

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENCORA PORTAL: AN INTERNET BASED FACILITY SUPPORTING EU-WIDE CONTACT SEARCH FOR ICZM RELATED SCIENCE, PRACTICE, AND POLICY COMMUNITIES

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One of the main objectives of the European FP 6 Coordination action ENCORA (=European Network for Coastal Research) is to address fragmentation of and difficult communication between coastal science, practice and policy across Europe. Together with the establishment of national, thematic and affiliated networks, ENCORA developed the ENCORA Portal to support dissemination activities and to share ICZM knowledge through the Web among scientists, practitioners and policy makers (users).

The ENCORA Portal was built upon existing technologies and software tools integrating three main different, interlinked database systems. The Integrated Marine Information System (IMIS) served as the searchable contact database of coastal professionals, institutes and projects. The different national and thematic ENCORA networks have started to feed the database and additionally an online edit tool is foreseen for the near future. A State of the Art Coastal Directory is embedded in the Wikipedia software and linked with the contact database. Striking about the ENCORA Portal is the link between registered users of the Coastal Wiki and the contact database, allowing only fully registered users to upload information in the Wiki Coastal Directory and hence allowing an improved authority and quality control. The link and synchronization between the different relational database systems was established through an in-house developed system and will serve as link to any future systems that may need quality control or authorization. A Thematic and National Forum which can be used as discussion and information exchange platform within the coastal community was also integrated in the Portal and is linked with the other systems.

The ENCORA Portal can be consulted at <http://www.encora.eu>.