

# APN's Capacity Building Efforts in Global Change Coastal Zone Management for the Asia-Pacific Region

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The Asia-Pacific region is an important region for the understanding of global environmental problems. Important atmospheric and oceanic phenomena occur here, such as the Asian Monsoon and the El Niño – Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomena, which affect the world climate. The region also has tropical forests, deserts, diverse marine and terrestrial ecosystems, and mountains. It is home to the world's largest bio-geographical region of coral reefs and mangroves. The population of the Asia-Pacific region is more than one-half of the world's total population. In addition, its economic growth rate is the highest of any region in the world. The population growth rate and economic activity of this region means that it contributes to global climate change in a major way. Degradation of the environment resulting from deforestation, desertification, and over harvesting is becoming a matter of great concern, as are natural disasters which occur as a result of this degradation, such as cyclones/typhoons, floods and droughts.

Thus, observation, monitoring, and research on global change in the Asia-Pacific region are indispensable to understanding environment changes taking place on a global scale and its socio-economic implications. In addition, stronger links are needed between the science community and policy-makers. The APN was created to address these needs.

The APN has funded a number of important projects in the Asia-Pacific region devoted to global change coastal zone research. Moreover, many of the projects have established and strengthened networks of regional scientists, coastal managers and policy-makers and developed and enhanced their capacity and interactions. APN projects have also harnessed global change programmes and their projects with new sources of support. Through its broader agenda, the APN has made it possible to engage Asia-Pacific scientists in the larger international



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community of global change scientists in a proactive manner. The aforementioned APN-funded project achievements, have, for example, been facilitated by activities that include: a) capacity building and training workshops; b) practical field work studies; c) participation at international fora; d) publication of proceedings and journals; and e) networking and awareness-raising.