



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

National Coastal Change Management Strategy

October 2025



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Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



OPW

Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Overview of the Irish Coastline

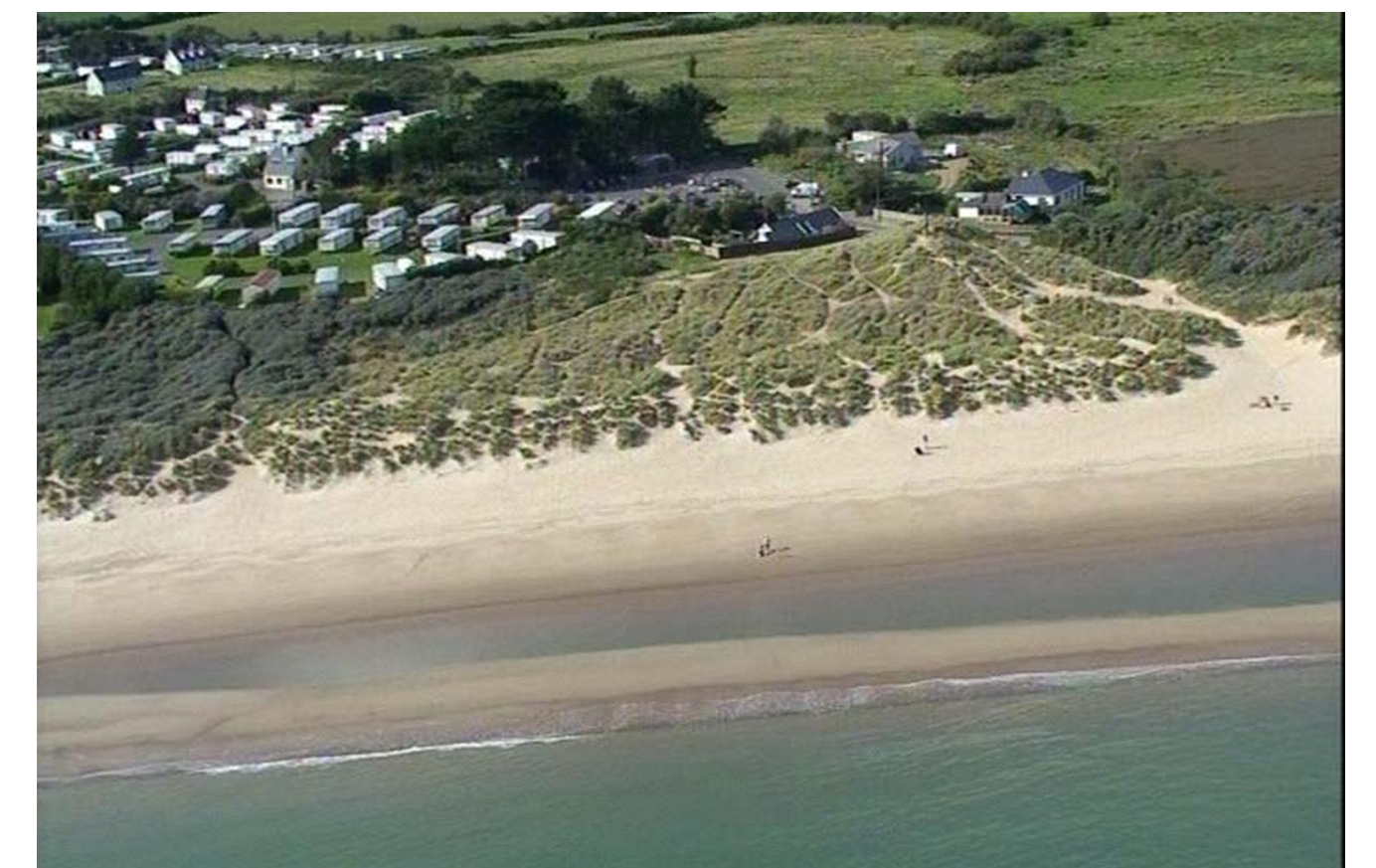


Total length of approximately 5,800km

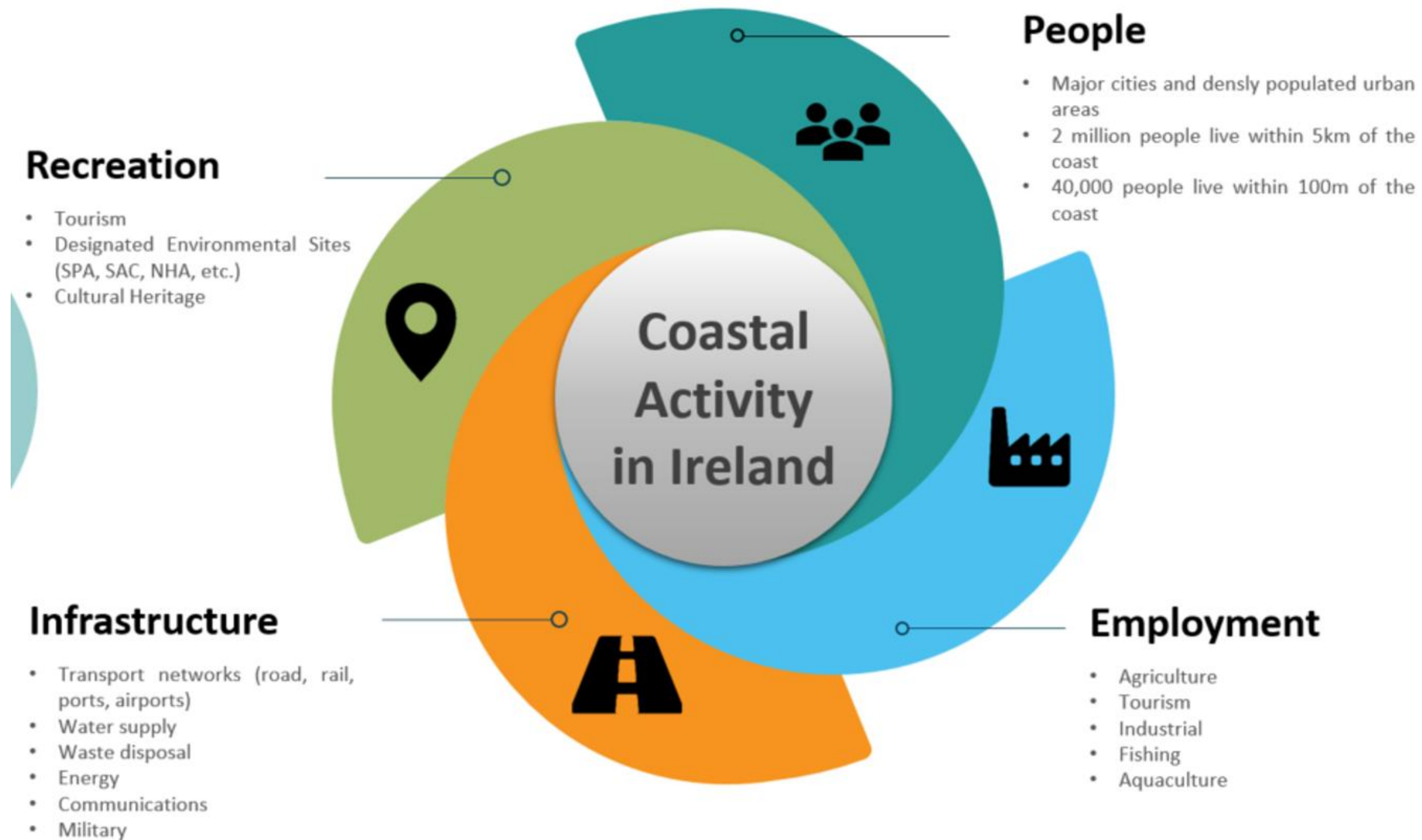
56% is hard rock, 39% is beach, 3% is artificial

Global mean sea level rise:

- *4.6mm / year (WMO, 2023)*
- *Up to 1 metre sea level rise by 2100 (IPCC, 2021), with plausible maximum of 1.8-2.0m*
- *Intensity and frequency of storms projected to increase*



Overview of the Irish coastline

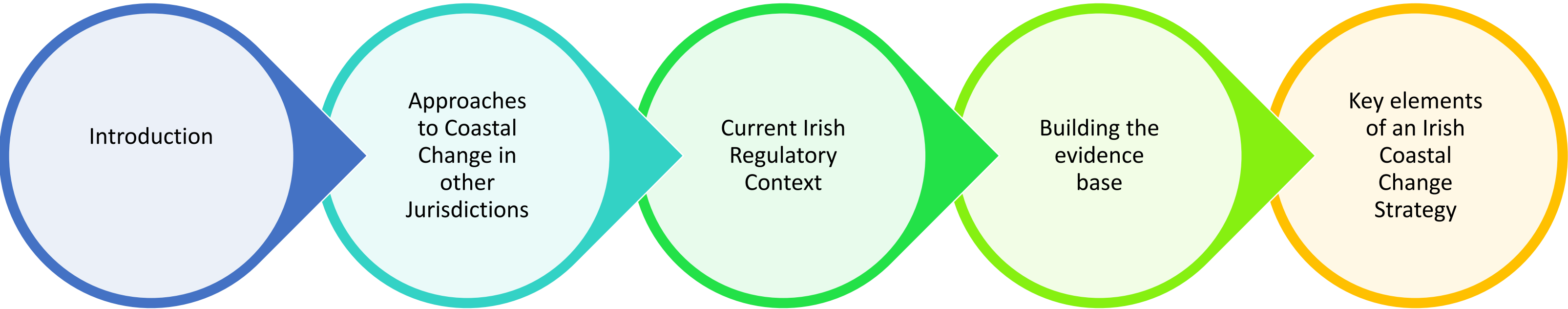


Background

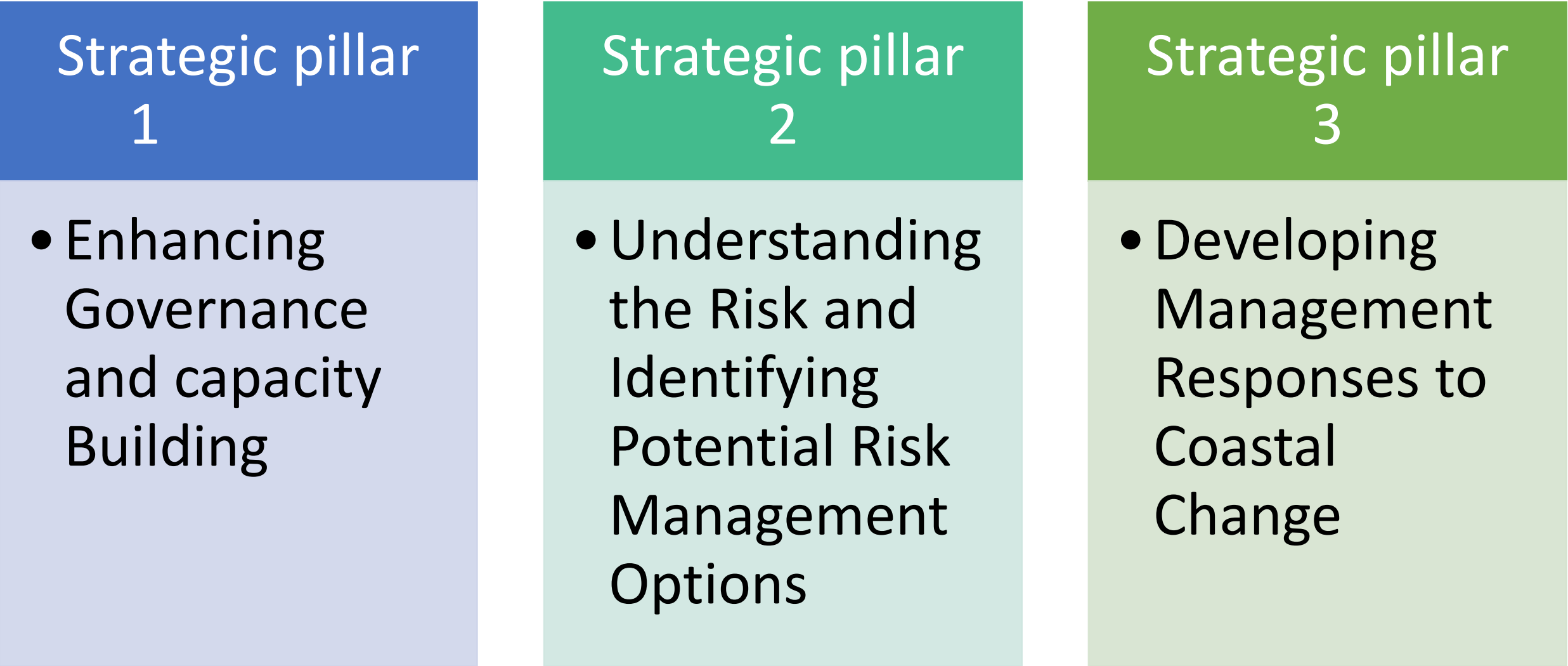


- Recognition that there are current and urgent coastal change issues to be addressed in parallel to the implementation of a medium to long-term framework.
- Inter-departmental group was established
- Task to scope out an approach for the development of an integrated, whole of Government coastal strategy, for managing our changing coast and to report back to Government with initial findings and recommendations.
- Scoping Report accepted by Government
- Interdepartmental Steering group established.

Outline of Report



Emerging Recommendations - The Evidence



Report Recommendations



- **Strategic Pillar 1 – Enhancing Governance and Capacity Building**
 - *The establishment of an Interdepartmental Steering Group, to promote a joined-up, whole of government response to coastal change by all relevant Departments / Agencies having regard to their existing policy remits.*
 - *The designation of the OPW as the national technical agency to lead on the assessments of coastal change hazards and risks and the assessment of technical options and constraints.*
 - *The establishment of an advisory group of national and international experts.*
 - *The engagement at an EU and bilateral level with neighbouring jurisdictions to examine best practice, lessons learnt and to update knowledge.*
 - *Carrying out an analysis of the relevant skills and resources available and required to implement the adopted policies and strategies for coastal change management.*
 - *Developing the programmes necessary to develop the required skill sets and resources nationally for coastal change management in the long-term.*

Report Recommendations



- **Strategic Pillar 2 - Understanding the Risk and Identifying Potential Risk Management Options.**

- *The monitoring of physical coastal change and developing and coordinating an ongoing national coastal change monitoring programme to facilitate national scale and more detailed, local assessments of risk.*
- *Establishing and maintaining a National Coastal Defence Asset Database of regional and local coastal protection infrastructure for the coast of Ireland.*
- *Development and implementation of a comprehensive coastal change research programme.*
- *Developing national-scale coastal erosion hazard mapping and an associated risk assessment.*
- *Undertaking an assessment to identify the communities and coastal areas at potentially significant risk from coastal change and erosion, both now and in the future.*
- *Identifying, assessing and appraising technical options and constraints to inform decisions on the management of coastal change risks and the long-term planning for the management of potential future change.*
- *Undertaking a pilot project for such work to inform the national implementation programme.*

Report Recommendations



- **Strategic Pillar 3 - Developing Management Responses to Coastal Change**
 - *Local authorities and State agencies engaging with local communities regarding the most appropriate interventions.*
 - *Local authorities, in statutory plans, should continue to identify potentially vulnerable locations and put in place spatial policies to limit development in the interests of not increasing the amount of development and consequent population at risk from imminent coastal change.*
 - *Engaging in skills training and development and research.*
 - *Undertaking a pilot programme to identify the most effective risk management response option(s).*
 - *The preparation of a national set of coastal change management plans by the IDG.*
 - *Relevant sectors to identify infrastructure assets at risk, put in place appropriate measures to address the risk.*
 - *Promoting nature based solutions.*
 - *Preparing and publishing spatial planning guidelines to give policy direction in coastal areas that may be subject to coastal change.*
 - *Considering any national or international legislative issues.*
 - *Developing managed retreat options and associated communications and consultation requirements.*

Where are we?



- Scoping report and recommendations approved by Government
- Interdepartmental Steering group established
- Work programmes underway- systematic – data gathering
 - *Key data sets*
 - *Identifying key baseline information*
 - *Developing policy*

Projects Under way



- National Coastal Aerial Imagery and LiDAR Survey (CALS) Programme.
- National Coastal Change Monitoring Programme development is ongoing.
- Pilot Coastal Monitoring Survey Programme- ongoing
- Coastal Defence Asset Database - currently being developed
- Hazard Mapping - pilot study is substantially complete
- National Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping programme is due to commence in 2026.
- Working groups established – Nature based solutions

Conclusions



- Coastal Change is essentially an issue of adaption.
- Interventions need to be carefully managed- importance of data
- Adaption measures will be long term and cross cutting
- Policy and consequent programmes will evolve!

Projects



National Coastal Aerial Imagery and LiDAR Survey (CALS)

Programme – data collection (2021 to 2025) is complete and all data is expected to be available in 2026.

National Coastal Change Monitoring Programme development is ongoing. In the interim, aerial photography and LiDAR surveys will continue to be conducted in the monitoring areas identified for annual surveys in the Pilot Coastal Monitoring Survey Programme.

Coastal Defence Asset Database - currently being developed and populated with details of all visible natural and engineered coastal defences. Completion of the initial data population stage is expected in 2026.

National Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping - pilot study is substantially complete and the National Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping programme is due to commence in 2026.