

SUPPORTING MORE COMMUNITIES TO PROTECT CORAL REEFS ACROSS THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Led by Conservation International (CI) and with support from the Australian Government, the Expanding the Reach of Community-based Resource Management in the Solomon Islands (ERSI) Project supported communities to better protect their coral reefs and to establish lasting systems to continue supporting communities to protect the marine environment into the future.

Introduction

The Expanding the Reach of Community-based Marine Resource Management in the Solomon Islands (ERSI) Project supported communities across the country to take action in protecting and conserving their marine environment through community-based resource management (CBRM). CBRM is when communities work together to develop rules and strategies that limit the fishing and harvesting of local coral reefs and fishing grounds to protect and conserve them. Through these actions, coral reefs and fisheries can be sustained and continue to provide for the communities that rely on them for food and livelihoods.

Coral reefs and other marine and coastal ecosystems are threatened by intensifying impacts from climate change, destructive fishing, overfishing and pollution. Consequently, the health of these ecosystems and the abundance of marine species has declined significantly in recent years. This decline has had devastating impacts on local communities, threatening food and livelihood security.

To combat these threats, conservation organizations and government agencies support communities to implement CBRM. In the past, this support has been costly and time intensive, which limited the number of communities to receive support.

In the Solomon Islands, there are about 4,000 coastal communities facing threats to their coral reef and marine ecosystems – best estimates indicate that only 260 or 6.5%, had received support before this project. The ERSI Project worked to develop lower cost ways to support more communities around the country to do CBRM as well as to establish lasting systems to continue delivering support to communities into the future.





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Community training in Hulavu, Guadalcanal Province

Our Approach

Our approach to supporting communities uses innovative pathways to empower communities with the necessary knowledge, tools, and encouragement to do CBRM. These innovative pathways reach more communities at a low-cost by engaging multiple communities in collective trainings as well as leveraging and improving existing government systems at the National and Provincial levels to deliver CBRM support to communities around the country. By empowering communities to protect their coral reefs and marine ecosystems, the approach used in the ERSI Project enhances the ability of communities across the country to sustainably support themselves.

Innovative Pathways



Conducting multiple-community trainings that teach communities the fundamental elements of CBRM.



Building a CBRM Program in the National Government with capable staff that provide information materials, training and mentoring on an ongoing basis.



Training and mentoring Fisheries Officers in Provincial Governments and other key individuals to guide communities to do CBRM.



Working with National Government to establish a system for communities to receive support to establish officially recognized community managed areas (CMAs).

Key Results of the Project

12

multiple-community trainings held in five provinces.

280

individuals participated in CBRM trainings.

92

communities received CBRM support.

22

Fisheries Officers and other key individuals trained to be CBRM mentors.

6

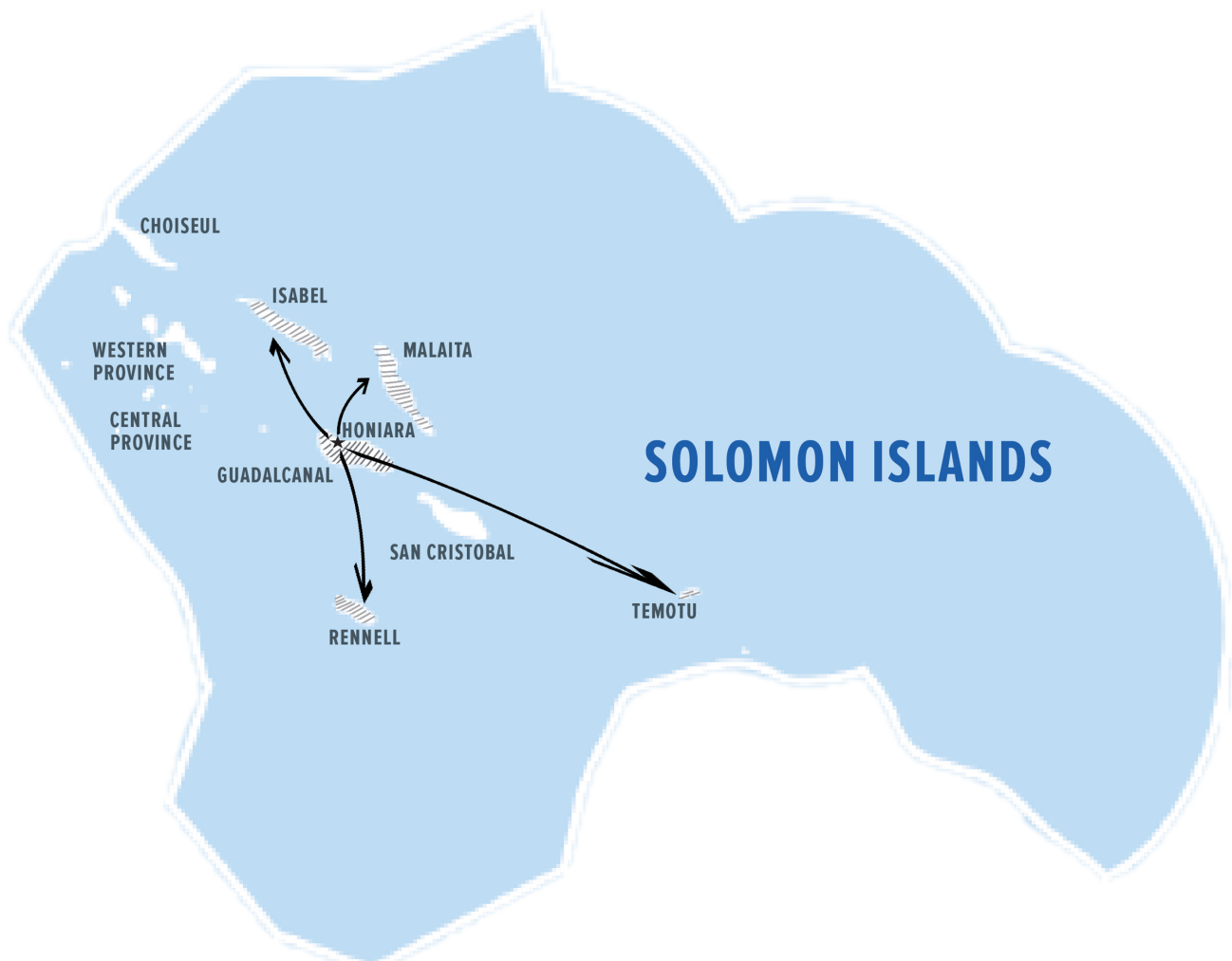
communities received support to establish officially recognized Community Managed Areas (CMAs) protecting an additional 60,000 – 120,000 hectares of marine ecosystems.

10

new communities have requested support to establish officially recognized CMAs.

Expanding the Reach

Through the innovative pathways, the ERSI Project has increased the number of communities that receive support to do CBRM across five provinces of the Solomon Islands, which are shaded in the map below. The map depicts the entire exclusive economic zone of the Solomon Islands.



What's Next

In the next phase of this work, efforts will be enhanced to make CBRM information more accessible to communities in the Solomon Islands in three ways:

- Innovative communications tools, such as interactive workbooks, posters, and videos that provide important guidance on CBRM will be created and shared broadly within the country. Through technology, specifically the use of scan disk cards, these materials will be able to be shared easily and accessed by phones and computers.
- Networks of community managed areas will be established that strengthen the collective impact of community CBRM efforts by providing a platform for communities to learn from each other and work together to solve communal challenges.
- Government systems to support communities will be refined and streamlined so that more communities may be able to establish officially recognized community managed areas.

Through these three elements, the current initiative will be further expanded to greatly increase the number of communities to receive CBRM support across the Solomon Islands.



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Villages selling produce

For more information on this project and CI's work in the Solomon Islands, contact **Niquole Esters** at nesters@conservation.org.