

INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR MONITORING, COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE IN THE SAIL COASTAL REGION

Lescrauwaet Ann-Katrien, An Vanhoorne, Sofie Bracke, Francisco Hernandez, Edward Vanden Berghe and Jan Mees

Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee
Vismijn, Pakhuizen 45-52, B-8400 Oostende, Belgium
E-mail: annkatrien.lesrauwaet@vliz.be

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) requires robust sustainability indicators (SI) that gauge the 'health' of the coast in relation to environmental, economic and social activity. They are essential tools for monitoring the state of the coastal environment to inform managers and policy makers of the effectiveness of strategies in achieving sustainability. At the European level, a set of 27 SI has been adopted in November 2004, to facilitate an integrated and common approach to monitoring, and to measure whether we are moving away from or towards more sustainable coasts.

The SAIL partnership is a trans-national ICZM effort bordering the Southern North Sea, seeking regeneration of regional economies of Zeeland (NL), West-Flanders (B), Nord-Pas de Calais (F), Kent and Essex (UK), and the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural diversity. The SAIL project on SI, taken forward by VLIZ from January 2004, attempts to assemble compatible datasets for all 27 indicators at a very local level, through one common methodology and systematization tools such as fact sheets and mapping products. Datasets of different format and from varied sources must be 'pre-packaged' for the coastal zone. Data and metadata are stored in an SQL database and shared on the web. An 'SVG Snippet Server' (SSS) was developed to improve performance of an interactive mapping tool of high-resolution maps for the SAIL region. Data capture has been completed for 20 indicators covering high-priority policy issues at the coast such as changes in the extent and quality of protected areas, significance of tourism, ports and fisheries, second homes, social deprivation and climate change.

This initiative is the first to tackle the EU set of 27 SI for the coastal zone through a coordinated trans-national approach based on a common methodology. The set of SI will be instrumental to EU Member States in preparing their national coastal strategies in 2006.