

New structures for Integrated Coastal Management and Monitoring around Dublin Bay - IE

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Preventing and managing natural hazards and technological (human-made) hazards
- 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
- Knowledge-based
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

While regional authorities have a role to play in co-ordinating the provision of public services, this case represents an effort of one Regional Authority to work with its constituent local authorities and stakeholders to formulate an overarching management plan for the Dublin Bay area. This work necessitated, initially, the establishment of a dedicated Dublin Bay Association which comprised all interested parties in the Dublin Bay area (including for example, industry and environmental interests) and culminated in the establishment of the Dublin Bay Task Force. In preparation for the development of a Master Plan Study the Task Force undertook wide public consultation inviting written submissions and also hosted a public meeting and public information seminar.

4. Overview of the case

The Dublin Regional Authority, a representative organisation within the Dublin Bay area, is assisting in the formulation of a Plan for Dublin Bay. There is currently no overall co-ordination between the many responsible local authorities, State agencies and other organisations whose remit includes the Dublin Bay area. As a result, it is difficult to monitor the development of Dublin Bay to determine if it is being developed to its full potential as both an asset of, and amenity for, the people of Dublin and visitors to the area. In order to develop a Plan it was necessary to create the institutional framework which provide a mechanism for agencies/authorities to work together to progress this aim. As a result the Dublin Bay Task Force was established in May 2008. This Task Force agreed a programme of activities including the preparation of draft Terms of Reference for a Master Plan Study as well as recommendations for institutional arrangements for ICZM, Dublin Bay boundary jurisdiction and recommendations for the implementation of findings from the work. As part of the Programme for Government a commitment was made to establish a Dublin Bay Task Force to maximise the potential of the Bay for the people of Dublin and hence, there was close interaction and liaison with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the proposed work of the Task Force. The over-arching objective is to establish a model of ICZM best practice for a bay area where there is often competing jurisdictions and a multitude of both regulators and stakeholders.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The Dublin Region is situated on the east of Ireland, fronting on to the Irish Sea, and occupies an area of 92,200 hectares. In 2006, the population of the region was 1.2 million which represents approximately 30% of the State's population. The Dublin Regional Authority (DRA) is one of eight regional authorities set up under the Local Government Act 1991. It is comprised of four local authority areas and has the over-arching role of preparing and implementing Regional Planning Guidelines and for co-ordinating the provision of public services in the region, which includes advocating co-operation and joint action between local authorities, public authorities and other bodies. In recent years the Authority has been active in developing a vision for the region, a key element of which is the sustainable management of Dublin Bay itself. The Dublin Regional Authority has assumed a leadership role in driving and supporting the need for an integrated master plan for the management of Dublin Bay. To progress this, the Dublin Bay Task Force was formed in 2008. This group produced terms of reference for a draft Master Plan for Dublin Bay in October 2008. A public seminar on ICZM was organised and based on the outcomes of this, a series of strategic objectives for Dublin Bay were developed. In parallel to the strategic objectives, the Task Force made a series of recommendations on institutional arrangements and legislative changes needed to deliver ICZM through combined marine and terrestrial planning. Adopting these recommendations would provide the Task Force with a mechanism for inputting its policy recommendations into the statutory regional and local planning systems while simultaneously ensuring worthwhile engagement with local stakeholders.

b) Objectives

The strategic objectives are very comprehensive. Overall the objective is to provide a framework for the ICZM of Dublin Bay. This will involve developing decision-making and planning models/frameworks for coastal communities in keeping with the European principles of ICZM that are cognisant of the unique aspects of bay areas. Sustainable development and adaptive management are at the heart of all the strategic objectives in realisation of the fact that the Bay is an economic, environmental and social resource. The Task Force will also identify new opportunities for enhancing Dublin Bay as a resource for all its stakeholders. Management of the Bay area must take account of all policies from European to local level impacting on issues relating to the Bay and so it is accepted that the proposed management regime must be flexible and capable of adapting to new and changing conditions be they economic or environmental. Finally the proposed management structure and associated work must be cost effective particularly in light of the current economic climate. For this reason, relatively straight forward changes to the institutional framework were recommended by the Task Force in preference to costly new structures and legal amendments.

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

a) Management

The Dublin Bay Task Force sits below the Dublin Regional Authority and reports to it. The Regional Authority is made up of 29 elected representatives from the four surrounding local authorities. The Task Force itself is comprised of key stakeholders from the Regional Authority, the Departments of Environment and Transport as well as commercial interests such as harbour and port companies; environmental NGOs and representatives from the surrounding local planning authorities. The Task Force currently meets quarterly. The proposed management model would create an Advisory Council which would sit alongside the Task Force. This Council would comprise of members from local residents/community associations, marine and environmental groups, business and tourism sectors and local elected representatives. It is proposed that the Council would also meet quarterly and provide comments on papers prepared by, or for, the Task Force. For some specific issues technical working groups will need to be established. In such cases the groups will include key staff nominated from stakeholder organisations. This proposed structure will be serviced by the Dublin Regional Authority through a dedicated Dublin Bay Officer and assisting Researcher. This element is subject to provision of funds.

b) ICZM tools

The Dublin Bay Task Force was established on a participatory basis with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and administrative bodies. The Task Force proposes to address the issues of strategic importance to the Dublin Bay area from both thematic and geographic perspective. Given the organisations represented on the Task Force it will be possible to draw on the wide ranging expertise available from this group. This will allow the Task Force to address key strategic issues and to develop policy approaches that are grounded in practical experience while also taking account of local/organisational plans and programmes. It will further enable the development of a Master Plan for Dublin Bay at very little cost to the Irish tax-payer. Public participation and stakeholder engagement are recognised as vital to any future management of the Bay area. To

address this it is proposed that a dedicated website will be created to disseminate all documents and report from workshops and meetings. Research will be carried out to collate baseline data, with a view to preparing guidelines for the sustainable development of the Bay and set up a continual monitoring system. This will have implications for the future management of the Bay particularly in light of the impacts anticipated for changes in climate.

7. Cost and resources

The Dublin Bay Task Force has formally requested that the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government agree funding for implementation of the project with the Director of the Dublin Regional Authority.

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

Experience from the process to date has highlighted that delivery of ICZM in the Dublin Bay area does not necessarily require a new formal responsible body. What is required are subtle changes to the current institutional framework. The Task Force has requested that the Minister for the Environment provide the legislative back-up to enable the Task Force to undertake combined terrestrial/marine planning as part of the Regional Planning Guidelines Review and to implement the Dublin Bay Master Plan. If this were to occur, it is probable that this initiative would act as a pilot project on both Integrated Coastal Management and Maritime Spatial Planning of an area that is economically valuable, environmentally protected and socially important.

9. Success and Fail factors

The success to date is the coming together of the stakeholders, initially through the Dublin Bay Association and subsequently the Dublin Bay Task Force. These mechanisms provided Dublin Bay stakeholders (for the first time) with an opportunity to discuss the future management of the bay area and to make recommendations for sustainable economic, environmental and social growth of the area. Participating agencies and individuals welcomed the opportunities to be part of the development of this area and strongly advocate continued consultation and participation in the process. The failure to date is the lack of speed from central government in responding to the recommendations of the regional stakeholders which has resulted in a stalling of the process.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

The current economic crisis in Ireland has resulted in delay in a decision being made on the future of the Dublin Bay Master Plan and its implementation.

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13. Sources

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