The Catalonian ICZM Strategic Plan - ES

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Managing impacts of climate change and safeguarding resilience of coasts/coastal systems
- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Preventing and managing natural hazards and technological (human-made) hazards
- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Integrating coherent strategies covering the risk-dimension (prevention to response) into planning and investment
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Balancing economic, social, cultural development whilst enhancing environment

2. Key Approaches

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

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The structure of the Catalonian Strategic Plan - based on 7 general objectives connected through specific objectives, 5 priority lines of actions and 4 working systems (Participation, Information, Proposal and Monitoring) – allowed working in an integrated way to achieve the objectives. The development of an ICZM pilot project at the local level helps to better understand what an adequate coastal management is and how far we are from a global ICZM implementation in the entire coastal zone.

4. Overview of the case

The Catalonian ICZM Strategic Plan is the response of the Catalonian Region to the European Commission Recommendation 413/2002/CE on the implementation of ICZM in Europe. It is based on the principles of sustainable development and integrated management, and is organized in 7 general objectives to be fulfilled through 4 working systems: the Information System, the Participation System, the Proposal System, and the Assessment and Monitoring System.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Catalonian coast, a 500 km rectilinear coast, is composed of different geographical features: the Pyrenees reaching the sea in the north, coastal cliffs, natural hidden pocket and long straight beaches, artificial beaches, deltas (Ebro Delta), islands, peninsulas, etc. Several urban areas are located on the coast, along with commercial and fishing ports. The Spanish Mediterranean coast has suffered an important transformation in the last decades caused by increasing urban and tourism developments: (i) high population density, especially during the summer; (ii) a percentage of urban and potentially urban areas much higher than in the rest of Spain; (iii) increasing tourism activities and infrastructurs construction; (iv) a massive building of the shoreline; (v) traffic problems. These facts cause an enormous pressure on the natural resources and the ecological and environmental quality: (i) progressive loss of landscapes values, (ii) coastal erosion problems; (iii) water cycle alteration;

(iv) loss of marine biodiversity; (v) ecosystems at risk due to maritime, ports and industrial activities. Functionality, uses and values of coastal stretches have not been analysed before planning and implementing the coastal developments. The lack of territorial planning and proactive public policies (only reactive policies exist) has not helped to solve the problem. Besides that, competences on the coastal zone are shared between different sectoral administrations at the national, regional and local level. The geographical scale of implementation is Regional: the Catalonian region

b) Objectives

The aim of the Strategic Plan is to promote a change in the Catalonian coastal development to move towards sustainable development. A coastal diagnosis, a participatory process and the selection of key issues to identify 7 general objectives: (1) achieving a good state of coastal waters; (2) declaring relevant coastal areas as “non-urban land”; (3) improving the coastal urban system’s sustainability; (4) minimising the pollution risk of marine waters; (5) minimising the environmental and socio-economic risks and costs caused by coastal erosion; (6) preserving and recovering the marine and terrestrial biodiversity; (7) increasing and consolidating co-ordination and shared-responsibility between stakeholders and sectors. The timescale associated with the implementation is 15 years (2005-2020)

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

a) Management

The Environmental, Territorial Policy and Public Works Departments from the Generalitat de Cataluña (Regional Government) applied in 2002, together with 6 Italian and 3 Spanish regions, for Interreg IIIB-MedOc funds for the development of the ENPLAN project on the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Projects. The key element of this project was the development of a demonstration plan in each region. The Catalonian Government selected the Catalonian ICZM Strategic Plan to be developed and environmentally assessed. This Plan was meant to be implemented through the existing planning instruments (Partial Plans, Sectoral Territorial Plans, Municipal Urban Plans, etc.), through the coordination of the different competent administrations. An important Participation Process has been carried out during the development of the Plan, involving administrations, experts, companies and society.

b) ICZM tools

To develop the Strategic Plan, 4 working systems were created:

- Information System, to integrate the knowledge dispersed among different stakeholders and sectors. An Environmental Information System was created, through the combination of a Set of Indicators and a Geographic Information System, to support the other systems by providing quantifiable indicators for (i) objectives definition and proposals systematisation, (ii) training and awareness, (iii) plan monitoring.
- Participation System, to ensure the Plan’s legitimacy and include the territorial vision. This system was based on (i) an online tool associated with the Regional Government website, and (ii) four participatory conferences (information + participation) aimed towards administrations, experts, companies and society. Some results were the stakeholders inventory map (GIS database) and 4 thematic working groups where experts met several times to discuss the strategy’s lines of action regarding coastal erosion, water management, biodiversity and strategic sectors.
- Proposal System, to facilitate the decision-making regarding the strategic actions to be proposed. From the defined objectives, an analysis of alternatives and scenarios to be achieved in the 15 years of the Plan’s viability was carried out.
- Assessment and Monitoring System, to ensure the Plan sustainability and effectiveness during all its phases while supporting the development of the other three systems.

These 4 systems allowed working in an integrated way to achieve the objectives. Besides, 5 Priority Lines of Actions (PLA) were developed: improving communication and participation through a Coastal Observatory and Coastal Forum; promoting the implementation of the Plan through a demonstration project in the Tordera delta; ensuring funding, development and implementation of the Plan, including the creation of a fund for coastal biodiversity and landscape protection and management; promoting the development of a Law for integral coastal protection; and promoting co-ordination in planning and management processes .

7. Cost and resources

The information about budget and manpower used for the implementation is not available.

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

The line of actions related to the communications and participation improvement is one of the best developed: a Coastal Observatory was created within the El Far Consortium (Coastal Observatory of Catalonia) and is in charge of the development and maintenance of the Environmental Information System. The Mar de Begur Foundation developed a map-inventory of stakeholders. Regarding the Participation System, 500 persons attended the 4 participatory conferences, including administrations, private sectors, university and research centres, NGOs and mass media. Although 10 years are still left to finish the planning horizon some PLAs are not moving forward, especially those related to institutional coordination and funding.

The fulfilled objectives have been achieved in the timescale defined. However, some objectives, such as increasing and consolidating coordination and shared-responsibility, are not moving forward.

9. Success and Fail factors

Factors that were helpful in achieving the objectives were the following: (1) the regional government was already aware and trained in ICZM, as the Generalitat de Cataluña participated (as observer) in the Working Group on Indicators and Data (EU ICZM Expert Group); (2) the Catalonian ICZM Strategic Plan was framed in the ENPLAN project resulting in the unique Environmentally Assessed ICZM Plan in Europe at that time; (3) the implementation of a pilot project at the local level (Consorcio Colls i Miralpeix-Costas del Garraf).

Factors that were unhelpful were that: (1) the Plan was the response of an institutional requirement based at the same time on a European Recommendation, not being a process that emerged internally which is why the Plan does not properly address the governance and structural changes (competences, coordination, etc.); (2) no specific objectives or Lines of Actions were created for the general objective related to the administrative coordination, they were established to improve the strategic sectors environmental competitiveness, (3) the lack of sectoral political willingness; (4) difficulties to integrate and coordinate the coastal management process when competences are shared between several administrations

10. Unforeseen outcomes

No unforeseen outcomes have been identified.

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12. Verified by

It has not been possible to verify this case.

13. Sources

- Gestión Integrada de Zonas Costeras. AENOR (Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación) ediciones, 2009. ISBN: 978-84-8143-649-5