

# **Achieving Integration in Coastal Management: The Challenge of Linking National and Local Levels of Government**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this paper is on the necessity of and techniques for allocating roles to different levels of government, then integrating functions and processes among them. It first discusses why such integration is necessary, but challenging to achieve. It then provides three examples of how very different nations—the United States, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania—all with different basic governance arrangements and coastal priorities have made different decisions as to how to distribute authority and responsibility among national and local government in order to achieve mutually supported management objectives. It concludes by suggesting government consider a number of key questions as they work to distribute and integrate the authorities and responsibilities for coastal management.

## **The Need for Linked National and Local Coastal Initiatives**

The integration in coastal management is what distinguishes the endeavor from traditional sectoral programs. Coastal regions, with their burgeoning populations and many competing human activities, natural resources and ecological processes, are where integrated approaches are most urgently needed. The forms of integration required by coastal management are several, including the integration of science and management, integration among sectors, institutions and disciplines, and importantly, integration among governance levels. Others, both in this forum and at last year's US-Korea forum, are demonstrating by example the essential link between science and management (GESAMP 1996); and the need for, as well as the difficulty and rewards of, meaningful interdisciplinary research and intersectoral management (Olsen, 1999). This paper focuses on the need to integrate national and local coastal initiatives.

Achieving cooperation and integration among different levels of government is always difficult, requiring effective leadership as well as human and financial resources. The

typical situation is that local government is suspicious of state (or provincial) government that in turn is suspicious of national government. This is surely the case when it comes to making decisions about limited and critically important coastal resources and developments.

The need for a multiple, integrated governmental approach is due to a number of factors, including the following:

- ◆ *Responsibility for the management of coastal and ocean resources rarely falls exclusively under the jurisdiction of one level of government.* In countries with federalist systems of government such as the United States, local government typically has responsibility for land use decisions; state government for utilization of resources in near shore areas; and national government for resource use in offshore waters. Frequently, there are also overlapping jurisdictions for specific coastal uses or practices. Even in nations with more centralized systems of government, the different levels of government have different, but often overlapping, and unclear decision-making authority.
- ◆ *National and local governments often have quite different management objectives for utilization of resources and/or different overriding concerns regarding the coast.* National government is concerned about issues of greater than local concern such as national security, export earnings, the need to site major facilities (e.g., power plants, industrial complexes, free trade zones, ports), and the protection of areas of significant environmental/ecological value. Local and state government may be more concerned about local job creation, residential development, access to basic services, and maintaining local traditions.
- ◆ *Different government levels possess different expertise and information.* To solve coastal problems, a diversity of skills and knowledge is often needed. Some of this expertise is technical, and higher levels of government typically have better access to technical expertise, either in their home agency or through partnerships

with universities or research institutes. Local government agencies often lack this access to expertise, but are more in touch with stakeholder perceptions and attitudes. Such knowledge is as essential as technical knowledge for crafting workable solutions to coastal problems.

- ◆ *Different levels of government can and do initiate coastal management programs independently.* Coastal management is increasingly being developed and used by governments around the world as a distinct management approach to address coastal zone problems. Two decades ago, in the early 1980s, there were few coastal management programs; and those, which existed—such as in the United States, Sri Lanka and Costa Rica—were developed under a national framework. Sorensen (1997) recently identified more than 180 programs, projects and feasibility studies in 90 countries. Many of these programs, projects, and feasibility studies occur—often in the same nation—in isolation from each other, and operate with different objectives and approaches, resulting in lost opportunities for synergy; and in too many cases at cross-purposes with each other.

The need to link and promote synergy between national and local coastal management initiatives is well recognized in many of the guidance and lessons-learned documents which have been published during the last five years (Cicin-Sain and Knecht 1998, World Bank 1998, IPCC 1994); and was discussed by Olsen (1999) at last year's Korea-US Marine Policy Forum. All essentially recognize the need for a “two-track” approach to coastal management (Olsen et al. 1998, Hale et al. 1998); or said a different way, the need to link “top-down” with “bottom-up” planning and management. A “top-down” approach focuses upon central government, its policies, procedures and structures. A “bottom-up” approach works to enable change at the community, site and local government level, with the hope that success can solve locally urgent problems, encourage resource users to become resource managers, and produce “good practice” models that can be transferred and replicated across a nation.

The two-track strategy combines both approaches by simultaneously and incrementally building capacity both within central government (both national and provincial) and at selected geographic sites. National and local governments, in partnership with communities and resource users, are involved in the analysis of development issues and in taking responsible action. The power of this approach lies in creating linkages between the tracks and promoting a sense of shared purpose at all levels. The challenge lies in the fact that different levels of government typically do not work together easily. When national government is the program initiator, it is not uncommon for local government to be resistant and even hostile to the program. This is especially true if local government perceives that they will lose power or authority, that their discretion will be constrained, and/or they will be required to do more work or incur costs without commensurate benefits. Similarly, when local levels of government initiate coastal programs, resistance sometimes occurs if central government believes locals are becoming too politically powerful or independent, or that national interests are being compromised.

In a recent survey of 46 coastal nations, Cicin-Sain and Knecht (1998) found that almost half the respondents reported that the nature of the national/local relationships varied by issue but that only one third had generally cooperative local/national relationships. In developing countries, close to thirty percent said that national and local institutions had little to do with each other.

For a country such as Korea that is embarking on coastal management at the national scale, serious attention must be paid to the national/local government relationship. The agency or individual acting as the “coastal manager” must view each level of government as an important and unique stakeholder group. While substantial effort has already been spent to define coastal management program roles and responsibilities, equal effort now need be spent making these relationships work. Incentives need to be built into any coastal program to help each level of government want to play its part, and then be capable of playing it.

## **Applying the Two Track Approach**

As with the application of any guideline, the key to success or failure is “inventing” a way to take a simple, general idea and apply it to a specific situation. Hence while all nations recognize the need for multiple levels of government to play their part in coastal management, there are substantial differences in the choices nations have made regarding what role is most appropriate for each governance level. These differences are apparent in the very different approaches taken by the United States, Sri Lanka and Tanzania when defining national and local government roles and how to integrate them. In all three cases, two-tracks were recognized, but in the United States and Sri Lanka coastal management was initiated at the national level – from the top down. The national government defined its policy and provided a framework for local initiatives and implementation, although in the US, a few local coastal management efforts (e.g. San Francisco Bay, Rhode Island) preceded and influenced the National Act. In Tanzania, coastal management started from the bottom-up. A number of local area-specific programs were started in the absence of national policy or a framework, and national government is now working to put an umbrella over such programs and address issues that have arisen and been illuminated by of these local initiatives.

### The United States

The United States (US) coastal management program, with over 25 years of experience, provides one model of how national, state, and local government play distinct but complementary roles in achieving a balance of national and local interests along the nation’s coasts. The US Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 provides a national framework for improved management of the nation’s coastal lands and waters. It focuses on the integration of goals, the balance of uses, and the governance process itself as it aims to protect estuaries, coastal wetlands, beaches and dunes, provide public access to the shore, mitigate the negative impacts of development and accommodate coastal dependent uses.

The CZMA was designed so that the national government provides broad policy guidance, federal financial resources, and legal incentives to state level governments

wishing to upgrade their capacity for coastal management. A central feature of the US program is that it is a voluntary partnership among the different levels of government. It gives all three levels of government in the US—national, state and local—important roles to play and considerable flexibility in defining the specific policies and actions they find appropriate to their individual needs. This results in a diverse national coastal program, that recognizes the many differences that exist along the United States' almost 20,000km of coast.

The distribution of roles, responsibilities and authorities among the different levels of government is well summarized by Hershman et al. (1999)...

At the national level the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM) is the administering office. It interprets the statute through rules and regulations, interacts with...Congress, and (based on national guidelines, *sic.*) approves (or rejects) state coastal management programs and program amendments submitted to it for approval. Additionally, it awards grants to states for planning and administration of coastal programs, evaluates the progress of the states in implementation, and oversees implementation of the federal consistency provisions of the CZMA.

The states are the action arm of the coastal management system. The states follow the framework and guidelines laid out by the federal act. States, for example, determine the boundaries of the coastal zone, the key coastal problems, the policies and laws that address them, and the state and local organizations required to be involved in implementation. Within each state, a designated lead agency is the author and lead implementer of the coastal management program and the recipient of federal grants and matching funds for planning and administration. Frequently, the states provide technical assistance to other entities, build constituencies, research coastal management issues and trends, and promote new policies.

Local governments...are often the primary implementors of state coastal policies and programs. They use traditional land use and infrastructure improvements to achieve coastal policy objectives...

After 25 years (1972-1997) this three-tiered, intergovernmental system has matured and is a stable element in most states. Of the 35 eligible states, 32 participate in the national program. (p.115-116)

In the US, the national coastal program does not make decisions on individual development proposals; the OCRM has programmatic decision-making authority but not regulatory authority. The US national approach to coastal management is voluntary, facilitative, and incentive-based. After approving policies and implementing mechanisms, it leaves implementation and case-by-case decision-making to state and local government. The national program provides oversight and periodically evaluates state programs. If a state makes decisions which do not conform to the program, the federal government can reduce or withdraw funding until performance improves. Variations to this approach are found in a number of other large, diverse coastal nations such as Australia and the Philippines (Hale et al. 1998).

### Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka passed its Coastal Management Act in 1981 (it was gazetted in 1983). The Act vested primary authority and responsibility for both coastal planning and implementation within a single national agency—the Coast Conservation Department (CCD). CCD was given responsibility for:

- ◆ Designing and implementing a permit program for all development in a legally defined coastal zone;
- ◆ Completing scientific and socioeconomic studies that provide information for a national coastal zone management plan;
- ◆ Preparing a national coastal management plan and updating it every five years; and
- ◆ Designing and constructing shoreline protection works.

From its inception, CCD staff implemented as they planned. CCD staff reviewed coastal permit applications, met with developers, enforced coastal setback requirements, constructed coastal protection works, commissioned research, met with representatives of other agencies to review projects, organized public awareness projects, and carried out a variety of other implementation activities. During the 1985 to 1989 period, they also prepared their first National Coastal Management Plan (adopted by Cabinet in 1990). In

this first generation plan, CCD chose to focus on a limited subset of coastal issues—coastal erosion, coastal habitat protection, and historic, scenic and archeological sites.

During this period, CCD tried to implement all coastal management actions from the capital city. In the 1990 to 1995 period alone, CCD with a coastal management staff of less than 15, reviewed more than 2700 coastal permit applications, supervised Environmental Impact Assessments for 10 major developments, launched several major policy and awareness-building initiatives, and began revision of the national plan. In short, the national office was attempting to take on **all** the work of the nation's effort to better manage its coast.

While the Coast Conservation Act allows the CCD Director to delegate decision-making authority to lower levels of government, it did not require him to do so. CCD staff recognized from the beginning that the volume of permit applications and the relatively minor nature of many coastal projects would ultimately require some delegation of authority. Centralized permit processing was seen as a necessary first step to test and refine the permitting system, prior to decentralization. As early as 1992, CCD attempted to distinguish between major and minor permits and delegate the issuing of minor permits to Divisional Secretaries—the executives at local government level.

Successful delegation of permitting authority and responsibility has, however, proven difficult and became effective after 1996. First, local government in Sri Lanka, as in other places, is over-burdened with regular administrative work and under capacitated. CCD had few incentives to offer local government, and local officials correctly viewed the permitting of coastal development as an activity that would not be “appreciated” by the resource users and small developers, that are the constituencies of elected local officials. CCD recognized that it needed to provide Districts with clear procedures, training, and incentives if they were to take on additional responsibilities. With relatively few resources, CCD developed guidelines (which were approved by Cabinet as part of the revised 1997 National Coastal Management Plan), piloted its devolution program, and carried out an extensive training program for targeted districts. At the same time, CCD



began to ask itself how the national program could help local government improve the quality of the resource base and the well-being of resource-dependent coastal villagers, and not restrict devolution to the transfer of regulatory burdens to local districts.

The coastal program had to move from being an agency that basically said yes or no to individual developments to one that was also making a tangible and positive difference in the lives of coastal people. The strategy that CCD adopted (Olsen et al. 1992) was to promote special area management plans (SAMPs) as a mechanism to deal comprehensively with coastal management issues at specific sites. Potential SAMP sites were selected by CCD based on four criteria: severity of the issues, biodiversity, feasibility, and economic significance. In their revised coastal management plan (1997), CCD calls for SAMPs for 23 coastal sites. The 1997 Plan provides guidance on the process for SAM planning. As with the permitting program, CCD's national guidance is based on its "lived" experience. CCD pioneered the SAM by developing two successful models—one in Hikkaduwa and one for Rikawa Lagoon.

A major change that occurred in Sri Lanka over its first decade of implementation was to promote greater interaction between national and local levels of government, as well as a more substantial role for local government in coastal management. Initially, the national government tried to "do it all." With its revised 1997 Program, national government retains a regulatory role for major coastal developments, an oversight role to local government in relation to minor permit review, and a catalyst/facilitator role with regard to SAMPs. In addition, CCD continues to play a national leadership and coordinating role—keeping coastal issues on the national agenda, promoting awareness of and support for these issues, and improving the available information base for coastal management.

### Tanzania

Tanzania is in the process of developing a national coastal management program. The nation has approximately 800 kilometers of coast and is very underdeveloped. Outside of urban areas, the major source of income for coastal communities is fishing, mostly at a subsistence level, but increasingly at commercial levels. Marine fisheries constitute

about 25 percent of total fisheries, provide protein for coastal communities and contribute \$6.5 million to the national economy. Women and children directly depend on the collection of shellfish and are often involved in processing and selling fish. As in many places, catch per unit effort is declining quickly while population and pressure on the resource base increases. Mangroves provide wood for building and fuel, while reefs are mined for lime and coral rock. In addition to the human use of the resources, coastal ecosystems (reefs, mangrove forests and sea grass beds) have high biodiversity and productivity, and provide shoreline protection.

Of the opportunities Tanzania has for development, many are coastal, including export fisheries, mariculture (both prawn and seaweed farming) and tourism. As coastal areas become more populated and activities become more intense, it is increasingly likely that the natural resource base will be degraded. Because Tanzanians depend on the higher qualities of their coastal ecosystems, pressure from development and over-utilization can have significant impacts on the nation's economy and social fabric. It is clearly in the national interest that coastal development be carefully planned.

Despite this pressure, and national recognition of the need for a coastal policy (Amaral et al. 1997), for many years the national government of Tanzania made little progress in moving from rhetorical support for coastal management to initiation of a meaningful national policy process. Over the last five years, however, isolated pilot programs began testing the viability and tangible benefits of using coastal management as a means for addressing coastal issues and opportunities in specific areas along the coast. Pilot programs primarily focus on district and village levels of government, and on village economies. They work independently of one another and are not tied into a central coordinating body, statements of national policy or plans specific to coastal areas.

The absence of a national framework for coastal management has resulted in lost opportunities and increased costs at the national level, and frustration at the local level. With management authority for coastal resources under the auspices of multiple institutions and departments, (e.g., fisheries, forestry, tourism and wildlife) mandates and

programs frequently conflict with each other, wasting extremely limited financial resources. Second, there is no coherent national effort to promote or guide coastal development, nor is there a mechanism for local communities to acquire support from the national government to implement integrated management plans. Lack of communication between local pilots and national government makes it difficult for pilot activities to inform national policy with the lessons that are being learned. This limits the prospects for the replication of successful local models that are addressing important problems.

Creating a national coastal management framework within a context of entrenched sectoral agencies, and substantial on-the-ground experience and activity presents the national government with a series of challenges. Local programs are concerned that a national program will be a hindrance rather than a help; and rigidly sectoral agencies are concerned they will lose power; and jealously guard their sectoral territories. This is a delicate but common situation for emerging coastal programs. Within this context, the government of Tanzania has decided to move cautiously, but deliberately, to define a national coastal program.

In 1997, the Tanzania Coastal Management Partnership (TCMP) was formed. The TCMP is a cooperative initiative among the Government of Tanzania through the National Environment Management Council, the United States Agency for International Development and the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Center. The TCMP works with the existing network of ICM programs and practitioners to facilitate a participatory, transparent process to unite government and the community, science and management, sectoral and public interests to establish the foundation for effective coastal governance at the national level.

From its inception the TCMP has been consciously trying to define the national program's role as one that promotes integration and fills gaps not covered by existing agencies or programs, or as well said by Lee (1999) in this Forum, "to promote

integration not centralization.” TCMP is adopting the roles a national program will ultimately have by adhering to the following operating principles (TCMP, 1999):

- Build on and from existing experience and programs.
- Do not seek to replace sectoral responsibilities, but instead, enhance the abilities of the sectors to work toward common goals.
- Use conflict management and participation as the primary tools for improving sectoral coordination.
- Ensure that a national program contributes to the success of local and regional programs.
- Work to promote the ownership and sharing of costs of the coastal program at both local and national levels.
- Promote participation by all key state and parastatal groups, resources users and private sector stakeholders throughout program planning and implementation.
- Make decisions about program direction with transparency, in partnership between national and local governments.
- Build human capacity at all levels, providing people with the right information and skills; and model the behavior that promotes integration.

This definition of the national program’s role is winning support. Similarly, as TCMP looks at what the national coastal program should do, it promotes a facilitative, rather than command and control model. While the final content of Tanzania’s national coastal policy is still unfolding, the likely differentiation of roles among governance levels is becoming clearer. There will be a clear differentiation between activities and uses of national versus local concern.

For issues of local concern, the national program will play a supportive role as the local government works with communities to solve local problems. Support means not only technical and financial support. Local programs also want the national program to help them communicate with each other and play an advocacy role for them with the many sectoral agencies of central government whose actions influence what occurs at the local level. This role of national program as ombudsman and advocate for local programs is a new one; but one that is viewed as essential in Tanzania.

For activities of national concern (e.g., major export-oriented developments including mariculture, tourism, gas development) the national program is developing Integrated Action Strategies that provide guidance and a coordinated government response. For

example, through the TCMP the first-ever intersectoral guidelines for a new activity—shrimp mariculture—are being developed by a multi-agency working group (TCMP 1999). If successful, this model of the national coastal program as the group that convenes multiple sectoral agencies will be used for other major development initiatives. The national program will also help identify critical areas of geographical concern—whether for ecological or economic reasons; improve the ability of science to inform decision-makers as they make resource use and allocation decisions; and work to increase the commitment to and capacity of Tanzanians to wisely manage their coast.

### **Conclusions**

There are many ways to allocate responsibility and authority among governance levels in any coastal program. All nations must make their own choices based on their socio-political and governance structures and traditions; and the issues upon which the coastal program needs to focus. Korea, though its new Coastal Management Act has allocated responsibility among its levels of government. Making those linkages effective and efficient is the challenge that still lies ahead.

In making the link between national and local government work, some key questions need to be asked and answered, including the following:

*(1) What will the coastal program attempt to do and what levels and agencies of government have the capacity to get it done?*

While at the broadest level, many national coastal programs share a common goal; at the next level down their objectives and priorities may be quite different. Discussion about the distribution of roles often tends to be general and focus only on authority, when this is only one consideration. One also needs to ask which level of government can command the resources (human and financial), the capacity, the knowledge, and the political support to address the coastal issues of concern.

*(2) What is the national interest in the coast? What is the local interest? What is the mechanism for balancing those interests?*

It is essential to recognize different levels of government often have dramatically different points of view on how and by whom coastal resource should be used.

Throughout Asia, there is a move towards decentralizing the management and control of coastal resources both as a way to improve management and promote stewardship. The hypothesis (as yet unproved) is that it is more efficient to place management at the lowest level of government, and that people more dependent on the resource base will be more likely to make decisions that favor sustainable forms and intensities of use. Within a context of increasing decentralization it becomes ever more important that the national interest in the coast is defined and protected. Mechanisms for balancing national against local interests are also essential. Such mechanisms can include national input into local plans, national approval of local plans, as well as a clear definition as to when national interests prevail over local interests.

*(3) What practical linkages can be forged between national and local programs that can promote a sense of shared ownership and result in planning and implementation that integrate across the different levels of government?*

For national and local government to work with a shared purpose, it takes substantial effort and specific institutional mechanisms that allow for both formal and informal exchange. Formal links can be through local program approvals, funding mechanisms, and evaluations. Of equal importance can be awareness-raising and capacity-building events, and opportunities to work together on specific projects and programs.

*(4) What can be done to overcome suspicion between national and local government?*

Local government needs to see new tools and resources available to address problems that are perceived as being salient to local communities; they need to see flexibility from national government in how policy is applied—recognizing the unique circumstances and priorities that exist in every location. Lastly, local government needs to see that local talent and expertise is effectively utilized and recognized; that help from the outside is indeed help and does not usurp the jobs or the status of locals.

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