

Survey on social perception on ICZM and climate change, an island wide survey - CY

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Managing impacts of climate change and safeguarding resilience of coasts/coastal systems
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Knowledge-based
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

An island (country)- wide survey on social perception on ICZM, climate change and public participation is an important tool for decision/policy makers and a baseline study for assessing the present status of social perception on these issues.

4. Overview of the case

The survey PERCEPTIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN CYPRUS covered the entire island (Greek and Turkish Cypriots). It took place between the 1st and 30th of November 2008, aiming to collect data on the following topics:

- Awareness / attitudes towards climate change,
- Awareness of environmental issues, including coastal erosion,
- Awareness of organisations which promote/fund the care of coastal areas
- Awareness of the function / attitudes towards breakwaters.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

There was a gap on field data in Cyprus on what are the civic attitudes towards sustainability and sustainable development, ICZM and climate changes. The survey aimed to fill this gap. It was the first time that a survey on these issues was carried out in an island-wide scale in Cyprus, i.e including Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

b) Objectives

The objective of the survey was to serve as a gap analysis and as an assessment study for recording the state of social perception and civic attitudes towards ICZM and climate changes, as well as to provide decision and policy makers with real data.

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

a) Management

Two Cypriot NGOs, AKTI Project and Research Centre and the Cyprus Environmental Stakeholders Forum (CESF) in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme -Action for Cooperation and Trust carried out the opinion research survey. The telephone interviews were conducted by RAI Consultants Public Ltd.

b) ICZM tools

The survey employed a quantitative methodology, consisted of telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of members of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. The sample was distributed proportionately throughout the urban and rural areas of the island. A total sample of 661 telephone interviews were carried out - with 412 Greek Cypriots and 248 Turkish Cypriots.

The survey was structured in 4 thematic groups and included a total of 18 questions:

- Integrated Coastal Zone Management, which included questions on coastal development, water management, tourism, energy and coastal erosion
- Climatic change, with questions aiming mainly to record public awareness on the issue
- Stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes concerning development, with questions aiming mainly to record public opinion on issues related to transparency of public administration and the will of people to participate in the decision-making process.
- Bi-communal co-operation on issues related to the environment, including questions aiming to record public opinion of Greek and Turkish Cypriots in accepting environmental issues as issues with bi-communal character
- The results are interesting. Some examples:
- 66% claimed that they had not heard of the term "sustainable development. Analysis of the answers to the question of whether they had ever heard of this term by ethnic group shows an uneven distribution of awareness, with twice as many Greek Cypriots saying that they had heard of it compared to Turkish Cypriots.
- The coastline, with 50% mentions as an aspect facing problems and 4% mentions as an aspect needing greatest attention does not seem to occupy a relatively significant place in the list of environmental concerns of the respondents.
- It is notable that there was a higher tendency by respondents from the older age groups of both communities compared to the younger age groups to agree with the statement "I do not like breakwaters, I prefer the beach to be left in its natural formation even if it is eroded".
- The majority of the respondents (68%) thought that Cyprus was affected by climate change very much. Analysis by ethnic group indicates that Greek Cypriots are much more likely than Turkish Cypriots to believe that climate change is influencing Cyprus.
- The majority of the respondents from both communities did not think that as citizens they were consulted in the decision-making process on environmental issues.

7. Cost and resources

The cost (ca. €10000) to run the survey was covered by UNDP-ACT. The setting up of the questionnaire and the evaluation of the results was done voluntarily by experts.

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

It was the first time that a survey on these issues covered the entire island, i.e. record the perception of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The survey is a base-line study which is repeatable in the future and can serve as a monitoring tool for the evolution of social perception on ICZM, climatic changes and participation in Cyprus. The report was not greatly published mainly due to lack of funding and this was an important draw-back for its effectiveness. Until now, mainly NGOs have used the results to plan their awareness-raising campaigns.

9. Success and Fail factors

Limited funding was an obstacle for the explicit and analytical evaluation of the results, the publicity/ dissemination and the contacts with decision makers. However, a qualitative reading of the results can enlighten several aspects of social perception on aspects such as awareness, participation and public administration.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

As it becomes clear from the answers, both Greek and Turkish Cypriots believe that environment is a bi-communal issue and would accept bi-communal co-operation on relevant issues. This is an important outcome that can support the dialogue among the two communities and the effort to find a solution to the political problem. The two communities of the island have been in isolation from each other since 1974. Efforts for an effective rapprochement started in an organised form only since 2003. The survey supports the opinion that environment can serve as a conflict resolution tool.

11. Prepared by

Xenia I. Loizidou, ISOTECH LTD Environmental Research and Consultancy, Cyprus

12. Verified by

Kyriaki Demetriou, AKTI Project and Research Centre, Cyprus

13. Sources

- Summary Report: Survey: Perceptions On Sustainable Development And Climate Change In Cyprus, 2009, RAI Consultants Ltd & AKTI project and Research Centre, Cyprus,
- http://akti.org.cy/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=153&Itemid=49