

Protecting coastal and marine environments from land-based activities

A guide for national action



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Foreword

Coastal and marine environments play many different roles in relation to public health, food security, economic and social benefits, cultural values and traditional livelihoods. The state of these environments is mirrored by activities carried out on land. Activities varying from industrial and agricultural production to daily domestic routines affect the health of these ecosystems and of the people that depend on them.

During the first intergovernmental review meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) in 2001, governments confirmed their commitment to use the coastal and marine environments in a sustainable way through implementation of the GPA.

In 2002 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as the Secretariat of the GPA, published a Handbook on the Development and Implementation of National Programmes of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (NPAs). It provides guidance for environmental managers and policy makers on how to implement the GPA in their own countries. Since its release many lessons have been learned and related policy developments gained importance.

Many NPAs have been formulated but concrete measures and action is lagging far behind. In this revision of the NPA Handbook it is stressed that institutional, financial, legislative, social, and technical aspects should be further addressed. Emphasis is put on affordable programming, calling for realistic, step-by-step implementation of priorities within a cross-sectoral, participatory framework, through a flexible and iterative process. Linkages with other strategic processes are made more explicit, such as the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development partnerships, poverty reduction strategies and sectoral policies, and linkages between coastal areas and upstream river basins.

A key purpose of the NPAs is to mobilize stakeholders and resources, and to ensure that activities fit into existing institutional, policy, societal and budgetary frameworks. As needs and priorities vary greatly between countries, action has to be tailor-made. In quite some countries a specific NPA programme may not be necessary because other relevant programmes are already in place, in other countries a limited programme may be enough to pull all relevant actors together, and in a third group of countries a full-scale programme will be required.

We re-named this new version, using the word guide instead of a handbook, because it mainly points to relevant sources that provide specific guidance. I hope that this revision will facilitate action that will actually protect our coastal and marine environments. We anticipate that up-dated versions will be produced as new approaches in relevant sectors mature into replicable methods. Feedback for future revisions is most welcome.

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Reader's guide

There are several ways in which this report can be used. Government and NGO staff, members of the private sector and others can use it to acquaint themselves of the basics for taking national action to protect the marine and coastal environment from land-based activities. It can also help ministries and other stakeholder representatives in the process of creating an enabling environment and subsequently implementing activities that will respect marine and coastal ecosystems. At the same time, it can be used in training workshops and other capacity building initiatives.

The report has three major parts. Part I is meant for policy makers as well as environmental managers ranging from national to local levels. It has a simple structure in which it sets the scene for action. Chapter 1 gives a general introduction; Chapter 2 briefly describes action taken so far at global and regional levels and summarizes lessons learned from relevant national strategic planning tools such as the National Programmes of Action (NPAs) and sustainable development strategies; Chapter 3 introduces guiding principles for national action.

Part II goes into more detail, especially addressing environmental managers, outlining specific tasks involved in a NPA process. Chapter 4 proposes a framework with five main steps that will lead to action. For each of the five Steps specific tasks are formulated (see Box next page). Chapter 5 describes Steps 1, 2 and 3, dealing with the initiation of a NPA process and the formulation of a realistic programme. Chapter 6 covers Steps 4 and 5, focussing on actual successful measures and activities.

Throughout the report examples are included in the text or in illustrations (numbers of figures and boxes are linked to Chapter numbers). In addition, Part III presents annexes with background information, more extensive examples and a list of recent publications recommended for further reading.

For *national* action it was possible to include specific examples and references that mainly deal with conceptual approaches, or with the mechanics of creating an enabling environment in the fields of policy, legislation and financing. For *local* on the ground activities the options become too numerous to present in this report. As a result, in most cases only brief examples are given with reference to more detailed sources.

Five major steps, each with specific tasks

STEP 1 Initial preparations

To start a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder process for the protection of the coastal and marine environment from land-based activities:

- designate the overall lead that will have to carry out initial preparation tasks:
- set up (and chair) a NPA Core Group
- define the overall scope and guiding principles
- consult potential financial partners
- hold initial brainstorming sessions with key actors
- develop and agree on an initial work plan
- secure funding for preparatory activities (mainly Step 1 and 2)
- ensure formal endorsement of the NPA process by the government

STEP 2 Identification of problems and of constraints and opportunities for successful solutions

To analyse the current situation:

- assess policy tools, (potential) partners and linkages
- assess data, monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- assess legal and financial frameworks
- For all: identify problems, constraints, opportunities and (capacity building) needs

STEP 3 Formulating realistic strategies and action

To develop a tailor-made NPA programme for step-by-step implementation through a wide network of linkages, partners and stakeholders:

- set up an institutional network
- set realistic objectives, goals, targets and time-frames
- define prioritization criteria and set priorities
- produce a programme pipe-line and formulate short and medium term activities
- devise a financing strategy
- formulate communication and participation strategies
- designate implementing agencies and assign responsibilities

STEP 4 Kick-off national level measures and on the ground activities

To start implementation involving all stakeholders and to ensure support and a sense of ownership at all levels by creating awareness:

- ensure adoption and acceptance of responsibilities by implementing agencies
- start ongoing awareness and outreach activities

STEP 5 Monitoring, evaluation and revision

To set up strong monitoring, feedback and evaluation components:

- ensure continuous monitoring, evaluation and revision
- set-up assessment and reporting programmes to evaluate action
- select indicators against which set goals and targets can be evaluated

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