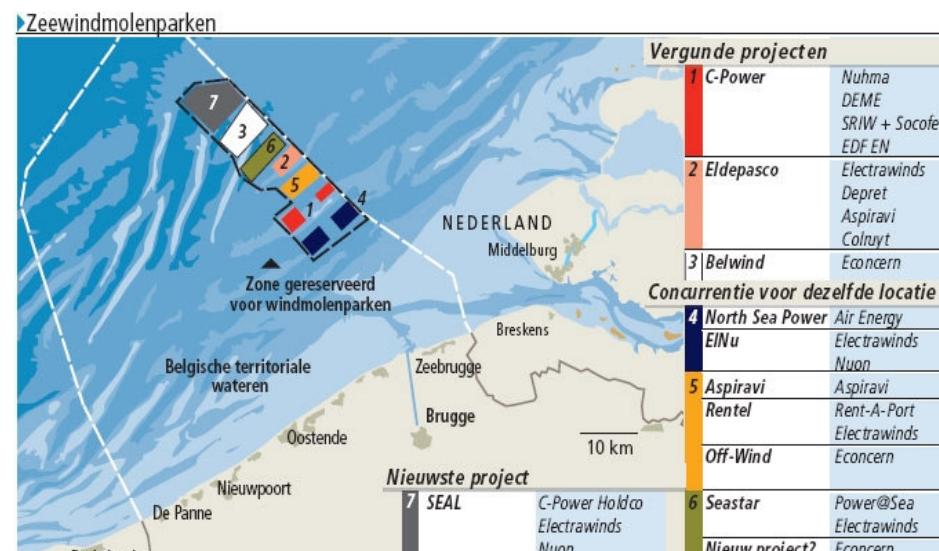
5

## “Masterplan for the North Sea”:

### Phase I (2003/2004): sand and gravel extraction zones / windmill zone



Source: Map sand and gravel extraction zones.  
(GAUFRE report “Towards a Spatial Structure Plan for Sustainable Management of the Sea”)

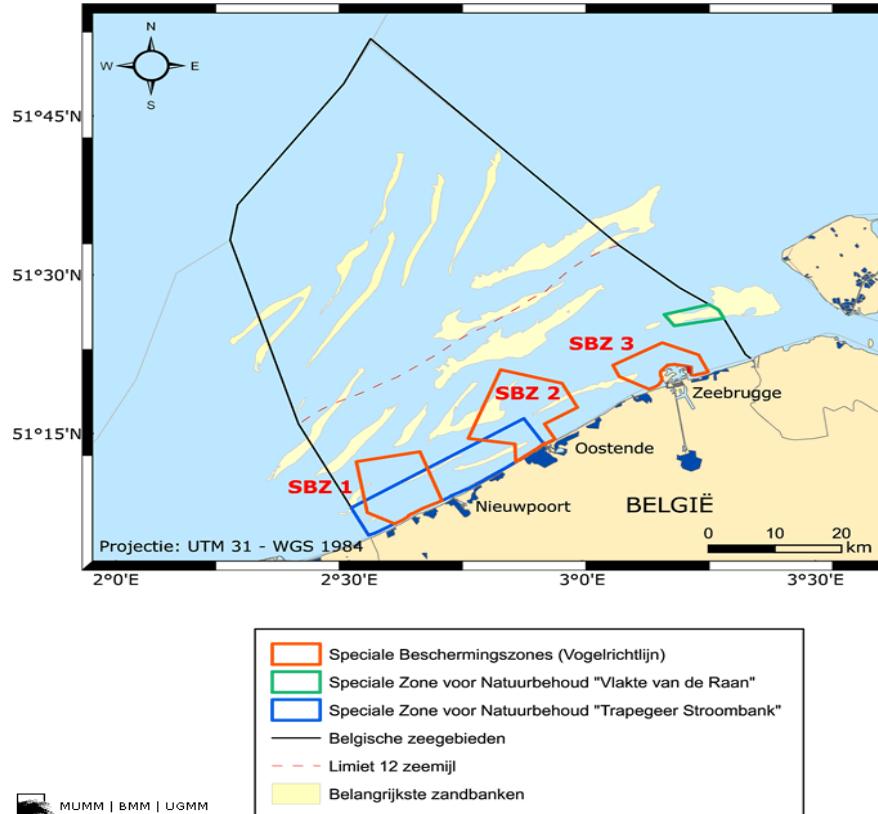


Source: Newspaper “De Tijd”



6

## "Masterplan for the North Sea": Phase II (2005/2006): marine protected areas



7

## Claim for space anno 2005...



Source: GAUFRE report "Towards a Spatial Structure Plan for Sustainable Management of the Sea"



## ... More claims for space anno 2009.

- No claims have significantly been reduced;
- Some existing claims have increased in surface:
  - nature conservation - new MPA's in EEZ;
  - aquaculture - commercialisation of the sector;
  - maritime transport - short sea shipping;
  - ... ;
- Other claims are likely to increase in surface in the near future:
  - wind energy - concession zone almost fully “booked”;
  - coastal defense - rise of the sea level;
  - sea ports - expansion;
  - ... ;



➤ And new claims are being considered:

- “Flemish Bays 2100” - construction of islands;
- extraction of seashells;
- tidal energy?



10

## The challenging repartition of competencies in Belgium

Federal State: general competency for the North Sea policy

→ federal public services Internal Affairs, Mobility, Defence, Environment...

Flemish Region: specific competencies

- fisheries policy;
- sea ports;
- dredging of lanes to sea ports;
- pilotage;
- salvage and towage operations;
- coastal defence

→ several competent ministries and autonomous services...

Local authorities: coastal municipalities (e.g. beach) / province (e.g. disaster plan)



11

## The challenging repartition of competencies in Belgium

### Coordination structures

- Cooperation agreement between the federal and the regional competent authorities “**Coastguard**” (2005) - “action state at sea”
- Cooperation agreement between the federal and the regional competent authorities “**Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy**” (1995) - “international environmental policy”
- Partnership **Co-ordination Center for Integrated Coastal Zone Management** (2001) - “coastal zone management”
- Forum Coastal Mayors, Ad hoc fora (e.g. policy plans MPA)...



## Key factors for a (Belgian) successful “maritime spatial planning” – vision of the Belgian (federal) DG Environment

- **Using MSP according to area and type of activity** - balance existing use of space / future use of space, no “fundamentalism”;
- **Definition of objectives MSP** - future perspective, no ad hoc approach;
- **Transparency** - mutual confidence, intelligent use of bilateral consultation, well-informed decision;



13

- **Stakeholder participation** - no top-down, intelligent use of bilateral consultation, clarity on competencies, participation vs. general interest, middle-ground approach, policy after decision;
- **Coordination within the Belgian state structure** - respect competencies (federal, regional, local, international...), planning process;
- **Ensuring legal effect of MSP** - legal certainty vs. organic evolution;
- **Cross-border cooperation and consultation** - potential of a “common” MSP, use of existing structures (OSPAR, BENELUX etc.);



- Incorporation of monitoring and evaluation in the planning Process;
- Coherence terrestrial - maritime spatial planning - mutual dependency vs. specialisation;
- Data and knowledge based - no need to “reinvent the wheel”, cooperation between data holders (MUMM, VLIZ...), close potential data gaps.



## Vision of the Belgian (federal) DG Environment – Short term actions

- Initiative to establish MSP to be taken by the Belgian secretary of State for Mobility and Marine Environment, elaboration to be done by all competent authorities involved;
  
- Holistic approach to harmonize overlapping policies (e.g. MSP, Natura 2000 and EMS);



16



Questions???

[geert.raeymaekers@health.fgov.be](mailto:geert.raeymaekers@health.fgov.be)

