

**Statement on the progress of implementation of
The EC Recommendation 2002/413/EC on Integrated
Coastal Zone Management**

Latvia

Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments

Riga, May 2006

Introduction

In Latvia, the coastal area stretching up to 496 km along the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga is of outstanding importance and interest due to the main following reasons:

- traditionally there has been a high concentration of the population and various management activities have taken place;
- still high quality semi-natural typical and unique physical formations, landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and species are being presented here;
- over the centuries original distinguishing cultural environment has been developed and valuable cultural heritage created and conserved;
- an increasing pressure and expansion of urban development, housing activities, tourism, transport infrastructure, especially ports/harbours development, interests to produce a wind energy and similar activities.

The coastal zone is a particularly attractive area where social, cultural, economic and environmental interests are being clearly inconsistent and very often become a top

discussion point when public and private interests are being debated. Hence, an appropriate management, i.e., proper development and concerned conservation, is crucial in this particularly ecologically sensitive area and therefore implementation of the ICZM Recommendations would be of the utmost achievement to ensure sustainable development of the coastal areas. It should be also emphasised that about 45% of the Latvian seacoast lies within the borders of protected nature areas and currently there are fourteen proposed Natura 2000 sites at the terrestrial part of the coast. On the basis of further detailed inventories there is expected to designate several Natura 2000 sites in marine coastal area as well.

National Legislation

At present, protection as well as land and sea use of the coastal zone in Latvia is ensured by the national legislation that coincides with the corresponding EU Directives. However, the country already has a long history to ensure conservation of the coastal natural resources: a belt along the coast has been protected over 150 years. The concern has been mainly regarding protection of sand dune forests, setting of building restrictions and limitations for the extraction of minerals.

Presently, the most significant legal instruments in relation to the coastal zone protection and management are the following:

Law on Protected Belts (1997, amended in 2002, 2003, 2005). Among other specific protection belts the Law defines:

- a strict protection belt that is ca 300m wide at the terrestrial area and a strict protection sea belt by 10m isobath.
- a limited economic activities zone up to 5km landwards, which is demarcated according to the natural conditions.

In order to decrease discharge of the pollution into the Baltic Sea, to maintain forests as a significant instrument for the elimination of the coastal erosion, to conserve coastal landscapes, to ensure protection and preservation of natural resources and resources essential for recreation, tourism and other public needs the Law determines

several land and sea use restrictions, mainly for urban and building development, drainage and forest management. The Law also prescribes free access to the sea and public inland waters.

Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (1998, amended in 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005). The Law defines the procedure for applying EIA and activities where EIA is required and for the strategic environmental impact assessment (SEIA) as well. The coastal protection belt is one of the specified criteria when SEIA of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment must be evaluated. SEIA shall be carried out during the preparation of plans and programmes and before their adoption or submission for the adoption procedure. SEIA shall be carried out for plans and programmes, which may have significant impact on human health and the environment, including those for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, mining, as well as regional development, land use, spatial planning, and those co-financed by the European Community as well. SEIA shall be carried out for the national level planning documents (concepts, strategies, guidelines, plans and programmes of sectoral policies), National Spatial Plan (Spatial development perspective, strategies, plans and programmes of regional and local level including those of sectoral policies, spatial plans of districts and major cities, planning documents related to the development of ports and harbours and those plans and programmes, which may have significant impact on coastal protected belt and Natura 2000 sites. Produced plans or programmes shall include a separate chapter - Environmental Report - that shall include the information about the potential need of EIA application for the planned activities or new developments.

Law on Water Management (2002, amended in 2002, 2004, 2005) transposes requirements of the Directive 2000/60/EC – The Water Framework Directive and establish a framework for the protection and management of surface and groundwater by promoting sustainable use of water resources, preventing deterioration of terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on water, protection of the aquatic environment and marine waters, ensuring cessation of emissions and losses of the hazardous substances, ensuring reduction of groundwater pollution and preventing of groundwater pollution, protection of the land against floods and droughts, and

contributing to the achieving the objectives of relevant international agreements. The Law determines elaboration of the River Management Plans and Programmes of Measures for each of four defined river basins in Latvia.

Law on Regional Development (2002, amended in 2002, 2003, 2005). The Law sets the key principles for regional development, defines five planning regions of the country, defines that regional development should be implemented by means of the co-ordinated regional development planning documents - National Development Plan, National Spatial Plan, Guidelines for Regional Policy, sectoral development programmes, spatial plans for the planning regions, districts and local governments that should be elaborated. The law defines that sectoral and regional plans and programmes should be elaborated in accordance to the Regional Policy Guidelines, National Development Plan and National Spatial Plan and subsequently applied also to the local level. The law gives general prescriptions for each of the planning documents and identifies competencies of the relevant public authorities.

Law on Spatial Planning (1998, amended in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). The Law sets the key spatial planning principles, i.e., sustainability, concertation of different interests, including cultural heritage and nature etc and defines the planning procedure, levels, competencies of the public authorities, public participation as well as put the deadlines for elaboration and authorization of various planning documents.

Law on Building (1995, amended in 1997, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). The Law regulates responsibilities and rights of different actors participating in the building process, defines that building activities must be carried out in accordance to the territorial and detailed plan of the municipality and building by-laws etc.

Law on Specially Protected Nature Territories (1993, amended in 1997, 2002, 2003, 2005). *The Law* specifies the basic principles for a system of protected nature territories, the procedures for their establishment, administration and monitoring. The Law also imposes elaboration of detailed regulations and management plans for the protected areas.

Law on Protection of Species and Habitats (2000, amended in 2005). This Law determines main principles of species and habitats protection.

Law on Forests (1999, amended in 2003, 2005) determines forest management and cutting restrictions due to various factors, including environmental requirements for the coastal protection belt.

Law on Ports (1994, amended in 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005). The Law in addition to a specific navigation issues defines that port development activities should be carried out in line with EIA procedure and requirements and according to the relevant development programmes and spatial/territorial plans of the municipalities. The Law also puts responsibility to the ports authorities regarding pollution control and responsibility and action in the case of occurred leakages.

Particular *Laws for specific protected nature areas* like for Kemeru and Slitere National Parks and North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve that partly lies within the coastal zone too, establish the specified regulations of those conservation areas

There are numerous of *Regulations and By-laws* consequential from the above referred to Laws that prescribe in detail how the protection and management should be planned and performed in the coastal area.

Spatial Planning

Spatial planning is known as the most important instrument for the co-ordination and concertation of different, very often-conflicting interests regarding ideas of the development and land- use (and sea-use) of the area. As various European level political documents and others have recognized it, town and regional planning can significantly contribute to the implementation of the integrated coastal zone management approach.

Implementation of ICZM Recommendations in Latvia is in line with findings of the recent INTERREG IIIB project “Integrated Coastal Zone Development in the Baltic Sea Region / BALTCOAST”, the spatial planning goes with ICZM hand by hand. In the framework of the project joint recommendations have been elaborated on the role of spatial planning within ICZM. As concluded by the project where directly seven Baltic Sea Region countries have been participated and the rest have been consulted, spatial planning is involved in the ICZM process in the following way:

- a) Including ICZM principles into national, regional and supra-local visions and strategic documents dealing with spatial development.
- b) Participating in the preparation of the ICZM plans contributing with its knowledge on spatial planning conflicts in the coastal zone, their geographical coverage, methods of conflict management (including public participation), instruments on territorial impact assessments and ensuring linkage between spatial plans and ICZM plans in the given area.
- c) If necessary offering to the ICZM process a service of cross sectoral co-ordination unit (ICZM focal point), which can be performed by spatial planning statutory structures.
- d) Participating in the preparation of mid-term development programmes, supporting comprehensive ICZM approach based on principle of sustainable development (the same as for spatial planning).
- e) Participating in the ICZM monitoring and evaluation process and by that improving and amending spatial development plans and visions.

As determined by the Law on Spatial Planning, there are four planning levels in Latvia: national, regional (planning regions¹), district² and local (municipalities³) level. All those levels apply to the Coastal zone area.

Administrative districts, planning regions and local authorities of Latvia



National Spatial Plan setting out the national interests and requirements for the use and development of the whole territory of the country, including the coastal area is being prepared. As it is stated in the Law on Spatial Planning and envisaged by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government, elaboration of The National Spatial Plan will be completed by the end of year 2006.

Spatial development plans of five *Planning Regions* settle on development possibilities, trends and restrictions of the territory of these regions. Currently all five planning regions are developing their spatial plans. Referring the coastal area, two planning regions are relevant there. One of the planning regions, Riga planning region has prepared and approved their spatial development plan, the other – Kurzeme region – is currently working on it.

Concerning the other regional level, regional administrative units – **Districts**, the coastal area lies in a part of six districts. District territorial plans determine development possibilities, trends and restrictions of the territory, reproduce current and define the planned (permitted) use of the territory, as well as specify requirements, territories and objects defined by a higher planning level. Three of the coastal zone districts Liepajas, Rīgas and Limbazu have elaborated and authorised their territorial plans, for the rest of the zone (three districts - Ventspils, Talsu, Tukuma) the territorial plans are being under preparation.

Local Plans, similarly as at the District level, identify and lay down development possibilities, trends and restrictions of the territory of the municipality, reflect existing and define planned (permitted) land-use, as well as specify requirements, territories and objects of the higher planning level. According to The Law on Protected Belts, municipalities, which lay in the Coastal Protection Belt, elaborating their territorial plans, must identify the boundaries of villages where building development may take place. These proposed draft borders after detailed evaluation and coordination with the Ministry of Environment are being approved or not by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government.

Detailed Plans specify the requirements of the land-use in a particular area set by the territorial plan of the municipality.

In the adjacent area of the coast there are 23 municipalities, 14 of them have elaborated and authorised the territorial plans. Two municipalities (Kolka and Rucava) have elaborated their territorial plans, but as the proposed boundaries of the villages are not yet authorised, the plans have no legal force up to now. The rest of municipalities are developing their territorial plans and are being in different stages of the process.

As defined by The Law on Spatial Planning, spatial/territorial plans of national, regional, district and local (municipal) level must be elaborated by the end of year 2006.

National stocktaking and co-operation

There is no conducted or updated any particular overall stocktaking to analyse which major actors, laws and institutions do influence the management in the coastal area. As a first attempt to analyze the situation from the ICZM point of view the EU Phare programme project: "IZCM Latvija." (supported also by World Bank) was carried out during 1998-1999. The project was performed at the same time when establishment of democratic and transparent spatial planning system in Latvia took place.

The coordination of activities is performed during spatial planning process at all levels, producing EIA and SEIA documents, developing management plans for protected nature areas and similar kind of activities, mainly determined by the obligations to fulfil environmental requirements.

Municipalities do co-operate under umbrella of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments and Coastal Union, established within the frame of the Association.

In order to co-ordinate the elaboration of the National Spatial Plan and ensure management of the development, the Minister responsible for national-level territorial planning may establish an inter-institutional national spatial plan steering group or working groups where different institutions, representing various sectors, stakeholders and regional level

are being involved. The draft of the National Spatial Plan document or a part of it should be submitted for evaluation by the National Regional Development Council, representing several ministries at the level of ministers as well as politicians from the planning region councils. Co-operation at the national level is being carried out among different ministries, mainly Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture and others. This co-operation largely is based on the case-to-case condition.

Furthermore, the national level interests represented by various ministries are being incorporated in regional and district plans (and subsequently municipalities' territorial plans) since the ministries shall be represented in the co-ordination groups supervising elaboration of the regional plans and, if necessary, ministries can set provisions and give their opinion on the draft district plans as well.

National strategies

There is no foreseen to develop any particular strategy and establish a new institution for the integrated coastal zone management in Latvia. The main emphasis will be put on the capacity building and education of the local planners towards ICZM issues. This position is in strong line with the Recommendations produced by the INTERREG IIIB BALTCOAST project where, The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government of Latvia was a project partner (see also the text above under "Spatial planning" section). The Recommendations recognize that spatial planning cannot substitute the ICZM process, but it forms an essential part of the ICZM process. The project also suggest not establish new institutions but improve the use of existing ones.

The principles of integrated management of the coastal zone as well as long term ICZM strategy are going to be incorporated in the National Spatial Plan of Latvia. The National Spatial Plan is an aggregate of

documents, which includes the long-term spatial development perspective for the country, binding parts of the National Spatial Plan and guidelines. The implementation of ICZM principles will be ensured in all other planning levels according the Law on Spatial Planning (1998) stated that “when developing a lower level spatial plan the higher level spatial plan, which is in effect shall be observed”.

Substantial Initiatives/projects contributing to the ICZM

A few directly to the ICZM related projects (*Kurzeme ICZM Plan, ICZM Latvija as a part of EU ICZM Demonstration Programme and ICZM Programme for the Baltic States and Poland*) have been carried out in Latvia at the end of 90-ies. They have resulted with quite general statements and guidelines about capacity building, sustainable use of resources, needs of conservation and management etc. Nevertheless, the projects have done a contribution to develop the co-operation among the coastal municipalities and state authorities and broaden their views about the significance of sustainability of the coastal area.

As tremendously useful, ambitious and challenging initiative for the planning and implementation of sustainable use of the coastal area the EU *LIFE-Nature* programme co-financed *project LIFE2002NAT/LV/008498 “Protection and management of coastal habitats in Latvia”* should be pointed out. The project is initiated and performed by the Faculty of Biology, University of Latvia and lasts from April 2002 until June 2006. The project area covers all the coastline of Latvia within the borders of the Coastal Protected Belt.

The project is truly strategic in nature. It started with a full inventorying and mapping of the whole coastline to identify areas that could qualify for designation as Natura 2000 sites. Then it focused in on 14 protected areas and developed management plans for those that are currently without, in close consultation with local municipalities and communities.

Once these were established a number of priority on-site actions were undertaken to restore and protect key areas from further damage or degradation. This has entailed an

extensive programme of visitor management to channel the increasing stream of tourists away from the most sensitive nature areas. Accompanying this national awareness raising campaign aimed at visitors and local communities alike to raise the profile of the coastal conservation interest and encourage responsible behaviour towards it. This is being a collective exercise involving 13 local townships and municipalities in the project partnership.

The project has:

- identified and assessed candidate Natura 2000 sites in the coastal belt
- produced a data base of all landowners
- produced digital maps of habitats at the scale of accuracy 1:5,000 and, based on the inventories of habitats and species, a functional zoning at the scale of 1: 10, 000 available for municipalities and state environmental institutions,
- developed conservation measures offered to the municipalities and state environmental institutions,
- developed management plans for four protected areas
- tested conservation measures in 14 demonstration sites
- contributed to raising of public awareness increased about nature values and understanding of their fragility among the stakeholders.

The mapped area covers ca 33, 172 ha and the following items have been recorded for every single polygon: habitat type, value (in terms of biodiversity), disturbances, necessity for restoration and management; protection (FFH³ habitats and species; nationally protected habitats and species). *Digital maps of habitats* had been elaborated and database created. In total there are ca 95 habitats and several land-use types mapped by the project. The digital habitat maps have been delivered to the all coastal municipalities and have been already applied for the territorial planning in several of them (Salacgrīva, Liepupe, Nīca, Skulte, Saka), Rīga City Development Planning, a number of detailed plans in Ventspils and Liepāja Cities. Several

³ Flora and fauna habitats protected according to the Habitats Directive

institutions have asked and adequately received the habitat maps, like the State Land Service, Regional Environmental Boards, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government and others.

Another crucial project output - proposed *Functional zoning* is a map, which is elaborated on a basis of the habitat map and the integral evaluation on the actual and potential use of the territory and evaluation of the area as a whole. The project has offered a classification of the coastal belt into the following zones:

- zone of strict protection (FFH and in Latvia protected habitats; habitats of protected species);
- zone of nature conservation (natural, undisturbed, sensitive areas crucial for protection of species and habitats),
- zone for recreation (sites where establishment of recreation infrastructure is essential for the protection of habitats);
- landscape zone where characteristic settlement structures and elements, traditional land-use and landscape mosaics has been maintained;
- neutral zone (human made, urban kind of areas where building activities are acceptable);
- zone of specially protected nature areas which have elaborated and authorised functional zoning.

Zones are categorized according to the existing applied zonation of the protected nature areas and settled in a national legislation. For every zone the project team has elaborated and proposed concrete conservation measures that are considered to be taken into account by relevant stakeholders.

Project staff is being working in a very close co-operation with municipalities. Thus habitat experts have reviewed the draft territorial plans prepared by the municipalities and provided the recommendations for required revisions and complementation from the FFH habitats and ecosystems fragility point of view. Then planners and habitat experts jointly had discussed and developed the most favourable option for the use of

the particular areas to be designated in the municipality's territorial plans. This is still ongoing and continuing activity. As confirmed by the project team, mostly, the attitude of municipalities towards nature conservation requirements has been positively orientated and the recommendations had been and are taken into account. Politicians and development planning experts have begun to look at the nature assets not only as restrictions but also as a chance for the economic development. Ca 70% of coastal municipalities has already made use of the habitats and functional zoning maps produced and disseminated by the project.

The project information, including spatial data base, is available in a website: <http://www.piekraste.daba.lv>

Already finished *LIFE – Nature project* LIFE2000NAT/LV/007134 **“Implementation of management plan for Lake Engure Nature Park”** realized by Latvian Fund for Nature from October 2001 until September 2004 can be considered as an input to the ICZM as had been performed in close co-operation with local municipalities and other stakeholders. The project experts have done inventory and mapping of FFH habitats and species and materials are available for municipalities and other interest groups. The main objective of the project was to commence and test realization of practical management activities foreseen by the management plan of the area by involving local inhabitants and authorities.

The project information is available in a website: <http://www.eedp.lv>

The ongoing *LIFE – Nature project* LIFE2003NAT/LV/000081 **“Lake Pape - Conservation, Preservation and Evolution”** leaded by WWF-Latvia deals with the utmost south- western coastal area of Latvia: Lake Pape Nature Park. The project, started in October 2003 and to be finished in October 2006, performs the following main actions:

- inventory of the project area to provide in depth habitat and species information to allow monitoring of conservation programs.

- planning and implementation a hydrological action plan that meets the needs of priority habitats and species and is respectful of the needs of local inhabitants.
- acquiring land to continue the reintroduction of large herbivores to maintain and expand project area meadow habitats.
- elaboration of management plan of LPNP.
- establishment of the nature park management authority.

The project is implemented in co-operation with local municipalities and relevant state environmental and forestry organizations and the outcomes might be useful for ICZM.

The project information is available in a website: <http://www.pdf.lv>

An additional *LIFE – Nature project*: LIFE2002NAT/LV/009496 “*Conservation of Wetlands in Kemer National Park*” being led by the Kemer NP administration, partly lies in the coastal zone as well. The project was commenced in September 2002 and will end in December 2006. The main idea is to implement a management plan of the area. Most important activities are dedicated to the restoration of natural hydrological regime of high raised bogs and swamps and reintroduction of active management in flood-plain meadows. The action that directly concerns coastal zone management is restoration of the coastal lagoon Lake Kanieris sluice and fish path and active management of the Lake. Thus the project can be considered as a kind of input to the ICZM - project implementation requests co-operation with municipalities and environmental and building institutions, but not many sectors are involved.

The project information is available in a website: <http://www.kemer.gov.lv>

Another recently initiated *LIFE-Nature project*, which deals with the coastal zone and carries out inventories of marine species and habitats, is the project LIFE2005NAT/LV/000100 “*Marine protected areas in the Eastern Baltic Sea*”. P/O Baltic Environmental Forum is implementing it in co-operation with 19 partners. The

project intends to complete establishment of marine Natura 2000 areas in the Baltic States and in collaboration with stakeholders to produce management plans for selected marine areas. In Latvia project area covers 5 sites located in the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea and bordering coastal terrestrial protected nature areas. The project will contribute to the overall objective of protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the Eastern Baltic Sea (costal and offshore waters of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and its realization and outputs might be considered as potential investment to the ICZM as well. The project ends in July 2009.

The information on the project is available in a website: <http://www.bef.lv>

Sustainable management of the North Western Latvian coastal zone has been intended by the finished *LIFE-Environment project* LIFE2000/ENV/LV/000956 "*Livonian Green Coastal Region – 21*", lasting from September 2001 until December 2003. The project was performed by the NGO "North Kurzeme Agenda 21 Centre" as a lead partner in co-operation with several municipalities, administrations of nature and culture conservation areas and others. The main objectives were to establish a framework planning, implementation and supervision system of Agenda 21 in the North Kurzeme coastal zone; to promote decrease of negative impacts to the coastal environment and to ensure integration of the principle of sustainability in all sectors.

The information on the project is available in a website: <http://www.zalaisnovads21.lv>

As a valuable initiative towards implementation of ICZM Recommendation the *INTERREG III B project Integrated Coastal Zone Development in the Baltic Sea Region / BALTCOAST* should be emphasized (see also the text above under chapters "Spatial planning" and "National strategies"). The project involved seven countries, including The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments of Latvia and was led by The Ministry for Labour, Building and Regional Development of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany. Its duration was July 2002 – September 2005. The project is a kind of pilot initiative for the support of integrated coastal zone management and development in the Baltic Sea Region. BaltCoast pursued a new,

integrated approach based on the concept of sustainable development by integrating the needs for development with those for protection, covering all types of coastal areas, including those of dynamic development and both: off-shore and land-side coastal areas, linking a project oriented approach with the process of spatial planning, widening participation to relevant public and private sectors.

Based on numerous ICZM case studies carried out in the framework of the BaltCoast and other ICZM projects and recommendations Recommendations for sea-use planning and the role of spatial planning within ICZM have been elaborate. The BaltCoast recommendations. The results and recommendations of the BaltCoast Initiative have been presented within the framework of the 6th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Spatial Planning and Development in the BSR countries 19 September, 2005 and form part of ICZM strategies that can be developed within each Baltic Sea country.

The information on the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B projects is available in a website: <http://www.spatial.baltic.net/>

Conclusions

There is no a particular single strategy developed for ICZM in Latvia. A National Spatial Plan, to be completed by the end of 2006, will be elaborated taking into consideration principles settled by the EC Recommendations on ICZM and recommendations and experiences. As indicated already above, all spatial and territorial plans should be developed in accordance to the conditions settled by the higher level spatial plan – thus principles of the ICZM will be implemented in all kind of spatial and territorial plans of the country. The existing produced zonings, based on coastal habitats and species inventories and experiences of co-operation among different stakeholders and institutions and recommendations produced by the BaltCoast project can serve as a good bases for the implementation of the Recommendations. As regards the coastal zone management, existing national legislation ensures cooperation among the institutions at national and regional level. It

should be strengthened at the local level through the facilitation of planner's qualification and other methodological type of activities.

Main Sources of Information

- ICZM in the Baltic States. State of the Art Report, edition Pickaver A., EUCC - The Coastal Union, 2003
- LIFE- tā ir jaunrade, LR Vides ministrija, Rīga 2005
- Materials of all indicated projects, available in relevant websites and provided by the projects beneficiaries.