

Littoral-cell-based national shoreline management programme - LT

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- ADAPTATION TO RISK: Preventing and managing natural hazards and technological (human-made) hazards

2. Key Approaches

- Integration

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The Littoral-cell-based national shoreline management programme of the Baltic Sea coasts in Lithuania is one of the most advanced national shoreline management programmes in Central and Eastern Europe. It provides relevant know-how for other Central and Eastern European nations in application of sustainable integrated shoreline management approaches based on specific regional experience.

4. Overview of the case

In recent years, the Lithuanian coastal zone management policy could be characterised by a very positive breakthrough. The Law of the Coastal Zone was adopted by the Lithuanian Parliament on July 2, 2002. It was followed by the National ICZM Programme, which was approved by the Ministry of Environment in September 2003. The main ICZM principles as described in the National Coastal Zone Management Programme are: 1. Conservation of natural coastal landscapes and coastal processes. 2. Integration of coastal conservation and coastal use objectives. 3. Littoral cells approach. 4. Differentiation of coastal management measures according to specific priorities for coastal conservation and wise use on a particular coastal strip. 5. Monitoring of coastal processes.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

In spite of the short length of the waterfront, the coastal zone of Lithuania encompasses a vast and very diverse coastal region with sand dunes, estuaries, a large river delta and a coastal lagoon. Therefore, the ICZM approach in the Lithuanian case covers a wide range of issues and target areas - from conservation and maintenance of pristine deltaic nature reserves to the development of industrial sea ports and seaside resorts. Radical measures for introducing an integrated shoreline management approach were taken after a series of devastating erosion events on the Lithuanian coast; particularly the hurricane "Anatole" of December 1999 which nearly swept away the beaches along the entire coastal zone of this country.

b) Objectives

According to the Lithuanian Law of the Coastal Zone the objectives of coastal zone management in Lithuania are: 1. To use wisely and to protect landscapes and rare species habitats of the Curonian spit (a World Heritage Site) and the Lithuanian mainland coast. 2. To ensure a sustainable use of the coastal zone for public and state needs. 3. To ensure conservation of coastal nature and culture heritage. 4. To provide favourable conditions for public use of coastal amenities for leisure purposes.

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

a) Management

From the administrative point of view it is very convenient that the entire coastal zone of Lithuania belongs to one (Klaipeda) county, which comprises seven municipalities. Five of them (Klaipeda, Palanga, Neringa, Gargždai and Šilute) are located on the Baltic Sea and/or the Curonian Lagoon coast. In the entire coastal zone of Lithuania, the interests of the state are represented by the Klaipeda County Governor's administration. Coastal (like any other) municipalities have the right to develop master and detailed spatial plans for their territory, which legally regulate any development in the coastal zone. On the county level, integration of the coastal management through the supervision of spatial planning procedures is ensured by the Spatial Planning Department of the Klaipeda County Governor's Administration. Klaipeda County Governor's Administration also arranges the state and county planning process, which is the main legal tool for integration of coastal management, as well as for any other regulations, conservation and development related to the coast. On the state level, integration of coastal management is ensured by several departments at the Ministry of Environment. Of these, the State Service Protected Areas, and the Department of Spatial Planning are the most relevant to ICZM.

b) ICZM tools

The Lithuanian coastal zone is delimited by at least 100 m wide belt of the mainland coast between the Klaipeda Seagate and the Latvian border stretching from the mean water level mark landwards. This belt comprises the beach, the coastal cliff, the foredune and the hinterdune. The seaward boundary of the coastal zone is limited by the 20 m depth line. The land and the sea within the coastal zone are exclusive public property and belong to the state, except those private lots of land, which have been established before the Law came into force. An integrated management of the coastal zone is ensured by the following spatial planning documents: 1. Special management plan of the "Kuršiu nerija" national park. 2. Special management plan of the mainland coastal zone. 3. Master plans of Klaipeda and Neringa urban municipalities. 4. Detailed plans of urban and rural settlements or parts of settlements within the following municipalities: Neringa, Palanga, Klaipeda urban and Klaipeda rural.

Any new construction is forbidden within the entire Lithuanian coastal zone. Only reconstruction or regeneration of the existing buildings, or those buildings which are proved to exist in the past is allowed within the limits of the coastal zone. A permit for such intervention into the coastal zone can be issued by the Klaipeda Governor's Administration only after the obligatory public hearings and environmental impact assessment. Every permit must be finally approved by the Lithuanian Government. In order to assess long-term trends and changes in coastal zone development of a comprehensive coastal monitoring system has been introduced. According to the National Coastal Zone Management Programme, which was approved by the Ministry of Environment in September 2003, several important ICZM tools are applied. The main principles as described in the National Coastal Zone Management Programme are: 1. Conservation of natural coastal landscapes and coastal processes. 2. Integration of coastal conservation and coastal use objectives. 3. Littoral cells approach. 4. Differentiation of coastal management measures according to specific priorities for coastal conservation and wise use on a particular coastal strip. 5. Monitoring of coastal development.

7. Cost and resources

€1.65 million annually.

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

Lithuania currently possesses probably the most comprehensive ICZM policy instruments in the entire Baltic Sea region. Lithuania has a relatively short coastline and a rather well geographically-expressed coastal region (or coastal zone in a broader sense). Therefore, its whole coastal management and planning system can serve as a good example of ICZM on the country level.

9. Success and Fail factors

Continuous funding is critically important for the success of the programme.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

The removal of an old jetty in the Palanga seaside resort in the early 2000s changed local coastal dynamics and caused erosion of the beach and dunes. This event triggered a broad public debate concerning the ways to restore the lost equilibrium. The programme of regular beach and foreshore nourishment was opposed by an 'anti-programme' of 'hard' shoreline management measures (constructing wave-breakers and new jetties) as providing more robustness for the coastal environment in Palanga.

11. Prepared by

Ramunas Povilanskas, EUCC Baltic Office, LT

12. Verified by

Saulius Gulbinskas, Klaipeda University, LT

13. Sources

- Povilanskas, R.; Urbis, A. (2004) National ICZM strategy and initiatives in Lithuania. In: G. Schernewski, N. Loeser (eds.) Managing the Baltic Sea. Coastline Reports 2, p. 9-15



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