

The Need for water course related planning tools is indicated in the field of hydro morphological pressures and impacts in the coastal zone of the North Sea and adjacent estuaries. One of first steps towards harmonized improvement of planning related to EU Water Framework Directive in this area is the setting up of the INTERREG IIIb project HARBASINS (Harmonised River Basins Strategies North Sea).

The aim of the HARBASINS-project is to enhance the compatibility of the WFD and international cooperation on integrated management of estuaries and coastal waters in the North Sea Region, by harmonisation of management strategies, leading to estuarine ecosystem restoration in the river basins and compatible instruments that ensure sound environmental management of interconnected coastal zones in the North Sea.

HARBASINS aims at exchange of knowledge and experiences in successful implementation of the WFD between the North Sea partners involved. Coordination and harmonization of activities – especially between adjacent river basins - is necessary to prevent divergence in approach. This especially holds for ecological entities such as the Wadden Sea, the Wash, Sager and the Scheldt. So the aim is to establish more coordination between these regions and come to consider the North Sea-region as one region.

Hydro morphological pressures and impacts are covered by work package 4 (WP4) of the Harbasins Project and the pilot is located in the Dutch-German Ems-Dollard estuary. In this region differences in approaches already have become apparent on both sides of the border in coping with hydro morphological modifications. Main responsible country for WP4 is Germany.

The other work packages are Harmonization River Basin Management Strategies (WP1), Estuarine Ecosystem functioning and health (WP2) and Trans River Basin Pollution (WP3).