

Analysis of the legal framework for integrated coastal zone management

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Abstract – Coastal areas, as dynamic and ecologically significant regions, play a pivotal role in the interface between land and sea. They provide essential services to ecosystems, communities, and economies worldwide. However, these vital regions face increasing threats from climate change, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable resource exploitation. In response, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) has emerged as a comprehensive approach to address these multifaceted challenges.

This research focuses on evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the Romanian legal framework that underpins ICZM initiatives. It delves into the complexities of the legal mechanisms governing coastal management, assessing their capacity to manage and mitigate diverse coastal zone issues.

Keywords – *coastal zone management, efficiency assessment, environmental conservation, integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), Romanian legal framework.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Coastal areas are among the Earth's most dynamic and ecologically significant regions, serving as critical interfaces between terrestrial and marine environments. These zones are not only essential for biodiversity and ecosystem services but also vital for the sustenance and livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. However, the increasing impacts of climate change, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable resource exploitation have rendered coastal areas particularly vulnerable [1].

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) emerges as a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to address these challenges effectively. ICZM is predicated on the concept of balanced and sustainable development, striving to harmonize environmental conservation, socio-economic development, and disaster risk reduction within the coastal context. Fundamental to the implementation of ICZM are the legal and regulatory frameworks governing coastal management [2].

This research undertakes the critical task of evaluating the efficiency and efficacy of the legal framework underpinning ICZM initiatives. It aims to delve into the intricacies of these legal mechanisms, assessing their capacity to effectively manage and mitigate the diverse array of coastal zone issues. The overarching goal is to provide valuable insights into how the legal framework can be enhanced to better support and facilitate ICZM practices.

As coastal areas continue to face mounting environmental and socio-economic challenges, the evaluation of the legal framework for ICZM becomes not only pertinent but also urgent. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of existing legal provisions, we can pave the way for more robust and adaptive coastal management strategies. This research endeavor seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable coastal development, ultimately aiding in the preservation of these invaluable ecosystems for future generations [3].

The aim of this analysis and investigation is to clarify the complexities of coastal zone legislation and establish a path towards a more resilient and harmonious coexistence between humanity and coastal environments.

2. ROMANIA'S ICZM LEGAL FRAMEWORK EVOLUTION: EU INTEGRATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ALIGNMENT

The historical evolution of the legal framework governing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Romania reflects a dynamic response to changing dynamics and evolving priorities in coastal management. Romania, akin to numerous other nations, grappled with the complexities associated with fragmented and sectoral approaches to coastal governance in its past [4]. Recognizing the imperative for a more coherent coordinated and integrated strategy, the legal framework has undergone a series of strategic reforms and adjustments over the years.

This evolutionary journey of the legal framework is punctuated by significant milestones, each of which has been a response to emerging coastal challenges, international agreements, and growing environmental concerns. These milestones collectively constitute a progressive narrative that has shaped the contemporary legal landscape governing ICZM in Romania.

Notably, Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 marked a transformative juncture in the evolution of its coastal legislation. This significant event triggered a substantial overhaul of the legal framework, necessitated by the imperative to align with EU directives and principles. The integration of Romania into the EU framework catalyzed comprehensive changes in coastal governance to conform to the rigorous standards and regulations set forth by the Union.

These adaptations have included the harmonization of Romanian coastal legislation with EU directives pertaining to environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, water quality, and sustainable development [5]. The alignment with EU standards has not only ensured compliance with international best practices but has also facilitated international cooperation and collaboration in the management of shared coastal resources.

Furthermore, this process of alignment with EU directives has facilitated access to EU funding mechanisms and support for ICZM initiatives, contributing to the implementation of projects aimed at enhancing the resilience and sustainability of Romania's coastal areas. The adoption of EU principles has also reinforced the commitment to integrated and ecosystem-based approaches in coastal governance, underlining the importance of protecting and restoring coastal ecosystems.

In summation, the evolution of the legal framework governing ICZM in Romania is emblematic of the country's commitment to adapting and responding to the ever-changing dynamics of coastal management. The legal framework's responsiveness to emerging challenges, international obligations, and environmental priorities underscores Romania's

dedication to safeguarding its coastal resources and embracing a more integrated and sustainable approach to coastal governance.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ICZM IN ROMANIA

The legal framework governing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Romania is indeed a complicated and intricate system comprising an array of laws, regulations, and policies. This legal architecture serves as the fundamental structure underpinning the governance and stewardship of coastal regions, playing a pivotal role in ensuring their sustainable management and preservation.

Within the vast framework of Romanian legislation, numerous documents and regulations play a central role in the context of ICZM. The paramount "Law on Integrated Coastal Zone Management" acts as the primary legislative tool dictating the direction of coastal management practices in the country. This fundamental legislation outlines the comprehensive framework for developing coastal governance strategies, defining the principles, goals, and primary responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in ICZM [6].

The legislative framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Romania reflects a comprehensive approach, recognizing the unique environmental, economic, and social significance of coastal zones. The framework is designed to balance the needs of environmental conservation with the imperatives of sustainable development. Each of the key legislative instruments plays a crucial role in this balanced approach:

Emergency Ordinance No. 202/2002, Amended by Law No. 280/2003: This ordinance sets the stage for a holistic management approach to the coastal zones. It integrates environmental protection with socio-economic development, ensuring that any activities in the coastal zone are sustainable and do not compromise the ecological balance. The amendment introduced by Law No. 280/2003 further refines these principles, providing a more robust legal basis for ICZM.

Government Decision No. 1015/2004: By establishing the National Coastal Zone Committee, this decision creates a central body responsible for coordinating the various aspects of ICZM. The committee ensures that all stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and private entities, are involved in the decision-making process, thereby fostering an integrated approach to coastal management.

Government Decision No. 749/2004: This decision is significant for its focus on the delicate strip of land adjacent to the coastal zone. It recognizes the critical role this area plays in maintaining the ecological and aesthetic integrity of the coast. By setting criteria for its management, the decision aids in preserving the natural landscapes and biodiversity, while also considering the cultural and historical value of the coast.

Government Decision No. 546/2004: The demarcation of the state's public domain in coastal areas, as defined by this decision, is essential for regulating the use and conservation of coastal resources. It serves as a legal tool to prevent unauthorized exploitation and ensures that public access to coastal resources is maintained.

Emergency Ordinance No. 19/2006: This ordinance plays a critical role in managing one of Romania's most valuable coastal resources - the Black Sea beaches. By regulating the use and activities on these beaches, the ordinance aims to prevent environmental degradation and promote sustainable tourism practices.

Emergency Ordinance No. 18/2016: Addressing the spatial planning in maritime areas, this ordinance underscores the importance of a coordinated approach in managing maritime activities. It aims to harmonize various interests - from fishing to maritime

transport and tourism - ensuring that the maritime space is utilized in an environmentally sustainable and economically viable manner.

In summary, Romania's legislative framework for ICZM represents a multifaceted and comprehensive approach. It not only addresses the environmental aspects of coastal management but also incorporates economic and social dimensions, ensuring that the coastlines are managed in a way that benefits both present and future generations.

Complementing and augmenting this primary legal instrument are an array of subordinate regulations, ministerial orders, and governmental decrees. These subsidiary legal provisions serve to provide granular and detailed guidance on specific facets of ICZM. They encompass a wide spectrum of topics, including land-use planning, environmental protection measures, disaster risk mitigation strategies, pollution control protocols, resource allocation mechanisms, and socio-economic development considerations. Together, these complementary regulations form a comprehensive framework that translates the broader principles of ICZM into actionable policies and procedures.

Collectively, this intricate web of legal instruments within Romania's ICZM framework not only signifies the commitment to sustainable coastal management but also establishes a robust and adaptable legal structure. This structure not only navigates the complexities of coastal governance but also seeks to harmonize the diverse interests and demands of stakeholders, all with the overarching goal of safeguarding and nurturing the invaluable coastal areas of Romania.

The legal framework for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Romania is characterized by a well-defined hierarchical structure that intricately delineates the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the various institutions and stakeholders intimately involved in the multifaceted field of coastal governance. This hierarchical arrangement forms the backbone of the operational framework for ICZM, providing a systematic and organized approach to managing Romania's coastal areas [7].

Within this structured framework, the organizational architecture of ICZM is explicitly outlined, serving as a blueprint for effective governance. It clearly defines the functions and mandates of government agencies, local authorities, and other pertinent bodies involved in coastal management. This delineation of roles and responsibilities is essential for maintaining coordination, synergy, and cooperation among stakeholders, ensuring that the objectives of ICZM are pursued collectively and efficiently.

Key components embedded within the legal framework include a diverse range of thematic areas that are indispensable to the holistic management of coastal regions. These components encompass important domains such as land-use planning, environmental protection, disaster risk reduction, pollution control, resource allocation, and socio-economic development [8]. Each of these components is meticulously underpinned by specific legal provisions, regulations, and guidelines. These legal instruments provide a detailed roadmap that dictates the prerequisites, protocols, and obligations incumbent upon the various stakeholders within each thematic area [9].

For instance, in the realm of land-use planning, the legal framework may articulate guidelines for sustainable coastal development, zoning regulations, and criteria for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas. In the context of environmental protection, specific regulations may be outlined to preserve biodiversity, maintain water quality, and mitigate the adverse impacts of coastal development. Disaster risk reduction provisions may delineate preparedness measures, response protocols, and recovery strategies in the event of natural disasters. Pollution control regulations can detail permissible pollutant emissions and effluent discharges, ensuring the integrity of coastal ecosystems and the

health of coastal communities [10]. Resource allocation mechanisms may encompass the responsible management of fisheries, aquaculture, and other coastal resources, striving for equitable access and sustainable utilization. Additionally, socio-economic development considerations may emphasize strategies for enhancing local livelihoods and community well-being, fostering a balanced and inclusive approach to coastal governance.

Collectively, the legal framework's explicit hierarchical structure and the detailed provisions that govern its key components epitomize a systematic and comprehensive approach to ICZM in Romania. This approach is grounded in the principles of effective governance, sustainability, and resilience, serving as an essential for the enduring protection and responsible management of Romania's invaluable coastal resources.

Within the body of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) legislation in Romania, several key aspects play a pivotal role in facilitating effective coastal management. These aspects encompass a spectrum of vital concerns and considerations that collectively contribute to the comprehensive and sustainable governance of Romania's coastal areas.

Land-use planning provisions within the legal framework represent a cornerstone of effective coastal management. These provisions establish clear and rigorous guidelines for sustainable coastal development, encompassing zoning regulations, land-use restrictions, and measures for the preservation of critical habitats. By delineating suitable land uses and safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas, land-use planning supports the responsible and orderly development of coastal regions while minimizing environmental impacts.

Environmental protection measures are paramount within ICZM legislation. These provisions are designed to conserve biodiversity, uphold water quality standards, and prevent pollution in coastal areas. They encompass regulations to safeguard fragile ecosystems, protect endangered species, and mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of human activities. The emphasis on environmental protection underscores the commitment to maintaining the ecological integrity of coastal regions, preserving their natural heritage for current and future generations.

ICZM legislation recognizes the vulnerability of coastal areas to natural disasters, including floods, storms, and other hazards. As such, it incorporates comprehensive disaster preparedness and response mechanisms. These mechanisms encompass strategies for early warning, evacuation, emergency response, and post-disaster recovery. By ensuring that coastal communities are well-prepared and equipped to cope with natural calamities, these provisions enhance resilience and minimize the potential human and economic costs of disasters.

Provisions related to **resource allocation and management** constitutes a critical component of ICZM legislation. These provisions govern the responsible utilization of coastal resources, including fisheries and aquaculture. They seek to strike a delicate balance between resource exploitation and conservation, promoting sustainable practices that preserve the long-term viability of these vital resources. By ensuring equitable access and prudent management, resource allocation provisions contribute to the socio-economic well-being of coastal communities.

ICZM legislation recognizes the importance of **socio-economic development** in coastal regions. It underscores the significance of sustainable livelihoods and the well-being of local communities. These considerations embrace strategies for fostering economic growth, employment opportunities, and community development while ensuring that such development is ecologically responsible and compatible with the long-term health of coastal ecosystems [11].

In summary, the key aspects embedded within ICZM legislation in Romania form a comprehensive framework that addresses the intricate challenges and opportunities presented by coastal management [12]. These provisions collectively strive for the sustainable development, environmental protection, [13] - [14] resilience, and equitable resource utilization in Romania's coastal areas, reflecting a holistic and forward-looking approach to coastal governance [15].

4. CONCLUSION

The research into the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal framework governing Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in Romania has yielded several key findings. Firstly, it was established that the legal framework serves as the fundamental backbone of coastal governance, providing the necessary structure for the sustainable management and protection of coastal areas. Moreover, the hierarchical structure within this framework delineates the roles and responsibilities of various institutions and stakeholders involved in coastal governance, ensuring coordination and collaboration among them [16].

Crucially, the legal framework encompasses a comprehensive set of components that address critical thematic areas relevant to coastal management. These include land-use planning, environmental protection, disaster preparedness, pollution control, resource allocation, and socio-economic development. Each of these components is supported by specific legal provisions, regulations, and guidelines that outline the obligations and requirements of stakeholders in these areas [17].

The evaluation of the legal framework within the context of ICZM is of paramount significance for several compelling reasons. Firstly, it ensures that coastal management practices are carried out within a well-defined legal structure, minimizing conflicts, and enhancing efficiency. Moreover, the evaluation provides a means to assess the framework's responsiveness to emerging coastal issues, international agreements, and environmental concerns.

Furthermore, the legal framework evaluation is instrumental in maintaining compliance with international standards and agreements, particularly in the case of Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007. This alignment with EU directives and principles not only ensures adherence to global best practices but also facilitates access to EU funding and support for ICZM initiatives.

Lastly, the legal framework evaluation highlights areas where improvements and adaptations are needed to address evolving challenges, such as climate change impacts and shifting socio-economic dynamics in coastal regions. It underscores the dynamic nature of coastal governance and the importance of ongoing assessment and refinement.

This research contributes to the understanding of legal aspects within ICZM by providing insights into the role and significance of the legal framework in coastal governance. It underscores the need for ongoing evaluation and adaptation of legal frameworks to ensure their relevance and effectiveness in addressing contemporary coastal challenges.

Future research in this field may focus on in-depth case studies of specific legal provisions and their practical implementation, as well as comparative analyses of legal frameworks across different coastal regions. Additionally, exploring the impact of legal framework modifications on coastal management outcomes and the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement within legal frameworks could offer valuable insights.

In conclusion, the legal framework evaluation within the context of ICZM in Romania reveals its pivotal role in coastal governance. It underscores the importance of legal structures and provisions in achieving sustainable coastal management and protection, and highlights avenues for future research and development in this critical field of study.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work has been conducted as part of the project “Improving the capacity of the central public authority in the field of marine environment protection in terms of monitoring, evaluation, planning, implementation, and reporting of the requirements established in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and for the integrated management of the coastal zone”, SIPOCA 608/MySMIS 127598.

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