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STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Through SOMACORE, these stories highlight how local action, scientific knowledge, effective governance, and regional cooperation are helping create a more sustainable future for people and nature.

Implemented by:

SOMACORE AT A GLANCE

COUNTRIES

Indonesia • Timor-Leste • Philippines • Papua New Guinea • Solomon Islands • Malaysia

FOCUS SEASCAPES

Three (3) priority seascapes:

1. Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion (*Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea*).
2. Lesser Sunda Seascape (*Indonesia, Timor Leste*)
3. Sulu Sulawesi Seascape (*Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines*)

STRATEGIC THEMES



Strengthened Governance and Seascape Management

Relevant authorities in Coral Triangle countries apply regional and national policy frameworks, international standards, and collaborative governance approaches to improve seascape-level decision-making and management, particularly in marine protected areas (MPAs).



Community-Based Ecosystem Management and Livelihood Resilience

Local communities scale up proven ecosystem-based resource management and area-based conservation practices, complemented by livelihood diversification and capacity development initiatives that support resilience at local to seascape scales.



Knowledge Sharing and Regional Recognition

Perspectives, experiences, lessons learned, and solutions from CTI-CFF member countries on transboundary marine governance and coastal biodiversity protection are documented, promoted, and recognized internationally.

CONTRIBUTING TO:

CTI
RPOA
2.0



STRENGTHENED GOVERNANCE AND SEASCAPE MANAGEMENT

Strengthening Cooperation,
Management, and Decision-Making
Across the Coral Triangle

Healthy marine ecosystems depend on effective governance.

Through SOMACORE, partners are supporting the application of policy frameworks, international standards, and collaborative governance approaches that strengthen decision-making at local, national, and regional levels.

Together, these initiatives are helping build more resilient seascapes that benefit both people and nature.

GOVERNANCE IN ACTION

SOMACORE supports:

- Improved management effectiveness of marine protected areas
- Stronger regional cooperation across shared seascapes
- Science-based planning and decision-making
- Capacity development for conservation practitioners
- Application of internationally recognized conservation standards



Raising the Standard for Marine Protected Areas Across the Coral Triangle

Effective marine conservation depends not only on protecting important ecosystems, but also on ensuring that protected and conserved areas are well governed, effectively managed, and able to deliver lasting benefits for both nature and people.

Through the SOMACORE programme, marine managed areas across the Coral Triangle are strengthening their management by applying the IUCN Green List Standard—a globally recognized framework that helps sites assess and improve their governance, planning, management effectiveness, and conservation outcomes.

To date, 12 marine protected and conserved areas have entered the Green List process, with nine sites completing self-assessments using more than 50 internationally recognized indicators. Guided by these assessments, site managers and stakeholders have developed tailored roadmaps to address management gaps, strengthen governance, and improve long-term conservation outcomes.

Beyond measuring performance, the Green List process encourages collaboration among governments, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and conservation partners, fostering more inclusive and evidence-based decision-making.

By supporting sites on their journey toward Green List certification, SOMACORE is helping countries strengthen marine protected area management while contributing to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly Target 3 (30x30), which calls for the effective conservation of at least 30 percent of the world's land and sea by 2030.

WHY IT MATTERS?

The Green List is a pathway for continuous improvement. By equipping marine protected areas with internationally recognized standards and practical roadmaps for action, SOMACORE is helping build more resilient ecosystems, stronger governance systems, and lasting conservation outcomes across the Coral Triangle.

Indonesia and Timor-Leste Strengthen Cross-Border Conservation in the Lesser Sunda Seascape

From 2–4 June 2026, government representatives, marine protected area managers, academics, and community champions from Indonesia and Timor-Leste gathered in Alor, East Nusa Tenggara, for the Regional Exchange (REX) on the Lesser Sunda Seascape. Organized under the SOMACORE programme, the exchange strengthened collaboration among practitioners managing one of the Coral Triangle's most ecologically significant transboundary seascapes.

Hosted by the Center of Excellence (CoE) at Tribuana University, the three-day programme combined technical sessions and field learning to strengthen participants' knowledge on marine protected area management, fisheries monitoring, community engagement, and transboundary collaboration. Discussions highlighted the importance of harmonizing scientific approaches, governance systems, and conservation planning to support the implementation of the CTI-CFF Regional and National Plans of Action.

The exchange also reinforced the critical role of local practitioners and community leaders in translating regional commitments into action. By strengthening technical capacity and fostering collaboration across borders, participants are better equipped to address shared challenges such as biodiversity loss, unsustainable fishing, and climate change while protecting the interconnected ecosystems of the Lesser Sunda Seascape.

RESULTS:

2 countries engaged:
Indonesia & Timor Leste

1 Center of Excellence
Serving as a regional hub
for marine conservation
learning

The sea and its contents know no passports or political sovereignty. Through the collaborative learning model at the Alor CoE, we are laying the foundation for aligning science and policy, so that the marine ecosystem in the Ombai-Wetar corridor and its surroundings can be managed adaptively and equitably. Tutus Wijanarko, Konservasi Indonesia



Strengthening Cooperation Across Shared Seascapes

Marine ecosystems transcend national boundaries, making regional cooperation essential for effective conservation and sustainable resource management.

SOMACORE supports platforms that bring countries together to align priorities, strengthen coordination, and advance shared solutions to common marine challenges.

2nd Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape (SSS) Dialogue

On March 10-11, the 2nd Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape (SSS) Dialogue convened representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to strengthen collaboration across one of the world's most productive marine ecosystems. Discussions focused on enhancing data sharing, marine spatial planning, and exploring opportunities for transboundary conservation initiatives, including a potential sea turtle corridor.

2nd Bismarck Solomon Seas (BSS) Dialogue

Similarly, the 2nd Bismarck Solomon Seas (BSS) Dialogue brought together representatives from Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands on May 15 to strengthen cooperation across the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion. Participants advanced discussions on regional governance mechanisms like the triparty MoU agreement, science-based management, and coordinated action to address shared challenges such as biodiversity loss and climate impacts.

Building the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

Capacity development is critical for effective on-the-ground conservation. In May 2026, SOMACORE organized a regional training activity bringing together marine protected area managers, practitioners, government representatives, and community leaders from the Lesser Sunda Seascape, including Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Through CTC and IUCN, participants strengthened their capacity to manage marine protected areas and to serve as future trainers and knowledge multipliers within their own institutions and communities.



Participants of the 2nd SSS Dialogue | Philippines



Participants of the 2nd BSS Dialogue | Papua New Guinea



Participants of the IUCN EAGL training | Indonesia



© CI Timor Leste

FEATURE STORY

From Data to Action

Strengthening Marine Conservation in Timor-Leste Through Science and Collaboration

On March 6, the Solutions for Marine and Coastal Resilience in the Coral Triangle (SOMACORE) Programme, through Conservation International Timor-Leste, organized more than 150 participants in Timor Leste Plaza in Dili for the national seminar titled “From Data to Action”. The event marked an important milestone in translating scientific research into practical action for marine conservation and sustainable fisheries management.

The seminar brought together representatives from government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, universities, and students, creating a platform to share scientific evidence that can inform the future management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Timor-Leste.

A key highlight was the launch of baseline survey reports for two proposed MPAs: the Lamsana Marine Protected Area in Manatuto and the Inur-Hitu Community-Based Marine Protected Area in Bobonaro. Developed through nearly two years of field surveys and collaboration among government agencies, technical experts, local communities, volunteers, and partners under the SOMACORE Programme, the reports provide critical information for conservation planning and decision-making.

The surveys revealed the ecological significance of both sites. In Lamsana and Laleia, researchers documented approximately 200 species across mangrove, seagrass, and coral reef ecosystems, including dugongs, turtles, dolphins, sharks, rays, crocodiles, and migratory birds. Meanwhile, Inur-Hitu recorded approximately 115 species and was identified as an important marine migratory corridor within the Lesser Sunda Seascape. The assessments also highlighted extensive seagrass beds, mangrove forests, coral reefs, and other critical habitats that support biodiversity, food security, and coastal livelihoods.

RESULTS:

150+ participants engaged

200+ species documented in Lamsana and Laleia

8 Young Marine Scientists recognized

2 proposed MPAs



Additionally, the seminar also recognized eight Young Marine Scientists who contributed to field surveys and data collection throughout the research process. For many, it was their first opportunity to participate directly in national marine research, gaining hands-on experience in biodiversity monitoring and ecosystem assessment while building their capacity as future conservation leaders.

Speaking during the seminar, Manuel Mendes, Country Director of Conservation International Timor-Leste, emphasized the importance of collaboration and science-based decision-making: *“This national seminar was held to share the research report and results from surveys previously conducted in two areas, namely Manatuto and Bobonaro, over a two-year period in collaboration with all partners.”*



The information generated from this baseline survey is important and will support the government in strengthening marine protected areas and ensuring sustainable management of our marine resources for future generations



Domingos da Conceição dos Santos, State Secretary for Fisheries



By bringing together science, policy, and partnerships, the seminar strengthened collaboration among government institutions, universities, communities, and development partners. More importantly, it reinforced the role of scientific evidence in guiding marine spatial planning, future zoning processes, and long-term conservation efforts in Manatuto and Bobonaro. Through SOMACORE, research is not only generating knowledge but also helping shape decisions that support healthier marine ecosystems and more resilient coastal communities.



COMMUNITY-BASED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOOD RESILIENCE

Empowering Communities as Stewards of Resilience

SOMACORE supports local communities in scaling up proven conservation practices while strengthening resilience through capacity development, knowledge exchange, and livelihood diversification. These efforts help ensure that conservation benefits are shared and sustained at both community and seascape scales.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN ACTION

SOMACORE supports:

- Community-based marine and coastal resource management
- Sustainable livelihood development
- Women's economic empowerment
- Indigenous and customary conservation systems
- Community participation in conservation planning and governance



MANGROVE TO MARKET:

WOMEN LEADING COASTAL RESILIENCE IN INDONESIA

At the edge of Berau's coastline in East Kalimantan, mangroves stand like quiet guardians, holding the soil, calming the sea, and sustaining life. For generations, they have fed families, sheltered fisheries, and buffered villages against an uncertain climate. Yet for many coastal communities, their value has remained only partially realized, especially for the women whose labor quietly sustains both households and local economies.

In February 2026, 25 women from six villages across Berau—Tabalar Muara, Pegat Batumbuk, Tubaan, Semurut, Buyung-Buyung, and Pилanjau—gathered under a shared purpose: to learn how to turn what they already protect into something they can grow. The *"Mangrove to Market"* initiative, led by Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) with the Berau Regency Government through the Solutions for Marine and Coastal Resilience in the Coral Triangle (SOMACORE) program, was not just training. It was a shift in perspective.

Here, mangroves were no longer seen only as nature to preserve, but as the foundation of resilient livelihoods.

Through participatory learning, the women moved step by step, from understanding sustainable mangrove use to refining products, organizing their groups, and managing finances. They learned to see their work with structure, value, and future potential. Representatives from Berau Regency Fisheries Office also participated and emphasized the importance of environmentally responsible fisheries and value-added coastal products.

The changes were immediate, but deeper than acquiring skills alone. Women who once worked informally began keeping records. Groups that operated loosely started defining roles. Products once made for local sale began to carry standards. And beneath it all grew a stronger awareness: that protecting mangroves is inseparable from protecting their income.

For Riska Febriani of Pegat Batumbuk, her group's milkfish floss which is a simple product at first glance, now carries a different meaning. **It represents not just food, but knowledge, organization, and care for the ecosystem that makes it possible.**

In coastal villages, women are often the unseen backbone of both economy and community. Strengthen them, and the impact ripples across households, into markets, and back into the environment. Healthier mangroves mean stronger fisheries, better protection from climate risks, and stored carbon that benefits far beyond Berau. At the same time, women-led enterprises create income streams that do not depend on degrading those same resources. The coastline, in return, begins to heal alongside the people who depend on it.

"Mangrove to Market" does not end with training. **YKAN and its partners will continue mentoring to support these groups refine products, strengthen governance, and reach wider markets.** Along Berau's shores, the story is still unfolding. But it is already clear that when women are equipped to lead, mangroves are no longer just protected, they are transformed into pathways of resilience coastal communities.

RESULTS

25 women trained **6** coastal villages engaged

- Improved financial literacy
- Strengthened women-led enterprises
- Increased awareness of sustainable mangrove management

"We now understand how to use mangroves without bring any detriment to them, and how to manage our business and group properly, from production to bookkeeping. It changes how we see what we do."

*Riska Febriani
of Pegat Batumbuk
East Kalimantan, Timur
Indonesia*



Communities Leading Conservation Across the Pacific

Community stewardship remains one of the strongest foundations for conservation success across the Coral Triangle.

© IUCN

Solomon Islands

Communities surrounding the Arnavon Community Marine Park participated in a Green List assessment process that recognized the importance of customary governance systems, community leadership, and local stewardship in managing marine resources. Community representatives, women's groups, and conservation partners worked together to assess management effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

Papua New Guinea

Green List assessments in the Lovongai and Murat Marine Protected Areas highlighted the value of Indigenous knowledge, customary marine tenure systems, and locally led conservation efforts. The communities played a central role in evaluating management performance and developing action plans to strengthen conservation outcomes while maintaining local ownership and decision-making authority.

Philippines

Apo Reef Natural Park undertook a Green List self-assessment that highlighted strong governance systems, biodiversity monitoring programmes, and effective management structures. The process also identified opportunities for continuous improvement and established a roadmap toward potential Green Listing.



Community Solutions Across the Bismarck Solomon Seas

During the Bismarck Solomon Seas Side Event at the 2026 Melanesian Ocean Summit, conservation practitioners from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Indonesia shared experiences showcasing how community stewardship, traditional knowledge, and sustainable livelihoods are helping strengthen marine conservation across the region.

Jackie Thomas of WWF Solomon Islands highlighted community-led sea grape management in Sairagi, where women-led enterprises, sustainable harvesting practices, and local governance systems are supporting both ecosystem health and household resilience.

From Papua New Guinea, Tracey Boslogo of the Wildlife Conservation Society shared lessons from the establishment of the Lovongai and Murat Marine Protected Areas in New Ireland Province, while David Mitchell of Eco Custodian Advocates emphasized the importance of recognizing customary marine management practices and traditional governance systems in conservation planning.

Meanwhile, Cliff Marlessy of the Indonesia Locally Managed Marine Area (ILMMA) Network showcased community conservation efforts in Papua Province, and Mazella Maniwavie of The Nature Conservancy Papua New Guinea highlighted how locally managed marine areas can contribute to broader seascape-scale conservation goals.

Together, the presentations reinforced a common message: conservation is most effective when communities are empowered to lead. Across the Bismarck Solomon Seas, local stewardship is helping protect marine biodiversity while strengthening food security, livelihoods, and resilience for future generations.

Shared Seas, Shared Responsibilities

The future of the Bismarck Solomon Seas depends on empowering communities to lead conservation efforts while strengthening partnerships across the region.



KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND REGIONAL RECOGNITION

Connecting People, Solutions, and
Impact Across the Coral Triangle

**Knowledge is most valuable when it is
shared, applied, and transformed into
action.**

SOMACORE helps ensure that valuable experiences and lessons in marine conservation do not remain isolated within individual projects or locations, but are documented, exchanged, and promoted to support learning across countries and seascapes.

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

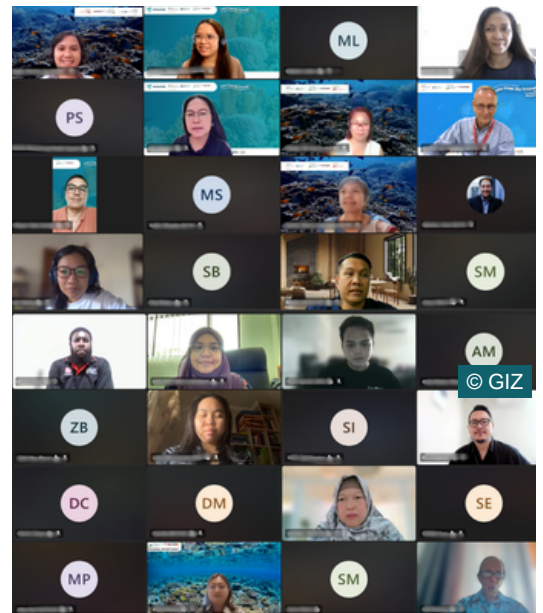
SOMACORE supports:

- Documentation of conservation solutions and lessons learned
- Regional learning and peer-to-peer exchange
- Capacity development for marine conservation practitioners
- Knowledge platforms and communities of practice
- Recognition of successful approaches at regional and global levels

Sharing Community and Conservation Stories

SOMACORE's Tales from the Triangle webinar series brings together policymakers, scientists, practitioners, and community leaders to exchange experiences and discuss emerging conservation topics. In 2026, more than 150+ participants joined a regional webinar focused on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Gender Transformative Approaches in the Coral Triangle highlighting the role of communities and local champions in achieving biodiversity targets across the Coral Triangle.

By creating space for dialogue and peer learning, the series helps connect local experiences to broader regional conversations on marine conservation and sustainable resource management.



Showcasing Solutions for Global Learning

SOMACORE also supported the documentation and promotion of successful conservation approaches through the PANORAMA platform. Through a series of writeshops with consortium partners, government agencies, local governments, researchers, and conservation organizations worked together to document experiences in fisheries governance, marine protected area management, ecosystem restoration, and community-based conservation.

These case studies contribute to a growing global repository of solutions that can be adapted, replicated, and scaled.



Building the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

Capacity development remains a critical component of knowledge sharing. In May 2026, the SOMACORE Training Nodes Programme brought together marine protected area managers, practitioners, government representatives, and community leaders from Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Through technical and facilitation training, participants strengthened their capacity not only to manage marine protected areas but also to serve as future trainers and knowledge multipliers within their own institutions and communities.



Building the Evidence Base for Marine Protected Areas in Papua New Guinea

How do we strengthen marine protected areas? It starts with reliable data and the people who collect it.

Supported by SOMACORE, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Papua New Guinea, together with WCS Indonesia and WCS Philippines, completed the first baseline benthic and reef fish surveys across the newly declared Lovongai and Murat Marine Protected Areas in New Ireland Province.

Community members, youth, and local conservation committees worked alongside scientists to collect data that will guide future management and monitor ecosystem health. Survey images were also contributed to MERMAID's open-access AI training repository, helping improve coral reef monitoring tools while expanding global representation of reefs from one of the world's richest marine biodiversity hotspots.



Featured PANORAMA Solutions in the Sulu Sulawesi Seascape

INDONESIA

From Data to Management: A Community-Based, Citizen Science Approach to Dugong Conservation in the Lease Islands MPA

This solution integrates dugong monitoring through a citizen science approach by engaging fishers and coastal communities to report sightings, verified by MPA managers and NGO partners. It is strengthened by awareness activities and participatory village regulations.



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[READ MORE](#)

MALAYSIA

Empowering Woman through Enterprise for Conservation

A key challenge addressed by the solution is the limited participation of women in conservation and community decision-making, despite their significant roles in supporting household incomes and local economies. To bridge this gap, the initiative works through the Women's Association of Omadal Island (WAPO), equipping women with skills in enterprise development, financial management, and organizational leadership.



© WWF Malaysia

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PHILIPPINES

Protecting Bauan's Seas: Stronger Enforcement Meets Responsible Tourism

As adjacent sites of Bauan Marine Protected Area (MPA) were recognized for their rich biodiversity, the diving and snorkeling activities also. However, it also attracted increasing numbers of tourists, creating pressure on marine ecosystems and management systems. This solution explored how coordinated solutions focused on sustainable tourism, strengthened regulation, and active conservation.



© LGU of Bauan, Batangas, Philippines

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<https://panorama.solutions/>



FEATURE STORY

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Coral Triangle Partners Launch Regional Capacity Building Repository to Strengthen Ocean Stewardship Across Six Nations

Bali, Indonesia – 9 June 2026 — In celebration of World Ocean Day and Coral Triangle Day, a new digital platform launches today to better connect people, knowledge, and opportunities to protect the Coral Triangle.

Initiated by the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF), together with the Coral Triangle Center, WWF Coral Triangle Programme, and the Solutions for Marine and Coastal Resilience in the Coral Triangle (SOMACORE) Programme, the CTI-CFF Capacity Building Repository calls on governments, academics, community leaders and conservation and development practitioners to share lessons learned and discover working solutions to address threats facing the Coral Triangle region.

“The repository represents a significant step forward in strengthening regional collaboration and ensuring that practitioners, communities, and decision-makers have access to the knowledge and tools needed to effectively manage marine and coastal resources.”



Dr. Frank Griffin,
Executive Director of the
CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat





“Despite decades of conservation efforts and the wealth of knowledge generated throughout the region, many valuable resources remain scattered across institutions, organizations, and countries. The CTI-CFF Capacity Building Repository addresses this challenge by bringing together essential knowledge, learning opportunities, and expert networks into a single accessible platform.”



Dili Rjohani
Executive Director
Coral Triangle Center

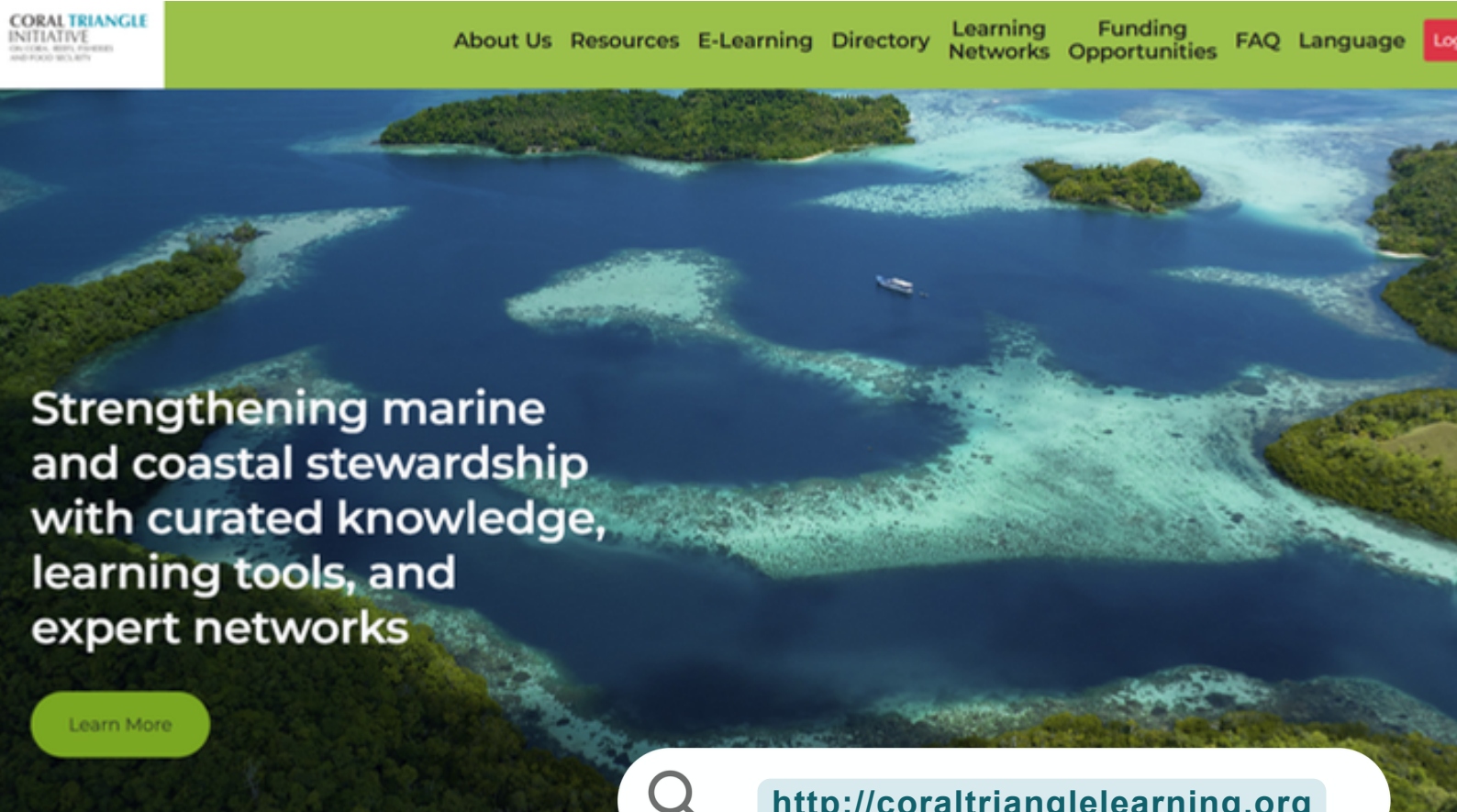
Healthy oceans depend on people with the right knowledge and skills. Yet across the Coral Triangle, valuable resources, lessons learned and technical expertise are often scattered across organisations, projects and countries. This makes it difficult for practitioners and decision-makers to access proven solutions and apply them at scale.

The Capacity Building Repository addresses this challenge by bringing together best practices, case studies, guidance materials and lessons learned from across the region. In addition, the platform connects users to training opportunities, funding opportunities, learning networks and expert practitioners, creating a comprehensive resource for marine and coastal management.



Klaas Jan Teule, Leader
of WWF Coral Triangle
Programme.

“Knowledge can only live and pass on through people who share and gain from them. We call on policy-makers, conservationists, community leaders to share lessons learned generously, translate knowledge gained into action, and help replicate solutions at the scale we need to achieve 30x30.”



Strengthening marine and coastal stewardship with curated knowledge, learning tools, and expert networks

Learn More



<http://coraltrianglelearning.org>

The repository goes beyond serving as a digital library. Through its e-learning portal, expert practitioner directory, capacity-building provider database and learning networks, it supports collaboration and peer-to-peer learning across the Coral Triangle.

Users can access self-paced learning materials, identify relevant training providers, connect with technical experts and explore funding opportunities that support conservation initiatives and sustainable coastal development. This helps practitioners strengthen their skills while enabling organisations and governments to build on successful approaches developed elsewhere in the region.



Symbolic for the inspiring strong partnership among the governments and non-government organisations in the 6 Coral Triangle countries, the new repository makes knowledge and experience more accessible, connecting practitioners across borders

*Dr. Jan H. Steffen
SOMACORE Programme Director
GIZ Philippines and the Pacific Islands*



By making knowledge more accessible and connecting practitioners across borders, the CTI-CFF Capacity Building Repository aims to empower a new generation of ocean stewards and accelerate collective action to protect one of the world's most valuable marine ecosystems.

ONE CORAL TRIANGLE, SHARED FUTURE

The stories featured in this publication demonstrate that strengthening marine and coastal resilience requires action at multiple levels. Effective governance helps create the conditions for sustainable management. Community stewardship strengthens conservation on the ground. Knowledge sharing enables solutions to be adapted, improved, and scaled across the region.

Through SOMACORE, these efforts are connected by a common vision: **healthy marine ecosystems that continue to provide food, livelihoods, cultural value, and resilience for future generations.**

By strengthening governance, supporting communities, and fostering regional learning, SOMACORE is helping build a more resilient Coral Triangle, one where both people and nature can thrive.

Got any complaints?
Scan this QR code:



SOMACORE is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) through the International Climate Initiative (IKI).