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USAID 50 ANNIVERSARY

U.S. Coral Triangle Initiative Support Program

Supporting countries of the Coral Triangle region to manage their marine resources March 2011

Improving the Application of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM)

Where is the Coral Triangle?

The Coral Triangle encompasses almost six million square kilometers of ocean and coastal waters surrounding Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. It is considered the global epicenter of marine biodiversity—home to over 500 species of reef-building corals and 3,000 species of fish. The Coral Triangle faces multiple threats such as unplanned coastal development, over-fishing and climate change that severely impact food security and employment opportunities of the 120 million people that depend on this resource.

What is the Coral Triangle Initiative?

To avert the risks threatening the Coral Triangle's marine ecosystem, the six Coral Triangle countries (CT6) came together in 2007 to form the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI)—a multilateral partnership that aims to safeguard the marine and coastal resources of the Coral Triangle region. Under the CTI, the Coral Triangle countries adopted a Regional Plan of Action with five goals: 1) strengthening management of seascapes; **2) application of ecosystem approach to fisheries management**; 3) developing and strengthening the management of marine protected areas; 4) implementing climate change adaptation measures; and 5) protecting threatened marine species. These goals are supported by clear sets of actions and timelines to specifically address regional marine resource conservation and sustainability priorities.

What is an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM)?

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization defines EAFM as *"an approach to fisheries management and development that strives to balance diverse societal objectives by taking into account the knowledge and uncertainties about biotic, abiotic, and human components of ecosystems and their interactions and applying an integrated approach to fisheries within ecologically meaningful boundaries."* The aim of EAFM is to plan, develop and manage fisheries in a manner that addresses the multiple needs and desires of societies, without jeopardizing the options for future generations to benefit from the full range of goods and services provided by marine ecosystems.

Why is it important to apply EAFM in the Coral Triangle?

EAFM recognizes the importance of the human dimensions to fisheries management and views coastal communities and fishers as critical parts of the ecosystem with food security, livelihood, and economic development interests linked to effective fisheries management. EAFM is a key tool used to address common transboundary policy and regulatory concerns among the Coral Triangle countries such as over-fishing; illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing; live reef fish trade; and by-catch of protected and endangered species.

CORAL TRIANGLE COUNTRIES

Indonesia
Malaysia
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste

Commercial fishing boat in Sabah, Malaysia.
Photo Credit: WWF Malaysia

Coral Triangle Support Partnership

How is the US CTI Support Program improving the implementation of EAFM in the Coral Triangle?

The US Government, through the US CTI Support Program, is applying EAFM to improve the governance of regional and national fisheries in the Coral Triangle. The program supports the implementation of EAFM through the following activities at the regional, national and site-level scale across the Coral Triangle.

The US CTI Support Program applies an integrated approach across the major CTI thematic areas to achieve catalytic results, focusing activities at specific priority geographic sites and linking them across the region through shared learning networks and regional exchanges to advance regional policies and strengthen capacity throughout the Coral Triangle region.

Regional

- Strengthens fisheries governance through EAFM by providing technical assistance to the Coral Triangle countries in the establishment of a regional policy statement and a 10-year roadmap to implement EAFM across the region.
- Supports the development of a multi-lateral live reef fish trade agreement among the Coral Triangle countries. The agreement will provide a foundation for managing the increasing impacts of the live reef fish trade in the Coral Triangle, much of which focuses on endangered or threatened species.
- Integrates EAFM approaches into its CTI Local Government Alliance network and CTI Learning Destinations, specifically through an Executive Course offered to local government officers in the Coral Triangle.

National

- Provides technical assistance to fisheries agencies in each Coral Triangle country to enable them to develop their own national EAFM operational guidelines that will inform national legislative frameworks and policies.
- Supports the review and analysis of existing national laws on EAFM and legal frameworks against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.
- Supports and mentors national-level EAFM policy "champions" to build constituencies for national EAFM legislation, policy and/or operational guidelines.

Site-Level

- Implements EAFM in all of its 17 priority sites and works with local governments and stakeholders to integrate marine protected areas and climate change adaptation actions to support EAFM in at least one site per country.
- Collaborates with local governments, community groups, and other stakeholders to catalyze public-private partnerships and initiatives with the goal of replicating these success stories across the region, as appropriate to local contexts.

What is the US CTI Support Program?

The U.S. Agency for International Development is supporting the Coral Triangle Initiative through the five-year US CTI Support Program (US CTI). The US CTI assists governments and stakeholders in implementing the CTI Regional Plan of Action; supports development of the CTI Secretariat and national coordinating committees; provides access to U.S. science and research capabilities; and shares best practices among the six Coral Triangle countries. The Program is implemented by the Coral Triangle Support Partnership, a consortium of NGOs led by the World Wildlife Fund and that includes The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International; a Program Integrator; the US State Department; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The program also works with other donors including the Government of Australia and the Asian Development Bank. For more information about the program, visit www.uscti.org.

Fisherwoman displays her catch in Kei Islands, Indonesia.
Photo Credit: WWF/Aulia Rahman

CTI Goal 2: Ecosystem Approach to Management of Fisheries and Other Marine Resources Fully Applied

***Target 1**: Strong legislative, policy and regulatory frameworks in place for achieving and EAFM approach to fisheries management*

***Target 2**: Improved Income, livelihoods and food security in an increasingly significant number of coastal communities across the region through a new sustainable coastal fisheries and poverty reduction initiative*

***Target 3**: Effective measures in place to help ensure exploitation of shared tuna stocks is sustainable with tuna spawning areas and juvenile growth stages adequately protected*

***Target 4**: A more effective management and more sustainable trade in live reef fish and reef-based ornamentals achieved*

CTI Regional Plan of Action, May 2009

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