



SOLOMON ISLANDS

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.

Solomon Islands has a population of around 500,000 people most of whom rely on the small nation's coastal resources for their livelihoods. Eighty percent of all Indo-Pacific seagrass species – which support threatened wildlife including dugongs and turtles – can found in the waters of the Solomon Islands. Good management of these precious marine areas will benefit the people not just in Solomon Islands but those living throughout the whole Coral Triangle region.

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.



By 2030, consumption of fish in Solomon Islands will exceed production – a serious threat to food security

! COUNTRY FACTFILE

Made up of over 1,000 islands, the waters of Solomon Islands are teeming with marine biodiversity. However, they're also extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Fish supplies are dwindling and food security has become an increasing concern in many parts of the country.



- There are 494 species of coral and 1,019 species of marine fishes in the Solomon Islands.
- With only 33 km of paved roads, boats are the main method of transport throughout the country.
- The monsoon season makes communication between islands limited for up to six months of the year.
- 90% of the population's dietary protein comes from fish.
- In rural areas, fish consumption is not nearly enough to provide healthy levels of protein.

Communities are taking action to protect their future food supplies

Solomon Islands is a nation made up of hundreds of coastal communities spread amongst hundreds of islands. The geographical spread of these people means that coastal resources are managed by local people and their local-level governments.

Lack of technical skills, scientific data, and resources (such as equipment and fuel) can hinder the ability for local-level decision-makers to develop plans that truly ensure the ongoing health of their precious marine resources.

CTSP supports local governments in Solomon Islands by sharing expertise and data to help boost the knowledge and confidence of local decision-makers. The National Plan of Action, which was created with the help of CTSP to support the regional plans of the CTI-CFF, prioritizes community-based management as a way to safeguard fish supplies and livelihoods for the people experiencing food insecurity.

CTSP also helps build the capacity of community organizations such as the Gizo Marine Conservation Area Management Committee and the Tetepare Descendants Association in Western Province so that they develop local programs which support the national plan.

Since CTSP began supporting work in Solomon Islands in 2009, the people and governments have established seven new policies which ensure marine resources are well managed on a national, district, and local level.

“With time flying by so fast, so will our natural resources fly from our children’s fingers. Looking at our present island life, we cannot be late. We need to act now!”

Chief Committee Spokesperson
Western Province



Planning for climate change

With CTSP support, WorldFish rapidly assess the vulnerability of coastal communities to climate change – giving local people the knowledge they need to plan ahead. CTSP work in Solomon Islands uses data collection to involve and empower communities and conducts group discussions, household interviews, and training in the Local Early Action Plan, also known as the LEAP.



Sharing best practice

CTSP supported the development of the Best Practice Guidelines for Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Solomon Islands. Using these guidelines, community organizations including the GERUSA Natural Resource Management Network and the Gizo Marine Conservation Area Management Committee safeguard the future of their coastal resources.



Protecting endangered species

Solomon Islands is home to dugongs, dolphins, and five of the seven species of marine turtles, all of which are threatened or critically endangered. With CTSP support, volunteer rangers in Western Province monitor and tag turtle populations using their “turtle rodeo” skills – a spectacular combination of water acrobatics and free-diving.



SUCCESS STORY: AN ISLAND HAVEN FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Once threatened by logging, Tetepare Island has become a unique model for safeguarding and monitoring resources, community education, and carefully-managed eco-tourism.

Tetepare in Western Province, Solomon Islands is the biggest uninhabited island in the South Pacific at 120 square kilometers in and its water teem with sharks, bumphead parrotfish, clams, turtles (including the endangered leatherback), and dugongs.

Originally home to headhunters, Tetepare is now protected by an association of over 3,500 of their descendants, spread throughout Western Province of Solomon Islands.

“Some landowners wanted to log Tetepare,” says Allen Tipter Bero, the Program Coordinator for the Tetepare Descendants Association (TDA). “Eventually, we chose conservation instead of logging to avoid community conflict. Now local people can get long-term benefits from the resources the island provides.”

Tetepare’s eight local rangers work on two-week rotations to gather data, patrol the island, monitor harvesting in traditional use zones, and confiscate illegal catches.

The TDA also supports education and vocational training for young people, funds small local enterprises, and offers students, scientists, and tourists (no more than 13 at a time) unique encounters with marine life.

In a nation characterized by complex clan structures and customary land ownership, Tetepare is a fantastic example of effective cooperative marine management. This success is now being shared with other similar initiatives taking place throughout the Coral Triangle, including Papua New Guinea and Philippines.