



Recommendation of the Council on Principles concerning Coastal Management

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Background Information

The Recommendation on Principles concerning Coastal Management was adopted by the OECD Council on 12 October 1976 on the proposal of the Environment Committee (now called Environment Policy Committee). The Recommendation advises Adherents to establish comprehensive plans for coastal management, to assess projects with potential significant environmental impact, as well as co-operate internationally on marine waters protection and coastal development. The Recommendation was abrogated on 8 November 2023.

THE COUNCIL,

HAVING REGARD to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on the Analysis of the Environmental Consequences of Significant Public and Private Projects [C(74)216];

HAVING REGARD to the Recommendation of the Council of 14 November 1974 on Principles concerning Transfrontier Pollution [C(74)224];

RECOGNISING the need for policy actions in coastal areas to avoid environmental deterioration and to enhance environmental protection;

CONSIDERING that permanent and temporary population and activity are increasing more rapidly in coastal zones than generally elsewhere in Member countries;

RECOGNISING that the solution to problems of coastal management must be found within the context of wider national policies and of related administrative and legislative arrangements, and after appropriate consultation;

RECOGNISING that the protection of coastal zones and, in particular, of unspoilt areas and areas of cultural and touristic importance is in the common interest of mankind and is of benefit to, and the responsibility of, all Member countries and therefore has international implications;

HAVING REGARD to the Final Report of the Mediterranean Pilot Study of Environmental Degradation and Pollution from Coastal Development [ENV(75)27];

HAVING REGARD regard to activities of other international organisations, notably the United Nations Environment Programme, related to the pollution of coastal zones;

On the proposal of the Environment Committee;

RECOMMENDS that Member countries be guided in their coastal protection and development policies by the principles contained in the Annex to this Recommendation of which it is an integral part.

ANNEX

PRINCIPLES CONCERNING COASTAL MANAGEMENT

A. National Measures

1. The development, redevelopment or realignment of coastal areas should be controlled. Consideration should be given to the special problems arising from existing dense industrialisation and urbanisation in certain coastal areas. Plans should thus be comprehensive and take due account of the complementary nature of the activities which can be located in coastal zones according to national and regional priorities. To this end, the use of techniques such as zoning, i.e. the specification of permissible land use, is desirable. Prior to development of coastal policies, it would be useful to draw up inventories, i.e. descriptions of the significant physical and biological characteristics of potential uses of the coastline.
2. Defensive planning, consisting of restrictions, should be complemented by positive planning indicating where activities may be located provided that due consideration is given to environmental protection.
3. The potential impact on the coastline of significant public and private projects should be assessed prior to their development.
4. The public should be informed of facts and plans relating to coastal development and involved in the planning process at the earliest possible stage.
5. The protection of the most esthetic, culturally and/or environmentally vulnerable areas should be given special care and kept for those activities which, by their kind and scale, are compatible with the preservation of the characteristics of these areas. In addition, areas representative of particular natural systems should be preserved for future study and to serve as regenerative centres.
6. The siting of industrial activities which have to be located in coastal areas should be such as to guarantee a maximum of environmental protection.
7. In certain coastal zones, pending evidence on environmental impacts of proposed projects, it may be necessary to take conservation steps by temporarily preventing certain types of development which could possibly have irreversible adverse effects on the environment. Such a moratorium could be lifted when evidence is available that the project can be developed in harmony with environmental protection.
8. Wherever possible, the adjacent inland should be developed so as to relieve the coastline proper -- in particular, inland transport infrastructure should preferably not be developed along this coastline.
9. In coastal zones, public transportation and public transport systems should be organised and used wherever possible in such a way as to guarantee a maximum of environmental protection.
10. Stringent action should be taken to avoid environmentally detrimental construction in the coastal zone, for example, to prevent building developments which through height and/or density, spoil the landscape, lead to environmental deterioration or interfere with natural processes of land and sea interaction.
11. Free access by the public to the sea front in areas of tourist interest should be ensured.
12. Adequate financial resources should be available within the framework of national regulations to be used for the alleviation of problems related to the implementation of measures designed to protect and conserve the coastal environment.
13. Coastal development projects should take due account of the need to protect fishing grounds, oyster and shellfish production.

14. Coastal development projects should not jeopardise coastal ecosystems as such, e.g. estuaries, wetlands, barrier reefs, archipelagos, and areas for the protection of flora and fauna, etc.

15. Efforts should be made to manage industrial and urban wastes by requiring pre-treatment and/or prohibiting and/or restricting discharges into the sea. Sewage treatment and disposal policies should be strengthened by various means such as recycling and making beneficial uses of effluent and sewage sludge.

16. Consideration should be given to the fact that congestion in coastal areas can be greatly relieved if measures are taken in the public and private sectors to stagger holidays.

17. In order to arrive at a comprehensive approach to environmental protection, ecological, technical and economic studies should be undertaken of the possible transfer of pollution between land, sea and air as a result of policies to deal with only one of these media.

18. Every effort should be made to ratify, where necessary, and to implement as soon as possible, existing international conventions which Member countries have signed on coastal protection, marine discharges, oil spills and pollution of the sea from land-based sources and to give effect to appropriate programmes to be developed under these conventions.

B. Concerted Measures

19. Work in international organisations should be strengthened on co-ordinated programmes to monitor the quality of marine waters, based on standardized or comparable methodology with the aim of classifying, interpreting and conserving the data.

20. Methodology should be developed in co-operation between Member countries for evaluation of the state of the environment, in various types of coastal zones, together with the definition of parameters to be considered in decision-making related to coastal development.

21. Member countries should co-operate with a view to promoting the protection of touristic sites of special interest, and in particular to developing a code of conduct for tourists in order to protect such sites.

22. Co-operation between interested Member countries should be developed regarding coastal development in border areas and mutual exchange of information should take place; where mutual interests are concerned, consultations should take place at the request of one of the Member countries concerned.

23. Whenever significant public and private projects have environmental consequences in coastal areas within other countries, active co-operation between Member countries concerned should be developed in the analysis of the environmental consequences of such projects. The results of such analyses should be taken into due account by Member countries concerned in the implementation of their policy measures.

24. Neighbouring Member countries should give mutual help in the event of major accidental coastal pollution by establishing emergency procedures to enable a given country to make use of the services of neighbouring countries to combat, as quickly as possible, the effects of such pollution.

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