

Integrated coastal management in South Africa: Achievements and challenges over 8 years of implementation- J Ryan Peter- Department of Environmental Affairs-Oceans and Coasts

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South Africa's coastal environment is a rich and diverse national asset, providing important economic and social opportunities for the human population. The estimated total contribution of coastal resources to the South African economy is in the order of some 57 billion (US\$5.7 billion). The direct economic benefits from coastal resources in South Africa are estimated to be approximately 35% of the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP). Direct economic benefits include the marine fishing industry, port and harbor development and recreational and tourism opportunities. The coast provides indirect economic benefits such as the erosion control from dunes and high cliffs which protect built and natural features from the effects of waves and wind. The National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act (Act No. 24 of 2008) has been promulgated to establish the statutory requirements for integrated coastal management in South Africa. The Act also

prescribes the inclusion of norms, standards and policies for further elaboration and guidance on coastal management provisions within legislation and specific scenarios and issues. One of the many reasons for the adoption of this form of management is to promote the conservation of the coastal environment and to maintain the natural character of coastal landscapes. Significant progress has been made with ICM in South Africa from policy and legal developments to institutional restructuring as well as the development and implementation of strategies, program and plans to give effect to the new legal framework. However, as with ICM initiatives the world over, progressing implementation beyond establishing a policy and legal framework for ICM is a challenging task. This objective of this paper is to take note of the progress and achievements made with ICM in South Africa, as well as the major challenges and valuable lessons learned along the road of implementation thus far.