

The Coordination Centre for ICZM, an intergovernmental coordination body - BE

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

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Inter-governmental co-operation, involving the provincial, regional (Flemish) and national (Belgian) authority levels, and a scientific partner representing the scientific community (Flanders Marine Institute).

4. Overview of the case

The Coordination centre for ICZM is a collaboration between the provincial, regional and national authorities in Belgium with the main aim to stimulate and promote sustainable and integrated management of the Belgian coast.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Coordination centre for ICZM was established in 2001 as a collaboration between the main coastal administrations on different policy levels. The partners of the centre are (1) the province of West-Flanders (the only coastal province in Belgium), (2) the Flemish government and more specifically the Department for Mobility and Public works (Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services, Coastal Division) and the Department for Environment and Nature (Agency for Nature and Forest, Coastal Division), (3) the federal government, directorate-general for the Environment (North Sea Division). The Flanders Marine Institute acts as a scientific partner. These partners have signed a protocol agreement, in which they confirm to use the Coordination Centre as a co-ordinating body and instrument for sound integrated coastal zone management.

b) Objectives

The main aim is to stimulate and promote sustainable and integrated management of the Belgian coast. The Coordination centre has three strategic objectives:

- Co-operating in implementing the EU Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2002/413/EG)
- Promoting the integration of planning and policy in the coastal zone
- Creating a basis for ICZM

For each of these strategic objectives, operational objectives and activities have been defined.

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

a) Management

The Coordination Centre has no competences. The competences remain with the responsible authorities. The following bodies are involved in the management of the Coordination centre:

- Executive committee: responsible for financial management and sees to the proper functioning of the secretariat;
- Secretariat (2 full-time equivalent)
- Administrative consultation body, involving all authorities with competences on coastal management.

Coastal stakeholders and coastal organisations are involved through the annual coastal forum or through ad-hoc working groups.

b) ICZM tools

The Coordination centre can be seen as a consultation and co-ordination tool. Responsibilities and competencies at sea and in the coastal area are complex, and different departments are responsible for different aspects of coastal management. A good co-ordination and communication is important for a good management of the coast. The Coordination centre was established to ensure a permanent body where consultation can take place, where authorities can inform each other, and where conflicts in the coastal zone can be discussed in an integrated way.

The Administrative consultation body is composed of high-ranking officials with a clear mandate from the Minister. The main task of this body is to openly discuss integrated coastal issues with all sectors involved, consult on these issues, exchange information and seek solutions. The Administrative consultation body can agree to set-up ad-hoc working groups to focus on specific specialised topics. The working groups will pay special attention to involve local authorities and stakeholders.

An example of the working methodology is with sea gulls on the coast: because of the increasing complaints of gulls breeding in coastal towns and their behaviour (aggression, litter), the Centre set up a communication campaign including a brochure, a scientific seminar and a website with concrete tips to avoid "gull trouble". The Centre works closely with scientific institutes to monitor the number of breeding gulls and to look for solutions in consultation with the coastal municipalities. Representing authorities at national and international meetings: the Centre has gained recognition by her partners (authorities) to represent them at meetings dealing with integrated coastal matters. The Centre will always try to go to the meetings with a co-ordinated viewpoint.

7. Cost and resources

The Coordination Centre has a fixed budget of €145,000 per year. This guarantees the employment of 2 staff (coordinator and administrative assistant). The Centre also generates extra income through national and European projects, and by acting as a secretariat for national and international bodies. It does not act as a consultant for small scale projects.

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

This permanent consultation body helps departments to look beyond their sectoral approach and therefore aids horizontal integration. By involving different authority levels, the vertical integration is stimulated. The Coordination Centre acts as a point of contact in the coastal zone for cross-sectoral issues.

9. Success and Fail factors

Success factors: good level of collaboration between authorities and departments. Political support for integrated working; this resulted in the signing of a protocol agreement. Budget is available for minimum level of functioning of the Centre.

Obstacles: it is important that all partners recognise the role the Coordination Centre can have, and that there is confidence in delegating tasks related to ICZM. Everything is organised on a sectoral basis: legislation, departments, policy plans etc. There is no legal basis for integrated working, only a Recommendation. Integration is a matter of good will, but there are no mechanisms for enforcement.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

None so far.

11. Prepared by

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12. Verified by

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13. Sources

- National Belgian report on the implementation of Recommendation 2002/413/EG. Integrated Coastal Zone management (2006).
- www.kustbeheer.be

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