

Coral Triangle Marine Protected Area System Framework and Action Plan

Context

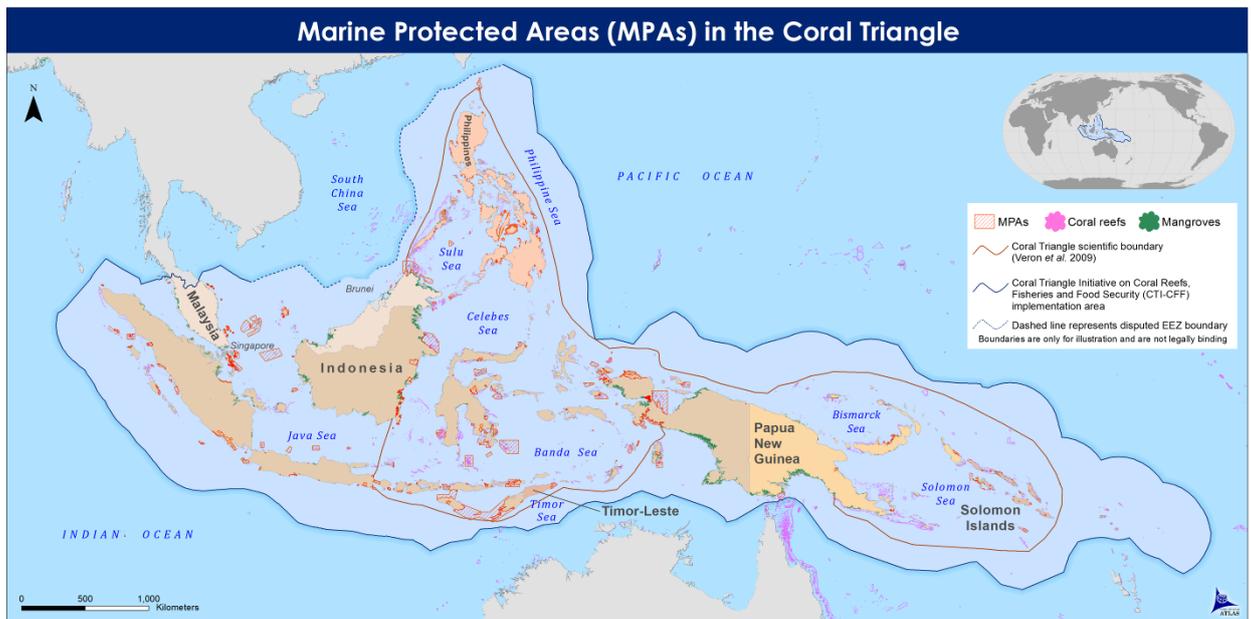
The third of five goals identified under the 2010-2020 Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) is “marine protected areas (MPAs) established and effectively managed,” and this goal has one target, “a region-wide Coral Triangle MPA System (CTMPAS) in place and fully functional.” Such target, which calls for regional planning and action among the Coral Triangle countries, underscores the need to address at a regional level the various ecological, political and economic issues that impact the region’s vital marine resources.

To support this target, the MPA-Technical Working Group (TWG) was formally established in 2011. The MPA-TWG guides regional MPA efforts under the CTI-CFF and serves as the main coordinating body on MPAs between the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat, individual partners and country teams. The *CTMPAS Framework and Action Plan* is the MPA-TWG’s primary guiding document and the first joint policy product on MPAs for the CTI-CFF. It provides information to inform discussions and assist the Coral Triangle countries to understand the opportunities, options, and actions needed to find new regional solutions to all coastal resource and fisheries management challenges.

Rationale and Process

Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste make up the CTI-CFF. The sheer number, > 1,900, and variety of MPAs in these countries, coupled with increasing pressure from the region’s rapidly expanding and culturally diverse populations, makes the management of coastal activities for sustainable use extremely challenging.

The *Framework and Action Plan* was built on consensus among the six nations and across levels of governance. Five regional workshops and numerous side discussions, along with parallel work done by partners and countries on various pieces of the framework and plan, contributed to its development. The document includes the advice of many experts who, as well as helping with and supporting the research and analyses that informed the countries’ discussions, participated in the workshops and meetings. It was endorsed in the 7th CTI-CFF Senior Officials Meeting (SOM7) in November 2012.



CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE

ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY

A publication supporting the **Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF)**

www.coraltriangleinitiative.org

The six Coral Triangle countries have determined that a region-wide system will be more efficient and effective at reducing threats across the region. In addition, they agreed that the following important reasons make a compelling case for the creation of the CTMPAS:

- Similarities in marine ecosystems, resources and shared fishing stocks in the region;
- The need to address common resource threats, e.g., habitat degradation, overfishing and dwindling fish stocks that often cross national boundaries;
- Ongoing challenges of MPAs (which are mostly small and scattered) that require learning networks, design and implementation tools, incentives, and an effective means of monitoring and improving effectiveness and ecosystem quality locally and regionally;
- Shared and interdependent sources and sinks of marine populations that support fisheries;
- Sharing of management resources that creates efficiencies of scale (i.e., tap into existing programs, attract funding through branding, and maximize the individual expertise of municipalities, provinces and countries); and,
- Planning at scales that consider broad ecological affinities and movements.

Design Strategies

MPAs and MPA networks can operate at all levels, from the community and local government levels to national and regional levels. In many cases, harmony across neighboring jurisdictions of the same level, and between the various community-to-regional level managers is a critical component to success for participating MPA and MPA networks across the CT6. In view of this and in consideration of the objectives of the RPOA, the CTMPAS has been designed and will be implemented through the following five basic strategies.

Strategy 1: Use and strengthen existing regional mechanisms, partners, programs, in developing and operating the CTMPAS.

Strategy 2: Prioritize activities that develop effective MPAs and networks and MPA/network sites that can immediately contribute strength or effectiveness to a regional network or system.

Strategy 3: Start and learn with “flagship” MPA sites that are already established, managed and of high conservation value. Phase-in other prioritized sites that fill regional conservation and management gaps in subsequent years or phases.

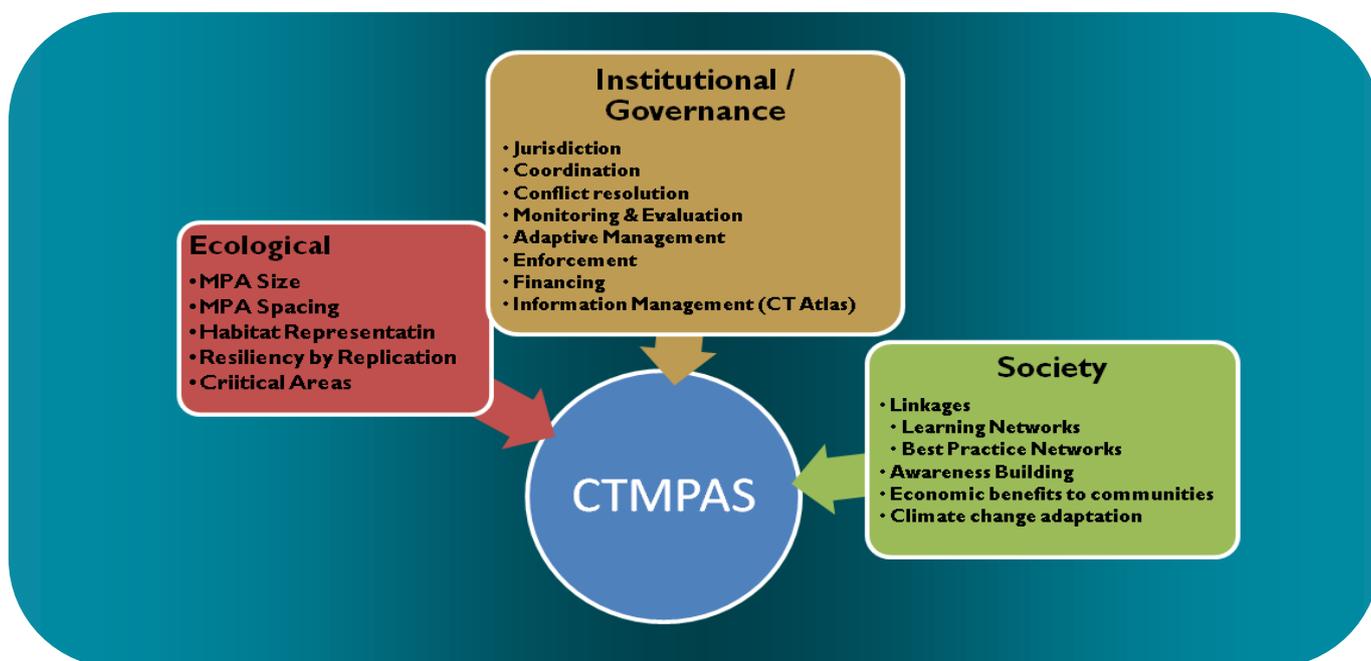
Strategy 4: Define and recognize four Categories of Sites in the CTMPAS.

Strategy 5: Direct governance and socioeconomics to protect ecosystem functions.

These strategies are built into the CTMPAS design and implementation and build on the objective and vision of the CTMPAS.

Three reoccurring themes shape and will contribute to the success of a comprehensive and effective CTMPAS: 1) Ecology, 2) Governance and 3) Society. In the *CTMPAS Framework*, ecology, governance and socioeconomics are considered components of the overall system. Ecology serves as the *source* of the benefits, Governance represents the *management institutions* that have jurisdiction over shared resources and facilitate cooperative actions, and society or socioeconomics represents the *people* who both use the resources and are impacted by good or poor resource management.

MPAs should have at least one of these components to be included in the CTMPAS and if a site is engaged all at once in socioeconomic, governance and ecological networks, it is deemed to be a more effectively managed and a stronger site.



“The vision of the CTMPAS is a system of prioritized individual MPAs and networks of MPAs that are connected, resilient, and sustainably financed, and are designed in ways that generate significant income, livelihoods, and food security benefits for coastal communities; and conserve the region’s rich biological diversity.”

“The CTMPAS should include most critical resources and the full range of use categories.”
 - CTI-CFF Regional Plan of Action, 2009

Marine Protected Area, Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands
 Credit: James Morgan/USAID CTSP

Site Categories in CTMPAS

The inclusion of MPA sites and networks in the CTMPAS is based on their regional value, uniqueness or importance, and the level of effectiveness they achieve in meeting basic criteria as MPA sites or networks. Four site categories will comprise the CTMPAS:

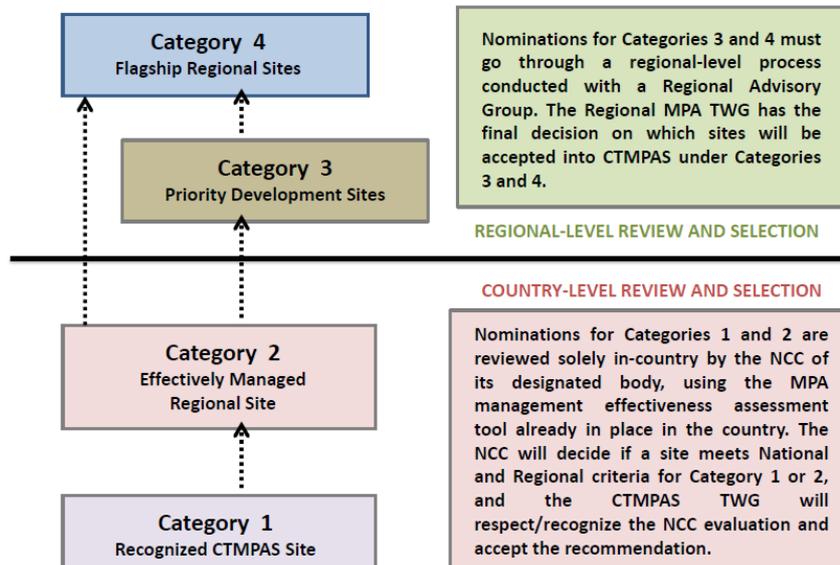
Category 1: Recognized CTMPAS Sites: These are sites that meet the minimum data requirements to be included in the Coral Triangle Atlas (ctatlas.reefbase.org). The CTMPAS will thus include all government recognized MPAs and networks within the Coral Triangle region, each of which will be qualified by level of accomplishment, contribution and purpose. The *Framework* states that Category 1 will include all MPAs as recognized by the countries.

Category 2: Effectively Managed Regional Sites: These are existing sites that meet agreed minimum criteria for design and management effectiveness as specified in the *CTMPAS Framework*.

Nominated sites are reviewed and approved for inclusion in Category 2 by each country’s National Advisory Committee based on a national management effectiveness system if it exists, and the criteria set out in the CTMPAS. The national decision process may vary among countries, but MPAs accepted into Category 2 should at least achieve the minimum criteria specified in the CTMPAS.

Category 3: Priority Development Sites: These are sites of regional ecological, governance or socioeconomic importance that are not yet effectively managed and thus need

additional assistance or new sites added to the system, as recommended by the regional gap analysis, because they make a specific contribution to the regional system as a whole. Similar to Category 4, these are sites that are clearly of regional importance. Nominations for Priority Development Sites will be reviewed and approved by a regional CTMPAS Advisory Committee.



Category 4: Flagship Sites: These include large, already effectively managed sites that have regional ecological, governance or socioeconomic importance. These are “no-regret sites” that are clearly important within the system. Nominations for the Flagship Sites will be reviewed and approved by a regional CTMPAS Advisory Committee.

✓ Any MPA, Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA), or MPA network can be included within **Category 1** as long as it is recognized in the country and has basic data to provide.

Building the CTMPAS

There are three major elements in the process for building the CTMPAS:

1. Establish the CTMPAS mechanism;
2. Nominate the initial sites; and
3. Conduct early actions that operationalize CTMPAS.

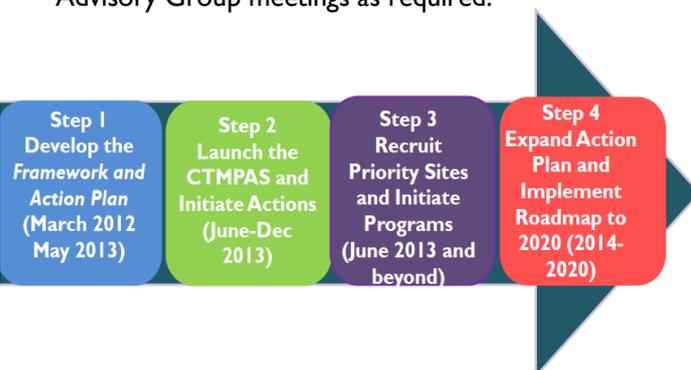
Effectively, the CTMPAS serves as the umbrella under which most CTI-CFF MPA activities come together. The organizational structure of the coordination mechanism of CTMPAS therefore follows that of the MPA-TWG and falls within the overall structure of the CTI-CFF.

The CTMPAS is considered to be an indefinite, long-running program through 2020 and beyond. As a part of the decentralized CTI-CFF, the system may involve three or more complementary institutions or organizations that have major roles in its implementation. The following organizations will have a part to play in its operations, policy development and technical leadership:

1. CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat;
2. MPA-TWG;
3. CTMPAS supporting institutions or individuals;
4. CTMPAS home institution (to be determined);
5. National Coordination Committees;
6. Regional Advisory Committee;
7. CTI partners and other collaborating organizations, including the Coral Triangle Atlas, which is hosted by WorldFish, and the regional Coral Triangle MPA Learning Networks as they develop.

The Action Plan for completing the CTMPAS Framework and putting it into operation includes several essential actions that include:

- Formalize the CTMPAS Advisory Committee for reviewing site nominations
- Nominate country Flagship sites and Priority Development sites for inclusion in the CTMPAS
- Input all national MPA data into the CT Atlas for tracking national and regional progress
- Employ or appoint the MPA Coordinator to guide CTMPAS implementation
- Conduct periodic CTI MPA-TWG meetings and MPA Advisory Group meetings as required.



To access the full CTMPAS Framework and Action Plan (CTI-MPA TWG 2013), go to www.coraltriangleinitiative.org

How has the US CTI Support Program been improving MPAs/Networks in the Coral Triangle?

USAID's US CTI Support Program is assisting the CTI to establish and effectively manage its MPAs through various activities at the regional, national and site-level in the six countries. At the regional scale, activities include support for development of the CT MPA System, guidance in the development of resilient designs for MPA networks, and building capacity in the formulation and implementation of MPA management effectiveness systems. At the national level, activities focus on training and building capacity for effective planning and implementation of MPAs/networks.

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

About the US CTI Support Program

The US CTI Support Program assists CTI member governments and stakeholders in implementing the CTI Regional Plan of Action; supports development of the CTI Regional 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 composed of the World Wildlife Fund, 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.

Cover Photo: Papua New Guinea, James Morgan/USAID CTSP

For more information, contact:

Lynette T. Laroya

CTI MPA Technical Working Group
Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Quezon City, Philippines
Email: lynette_laroya@yahoo.com Tel: +63927 2679598

Alan T. White, PhD

CTMPAS Technical Lead
US CTI Support Program and CTSP
The Nature Conservancy, Hawaii, USA
Email: alan_white@tnc.org Tel: +1-808-587-6218