Integrated Coastal Management Coordinating Mechanism for Da Nang City

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Key Message

• Coordination is an indispensable element of an integrated coastal management (ICM) program. The setting up of a Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) by a responsible authority at project inception creates a favorable environment for ICM implementation and is crucial to ICM success.

• The coordinating mechanism, as demonstrated in Da Nang City, can provide the necessary platform for stakeholders to interact and make collective decisions on sustainable development and ICM program implementation challenges. This can result in reduced policy and functional conflicts between sectors and government agencies pertaining to use of the coastal and marine areas.

Abstract

Da Nang City’s coastal area is experiencing high economic growth, particularly for coastal tourism, port development, and maritime transport. Under a sectoral and “territory-based” management, unintegrated development was resulting in coastal use conflicts and generating various environmental concerns including pollution, degradation of coastal resource-base, and habitat destruction. The city government, in its pursuit for sustainable development, adopted the ICM system in 2000, under which a multidisciplinary coordinating mechanism was established, and institutionalized. Through this mechanism, the city mobilized the active participation of various stakeholders. Issues concerning coastal and marine resource use, as well as the city’s plans for socioeconomic development, were thoroughly discussed.

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during stakeholder consultations, workshops, and meetings. The consensus-building process of the ICM approach helped reduce use and turf conflicts between sectors and agencies. This, in turn, facilitated the city government’s coastal planning and decisionmaking processes.

The multidisciplinary coordinating mechanism, one of the main dynamics of ICM, played a key role. Stakeholders were appreciative of the mechanism because they benefitted from the outcomes. Its effectiveness and the experiences gained during the development and implementation of the ICM program strengthened the capacity of Da Nang City in implementing other related projects and programs, such as the Provincial Program in Response to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise, which required multisectoral and multidisciplinary coordination and cooperation.

Background

In the past two decades, Da Nang, a coastal city in Viet Nam, experienced rapid and dynamic economic growth and social development. Because of its strategic location, Da Nang city played an important role in promoting the development of its coastal areas — port, tourism, shipping, fishing, aquaculture, mining, urban, and residential development. Similar to other coastal provinces of Viet Nam, development activities in Da Nang City were employing sectoral and “territory-based” management approaches. As a result, the coastal space and resources were used by different sectors in a disorderly manner. This generated many coastal environmental challenges, including pollution, degradation of resource base, habitat loss, and hence, loss of ecosystem services. As the city’s development focused on the marine economy, in particular coastal tourism, port development, and maritime transport, there was an urgent need for a more efficient and effective environment and natural resource management approach to ensure sustainable exploitation and use of the marine and coastal resources. The ICM system was introduced in Da Nang in 2000 by the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) as an environmental management approach in achieving social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The project started with the establishment of a multidisciplinary coordinating committee, a mechanism which engaged key stakeholders with clearly defined functions and responsibilities (Figure 1). Through such coordinating mechanism, the city mobilized the active participation of various stakeholders throughout project implementation. The coordinating mechanism played a key role in promoting effective integrated management of the coastal and marine resources. The stakeholders appreciated the establishment of such mechanism because they benefitted from the outcomes of the project, which were crucial for the city in achieving sustainable development goals, especially towards its transformation to an “Environmental City” by 2020.

This case study documents the establishment and functions of a multidisciplinary coordinating mechanism and how it was sustained.

Approach and Methodology

To effectively implement the national ICM demonstration project, the city established a PCC based on Decision No. 7997/QD-UB, dated 5 July 2000, by the People’s Committee of Da Nang City. The PCC consisted of 25 members and chaired by a vice chair of the People’s Committee of the City. The PCC deputy chair, with a key role in project implementation, was the director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE). Other members of the PCC included leaders of the People’s Committee of Da Nang City, the People’s Committees of coastal districts, the leaders of key departments, agencies and organizations, and a representative of PEMSEA’s national focal agency, the Viet Nam Environment Protection Agency.
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Figure 1. Multidisciplinary coordinating mechanism under the Da Nang ICM Project.

Figure 2. Composition of PCC members.

Officially started, the PCC was able to operate smoothly, especially creating unity across all relevant agencies. The stakeholders realized the importance of their roles and responsibilities, and were motivated to actively participate in project activities including identifying solutions and measures for effective project operation.

Assisting the PCC was the Project Management Office (PMO). It consisted of permanent and several part-time staff of the then Department of Science and Technology. All PMO staff were

The PCC conducted quarterly meetings to review the project’s activities and outputs as well as to identify and recommend effective solutions for addressing environmental and developmental concerns or constraints encountered during project implementation. The meetings provided the necessary forum for the stakeholders to discuss their concerns and to agree on decisions for their resolutions, thus reducing conflicts between and among sectors.

All members of PCC worked on a part-time basis. There was no allocated funding for the committee’s regular activities or extra financial support for their participation. Members’ costs were shouldered by their respective organizations. Shortly after the project was

(then under the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment). The PCC members also included representatives from the Port Authority, the Command of Military Zone 5, the Command of Naval Zone 3, Da Nang’s Farmers’ Association, Women’s Union, and Youth’s Union (Figure 2).

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selected based on the terms of reference of their respective working positions. Thus, the PMO could handle and complete many different and challenging tasks of the project, including working directly with international experts.

The close cooperation among the relevant departments, agencies and other stakeholders created a significant change in the perception of people and officers on protecting and maintaining natural resources. Many government managers from different departments were interested in the approach and outcomes of the ICM project and incorporated them into their agencies’ agenda. The public being appreciative of the initiatives, was motivated to actively participate in the project activities, especially those related to coastal environment and resource protection. Their participation contributed much to the development of Da Nang into an environment-friendly city, in particular, the development of a long-term city vision as outlined in Da Nang’s Coastal Strategy (Box 1).

The active participation of the concerned departments/agencies and districts, and social organizations in the coordinating committee reflected their understanding and acceptance of the ICM approach in protecting the values and benefits of coastal and marine natural resources.

The interest and active participation of stakeholders in the coordinating mechanism, which is based on fairness and democracy, also facilitated the mobilization of human resources. Stakeholders realized the benefits, particularly in solving conflicting issues related to the coastal area and promoting multidisciplinary cooperation and integration.

The issues on coastal and marine resource use in relation to the city’s socioeconomic development plans were also discussed during stakeholder consultations, workshops, and meetings. The consensus-building process helped reduce conflicts in coastal resource use, which in turn facilitated the government’s planning and decisionmaking processes (Box 2).

The project’s training programs supported the coordinating mechanism by creating a network of people with skills and knowledge on ICM. This served as the basis for mainstreaming the ICM model into the programs, plans, and activities of departments and districts in Da Nang.

The experiences gained were also used to implement other activities that required multisectoral and multidisciplinary coordination and cooperation, such as the Provincial Program in Response to Climate Change and Sea Level Rise.

Overcoming operational challenges

Members of PCC were responsible for many other tasks in their respective agencies. Some initially did not fully appreciate the ICM approach or were not able to participate fully in all PCC meetings. To overcome this, a PCC Assisting Group was established, composed of senior technical and administrative staff of the respective departments, agencies, and districts. The PCC Assisting Group was responsible for supporting PCC in

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**Box 1. Vision of Da Nang City.**

A coastal area of rapid and diversified development, with green, clean, beautiful, and healthy environment; where the natural resource system is under long-term planning and sustainable use; where the ecological, cultural, and historical values are preserved; where the Da Nang people are provided with maximum benefits while the ecological values are maintained, and where Da Nang shall spearhead Viet Nam and the Region towards sustainable development.

People’s Committee of Da Nang City, 2001
various activities, such as information gathering and dissemination, report preparation, and coordination between PCC and PMO during the project implementation process. As such, PCC was able to operate smoothly.

When there was a revision in PCC membership due to changes in positions within agencies, the newly appointed members encountered difficulties in understanding the project activities and progress. In 2005 in particular, there were changes to the city’s leaders, and several of them were also members of PCC. To fill this gap, the Da Nang’s People’s Committee promptly issued Decision No. 6207/QD-UB, dated 5 August 2005, on the amendment of PCC membership, particularly the designation of new members. The PCC also directed PMO to provide the necessary materials and information to newly appointed PCC members and to regularly update them and provide clarification of any matter related to the ICM project.

From 2004 to 2005, the project faced significant changes arising from the reorganization of concerned agencies relating to science, technology, environment, and natural resources sectors at both national and local levels. The PCC advised the city’s People’s Committee to maintain PMO under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) instead of shifting it to DONRE\(^1\) to avoid any disruption to project implementation, given that the project was in its final stages of the demonstration phase. As soon as this phase was completed in March 2006 and preparations were made to proceed to the next phase, the ICM project was handed over to DONRE. To ensure uninterrupted project performance, the PCC proposed the transfer of all PMO staff from DOST to DONRE to effectively assist the newly appointed PMO director from DONRE. Through the recommendation of the PCC, the People’s Committee issued Decision No. 2587/QD-UBND, dated 21 April 2006, on the related PCC membership amendment, especially regarding the new PCC vice chair position assigned to the director of DONRE.

**Results**

The PMO’s role was critical in ensuring that PCC operated smoothly and effectively throughout the whole project implementation process. The PMO, while serving as the PCC Secretariat, also built its capacity on ICM implementation through “learning by doing,” particularly in developing plans, managing specific activities of the ICM project, and working with various stakeholders. Through the organization and conduct of seminars, workshops, and training courses, the capacity of PMO staff was

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\(^1\) As per government decision, ICM, including its development and implementation, is handled by the natural resources and environment sector.
strengthened and in the process their confidence was boosted in working and interacting with, and mobilizing the various stakeholders. The staff’s knowledge and experience continuously accumulated through their involvement in project activities, such as development and implementation of a communication plan, coastal strategy and action plan, coastal use zoning plan, integrated environmental monitoring, integrated information management system, coastal risk assessment, and coastal vulnerability study (Boxes 3 and 4).

Over the span of 15 years, PMO staff became more familiar with the operational details in developing and implementing the ICM project within the Vietnamese sociopolitical and administrative settings particularly in addressing sectoral overlaps and in solving multiple use issues in the coastal areas. The ICM project also provided opportunities for the staff to participate in international events, including giving presentations on the progress made and sharing experiences in ICM implementation. Likewise, as a national ICM demonstration site, Da Nang became a favored venue for regional training and important international events such as the East Asian Seas Congress in 2015.

The PMO staff were involved in organizing many international and in-country seminars and training courses related to ICM, specifically on the scaling up program in Viet Nam and the ICM for the North-Central and Central Coastal Region of Viet Nam until 2010, with orientation to 2020 (to realize Decision No. 158/2007/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister). These courses included the following:

- Training Workshop on Implementing Decision 158/2007/QD-TTg and the ICM Scaling Up Program for DONRE staff of other coastal provinces of Viet Nam;
- National Training Course on ICM Level 1 for leaders and representatives of DONRE from 28 coastal provinces, and professional staff from universities and research institutes in Viet Nam, and representatives from the Viet Nam Administration of Seas and Islands;
- Training Course on ICM for leaders of coastal communes and Divisions of Natural Resources and Environment of all districts;
- National Training Workshop on the Development of Coastal Strategy and Communication Plan for ICM for staff from 20 coastal provinces within the framework of the ICM scaling up program for 7 provinces of Viet Nam and the ICM program for 14 central coastal provinces, following Decision No. 158;
- Training course on State of Coast Report Development and Integrated Information Management System development for officials of Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Provinces and Da Nang City; and

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**Box 3. Capacity building in Da Nang ICM.**

The ICM project has brought many benefits in my professional career. Specifically, it made me understand the benefits of integrated management approach to achieve sustainable development, which is very useful for me to carry out various tasks related to the management of the environment and natural resources. My involvement in ICM Project implementation has taught me how to develop and manage projects and plans as well as collect and share data and information with various stakeholders. The project has also provided me the opportunity to improve my ability in preparing and presenting reports.

**Phan Thi Thu Thuy**  
PMO staff of the ICM Project since 2004
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The ICM project helped me in strengthening my technical capacity in the field of sea and islands management. At the early stages of ICM project implementation, I had the opportunity to learn and apply a GIS technique and develop and manage the database for the Da Nang coastal zone management. Together with what I have gained later, such as teamwork skills and experience in working with various stakeholders, I could participate in and significantly contribute to the development and implementation of some important ICM tools, such as coastal use zoning plan, integrated environmental monitoring program, integrated information management system, and the project web page.

Do Manh Thang
PMO staff of the ICM Project since 2001

Lessons Learned

Box 4. Capacity building in Da Nang ICM.

Box 5. Sharing of lessons learned in ICM implementation in Da Nang.

The involvement of the Da Nang leaders in the project from inception created a favorable environment for project implementation and was crucial for its success. With the establishment and operation of a multidisciplinary coordinating mechanism, the PCC contributed significantly in the modality of coordination and cooperation among and between sectors, organizations and districts in collectively solving issues confronting the coastal and marine areas of the city.

The mechanism strengthened the capacity of various stakeholders, including governments at the district and commune levels, and academic and social organizations, such as Da Nang University.
Farmers’ Association, Women’s Union and Youth’s Union as well as all the coastal communities. The mechanism facilitated their involvement in consensus building and sustaining the support for coastal and marine resources management and environmental protection. At the beginning, stakeholder participation was passive. This situation gradually changed as the stakeholders were made to understand their role and contribution to sustainable coastal development.

Many sectors and agencies applied the ICM approach in their professional activities. For example, coastal use zoning was attentively considered and implemented by tourism, industrial, and agricultural sectors. Aquaculture activities were no longer practiced in Da Nang’s coastal waters but instead along the estuarine area of Cu De River. Many social organizations implemented coastal resource and environmental protection campaigns in the city based on the experience of the ICM project.

Through collaboration and consultations on critical environmental issues, the sectors, agencies, and stakeholders continue to reduce duplication of efforts and increase their efficiency.

The ICM working modality, especially its coordinating mechanism, contributed to national efforts to establish a common coordinating model for Viet Nam. There were several different modes of operation and coordination of coastal management projects sponsored by other donor agencies, including the Viet Nam–Netherlands Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project, implemented from 2000 to 2005. The achievements and lessons learned from operationalizing the coordinating mechanism were analyzed and showed the need for a common coordinating model. Thus, a common coordinating model for marine and coastal management at both national and local levels in Viet Nam was proposed as specified in different documents, such as:

- Decree No. 25/2009/ND-CP dated 6 May 2009 of the Vietnamese Government on integrated sea and islands resources management and environmental protection
- Circular No. 22/2012/TT–BTNMT dated 26 December 2012 of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam, regulating the development and implementation of plan on integrated coastal resources management and environmental protection
- Viet Nam’s National Integrated Coastal Management Strategy until 2020 and Vision to 2030, approved by the Prime Minister of Viet Nam through Decision No. 2295/QD-TTg dated 17 December 2014.

Reference

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