

European coastal areas offer a variety of recreational and economic opportunities to the continent's citizens and these depend largely on maintaining the environmental quality and character of beaches and coastal systems. With the continuing migration of citizens towards coastal areas however, the character and quality of the shoreline is changing. High population density is affecting the natural processes that govern both environmental and geological processes. This, in turn, has increased public exposure to the risks associated with coastal storms and erosion, such as property damage.

Despite efforts by many European public authorities to compile information on the hazards facing coastal systems, there is still much to discover and suggests the need for increased partnership amongst European coastal authorities.

MESSINA stands for **Monitoring European Shorelines and Sharing Information on Near shore Areas**.

The MESSINA initiative intends to partly bridge these gaps by breaking "knowledge isolation" of some local authorities and institutions in Europe, by raising their managerial and technical capabilities through a mutualisation of the experience accumulated by each of them, and by upgrading existing shoreline management guidelines through an integration of the latest innovative techniques and methods available in Europe. The objectives of this 3 years project are:

- to provide a state of the art of shoreline monitoring and modelling techniques supporting coastline management policies, with a particular attention paid to innovative techniques;
- to review concrete examples of economic analysis methodologies applied to shoreline management policy inside and outside Europe;
- to embed lessons learnt from existing coastal defence engineering practices - including hard and soft engineering - into coastal planning processes at the local level;
- to assess information requirements to better integrate coastal erosion processes into spatial planning policies;
- to design and implement a pilot GIS-based information system dedicated to shoreline management planning at the local level, to be experimented by the project partners.

Ultimately, MESSINA aims at maximizing the benefits of future investments in coastline management and raise the public awareness about the need to manage the coastline in a sound and sustainable way.

For that the project partners have designed a "**MESSINA Coastal Manager Toolkit**" made of 4 Practical Guides ("**Monitoring and modelling the shoreline**", "**Valuing the shoreline**", "**Engineering the shoreline**", "**Integrating the shoreline into spatial planning policies**") and a demo CDROM featuring a GIS-based prototype of shoreline management planning practices.

The Practical Guides content and issues will be commented and discussed during Littoral 2006 specific workshops:

- Monitoring and modelling the shoreline;
- Valuing the shoreline;
- Engineering the shoreline;
- Integrating the shoreline into spatial planning processes.

More informations are available on [www.interreg-messina.org](http://www.interreg-messina.org)

Content of Workshops shall be proposed in the coming weeks in common agreement with organization team.

Partners' list:

- Institut Géographique National (IGN) - French Geographic Institute (France)
- Rijksinstituut voor Kust en Zee (RIKZ) - National Institute for Coastal and Marine Management of the Netherlands (Netherlands)
- Communauté d'Agglomération du Bassin de Thau – Community of Agglomeration of the Thau Basin (France)
- Ystadskommun - Municipality of Ystad (Sweden)
- Università degli Studi di Messina - University of Messine (Italy)
- Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II - University of Naples (Italy)
- Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) - Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)
- Uniwersytet Szczecinski - University of Szczecin (Poland)
- Urząd Gminy w Rewalu - Municipality of Rewal (Poland)
- Statens Geotekniska Institut (SGI) - Swedish Geotechnical Institute
- ErosionsskadeCentrum - Centre for Coastal Erosion Studies (Sweden)
- Provincia Regionale di Ragusa - Province of Ragusa (Italy)
- Isle of Wight Council (UK)