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Future Challenges in Environmental Policy Relative to ICZM

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Abstract

Environmental policy making is typically perceived as an exogenous element of coastal management. It is something that occurs “elsewhere,” often generated by some aggregate effects experienced at a national or global level, as with overfishing and climatic change. In such case, the subsequent legislation is seen as being imposed from the top-down onto coastal zone managers and stakeholders. Although the regulatory framework within which coastal actors operate are becoming increasingly strict and complex, I argue that a no less difficult environmental policy issue is endogenous, originating from within the coastal zone eco-social system itself. This is largely acknowledged among coastal practitioners as a challenge stemming from the interaction that occurs among the various user-groups and stakeholders of marine and coastal resources, and which is inherently conflictive, but also potentially cooperative and symbiotic. Curbing the former while enabling the latter is no doubt tricky, and yet, it is essential that managers are able to handle both. In this paper I discuss what kind of policy making process is needed to make it more constructive and how it must be organized. In short, I claim that we need a policy process that builds on an institutional model that allows us to deal with both the exogenous and the endogenous challenges and the way they interact. Such a management system must be inclusive, transparent and interactive across both sector boundaries and scales.