



3.6 Develop a locally coordinated solution to flooding with stakeholders in Holbækfjord

Holbæk municipality, Denmark

Introduction

This report summarises the efforts of Holbæk municipality in the development of a locally coordinated solution for flooding with stakeholders in the Holbækfjord. The report is written as a SUCCEs-story format to showcase the municipalities participation to the IMMERSE project and commitment for helping local stakeholders in designing, developing and implementing flood protection measures.

More information situating the flood risk in the Holbækfjord and the contributing role of waterways to flooding in the area, including a risk assessment and analysis of key elements for possible solutions can be found in the report of activities 3.8 and 3.9 developed as part of the IMMERSE project.

SUCCEs Story

S: Why we did apply for being a partner.

Based on an invitation from Frederikssund municipality we took over their place as partner in IMMERSE. The considerations were, that Holbæk (also) was threatened by floods, and we had not yet implemented measures for a damage reduction. The IMMERSE project hereby was an option for initiating the coast protection activities with professional and financial support.

U: What was our objective

In advance, there were no specific defined objective for the coast protection and the invitation came unexpected. In that way, the decision for participating was easy to take as it seemed obviously to use the IMMERSE project for initiating the coast protecting preparations in interaction with a highly qualified and experienced transnational network.

C: Challenges

The situation at the time of submitting the application was, that the municipalities in Denmark had no jurisdiction in relation to the coast protection. As the municipality was only responsible for the areas owned by the municipality itself, it was quite inevitably that not much work has been done in relation to the coast protection issues. However, the situation changed quite drastically during the project lifetime. Suddenly it was decided that the coast protection jurisdiction should overgo from the state to the municipalities.

As the municipality had limited experiences within the coast protection area and the municipality suddenly became the overall authority within the area, a serious capacity building work had to be



initiated related to all the perspectives coast protection includes. Pressure analyses, measure assessments, measure implementations for coast and nature protection issues, stakeholder dialogues etc. An entrance for the municipality to a highly comprehensive and complicated professional subject should be taken.

C: Achievements

Several members of the municipality staff have participated in minor coast protection activities. However, the work in IMMERSE has contributed to a capacity building of the staff. The coastal protection area is very complicated, and the staff competences are few and the coastal protection department has been met with several personal exchanges, the power in the department has been concentrated around the most necessary and obligatory tasks.

One of the efforts which has been made, was to initiate a dialogue with the stakeholders in one of the threatened areas in Holbæk. An around 2 km. long coastline is regularly flooded and where three different landowners' associations hereby are in risk of getting damages on the houses of some of the landowner association members. The associations was invited to meetings with municipality representatives several times for a dialogue. A dialogue in which Holbæk municipality also is a stakeholders as the municipality owe a part of the coastline and is responsible for maintaining the road which passes by between the fjord and the local landowners areas. In this relation, it is important to mention, that the coastal protection in such a case must be solved by mutual agreements with all the involved stakeholders. However, the local stakeholders have been reluctant in relation to entering a dialogue.

Several approaches have been tested. Anyway, the dialogue has trouble with finding a constructive level. That probably because the local landowners feel the dialogue is difficult because of unequal interests and maybe an unbalanced power as the municipality at one at the same time is a stakeholder and the jurisdictive institution.

E: Next Steps

What has been one of the largest surprises seen out of the Holbæk Municipality perspective has been, that all partners in IMMERSE seems to have identical problems. Coming from an area, where around 20. cm. sea level raise seems to give serious problems. Initially in the project duration it seemed hard to believe, that we could learn anything from partners, who had up to 10m daily differences in the sea level due to the tide. Additional, it seemed completely hopeless to believe, they could learn anything from Holbæk municipality. Anyway, impressing is was to experience that an increase of the sea level from 10 m. to 10 m. and 20 cm is just as serious as an raise in the sea level from 0 to 20 cm. The problems are identical. And the measures seem also to be identical, or more correct formulated equally complicated. There are no easy solutions. There are no cheap solutions.



S: Final findings

What has also come clear was, there are no individual solutions. Individual solutions only remove the problems from one part to somebody else, and if everybody establish their individual solutions, everybody is just back to start. The water will find its ways. So what we have learned is: think holistic, think big and be patient as large solutions often must be implemented by small steps.