

A partnership to revitalise an urban waterfront in a coastal lagoon, Ria de Aveiro - PT

1. Policy Objective & Theme

- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Preserving coastal environment (its functioning and integrity) to share space
- SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES: Sound use of resources and promotion of less resource intensive processes/products

2. Key Approaches

- Participation
- Ecosystems based approach
- Socio-economic
- Technical

3. Experiences that can be exchanged

Setting up a discussion forum of a wide range of stakeholder users in order to implement an integrated approach to achieve a sustainable common goal for the utilisation of a coastal water resource.

4. Overview of the case

The coastal area of the Central region of Portugal hosts one of its most challenging landscapes. Over the last five years special attention has been given to the lagunar region of 'Ria de Aveiro', mainly with respect to formulation of an integrated management structure proposal for the lagoon area.

5. Context and Objectives

a) Context

The lagoon "Ria de Aveiro" is situated in the Central Region of Portugal and covers 600 km². It is a coastal lagoon subject to the influence of tides and shelters a wide range of natural habitats including sandy coast and dune systems with a high recreational value, as well as salt and brackish marshes suitable for fisheries and aquaculture. Together with harbour activities, these constitute the major sources of income for the Aveiro region citizens. The characteristics and socio-economic activities are strictly dependent upon the navigable conditions of the several branches of the lagoon. In the past, a system of quays located in urban and rural waterfront areas were developed to support the use of canals for passenger and goods transportation. These quays are one of the potential resources for leisure and recreational activities on the waterfront. This is a fact proven by the numerous urban interventions made by the municipalities in the last 10 years on the waterfront areas of the lagoon. However, of 109 quays that existed in the past, only 30 were in use in 2001; the remainder had either disappeared or were severely degraded. As a result, and, in particular in response to the growing demand of this area for leisure activities, an initiative called 'Regeneration and Appreciation of the Quays' was implemented.

b) Objectives

The key objective was to stimulate an increasing involvement of the waterfront communities in order to revitalise the Ria and to encourage its leisure and recreational components. This entailed characterising the adaptation of the quay to the potential

users of the waterfront, and defining and implementing strategies for the revitalisation of the quays.

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

a) Management

This pilot was a two-year initiative and started in 1999 under the co-ordination of the Environmental and Planning Department of the University of Aveiro.

b) ICZM tools

This initiative covered the whole geographical area of the lagoon, involving all partners around the lagoon ranging from the Carregal Quay in the municipality of Ovar in the north to the Clube Náutico Quay in Mira, in the South involving sixteen different stakeholders ranging from eleven municipalities, local associations, port authorities, regional government and expert organisations. The methodological approach used was based on a process of dialogue and consensus – a discussion forum – where each partner had the opportunity to express its desires for the Ria de Aveiro. The main purposes of this intervention plan were to; identify areas of great potential for tourism and recreation activities; restore/animate the traditional activities; create models of revitalisation of certain quays and ultimately to define a Strategic Model for the whole region.

The development of this pilot allowed the “testing” of the capacity of all the partners involved in the maintenance of a partnership in the prosecution of a common goal: the sustainable development of the Ria. It also confirmed the capacity of the different actors, with different interests in the management of the lagoon, to change attitude, due to the imprecision of the laws for lagoon areas, by emphasising the consensus of interests in an informal setting. This change implied a new way of working in the region, encouraged by the lack of a formal model of management and planning for the Ria. The Inter-Municipal Plan of the “Ria de Aveiro” which is under development and has already benefitted from this approach by complementary actions and exchange of information. The discussion forum also showed the ability to implement an integrated approach able to combine the interests of the entire range of users of the Ria de Aveiro and to achieve a sustainable common goal. This partnership demonstrated the ability to develop simple exchange of information and sharing of common goals by transferring good practices of interventions that already exist in some municipalities, in order to maximise the field of action from local initiatives and extending it to the whole area of the lagoon.

7. Cost and resources

The total budget was €125,397 of which there was a Life contribution of €37,112.

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

The main achievement was in bringing together, for the first time, a wide-range of stakeholders from both the public and private sector in the start of a new partnership over coastal zone management. These partners came from local, regional and national level and integrated institutional representatives as well as NGO's and other interest groups. This pilot has been promoted and the approach adopted by the Association of Municipalities of the Ria de Aveiro. After 4 years of partnership, the partners are still using the mechanism established by the discussion forum to communicate, exchange and solve conflicts of current planning activities and to plan future initiatives. Finally, this pilot contributed in practice to the implementation of the principles defined as part of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management project ESGIRA – Maria.

9. Success and Fail factors

This work was started as part of the EU Demonstration Programme (1996-99) and has since been supported by the development of some pilot projects co-financed by Life-Environment. One in particular, is the ESGIRA-MARIA project (Integrated Management Structure for the Ria de Aveiro), whose aim was to test the efficiency of an integrated management structure based on stakeholder involvement of all interest groups in the region.

10. Unforeseen outcomes

None so far.

11. Prepared by

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12. Verified by

It has not been possible to verify this case.

13. Sources

- <http://www2.dao.ua.pt/esgiramaria/pep.html>
- The contribution of an European Life project to the revitalisation of the urban waterfront in a coastal lagoon - a case study from Portugal (1999) F. Alves, F. M. Martins and C. A. Coelho. Proceedings of the 17th international conference of the Coastal Society.



The contribution of an Euroepan Life project (271.36 KB) 