

**Climate Change Adaptation**

**Technical Working Group**

**Terms of Reference**

**Centers of Excellence on Climate Change Adaptation for**

**Marine and Coastal Environments**

**I. Background**

The Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) establishes the goal of the Initiative to address the changing climate conditions in the CT Region under Goal 4: Climate Change Adaptation Measures Achieved. Under this goal, two (2) targets were identified: i) Region-wide early action plan for climate change adaptation for the near-shore marine and coastal environment and small island ecosystems developed and implemented; and the other target is, ii) Networked National Centers of Excellence on Climate Change Adaptation for Marine and Coastal Environments are established and in full operation.

During the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM9) in November 2013, this target was endorsed as part of the Regional CCA activities for 2014. As a follow-up to the SOM9 decision, WWF together with some other partners was requested to initiate and take the lead in developing a concept note on Centers of Excellence focusing on the role of COE in advancing Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) actions and programs within the CTI. The concept paper produced by WWF helped guide the discussions of the CCA Working Group in understanding the concept and requirements of a COE. It became the basis for developing and designing a regional workshop on COE on CCA which was conducted in September 2016 in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

During the regional workshop, a speaker defined COE as a “ prestigious site of focused research, training and/or knowledge brokerage activity that seeks to address specific challenges in innovative ways”. It can be a single institution-based center which may be an institution within a university, government ministry, corporation, national research organization or cultural institution. It can also be a cross-institutional center, which is primarily an in-country. This refers to a networked organizations, led by one institution with formal, contractual partnership arrangements between the lead and collaborating institutions. The third model is the international “umbrella organization” COE which is a network of organizations that brings together relevant senior bureaucrats to work on common regional challenges.

Regardless of what model will be used, a COE has five (5) essential ingredients: i) research program, ii) investigators, iii) institutional support, iv) governance, leadership, management, and mentoring, and v) outcomes and linkages.

According to the concept paper, Centers of Excellence catalyze expertise in a given area by bringing together thought leaders to work on common challenges and problems. They often take a cross-disciplinary approach and engender collaboration, cooperation and creativity. They also have a strong outward focus to engage with stakeholders in government, community and business.

Preliminary research conducted by WWF revealed that there do not seem to be any COE existing in the CT that is focused on CCA. For this reason, the Working Group came together to define what COE is in the context of CTI by formulating the objectives, functions, and scope of the COE.

**II. Objectives of the CTI COE on CCA**

The objectives of the CTI Centers of Excellence on Climate Change Adaptation are shown below in no particular order.

* + 1. Align with the Regional Plan of Action

Improve understanding of future climate impacts and related issue

Support comprehensive application of effective adaptation measures to mitigate impacts

Support implementation of the Regional Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation for Nearshore Marine and Coastal Environments (REAP-CCA); and the Local Early Action Plans on Climate Change Adaption (LEAP-CCA).

* + 1. Synchronize research directions and activities, priorities, evidence-based and cross-cutting knowledge for the CT Region
    2. Facilitate country-specific capacity building / development for the CT6 member countries:

Provision of training services

Outreach programs for the coastal communities through communication, education and public awareness

* + 1. Support and provide guidance on policy development, decision-making process, action planning and investment programming of CT6 regarding CCA by providing, such as but not limited to, assessment information/data, analytical tools, technical expertise and case studies, with respect to national interests
    2. Integrate national COE into regional COE

**III. Functions of the CTI COE on CCA**

The functions of the CTI Centers of Excellence on Climate Change Adaptation are shown below in no particular order.

* + 1. Facilitate funding through access to climate funds and other sources of funding and provision of technical assistance for funding proposals
    2. Provide capacity building and technical support/assistance
    3. Serve as a hub for technical and scientific experts on CCA
    4. Develop mechanisms for validation of data and information
    5. Monitoring and evaluation, and development of standards for such
    6. Identify CT6 member countries’ strengths and weaknesses
    7. Generate new knowledge and enhance its utilization in addressing CCA

**IV. Scope of the CTI COE on CCA**

* + 1. Climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation as a co-benefit
    2. Align the objectives of COE to international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biological Biodiversity, Aichi Targets, etc.
    3. Hybrid arrangement (both regional and national)

**V. Roadmap towards the establishment of a network of national COE on CCA for Marine and Coastal Environments**

| Milestones | Target Date | Lead |
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