

Guidelines for Waterfront and Island Developments for Tourism and Recreational Activities

Issued by

Coast Conservation Department (CCD)

The regulatory framework of the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management (CC&CRM) Act, No.57 of 1981 is being used as an effective management instrument by the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department (CC&CRMD) for managing activities and the resources within the Coastal Zone.

With recent developments in tourism and recreational activities, a demand exists for developments in islands (in the Coastal Zone) and waterfront developments to facilitate such activities. The current demand mainly focused on many small islands located in shallow waters off the Jaffna Peninsula and Kalpitiya.

The main environmental and socio-economic issues that could result from developments in islands and waterfront developments for tourism and recreational activities may be diverse and need to pay attention on the following bio-physical characteristics and impacts:

- Low level of environment threshold (ability to withstand stresses) due to the fragile nature of environmental resources in the area of developments
- Limitation of the carrying capacities of the coastal ecosystems including the beaches
- Potential impacts of construction of structures such as jetties, berthing facilities, and other marine structures (which may cause obstructions to sand movement around the islands/waterfronts, alterations of current movement due to dredging, sedimentation on corals, sea grass, and other marine ecosystems, destruction of marine ecosystems due to dredging and other constructions in water bodies.
- Construction of additional protective structures to minimize damages to the developments carried out.
- Removal of vegetation causing changes in erosion and accretion patterns
- Environmental pollution due to the accumulation of solid and liquid waste
- User conflicts between traditional fishing activities and tourism and recreational activities
- Inadequacy of historical data and information on coastal processes for assessing the dynamic behavior of the islands/locations

Considering the significant characteristics and potential impacts related to waterfront and islands development for tourism as highlighted above, the following guidelines shall apply for issuing permits for such developments.

1. A permit may be issued based on the findings of an EIA or IEE procedures adopted in compliance with the existing legal provisions (CC&CRM Act, National Environment Act and other related Acts) on a case-by-case basis, by the DG of the CC&CRMD.
2. Based on the findings of an EIA or IEE, an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) should be prepared and implemented by the respective developer to ensure sustainable management of the coastal environment.
3. Waterfront development activities shall not be located in/or adjacent to the live coral reef areas and sea grass beds.
4. Waterfront development activities shall not be allowed within a distance of 1.6 km from a National Park declared by the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC).
5. Permission from the DWC should be obtained for siting of waterfront development activities in sanctuaries or marine protected areas on a case-by-case basis.
6. Waterfront development will be restricted to 500 m of the water body and the riparian land from the riverine estuary, lagoon, or canal mouth
7. All waterfront developments to be located within rivers, streams, and other water bodies will be permitted subject to the approval of Irrigation Department.
8. Approval should be obtained from the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) for all waterfront development activities to be located within designated "Environmental Protected Areas"
9. An environmental Protection License (EPL) should be obtained from the (CEA) to discharge, emit, or deposit any waste or reject water from desalination from the waterfront development activities within the "Coastal Zone"
10. The traditional fishing activities, fishing grounds and fish migratory routes shall not be disturbed by the proposed waterfront development activities.
11. Waterfront development within small islands shall be permitted only if an adequate service area is available in the mainland (terrestrial area).
12. No waterfront development activities shall be permitted in the areas subject to security restrictions or specific measures imposed for national security.
13. The necessary approval should be obtained as per the provisions of the state land ordinance.

14. Any development activity shall not be permitted within the “Conservation Areas” or “Affected Areas” declared under the CC&CRM Act, No. 57 of 1981.
15. Provisions should be provided to ensure public access within the islands.
16. All precautionary measures/evacuation plan to minimize the impacts of natural hazards should be submitted by the developer to the CC&CRMD and approval for such measures/plans need to be obtained.