

ID: W2730125078

TITLE: An overview of the management policy for marine sand mining in Israeli Mediterranean shallow waters

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ABSTRACT:

In Israel, the ever-increasing interest in mining and dumping of marine sand in the shallow waters of the Mediterranean (up to depth of 30 m) on the one hand, and the growing concern for the marine environment on the other, have led to the formulation of various policy tools intended for the rational management of this resource. However, the comprehensiveness and sustainability of this policy, and its adherence to international obligations and customs, remains unclear. This paper provides a structured overview of the management policy governing the extraction and dumping of marine sand in the Israeli Mediterranean shallow waters, and the way environmental values are being taken into account in the regulatory process. It then examines the way in which two main international policies?UNCLOS (not yet ratified by Israel) and the protocol on ICZM (ratified by Israel), which provide principles and standards for the management of environmental risks associated with marine mining activities in the Mediterranean Sea?are transposed into local legal procedures and regulatory requirements. The study reveals that the Israeli marine sand regulatory framework embraced most of the environmental principles and guidelines laid down in the main international conventions. However, several essential issues still need to be addressed. At present, the use of marine sand is usually managed with one key activity in mind, without an all-encompassing policy and monitoring program. As a result, the impact of cumulative effect of extracting and dumping activities (the "big picture") is overlooked. The study recommends to formulate a sound policy that can be adjusted for social/economic developments as they occur, and can facilitate the response to a wide range of future scenarios while adhering to a sustainability agenda. This policy should be based on up-to-date and standardized data gathered through a national monitoring program and stored in an accessible database. The analysis method and results can form a basis for discussion with other experts working in the field, and may be useful for future management decisions and for other coastal regions in the world.

SOURCE: Ocean & coastal management

PDF URL: None

CITED BY COUNT: 11

PUBLICATION YEAR: 2017

TYPE: article

CONCEPTS: ['Dumping', 'Sustainability', 'Environmental resource management', 'Marine protected area', 'Environmental planning', 'Marine conservation', 'Integrated coastal zone management', 'Business', 'Environmental science', 'Coastal zone', 'Ecology', 'Habitat', 'International trade', 'Biology']