

Coastal management in the Mediterranean

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In the early 1990's, integrated coastal management (ICM) in the Mediterranean basin found general acceptance as an important issue both at national and regional levels, and since then it has been steadily developing. Donor organizations, especially the European Union and the UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan played important catalyst roles in this development by initiating and supporting pilot projects. In 1992, the European Union launched the Mediterranean programs in which the environment, and especially the coastal environment, was considered as a priority issue. In the following years, EU provided financial support to ICM related projects in the Mediterranean in the context of the Marine Science and Technology (MAST) and the Framework Programs, as well as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership scheme (such as the SMAP III Programme). Parallel to this development, several NGO initiatives took place for public awareness on pressing coastal issues and in training and education. MEDCOAST, a network of Euro-Mediterranean academic institutions, has been providing scientific and professional support to the practice of ICM in the Mediterranean (and the Black Sea) countries and organizing forums for exchanging ICM experiences, disseminating information and training professionals at mid-managerial levels. Today, there exist significant levels of efforts in the form of policy and strategy development, ICM projects and programs, especially in the northern Mediterranean countries.

This paper presents the history of efforts for advancing coastal management in the Mediterranean countries, including the recent work for a Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management within the framework of the Mediterranean Action Plan, the ICZM projects funded by the European Union through SMAP III Programme and the implications of the recent EU Integrated Maritime Policy.