Few would disagree that in combatting serious anthropogenic ecological problems, such as climate change, public policy development should be informed by the best available scientific information. However, with the vast volume of information now available through multiple communication methods and with public resources constrained by current austerity measures, an urgent need exists to understand and strengthen the channels by which scientific information reaches policy- and decision-makers.

Science, Information, and Policy Interface for Effective Coastal and Ocean Management is a timely publication in the midst of this period of crisis and opportunity. This volume is the first to focus exclusively on the role of scientific information in the development of coastal and ocean policy and management of the oceans.

About the Authors

Bertrum H. MacDonald, Suzuette S. Soomai, Elizabeth M. De Santo, and Peter G. Wells, of the Environmental Information: Use and Influence Research Program (EIUI) at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada, are the editors. Since 2004, EIUI has partnered with governments in Canada, in addition to NGOs and international inter-governmental organizations, to investigate the role that scientific information plays in the development and implementation of marine policy.

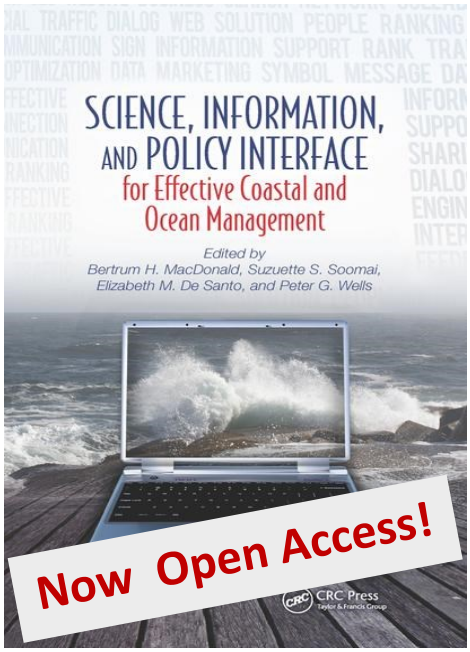
An international roster of over 30 practitioners and scholars contributed to this volume, representing multiple disciplines, including coastal zone management, fisheries management, information management, and public policy. This team combines the knowledge of leading researchers on science-policy interactions with the experience of practitioners at national, regional, and international levels of government. The text draws clear, practical lessons from the scholarly literature.

Essential Themes

The book presents fundamental concepts and principles of the science-policy interface, which are illustrated in contemporary case studies.

Essential themes include:

- The complexity of the pathways by which scientific information flows within and among organizations that set the context for policy and management decisions.
- The significance of the processes by which information is generated and assembled to inform policy.
- The necessity to produce information in styles and formats that are helpful to intended users.
- The diversity of methods by which information can be used (or misused) in policy development.



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Key Messages

The book identifies major challenges facing researchers and practitioners wanting to improve the processes of evidence-based decision-making, including the need to:

- Develop policy solutions to balance trade-offs between evidentiary, political, and economic imperatives.
- Enhance knowledge sharing and information management processes to ensure that decision makers access the relevant information.
- Improve the reliability of scientific information presented to policymakers.
- Understand and effectively communicate the consequences of inaction on environmental issues.
- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches, that include information management, in the practice and study of integrated coastal and ocean management.

Science, Information, and Policy Interface for Effective Coastal and Ocean Management

Section I. Introduction

Section II. Fundamental Concepts and Principles

Section III. Case Studies

Section IV. The Way Forward