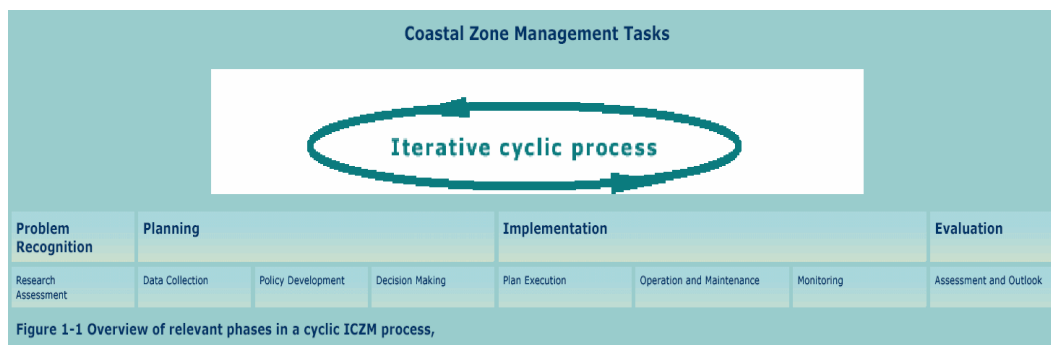


THE ROLE OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INTERREG III B BALTCOAST PROJECT



DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL WORKING GROUP

DECEMBER 2004

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1. Spatial Planning among the core ICZM players The BaltCoast Experience

1.1. Spatial Planning cannot substitute the ICZM Process - but it forms an essential Part of the ICZM Process

According to the *EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies*, "spatial planning refers to the methods used largely by the public sector to influence the future distribution of activities in space. It is undertaken with the aims of creating a more rational territorial organisation of land uses and the linkages between them, to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to achieve social and economic objectives."

In the spatial planning process the following issues are usually taken into account*:

- spatial order requirements (esp. urbanisation and architecture);
- landscape and architectonic values;
- nature protection requirements;
- cultural heritage requirements;
- public health and security requirements;
- economic values of the space;
- ownership rights;
- national security and defence needs;
- public interest needs.

** according to the VASAB 2010 Guidelines "Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the BSR", 1996*

These issues cover only a part of the coastal resources which shall be managed under ICZM process. Therefore spatial planning cannot substitute ICZM but it can be among the core mechanisms for management of the coastal zone and could play an important role in the ICZM process.

1.2. ICZM is the responsibility of political bodies at all levels

ICZM is the responsibility of political bodies at all levels. The experience not only from the BaltCoast project, but also many other previous ICZM projects such as the EU Demonstration Project, NORCOAST or PROCOAST has shown that - in order to be successful in the long-term - the responsibility for ICZM needs to be taken up by political bodies of all levels (municipalities, regional government, national government). These bodies should initiate the process according to the EU Recommendations and assign responsibility for its continuation in the future to responsible networks and/or institutions.

1.3. Do not create new ICZM specific institutions – improve the use of existing ones

Taking into account the current density of public authorities' interventions and the limited resources both in terms of finance as well as personnel of local and state authorities it is not recommended to create new ICZM specific institutions and organisations. In fact the

realisation of ICZM can be achieved by the optimisation of existing institutions and their better networking with regard to the principles of ICZM.

1.4. ICZM process based on Endogenous Resources

The existence of ICZM specific support programmes should not be a pre-condition to achieve a satisfactory level of integrated coastal zone management. In fact, it is assumed that existing instruments and bodies of planning, conflict management and financing are sufficient and that they merely need to be coordinated in a way which follows ICZM principles. The absence of ICZM specific support programmes is no excuse for a missing or failed ICZM strategy.

1.5. Cross-Sectoral Agency at Regional Level should take the Lead

The comprehensive, integrative approach of ICZM requires strategic coordination of the whole planning and management process.

The regional level will in most cases be the best suited to take this responsibility, while the national level should provide the overall framework for ICZM process (including participation of national authorities).

The complexity of the ICZM process requires the stimulus of one lead agency, responsible for its activation, execution and monitoring, as the ICZM focal point or coordinating unit. Such agency should play a technical role being supervised by democratically elected bodies/public authorities which are directly responsible for the ICZM process. The coordinating unit should be neutral both with regard to socio-economic development and nature conservation.

1.6. Suggested Tasks of the ICZM Coordinating Unit

A Coordinating Unit (acting under supervision of democratically elected bodies) should be responsible for:

- a) Securing involvement of relevant stakeholders and establishing a dialogue between them within the ICZM process,
- b) Creating a common coastal-wide information basis,
- c) Facilitating the process of preparation and concertation of the Common Vision to find the underlying Consensus,
- d) Delimitation of the most appropriate areas for preparation of the ICZM plans aiming at conflict management - a flexible approach: combine regional with case-specific solutions,
- e) Monitoring implementation of the solutions agreed by the stakeholders (proactive approach),
- f) Servicing the evaluation of ICZM results by democratically elected bodies (responsible for ICZM) - ensuring continuation of the ICZM process.

1.7. Create a common coastal-wide Information Basis

Successful ICZM depends on the constructive use of up-to-date, objective, reliable and relevant information. Experience has shown that conflicts, especially between nature protection and other uses of the coastal zone (i.e. economic uses, tourism, urban expansion)

are exaggerated by the various interest groups. This is mainly possible due to a lack of precise, detailed information about real plans, uses, activities and their consequences.

Thus it is important that the information basis for the ICZM plans (see below) covers the whole of the coastal zone and not only parts of it. The data used shall be translated and exchanged – as much as possible – in G.I.S. format.

The ICZM Coordinating Unit shall support each region in the appropriate choice of data generation and collection formats and in data evaluation.

1.8. Identify a Common Vision – Find the underlying Consensus

Sustainable development has different meaning in densely populated areas than in the regions under intensive economic pressure e.g. there are clear differences with regard to sustainable development between E-BSR (Eastern Baltic Sea Region) and W-BSR (Western Baltic Sea Region).

Experience has shown that conflict resolution methods work much better if they can ground on a common vision – agreed by all parties - for the region in question. It is therefore essential that all parties agree on clear objectives, documented in a “mission statement” for the region before going into the detailed preparation of the ICZM plans. Where appropriate existing processes (i.e. for the “Agenda 21”) should be used for the development of such vision and form part of statutory long-term strategic documents such as regional socio-economic development strategies or regional spatial plans.

The ICZM Coordinating Unit shall support democratically elected bodies in taking into consideration the ICZM principles while formulating regional visions and mission statements.

1.9. A Flexible Approach: Combine Regional with Case-Specific Solutions

The experience of the BaltCoast project has shown that – once objective data is available and analysed systematically - in many instances the application of costly and time-consuming conflict resolution methods can be reduced to a selected range of limited areas, where otherwise no integrative approach can be found.

Depending on the situation within the region in question, the Regional ICZM plan can take three different formats:

- Option 1: Development of a Medium-Term Action Programme for the whole Region
- Option 2: Identification and Concentration on Special Action Areas
- Option 3: A Combination of Option 1 and Option 2

The flexible approach ensures that depending on the situation in question - ICZM is applied at the most appropriate level according to the existing needs (problems) and the available solutions.

The ICZM Coordinating Unit shall support democratically elected bodies (responsible for ICZM) in applying the ICZM at the most appropriate level by initiating or coordinating case-specific solutions under the participation of the concerned interest groups, departments and institutions when a concerted approach is requested.

1.10. A Pro-Active Approach

The development of regional ICZM plans should not be mistaken with a “one-off” exercise. In fact, once the first ICZM plan has been developed and agreed upon, the adaptation and further expansion of this ICZM plan will be a continuous task taking into account the changing environment of which ICZM forms a part.

The ICZM Coordinating Unit shall support democratically elected bodies (responsible for ICZM) in assessing and reshaping the ICZM process according to the changing environment.

1.11. Ensure the Continuation of the ICZM Process

The experience of the BaltCoast project has shown, that the discussion of ICZM has by now reached a stage, where stakeholders are no longer to be satisfied by being asked to contribute to local or regional plans, but are increasingly asking for concrete deliverable benefits.

In fact, ICZM is not a goal by itself. It is a tool for optimizing or accelerating sustainable development in the coastal zone. Therefore it should result in tangible concrete results clearly visible for regional populations. Thus the ICZM process should not be separated from a delivery phase. This implementation phase has to follow in due time in order to safeguard the benefits generated by the previous ICZM planning process, which are likely to get lost in case of long time delays between planning and actual implementation (i.e. information basis no longer valid).

The ICZM Coordinating Unit should assist the democratically elected bodies (responsible for ICZM) in ensuring the necessary links between ICZM planning and delivery phase.

1.12. Increase the Role of Spatial Planning

In view of the tasks listed above, important synergy effects could be achieved if the ICZM Coordination Unit is merged with spatial planning which is driven by the notion of sustainable development (balancing different interests) being also a core for ICZM. Thus spatial planning could play a bigger role than it is now in facilitating the activities of the various bodies to achieve ICZM aims, providing a necessary framework through existing field structures as well as methods for impact assessment and wider public participation.

2. Spatial Planning can offer unique added value to ICZM both in terms of ICZM issues as well as ICZM processes

2.1. Multi-Agency and Multi-Sectoral Harmonisation

ICZM is based on the principles of*:

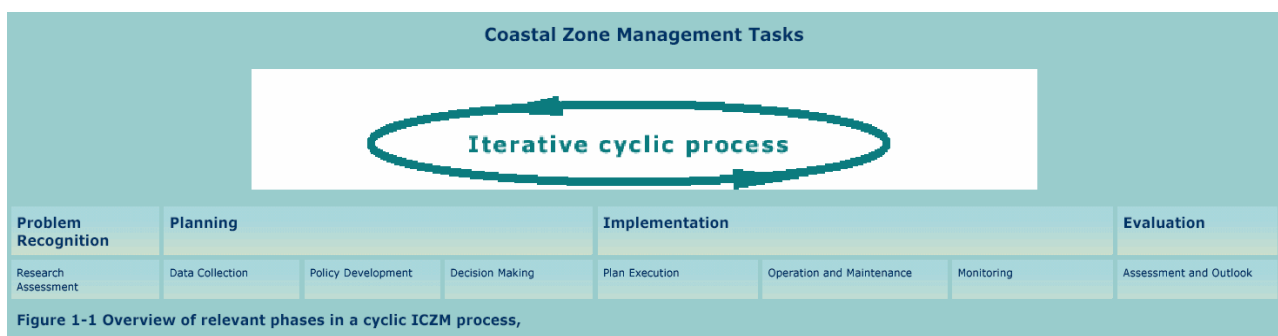
- a broad “holistic” perspective (thematic and geographic);
- a long-term perspective;
- adaptive management during gradual process;
- local specificity reflection;
- working with natural processes;
- Participatory Planning
- Support & Involvement of all Relevant Administrative Bodies
- Use of a Combination of Instruments

*after *A Strategy for Europe* COM(2000) 547 final

This requires ICZM to take a multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach as followed already by spatial planning as such. In fact, the ambition to balance different demands and to reach a reconciliation of the interests of regional actors is at the heart of spatial planning and is not restricted to ICZM only.

2.2. Spatial Planning and ICZM methodologies very similar

Spatial Planning can offer to ICZM its unique experience and expertise in managing the iterative cyclical process of problem recognition, planning, implementation and evaluation:



2.3. Good Information Basis

In the sense of the network character of ICZM a coordinating unit within spatial planning is an information node for other institutions, for the regional and local authorities for which it is responsible as well as for the neighbouring coastal regions, and the bordering foreign authorities. Spatial planning has already the necessary contacts and know-how about the territory it is responsible for, its local interest groups as well as the other stakeholders playing part in the ICZM process.

2.4. Familiar with Modern Methods of Knowledge Organisation

Successful ICZM has to take into account the dynamic, constantly changing nature of the coastal environment. With its experience in the use of standardised G.I.S. spatial planning is well suited to ensure the necessary advances in the management and development of know-how in the knowledge organisation with the help of new technologies supported by common and systematic formats capable of producing standardised data bases that facilitate the flow of information on a local, regional, national as well as international (at least European) scale.

2.5. Proven Methods of Participation and Conflict Management

BaltCoast and numerous previous projects have shown the benefits and importance of a participatory, bottom-up approach for the success of ICZM. Spatial planning is the body with most experience in public consultation - providing a level of transparency and democracy. In addition it can offer ICZM well established mechanisms for resolving conflicting demands

2.6. Harmonisation of Development with Nature Protection

Experience shows that most of ICZM conflicts evolve around the diverging interests of utilisation versus environmental protection. The harmonisation of these interests – also outside the coastal zones as such – lies at the heart of spatial planning. Furthermore it deals with the reservation of certain types of land for particular uses and issues like cultural and visual landscape values, settlement structures and accessibility – all of which are essential ICZM themes.

2.7. Long-Term Scenarios

Effective ICZM requires a long-term vision. Experience shows, however, that this perspective gets easily lost throughout the ICZM process itself. Individual actors and interest groups involved in the ICZM process through the participatory approach are more inclined to deal with short-term problems with day-to-day issues receiving more attention than long-term questions of perspective nature.

Given the long-term focus of spatial plans, spatial planning can offer ICZM the experience and know-how in the preparation of long-term scenarios. Without such perspective it is not possible to assess whether regional ICZM plans (see below) and projects are in line with the overall ICZM vision for that region.

3. Necessary Improvements of Spatial Planning in order to meet the needs of an effective ICZM

3.1. More flexibility in Spatial Planning to meet ICZM Needs

The coastal areas, due to their complex nature and quantity of issues encountered, often require from managers the ability of adaptation to rapid/sudden changes, flexible decision making as well as the continuous process of planning, implementation and goals' modification.

Usually traditional local land-use plans are too narrow, territorially fragmented (e.g. administration borders) and the decision-making is often short-term driven.

On the other hand the long-term spatial plans are too heavy bearing in mind the long, stiff preparation procedures and revision only after 8-19 years.

The pre-condition of effective coastal spatial planning should be the introduction of some flexibility into the planning process. The planned solutions should be constantly monitored and the links between various phases should include mechanisms for feedback ensuring timely corrections of activities.

3.2. Spatial Planning in the Coastal Zone should be based on Coastal Components' Coverage overcoming the traditional planning (administrative) Borders

Better integration between terrestrial and marine planning

Traditional spatial planning in democratic countries is usually effective in reaching the sustainable development conditions on the terrestrial side of the coastal zone, with the land use regulations and nature conservation being based on comprehensive approach. Problems arise, however, often with the integration of land-sea issues as the land-sea border often coincide with the administrative borders of planning authorities. Furthermore the ICZM process widely suffers from the lack of spatial planning mechanisms on the marine side: no means of cooperation and coordination of the different interests, lack of information and sectoral way of thinking are only parts of the problems encountered.

Spatial plans in the coastal zones should, however, neither take the responsibility of the sectoral management in the marine areas, nor should new bodies be created. Spatial planning authorities should be encouraged to consider and include the inshore marine area and the sectoral interests in their spatial plans to provide a comprehensive overview of resource use and management issues.

BaltCoast has developed detailed recommendations on the integration of marine areas into the current instruments of spatial planning (see "WorkPackage 1 – Summary and Recommendations").

Administrative borders (fragmentation)

The coastal zone is an open system, based on different, usually much wider borders than the administrative ones.

The ability of local spatial plans to deal with coastal issues whose impacts often go beyond the administrative borders can be questioned substantially. What is needed is a regional (or even national) planning overview to ensure effective consideration of issues/problems of such nature that require the extension of the traditional planning territorial limits. Spatial planning needs to act more carefully while planning on administrative border areas and make the best use of networking between spatial plans of neighbouring regions.

The identification of appropriate coastal plan boundaries is a responsibility which should be shared by politicians, planners, managers and researchers at the appropriate level.

Lack of definition of coastal zone

A lack of clear and legal definition of the coastal zone, as well as precise seaward jurisdictional boundaries, can be a practical obstacle to land-sea integration in the planning process.

Many countries, however, consider that such a definition is not desirable due to the dynamic nature of the coast and different geographical scope of different coastal related issues.

3.3. Strengthening Public Participation

Authentic and active public participation is an essential requirement of the ICZM process and should have first priority in planning and in the review of coastal management actions. Stakeholders who have been involved in the formulation of policies and rules on resource use in the coastal areas are more likely to support them.

Traditional spatial planning has developed legal mechanisms that enable public involvement in the process, which often turn, however, out to be ineffective. The success of public involvement depends on the national experience, culture and public awareness of the importance of coastal issues for the whole society, and that often goes beyond the mandate of spatial planning.

Nevertheless it needs to be ensured that the existing mechanisms are widely used and all the potential stakeholders have a chance to be involved in the planning as well as in the decision-making process.

One of the preconditions is effective communication - the key to successful public participation in coastal planning and numerous tested communication methods exist, e.g.: public hearings, public meetings, public displays, information for mass-media, press releases inviting comments, task forces, general public information meetings, community survey research, information materials and model demonstration projects.

3.4. Lack of vertical co-operation = lack of consideration at the local level of the ICZM priorities due to insufficient capacity

The overall goals for coastal zone management/development should be outlined in the long term national vision and then translated into regional conditions in the “regional strategic documents/visions (see recommendation 1.8.).

On the other hand the lack of such strategy should not be an excuse for not using the ICZM mechanisms while planning the coastal zone.

Creating the local capacities for the implementation of the ICZM process is the key element of its success. It is crucial for ensuring the better vertical cooperation between different planning levels and the better understanding of ICZM mechanisms. Competence rising in the field of ICZM among the spatial planners should be one of the steps of the professional development and should encompass e.g.: ICZM priorities, modern tools and techniques of coastal planning (use of digitised and integrated databases, GIS, impact assessment tools, delivering different scenarios), delivered via traditional training courses, on-the-job training or training through public participation and raising of public awareness on coastal issues.

3.5. Better Utilization/Consideration of existing Instruments.

There should be nothing to prevent the spatial planning authorities from starting to implement the idea of integration and a planning process bringing the ICZM thinking into practice, even if a specific policy or legislation has not been delivered yet. Spatial planning should do its best to improve the use of existing instruments like public consultations, impact assessment mechanisms, etc., to fulfil the ICZM process requirements and to integrate the environmental components into the development plans.

4. Ways to improve ICZM Implementation

4.1. Preparation of regional ICZM Plans

It is recommended that the ICZM coordinating unit invites coastal stakeholders to develop a ICZM vision followed by a regional ICZM Plan(s). Existing processes (i.e. the Agenda process) and existing documents such as regional socio-economic strategies or regional spatial development plans should be used for that purpose according to the legal provisions existing in each country (see recommendation 1.8.). ICZM plans should be developed according to the principle of flexibility (recommendation 1.9.) and passed and adopted by the relevant political, regional decision making bodies (see recommendation 1.2.). Thus the normal democratic processes of public control will apply – with the various interest groups following the adherence of these self-binding agreements in regard to safeguarding the actual implementation of the projects specified in the regional ICZM plan.

The development of such ICZM plans shall follow the “*European Code of Conduct for Coastal Zones*”:

- Preparation of baseline information about the environment, processes and its features
- Set the geographical scope
- Establish a Mechanism of Public Participation
- Assess past and current activities
- Assess existing structures
- Establish the necessary institutional framework for its management
- Identify Priority Issues, setting clear objectives and priorities of planning
- Draw up the initial plan and proposed projects
- ...

4.2. Focus on ICZM Deliverables

For the success of ICZM (just as for the success of strategic spatial planning) the key issue is a direct linkage between the planning phase and induced changes in quality of life of regional populations. Otherwise the ICZM plans are prepared but hardly used. ICZM needs to bridge planning and projects.

Therefore the ICZM process should be:

- a) linked to development decisions of democratically elected bodies at appropriate (to the coastal problems) level (see recommendation 1.5.),
- b) linked to spending mechanisms and funds allocation at local, regional, national and EU level (see recommendation 1.11.).

This will safeguard the active participation of all stakeholders, which has been noted by all ICZM projects/programmes implemented so far, as an essential pre-condition for a successful ICZM.

4.3. ICZM as Pre-condition for external Funding

Concerning the external funding (to the ICZM area) (both from national or EU level) the principle should be that the existence of an ICZM plan agreed by coastal stakeholders is a

condition sine qua non for receiving financial support for the projects influencing the coastal zone.

The list of such projects and the type of the areas in question should be specified by democratically elected public bodies responsible for ICZM¹. This will prevent ad hoc actions hardly taking into consideration the complexity of the coastal interactions.

Regional, national as well as international institutions should be urged to optimize their existing financial instruments and support programmes in view of ICZM principles.

4.4. Create the Connection between ICZM and Development Issues Focus on mid-term programming

ICZM is not a static, limiting approach, but serves as a facilitating, dynamic and future-oriented exercise. Therefore an important role of ICZM should be seen in the processes of preparation and implementation of the medium term development programmes (action plans - specification of concrete short- to medium-term actions) for regions and groups of municipalities based on ICZM plans specifying main objectives, priorities and projects.

Mid-term programming is the place where ICZM can meet with other important developmental axes of given areas such as health care, education, social issues etc.

The regional programmes shall not only lay out the proposed actions and projects in the framework of ICZM, but shall actually also specify the responsible bodies and financial sources for the implementation of these projects. Thus already the ICZM planning phase itself includes the search for and identification of appropriate tools, which need to be in place for the financing of the solutions found. Thus it is ensured that implementation is an integral part of the ICZM process.

4.5. Use Competition: Incentives / Sanctions

The projects identified within the ICZM regional plan will be in competition with other regional projects in terms of access to necessary resources (finances, personnel, etc.). Their selection or non-selection (e.g. inclusion into regional development programmes) will be a reflection of the overall importance attached to the ICZM process within the region in question.

Furthermore it will also be a reflection of the quality of projects identified providing an incentive to the applicants to develop projects, which do fulfil the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. It is therefore not sufficient for ICZM plans to outline projects in general terms, but each project has to be justified showing inputs, outputs, assumptions, etc. (logical framework). This will not only facilitate the application process, but also the monitoring and evaluation process once projects have been selected and are implemented.

It is recommended that only those projects, which fulfil a set of quality criteria including clear specification of deliverables (actual outcomes) and milestones (adherence to time-schedule) will be allowed to form part of the ICZM plan.

¹ The same is for example for transport project in agglomeration which can be financed only if the integrated transport strategy had been prepared and adopted by the public authorities for given agglomeration.

4.6. Spatial Planning goes with ICZM hand by hand

In the process described above spatial planning is involved in the ICZM process in the following way:

- a) Including ICZM principles into national, regional and supra-local visions and strategic documents dealing with spatial development;
- b) Participating in the preparation of the ICZM plans contributing with its knowledge on spatial planning conflicts in the coastal zone, their geographical coverage, methods of conflict management (including public participation), instruments on territorial impact assessments and ensuring linkage between spatial plans and ICZM plans in the given area;
- c) If necessary offering to the ICZM process a service of cross sectoral co-ordination unit (ICZM focal point), which can be performed by spatial planning statutory structures;
- d) Participating in the preparation of mid-term development programmes, supporting comprehensive ICZM approach based on principle of sustainable development (the same as for spatial planning);
- e) Participating in the ICZM monitoring and evaluation process and by that improving and amending spatial development plans and visions (see recommendation 3.1.).