

Institutional Coordination Agreements between the Directorate General for Coasts and the Autonomous Communities - ES

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

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Institutional coordination agreements ensure the collaboration between Administrations for a better coastal management, the willingness to work together for a common objective, the exchange of information and transparency.

4. Overview of the case

The institutional agreements between the Ministry of Environment and the Regional coastal Governments aim to promote vertical integration in the framework of the Spanish Strategy for Coastal Sustainability.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Spanish coast has high ecological, landscape and cultural values. Nowadays, 32% of the total population is living in coastal areas with the consequently enormous pressure of the different socio-economic activities. Besides that, coastal management is characterized by an overlapping of competences among the different sectoral Administrations at the national, regional and local level, and by the lack of information exchange between Administrations. The National Strategy for Coastal Sustainability was developed to tackle the massive, unplanned and unsustainable occupation of the coastal zone, deterioration of coastal ecosystems, coastal erosion, climate change effects, lack of technical knowledge about the coastal zones, unco-ordinated decision-making, and lack of public participation in the decision-making. These institutional coordination agreements are framed within this context, in order to ensure the collaboration of the National and Regional governments to help tackle the above-mentioned coastal issues.

b) Objectives

The general objective of these institutional agreements is to establish a stable co-ordination and collaboration framework between the Ministry of Environment and the coastal Autonomous Communities in order to achieve an adequate Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The specific objectives are related to the technical and administrative collaboration in the following issues: (1) protection, defence and restoration of the coastal zone; (2) development of works and activities for which the Min. of Environment is competent; (3) coastal surveillance and monitoring to ensure the regulations are met; (4) exchange, improvement and diffusion of coastal management related information; and (5) promotion of active and responsible public

participation in the coastal conservation and improvement. The timescale associated with the implementation of these institutional agreements is undefined, they become effective when signed and will stand until both parties decide to end the agreement and at least until the National Strategy is implemented.

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

a) Project Management

The authorities involved in these agreements depend on the region but the Ministry of Environment, through its Directorate General for Coasts, and the Autonomous Community (regional) are always involved. Sometimes the regional authority signing the agreement is the Regional Government (i.e. Canarias agreement), while at other times sectoral regional authorities are involved, such as the Galicia Agreement in which the Regional Councils of Land-use policy, Public Works & Transportation, Environment, and Fisheries & Maritime Affairs signed it. The level of responsibility in the process is the following for all the involved parties, as the agreement promotes the collaboration between them.

b) ICZM tools

This initiative fits in the policy category.

The specific tools used for the achievement of the agreement goals are:

- A Joint Monitoring Commission (MJC) composed of representatives from each administration involved and in charge of (1) co-ordinating the plans and initiatives of each administration, (2) analysing the affect of each of the initiatives in the global competences network, (3) determining the specific activities and project to be carried out by each administration and which would be included in their respective plans, (4) analysing specific projects or agreements to be developed, and (6) co-ordinating the economic contributions of each administration. This MJC meets at least twice a year. Technical experts, social organisations or Local administrations representatives can be invited to the meetings.
- A Technical Commission (TC) in each province of the Autonomous Community composed of representatives of each involved administration and in charge of the technical, legal and environmental analysis of the foreseen activities. This TC also meets at least twice a year. Technical experts, social organisations or local administration representatives can be invited to the meetings.

7. Cost and resources

The budget for the implementation of this tool was €0 but each agreement includes a budget to implement the contents of the agreement. The manpower used for the implementation of the tool was 30 people approximately.

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

Agreements with the Autonomous Communities (AC) of Galicia, Asturias and Cantabria (all in the Cantabria coast), and the Canary and Balearic Islands were signed between 2004 and 2006. No agreement was achieved with the Basque Country (Cantabria coast) and Cataluña, Valencia, Murcia and Andalusia (the whole Mediterranean and the South Atlantic coast). Besides this, the agreements were different in some regions, one of them oriented to co-operate in the initiatives on coastal infrastructures (Balearic Islands). Therefore, the specific objectives can be considered fully/partially achieved in the Islands (Atlantic and Mediterranean), partially achieved in the North coast, and not achieved in the Mediterranean and South Atlantic coasts. Considering only the AC which signed the agreement, the objectives were achieved in the timescale defined.

9. Success and Fail factors

Factors that were helpful in achieving the objective were: (1) the framework provided by the Spanish legislation (the Spanish Constitution defines the coast as a public property, and the Coastal Law gives to the State the competences on the Maritime-Terrestrial Public Domain, and to lower levels the competences on several coastal management issues, making

obligatory the communication between the different government levels), the National Strategy for Coastal Sustainability, and (2) the awareness of some AC of the threats affecting the Spanish coast and the willingness to tackle them. More general factors were: (1) the framework provided by the European Recommendation 413/2002/EC on the implementation of ICZM in Europe, which asked the Member Countries to develop a national Strategy on ICZM; and (2) the widespread global change impacts and coastal erosion problems that made the governments to adopt common strategies.

The main factors that hindered the achievement of the objective were (1) the slow pace in projects development; (2) that the agreement was voluntary, not mandatory, so many AC decided not to get involved and to continue with their current coastal planning and management. The reasons why those AC did not sign the agreement could be related to: (a) they require more independence from the central government, (b) are large enough to manage on their own, or (c) are satisfied with the benefits that the current coastal development provides for the region. Other factors that were unhelpful were: (1) high dependence on the political will and changes in government; (2) economic interests were based on the benefits of the current coastal development model and at the expense of the common benefit and the coastal preservation.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

Unforeseen positive outcomes were: (1) the increase of projects and initiatives in these ACs due to the existence of the agreement (i.e. Canarias); (2) the creation of the working Commissions through these agreements has promoted a better communication and understanding between administrations.

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13. Sources

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- Convenio de colaboración entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y el Principado de Asturias en la gestión integral del litoral asturiano (Oviedo 22/06/2004)
- Convenio de colaboración entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y el Gobierno de Cantabria, para la gestión integral y sostenible del litoral (Santander, 1/08/2005).
- Convenio de colaboración entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y el Gobierno de Canarias, para la gestión integral y sostenible del litoral (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 4/02/2006).
- Convenio de colaboración entre el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, la Conselleria de Política Territorial, Obras Publicas y Transportes, la Conselleria de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo sostenible y la Conselleria de Pesca y Asuntos Marítimos de la Xunta de Galicia, para la gestión integral y sostenible del litoral (Santiago de Compostela, 24/11/2006).



Agreement DGC-Canarias 07 (134.4 KB) 

Agreement DGC-Galicia 07 (78.41 KB) 