

Information centres and environmental education

Another very successful example is the cooperation between information centres in Korea and the Wadden Sea. Many field studies, workshops and training courses were held with participation of practitioners from both sites. Through these joint activities, the importance of visitor centres as a regional focal point was underlined, resulting in establishing a new network of visitor centres in Korea in 2011 and developing an educational programme compared to the International Wadden Sea School. The work has also reinforced the important role of visitor centres when developing sustainable tourism by providing high quality nature experience offers through skilled staff.



Joint MoU activities

2008

- Joint International Symposium on East Asian Coastal Wetlands and side event at the Ramsar Conference of Parties, Changwon, October 2008.

2009

- 12th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium, Wilhelmshaven, March 2009.
- 1st Joint MoU Workshop, Mokpo, October 2009.

2010

- 11th Trilateral Governmental Conference and Joint Benthos Workshop, Sylt, March 2010.

- International Symposium of Migratory Birds, Mokpo, October 2010.
- Workshop and IWSS training course on Wadden Sea education in Mokpo, Muan, and Sinan, September 2010.

2011

- Joint workshop, field excursion and laboratory work on benthos monitoring and research, Mokpo, September 2011.
- Korean study visit Wadden Sea information centers, Husum, Tönning, Hooge, Sylt and Texel, October 2011.

2012

- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Jeju, and World Heritage Workshop, Mokpo, September 2012.
- Workshop on tidal flat education programs and exhibition concepts, Suncheon, November 2012.
- 13th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium, Leeuwarden, November 2012.

2013

- Korean study visit of 20 Wadden Sea information Centers, June 2013.
- Water Bird Society Symposium and International Wader Study Group, Wilhelmshaven, September 2013.
- Annual Workshop International Wadden Sea School, Spiekeroog, November 2013.
- Joint workshop at the International Marine Protected Areas Conference (IMPAC), Marseille, October 2013.

Impressum

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Common
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Conservation and Management of Tidal Flat Ecosystems

Memorandum of Understanding
Korea - Wadden Sea





Tidal Flats in the Wadden Sea and Korea

The Korean tidal flats and the Wadden Sea belong to the worldwide largest and most important coastal tidal flat ecosystems. Therefore, there is mutual interest in supporting each other in the protection of these ecosystems and exchange of experiences in management, monitoring and research.

Both sites extend over a few hundred km along the coast and host a high biodiversity. They play an important role as nursery and feeding area for the adjacent seas: the North Sea and the Yellow Sea. They are also indispensable stopover sites for migratory birds on the East-Atlantic Flyway respectively the East-Asian-Australasian flyway, thus underlining the significance of tidal flats for the protection of global biodiversity. Both areas are multi-use areas with fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and coastal development.

However, Korean tidal flats are different from those in the Wadden Sea as high mountains are situated in the hinterlands and no barrier islands have developed. They are typical macrotidal flats with a tidal range of about 6–8 m and show different sediment features depending on the exposition (shores, bays, estuaries).



Tidal flats at the Yellow Sea coast of Korea



The Wadden Sea

Working together to protect our heritage

In 2009, the Wadden Sea countries and Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding. It intends to further consolidate and extend the existing cooperation in particular with regard to exchange of scientific knowledge and exchange of experience in the field of protection and management. It also underlines the joint responsibility to contributing to wisely manage such exceptional coastal ecosystems around the World.



Aims of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

- To work together for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of intertidal wetlands;
- To raise awareness for a coherent conservation of tidal flats at an ecosystem scale;
- To establish and expand networks of experts, authorities and NGOs to exchange knowledge and experiences concerning the management of tidal flats.

The main work topics cover integrated management for the protection of tidal flat ecosystems, monitoring and research, as well as public information, visitor centres and eco-tourism.

A successful international cooperation

Since 2008, policy maker, managers, scientists and NGOs from the Wadden Sea and Korea have intensified their cooperation through 15 joint events or participation in other events. Almost 100 experts from the Wadden Sea and Korea participated in this mutual exchange which has reached over 1,500 persons at both sites. At several international events, participants from the Wadden Sea and Korea have jointly raised their voice to safeguard the protection of tidal flat ecosystems worldwide, e.g. joint events at Ramsar Conferences, within the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and other international conferences (IUCN, IMPAC).

The MoU has raised the profile of both areas regarding protection of tidal flats nationally and internationally, underlined the necessity to provide scientific knowledge for management, strengthened the capacity for communication and education, and provided many valuable examples for practitioners which they can apply at their site.



Policy and management

The Wadden Sea has a long experience of over 30 years of trans-boundary nature conservation which may also be valuable for other areas. Since the establishment of the Wetland Conservation Act in 1999 in Korea, management aims for tidal flats have changed to conservation. As a result, a number of marine protected areas have been established and designation as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar sites. The MoU activities have underlined the need connecting science and policy. Regular assessment reports similar to the Wadden Sea QSRs have now been implemented in Korea which are based on scientific monitoring supported by a database and GIS.

Research and monitoring

Development of monitoring and assessment strategies and establishing a scientific basis for monitoring, assessment and management is a second focus of the MoU activities, in specific for benthos and bird monitoring, including data management. Several workshops with scientists from various disciplines helped to understand similarities and differences between the two tidal flat ecosystems. The MoU has also strengthened the role of scientific surveys as a policy supporting tool in the management of Korean tidal flats. A scientific comparison of the two ecosystems has also helped to get a better understanding of alien species ecology such as the Pacific oyster in the Wadden Sea.

