

Country: CYPRUS
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1. State-of-play in implementing the EU ICZM Recommendation

Several efforts have been made in coastal management with regard to sustainable development, during the last year:

1. The Environment Service, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, focal point for the EU ICZM Recommendation, has proceeded with the initiation of the Coastal Area Management Programme, the implementation of the Bathing Waters Directive, the promotion of "Ecolabel" for tourism accommodations and the initiation of the preparation of management plans for "Natural 2000" sites. The above are analysed further in 1b.

2. The Department of Town Planning and Housing, Ministry of Interior, responsible for spatial planning, designates the Coastal Protection Zone established under the Foreshore Protection legislation. This Department has also contributed in the final evaluation and definition of the proposed Natura 2000 special conservation areas, including coastal areas. Furthermore, within the framework of the preparation of Development Plans, it proceeds in the adoption of coastal conservation areas designated in the Natura 2000 Programme, in view of providing the appropriate spatial development policies.

3. The Public Works Department, Ministry of Communications and Works, and Delft Hydraulics, has already carried out, under the framework of MEDSPA Programme, a project on "Coastal Protection Management for Cyprus" (1993-96). The main task of this project was to identify the proper methods to protect the coastline and improve the quality of beaches where necessary, without any serious impacts on the environment. At the end of this project, Master Plans for three (3) selected coastal sections, as well as conceptual and detailed designs were prepared. In 1998, the Cyprus Government started the implementation of these Master Plans. This year, the implementation phase will continue in the Limassol area. Specifically, ten (10) detached breakwaters will be constructed and 13 illegal groynes will be demolished.

The same Department in cooperation with the National Technical University of Athens, also carry out a project, which is a continuation of the previous one, which deals with three (3) new areas. The goal is to find the proper methods to protect the coastline and improve the quality of the beaches where necessary. The study is expected to be completed late in 2006.

Over the coming years, the Cyprus Government plans to prepare Master Plans and detailed designs for the whole of the coastal areas.

1b. Implementation overview:

1. A Coastal Area Management Programme (CAMP) for Cyprus was initiated by the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) in close cooperation with the Cyprus Government. The CAMP Cyprus, the duration of which is envisaged for two years, covers the coast of Cyprus as a whole. Within the broad island-wide scope of CAMP Cyprus, a local spatial dimension will be incorporated, through the proposed Pilot Case Study Application Projects.

The relevant agreement was signed on 21 June, 2005 between Mediterranean Action Plan and Environment Service. The Terms of Reference Report was completed in June 2005 and the Inception Report is under preparation. The Inception Workshop will be held in October and it will launch the project.

The Project is oriented towards the sustainable management of the whole coastal area of Cyprus, introducing and applying principles, methodologies and practices of sustainable development and Integrated Coastal Areas Management (ICAM) and Tools of Integrated Coastal Area Management.

The Activities which will be carried out will elaborate and demonstrate the application of principles of integrated coastal management as well as tools for environmental assessment, carrying capacity assessment and environmental fiscal instruments. The Project also aims to introduce and elaborate the scope of such tools for raising public awareness.

The Project will also address particular attention to socio-economic aspects of coastal management. The Project will elaborate the application of market-based instruments and environmental economics as a basis for the harmonization of coastal policies with private investment concerns.

2. After the annual national inspection visits to several beaches and the April Evaluation 2005, the International Jury has decided to award the Blue Flag to 48 Cyprus beaches, for the year 2005.

3. Cyprus is fully implementing the "Bathing Waters Directive". A total of 100 coastal bathing areas are being monitored fortnightly from the 1 May to the 31 October. The first report regarding the quality of the bathing waters of Cyprus was submitted to the European Commission.

4. The EU Eco-label for tourist accommodation comprises another means towards the sustainability of tourism. The system of EU Eco-label has been active since the accession of Cyprus to EU, having one year of implementation. Interest for the obtainment of this label for tourist accommodation has been keen.

5. Scientific work for the "Natura 2000" network has identified 31 areas that will be protected for their wildlife and habitats value. From them five (5) are in the coastal area.

2. Problems and obstacles

- Land use conflicts: Due to the small size of the country, policies often do not succeed in reconciling land use conflicts, leading to the loss of agricultural land; coastal mobility problems; erosion of the shore; overcrowding of beaches; deficiencies in infrastructure; high building densities in many urban coastal areas; and insufficient protection of areas of natural beauty.

- Social disparities and loss of rural heritage: Coastal urbanisation and coast-centred economic growth have minimised the importance and overshadowed the landmarks of rural heritage and the quality of coastal landscape in many parts of the island.

- Land ownership and local economic interests: Land ownership is widely distributed among the population giving rise to often legitimate expectations for private building development in both urban and coastal areas.

- Limited environmental awareness: Concern for the environment is limited and this has important consequences for coastal management.
- Poor harmonisation of environmental and socio-economic objectives: Protection of the environment is often weak because the gains from development are not related to the 'environmental costs' on society.
- Lack of a common vision: Parallel policies affecting the development and management of coastal resources (land use, fisheries, water, agriculture, tourism, ports, roads, etc), are designed and implemented by separate competent authorities not always under a coherent overall and broadly approved framework.

Also, there are gaps in the administrative framework for coastal planning and management.

3. Green Paper on EU Maritime policy

Appropriate integration and coherence with the Marine Strategy has to be served.

4. European Stakeholders Forum

Cyprus agrees with the establishment of the Stakeholder forum, comprised of representatives of government agencies, intergovernmental organisations, local authorities and representatives of appropriate sectors of civil society and NGO's.