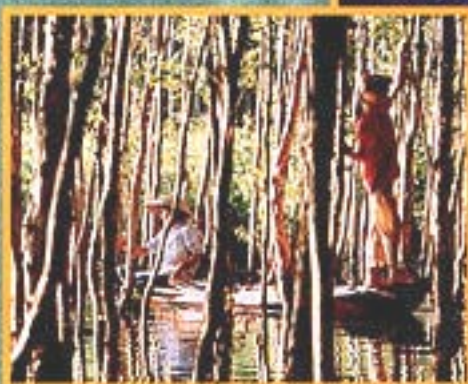


Land, Sea and People

**Seeking a
Sustainable
Balance**



**ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
IN COASTAL REGIONS AND IN SMALL ISLANDS**

a platform for cross-sectoral action to elaborate 'wise practices'



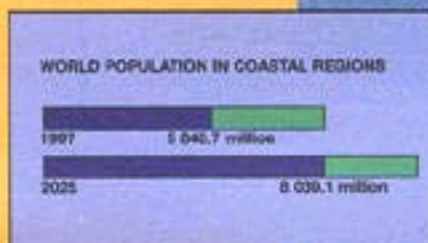
Coastal regions and small islands

What's at stake?



Their significance

- As meeting places for peoples of many origins, coasts harbour intricate social and cultural mosaics.
- Many of the Earth's most diverse, complex and productive ecosystems are in coastal areas.
- Coastal resources are of utmost importance for world food security.
- Islands – coastal regions in their entirety – nurture and sustain unique social, cultural and ecological landscapes.
- Small Island Developing States, by making the most of restricted resources, provide lessons on living in a finite yet global world.



Friction and inequalities

- Some 60% of the world's population lives within 60 km of the sea and this figure is likely to rise to 75% by the year 2025.
- Of the world's 23 mega-cities, 16 are in the coastal belt.
- Increasing competition for diminishing resources and the growing disparity between those who have and those who have not, make coastal areas flash points for conflict.
- Tourism, the world's top growth industry, places inordinate pressure upon coastal and island peoples and their environment.
- For local communities, managing coastal resources is rendered all the more difficult by the globalization of the world economy.



An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely on a small island or peninsula. The town is built on a hillside, with numerous buildings and roads visible. A wide, sandy beach runs along the coast, and the ocean is visible in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

An integrated approach

Continental coastal regions and small islands are particularly challenging to manage. Their physical, ecological and socio-cultural complexity requires managers to cope with high levels of uncertainty.

Rising to this challenge, an approach known as *integrated coastal management (ICM)* aims at coordinated planning and action involving communities, stakeholder groups and managers at local and national levels, as well as specialists in both natural and social sciences.

By building upon and interlinking these various sectors of society, ICM is breaking new ground towards improving the quality of life for coastal populations. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to develop, test and apply cross-sectoral strategies which can resolve tensions and offer equitable and sustainable solutions.

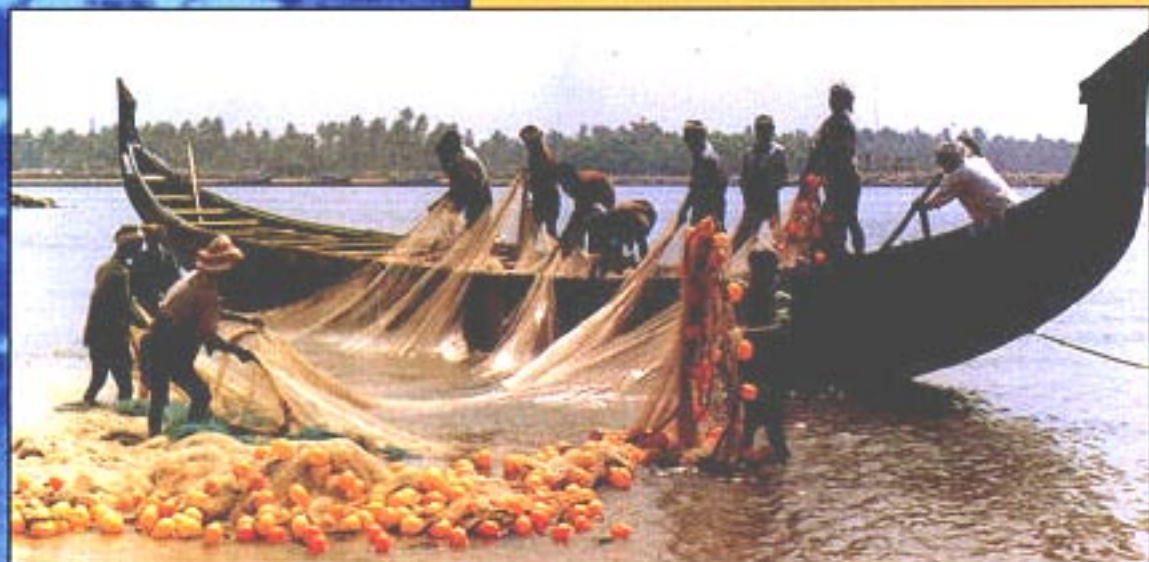
UNESCO's *response*



Launched in 1996, the *Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands (CSI)* initiative responds to calls for integrated approaches to major coastal problems. The overall goal is to assist Member States towards environmentally sound, socially equitable and culturally appropriate development of their coastal regions.



UNESCO draws upon the experience of its sectors for Natural and Social Sciences – including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, International Geological Correlation Programme, International Hydrological Programme, Man and the Biosphere Programme, and the Management of Social Transformations Programme – as well as that of its sectors for Culture, Communication and Education, along with their networks of counterparts in over 180 countries.



Towards a culture of wise practice

The CSI endeavour is implemented primarily through the development of pilot projects which draw upon expertise from the natural and social sciences, as well as local knowledge and practice. Key themes include:

- integrated freshwater management in islands and coastal cities,
- sustaining coastal communities and the biological diversity upon which they depend,
- rural-urban migration and the environmental quality of coastal settlements,
- impacts of coastal erosion and sea-level rise on society.

These focal activities provide a base from which an expanding sphere of related management concerns are addressed. Training in interdisciplinarity and integrated approaches is being reinforced through a growing global network of UNESCO Chairs and university twinning arrangements dealing with coastal issues.

The lessons learned from these undertakings provide the basis for elaborating 'wise practices' for sustainable coastal and small island development.



The basis for action

The specific needs of coastal regions and small islands are underscored in recommendations and action plans from major intergovernmental conferences.

- **UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro 1992)**
The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 advocate the development of integrated coastal management as a framework for action.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (in force since 1993)**
Objectives and agreements provide for the conservation and sustainable use of coastal biodiversity, the sharing of benefits and access to information and technology.
- **UN Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Barbados 1994)**
SIDS are recognized as uniquely vulnerable to the hazards and pressures of unsustainable development because of their small size and isolation.
- **World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995)**
Formally recognizes that economic and social development and environmental conservation are mutually reinforcing goals.
- **Global Programme of Action on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (Washington 1995)**
Underlines the major threats of land-based activities to the health, productivity and biodiversity of the marine environment.
- **UN Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul 1996)**
Endorses universal goals and recommendations for ensuring adequate shelter for all and the need to make human settlements safer, healthier, more equitable and sustainable.
- **World Food Summit (Rome 1996)**
Noting that millions of people cannot meet their basic nutritional needs, the Declaration on World Food Security reaffirms the universal right to a life free from hunger.



Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands
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