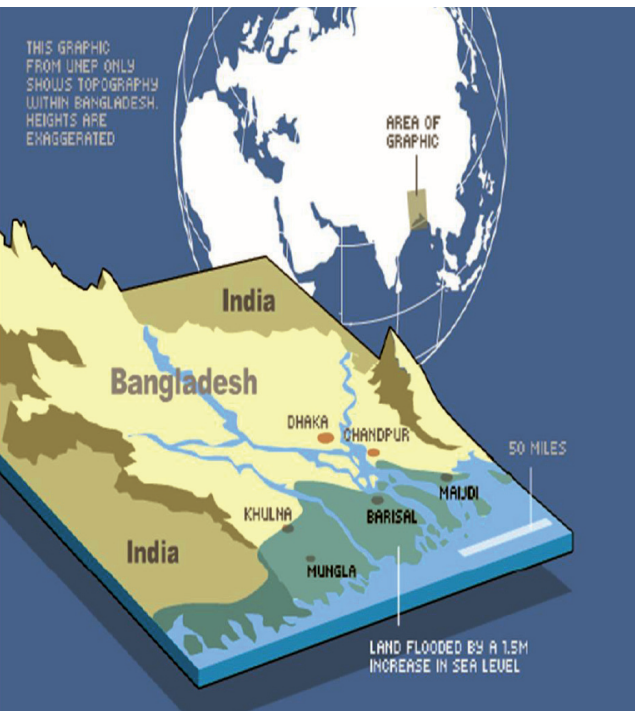




# Bangladesh's ICZM efforts in practice

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*Bangladesh in perspective, its coastal zone squeezed between the forces of the mighty rivers and the sea, is low-lying and critically vulnerable to sea level rise.*

*ICZM is recognised as an appropriate, adaptive coastal measure. The first phases dealing with coastal policy, strategy and spatial planning, were successfully completed. The transition to ICZM implementation needs to begin.*

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## Summary

Bangladesh, over the last two decades, has successfully embarked on adopting ICZM approaches and related projects, supported by e.g. the World Bank and the Netherlands. A number of ‘coastal success stories’ in the beginning of the 1990s formed the basis for integrated and comprehensive coastal management. Between 2002 – 2006 a new stage in the ICZM cycle emphasising stakeholder participation, was reached. Great importance was placed on building cooperation between and among the many national institutions, local NGOs and communities. These successful ICZM activities included the actually building of coastal cooperation, which is not easy and takes time.

A Program Development Office (PDO) for ICZM was established and a comprehensive knowledge base was built and disseminated in print and via a project website. The WARPO – hosted ICZM Plan site provides an overview of this valuable ICZM resource.

The Coastal Zone Policy and Strategy were adopted and many ICZM planning tasks were accomplished. The translation from planning to implementation started with the identification of series of distinct coastal projects.

However, since 2006, implementation of these projects has not taken place due to reduced funding, complicated project organisation and changes in governmental priorities.

Recently, the cyclones Sidr and Aila have again exposed the vulnerabilities of the Bangladesh coastal zone. With increasing population, declining natural resources and on-going and increasing impacts of climate change, sectoral planning no longer protects the coast as it has in the past. It has also resulted in unintended negative impacts including impeded drainage caused by polderisation and salinisation brought about by shrimp farming.

The ICZM approach not only helps mitigate the effects of disasters, but also provides opportunities for sustainable resource utilisation. ICZM in Bangladesh is not just for environmental or ecological gain but provides a survival strategy for millions living at the mercy of nature. Bangladesh has no other alternative.

The responsibility, still remains with the Ministry of Water Resources and the Water Resources Planning Organisation to lead and to nurture the gains made during the formulation and preparatory years of ICZM.