

# Just coasting

*An assessment of the commitment  
of the devolved administrations  
and the English regions to  
Integrated Coastal Management*

A Report from The Wildlife Trusts and WWF

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# Introduction

Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) is an accepted element of planning and management in many maritime countries. To date, however, this does not appear to be the case in the UK. The development and implementation of most ideas and actions on ICM in the UK have been on a voluntary basis, through non-statutory plans and programmes. National guidance has generally been sectoral, and most ICM initiatives have been funded as short-term “projects” rather than being seen as part of the effective functioning of the day-to-day activities of government and coastal users at national, regional and local levels.

The completion of a European Demonstration Programme on ICM, publication of ideas for a European Coastal Strategy, and a recommendation from the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on ICM in Europe, have created fresh momentum to address the issue in the UK. This is most apparent in the recently-published *UK Marine Stewardship Report*, which sets out the need to develop a new, shared vision for the future of coastal areas and coastal strategies for each of the national administrations.

The Wildlife Trusts and WWF have had a long-standing interest in ICM and wish to encourage its adoption and implementation in the UK. This report has been prepared as a contribution to that process with the recent developments at European and national level in mind. The specific objectives of this report are to:

- 1 provide a synthesis of how the devolved governments and English regions are proposing to or are already implementing ICM and the principles of ICM as identified in the European Strategy and as reflected in the UK Marine Stewardship Report;
- 2 identify which, if any, of the principles of ICM in the European Recommendation and Marine Stewardship Report are not currently being promoted by the devolved governments and English regions; and
- 3 identify, in light of the above objectives, useful areas for consideration in a UK National Coastal Strategy that will support and coordinate regional coastal zone management in the devolved administrations and English regions.

Actions being taken to promote ICM at a national level, through the devolved administrations, are considered in this report with particular reference to planning policy guidance, national stocktaking and national coastal strategies. At the English regional level, the report examines regional planning guidance, regional economic strategies, regional sustainable development frameworks and government offices for the regions.

# 1 Background

## **1.1 THE EUROPEAN UNION INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRINCIPLES**

Awareness of the value of coastal areas, combined with concern about the deterioration in their quality, has resulted in a variety of European Union programmes and policies directed at the coastal zones of Europe. A European Coastal Charter, promoting the protection and development of Europe's coastline through coordinated action, was adopted by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of the European Community, and supported by the European Parliament in the early 1980s. In 1986 the European Commission concluded that the regions had not fully applied the charter and that there was a need for integrated planning of coastal areas (COM[86]571).

The desire to take action on Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), sometimes also referred to as Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), in the EU has been spurred on by a recognition that coastal zone programmes have a European as well as national dimension and therefore cannot be solved by member states working in isolation. The influence of EU policies and actions on the development of coastal zones, and the need for an exchange of experience where there is substantial public and political demand for the conservation of coastal zones and their sustainable development, has also become clear (EC, 1996 –XI/79/96).

The Council of Ministers asked the European Commission to propose an overall Community strategy for the management of coastal zones in 1992, and the *Fifth Community Environmental Action Plan* set targets for an operational framework for integrated planning and management by 2000 (EC, 1992). To take this forward, a demonstration programme was established to test cooperation models for the integrated management of the coastal zones, and to provide the technical results necessary to foster dialogue between the European institutions and all the players with a stake in developing coastal zones (COM(95) 511). The programme ran from 1996 to 1999 and the lessons learnt from the 35 individual projects and six cross-cutting thematic actions were published in 1999 (EC, 1999a). At the same time the Commission published a reflection paper setting out general principles and policy options towards a European Integrated Coastal Zone management strategy (EC, 1999b).

The most recent outcome of a decade of work on ICM at the European level has been a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EC) (BOX 1). It repeats the call made in 1992 for a strategic approach to coastal management, and goes on to set out a process whereby national strategies, national stocktaking, cooperation, report and review will deliver what is required. The recommendation also sets out a number of principles on which to base any future management. The first report on these activities is due in 2006.

**BOX 1: Key elements of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe (2002/413/EC).**

**A strategic approach**

Member states to take a strategic approach to the management of their coastal zones, based on: protection of the coastal environment;

- recognition of the threat to coastal zones posed by climate change, sea level rise and increased storminess;
- appropriate and ecologically responsible coastal protection measures;
- sustainable economic opportunities and employment options;
- a functioning social and cultural system in local communities;
- adequate accessible land for the public;
- maintenance or promotion of the cohesion of remote coastal communities; and
- improved coordination of the actions taken by all authorities concerned with sea and land in managing sea-land interaction.

**Principles**

In formulating national strategies and measures based on these strategies, member states should follow, in particular, the following principles:

- a broad overall perspective;
- a long-term perspective;
- adaptive management;
- local specificity;
- working with natural processes and respecting the carrying capacity of ecosystems;
- involving all the parties concerned;
- support and involvement of relevant administrative bodies at national, regional and local level; and
- using a combination of instruments.

**National Stocktaking**

Member states should conduct or update an overall stock taking to analyse which major actors, laws and institutions influence the management of the coastal zone. This should: consider a broad range of sectors (some are specified); cover all administrative levels; analyse the interest, roles and concerns of citizens, NGOs and the business sector; identify relevant inter-regional organisations and cooperation structures; and take stock of the applicable policy and legislative measures.

**National Strategies**

Member states should develop a national strategy or, where appropriate, several strategies, to implement the principles for integrated management of the coastal zone. These strategies should:

- identify the roles of the different administrative actors;
- identify the appropriate mix of instruments for implementation of the principles;
- develop or maintain national and other policies and programmes which address both marine and terrestrial areas of coastal zones together;
- identify measures to promote bottom-up initiatives and public participation in integrated management of the coastal zone and its resources;
- identify sources of durable financing;
- identify mechanisms to ensure full and coordinated implementation and application of Community legislation and policies that have an impact on coastal areas;

- include adequate systems for monitoring and disseminating information to the public about their coastal zone;
- determine how appropriate national training and education programmes can support implementation of integrated management principles in the coastal zone.

#### **Cooperation**

Member states should encourage dialogue and implement existing conventions with neighbouring countries to establish mechanisms for better coordination of responses to cross-border issues. They should also work actively with the Community institutions and other coastal stakeholders to facilitate progress towards a common approach to integrated coastal zone management, examining the need for a European coastal stakeholders' forum.

#### **Reporting and review**

Member states to report to the Commission on experience in implementation of this recommendation 45 months after adoption. The reports should be available to the public and the Commission should review this recommendation within 55 months and submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council for evaluation, accompanied if appropriate by a proposal for further action.

## **1.2 INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE UK**

In common with the situation in the EU, support for ICM in the UK has gone through a number of cycles. The need to improve planning and management of activities at the coast was recognised at least as far back as the late 1930s. The Council for the Protection of Rural England raised the issue of ineffective coastal planning again in the 1960s, and concerns about the loss of unspoilt coast led to the National Trust's *Enterprise Neptune* programme shortly afterwards, and the Heritage Coast programme for England and Wales by the 1970s. More recently, a specialist coastal group of the Local Government Association produced a coastal strategy that set out its vision and priorities for the coast to improve "governance, management and community wellbeing to ensure that the UK has the best managed coast in Europe" (LGA, 2000).

The UK government has been slow to acknowledge and support ICM, but campaigning work in the 1990s by The Wildlife Trusts, WWF and others brought it to the fore. The House of Commons Environment Select Committee carried out an inquiry into coastal zone protection and planning in 1992 and gave the idea its clear support:

"We recognise the benefits of the approach known as Coastal Zone Management, and we recommend that such an approach be adopted as the framework for all coastal zone planning and management practices in the UK" (HMSO, 1992).

Progress was made through coastal management initiatives such as those focused on estuaries and firths, and the establishment of coastal fora which brought together organisations and individuals involved with the coast in an effort to coordinate their activities and avoid conflicts over coastal resources and space. However, most of these actions were carried forward as projects outside any statutory framework, and some are no longer operational. Despite this, there is a pool of expertise

in ICM that can be harnessed to make progress, and a strong interest to do so in many organisations.

Central government action on ICM in the 1990s was mostly directed at producing review and consultation documents and a good practice guide (for example, DOE/WO 1993a & b; DOE, 1996). The most significant addition to policy on the topic at that time came through the issuing of planning policy guidance for the coast (PPG 20 for England and Wales, NPPG13 for Scotland). National coastal fora were also set up in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and an Inter-Departmental Group of officials was established to exchange information on government policy on coastal matters.

At a European level, the European Commission Demonstration Programme on ICM, which ran from 1996 to 1999, provided external interest and pressure to take forward ICM in the UK. Seven of the demonstration projects were UK-based and enabled ICM actions to be taken forward at specific locations. UK partners also contributed to six cross-cutting, thematic studies so that experiences from the projects informed the subsequent discussion on a possible strategy for promoting ICM throughout the EU. One outcome has been a recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on ICM (2002/413/EC) that includes a call for national stocktaking by member states and the development of national strategies to implement principles for integrated management of the coastal zone (see Section 1.1).

Developments in Europe and the continuing calls for ICM in the UK from a broad range of organisations appear to have had some effect. This is most apparent in the recently-published UK *Marine Stewardship Report*, which recognises that a new, shared vision for the future of our coastal areas is needed, and that it is essential for the stewardship of our seas and the success of an ecosystem-based approach (DEFRA, 2002). A regulatory review of development in coastal and marine waters has been instigated, and coastal strategies for each of the national administrations are to be developed. The target is to have “an overarching vision for the future of the UK’s coastline, underpinned by a fully integrated set of strategies for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland” by 2006.

### **1.3 THE ROLE OF DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS**

There was a major change in the pattern of governance in the UK in the late 1990s with the setting up of the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive to operate devolved administrations in different parts of the country. In England, devolution has been focused on the regions. The various changes that have been made, and current proposals, are described in Section 1.4.

Memoranda of Understanding and Concordats exist between the UK government and Scottish Ministers, the Cabinet of the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive Committee. These have been drawn up to ensure coherent governance of the UK as well as the procedures and rules to be followed for cooperation and policy coordination where there is shared competence, or where the actions of one will impact on the policy of other administrations.

Two important questions for ICM policy in the UK arise from these changes: where the driving force for ICM will lie, and whether it will be easier or more complex to introduce. The new arrangements may add another level of administration, policy development and decision-making for example, or may simply have transferred this role from an existing body such as the Welsh Office or the Scottish Office to the devolved administrations. One thing that has changed, however, is the way in which an ICM vision and strategy might be developed for the UK as there is more potential and interest in driving it from a national and regional level than existed previously.

### **1.3.1 THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE**

The Scotland Act 1998 sets out the role, powers and functions of the Scottish Executive, which is the devolved government for Scotland. It was established in 1999 and took over most duties of the Scottish Office. The new arrangements also allowed for a directly elected legislature. The First Minister for Scotland was appointed in 1999 and the first sitting of the Scottish Parliament under the new regime took place in the same year. The Parliament, which comprises 129 MSPs, passes laws and scrutinises the work and policies of the Scottish Executive.

The Scottish Executive consists of eight main departments: the Scottish Executive Development Department, the Scottish Executive Education Department, the Scottish Executive Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, the Scottish Executive Finance and Central Services Department, the Scottish Executive Health Department, the Scottish Executive Justice Department and Corporate Services.

The Scotland Act sets out a number of issues that are either “devolved” or “reserved”. The former are primarily for domestic Scottish consideration and the latter, which are dealt with by the Parliament at Westminster, are the responsibility of the UK government. The split between these issues is relevant to any future ICM policy, as it means that the Scottish Executive can deal with some elements while others will be functions of UK government. Defence and national security, foreign policy, trade and industry and constitutional matters, for example, are reserved issues while environment, fishing, ports and harbours are devolved matters.

A number of Scottish Executive agencies are directly or indirectly involved with Scotland’s coastal areas. They include the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Enterprise Network and Scottish Natural Heritage. An important focus for ICM in Scotland has been the Scottish Coastal Forum, established in 1996 and operated under the auspices of the Scottish Office. With the new arrangements it now falls within the responsibility of the Scottish Minister for Transport and the Environment.

### **1.3.2 THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WALES**

The Government of Wales Act 1998 sets out the make-up, powers and functions of the National Assembly of Wales. Unlike Scotland, there is no separate legislature, but a directly established Assembly that has power to implement and administer those aspects of UK government legislation devolved to it. The Assembly, established in 1998, elects a First Minister and cabinet, and operates through committees. The subject committees develop policy and examine what the

Assembly does, while regional committees represent the needs and interests of localities and convey issues of local concern to the subject committees and the Assembly.

Coastal matters can be dealt with through any of these administrative structures. The Environment, Planning and Transport Committee is currently carrying out a review of flood and coastal defence, for example, while the Economic Development Committee has in its brief tourism and urban development and regeneration, which are important coastal issues in some parts of Wales.

A Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership was launched in March 2002 to help inform policy development, advise on specific topical issues and help implement ICM. Key interest groups from the public, private and voluntary sectors are invited to be part of the new Partnership and a work plan has been drawn up to guide its work. At its launch, the Welsh Minister for the Environment stated that “improving the stewardship of Wales’ coast is a priority both for the new Partnership and the Welsh Assembly government”.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 placed a duty on the Assembly “to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions”. The Act requires it, among other things, to draw up a scheme setting out how it proposes to implement the duty. This was done on 16 November 2000 under Section 121 of the Act, and provides the over-arching framework for all the Assembly’s work, describing how it will fulfil its duty.

An action plan has been published, with a draft set of indicators. These do not include any marine or coastal indicators, but a working group will shortly reconvene to revise them. The sustainable development scheme is unique to Wales and is one of the potential levers for ICM in Wales.

### **1.3.3 THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

The devolved government in Northern Ireland is the Northern Ireland Assembly. It was established in December 1999 as part of the Belfast agreement of 10 April 1998 (also known as the Good Friday Agreement). The Assembly was elected in June 1998 under the Northern Ireland (Elections) Act, 1998.

The Assembly has a First Minister, an executive committee of ministers, and departments with various committees. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland represents the Province’s interests in the UK cabinet. The Secretary of State is supported by the Northern Ireland Office, which covers matters not devolved to the Assembly such as international relations and policing. Coastal and marine policy is covered by a number of departments including the Environment Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment, the Regional Planning and Transportation Division of the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Agriculture (NI), which deals with fisheries matters.

#### **1.4 THE ROLE OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND REGIONAL CHAMBERS IN ENGLAND**

In England the main emphasis of the UK government's devolution agenda has been to strengthen regional institutions and provide opportunities for elected regional government. Elements of the work of three of these institutions are considered in this report: regional Government Offices (GOs), Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and regional chambers. Regional government structures and development agencies exist in other parts of the UK but are not discussed in this report.

The GOs in England were set up in 1994 to bring together the activities and interests of different government departments within a single organisation. They are represented in Whitehall by the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) and have been part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since May 2002. The GOs are intended to provide a regional perspective to inform the development and evaluation of policy. They work with regional partners including local authorities, RDAs and other organisations to achieve government objectives in a joined-up way. The RCU coordinates inputs from the GOs to influence policy in central government.

RDAs come under the auspices of the Department of Trade and Industry. They were established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, following proposals in a government White Paper in 1997 which also set out new procedures for regional planning guidance. They are intended to provide coordinated regional economic development and regeneration within England's nine geographic regions. Each RDA has five statutory purposes:

- to further economic development and regeneration;
- to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness;
- to promote employment;
- to enhance development and application of skill relevant to employment; and
- to contribute to sustainable development.

In taking forward these purposes, they work within regional planning guidance and local authority development plans which set out the long-term spatial planning context for the region, including for coastal areas.

The RDAs were launched in 1999, and the following year produced strategies concentrating on improving the economic performance of each region. RDA board members are accountable to ministers and Parliament through regional chambers.

The geographic areas covered by the nine GOs for the regions and nine RDAs are shown in Figure 1. Only one, the West Midlands, has no coastline.

Each of the eight English regions has a Regional Chamber. They represent the interests of the region in relation to the work of the RDAs and have a membership mostly drawn from local authorities but also from other sectors such as chambers of commerce, rural and environmental

groups and other regional stakeholders. Some chambers have adopted the title “Assembly”, such as the South East of England Regional Assembly.

The most recent devolution initiative in England concerns the possibility of establishing directly elected Regional Assemblies. Plans to allow for this have been set out in a recent government White Paper, *Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions* (DTLR, 2002). The proposal is that they develop a strategic vision for improving the quality of life in their regions and be responsible for setting priorities, delivering regional strategies and allocating funding. The one exception is London, which has had a directly elected mayor since 2000 and a separately elected assembly, which together comprise the Greater London Authority.

The GOs, RDAs and Regional Chambers have an important role to play in developing an ICM strategy for the regions and supporting its implementation, as it is highly relevant to their function of promoting economic regeneration and sustainable development.

**FIGURE 1**

**The English Regions**



## 2 Current and proposed ICM policy and initiatives by the devolved administrations

Changes in the structure of government, such as the establishment of devolved administrations and greater regional autonomy, have opened up new possibilities for delivery of coastal zone policy and planning. This section of the report looks at current and proposed ICM policies and initiatives by the devolved administrations.

### **2.1 PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE**

National guidance on planning policy for the coast is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 20 for England, National Planning Policy Guideline 13 for Scotland, Planning Policy Wales with Technical Advice Note (Wales) 14, and the Regional Development Strategy *Shaping our Future* for Northern Ireland.

PPG 20 (which also applied to Wales until 1996) was published by the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office in September 1992 and replaced two 1972 Circulars on Planning of the Undeveloped Coast (DOE/WO, 1992). The policy guidance makes a distinction between types of coast, and identifies four key policy issues: conservation of the natural environment; development, particularly that which requires a coastal location; risks including flooding, erosion and land instability; and improving the environment, particularly of urbanised or despoiled coastlines.

Two other cross-cutting issues that are important for the implementation of ICM, and that are raised in PPG20, are cooperation and coordination, and information. Coastal planning is recognised as a strategic issue, so regional conferences or other groupings of local planning authorities are encouraged. The idea of cooperation to prepare estuary or coastal management plans is mentioned in this regard, but is not a requirement. The need for a good understanding of natural processes is also stated, with local planning authorities encouraged to cooperate in gathering information on the nature and quality of the coastal environment. Finally, it is noted that structure plans should identify key coast-related policy issues and that local plans provide an opportunity to define in detail the areas to which specific policies apply such as a coastal zone.

NPPG13 was published by the Scottish Office Development Department in 1997 (Scottish Office, 1997) to update national planning guidelines on the coast published in 1974 and 1981. It sets out the government's view on how the planning system can contribute to ICM in Scotland. NPPG13 highlights the need to distinguish between policies for the developed, undeveloped and isolated coast, with further guidance given in Planning Advice Note 53 (Scottish Office, 1998). It is recognised that many development and other pressures on the coast fall outside planning control. Elements of ICM that are brought out in NPPG13 include the need for planning authorities to recognise the inter-relationship between onshore and offshore activities, to work with other authorities and agencies to pursue a coordinated approach to issues arising on the coast, and that such issues are likely to range more widely than land use planning. The importance of planning authorities working together on coastal planning at the strategic level, taking a long-term view of the potential impacts of natural

processes, and drawing up policies and proposals in the context of the wide planning objectives for an area, are other elements of the guidance that will help implement ICM.

Chapter 5 of *Planning Policy Wales* concerns “conserving and improving the natural heritage and the coast” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002). It sets out the Assembly government’s objectives for the coast and the actions to be taken by local planning authorities in relation to the coast. Local authorities will need to consider landward and seaward pressures on the coastal area when, for example, they prepare their Unitary Development Plans and normally only propose coastal locations for development that needs to be on the coast. For estuaries and parts of the open coast, the policy states that local planning authorities and other agencies and interest groups may cooperate to prepare estuary or coastal management plans.

A Technical Advice Note on coastal planning for Wales was published in 1998 (TAN(W)14). Approaches discussed include the need to be aware of the link between onshore development and potential impacts offshore, and the fact that it may be appropriate to define a maritime zone which includes an “area of influence” offshore, as well as a coastal zone onshore. Key issues to be addressed in relation to development, nature and landscape conservation and recreation, as well as more general issues, are identified. A significant difference between the planning guidance for Wales, when compared with other parts of the UK, is that local authorities are required to recognise the aims and policies on any coastal zone management plans and consider the scope for producing a complementary framework to facilitate implication of such plans or even to issue supplementary planning guidance that directly links any ICM plan to the development plan.

In Northern Ireland, policy guidance specific to the coastal zone is minimal. The recently-published Regional Development Strategy *Shaping our Future* (DRD, 2001) is a step in the right direction, even though it is still very limited in its consideration of ICM issues. The strategy sets out the strategic planning framework for the next 25 years and will inform spatial development, including that taking place in coastal areas. Coastal issues are raised in the chapter on caring for the environment under the objective “to protect and manage the Northern Ireland coastline”. This includes seeking to reconcile development and management pressures, protecting the undeveloped coastline and conserving distinctive coastal habitats.

Planning policy statements are due to be published to give more guidance on how to deliver the goals and visions of the Strategy for Northern Ireland. The first three will cover transport, the countryside and retail policy. A coastal planning policy statement is likely to follow, as it is part of the agreed programme of work between the Department of the Environment (NI) and the Department for Regional Development.

A fundamental issue is that the documents described above provide guidance rather than being a statutory requirement. They are, however, material considerations to be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and development control. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Regional Development Strategy was prepared under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. As such, it requires NI departments to have regard to the strategy in exercising any functions in relation to development. Planning policy, development plans and development schemes prepared by the Department of the Environment (NI) and Department of Social Development are required to be consistent with the strategy, and it will be a “material consideration” in relation to decisions on planning applications and appeals.

There has been some discussion about whether planning guidance documents should have greater weighting. The status of NPPGs was raised during a review of strategic planning in Scotland, and although they are to be renamed and combined in a new series of Scottish Planning Policies, there was general opposition to giving them a legislative basis.

Another basic difficulty with the various planning guidance documents in relation to ICM is that, because they are linked to the land use planning system, they inevitably have a landward focus. While all except the Northern Ireland document are clear about the need to look to the marine environment and consider the links between land-based and inshore activities, issues and impacts, there is no guidance on how to deal with the marine element of ICM. Therefore, this remains a fundamental issue to be addressed, because the need to plan and manage the coastal zone as a interlinked system is at the heart of successful ICM.

## **2.2 NATIONAL COASTAL FORA**

In 1996, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA) published a guide to promote best practice in managing the coasts of England (DoE, 1996). Key points included promoting consensus through early and comprehensive participation and partnership, and being democratic and open in decision-making. The idea of national “coastal fora”, bringing together the major coastal interests, supports this approach, and such bodies have been set up in England, Scotland and Wales (Table 1).

The Coastal Forum for England was the first. It was established in December 1994 and has had a rather chequered history. Early meetings were well attended and were a good opportunity for networking and keeping up to date with ICM issues. However, there was no work programme or clear focus, and after a time the value of attending was questioned by many participants. At the last meeting in October 2000, delegates discussed where best to focus effort to influence and develop ICM. A report of the meeting summarises what were considered to be European, national, regional and local priorities (CoastNET, 2000). The forum has not met since, and its future status is unclear at present.

The Scottish Coastal Forum (SCF) was set up by the Scottish Office (now the Scottish Executive) in 1996 and operates through an independent chair with members of the Executive attending meetings as observers. The SCF is a very active group with a membership of around 20 organisations and individuals drawn from a wide range of coastal and marine interests. Examples of recent work under its auspices include an audit of Scottish coastal plans, acting as a central focus for local coastal fora in Scotland, responding to government consultations such as the 2002 Review of the Common Fisheries Policy, and disseminating information on coastal management to a wide audience. A major focus of current work is the development of a Scottish Coastal Strategy (see section 2.4). The SCF has a full-time project officer based in the Scottish Executive, who is funded by a number of members. In addition, the Scottish Executive covers the costs of the forum’s administration. There are no permanent arrangements yet to secure the long-term future of the forum.

**TABLE 1 Overview of UK National Coastal Fora**

Year Estab.	Terms of Reference	Current Status	Main working methods
1994	<p><b>English Coastal Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide for an exchange of views by those concerned, including representatives of central and local government as well as conservation, commercial and recreation bodies and organisations</li> <li>• promote understanding of the proposed policy guidelines for the coast</li> <li>• assist evaluation of local and other action in implementing coastal zone management initiatives, and to monitor preparation and publication of a guide to good practice</li> <li>• build on existing liaison arrangements at regional and local level</li> </ul>	In abeyance	<p>Set up and originally chaired by DoE, last meeting organised by CoastNet – a coastal heritage network.</p> <p>Attendance by coastal and marine interest groups, no formal membership.</p> <p>Formal meetings (7 since established) with presentations and discussions – sometimes in small groups.</p> <p>Idea of sub-groups to work on particular policy areas between main forum meetings was proposed but only one was every established (covering nature conservation).</p>
1996	<p><b>Scottish Coastal Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage a voluntary, sustainable and holistic approach to the management of Scotland’s coasts through the formation of local coastal fora;</li> <li>• act as the national focus for coastal issues and coordinate the dissemination of advice on best practice;</li> <li>• reflect views and aspirations of local fora for the coast of Scotland and guide a national policy framework within which local initiatives can operate;</li> <li>• advise government in the development of coastal policies for Scotland.</li> </ul>	Operational	<p>Set up by Scottish Office.</p> <p>Independent chair.</p> <p>Membership drawn from a wide range of coastal stakeholder representatives.</p> <p>Methods of working include formal meetings (17 since established), conferences, seminars and working groups. Outputs include topic papers, research reports and responses to consultations.</p>
2002	<p><b>Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help inform policy development in Wales on the sustainable development and management of the Welsh coastal areas and maritime waters;</li> <li>• help take forward the implementation of the EU recommendation on integrated coastal zone planning and</li> </ul>	Operational	<p>Developed from the Wales Coastal Forum established in 1997.</p> <p>Methods of working include meetings and responses to consultation papers and preparation of other papers to inform Assembly debates on coastal matters. May act as an advisory group</p>

	<p>management in Wales;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide better coordination of national and local policies for Welsh coastal areas and maritime waters and to complement existing consultation mechanisms;</li> <li>• facilitate the integrated management and use of the Welsh coastal areas and maritime waters by encouraging debate and by building partnerships supporting the exchange and dissemination of information and good practice;</li> <li>• cooperate with other national and regional coastal fora;</li> <li>• support research where this could identify gaps and add value to existing research activity on coastal and maritime issues.</li> </ul>		<p>which can be called on by the Environment Minister of the Welsh Assembly government.</p>
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The Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership has evolved from the Wales Coastal Forum. Recently established, it has met twice and has a work programme which includes consideration of the EU recommendations on ICZM. A part-time officer is based in the Welsh Assembly, and the link to government is mostly through the Countryside and Coastal Policy Branch which comes under the jurisdiction of the Environment, Planning and Transport Department of the Welsh Assembly government. The work plan for 2002/3 includes following up the work of the Assembly's Renewable Energy Working Group, a review of flood and coastal defence funding mechanisms, and the development of sustainability indicators for the coastal environment.

The idea of a national coastal forum for Northern Ireland was first proposed in 1995 as part of Northern Ireland Environment Policy. However, despite receiving support in principle from the Environment Committee and the minister, it was never established. Lack of funding has been cited as the principal reason for the lack of progress. Attention has been refocused on this issue since publication of the conclusions and recommendations of the EU demonstration programme on ICZM. One indication has been a research project, commissioned by the Environment Policy Division in the Department of the Environment, which examined the value and potential scope of a coastal forum for the Province. Although the results of this research are not publicly available, one recommendation of the recently-published Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy is to establish a coastal forum.

Experience so far with national coastal fora raises some relevant issues about consultation, advice, delivery and information exchange as part of the implementation of ICM. The greatest strength of these groups in their present form is providing an opportunity for networking – keeping up to date, exchanging information and raising issues for discussion. A far less successful aspect, up to now, has been their ability to influence government policy and facilitate action on the ground. Part of the difficulty lies with the voluntary nature of the fora, and the informal or unclear links with the development of government policy. The EU recommendations on ICM are an opportunity to change this, and the Scottish and Welsh fora are already working on the stocktaking and national strategies promoted in the recommendations. The fora are a useful sounding board and initial drafting group, and are

therefore playing a part in developing government response to these issues. The final status of these documents, as well as issues to do with the long-term direction, role and funding of national coastal fora, are still to be resolved.

### **2.3 NATIONAL STOCKTAKING**

A considerable body of information is already available to help deliver the EU recommendation for member states to “conduct or update an overall stocktaking to analyse which major actors, laws and institutions influence the management of the coastal zone”.

The House of Commons Environment Committee Review on coastal planning and management provided an overview of the situation in the early 1990s (HMSO, 1992) and stimulated the production of a number of review reports. These included a review of the main legislation and administrative provisions for coastal planning and management in the UK (DoE, 1993), reviews of coastal management plans and the powers supporting them, and of the regulation of development below low water mark in England and Wales (DoE/WO, 1993a & b), and a review of legislation relating to the coastal and marine environment in Scotland (Cleator & Irvine, 1995). Policy documents produced around that time included a maritime policy for seas, shores and coastal areas for Wales (CCW, 1996) and a consultation paper on delivering ICM in Northern Ireland (DoE [NI], 1995). All these reports were produced before the devolved administrations were established and need to be brought up to date and reconsidered in light of the changes made to government structures in the UK and the major planning reviews that have been conducted in the interim.

More recent work which can be drawn on includes the various papers produced by the Scottish Coastal Forum (such as the audit of *Scottish Plans and Foreshore and Seabed Development Consents: legislation overviews*), work commissioned by the Review of Marine Nature Conservation (for England) which is being carried out under the auspices of DEFRA, and a review of the consenting procedures for activities taking place in the marine environment in England and Wales which is due to report in early 2003.

### **2.4 NATIONAL COASTAL STRATEGIES**

The EU recommendation 2002/413/EC calls for member states to prepare national strategies as part of their approach to implementing ICZM (see Box 1). For the UK as a whole there is a commitment in the Marine Stewardship Report to have an overarching vision and a fully integrated set of strategies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales by 2006. Initial public discussions relating to the UK-wide approach are due to take place in November 2002.

A coastal strategy sub-group of the Scottish Coastal Forum started work on a national coastal strategy in 2000. This is focusing on the next 25 years and will cover the coastline and territorial waters to the 12-mile limit as well as identifying relevant issues outside this area that impact on coastal management. Task groups are preparing 12 sectoral topic papers including a factual position statement, current trends and key strategic management issues, long-term views, proposed key objectives and actions and integration prospects. Other work is also under way, including an assessment of the effectiveness of local coastal management partnerships as a delivery mechanism for ICZM. When completed, these will be developed into a synthesis document for consideration by the whole forum. Further debate is planned at

a national conference, after which a draft strategy will be circulated for wider consultation. It is hoped to complete this process by the end of 2003/beginning of 2004. The Scottish Executive is not a member of the forum but attends meeting in an observer category. The status of the completed national strategy document is therefore unclear at present.

The Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership is only recently established but its members have already expressed interest in working on a national coastal strategy for Wales. The process and potential of working with the other devolved administrations to produce the national strategy for Wales and link this into a UK strategy is still under discussion.

There is no indication at present of how national coastal strategies might be produced for England and Northern Ireland.

### 3 Current and proposed ICM policy and initiative by regional administrations and Regional Development Agencies in England

The devolution process initiated by government in the late 1990s is giving greater autonomy to English regions, making this an important level at which to secure enthusiasm, commitment and support for ICM in England. This section focuses on current and proposed ICM initiatives relating to regional policy through regional government and the Regional Development Agencies.

#### **3.1 REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Responsibility for issuing Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) was transferred from the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in May 2002. The aim of RPG is to:

- provide a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans should be prepared;
- set out a broad development strategy for the region over a 15-20 year period; and
- provide the spatial framework for other strategies and programmes.

Regional planning bodies (in most cases regional chambers), working with government offices and regional stakeholders, are responsible for preparing the draft RPG, which is then tested at a non-statutory public examination by a panel appointed by the Secretary of State, before being finalised.

The most recent guidance on regional planning – Planning Policy Guidance Note 11 – was published in October 2000. A section on the coast states that RPG should identify the key characteristics of the coast which is of regional or sub-regional significance, its problems, development pressures, and opportunities for more environmentally sensitive use. Shoreline and estuary management plans are referred to as sources of information on assessing these characteristics, and the importance of taking account of climate change scenarios is highlighted.

PPG 11 notes that the scope for integrated coastal planning in the region should be considered and that it should set out a vision for sustainable and environmentally sensitive land-use planning of the region's coast as a whole and of sub-regional units. The guidance is for the vision to ensure an integrated approach to the future use of the coast, with an emphasis on protecting and enhancing its biodiversity, natural character, built environment and landscape quality.

Eight RPG notes cover the coastal areas of England (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2: Regional Planning Guidance covering coastal areas of England**

<b>RPG No</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Regional Planning Body</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	North-east	North of England Assembly	1991	Under revision
6	East Anglia	Standing Conference of East Anglian Local Authorities	2000	To 2016
8	East Midlands	East Midlands Regional Local Government Association	2002	To 2021
9	South-east	South East Regional Planning Conference	2001	To 2011
10	South-west	South West of England Regional Assembly	2001	To 2016
12	Yorkshire and the Humber	Regional Assembly for Yorkshire and Humberside	2001	To 2016
13	North-west	North West Regional Assembly	1996	Under revision

Each RPG was examined to see whether and how it might encourage the ICM.

All regions give some consideration to coastal matters (see Table 3). In the South-west, for example, the coast is recognised as a key resource, playing a major role in quality of life, port development, tourism and the extraction of natural resources; the RPG for the South-east mentions that ICM plans can be used to promote sustainable development in coastal areas; and the RPG for Yorkshire and Humberside, in its coastal policy, focuses on the Humber estuary. However, the depth of consideration, and whether the guidance promotes ICM as opposed to coastal planning, is varied. This ranges from a very sectoral approach – for example, in the north-east where the coast is viewed predominantly from a recreational perspective, to the north-west which specifically promotes ICM as well as pointing out the need to address important elements such as marine issues, even when these are outside the immediate scope of the RPG. The north-west also gives ICM a much higher profile than other regions, by making it one of its key objectives. Of all the RPGs, overall consideration of ICM was by far the most extensive in the north-west.

**TABLE 3: Consideration of coastal issues in RPG for England**

RPG No	Region	Coastal issues identified	Coastal policy	ICM promoted	ICM plans specifically promoted	Coastal zone identified	Marine link made	Regional coastal fora specifically promoted
1	NE*	Limited	Limited	No	No	No	No	No
6	EA	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Limited	No
8	EM	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
9	SE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Limited	No
10	SW	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Limited	No
12	YH	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Limited	Yes
13	NW*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Proposals	Yes	Yes

\* Most recent consultation documents used for analysis. In both cases these were drafts incorporating proposed changes at May 2002.

### **3.2 REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGIES**

A recent initiative, linked to the establishment of RDAs, has been the preparation of Regional Strategies. Government guidance states that these should formulate clear priorities for seeking regional economic performance and identify strategies for achieving them. All nine RDAs in England are either producing the first of these strategies or have finalised them.

Coastal issues are mentioned very briefly in the Regional Economic Strategies (RESs). This is undoubtedly due to the fact that these strategies cover broad themes such as transport, regional identity, knowledge, learning and entrepreneurial culture, that apply equally well to coastal or other parts of the region. However, taking such an approach suggests that the value of ICM in harnessing the economic potential of the region has not been recognised. The RESs therefore also fail to pick up on the different issues that need to be tackled, and the opportunities that can be advanced through integrated management of the coastal zones of the different regions.

The fact that there is no more than a passing reference to the coast in these documents is a major omission, given the relevance of the coastal zone to the economy of the regions. For example:

- the South-west has the greatest length of coastline of any of the regions, yet apart from recognising its value for recreation and a brief mention of shipping, there is no consideration of the importance of ICM to the region's economy. This is particularly surprising given the existence of a South-west Coastal Issues group in the South-west RDA.
- the economic priorities for London clearly lie in aspects such as its business, housing, people and economic growth. Without the illustrations in the document, it would be impossible to discover that there is a major estuary in the heart of the city.

- as one of the low-lying regions of England vulnerable to flooding from rivers and the sea, a strategic view of coastal management as part of the economic development of the east of England region could reasonably be expected, but has not been included.
- in the South-east, the value of the coast is recognised – yet, despite being adjacent to one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and a major focus for coast/marine-based recreation, these issues get no mention as being relevant to the economic strategy for the region.

Specific mention of ICM as an approach, the need to link planning and management of coastal and marine issues, identifying a specific coastal zone on which to focus action, and the idea of promoting ICM plans for the benefit of the region are virtually ignored. There is also very limited consideration of the coastal zone’s role in the regional economy (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4: Consideration of aspects of ICM in Regional Economic Strategies covering coastal areas of England**

Reg	Document	Date	Coastal /marines issues mentioned	ICM as an approach	Coastal/ marine management linked	Coastal Zone identified	IZM plans	Role of Coastal Zone in economy recognised
NE	2002 Update: Realising our Potential. The Regional Economic Strategy for the North East of England (Consultation draft)	2002	Offshore renewables. Ports. Environment – turning the tide project.	No	No	No	No	Limited
YH	Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber 2003-2012 (Consultation draft)	2002	Humber trade zone and ports and its importance to the region and towns such as Hull and Grimsby. Coastal community restructuring in tours and eco-tourism in the Humber estuary.	No	No	No	No	Limited
EM	East Midlands – Towards the top 20. (Consultation paper)	2002	None	No	No	No	No	No
EE	East of England 2010: prosperity and opportunity for all. The	2001	Thames Gateway recognised as a major cross-regional	No	No	No	No	No

	Regional Economic Strategy		partnership.					
L	Success through diversity. London's Economic Development Strategy	2001	Protection and enhancement of the biodiversity of London land and marine environments.  Increased freight use of the Thames.	No	No	No	No	No
SE	Building a World Class Region. An Economic Strategy for the South East of England	1999	Recognise quality of coast as one of its "formidable potential strengths".  Developing links with the South-west region along the south coast.  Objective to recognise the contribution of landscape and coastline to the region's quality of life and lobbying government for adequate support to deal with the pressure on them.	No	No	No	No	No
SW	Regional Economic Strategy Review (Consultation doc)	2002	Regeneration of coastal towns part of one of the regional targets.  Marine technologies are one of the economic sectors to promote.	No	No	No	No	No
NW	England's North West. A strategy towards 2020	2001	Vision for coastal resorts.  Strategic port issues.  Heritage, coast and countryside recognised as fundamental environmental assets and crucial economic assets.  NWDA and partners to direct some resources to enhancing extending and securing the management of these assets.	Limited	No	No	No	Limited

### 3.3 REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS (RSDF)

The UK strategy for sustainable development states that “at a regional level in England, sustainable development will have a place in all strategic documents produced by public bodies. In addition, the government wishes to see high-level sustainable development frameworks for each English region by the end of 2000” (DETR, 1999). The Regional Chambers for all the English regions have now produced these and, in London, the Sustainable Development Commission that reports to the mayor is producing an RSDF.

RSDFs are intended to provide general guidance for those developing other strategies or action plans on how sustainable development should be delivered in the regions. As sustainability is one of the main objectives of ICM programmes, it was to be hoped that there would be some reference to such programmes in the RSDFs.

Most of the strategies make some reference to a number of coastal or marine issues and some go on to consider aspects of ICM (See table 5). For example:

- the East of England RSDF has a specific objective “to implement ICZM in order to achieve sustainable use of coastal areas” under the heading of rural issues. The objective to “review the effects of offshore dredging on coastal processes, sediment flows, beach recharge, fisheries and habitats” is an example of the linkage being made across the coastal zone.
- the South-east RSDF only picks up one coastal zone-related issue, regional objective 11 – to maintain and improve the water quality of the region’s rivers and coast and the need to reduce the risk of flooding.
- the North-east RSDF makes reference to coastal water quality. The coastal and marine environment is covered in the objective to protect and enhance the region’s biodiversity which is supported by the Framework document.
- the North-west RSDF mentions the role of coastal fora, and the importance of ICM. It includes the statement that “the need for integrated coastal planning along our entire coast is urgent and a Coastal Forum has been established”.
- the South-west RSDF has *Coast and the Maritime Environment* as one of its themes. There are objectives to develop and support cross-sectoral partnerships, develop the region’s coastal and marine knowledge base, enhance the sustainable economic potential of the coast, and reduce diffuse marine pollution from land-based sources.
- the East Midlands RSDF identifies “management of the region’s coastline and flood plains in ways which maintain and enhance their environmental assets” as a key issue.

**TABLE 5: Consideration of aspects of ICM in Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks covering coastal areas of England**

Region	Document	CZ issues raised	ICM as an approach	Coastal for a promoted	Coastal/ marine mmnt linked	Coastal zone identified	ICM plans	Role of CZ in sustainable development
NE	Sustaine. Quality of Life in the North East. Towards a Regional Framework (2002)	Limited	No	No	No	No	No	No
YH	Advancing Together: Towards a Sustainable Region. The Regional Sustainable Development Framework for Yorkshire and Humberside (2001)	Limited	No	No	No	No	No	No
EM	England's East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy. Our Sustainable Development Framework (2000)	Limited	No	No	No	No	No	No
EE	A Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England (2001)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
SE	A Better Quality of Life in the South East (2001)	Limited	No	No	No	No	No	No
SW	A Sustainable Future for the South West (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
NW	Action for Sustainability (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

### **3.4 GOVERNMENT OFFICES FOR THE REGIONS**

Regional Government Offices (GOs), linked by the Regional Coordination Unit, provide a regional perspective on the development and evaluation of government policy, and work with regional bodies to achieve the objectives of government in a joined-up way. Government has stated that GOs are “uniquely well-placed to take a cross-departmental approach, and to provide a coherent view of the operations and interactions of government programmes”. As integration, coordination and cooperation are at the heart of ICM, they are potentially very important in helping to deliver ICM at a regional level.

The work of GOs in promoting and coordinating policy to deliver ICM in the regions has generally been very limited. Coastal issues tend to have been considered on a very sectoral basis and mostly in relation to transport considerations (for example, multi-modal studies) if at all. The most active GO on ICM has been that of the North-west (GONW), which has supported and helped promote ICM in the region. In 1999, for example, it commissioned the University of Liverpool to undertake research into ICM in the region, in order to inform the review of RPG and subsequent review of development plans and coastal strategies, as well as to “encourage a more consistent, integrated and holistic planning and management for the North-west coast” (DETR, 2000). This has clearly had an effect, as illustrated by the consideration of ICM issues in the draft RPG for the North-west (see Table 3). GONW established the North West Coastal Forum and, until recently, chaired and provided the forum’s secretariat, a group whose aim is to promote and deliver ICZM in the region. It is now independently chaired and the secretariat has been transferred to the North-west Regional Assembly. However, GONW hopes to remain actively involved.

Apart from GONW, the work of GOs on ICM has generally been variable and very limited. The South-west is probably the next most active region, with its coastal prospectus commissioned by the South West Coastal Issues Group, which has the GO for the South-west as one of its members. Ideas under discussion include a regional strategic framework for addressing coastal issues, a South-west coastal conference, and a regional Coastal Issues Steering Group.

Other examples of the work of GOs related to ICM include the promotion of specific projects, as well as coordinating and providing information on funding bids such as those for the Coastal Zone Management Demonstration Project, INTERREG, and LIFE programmes of the EU. GOs also send a representative to meetings of the Inter-Departmental Group on coastal policy so that relevant information can be passed from the regions to inform national and UK policy and *vice versa*.

## 4 Promoting the principles of ICM at national and regional levels

The EU recommendation on ICM lists eight principles that member states should follow when formulating national strategies and measures based on these strategies:

### **Broad holistic perspective**

This principle is an acknowledgement that successful planning and management should be strategic, looking at the bigger picture and the long-term interdependence between maintaining the integrity of natural and cultural systems and the provision of economic and social options. In terms of geography, it points to the need to consider both marine and terrestrial portions of the coastal zone as well as the river basins draining into the coast.

### **A long-term perspective**

This principle sets out a call to consider the needs of both present and future generations concurrently and equally, and in an institutional framework that looks beyond the present political cycle.

### **Adaptive management during a gradual process**

This is a recognition that integrated planning and management develops and evolves. In response to this there is a need for good information provision, shared responsibilities and monitoring so the programme can be adjusted as problems and knowledge evolve.

### **Reflect local specificity**

This principle stresses that ICM must be rooted in a thorough understanding of the specific characteristics of the area, including pressures and driving forces. Linked to this is the need to ensure the collection and availability of data and relevant information, including informal traditional knowledge to decision-makers.

### **Work with natural processes**

This principle recognises that natural processes and the dynamics of coastal systems are in continual and sometimes sudden flux. It advocates working with, rather than against, this as well as recognising the limits (or carrying capacity) which are imposed as a result.

### **Participatory planning**

This principle seeks to ensure that the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders are incorporated into the process. It is a recognition that collaborative involvement helps to identify real issues, harness local knowledge and build commitment and shared responsibility.

### **Support and involvement of all relevant administrative bodies**

This principle recognises that administrative policies, programmes and plans set the context for management of the coast and therefore that strictly voluntary, non-governmental approaches to ICM will have serious limitations. It seeks to encourage the engagement of local authorities from the outset, commitment from all levels and sectors of administration, and it recognises the value of a nested set of planning and management actions at different scales. This principle also stresses the need for support and links between sectors of

administration and coordination of policies, as well as ensuring that legal instruments which influence the coastal zone are mutually compatible and coherent.

**Use of a combination of instruments.**

This principle recognises the need for a mix of instruments to deliver ICM. They include legal and economic instruments, voluntary agreements, information provision, technological solutions, research and education. In such circumstances it is also clear that there should be coherence between legal instruments and administrative objectives and between planning and management.

Table 6 provides a general overview of how well these principles are being taken forward by the various documents and organisations examined for this report.

**TABLE 6: Promoting the principles recommended by the European Commission in its Recommendation on ICZM (2002/413/EC)**

POLICY STRATEGY ORGANISATION	Broad perspective	Long-term perspective	Adaptive management	Local specificity	Natural process	Participatory planning	Support/involve relevant admin bodies	Combination of instruments
Planning policy guidance	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited
Coastal Fora – outputs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coastal Fora – operation	Yes	Limited	Yes	Limited	N/R	Yes	Limited	No
National stocktaking	Too early to judge							
National coastal strategies								
Regional planning guidance (England)	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited
Regional economic strategies (England)	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional sustainability frameworks (England)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional Government Offices (England) – operation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Regional	N/R	Yes	Yes	Yes

Most principles advocated in the EU recommendation are supported by the various planning policy guidance documents and regional planning guidance prepared by the English regions described in Section 2.1. For example, even though they are written from a national or regional perspective, they acknowledge the importance of local specificity by suggesting

dividing the coast into a number of types for planning purposes and encouraging defining different zones of the coast and different policies for these. The value of using a combination of instruments is not really promoted, apart from development plans for which planning guidance documents are specifically geared, nor does the need for a long-term perspective emerge particularly strongly.

The three existing national coastal fora are at different stages of development and have different ways of working. Their main strengths are in the areas of participatory planning and taking a broad perspective. With regard to the discussions that take place at the fora, all the principles are promoted – but the same cannot be said for their operation. It is not clear that they have the support of all the relevant administrations, for example, and the long-term existence of the groups themselves is in question. Also, while the fora may advocate the use of a combination of instruments to deliver ICM, they have no powers to make this happen. Finally, because they work at a national level there is a limited local focus, but they do reflect local situations through their membership and by supporting local ICM initiatives. This is illustrated by the work of the Scottish Coastal Forum and its links to local fora.

The Regional Economic Strategies take on the principles as a way of working, but have not applied them in relation to the coastal zone – and the same can be said for most Regional GOs. The most consistent documents in terms of taking forward the principles are the RSDFs. They cover all aspects and advocate the principles in the EU recommendation on ICM.

Examination of these few documents suggests that the principles advocated in the EU recommendation are generally accepted as a way of working at national and regional level. This is most likely because they are not limited in their applicability to the coastal zone and consequently, in many cases, they have still to be used to deliver ICM. This is best illustrated by the situation with the RESs, which advocate the various principles that are considered to be important for ICM but are not using them to take forward ICM for the regions.

# 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers concerning the implementation of ICM in Europe has created a new momentum for ICM in the UK. This is clear from the UK Marine Stewardship report which states that a new, shared vision for the future of our coastal areas is needed, and that it is essential for the stewardship of our seas and the success of an ecosystem-based approach.

Actions being taken to promote ICM at a national level, through the devolved administrations, are considered in this report, with particular reference to planning policy guidance, national stocktaking, national coastal strategies and, at the level of the English regions, with particular reference to regional planning guidance, regional economic strategies, regional sustainable development frameworks and Government Offices for the regions.

At a national level, the situation is most advanced in Scotland, where work is under way to inform a national coastal strategy, and where there is an active Scottish Coastal Forum which is contributing to and promoting ICM at a national level as well as helping to network regional ICM initiatives in Scotland. The Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership is starting work on similar issues and is therefore a potential focus for ICM at the national level in Wales. The English Coastal Forum has failed to deliver anything useful at a national level and the strong regional government agenda has left a vacuum for coastal policy development at a national level in England. There may soon be a Coastal Forum in Northern Ireland, but the Province lags far behind other parts of the UK on this issue.

Coastal planning policy guidance is available for England, Scotland and Wales, and a Planning Policy Statement on the coast may be prepared for Northern Ireland in 2003. The Welsh guidance is the most recently published and therefore includes more current thinking on ICM. PPG20, which applies to England, is 10 years old and while the issues covered are still relevant, there is a need to update the guidance provided. By their very nature, these documents provide guidance only, and it is not clear how much influence they have had in promoting ICM at a national level in the UK. Work on national stocktaking and the preparation of national strategies, as requested by the European Commission, has only just begun, so it is too early to judge how successful they have been.

Work on ICM at the level of the English regions has been very variable and fairly limited in most cases. Regional Planning Guidance is one of the mechanisms that can help deliver aspects of ICM and all the RPGs that cover the English coastal areas do raise at least one coastal issue. Beyond this, the review carried out for this report shows that RPGs are not consistent in promoting ICM plans, regional coastal fora or identifying coastal zones, despite the support for such action in PPG20. The link with marine issues is particularly limited, if mentioned at all, again despite the fact that PPG20 makes it clear that local planning authorities should recognise that on-shore development can often have an impact offshore.

In terms of key documents produced by the RDAs, the most significant drivers of regional action are likely to be the Regional Economic Strategies. The analysis presented in this report reveals that their consideration of coastal issues is minimal and the idea of ICM is even less

likely to be mentioned. While accepting that these documents advance many cross-cutting themes which are as relevant to the coast as elsewhere, there does not appear to be any recognition of the particular requirements of coastal management or the important contribution integrated management can make to regional economies in all parts of England. The Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks are more positive in this regard, with a number specifically promoting ICM and ICM plans as well as recognising critical issues such as interconnection between terrestrial and marine systems and therefore the need to take a holistic approach to management in the coastal zone. They could be a valuable basis for more regional action on ICM.

The work of Regional Government Offices on ICM is another area of variable action, with coastal matters generally having little or no profile. In the few cases where GOs have been proactive on this subject, the results can clearly be seen in RPG and the establishment and work of regional coastal fora. One consequence of this is a poor link into any future national coastal strategy for the UK, as GOs are an obvious channel between regional and national levels to inform such a strategy.

The principles advocated in the EU recommendation are generally supported at the different levels and in the various documents examined in this report. They are part of a style of working rather than being coast-specific principles, and this is perhaps why they are widely applied. Of all of them, the one which most needs to be reinforced is the need to take a long-term perspective. These principles have still to be applied to deliver ICM in the UK.

Issues that need to be addressed that come out of the analysis are as follows:

**National planning policy guidance**

- status of documents (guidance);
- terrestrial focus;
- poor linkage with ICM plans;
- poor or no explanation of the coastal zone.

**Devolved administrations**

- role and status of national coastal fora;
- unclear links between national fora, elected bodies and national administrations;
- strategy development at a national level in England;
- mechanism for linking strategies and stocktaking for the UK.

**English regions**

- inconsistent consideration of ICM in Regional Planning Guidance;
- limited and variable work of Regional Government Offices of ICM;
- very poor coverage of coastal issues, ICM, and the value of ICM to regional economies in Regional Economic Strategies;
- methods of linking ICM considerations in Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and the work of Regional Assemblies;
- poor links between regional and national government to inform national coastal strategy.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Despite many years of lobbying by national, regional and local organisations, there is clearly still a job to be done in convincing government at all levels that there is a need for and value to ICM. The subject is acknowledged in the Marine Stewardship Report, which is a start, but the issue still has a **very low political profile and does not receive any significant funding**. Both these points must be addressed if the EU recommendations are to be implemented, and if the UK is to get the benefits of ICM.
  
- 2 A major area of weakness in those actions that have been taken on ICM at national and regional levels to date is **consideration of the marine environment**. Certain issues such as shoreline management and policies concerned with sea level rise do make this link but, apart from that, there is little policy guidance on integrated management of the marine part of the coastal zone. The situation is being complicated further by setting up groups, such as those reviewing marine conservation requirements and the consultation of consents procedures in the marine environment (both in England), that have no remit to consider the framework in which decisions about these subjects need to be made. A continuing and urgent priority is therefore to address the related issue of integrated planning and management in the marine environment, and of the particular geographic area offshore which will be covered by a UK ICM strategy and programme.
  
- 3 National coastal fora have been in existence for a number of years and have operated in different ways in different parts of the UK. They are being used as sounding boards and useful groups to provide opinions and respond to consultations on government policy. **The status of national coastal fora** in terms of their relationship and advice to government does, however, **remain vague**. While this may facilitate their work in the short term, there is a need for clarity about this link so that they can be as effective as possible as different parts of the UK move towards preparing national strategies for ICM.
  
- 4 **Regional Government Offices and the Regional Coordination Unit need to be much more engaged in promoting and facilitating ICM**. As a start, this requires a focal point in each GO (perhaps most appropriate in the section dealing with sustainable development) which has an integrating function on coastal zone matters. This will not only enable GOs to bring together information on existing policies and actions relevant to ICM at the regional level, but it will also enable them to pass this on to inform the national coastal strategy through the RCU. This is part of the function of GOs and an action that should be taken further through the RCU – but it is one that has not taken place to any great extent in relation to coastal issues so far. The actions taken by GONW to set up a regional coastal forum and enable its transition to the regionally elected assembly is an example of a further step of how ICM can be taken forward in the regions, and is a model that could also be applied elsewhere. This does not, however, remove the need for a regional ICM focus in GOs and promotion at national level through the RCU.

- 5 **Regional Assemblies and the Regional Development Agencies in England** are driving policy development and implementation at a regional level. They are concentrating on economic aspects and economic development, yet **have largely failed to recognise the potential of ICM to harness the value of coastal and marine economies for the region.** Like the GOs, there is a need to identify focal points and a budget in these administrations to act as a link for regional action of ICM. A second important area for action is for others to **demonstrate clearly the economic value of ICM** and the benefits it can bring to regional economies as well as the benefits to environmental and social agendas for the regions.
- 6 **Regional Planning Guidance for the English regions is inconsistent in its consideration of ICM** despite the guidance provided in PPG20. If ICM is to be taken seriously and implemented as part of government policy, there is either a need to have something stronger than guidance, or to ensure that *all* aspects of the guidance are being taken into account. ICM plans are non-statutory documents, but there should at least be some acknowledgement of their role in RPGs, given the emphasis that government has put on the value of creating ICZM plans on a voluntary basis. The role of ICM plans could be strengthened further by making them a material consideration in planning decisions.

#### **ACRONYMS AND INITIALS**

GO	Government Office
ICM	Integrated Coastal Management
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NPPG	National Planning Policy Guidance
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSDF	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
SCF	Scottish Coastal Forum

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