

# From a sectoral to an integrated management approach - MT

## 1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

## 2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Knowledge-based
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic

## 3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The development of an integrated approach from a strictly sectoral approach in a relatively short span of time. It also demonstrates how the marine environment (to 12 nm) can be incorporated into an ICZM strategy. This case is suitable, particularly for small islands where the whole land area can be considered coastal and for those administrations which have little experience of integrating policy and legislative instruments and with an increasing practice of public participation.

## 4. Overview of the case

Malta, in a relatively short period of time, has moved from a sectoral approach of coastal management to a situation where ICZM is now being implemented. Furthermore, the management of the coast includes the marine area to a limit of 12 nm.

## 5. Context and Objectives

### a) Context

With a total land area of approximately 315 km<sup>2</sup>, the Maltese archipelago has a shoreline of about 270 km. The entire islands, with characteristics pertaining to medium sized Mediterranean islands, are considered to have the attributes of a coastal zone. A wide variety of activities compete for an extremely limited stretch of coast. Shipping and fishing were the traditional users of the coast, but new demands for coastal locations are now made by the tourist industry. Shoreline residences, shipping, mariculture, oil bunkering, desalination, sewage treatment and disposal, fishing, agriculture, water-sports, yachting, scuba-diving and bathing are all examples of activities which require rigorous standards in the quality of the marine environment. The growing impact of the risk of desertification was also mandatory to be considered in the efforts for sustainable coastal area management in Malta. However, despite their small size, the Maltese Islands support a variety of habitats and are particularly rich in flora and fauna diversity. A considerable number of species and sub-species are endemic. There are three nature reserves found in the Maltese Islands which are rich in historical and archaeological remains spanning several epochs.

### b) Objectives

The broad objective was to increase national efforts towards sustainable management and environmental protection in Malta viz. protect coastal and marine habitats and biodiversity; protect cultural heritage; protect coastal uses that necessitate a coastal location; promote and protect public access and use; and minimise existing and potential user conflicts. This strategy applies to the marine environment up to the 12 nautical mile limit even though most activities are located in the coastal waters.

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

### **a) Management**

ICZM is the subject of a number of agencies, though its close linkage with spatial and regional development planning places the Malta Environment & Planning Authority (MEPA) in the lead role. This ensures that ICZM issues are considered in development planning mechanisms.

### **b) ICZM tools**

In Malta, spatial development and many activities in the coastal area have had a long but sectoral regulation. Nonetheless, spatial planning has assisted in identifying a strategic approach towards sustainable development of the coastal environment. The current Structure Plan, a legal instrument that regulates development dating from 1990, calls for a Coastal Management Plan and provides for measures to address coastal development. The Development Planning Act has extended development control beyond the coast to the marine environment, thus enabling MEPA to address coastal development in a more integrated way. During the review of the current Structure Plan, a Coastal Strategy Topic Paper was prepared in 2002 to identify those coastal issues that can be managed through the development planning process, within the new Structure Plan. The Paper highlights the need for effective planning. The use of the coastal zone depends on a solid understanding of the natural processes and systems affecting this dynamic area. It calls for measures to minimise spatial conflicts by ensuring that activities necessitating a coastal location are not displaced by uses that can easily be located elsewhere. The Topic Paper also identifies those issues that would require management under a much wider national management strategy such as the exploitation of marine resources, pollution control and the creation and management of protected areas.

A Strategy, equivalent to a National ICZM Strategy was developed in 2004. The most significant output of the Topic Paper was the definition of the coastal zone within the Maltese Islands which extends up to 12 nautical miles offshore. The strategy is directed to this geographical space so, unusually, development at sea is also being addressed in a strategic manner alongside development of the coast. Although it does not in itself set a time frame, because the Structure Plan into which the Strategy feeds has a 20-year time frame and is reviewed every 10 years, the Coastal Strategy can be considered to have a similar time frame. Stakeholders have been involved in the formulation of this Strategy through the formal public consultation phase required by law. The entire Strategy as well as additional information are publicly available on MEPA's website.

## **7. Cost and resources**

No costs are available.

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

Malta is one of only four EU Mediterranean countries recognised by the Rupprecht report as having begun implementation of their Strategy.

## **9. Success and Fail factors**

There is now a strong awareness that the population as a whole together with Government and all other stakeholders, are jointly responsible for the preservation of the environment.

Malta has been able to capitalise on an Mediterranean Action Plan CAMP project which was completed in 2002 and which enabled the 'vision' concepts to be identified and realistically put into practice.

## 10. Unforeseen outcomes

## 11. Prepared by

A. H. Pickaver, Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC), The Netherlands

## 12. Verified by

Michelle Borg, Malta Environment and Planning Authority

## 13. Sources

- Coastal Area Management in the Maltese Islands (2005). PAP/RAC, Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre, Split
- <http://www.mepa.org.mt>
- [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczmevaluation/iczmevaluation\\_national\\_reporting\\_malta.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczmevaluation/iczmevaluation_national_reporting_malta.htm)
- Coastal Strategy Topic Paper (2002) Borg M. Malta Environment and Planning Authority
- The Malta Structure Plan (1990) Works Dept., Planning Services Division, Government of Malta (downloadable from MEPA website).
- Report on the Implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council Concerning the Implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EC) 2006, Malta Environment and Planning Authority



Coastal Area Management in the Maltese Islands (2.34 MB) 



Coastal Strategy Topic Paper (1.21 MB) 