

Drinking water supply and wastewater treatment in low-density coastal communities - LV

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products
- SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH: Improving competitiveness

2. Key Approaches

- Integration
- Participation
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

The positive experience of a joint inter-municipal development and application of a non-for-profit municipal enterprise, and related-tools, to manage different public sectors, in this case, water management for coastal stakeholders in low-density coastal communities.

4. Overview of the case

In 1997, within the framework of the initial inter-municipal co-operation, nine local municipalities established the municipal collaboration association (MCA) „North-Kurzeme“. The following year, two low-density populated coastal municipalities, together with two neighbouring ones, established a non-for-profit municipal enterprise (NME) „Ziemeļkurzeme“ in order to manage jointly drinking water supply and wastewater treatment as well as other communal services and road maintenance in this coastal region.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

Four local municipalities – Dundaga, Kolka, Targale and Ance – in the NW corner of Latvia with less than 10,000 inhabitants but more than 70% located in the municipality centres in a territory stretching for 90 km along the coast and up to 100 km inland – formed the non-for-profit municipal enterprise (NME) „Ziemeļkurzeme“. Such municipalities are formally responsible to organise water supply and waste water treatment within their coastal territories although it is private enterprises that are the owners of the water facilities and sell this service to local inhabitants. Private owners may have problems in maintaining their often already out-dated water facilities properly and providing the necessary services because their main operation profile is different from water management (e.g. in most of cases they are fish processing companies). They even fix inappropriately high tariffs for their services. Solutions can be achieved by buying out water facilities from private owners or building new ones or only by negotiating and establishing different agreements and/or partnerships.

b) Objectives

The establishment of the non-for-profit municipal enterprise „Ziemeļkurzeme“ was aiming to create joint management institutions and new sub-regional capacities for a comprehensive and modern development of municipal infrastructure and

public service sectors. Particularly, for this first attempt drinking water supply and wastewater treatment as well as road maintenance and other more minor communal services were chosen. The time frame includes 1997-2009.

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

a) Management

The first objective was an agreement to start a joint municipal enterprise with a number of collaboration-based activities to investigate the water management situation as well as other fields of work. Decision-making in the enterprise council was to be done based on equal shares by all four municipalities but the management was realised through a multifunctional non-for-profit enterprise which was also wanting to establish different collaboration processes, from networking to formal partnerships.

b) ICZM tools

For this water management, inter-municipal integration case, legal and economic instruments, infrastructure and technical instruments, planning and institutional instruments, communication and integration instruments were all employed. The following instruments and activities were used to integrate inter-municipal water management interests and diverse applications concerning all the target groups and general public, but, particularly, the private owners of water facilities:

- coastal dune patrols supported by information and education work;
- information and education materials (booklets, newspaper articles and licence number plate photos of cars violating the coastal belt law, information stands and roadside signs, photo exhibitions and even a video advertisement on national TV, etc) designed and appropriately spread;
- clean-up campaigns in the dunes area with local inhabitants and schoolchildren, as well as re-cultivation e.g. tree planting etc.;
- lectures/seminars, also international seminars, local trainings;
- collaboration meetings and action planning together with other stakeholders, including building collaboration networks;
- participatory work in the local municipal planning process, national legislation and strategies design as well as using guaranteed access to justice in the cases of serious law violations;
- applying for special training and an approved legal status and further work as officially registered voluntary environmental inspectors.
- cooperation with mass media both print (in the Talsi region and national newspapers) and broadcast (regional and national radio and TV).

7. Cost and resources

No information is available.

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

joint inter-municipal development and application of a non-for-profit municipal enterprises had only limited effect largely because it was approached on a project basis. Long term development requires public-private partnerships on a more secure financial footing.

9. Success and Fail factors

NME "Ziemeļkurzeme" was a multifunctional enterprise established to manage not only the drinking water supply and wastewater treatment, but also other communal services and road maintenance for all four shareholder municipalities. With unsatisfactory municipal financing and very different service-related incomes for diverse municipal functions, the business relationship was fragile.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

Administrative and territorial reform in the country has been on-going since 1999 and even though unpredictable, NMEs can be recognised as having made an important contribution towards integrated water management and ICZM approaches.

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13. Sources

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