

A communication platform for coastal communities to further local sustainable development - LV

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

A coastal communication network and platform development involving four facets, viz. coastal information, education/training, coastal participation and an environmentally friendly behaviour/green life-style approach in an informal rural community setting.

4. Overview of the case

A coastal collaboration and communication concept was elaborated and introduced in a step-wise manner. All communication process' and products' developments have been jointly managed by the main regional stakeholders and facilitated by the Local Agenda 21 (LA21) centre established, altogether aiming to provide effective coastal zone management.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The coastal region of Livonia includes three local municipalities (before 2009) with a total number of inhabitants of ca. 10,000, being employed mainly in fish processing, agriculture and forestry-related industries. The territory covers about 800 km² in NW part of Latvia, situated both along the coast of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga. The coastal region has various nature biodiversity qualities and more than 70% of the territory is covered by forests, with almost all managed by the coastal Slitere national park authority.

The initiative was prepared to create a participatory governance system in order to take care of the on-going coastal management problems in the North Kurzeme coastal region. Here, there is a lack of institutional co-operation and stakeholders' participation. Appropriate environmental and sustainability communication is the main pre-condition and effective instrument for sustainable coastal development and ICZM. The level of information, professional education, participation experience and management skills are very different for stakeholders involved in ICZM. The main environmental communication problems seen at the both national and regional/local levels are: insufficiently co-ordinated and available information, also not well corresponding to the needs of the different target groups; not sufficient development of public education and understanding, particularly on environmental problem/solution possibilities; participatory activity of the community and other target groups needs to be enhanced as well as the preconditions for the realisation of a more environmental friendly behaviour and green life style.

b) Objectives

The long term objective was to create an understanding of sustainable development and set up a Local Agenda 21 system for the NW coastal zone of Latvia. In the short term, the objective was to prepare, test and further elaborate tools to facilitate integrated and participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of North Kurzeme coastal region management. The work was based on an interactive development of coastal communication towards understanding and application of participatory coastal zone governance. A particular task was to establish a background for the rural communication network, based on very local information-sharing and collaboration traditions coupled with all four collaboration communication dimension instruments and modern communication means and channels.

6. Implementation of the ICZM Approach (i.e. management, tools, resources)

a) Management

The University of Latvia was involved in the project preparation to mediate and moderate the Local Agenda starting processes and so handle issues that concern coastal sustainability and, particularly. All the main stakeholders in the coastal region were included: the local municipalities of Dundaga, Kolka and Roja; Slitere National Park (SNP) and both local coastal minority culture representations – the Livonian Union (NGO representing Livonian population) and Culture-historical protected territory “Livonian Coast” - as well as the Institute for Environmental Science and Management (IESAM). All participating in the work of the Supervision Council and co-operatively established the North-Kurzeme Agenda – 21 Centre (LA21 centre) as the executive body. This was to continue the work also after the conclusion of the initiative.

b) ICZM tools

The main coastal communication tools in the project were developed based on both bottom-up activities (facilitation for inhabitants and their interest), and top-down activities (adequate information sharing, local/regional education and training orientation and implementation, coordination and participation activities and mechanisms as well as personal and professional “green behaviour” facilitation). In order to support coastal sustainability awareness-raising and active involvement to build a green coastal region coastal communication networking and platform development were facilitated. Specifically,

- information materials designed and appropriately disseminated e.g. newsletter and diverse media publications (more than 60), thematic coastal sustainability booklets, “On the Green Branch” as a quarterly amendment to a regional newspaper, web page with different information/resources data banks and various case studies;
- a series of formal and non-formal education activities and materials on the seminar products/experiences including a variety of seminars/trainings for various audiences, ongoing work to establish an eco-school e.g. school classes and coastal projects, eco-summer camps for regional schools, green developments, local and regional experience-exchange workshops; as well as publications like a local sustainable development handbook/glossary, eco-passport and also ecotourism development manuals etc.;
- participatory activities like individual and very local initiative groups’ self-initiatives facilitation and Round Table Forum (RTF); development and running of permanent self-development working groups for both practice-oriented collaboration activities and contributing to municipal and regional planning and decision making;
- design and development of green behaviour in everyday practices of local inhabitants, professional and business activities as well as sustainability demonstration sub-projects in locally chosen sites e.g. green buildings, eco-technologies, environmental friendly management of dunes etc.

Conflict resolution issues were also targeted, stressing local communication developments and the involvement of active citizens and all formal and non-formal citizen groups.

7. Cost and resources

Communication costs were around €200,000. There was a contribution from the LIFE programme.

8. Effectiveness (i.e. were the foreseen goals/objectives of the work reached?)

All coastal communication activities, specified and foreseen, were implemented and the general objectives were reached, although with different degrees of effectiveness, particularly when considering long term impacts. TheLA21 centre, as planned, has been legally established and has prepared a portfolio of new projects for funding.

9. Success and Fail factors

Complementary communication developments in the local municipalities is crucial for the meaningful involvement of the local population/interested individuals and local experts/ specialists/decision-makers Good conflict resolution. LA21 process facilitation. Continuity is another important factor.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

Various spin-off developments and more was achieved than planned.

11. Prepared by

Raimonds Ernšteins, University of Latvia, LV

12. Verified by

Gunars Laicans, MP, former chairman of Dundaga municipality, LV

13. Sources

- Layman's report. EU LIFE Project „Livonian Green Coastal Region - 21”, (2004) , Dundaga municipality, Latvia. - <http://www.ziemeļkurzeme.lv/lzp21.pdf>
- Ernšteins R., Pulina A., Laicans G., Sustainable Consensus for North-Kurzeme Coastal Region Development: Agenda 21 Process application. Proceedings of EU Research Conference „ Sustainable Region Development”, Lillehammer, EU/ProSus, Oslo University, Norway, 2003 (web-print<http://www.iccr-international.org/regionet/docs/ws2-ernsteins.pdf>)
- LIFE project webpage re-designed for wider post-project applications www.ziemeļkurzeme.lv
- Ernšteins R., Local Agenda 21 Process Facilitation : Environmental Communication and Self-Experience Development in Latvia, In Filho L.W., Ubelis.A.,Berzina D(eds.), Sustainable Development in the Baltic and Beyond, Frankfurt, Peter Lang Europaischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2006, pp.305-318
- Ernšteins R., Coastal Communication And Partnerships For Municipal Sustainable Development, Proceedings, International conference, Management And Conservation Of Coastal Natural And Cultural Heritage, Aveiro Univeristy, Aveiro, Portugal, 2005, pp. 21-27



LIFE-Leymans_report (5.05 MB)

