

Protocol of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management, and its implementation in the Republic of Cyprus

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The Importance of Coastal Zone, on a worldwide scale

37% of the world's population lives within **100 km** of the coast, at a population density twice the global average

→ heavy population density → adds pressure on the development of coasts (e.g. building new ports, tourist beaches, new communities) → impacts the environment (coastal erosion, destruction of benthic habitats)¹.

According to UNEP (2024)¹, **34 %** of the world's coasts are at high risk of degradation from coastal development and another **17 %** are at medium risk. The most threatened regions are Europe with 86 % and Asia with **69 %** of their coastal ecosystems at risk.

According to World Bank (2024)², the ocean is the largest carbon sink, absorbing greenhouse gases and significantly mitigating the impacts of climate change. By properly valuing the role played by mangroves and seagrass beds – one can achieve the triple win of:

- Adaptation and resilience to sea level rise and erosion
- Addressing the climate crisis by storing carbon and reducing ocean acidification
- Ensuring coastal communities are safer and more prosperous.

References

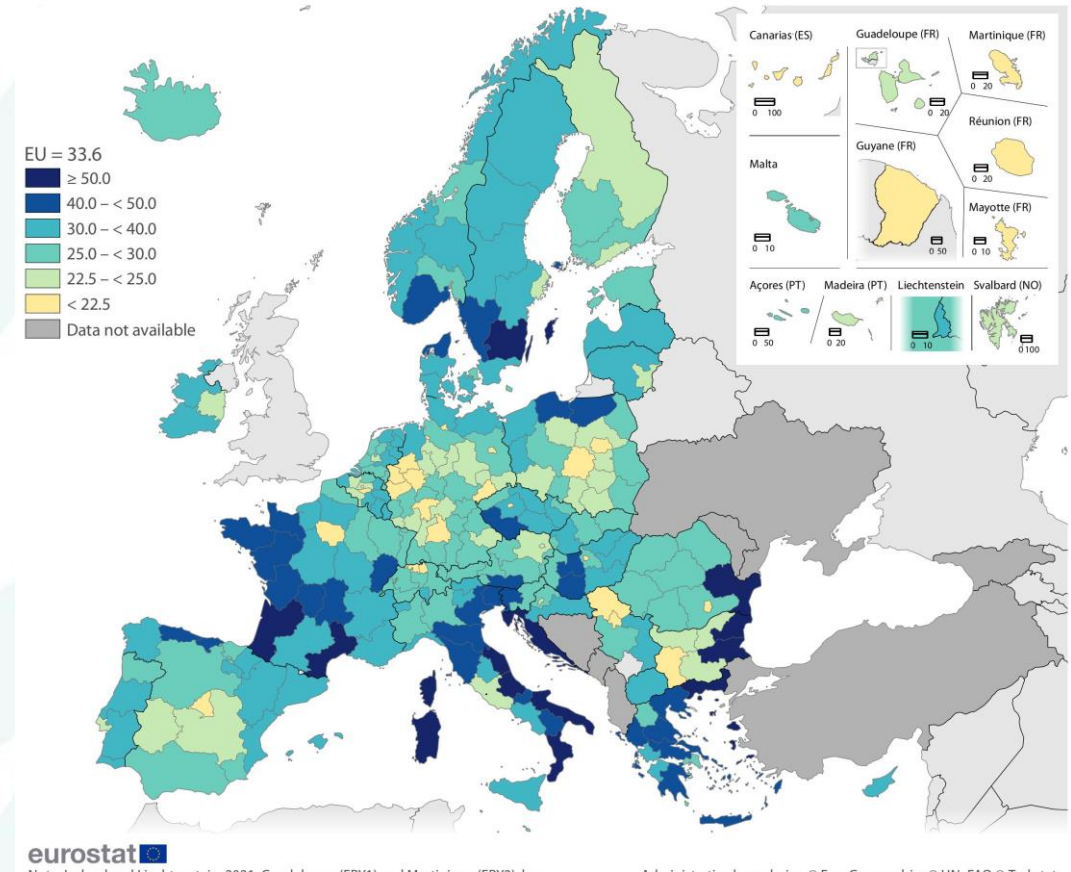
1: Coastal Zone Management, UNEP, 2024: <https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts/regional-seas-programme/coastal-zone-management>

2: Blue Economy, World Bank, 2024: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/oceans-fisheries-and-coastal-economies#:~:text=The%20ocean%20is%20threatened%20by%20marine%20pollution%20from%20multiple%20sources,and%20ice%20in%20the%20Arctic.>

The Importance of Coastal Zone, in the European Union

- The coastline of EU is 68 000 km long — more than three times longer than that of the United States and almost twice that of Russia.
- The area of sea under the control (jurisdiction) of EU Member States is larger than the total land area of the EU. Including its outlying regions (territories and entities in the Atlantic, Pacific and Caribbean), the EU has the world's largest maritime territory.
- Almost half of the EU population lives less than 50 km from the sea; the majority is concentrated in urban areas along the coast.
- Coastal regions are popular tourist destinations in terms of nights spent in tourist accommodation by both domestic and international tourists, when compared with other regions across the European Union (EU).

Nights spent in tourist accommodation – 2 busiest months of the year, 2022
(% of total number of nights spent during the year, by NUTS 2 regions)



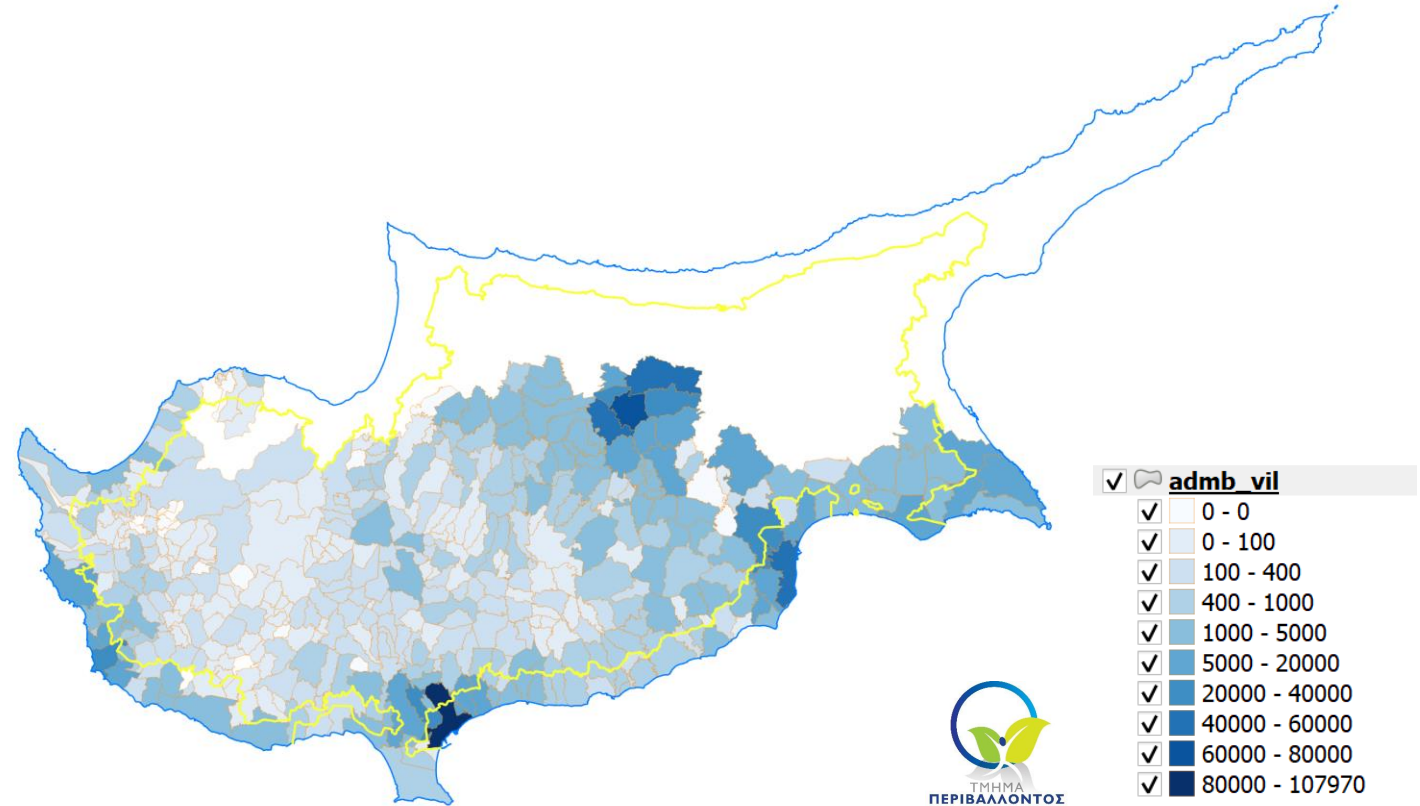
References

3: European Environment Agency, Europe's seas and coasts, 2015, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/europes-seas-and-coasts/europes-seas-and-coasts/#interesting-facts>

4: Statistical Atlas Regional Yearbook 2024, <https://ec.europa.eu/statistical-atlas/viewer/?mids=BKGCNT,C10M04,CNTOVL&o=1,1,0.7&ch=C10¢er=46.19151,30.83565,3&lcis=C10M04&>

The Importance of Coastal Zone, in the Republic of Cyprus

- The total length of Cyprus' coastline is 772 km, of which only the 296 km (38%) are under the control of the Republic of Cyprus
- The largest urban centres in Cyprus are coastal⁵
- According to the Statistical Service (2021) more than 50% of the population lives and works in the coastal zone⁵
- 123 coastal locations were included in the bathing water quality monitoring network, of which 76 beaches and 2 marinas were awarded the Blue Flag, during 2024⁶



References

5: Population dataset, Statistical Service, 2021

6: Bathing water quality, Department of Environment, 2024,

<https://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/All/9E7057F0FB6B8067C2257F6200327E0D?OpenDocument>

The Importance of Coastal Zone, in the Republic of Cyprus

14 Natura 2000 sites (coastal and marine) are defined in Cyprus:

> 4 Special Protected Areas (SPA)

> 4 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

> 6 Both Special Protected Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

(2 Proposed SACs in Ayios Georgios Alamanou and the expansion of the Kavο Gkreko SAC and SPA)

This accounts to a total of 293,17 km² of coastal area and 8.543,94 km² of marine area which is protected under the provisions of the “Nature and wildlife protection and management law (N.153(I)/2003), which is the transposition of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and under the “Protection and Management of Wild Birds and Game Law” (N.152(I)/2003), which is the transposition of the Birds Directive⁷

References

7: Network of Natura 2000 sites, Department of Environment, 2024,
https://www.moa.gov.cy/moa/environment/environmentnew.nsf/page12_gr/page12_gr?OpenDocument

The “birth” of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol

Signed in Madrid, on 21 January 2008 and on 24 March 2011, the Protocol entered into force

ADOPTION BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Signature:
16/01/2009

Ratification:
29/09/2010

Entered into force:
24/03/2011

The signing and ratification of the Protocol by the European Union is European law and binds the Member States and its institutes. Thus, although the RoC has not signed and ratified it yet, its implementation is binding in Cyprus.

4.2.2009

EN

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PROTOCOL

on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean

THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE PRESENT PROTOCOL,

BEING PARTIES to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, adopted at Barcelona on 16 February 1976, and amended on 10 June 1995,

DESIROUS of implementing the obligations set out in Article 4(3)(e) and (5), of the said Convention,

CONSIDERING that the coastal zones of the Mediterranean Sea are the common natural and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Mediterranean and that they should be preserved and used judiciously for the benefit of present and future generations,

CONCERNED at the increase in anthropic pressure on the coastal zones of the Mediterranean Sea which is threatening their fragile nature and desirous of halting and reversing the process of coastal zone degradation and of significantly reducing the loss of biodiversity of coastal ecosystems,

WORRIED by the risks threatening coastal zones due to climate change, which is likely to result, *inter alia*, in a rise in sea level, and aware of the need to adopt sustainable measures to reduce the negative impact of natural phenomena,

CONVINCED that, as an irreplaceable ecological, economic and social resource, the planning and management of coastal zones with a view to their preservation and sustainable development requires a specific integrated approach at the level of the Mediterranean basin as a whole and of its coastal States, taking into account their diversity and in particular the specific needs of islands related to geomorphological characteristics,

The implementation of the ICZM Protocol's provisions in the RoC

The Republic of Cyprus has not ratified yet the ICZM Protocol

- However, many of the Protocol's provisions are already taken into consideration. For example, during:
 - The preparation of Local Development Plans, where a specific chapter regarding the ICZM Protocol is included.
 - The environmental impact assessment of proposed projects (EIA) and plans and programmes (SEA)
 - The appropriate assessment for the environmental impacts to the coasts, the coastline in general, as well as to the habitats and the protected species of both land and sea, according to the provisions of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
 - The development of the Maritime Spatial Plan (MSP) (land and sea interactions)
[the MSP for the RoC was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 20th December 2023]

Article 18 – National Coastal Strategies, Plans and Programmes

The Department of Environment, led the action of the preparation of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Cyprus for 2018 – 2028, which was completed in 2020

The Objectives of the National Strategy for ICZM 2018-2028 are the following:

- To map the uses and activities in the coastal zone in a sustainable and integrated way.
- To protect and manage the ecosystems, natural resources, cultural wealth and landscapes, including the marine environment, which will secure the integrity of these systems.
- To avoid/reduce pollution and the overall anthropogenic pressures and subsequently upgrade the quality of life.
- To address and tackle the issue of coastal erosion.
- To contribute to the country's economic development and well-being in a sustainable way, in order to secure the provision of its goods and services.
- To adapt to climate change and its effects.

Article 3 of ICZM Protocol – Geographical Coverage

One of the deliverables that needed to be prepared during the development phase of the National Strategy and of the Action Plan, was the definition of the geographical coverage of coastal zone:

a) Definition of the **seaward limit**: It was defined according to Article 3(1)(a) of the ICZM Protocol, which states that “*the seaward limit of the coastal zone, which shall be the external limit of the territorial sea of Parties*”

→ Thus the seaward limit of the coastal zone is the outer limit of the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus (12 nm)

b) Definition of the **landward limit**: It was defined according to Article 3(2)(b) which states that “*the landward limit is different, either more or less, from the limits of the territory of coastal units as defined above , in order to apply, inter alia, the ecosystem approach and economic and social criteria and to consider the specific needs of islands related to geomorphological characteristics and to take into account the negative effects of climate change*”

→ In the RoC the landward limit of the coastal zone was designated through the implementation of a multicriteria analysis by taking into consideration a number of economic, social and environmental parameters and which varies from 2,4 to 9,4 km from high tide level

The multicriteria analysis considered the following parameters:

- **Natural environment** (biodiversity, altitude, protected areas, environmental threats etc.)
- **Landscape** (coastal landscapes, areas with visual contact with the sea, etc.).
- **Cultural environment** (ancient monuments and cultural and religious sites, etc.).
- **Socio-economic environment** (economic activities, urban planning zones, etc.).
- **Distance from the coastline** (distance 0-5 km, graduated per kilometer).

Geographical Coverage of the coastal zone (landward and seaward limits)



Article 7 - Coordination

In **2020** the RoC's Experts Group proceeded with the preparation of a Report on the assessment of the Governance Structure of the National Strategy and Action Plan for the ICZM. The need to create a new Governance Structure was considered optimum towards the successful implementation of the integrated coastal zone management. The new Governance Structure was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 8/10/2021.

The National Governance System for the ICZM is described below:

I. Ministerial Committee consisted of:

- The Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (coordinator)
- The Minister of Interior
- The Deputy Minister of Shipping
- The Deputy Minister of Tourism

The Ministerial Committee has the responsibility of taking political decisions on matters relevant to the overall objective of the National Governance System for ICZM, following the suggestions of the Technical Committee.

Article 7 – Coordination

II. Technical Committee consisted of the General Directors and/or their representatives:

- Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (coordinator)
- Minister of Interior
- The Deputy Minister of Shipping
- The Deputy Minister of Tourism

and the General Directors or their representatives:

- Department of Environment
- Department of Building and Housing
- Department of Land and Survey

The Technical Committee has the responsibility of coordinating all the issues regarding the National Governance System for ICZM and submit relevant proposals for approval to the Ministerial Committee. The Technical Committee can appoint specific Working Groups to work on specialized issues of the ICZM, that need to be approved by the Ministerial Committee.

The Department of Environment has the responsibility to coordinate the two Committees and Working Groups, as well as coordinate and organize meetings and keep meetings' minutes.

Article 8 – Protection and sustainable use of the coastal zone

Article 8 (2) (a): the Parties:

(a) Shall establish in coastal zones, as **from the highest winter waterline**, a zone where construction is not allowed. Taking into account, inter alia, the areas directly and negatively affected by climate change and natural risks, **this zone may not be less than 100 meters in width**, subject to the provisions of subparagraph (b) below. Stricter national measures determining this width shall continue to apply.

Article 8(2)(b): the Parties:

(b) May adapt, in a manner consistent with the objectives and principles of this Protocol, the provisions mentioned above :

- 1) for projects of public interest;
- 2) in areas having particular geographical or other local constraints, especially related to population density or social needs, where individual housing, urbanisation or development are provided for by national legal instruments.

Article 8 – Protection and sustainable use of the coastal zone

We haven't defined yet the Coastal Setback Zone according to the ICZM Protocol

Currently we continue implement the provisions of our national legislation, which is the Foreshore Protection Law (CAP 59).
→ The Central Beach Committee sent suggestions to the Ministry of Interior for revising the Foreshore Protection Law.

According to CAP 59 as “coast” it is determined the coastal area **of no less than 100 yards distance from high tide level**, as the Minister of Interior defines with a formal notification in the official newspaper of the Republic of Cyprus.

Subsequent measures suggested in the Action Plan:

- Revise and/or adapt several provisions of the urban planning and spatial planning law, in order to secure that the spatial planning and management of the coastal zone takes into consideration the interactions between land and sea.
- Revise the Piers Law (CAP 78) and the Streets and Buildings Regulation Law (CAP 96), by re-examining issues regarding the licensing processes covered by these laws, since some of their provisions overlap between each other and cause confusion on their applicability, especially in the most vulnerable part of the coastal zone, close to the coastline.

Part IV of the Protocol – Risks affecting the coastal zone (Articles 22, 23 and 24)

Article 22 – Natural Hazards:

“Within the framework of national strategies for integrated coastal zone management, the Parties shall develop policies for the prevention of natural hazards. To this end, they shall undertake vulnerability and hazard assessments of coastal zones and take prevention, mitigation and adaptation measures to address the effects of natural disasters, in particular of climate change”.

One of the expected deliverables of the Vulnerability Assessment report would be **the preparation of specific maps where the different levels of vulnerability significance** of the coastal areas will be illustrated.

With the completion of the Vulnerability Assessment, it is **expected that the Coastal Setback zone will be defined**. In some regions, the Coastal Setback Zone should be more than 100 meters, in order to successfully protect coastal areas of significant vulnerability (e.g. coastal protected areas included in the Natura 2000 network).

Work on the preparation of the Vulnerability Assessment report has not been initiated yet.

Also, we emphasize the need to further implement soft measures / actions based on the value of Nature-based Solutions for coastal adaptation and coastal resilience purposes.

Article 20 – Land Policy

Article 20 (1): “For the purpose of promoting integrated coastal zone management, reducing economic pressures, maintaining open areas and allowing public access to the sea and along the shore, Parties shall adopt appropriate land policy instruments and measures, including the process of planning”.

Article 20(2): “To this end, and in order to ensure the sustainable management of public and private land of the coastal zones, Parties may inter alia adopt mechanisms for the acquisition, cession, donation or transfer of land to the public domain and institute easements on properties”.

Taking the aforementioned provisions into consideration one can understand the challenges ahead and which would need to be dealt in order to move forward with the Ratification and Signature of the Protocol

- Various competent authorities in the RoC are involved in the management of the coastal zone.
- Many pieces of legislation from both national and EU legal framework linked to subjects of coastal management.
- Definition of the land ownership of the coastal zone
- Adopt mechanisms for the acquisition, cession, donation or transfer of land to the public domain and institute easements on properties

Coast and Hydrography (PAP/RAC – UNEP/MAP)

- **Common Indicator 15** “Location and extent of the habitats potentially impacted by hydrographic alterations”
- **Common Indicator 16** “Length of coastline subject to physical disturbance due to the influence of human-made structures”
- **Candidate Common Indicator 25** “Land cover change”

For the aforementioned tasks, the Public Works Department coordinated the collaboration between them, the Department of Lands and Surveys and Department of Environment, regarding the report needed for C.I. 16. The report has not been submitted yet. In the near future, efforts for the preparation of what's required will increase, strengthening the collaboration between the aforementioned departments, as well as with the expected valuable contribution of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and the guidance from the Ministry of Exterior.

Responsibilities of the Department of Environment

- Informing the public about ICZM
- Implement the National Plan (40 Actions) by 2028
- Implement the New Governance Structure and organize meetings for the Technical Committee
- Participate in the Maritime Spatial Planning Committee
- Participate in the Central Beach Committee
- Participate in the meetings and workshops of PAP/RAC and of European Environment Agency
- Incorporate the provisions of ICZM into the Policy Statement and in Local Development Plans
- Incorporate the provisions of ICZM into strategies for climate change (e.g. Climate Adaptation Strategy which is currently being revised), for tourism, for coastal protection etc.

More information regarding the ICZM Protocol can be found in the Department of Environment's website at the following link:
www.moa.gov.cy/environment



THANK YOU

<https://pandoteira.cy>

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΟΣ. ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑΣ, ΑΓΡΟΤΙΚΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝΤΟΣ



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση του προγράμματος
LIFE της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

