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FP7

In August, submitters of proposals to the first call of the FP7 Environment Programme received the proposal evaluation reports; this month they will be informed about the funding decision of the Commission. The budget of the 1st call allows funding of about 10-15 % of the submitted proposals.

The second call will be launched soon. For this call ENCORA will again organise for all the topics an inventory of research groups interested in coordinating or to participating in consortia preparing proposals. This was also done for the first call and yielded an [interest list](#), which helped many consortia to achieve a well-balanced mix of expertise. Shortly after publication of the 2nd call text you will receive an inquiry form where you can specify your interest in the different topics open for funding.

The preparation of the workplan for the 3rd call will start in the beginning of 2008. When defining priority topics the Commission will take into consideration the results of the ENCORA Paris Conference on European Action Plans. The Framework Programme should focus on research issues, which are crucial to the advanced understanding of the processes governing natural and man-induced coastal zone development, allowing for better assessments and predictions. By [registering](#) to the Paris Conference you may contribute to defining those issues and to the development of a European research programme that provides corresponding means for cooperation and funding.

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Over the last century, the prosperity of coastal regions in Europe has strongly increased. While in the past, coastal regions were often considered as waste land, there is nowadays a broadly shared consciousness of their economic, environmental and cultural values. It has also become obvious that thorough management is required to maintain these values. Coastal values are protected by international laws and regulations, such as the [Ramsar Convention](#), the [Habitats Directive](#), the [Water Framework Directive](#), assignment of fishery quotas, regulations for [waste discharge and disposal](#), and regulations to prevent [pollution from shipping accidents](#). Seawater quality is a priority issue of European law because of its transboundary character and its implications for human and environmental health.

However, these legal acts offer only partial protection; values such as landscape, safety against

storm surges, and maintenance of the physical integrity of coastal margins are sometimes regulated by national policies, but are often also subject to the appraisal of local interests. It is difficult, and perhaps even impossible to devise generic guidelines for the protection of these values, on the one hand because of diversity in socio-cultural views and traditions and on the other hand because of diversity of environmental settings. The high complexity of the physical-ecological dynamics of the coastal zone and the present shortcomings in knowledge and predictability present additional difficulties. These factors constitute a serious obstacle to the development of a binding European framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management. However, such a framework for decision making is strongly needed, as the local knowledge resource for assessment is often weak and fragile.

The development of the [European Maritime Policy](#) (EMP) is a new EU initiative to provide a more solid basis for the integrated management of European coastal zones. The EMP promotes good practices by sharing knowledge and experience, more than by imposing binding regulations. This is in line with a strategy initiated in the nineties with the [Demonstration Programme](#) and continued in the years afterwards with a large number of [Interreg projects](#), in which local and regional coastal authorities of different EU countries have cooperated to devise solutions for comparable problems. These projects are limited in time and raise the question how to retain and to further disseminate the acquired knowledge and experience. The [ENCORA Coordination Action](#) is an initiative precisely meant to offer an answer to this issue. Summer 2007 this project is at half term, which is an appropriate moment to evaluate to what extent the project succeeds in providing a sustainable knowledge basis for Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe.

Broadening the knowledge base has in first instance been realised in all the participating countries by the establishment of [national coastal networks](#), in which institutions related to science, practice, and policy are represented. Each coastal network has a coordination office co-funded by the EU; for contact search these offices are supported by a team of [network ambassadors](#). The national networks fulfil a clearing-house function, organise information meetings and initiate and facilitate workshops for knowledge exchange among science, practice and policy. The number of members is growing – the total number already exceeds 1500 – but practice and policy are still underrepresented in most networks. Moreover, the institutional basis needs to be strengthened, to ensure continuation after ending of the EU funding. This is an important priority for the next period.

Core task of ENCORA is to facilitate sharing of knowledge and information. Several services have been developed to implement this task. The [Contact Search Service](#) responds to requests from members for identifying and contacting experts and practitioners from different countries to share knowledge and to work together on problems with a common denominator. This service is not yet used at the expected level. Unfamiliarity probably plays a role, but also reticence to engage in contacts with unknown parties. Therefore ENCORA has chosen a more active approach, whereby members are explicitly invited to call on the contact search service. Examples are calls to register at an interest list for participation in FP7 proposals and an agreement to perform a contact search for work tasks and site studies of the [SPICOSA](#) project.

Contact search is also facilitated by the [Contact Database](#), which can be consulted via the ENCORA Coastal Portal. All the members of the national networks are included in this database. Up till now the contact data have been imported by the coordination offices; these data are still rather scanty. Soon it will be possible for coastal professionals to enter their contact data themselves online. The Contact Database is then expected to grow further and to provide more complete information, while maintenance will require only a minor effort. Through the Contact Database coastal professionals are able to search themselves for potentially interesting partners to cooperate or to share experience with.

Young coastal professionals are an important target group for ENCORA. They often do not yet dispose of an international network and have little experience with methods and organisation of coastal management in other countries. For this reason the [Young Professionals Exchange Programme](#), YPEP, has been set up, targeting coastal scientists and practitioners at the start of their career. YPEP events are workshops, summer schools, site visits, etc., where young professionals can learn about experience and practices elsewhere and where they can start building a network with young colleagues from other countries. Several of such events are

planned for the second half of this year. YPEP organises also short traineeships and the exchange of young professionals between coastal institutions in different EU countries and provides some financial support. The number of YPEP applicants is rapidly increasing.

Transfer of knowledge is a major ENCORA goal. The existing practice of publication in scientific journals tends to restrict new knowledge to a circle of fellow experts and to hamper its transfer to coastal practitioners. Therefore ENCORA has raised [European theme networks](#) focussing on different aspects of ICZM and coordinated by institutes with outstanding expertise. The theme networks transfer knowledge to non-expert coastal professionals, enabling them to learn about progress in different ICZM-related relevant fields of knowledge, through a coastal and marine professional wikipedia, the [Coastal Wiki](#). The theme networks have contributed an initial body of information, and recently the Coastal Wiki was launched to become a popular publication vehicle for coastal professionals registered in the Contact Database. This ensures topicality of the Coastal Wiki, with only a limited management effort, which is mainly aimed at quality assurance. The Coastal Wiki contains already information on several hundred topics. For the next months an activity is planned to better organise the present information, to introduce relevant links, and to improve the readability.

The ENCORA Coastal Portal offers two other instruments for retrieving information on specific coastal topics. One instrument is the [Coastweb Archive](#), containing many background documents and equipped with an ontology-based search facility guiding the user to the most pertinent information. The Coastweb Archive is managed by CoastNet; it also serves as a background library for the Coastal Wiki. The other instrument is a [web search system](#) enabling users to limit their search to a selected group of websites. Users, who upload new documents or who propose new websites for inclusion in the search selection, contribute to keeping both instruments up to date.

The use of the contact and information search facilities offered by the Coastal Portal is rapidly increasing. A few hundred users currently visit the Coastal Portal every day; an average of over 1000 hits/day is recorded.

We may conclude that ENCORA adds an important dimension to a better utilisation of coastal knowledge and experience within Europe. The organisation of the ENCORA services is designed to enable their continuation after ending of the EU funding in 2009 with only a limited effort. Several initiatives have been started to secure this limited effort in the future. Several partners have already promised their support, so we can face the future full of confidence.



YPEP PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

In June, Maria Gabriella Gaeta, an Italian PhD student of the University of Bologna, visited the Cantabria University in Santander (Spain) with an YPEP grant. Her PhD research focuses on simulating the interaction between sea waves and porous structures, using the numerical model called COBRAS. This code was first developed by Professors Liu and Lin at the Cornell University in Ithaca (USA) and recently improved at the Cantabria University by Prof. Losada and his staff. "I wanted to share my studies and numerical results with the Spanish staff and also with Prof. Liu, who was visiting Santander and gave a lecture during that period. I had the opportunity of showing and discussing my results and so got a better understanding of some model's approximations and received many suggestions on how to improve the numerical code. As a result of this activity, I am now visiting the Cornell University, working with Prof. Liu for four months. Thanks to the Young Professional Exchange Program for giving me this useful experience!"

Gerasimos Kolokythas, a young researcher from the University of Partas attended the YPEP summer school about the Mathematical Methods for Coastal Engineering which took place from

19 to 28 of June 2007 at the University of Plymouth, UK. Here are his impressions: "My participation in this summer school was a unique, unforgettable experience. The warm welcome and the flawless organization contributed to a pleasant attendance including high-quality lectures, study groups and field trips. Indisputably, the best advantage for me was the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of coastal engineering with other young researchers from various European countries. I am fully satisfied from the ENCORA platform which through the YPEP program has supported financially my participation while providing additional assistance for the development of future cooperation initiatives with the rest of the participants. These benefits will encourage me to participate in future ENCORA activities."



FOR YOUR AGENDA

[LIST OF YPEP EVENTS](#)

[UPCOMING COASTAL EVENTS](#)



Colophon

The ENCORA objective is to facilitate and create new opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience on coastal issues in Europe. This electronic newsletter will inform you frequently about the activities and achievements of the ENCORA network. Every issue will contain news with news about your national network or ICZM related activities in your country.

This electronic newsletter is forwarded freely to other experts in the ICZM fields. If you would like to receive the ENCORA Newsletter directly, please contact your national coordinator. To subscribe to www.encora.eu send News-items for publication to encore@rikz.rws.minver.nl