

## **The crafting of local communities partnership – Towards Integrated Coastal Management.**

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From the water basin to the maritime basin, we are addressing interconnected systems with basically the same framework at stake: integrated water resource management (IWRM) initiatives should be organically linked to integrated coastal management (ICM) and further offshore to a form of integrated regional seas and ocean management from national to regional and finally global levels, all underpinned by the ecosystem-based management approach. Too much confusion has been sprayed about in between these different approaches relying on the same basic principles of sustainable development. It is time to “demystify” the scientific/expert discourse and the best way to do it is to start dealing with the actual management practices encountered in the field and accept to “journey” with the stakeholders towards more sustainability.

Improved coastal governance towards Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) depends on government, market and civil society mechanisms. At local level, it is conditioned by both skilled self-organized communities and strongly committed local governments with negotiation and planning, learning and financial skills and facilitating mechanisms. Awareness and contribution from the Education sector (schools) is considered as crucial for today and tomorrow. The upscaling process usually operates through a nested governance approach including local governments, private sectors, NGOs and volunteer organisations from local to national level. As a driving force, the market mechanism calls for Public-Private partnership agreements. Knowledge centres (universities, research centres) got committed in the governance process through practicing useful knowledge transfers to users and decision-makers.

Negotiating tools like sensitivity and vulnerability mapping of coherent coastal areas like a bay or an estuary contribute to build up partnership with an equal level of knowledge about the state, the pressures and the risks in each coastal management unit. The analysis and diagnosis of the coastal production system and vulnerability mapping in Ban Don Bay (Gulf of Thailand) is given as an example of this kind of approach and the way it has been effectively developed in the frame of a Coastal Habitats and Resources Management (CHARM) project carried out throughout five provinces in Thailand from the Andaman Sea to the Gulf of Thailand.

To feed the nested governance approach, project leaders need to be able to find a way to relate to each other’s experiences. Although each local or regional project has a different starting context, each one is actually going through the same system of actors, institutions, processes and interactions, while they would be stronger in doing one thing



instead of another. As a whole, they present comparative advantages that may strengthen the ICM process at local, regional and national levels.