

Shifts in the Ecological Economic Interface of the Baltic Sea Region

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The capacity of the Baltic Sea to effectively process the effluents from industrial activities in the surrounding land areas was exceeded already some twentyfive years ago. In spite of international agreements and considerable efforts to restore the integrity of the marine ecosystems the environmental situation has grown worse. One reason for this failure has been a much too limited approach to the problem, focussing mainly on the marine ecosystem with monitoring of pollution (Baltic Marine Environmental Protection Commission, HELCOM) and regulation of fishery resources (International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission) as the primary areas for international cooperation. Because pollution loads and demand for marine resources depend on the economic, technical and political possibilities in the various countries to meet common standards the international conventions have not been sufficient. To effectively improve the environmental conditions in the Baltic Sea requires a synoptic picture of the human activities within its entire air- and watershed and a profound restructuring of the industrial production. The aim of this presentation is to suggest an ecological-economic approach to the environmental problems in the Baltic Sea region to investigate ways to reduce the scale of the human activities within the drainage basin to a level which is within the assimilative and regenerative limits of the total ecosystem.