

Climate resilience on the beach:

Results of the workshop: "Understanding challenges, recognizing opportunities, acting together" on 12 April 2024

The economic development of the Baltic Sea region benefits from flourishing coastal tourism, which, however, is increasingly impacted by climate change. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and more frequent extreme weather events are jeopardizing the use of beaches. The consequences can be reduced attractiveness, landscape degradation, and increased health risks.

methodology

The extent to which Baltic Sea beaches are specifically affected and impacted by climate change was explored during the first workshop. The 18 participants from the tourism industry, administration, and science examined the impacts of climate change and the resulting opportunities and risks, and discussed initial adaptation measures.



Results

Impact on the beach

- Increase in weather extremes
- Sea level rise (beach narrower)
- Increase in bacteria, jellyfish, algae
- Declining water quality
- Rising water and air temperatures
- More sun/sun hours
- Coastal erosion
- Loss of infrastructure

Opportunities

- Season extension (no more tourists in summer)
- More visitors all year round
- internationalization
- Promote additional/alternative tourist offers

Risks

- Unpredictability
- Weather extremes (especially in autumn)
- More tourists
- More garbage, traffic, hotels, infrastructure
- Less ecosystem recovery and higher pollutant input

Adaptation measures

- Increase measurements/monitoring (e.g. (bathing) water quality)
- More trash cans and sanitary facilities
- water dispenser
- Shady spots/shading
- Sand and stone embankments to prevent land erosion
- Limiting the number of visitors
- Adjustment of nationwide holiday periods
- Creating more attractive working conditions
- Multilingualism (information, advertising, personnel)
- Alternative ("Indoor") offers/alternatives for the beach
- Educational offerings

Cooperation with relevant and affected stakeholders

- Research institutions & science
- Authorities (Office for Environment & Climate Protection, Health Authorities, Coastal Protection Authorities, StaLU MV)
- Politics and local politicians
- Municipalities & Administration
- Tourism industry (hotels, beach operators, restaurants)
- Residents (tourism acceptance)
- Guests/beach users (swimmers, sunbathers, anglers)
- Non-governmental organization

Conclusion

- Changes are primarily perceived negatively
- **Sea level rise, extreme weather events, deterioration of (bathing) water quality are the three most critically seen changes**
- **More cooperation (also across borders) is required**
- **Season extension has positive & negative effects**
- **The tourism sector should develop an adaptation strategy**