

THE COASTAL AND MARINE WIKI: AN INTERNET ENCYCLOPAEDIA PROVIDING UP-TO-DATE QUALITY INFORMATION FOR AND BY COASTAL AND MARINE PROFESSIONALS

Claus Simon, Bart Vanhoorne and Francisco Hernandez

Flanders Marine Institute, VLIZ-InnovOcean site, Wandelaarkaai 7, 8400 Oostende, Belgium
E-mail: simon.claus@vliz.be

The Coastal and Marine Wiki (www.encora.eu/coastalwiki) is an Internet encyclopaedia providing up-to-date high quality information for coastal and marine professionals, which is continuously improved, complemented and updated by expert users. Main difference between the Coastal and Marine Wiki and the online Wikipedia are the procedures to maintain the quality, consistency and comprehensiveness of the information.

The issue: taking better advantage of existing knowledge

Much coastal and marine knowledge existing in research institutes and in practitioners organizations throughout Europe is not fully used and similar studies are carried out more than once. New knowledge dissemination practices are needed for Europe to take better advantage of existing knowledge, especially for use in practice and policy.

The Coastal and Marine Wiki concept

The Coastal and Marine Wikipedia is a professional Internet encyclopaedia that guarantees high quality information. Several procedures are implemented to ensure quality, consistency and comprehensiveness. A major difference with the general Wikipedia is the requirement of an editing authorisation for contributors. Anonymous contributions are precluded; authors and co-authors of articles or article revisions are explicitly acknowledged. The access to the Coastal and Marine Wikipedia is free to any coastal and marine stakeholder, but only experts registered in the Wiki Contact Database are entitled to enter new information. This contact database has been developed in house and is managed at a marine datacentre. Editing authorisations will be granted only to users with a professional background, checked by the editorial team. This team will oversee the overall quality of the Coastal and Marine Wikipedia.

Target user groups

The primary users of the Coastal and Marine Wikipedia are professionals, usually with higher education, who are either generalists who need to update their knowledge about a broad range of subjects or specialists who need to gain an understanding of other sectors or disciplines in order to work in an integrated manner. Target user groups are policy makers, practitioners, scientists, students at academic institutions and trainees, public stakeholders with particular interest in coastal and marine information and the wider public.

The way forward: integrating project-specific information

Besides internal linking, similar Wiki Articles can also be grouped together using different categories. The combination of internal linking and categorisation allows to create a web of linked information that can be organised and accessed in several ways. The Coastal and Marine Wiki is structured following a Coastal and marine ontology

that starts from six main categories: the Natural Environment, Issues and Impacts, Human Activities, Locations, Coastal Management and People and Organisations in ICZM. Several Coastal and Marine European research projects like ENCORA (European Network for Coastal Research), SPICOSA (Science and Policy Integration for Coastal System Assessment) and MarBEF (Marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning) are contributing their project results to the Coastal and Marine Wiki. In this way the major outcomes of their research will be reflected in the Coastal and Marine Wiki enhancing the knowledge dissemination and integration of their project-specific information.

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