

Integration of European Directives and other sectoral policies, from a maritime industry perspective, Bristol port – UK

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
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Improving competitiveness

2. Key Approaches

- Knowledge-based
- Socio-economic
- Technical

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Good practice in the sustainable development of ports and maritime industry through a participatory approach.

4. Overview of the case

There are many conflicts between the operations of ports and shipping and the implementation of various EU environmental directives and legislation. Various ports and port organisations, e.g. Valencia port, Spain, ESPO, Belgium are working towards sustainable use of ports and compliance with EU regulations.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

There are many conflicts between the operations of ports and shipping and the implementation of various EU environmental directives and legislation. Although regulated, the daily operations and economic development of ports are often in conflict with nature conservation and environmental protection. The notion of sustainable shipping and port operations is one that is still not totally recognised as a benefit in its own right, but as something that must be done to comply with regulations. Various initiatives have been launched by port organisations, e.g. ESPO, EU funded projects e.g. Ecoports, SAFEMED and by individual ports, Valencia Port, Bristol Port, UK

b) Objectives

The environment as a central consideration alongside commercial growth during port development.

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

a) Management

The port of Bristol operates directly through scientific monitoring of the estuary and indirectly through contributing to UK and EU policy debate. Specifically, they work with conservation NGO's and organisations to initiate and manage conservation projects which protect and enhance the local environment.

b) ICZM tools

The Bristol Port Company is a leader in such nature conservation initiatives and in understanding their commitments to nature conservation. Additionally they have been responsible in contributing to debates on EU environmental issues, e.g. Water Framework Directive (WFD), maritime strategy and national issues such as the Marine Bill. Bristol Port is the fastest growing deep-water port in the UK and as such is strategically very important to the their maritime industry. It has direct access to motorways and rail networks and thus can help in reducing lorry emissions on the onward logistic legs of the distribution of goods. It is estimated that the expansion of the container port could lead to a saving of 50 million road transport kilometres per year saving thousands of tons of CO₂ entering the atmosphere. Alongside the understanding of the sustainable nature of the port, Bristol has been proactive in its involvement in wildlife conservation since 1991. They have allocated 97 hectares of operational land for wildlife corridors made up of differing habitats, including wetlands, reed beds and salt marsh. New areas of wetland, woodland and scrub have been created, land purchased and covenanted for nature conservation. Various other species conservation projects are in operation, e.g. owl and water vole preservation. The Port has been active in the discussions concerning the impact of the WFD and port activity. The thrust of this activity was to ensure that the best environmental standards could be met while allowing for the sustainable development and use of ports. Of particular concern was dredging activity. The act of dredging is known to re-suspend historic contamination in the areas where dredging occurs and where the dredge spoil is placed. It was therefore thought that some port operations would lead to a failure in water quality. There were additional concerns regarding the definition of heavily modified water bodies (HMWB). This designation would help ports a great deal in meeting their water quality standards, through derogation, but HMWB had remained ill-defined.

Alongside other organisations, The Port of Bristol instigated discussion into WFD and the impact on Port operations, with scientists and organisations such as ABP Mer, UK, EUDA, Belgium, and AMRIE Belgium. The discussions informed their opinion which was then fed into WFD working and expert groups. While it can be argued that it was in the commercial interests of the Port to resolve such issues, past commitment to environmental issues demonstrated that the port company does take environmental issues very seriously when working toward the sustainable development of the port. The Port has worked to implement a management scheme for the Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS) under the EU Habitats and Birds Directive. Water quality within the local area of the proposed development is currently regulated according to the Dangerous Substances Directive; Bathing Waters Directive; Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive; and The Water Framework Directive. Bristol Port is, furthermore, a member of the liaison panel for the Severn River Basin and continues to contribute to the workings of that body to promote the protection and sustainable use of the River. The area in which the port operates is monitored by port scientists to improve understanding of the estuary.

7. Cost and resources

The Bristol Port Company is a private port. In 1991 First Corporate Shipping Limited, a private company owned by Terence Mordaunt and David Ord, purchased a 150 year lease of the Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Dock Estate from Bristol City Council. Over £400m has been invested in the dock estate and the Port is now recognised as being one of the most productive and technically advanced in Europe.

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

The port has effectively contributed to the environmental debates regarding WFD, Maritime and environmental policy. For more than a decade now the Port has worked with wildlife and conservation organisations to protect the local environment. These factors allow them to act at local level while contributing on a wider national and European level.

9. Success and Fail factors

The success of the port in environmental issues can be attributed to:

- Successful engagement in discussion at local, national and European level,
- Informed decision making through data gathering and informed discussion,
- Commitment to environment issues and the sustainable development of the port.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

11. Prepared by

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13. Sources

- ABP Research (999) Good Practice guidelines fro ports and harbours operating within Uk European Marine Sites.
English Nature. UK SACs Project pp120
- The Bristol Port Company(2009) Conservation and the Environment, Port Bochurepp4