

Rapid application of research results would help save the Baltic Sea

Experts feel that rapid application of new research results, communications and intensified cooperation in regional planning would help improve the state of the Baltic Sea. Public opinion in general and the debate on science policy were also considered to be important factors in the work to protect the Baltic Sea. A survey conducted by the Academy of Finland examined the views of experts from the entire Baltic basin on the impact of Baltic Sea research and how it might be developed. The survey gathered 315 respondents from research, administration and NGOs.

The survey was implemented in the form of an online brainstorming session with the purpose of identifying best practices for improving the societal impact of Baltic Sea research and collecting ideas on how to encourage the use of research findings in various sectors of society. The views that emerged in the study will be used at the Academy of Finland's BONUS Day, held on 9 February in Helsinki. The BONUS Day seminar will prepare a statement to be submitted to the Baltic Sea Action Summit held on Wednesday 10 February.

The themes: maritime safety, ecosystem services and eutrophication

The survey focused on three themes: maritime traffic and safety, ecosystem goods and services, and eutrophication. Within maritime safety, respondents felt that sustainability was a high-priority issue. Other critical issues that emerged within this theme included the handling of waste and oil spills, and faster implementation of new research results in practice.

Within ecosystem goods and services, communication was highlighted as a key factor in improving the impact of research knowledge on the Baltic Sea. Public opinion emerged as a particularly crucial factor for improving the environment. The means to rapid identification of good and bad environmental status, together with active participation in science policy debate also emerged as factors that would improve the interaction between research and policy-making in the Baltic Sea region.

With regard to eutrophication, the respondents brought up climate change as the first priority. They also highlighted the importance of coordination and spatial planning. It was also considered crucial to identify local nutrient hotspots and eliminate them, and to boost cooperation between different scientific disciplines.

Researchers the most active respondents

The highest percentage of respondents in the online survey came from Finland (34%), with Sweden as second (14.9%) and Germany in third place (10.2%). Replies were also received from Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Some 8 per cent of the replies came from other countries not listed above.

The majority of respondents were researchers (52.4%), with representatives of the administrative sector in second place (22.5%). The survey was carried out by Fountain Park.

An English summary of the results of the online survey is available on the Academy of Finland website at

