Blue carbon does not just mean mangroves, seagrass, or tidal marshes anymore. USAID aims to quantify the blue carbon in fish stocks for the benefit of communities and the climate.

**WHAT IS BLUE CARBON?**

**Blue carbon ecosystems** are ocean ecosystems that remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it as organic carbon in soil and plant biomass. Long-term removal of carbon dioxide and storage of carbon by these natural processes reduces the impact of climate change.

**Blue carbon losses** are the result of damage to these ecosystems due to climate change or other human activity such as coastal development and overfishing.

**Blue carbon solutions** are management interventions, policies, and financing to protect, sustainably manage, or restore blue carbon ecosystems.

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE?**

Eighty-three percent of the global carbon cycle is circulated through the ocean, yet little work has been done to understand the role of non-terrestrial processes in this sequestration. Emerging examples of carbon storage by fish, seaweed, sediment transport, and other natural processes could increase “blue carbon” sequestration by up to three gigatons, an amount comparable to the contribution of current terrestrial protected areas. However, human activity and climate change are threatening ecologically, economically, and culturally important blue carbon ecosystems worldwide. To protect these ecosystems and champion the communities that rely on them, we must better understand and quantify blue carbon.

**WHAT IS USAID DOING?**

USAID is bringing together a team of global experts on fisheries, natural capital, carbon markets, and community-level climate risk management to strengthen understanding of the issues, identify solutions, and engage communities. The work will initially focus on the Indo-Pacific region. A combination of nature-based solutions, policy and regulatory actions, and capacity-building strategies are necessary to sustain blue carbon ecosystems and their potential to deliver mitigation, adaptation, and economic co-benefits to Indo-Pacific communities. Each of these solutions requires rigorous scientific evidence and community engagement to avoid maladaptation and help sustain benefits over time.

**WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

Blue carbon ecosystems are the basis for economic development opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region, and the pace of blue carbon losses demands action. By investing in the study and protection of these ecosystems, USAID will not only advance global understanding of blue carbon but will also help meet multiple goals of its Indo-Pacific Strategy. These include building resilience in the Pacific Islands, developing trade approaches that meet high labor and environmental standards, advancing resilient supply chains, investing in decarbonization and limiting global temperature increase, and reducing regional vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

USAID will develop the Pacific Blue Carbon report in 2023, in consultation with scientific and regional experts. We welcome your input!

The final products will include the state of the science on blue carbon ecosystems and the risks facing communities across the Indo-Pacific region, along with a blue carbon finance handbook for government and private sector stakeholders. To contribute a case study or expression of interest in further engagement, please contact us at bluecarbon@usaid.gov.
TIMELINE

**SPRING 2023**

**Open call for blue carbon case studies from the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Pacific Islands Countries and Territories**

Share concept note for Indo-Pacific Blue Carbon report

**SUMMER 2023**

**Open call for potential partners for coordination and collaboration starting in 2024**

Regional workshop(s) to prioritize risks and vulnerabilities related to blue carbon

Share draft analysis of trends in blue carbon ecosystems

**FALL 2023**

Share draft analysis of community impacts of losses of blue carbon ecosystems

Disseminate findings on blue carbon community and ecosystem risks and trends

Share finance handbook for public and private sector interventions at a regional level

**2024**

Explore potential partnerships and case studies for 2024

Regional consultation to discuss and prioritize interventions that address blue carbon community and ecosystem risks

Build regional partnerships for blue carbon investment

Identify public and private financing

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To contribute a case study or expression of interest in further engagement, please contact us at bluecarbon@usaid.gov

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