

Planting the SEED:

Towards a Spatial Economic Ecological Database for a shared understanding of the Dutch Wadden area

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In this paper we address the characteristics of a publicly accessible Spatial Economic Ecological Database (SEED) and its ability to support a shared understanding among planners and experts of the economy and ecology of the Dutch Wadden area. Theoretical building blocks for a Wadden SEED are discussed. Our SEED contains a comprehensive set of stakeholder validated spatially explicit data on key economic and ecological indicators. These data extend over various spatial scales. Spatial issues relevant to the specification of a Wadden-SEED and its data needs are explored in this paper and illustrated using empirical data for the Dutch Wadden area. The purpose of the SEED is to integrate basic economic and ecologic information in order to support the resolution of specific (policy) questions and to facilitate connections between project level and strategic level in the spatial planning process. Although modest in its ambitions, we will argue that a Wadden SEED can serve as a valuable element in the much debated science–policy interface. A Wadden SEED is valuable since it is a consensus-based common knowledge base on the economy and ecology of an area rife with ecological–economic conflict, including conflict in which scientific information is often challenged and disputed.