Project background

The BLAST project's primary focus was on "Bringing Land and Sea Together", by harmonizing and integrating land and sea data. In respect to geographic data, it has long been a fundamental problem that data on the landward side are collected and maintained by topographic mapping or cadastral agencies utilised primarily for development, nature conservation etc., while sea data are collected by hydrographic survey services, focusing primarily on marine navigation issues.

BLAST took advantage of the great potential for increased collaboration on these issues among countries at national, regional and local levels. BLAST followed the IHO-guidelines as state of the art and resulted in a regional input to the IHO. The lack of harmonised data across the land-sea margin poses limitations to good planning and integrated coastal zone management, as well as the handling of acute pollution, accidents etc. Therefore, BLAST sought to provide a prototype land/sea interoperable database that was tested by practitioners from muliple sectors. Incomplete, inconsistent maritime information is a leading factor in marine casualties, environmental damage and ship detainments. The harmonisation of maritime information is a transnational European challenge. To address the issues that arise from unharmonised presentation of maritime information, BLAST developed several platforms for better integrated maritime information. It also demonstrated the value of 3D visualisation in navigational aid displays.

Lack of reliable maritime information will always be a risk in respect to the maritime traffic navigation and monitoring. A harmonised ENC (Electronical Navigational Chart) system and efficient traffic monitoring system are of utmost importance to keep a high level of security for regional maritime traffic. Integration and distribution of maritime data is therefore important. It is also important to widen access to these data so that all parties involved in traffic management can use the data to improve decision making. To this end, the BLAST partners worked to improve the functionalities of relevant databases, it provided input for improvements to the SafeSeaNet reporting system.The coastal zone is an optimal place to locate renewable energy devices (wind, tidal turbine); at the same time, maritime traffic and vulnerable ecosystems must also be considered in planning at the coastal margin. Furthermore, these interests need to be managed in a context of climate change adaptation. BLAST developed a conceptual model for integrated spatial planning utilising GIS, tools for spatial planning in respect to renewable energy plants, and a web-based decision support system for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) in a transnational context. Named COINS, the decision sypport system links sea and land areas together to provide planning and management tools that are consistent between sea and land.The overall aim of the project was to improve Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Planning (ICZM&P) and maritime safety in a broad sense, by improving and contributing to harmonising terrestrial and sea geographical data, by developing planning and visualisation tools, and by improving the safety of maritime navigation - all in the context of climate change.

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