

Space integration and consultation around the Thau lagoon - FR

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Developing Europe's regional seas sustainably

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Knowledge-based

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The process to integrate the water policy and town-and-country planning through a joint working out of a Scheme for Management and Planning of the territory (SCOT) and of water (SAGE).

4. Overview of the case

The Thau territory, where planning is done in the framework of a « Schéma de Mise en Valeur de la Mer » (SMVM), wanted to integrate the constraints linked with the protection of a lagoon ecosystem to a strategy of development. To carry off such integration, tools of spacial planning were simultaneously committed to the same area: the SCOT (for territorial management) and the SAGE (for water management).

The approach relies on a common and shared diagnosis of the territory which was first completed from two strong ideas viz. a wide consultation with innovative actions such as the “carte à dires d’acteurs” and “rando-SCOT” (walking across the territory). The consultation was framed and organized thanks to a charter of participation and a scientific process of expertise conducted by the Institute for Research in Science and Technology for the Environment (CEMAGREF); and integration of scientific approaches in the territorial diagnosis through the creation of an observatory (giving indicators etc)

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Thau basin, a territory of 110,000 inhabitants, is made up of the Thau lagoon, its watershed and marine front including the town of Sète. Close to Greater Montpellier, it has to conciliate issues of demographic pressure and social change. Increasing urbanisation increasingly competes with vine-growing and natural space linked with the lagoon. Moreover shell-fishing activities maintain a fundamental place in the local economy and constitute a heavy strain on water management. Another important issue for the future of Sète comes from industrial and economic re-conversion of the harbour zone.

These various constraints and stakes, as well as the geographical context (lagoon, strong land/sea interaction), explain why the Thau Basin was the first French SMVN to be approved, in 1995. Likewise for several years up to now, national (IFREMER, “Mission Littorale” of the French State) as well as local stakeholders (Languedoc-Roussillon Region, peculiarly CEPALMAR) have invested in developing ideas and programmes of actions for the territorial management and planning e.g. €74 million were contracted for water quality and an important programme of coastal protection.

b) Objectives

The ambition of the “syndicat mixte” of the Thau basin (SMBT) is to integrate the numerous steps and consultation authorities and obtain a unique device for the whole management set-of-tools in the territory.

In this framework the process had three particular objectives:

- The simultaneous conduct of SCOT and SAGE territorial diagnoses,
- A wide consultation and participation of local stakeholders during this diagnosis, and
- A process of information, which could help participation, which had to be organised within the framework of a territorial observatory.

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

a) Management

The project was steered by the SMBT. It put in place numerous consultation meetings with different partners including institutional authorities. However, there was no partnership committee to specifically follow up and conduct the approach.

b) ICZM tools

Implementation of management and planning instruments (SCOT/SAGE) relied on engineering tools and the accompanying consultation:

- A charter of consultation specified the procedure, role and responsibility of every stakeholder, who was involved in the process.
- A collective cartography was done to give synthesis maps relying on the knowledge of the consultation-group members.
- A 3D model was constructed to allow an understanding of the main principles of hydraulic working in the Thau territory.
- A process of permanent evaluation of the participation was conducted by external contributors (CEMAGREF and a Dutch university).
- A website was created to disseminate all these points and make them available.
- An observatory which is not only in charge of data base and GIS but also has to specify indicators able to produce graphs and diagrams for the follow-up of the permanent diagnosis of the territory.

7. Cost and resources

The project has progressed in accordance with the expected schedule. As regards the sharing approach, there were: 12 theme-based workshops, 2 days of idea development with nearly 200 participants and 2 field trips. All the reports, results and documents, which were produced, are available for consultation on the SMBT website. Indicators of sustainable development were effectively produced by the observatory (approach of co-construction with scientists and stakeholders and validation by a group of experts). Numerous maps and data are now available. The plan of management and sustainable development of the SCOT has been approved. Beyond the diagnosis, the development of management and planning tools is still in progress, but the maritime part has started. Integration of the different consultation authorities is not efficient yet.

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

The SMBT team in charge of the project consists of 5 engineers. The budget of 60000 from the DIACT was just a small part of the whole budget.

9. Success and Fail factors

The SMBT is a new structure created in 2005, but has resulted from a long thought-process of the local stakeholders. From the beginning it has benefited from a strong recognition and legitimacy, supported by numerous previous steps, expert's reports and research on this territory. Such a rich experience could be particularly and positively invested in the creation of the observatory. The joint implementation of water-management and town-planning tools was possible here thanks to a favourable geographical context (e.g. space-limited watershed, "obvious" sea/land interaction through the lagoon system). However, it can also be said that the process depends upon a fragile local and political equilibrium, which might, for example, be called into question in regard to the situation and impact of Greater Montpellier.

The organisation of the sharing approach was well thought-out and structured (particularly for the charter of participation and evaluation). It allowed the elected representatives to strongly support the process and be involved in it and consequently has helped its success. However, it is a complex approach which needs important means to be implemented. On the other hand, because of a possible break in the process of participation (e.g. the validation steps which avoided some groups, the choice of stakeholders), such a complex organisation might tend to overlook some opinions, which could be considered non-consensual and worrying for the elected representatives and the project leaders. This situation can lead to unexpected blockage during the process. Finally, the initiative has allowed the sharing of different knowledge and know-how with the local stakeholders, making a shared diagnosis and defining a common approach for this territory. However, the concrete and local issues of sustainable development as the whole was indirectly considered to emphasise the lagoon-ecosystem essentially in favour of shell-fishing, an economic activity.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

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13. Sources

- Application file for the project call for proposal - Syndicat Mixte du Bassin de Thau
- First provisional report - ICZM call for proposal - Syndicat Mixte du Bassin de Thau - 2007
- Questionnaires and interviews to follow through the call for proposal «Pour un développement équilibré des territoires littoraux par une GIZC» of the DIACT/SGmer - CETMEF/IFREMER- Luce Goudedranche/ Jean-Louis Gaignon
- www.smbt.com



Annexe 2 (518.63 KB)



Couverture (94.11 KB)



Couverture_annexes (59.22 KB)



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