



# PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## and the Coral Triangle Support Partnership

### The Coral Triangle

The Coral Triangle holds the highest diversity of marine life in the world. Spanning 648 million hectares off the coasts of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste, the ecosystems in the region support the livelihoods of over 340 million people spread across the six countries.

Yet this abundant marine ecosystem is now at risk. Unsustainable fishing, rapid population growth, and the effects of climate change are not only damaging the environment, but also threatening the food security of those who depend on the valuable natural resources in the region.

Papua New Guinea forms a special part of the Coral Triangle. The largely untouched waters of Papua New Guinea boast over 1,400 species of fish, (the seas of the Caribbean hold between 500-700) as well as a host of endangered species including dugong, sea turtles, sharks and giant clams.

### The Coral Triangle Support Partnership

In 2009, the six nations of the Coral Triangle came together to form the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF).

As part of its support to the CTI-CFF, USAID funds the Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) to ensure that the expertise, traditional knowledge, and history held by each country is well-utilized and shared across the region.

CTSP is unique five-year project which brings together the work of WWF, Conservation International, and The Nature Conservancy.

CTSP matches science with traditional knowledge to provide realistic, practical solutions for conservation and resource management – empowering local people to protect their ecosystems and their livelihoods.



*60 percent of people in Papua New Guinea rely on coastal ecosystems for food and livelihoods*

## ! COUNTRY FACTFILE

While large parts of Papua New Guinea’s rich coastal resources remain untouched, they are at increasing risk from the growth of mining, oil palm, and other industries. With careful actions, Papua New Guinea’s pristine habitats can help to support the recovery and resilience of the whole Coral Triangle.



- Papua New Guinea’s population is set to nearly double to 11 million by 2035, so food security is a high priority for the government.
- Over 35% of coastal residents live on less than \$2 a day.
- Less than 20% of children in Papua New Guinea go to high school.
- Papua New Guinea is home to many diverse cultures and over 800 languages.

# Linking local action with a national plan

CTSP conservation efforts reflect the unique cultural, geographical, and governmental contexts of Papua New Guinea. With a diverse system of traditional laws and the majority of land under private ownership, national strategies can be difficult to incorporate at a local level.

With this in mind, CTSP partners in Papua New Guinea-WWF and Conservation International have supported the Papua New Guinea government to develop a National Plan of Action that supports the regional plans of the CTI-CFF and empowers local communities to help implement their own activities. The government's long-term goal is to prioritize Marine Protected Areas across the country with Milne Bay, Manus, and Kimbe Bay serving as models. These priority areas serve as living laboratories for developing best practices which can be applied throughout the country and the greater Coral Triangle region.

CTSP local partners conduct workshops, field trips, and training to increase the government's capacity for environmental policy making. Through this support, decision-makers have increased expertise and skills to help them take actions to ensure the longevity of their coastal and marine resources.

*“Women are just like Mother Nature. We provide for our families, while Mother Nature provides for all of us.”*

Ruth Pranis,  
Women in Conservation Network



## Local management

Papua New Guinea's geographically and culturally dispersed communities make a one-size-fits-all style of coastal and marine management difficult. Instead, Locally-Managed Marine Areas draw upon communities to manage their own coastal resources.



## Sharing best practice

CTSP works with Manus Environmental Conservation Communities Network to help share the best conservation practices amongst the people living in the area. The network – which emphasizes the role of traditional methods – has five sub-groups (including Manus Women in Conservation), which focus on a different goal of CTI-CFF National Plan of Action.



## Living laboratories

In Milne Bay, CTSP helps the fishermen develop their skills in biological monitoring, administration, fundraising, and reporting techniques. For example, through monitoring sea cucumbers (see above), communities have found that stocks are already making a recovery following a nationwide ban on their harvest since 2009. Soon communities will be able to start harvesting sea cucumbers sustainably.



## SUCCESS STORY: FROM FISHERMAN TO CONSERVATIONIST

Joel Araea owns the idyllic Grace Island, and hopes to set up his own eco-tourism business using the skills he has picked up in his role as Community Monitoring Officer.

“I used to dive for sea cucumbers and fish with nets,” says Joel, “but it became more and more difficult.” Until recently, marine resources in Milne Bay province were in sharp decline and Joel couldn't afford a boat to capitalize on the area's fledgling scuba and tourism industries.

But CTSP supports the government to create a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Milne Bay which is managed by local people, including Joel. As a Community Monitoring Officer, he patrols and enforces the MPA, gathers scientific data, and educates communities about how conservation will benefit them and their future food security.

The benefits of protection are already being seen, with dramatic increases in the

number of fish and sea cucumbers in and around the MPA. Now neighboring communities are planning to set up their own MPAs to protect their long-term livelihoods too.

Joel is excited about everything he's gained from CTSP trainings, such as knowledge of monitoring, scuba diving, and improved computer skills. He looks forward to a time when he and his colleagues can manage the MPA independently. He sees conservation as the first step towards his long-term goal. “My grandfather bought this island in exchange for an axe many years ago. My dream is to set up a dive resort here now I'm learning all these new things.”