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Abstract

Humans have relied on coastal resources for centuries. However, current growth in population and increased accessibility of coastal resources through technology have resulted in overcrowded and often conflicted spaces. The recent global move towards development of national blue economy strategies further highlights the increased focus on coastal resources to address a broad range of blue growth industries. The need to manage sustainable development and future exploitation of both over-utilised and emergent coastal resources is both a political and environmental complexity. To address this complexity, we draw on the perspectives of a multidisciplinary team, utilising two in depth exemplary case studies in New Zealand and within the Myanmar Delta Landscape, to showcase barriers, pathways and actions that facilitate a move from Business as Usual (BAU) to a future aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. We provide key recommendations to guide interest groups, and nations globally towards sustainable utilisation, conservation and preservation of their marine environments in a fair and equitable way, and in collaboration with those who directly rely upon coastal ecosystems. We envision a sustainable future where: (i) Change is motivated and facilitated (ii) Coastal ecosystems are co-managed by multiple reliant groups (iii) Networks that maintain and enhance biodiversity are implemented (iv) Decision-making is equitable and based on ecosystem services (v) Knowledge of the marine realm is strengthened-‘mapping the ocean of life’ (vi) The interests of diverse user groups are balanced with a fair distribution of benefits

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