

Preface

The Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) has been given the unique task of assessing current problems and future threats of transboundary aquatic ecosystems, considering both environmental as well as socio-economic issues in freshwater and marine ecosystems on the entire globe.

The Baltic Sea, being enclosed by nine countries, has an obvious transboundary character. This is illustrated by a history of more than 100 years of international cooperation around the Sea, starting with the foundation of the International Council for the Explorations of the Sea (ICES) at Copenhagen in 1902.

Since then, the Baltic Sea has been subject to a variety of assessments, reports and discussions. However, the GIWA report is the first to present major environmental and socio-economic issues in a global context. This report is the 18th report published in the series of GIWA regional reports. Similar assessments have been conducted for the Pacific Islands, the Amazon Basin, the Barents Sea and the East African Rift Valley Lakes, to name some examples. The coherent GIWA method enables global comparison of the Baltic Sea region results, thereby providing information and guidance to policy makers.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the current report that summarises the state of the Baltic Sea.



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