BALTIC COMPASS

New approaches to project partner communication for project development and the creation of common responsibility.

Elements of a communication concept for Baltic Compass

- Schleswig-Holstein report

Project Report

Baltic COMPASS (Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region)

Work Package 6: Policy Adaptation and Governance

Work Package 2: Communication and information dissemination

Prepared by the State Agency of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Areas
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List of Acronyms

Acronym	German activation	English activation
BSAP	Baltic Sea Action Plan	Baltic Sea Action Plan
BSRP	Regionalprogramm für die Ostsee-Region	Baltic Sea Region Program
CSSA	Kriteriensystem Nachhaltige Landwirtschaft	Criteria System for Sustainable Agriculture
EAFRD	Europäischer Landwirtschaftsfonds für die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raumes	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
NGO	Nichtregierungsorganisation	Non-governmental Organization
N2K	Natura2000-Richtlinien	Natura2000 directives
WFD	Wasserrahmenrichtlinie	Water Framework Directive

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1. Introduction

This report discusses approaches to a new method of project partner communication in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany and the lessons learned on their practicability. At first, a short presentation of the state of discussion in Schleswig-Holstein and an overview of the methodology is given. Afterwards, the recently discussed cases are presented. The change of perspective from a project driven to a communication driven approach and its implications for the future management are described and discussed. The methodology report is a part of the reporting series under task 1.2 in Work Package 6 and also gives major input to WP 2 of the project Baltic COMPASS.

Background of the project

Baltic Compass is an agri-environmental project financed by Baltic Sea Region Programme and its 22 partners from all the riparian countries. Its main topic is to find new approaches to reduce the eutrophication of the Baltic Sea, mainly originating from agricultural activities. This approach involves activities like data collection and modelling, but also the formulation and realisation of pilot projects in certain regions of the project area. All these activities point to the support of a sustainable agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region as well as communication and harmonisation of knowledge and activities between different parts of the region. The main groups involved are farmers, but also governments, agencies, stakeholders, universities and private enterprises.

Next to general environmental issues the region also has to face climate change as new challenge. This causes the need to develop ideas and projects that do not only take into account environmental conditions we already know, but that are adapted to new settings and conditions.

The general project planning and development cycle

Any project follows a certain cycle of steps (see fig. 1). One major aspect of any planning process is the involvement of people and / or groups affected by the plan and the involvement of stakeholders and decision makers. Unfortunately, most of these processes follow a top-to-bottom approach: the basic decisions about the planning needs and the possible solutions are taken by decision makers that do not live in the region where the project will be realised. This means that in many cases it is difficult to find acceptance for a plan as regional / local characteristics and goals are not taken into account in the first phases of the project development.
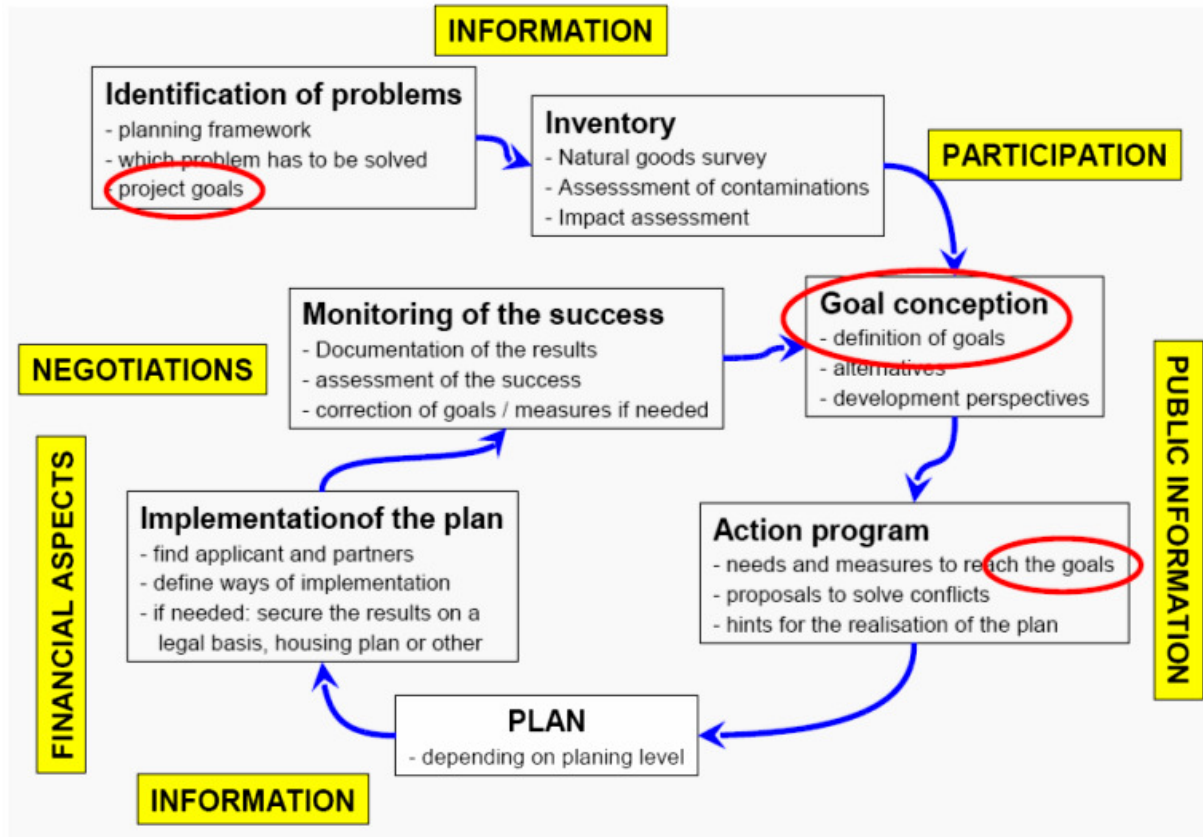
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Figure 1: Sample project planning and realization cycle

From this scheme it can easily be derived that the project cycle demands extensive communication and participation of the public, the definition of goals and the communication of intermediate or final results to all participants. However, in a general process these steps are highly standardised and formalized, and the major top-to-bottom approach follows very strict rules regarding the type, contents or argumentation methods of these public participations. In some cases, these rules are too strict to enable a positive and productive communication. And the methods are not meant to deal with emotional arguments or arguments not following legally defined terms. So a public communication of this formal type will always need a general common understanding of a problem and of generally acceptable solutions before it can be productive. In our cases these prerequisites are met only to a certain part.

The framework process for land use planning

Looking at land use planning, the process and the data flows and decision levels can be made clearer than above. A general land use planning process (see fig. 1) will define the problem and the different possible (technically possible, legally acceptable, etc.) solutions, then analyze the area affected, and

then develop a solution for the area affected, etc. If the planning process also has to take care of external factors like global change factors, this is a special challenge for these processes, as they normally are meant to work in a "stable" environment. This can easily be understood if you see that most of the general decision bases are legal prescriptions giving strict threshold values, or framework plans meant to be valid some ten to 20 years.
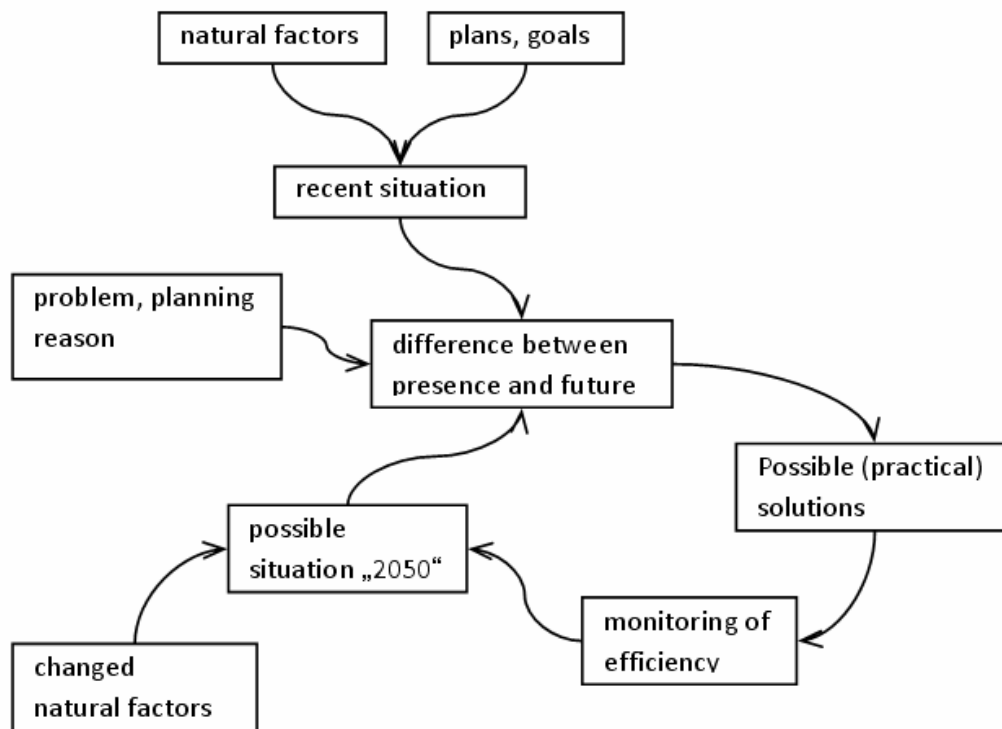
Figure 2: Planning process for land use management projects. For description see below

In this scheme, the different input and output factors are summarized. The **recent situation** summarizes the available information about a certain area; it is defined by the following factors:

- Plans and goals:

  o legal definitions and obligations

  o framework plans like WFD or N2K

  o generalized planning goals like sustainability

- natural factors

  o land use

- ecological factors like soil, water, natural assets etc.

- sensitivities and vulnerabilities

Taking into account some **problem**, or a planning reason like a developmental project, and / or taking into account **changing natural factors,** forming the basis for the description of a **possible future situation**, we can prepare a description of changes to be expected, showing **differences between present and future**. These differences can be evaluated and either be accepted as positive or be regarded as negative, so some action has to be taken. In a planning process like the one described in fig. 1 some **possible solutions** will be developed and their efficiency be **monitored** in order to find out whether the possible future situation has been improved.

This "classical" planning approach will develop solutions obeying to the recent legal rules and to the framework planning guidelines, but it will hardly be able to deal with information which is not based on a clear legal definition ("I do not believe in the threshold values used for the decision, they are wrong."), that is apart from plain rational arguments ("I fear that project and its impacts") and that needs a view on the planning results that is not based on the assumption of stable external factors, neglecting global change influences for example.

Especially the last aspect, implementing elements into our planning tools that enable them to be flexible enough to also take into account climate change effects in the decision process, has lead to some development of new ideas in this field. Since several years a set of tools has been developed to implement climate change aspects in planning approaches, see for example the EBM or UNU homepages (EBM 2011, UNU-EHS 2010). However, these tools also focus on the evaluation of existing data, not on inputs from people affected.

Communication and involvement aspects for different groups

Starting at this point it is possible to analyze basic communication obstacles for the projects in the intersection between agriculture, land use planning and global change adaptation, heading towards a sustainable regional development. The Baltic Compass project's main target, nutrient reduction, is well accepted as general target for different groups of actors and institutions involved. It contributes to the needed fulfillment of the relevant legal framework prescriptions like WFD, N2K, etc. which has to be done by farmers, but also by agencies, stakeholders and politicians.

A next step, however, is more difficult to communicate. As long as general targets are described and farmers themselves can decide about the ways of implementation, it may be easier to get acceptance. If, however, it is intended to find ways towards an optimized management of farms in general, farmers are much less willing to cooperate. They suspect to be held unable to run their

farms appropriately, or they fear to be "over-controlled" by externals (NIENS & MARGGRAF 2010). This problem will be analyzed again in more detail in the next chapter.

Basically, a central approach of this communication concept is to collect regional and/or personal knowledge of the regional people. Many cases are described where plans and concepts developed "top to bottom" may be quite convincing in a general view, but they may not meet the needs of the particular regional / local situation, or the obstacles for the implementation are high due to certain regional / local characteristics which have not been taken into account (or could not be seen) on the planning level. So it always seems to be a good idea to involve local / regional people in the collection of information about a certain region and / or in the development of new ideas. Some of these methods related to this approach have already been used successfully in so-called multi-agent approaches meant to identify options for land use development under changing conditions. Practical examples for these communication based processes have for example been published for Vietnam (CASTELLA et al 2005) and Senegal (D´Aquino et al 2003). A major disadvantage of these early approaches was the assumption of a static environmental situation. This was attempted to overcome in a more dynamic approach in later studies, assuming a changing environment as basis (SUN & NAVEH 2004) or implementing the uncertainty of changing policy decisions in the framework of the project (ZHANG & LESSER 2010).

However, it will not bring sufficiently positive effects to just ask for problem descriptions, for new ideas or solutions or even for ethical values and directives. The answers may be quite helpless or flat, or people may even refuse to cooperate, as this type of discussion is not common for us. Besides, transferring the evaluation of these answers to IT-based systems also does not seem to be a final solution for the problem, as in some cases there are very many actors and answers, so scientists have already started to look for solutions to assort this multitude and to find appropriate organizational patterns for the process (HORLING & LESSER 2008).

So it is necessary to implement new methods of discussion and communication (story telling...) in order to find an access to the local / regional people and in order to detect hidden knowledge, to uncover real reasons for opinions or activities and to create a basis for a new type of cooperation. Some of the available methods will be described in chapter 6, a summary of these communication methods, especially under the aspect of finding access to ethical rules and decisions, is given by MATTHES (2011).

Analysis of deficiencies, problems and possible solutions

Focusing on land use planning and farming activities, in many cases farmers are held responsible for many problems. Without any doubt farming is a relevant factor affecting the ecological status of our

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environment, but at the same time some of the discussions in this respect are too uncritical, not asking for real reasons for environmental threats and problems, but just accusing farmers in general to be responsible. So an objective discussion of cause-and-effect connections or a collaborative approach to solve problems seems to be very difficult – due to communicative barriers on both sides, farmers as well as nature protectors. This situation has been made even worse by the high amount of regulations for farmers, often also developed by a top to bottom process and containing prescriptions which are very general and not adapted to certain local situations.

Another challenge is the often poor cooperation among farmers from different regions (sometimes even within a region). Farmers are used to plan and work on their own. Additionally, the economical situation of farmers (varying product demands, EU funding, limited area available) also promotes the feeling of concurrence. So the level of discussion is often limited to land exchange and the general aspects of cooperation in stakeholder communities like farmer's union or others, but the development of new approaches to land use and the discussion of problem solutions is rare. Two positive examples should however be mentioned in this framework. The first one has been presented by Teri Lee and Hakan Eriksson, awarded as "Baltic Farmers of the Year 2010". The activity is called "Odling I Balans" (growing in balance). A collection of 17 farmers so far, located in predominantly crop areas from southern Sweden to Dalarna, are cooperating in order to develop new ideas on sustainable development and on the solution of recent agricultural problems. The action is meant to

- show that economy and ecology can be combined on the farm,

- conduct various projects in which current issues are processed, and

- implement themes focusing on the environment and biological diversity.

The web page can be opened with the URL http://www.odlingibalans.com (in Swedish), giving more details about this activity.

The other example comes from Schleswig-Holstein, the so called "Development of a semi-open pasture landscape in the Eider valley" (MLUR 2012). The starting point of this project was the complaint of farmers that the sustainment of the Eider river was very expensive as massive nutrient loads due to intensive agriculture in the valley caused a high plant and algae growth. The solution of these problems included an extensification of agriculture, a change from ploughing to extensive pasture and a complete change of the usage pattern and the ownership pattern in the valley. This could only be realised because the competent authority had a close cooperation with "Wasser- und Bodenverband" (water and soil associations), an institution cooperating with the farmers in aspects of water and soil management in the region. The head of this institution took over the leadership in this project and helped to communicate the project ideas to the farmers and their questions back to the agency and the cooperating university. Today, this project is well accepted and it has developed

towards a project that is welcomed by farmers, agencies, scientists and people seeking recreation. Further information can be found on the project web page (MLUR 2012).

Another problem to be addressed is the fact that there is a serious information input to farmers, growing with every new regulation, and on the other hand there are high demands of information delivery from the farmers. Farmers have to report in detail about their activities, to tax agencies as well as other institutions, and the process of applying for a direct funding of EU money is very complex and demanding (EU 73/2009). So the trust of farmers into these institutions and the will to cooperate in even more fields seems quite low.

Besides, there often is only a poor understanding of different discussion partners involved in projects on farmlands. The words used by farmers, nature protectors, university people, stakeholders and decision makers have distinctive differences in their meaning, so that the same words may address different aspects, or the same aspect is named by totally different words. Even if all participants have a good will of cooperation, these communicative obstacles may hinder positive results.

And finally it is hardly possible for farmers and other regional or local actors to evaluate running or finalized discussions or results from projects carried out by agencies, universities and other institutions in order to find solutions for relevant problems. One of the most important steps is to make results of relevant projects available, not only for a scientific community, but also for the practical implementation level.

Several papers have already been published to reveal the reasons behind farmer's rejection of certain activities and measures. A good example is the paper from NIENS & MARGGRAF (2010), who interviewed farmers about their willingness to participate in Agro-Environmental measures (AEM). AEM are a funding system to promote environmental projects on farmland (see HOERTDOERFER 2011). The major obstacles to participate in AEM are shown in figure 3. The most important aspect to prevent participation is "too much bureaucracy"; other factors are "too strict obligations", "too far from practical application" and "insufficient possibility to actively influence the project".
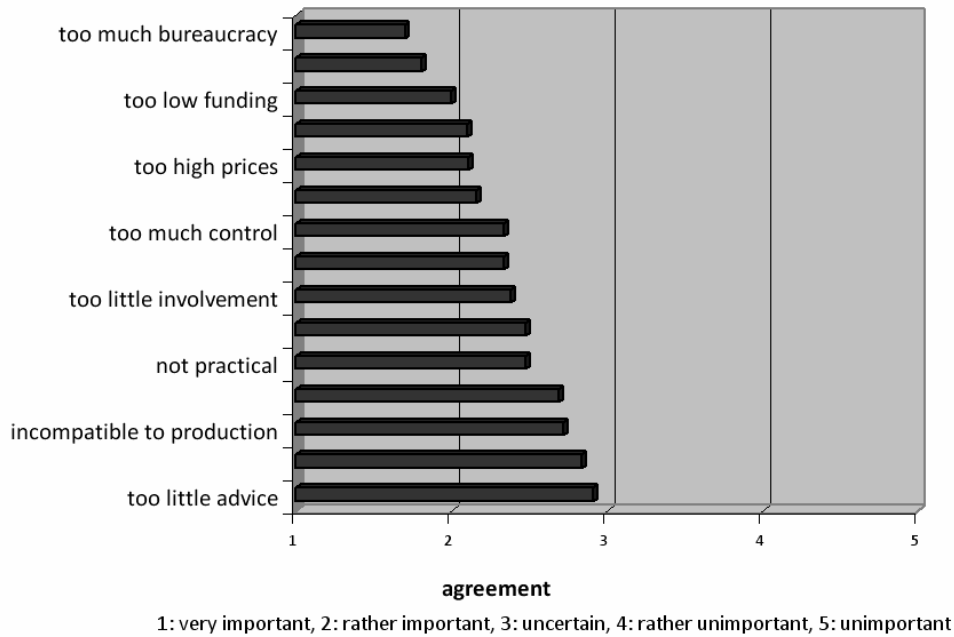
Figure 3: Farmer's criticism to Agro-Environmental Measures and their reasons (according to NIENS & MARGGRAF 2010, fig. 3, translated and reformatted)

The new approach – perspectives and advantages

The approach described here is not all new, however it has not yet been used in this framework. The general considerations (see chapter 2) and the techniques used for communication can be used for different situations and partner structures. In our particular case it has been tested and practically applied in the framework of farmer's projects. The basic aspect is that the project development changes from a top-to-bottom to a bottom-up process. In this respect (and in our particular case), the farmers change their position in the planning process from an affected group to the central planning and acting institution. The positive impacts of this approach are obvious:

Nobody knows the regional farmland and farming situation better than the farmers themselves. Farmers have a deep insight into a region's nature, the water household situation, the soil capacities and crop situation, the local weather characteristics and many other factors. Additionally, they mostly also know a lot about factors influencing their own situation and people / institutions that can be helpful for problem solutions. The "only" problem is that according to their daily work and their influencing factors they are normally not used to run a planning process involving a lot of other people.

Thus, the basic attempt is made here, to make the general planning cycle (see fig. 1) more transparent to the people affected. We will try to really involve people in the process and to give

them a chance to really participate in the development of ideas and solutions, and to bring in their arguments without the filter of legal terms or procedural restrictions. This enables us to also accept ethical values or emotional arguments (that in most cases also have a very practical or rational background). In this case, the data and information flow scheme of fig. 2 will be changed and some substantially new steps will be added.

2. Methodological considerations

General aspects

The following considerations mark the starting point of the activities and give information about the methods used and the questions to be answered in order to start a fruitful cooperation and project development. They are a report about our own primary considerations, but they also have been refined by the results of our own experience with the implementation of the communication concept in our Baltic Compass model region.

Especially due to the problems and communicative obstacles described above, the first problem for the implementation of the communication method is to find appropriate cooperation partners in a region. In the course of the problem we made a set of observations giving rise to rules for finding partners. These findings are summarized in Chapter 5. The groups involved in our processes so far are named below.

Groups involved

Land use projects usually are complex problems. The following list enumerates the most important groups of participants in these processes:

- farmers from the region

- planners known to and trusted by the farmers

- regional water management board

- farmers association and other NGOs and stakeholders

- manufacturer of agricultural (and other) equipment

- other agencies touched by the project outcome

- University, different institutes

- Ministry / State Agency

- politicians / decision makers

Each of these participants and / or groups has its own roles, targets, language or methods to carry out the planning process. In the course of the process, these different parameters need to be adjusted in order to create a productive outcome. In addition, in the context of this project it became obvious, that this approach also needs the definition of new roles for the other participants in the processes. This will be discussed in chapter 5.

Useful tools

In a standard planning process communication, the subjects discussed and the methods used for discussion are direct dialogues, public hearings and publication of planning documents. These methods are meant to check the general acceptability of a plan and to enable the participants to deliver their opinion or their additional information to the project. These methods work well, as long as all participants are willing to cooperate, and the participants have a comparable state of knowledge and project targets that can be discussed with rational arguments.

However, these methods fail as soon as different types of targets come together, especially if rational arguments are answered by emotional arguments. Other obstacles may be that the understanding of the recent situation, the definition of the future goals or the language used to communicate certain aspects of the idea is different. This means that people may say the same but mean something entirely different, and vice versa. These possibilities as well as ways to overcome the difficulties have been analyzed by a paper developed in cooperation with the Christian Albrechts University at Kiel (MATTHES 2011). One major task of this paper is the description and analysis of different tools for a structured communication between the different participants with the major target to filter out the real opinion behind the words spoken in a communication. The paper ends with a particular proposal how to filter out ethical values in the framework of a project communication with farmers. These results will be discussed in chapters 5 (findings) and 6 (perspectives).

3. The practical cases

The Schleswig-Holstein participants started into the Baltic Compass project with a set of general ideas for practical solutions on (drainage) water management and nutrient loss reduction mainly derived from nature protection activities and from the WFD implementation. The overall setting of the Schleswig-Holstein contribution to Baltic Compass is described in the report by HOERTDOERFER (2011b).

Data basis

The process was started with an analysis of the existing data and the communication structures of the region. Some of these structures and most of the data have already existed before Baltic Compass was started, mainly based on the activities generated by the implementation of the important European directives (WFD, Nat2K etc.) and the daily work of the State Agency. However, the main new input was generated by two activities during the project. One of them was to address the existing communication structures generated during the implementation processes of the directives but also by the implementation of the European concepts of rural development (EAFRD, LEADER+ and others), the so called "Aktiv Region" concept.

The second and maybe even more important step was the implementation of an instrument called "Criteria System for Sustainable Agriculture" (CSSA) (BREITSCHUH 2008). This system collects certain data about the status and the operation of a farm, looking at economical, ecological and social factors. Using a newly developed algorithm, these factors can be used as indicators describing the farm's status but also as a basic data set to evaluate the possible outcome of different strategies to run the farm using a scenario approach. In this respect, the CSSA criteria set and the connected methodology is a useful management instrument for farmers to understand the influence of different external and internal factors on their farm as well as the influence of farmer's decisions on the environment. These CSSA data are collected since 2009.

Additional aspects are ethical factors. So far, the criteria systems and management tools only ask for indicators in the framework of economical or ecological questions. CSSA indicators already add social questions, but these aspects still are not sufficient to carry out a discussion about future plans, indicatives and ethical values. These, however, are a major concern of this communication concept. So in 2010 an additional discussion about these ethical values and corporate social responsibility has been carried out with six farms in the model region. A special questionnaire has been developed and sent out to the farmers. In the following time interviews have been made with the farmers willing to cooperate in this matter, based on the questionnaire. The most surprising result of this was that all farmers involved have answered all questions and contributed their information! It has been granted

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to the farmers that the results of these interviews will be kept confidential, but the essence has been evaluated and has had influence on the communication concept and its basic findings.

Time schedule

Before the project Baltic Compass started the basic idea of this communication concept was already visible in an outline. We already had some site visits in order to understand the farmer's opinions, problems and solutions. So the farmers already started to produce ideas, but so far we were not really prepared. The roles had not been defined clear enough and some misunderstandings were the consequence. Besides, we already started data collections and discussions on the recent situation and the local environmental situation (in addition to the already known data) in order to be prepared for questions from the regional people. With the beginning of this project a structured procedure was followed with well defined roles and steps. So far these steps were taken:

- 2.11.10 preparatory workshop with stakeholders, universities etc

- 10.11.10 regional workshop with farmers and other actors plus science in our model region

- 9.12.10 scientific workshop, wrap up all information and plan the future steps

- 12.4.2011 next status discussion, with university people first, later discussion with local people

- Since then several discussions have been carried out with the manufacturer of the drainage control systems, the algae experts, these are shown in another report for Baltic COMPASS WP6.

Figure 4: Basic data analysis by members of the university, the agency and local farmers, preparation of the regional status description

Figure 5: Meeting of regional and state actors on the farm of one of the initiators of the process, the farmer Mr. Bossmann sen. (near centre of the picture, with walking stick)

Figure 6: Excursion of regional actors, farmer's advisors, water management board members, university and agency people to possible project sites, discussing farmer's opinions and practical solutions

4. Major findings: Change of Perspective

General considerations

After several discussions with farmers in the beginning of our project contributions one major finding was that not projects or technical / practical solutions are the main Schleswig-Holstein input to Baltic Compass, but the process of development and realization of the project ideas. So we decided to define the following aspects as main components of the activities:

- the process of discussing new perspectives for farmers (including climate change adaptation) is the main contribution to the project.

- We should enable farmers to change their perspective:

  o from plain food production to production of a sustainable environment

- from a totally controlled to a personally managed farming

- farmers are responsible for food supply, but at the same time also for the production of natural goods as clean drinking water, functioning cultural landscapes, and so on

- we must try to find ways from a simply reactive to an active farming

In discussions following this decision we were reassured that this way is needed and helpful for the region and for the farmers. During the Conference "A greener agriculture for a bluer Baltic Sea" in Helsinki in November 2011 this approach has been presented. One of the participants finally agreed to this and stated that this has been in need since quite a long time. The final question was: "Where have you been so long?" (Hakan Eriksson, Baltic Farmer of the year 2010, during the plenary meeting of "A Greener Agriculture for a Bluer Baltic Sea", Helsinki, November 2010).

Refinement of the planning process

Taking all the recent findings into account it is necessary to refine the basic planning process as shown in figure 2. It seems necessary to add an important branch to the planning process, see fig. 7.
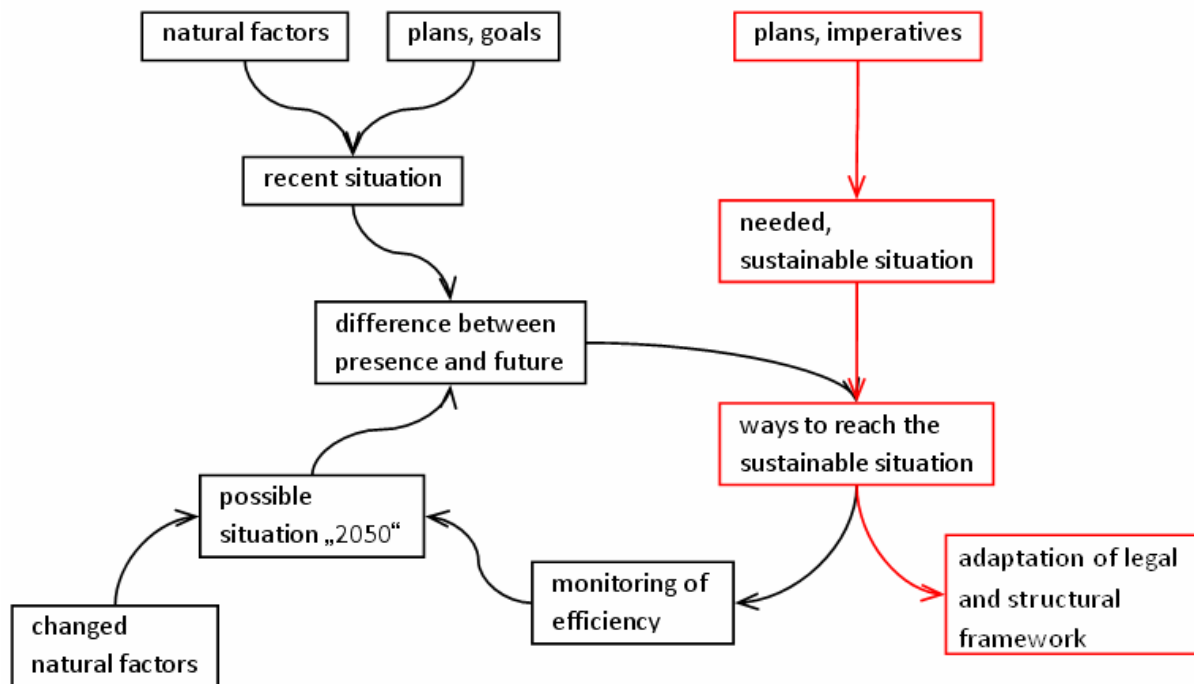

Figure 7: The data flow and decision making process, refined and enhanced with real public participation elements

As a result of our pilot process we find it necessary that the right branch (marked in red) must be added to the process. In the course of this addition the basic and new approach of public involvement is carried out. The outcomes of this process branch will bring a better definition of a "sustainable solution" for the problem discussed which then can be the basis for a better adapted, better accepted and better suiting solution. There should also always be a close link to the legal and structural framework carrying the process.

To carry out the new type of public communication and involvement, the use of new communication techniques is necessary. This process needs a communication that does not only ask for thresholds, as is usually done in planning and granting processes of today. The communication should enable the involved people to really let people tell their knowledge and their real planning goals for the future. The regional actors should come together with planners and decision makers in order to develop a view on a wanted, needed sustainable situation for the future which then is the translation of the common saying "I want my children to live a better life". This means, however, that the usual working meetings, round table discussions etc. will not be sufficient to reach the goals described, as these meetings are not prepared to ask for personal or even emotional aspects of people's opinions. Today we know a lot of other methods, basically coming from the social sciences that ask for reasons behind meanings and decisions. These methods can also be used in the framework of this new type of project planning communication. The analysis made by MATTHES (2011) in the course of her internship in the State Agency gives a comprehensive overview over available techniques, including an evaluation of their usefulness in the framework of the projects carried out here. The text so far is available in German only, a translation will follow.

In some cases it has shown to be necessary to not only discuss possible, practical (and possibly pre-formed or predefined) solutions, but to describe wanted situations and obvious or possible ways to reach this future situation. These ways may include particular options and measures as well as investments, gaps of knowledge and ways to close them, financial planning and a time schedule for the realization of the plans. A very clear time schedule can be extraordinary important, as some measures to adapt to climate change, for example, can not wait forever.

Finally, it may be possible that the recent legal situation does not allow for certain unusual types of problem solutions. If the whole process shall be credible to the regional actors, the whole process should at least also include the option to involve local and regional politicians to start an initiative to liberalize legal prescriptions or to start initiatives to adapt the organizational or data related framework to the emerging new sight of possible solutions.

The described planning process is best suited for a framework planning process like developing a land use plan or a regional plan, but it is also possible to develop detailed plans like a local water management plan (e.g. general rules for a drainage method for agricultural fields) with this method. In fact, the actual starting points of our activity (the pilot cases) were the planning of a new drainage

system for fields, as well as the development of new methods to make use of the water runoff and its nutrient load by ponds and algae, see chapter 3.

5. Lessons learned

Obstacles on the way

So far the concept has unrevealed a few interesting aspects that prevent a simple realization. In some of the cases a solution seems possible, in some other cases we still struggle for a way out of the dilemma. These findings were defined by analysis of the experience we have made during the different stages of project communication and by the evaluation of literature on new project communication methods (MATTHES 2011). The most important findings so far are presented here:

Prerequisites for a successful cooperation project

In many cases project communication and cooperation suffers from insufficient willingness or ability of the participants to see and to accept the differences between the partners. Communicative obstacles are not taken as a challenge to be accepted and solved, but as the expression of unwillingness or inability of the partner. For a productive communication the following rules must be obeyed to:

- All partners must have the will to listen to the others and to accept their statements and wordings without prejudice.

- Partners must trust each others; there must be a basic general acceptance of the other communication partners as full partners in a mutual process.

- All partners must have a basic acceptance of the other's opinion, as all opinions have a certain reason, and all partners in the process have to play their own role. Sometimes the opinions of different partners are the same, but due to different ways of formulation or of looking at a problem, a project or a solution these similarities are hidden. Then the partners must try to find common points instead of enhancing the differences.

- As a basic summary, the partners generally must have the will to cooperate at all.

- Maybe the most important point is that each partner must see and accept the (new) role he has to take in the process, and he must understand this new perspective and take it serious. Each

partner must try to find the appropriate approach towards the change of roles in the process. This aspect seems to be the most important one, so it is discussed in detail in a following chapter.

This process takes a long time, and the success is never granted. Partners have to find ways to communicate with each other, they have to find a common understanding of the project and the possible solutions, and they must find a common language and an access to their new role in this particular type of process. This sometimes makes it difficult to keep up the motivation of all involved groups as some are used to longer planning cycles and others just want to have a fast solution for a problem. Solving this problem and bridging this gap is one of the most important and difficult tasks for the project manager.

Find the appropriate partners

In the course of the process we several times had the discussion who is a good partner in this process, and why. We sometimes came up with the opinion that the "standard partners" seem to be not optimal as they are so deeply entangled in their "old" rules and positions that they hardly manage to change their perspective and to accept a new position in the process (see above). So finally there is no simple recipe to follow in order to find appropriate partners, but some characteristics and attributes can be given in order to locate possible partners:

- In some cases farmers themselves come up with ideas for problem solutions. This is the most straightforward case. If you follow these traces it may be quite simple to find cooperation partners. Discussions like this will be carried out among farmers in a regional meeting, during round table discussions, on farmer's union meetings etc.

- Talking to regional farmers will easily show the ideals and targets used to run a farm. If a farmer is asking for economic solutions exclusively, it will be difficult to discuss environmental or societal matters. However, many farmers voluntarily carry out nature protection activities or are known to be especially sensitive to ecological questions.

- In some cases farmers and / or other land users have already formed own congregations. It is always a good idea to go and ask them as a first step towards a communication in a regional and practical context.

- Ask for contacts in agencies and institutions that work in the region, or that give grants for different regional development projects.

- The most important step in order to start a fruitful communication is to try to understand the problems of the farmers and other partners involved. In some cases this is difficult due to

different types of communication and wording used or different characteristics of communication.

- The project partners should help each other to find ways of realization of the other's ideas. This should not start with a "this will not work" blockade, but with a "what a good basis for a cooperation" approach.

- It is most important to analyze existing information, derive the information essential for the project and prepare it in a way that can be used and understood by the project partners. In some cases, the scientific background for a project solution is not easy to understand. This should, however, not hinder the realization. The information must be "translated" for the other project partners.

- The parties involved should help each other to find partners to solve problems on the way.

In many cases it will be necessary for different partners (agencies, planners, universities) to find their new role as advisor for the regional active people. This is a new aspect of work which may not have been the recent basis of the own work, but it is needed for this communication process to work.

New roles for the participants

Communication runs very differently with the bottom-up process described, as mentioned above. The mental leadership shifts from ministries, agencies and universities to regional people, agencies become translators in a complex process instead of control institutions, and so on. So the partners have to change their role during the process:

- farmers become actors and information sources in the region, but they need support in different aspects.

- universities are not only needed as scientific institutions to develop new knowledge, but also as advisors and planning support for the regionally active people and as institutions that take up information and ideas from the local people and find practicable solutions for the ideas; additionally the research institutions must learn to transform their scientific knowledge into a language and a form that is useful for local actors. Besides universities must find ways to overcome the problem that they are always short of money and thus depend on financial aid from the outside. This permanent quest for a more sufficient financial support leads them to think in a way like "first money, than personnel, then active cooperation in a project". So it is very difficult to bridge the time between a starting idea and the real start of a project, often ending with partners that stop to believe in the success of a project and quit their cooperation.

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- the agencies and politicians responsible for the region must in addition to their normal responsibilities also act as helping hands to remove obstacles in the realization of projects as neither farmers nor universities are used to prepare documents needed for a grant, so here is a need for something like an interpreter, a translator between the local ideas, the general and regional planning goals and the legal framework.

- and finally it should in this particular case lead farmers from a simply reactive (transforming prescriptions "from above" into practical actions) to a pro-active and responsible type of work (and self-understanding).

Especially this final aspect will help farmers to change their position from only food producers to versatile and important land and landscape managers, also producing life quality, clean water, nice landscape etc, being responsible for landscape functions in general, not only for the production of single goods.

Improve the internal communication in agencies

In the course of the process we had to learn that some of the communicative obstacles are based in the particular way agencies work. In many cases, due to a small amount of people working there and a high workload, civil servants are used to be very strict in their selection of activities and tasks. Normally, this is a good way of structuring the work and of enforcing good, sound and well balanced decisions. However, in a process like the one described here, a too strict confinement to certain tasks and responsibilities can be a high barrier for a positive and productive communication. So the agency people should meet these challenges:

- Agency people must think beyond their own scope of tasks, as in the framework of thus communication concept agencies play a main role in the networking part of the process. This means that a simple confinement to a limited scope of subjects is not sufficient to see and understand the side effects of a plan or a subject. So a too limited view will not enable them to be good networking partners.

- In the whole course of the project it is necessary to inform people about the activities in order to bind them to the project. This does not mean that large reports have to be produced many times during the process. In most cases short notes, mails or phone calls informing others about newly reached milestones or steps done on the way are sufficient to help the people involved see that the whole process is still running. These small pieces of success will motivate them to continue their own engagement.

- All process participants, including the agency people, should continuously try to spread the idea(s) of the project itself and try to start own new ones. "Appetite increases while eating" – this is also true for ideas during a project. When thinking in the realm of a certain subject it is much easier to develop new ideas. A major challenge for each project is the development of an atmosphere that enables, enforces or even demands the development of new approaches which then are communicated to others, hoping these bits of information will start new ideas in their minds, too.

- Agencies, being the main networking partners in the process, have a major task in helping other agency people to find connections between the general project idea, the farmer's proposals and their own work.

6. Future plans

The evaluation of the communication processes started in the framework of Baltic Compass have given rise to a series of ideas for future developments that could help to develop the method. The most important ones are listed below. In some cases first steps towards a realization of these ideas have already been made or are under preparation.

Structured interviews and DELPHI study

The analysis prepared by MATTHES (2011) proposes a certain setting of project communication especially in order to derive ethical values of the regional people as planning guidelines. The implementation of these methods in a planning process, however, needs some further negotiations. The planned (and in part already started) steps are:

- We will carry out structured interviews and Delphi-type actions in the SH model region during 2012. This will help to discover the major factors influencing the local economics as seen by the regional actors like farmers, NGOs, politicians, stakeholders and others. And it will help us to see the main factors, as well as the main goals and views on the regional vulnerabilities.

- In a next step these findings will be used as planning basis, possibly redefining the planning goals of the starting phase of a project.

- Finally these findings from the Delphi study will be the input for the modeling approach planned for the model region. The Delphi study will bring up those factors that according to the farmer's opinion influence their activities and results. These factors and their interdependencies will be laid down in a structural (conceptual) model of the region. It will be the basis for a discussion about scenarios and the prediction of possible outcomes of different types of farmer's decisions.

- In this form the data and the model findings will also form a basis for the analysis of the effects of the project measures, and possibly help to start the development of a regionalized Decision Support System (DSS) for farmers and other regional actors.

- It can also be very helpful to create maps from the findings in order to support the communication of the results and to visualize the findings from the modeling approaches. The Map Server already developed for the Schleswig-Holstein environmental information dissemination will be a central element in this, as it already gives access to a large amount of environmental information that form the basis for decisions.

- Another plan that in this moment is close to realization is to continue this approach with a parallel model region in Schleswig-Holstein and possibly also in another country in order to validate the findings and to prove the applicability of these findings in other circumstances.

Deal with the results

A major goal of the communication concept is to enhance the results of the communication processes in the framework of planning and to derive further findings and proposals. On this course it is also possible to test new communication approaches according to the collection of MATTHES (2011). In any case the following first proposals for tips and clues for the enhancement of communications can be given:

- All participants should be encouraged to give a precise description of their idea. In some cases communication processes have been stopped because of a too unclear or unprecise target or a to unclear formulation of a possible solution. This can give rise to so many misunderstandings that after a short moment of discussion the main target gets lost.

- The members of a bottom-up planning process should also be allowed to develop seemingly "impossible" ideas and projects. If a discussion is started with too many limitations and barriers it will most probably fail or at least produce results that will not really satisfy the participants. Starting the discussion with a free and open discussion, however, may start the development of very good new ideas that so far have been blocked by the obstacles descried above.

- After this "phase of fantasy" it is the most important task of the "professional" members of the process to translate the basics of the project proposals to practical and legally acceptable steps. This in most cases will be the role of an agency, supported by the scientific project partners. After this first translation phase, which should not trim the corners off the proposal to make it fit to already developed and thus well known solutions, but should distill the major ideas and

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proposals from the discussion, the basic idea(s) should be developed towards a practical project in cooperation with all participants.

- In any way it is the task of all participants to remove obstacles on the way of implementation. These can be practical obstacles like missing technologies or missing knowledge, legal obstacles, technical obstacles or general obstacles in the acceptance of the project. The group carrying out the communication process should have experts – directly in the group or as external experts – that can handle these matters and find solutions.

Monitoring of success

In any case a monitoring is needed in order to see the quality of the projects. A major question to be answered here is how good the project's contribution is in spite of the fulfillment of the goals defined. This means that already in an early stage of the project the communication group has to define a set of criteria (indicators) describing the success of the project. The methods to find these criteria still need some further development, as the monitoring of financial aspects of the project is only one aspect. In any case it is necessary to compare the cost of the project with gains in other levels, the economical gains (seems to be thee easiest aspect in most cases), but also the benefits for the ecological side of the spectrum and finally also the impacts on social questions. Several criteria systems have been developed so far (see CSD-indicators, UN 2007), but they need another thorough testing in the framework of the regional project development.

Another aspect here is that the monitoring of success may reveal bad results for a project because of missing or misleading legal regulations. In this case, at least one option should be to start an initiative to adapt the legal framework to the new challenges.

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