

Coastal partnership and communication in small harbour municipalities - LV

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
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) initiated communication and collaboration with various target groups towards establishing coastal dunes protection partnerships. This was in order to manage practical conservation and re-cultivation work locally in the field and to take part in the decision-making process for coastal management planning and legislation development.

4. Overview of the case

Coastal dune protection, practical work and step-wise communication and partnership development began in the early 1990s, blossoming during 1997-2003 and finally culminating in the realisation of the joint project "Save Latvian Dunes" (2007-2009). All diverse, but complementary, project activities were developed and jointly managed by three national NGO's.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

Coastal zone protection belts, cover (according to law in Latvia) inland a 150m zone in urbanised areas and a 300m zone outside villages, including beach areas, dunes and all vegetation/forests. They play a crucial role in the prevention and management of natural and human-made hazards, particularly in relation to growing climate change impacts along the whole 500 km long Latvian coastline. The coastal collaboration project "Save Latvian Dunes" (2007-2009) was initiated at the eastern coast of the Riga Gulf in the area of the small harbour municipalities of Mersrags, Roja and Kolka, which has a coastline of 100 km and less than 10,000 permanent inhabitants in the coastal villages.

In order to solve the problem of dune destruction by vehicles and illegal camp sites, there is an obvious need for co-operation between all levels of governance from local to the national involving stakeholders like local inhabitants and municipalities, environmental protection authorities in the regions and at the ministerial level and also various science branches/institutions and business. Previously existing dune protection control was based mainly on poorly staffed and equipped regional environmental inspectors and municipal policemen. Although there is a growing coastal recreation and tourism interest, infrastructure remains poor e.g. with only a limited number of car parks. This was the background for NGO's to initiate coastal patrols to control, and essentially police, coastal belts particularly in the summer time and at weekends.

b) Objectives

The objective was to facilitate participatory dune protection through coastal communication and collaborative partnerships and development of a re-cultivation system.

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

a) Management

The initiator of the coastal patrols, already in the 1990s was the Talsi coastal region branch of Latvian Environmental protection club (LEPC). The final collaboration memorandum was signed between the Latvian Green movement organization (the successor of the LEPC), the Coalition for Clean Baltic Latvia and the environmental education foundation "For Tidy Latvia". Also involved for both the practical dune protection and management were the local municipalities and regional and national environmental and forest management authorities as well as the financial support partners.

b) ICZM tools

This bottom-up, participatory initiative was further supported by various information, education and demonstration methods, economic and legal instruments as well as planning and institutional capacity building instruments. The activities that led the protection of the coastal were:

- 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

Information is not available. Financial support was from several Embassies viz. Germany, Netherlands, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden, the Friedrich Ebert foundation's Baltic office and the Latvian Environment Fund administration. The Latvian Environment Fund administration and Latvian Mortgage bank also assigned grants for the project "Save Latvian Dunes".

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

All coastal dunes protection and partnerships building activities, specified and foreseen by the project, were implemented and the objectives prescribed were reached. However, the process of diminishing legal violation in the coastal zone is the long term process, although state environmental inspectors have seen a decrease of violations during the last two years. Awareness raising on dunes protection for both general public and tourists has improved.

9. Success and Fail factors

Several factors have been helpful for coastal dune protection e.g. the democratisation process leading to increased

self-responsibility of society, the diversification of participation forms and methods at all governance levels and legal acts (viz. Environmental Impact Assessment, Territorial planning and Building laws, renewed versions of the Protection belts law and Environmental protection law in 2006). Also, the first widely known cases of the legal processes against coastal belt violations, especially, with respect to illegal building works within the restricted 150m or 300m zone are contributing to a growing understanding of coastal.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

The implementation scheme has generated various smaller local partnerships and a range of spin-off developments, particularly at the national level and for collaboration in the environmental decision-making. The coastal dunes protection partnership are not only facilitating further on-going coastal communication activities but also serving as a positive case of non-governmental and governmental/municipal collaboration in the field of national environmental management.

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13. Sources

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- Project „Save Latvian Dunes” information on the webpage of the Latvian Green movement organization - www.zalie.lv
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Coastal Communication Development and Public Involvement (2006), Alda Ozola-Matule, “Coastal Management and Communication: Case Studies Development”, Integrated Coastal Management Research School, Roja, Latvia, pp.20-36.



NGO initiv-coastal PP (158.58 KB) 



NR8-collaboration in coastal nat parks (33.23 KB) 