

THE CORAL TRIANGLE PROGRAM

Reefs for the Future, Fish for the Future



Luxuriant coral gardens characterize the Coral Triangle ©Paul Marshall

Deep in the heart of the Asia-Pacific region lies the epicenter of our planet's marine diversity, an area known to scientists as the Coral Triangle. These rich seas stretch from Indonesia to the Solomon Islands and up from Indian Ocean across the Philippines to the Pacific. Home to 76% of the world's coral species and 50% of its reef fish species, the Coral Triangle also provides feeding and breeding grounds for whales, orcas, dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, and manta rays. The rich fisheries of the Coral Triangle support the livelihoods of 126 million people and provide food for millions more.

The reefs of the Coral Triangle have survived for millions of years,

and even today seem resilient to the effects of mass coral bleaching linked to the global warming trends that are ravaging reefs worldwide. Despite this resiliency, the marine habitats of the Coral Triangle are being degraded by human threats such as overfishing, destructive fishing, and coastal development. More than 80% of the reefs in Southeast Asia are at risk from such threats.

In recent years, national and local governments, communities, tour operators, NGOs, and international funding agencies have taken action individually or collectively to protect these reefs and their fishery resources. Although the number of reefs conserved in marine protected

The Conservancy's Role

We are a recognized global leader in adapting conservation strategies to address climate change impacts through our work in the Coral Triangle.

Working with partners in Kimbe Bay, Papua New Guinea, we completed the first MPA network designed specifically to be resilient to climate change, and we are replicating this approach across the Coral Triangle.

Working with partners in Indonesia, we helped establish, design, and manage five MPAs equivalent in size to Maryland.

Conservancy-led scientific assessments have redefined knowledge of the richness and distribution of the region's coral communities, inspiring local and national pride and support for conservation.

We participate as a respected partner and advisor in conservation policy and programs at the local and national levels.

Our training and mentoring activities are building local conservation leadership in the region.

We are at the forefront of developing sustainable financing for MPAs, including the Arnavon Endowment in the Solomon Islands, the Komodo National Park joint venture in Indonesia, and the Mama Graun Conservation Trust Fund in Papua New Guinea.



Solomon Islands girl harvesting the bounty of the sea ©Louise Goggin

areas (MPAs) has increased vastly over the last several years, the management of these areas is lagging. Improving management effectiveness is a major focus of our program.

A History of Success

For over 15 years, The Nature Conservancy has partnered closely with local communities, governments, the private sector, and regional organizations in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and the Solomon Islands. Together, we are working to transform the way MPAs are designed, established, managed, and financed in order to protect vital coral reef resources while taking into account the needs of local communities. Our goal is to establish resilient MPA networks in areas of high ecological importance that can withstand global and local threats such as climate change and destructive fishing.

A Vision for the Future

Our vision is that the people of the Coral Triangle are protecting the environment and resources in this global center of marine biodiversity and maintaining the value of marine resources for the quality of human life. In pursuit of this vision, Conservancy teams in Papua New Guinea,

Indonesia, and the Solomon Islands will continue working with partners to improve and expand MPA networks and to ensure that MPAs are designed to survive and managed to last in our rapidly changing world. We will also work to restore and sustain the values of these reefs to the people who depend upon them.

Over the next 10 years, we will help:

Achieve effective management of the seven large MPAs where we currently work (8.1 million acres, or 3.3 million hectares).

Expand the MPAs into resilient networks and add 10 large MPAs or networks of small MPAs (20.7 million acres, or 8.4 million hectares).

Reduce fisheries threats over an additional 9.3 million acres (3.8 million hectares) of the nearshore environment through improved fisheries management policies and practices.

Conserve at least 10% of the nearshore environment in all Coral Triangle ecoregions by using resilient MPA networks as the central strategy guiding conservation, and put in place sustainable funding, integrated coastal management, and sustainable harvesting practices to support the management of these areas.

To achieve these outcomes, we will: 1) demonstrate effective man-

agement (including sustainable financing) at the seven MPA sites where we currently work; 2) work with governments of the Coral Triangle to build the highest level of political will and commitment for marine conservation; 3) integrate conservation and ecosystem services objectives to maintain the value of coral reef systems to the region's people; 4) develop and apply innovative management and financing strategies to address the rapidly changing demographic, economic, and climate impacts on the Coral Triangle's reefs; 5) leverage our successful approaches to catalyze the development of additional MPA networks through partners in all remaining ecoregions in the Coral Triangle; and 6) build local capacity and institutions to support MPA networks and fisheries management through our Coral Triangle Center and country programs.

Funding Needs

The total cost to achieve these ambitious goals is estimated at \$220 million over 10 years. These costs cover capital investment for new sites, annual operations (offset by sustainable financing strategies), training and mentoring of national staff, and technical advice and specialized science and policy support. This investment will secure 30 million acres (12.2 million hectares) in effectively managed MPAs and yield a return of \$322 million annually in tourism, fisheries, and coastal protection services to the region's people.

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