



**WG ICZM**

**First Meeting**

**Wilhelmshaven, 6 September 2006**

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**Agenda Item:** 4

**Subject:** ICZM overview

**Document Nr.** ICZM-1-4.1

**Date:** 29 August 2006

**Submitted by:** Herman Verheij

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**Proposal:** The meeting is invited to discuss the document

## **Integrated Coastal Zone Management**

### **Overview of the current situation in the European Union**

Paper for the first meeting of the WSF ICZM Working Group, Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Wilhelmshaven.

Prepared by Herman Verheij, based in information from the European Commission.

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### **Reports**

The Commission has officially received reports in the implementation of the ICZM Recommendation of 2002 from coastal Member States. The reports are available through the public website linked to the evaluation of the ICZM Recommendation: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/home.htm>

For the Wadden Sea Countries the situation is as follows:

#### **Denmark**

A brief ICZM Status Report was submitted to the European Commission on 20 June 2006.

No comprehensive Danish ICZM National Strategy, following the EU ICZM Recommendation has yet been formulated. Some initial steps were taken until 2003, when it was decided to have a major structural reform of the Danish municipal system. A number of initiatives were developed to promote ICZM. These included surveys of coastal management practices, establishment of a network including national authorities engaged in the marine environment, enabling legislation regarding new summer cottage areas in coastal areas. The reform will be implemented in 2007. Danish participation in a number of Interreg projects concerning integrated management and spatial planning in the coastal zone at land and at sea, and implementation of ICZM elements in the Wadden Sea conservation area.

The Danish government perceives the Danish planning system in general to be adequate to manage the challenges to secure a proper balance between conservation and development of the coastal zone. Weaknesses and gaps are dealt with currently by adjusting existing laws, regulations and practices as well as implementing EU Directives and policies.

In 2003, the Danish government decided to implement a major reform of the regional and local government structure. Upon this decision, the Ministry of Environment decided that it would be more appropriate to postpone a debate on a possible national strategy on ICZM to after 2007 when the reform is implemented.

*The Report submitted clearly demonstrates little progress on ICZM has been made in Denmark since 2003 and that it will take time before ICZM will come on the Danish political agenda.*

## Germany

A National Report for ICZM in Germany was submitted to the European Commission on 3 April 2006, as an assessment and steps towards a National ICZM Strategy for Germany.

The Report defines the strategy as an informal and thus voluntary approach supporting sustainable development of the coastal areas. ICZM is not regarded as a statutory instrument to formal planning and decision-making procedures. *The Report states that the current legislative framework in Germany is capable of meeting most of the ICZM principles, however, further legislative adaptation and optimisation of governance instruments are encouraged by the national strategy.*

## The Netherlands

The Netherlands submitted a progress report on the implementation of the ICZM Recommendation in the Netherlands to the European Commission on 3 March 2006, with the main purpose to show the extent to which the Dutch coastal zone is being managed in an integrated and sustainable way.

The Netherlands has decided not to develop a separate strategy for ICZM but to make use of two existing building blocks which in fact are supported by a variety of complementary statutory institutions:

1. the National Spatial Strategy, which establishes a national strategy for integrated spatial planning policies generally; and makes the coastal zone, Wadden Sea and Deltas explicitly part of the main national spatial structures; and
2. the Third Policy Document on Coastal Areas, which provides an integrated frame-work for coastal zone management and policies on coastal areas.

ICZM has been initiated - although not always explicitly mentioned as such - even before the Recommendation. *The case for the Netherlands shows that a specific ICZM strategy is not necessarily needed in the country to implement ICZM principles as long as the notion of sustainable development guides the set up of governance and participation.*

**In the WSF ICZM group we will need to discuss how we can use these reports and the WSF report 'Breaking the Ice' as building blocks for a trilateral approach to ICZM.**

## Next steps

At the European level the next steps will be taken in the following context: the Commission report to the European Parliament and Council, due end 2006, and the broader Green Paper Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union.

The Green Paper Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union has been adopted on 7 June 2006 and will set off a consultation process that is to run until the end of June 2007.

See:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/739&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

The coastal zones are covered in the vision for a future maritime policy and hence it is important that experts in coastal zone management and stakeholders participate in the consultation. There will be an internet consultation and a series of events at which the Green Paper, overall or specific topics, will be discussed. A few events are organised by the Commission, but others by third parties. Member States and stakeholders are invited to make known the events (conference, workshops, etc) at which the Green Paper, and in particular the issues of relevance for the coastal zones, can be presented and discussed.

There is a great variety of approaches taken by Member States in responding to the EU ICZM Recommendation. Moreover, the reports reflect often not a final national ICZM Strategy but rather a certain stage within an on-going process. The priorities and measures envisaged by the different countries vary therefore quite significantly.

However, there are some recurrent concerns and areas for action. Based on the orientations taken in the national processes it is clear that in the great majority of countries there is a need to improve governance of the coastal zones, covering horizontal and vertical integration, cooperation and more systematic involvement of stakeholders. More specifically there seems to be a need for better knowledge to underpin coastal planning and management, as well as indicators for policy making. Also, much more needs to be done in terms of communication and awareness raising to create a durable support and implementation basis for ICZM. Also support is needed in the area of incentives to ICZM projects, exchange of best-practice, stimulation of projects that demonstrate a multi-disciplinary approach and the benefits of ICZM. Furthermore, It is important to improve planning and management of the land-sea interface, and to stimulate practical mechanisms and practice to govern use of marine resources especially in cross-border context. Coordination at regional sea level should be continued and further elaborated in certain areas, but overlap and inconsistencies should be avoided between new measures at the EU and the regional sea level. Compared to the current EU ICZM Recommendation text, the definition and scope of ICZM could be improved, the principles could be made more specific and the instruments or tools for ICZM implementation could be better described. The coordination of policies, from the inception at EU level, should remain a priority. Finally, more could be done to apply an integrated approach in structural funds and TENs programmes and projects.

Specific coastal problems, such as the risk of erosion and flooding, including the impacts of climate change on these natural hazards and off-shore wind/renewable energy, reconciling nature protection with other uses, especially tourism, and control of urbanisation need closer attention.

### **What instrument?**

At the European Group of Experts there is an ongoing discussion about further action to support ICZM, and the most appropriate type of instrument(s) for such further action. There is a split over the need or not for a more binding instrument at EU level. Half of the experts prefer to keep the current Recommendation and complement the instrument through actions such as guidance, at least for the time being. The other half would favour a modified Recommendation or a (framework) Directive.

The administrative and decision making process for a modified Recommendation or a Directive are equally long and effort consuming.

A Recommendation would allow to be more ambitious or cover sensitive topics, as it provides flexibility for countries to adapt their circumstances. The option to keep the current Recommendation, but support further ICZM implementation through guidance, would provide stability at a time when most national strategies are just starting. Many

activities at EU and international level are going on, of which first stock would have to be taken. However, the current Recommendation does not include a time-line beyond 2006 and focus may be lost in absence of a reporting schedule or other common goal to work towards. The current Recommendation also does not provide a basis for 'guidelines'. As regards a binding instrument, realistically only a framework could be envisaged given the subject matter and the variety of systems and level of advancement in ICZM. Positive aspects of a framework Directive would include the long-term safeguarding of ICZM processes started and providing focus. It would give a stronger position to involve stakeholders or authorities together who might not be sufficiently motivated through a Recommendation. A Directive would also imply that ICZM would be given more priority and access to funding would be facilitated. However, a Directive may trigger strong reactions among certain stakeholders, jeopardising the whole ICZM process. Also the subject would be extremely difficult to capture well in a Directive; notably clear measurable objectives fail. Finally the negotiating and decision making process would probably be very difficult. Amongst other issues the legal basis would need careful reflection (would the environment legal basis be adequate to cover ICZM? Would unanimity be required given the linkage to land-use and town and country planning?).

Under the current Recommendation a lot of activity has been deployed by Member States. A key question for the choice of an instrument will be whether this acquis is sufficiently strongly in place or whether there is a risk of losing the momentum towards more integrated planning and management of coastal zones. In the latter case a stronger instrument will be more appropriate. Given the significant number of countries that prefer to keep the current Recommendation, the options should be kept in mind, but there needs to be agreement on how the momentum can be kept. Finally, the choice for an instrument need not to follow immediately: While the current ICZM Recommendation does not provide reporting deadlines beyond 2006, it remains in force as the basis of the national strategies and the generic principles it contains.

DGEnvironment will send the external evaluation (see below) on ICZM to the Group of Experts in September, probably with a few questions on issues it wishes to address in view of the Commission's report by the end of 2006

The members of the Group are invited to make known all relevant events at which the Green Paper, and in particular topics of relevance to the coastal zones and ICZM, can be presented and discussed.

### **Commission evaluation of the EU ICZM Recommendation**

An external evaluation is currently being carried out, in view of the Commission report to the European Parliament and Council, end 2006.

The methodology combines a number of information gathering and assessment tools. An assessment grid and guidelines were developed for the analysis of the national reports. Apart from national reports, also other documents relevant to ICZM have been collected. A cross-country analysis was carried out to derive trends at EU level. To complement the reports and desk research, a questionnaire campaign was launched (deadline 30 June) and telephone and face-to-face interviews have been held. The interviews were directed to countries with reporting gaps and used to cover issue related gaps to support the findings. A validation workshop with a limited number of experts has been held on 22/23 June in Bremen to discuss the findings and the draft recommendations. The final report is due 18 August.

A public website has been operational from 2 June ( <http://www.rupprecht-consult.eu/iczm/> ). It contains information about the evaluation and the national reports, the questionnaire and a special feed-back page.