

The Coral Triangle Initiative

On coral reefs, fisheries and food security

Scientists have identified an area called the Coral Triangle within the Indo-Pacific – its boundaries defined by marine zones containing 500 or more species of reef-building coral. This region covers all or part of six countries: Indonesia (Central and Eastern), Malaysia (Sabah), Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. Certain neighboring countries – including Australia, Fiji, New Caledonia and Vanuatu – contain rich coral biodiversity, but with somewhat lower numbers.

To maintain the health and productivity of the Coral Triangle, it is important to think of the region as a large-scale system. This way we can more easily understand and protect the core ecological processes that drive its productivity and sustain the social and economic benefits for the people dependent on its resources. There is a growing recognition of the need to share in the responsibility of sustaining these resources for future generations. Examples of leadership and cooperation among the Coral Triangle countries include

- In 2004, Indonesia, Philippines, and Malaysia signed an MOU to jointly manage fisheries, sea turtles and marine protected areas.
- In 2006, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Solomon Islands signed an MOU to coordinate management of shared marine resources and sea turtles.
- In 2006, Philippines President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed an Executive Order on a National Policy on Biological Diversity to be implemented throughout the country, particularly in the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape and Verde Passage.
- The Indonesian government announced their intention to double the extent of marine protected areas by 2010, and establish 20 million hectares of marine protected areas by 2020. In the past year alone, Indonesia has added over 2 million hectares into conservation areas.
- Communities in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands have taken the initiative with local government to establish networks of locally managed marine areas, sharing lessons in a network across the Coral Triangle region.



The Center of Marine Biodiversity

- Over 600 species of coral and over 3,000 species of fish
- 53% of the world's coral reefs
- Greatest extent of mangrove forest of any region in the world
- Waters contain spawning and juvenile growth areas for the largest tuna fishery in the world

A Home to 150 Million People

- Marine resources directly support livelihoods and food security for over 120 million people
- Healthy coral reefs contribute to a growing tourism industry valued at over US\$12.5 billion annually
- Mangroves and healthy coral reefs protect coastal communities from storms and tsunamis, at an estimated value of between \$250,000 and \$15 million per kilometer of coastline
- Capture fisheries contribute up to 12% of GDP and are a key source of foreign exchange and employment

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Building Multilateral Partnerships

Building on previous collaborative efforts, President Yudhoyono of Indonesia proposed a new multilateral partnership: a Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security. Such an initiative could be centered around high-level, joint political commitments by the six governments of the region, and collaboration with other nations and stakeholders on such issues as fisheries, tourism, private sector engagement, and financial investments. At the recent Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Sydney, Australia, 21 world leaders endorsed the Coral Triangle Initiative in their APEC Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development. A first formal governmental planning meeting to advance the CTI will be held in Bali in December.



Key strategies under a Coral Triangle Initiative – Approaches and Tools

Regional mechanisms – Working across sectors with relevant stakeholders to establish and strengthen regional mechanisms needed to address threats to marine biological resources.

Legal framework and governance – Creating the legal framework through existing and new laws at regional, national and local levels.

Private sector collaboration – Building effective partnerships across industry, government and civil society to galvanize private sector action and funding support for effective marine resource management. Addressing all steps in the market chain for sustainability on the supply and demand sides.

Building Capacity – Building the capacity for effective marine resource management and conservation and increasing civil society participation in management decision making.

Ecosystem-Based management of the oceans – Adopting and enforcing sustainable fisheries policies that will maintain critical ecosystem processes, placing sustainable human resource use and stakeholder participation at the center of fisheries management.

Representative networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) – Building effectively managed networks of large-scale MPAs and community-managed areas in places that provide increased potential for resilience and resistance to future climate change impacts and that capture the range of marine and coastal habitats. The MPA establishment and management process will increase civil society participation in decision making, ensuring adequate and sustainable flows of funding for MPAs and broader marine resources management, and for empowering local communities and reducing resource conflict.

Increasing populations of threatened and endangered species – Mitigating threats to highly endangered species and focusing protection strategies on key phases of their life history.

Adaptive management strategies for climate change – Understanding impacts of global warming and integrating adaptation strategies into management and development plans for reduced vulnerability.

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Strong Partnerships

Effective conservation and marine resource management is achieved through collaboration among a range of partners – from governments to local communities, and from NGOs to businesses. By building lasting partnerships among the Coral Triangle nations and stakeholders inside and outside the region, conservation and management of the Coral Triangle's outstanding marine resources can be assured for future generations.

A partial list of governments and key stakeholders for the Coral Triangle Initiative includes

The governments of:

Indonesia
Malaysia
Papua New Guinea
The Philippines
Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste

Australia
France
Japan
New Zealand
United Kingdom
United States

Asian Development Bank
Conservation International
Global Environment Facility
The Nature Conservancy
World Bank
WWF