

# **Application of the European ICZM Progress Marker: Investigation for Hamburg within the Interreg III B BSR project "Coastman"**

COASTMAN project document

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# Introduction

The key to sustainable development of the City of Hamburg is reconciling the interests of those stakeholders developing its harbour - Germany's largest and Europe's second largest port – with interests of other stakeholders representing among others tourism, fisheries, housing, and nature conservation. It was therefore decided to make Hamburg the German case study for COASTMAN and to investigate how instruments of Integrated Coastal Zone Management can contribute to resolving conflicts. Solutions will be shared with other big harbour cities of the region, in particular St Petersburg and Kaliningrad and are expected to lead to deepened cooperation.

As a first step, TuTech Innovation identified the coastal stakeholder community, divided into the following groups:

## Category 1: conflicting stakeholders

- Hamburg Ministry of Urban Development and the Environment
- Hamburg Ministry of Economy and Labour Affairs,
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety

## Category 2: interest-based stakeholders

- Hamburg Port Authority
- Chamber of Commerce Hamburg
- Tourism operators
- Ship owners
- Port workers

## Category 3: other stakeholders

- Universities
- NGOs
- Research Institutes
- Authorities dealing with integrated coastal zone management of neighbouring Länder (German regions), in particular Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen.

TuTech established a database of contact persons within all those institutions and sectors.

# Aims and objectives

TuTech Innovation decided to apply the ICZM Marker in the framework of its Hamburg Case Study for the following reasons:

- The Marker was introduced to COASTMAN partners and to representatives of the Hamburg stakeholder community and regarded as an interesting instrument.

- TuTech wanted to make a contribution to the European discussion process on ICZM instruments by testing the Marker in Hamburg and providing feedback to the European level and the Ministry for Environment of Germany.
- Application of the Marker in form of a workshop facilitates the discussion process among coastal stakeholders about what ICZM is, what has been done in the recent past in order to establish it as part of the local, regional or national coastal management and planning process, and where the weaknesses are, thereby contributing to conflict resolution and communication among the stakeholder community.

On 28 April 2006, the National ICZM strategy for Germany was presented at a conference in Bremen. The Strategy itself as well as several conference participants were critical about the European ICZM Progress Marker. This is why TuTech decided to adjust the scope of its mission and to focus less on the results of a Marker application in Hamburg and more on achieving consensus on how the Marker could be improved in order to best serve its purpose of indicating ICZM progress in Germany and facilitating conflict management in the course of a discussion process, active stakeholder participation, and integration of different interest groups.

## Methodology

The method of choice for bringing together the stakeholder community and initiating a discussion process on conflicts and achievements of coastal resource use was the application of the European indicator for measuring progress in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), an element of implementing the ICZM Recommendation by the European Parliament and the Council of 2002 (EC, 2002).

The Progress “Indicator”, often referred to as “Marker” because of its simple, binary response structure, was developed under the guidance of the EU ICZM Expert Group and its Working Group on Indicators and Data, established by DG Environment of the European Commission. The Working Group received assistance from the Topic Centre for Terrestrial Environment, a structure of the European Environment Agency, and EUCC – The Coastal Union as an additional subcontracted consultant. The resulting Progress Indicator/Marker has received approval of the EU ICZM Expert Group and was recommended for testing in EU Member States on various levels (Expert Group ICZM, 2004).

The ICZM Progress Marker is an instrument for assessing to which degree ICZM in its widest sense is being implemented on local, regional and national level and whether there is progress over time (e.g. within five-year intervals) in applying and establishing the ICZM approach. It highlights success stories as well as failures, thereby helping to focus resources where they are most needed.

A second set of indicators has also been developed by the Working Group on Indicators and Data under the guidance of the Expert Group. This Indicator has the complementary aim of assessing sustainable development along the coast, thereby showing whether progress in ICZM has the intended results (Working Group ID, 2004).

The ICZM Progress Marker methodology (see annex 1) consists of 31 actions characterising the process from an early stage of ICZM (phase 1: Aspects of coastal planning and management are taking place) to the final stage (phase 4: An efficient, adaptive and integrative process is embedded at all levels of governance and is delivering greater sustainable use of the coast). This list of actions is complemented by annotations that describe more in detail what each action implies. The goal is to assess whether this action has already been completed or not or whether information is lacking

and therefore an assessment is not possible. This assessment is to be done for the local, regional, and national level and applied for the year 2000 and the year 2005 in order to indicate progress over time. The results can be visualized in form of a table where positive assessments are marked with green, negative ones with red, and “don’t know” with yellow.

A representative group of coastal stakeholders should make the assessment in the framework of a workshop. Optionally, the assessment can be done first in written form to familiarizes the stakeholders with the methodology and provide an indication of which actions are being assessed the same way by all stakeholders and for which ones a joint discussion is necessary in order to reach a common conclusion. In a second step, a workshop should follow.

Application of the Marker, in tests carried out so far, has shown that civil servants working in central government departments, for example, will not necessarily have much idea about what is going on locally. Similarly, local practitioners will have restricted knowledge about what, if anything is happening at regional or national levels. Even people working in the same organisation often differ with their colleagues in assessing whether a particular action is being fully implemented or not.

Therefore, it is beneficial to bring together practitioners from different administrations, organisations, agencies and interest groups to complete the table jointly. In this way, a more accurate picture of how far ICZM is being implemented at all three spatial levels – national, regional and local can be gained.

In fact, the act of completing the table is, itself, an important step in helping to implement ICZM. The debate necessary to decide on an answer, even one as apparently simple as ‘yes’ or ‘no’, leads to an exchange of opinions about which organisations and agencies are doing what on the coast, and to what effect.

There are some rules that need to be followed when doing the assessment:

1. Only enter YES if you are sure that the action described is actually taking place or has happened in full.
2. At least each YES should be backed up with a brief text that notes the basis for that answer (e.g. a law or a public policy document). Such text can note differences of opinion.
3. If it has been implemented only partly, one must enter NO.
4. If one is not sure whether an action is or is not being carried out, one must enter DK (don’t know). In a workshop environment, these open issues can be discussed and jointly assessed.

## **Application of the Marker in Hamburg**

In April 2006, Stakeholders registered in the TuTech database received a letter inviting them to do the self-assessment by filling in the ICZM Progress Marker table translated into German (see Annex 2) and consulting with the Explanatory Notes (also translated into German, see Annex 3) where necessary. They were also informed that they would be invited to a workshop in Hamburg in order to discuss conflicting issues and achieve a consensus on how to assess progress of ICZM in the city.

After several weeks, those stakeholders that had not responded were contacted by phone and e-mail in order to discuss reasons for not participating and answer questions.

On 26 June 2006, a workshop took place at TuTech in Innovation in Hamburg-Harburg with the participation of 20 stakeholders. Several others had voiced interest but could not participate due to

other obligations. The scope of the workshop had been extended by the issue of Sustainability Indicators in the context of the German ICZM Strategy, because of its complementary to the ICZM Progress Indicator.

The Workshop was opened by Prof. Walter Leal, TuTech Innovation. He explained the context of the workshop and said that the results will be shared with other COASTMAN partners around the Baltic.

Next on the agenda was Irene Lucius, EUCC – The Coastal Union, who presented the specific objectives of the workshop more in detail and briefed the participants on the latest ICZM policy development on European level. She stressed that the ICZM Progress Marker has been applied in the context of national and regional workshops in Belgium, France, South UK, Poland, Spain, Malta, and Italy. The results so far are promising: There is a clear positive trend over the past 5 years and the indicator has been well received, although some measures for improving the tool have been put forward, e.g. the need to add “in progress” to the already existing possible categories of “Yes”, “No”, and “Don’t know” for assessing the 31 actions.

Then, Bastian Schuchardt, bioconsult, informed the participants on the state of the German ICZM process, referring to the German ICZM Strategy, which recommends, among others, the establishment of an ICZM Secretariat and ICZM Forum. The German Ministry for Environment had contracted bioconsult to develop proposals for coastal sustainability indicators tailored to the German situation.

Sustainability Indicators had been developed as a follow up to the European ICZM Recommendation and applied in the framework of the project DEDUCE for some countries. Achim Daschkeit presented results of applying those indicators to German regions and visualizing them with the help of WebGIS. The problems encountered in the process were in particular the low availability of data for some indicators and the lack of clear objectives, limits and consequently judgment for interpreting the results (e.g. what is a “sustainable” or “unsustainable” population density along the coast?). These norms have to be defined by the coastal stakeholder community first. Also, the direct relevance of some of the indicators to ICZM has not been made clear. He concluded by saying that the application of the EU sustainability indicators is not sufficiently relevant from a policy point of view.

Achim Daschkeit continued by providing his analysis of the ICZM Progress Indicator and the process of applying it. The development of ICZM processes – planning or regional development processes – can be evaluated with progress (also called process) indicators. In Achim Daschkeit’s opinion, the EU ICZM process indicator is not very appropriate for the German context because it does not deliver precise information about the ICZM process and because the “byproduct” of doing the assessment – raising awareness on what ICZM is and how it is being implemented – is not important in a country where stakeholders are already well-informed about the approach.

Many actions – in particular those of the first phase – could best be assessed by an expert doing literature search for legal acts and policy initiatives. The other actions require a subjective assessment for which standard empirical methodology exists in the form of opinion surveys with a range of possible answers (e.g. from “I fully agree” to “not at all”). Intensity and quality of communication and cooperation, for example, are best assessed with this methodology if the usual conditions and limitation of empirical social research are being taken into consideration.

Another weakness according to Achim Daschkeit is the fact that the composition and minimum number of stakeholders applying the marker for a particular area are not defined. Consequently,

results are not well comparable and only of limited value. Furthermore, the formulation of some questions is too vague.

He concluded by saying that the content of the ICZM Progress Marker is appropriate, but the procedure of application needs to be refined.

## **Results of the ICZM Progress Marker test run in Hamburg**

The ICZM Progress Marker table was sent to 55 stakeholders of about 45 institutions representing different sectors and administrative levels. Most of them are working for Hamburg institutions, some representing the “Länder” Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen and the federal level. Out of those, only four did the assessment, while some explained why they could not do so in written form. The most commonly cited reasons were unclear responsibility, lack of time, the negative attitude of the recently published ICZM Strategy for Germany towards the European ICZM Marker, and the special status of Hamburg (it is both a municipality and a “Land” and it is located not directly on the coast).

While the number of respondents is too low for a proper statistical analysis, some qualitative remarks can be made: There was considerable agreement in the positive judgement of actions in the first phase and least agreement on the assessment of ICZM progress in Hamburg from the year 2000 to 2005. Due to time constraints and the focus of this Workshop on criticising the Marker, these issues could not be further discussed, but can be regarded as interesting issues for future stakeholder meetings.

## **Discussion**

**The Workshop participants agreed on the following weaknesses of the Marker:**

1. Many aspects of ICZM are already established in Germany, but they are not called ICZM. Therefore, the Marker tends to undervalue progress in those actions where the term ICZM is mentioned.
2. The Marker is too extensive and not clear enough in some points. Therefore its application can lead to long discussions about terminology without providing much insight. It would be better to limit the Marker to a maximum of 10 crucial points.
3. Neither the actions themselves nor the annotations are formulated clearly enough. Some actions consist of different elements that need to be assessed independently. This leads to inaccuracy, redundancies, and frustration during the application process.
4. Some actions can be assessed only subjectively (e.g. there is no objective answer to what is “properly staffed and properly funded”)
5. “Yes”, “No”, and “Don’t know” are not enough for assessing the actions.
6. The aims and target groups of the Marker should be better communicated. It should be made clear for example that it is not an instrument for solving local problems.

7. The terminology must be better defined. Some terms such as “stocktake of the coast” or “report on the State of the Coast” are clear in the English language context but not yet established in the German language, neither as English nor as German terms.
8. Filling in the Marker table individually does not lead to meaningful results because of ambiguous terminology and because left to themselves, stakeholders tend to answer questions purely from the perspective of their interests and discipline.
9. Clear instructions are needed which type of stakeholders and how many of them must contribute to the assessment. The group of people who ended up applying the marker in Hamburg appears too random.
10. The ICZM Sustainability and Progress Indicators are being discussed and applied independently at the moment although they are (or should be) interrelated.

**The participants recommended the following improvements:**

1. The conditions for applying the marker need to be defined clearly. Two alternative models have been proposed: a) If an ICZM Forum is established with representation of the major stakeholder groups (as the Germany ICZM Strategy recommends for the near future), the Marker can be applied during a Forum session. This would provide the opportunity of defining terminology and during the discussion process, achieving a common opinion on the state of ICZM, integrating the perspective of the different sectors and disciplines. B) If no Forum (or comparable body) is established, the Marker can be split into two groups of actions: those that can be assessed objectively with the help of a literature search, and those that can be assessed with the help of a questionnaire answered by a sufficiently large and representative group of stakeholders in written form.
2. Sustainability and Progress Indicators should not be assessed independently.
3. The actions need to be formulated more clearly and if necessary, terminology needs to be better defined without using the term ICZM. Thereby, the annotation can be reduced to a large degree or made obsolete.
4. Some actions need to be split into two or more elements, to be assessed independently. Other actions, of lesser relevance to ICZM, should be eliminated or integrated into others in order to reduce redundancies and overall number of actions.
5. More communication efforts are needed to convince stakeholders about the necessity of ICZM. This would increase motivation for applying the Marker.
6. The aims of applying the Marker have to be made very clear.

Some of the participants voiced their willingness to engage in further development of the Marker on the European and German level.

## Conclusions

The ICZM progress Marker test run in Hamburg has shown that there are many objections to the methodology in Hamburg and the region. It would not be advisable to let individual representatives of the stakeholder community carry out a written assessment as in its present form. Also, in the German translation, the wording of the actions is not precise enough. A workshop type setting would be beneficial with sufficient time allocated – probably one day as minimum – to explain to the participants the precise purpose of the exercise, to clarify terminology, and to moderate a discussion process between the different stakeholders that leads to a common assessment.

When interpreting these results it is important to bear in mind that this was a test run of the application of the ICZM marker. The purpose of this workshop seemed to be unclear at the beginning and led to some confusion.

While in some European regions starting the process of stakeholder interaction is a goal in itself, the participants in Hamburg seemed much more goal-oriented. This is why more emphasis would need to be placed on explaining the reason for the testing exercise. Once the goal – constructive criticism in order to improve the Marker – was made clear, the German audience focused entirely on this aspect, not on testing the methodology and interpreting preliminary results.

Superficially, it looks like the COASTMAN objective of applying the Marker as a mechanism for conflict resolution by facilitating a productive discussion process among stakeholders about achievements and challenges of the ICZM process has failed. At a second glance, however, the process helped to unite stakeholders in their sometimes strong criticism of the methodology and to raise their interest in contributing to developing ICZM methodology for Germany. During the workshop criticism arose e.g. regarding the formulation and grouping of the marker actions, leading to an intense discussion, which left some participants irritated at times.

Ideally, the planned German ICZM forum will become a platform for developing and applying the Marker in the near future. If this effort fails, application of the Marker will require a strong champion – such as the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety – who could bring stakeholders together for Assessment Workshops.

The discussion process has also brought into the open that the stakeholders, who came together in Hamburg, have their own, not very clear definition of ICZM. This may also be the case in other countries, and would mean that in some cases considerable adjustments to the way coastal resource use is being managed and planned would be required. The fact that the tedious, meticulous and often long-lasting planning process with stakeholders participation so common in Germany is a good base for, but not the equivalent of ICZM, has to be communicated much better. In any case, as long as ICZM is an ambiguous and vague term in any country's context, the application of the Marker will have its problems.

Independent of these aspects, the discussion process has revealed several shortcomings of the present methodology and it can be hoped that critique and recommendations will be taken into consideration during future rounds of revising the assessment tool.

In particular, the idea of producing a clear protocol for applying the Marker should be considered. If ICZM progress assessments are to be made comparable between different European countries, regions and municipalities, the assessment process should be agreed upon. Developing two options – the joint assessment in the framework of a workshop and the written assessment, split into a literature search part and a questionnaire – may be considered as a pragmatic but at the same time

sound solution. A critical revision of the actions, in particular defining key terminology more clearly and reducing inaccuracies and redundancies, would be recommended.

## References

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