



BACKGROUND

In recent years significant advances have been made in the development of Internet resources for decision makers, scientists, resource managers and the general public who are interested in coasts around the world. Coastal web atlases (CWAs) are a key component of these technological improvements.

WHAT IS A CWA?

We define a coastal web atlas (CWA) as: a collection of digital maps and datasets with supplementary tables, illustrations and information that systematically illustrate the coast for the purposes of coastal zone management and planning, oftentimes with cartographic and decision support tools, all of which are accessible via the Internet.

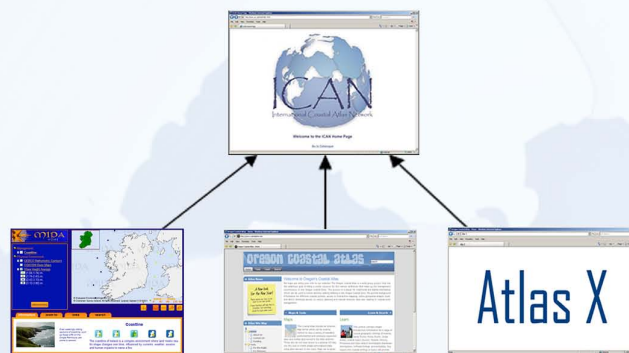


CWAs can be local, regional, national and international in scale.

International Coastal Atlas Network

AIM

ICAN aims to be a global reference for the development of coastal web atlases (CWAs). Via the expertise of more than 35 member organizations, ICAN intends to inform, guide and influence matters related to research, development and use of CWAs.



The ICAN prototype (<http://ican.ucc.ie>) addresses issues of atlas interoperability to connect individual CWAs in an integrated global atlas.

ACTIVITIES

- Technical development: a cooperative interoperability and network project to globally-integrate locally-maintained coastal atlases (<http://ican.ucc.ie/>).

- Raising Awareness: Promote the benefits of ICAN to the developer and user communities.

- Outreach and Training: ICAN expertise which will be made available to atlas developer and user communities, via handbooks and training courses.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that ICAN has representation from CWA development and user groups from around the world.
- Collate and publish a set of best-practice guidelines for the development of CWAs.
- Highlight the benefits of interoperability and standards-based systems to the coastal atlas developer communities.
- Develop collaborative projects for the sharing of know-how, implementation of technical solutions and demonstration of atlas benefits to users.
- Align the atlas efforts of the Network partners in order that interoperability can be facilitated.
- Engage with other relevant international projects and developments.
- Involve representatives of the user communities to help in tailoring CWAs to their needs.



CWAs provide valuable information, data and tools for coastal zone managers and decision makers.

