The changing seabed in Knokke-Heist: involving stakeholders

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Why stakeholder engagement?

Within C-SCOPE the Coordination Centre on ICZM will develop a long-term vision on the Marine Management Area Heist.

Heist MMA: particular area with specific problem (growing sandbank), mix of very different stakeholders, involved in an early stage.

The long term vision aims to achieve multiple objectives & should reflect expectations, opportunities and conflicts arising in the area.

Important questions to answer:
- Defining who should be involved in this LT-vision
- Defining when to involve stakeholders
- Defining how to involve stakeholders
Involving stakeholders through the whole process

- Heist MMA: unique and complex area with numerous users
- Target for this area: a long-term vision for Heist, supported by all stakeholders
- Involving these stakeholders is a key element to make the process work

Summary of the process:

- January-July 2010: Basic Analysis of Heist MMA: analysis of the area, actual conflicts, future scenarios
- May 2010: webpage launched within C-SCOPE website on Heist and its sandbank
Involving stakeholders through the whole process

- July 2010: spreading of brochure on Bay of Heist
- July 2010 – January 2011: Socio-economic analysis of Heist MMA
- April 2011: stakeholder workshop – defining a common future scenario on Heist MMA
- April 2011 – June 2011: developing long-term vision on Heist MMA, in close consultation with all stakeholders
- Summer 2011: process to confirm the long-term vision by all parties involved & end report
- Autumn 2011: presentation report and long-term vision
How exactly were stakeholders involved?

**Basic Analysis of Heist MMA** (external consultant ARCADIS in collaboration with the T&F Group Knokke-Heist West):

- Description part (natural, morphological characteristics of the area, historical analysis, juridical and policy boundary conditions

- in-depth interviews were held amongst the principal stakeholders of the area:

  - Representatives of inhabitants, tourism & recreation: Stakeholder T&F Group, Agency for Tourism of West-Flanders and Tourism Flanders, Community of Knokke-Heist, Surf Club VVV Heist

  - Harbour of Zeebrugge

  - Representatives for coastal defence and exploitation of the beach: Flemish Agency for Maritime Services & Coast

  - Representatives for nature: Flemish Agency for Nature & Forest, Federal Agency for Public Health, Safety of the Food Chain and Environment, NGO for nature Natuurpunt

- Approach in this Basic Analysis = sectoral approach
Analysis of Heist MMA: visualising conflicts
Analysis of Heist MMA: visualising conflicts
Analysis of Heist MMA: future scenarios

- During the in-depth interviews, interviewees were asked about their future visions
- All visions were visualised from a sectoral point of view
Analysis of Heist MMA: future scenarios
Long term touristical-recreational sector
Analysis of Heist MMA: future scenarios
Socio-economic analysis

- By Study office Tritel in collaboration with T&F group Knokke-Heist West
- Interviews & surveys amongst tourists and recreational users of the beaches of Heist and Duinbergen, inhabitants, owners of second residences, local merchants
- There were also in-depth interviews with ‘key stakeholders’
- SWOT confrontation matrix for social and economical situation
- Description of similar ‘foreign’ cases to learn from other examples
Socio-economic analysis

The stakeholders in the T&F group were most interested in:

- Economical data: evolution of Heist through the years
- Is Heist developing in a positive or negative way as regards tourism, economy?
- What do our tourists think of our beach and Heist in general?
- Vision local inhabitants, merchants
Other ways to involve stakeholders

- Important is to involve stakeholders through the whole process, even if there is not much to communicate:
  - Webpage on Heist MMA, explaining the challenges and answering FAQ’s
  - Brochure on Heist MMA, with same purposes as the webpage, widely spread over all Heist
  - T&F group ‘Knokke-Heist West’ followed the whole process: all relevant stakeholders present.
  - Separate stakeholder group active
  - Contacts with employer organisation UNIZO resulted in a drawing contest, organized by them
  - Workshop to develop a common future scenario on the Bay of Heist
Problems on the road

- Severe delay in the process because of socio-economical analysis
- Interview part in socio-economical analysis: difficult to involve the local merchants in Heist.
- Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the economical data in the socio-economical analysis
- Restraint of the community of Knokke-Heist to involve many stakeholders
- Unbelief of the community as regards to the results of the socio-economical analysis
- How to reconcile the aims of very different stakeholders? Principal conflicts:
  - Disturbance of protected areas
  - Realisation of a future scenario: calm versus lively?
Lessons learned

- The road towards a long-term vision is difficult in this specific area! Land side and sea side to consider.
- All stakeholders need to agree on the approach
- Intense stakeholder involvement was necessary to come to a common idea. Importance of participation: creating involvement en awareness raising of the different interests and (potential) conflicts
- Take care powerfull stakeholders do not take over!
Lessons learned

- It will still take a lot of consultation to reach a common long term vision, participation takes time.
- Need for policy making after participation – stakeholder engagement alone is not enough.
- Marine Spatial Planning: at this moment, stakeholders are not approached in a structural way, need for structural anchoring.
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