



Environmental Cooperation – Asia (ECO-Asia)

US SUPPORT TO THE CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE

Conserving the planet's most biologically important marine resources



Credit: The Nature Conservancy



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What is the Coral Triangle?

The Coral Triangle is a geographic area encompassing almost 6 million square kilometers of ocean and coastal waters in Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. The Coral Triangle is within the Exclusive Economic Zones of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Timor Leste, and the Solomon Islands. Recognized as the global center of marine biological diversity, the region is home to some 363 million people, one third of which are directly dependent on coastal and marine resources for their livelihoods.

What are the threats to the Coral Triangle?

The marine and coastal natural resources of the Coral Triangle—and the many goods and services they provide—are at immediate risk from a range of factors, including: over-fishing, unsustainable fishing methods, land-based sources of pollution and climate change. These factors adversely impact food security, employment opportunities, and standards of living for households that comprise the majority of the people dependent on fish and other marine resources for their livelihoods.

What is the Coral Triangle Initiative?

In August 2007, President Yudhoyono of Indonesia proposed the creation of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), a new multilateral partnership to safeguard the region's extraordinary marine and coastal biological resources. Twenty-one heads of state, including President Bush, welcomed the Initiative at the APEC Summit in September 2007. The CTI was officially launched in December 2007 during the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali.



What is the management structure of the CTI?

The CTI Secretariat, currently hosted by Indonesia, manages the overall Initiative. Formal governance arrangements are currently under negotiation, but are likely to include a governing council, assisted by a partners' forum, and national coordinating committees in each country.

What is the CTI Plan of Action?

The six governments in the Coral Triangle (CT6 countries) are engaged in an ambitious process to finalize a Plan of Action to guide the CTI, which will be presented at the CTI Leaders' Summit

during World Oceans Conference in Manado, Indonesia in May 2009. While the details of the CTI Plan of Action are still being developed, the CT6 countries have agreed to structure it around five major goals:

1. Designating and effectively managing “priority seascapes”,
2. Applying an “ecosystem approach” to the management of fisheries and other marine resources,
3. Establishing networks of marine protected areas,
4. Implementing measures to strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change, and
5. Strengthening measures to protect threatened marine species.

Within the broad framework of the CTI Plan of Action, the CT6 countries are developing national strategies and action plans and are working together to identify and implement those actions that require regional cooperation. The CTI thus encompasses a distinctively regional approach, building on country-driven priorities and actions.

How is the United States supporting the CTI?

Recognizing the potential of the CTI to be a truly transformative regional initiative with far-reaching environmental and economic benefits, the United States has offered considerable financial, political, and technical support through both bilateral and multilateral channels.

- USAID and the Department of State are supporting the CTI with a \$40 million five-year program implemented by a consortium of non-governmental organizations, including the World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and The Nature Conservancy, and a “Program Integrator.” The support includes a number of targeted activities designed to transform the management of marine and coastal resources in the region over the long term and engage the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the implementation. The activities include:

- Assistance to the CT6 governments and stakeholders in implementing the CTI Plan of Action,
- Support in establishing and developing the CTI Secretariat,
- Providing access to U.S. science and research capabilities, and
- Sharing of best practices among the CT6 countries.

- The governing Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to which the United States is the largest single donor, approved a four-year, \$63 million grant for an umbrella program in support of the CTI. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) leads and coordinates the GEF CTI program, which includes projects developed and implemented by ADB, the UN Development Programme, the UN Environment Programme, and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. These various projects are currently under development, in close consultation with the CT6 countries, and are expected to be finalized and endorsed by the GEF in the second quarter of 2009.

The United States views the CTI as an important and innovative initiative with the potential to generate significant benefits across the region, including supporting sustainable economic development, poverty reduction, and the conservation of the planet’s most biologically important marine resources.



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