

## 1. NAME

### MyCoast – Elaboration of a vision and a strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Bulgaria

## 2. DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 The case

Bulgaria's coastal territory is distributed among three administrative districts, the oblasts of Dobrich, Varna, and Bourgas. The main problem and source of conflicts along the coastline is the overuse of resources (land, water, biodiversity) caused by the booming tourism sector, accompanied by the construction of resorts, jetties and golf clubs. Strong population fluctuations due to seasonal flows of tourists aggravate pressures on natural resources. Pollution as a result of poor wastewater treatment and illegal waste disposal was a prominent problem. Furthermore, erosion is creating risks for coastal protection.

At the time when the MyCoast project was conducted (2006-2009) no national legislation or strategy for Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) existed, and only fragmented initiatives were in place. Mandates and responsibilities for ICM were unclear. National and regional development plans were based on sectoral approaches, focusing on short-term economic benefits, and municipalities were competing for powerful investors. Implementation and enforcement of plans and laws was weak.

Through stakeholder workshops, the MyCoast project (2006-2009) formulated 30 year ICM visions for four case study areas. The discussions in the four areas unfolded in very different ways. In Varna, for example, work was halted early, while Bourgas incorporated the results of the process into the city masterplan. Overall, however, MyCoast did not lead to new initiatives for coastal management.

### 2.2 Climate impacts



Temperatures



Water Scarcity



Flooding



Sea Level Rise



Droughts



Storms



Ice and Snow

### 2.3 Challenges

#### Challenges due to climate change

The major threat for Bulgaria's coastline originating from climate change is the expected increase in frequency of storm-related flooding events, leaving low-lying agricultural lands behind the coastline with high salinities.

This problem is particularly severe in the Bourgas area. In contrast to storms, sea level rise is only expected to play a minor role on the Bulgarian coast, however, as it is currently predicted to be modest and most of Bulgaria's coastline covers mountainous territory. Coastal erosion is also a widespread problem equally threatening sandy beaches, as well as existing coastal protection infrastructure, particularly in the areas surrounding the cities of Varna (Varna), Primorsko (Bourgas), Sarafovo (Bourgas) and Shabla (Dobrich). Finally, a more frequent occurrence of extreme droughts in combination with significant warming in summers as predicted by climate researchers might lead to difficulties for agriculture and the provision of drinking water, particularly in the peak tourism season.

## **2.4 Objectives**

The objective of the MyCoast project, which ran from 2006 to 2009, was to improve coastal management on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast and to foster the implementation of ICM by means of an integrated approach to spatial planning, based on an open planning process. A contribution was to be made to streamline policies and their respective programmes related to ICM, and stakeholders were to participate in the planning process from the start. The outcome of the project was to be a 30 year vision for a sustainable future of the Black Sea coast and an integrated management plan with specific programs of actions, as a means to coordinate coastal development, covering the administrative districts of Dobrich, Varna, and Bourgas.

The open planning process consisted of stakeholder workshops in four case-study areas: Dobrich, Varna, Bourgas and Strandzha.

## **2.5 Adaptation measures implemented in the case**

The MyCoast project was based on a collaboration between the for Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment (VROM) and the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) on the management and development of the Black Sea Coast. It was funded by VROM, organized by the Agency for International Business and Cooperation of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs (EVD) and carried out by a Dutch consultancy together with Bulgarian partners on the ground in a consortium called 'Povvik'.

MyCoast was an approach to implement integrated spatial planning on the Bulgarian coastline as a first step towards ICM. For this, on three stakeholder workshops held in the different oblasts, conflicts and synergies between the various use functions of the coastal area were identified and discussed, and options for improving coordination were collected. A long term plan (30yrs) and a short term approach based on a number of measures were compiled for the respective case areas. A list of measures related to climate change adaptation, which were discussed in the different case areas is provided in table 1.

## **2.6 Solutions**

In the MyCoast project, the ICM approach itself, starting with a shared and integrated long-term coastal vision, which is then translated into a strategy and management measures, was seen as a solution to the lack of coordination and the related problems encountered in coastal management in Bulgaria.

To reach this ambition, the MyCoast project team employed an open planning process, consisting of stakeholder workshops in four case-study areas: Dobrich, Varna, Bourgas and Strandzha.

In Varna, stakeholder workshops came to a halt due to the general rejection of MyCoast and a reluctance to participate by municipal representatives. For Dobrich, Bourgas and Strandzha, respectively, a common vision was produced and possible measures were discussed as solutions to reach the vision.

Table 1 displays the measures which were discussed as possible solutions in the three case areas of the MyCoast project.

**Table 1: Overview of measures discussed in the MyCoast project in stakeholder workshops in the case areas Dobrich, Bourgas and Strandzha, sorted by the sectors to which they apply**

Sector	Measure	Case area
<b>Water services management</b>	Promote effective irrigation system	Dobrich
	Implement long-term water management	Dobrich
	Optimization of water use	Dobrich
	Reduction of water loss	Dobrich
	Enhancement of water reuse	Dobrich
	Desalination	Dobrich
	Modernization of existing and construction of new WWTP	Dobrich
<b>Agriculture</b>	Introduce drought resistant crops	Dobrich
<b>Transport</b>	Modernization of port	Bourgas
<b>Tourism</b>	Eco-Tourism	Strandzha
	Marketing of products from national park	Strandzha
<b>Spatial planning</b>	Practice spatial planning at oblast level	Dobrich
	Incorporate marine and terrestrial parts of coast in spatial plans	Dobrich
	Relocation of industrial zones away from ports	Bourgas
	Integrated planning	Bourgas
	Draft management plans for lakes as basis for protection	Bourgas
	Combine protection with recreation and tourism opportunities	Bourgas
<b>Institutional /Organizational measures</b>	Introduce a coastal council	Bourgas
	Enhance implementation, monitoring and control of environmental and marine legislation	Dobrich, Strandzha
	Increase cooperation between enforcement agencies	Strandzha
	Organize ICZM consultation procedures for the preparation of the master plan	Bourgas
	Establish a maritime monitoring and information system	Dobrich
<b>Environmental protection</b>	Devise measures against pollution	Dobrich
	Mitigation of environmental impact of construction	Bourgas
	Reduction of pollution from ships	Bourgas
<b>Coastal protection</b>	Devise measures against erosion	Dobrich
<b>Education</b>	Develop educational programs on sustainable economic development of marine transport, petro chemistry, energy, cultural and historical tourism	Bourgas
	Raise awareness	Strandzha

The MyCoast team described the workshops and their results as follows:

- Dobrich: cooperative atmosphere, fruitful discussions, district showed willingness to take the lead in follow-up steps
- Varna: municipal representatives blocked discussions on the municipal master plan and were unwilling to answer and discuss issues related to it. Process was stopped by project team
- Bourgas: discussions fruitful but problems in incorporating plan into municipal master plan, as officials did not accept a document without legal status.

- Strandzha: discussions fruitful, governor took initiative to install a participative coastal council

When approached through interviews again in 2014, most of the participating organizations described the impact of the MyCoast project as very limited. Since the end of the project in 2009, no follow up initiatives were implemented in any of the case study areas, and in the absence of a national coastal and marine strategy, most of the activities related to ICM (mainly activities on coastal defence) are still of a limited scope and rather ad-hoc in nature. Most interviewees, however, considered the MyCoast project an interesting exercise, as they liked the participative approach which brings all stakeholders to a table to discuss the issue at hand, and which had been new to them. Whether MyCoast has influenced the new National strategy for Integrated Marine Policy of Bulgaria, which is currently under development, still remains difficult to judge.

## 2.7 Importance and relevance of adaptation



Case developed and implemented as a climate change adaptation measure



Case developed and implemented and partially funded as a climate change adaptation measure



Case mainly developed and implemented because of other policy objectives, but with significant consideration on climate change adaptation aspects

## 2.8 Pictures

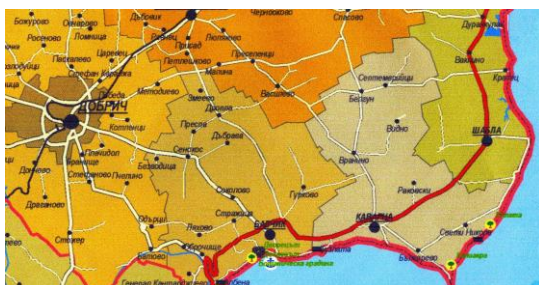


Figure 1: Map of case area in oblast Dobrich



Figure 2: Typical landscape in the area of Strandzha



Figure 3: Map of the case area Strandzha



Figure 4: Aerial view of the port city and case area Bourgas



Figure 5: Map of case area Bourgas

## 2.9 Keywords

Bulgaria, Integrated Coastal Management, coastal councils, open planning process, stakeholder workshops, spatial planning, land-use planning

## 2.10 Relevant EU policy sector

- ☒ Agriculture and forest
- ☒ Biodiversity
- ☒ Coastal areas
- ☒ Disaster Risk Reduction
- ☐ Financial
- ☐ Health
- ☒ Infrastructure
- ☐ Marine and fisheries
- ☒ Water management



Urban

### 3. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

MyCoast aspired to produce vision and management plan for a sustainable future of Black Sea coastline, by applying an open participation process, based on active stakeholder participation from the beginning and accompanied by information campaigns directed to the wider public, which resulted in coverage by radio, TV, internet and printed press.

The open planning process started with visionary, sectoral workshops at national level, looking at the whole coastline, in which first steps were taken towards the development of a common vision on the future of Bulgaria's coastline to 2030. Compatibilities and possible conflicting sectoral visions were identified by the project team after the workshops.

Subsequent to the sectorial workshops, in order to increase stakeholder involvement both in quantity and quality, the scope of the future workshops was adapted to district and municipality level, respectively.

In the four case study areas Dobrich, Varna, Bourgas and Strandzha, the following workshop-scheme was applied:

1<sup>st</sup> workshop: Vision

2<sup>nd</sup> workshop: Vision +identification of next steps

3<sup>rd</sup> workshop: presentation &validation of result

Participants of the MyCoast workshops included representatives of municipalities, provinces ('oblasts'), the national ministry of transport, as well as several state agencies and directorates (planning & development, environment, water, including the Black Sea Basin Directorate), and also representatives of sectors such as shipping (marine chamber, port authority), tourism, wine producers, nature protection (administration of natural park, several NGOs) and research institutes. The MyCoast project team reported reluctance to participate particularly on the side of industries, and also challenges regarding the political commitment and the participation of governmental representatives at different scales.

### 4. SUCCESS AND LIMITING FACTORS

#### SUCCESS FACTORS

MyCoast was seen by the project team as a first small step towards implementing an open planning methodology in Bulgaria. The project succeeded in building capacities of project participants regarding the concept of ICM and what its application in the Bulgarian context would imply. Through the creation of a platform for the discussion of conflicts, stakeholders' insight into their mutual interdependencies increased.

The project identified lessons for future ICM initiatives. One is the value of taking the planning scale to local needs, i.e. a shift of discussions to the level where benefits of the planning can be seen, which in the Bulgarian context implied a shift from national scale to district ('Oblast') scale. Another success factor for future projects is the need to assure that the planning process, its objectives and its basic rules are legally implemented, including provisions on participation, before the implementation of the planning process on the ground begins.

Just as important seems to be the alignment of planning agendas, i.e. the harmonization and integration of open planning processes for ICM with local planning processes, as was the case in Bourgas for MyCoast. Local

willingness to participate and openness to institutional changes were identified as success factors in the Strandzha pilot, where the implementation of a coastal council was debated.

#### **LIMITING FACTORS**

The MyCoast project encountered many barriers for successful implementation of open planning processes and ICM in Bulgaria. Stakeholders as well as public authorities lacked experience with participation and integrated planning processes, and a generally low level of stakeholder organization led to an unclear mandate for workshop participants. Not only is the field of representational bodies of businesses very fragmented in Bulgaria, which made it difficult to identify suitable participants, but economic sector representatives themselves were also reluctant to participate in MyCoast.

Those stakeholders who did participate in workshops, however, seemed to have difficulties expressing and translating their own, long term objectives, which the project team related to a lack of capacity in stakeholder organizations and administration.

Other difficulties encountered were attributed to the transplantation of the western idea of adaptive planning into the Bulgarian context where ICM is inhibited by uncoordinated strategies, plans and actions between different administrative levels. This situation was exacerbated due to a still unclear division of competences between ministries and municipalities after a recent decentralization process (incomplete decentralization of spatial planning). Throughout its implementation, MyCoast was confronted with a lack of political support and local project ownership. Other factors which were described as limiting the success of MyCoast included the need for simultaneous translation, which limited free expression and the exchange of opinions between external consultants and local actors. Power imbalances, as well as strong mistrust between and within stakeholder groups due to past and ongoing conflicts, and a particular mistrust in the government, paired with a general suspicion of corruption were described as important factors limiting the project.

#### **5. COST AND BENEFITS**

The total budget of the MyCoast project was 400 000 Euro, which was paid by the Dutch Government. In interviews and literature research, no information on direct benefits of the project could be obtained. No follow-up projects are known to have been carried out in Bulgaria, and ICM activities along the Bulgarian coastline (mostly the small-scale enhancement of coastal protection measures) have remained limited and sporadic. Whether MyCoast has inspired the new National strategy for Integrated Marine Policy of Bulgaria, which is currently under development, remains difficult to judge.

#### **6. LEGAL ASPECTS**

Legislation on ICM in Bulgaria is fragmented and no single national law policy or plan concerning ICM exists. Principles of ICM are, however, covered in the following laws, policies and plans on national and regional level (please note that some of the laws, policies and plans presented below did not exist during the implementation of the MyCoast project, and entered into force only later):

- **National Spatial Planning Act**, promulgated SG No. 1 / 2 January 2001
- **Land-use Planning of the Black Sea Littoral Act**, promulgated SG No. 48 / 15 June 2007 (reformed in 2012): regulates land use in the coastal zone and promotes coastal protection

- **The Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea** (2009) A common agreement by the countries surrounding the Black Sea under the Black Sea Commission, in which ICZM forms a high priority target
- **Strategy for river basin management in the Black Sea Region** (2009-2015), covers coastal erosion and gives overview about measures taken until 2010
- **National Plan for Regional Development** (2012-2022) Includes the ICM principles for both the north eastern coastal region and the south-eastern coastal region in Bulgaria
- **National strategy for Integrated Marine Policy** under development (status June 2014)
- **Regional Development Act**
- **Environmental Protection Act**

## 7. CONTACT

Rene Boesten (rene.boesten@taofes.eu)

## 8. WEBSITES

The project website of MyCoast has expired.

## 9. SOURCE

Country fiche Bulgaria. Country overview and assessment

[http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/documents/bulgaria\\_climate\\_change\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies/documents/bulgaria_climate_change_en.pdf)

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Dieperink, C., Boesten, R., Hovens, J., Tonkes, H. (2012): Sustainable Coastal Development and Open Planning? Transferring the Integrated Area Approach to Bulgaria. Sustainable Development 20, pp 58-70

Environmental Protection Act 2002, Promulgated by State Gazette No. 91/25.09.2002, last amended and supplemented in 2011.

Land-use Planning of the Black Sea Littoral Act, promulgated SG No. 48 / 15 June 2007

(<http://parliament.bg/bills/40/602-01-9.rtf>, p 5 (accessed on January 20th, 2014)).

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works 2012: National Regional Development Strategy (NRDS) of the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 2012-2022

Regional Development Act, 2008, Promulgated by State Gazette No. 50/30.05.2008, last amended in 2009

National Centre for Regional Development, Operational Programme Regional Development report (2012): National Concept for Spatial Development for the period 2013-2025: The national space – our common heritage for the future

The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution 2009 Strategic Action Plan for the Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea [http://www.blacksea-commission.org/\\_bssap2009.asp](http://www.blacksea-commission.org/_bssap2009.asp)

## 10. IMPLEMENTATION TIME

2006-2009



**11. LIFETIME**

Not relevant

**12. GEOGRAPHIC LEVEL**

National, local

**13. COUNTRIES**

Bulgaria

**14. GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES**

Burgas Bay: 42.460461, 27.449857

Varna Bay: 43.186945, 27.923682

Strandzha: 42.063354, 27.643874

Dobrich: 43.572975, 27.825825