

The Adriatic Sea in the prospect of integrated coastal area management

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The Adriatic Sea is considered in relation to the prospect of implementing coastal area management, namely of increasing rationality in sea resource uses and protecting the ecosystem. The main objectives of this paper are to : (i) put into evidence a range of leading factors and processes through which the management of the Adriatic Sea differs from that of other parts of the Mediterranean Sea and, *sensu lato*, of the semi-enclosed marine basins as a whole; (ii) to approach these aspects and processes through some general system-based conceptual tools; (iii) to relate the subsequent deductions to the directions that the United Nations system has provided for implementing coastal area management.

Analysis starts from some natural processes relating to plate tectonic dynamics and climatic, hydrological and erosion cycles, and deals with: (i) the establishment of the jurisdictional continental shelves which has opened the prospect of setting up coastal management patterns; (ii) the nature and content of the potential Adriatic management pattern; (iii) the Adriatic use framework; (iv) the Adriatic **use-use relationship model** leading to the consideration of **coastal use differentiation-coordination optimum**; (v) the Adriatic **uses-coastal ecosystem relationship model** relating to the need to prevent collapses of the ecosystem.

Through this approach the complexity of coastal management is self-evident. On the one hand, the Adriatic sea is subjected to natural processes making the ecosystem fragile. On the other hand, this semi-enclosed sea, included in a wider semi-enclosed sea, namely the Mediterranean Sea, is affected by high human pressure in the Italian side and is involved in a wide range of resource uses which to a large extent are conflicting. Because of this, advanced methodologies are to be experienced in order to ensure evolutions in management consistent with the need to enhance the environment and keep available sea resources for future generations.

The conclusion is that these methodological bases are consistent with the leading principle of the Integrated Coastal Area Management (ICAM) but that, in spite of the efforts made by the United Nations system, the route to the establishment of specific methodological approaches is still to be delineated. In this context the Adriatic Sea can be regarded as a marine area to which experimental and driving ICAM-inspired initiatives are appropriate.

