

Other major views

Views and priorities of funding agencies

Session 2

RAC/PAP perspectives and priorities in the Mediterranean

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Since the Rio Conference and the recognition that marine pollution is largely due to land activities, the role of RAC/PAP in the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) has been greatly strengthened. After the refocusing of MAP in 1995, special attention has been paid to *Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)* which has become one of the main ways of ensuring the sustainable development of coastal zones and therefore a priority aspect of MAP's work.

There are 2 sides to RAC/PAP's work in terms of ICZM: a theoretical side that focuses on the development of ICZM methods and tools and an operational side that concentrates on the practical application of the methods and tools as part of actual projects that come under the MAP *Coastal Development Programme (CDP)*. 12 CDP projects have so far been carried out on the two shores of the Mediterranean, one is currently being performed and three others are in preparation. One country, Italy, has announced it is going to apply for a CDP project at the next conference of contracting parties to the Barcelona Convention and we hope France will do likewise in the near future. Preliminary discussions encourage us to hope that a very interesting theme for all the Mediterranean countries may be tackled in a French CDP, that of spreading information and integrating knowledge and scientific expertise in the decision-making process.

The CDP in Algiers, which was implemented between 2001 and 2006, is a prime example of an integrated management approach applied to a coastal zone where the major factor of imbalance is the population growth with its consequences on urban development, the natural land and marine environment, historic and cultural heritage, water resources, sewage and solid waste. A very detailed assessment of each of the above sectors, the data of which was incorporated in a GIS, was used to propose an optimal development project for this zone and an action plan that focuses on 19 priority objectives. The approach was supported by a sustainability analysis of each sector and an awareness-raising/ training/ participation programme.

In addition to its standard programme RAC/PAP is participating in a series of projects funded other than by the MAP budget. Due to the very nature of ICZM, all the projects include a marine aspect. This is particularly important in the "*FEM strategic partnership for the marine ecosystem in the Mediterranean*", the "*PlanCoast*" (planning in coastal zones), "*Conscience*" (Concepts and Science for Coastal Erosion Management) projects and "*BEACHMED*" (beach erosion) co-funded by the EU.

The above projects are a perfect illustration of RAC/PAP's priorities in the years to come. They are all in line with the *Operational Strategic Action Plan for ICZM in the Mediterranean* adopted in 2005 and contribute to achieving the objectives, set in the same year, concerning the *Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)*. Aspects that ICZM considers particularly important in the marine sector are climatic changes and the rise in sea levels, coastal erosion, habitats and marine biodiversity, underwater archaeology, analyses of the role of marine areas and their vulnerability to various economic activities (aquaculture, ports, wind farms, etc.), and zoning for the purposes of planning.

Finally, in recent years RAC/PAP has concentrated on drawing up the *ICZM protocol*, a regional legal document soon to be presented to the Mediterranean states for their written approval. The document explains the obligations and responsibilities not only of the coastal countries but also of MAP and RAC/PAP which will automatically become their major priorities in terms of ICZM once the protocol has been adopted.

Because the scope of the protocol is the coastal zone defined as: "towards the land, within the limit of the territory of the coastal administrative authorities with jurisdiction" and "towards the sea within the outer limit of the territorial waters of the Party States", the articles on institutional coordination, trans-border cooperation and international cooperation in the fields of protection and sustainable use of coastal zones and specific coastal ecosystems, risk and natural disaster prevention, awareness-raising, training, education and research, environmental assessment, scientific and technical assistance, clearly require major commitments from the Mediterranean organisations and institutions that manage marine issues.