

Integrated coastal zone management

What is integrated coastal zone management?

The coastal zone is a dynamic area where land and sea meet and interact. In addition to this there is the complexity of many different demands from environmental, economic and community sectors and, more often than not, these demands on the coast exist in conflict with each other.



Integrated coastal zone management is the process which brings all these sectors together, i.e. all those involved in the development, management and use of the coast, in order to integrate their interests in working towards a common objective.

European Commission definition of ICZM

"A dynamic, continuous process designed to promote sustainable management of coastal zones. ICZM seeks, over the long-term, to balance the benefits from protecting, preserving, and restoring coastal zones, the benefits from minimizing loss of human life and property, and the benefits from public access to and enjoyment of the coastal zone, all within the limits set by natural dynamics and carrying capacity."

Throughout Kent there are a number of bodies that adopt the ICZM framework, working in partnership for the benefit of the coast and all those that depend upon it.

ICZM - a strategy for Europe & the UK

In 1999 a three year demonstration programme on ICZM was completed by the European Commission which provided technical information about sustainable coastal zone management and stimulated debate amongst the various coastal stakeholders. As a result of this work two documents were published in 2000:

- A Communication "Integrated Coastal Zone Management: A Strategy for Europe" - detailing how ICZM will be promoted.
- A proposed Recommendation concerning the Implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe - outlining steps for Member States to take in the development of national ICZM strategies.

In 2002, the European Union adopted the Recommendation on implementing ICZM in Europe. This asked Member States to undertake a stocktake of coastal legislation, institutions and stakeholders in order to develop national ICZM strategy. This stocktake, overseen by Defra, was completed and published in 2004 and will inform the development of the ICZM programme for the UK and the national strategies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which are due to be completed by 2006.

Kent's coastal partnerships and projects

The Thames Estuary is a complicated environment, home to people, industry, recreation, history, animals and plants. All these contribute to an estuary facing many pressures. The [Thames Estuary Partnership](#) (TEP) provides a neutral forum for local authorities, national agencies, industry, voluntary bodies and local communities to work together for the good of the Thames Estuary. It covers the estuary from Tower Bridge in London to the outer estuary limit of the Isle of Grain (Kent) and Shoeburyness (Essex). In addition to the production of management guidance for the estuary, TEP also co-ordinates a programme of projects and forums for joint working, holds regular events and workshops and seeks to further the interests of local communities, local economy and the environment.

North Kent is host to some outstanding natural areas but these are at risk because of commercial and development pressures in the area. The [Medway Swale Estuary Partnership](#) (MSEP) is a voluntary forum covering the Medway Estuary (including the tidal stretch of the river as far as Allington Lock near Maidstone) and the Swale (which separates the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland). MSEP facilitates the main organisations that have a common interest in promoting a sustainable future for the estuary to work together more closely. United by an Estuary Strategy and Business Plan (2000), the Partnership has developed an agreed programme of voluntary initiatives that aim to address strategic and integrated estuary issues and has established a forum for communication, participation, information exchange and action.



The Thanet Coast, running from Herne Bay to Sandwich Bay, is covered by six nature designations and is collectively known as the North East Kent European Marine Site. These sites are legally protected and the shore and sea has a

statutory management scheme which ensures that they are managed in a way that conserves their internationally important wildlife. Born out of this management scheme was the [Thanet Coast Project](#), which was established to drive forward the priorities stakeholders had identified for the Marine Site. The Thanet Coast Project continually works with local stakeholders to raise awareness of the area and safeguard coastal wildlife.

The coast and countryside of Dover and Shepway is a special landscape, featuring the only two stretches of Heritage Coast in Kent: the Dover-Folkestone Heritage Coast and the South Foreland Heritage Coast between Dover and Kingsdown, near Deal. The [White Cliffs Countryside Project](#) (WCCP) was established to help landowners care for the area's important habitats and to improve public access to the coast. Similarly the [Romney Marsh Countryside Project](#) (RMCP) was also launched to advise landowners on protecting the special wildlife and landscape of Romney Marsh and Dungeness and to enhance the experience of visitors to the area.

The Kent Coastal Network

Within Kent there are a multitude of different bodies operating along the coastline and many of these are undertaking work that may be of interest to some or all with a stake in the coast. The challenge, with such a diverse range of stakeholders, is disseminating this work out to all the relevant organisations. The Kent Coastal Network aims to assist with this by linking the stakeholders and raising awareness of Kent's coastal activities.

The Network links members and informs them through a quarterly bulletin, monthly email updates and the news and events pages on the website. The Network also hosts an annual conference, to provide members with the opportunity to discuss their work of the past year and their aspirations for the next.

The Network represents many different stakeholders and it can therefore also serve as a facilitator for getting people together to discuss common issues. The many organisations represent different experience and knowledge and so these groups will not only act as a discussion group but also provide opportunities to learn from each other. The working groups are set up in response to a common issue identified by the network and their aim is to provide a platform for different stakeholders to come together to discuss the issue, share experience and knowledge and hopefully identify ways to improve situation.

The Network has a large established base of members, representing different organisations from many different sectors. If you would like to join the Network, you can register as a member via the website www.coastalkent.net or by emailing kent.coast@kent.gov.uk



The SAIL Partnership

The SAIL partnership was formed to help manage the issues affecting the coastlines and communities bordering the Southern North Sea Area (SNSA). The partnership has representatives from the four member states which have coast in this area of the North Sea - Essex, Kent, Nord-Pas de Calais, West Flanders and Zeeland.



The SAIL partnership's vision for the SNSA is "a place where we work with nature rather than against it, where natural and cultural diversity is enhanced and celebrated and where residents and visitors alike can enjoy clean beaches and unpolluted water, outstanding recreational opportunities and vibrant, prosperous coastal communities". This vision will be achieved by focussing work on raising awareness, managing information, strategic planning, enhancing natural areas and regeneration - with all work carried out in partnership.

Indicators of sustainable development in the SAIL coast region



To support the implementation of the EU Commission's ICZM recommendation two sets of indicators were developed, one aimed to measure progress in ICZM, the other one measuring sustainability on the coast. In 2004, 27 indicators for the sustainable development of the coast were adopted by the EU ICZM Expert Group in 2004 - these focus on:

- Appropriate development of the undeveloped coast.
- Natural and cultural diversity
- Dynamic and sustainable coastal economy
- Clean beaches and unpolluted water
- Social cohesion in coastal communities
- Wide use of natural resources
- Climate change and ecologically responsible coastal protection

The SAIL Partnership recognises that in order to improve the understanding of coastal and marine processes and build community support for ICZM, attention must focus on the monitoring of relevant, reliable and comprehensive indicators that are representative of sustainable development in the coastal zone. Hence the Partnership has developed the SAIL indicator project, which represents a transnational effort conducted by the partnership to visualize the state of the coastal zone in the Southern North Sea.

Sources of information:

- www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/iczm
- www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/iczm/index.htm
- www.thamesweb.com
- www.medway-swale.org.uk
- www.thanetcoast.org.uk
- www.whitecliffscountryside.org.uk
- www.rmcp.co.uk
- www.coastalkent.net
- www.sailcost.org

