



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Victorine Tafara fishes on the Belo sur Mer coast. The head of her household, she has become one of the few female leaders in the fishing industry in Belo sur Mer. In 2020, Victorine attended the FisherWomen Leadership Program organized by USAID through Hay Tao ('know how' in Malagasy), a five-year project working towards effective community-based management and protection of biodiversity resources in Madagascar. Victorine credits her experience with giving her the confidence, knowledge, and motivation to become a leader in her community. "The training gave me the idea to create an association for fisherwomen—Ampela mpanjono miavaka," she says. Since its inception, Ampela mpanjono miavaka ("distinguished fisherwomen" in Malagasy) has grown to 67 members, all from the Belo sur Mer fishing community. PHOTO: NICKY RAKOTONDRAZAFY / USAID

USAID AT OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE

At the April 15–17, 2024 Our Ocean Conference in Athens, Greece, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced more than \$103 million in funding to conserve and protect our oceans, subject to Congressional notification. This includes funding for several new activities, as well as additional funding for ongoing initiatives which had been announced previously.

Priority Areas

These initiatives support USAID and Our Ocean Conference priority areas by identifying solutions to improve management of marine resources, increasing ocean resilience to climate change, and safeguarding ocean health for generations to come. USAID commitments address the following Our Ocean Conference areas of action:

1. Marine Pollution
2. Marine Protected Areas
3. Sustainable Blue Economies
4. Sustainable Fisheries
5. Climate Change

New Activities USAID Launched at This Year's Our Ocean Conference

Blue Pacific Youth Initiative

USAID announced \$400,000 for the Blue Pacific Youth Initiative, a Peace Corps initiative to engage Pacific Islander youth as caretakers and advocates for their ocean continent and home. Peace Corps Volunteers will work with youth and other partners on activities such as elevating climate literacy, bolstering community adaptation projects, and reinforcing disaster mitigation plans.

Combating Wildlife Trafficking Program

USAID announced \$1 million to protect illegally traded wildlife, including sea life, by reducing illegal collection and poaching activities in the Caribbean linked to international trade demands. The program bolsters enforcement, enhances international coordination, and raises awareness to mitigate wildlife crime tied to global markets with high demand for sea life sold for food, jewelry, souvenirs, pets, and traditional medicines and tonics.

Countering Nature Crime

USAID announced \$353,000 to uncover and combat illegal fishing in seafood supply chains globally through the Countering Nature Crime activity. The activity will collaborate with a variety of partners to reveal and combat illegal fishing in major seafood supply chains, build awareness and solutions for the seafood industry to better fight illegal fishing, and improve technologies to deter illegal fishing.

Melanesian Youth Climate Corps

USAID announced more than \$4.4 million to establish a Melanesian Youth Climate Corps with partner Social Solutions International. This program will work to equip young people in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to advance disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation efforts in their own communities.

Resilient Inclusive Abundance in Key Ecosystems

USAID announced \$2.4 million to ensure that resilient and empowered communities inherit and maintain biodiverse marine ecosystems in Madagascar. USAID Resilient Inclusive Abundance in Key Ecosystems supports sustainable management of marine natural resources and protected areas, including through improved governance and anti-corruption efforts of marine and coastal ecosystems, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass.

Southeast Asia Fisheries Partnership

USAID announced \$1.8 million, subject to Congressional notification, to improve and sustainably manage fisheries and aquaculture practices and productions in Southeast Asia. As part of the larger Sustainable Fish Asia project, the activity strengthens the adoption and implementation of sustainable fisheries policies, promotes the adoption of sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices, and increases the technical capacity of fisheries agencies.

Sustainable Coral Triangle

USAID announced \$1.2 million, subject to Congressional notification, to improve the management of marine biodiversity and fisheries resources in a changing climate in the Indo-Pacific region. As part of the larger Sustainable Fish Asia project, USAID Sustainable Coral Triangle will advance regional sustainable fisheries management by implementing regional policy frameworks, strengthening local communities' climate change resilience, and increasing investments in marine biodiversity conservation. USAID's partnership with the Regional Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security through this activity further strengthens a vital regional institution.

Sustainable Financing for Regional Conservation Program

USAID announced \$2 million to ensure that the conservation of ecosystems in the Caribbean region is safeguarded through sustainable financing via support of National Conservation Trust Funds, National Trust Fund grantees, and other grantees. Key objectives include consolidating governance structures, establishing diverse funding mechanisms, improving grant management, and fostering a network for sharing best practices among regional trust funds.

Funding for Ongoing Activities Launched by USAID at Previous Our Ocean Conferences or Other Fora

Central America Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project

USAID announced an additional \$1.7 million for the Regional Coastal Biodiversity Project in Central America, which supports policy reforms and environmentally sustainable business and education opportunities, such as sustainable business planning for fisheries and ecotourism companies in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. The activity now totals \$3.9 million and focuses on the transboundary coastal ecosystems of the Rio Paz (El Salvador and Guatemala), Rio Motagua (Guatemala and Honduras), and the Honduran Miskito Karataska Lagoon System.

Conserving Coastal Ecosystems

The United States announced an additional \$2 million for the Conserving Coastal Ecosystems activity in Honduras, which aims to improve coastal ecosystem management to protect biodiversity, promote climate change adaptation and mitigation, and generate economic opportunity and resilience for Indigenous Peoples (Garifuna and Pech people) and other local communities. The activity now totals \$5.4 million and will benefit at least 10,000 women, men, and youth in high-migration municipalities near priority coastal wetland systems—including their fisheries, estuaries, lagoons, mangroves, marshes, and mud, sand and salt flats—covering 150,000 hectares along Honduras' Pacific and Caribbean coasts and Bay Islands.

Habla Tiburón

USAID committed \$3.3 million for [Habla Tiburón](#) to decrease the catch and mortality of sharks and rays in the Ecuadorian Exclusive Economic Zone, including the Galapagos archipelago. The program will address governance gaps in legislation, develop an innovative governance framework, and deploy social and economic strategies to improve shark and ray conservation, including implementing new trading schemes to improve the value of sea products that have low impact on populations of sharks and rays.

Save Our Seas Initiative

USAID committed an additional \$62.5 million for the [Save Our Seas Initiative](#), which advances the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act. The funding supports efforts to combat marine plastic pollution through global, regional and country programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. With this commitment of \$62.5 million, in addition to the \$40.5 million [announced](#) at the 2023 Our Ocean Conference, total funding for the Save Our Seas Initiative has reached \$103 million since FY 2021.

USAID Caribbean Sustainable Ecosystems Activity

USAID committed \$5.8 million to leverage private sector engagement in the management of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Caribbean. Key areas of focus of the [Caribbean Sustainable Ecosystems Activity](#) include preserving vital ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs, along with safeguarding diverse communities of invertebrates, sharks, rays, reef fish, marine turtles, and marine mammals, with a specific emphasis on manatees.

USAID Heshimu Bahari (Respect the Ocean)

USAID committed \$13.4 million, subject to Congressional notification, towards protecting important coral reef habitat and strengthening community fisheries in Tanzania. [Heshimu Bahari](#) aims to establish an enabling environment and science-driven framework for sustainable Marine Protected Area and wild-caught fishery co-management by government, communities, and the private sector.

Women Shellfishers and Food Security

USAID announced an additional \$817,540, subject to the availability and Congressional notification of funds, for the Women Shellfishers and Food Security activity. The activity supports women shellfishers and mangrove conservation in The Gambia and Ghana, while producing research and a toolkit to broaden technical capacity across the continent.