



**FINAL REPORT**  
**MedOpen – a virtual training course on ICZM**  
**2010/2011**

*Prepared by Yves Henocque, Head Lecturer*

**Introduction**

The scope and complexity of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) programmes, which can be successfully implemented by any nation, is directly dependent on its national capacity. Yet, despite substantive efforts undertaken over the last two decades in education and training in Mediterranean countries, there remains insufficient individual and institutional capacity to implement meaningful coastal management programmes. The reasons for this are manifold, for example:

- lack of emphasis on building a critical mass of practitioners and constituencies for coastal management;
- lack of enabling conditions and continued support for coastal programmes;
- too few leaders with a vision for sustainable progress along the region's coasts;
- focusing capacity building on the "wrong" knowledge and skills areas;
- too much reliance on external expertise and funding - a reliance that keeps the region from fully developing its own capacity.

In 2002, the Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (PAP/RAC) of the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP) based in Split started preparations for a virtual training course on ICZM (in English and French) which would address the root causes of limited regional capacities for coastal management. This means delivering a course that would not only focus on building individuals' knowledge and skills, but a course which would, through a series of interventions, expand and strengthen the network of individuals and, hopefully, even institutions contributing to coastal management in the region. Through this course, the participants would get breadth and depth in coastal management plans and programmes, and become acquainted with the technical and professional expertise existing in the region. The course focuses not so much on the technical and scientific knowledge and skills for coastal management, but rather on the professional, project management, and ICZM practical skills and knowledge critical to today's coastal manager - skills that include conflict resolution (simulation game), communications (forum), and policy and decisionmaking (final essay).

The course was designed to accomplish several goals. First, to reflect a balance of ICZM practice, project management, and professional knowledge, concepts, models, tools, and skills. This design responds to a key message emerging from the region and around the world - the need for a new direction in capacity building. Because most of ICZM managers enter the field of ICZM with a technical education and/or experience background, it is a direction with a less exclusive focus on science and/or technical skills for coastal management and a greater focus on other skills and knowledge essential to an effective coastal manager. The approach of *MedOpen – a virtual training course on ICZM* is to complement many excellent technical and science-oriented training programmes already available in the region.

## Status of the implementation of the activities and outputs listed under the workplan

- Basic and advanced twelve lectures have been revised from January to November 2010 with a new focus around the Protocol on ICZM in the Mediterranean, i.e. more particularly: how the ecosystem-based approach is articulated with ICZM (Lecture 3: Basic Principles of ICZM), what is the new legislative and financial framework (Lecture 6), new case studies regarding the introduction of ICZM (Lecture 7: Examples of Introducing ICZM at the National Level), adding some new tools to the Toolbox (Lecture 9) like the valuation of ecosystem services, and reshuffling largely the conclusions and ideas for the future (Lecture 12).
- The MedOpen Advanced Course started on November 23, 2010, and finished on March 31, 2011. It was composed of 22 participants from 15 countries, including one non-Mediterranean country, Japan, to start building up exchanges with the corresponding region. With an average age of 37, the majority of the profiles were coastal practitioners working in the administration or the academe of their country.
- While a longer-term goal of the course was to build a regional cadre of coastal management practitioners/leaders, the starting point was to focus on building individual skills and knowledge. Hence, the course worked in parallel to build both individual and team skills through the use of the forum and the simulation game which have been regularly practiced by about half of the participants (the last political events in Egypt have rendered the participation of four of them particularly difficult).
- Time for question and reflection was built into each lecture with participants asked to reflect on specific topics of relevance to the course and to their work in coastal management. Other times participants were asked to reflect on a topic or issue of their choice which could relate to the course, to their own professional development, or to the future of coastal management in their country. While the reflections were private, some participants volunteered to share some of their thoughts through the forum, and in doing so provided interesting insights to the larger group.
- At the beginning of the course, participants were advised of a voluntary competition including their active participation in communicating through the forum and through a simulation game, and the drafting of a final essay of their choice. Within the framework of the simulation game, the initial imaginary scenario was introduced to the candidates together with natural conditions of the area presented through different data. The candidates were given specific roles, possible pathways for the development have been offered, and they were then invited to develop the situation and propose solutions. The simulation game and discussions were moderated, and outputs evaluated by experts in coastal management in the Mediterranean.
- Each final essay was to be delivered in writing (seven pages or less) reflecting participants' effective communication and presentation skills. Making a written presentation of their subject proposal to an external audience provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to practice the skills they had honed during the course.
- Although no explicit requirements were made for the final essays, they were aimed at making:
  - an explicit connection to advancing ICZM in participant's country and ICZM location;
  - benefits or potential benefits to multiple coastal stakeholders;
  - an explicit project logic - articulated in writing a presentation;
  - a clear and realistic assessment of resource needs (staff, funds and inputs);
  - junctures that demonstrated the use and application of course skills and tools;
  - ideas presented in a compelling, articulated and concise manner.
- As a whole, the eleven submitted final essays, be there at the international, national or local scales, well captured the ICZM approach though in very different ways, depending on the scale, country or location, the main issues at stake, and also depending on author's perception.
- Besides taking into account the land-sea continuum and the specificity of the location, there is a clear preference for dealing with the legal and institutional setting and the required arrangement in regard to ICZM implementation. Although the legal and institutional aspects are of the utmost importance, most of the essays are rather descriptive without really reflecting ICZM dynamics through time and across the different scales of intervention. All models show that time and resources are required before coming up with a national or local ICZM strategy whatever the form it takes. Conducting an extensive participatory process that deals with complex issues necessitates securing sufficient

financial resources as well as a reasonable timeframe to engage stakeholders in contributing to the formulation of the coastal policy. Whatever the initiative, putting into context are the key words, in regard to the political, institutional, participatory, as well as knowledge processes, and it is these main criteria that have driven the Head Lecturer's grading attribution for each of the final essays whatever its subject and its spatial scale (local, national or international).

- Besides their grade attribution, each final essay has been commented in more detail by the Head Lecturer in order to address them back to their respective authors asking them for their own comments, if they wish to do so.

### **Problem encountered and ideas for future improvement of the activity**

- About half of the candidates from eight countries have been actively participating, either in the forum, simulation game or the final essay. It is evident that the current political events in South Mediterranean countries like Egypt have hampered some other candidates' participation.
- Whatever the reason, some ideas may be suggested for improvement of the next MedOpen sessions. While the longer-term goal of the course is to build a regional cadre of coastal management practitioners/leaders, the 4-month MedOpen training course should be considered as a starting point focusing on building individual skills and knowledge. The following suggested ideas could emphasize this individual learning while instilling some team skills:
  - Instead of just asking for their motivation, each participant could be asked to prepare a "**learning agreement**" which would outline his/her professional development goals and priorities for the course. Participants would review the agreement with the course advisors prior to finalizing the document. Once completed, the agreements could be formally signed by the participants. Between modules, participants would be encouraged to discuss progress on their learning goals with their advisors. The latter would provide encouragement, suggest adjustments where necessary, and help participants develop new priorities where appropriate. Once agreed, learning agreements could be posted on GoogleDocs with corresponding participant's photo for mutual information;
  - During the selection process, each participant could be charged with selecting a **mentor** - an experienced coastal management professional - from their home country. At intervals, mentors would make themselves available to participants for discussions - preferably in-person discussions - all along the MedOpen training course. The purpose is to link the participants with experienced coastal managers who could at a minimum advise and coach the participants throughout the course, and at best continue contact and provide coaching of the participant after the course. The intent of the mentoring element would be two-fold: to provide participant-specific benefits in their ICM professional development, and to add momentum to building an expanding network of coastal management experts and leaders in the region. Each participant would complete a mentor/mentee agreement form that would guide his or her interactions with and expectations of the relationship;
  - A survey could be submitted to the participants at the end of the first month, asking participants to identify their predominant or preferred style of **leadership and management**. Participants would then be asked to reflect on the survey results. What do those results reveal about how the participant manages work or leads others? What are the pros and cons of their particular style/profile? After raising awareness of their preferred/predominant style, participants could then be asked to reflect these different tools/approaches to leadership - styles in their own final essay.
  - In order to give more stake to the final essay, at the beginning of the course, participants could be advised of a voluntary competition to design and implement a small **coastal management project** costing no more than US\$3,000. The process would involve writing a proposal for submission not only to a Head Lecturer but to a review panel. In the final module of the course, the best three proposals would be awarded funding for implementation of their outlined projects. In awarding the winning proposals, a panel of experts would consider the merits of both a written proposal and a possible oral presentation on its highlights. At the very beginning of the course, they would be provided with the general guidelines in developing their service project proposal and the criteria by which that proposal would be judged.

- It is highly recommended to conduct a **post-course evaluation** to assess how participants applied the skills and knowledge acquired during the course. Two questionnaires would be formulated: one to be sent to the participants, and one to the participants' mentors.
- While formative evaluations - those which identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement - are essential for immediate or short-term adjustments to course content and delivery, it is **impact assessments** which are the more critical tool for assessing whether the MedOpen training course model is achieving its longer-term goals of ICZM capacity building in the region. In consideration, impact evaluation surveys could be distributed to course participants at approximately six to nine months after the end of the course, and then again at the 15 to 18-month mark. These surveys will seek to assess longer-term ability of participants to use in their work the professional ICZM practice and the project management knowledge, skills, and tools acquired or strengthened by the course. Equally important, these surveys would seek to assess what impact participants' strengthened skills are having on their larger organisations, projects, or programmes. As well, they would seek to assess changes in "softer" targets of the course - e.g., course impact on the participants' attitudes, viewpoints, and critical thinking skills on key issues facing ICZM at the local, national, or regional levels. Lastly, impact evaluations would assess (hence contribute) the attempt made at creating a more active regional network of ICZM practitioner/experts - a network that stimulates the sharing of knowledge, experience, and skills in the region. It will help answer whether *alumni* and their organisations are more likely - as a result of having been part of the *MedOpen virtual training course on ICZM* experience - to communicate with and call upon one another.
- The 18-month post-course evaluation would include an additional section for those three individuals who were awarded funding for their **service projects** (see recommendation above). This section would seek to assess how well this element provided additional opportunity to practice the knowledge, skills, and attitudes from the course in a situation where they had full control over the design and implementation of the project from start to finish.