



# Evaluating Integrated Coastal Management planning policy in Japan: Why the Guideline 2000 has not been implemented



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## ABSTRACT

In Japan, the Guideline for Integrated Coastal Management Plans (Guideline) was issued in 2000 to promote planning and implementation of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM). However, to date, no local governments have developed ICM plans in line with the Guideline. This paper clarifies the reasons for the poor implementation using a theoretical approach, the Policy Implementation Framework developed by Mazmanian and Sabatier. Also, an international comparison was conducted of acts and policies related to ICM in the United States, Republic of Korea, European Union, and Partnerships for Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). Lack of a scheme that would provide national subsidies to local governments after approval of their ICM plans by the national government, the unviable districting of coastal areas in which they exceed the single administrative boundary of a local government, existence of similar initiatives for Seacoast Conservation Plans which are somewhat overlapping with ICM plans, and the diminished position of the coordinating national agency are identified as major factors hindering implementation of the Guideline. The findings of this paper should serve as a reference to the national government of Japan in avoiding similar deficiencies with the Guideline when developing detailed framework/institutional arrangements to promote ICM planning and implementation in the future, and could also be of assistance to countries developing national policies/strategies on ICM.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background and objectives

The coastal zone is a unique space where people live and undertake a variety of social and economic activities unlike anywhere else on the planet. Its ecology, rich in biodiversity, is important to human welfare, but is also vulnerable to human activities on both land and sea. Intensification of these activities in recent decades has led coastal management to evolve from single to multiple use approaches that emphasize the ecosystem and interdependencies. In step with the global movement towards sustainable development, as seen in the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and UNCED, UNFCCC, and CBD in 1992, the need for coastal management using an integrated approach became widely recognized (United Nations Environment Programme, 1995; Cicin-Sain and Knecht, 1998).

In Japan, realization emerged during the 1990's that some coastal problems may have been caused by sectoral management

and the call for vertically and horizontally Integrated Coastal Management has become more common (National Land Agency, 1998; Research Committee on Integrated Coastal Management, 2003). The coastal problems mentioned above include unexpected beach erosion and sediment deposit due to insufficient coordination between fishery and seacoast protection authorities (Uda, 2006), lack of nutrients in the sea because strict regulation has only focused on water quality without due consideration of the entire ecosystem and coastal area nutrient cycling (Ministry of Environment, 2011), etc.

In a Japanese framework of coastal management, responsibilities for coastal management are delegated to various agencies at the national, prefectural and municipal levels (Fig. 1, Fig. 2). For example, around half of the coastal areas designated by the Seacoast Act as extending 50 m from each side of the LWL and HWL are managed by prefectural River Bureaus. The majority of shipping ports and harbours are managed by the Ports and Harbours Bureaus of the prefectures in which they are located (Ports and Harbours Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), 2011), and most fishing ports are managed by municipalities (Fisheries Agency, 2011). Riverine systems important for national land conservation or the national economy

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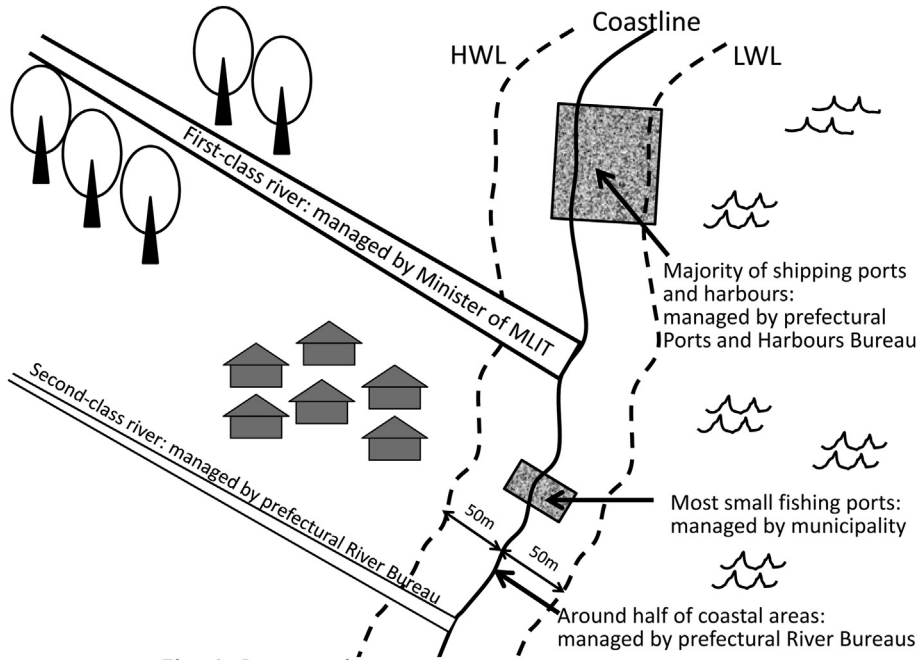


Fig. 1. Responsibilities for coastal management.

are designated as First-class rivers by the Minister of MLIT and are managed at the national level by MLIT. Rivers of less importance to the public interest are designated as Second-class rivers by governors and are managed by prefectures. Smaller rivers and streams are managed by municipalities.

Having the background as above, the Guideline for Integrated Coastal Management Plans (Guideline) was agreed upon at the Grand Design for the 21st Century Promotion Liaison Conference (GD21PLC) in 2000, and is now considered the most important national Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) policy of the last 40

years in Japan. Although the Guideline, which was formulated by seventeen ministries and agencies related to coastal management, is not binding on local governments, it is the first and only detailed national strategic document that approaches coastal areas to be managed as integrated spaces encompassing land and sea. However, to date, no local governments have developed ICM plans in line with the Guideline.

Globally, the identification of successes and failures underlying ICM progress and the expected roles of national governments in encouraging initiation and implementation of ICM at the local level

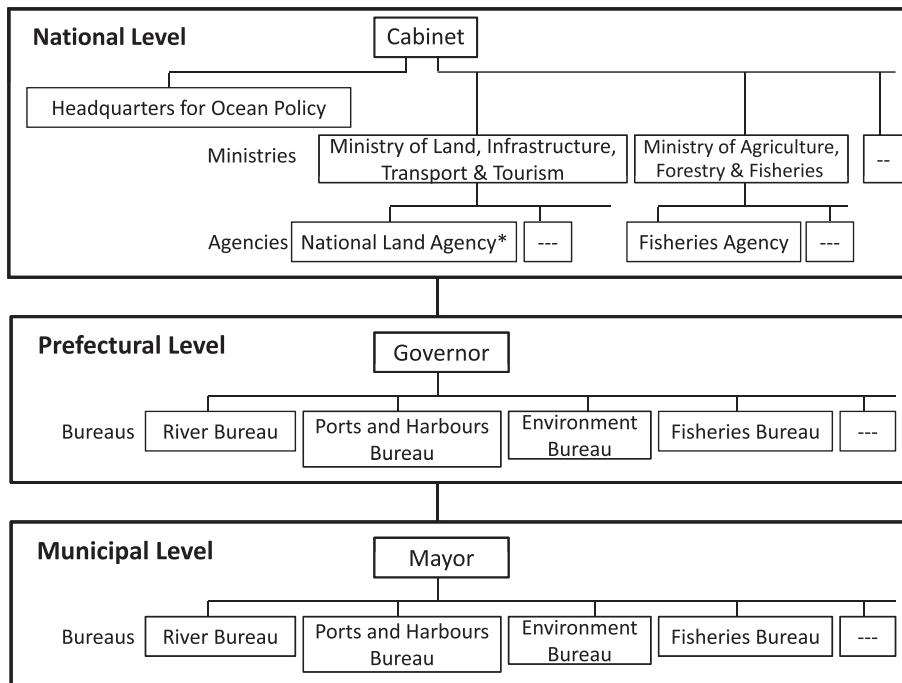


Fig. 2. Japanese government framework related to ICM. \*The National Land Agency was integrated into Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism as one bureau, the National and Regional Planning Bureau in 2001.

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