

# Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### for the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion Sub-Group

#### I. Introduction and Overview of the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion<sup>1</sup>

The Sub-group may in the future develop new plans and enhance other environmental concerns that compound the current state of the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion (BSSE) and the resources within. Concerns may include, but not limited to, the negative impacts of climate change, plastic wastes, management of threatened species, among others.

This Terms of Reference enumerates the purpose and functions of the sub-group as bases for its establishment. It also outlines how the sub-group will proceed with the implementation of plans and activities at the regional and national level.

Stretching from the Birds' Head Peninsula of the province of Papua in Indonesia, across the admiralty and Bismarck archipelagos of Papua New Guinea to Makira of Solomon Islands, the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion (BSSE) is perhaps one of the last tropical marine ecoregions that remains relatively unaffected by human activity.

The BSSE covers approximately 2 million km<sup>2</sup> and is home to approximately 3 million people of which 80 percent rely on coastal resources for their livelihoods. The Bismarck Solomon Seas support a variety of

ecosystems that include coastal lowland and swamp forests, mangroves, tidal estuaries, deltas, lagoons, coral reefs, atolls, fringing reefs, and barrier islands forming an ecological mosaic that has created a rich marine biodiversity and high degree of endemism. It is also home to numerous marine species, including the leatherback turtle, as well as hawksbill, green, olive ridley and loggerhead sea turtles, and Blainville's beaked whales, dugongs, giant clams and finless porpoises. Figure 1 shows the current map used for the BSSE. The spatial boundary was expanded to include the watersheds surrounding the BSSE because of the impacts of the activities in the watershed that transcend to the marine ecosystem.

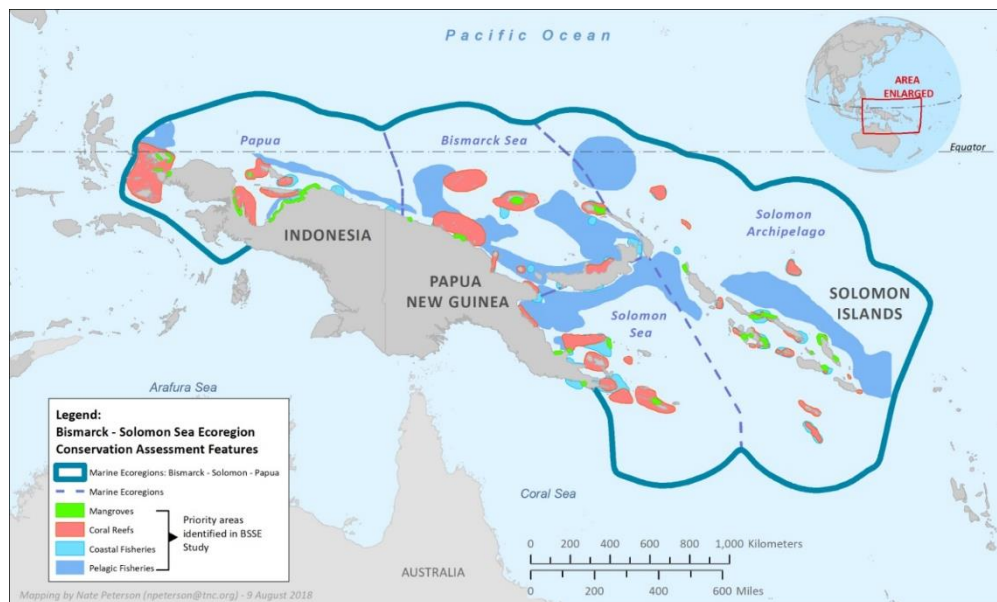


Figure 1: Map of BSSE

<sup>1</sup> Based on the SOM15 decision 10.1.5, "Tasked the Seascapes Sub-Working Group to develop their Terms of Reference,"

## **II. Purpose, Functions, and Objectives of the BSSE Sub-group**

The Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion sub-group is established to oversee the management and protection of the BSSE and the resources within. Specifically, it is tasked to progress existing and future plans and programs of the seascape with the technical and financial support from the development partners and collaborators. The primary purpose of the sub-group is to implement approved BSSE plans and programs. The sub-group shall:

- 2.1 Convene meetings, virtual and face-to-face, among member countries together with development partners and collaborators to discuss the progress of the implementation and to resolve concerns and issues arising in the implementation.
- 2.2 Explore potential partners and collaborators with the assistance of the Regional Secretariat.
- 2.3 With the assistance of the Regional Secretariat, monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan implementation.
- 2.4 Track and report the progress of the plan implementation to the Seascapes Working Group during the annual working group meeting.

## **III. Composition and Structure**

### **3.1 Membership**

Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands are the member countries of the sub-group for Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregions.

- 3.1.1 Each member country shall nominate two (2) focal points and one alternate representative to the sub-group.
- 3.1.2 Each member country shall develop their own criteria and process in nominating their focal points and the alternate representative.

### **3.2 Functions of the Members**

- 3.2.1 One of the functions of the focal point of the subgroup is to relay, report, or share to their respective National CTI Coordinating Committee any documents, agreements, discussions, issues, requests, progress, and other information pertaining to the Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion generated during any sub-group events.
- 3.2.2 Report the progress of their national-level implementation to the sub-group. The country reports will comprise the annual sub-group report.

### **3.3 Convenor**

3.3.1 The chair of the sub-group shall be referred to as the Convenor.

3.3.2 Nomination of the Convenor of the sub-group will be based on consensus.

3.3.3 The term of the Convenor will be based on consensus and will last for two (2) years.

### **3.4 Functions of the Convenor**

3.4.1 The primary function of the Convenor is to call and preside the BSSE sub-group meetings and other activities.

3.4.2 Act as signatory to all communication to SWG on behalf of the sub-group.

3.4.3 Report all progress and achievements of BSSE to the SWG.

3.4.4 Represent the BSSE sub-group to official functions as needed.

3.4.5 Communicate, negotiate, hold talks, and others on behalf of the BSSE sub-group.

### **3.5 Partners and Collaborators**

3.5.1 Development Partners and Collaborators are enjoined to sit as members of the sub-group to provide technical guidance and funding support as the countries implement the plans and programs. They may become members upon request by the concerned agency and approval by the member countries.

3.5.2 Existing and potential partners and collaborators may provide technical and financial support (i.e., developing proposals), and assist in implementing plans and programs. These projects and programs shall be presented, discussed, and deliberated for approval by the member countries.

3.5.3 Existing and potential partners and collaborators may participate in the discussions during meetings, workshops, and other BSSE events.

3.5.4 Existing and potential partners and collaborators are urged to facilitate in connecting the countries through the Regional Secretariat to potential donors who can provide additional funding and technical assistance.

3.5.5 Partners and Collaborators are also encouraged to share or produce reference materials and documents that will aid in the proper management and protection of the BSSE as well as in formulating national policies. They may also develop informational materials that the member countries can use to educate and raise the awareness of their constituents about BSSE issues and problems as well as in promoting solutions.

### **3.6 Coordinator<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> The approved Rules of Procedure of the CTI SWG stipulates under Rule 3.3, "Each of the sub-group shall appoint a Coordinator from the related parties".

3.6.1 Hiring/Appointment of the Coordinator shall follow the alphabetical order based on the name of the CTI-CFF Party.

3.6.2 The Coordinator is directly reporting to the Convenor; therefore, the person will get all directions and guidance from the BSSE Convenor.

3.6.3 The key role of the Coordinator is to provide administrative support to the sub-group. The Coordinator shall act as the Secretariat of the BSSE sub-group. The Coordinator shall draft all communication on behalf of the Convenor and the sub-group, in general. The Coordinator will be responsible in organizing call and in-person meetings, prepares the minutes of meetings, draft reports, coordinates BSSE sub-regional events, files all reports and documents pertaining to BSSE, and liaise with the CTI Regional Secretariat through the SWG and with the development partners and collaborators.

## **V. Coordination and Implementation of the BSSE Plans and Programs**

5.1 The sub-group shall conduct at least one meeting annually so member countries can report the progress of their national-level implementation of the BSSE plans and programs. Furthermore, the annual meeting will also provide the opportunity for the member countries to plan out the following year's activities and programs as well as to address any issues or concerns arising in the course of the implementation. The results of the meeting shall be inputs to the SWG annual report to SOM on priority seascapes.

5.2 The annual meeting shall be conducted a day before the SWG annual meeting so that all outputs will be immediately reported during the SWG annual meeting.

5.3 In addition to the annual meeting the sub-working group shall also conduct regular call meetings or as the need arises to keep abreast of any developments and progress of the group.

5.4 The Coordinator will inform the member countries the schedule and agenda of the meeting at least a week before the date of the call conference.

5.5 Location and dates of the meetings and other events shall be agreed upon by the member countries.

5.6 As there are only three (3) member countries of this sub-group, therefore, the presence of each of the focal points during the meeting is imperative.

5.7 Funding for these meetings and events may be shared by the member countries; may be provided by the partners or collaborators; contributed by donor-assisted projects; or supported by other funding institutions and agencies.

5.8 The conduct of the meetings shall follow the protocols set by the Agreement on the Establishment of the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat as appropriate.

5.9 Decision-making in the sub-group shall be by consensus.

5.10 Partners and collaborators may be invited to the meetings as resource persons to share scientific information, technical assistance, provide reference materials, direction, and to take part in the discussions upon the approval of the member countries. The sub-group may invite as many partners and collaborators as needed. Partners and Collaborators shall confirm their participation to the meetings and events at least a week before the event by way of a letter or submission of the required registration form.

5.11 Each member country shall conduct regular meetings with their respective national WGs to ensure the smooth implementation of the BSSE plans and programs and to make certain that budget is allocated to fully enforce the national-level activities.

5.12 Each member country is also encouraged to work with partners and collaborators in exploring other sources of technical assistance and in developing proposals to secure funding for the full implementation of the national plans and programs.

5.13 Member countries are encouraged to develop a mechanism to cascade the plans, programs, strategies, approaches, and activities to the local government units or districts that are mandated to manage and protect the coastal and marine environment and the resources within.