

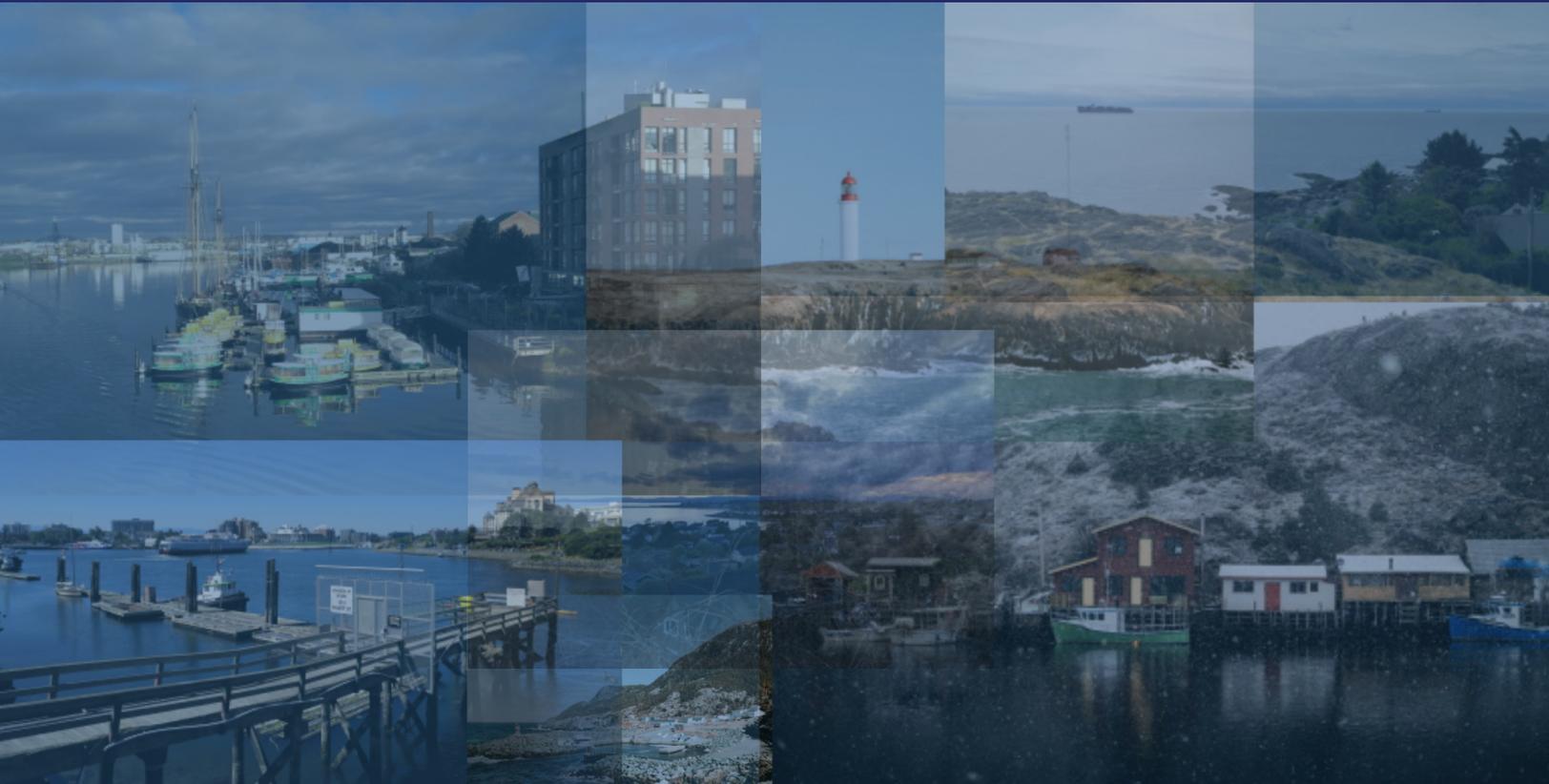


September 29 & 30, 2020

FORUM REPORT

National Forum on Coastal Community Resilience

Local Government Initiatives to Address Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Flooding



About the National Forum

What was the National Forum?

From coast to coast to coast, Canada's municipalities have begun to adapt to climate change. As local governments work to develop, implement and communicate about coastal adaptation to sea-level rise and coastal flooding, a common set of challenges, questions and tools may emerge. Thus, the role of networks and forums for sharing information across communities is increasingly vital. On September 29 & 30, 2020, the National Forum provided an opportunity for people living in communities on all of Canada's coasts to engage with each other and to share approaches and ideas for adapting to sea-level rise and coastal flooding.

Over two days of presentations and interactive discussions, participants had the opportunity to learn about and discuss initiatives and innovative climate actions for addressing sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and related coastal hazards. The Forum's three main themes – **Technical Challenges, Engagement, and Implementation** – provided a framework for participants to learn and share ideas.



Forum Outcomes + Successes

- Supported dissemination of important knowledge and tools.
- Highlighted success stories and persistent challenges experienced by coastal communities across Canada who are developing plans to address coastal flood risks and when implementing action.
- Fostered national collaboration and networking among coastal adaptation practitioners.
- Can be used as a model of success for future virtual conference events.
- Forum presentations were available in English and French translation.

topics like use of climate projection data, vulnerability identification and green infrastructure

Technical Challenges

topics like public engagement, risk communication, public 'buy-in'

Engagement

Implementation

topics like insurance, finance, partnerships, managed retreat and land-use planning



The National Forum was brought to you by the **Marine Environmental and Observation Prediction & Response Network (MEOPAR)** an independent not-for-profit group focused on funding research, training students, mobilizing knowledge and forming partnerships in the area of marine risk and resilience.

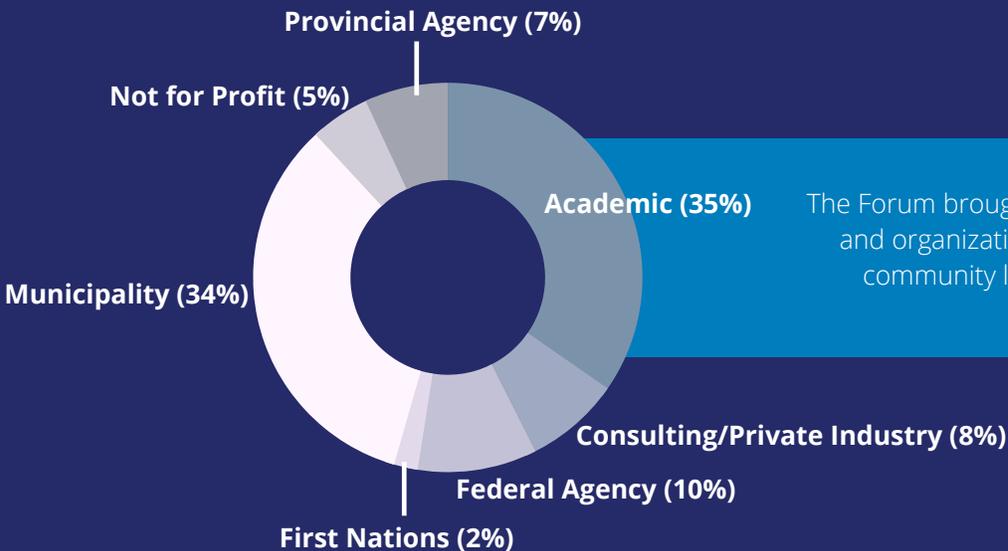
Who was at the National Forum?

The purpose of the forum was to bring together planners from local governments of coastal communities; researchers; representatives of Indigenous governments, nations, and organizations; representatives of provincial and federal government agencies; and other relevant organizations. And we succeeded!

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Over the two days, over 100 participants joined in from across Canada to listen, share and discuss ideas about coastal adaptation.

From Tofino, BC to Churchill, MN to Digby, NS - the National Forum offered a virtual venue for coastal communities to connect.



The Forum brought together a diversity of actors and organizations to share ideas - from the community level to federal government perspectives.

Where are Local Governments at with Coastal Adaptation?

Local governments across Canada have made significant progress in the realm of coastal adaptation. To date, many municipalities have identified climate change risks, vulnerabilities and objectives; have assessed risks and identified options; and established decision-making criteria. Fewer municipalities appear to be at the stages of establishing decision-making criteria; evaluating trade-offs; implementing decisions; and monitoring and reviewing outcomes.

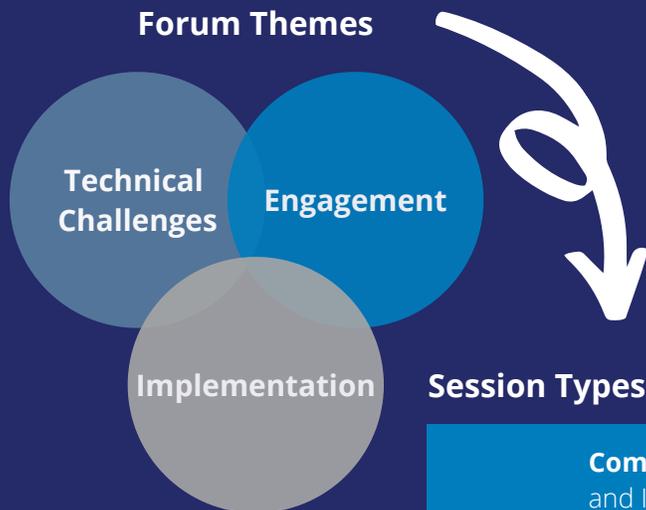
Communities face numerous challenges in planning for and responding to the impacts of climate change. Leading up to the forum, participants identified some of the **major challenges in planning for sea-level rise and coastal flooding**.

Survey of Major Challenges



Forum Structure: Themes + Session Types

The National Forum was structured around our three key themes for coastal adaptation – **Technical Challenges, Engagement, and Implementation**. Within each of the themes, there were three key session types which aimed to capture different perspectives and create opportunities for participants to discuss topics and share ideas with one another.



Access event schedule, session descriptions, links to presentations, and posters here.

Session Types



Community Snapshots: Community Snapshots put the spotlight on local and Indigenous government practitioners, who were invited to share short presentations about how their communities are currently addressing coastal adaptation. We sought to profile communities from different coastlines, of different size and scale, with different adaptation challenges, and at different stages of coastal adaptation action.



Key Resources: The Key Resources panelists represented various not-for-profit, academic, policy, and Indigenous-led organizations whose work is focused on coastal community adaptation. Across the board, these panelists offered great insight on emerging research, tools and approaches that may support local governments as they address coastal flooding and sea level rise.



Interactive Discussions: Structured in the form of virtual breakout rooms, these interactive discussions offered Forum participants the opportunity to debrief and discuss learnings from the Forum with speakers and participants. These sessions were created to foster engagement, networking, and deeper discussion between communities and practitioners around core questions and concepts that emerged from the community and key resource sessions.

Forum Key Insights

The National Forum provided many insights into the current challenges faced by local governments when it comes to coastal adaptation. It was also an exciting setting to learn about successful tools and solutions being tested and applied from coast to coast to coast. Here are some of the big take-aways from the 2 days of presentations and discussions.

Key insights gained from the National Forum

Data availability: Availability of current and high-quality data and maps needed to inform adaptation approaches, such as sea level rise LIDAR maps, can vary between neighbouring municipalities which can make it difficult for a regional entity to give standard guidance/advice to municipalities. One discussion highlighted the benefits of coordinating efforts at a regional scale, for example by combining funding towards consulting for the purposes of generating consistent regional data. Others highlighted the desire for higher levels of government to undertake this technical groundwork.

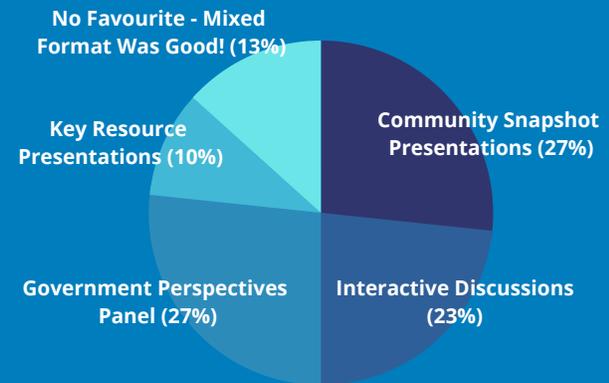
Green Infrastructure: A recurring theme throughout the event was the need to monitor the success of green infrastructure projects and to collect lessons learned from appropriate contexts across coastal Canada. There is a desire to build a stronger case for these approaches.

Cross-Sector Collaboration: Many participants identified the increasing role of cross-sector collaboration in shaping new pathways forward for coastal adaptation. There was an identified need for government, academia and private sectors like insurance and real estate to help fill knowledge gaps, improve data availability, and increase public awareness of climate risks and impacts. Partnerships may be an effective tool.

Capacity Levels: There are different capacity levels across all scales of municipalities. There is a particular challenge for small communities in accessing sufficient staff, financial and information capacity to support needed adaptation measures.

Public Communications + Engagement: Communities discussed challenges with engaging the public in seeking to advancing coastal adaptation. Many communities are seeking approaches and tools for communicating information to a diversity of positions, and identified the need to build trust with the public through open information sharing.

Participants enjoyed the range of session types offered throughout the National Forum:



"I was very happy to take part in the conference and really loved the breakout/small group discussions. I didn't expect such great quality networking with virtual technology but was very pleasantly surprised. Thanks for hosting this terrific event and for inviting me to be a part of it."

- Forum Presenter

"Value of collaboration between Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic coast communities on policies."

- Forum Participant

"That there is a real need for tools for having difficult conversations."

- Forum Participant

"Just how different our participating communities can be in the issues they face, capacity, resources, and what is a key concern for them."

- Forum Participant



Additional Resources

Stay connected by joining a MEOPAR Network Community of Practice.

MEOPAR supports Communities of Practice across multiple disciplines in our network. These Communities help to mobilize knowledge, enrich research and encourage collaboration between academics, practitioners, policy-makers and community groups. They are also an ideal opportunity to inform MEOPAR researchers about new developments and information gaps.

To join a Community of Practice - visit [MEOPAR's website](#) or click on any of the links below to connect directly to a community of practice website:

- **[Coast and Ocean Risk Communication \(CORC\)](#)** (Leads: Joel Finnis, Ron Pelot and Amber Silver)
- **[Ocean Data Management](#)** (Lead: Mike Smit)
- **[Ocean Gliders Canada](#)** (Lead: Brad deYoung)
- **[Climate Risk for Coastal Transportation Infrastructure](#)** (Lead: Paul Kovacs)
- **[NetColor](#)** (NetColor1 leads: Emmanuel Devred and Maycira Costa; Research Assistant: Stephanie Clay; NetColor2 leads: Emmanuel Devred and Anders Knudby; Research Assistant: Stephanie Clay)
- **[Canadian Coastal Resilience Forum](#)** (Lead: Jason Thistlethwaite)
- **[Canadian Marine Shipping Risk Forum](#)** (Leads: Ron Pelot and Stan Matwin)
- **[Ocean Acidification](#)** (Leads: Brent Else and Helen Gurney-Smith)



Discover other "peer" Canadian coastal communities through the Resilient-C Platform.

The **[Resilient Coasts Canada Platform](#)**, commonly referred to as Resilient-C, is a free online tool created to help Canadian coastal communities build hazards resilience. Resilient-C helps interested communities to discover other communities across the country that share similar hazard vulnerabilities, similar community profiles, or similar approaches to resilience-building so that they can connect and learn from one another. The platform relies upon an expanding dataset that includes information for over 150 coastal communities across four Canadian provinces.

