

THEME
SESSION



*Ocean futures: engaging
science and society in
visions of the future*

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CM 203: Coastal fisheries – quo vadis? Developing visions of the future in a collaborative Stakeholder Think Tank

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Climate Change, degrading fish stocks, fishing bans, BREXIT, expanding bureaucracy, an overaged fleet, Covid-19 pandemic related sales problems and spatial competition with other marine users such as wind parks, tourism and conservation: Nowadays, coastal fisheries in the North and Baltic Sea face many challenges, which jeopardize the economical existence of commercial fisheries in Germany. At the same time coastal fisheries are often mentally connected with pictures of a sustainable, artisanal activity, and with the supply of fresh and regionally caught seafood.

Coastal fisheries and coastal structuring should be more in line with society's changing expectations for nature conservation, cultural preservation, food provenance and sustainability, while still being competitive and economically viable. At the same time, there must be room for offshore energy production for the German energy transition and nature reserves for the protection of biodiversity. Further, the local coasts are attractive as a vacation destination, and recreational fishing holidays are enjoying great popularity as well.

All this shows that the coasts will change and must evolve. But how will the future look like? It is easier to develop pathways for transition, for such complex socioecological systems if there is a concrete, consistent and shared vision. Shared "visions of the future" are forward-looking images that are specific enough to guide decision-making. They can and should be ambitious, but also plausible. Methodologically, "visions of the future" are easy to communicate, making them readily available to decision-makers and the public. In order to develop German coasts and coastal fisheries in a goal-oriented approach, the Thuenen-Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries and Thuenen-Institute of Sea Fisheries initiated a Think Tank "Coastal Fisheries 2045" to develop precisely such visions for the future. They deal with the question: Which coast do we as society want at North and Baltic Sea?

A group of opinion leaders and decision makers from municipal politics, nature conservation, tourism, seafood trade, marine spatial planning, science, commercial and recreational fisheries were selected to discuss visions for the German coast. We are developing a range of visions defining the solution space, which offer a long-term future perspective for fisheries and other marine stakeholders.

According to social science standards our discussions are recorded and analysed using qualitative research approaches. Here we present preliminary findings and methods used during the first meetings of the Think Tank.

Keywords: Visions, Stakeholders, Think Tank, coastal Fisheries

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