CO-EVOLVE

Promoting the co-evolution of human activities and natural systems for the development of sustainable coastal and maritime tourism

FACTSHEET # 21

COAST OF THE ORB DELTA RIVER / HÉRAULT

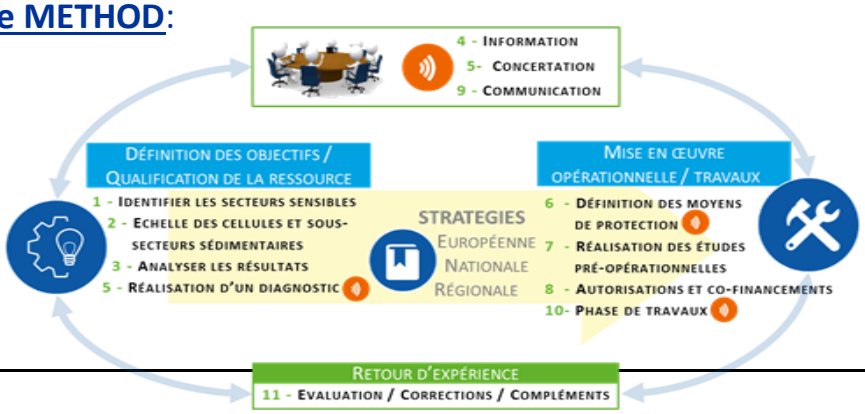
SUMMARY:

Mass tourism, anthropisation and urbanisation of the coast have created fragility and reduced the available space on the terrestrial part of the coastal strip. A rise in sea levels, flooding from the sea and the river, erosion of beaches ... more frequent and violent storms, contribute to erosion of the coast, and floods of high amplitude and more frequent pose a risk for the residential and tourist equipment established on the coast. Coastal erosion poses a direct threat to urbanisation and campsites near beaches. The reduction of the sediment contribution from rivers and streams has deprived the system of a considerable volume of sand.

The objective of this work is to gather existing information, to summarise it and to propose a methodology that can be reproduced for other Mediterranean beaches, in particular by the partners of the European CO-EVOLVE project. The latter has just begun a new operational phase in association with the municipality of Valras-plage. The department wishes to produce a document aimed at setting out the **principles of a sediment management plan** for municipalities located between Portiragnes and Vendres, summarising it and making the broad lines of the approach taken transferable.

These results will help to develop and coordinate strategies between territories at the European and local interregional level; they will produce concrete actions including light innovative developments for the benefit of local people and the tourist industry.

Steps of the METHOD:



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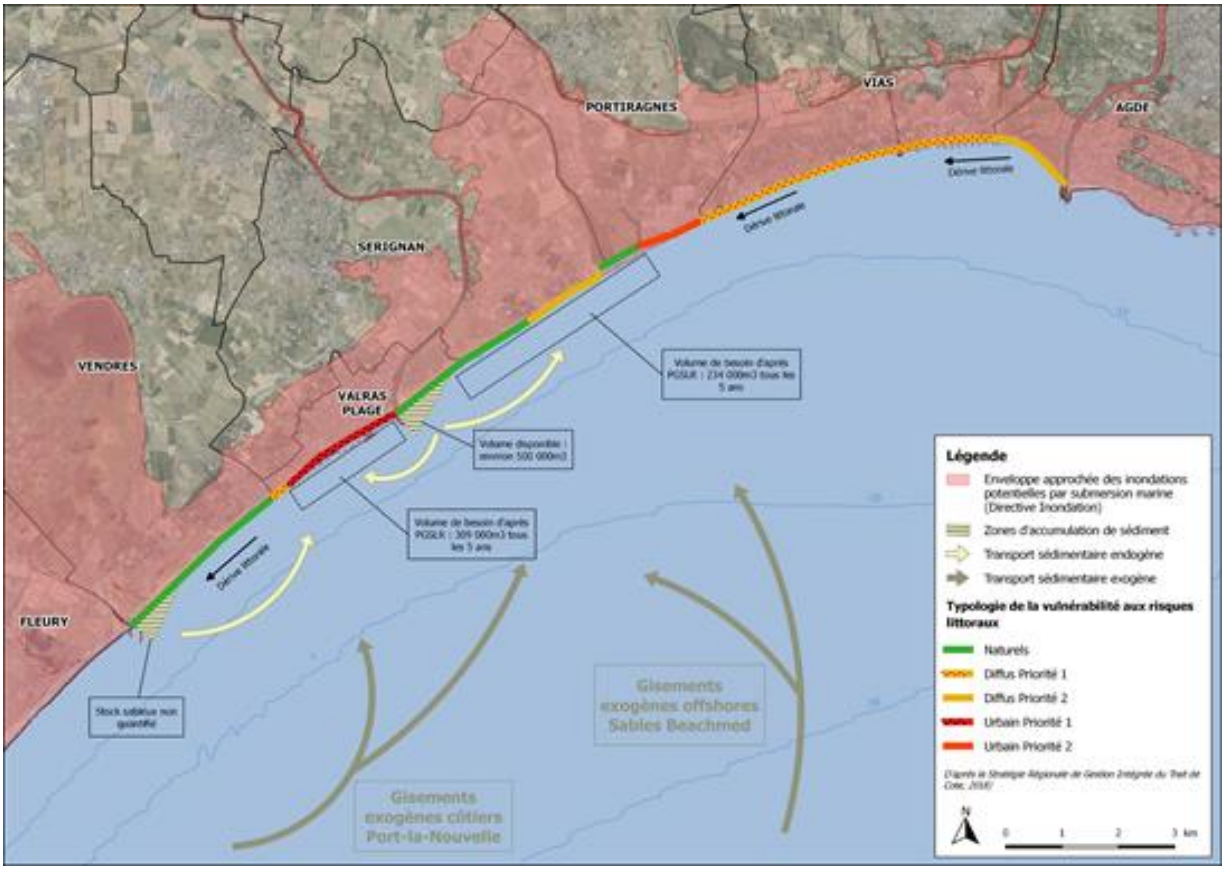
RESULTS



CONCLUSION

At the overall scale of the Gulf of Lion, the sedimentary deficit on the coast has been chronic for at least 50 years. Diminishing the threat posed to many seaside resorts appears to be out of reach in the medium-term at least for financial reasons, meaning that we will have to get used to experiencing increasingly severe material damage during violent storms, until the situation is no longer tenable, while at the same time anticipating local adaptation strategies.

At the local level, on our coasts that have been chronically under-supplied with sediment for several decades, and therefore which have a negative sediment balance, the rare coastal sandy deposits must be managed carefully and sparingly. Exports of sand must be prohibited and the appropriateness of importing it looked into and studied carefully, in a concerted manner.

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