

# Group Report: Unifying Concepts for Integrated Coastal Management

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## INTRODUCTION

Experience and expertise gained in recent years call for an attempt to identify and document the principles that advance the effective integration of the sciences into Integrated Coastal Management (ICM). Three overarching principles emerged from our discussions as we worked to address the assigned topic of “Unifying Concepts for Integrated Coastal Management”:

1. ICM needs to strengthen science policy and systems of governance so that they can respond to expressions of ecosystem change at all social and natural scales.
2. The ICM process requires full participation of scientists, ecosystem managers, and user interests in all steps of the policy cycle to foster improved understanding, communication, and decision making.
3. The subsidiarity and precautionary principles are equally important to the effective evolution of ICM. Subsidiarity is the democratic principle that decisions should be made at the lowest level of society that is practical and consistent with the overall public good. (No decision affecting the lives of others should be undertaken by a government without mandate or by a corporation without authority by government granted by charter or legislation.) The precautionary principle can be defined as follows (Dovers and Handmer 1995): “Where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. In the application of the