A new methodology incorporating public participation within Cuba's ICZM program

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Abstract

Although public participation (PP) has influenced some integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) programs around the world, researchers have rarely analyzed this component specifically inside an ICZM cycle. Furthermore, the approach for integrating environmental energy planning tools within the ICZM Programs for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has presented an ongoing challenge for specialists involved in management issues. In Cuba, plans for coastal development are supported by land use planning activities and environmental planning tools. However, the functions and outputs of those tools are “non-obvious”, precluding sufficient integration among them. As these aforementioned actions have not been systematically carried out in the Cuban territory, and the systems of inter-institutional relationships with local communities have presented some insufficiencies, the national marine-terrestrial interphase has suffered some negative environmental impacts impossible to be solved by the national authorities. Designing a new methodology that incorporates PP and environmental energy planning tools in the stages of an ICZM program is the objective of this article. The methodology was named MePuPa and has improved current tools for land use planning and ICZM in Cuba. Previously selected “Local Indicators of Environmental Sustainability”, applied in two geo-systemic units in the southeastern region of Cuba, were used to demonstrate the methodology. The qualitative and qualitative methods in the proposed MePuPa were also applied. Finally, the MePuPa methodology was tested for four of its five stages. Six advantages and five learned lessons were identified during the Preparation to Proposal stages. MePuPa resulted in a useful local management tool for environmental energy planning, ICZM, economic and agricultural activities, strategic ecosystems recovery, as well as improvements to the governance and decision-making processes in one SIDS.

Keywords : Integrated coastal zone management; Environmental energy planning; Public participation; Small Island Developing States; Cuba