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INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AND VALUATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

“The Changing Faces of Europe's Coastal Areas: Main Results and Methodology”

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Available trends show that changes in land use in coastal areas outstrip those seen elsewhere; for instance, the growth of artificial surfaces along Europe's coasts is increasing at a rate one third faster than in inland areas. These changes are widespread and driven by a range of factors - demographic changes, economic restructuring, increased living standards and leisure time and global trade patterns. In many coastal regions these factors have caused rapid changes that have drastically altered the potential long-term viability of coastal ecosystems and the services they provide. It is increasingly likely that existing impacts on coastal ecosystems will be exacerbated from now on by climate change.

The land and ecosystem accounts method (LEAC), as developed by the EEA and ETC-TE (now ETC-LUSI), provides a framework for analysis of spatial changes in coastal zones. The temporal trends of LEAC land cover flows were determined between 1990 and 2000. The LEAC application for coasts is used for analysis of land use conflicts in area and time, from local to European scales. It can be used for monitoring development trends of coastal systems. Land cover is an (ex-post) image of land use and ecosystems condition and accounts can be compiled in monetary or physical units. Changes in structure, patterns, quantity and quality are included into accounts. Indicators can be easily derived from accounts. Land use relates to many economic and social functions of land, e.g. housing, food production, industrial activities, services, transport, recreation and nature protection.

The communication will also bring some critical aspects affecting integrated coastal management, basically the appraisal of the land-sea interface in the planning and management of activities and landscape in this coastal areas.