

CoPraNet Final Report

Autumn 2006

A vibrant network of European coastal practitioners

Almost three years have passed since the beginning of the Coastal Practice Network. A network created to bridge the gap between planners, managers and the research community in Europe.

It all started with the inspiration of creating a European network of coastal practitioners as a forum to develop and exchange information on best practice in the coastal zone, and to bridge the gap between planners, managers and academia. The project has its origins in the previous INTERREG IIC project "Quality of Coastal Towns", which ran from 1999 – 2001. One of its main aims was to provide conclusions and policy recommendations, which could be transferred to other regions within Europe. The development of a Europe-wide network would give the opportunity to transfer knowledge and share the experiences from different partners, enabling the information to be refined and implemented.

Key activities and achievements

Coastal Practice Network (CoPraNet) was inaugurated in January 2004. The main activities for the project have been to promote integrated approaches to coastal management and planning (ICM) with special emphasis on developing a quality label for sustainable tourism destinations, and a multilingual guide on coastal erosion and beach manage-

ment. The network will have made a contribution to sustainable tourism throughout Europe, a better territorial balance by equalising the economic development of different European regions, and the introduction of more coastal ecosystem friendly methods of beach and coastal erosion management.

CoPraNet is supported by the INTERREG IIC programme. Including the contributions of the partners themselves, the total budget of the project has been € 1.8 million. The project closes on December 31, 2006.



Many of the CoPraNet partners and associates at the workshop in Gran Canaria, November 2005. Photo: ICCM

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Taking beneficial ideas from one region and introducing them to others will lead to economic revitalisation in some regions, as well as an equalisation between the regions and an improved socio-economic balance between coastal communities. In CoPraNet, the driving force to ensure knowledge and experience exchange has been carried out in a series of international events - two conferences and eleven workshops, including exchange study visits. These events have been organised by the network partners in order to discuss various themes, as follows:

In 2004

- Integrated Coastal Management pilot studies, causes and remedies in the field of coastal erosion, in Down (Northern Ireland)
- Littoral 2004: Delivering Sustainable Coasts: Connecting Science and Policy. International conference, in Aberdeen (Scotland)
- Role of regional parks in sustainable tourism in relation to general, economic regeneration, in Sefton (Merseyside, England)

In 2005

- Sustainable tourism and Marine Protected Areas, focusing on eco-tourism activities in Natura 2000 areas, in Fuerteventura (Spain)
- ICCCM2005. International Conference on Coastal Conservation and Management in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, in Tavira (Portugal)
- Sustainable beach management, with a focus on beach exploitation and the role of private entrepreneurs, in Zandvoort (The Netherlands)
- Role of public participation in participatory planning, on the island of Sifnos (Greece)
- Planning, implementation and monitoring of coastal defences, in Sefton (England)
- Natura 2000 in practice in the coastal zones, in Stepnica (Poland)
- Sustainable littoral and tourism management as part of the Sustainable Tourism & Coastal Management Week, on the island of Gran Canaria (Spain)

In 2006

- Addressing public perception of changing coasts for improved ICM in Cork (Ireland)
- Role of NGOs and local authorities in planning sustainable tourism development, on the island of Samothraki (Greece)
- The final CoPraNet event, bringing the whole coastal practitioners network together in Baie de Somme (France) to discuss "European and French Shorelines - What governance for practitioners?"

All meetings have been well attended with an average of 300 participants in the conferences and 50 in the workshops. Throughout the project, partners have also taken part in bilateral exchange visits and/or have carried out study visits to coastal regions that have provided them with good practice experiences and useful lessons.



Workshop in Sifnos, Greece.

Photo: Michalis Theodoropoulos

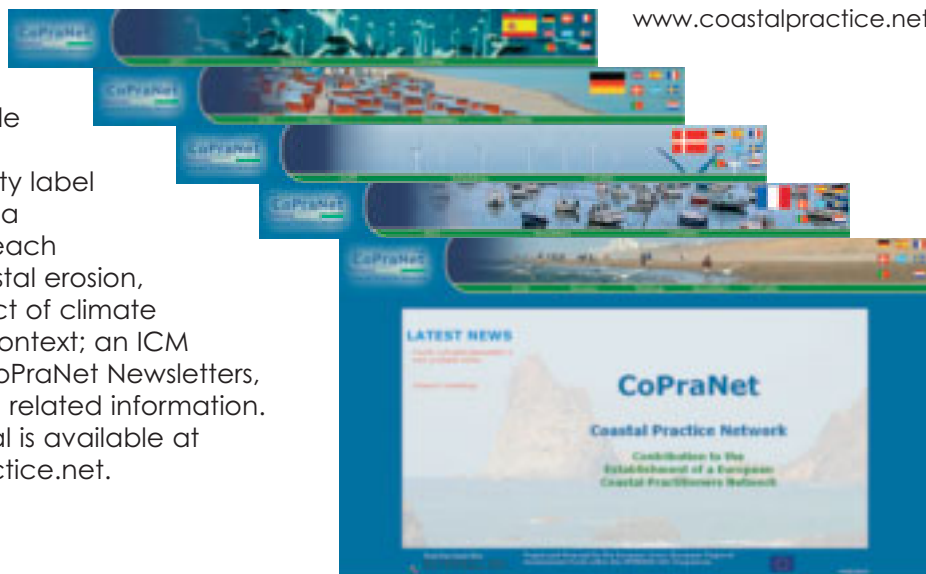


CoPraNet meeting in Cork, Ireland
(Photo: Jeremy Gault)

MULTILINGUAL CLEARING HOUSE

The multilingual Clearing House represents the key product of CoPraNet's activities. An important function of the project is to reach out to others interested in exchanging information and sharing best practice examples in the coastal zone. To facilitate this, a multilingual website has been created so that the message can be spread beyond the English-speaking community. Although the initial intention was to translate it into five languages, it has finally been produced in all project partner languages: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. This has been the result of commitment of all network partners into making the information as widely available and accessible as possible through their national, regional and local networks

This toolkit includes:
an information system on best practice experience in sustainable tourism, through the development of a quality label for tourism destinations; a multilingual guide for beach management and coastal erosion, incorporating the impact of climate change, in a regional context; an ICM glossary of terms; the CoPraNet Newsletters, and all project activities related information. The clearinghouse portal is available at <http://www.coastalpractice.net>.



Best Practice Database

A sectoral approach to coastal development (including tourism, beach management, erosion, nature conservation, etc.) is no longer a sustainable option. Throughout Europe, coastal regions and local authorities are making efforts to develop ICM planning approaches that will lead to a sustainable economic development. This effort is usually being held back by a lack of effective means of information exchange e.g. best practice examples developed in one region will not necessarily be introduced elsewhere because other regions are unaware of their existence.

To solve this issue, CoPraNet has introduced a coastal practice database for best practice examples. Partners have uploaded case studies and projects that have been successful in their regions, in order to spread the knowledge and share experiences, with the purpose to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Additionally, there is an ICM database with case studies mainly focussing on erosion issues. This builds on the EC project EUROSION which developed generic policy recommendations on coastal erosion management. The network has exchanged knowledge and best practice experiences on local, coastal erosion management in order to develop more specific recommendations. This will enable authorities to translate them into their own local planning in order to improve shoreline management.

QualityCoast Programme



During the last fifteen years several efforts have been made to develop indicators for sustainable development in coastal management e.g. the Blue Flag programme, EcoTrans. Furthermore the Local Agenda 21 initiative has provided inspiration for a number of efforts to develop benchmarking programmes for tourism destinations regarding sustainable development. Nonetheless, common standards to monitor performance in sustainable tourism development in coastal destinations are still lacking.

The QualityCoast programme is meant as a complement to these other labels. By making use of existing achievements and ongoing international work, the CoPraNet partners have collaborated and exchanged views to develop a transparent, international quality label for tourism destinations which addresses lack of information strategies on sustainable management for visitors of coastal destinations, by providing better communication and information in a clear, objective way to the tourist visiting a coastal destination.

A QualityCoast label for tourism destinations is the willingness of a municipality, county, or region to highlight nature and landscape, carrying capacity, cultural heritage and aspects of sustainable development of tourism in its marketing programme targeting domestic or international visitors.



Zandvoort, the Netherlands is the first municipality awarded the QualityCoast.

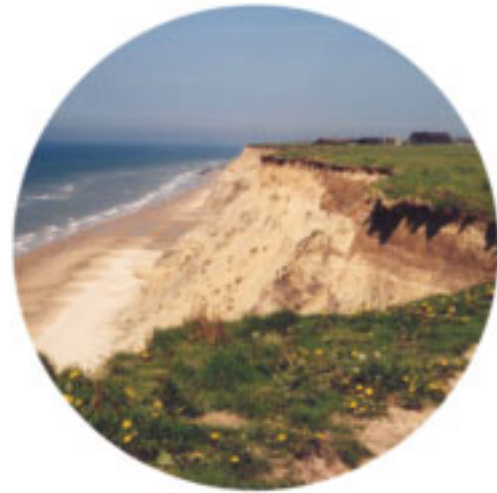
Photo: EUCC – The Coastal Union

This programme aims to ensure that a tourist will be well informed about the social, natural and economic aspects of the communities they will visit and will support and value the integrity of the local culture by participating with businesses that conserve natural and cultural heritage. Visitors will also support the local economy by purchasing local goods and participating with small, local businesses and conserve resources by seeking out businesses that are environmentally conscious, and by using the lowest possible amount of non-renewable resources.

By participating in the QualityCoast programme a municipality/region is committing to offer objective and truthful information on selected milestones to its potential visitors and interested parties on a number of issues which can be used as part of their advertising strategy.

Beach Management Guide

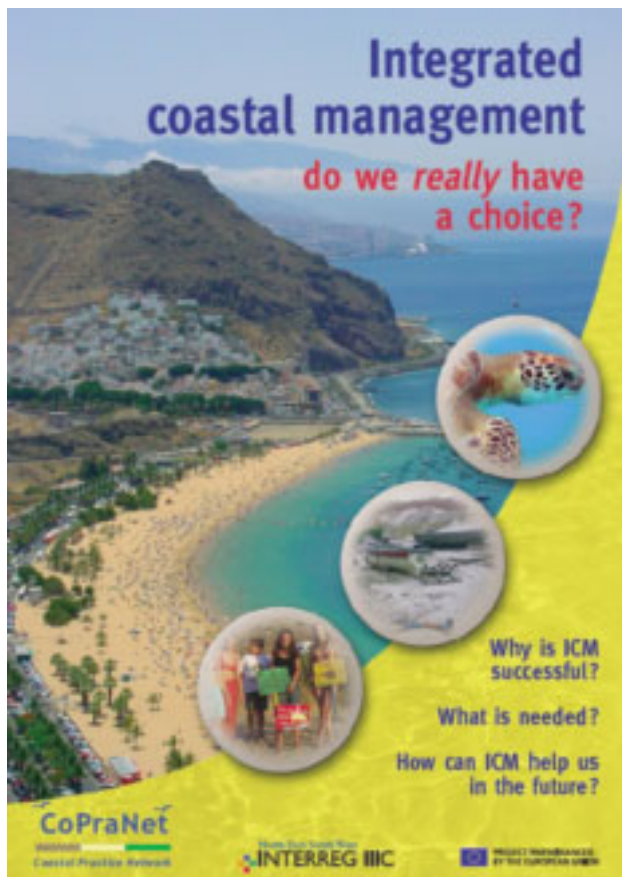
Although natural processes have significantly transformed coastal landscapes throughout history, the intensity of human and economic pressures has greatly exacerbated the situation. One quarter of Europe's coastline is currently eroding and local and regional authorities are facing major damage and risks to their coastal regions. This situation will worsen with sea level rise, the frequency and magnitude of storms and storm surges predicted to increase in the next decades. Erosion and flooding in economically important coastal areas is expected to increase considerably during the 21st century.



Coastal erosion in northern Jutland, Denmark.
Photo: Karin Johansson

The Beach Management Guide has, therefore, been designed as a tool for the beach manager and developed to harness interregional experience with the future in mind. It is comprehensive in scope dealing with beach management in its entirety including recreation, tourism, management of wildlife and habitats as well as erosion and beach protection. It shares best practice experience from across Europe and is a topical and easy reference guide to the case studies of good practice held in the main project database. It will be of use to those responsible for managing coastal areas on a day-to-day basis and all others with an interest in beach management, from the community to politicians.

Integrated coastal management - Do we really have a choice?



CoPraNet partners have produced a brochure on integrated coastal management, pin-pointing the importance of managing our coastal regions in a sustainable and integrated way. The intention of the brochure is to provide realistic arguments for politicians and interested stakeholders as to why ICM should be used all over Europe. The booklet investigates the economic arguments and the job opportunities it creates, as well as minimising the effects of natural disasters and restoring habitat. The booklet presents many good practice examples from around the world, where ICM is already having an important and positive effect on coastal management, the social welfare of coastal communities as well as the natural habitats and landscapes of the coast.

5,000 copies have been distributed through the network. It has been translated into several languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish). Summary versions in Greek and Dutch have also been prepared, and the message is therefore further spread. A digital version of the English brochure is available to download at CoPraNet's website.

ICM Glossary

As an added function, CoPraNet has provided an integrated coastal management glossary. The aim of the glossary is to provide clarification on terminology and language used in ICM to help coastal practitioners, managers, professionals, academics and students to better understand the definition and meaning of terms. The glossary contains over 1,000 technical terms, with their definitions, explanations, and illustrative materials where appropriate. For the convenience of the reader, some of the terms contain links to the most closely related websites.

Helpdesk

For any questions regarding ICM or CoPraNet issues we have set up an electronic helpdesk. It can be contacted via e-mail: helpdesk@coastalpractice.net.



Coastal managers at Sherkin Island, Ireland.
Photo: Jeremy Gault



CoPraNet Newsletters

Semi-annually throughout the project, a newsletter has been produced and disseminated. Every issue has touched upon topics that have been discussed and experienced during the previous six months. Reports from workshops and conferences are found in the newsletters as well as the process of developing the QualityCoast label and the Beach Management Guide, partner presentations, expansion of the network and other information relevant to the project. These have been published in an international issue (English). The electronic newsletters have been translated into the various languages and each version also introduced regional matters of interest, as well as spreading the information of CoPraNet.

All the newsletters that have been produced can be downloaded from the project's website.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

As the Coastal Practice Network project is concluding, discussions are ongoing on how to carry on with the necessary work that already has started. The network partners recognize that the differences in regional coastal development have been reduced by bringing together colleagues with many different experiences in a network embracing research, advisory and implementing organisations.

As a result, the network partnership actively supports a number of new initiatives, e.g. ENCORA - a European platform for sharing knowledge and experience in coastal science, policy and practice, an FP6 Coordinated Action.

In one way or another the CoPraNet partnership will continue. The need to bridge gaps between planners, managers and academia is obvious. Integrated approaches to develop coastal tourism destinations in a sustainable way are necessary. It is for the future for our children and our earth that this important work continues.



Children enjoying the coast.

Photos: Chungmei Cheng, Karin Johansson

PARTNERS

The partners of CoPraNet consist of 21 partners from 11 countries, embracing regional and local authorities (9), government institutions (2), universities (6) and NGOs (4):

Lead

EUCC – The Coastal Union (The Netherlands)

Regional and local authorities

Storstrøm County (Denmark) • Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (United Kingdom)
• Municipality of Zandvoort (The Netherlands) • Municipality of Samothraki (Greece)
• Down District Council (Northern Ireland, UK) • Municipality of Stepnica (Poland)
• Municipality of Càlvia (Mallorca, Spain) • Ministry of the Interior of the State Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) • CCDR-C – Regional Authority of Central Portugal (Portugal)

Government Institutes

Institute of Marine Sciences of the Canary Islands (Spain) • National Institute for Coastal & Marine Management – RIKZ (The Netherlands)

Universities

Coastal & Marine Resources Centre, University College Cork (Ireland) • The University of Aberdeen (Scotland, UK) • Coastal Management Research Centre – COMREC (Sweden)
• Institute of Hydraulics and Water Resources – IHRH/FEUP (Portugal) • IHE – Delft (The Netherlands) • University of Littoral (France)

NGOs

Mediterranean SOS Network (Greece) • WL – Delft Hydraulics (The Netherlands)
• Rivages de France (France) • EUCC – The Coastal Union (The Netherlands)

One of CoPraNet's intentions has been to expand the current network with Associate Partners to realise the European Commission's aim to have a European coastal practitioners network that can be fully self-supporting by the end of the project. At present there are some 200 associated partners linked to the project.

*JOIN US AND BE AT
THE FOREFRONT OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT!*



Cork, Ireland (Photo: Jeremy Gault)