In 2011, the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, including the EU, established a binding Protocol to make ICZM compulsory for States bordering the Mediterranean Sea; this included the participating EU Member States.

The Balanced Scorecard was initially developed as a tool for businesses, incorporating both financial and non-financial data. It aims to map a set of criteria to assess current performance – and the gap between expected and actual performance – when implementing a strategy. It therefore helps managers align performance with organisational goals and enables them to check that the strategy is achieving the desired results.

The process starts with identifying the ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ of the ICZM plan or programme. This is followed by a Strategy Map, which identifies four perspectives, each with its own goals, outcome measures and initiatives, which are linked by hypotheses about the cause-and-effect links between drivers and outcomes. The four areas of context chosen as particularly relating to public bodies working on ICZM were: Financial, Internal Processes, Learning and Development and Coastal Communities. The aim is to balance these four perspectives in a holistic manner. In this way, this adapted Balanced Scorecard approach describes a network of feedback mechanisms that allow interventions to be assessed across the entire ICZM plan.

Derived from the vision and mission, and for each of the four perspectives, the plan then identifies Strategic Objectives that drill down to Initiatives: concrete actions that answer the question ‘How do we do it?’ The researchers advise that each Initiative is assigned a budget, the sum of which represents the budget for the appropriate Strategic Objective, allowing financial flows to be optimised and making it easier to reschedule financial commitments on the basis of progress.

The adapted Balanced Scorecard can also be used to identify performance indicators, which can be split into two groups. The researchers give an example of a Driver Indicator – where the scope is to measure significant change in coastal and marine habitats and species – as ‘increase migratory bird species on salt marshes by 4%’. An Outcome Indicator (where the scope is to preserve coastal zones for current and future generations) could be ‘decrease the number of environmental crimes committed in protected areas’.

A Balanced Scorecard approach to ICZM aims to lay out the relationships and individual actions necessary to achieve Strategic Objectives at a wide scale, then monitor and manage actual progress against concrete targets at an organisational level. While the researchers consider the cause-and-effect chains in this kind of approach to be logical and probabilistic rather than mathematical and deterministic (and they warn that if the map is not planned properly, it can transfer management errors to the entire framework), they say this approach can enable a greater level of understanding and comprehension of ICZM.