

# Coastal Atlas (Belgium)

**URL:** <http://www.kustatlas.be>

## Purpose of application

The Belgian coastal atlas was published as a response to the European Recommendation in ICZM, to provide an overview of the key topics for the Belgian Coast. The atlas provides interactive maps, downloadable maps and data, GIS.

Purpose of the atlas:

- Facilitate **communication** and **awareness-raising**;
- Provide a **contact point** for coastal information;
- Help implement the **European Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management**;
- Integrate **planning** and **coastal policy**;
- Make **coastal indicators** visible as policy support instruments.

## Geographic extent

The Belgian coastal atlas covers the EEZ of Belgium and the coastal municipalities.

## Target audience

Coastal managers and stakeholders, state agencies, local and regional governments, federal agencies, researchers/scientists, students & teachers, consultants, and interested citizens and tourists.

## Data included (general categories)

**Number of data sets:** 33 in 2010. Big scale updating process in 2011.

**Information on:**

Physical Environment;  
Coastal Habitats;  
Spatial planning (on land and at sea)  
(Integrated) Management and legal aspects  
Infrastructure;  
Industry;  
Social aspects, Culture & Heritage;  
Natural Resources;  
Fisheries, Aquaculture & Agriculture;  
Tourism & Recreation;

## Distinguishing features

Initially **published as a book** (Belpaeme and Konings 2004), then developed as a CWA;

- **Designed simply** but effectively;
- **Uses Flash** instead of a web mapping system for its maps;
- Available in **four languages**.

## Technology used (web GIS, server, database, content management system?)

- PHP/HTML web content;
- Flash for interactive maps;

- Downloads available in pdf/xls/gis format.

## **Atlas support (financial/institutional)**

### *Funder:*

- The Coordination Centre on ICZM (partnership);

### *Partners:*

- The province of West-Flanders (coastal province);
- The Flemish Government: Nature and Coastal Defence Department;
- Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ);
- Environmental Department, Federal Government.

## **Challenges encountered**

- Securing long term funding for maintenance
- Staff time for update
- Commitment from coastal partners to provide data and share through the atlas
- Setting up data sharing agreements
- Find time series to illustrate changes in the coastal zone
- Broad user base
- Finding the balance between a simple to use product and a portal with a lot of information (prevent information overload)
- Monitor use and usefulness of the atlas

## **Lessons learned**

- Understand the business needs of the targeted audience and have open dialog with users
- Easy to use product is crucial for our target audience
- Clearly articulate use and importance of Atlas to managers in related programs and agencies
- Communicate with occasional users about new information and features
- Importance of marketing the Atlas to new audiences and potential stakeholders

## **Future directions (ongoing and future improvements?)**

### **Planned improvements** to the Atlas include:

- Updating the atlas
- Providing more interactive maps, besides the static (and easy to use) maps
- Integrating sustainability indicators into the atlas
- Including more marine information