



Practitioner training for building capacity in ICZM

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ABSTRACT

Capacity building has been a much promoted principle of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) since its advent beginning in the 1970's. Although the concept of capacity building includes human resource development, organizational development and institutional and legal framework development, in practice it has often become focussed on the transfer of technical knowledge and procedures to managers and decision makers. The effect of this is often to emphasise and promote sectoral approaches rather than a holistic one as advocated by ICZM. Experiences gained during the EU Interreg IIIB COREPOINT project led to the development of a training programme that progressively reduced its formal lecture-style content and increased opportunity for discussion and delegate participation. It also produced a more uniform and systematic style and structure to presentations, in particular the case studies illustrating the eight EU ICZM principles of best practice, and embedded the ICZM principles and European perspectives of coastal management within the context of the work environment.

This paper reviews methods for practitioner-oriented capacity building, and details the evolution of a training course to sensitise and familiarise coastal practitioners with the principles and practices of ICZM, working from local to national to trans-national scales. The lessons learnt from the ICZM capacity development in COREPOINT are identified and it is suggested that these are relevant and applicable to many other ICZM initiatives.

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1. Introduction

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) has been promoted by a wide range of organisations as a panacea for addressing the apparently conflicting pressures between environmental conservation and economic and social development in the world's coastal zones [1]. The reason for this is that ICZM is seen to be an integrated and joined up approach towards the many different interests that exist in coastal zones, and as a process of harmonizing different policies and decision making structures. Such a holistic approach is seen to encourage concerted action towards achieving sustainability goals. However, despite initiatives that now span over 30 years there are few examples, other than project specific case studies, of successful ICZM [2–4]. Instead the threat from an ever increasing diversity of potentially conflicting uses, and an equally diverse array of statutory bodies enacting uncoordinated sectoral legislation and policy, works against the long-term interests of sustainable management of coastal zones [5,6]. Whilst this paints a rather bleak picture, there remains a considerable interest and faith in ICZM as a means to establish sustainable levels of economic and social activity in coastal areas while protecting the coastal environment

(see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/marine/links_en.htm for examples at the European level).

ICZM seeks to reconcile the different policies that have an effect on the coast, and to establish a framework that facilitates the integration of the interests and responsibilities of those involved in the development, management and use of the coast. Capacity building is often cited as one mechanism to develop competencies in individuals and organisations to implement ICZM. A recently completed Interreg IIIB project – Coastal Research and Policy Integration (acronym: COREPOINT) – specifically identified 'Lack of sustained capacity and expertise within local authorities' as a key issue acting as a barrier to successful coastal management within Northwest Europe. Other issues identified centred on a lack of integrated planning and management, lack of participatory mechanisms and poor links between researchers and policy makers. These barriers are often considered to require elements of capacity building in order to be overcome. However, despite an enormous number and diversity of capacity building initiatives there has been little impact leading to a disconnection between training for ICZM and management priorities for coastal management.

The purpose of this paper is to consider the challenges of capacity building for coastal professionals and describe the development of a capacity building school developed by the COREPOINT project.

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2. Existing coastal management practices

All countries have a complex statutory organisational structure that responds to a number of legislative sources (national, regional, and international) to manage coastal activities [7,9,10]. The overarching problem of managerial responsibilities enacted through a myriad of departments and agencies is how to create social and economic opportunities on a sustainable basis from fragile coastal resources. This is further constrained as coastal areas are increasingly susceptible to change derived from both natural and anthropogenic sources, for example, climate change and urban spread. This complexity prevents a 'joined-up' approach to managing coastal issues and poor horizontal links between tiers of administrative levels (governmental and non-governmental), and vertical links between local, national and regional levels. Consequently, their combined activities can often exacerbate rather than solve problems [7,8].

Concepts of ICZM are focussed on a dynamic and continuous process which allow progress towards sustainable use and development of coastal areas while maintaining the biological diversity and productivity of coastal ecosystems. Within the existing administrative, jurisdictional and legislative structures of all countries, ICZM is often in conflict with the following two fundamental tenets of existing management strategies within natural resources and spatial planning [11–13]:

1. A medium to long-term perspectives towards coastal management in contrast to the largely short term perspectives of political and socio-economic interests that respond to public demands for immediate action and results.
2. A process that crosses jurisdictional boundaries as well as natural system boundaries.

This is because coastal planning and management are largely dominated by sectoral approaches which can inherently favour single purpose usage (e.g. fisheries, tourism), despite the recognition of the strategic value of coastal resources worldwide. This does not mean that Governments are not aware of the challenges of managing coastal zones. For instance, the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in its 2008/09 plan states that it recognises a need to change working practices to make the Department more flexible and responsive. ICZM is stated as a priority approach for the UK Government, as for most Governments within Europe and other regions of the World, as a means to join up marine management with existing arrangements on land, thereby offering new opportunities for coastal regulators and communities to have a say in the way the environment is managed, with proper consideration to coupled land and marine planning. However, promoting wide involvement in decision making on the coast has a number of practical implications, such as long lead-in times to be able to come to decisions, logistics of organising and running many meetings and workshops and stronger focus and burden on staff with skills associated with brokering consensus. It is considered however, that these disadvantages are outweighed by the advantages of this type of decision making.

Despite the impetus attached to ICZM as a process to overcome sectoralism and providing a positive opportunity for more efficient and effective management of coastal zones, in particular as an instrument to link terrestrial and marine legislation and management [11], it is questionable whether this has actually led to effective changes in the way coasts are managed [4,10,14,15]. Many coastal professionals regard ICZM as having an over emphasis on consultation and consensus and a perceived conservation bias [16]. This, coupled with an absence of guiding legislation, government policy and direction, means that ICZM lacks or has a weak statutory

basis [15]. In addition, coastal professionals have a focus on their day-to-day work, which are generally dictated by existing statutory or legislative responsibilities and duties in an atmosphere of strong development pressures, so introducing ideals of ICZM is low on their "to do list" [15]. These two considerations mean that for ICZM to become a reality and relevant it needs to:

1. Become integral to organisations and institutions, rather than an add-on, and
2. To work within existing sectoral frameworks in order to strengthen and enhance their progress and integration to deliver more holistic solutions to coastal pressures and issues [16–18].

A review of ICZM in Europe found existing coastal management practices could inculcate principles and practices of ICZM without actually being explicitly identified as such [11], although these are often project based or very localised in scale. An example of such is the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, UK coast defence strategy project (www.newbigginbythesea.co.uk/bay/). This project sought to provide technically robust, environmentally acceptable and economically justified sustainable coast protection to the town. It was undertaken with statutory and non-statutory consultation throughout, with particular emphasis given to consultation with the general public and affected bay users. An analysis of the project from start to completion showed it to exhibit all the elements of ICZM according to the EU ICZM recommendation [19], but without ever mentioning ICZM in any of the project documentation. Though the extent to which interventions are monitored and evaluated and a transparent feedback loop into further enhancement of decision making is apparent is often limited, thus although elements of ICZM can be identified, the cycle of continuous improvement inherent in the ICZM framework can be lacking. Regardless of the label used, all countries, and at all levels, are engaged in forms of management within their coastal zones to varying degrees of impact, with the level of success often dependent on the perspective and interest of the arbiter.

3. Context for capacity building in ICZM for coastal professionals

Capacity building and education in support of ICZM and its implementation by coastal professionals have attracted considerable interest [20–22]. However, there is little evidence that ICZM approaches are becoming embedded in the work practices of coastal practitioners [16]. There are three reasons for this situation:

1. Delivery of training is often structured and delivered according to traditional disciplinary boundaries which can be a contradiction to the stated aims of ICZM of integration and working across administrative and sectoral boundaries.
2. Within a training context, ICZM is often presented, albeit usually not intentionally, as an alternative utopia to the existing fragmented, disjointed and competing institutional and organisational setting for coastal management.
3. Capacity building is often tied to projects with a finite funding horizon and is focussed on achieving the discrete project goals rather than enabling coastal professionals to manage existing and future issues, by increasing their ability to integrate cross-sectoral information and understanding into a decision making framework.

Most coastal professionals work in a sectorally structured system with a plethora of legislative and jurisdictional instruments that form the foundation of their day-to-day work. Training can

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