

Klaus Jarmatz

The Framework Concept: a Chance for Integrative Nature Conservation

The Seville Strategy for the programme 'Man and the Biosphere', which was adopted in 1995, recommends concrete strategies for biosphere reserves in the 21st century. Above all, it deals with their role as model regions for the implementation of important aspects of the Agenda 21. Devising local consultative frameworks (subsequently called framework concepts) for biosphere reserves is an important recommendation of the Seville Strategy.

Framework concepts are strategies adapted to special regional features, which serve as central instruments for implementing the highly ambitious tasks of the biosphere reserves, both at the regional and the local level. The multiplication effect into the regional and national political scene, on neighbouring regions and other stakeholders may not be underestimated. Taking up this responsibility to benefit an entire region is a challenge for the administration of the biosphere reserve, in cooperation with its partners.

In the Schaalsee biosphere reserve, which was designated by UNESCO in 2000, the framework concept instrument was taken up quickly in order to meet internationally and nationally required targets and simultaneously accommodate regional requirements. On the initiative of the administration, the decision was made not to develop the framework concept internally, in contrast to the specialist plans which usually have been drafted for protected areas. The planning process was to remain open as a Regional Agenda

21 process and was to use a cooperative and consensus-oriented approach.

The concept should point out the chances for a sustainable, i.e. ecologically, economically and socially viable regional development, based on the requirements of the Mecklenburg-Schaalsee region; drafting the concept should already contribute to solving the upcoming tasks. The concept should not only be developed in a professional planning office but also in work groups,

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UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Schaalsee

This biosphere reserve spans an area of 309 km²; it is located between the cities Hamburg, Lübeck and Schwerin. It stretches around the Lake Schaalsee, which spans 24 km². This landscape, with its many lakes and riparian forests and tightly networked, mosaic-type biotopes was created by the forces of the ice age. The Schaalsee area was designated by UNESCO in 2000. The variety of species, the huge beech groves and old tree-lined roads, the calcareous lakes, moors and marshes give this area a unique character.

Next to the exemplary establishment of a framework concept and the successful development of the 'Job-Motor Biosphere' (featured in this journal), a focus is the promotion of environmentally friendly tourism under the umbrella

of the regional brand. For example six observation platforms for field observations were constructed and more than 150 km of cycling and hiking paths were signposted and partly built afresh. The information centre 'Pahlhuus', hiking tours and excursions contribute to environmental education. Eighteen on-going monitoring projects serve to record the breeding activities of the white-tailed eagle and the cormorant or to control the efficiency of extensive grasslands.

Further information:
<http://www.schaalsee.de>

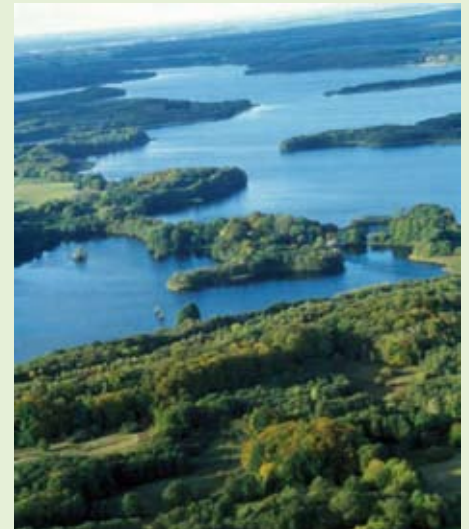


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open to everyone. Citizens should have the opportunity of becoming involved in all sorts of ways; their interests should be integrated into the regional objectives by use of a 'bottom up' approach.

A circle of local moderators was established to agree on compromises acceptable to everyone; external moderators were also hired. The administration of the Schaalsee biosphere reserve set up a co-ordination office. A specifically designed model of involvement made it rather easy to reach interested citizens, economic developers, local stakeholders, associations and members of parliament. As a result of the involvement model, the network of those responsible for the biosphere reserve became a permanent fixture and consensus building processes were encouraged far beyond the drafting phase.

The board of trustees for the Schaalsee biosphere reserve and the 'regional Board', founded in 2000, served as consultants for the process. The body in charge of the project was the 'Steering Committee' made up of representatives from the municipalities, the sponsoring association 'Biosphere Schaalsee e.V.', the heads of five thematic working groups and an official in charge of land use planning. When the working groups

had prepared projects and these were agreed upon via a dialogue forum, this committee made the decisions about the projects. The working groups were headed by interested citizens; they met regularly and formed the activity focus for developing the content and up-dating the framework concept in future.

The framework concept has a modular structure. The printed version is divided into three volumes, which are constantly up-dated. The volume 'Visions and Objectives' is the result of the cooperative dialogue with the local players. The volume 'Analysis of Status Quo' lays out the legal and planning guidelines, lists ecological, economical and social data and analyses strengths and weaknesses. The volume 'Action Plan/Project Overview' contains recommendations for concrete measures and characterises ongoing projects. This list of projects is constantly supplemented and documents the development of the biosphere reserve.

Since then the visions and objectives formulated in the Regional Agenda 21 process have been the means to measure the success of all regional activities and projects. Yet, the process has been able to achieve much more: different regional interests were harmonised and a culture

to handle conflicts in the region was developed; the regional identity of the biosphere reserve Schaalsee was strengthened; an open network of stakeholders was established and communication and cooperation strengthened; and honorary work was encouraged. Another tangible success was the qualification as a self-contained region for the European Union regional funding programme LEADER+. This programme is enabling ecological, economical and social projects to be carried out on a sound financial basis. The integrated approach will also be used in the case of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Klaus Jarmatz is head of the authority of the Schaalsee biosphere reserve.