

Successful ICES/COEXIST interactive workshop in Bergen

Over 30 stakeholders from different sectors (aquaculture, fisheries, coastal zone management, tourism, energy, etc.) along with 20 members from the COEXIST project partnership and ICES representatives met in Bergen on 19th September 2012 for the joint ICES/COEXIST workshop: “Best Practice Guidelines for spatial planning to integrate fisheries, aquaculture and other uses in the coastal zone”. The workshop was designed as a facilitated and interactive workshop, where the stakeholders were asked to give as much input as possible to the COEXIST results obtained so far. These inputs are to be used to adapt the results to their needs as coastal zone users and managers.

Dr. Torsten Schulze, the workshop organizer, commented, *“I was deeply impressed by the stakeholders. They worked very hard and concentrated until the very end of the workshop, keeping the facilitators busy taking down their ideas. From a first look at the stakeholders’ comments, we got plenty of valuable constructive criticisms and are happy to implement the ideas into our work.”*

Based on three years of research, the COEXIST project has developed different tools that have been used to evaluate competing activities and interactions in European coastal areas. To ensure that the tools can be used within the entire European context, several geographically diverse case studies representing the conditions and combinations of activities in various European coastal areas were developed.



The morning session of the workshop was devoted to demonstrations of the tools developed and implemented in the six case studies covering Mapping/Spatial Conflicts Analysis, Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement, Modelling Fisheries and Aquaculture activities and Suitability Maps for different activities based on the specific characteristics of European coastal areas. During this session, stakeholders had an opportunity to see how these tools had been applied in different case studies, and also to assess the outcomes that could be obtained when they were utilised. They were thus able to discuss the usefulness of the tools in their day-to-day work and to comment on possible improvements that might make them even more powerful.

“The tools developed within the COEXIST Project, and presented during the meeting, offer a very powerful instrument, accessible to all types of stakeholder. Moreover, they provide a clear idea of the state-of-the-art, facilitating decision-making about the way forward for people involved in management”, Maria Jose Cornax from OCEANA (Spain) pointed out.



How to analyse stakeholders' preferences and incorporate them into Marine Spatial Management was the topic of the second workshop session, carried out by means of an interactive exercise which allowed stakeholders to test the methodology and assess the results obtained from using it.

In the last workshop session, stakeholders were tasked with summarising the project findings as best practice guidelines. To achieve this, stakeholders' needs with respect to a best practice guideline template had to be analysed and taken into account. The last objective was to

reach agreement as to how the final outcome of the COEXIST project should be designed to meet the needs highlighted during this important workshop.

At the end of this very full day of activities, all participants were tired but happy, satisfied at having had the opportunity to contribute to the results of such a complex and demanding exercise.

The Workshop report is currently being written up and will be available on the project website (www.coexistproject.eu) at the beginning of December 2012.

Ends

30 October 2012

Issued by AquaTT Limited & Institute of Marine Research (IMR), the COEXIST project management team. For further information contact Emma Bello Gomez, on +353 16449008 or emma@aquatt.ie.

Note to Editors

IMR (Institute of Marine Research, Norway) is the project coordinator of **COEXIST**, with AquaTT as its project management and communication partner. The **COEXIST** project has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 245178.

Detailed partner profiles are available on request.