

## **Climate change and coastal management: making decisions in the face of uncertainty**

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Climate change will have significant impacts on coasts and coastal communities, particularly through the combined effects of sea level rise, extreme weather events and coastal inundation. In assessing the impact of climate change on coastal areas, and developing strategies for adaptation a systems approach is required, taking into account the interactions between a range of biophysical, social and economic drivers and impacts.

Decisions on coastal planning that have ramifications for decades need to be made now and they need to factor in climate change. While it is important that science help inform these decision-making processes by narrowing the uncertainties associated with sea level rise projections and being able to better predict the impacts of extreme rainfall and storm surge events and associated inundation, decision-making can't wait for predictive science to improve. Awareness of the issues needs to be raised and adaptive capacity at the level of individuals, communities, institutions and government has to be increased to lay the foundations for appropriate climate adaptation strategies. Risk management approaches and tools need to be put in place now to inform decision making in the areas of urban planning and development, flood management, infrastructure and disaster management.