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Introduction

The Region of East Macedonia Thrace and the Decentralized Administration of Crete organized a meeting in Athens on the 18th December 2014. The objective of the meeting was to inform the Ministries on the Coastgap project, the Bologna charter and the Joint Action Plan and build partnerships for the promotion of the Major Coastal Works on National Level.

The official invitation of the event is attached in Greek.







Minutes

Opening

The meeting opened with a presentation of each participant. Mr Mavrakis of the DAC and Mrs Chamitidou of REMTH presented the objective of the meeting: present what REMTH and DAC have accomplished till now with their participation to the COASTGAP project and gain national endorsement for the next steps: the proposition of Major Coastal Works.

Mr Mavrakis pointed out that from the participation of DAC to a series of EU projects like Beachmed-e, Coastance, Maremed and Coastgap, DAC has gained a lot and most of all has seen that Regional ICZM planning is essential for planning and constructing environmental friendly coastal projects that will not cause erosion later on. Mr Mavrakis presented briefly DAC's proposal for the JAP, which is currently under preparation, and the main points that he wishes this proposal to include. DAC has now the opportunity to unify data from research projects like AKTAIA in order to create a data base on coastal erosion and to use COASTGAP Best Practices, which have been already tested in many EU MED countries for Regional ICZM planning.

During the meetings, which were conducted in the context of the COASTGAP project, a close collaboration was developed between DAC's Environment and Spatial Planning Service, which license works, and the REMTH's Regional Technical Services which plans and designs coastal works. This cooperation should be strengthened in the implementation phase of the JAP, since our proposals are now at the application level in order to obtain a useful tool for the coastal zone's management.

In the context of the COASTGAP project, Mr Mavrakis participated in an equivalent meeting in Cyprus, where a similar discussions took place. Cyprus disposes of many coastal protection works and a central ministry service that is responsible for their licensing. This service presented as a good example coastal protection works that combine beach nourishment and submerged breakwaters.

Mrs Chamitidou continued that, through the EU projects mentioned before, REMTH has now experience on ICZM and sees that erosion is an obstacle for the touristic and economic development of REMTH. Thus REMTH has already decided to create an ICZM Working Group in collaboration with the municipalities and to develop a Regional ICZM Masterplan that will include a database on coastal information, Risk and Hazard Maps, the Socio-economic effects of erosion and climate change and monitoring protocols for coastal evolution. REMTH is already actively seeking funds for this ICZM MasterPlan from EU funds. Furthermore the island of Samothraki is proposed as a pilot site for environmental friendly coastal protection projects.

Both representatives of REMTH and DAC highlighted the necessity of national endorsement of the Bologna Charter and the proposed Major Coastal Works in order for REMTH and DAC to carry on their efforts on ICZM but also for the Bologna Charter and ICZM issues to gain more political influence and funding on EU level.

Presentation

The presentation of Mrs Chouli is attached. Mrs Chouli presented the COASTGAP project, the Bologna Charter, the Joint Action Plan and the adopted Best Practices: BP1 EIA Guidelines, BP2 SICELL and BP7 COFLERMAP.



Debate

The debate opened with comments of Mrs Douma that, in Greece, there are no technical guidelines for port works and coastal protection works, so the EIA guidelines are very useful. Furthermore a database like SICELL would be very useful because now the Ministry of Environment has to license coastal and port works based on the studies of these works but without having any other information of the entire coastal area (sedimentary cell) and how this area will be influenced by a single project.

Mr Toleris asked if the COASTGAP project and the proposed JAP are about coastal protection from the climate change effects or about structural works for the development of beaches.

Mrs Chouli answered that the COASTGAP project and the proposed JAP, study both kind of threats: coastal erosion induced by climate change and coastal erosion induced by human intervention. This is why the proposed Best Practices include monitoring methodologies so as first to find the erosion “hot spots” and study the erosion mechanisms and then propose works. Furthermore, future scenarios are build in order to estimate the effects of climate change and sea level rise, these scenarios help not only in the proposition of works but also for better spatial planning so as to limit future damages and reinforce the coastal areas resilience to climate change.

Mr Niavis, said that Climate Change is a very critical issue for Greece and it has to be promoted on EU level. A serious issue is the official delimitation of coastline and beach which is not yet available for the whole Greek coastline. If the proposed works include breakwaters, it would be possible to propose mechanic energy producing breakwaters.

Mr Aftias, continued saying that a crucial legal issue is the re-use of dredged sand: the sand dredged from ports and channels is auctioned to contractors and not used for beach nourishment.

Mrs Chamitidou also pointed out that finding off-shore sand deposits and using them for beach nourishment is a difficult task because of legal issues.

Mrs Chouli, said that during the Komotini meeting the municipalities and cadastral services said that it is not legal to use long-shore and off-shore dredged material for beach nourishment projects.



Mrs Douma, said that the current legal framework is problematic about coastal protection but beach nourishment from off shore deposits is possible and her service has already licensed many beach nourishment projects in the past. The appropriate procedure is to delimit the off-shore deposit and seek the appropriate license from the cadastral service (with information and approval from the relevant services: Greek Navy etc.) for the dredging of the off-shore material and then proceed to the licensing of the project. So it is a long procedure but it is possible.

Mrs Douma said that many municipalities do not prefer beach nourishment projects because they have the money for a single intervention and not for periodical interventions. Because beach nourishment projects have to be repeated periodically.

Mrs Chamitidou said that REMTH is planning to start a regional project on the delimitation of off-shore sediment deposits. Would it be possible to get a “permanent” license for the use of these sediment deposits for beach nourishment?

Mrs Douma replied that the cadastral services give every license/authorization for a specific amount of sediment to be used for specific use. They cannot give an authorization of unlimited use.

Mrs Chamitidou replied that the volumes will be specific and the use will be specific: beach nourishment.

On those conditions a dredging license/authorization would be possible for the use of the sand on specific sites. REMTH can apply for multiple beach nourishment sites and get the license and then do the projects in the long-term. It is better to have a license for many projects-sites even if some of them will never be constructed.

Mrs Douma added, that in general there is a lack of guidelines for coastal protection works. There is a need for guidelines on national level that should be the same for all coastal works.



Mr Parapanisios Antonis, said that Greece has the longest coastline in Europe and it will be very beneficial for Greece if ICZM issues are promoted in EU level. He also asked a general question: How does the sand in sand nourishment projects stay on the beach? Even in natural beaches the sand moves around during the summer time and the winter time, some years there is more sand and others less sand and many beaches/gulfs change shape in the long-term. So how we want to create a stable sandy beach? More over there is a general problem in Greece with torrents, river beds and beaches. It is permitted by law to private own torrents and beaches, it is not permitted to build on them. Usually nor state nor municipalities have the money to expropriate this land so it remains private. The legal framework for the ownership of torrents, rivers and beaches should be revised.

Mrs Karipidou, added that many private land owners and municipalities construct coastal defense works on the beach or near the coastline without the appropriate licensing. These works are “illegal” and the cadastral services have proceeded legally and have got court orders for their demolition, because these works are build on state property without licensing. Now the Decentralized Administration of Macedonia Thrace is called to demolish these coastal works. But they see that if these works are demolished/ removed houses and/or roads will collapse from sea erosion. For some of these works, the DAMTH is trying to get the appropriate licensing but for others they have no solution. The state authorities or the regional authorities have to make a general erosion protection plan and construct the adequate coastal protection works or say that the existing works should be removed or not. But they cannot remove existing works and let houses and roads collapse without any planning! First build the appropriate public works and then remove the private works that are not properly licensed.

Mr. Manalis, concluded that one of the results of this meeting is that Climate Change will be an important issue in Greece in the future. A National Strategy on climate change will be drafted and it will include the issue of coastal erosion and other issues.



Mrs Pelekasi, said that the Bologna Charter should be endorsed by the National Authorities. Some other services should also be informed about the Bologna charter as the Special Secretary on Water. Greece has to complete the National Strategy on Climate Change within 2015. This paper will include an inventory of all possible natural risks (sea erosion and sea level rise included) and the socio-economic impacts of climate change in Greece. REMTH and DAC should exchange information on coastal erosion and climate adaptation with the ministry. As a representative of the Ministry she considers that the tender documents for the preparation of the National Strategy on Climate Change can also be used as a basis for the specifications of an ICZM study.

Mrs Chamitidou said that a national inventory on the coastal risks would be very useful and municipalities are eager to give information when they see that regional and state authorities are interested on their problems.

Mrs Pelekasi said that it would be useful to create an information platform. The EU structural funds 2014-2020 will be distributed on National Level according to the Partners Agreement. 25% of these funds will be invested in Climate Change related projects. Thematic 5 covers Climate Change and natural risks. The National Strategy on Climate Change will be the national umbrella. Regional Plans on Climate Change will be drafted under this National Strategy. These will be planning tools. The proposed regional masterplans on ICZM will be operational tools.

Mrs Martinou asked how quickly these Regional Plans and the National Strategy will be ready.

Mrs Pelekasi answered that the first step, which is the National Strategy, will be completed by the end of 2015. Then adaptation works, like coastal protection works, could be included into the Regional Planning afterwards.

Mrs Karipidou asked if the ICZM Masterplan will be done after the National Strategy on Climate Change.



Mrs Pelekase answered that the National Strategy on Climate Change will be the national umbrella under which many issues will be dealt with: the impacts of Climate Change on Cities, on the natural environment etc. The coastal erosion should not be dealt with as an isolated problem that is why cooperation and collaboration of different services on regional and national level is necessary: Special Secretary of Water, Special Service for the Management of the Operational Program of Environment and Sustainable Development, Special Service for the Coordination of Environmental Actions, Civil Protection Services etc. It would also be useful to include to the future projects information and awareness activities for the general public and the effected social groups. There are available EU funds for raising awareness on the Risks and Adaptation.

Mr Niavis added that projects relevant to coastal protection could be funded by the LIFE project. And funding is also possible for a multinational project, as the components of the Joint Action Plan.

Conclusions

Mrs Chamitidou and Mr Mavrakis, concluded that all national authorities present were very positive to the Bologna Charter and the proposed Joint action Plan and further collaboration with national services is necessary in order to promote ICZM on national level and ensure multiple funding sources for the proposed Major Coastal Works.

The proposed Regional ICZM masterplans were also well received and they will be endorsed by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. However a dynamic collaboration with the ministry is necessary in order for these Regional ICZM masterplans to be coherent with the National Strategy on Climate Change which is not yet completed.

Participants list

The participants list is attached, 18 persons in total participated. The participants included:

- Mr Rokadakis, General Secretary of the Decentralized Administration of Crete
- Mrs Zahari Zinovia, Thematic Vice-Governor on Environmental Issues of the Region of East Macedonia Thrace
- Mr. Manalis Nikolaos, General Director of Environmental Policy, Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (YPEKA)
- Mr Parapanisios Antonis, Director of Climate Change, YPEKA
- Mr Toleris Epaminondas, Director of Environmental Licensing, YPEKA
- Mr Niavis Dimitrios, Mrs Pelekasi Katerina, Mrs Tsilimpari Eirini, Mr Adamopoulos Anastasios, Direction of Climate Change, YPEKA
- Mrs Douma Chrisoula, Direction of Environmental Licensing, YPEKA
- Mrs Tsiatas, Direction of Portal Works, Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks
- Mrs Chamitidou Maria, Direction of Works, Region of East Macedonia Thrace
- Mrs Chrisoula Karipidou, Direction of Technical Control, Decentralized Administration of Macedonia Thrace
- Mrs Mavrakis, Director of Environmental and Spatial Planning, Decentralized Administration of Crete
- Mrs Martinou Aggeliki and Mrs Vrentzou Irini, Direction of Environmental and Spatial Planning, Decentralized Administration of Crete
- Mr Aftias Michalis and Mrs Chouli Eleni, Ydronomi Consulting Engineers