

# International Coastal Atlas Network

## A Strategy Discussion Document

### Aim

The International Coastal Atlas Network aims to be the global reference body for the development of coastal web atlases (CWAs). Here we define coastal web atlases as *collections of digital maps and datasets with supplementary tables, illustrations and information that systematically illustrate the coast for the purposes of coastal zone management and planning, oftentimes with cartographic and decision support tools, all of which are accessible via the Internet*. Via the expertise of its members it intends to influence, guide and inform in a coherent manner on matters related to development and use of coastal web atlases. Furthermore it will encourage and facilitate global operational interoperability between coastal atlases in order to enhance data and information sharing among users including policy makers, resource managers and the general public.

### Goals

The long-term strategic goal of ICAN is to help build a functioning digital atlas of the global coast based on the principle of distributed information. This will involve the sharing of experience in order to find common solutions to CWA development whilst ensuring maximum relevance and added value for the end users. In order to achieve this aim ICAN has the following goals:

- Ensure that the Network has representation from CWA development and coordination groups from across the Globe.
- Collate and publish a set of best-practise guidelines for the development of CWA.
- Highlight the benefits of interoperability and standards based systems to the coastal atlas user community
- Develop collaborative projects for the sharing of know-how, implementation of technical solutions and demonstration of atlas benefits to end users.
- Move towards aligning the atlas efforts of the network partners in order that interoperability can be facilitated.
- Engage with other relevant international projects and developments.
- Involve representatives of the relevant user communities to help in tailoring CWAs to their needs.

### Strategic activities

To further these goals ICAN intends to and is in the process of

- Identifying appropriate collaborative applied research projects (e.g. enabling semantic interoperability between OCA and MIDA),
- Submitting joint proposals to funding agencies (e.g. US Science Foundation...),

- Participating in and contributing to relevant workshops and conferences (e.g. CoastGIS 07, EEA Conference 08, Littoral 08),
- Contribute written material to magazines, books and scholarly journals (e.g. forthcoming book for IGI global, articles for Coastal Management journal)
- participate in on-site training and develop short distance learning courses on CWA (e.g. IODE course for Caribbean Marine Atlas) ,
- contribute to the development of specifications and standards of concern to the coastal atlas community
- Organise an annual meeting or web conference to review past and discuss future activities (e.g. Cork '06, Corvallis '07, Copenhagen '08).
- *Identifying the information needs for large scale interoperable CWAs.*

### **Benefits of Membership**

- Assistance in finding maps, datasets, and related informational resources;
- Your CWA can be part of and interoperable with a larger universe of resources that is needed for effective marine spatial planning, resource management, and emergency planning.
- Communication channel for CWAs in your own region to enhance collaborative study or spatial planning within a region or nation.
- Guidance and best practices for your own local CWA development. You have access to a community of experts in the IT, GIS, data management and coastal and marine governance domains.
- Potential to exchange and reuse software and technical solutions developed using Open Source solutions.
- Linkage to broader communities such as the Marine Metadata Interoperability (MMI) initiative, SeaDataNet and similar “cyberinfrastructures”, along with their accompanying tools, solutions, and best practices.
- Great publicity for your individual CWA via the outreach efforts of ICAN. This can help with promoting your CWA with decision makers.
- Possibility to leverage funding for collaborative projects among ICAN participants
- Participate in teaching and learning activities organised by ICAN or other organisations in the CWA domain.

### **Activities to Further ICAN Goals**

#### **Governance**

*During the Copenhagen workshop a governance structure will be agreed on and put in place in order to improve co-ordination of the network, and provide the guidance necessary to maintain its activities.*

#### **Long-term funding mechanisms**

*Funding of the ICAN itself is not envisaged. However in order to progress the aims of the network its activities will need to be funded, and can be done so in separate pots of money to collaborative sub-teams within ICAN. Sources include national and international programmes such as:*

*US, National Science Foundation*  
*EU, Framework Programme 7*  
*UNESCO*  
*GEO/GEOSS*  
*LOICZ*  
*NOAA*

**Proposed Activities for 2008-2009**

- *Extend the prototype to include the Washington Coastal Atlas and the Belgian Coastal Atlas (or another European initiative)*
- *Implement WMS services in the next version of the prototype*
- *Additional Use cases*
- *Publish a CWA handbook with IGI*
- *Promote ICAN at Littoral 2008 and other conferences*
- *Scope out a longer term project under ICAN and apply for funding.*