



WWF COASTAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Mid-term Evaluation Summary:
Scaling Towards a Healthy Ocean

THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Our vision is to rebuild our ocean’s health through empowered coastal communities around the world. Resilient coastal communities manage their marine natural resources sustainably and deliver solutions that can be scaled up to improve ocean health.



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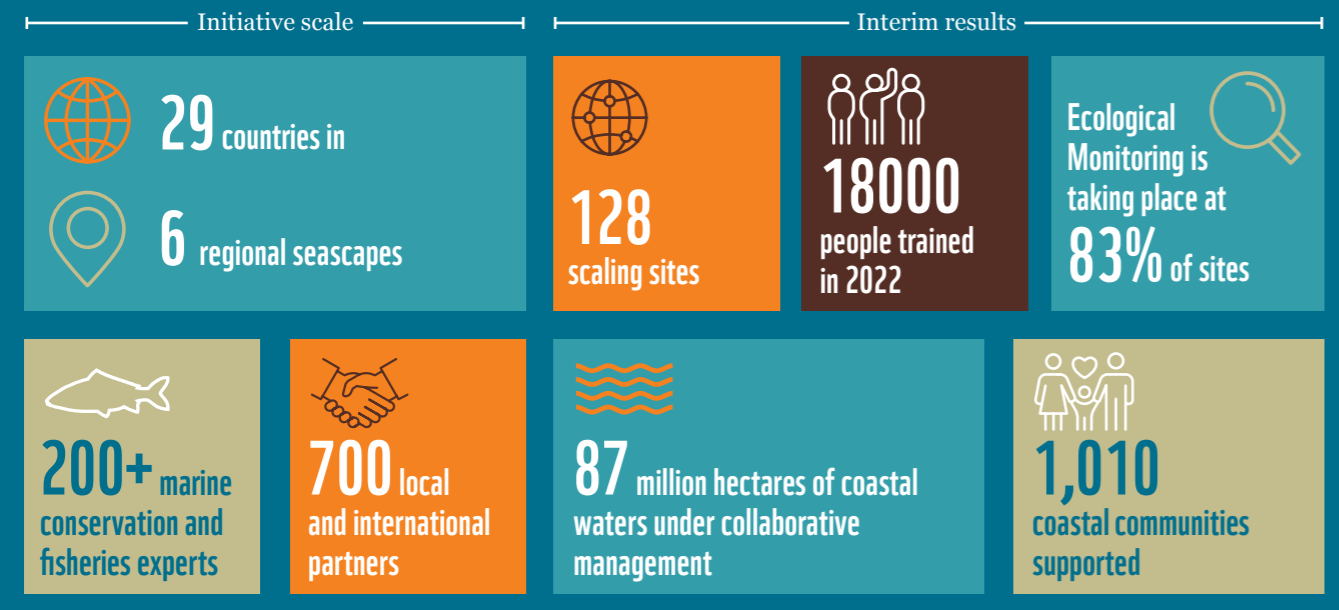
COASTAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE MISSION:

- **SUPPORT** communities to claim their rights
- **SHARE** capacity
- **FOSTER** collaboration
- **PROMOTE** innovation
- **ADVOCATE** for supportive policies
- **CATALYSE** global movement

COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION: THE 5-POINT PLAN



THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE IN NUMBERS



THE COASTAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE WORKS IN 6 REGIONAL SEASCAPES ACROSS 29 COUNTRIES AND 128 SITES



THE SCALING STRATEGY OF THE INITIATIVE



This is a summary of a third-party evaluation of the first phase of **WWF’s Coastal Communities Initiative (CCI)** from July 2020 to December 2022. The aim of the evaluation was to track the value, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of the initiative at local, national, regional and global levels; to explore the challenges encountered and how best to address them; and to consider how WWF can operate more effectively.

 **YOU CAN READ THE FULL EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT [HERE](#).**

CREATING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT THROUGH ADVOCACY AND COALITION-BUILDING

FINDINGS



Advocacy for communities' rights to manage coastal resources is the initiative's standout accomplishment:

- Capitalizing on WWF's ability to communicate and connect community projects and voices to global frameworks and policymakers: place-based action, system-level advocacy.
- Amplifying community perspectives at international events is a key strength of the awareness-raising and advocacy strategy.

Stronger national and regional coalitions are putting community governance on government agendas, and the initiative is leveraging the trend globally.

Initiative's online [Scaling MEL Platform](#) enables WWF experiences to be measured, articulated and analysed/compared globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue **constant advocacy** to ensure coastal communities, including the small-scale fisheries sector, can access and manage natural resources. Partner with a wide range of stakeholders, leverage media interest, and engage with decision-makers to increase support and amplify community voices in local, national, regional and global fora.

Build **national, regional and global-level partnerships** with organizations that share CCI's vision and can support advocacy – civil society organizations (CSOs), government agencies, private sector, etc.

Monitor **policy developments** at all levels to identify opportunities for advocacy and counter emerging threats to community-led conservation.

Mainstream the **human-rights-based approach and inclusive conservation** components of the work executed by national and regional teams into global-level advocacy or WWF communications campaigns.

Use **evidence-based arguments** to strengthen advocacy – employ data and case studies to show both successes achieved and challenges faced by community-led conservation initiatives.

Provide strategic advocacy **support for project partners**; and guidance on fundraising and potential donors to mobilize resources.

AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

CCI helped Indigenous and local community leaders create a space for participatory and inclusive advocacy on marine protected areas at [IMPAC5](#) in Vancouver.



© Kevin Chang

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

FINDINGS



Progress has been made in promoting knowledge sharing and learning among communities, CSOs and other stakeholders, notably through the creation of learning hubs.

Overall, increased collaborative learning between communities has led to:

- Greater solidarity and mutual trust
- Improved livelihoods
- Community-owned data to support resource self-management
- Increased participation of women and new sustainable business ventures

Knowledge management systems to share best practices and lessons learned have been developed: more than 90% of respondents to the evaluation survey are connected to the WWF Community of Practice and about half regularly attend workshops and training.

However, consolidated resources are not yet providing practitioners with the practical guidance and tools they need for building community capacity at scale, and there are numerous challenges related to accessing resources online.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Prioritize building strong **local partnerships** including with development organizations, social agencies and CSOs to work alongside communities to address their needs and capacity gaps, considering that livelihood improvements provide incentives for conservation.

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Prioritize localized **community-led learning hubs** and help existing groups gain formal registration and governance capacity to access new opportunities and legitimacy.

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Foster an open **culture of learning** with partner organizations; promote peer-to-peer learning through exchanges and communities of practice; conduct, share and discuss collaborative research that can leverage communities' rights.

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Develop **knowledge management systems** that present best practices and lessons learned at a level appropriate for communities to contribute to and learn from.

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Work with CSOs to develop **participatory monitoring and evaluation** frameworks for communities to keep tabs on their resources, track progress and measure impacts, and inform decision-making.

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Adapt global learning materials and techniques to address context-specific barriers through a **mixed learning approach**, incorporating both online technology and in-person events (fostering networks that can turn into coalitions).

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Focus our learning agenda on expanding the **'livelihood toolkit'** – adapting our interventions to the needs of communities, notably through mainstreaming a human-rights based approach and putting WWF's Inclusive Conservation Principles front and centre our engagement with communities.

IN THE FIELD

CCI has been working with women in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea with financial literacy and alternative livelihoods to develop financial literacy and alternative livelihoods.



COMMUNITY-LED AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT

FINDINGS



CCI has made progress in promoting co-management of marine resources between communities and governments.

CCI has created partnerships between local organizations, academic institutions and government agencies to promote community-owned or co-managed MPAs or fishery co-management, to support formal registration of local fishers and conservation groups, and to lobby authorities for policy change.

Monitoring capacity of small-scale fishers has been increased, enabling fishers to make informed management decisions on their marine stocks.

CCI has contributed to implement commitments and strategies made by governments, by providing implementation models that prioritise community co-management.

However, despite an encouraging start to the project, real change is very slow and requires constant long-term effort. National-level policy change is proving hardest to achieve for co-management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Launch research programme with WWF Global Science team to explore:

 - Status of marine territorial rights around the world, and the extent to which they enable community-led marine conservation.
 - Evidence that local rights, tenure and co-management produce positive outcomes.
 - Enabling conditions for – and effective forms of – collaborative management.

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Use results of research and WWF best practices to accelerate triple-loop learning: on the ground locally, across the initiative globally, and within the broader ocean conservation field.

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Build capacity among staff and foster innovative partnerships to scale up local co-management and community governance successes to national policy arena.

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Strengthen community-led management and governance by facilitating self empowerment and use of local ecological knowledge in decision-making.

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Build capacity of CSOs and networks to strengthen their voice and negotiation capacity in decision-making arena at both local and national level.

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Develop innovative mechanisms – tailored to local needs and socio-economic context – to improve fishers and local communities’ livelihoods to strengthen their resilience and well-being.

IN THE FIELD

CCI works with small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean to create co-management committees, with benefits for both people and nature.



HUMAN-RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO MARINE CONSERVATION

FINDINGS



CCI 5-point plan provides a strong framework for human-rights-based approach (HRBA) to marine conservation.

A HRBA is still being integrated into the CCI, but early progress has been made on:

- Empowering previously marginalized small-scale fishers
- Elevating and replicating indigenous and traditional conservation practices and techniques, especially in oral cultures
- Rights and official recognition secured through local co-management committees


However, understanding of the full spectrum of the HRBA, and its potential for conservation initiatives, remains limited to date.

Some stakeholders lack capacity for effective implementation of HRBA in areas such as inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, people with disabilities); and resources to support its adoption are limited.

Application of WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguard Framework (ESSF) has improved HRBA but needs greater efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  **Champion processes** at all levels to embed HRBA in coastal community-led conservation.

-  Build partnerships with CSOs and other stakeholders with **HRBA expertise**.


-  **Conduct research** on status of human rights in CCI locations and integrate findings.

-  **Monitor and evaluate** impact of CCI activities on human rights of coastal communities.

-  Provide **capacity-building support** to staff and partners to enhance understanding and pragmatic integration of HRBA principles.

-  Continue roll-out of WWF's **'Inclusive Conservation Quick Self-Assessment Tool'** to promote inclusion of traditional knowledge in design of project activities.

-  **Mainstream effective WWF global policies** across all CCI regions.

-  Strengthen **stakeholder engagement** to ensure Indigenous and local communities and marginalized groups including women, youth, elders and people with disabilities are fully involved in decision-making processes.

IN THE FIELD

Find out how we've been revitalizing traditional fisheries management through community-to-community learning in Indonesia.



Yosias Menabu - WWF-Indonesia

PRIORITIES 2023-2026

CCI has set five high-impact objectives to support communities to claim their rights, and that ecosystem health and human well-being are prioritized in management decision-making.



1. STRENGTHEN

CSO networks and multistakeholder coalitions to advocate for communities' rights to manage coastal resources



2. EMBED

community governance, co-management and HRBA into policy frameworks



3. EXPAND

community-led conservation and raise funds in priority seascapes



4. CHAMPION

an inclusive learning agenda and support community learning hubs as critical tools for capacity development at scale



5. PROMOTE

innovation through ICT and social marketing approaches to trigger behaviour change and influence decision-making at all levels

THANK YOU

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® "WWF" is a WWF Registered Trademark. WWF, Avenue du Mont-Bland, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 364 9111. Fax. +41 22 364 0332.

For contact details and further information, please visit our international website at www.panda.org

Website <https://coastalcommunityledconservation.org/>
Twitter @ACCLCInitiative