

# The Compendium for Coast and Sea – Bringing the marine science-policy interface into practice

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Over the last years, the use of our coasts, seas and oceans has intensified significantly, resulting in new challenges and opportunities which in turn have led to novel regulations and policy initiatives. In order to respond to these societal challenges, the targeted communication about scientifically-underpinned marine and maritime information to end users and stakeholders is of the greatest importance. In this context, the concept of marine science-policy interfaces has been debated intensively over the past decade.

In 2010, the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) has taken the initiative to develop a marine science-policy interface, dedicated to the Belgian part of the North Sea. Intensive collaboration with more than 100 experts from the research community, government, industry and civil society organisations has resulted in the launch of the first version of the Compendium for Coast and Sea in 2013. A second edition was presented in 2015.

The Compendium for Coast and Sea constitutes a one-stop shop for data and information, integrating socio-economic, environmental and institutional aspects of the coast and sea in Flanders and Belgium. As such, this knowledge document aims to increase the communication within the broad network of marine and maritime scientists and experts and intends to enhance the visibility and accessibility of marine research.

The Compendium consists of an extensive background document [1] which describes the marine scientific landscape (expertise, capacity, research infrastructure, etc.) (Chapter 1). Chapter 2 provides a summary of the scientific knowledge, as well as the legislative and policy framework with regard to the different user functions of the Belgian coast, sea and the adjacent Scheldt Estuary. Furthermore, a number of derived communication products with a specific focus were developed:

- A brochure with an overview of the expertise of the Belgian marine research groups [2]
- A catalogue with an overview of the available marine research infrastructure [3]
- A guide on funding instruments for marine research and innovation projects [4]
- A manual with the most pertinent marine policy and legal instruments which apply to the Belgian part of the North Sea [5]

All these products can be consulted interactively on the website [www.compendiumcoastandsea.be](http://www.compendiumcoastandsea.be), where the cited references are made publicly available, in line with the Open Access policy.

The Compendium for Coast and Sea addresses the recommendations of a.o. the EU policies on marine knowledge transfer [6] and The Rome Declaration [7]. It has resulted so far in tangible impact on various policy processes on an international (e.g. example of good practice in the context of the Global Ocean Science Report of IOC-UNESCO), European (e.g. input for consultations of the European Commission), federal (e.g. implementation of the MSFD in Belgium), regional (e.g. input for the ecosystem vision for the Flemish coast) and provincial level (e.g. revision of provincial spatial plan) (more information: <http://www.compendiumcoastandsea.be/en/impact>).

## References

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