

Foreword



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The inherent high productivity of coastal zones means that they have become home to the majority of the Earth's population – centers for trade, commerce and food production from the sea. Much of the world's economy, therefore, is at least partly dependent upon the health and integrity of coastal resources.

Highly dynamic coastal systems, however, face growing pressures from urbanization and resource mismanagement, including wetlands loss, coral reef destruction, urban and industrial pollution, and over-fishing. These stresses are now being exacerbated by the adverse impacts of climate change, with coastal zones among the most vulnerable due to the combined effects of increased ocean levels, temperature and acidity and more intense storm events. These development and climate strains are putting coastal populations, infrastructure and environments at risk around the world.

Nowhere are these trends more apparent than in Asia and the Pacific, where more people live and work in proximity to the sea than in any other region. Moreover, the hundreds of millions who live in low-lying coastal areas of this region often face a range of other vulnerabilities due to their poverty, vulnerability to natural disasters, and lack of access to clean water and other services. The rapid pace of development along Asia's coasts – often with inadequate attention to environmental sustainability – further strains both coastal systems and their inhabitants. In the Pacific, the survival of entire nations is being put at stake by these forces.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is well aware of these trends, and is working closely with countries around the Asia and Pacific region and partners including the Government of the Netherlands to establish policies, institutions, management systems and the infrastructure needed to ensure that the region's coastal resources will meet both current and future environmental and economic demands.

In the People's Republic of China, for example, ADB has worked with the City of Shanghai to restore its main waterway – Suzhou Creek – from a murky and essentially dead river that polluted not only the City but the shore at its delta. It is now the cornerstone of a coastal ecosystem rehabilitation program. ADB is also a founding partner of the Coral Triangle Initiative, supporting Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste in improving coastal and marine resources management across the most highly productive and biologically diverse marine region in the world.

Integrated approaches like those applied in Suzhou Creek and the Coral Triangle are the wave of the future, and ADB will continue to work with its many partners to support such by providing policy advice, building institutional capacity and investing in well planned coastal infrastructure.

The main message of this *Climate of Coastal Cooperation* publication is that a holistic perspective is needed to devise effective and sustainable coastal management systems, and the report provides an important knowledge resource for those seeking to understand and employ such integrated approaches to coastal management.

I am certain that it will contribute to improving the quality of life for coastal inhabitants and the integrity of coastal resources upon which we all depend.