

## ICZM & Coastal Partnerships: Working Together

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### Background

Proposals for the Marine Bill are due to progress to a White Paper in early 2007. Results of Defra's consultation for an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy are tagging along somewhere in this process. So, what about the coast? Members of the English Coastal Partnerships Working Group formed in 2006 are concerned!

### Our Valuable Coast

The UK is an island nation. Over 1/3 of the population of England and Wales lives within 10km of the coast. Almost 1/3 of our coastline is developed, yet over 2000km is still protected for its wildlife or landscape. The UK ports industry is almost 3 times larger than any other EU state. 40% of all manufacturing industry is sited close to the coast. Of the total amount spent by UK residents on tourism, nearly half is on coastal holidays<sup>1</sup>. So, how do we manage our valuable coast?

### Integrated Coastal Zone Management

There is no single definition of the coast because it is a diverse, dynamic area between the land and sea, requiring flexible management. Responsibility for managing coastal resources is held within a variety of sectors. Different institutional levels have statutory responsibilities depending on the sector and coastal issue concerned. A process is required to ensure that all sectors with an interest in the coast work together - both horizontally (across sectors) and vertically (between institutional levels) - to ensure the coast is managed sustainably. This process is termed Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The European Commission (2002) defined 8 aspects of the 'ICZM process'. It may also usefully be called partnership working in the coastal zone.

### Coastal Partnerships

Since the early 1990s over 50 Coastal Partnerships have been set up around the UK coast. These partnership initiatives have evolved from a 'bottom-up' approach, with people involved from local communities, clubs and user groups to local authorities, statutory agencies, industries, water companies, port & harbour authorities and NGOs.

### We're unique!

There is huge diversity in the approach of Coastal Partnerships, but they all have similar **unique selling points** which make them well placed to deliver ICZM:

- Impartiality and a proven role in conflict resolution and consensus building;
- The ability to work across sectors and between all levels of decision-making;
- Raising awareness of issues and a mechanism for community engagement;
- Horizon scanning to inform organisations of coastal issues;
- Attracting project funding and initiating collaborative ventures;
- Providing a gateway service and 'one-stop-shop' for information and contacts;
- Filling gaps where there are no sectoral responsibilities and mobilising voluntary support and involvement;
- Providing a (bottom-up) conduit to regional and national government;

<sup>1</sup> CoastNet marketing brochure

Partnership approaches have been tried and tested in many fields and are becoming increasingly popular. Coastal partnerships specialise in providing services to help organisations deliver ICZM. There are other organisations and some partnership initiatives that deliver ICZM (e.g. AONBs with sections of coast, the European Marine Sites and Shoreline Management Groups) but they don't offer the same core services which the existing voluntary Coastal Partnerships provide.

### Achievements

Coastal Partnerships have existed for 10-15 years around the UK coast on ad-hoc funding contributions from local partners. On this basis they have provided significant value for money, leveraging in support, in-kind benefits and the goodwill of many partners. Many of the benefits are intangible; improved communication, understanding and awareness of coastal issues; access to information and contacts; new collaboration opportunities and research, advising on policy and planning, mobilising community involvement in decision-making; providing a neutral platform for debate; the list is long! Direct experience or a few examples can help to illustrate the achievements of Coastal Partnerships...but a key question facing Coastal Partnership Officers at this time is: **what can we achieve?**

We believe Coastal Partnerships are at the forefront of providing mechanisms to help deliver Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). The experience and value of coastal partnerships should be harnessed as we move towards the Marine Bill.

### Coastal Partnerships Working Group

In May 2006, an *English Coastal Partnerships Working Group* was established to increase collaboration between Partnership Officers, with a particular urgency to inform development of the proposed Marine Bill. Partnership Officers have become active in a voluntary capacity through the CPWG in 2006 to help provide input to the ICZM Strategies and Marine Bill process. Work to date includes:

- Endorsement of the CPWG at the annual CoastNet Partnerships Forum;
- Sharing views to inform the Marine Bill consultation and Defra ICZM Strategy consultation with views from the group presented at meetings & conferences;
- A CPWG email group established, with a Coastal Partnerships Contact Group and UK-wide map of existing CPs underway;
- Two CPWG meetings (Bristol, Newcastle) and an additional meeting to prepare input for Defra ICZM consultation (Dorset)
- Establishing links with the Local Government Association and Government Statutory Agencies to explore the future role of coastal partnerships.

The next meeting is likely to coincide with the publication of the Government White Paper on the Marine Bill, at which time we hope to convene a **CPWG meeting with the Minister** for the Marine Bill (Ben Bradshaw) to raise the profile of the work of coastal partnerships in facilitating ICZM.

### Our ICZM Vision

Through an additional CPWG meeting to prepare input for the Defra ICZM consultation, an **institutional framework for local, regional and national delivery of ICZM** was drafted. This was quick, rough work but provides a starting point for discussion about the network and partnership services needed at each level for ICZM delivery. Some cost estimates were put to the delivery framework. Our estimate is that we only need **£3.65 million/year to provide a good framework for delivering ICZM services**. This information was submitted as a CPWG response to Defra's ICZM Strategy consultation. We are currently seeking the means to undertake a detailed **cost-benefit analysis** of coastal partnerships to build on this initial work.

### Issues for clarification

To progress thinking on how ICZM will fit in with the Marine Bill and how the role of Coastal Partnerships can best be utilised, we are calling for more clarification on the:

- Options for nested plans: regional seas and sub-regional planning in the coastal zone;
- Boundaries of Marine Spatial Planning to ensure we manage the land-sea interface in the most efficient manner;

- Role of an MMO in relation to ICZM delivery and Coastal Partnerships services;
- Development of Marine Protected Area management and Coastal Partnerships role;
- Exploration of the mechanisms placed on Local Authorities and Relevant Authorities towards Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive – similar mechanisms could support and develop the work of Coastal Partnerships.
- Need for national leadership and regional co-ordination.

### **Reinventing the wheel?**

Partnership Officers recognise that there are limitations and inconsistencies in the way partnerships currently function. They include:

- Reliance on voluntary funding - sometimes leading to domination of one or more sectors, compromising the neutral cross-sectoral goals of a partnership;
- Inconsistent support relying totally on the goodwill of partners and individuals - sometimes leading to inconsistency in service provision;
- Lack of regional guidance or central government vision with no legal underpinning;
- Lack of secure funding because ICZM is not a core service for any one organisation.

If ICZM is to truly function, partnership working is an essential component. One might say that the past 10-15 years was the first cycle of ICZM partnerships. We are now moving to a more mature method of working - with service planning and partnerships regularly being used by relevant authorities to deliver stakeholder engagement. We should therefore look to build on their success, adapt them where necessary and identify the best way to secure future funding. Otherwise, we could be in danger of reinventing the wheel through new measures to deliver aspects of the Marine Bill and ICZM Strategy.

### **Partnership Officers are therefore calling for:**

- **Legislation to underpin ICZM as policy development does not guarantee commitment in the long term.**
- **Stronger leadership and support for ICZM from the national and regional levels**
- **A statutory duty (not just a power) to be placed on local authorities, statutory agencies and other relevant authorities to deliver ICZM.**
- **Recognition that for successful ICZM, MSP needs to link with the terrestrial planning system and that coastal partnerships provide services to assist this process.**

### **Conclusion**

The opportunity presented by the Marine Bill must be utilised to ensure statutory underpinning for ICZM. Stronger leadership and co-ordination is needed at the national and regional levels to support and strengthen the work of local Coastal Partnerships. The new system of Marine Spatial Planning must include full consideration of how terrestrial planning will meet marine planning in one of the most dynamic, diverse, productive, complex and treasured environments of the UK – the coast. Greater recognition of the experience and effectiveness of Coastal Partnerships in delivering ICZM is called for, in order to invest in mechanisms which will support future Marine Spatial Planning, including proper recognition of the value of the coast to our economy and society.

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**Please feel free to contact one of the committee members of the CPWG with your thoughts, feedback or further information:**

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**Coastal Partnerships Working Group information is available through the CoastNet website: [www.coastnet.org.uk](http://www.coastnet.org.uk)**

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