

COASTAL OBSERVATORY (UNIVERSITY OF CORUNA) - 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

2. Key Approaches

- Knowledge-based
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Most of the studies promoted by the Coastal Observatory have been based on multi-disciplinary expert's networks. The acquired experience is offered to the scientific community and other interested groups at the national, regional and local levels, and is shown in seminars and scientific publications.

4. Overview of the case

The Coastal Observatory is a research group of the Marine Studies Institute at the University of A Coruña, which since 2005 studies and researches on coastal policy and law related issues. It organizes National and International Seminars about different coastal-related issues (Maritime Security, Coastal Planning, etc.) and edits several scientific works on the results obtained from the projects carried out by the coastal Observatory members and their associated researchers.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Coastal Observatory is located in a highly important maritime traffic area (which has suffered several catastrophes - the Mar Egeo and the Prestige ships), has a population which is highly dependant on the fisheries economy and an important natural heritage in the Natura 2000 Network. The Coastal Observatory was created to study the planning, zoning and management processes in the coastal zone due to the problems caused by the complexity of the Spanish legal-constitutional structure which gives the coastal competences to both the national, regional and local governments. The geographical scale for ICZM project implementation is regional and local, although it also considers international experiences. Before the constitution of the Coastal Observatory the members of the research group were already working in different coastal and marine law-fields (coastal zone protection, zoning, marine environment, fisheries and aquaculture legal regulations, etc.)

b) Objectives

The specific objectives to be achieved through the Coastal Observatory in terms of coastal planning are: (1) the promotion of implementation guides, (2) the design of recommendations, (3) the publishing of research studies, and (4) organization expert meetings. Although the group began analysing coastal management issues from a legal point of view, the last publications have increased their multidisciplinary perspective.

The timescale associated with implementation and goals achievement is not defined, but it has been working since 2000.

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

a) Project Management

The implementation of the ICZM studies has involved the authorities and the social groups related to coastal planning and management. The project is mainly oriented to the regionally and locally responsible authorities. The Coastal Observatory does not have responsibility for coastal planning and management processes. It has participated in several scientific events offering its results and the scientific collaboration to the involved Public Administrations and institutions.

b) ICZM tools

The category of the Coastal Observatory is policy and legislative analysis tool.

The specific tools applied are: coastal planning implementation guides, recommendations, research studies, and expert meetings.

A special emphasis should be put on the "Guide to Implementing a Management System for ICZM", which is to be printed by the Spanish publisher Netbiblo and aims to implement standardised management systems, such as the ISO quality systems. It allows every region, coastal stretch or coastal specific area, to implement the same management rules, facilitating and promoting synergies and making the coastal zones and marine areas more dynamic.

The current research project, funded by Xunta de Galicia, is entitled "Legal basis for the planning and zoning of the Galician coastal zone", for the period 2007-2010.

7. Cost and resources

The funding for the projects comes from research projects at the European, national and regional levels, secured by the Research Group. Concerning the human resources, besides the research group members, the Coastal Observatory relies on the expertise of 50 researchers from Universities and Spanish and International organisms.

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

The Coastal Observatory, by means of its publications, organization of international seminars, participation in scientific events and experts' networks has become a reference institution in the field of socio-economic related coastal planning issues. 2 international seminars on ICZM have been organized and several research works have been published up to now. These objectives have been achieved in the timescale defined by each developed project.

9. Success and Fail factors

A factor that was helpful in achieving the objective was the research history of the Coastal Observatory members in the different topics. Another was social interest and awareness –both in Galicia and Spain - of the problems that need an adequate organisational response, for example, in the fields of maritime security, coastal planning, zoning and management, coastal and marine public policies design, etc.

A factor that hindered the achievement of the goals was the initial difficulty to carry out co-ordinated work and a common language from the multidisciplinary perspective.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

No unforeseen outcomes have been identified.

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13. Sources

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