



Ireland: Youghal Coastal Flooding

Adapting to Rising Seas and Storms

The coastal town of Youghal in County Cork faces increasing flood risks from climate change, sea-level rise, and more intense storms. Their adaptation approach combines infrastructure improvements with community preparedness and nature-based solutions.

The Risk

Youghal sits at the mouth of the Blackwater River, making it vulnerable to both coastal flooding from storm surges and fluvial flooding from river overflow. Climate change is intensifying both risks. Recent decades have seen more frequent and severe flooding events affecting homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure.





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Adaptation Approach

Youghal is implementing multi-layered flood protection: coastal defenses and flood walls in critical areas, improved drainage and water management systems, nature-based solutions like wetland restoration to absorb floodwater, early warning systems giving advance notice of flood risk, community preparedness training, and relocation support for the most vulnerable properties.

Community Engagement

Success requires community buy-in. Local authorities conduct regular consultations, explaining flood risks and adaptation options. Residents participate in preparedness drills. Vulnerable households receive personalized flood plans. Businesses develop continuity strategies. This engagement ensures adaptation measures reflect community needs and values.

Key Lesson

Coastal communities must adapt to climate change through combined approaches: protective infrastructure, nature-based solutions, early warning systems, and community preparedness. Engaging residents in planning and preparation ensures adaptation measures are effective and supported.