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Abstract

In the early 1990s, an important observation was made for the first time that the coastal population had increased more than in any other zone. At the end of the 20th century, about two-thirds of the world's population lived within 100 km of the coastline, with an ever-increasing trend of movement for permanent residence and work. At the same time, the debate on climate change and its possible effects was launched and continues to this day without policies being incorporated into decision-making systems. To address these combined physical and social changes, the United Nations Conference (1992) chose to pursue sustainable coastal development through the implementation of integrated management systems. Beyond the ambiguity of the term "integrated management", for which many proposals have been made since the early 1990s, the inclusion of coastal management in the pursuit of sustainable development has rightly been perceived as a binding task.

The joint pursuit of the integrity of coastal ecosystems, economic efficiency and social equity, which make up sustainable development, is a one-way street for maximising the benefits offered by the coastal zone, with all the difficulties inherent in the task due to the complex web of local ecosystems linking land, sea and the immediate atmosphere, increasing human pressure and the expanding use of natural and other resources. Coastal zone management is a complex process with strong contrasts and conflicts of interest between the individuals and actors involved, including those with economic interests in the coastal zone. This book studies the individual ecosystems of the coastal zone and provides the principles and conditions for the preparation of management plans for each case. At the end of the book, there are also supplementary chapters on the basic principles of coastal engineering as well as on contemporary management challenges.

