

Announcement: Towards biodiversity responsible IMCAM Guidance

Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management approaches (IMCAM) have been recognised as the most effective tools for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity. However, existing IMCAM guidance documents as well as implemented IMCAM practices often fail to take biodiversity considerations fully into account.

In order to integrate biodiversity conservation and IMCAM further, the Coastal Zone Management Centre (CZMC) (The Hague), in cooperation with AIDEnvironment (Amsterdam), has initiated a web-based project aiming to produce a document in which existing IMCAM guidance and the objectives of the CBD are fully integrated. This document should be comprehensive and concise, referring to existing guidance where available and expanding on identified gaps and needs. The outcome, a biodiversity responsible IMCAM Guidance Document will be presented at CBD's SBSTTA's Meetings and finally at CBD's 7th Conference of Parties (CoP7).

All IMCAM practitioners are welcome to join this discussion. For registration or further information, please address: imcamonline@aidenvironment.org.

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- share their views on IMCAM and biodiversity,
- contribute to the IMCAM guidance document,
- learn from and communicate with other expert IMCAM practitioners, and
- become part of a global network of IMCAM practitioners.

Programme

The project is organised in two distinct phases:

1. Preparation - interactive identification of the (*circa* 5) main themes (needs and gaps of existing guidance documents) for the discussion: *October - November 2002*. This includes **the first on-line event** of this project, planned for **28 October - 8 November 2002**.
2. Main discussions - interactive production of the Guidance Document, focusing on the identified main themes: throughout 2003, in several steps.

More information can be found at the discussion website: www.aidenvironment.org/imcam.

Background

In 2001, the Netherlands' CZMC analysed numerous IMCAM documents in relation to CBD objectives and three case studies of IMCAM projects to ascertain the extent to which these incorporated CBD objectives. The findings of the analysis were summarised and discussed at a side event "Towards better incorporation of CBD elements in IMCAM projects" at CBD-CoP-6 in The Hague, April 2002. This meeting was the start of a process to organise a discussion on improving existing IMCAM guidelines and projects with respect to CBD objectives for marine and coastal biodiversity. The current web discussion is an important contribution to that initiative.

The development of the guidance document will be based upon the mentioned analysis of gaps in existing IMCAM guidance and practice vis-à-vis CBD objectives. The idea is to mobilise as much IMCAM expertise as possible to contribute to the IMCAM Guidance Document. The internet will therefore be the main instrument in the preparation of the document. Discussions on the project and draft guidance documents will be organised on this medium, viz. on a dedicated website. Further, face-to-face, discussions may take place at side events during relevant fora, in particular within the frameworks of CBD and Ramsar.

Participants

All IMCAM practitioners from local level management to international policy level, educators and researchers are invited to contribute to the Guidance Document. It is the intention to focus on national and regional level marine and coastal management. The aim is to get a truly world-wide coverage of participants. Selected experts will be invited to lead discussions on specific themes. After registration, participants will be able to take part in the discussions on the document's drafts.