

KEYNOTE PAPER TO BE PRESENTED AT LITTORAL 2008, 25-27 NOVEMBER

## **EU Policies and ICZM implementation in Europe: furthering and measuring sustainability**

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### **Setting the Scene**

Coastal regions provide many resources for the sustainable development of society. However, the management of these resources is complex. Coastal regions are very diverse, ranging from the most remote areas to the most densely populated. Its coastal regions must contend with land/sea interactions as well as the more normal terrestrial spatial pressures and conflicts. Furthermore, the additional dimension of the sea greatly increases the diversity and number of actors who must be engaged in planning and management, especially given the nature and conflicts of this shared space. The goal of maximising growth and jobs, within a sustainable development context, against this background of complexity, is a significant challenge.

### **Historical Context of ICZM in the EU**

In Europe the coastal environment has been raised as an issue of concern by the Council of Europe since 1974. The Council issued a number of studies, documenting the decline of coastal environments, as well as a series of recommendations and ministerial resolutions. In spite of this, until 1996 only one international programme had successfully developed in Europe: the Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) Programme in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Dutch Presidency of the European Communities in 1991 marked the start of a growing attention for coastal conservation and management at European level. The Dutch ministry for agriculture, nature management and fisheries (LNV) and the EUCC organised the Scheveningen Conference (Salman and Tekke) that prompted the European Council of Ministers to a Resolution inviting "the Commission to propose for consideration a Community strategy for ICZM".

EUCC continued to elaborate the principles of the Scheveningen Conference in order to further a strategic approach to sustainable development. In 1993, EUCC launched the concept of a European Coastal Code as a set of principles, clear and realistic guidelines, and recommendations for all those involved in management, planning and development of coastal areas: local, regional and national authorities as well as commercial and other stakeholders in all economic sectors. The concept was included as a priority action in the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995) and then drafted in 1996-97 by EUCC staff under the auspices of the Council of Europe and UNEP. The Pan-European Code of Conduct for Coastal Zones, adopted by the Council of Europe Ministers in 1999, represents a comprehensive effort to put the principles of sustainable development into practice for the coastal zone. <http://www.coastalguide.org/code/index.html>.

In the meantime, the European Commission announced its Demonstration Programme for ICZM in 1996. This three year programme included 35 individual projects and six thematic studies (European Commission, 1996). It was a joint programme of the three DGs: Environment, Regional Development and Fisheries. Its aim was to test co-operation models for ICZM and to stimulate a broad debate amongst the various stakeholders. It was also to provide the technical results necessary to foster dialogue between the European institutions and coastal stakeholders.

Based upon the results of this programme, the European Commission subsequently produced two important documents on the subject of ICZM.

The first was a Strategy for Europe (European Commission, 2002a) concerning the implementation of ICZM throughout the EU coastal states. This Strategy consists of a series of concrete actions building

upon existing instruments, programmes and resources and is a flexible, evolving instrument, designed to cope with the specific needs of the different regions and conditions. It reiterates the need for a strategic approach to the management of the coastal zone which is underpinned by a number of important principles such as the eco-system approach, the precautionary principle and adaptive management.

The second document was a Recommendation on ICZM (European Commission, 2002b) that was adopted by Council and Parliament on 30 May 2002. Although the Recommendation is not legally binding, all EU (and acceding) countries have committed themselves to ICZM. Member states have, therefore, undertaken a national stock take which analysed which major actors, laws and institutions influence the management of their national coastal zone. Many have also, based upon the results of the stock take, developed a national strategy for the implementation of ICZM. Such a strategy must include *i.a.* adequate systems for collecting and providing information in appropriate and compatible formats to decision makers at national, regional and local levels to facilitate integrated management.

The Spanish government hosted a High Level Forum on Community Strategies for ICZM in La Vila Joiosa in 2002. It called, among other things, upon the Member States to promote the general use of existing comparable indicators for sustainable development and to develop indicators, on a national basis, to provide standardised descriptions of the status of the coast and possible impacts of human indicators as well as of *the progress made towards ICZM in Europe*. It further recommended that an EU Group of Experts on ICZM be created with the object to support the implementation of the Recommendation. Such a group was drawn up and held its first meeting in October 2002 in Brussels. It has been held annually ever since (this year in connection to Littoral 2008 in Venice, 27 October).

## ICZM State-of-the-Art in Europe

The EU drive to improve coastal management has meant that ICZM has been applied for over a decade and there is a large body of good practice amongst the many actors in the coastal zone. However, ICZM is still not being widely, nor systematically, implemented.

The Rupprecht Report from 2006 has shown that:

- ❖ No country has implemented an ICZM National Strategy.
- ❖ In seven countries, namely Finland, Germany, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Romania, and United Kingdom, the implementation was pending.
- ❖ In six further countries, namely Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Netherlands, and Slovenia, documents considered as equivalent to an ICZM National Strategy have been developed.
- ❖ In eleven countries, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Turkey, no ICZM equivalent policies are in advanced stages of preparation.

The report concluded that there is wide scope to improve the implementation of ICZM along the European coasts; these include improved regional cooperation within the regional seas, stronger exchange of expertise and information, better stakeholder participation, monitoring of implementation through common methodologies and a long-term funding perspective for regional ICZM initiatives.

The Evaluation Team made a series of recommendations.

- ❖ Strengthen the European dimension of ICZM based on a Regional Seas approach,
- ❖ Raise the profile of ICZM and enhance its integration with sectoral policies
- ❖ Elaborate the strategic approach of ICZM - oriented at a balanced ecologic, social, economic and cultural development
- ❖ Address major long-term risks: Vulnerability to disasters and climate change
- ❖ Endorse awareness, guidance, training and education
- ❖ Enhance stakeholder coordination and participation
- ❖ Perform a mainstreaming of European policies
- ❖ Harmonise monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- ❖ Improve the knowledge basis for ICZM.

There are many difficulties, perhaps the most important being:

- ❖ implementing an integrated approach of the variously involved coastal stakeholders when the policies and implementing departments are themselves still operating from different government bodies.
- ❖ the supposed added value of ICZM to standard sectoral management has still not been proven. It has still not been shown that ICZM is actually integrating management with policy nor that any ICZM which is doing so is actually benefiting the coastal resources and/or the associated social and economic well-being of our coastal societies.
- ❖ there are numerous projects and networking efforts, but these are often limited to the time-span of a project. Once the project finishes, the website shuts down and the valuable lessons learnt are no longer disseminated. Moreover, the projects are approached on an ad-hoc basis. We do not really bring the project results together to draw policy conclusions from them (Kremlis, pers. comm. 2008).

The recent Communication from the Commission on progress relating to the ICZM Recommendation (European Commission, 2007a) has shown that much still needs to be done at national levels:

- ❖ only few countries and regions have effectively engaged in the collection and analysis of specific sustainability indicators to the coastal zone
- ❖ no methodology exists to link ICZM to trends in sustainability
- ❖ varying interpretations of ICZM exist across Europe
- ❖ many coastal processes occur in cross-border systems and coordination and cooperation in a regional sea context are needed
- ❖ substantial gaps in data and a lack of effective information-sharing systems.

## **Marine and Maritime Policies: a role for ICZM?**

Over the last couple of years, the European Commission has introduced two other emerging policy fields into the ICZM equation. As a result of the Marine Strategy, a new framework directive was adopted on 17 June 2008 (2008/56/EC). Member States are having to think about systems for marine spatial planning which adds a new dimension to the marine-coastal-terrestrial management paradigm, one that could yet fundamentally alter the coastal management framework again. Attention and resources are inevitably being pulled away from ICZM towards marine policies.

Parallel to this, a new vision for the management of Europe's relation with the oceans and seas is developing. On 7 June 2006, the European Commission adopted a Green Paper on a Future Maritime Policy. This Green Paper is the result of over a year of consultation with stakeholders. The mandate has been to examine all economic activities and policies which are linked to or impact on the oceans and seas, including coastal zones. A public consultation on the Green Paper resulted in a new communication adopted on 10 October 2007. In this Blue Paper the Commission is setting out its vision for an Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU together with a detailed Action Plan setting out a work programme for the years ahead. ICZM is considered by the Commission an important element of the Maritime Policy. And there is also consensus that the regional seas context is the most relevant for the EU Maritime Policy as well as for coastal zone management.

An integrated governance framework as set out in the EU Maritime Policy requires horizontal planning tools that cut across sea-related sectoral policies and support joined up policy making. Maritime spatial planning is considered the most important tools for this. The Maritime Policy toolkit is necessary to help policy makers and stakeholders to join up their policies, interlink their activities and optimise the use of the marine and coastal space in an environmentally sustainable manner. The Commission also aims to ensure continuity between maritime spatial planning and terrestrial planning (Schäfer, 2008).

Marine spatial planning (MSP) is often being seen as something very different from ICZM and because of the political emphasis being laid on MSP it has become a process in its own right, maybe even an alternative to ICZM. In the preparation of the EU Maritime Policy it has been argued that too many ICZM projects have been research oriented and have provided insufficient results for practical management and planning. And that ICZM has not sufficiently delivered for the marine environment. It should be realised however, that the objectives of marine spatial planning are almost identical to those that have always provided the rationale for ICZM. And it should also be realised that most national governments have not invested too much in ICZM strategies and implementation programmes.

In the meantime, it is very encouraging that the Commission takes a broad view on MSP: it can be implemented through various instruments of which zoning is only one possible option. It is far more than the mere existence of a plan. MSP is presented as a process that may begin with a data collection and progress through stakeholder consultation into the participatory development of the plan. The adoption of a given plan is a stage in this process – one that continues with its implementation, enforcement, evaluation and subsequent revisions or amendments (Schäfer, 2008).

## **ICZM Database, Best Practice and Guidance**

As a further response, DG Environment is funding a service contract to support *the implementation of* integrated planning and management by marine and coastal authorities and stakeholders. It recognises that: more efforts need to be deployed to make the Recommendation Principles more operational and to achieve a better common understanding of ICZM: the dissemination of results of many coastal and marine initiatives and projects, including with EU co-funding, remains fragmented and limited in time: linguistic barriers hamper effective dissemination and transfer of results: a better capitalisation on past experiences should be achieved so that new initiatives can be more effectively informed and a focussed but durable, multi-lingual mechanism to support exchange of experiences, systematic comparative analyses, information and communication are key components of action the Commission envisages to support implementation of ICZM.

The contract's objectives are to:

- ❖ Identify ICZM and marine planning practices and implementation tools in EU coastal Member States and provide structured, summaries of each case;
- ❖ Set-up a publicly accessible, multi-lingual data-base comprising the structured summaries and the most relevant written material of such practices and tools;
- ❖ Provide comparative analyses of the ICZM and marine planning experiences, and of the relevant implementation tools used in EU coastal Member States;
- ❖ Analyse the most relevant EU policies and legislation regarding their effects for the implementation of ICZM and marine planning, and identify mechanisms for a coordinated implementation of these policies and legislation in the coastal zones;
- ❖ Based on the analyses, formulate guidance for future ICZM and marine planning projects and for the design of policies and tools by competent coastal authorities;
- ❖ Organise widespread multi-lingual dissemination to coastal authorities and stakeholders and provide a feed-back mechanism;

The intention is to formulate, by 2011, relevant, recommendations to support the implementation and a possible review of the EU ICZM Recommendation and/or to underpin the further development of the EU Maritime Policy.

## **ICZM: measuring implementation and sustainability**

It has long been impossible to measure the degree to which ICZM is being implemented. Since 2003, EUCC has led the development of an ICZM Progress Indicator Set for the Commission's ICZM Working Group on Indicators and Data (WG-ID) and for the EEA (Pickaver et al. 2004, Pickaver 2008). It takes the thinking of the complex, ICZM management cycle towards much more simplified comparative analysis by evaluating the progress using semi-quantitative criteria. The Indicator Set breaks down this management process into a series of successive actions which are needed to pass from a situation where no ICZM is being used to one where it is being fully implemented at national, regional and local levels. This allows the trend in implementation within any one country to be compared over a period of time.

Thus, it recognises that the ICZM cycle can be broken down into a series of discrete, ranked actions. These actions, now 31 in total, in four distinct phases, are not completely exhaustive but are comprehensive enough to allow progress in ICZM to be measured.

Application of the Progress Indicator towards implementation of the eight ICZM Principles has exposed rather a mixed fulfilment but showing good evolution at (sub-national) regional and local levels throughout the region. There are certainly interesting results regarding the local specificity,

broad holistic approach and a combination of instruments at least in the early stages of ICZM. In general, the most challenging principles are those dealing with adaptive management, working with natural processes, participatory approach and involvement of all stakeholders. Actions dealing with lack of *adequate funding* and *the development of a strategy* present the greatest problems within the implementation. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that most of these principles are largely being implemented in the early phases of ICZM.

This indicator will not, by itself, be able to show if ICZM has been successful in reversing the decline in Europe's coastal regions. In order to ensure that ICZM is actually leading to the sustainable use of coastal resources it will also be necessary to concurrently measure whether there has been any improvement in the state of the coast. Only then can it be stated with any degree of certainty that enhanced implementation of ICZM is leading towards local, regional and national sustainability.

There is a great number of indicators that are being used today but they are all predominantly state-of-the-coast indicators rather than sustainability indicators. The WG-ID has attempted to select a group of indicators which could be applied around the Union's coastline. A set of 27 so-called sustainability indicators was drawn up and tested by the INTERREG IIIC project DEDUCE. Unfortunately, these indicators too reflect more a current state-of-the-coast rather than a true evaluation of sustainability although they may have value in showing trends towards environmental or socio-economic improvements which could be considered part of sustainability.

These indicators have not been accepted by the Commission because it is felt there are too many for routine use, they are not uniformly applicable around Europe's coastline, and they require quite an effort in data collection, standardisation, and specialist, scientific interpretation. Therefore, although of value to individual nation states, their worth for comparisons in Europe, a goal of the European Commission, is very limited.

### **QualityCoast: a new indicator set for sustainability**

Many hundreds of indicators have been measured at the coast for decades but there is still not a commonly agreed set of indicators for sustainability. Perhaps a combination of indicators is needed, linking and interpreting them within a sustainability framework. Perhaps it is too difficult to measure sustainability in a purely quantitative manner. Sustainability means different things to different people and stakeholders and in different situations and time scales. There is no definable element or elements that you can say, "this is sustainability and this isn't". The biofuels example shows that technologies that were considered environmentally friendly two years ago may not anymore be tomorrow. It therefore follows that nothing you measure at the coast, even if you measure everything, can ever tell you whether you have reached sustainability

You can measure pollution at the beach and in the sea and it is improving to the point where the sea-water has drinking water quality and the beaches are pristine. But what if the carrying capacity of the resort has long been overreached, infrastructure is breaking down, and the beach is eroded away by the sea?. Even if you measure 10 parameters and 9 are moving in the "right" direction, if the 10<sup>th</sup> shows that you are losing all your natural areas and species, are the other 9 of value? In other words, we are perhaps measuring the wrong parameters if we want information about sustainability. Because sustainability is itself about *quality* you also need to "measure" it using qualitative information and reasoning. Therefore, it is perhaps time to begin supplementing the classical quantitative indicators with more qualitative ones to get a better picture of what is happening at the coast.

With this in mind EUCC has adopted the same approach as in the development of the ICZM Progress Indicator. Under the working title *QualityCoast*, we started this work in 2003 in the context of the INTERREG IIIC project Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet, 2004-'06). Our challenge was the development of indicators that can truly measure sustainability at the local community level, for coastal towns and small islands. This has led to a set of 20 QualityCoast criteria (first called milestones) which have been described and tested, in all regions of Europe from Ireland, Sweden and Poland to Spain, Portugal and Greece. The criteria were elaborated with the Gothenburg and Lisbon Agendas in mind since the aim was to formulate a management programme which would promote environmental protection, sustainable development, employment, and use of Europe's tourism potential and services by its coastal communities.

The QualityCoast criteria as they have been developed so far are presented in **figure 1**.

The criteria clearly lay out what is required for municipalities to implement a sustainable and integrated, cross-cutting management approach. Perhaps, most importantly, the development of the criteria has from the very start been driven by coastal practitioners and policy makers: a true bottom-up approach with policy makers both defining their needs and determining how those needs can be best satisfied.

The QualityCoast criteria appeal to policy makers and implementers at local and regional level because they don't need expensive and routine monitoring equipment, standardisation of data collection or, most significantly, specialist, scientific interpretation. They also have many other advantages over currently used state-of-the-coast indicators. They are truly Pan-European and they don't have any regional focus. In testing the criteria, it was recognised that the methodology was cost-effective and resource-light. The message was easy to communicate, digest, and perhaps most importantly, made it attractive to those who needed to be engaged – service providers and local authorities. There was no pretence – it provided information, and in doing so highlighted gaps, challenges, etc. – and set an agenda for the further development of policies improving insufficient performance.

There is one “but”: the results may partly depend on the reviewer and they may therefore be considered subjective. There are some ways to compensate for this. The evaluation of the QualityCoast criteria for a certain town does require factual information. Second, an assessment is based upon a report of the town council themselves in which it summarises and documents its performance under all 20 criteria. This report is assessed by an independent expert and feedback is provided to the coastal council that can provide further clarification. And finally, the conclusions of this process are assessed by an independent Jury that includes local experts - who know the town very well - as well as international experts - who can compare this town with other towns in Europe.

Every year a series of pilot projects is implemented leading to the further improvement of the 20 criteria. So we think this approach does provide a promising starting point for measuring and communicating progress in some form, and allowing a discussion on how the approach can be refined and altered to suit changing environments (from climate to economic) and changing perceptions of what sustainability is in an ever-changing world.

In 2007 the evaluation system was improved for testing the QualityCoast criteria on a Dutch coastal town, Noordwijk. Each criterion was rated by the independent Jury on a score of 0 to 5 according to how well it was judged the town was doing. The results are shown in **figure 2**. Clearly, if this exercise is repeated in the future, it will be possible to gain some measurement as to how much further they have progressed towards sustainability.

This evaluation system allowed for the introduction of a QualityCoast Award for those municipalities that have a sufficiently high total score. So far twelve coastal towns and islands have completed a QualityCoast pilot and received an Award ([www.qualitycoast.info](http://www.qualitycoast.info)). QualityCoast has shown to be an effective programme to promote sustainability at the local level, because communities are interested to use the QualityCoast Award in their external marketing, thus firmly incorporating aspects of sustainability in their community policies. This winter, local and regional authorities are again given the opportunity to register for the 2009 QualityCoast programme and to apply for an Award. The present methodology is described in [www.qualitycoast.net](http://www.qualitycoast.net).

QualityCoast is not the only programme building upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative criteria. All award programmes do so. An excellent case for the coast is also provided by Belgium, where awards are provided to projects that reflect sustainability at a local level. (Duurzaam Kustbeheer, <http://www.dekustkijktverder.be>). And Leonardo Marotta and his colleagues are developing a method to evaluate sustainability and ICZM at the level of provinces, largely based upon qualitative assessments. They present this approach at the Littoral 2008 conference and illustrate this for the provinces of Venice, Rimini and Ancona. (Marotta et al. 2008).

## **The Future for ICZM: implementation in practice**

We are, perhaps, at a watershed in the implementation of ICZM in Europe. Politically, ICZM has been a buzzword for more than ten years. The Commission has given a considerable impetus to regions and Member States since the start of the ICZM Demonstration Programme in 1996. Many projects have come and gone in that time and ICZM is now part of the vocabulary of coastal management. Now, the Member States are expected to take the lead. The Commission is perhaps looking for a second phase of activity when the requirements of the ICZM service contract will have been fulfilled by the publication of Recommendations in 2011.

Nonetheless, there are some real dangers towards ICZM being implemented in the near future. There is no legislation driving the process although the Recommendation is still in force. ICZM fatigue may set in as Member States and regions grapple with what is still a very difficult policy area cutting across many sectors and government departments, even Ministries. There is often more attention for the problems and failures in ICZM than for the successes. Besides, ICZM may be superseded, in terms of resources (staff and funds) with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and maritime spatial planning – perhaps even more complicated than ICZM – is now the new buzz word as the marine environment comes increasingly into focus.

Despite these challenges, we see several opportunities to make our coastlines and seas more sustainable and more resilient towards climate change. Rather than focusing on ICZM as a (project) model, we suggest to focus on the incorporation of its principles in all coastal and marine planning. One opportunity is the EU Maritime Policy itself, as a challenge for Member States and regions. A second one is the development of national policies in view of climate change, a process recently initiated in the Netherlands. And a third one is to engage local communities in measuring their performance with the new QualityCoast criteria.

We have no alternative but to incorporate the ICZM principles in our management if we truly desire to leave our children with what we inherited.

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**Fig. 1. QualityCoast sustainability criteria in three categories: Nature, Environment and Socio-economic criteria**

CATEGORY	NATURE
<b>QC 1</b>	<b>Natural Values</b>
Definition	Presence of internationally important species and habitats that occur in the local destination.
<b>QC 2</b>	<b>Nature Information</b>
Definition	Information sources and facilities that promote interaction with the local natural environment and are located within and/or near natural areas of interest.
<b>QC 3</b>	<b>Contact with Nature</b>
Definition	Appropriate level of accessibility of natural areas for low pressure recreational access.
<b>QC 4</b>	<b>Green Policies</b>
Definition	The extent to which natural values are protected through integrated, sectoral or cross-sectoral policies and management schemes
<b>QC 5</b>	<b>Open Landscapes</b>
Definition	Presence of open landscapes and existing trends in land use and land cover patterns.
<b>QC 6</b>	<b>Availability of Quiet Places</b>
Definition	Presence of areas where visitors can escape from traffic, crowds and noise.

CATEGORY	ENVIRONMENT
<b>QC 7</b>	<b>Tourism Pressure</b>
Definition	The number of visitors in relation to the number of local inhabitants and length of stay associated with their visit.
<b>QC 8</b>	<b>Business Involvement</b>
Definition	The extent to which the local business community is involved in efforts for environment and sustainable development, incl. the nr. of accommodation providers achieving an officially recognised eco-label.
<b>QC 9</b>	<b>Bathing Water Quality</b>
Definition	Extent of fulfilling the requirements regarding bathing water quality in the water bodies of the area under scope, in accordance with Directive 76-160-CEE.
<b>QC 10</b>	<b>Water Management</b>
Definition	Efficient use of water, especially regarding drinking water quality, water supply and its provenance (external dependence) and reuse of deputed water
<b>QC 11</b>	<b>Sustainable Transportation</b>
Definition	The availability and stimulation of sustainable transport modes.

CATEGORY	ENVIRONMENT
QC 12	<b>Waste and Recycling</b>
Definition	Existence of structures for recycling and waste collection in place in the area.
QC 13	<b>Climate Change Response</b>
Definition	Policy aimed at reducing greenhouse gasses and accommodating to climate change.

CATEGORY	SOCIO-ECONOMICS
QC 14	<b>Cultural Heritage</b>
Definition	Presence and level of protection of elements that are connected to the origins and history of the destination. That though belonging to the cultural heritage of the community are no longer active
QC 15	<b>Cultural Landscapes</b>
Definition	Presence of valuable landscapes that are man made or man formed.
QC 16	<b>Local Identity</b>
Definition	Presence and attention for a distinct physical and/or social atmosphere that is considered typical for the destination. Activities and elements linked to the tradition but that are kept alive and integrated into the present time.
QC 17	<b>Leisure and Recreation</b>
Definition	Availability of leisure and recreation activities and facilities within the destination, with specific attention to those related with tradition.
QC 18	<b>Community Participation</b>
Definition	Local initiatives to promote community participation and stakeholder involvement in management and decision-making.
QC 19	<b>Tourist Satisfaction</b>
Definition	The appreciation level of tourists and inhabitants regarding the destination.
QC 20	<b>Safety</b>
Definition	Presence of a safe, healthy and secure environment and of preventive measures

**Fig 2. Presentation of the QualityCoast Jury assessment 2007 for the Dutch municipality of Noordwijk. The 20 sustainability criteria were assessed with a score of 0 (zero) to 5 for each criterion, on the basis of information provided by the municipality.**

