



## Natura 2000 in the Elbe estuary – Integrated Management Plan



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# 1. EU Biodiversity Policy And Nature Legislation

The EU is committed to the protection of biodiversity – due to the Convention on Biological Diversity (World Summit 1992). Aim is halting biodiversity loss within the EU by 2010.

The **Habitats Directive** (together with the **Birds Directive**) constitutes the backbone of the EU's internal policy on biodiversity protection :

- the Natura 2000 network of protected sites
- a strict system of species protection.



## **Birds Directive (1979):**

„Whereas a large number of **species of wild birds** naturally occurring in the European territory of the Member States **are declining in number**, very rapidly in some cases; whereas this decline represents a serious threat to the conservation of the natural environment, particularly because of the biological balances threatened thereby;

Whereas the species of wild birds naturally occurring in the European territory of the Member States are mainly **migratory species**; whereas such species constitute a **common heritage** and whereas effective bird protection is typically a **trans-frontier environment problem** entailing common responsibilities; ...“

### **► Special Protected Areas (SPA)**



## Habitats Directive (1992):

„Whereas the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, including the **conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora**, are an essential objective of general interest pursued by the Community ...“

„Whereas, the main aim of this Directive being to promote the **maintenance of biodiversity, taking account of economic, social, cultural and regional requirements**, this Directive makes a contribution to the general objective of **sustainable development**; whereas the maintenance of such biodiversity may in certain cases require the maintenance, or indeed the encouragement, of human activities; ...“

### ► **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

## Natura 2000

Network of protected nature sites recognised as harbouring natural habitats or key species necessary for maintaining biodiversity in Europe

+ Special Protected Areas (SPA)  
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

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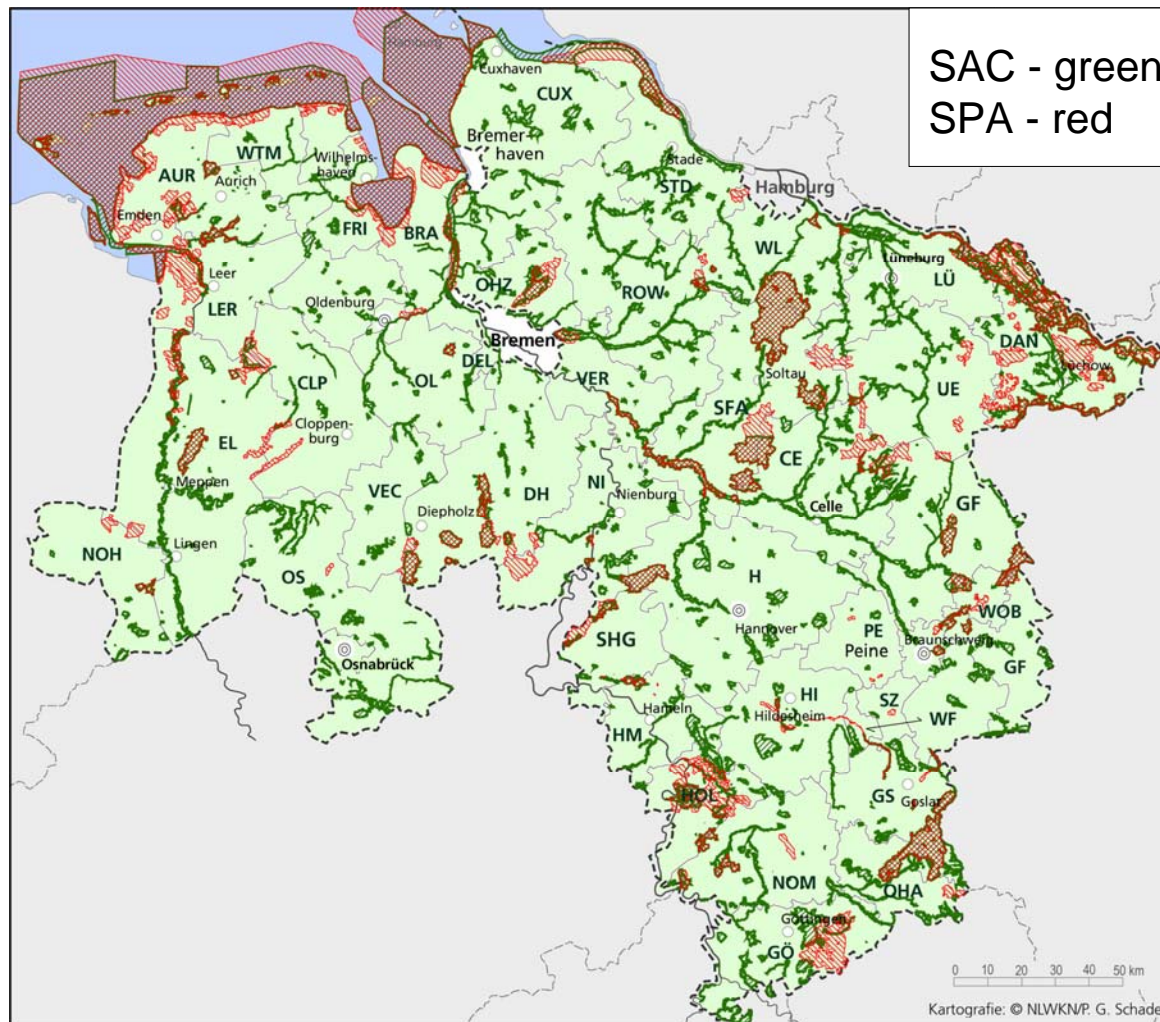
= Natura 2000



Further information: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm)



## Natura 2000 in Lower Saxony



Natura 2000 includes 10,5 % of the terrestrial area of Lower Saxony (499.984 ha).

SPA – 7,1 % (339.736 ha)

SAC – 6,8 % (325.420 ha)





## Keywords for the understanding of Natura 2000

### Overall coherence of Natura 2000

- quality and quantity of habitats and species targeted
- structural and functional role played within the network in ensuring the adequate geographical distribution

### Favourable conservation status (FCS)

is the overall objective for all habitat types and species of Community interest.

Conservation status indicator:

A (favourable), B (unfavourable/inadequate) or C (unfavourable/bad)



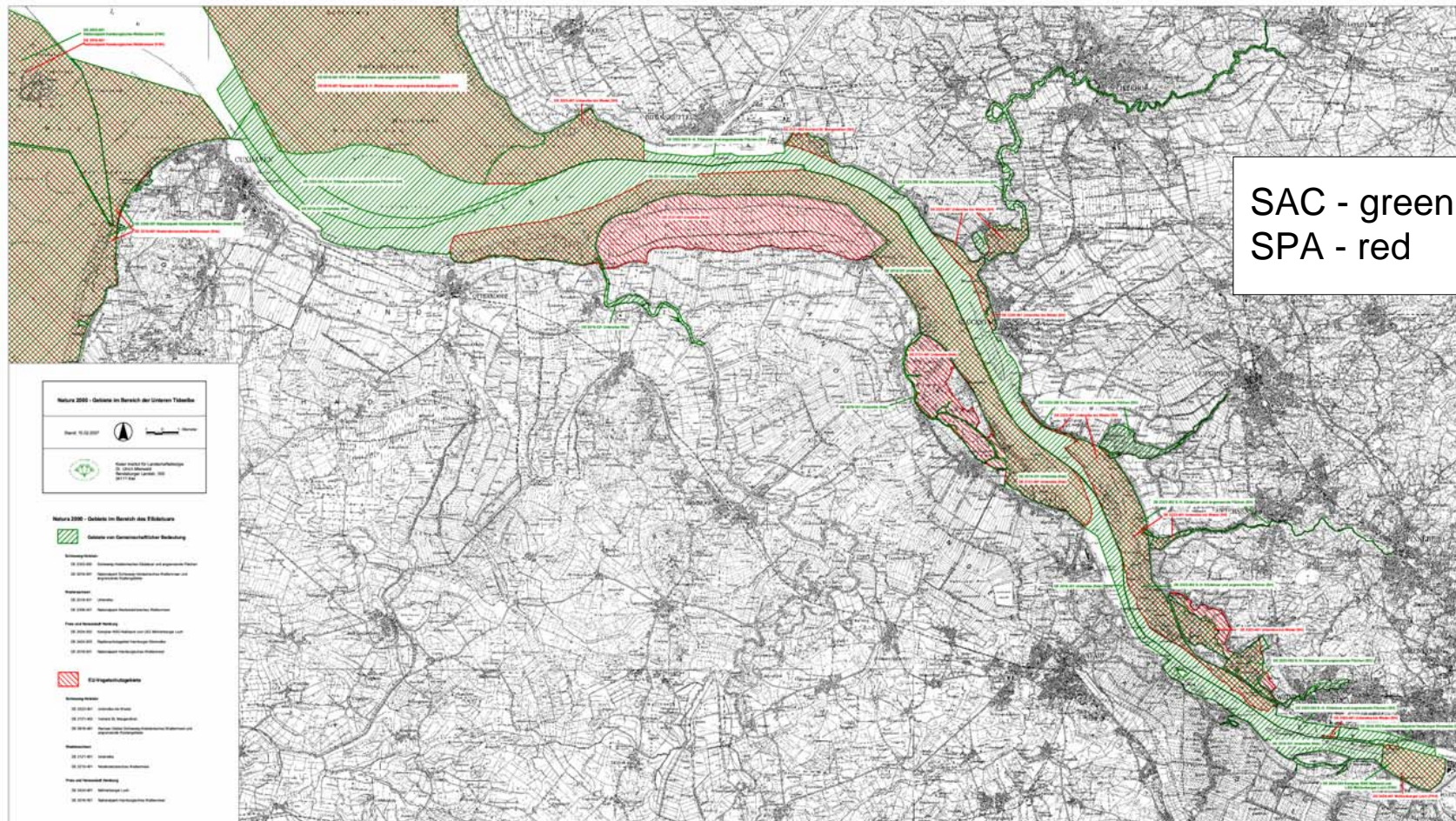
## Appropriate assessment of plans and projects

A thorough assessment to determine whether or not there will be an **adverse effect** on the integrity of a specific Natura 2000-site **by a plan or a project**.

During the assessment process **alternative solutions** are reviewed and reasons of **overriding public interest** considered before making a final decision.

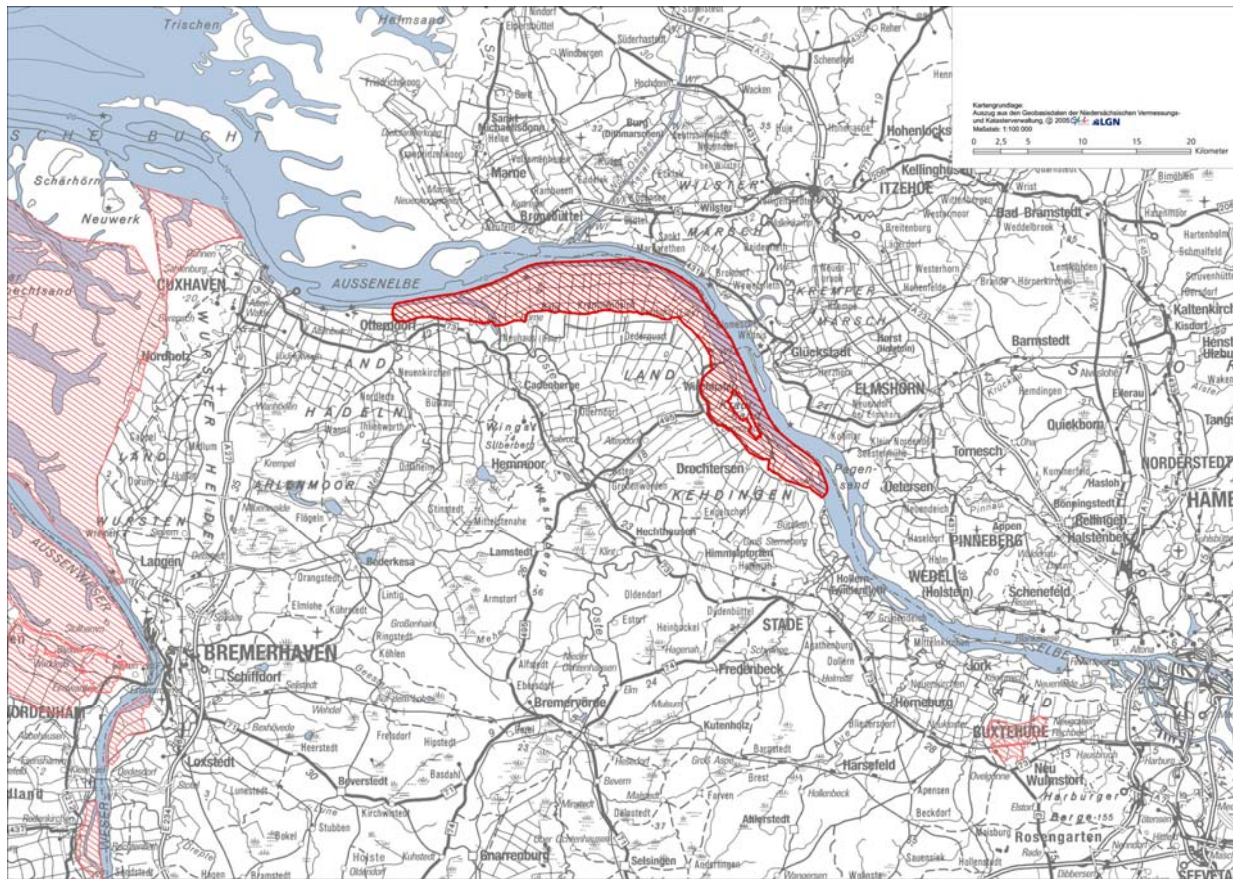
A project can be permitted when imperative reasons of overriding public interest exist. Negative impacts of the plan or the project require **compensatory measures**.

## 2. Natura 2000 in the estuary of the Elbe river





## Protected species of the Birds Directives significant for the Elbe estuary (selection)



Example  
SPA „Untere Elbe“,  
Lower Saxony

## Significant birds (Selection)

- Arctic tern
- Barnacle goose
- Little Gull
- Avocet
- Lapwing
- Common snipe

*Sterna paradisaea*  
*Branta leucopsis*  
*Larus minutus*  
*Recurvirostra avosetta*  
*Vanellus vanellus*  
*Gallinago gallinago*



Arctic tern



Barnacle goose



Little gull



Avocet



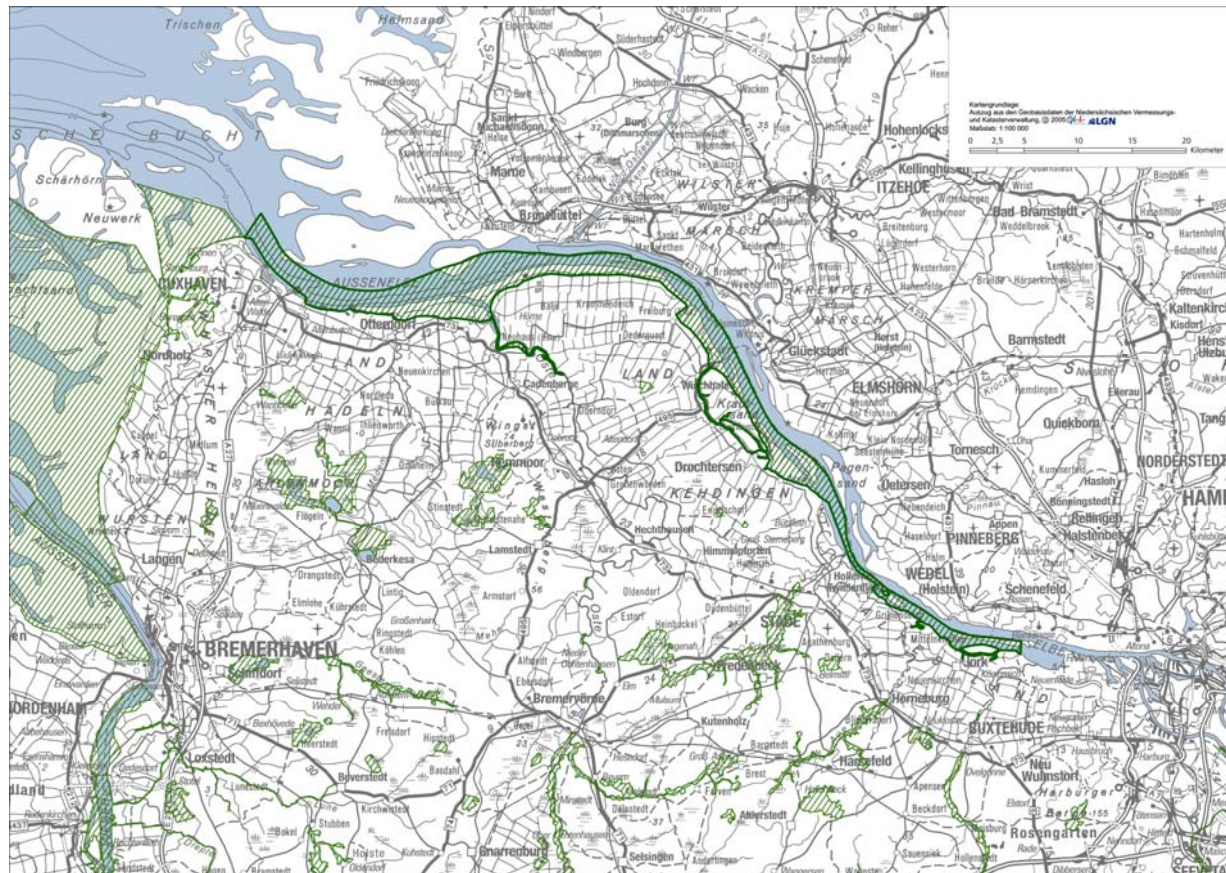
Lapwing



Common snipe



## Protected Species and Habitats of the Habitats Directive significant for the Elbe estuary



Example DE 2018-331  
„Untere Elbe“ (SAC),  
Lower Saxony

## Significant species (Selection)

- Twaite shad (Alosa fallax)
- Lamprey (Petromyzon marinus)
- Checkered lily (Fritillaria meleagris)
- Schierlings-Wasserfenchel (Oenanthe conioides)



Twaite shad



Lamprey



Checkered lily



Schierlings-Wasserfenchel

## Habitattyp „estuary“ under the Habitats Directive

(properties)



Reeds and tidal inlets



Salt marshes



mudflats



Wet greenland



## Conservation status and meeting the obligations

The memberstates of the EU have to **report the conservation status** of Natura 2000 (habitats and species) periodically every 6 years to the European Commission.

The conservation status of the **estuaries of the Ems, Elbe and Weser** has been determined as being **„not favourable“ (C)**.

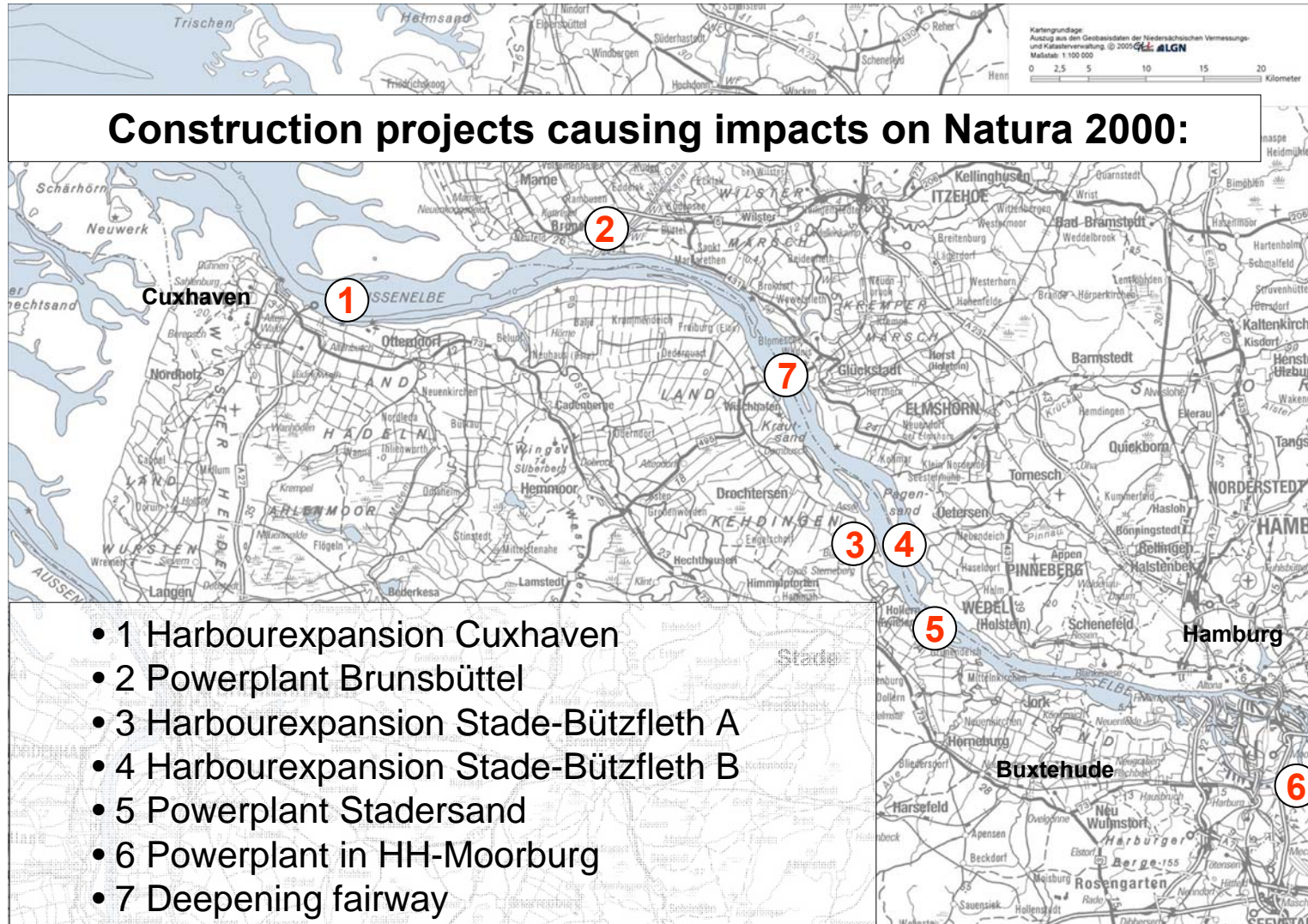
This means that the affected federal states have to take **obligatory action** to improve the conservation status.



### **3. Economic goals in the Elbe estuary**

The Elbe estuary constitutes an economic area of outstanding significance for Northern Germany:

- The estuary carries all seaborne traffic heading for the Elbe ports and the Kiel canal, connecting North Sea and Baltic Sea.
- Beyond existing industries and businesses, numerous projects are planned on either banks of the river.
- The river marshes are highly important areas of agricultural production.



## Claims on usage and the environment in the Elbe estuary

intensified use of the estuary



heightened pressure on the ecosystem and higher ecological risks

compulsory implementation of european directives:

- Birds Directive
- Habitats Directive
- Water Framework Directive



implementation demands:

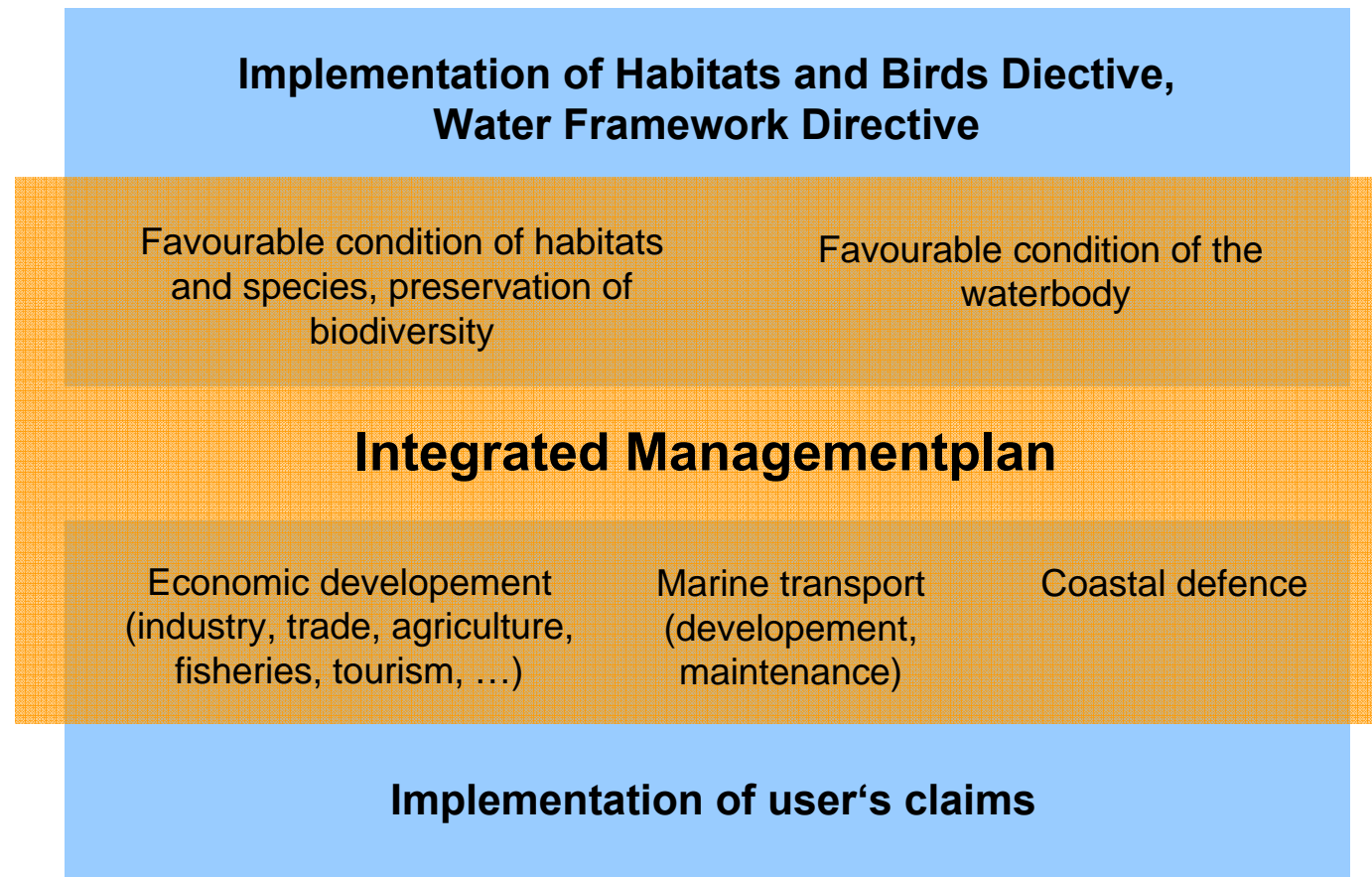
- at least maintaining ‚status quo‘
- when conditions are unfavourable taking remedial action to re-establish favourable conditions (Natura 2000)
- WFD respectively



**Goal: adjusting and compensating rivalling claims of usage, identifying perspectives for development**



## 4. Integrated Managementplan





## Drawing up an Integrated Managementplan for the Elbe estuary

- The federal states of **Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony** have an agreement to draw up an Integrated Management Plan.
- They have established two **planning groups cooperating with the stakeholders** to work on the plan.
- All **relevant authorities, NGO's, land owners and users** are represented in these planning groups.

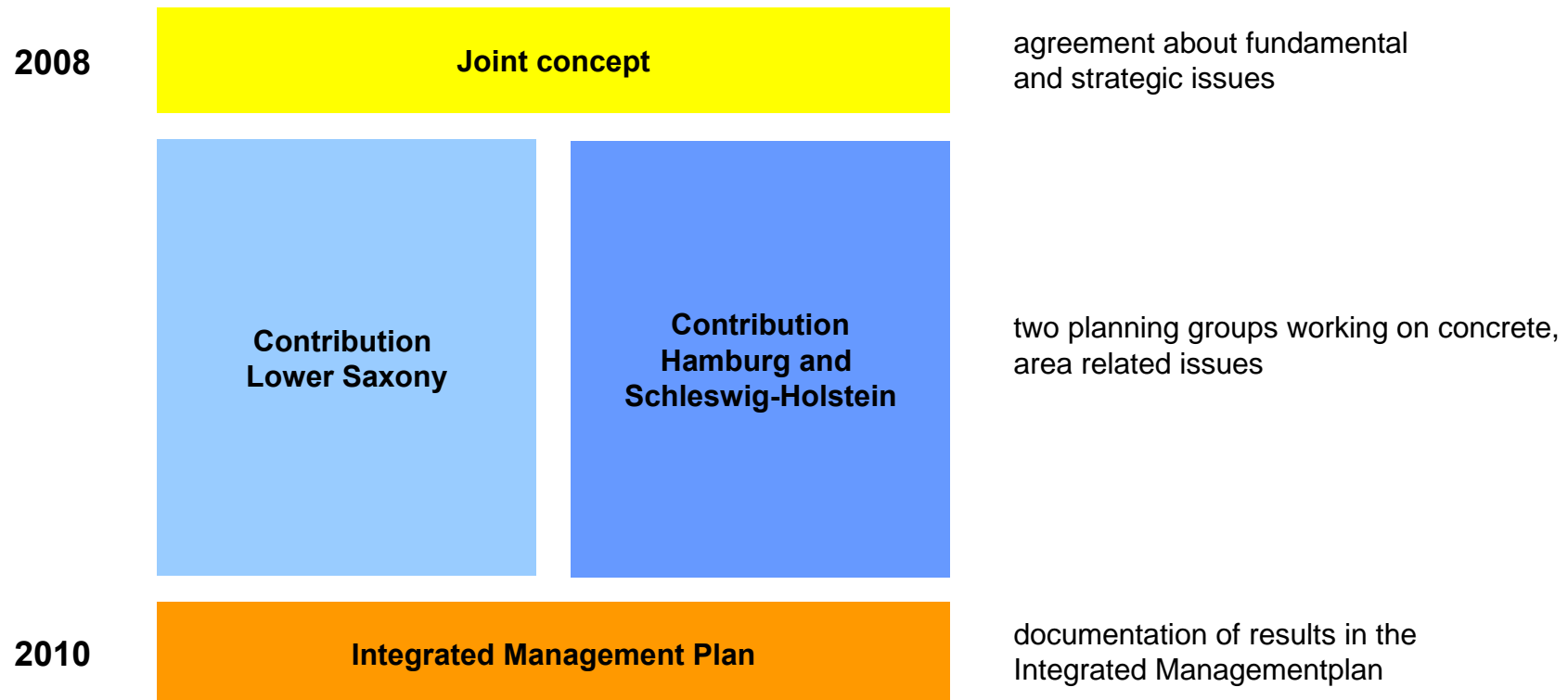


## Goals of the Integrated Management Plan

- common objectives for the protection and the development of Natura 2000
- proposals for measures to achieve the objectives
- perspectives for the economic development
- facilitating permit procedures
- establishing a common data base and monitoring

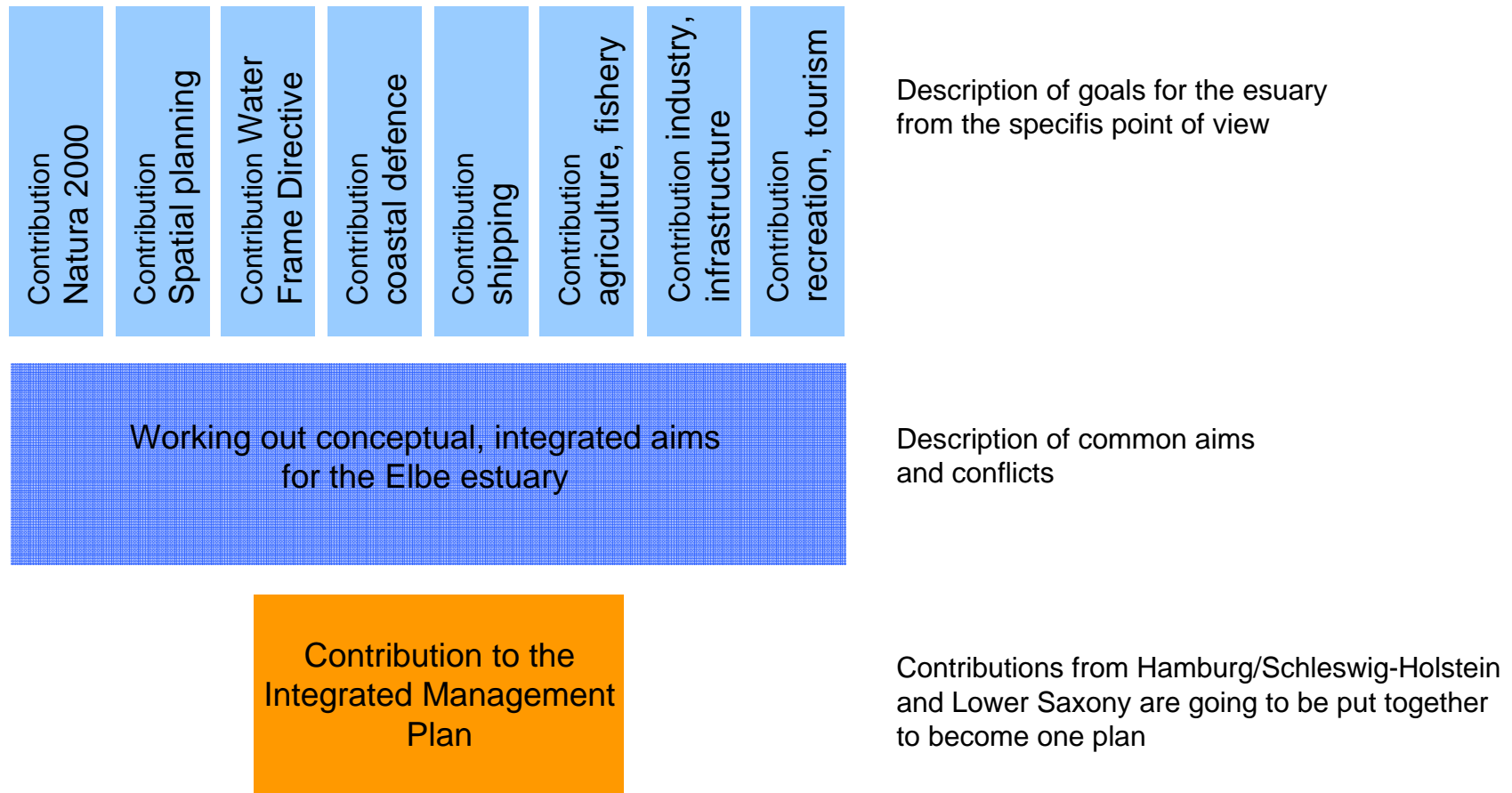


## Cooperation of the federal States of Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein





## Course of action for the planning groups





## Properties of the Integrated Management Plan

### The Integrated Management Plan

- is a joint, trans-state plan,
- is an interdisciplinary expertise plan,
- has no legal binding force,
- is a guideline for state actions,
- is aimed at voluntary commitment of all stakeholders.

