

Partnership Concept Note

between the USAID Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support Activity and
the Regional Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative on
Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security

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I.0 Overview

The Indo-Pacific region is the global epicenter of marine biological diversity and home to the most productive fisheries on the planet. However, the region's marine ecosystems are threatened by pollution, uncontrolled coastal development, the impacts of climate change, and unsustainable and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. IUU fishing poses a significant threat to the ocean ecosystem and causes severe loss and damage to the environment. It also has an impact on both economic and ecological imbalance. IUU fishing is categorized as a transnational crime, hence its eradication needs international cooperation amongst the countries. Distant-water fishing fleets of foreign state actors contribute to unsustainable and IUU fishing in the Indo-Pacific, threatening regional economic and food security, and eroding national sovereignty and maritime security.

Given the shared interest to combat IUU fishing regionally, this concept note outlines a partnership being made between the USAID Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support (SuFiA TS) Activity¹ with the Regional Secretariat (RS) of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF). This USAID SuFiA TS and CTI-CFF RS partnership concept note represents a collaborative effort being made by both parties to advance efforts in the Indo-Pacific region to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and promote sustainable fisheries and marine biodiversity conservation.

This concept note is not a binding agreement. Nothing in this concept note should be construed as superseding or interfering in any way with any legal agreements or contracts entered into by either party, either prior to or subsequent to the signing of this partnership concept note. Both parties agree to coordinate with relevant national and regional governmental organizations and socialize proposed partnership tasks prior to being implemented.

I.1 SuFiA TS

¹ *SuFiA TS is a 4-year Activity funded by the Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). SuFiA TS is implemented by Tetra Tech.*

Through SuFiA TS, USAID works to promote sustainable fisheries and marine biodiversity conservation in the Indo-Pacific, address gender inequity and forced labor concerns within regional seafood supply chains and provide technical support services and tools to combat IUU fishing.

SuFiA TS provides a range of technical support services and products as requested by regional and local institutions, private sector partners, and key stakeholder groups working to promote fisheries sustainability, marine biodiversity conservation, and gender equity and social inclusion across the Indo-Pacific region. Regional services and products are organized around three key components: regional fisheries policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks; fair labor and sustainable fishing practices used by the seafood industry; and improved regional outreach and communications among relevant institutions and stakeholders. Regional technical support services and products will be designed to integrate gender equity and social inclusion considerations as well as strengthening community resiliency and coastal climate change adaptation.

SuFiA TS is structured specifically to provide relevant technical support products and services to regional organizations such as the CTI-CFF in support of three core components.

Component 1: Regional sustainable fisheries policies, standards, and regulatory framework adopted and implemented.

To advance fisheries sustainability and marine biodiversity conservation regionally, SuFiA TS supports the development, adoption, and implementation of regional sustainable fisheries policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks in the Indo-Pacific. SuFiA TS will promote the leadership and goals of regional organizations that advance sustainable fisheries management and counter IUU fishing.

Component 2: Adoption of fair labor and sustainable fishing practices by fishery business increased.

In partnership with entrepreneurs, seafood companies, and business investors, SuFiA TS engages and partners with regional private sector interests in the adoption and implementation of seafood industry fair-labor standards and sustainable fishing practices. This will be supported through increased industry investment, establishment of sustainable seafood market mechanisms, and voluntary contributions by seafood companies toward the adoption of fair-labor and sustainable fishing practices.

Component 3: Project coordination, administrative and technical support, and outreach communications.

SuFiA TS supports regional communications and outreach among regional institutions, relevant non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to promote a collaborative management approach for regional fisheries management and marine conservation. SuFiA TS aims to improve multi-stakeholder coordination, increase regional communications, and generate and manage relevant regional knowledge products relating to marine biodiversity conservation and fisheries management.

1.2 CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat (CTI-CFF RS)

The CTI-CFF is a multilateral partnership established in 2009 of six countries² working together to sustain biodiversity conservation and food security through the sustainable management of marine resources taking into consideration climate change impacts. The six CTI-CFF Member Countries (the “CT6”) focus on the conservation of coral reefs and coral reef fisheries resources and their associated ecosystems within the Coral Triangle region. The CT6 have agreed to apply a people-centered approach to marine biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, poverty reduction, and equitable benefit sharing. The CTI-CFF seeks to address poverty reduction through economic development, food security, sustainable community livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation through the effective protection of marine species, coral reef habitats, and associated ecosystems.

The CT6 member countries have agreed to adopt a 10-year CTI-CFF Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to safeguard the region’s marine and coastal biological resources. The RPOA has five (5) goals: (1) strengthening the management of seascapes; (2) promoting an ecosystem approach to fisheries management; (3) establishing and improving effective management of marine protected areas; (4) improving coastal community resilience to climate change; and (5) protecting threatened species. CTI-CFF operates through five Technical Working Groups which mirror the five RPOA goals. The original (2009-2020) RPOA has recently been updated, with a renewed (2nd Version) RPOA is scheduled to be approved by the CT6 for implementation during the period of 2021-2030.

The CTI-CFF is a voluntary regional mechanism that is consistent with existing international treaties, agreements, arrangements, and other plans and programs relevant to the sustainable

² The CTI-CFF was formed in 2009 by the six member countries’ governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, the Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste, as the nations of the Coral Triangle region.

management of the Coral Triangle and wider Indo-Pacific region's living marine resources. All six CTI-CFF Member Countries show a strong commitment to reducing IUU fishing behavior through ratifying international or regional instruments relating to addressing IUU fishing, including both non-binding/voluntary and legally binding instruments; e.g., the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing (RPOA-IUU).

In 2011, the CT6 member countries ratified an "Agreement on the Establishment on the Regional Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security" which forms the foundation from which the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat (RS) was established to operate, initially (2011-2014) in an interim basis. The permanent RS was officially established with the appointment of the first Executive Director in April 2015, from the CTI-CFF RS Headquarters in Manado, Indonesia. In 2019, a second Executive Director was appointed to lead the RS. As the second and current Executive Director of the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat, Dr. Mohd Kushairi Bin Mohd Rajuddin was inaugurated as new head of the Secretariat during the 15th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-15) in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 8 November 2019.

Relevant regional actions taken under the current CTI-CFF RPOA that also relate to SuFiA TS include: the application of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) and combating IUU fishing; the management planning and implementation for priority seascapes (including the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape and the Bismarck-Solomon Seas); addressing climate change adaptation (CCA), including through building the adaptive capacity of coastal and fishing communities in the Coral Triangle region; and advancing gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) across the CT6.

For CTI-CFF to remain a leading regional organization in coral reef conservation, fisheries resources management, and food security, continued support and commitment must be maintained not only from CT6 Member Countries, but also governmental and non-governmental Implementation Partners. Such regional cooperation demonstrates the ability for CT6 governments to work together at the highest political level despite the inherent challenges of working with countries with differing institutional arrangements.

In November 2017, the Agreement on the Regional Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security has been recognized by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General which further increases the profile of CTI-CFF in the international platform and would open the pathway for further possible cooperation with international bodies under UN.

2.0 Partnership Rationale

During the initiation period of SuFiA TS in early 2022, an introductory meeting was held with the CTI-CFF RS. Representatives from both SuFiA TS and CTI-CFF RS confirmed the conceptual alignment of the three core components of SuFiA TS with the CTI-CFF.

Given the critical regional leadership role and significant contributions and influence of the CTI-CFF RS and its participating Member Countries, USAID SuFiA TS proposed the development of this non-binding partnership concept note to define the specific objectives, mutual roles and responsibilities, and scope and framework for cooperation by both parties.

Key points justifying a partnership between CTI-CFF RS and USAID SuFiA TS include:

1. SuFiA TS technical expertise can complement and directly support the CTI-CFF RS.
2. **SuFiA TS can support CTI-CFF RS and CT6 Member Country engagement with key stakeholder groups, including from the private sector, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, women and youth groups, and other marginalized stakeholder groups including small-scale and stateless fishers.**
3. SuFiA TS can assist the CTI-CFF RS with the coordination of U.S. Government (USG) agency engagement and collaboration in support of regional implementation of the CTI-CFF.
4. SuFiA TS can support facilitation of learning exchanges between CT6 Member Countries regarding best practices and sharing lessons learned, applying EAFM, conserving marine biodiversity, and enhancing maritime domain awareness.
5. SuFiA TS can contribute limited, matching funding support made toward the implementation of specific CTI-CFF RS activities.
6. CTI-CFF RS and SuFiA TS can create synergies and regional collaboration among CT6 member country agencies in their respective contributions toward sub-regional EAFM implementation, including IUU fishing sub-regionally and enhancing maritime domain awareness and food security.
7. SuFiA TS can capitalize on the significant regional convening power of the CTI-CFF RS to engage and recruit broader support that enables regional efforts to promote coral reef conservation, sustainable fisheries, and food security.
8. A partnership would demonstrate USAID and the wider USG commitment to the CTI-CFF goals and related regional activities conducted in partnership with CT6 Member Countries.

This partnership concept note is proposed for a 3-year period, from 01 August 2022 through 31 July 2025. During June and July of each year, SuFiA TS and CTI-CFF RS will discuss and agree upon the specific technical products and services that are of highest priority to the CTI-CFF RS

to be provided each year (i.e., 01 August of the current year through 31 July of the following year), to address priorities for strengthened Coral Triangle regional capacity to advance marine biodiversity conservation and promote EAFM sub-regionally, including IUU fishing issues.

Quarterly implementation meetings are proposed between both parties to review implementation progress, discuss activity planning, and confirm future priority technical support needs.

3.0 Objectives

The Partnership aims to support the CTI-CFF within the following priority objectives during Years One and Two (01 August 2022 through 31 July 2024):

1. **To conduct targeted technical assistance to the CTI-CFF RS relating to the development and implementation of the Coral Triangle Trust Fund—particularly relating to public outreach and external communications—as requested by the RS, and in collaboration with CTI-CFF Strategic Implementing Partners leading the design and creation of the Coral Triangle Trust Fund Secretariat.**
2. To support the design and implementation of a strategic communications plan and outreach strategy for CTI-CFF RS communications and CT6 Member Countries outreach relating to communicating the visibility, progress, status, strategic directions, and lessons learned of the CTI-CFF.
3. **To support the EAFM and Seascapes Working Groups in their updating and implementation of specified work plan activities associated with the Sulu-Sulawesi Seascape and Bismarck-Solomon Seas, and connection with other, regional South China Sea initiatives.**
4. To support capacity building of the CTI-CFF RS and CT6 member countries in their development and application of program monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) efforts, including through training relating to MEL data collection, management, and analysis related to MEL indicators.
5. To provide technical assistance to the RS in support of specific, priority CTI-CFF regional consultative meetings, lessons learned exchanges, training workshops, and/or other events a few times during the year, including relating to meeting planning and facilitation.
6. To support the development of a strategic plan for the CTI-CFF RS, focused on priority setting in relation to RPOA 2.0 implementation, Trust Fund establishment, and external outreach and communications.

7. To support the CTI-CFF RS and CT6 Member Countries in engaging with key stakeholder groups, including marginalized or socially-excluded groups (e.g., women, youth, and small-scale and stateless fishers).
8. To build CTI-CFF stakeholder awareness and knowledge about CTI-CFF and the Coral Triangle region, including with regional champions.
9. To assist with CTI-CFF integration into other regional and global IUUF efforts and endeavors.
10. To support the CTI-CFF Virtual Center of Excellence in consultation with CT6 countries related to the design and implementation of a regional knowledge management system.

Proposed Objectives for Year Three (01 August 2024 through 31 July 2025):

- To be determined during Year Two.
- Support conducting a 'pause and reflect' assessment of CTI-CFF during Year Three.
- Support integration of relevant CTI-CFF technical reports, learning documents, and other communications products within a regional knowledge management system.

4.0 Expected Results

4.1 Outputs:

- Strengthened CTI-CFF RPOA implementation relating to specific priorities.
- Coherent and effective CTI-CFF communications and external outreach strategy.
- Training and technical exchanges completed for CTI-CFF RS staff, CT6 Member Country representatives, and CTI-CFF implementing partner stakeholders to build technical capacity, share best practices, and identify lessons learned in support of the sub-regional application of EAFM to strengthen Indo-Pacific fisheries management.
- Increased level of engagement by private sector groups, special interest groups, marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, and small-scale and stateless fishers) including intergovernmental agencies and implementing partners in support of the regional implementation of CTI-CFF.
- Successful launching of the Coral Triangle Trust Fund.

4.2 Outcomes:

- Increased visibility and awareness of the value of CTI-CFF by regional and international target audiences.
- Increase functioning and regional convening power of CTI-CFF in implementing their mission.

- Increased public engagement and strengthened strategic partner support to the CTI-CFF.
- Improved CTI EAFM and Seascapes implementation at the sub-regional level.
- Increased effectiveness, operations, and regional influence of the CTI-CFF RS.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 SuFiA TS will:

- Participate in regular planning and update meetings, including quarterly coordination calls and annual planning meetings. Proposed language for CTI-CFF engagement by SuFiA TS within annual work plans will be shared and discussed with RS for review and discussion.
- Support CTI-CFF RS with additional technical expertise in engaging a wider group of private sector and USG stakeholders to engage and support the regional implementation of the CTI-CFF RPOA 2.0.
- Support the planning and facilitation of CTI-CFF technical exchanges for CTI-CFF RS staff, Member Country representatives, and implementing partners to share best practices, increase technical capacity, and identify lessons learned in support of RPOA 2.0 implementation.
- Provide technical guidance for implementing and incorporating GESI policy into CTI-CFF.
- Contribute limited, matching funding support made toward the implementation of specific CTI-CFF regional activities.
- Providing assigned key personnel to implement agreed partnership activities.

5.2 CTI-CFF RS will:

- Participate in regular planning and update meetings.
- Support engagement of SuFiA TS with CT6 stakeholders working on IUU fishing.
- Convene CT6 member countries and key stakeholders at various SuFiA TS events.
- Provide leadership inputs regarding the collaboration with SuFiA TS.
- Provide in-kind and matching funding.
- Provide assigned key personnel to implement agreed partnership activities

6.0 Scope and Framework of Cooperation

No	Strategic Objectives	Activity Details	Estimated Timeline
1	Provision of Technical Expertise and Knowledge Sharing <i>See:</i> <i>Draft RPOA 2.0 Target A3 (Healthy and productive fisheries)</i> <i>Draft RPOA 2.0 Target B1 (Food security and livelihoods)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Technical/training workshops, including socialization with member states, e.g., COASTFISH, EAFM, CCA, and Seascope ● Private Sector engagement partnership ● Improve the awareness of CDT Technology ● Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) training workshops with member states ● Conducting sub-regional fisheries training exercise on IUU fishing 	Oct 2022-Oct 2024
2	Gender equality and Social Inclusion <i>See:</i> <i>Draft RPOA 2.0 Target B2 (Gender equality and social inclusion)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the implementation of the Coral Triangle GESI Policy and relevant activities under the CTI-CFF. GESI policy includes marginalized groups e.g., women, men, youth, person with disabilities (PwD), and small-scale and stateless fishers ● Building sub-regional GESI capacity to implement EAFM by relevant member states (cross cutting with EAFM) ● Establish regional network of small-scale fishers that addresses IUU fishing issues (cross cutting with EAFM) 	Oct 2022-Oct 2024

No	Strategic Objectives	Activity Details	Estimated Timeline
3	<p>Strengthening Regional Communications and Outreach</p> <p><i>See:</i></p> <p><i>Draft RPOA 2.0 Target C1 (Good governance, effective leadership, and productive strategic partnerships achieved)</i></p> <p><i>Draft RPOA 2.0 Target B2 (Gender equality and social inclusion)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the participation of CTI-CFF in international events relating to IUU fishing, EAFM, Maritime Domain Awareness, and the engagement of marginalized groups ● Support the representation of CTI-CFF in important international meetings, including assessing meeting outputs, impact, and results ● Support the communication outreach for CTI-CFF as an integral part of public awareness of Draft RPOA 2.0 and the launch of the Coral Triangle Trust Fund ● Support CTI-CFF with sharing lessons dissemination ● Supporting WLF and GESI Policy implementation ● Facilitate the development and implementation of a renewed external communications and outreach strategy for the CTI-CFF Secretariat to increase CTI-CFF visibility and communicate the value of the regional initiatives to target audiences to support CTI-CFF priorities and activities. ● Provide capacity building on communication and outreach (e.g., development of well-designed, visually appealing, and functional website, creating clear and effective fact sheets, designing effective social media outreach plan, etc.). ● Increased capacity for external communications. 	Oct 2022-Oct 2025

No	Strategic Objectives	Activity Details	Estimated Timeline
4	<p>Support the Design and Establishment of the Coral Triangle Trust Fund</p> <p><i>(Provided to SuFiA TS on 29 Aug 2022 by CTI-CFF Executive Director; in consultation with CFA and WCS)</i></p>	<p>A. CTF Legal Analysis, Design, and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure legal advisors • Confirm legal structure • Finalize legal documents <p>Estimate: 20 Days (hopefully Pro Bono)</p> <p>B. Legal formation of the Trust Entity in Singapore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See: https://www.vistra.com/services/incorporation-establishment/international-incorporations/jurisdictions/singapore <p>Estimated Costs: USD 18k for formation + USD 25k for one year management from Vistra</p> <p>C. Tax Analysis and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Tax considerations for CTI Trust Fund including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Potential domiciliation in Singapore o Operations in Indonesia o Grants provided to all CT6 Countries o Options for provision of concessional loans in CT6 • Develop and submit applications for all available tax relief opportunities to minimize the Fund’s potential tax burden – including charity status in Singapore, in Indonesia, and in the other CT6 countries as needed. <p>Estimate: 10-20 Days</p> <p>D. Create governance documents and manuals that will guide the day-to-day management and operations of the CTF in association with the WCS/CFA team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational Manual 	<p>Oct 2022 – Sept 2024</p>

No	Strategic Objectives	Activity Details	Estimated Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Structure – including board, grants and finance committee terms of reference and their decision-making/authorities, o Finance and administration manuals o Information technology o Human resources o Branding and communications • Grant-making guidelines - Procedures and priorities • Environmental and social safeguards • Risk management policy • Conflict of interest policy • Gift acceptance policy • Investment policy <p>Estimate: 60 days</p> <p>E. Develop a 5-10-year Strategic Plan and Fundraising Strategy for the Fund with cost structure for the Trust Fund Secretariat to ensure sufficient budget to build capacity and fulfill its functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising Strategy to generate funds from diverse sources and that will focus on multiple types of financing including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Strategies for capitalizing the endowment o Raising long- and short-term project funds (including revolving funds) • Investment strategy to employ once endowment capital is secured <p>Estimate: 60 days</p> <p>F. Develop Branding and Communication plans for the CTF, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo • Website • Associated materials. <p>Estimate: 25 days</p>	

No	Strategic Objectives	Activity Details	Estimated Timeline
		G. Secure appropriate training for Board members and key staff to build their technical capacity to take on their responsibilities to run the CTF. Estimate: 20 days	

Agreement

Our signatures in the spaces below record our joint acceptance of this partnership concept note:

Accepted by:

Accepted by:

Mr. John Parks

Dr. Mohd Kushairi Mohd Rajuddin

Chief of Party

Executive Director

Sustainable Fish Asia Technical Support

CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat

Date:

Date: