cordap

G20 Coral Research
& Development
Accelerator
Platform

Annual Report 2025

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Photos Joshua Vela (Cover);
ROV SuBastian/ Schmidt Ocean Institute (Background)

Letter from our Executive Director

Coral reefs are a lifeline for hundreds of millions of people, underpinning food security, livelihoods, coastal protection and biodiversity. As we reflect on 2025 and look ahead to 2026, it is clear that we are now in a decisive decade for coral conservation.

The past three years have marked the most severe global coral bleaching crisis on record. According to the latest international assessments, more than 80% of the world's coral reefs have now been exposed to bleaching-level heat stress conducive to unprecedented mortality, driven by persistent marine heatwaves and record-breaking ocean temperatures. The implications for coral survival, reef-dependent economies, coastal communities and ocean health have never been more profound. As I often mention in my speeches, **it would be a tragedy to assign these glorious underwater kaleidoscopes of marine life to colouring books, just in the way dinosaurs have been.** The window for effective intervention is narrowing, and the need for urgent, co-ordinated and well-resourced action has never been greater.

Despite these unprecedented challenges, there is space for hope, underpinned by much ambition and hard work. **Breakthroughs in assisted evolution, cryopreservation, selective breeding and reef restoration technologies are reshaping what is possible for coral resilience and recovery.**

However, to translate innovation into impact at scale, sustained investment in research, innovation, and capacity building is essential, particularly in the regions most vulnerable to coral loss. This is where CORDAP's role is both unique and indispensable.

We are immensely proud of what we have collectively achieved up to 2025. Through CORDAP-supported funding, our partners have expanded and strengthened coral-rearing infrastructure across multiple regions, establishing and upgrading additional land-based and in situ facilities in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

More than 1500 practitioners, technicians and early-career scientists were trained in advanced coral husbandry, restoration and monitoring techniques. Across our projects, teams established dozens of new coral nurseries, propagated several thousand coral colonies, and significantly increased outplanting efforts to degraded reef sites, directly contributing to reef recovery and resilience.

We are testing 10 probiotics, identifying new deep sea coral species and developing new interactive data tools to track coral disease.

Building on the success of our workshops in Africa and the Pacific, 2025 saw the launch of a dedicated funding stream designed specifically to empower coral reef researchers and practitioners from low- and middle-income countries. We have also launched a series of Grand Challenge programmes, detailed in this report, that address some of the most significant threats to coral reefs by radically elevating the ambition and scale of our efforts.

2025 was also a year of strengthened collaboration; we formalized new strategic partnerships with leading research institutions, NGOs, and multilateral organizations, reinforcing a global coalition committed to coral survival.

While we are making meaningful progress, **it is clear that our mission is far from complete.** Until the root causes of coral decline - climate change, land-based pollution, overfishing and coastal development - are addressed through systemic global change, we must continue to push the boundaries of scientific innovation to safeguard coral reefs for future generations. Moreover, the tools we are developing will be of no use in conserving healthy corals if they are not deployed. This is why, in 2025, we developed an ambitious Theory of Change that articulates what can be achieved by applying, at scale, the tools developed by the scientists we support. Furthermore, CORDAP convened a workshop to develop a global Coral Action Plan, defining a set of emergency actions that include the accelerated deployment of all available measures to protect and restore coral reefs.

To all who have supported us to date, I extend my sincere gratitude. Your commitment is helping to turn the tide for coral conservation. To those just discovering CORDAP, I invite you to join our mission. Whether through partnerships, research collaboration or financial support, there is a vital role for everyone to play in safeguarding the future of coral reefs.

There is still time to save the corals - but only if we act decisively, collectively and with the urgency this unfolding, but avoidable, tragedy deserves.

Prof. Carlos Duarte
Executive Director of G20 Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform and CEO of CORDAP Foundation

Photo Joshua Vela

Letter from our Executive Director

Corals and Reefs

Photo
Joshua Vela

1 bn

People rely on coral reefs for food, income and coastal protection

USD1 trn
in ecosystem services

USD6.8 bn
in annual net profits from global fisheries

>USD4 bn
in reduced storm damages and lower the number of people affected by flooding by 45%

>USD36 bn
delivered through tourism

>50%
of new cancer drug research focuses on marine organisms, with many being found on coral reefs

>30%
of marine life supported by corals

and Their Threats

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Bottom-contact fisheries
- Deep-sea mining
- Water contamination and degradation
- Changes in land use
- Diseases
- Invasive species

Photo Tracey Jennings / Ocean Image Bank

Corals and Reefs

We accelerate science to save corals

As the G20 Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP) we are the only international organization fully dedicated to funding global research and development (R&D) for tropical and cold-water coral restoration and conservation worldwide.

We work to shift the boundaries of what is possible, ensuring that our ambitions for the future of corals aren't limited by the technology available today.

Photos Misha Vallejo Prut / Schmidt Ocean Institute

Our Vision

CORDAP's vision is thriving corals and reefs, fully protected in perpetuity, for the benefit of nature, communities and humanity.

Our Mission

CORDAP will unite the world to accelerate global coral research and development, to provide the technologies and innovations needed to safeguard the future of corals and reefs, and the benefits people receive from them, in a warming ocean.

Coral Solutions to Face the Coral Crisis

Coral reefs are now facing the most severe stress in recorded history.

Since January 2023, bleaching-level heat stress has impacted approximately 84% of the world's reef area — the largest global bleaching event ever documented, surpassing previous crises in both scale and intensity, and causing devastating coral loss in many regions. What was once considered episodic has become systemic. The question before us is no longer whether reefs are in danger of global collapse, but whether we can act quickly and boldly enough to secure their future.

Realizing this imminent threat, the United Nations Ocean Conference released an urgent Call to Action calling to limit warming to 1.5 °C, reduce pollution and overfishing, mobilize global partnerships, and invest at the scale required to restore at least 30% of degraded reefs, and support global initiatives such as ICRI, UNGFCR and CORDAP.

CORDAP is indeed advancing a number of solutions.

They remain imperfect and in need of improvement, and none of them are a silver bullet in isolation. However, the solutions CORDAP is developing can be layered, already in their imperfect state, to face the coral crisis, while further improvements are being made.

Coral Reef Watch

National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service

Home | Key Products | Condition Updates | Products List | Report Bleaching | Exploration | Announcements

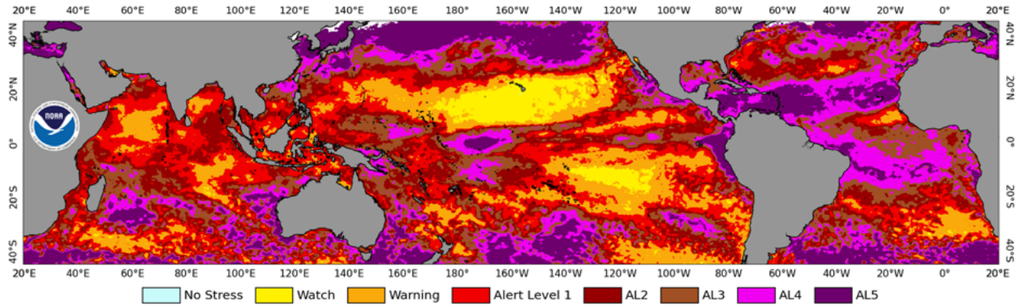
Current Global Bleaching: Status Update & Data Submission

(Updated: December 4, 2025)

On April 15, 2024, NOAA (in partnership with the International Coral Reef Initiative) confirmed the world is in the midst of its 4th global coral bleaching event. From 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2025, bleaching-level heat stress has impacted ~84.4% of the world's coral reef area and mass coral bleaching has been documented in at least 83 countries and territories. The percentage has remained the same as of the latest update.

The ongoing global coral bleaching event is the biggest to date. The previous record was during the 3rd global coral bleaching event, which occurred from 2014-2017, when 68.2% of the world's reef area experienced bleaching-level heat stress. The 1st and 2nd global coral bleaching events occurred in 1998 and 2010, respectively.

NOAA Coral Reef Watch 5km Bleaching Alert Area Maximum (v3.1) 1 January 2023 - 30 September 2025



Check the full Coral Bleaching Update by NOAA at https://www.coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/

Photo Guilherme Longo

GOUVERNEMENT Liberté Égalité Fraternité | UN OCEAN CONFERENCE NICE 2025 FRANCE | GOBIERNO DE COSTA RICA

.URGENT CALL TO ACTION TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE SHALLOW-WATER CORAL REEFS

Recognizing the unprecedented severity of mass mortality of corals in 2023 and 2024, where global ocean temperature exceeded previous records by a large margin, and the severe risk of catastrophic loss of coral reefs, the International Scientific Committee of the One Ocean Science Congress calls on the nations gathering at Third United Nations Ocean Conference to take the following urgent actions:

> **Enhance** the ambition to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to limit global surface air temperature rise to 1.5 °C above preindustrial levels.
>
> **Remove** local pressures, such as pollution, overfishing, siltation, and physical damage, that impact coral reefs to improve their resilience to climate change.
>
> **Support** global collaborative efforts to develop cost-effective, scalable and climate-change resilient science and technology to halt losses of tropical coral reefs and restore 30% of degraded coral reefs, as mandated by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
>
> **Strengthen and support** global initiatives, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative, UN Global Fund for Coral Reefs, and the G20 Global Coral R&D Accelerator Platform.
>
> **Deploy** sufficient financial resources to conserve and restore coral reefs, with dedicated support for conservation and restoration initiatives led by indigenous and local communities.

Tropical coral reefs are at severe risk of functional extinction under climate change, with consequences for food security, coastal protection and biodiversity. Should this risk be realized, this would represent a failure of both the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, whose goals are to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects, and the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, given coral reefs host one in every four marine fish species.

We urge world leaders to act without further delay, as the catastrophic loss of coral reefs would be a collective failure of our generation, condemning future generations to live in a world devoid of these critical marine ecosystems and the invaluable services they provide to humanity.

The Call to Action to restore and conserve shallow-water coral reefs.

How emerging solutions can be layered to face the coral crisis was articulated by Prof. Carlos Duarte and other leading coral scientists in their flagship review article published in October 2025. **We must move beyond isolated efforts toward layered, collaborative solutions** — reducing greenhouse gas emissions and local stressors, accelerating the development of scalable restoration and adaptation technologies, and mobilizing the infrastructure, financing, and skilled human capacity required to deploy them rapidly and at scale.

nature reviews biodiversity
https://doi.org/10.1038/s44358-025-00106-0

Review article
Check for updates

Layering solutions to conserve tropical coral reefs in crisis

Carlos M. Duarte[1,10], Jessica Blythe[2], Michelle J. Devlin[3], Nathalie Hilmi[4], Shannon G. Klein[1], Britta Schaffelke[5], David J. Suggett[1,6,7], Alifereti Tawake[8] & David O. Obura[9,10]

The scientific article was led by CORDAP's Executive Director, Prof. Carlos Duarte.

Coral Solutions to Face the Coral Crisis

The coral crisis continues to unfold before our eyes, with no indication of near-term reversal.

Functional extinction, when species still exist but lose their function in the ecosystem, is already a reality for Caribbean coral reefs. We cannot stand by and wait for this tide to turn; this moment demands immediate and collective action.

Saving corals from the current threats is a generational responsibility. We do our share.
To be part of the solution we are:

Committed to scalability

We fund projects that deliver innovative coral restoration solutions suitable for large-scale interventions and remote areas.

Accessible to everyone

Our open-source platform allows any organization to advance and use our freely-available technologies.

Addressing the global goals

Our work directly contributes towards several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework goals, which set out to halt biodiversity losses by 2050 and restore 30% of degraded habitats by 2030.

Rooted in inclusivity

We support a gender-diverse, internationally inclusive, transdisciplinary, global community of scientists, technologists, community leaders and innovators.

Promoting participation of the Global South

Scientists from the Global South, those most impacted by coral loss, take part in all our programs, enabling and empowering them to deliver solutions that work for their nations and beyond.

Photo Misha Vallejo Prut / Schmidt Ocean Institute

CORDAP Objectives

CORDAP aims to

Deliver
novel scientific and technological solutions to conserve and restore corals and reefs through targeted funding programs, supporting diverse and inclusive teams.

Develop and share
novel scientific tools.

Connect
existing national, regional, and international research and development programs.

Facilitate
access to information and research facilities.

Engage
with the private sector to use and implement CORDAP-developed solutions.

Support
a gender-balanced, transdisciplinary community of scientists, technologists and innovators worldwide to achieve CORDAP's goals.

Provide
advanced research and development training to scientists from developing and least-developed countries.

Photo ROV SuBastian / Schmidt Ocean Institute

CORDAP at a Glance

Since 2021, CORDAP has collaborated with

663 institutions from **115** countries & territories.

We have funded

43 projects

2000+ researchers and research teams

7 scoping workshops and published **6** technology roadmaps.

Overall, we have committed over

USD38 m

towards coral research and restoration

North America

Bermuda
Canada
Mexico
USA

Europe

Austria
Belgium
Croatia
Denmark
England
EU
Germany
Gibraltar
Ireland
Italy
Finland
France
Monaco
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Scotland
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The Netherlands
UK

Asia

Bangladesh
China
Japan
Jordan
India
Indonesia
Israel
Malaysia
Maldives
Philippines
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Sri Lanka
Timor-leste
Taiwan
Thailand
Turkey
UAE
Vietnam
Yemen

Oceania

American Somoa
Australia
Fiji
French Polynesia
Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Micronesia
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

Central America

Anguilla
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
Bahamas
Belize
Bonaire
Cayman Islands
Costa Rica
Cuba
Curaçao
Dominica
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Jamaica
Nicaragua
Panama
Puerto Rico
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Turks and Caicos
The Netherlands Antilles

South America

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Equador
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

Africa

Cape Verde
Cameroon
Comoros
Djibouti
Egypt
Kenya
Mauritania
Mauritius
Madagascar
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
São Tomé and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
South Africa
Sudan
Tanzania
Tunisia
Uganda

Projects
Governance
Workshops
Partners

CORDAP at a Glance

Our Impact

2022

35 countries
57 institutions

2023

14 projects
564 researchers
3 workshops
1 roadmap
65 countries
379 institutions

2024

22 projects
1270 researchers
6 workshops
4 roadmaps
88 countries
477 institutions

2025

43 projects (+21)
2057 researchers (+787)
7 workshops (+1)
6 roadmaps (+2)
115 countries (+27)
663 institutions (+186)

Photo Tracey Jennings / Ocean Image Bank

Photo Chu Hong Tan

The CORDAP Effect

A reef is only as healthy as it is diverse — home to an array of corals, fish, algae, and countless other inhabitants.

To keep coral reefs thriving, we must act on multiple fronts, approach challenges from different angles, and embrace diversity in every sense. The scientific and technological programs we design and develop are built on this foundation. They don't focus on a single issue or follow a single format. Because the challenges facing coral reefs demand diverse, interconnected solutions, we currently host several programs based on key priority areas.

Cold-Water corals

We fund projects on largely understudied cold-water corals and how best to restore them when damaged.

Limit early life mortality

We fund solutions that promote coral survival at the early stages, such as the development of nutritional supplements.

Aquaculture

Our projects find ways to make the production and outplanting of coral more efficient and effective.

Supporting R&D in developing countries

We support the development of R&D in low- and middle-income countries by ensuring that all projects we fund actively involve researchers from these nations.

Blended artificial and natural reefs

We support the use of artificial structures, including hybrid reefs (when integrated into existing reefs with minimal damage) to offer protection to coastal communities and enhance the recovery of reefs.

R&D capacity building

We advance global R&D capability and build the capacity of marine managers and practitioners to understand and use new methods effectively.

Assisted evolution

Our projects focus on assisting coral species to adapt to environmental changes more quickly than they would via natural selection.

Preserve and conserve existing corals

We support innovative conservation ideas that boost corals' health but also improve their environment.

Intervention planning and monitoring

We place our resources where we can have the highest impact.

Scoping Workshops
Actionable workshops and roadmaps to guide future activities and investments on coral R&D.

Coral Accelerator Program (CAP)
USD1.5 m per project for up to 3 years to drive coral innovation

Coral Local Innovation Program (CLIP)
Program USD100 k grant per coral project in low middle income countries

Coral Grand Challenges
Funds R&D challenges for breakthrough coral reef solutions

Capacity Building Initiative
Train at least 1,500 practitioners to actively manage >7,500 km2 of coral reefs

Awareness Creation
Mobilizing communities to champion coral conservation

Research & Development

Scaling

Enable & Amplify

Photo Guilherme Longo

Scoping Workshops

Understanding where our knowledge ends and where the unknown begins is essential to unlocking solutions that can truly support coral restoration. To uncover these missing links, and following the guidance of our Scientific Advisory Committee, we bring together leading coral researchers, conservationists, and practitioners from all over the globe in thematic scoping workshops.

Since 2023, CORDAP has organized various scoping workshops to identify the most urgent R&D priorities needed to support coral conservation and restoration, and to guide future investments into innovation.

The workshops' insights are available on our website as open access documents, to inform national, regional, and international conservation efforts.

We can only protect what we know.

Photo Guillermo Longo

In 2025, we co-organized a workshop focused on

water quality solutions for coastal habitats

with CEFAS, the Nutrient Pollution Global Action Network and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

This workshop brought together 27 experts from 13 countries to develop an easy-to-use, comprehensive guide for coastal managers and policymakers on interventions to reduce pollution reaching coral reefs and other coastal habitats.

Photo Cody Clemens

Photo Jona Uluinaceva

Key recommendations

- Improve access to and sharing of knowledge on water quality management, particularly among stakeholders in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Increase access to affordable technologies that support effective water quality monitoring and management in LMICs.
- Address pollution across the entire cycle — from source reduction in agriculture and sanitation, to effective wastewater treatment — rather than focusing only on pollutants that have already reached waterways and the ocean.
- Implement, scale and exchange knowledge on nature-based solutions as part of integrated strategies to improve water quality and strengthen coral reef resilience.

The roadmap resulting from this workshop will be released in 2026. Feedback and insights from the participants already served to inform CORDAP funding programs and initiatives to take place in the coming years.

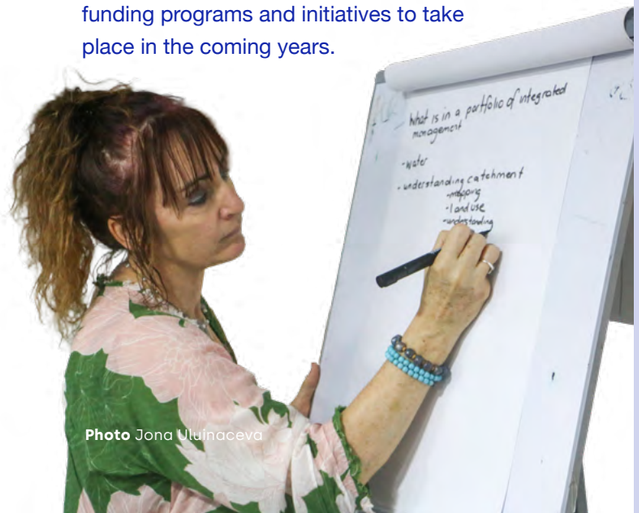


Photo Jona Uluinaceva

Publications

As part of CORDAP's strategic plan, we are producing actionable roadmaps to guide future activities and investments in coral research and restoration. In 2025, two roadmaps and studies were published.

CORDAP R&D Technology Roadmap – Growing capacity in coral reef conservation and restoration in the Global South
This roadmap sets out the knowledge gaps, the key research priorities and the technological developments needed, to co-create solutions that can strengthen coral reef conservation and restoration across diverse local contexts. It was written by researchers, practitioners, policy experts and community leaders mostly from the Global South, following the CORDAP capacity development workshop that took place in Kenya in 2024.

CORDAP R&D Technology Roadmap - Coral diseases
Focusing on coral diseases, this roadmap identifies priority areas where investment in research and development is required to accelerate scientific advancements in coral resilience and disease intervention. The document was written by a team of coral scientists and experts from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and CORALIUM Lab, following a CORDAP workshop held in Mexico in October 2024.

Our flagship approach for supporting international, collaborative teams with impactful ideas for coral conservation and restoration is called

The Coral Accelerator Program

Through this program we currently fund **29 projects** all across the globe. We couldn't be more proud of the teams we fund and support; they are changemakers, constantly breaking boundaries of what is possible.

From colonial to solitary corals, from shallow reefs to the deep sea, the researchers we funded studied

157 species

Because it all starts in the lab and in the field, we helped improve

26 research facilities

and build

209 coral nurseries

The hard-work paid off: the teams outplanted

336,318

corals in the wild
- some, for the first time, in Mauritius.


Photo Joshua Vela

And they also monitored **568,163 m²** of reefs - the approximate size of 80 soccer fields!

while also restoring **300m²** of reefs

Pioneers of knowledge-sharing

researchers trained **1,548 people** in **117 sessions**


Photo Jona Uluinaceva

They have also

More than doubled the survival rate of coral fragments

Cryobanked three species in the Philippines

Increased settlement success and survivorship in baby corals

Increased by **20%** coral survival under thermal stress thanks to nutritional supplements

In Argentina researchers discovered

40 new deep-sea species!

The expedition was such a national phenomenon that the research team won 2 Martin Hierro awards - Argentina's equivalent of the US Emmys - due to their science outreach.


Photo ROV SuBastian / Schmidt Ocean Institute

Adding to the **12 scientific publications** that went out this year, the teams also developed

- **10 coral probiotics** that are now being tested
- **A genetic "stress sensor"** to detect heat stress in corals
- **An app to track** coral spawning in Indonesia
- **A self-driving boat that maps** coral reefs and monitors coral health
- **A tool to detect** coral bleaching by "looking" at corals
- **Software to analyze images** and automatically measure coral volumes
- **Databases and tools to track** coral population status, diseases, spawning, bleaching and invasive species

Research teams funded by CORDAP had brilliant public engagement, reaching

30,855 people in events and activities

and went viral to

>21 million

people on social media

Photo Joshua Vela

CAP 2025
the next changemakers

In 2025, the CAP funding call received 122 eligible applications, involving 761 researchers, which requested a total of USD155 millions. All applications were reviewed by a scientific panel of experts that shortlisted 17 projects to submit full proposals. In 2026, we will reveal the new round of CORDAP's CAP awardees.

A Recipe to Fight a Lethal Disease

Seen from above, the small island of San Andrés is wrapped in turquoise blue, its reefs stretching from the shoreline into the depths of the Caribbean, as if someone had gently combed the sea. With just 26 square kilometres of land, this Colombian island still holds traces of what was once a pristine paradise.

Born from underwater volcanic activity more than ten million years ago, San Andrés slowly rose toward the sun, cloaked in coral. Those corals, built to live underwater, were sacrificed during the island's emergence, forming the solid foundation that now supports not only marine life, but life on land as well. This is where we meet Dr Valeria Pizarro, a researcher at the Perry Institute of Marine Science, who has been diving these waters for over twenty years and knows the corals of San Andrés like the back of her hand. She leads a team racing to save Colombia's reefs from a disease that is devastatingly lethal—and, for now, with no known cure.

"In 2000, the corals weren't looking as bad as they do today."

– Dr. Valeria Pizarro

We first meet at a small harbour crowded with tourists. After a tropical storm battered the island with relentless rain and churned the sea beyond safe limits, the coast guard finally gives us permission to head out to the field. We load the boat with dive gear and set course for El Árbol reef, named after the large tree visible on land. It is one of five sites the team visits every month to monitor the spread of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease.

Photo Valeria Pizarro

Photo Francisco Acosta

San Andrés, Colombia
Caribbean Sea

"No other disease in the past has affected as many coral species as this one is affecting."

– Dr. Valeria Pizarro

This disease begins by attacking the microscopic algae that live within corals, triggering a secondary reaction in the host. Soft tissue is rapidly consumed, until only a stark white skeleton remains… A death sentence for the colony if nothing is done. For now, the only effective solution is a thick antibiotic paste, carefully applied along the still-healthy margins of infected corals to halt the disease's spread.

With the plan reviewed, it is time to get to work. Once underwater, with large syringes and data slates clipped to their vests, the team begins scanning the reef in zigzag patterns across predefined monitoring zones. Whenever a diseased colony is found within one of the large survey squares, a syringe is aimed and the paste is applied. Colony by colony, square by square, the ritual continues — interrupted only when air tanks or syringes run empty and the team must return to the boat to refill.

"We have lost 50% to 70% of coral reefs due to the disease and the bleaching event."

– Dr. Valeria Pizarro

Ten metres below the surface, corridors of towering gorgonians, massive hard corals, and tubular sponges make it look like we are on a healthy reef. Those who have been here before know that this beauty is but a constant reminder of what has already been lost.

Photo Francisco Acosta

White-clad corals surround us like a gathering of ghosts. The disease is not the only culprit. Rising ocean temperatures strain the delicate relationship between corals and their symbiotic microorganisms, and when waters remain too warm for too long, that relationship breaks down, and corals bleach. Combined with a lethal disease, warming seas create a recipe for disaster.

"Most of us don't want to continue using antibiotics, because in the long term it will have negative effects on the microbes that live within the coral."

– Dr. Valeria Pizarro

While effective at slowing the disease, antibiotics are far from an ideal solution. Though beneficial to corals, their broader impacts on other marine organisms remain unknown. That is why Valeria's team is developing an alternative approach, one that protects corals without compromising the wider ecosystem.

On land, a laboratory is shaping up, destined to become the project's experimental hub. The goal is to test and validate a suite of probiotics designed to improve corals' health. Out of twelve probiotic candidates, one has already passed laboratory toxicity tests and has entered field trials. The next step is scaling up production.

These early results have brought a wave of excitement and cautious optimism to the entire team. If the probiotics prove effective at stopping Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in San Andrés, they may also work elsewhere in the Caribbean. And beyond. With more than thirty coral species affected, across over thirty countries and territories, finding a way to slow this disease is nothing short of essential.

Photo Francisco Acosta

Successful coral restoration does not rely solely on dedicated research teams or cutting-edge technology. The involvement of local communities is key. In San Andrés, we witness a true symbiosis between scientists and fishers. In exchange for technical knowledge of biology, ecology, and reef ecosystem services, fishers share traditional wisdom — helping reconstruct what has already been lost — and become active participants in shaping the path forward.

"I didn't know corals were something alive, but then I started working with Valeria. I have learned that if there is no coral, there is no future."

– Camilo Hudson, artisanal fisher

Photo Carla Lourenço

Photo Carla Lourence

Life on San Andrés is being reshaped by the loss of corals as you read this. Fishers must travel farther to make a catch. Coastal protection is weakening as storms grow stronger. Yet this is not the moment to give up. There is still much to be done, and many hands are needed — not to hang in despair, but to get to work.

"If you don't know, you don't care. But if you know, you will care."

– Dr. Valeria Pizarro

Photo Noemi Merz / Ocean Image Bank

Follow the Butterflies

From end to end, the island of Roatán, in Honduras, stretches for 60 kilometres and is no more than 4 kilometres wide. Born from a submerged volcanic ridge — known as Bonacca — Roatán shares its origins with Utila and Guanaja, among other islands. Together, they are known as the Bay Islands. This is where the largest coral reef in the Northern Hemisphere lies: the Mesoamerican Reef. It is breathtakingly beautiful. And severely threatened. We were lucky enough to experience it, both from above and from within.

"After the 2023–24 bleaching event, we went from 45% hard coral cover to just 5% in a couple of months."

– Andrea Godoy Mendoza

In West End, a rural area where towering trees rise on all sides, we were welcomed by a team of researchers from the California Academy of Sciences and the Roatán Marine Park. Day and night they plan their work to improve the growth of baby corals, in order to help them survive long enough to reach adulthood. With the region's very first coral larval rearing laboratory recently inaugurated in Roatán — made possible through CORDAP funding — the days ahead will be filled with experimentation and challenge. Years of coral spawning monitoring, the training of the Honduran team in the United States, the construction of a laboratory from the ground up, and a series of preliminary tests has all led to this defining moment: understanding how to help baby corals grow. Because life is not easy for corals.

The major bleaching event that began in 2023 drastically reduced the number of healthy colonies, severely limiting corals' ability to reproduce naturally. Since adult corals cannot move across the reef in search of mates, finding a partner with whom to reproduce has become a herculean task. If too many adult colonies die, the chances of keeping a species alive disappear with them. Today, not only are there fewer corals on the reef, but those that remain struggle to find one another. Ultimately, this means fewer baby corals. For the survivors, it is essential to ensure they have everything they need to make it to adulthood.

Photo Rita Sellares

Photo Antonio Busiello

"Even if there are still a few corals on that reef, the likelihood of their gametes finding each other becomes exponentially lower."

– Dr. Elora Lopez-Nandam

Inside a meticulously controlled room, just a few metres from the Caribbean Sea, temperature is carefully regulated. Rows of small cylindrical tanks stand ready for the experiment to begin. The treatments are designed to provide baby corals with more energy — either through enriched food or by increasing carbonate availability in the water, making it easier for corals to absorb and grow. A final treatment takes a different approach, focusing on selecting baby corals that are more resilient to thermal stress.

But before any experiments could begin, the most important element was still missing: the baby corals themselves. The species under study, the brain coral *Diploria labyrinthiformis*, spawns 9 to 12 days after the full moon — and we were there right on day nine.

Ten metres below the surface, corridors of towering gorgonians, massive hard corals, and tubular sponges make it look like we are on a healthy reef. Those who have been here before know that this beauty is but a constant reminder of what has already been lost.

We geared up carefully, loaded the boat with gamete-collection nets, assigned divers to different coral colonies, and set up a team of snorkellers to provide surface support.

We watched the sun sink into the sea and waited, anxiously, for the corals to spawn. The nets were placed gently over each colony so no gametes could escape. Butterflyfish — the first to recognise a colony ready to spawn — swam in tight circles, alerting the divers below. But nothing happened.

Photo Roatan Marine Park

Photo Manlio Martinez

We repeated the ritual the following night, and again the night after that. No matter how closely we followed the butterflyfish or how patiently we waited alongside them, not a single colony spawned. Could it be that they were wrong? The window of opportunity was closing fast, threatening to undo an operation that had been planned in meticulous detail over many months.

On the final day of the fieldwork calendar — the 12th night after the full moon — we returned to the sea with only a sliver of hope left. We dove and monitored the colonies one by one as usual. The butterflyfish were more active than ever. On one of our repeated passes, we saw a researcher gesturing underwater — one hand raised with the palm up, fingers opening and closing repeatedly. We understood the sign immediately: the corals were spawning.

"Tonight is the night." The boat mantra did the trick.

What followed is remembered by everyone as one of the most exciting moments of the expedition. Divers circled the colonies below, while snorkellers zigzagged across the surface, ready to assist when needed, taking tubes with the collected gametes back to the boat. That evening, five Diploria labyrinthiformis colonies spawned — to the immense joy of the entire team.

We rushed back to the Roatán Coral Restoration Center, Andrea had been urgently called in. Still in our wetsuits, we moved quickly through the well-rehearsed protocol. First, Dr. Rebbeca Albright and Dr. Elora Lopez-Nandam mixed the gametes collected from different colonies. We all waited patiently for fertilisation, Carolina confirmed embryo viability under the microscope, and one by one everyone carefully released the future reef builders into the laboratory cylindrical tanks. This moment marked the beginning of a new era for coral research in Honduras. A dream come true. The experiments began immediately, and soon, we will know the best ways to help baby corals grow.

The present is marked by the massive loss of coral reefs — but no one on this team is ready to give up.

Photos Carla Lourenço

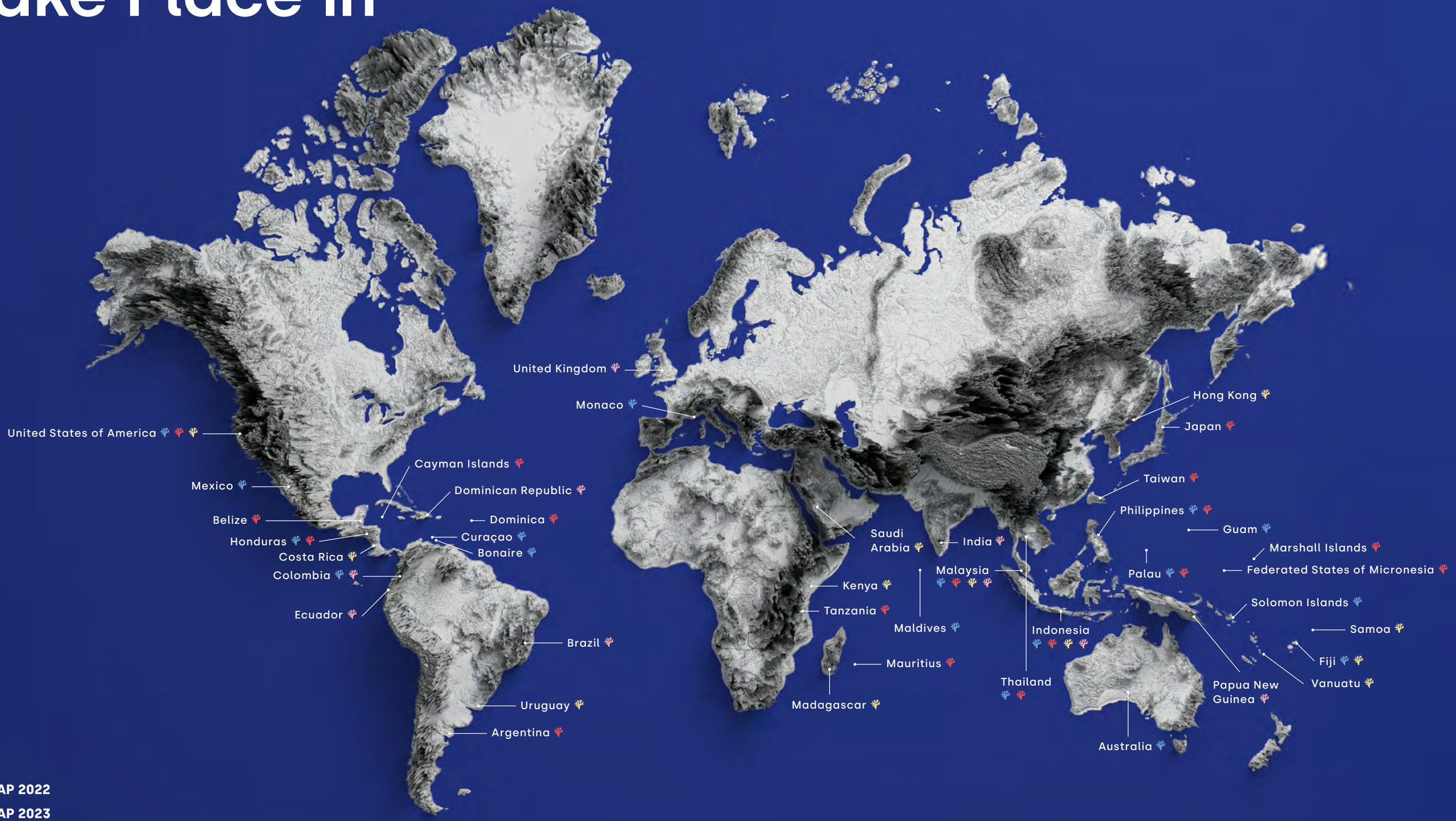
"We all know this is an uphill battle. We know we're losing things faster than we can replace them.

But I've seen places... If they were protected, if they were managed effectively, they came back."

— Dr. Rebecca Albright

Photo Marvin del Cid

Our Projects Take Place in



CAP 2022
CAP 2023
CAP 2024
CLIP 2025

Coral Local Innovation Program

In low- and middle-income countries, scientists and local communities strive to protect their reefs under challenging conditions;

limited funding and resources, a lack of technical capacity and experience, and fierce competition with institutions from high-income nations. For small island countries, isolation adds yet another obstacle.

Developing nations are the very places that host most of the world's coral reefs, and the ones least equipped to help solve the coral crisis, even as they pay the highest price for it. The math simply doesn't add up.

With that in mind, we launched the Coral Local Innovation Program (CLIP) in 2025, to empower researchers in developing nations to design local, affordable, scalable solutions to protect and restore their own reefs. The Coral Local Innovation Program:

- **Encourages local technology development** and innovative approaches to coral conservation and restoration in developing countries;
- **Enhances the capacity of local scientists,** researchers and organizations to conduct coral and reef research and development activities in developing countries;
- **Addresses critical knowledge gaps** in local coral conservation and restoration;

"Becoming a CORDAP awardee is both an honor and a milestone for coral research in India. It brings global recognition to the work by Indian scientists and creates new opportunities for international collaboration. For our team, it validates decades of research on marine microbiomes and inspires us to train and mentor the next generation of reef scientists."

- Prof. Joseph Selvin
Pondicherry University, India

"I am at loss for words what this [CLIP 2025 award] will mean for the local marginalised community of Kulapuan island. This is going to change the history for the island forever with such a significant impulse of funding that can be distributed."

- Robin Philippo
Tropical Research and Conservation Centre Malaysia

This year, we awarded

14 projects involving 53 researchers from 12 countries.

Projects will last up to two years and will focus on a range of different topics. Namely,

Coral Local Innovation Program

In Brazil

Probiotics for corals

To avoid the imminent risk of extinction, a team of researchers will test the use of probiotics on Brazilian marginal corals for the first time.

In Colombia

A recipe to boost coral survival

On the remote island of San Andrés, Colombia, another team aims to produce their own probiotics to fight a deadly, fast-spreading coral disease that has been decimating reefs.

Unraveling temperature tolerance mysteries

A team of researchers in Colombia aims to identify the mechanisms that drive thermal resilience in the Eastern Tropical Pacific corals.

Photo Pedro Pereira

In Ecuador

Listening to corals to restore reefs

In the Galápagos, scientists will record coral reef soundscapes and play back the sounds of healthy reefs to lure baby corals into settling on degraded reefs.

In the Dominican Republic

The coral bodyguards

In the Dominican Republic and Mexico, scientists will use sea urchins to guard baby corals while also grazing on the algae that compete for space to grow.

In India

Early warnings of coral stress

Scientists will work to identify early-warning genetic signals of coral stress to characterize viable microbial therapies.

In Indonesia

Citizen scientists will monitor coral spawning

Researchers will use cutting-edge tools to identify coral species in real time simply by collecting water samples, and then will monitor coral spawning together with local communities.

Tracking water quality

To help solve the problem at source, a team of researchers will assess the extent of water pollution linked to inadequate waste management and the impacts of the rapidly growing tourism industry in Raja Ampat, Indonesia.

Autonomous water filtration vessel

Researchers will develop a low-cost, unmanned vessel capable of measuring turbidity in real time, which activates an autonomous filtration system made of mussel shells.

Boosting slow-growing corals' survival

Indonesian scientists will work to validate outplanting practices for slow-growing, underrepresented stony corals, in order to increase coral reef resilience.

In Malaysia

Back from the blast

A team of researchers will use modular, reverse-engineered, 3D-printed structures as small artificial reefs in an attempt to restore ecosystems shattered by explosives of blast fishing.

Larval highway

Another team will develop a low-cost system that delivers coral larvae directly to restoration sites, allowing the handling of millions of larvae per spawning season with minimal resources.

In Thailand

Carbon-neutral tourism

A team of researchers will work hand-in-hand with the tourism sector to restore coral reefs while implementing practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mapping how coral reefs are connected

Also in Thailand, scientists will map how coral larvae travel between reefs during spawning events to identify which sites act as key sources or sinks of larvae.

Photo Pedro Pereira

The Coral Grand Challenges

Some challenges are simply too big to tackle in isolation.

While individual CORDAP-funded projects play a vital role in advancing knowledge and innovation, their scope and duration can limit how far solutions can be taken. To address the most urgent and complex threats facing coral reefs, CORDAP is launching a new generation of large-scale initiatives: the Coral Grand Challenges. These programmes provide sustained, significant investment to bring together large consortia of scientists, practitioners, educators and regulators, with a shared goal of developing solutions that can be scaled globally.

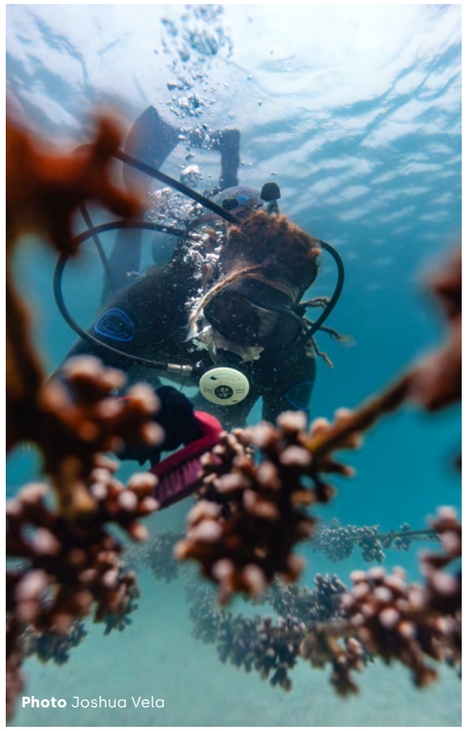


Photo Joshua Vela

Photo Robin Philippo

Over the next three years, CORDAP will launch several Grand Challenges.

This year, we defined the three inaugural Coral Grand Challenges, engaged key partners to help establish them and clarified the budgets required.

On Preservation

- Establish globally distributed secure, live-coral biobanks, to mitigate the risks of extinction and loss of genetic diversity.
- Preserve genetic diversity, enable research and innovation, and provide the foundation for large-scale restoration.

Our approach is to build a global network with 10 regional nodes throughout the world leveraging existing infrastructure from universities and research facilities, public aquaria, tourism entities, commercial aquaculture coral growers and existing biobanking facilities.

Photo Conflict Islands Conservation Initiative

On Assisted Adaptation

Photo Chu Hong Tan

- Accelerate solutions that enhance coral resilience to warming oceans.
- Support breakthroughs in coral selective breeding, assisted evolution and symbiont research.

Our approach is to embed enhanced heat-tolerance strategies into restoration practices worldwide so programs deploy the best available science and deliver resilient outcomes. We will align with international efforts to create the research foundations required to increase coral heat tolerance at scale. Research priorities will be based on the CORDAP Assisted Adaptation R&D Roadmap.

On Deep-Water Corals

- Advance exploration, protection, and restoration of deep-water coral ecosystems.
- Unlock knowledge and innovations for ecosystems that remain largely unstudied, yet vital to biodiversity.

Together with our partners, we will develop an approach and strategy that helps us to deliver our mission.

Photo ROV SuBastian / Schmidt Ocean Institute

Capacity Building Initiative

What's the use of knowledge if we don't turn it into action? And what's the use of action if it isn't powered by knowledge? For real change to happen, one cannot exist without the other. This need for change — fueled by knowledge and thoughtful action — is what led us to create our Capacity Building Initiative.

The Capacity Building Initiative is designed to support an international initiative designed to support the conservation, climate-proofing, and restoration of coral reefs at scale by training skilled practitioners around the world. Working alongside and complementing existing training efforts, this program focuses on regions where the need is greatest. Much of the science needed to restore reefs already exists, but there is still a critical gap on the ground — a shortage of trained practitioners able to put that knowledge into practice.

But if there is a will, there is a way.

The goal of the Capacity Building Initiative is to bridge that gap by translating research outcomes into practical skills. Through targeted training and knowledge-sharing, we will help equip thousands of practitioners with the tools and techniques supported by CORDAP, helping ensure that the latest innovations reach the reefs and communities that need them most.

This program is designed for those working closest to the reefs — restoration practitioners, reef managers, dive operators, and the tourism sector — with a strong focus on low- and middle-income countries and small island developing states. By building a global community of skilled practitioners, this initiative aims to turn local action into lasting, global impact for coral reefs.

Photos FUNDEMAR

Photo Joshua Vela

Photo Misha Vallejo Prut / Schmidt Ocean Institute

Progress in 2025

Key partners were identified, and the initiative's structure and operating model were further refined. In parallel, pilot courses are scheduled to be delivered in 2026 — one in Saudi Arabia and one in Mexico.

These pilots will help shape a scaled-up programme, informing the development of broader initiatives and strategic partnerships to strengthen training and knowledge sharing for coral restoration practitioners in regions where the need is greatest.

CORDAP is committed to ensuring that the knowledge and innovations generated through our funding are accessible and widely applicable to coral restoration efforts worldwide.

Any IP resulting from CORDAP-supported projects and programmes will have a public license (non-exclusive, royalty-free) and all CORDAP-funded publications, data and underlying research materials will be made openly available as soon as possible, with no barriers for reuse or dissemination.

Capacity Building Initiative

Events, Outreach and Communications

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

With this escalating crisis unfolding before our eyes, we cannot choose between speed and distance — we must go both fast and far. Those who travel with us make all the difference and are essential to success. In 2025, we expanded our community of partners, welcoming teams driven to act swiftly and effectively to protect and restore coral ecosystems.

Around the globe, scientists made headlines as new coral restoration facilities opened in the Caribbean, cryobanks were launched in Southeast Asia and a coral restoration system triumphed in the Maldives. Researchers were able to see what lies more than 3,000 meters below the surface in the Mar del Plata Canyon in Argentina, including a deep-sea starfish that closely resembles a famous character from the SpongeBob SquarePants cartoon! All these projects have something in common: they are funded by CORDAP.

The way we communicate science is as important as the science itself. Researchers are not detached operators performing purely mechanical tasks; they are direct witnesses to environmental change. They observe ecosystems over time, document decline and recovery, and bear the weight of returning — often repeatedly — to places that were once healthy and thriving.

For this reason, we have embraced rigorous, evidence-based storytelling as a means of conveying impact. We engaged closely with our awardees to document the real trajectories of their projects: what the progress achieved, the setbacks encountered, and the iterative steps that define successful science. By capturing these experiences alongside measurable outcomes, we aim to communicate not only what is being done, but how change is achieved — step by step, in the field, and over time.

This year, we were also part of a global wake-up call to act on behalf of corals — the SOS Ocean — and we attended the UN Ocean Conference to call for coordinated, urgent, and immediate action to safeguard what remains.

As 2025 came to a close, we convened a dedicated group of experts who worked intensively to define a clear plan of action for safeguarding coral reefs. This marked the beginning; 2026 will focus on turning that plan into implementation.

Photo ROV SuBastian / Schmidt Ocean Institute

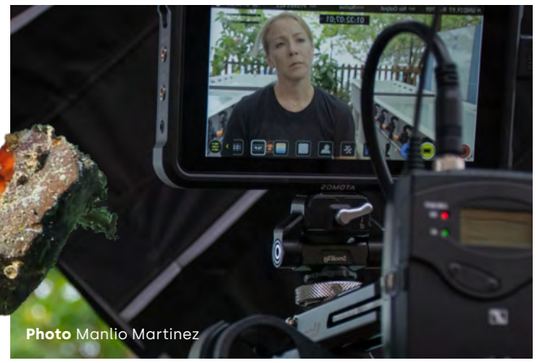


Photo Manlio Martinez

Learn from the present to change the future.

Meaningful action is often catalyzed by direct experience. Environmental change resonates more deeply when it is observed firsthand, rather than described at a distance. In January, ahead of the UIM E1 Championship in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, we partnered with KAUST to host a diving visit to the Red Sea, joined by a race team owner and several members of the E1 community.

World-renowned DJ and avid diver Steve Aoki joined the group in the water, executing a clean back-roll entry into the Red Sea. The rest of the participants followed, guided underwater by coral researchers from KAUST, who led the dive and shared scientific insights on the reef ecosystem.

Around 80% of the corals were either bleached or dead due to a recent marine heatwave, but the surviving ones gave the entire group a glimpse of the incredible biodiversity that still exists beneath the waves.

After the dive, the group was joined by HRH Prince Sultan Fahd Salman Al Saud of the Saudi Water Sports and Diving Federation, who arrived in time to experience the soundscape of a living coral reef. The crackles, pops, and static-like signals – produced by reef organisms – captured everyone's attention. Few would expect healthy coral reefs to be so acoustically alive.

Photo KAUST

It's time to walk the talk!

On March 30-31, Paris hosted SOS Ocean, an international event bringing together almost 100 opinion leaders, policymakers, scientists and ocean advocates from around the world, to launch a wake-up call for the Ocean. As part of the team challenging political leaders to act swiftly in the next 5 years, our Executive Director Prof. Carlos Duarte shared:

"We are here to launch an SOS for corals, which are at risk of global collapse. Science is part of the solution, but a societal tipping point is required to ensure they remain healthy for generations to come: we must face our responsibility."

It is time to move from commitment to action. The primary objective of the meeting was to advance an ambitious action plan to address the ocean's most pressing challenges and to build momentum ahead of the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in June 2025.

One message stood out across all discussions and panels: global collaboration is essential. No single leader, organisation, or community can solve this crisis alone. Like sailors answering an SOS call at sea, we must unite with urgency.

SOS Ocean was hosted by France and Oceano Azul Foundation, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Photo Pedro Pina/FOA

Events, Outreach and Communications

The Ocean Community gathered again

At the third UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, in June, more than 100,000 people came together to talk ocean.

With more than 450 side events, the global gathering concluded with a shared call to accelerate action to protect marine ecosystems by expanding marine protected areas, reducing pollution, strengthening governance of activities on the high seas and unlocking finance for vulnerable coastal communities.

We seized this opportunity to speak clearly and forcefully on behalf of coral reefs and the urgency of protecting them. We hosted two dedicated events and contributed to three additional sessions, all focused on charting pathways out of the coral crisis and advancing practical strategies for coral reef recovery.

The UN Ocean Conference also saw the adoption of an Urgent Call to Action

Recognizing the unprecedented severity of global coral mass mortality in 2023 and 2024 – driven by ocean temperatures exceeding all previous records by a wide margin – and the acute risk of irreversible loss of coral reef ecosystems, the International Scientific Committee of the One Ocean Science Congress, including Prof. Carlos Duarte, the Executive Director of CORDAP, called on nations convening at the United Nations Ocean Conference to take the following urgent action:

- Enhance the ambition to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions to limit global surface air temperature rise to 1.5 °C above preindustrial levels.
- Remove local pressures, such as pollution, overfishing, siltation and physical damage, that impact coral reefs to improve their resilience to climate change.
- Support global collaborative efforts to develop cost-effective, scalable and climate-change resilient science and technology to halt losses of tropical coral reefs and restore 30% of degraded coral reefs, as mandated by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Strengthen and support global initiatives, such as the International Coral Reef Initiative, UN Global Fund for Coral Reefs and the G20 Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform.
- Deploy sufficient financial resources to conserve and restore coral reefs, with dedicated support for conservation and restoration initiatives led by Indigenous and local communities.

We urge world leaders to act without further delay, as the catastrophic loss of coral reefs would be a collective failure of our generation, condemning future generations to live in a world devoid of these critical marine ecosystems and the invaluable services they provide to humanity.

Photo Yen-Yi Lee / Ocean Image Bank

Impactful science, impactful stories

As the first cohort of CORDAP-funded projects reached the halfway point of their journey, we decided to visit some of them to document how their research is progressing. With a storytelling mindset and a notebook full of questions, we embarked on this adventure. Working with local videographers, we interviewed not only the research teams, but also government representatives and members of the local community.

Photo Carla Lourenço

We produced and directed a series of short documentaries to highlight the distinctiveness of each project and acknowledge the people behind the work. The documentary series can be found on our social media channels, including LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube.

Photo Marvin del Cid

Photo Manlio Martinez

Social media platforms help bridge geographic distance,

enabling people to share knowledge and remain connected to global developments in real time. The coral community is no exception. Our social media channels have become a virtual meeting space for coral experts and practitioners worldwide — from the Caribbean to the Coral Triangle. As this online community grows, so does our reach: more people learn about our funding opportunities and discover ways to strengthen and amplify collective action for coral reef conservation.

Total number of people on CORDAP events

843

Online community

16,035 followers **(45% growth)** on Instagram + LinkedIn

Social media audience was **>1.7 million people** with **>4.2 million impressions**

and **160,000** engagements

Website

23,530 visitors from **192** nations and territories

68 000 views

Total downloads of roadmaps: **933**

CORDAP was mentioned in

280 media articles

Key Highlights

Capturing a full year of progress in just a few pages is no small task.

From forging new partnerships to unlocking new financial resources for coral research worldwide, 2025 was a year of momentum and delivery. What follows is a snapshot of our year in review.

Partnership

Racing to save corals

We teamed up with E1, Aoki Racing Team and Westbrook Racing to drive global action for coral conservation. Owned by world-renowned DJ Steve Aoki and Hollywood icon Will Smith respectively, both teams compete in the UIM E1 World Championship. Together with E1 and the two teams, we connected the public with the science and innovation behind coral conservation, showcasing the role of sport and music in ocean protection, mobilizing resources for long-term coral solutions.

"We are at a pivotal moment for ocean conservation, and coral reefs are at the heart of this crisis. Through our partnership with CORDAP, we want to use the power of sport to drive awareness and action, ensuring that these vital ecosystems are protected for future generations."

– Ana Agostinho,
Sustainability Lead for Westbrook Racing

Photo KAUST

"After seeing how much devastation is down there, losing more corals is heartbreaking to me. But it is important to see that, to see what's happening with the rising temperatures and how much it affects everything. We can't lose the corals – that's priority number one. We need to save them."

– Steve Aoki,
DJ and Owner of Aoki Racing Team


Photo KAUST

Jan - Mar

Apr - Jun

Event Partnership

Coral solutions for breakfast

We partnered with OceanX and The Earthshot Prize to deliver a high-level side event at the third UN Ocean Conference aboard the OceanXplorer, a research and media vessel operated by OceanX. The event brought together global voices from venture capital, corporate, investment and philanthropic organisations – including musician and ocean advocate James Blunt and environmentalist Philippe Cousteau Jr. – to discuss how to bridge the gap between breakthroughs and real-world implementation, particularly in the Global South.


Photo OceanX

Partnership

Partnering with The Earthshot Prize

CORDAP and the Earthshot Prize announced a new strategic partnership to fast-track solutions for coral reef protection and restoration.

"The Earthshot Prize is thrilled to be partnering with CORDAP to help promising and much-needed coral solutions to fast-track their deployment in the coming years. We want to know how tech, local stewardship and innovative financing can come together to offer greater ecosystem resilience."

– Chris Large,
Senior Director of Prize and Portfolio at The Earthshot Prize


Photo Matt Curnock / Ocean Image Bank

Partnership

A bold agreement

CORDAP and Red Sea Global entered into a collaborative agreement to create a shared framework for advancing coral reef conservation, marine research and sustainable development. The partnership spans joint R&D, knowledge sharing and capacity building, public awareness and education and sustainable tourism practices, while supporting learning initiatives and operational collaboration with the Red Sea Marine Life Institute.

Event

The call to Action Plan

In late September, we brought together leaders from science, policy, finance and civil society to jointly shape a high-level roadmap for taking coral innovation from research and development to real-world impact. This collective effort would not have been possible without the support of Kanaloa, the MSC Foundation, 10% for the Ocean, and all partners who helped chart this shared path forward. In 2026, we will release the Coral Action Plan and invite an even broader community of partners and stakeholders to help turn this vision into action.

Photo CORDAP

Jul - Sep

Oct - Dec

Partnership

Funding global coral training

The Fishmongers Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust agreed to support CORDAP's Capacity Building Initiative, a program designed to equip conservation practitioners with advanced training in coral restoration, reef monitoring and ecosystem-based conservation.

Event

An impactful week

Anchored by the UIM E1 World Championship Miami GP Finale, the Miami Blue Impact Week took place in Miami, Florida, bringing together leaders from sport, science, investment and local communities to accelerate ocean innovation, coastal resilience and coral restoration. The programme was delivered with the support of WICE, CORDAP, the MSC Foundation, XPRIZE and the Benioff Ocean Science Lab, alongside partners including UIM E1 (with Front Office Sports), Westbrook Racing, Team Miami, Team Brazil, Team Rafa, Florida International University, DEEP the Reefline, amongst others.

Event

Ocean20 Summit

In early November, the Ocean20 Summit took place in Cape Town, under South Africa's G20 presidency. CORDAP, represented by our Executive Director, Prof. Carlos Duarte, provided an overview of our history, explained the governance structure and highlighted our achievements and how the G20 initiative is accelerating science and technology to secure a safe future for corals.

Photo CORDAP

"We advocate G20 members to increase support to the Global Coral Research and Development Accelerator Platform, launched by the G20 in 2020, the first ocean-based initiative put in place by the G20. In its short, five year span CORDAP has raised support for collaborative efforts involving over 2000 scientists, from 645 institutions and 112 nations to provide the tools required to avoid the collapse of coral reefs. This attests the capacity of the G20 in catalysing ocean action".

– Ocean20 Communiqué

CORDAP's Governance Structure


Photo FUNDEMAR

CORDAP's Governance Structure

Initiative Governing Committee (IGC)

Every program, funding call and strategic decision at CORDAP begins around a shared table, where the members of our International Governance Committee use their expertise to chart the future priorities for CORDAP.

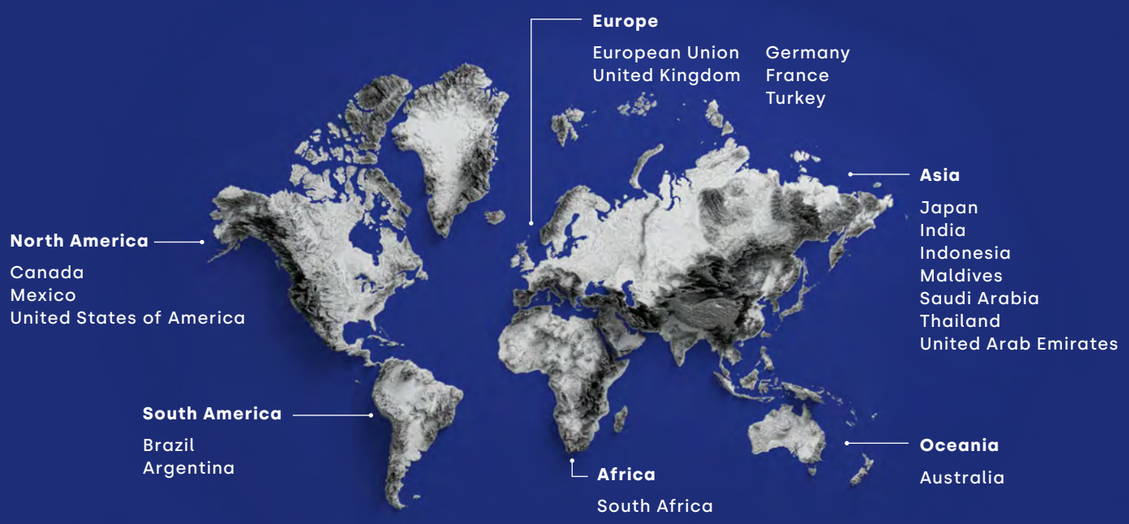
The IGC brings together G20 and non-G20 nations, along with international organizations that advise and support CORDAP's work. This diverse group, enriched by different realities and experiences, guides CORDAP's direction, approving its strategic plans, operating procedures, and the research projects recommended by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

CORDAP IGC is Chaired by

Dr. Osama Faqeeha
Deputy Minister of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Saudi Arabia.

and Vice-Chaired by

Ms. Jennifer Koss
Director, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, United States.



Advisory members to the IGC

Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC)
Dr. R. Scott Winters

Coral Triangle Initiative - Coral Reef Food and Fisheries
Dr. Frank Griffin, Mr. Christovel Rotinsulu

Global Center for Adaptation (GCA) New
Mr. Nitin Jain, Ms. Adele Cadario

Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR)
Mr. Yabanex Batista

Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF)
Dr. Theresa Fyffe, Ms. Margot Andersen

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
Mr. Francis Staub

International Coral Reef Society (ICRS)
Prof. Christian Voolstra

Japanese Coral Reef Society (JCRS)
Dr. Atsushi Watanabe

Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation (KSLOF)
Dr. Alexandra Dempsey

MIRPURI Foundation
Ms. Ana Agostinho

The Commonwealth Secretariat
Dr. Daniel Wilde

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
Ms. Sinikinesh Jimma, Mr. Gabriel Grimsditch, Mr. Aidan McKean

XPRIZE
Mr. David Babson

Scientific and Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Scientific and Advisory Committee (SAC) is comprised of renowned international coral scientists, managers, and engineers.

The SAC members use their extensive scientific knowledge to assist the Initiative Governing Committee by providing guidance and recommendations on CORDAP's overall strategy, funding program priorities, resource allocation and deliverables. The SAC monitors project performance, reviews the results of the overall CORDAP's programs and delivers its evaluation and recommendations to the IGC.

The SAC is Chaired by
Prof. Anastazia Banaszak,
Research Professor at the Institute of Ocean Sciences & Limnology, National Autonomous University of Mexico.

and Vice-Chaired by
Prof. Serge Planes,
Centre of Island Research and Environmental Observatory (CRIOBE), French Polynesia.

In 2025, we welcomed one new member to the Scientific and Advisory Committee

Prof. Christian Wild,
University of Bremen, Germany

Prof. Anastazia Banaszak
Institute of Ocean Sciences & Limnology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico

Prof. Callum Roberts
Centre for Ecology and Conservation at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Prof. Carlos Duarte
CORDAP / King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia

Dr. Daniel Lauretta
National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET), Argentina

Mr. David Mead
Independent Consultant

Dr. Elizabeth McLeod
The Nature Conservancy, United States of America

Prof. Hajime Kayane
University of Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Ian McLeod
Independent Contractor

Dr. Joanie Kleypas
Climate & Global Dynamics Lab at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), United States of America

Dr. Mark Gibbs
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), Australia

Prof. Michelle Devlin
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science / Collaborative Center for Sustainable Use of the Seas (CCSUS) at University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

Dr. Michelle Taylor
School of Life Sciences, University of Essex, United Kingdom

Mr. Muhammad Abrar
Research Center for Oceanography - National Research and Innovation Agency, Indonesia

Dr. Nathalie Hilmi
Monaco Scientific Centre, Monaco

Prof. Nur Eda Topcu Eryalcin
Faculty of Aquatic Sciences, Istanbul University/ Turkish Marine Research Foundation, Turkey

Dr. Rachel Pears
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), Australia

Prof. Ramesh Ramachandran
Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company / Department of Environment, Climate Change & Forests, Government of Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. Sean Porter
Oceanographic Research Institute, SouthAfrican Association for Marine Biological Research, South Africa

Prof. Serge Planes
Centre of Island Research and Environmental Observatory (CRIOBE), French Polynesia

Dr. Tali Vardi
Coral Restoration Consortium, United States of America

We work as one,

Photo CORDAP

move as one

CORDAP Foundation & the Platform Central Node (PCN)

Behind the correspondence, funding processes, project updates, events, strategic planning, digital platforms and ongoing coordination efforts is a dedicated team working continuously behind the scenes.

Based at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), the Platform Central Node (PCN) and the Global Coral R&D Accelerator Platform Foundation (CORDAP Foundation) work as one to advance CORDAP's mission. The Platform Central Node oversees the day-to-day running of CORDAP, providing coordination and support to the IGC, SAC, Foundation, and Awardees — keeping all the different members connected. The CORDAP Foundation is the nonprofit arm that manages and distributes the Platform's financial resources, ensuring that funds reach the projects and programs making a real difference for the world's corals.

Prof. Carlos Duarte
Executive Director & CEO of CORDAP Foundation

Hiroko Davis
Executive Secretary

Christine Rueping
Business Manager

Hetal Ganatra
Director of Partnerships

Ebtisam Bakhsh
Strategist

Abdullah Zubair
Fundraising Manager

Dr. Just Cebrian
Deputy Director

Dr. Carla Lourenço
Communications & PR Lead

Dr. Alexandra Steckbauer
Program Manager

Dr. Maheshwar Gummalla
Program Manager

Suganya Jaypal
Operations Specialist

Sofia Blount
Strategic and Policy Advisor

Mayya Khizbullina
Market Research & Admin Officer

Dr. Mark Rose
Strategic Advisor

David Mead
Program Expert

Andreas Hutahaean
Program Expert

Parmjit Takhar
Statutory Funding Specialist

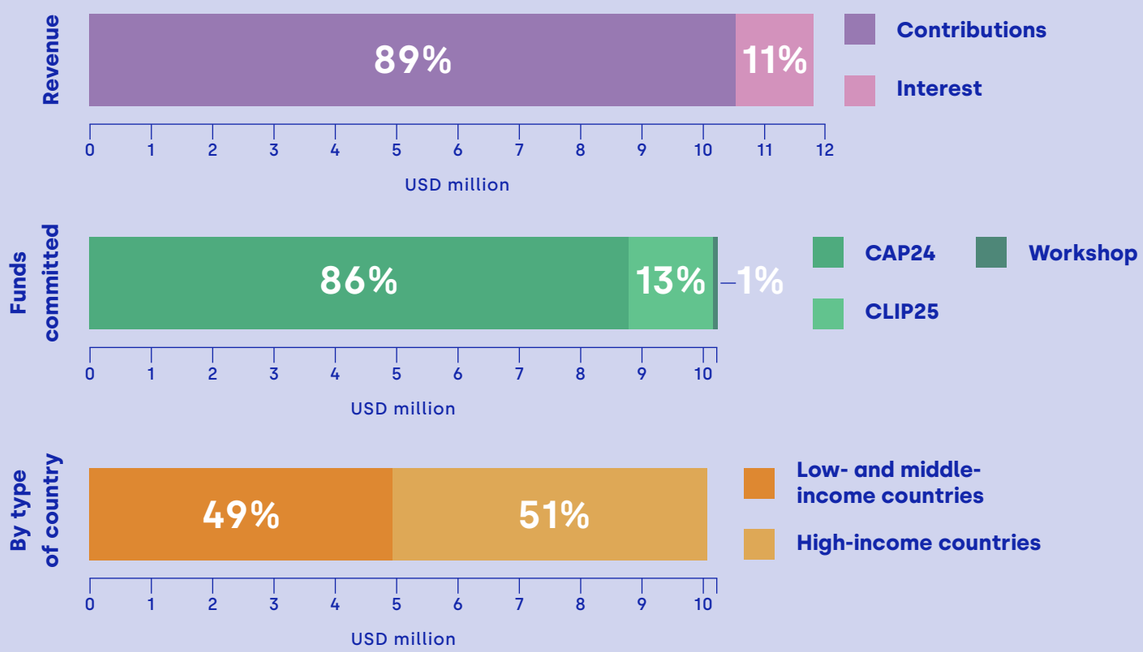
Financial Overview

Every reef restored and every project launched begins with careful management of our resources.

Our financial overview provides a transparent look at how CORDAP's funds are allocated, the support we receive, and how those resources translate into real-world impact for coral reefs.

From grants to operational expenses, each dollar reflects our commitment to driving science, innovation and conservation forward. This section highlights the key figures and decisions that make our work possible. With a net income of USD392,128 from 2024 carried over into 2025 — plus interest earnings from 2025 and after deducting USD10,236,252 committed to research programs — the remaining funds will transition into 2026 to support commitments for the upcoming round of awards (CAP 2025) and other programs, set to be announced in 2026.

Photo Joshua Vela



Reducing the funding gap in coral research and restoration between the Global North and the Global South

In 2025, throughout the various projects and programs

USD 4,941,823

was delivered to low- and middle-income countries

USD 5,127,433

was delivered to high-income countries

Operational costs

None of this progress would have been possible without the commitment of our founding partners the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). In 2025, we received a new USD 10 million installment from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, further strengthening our ability to support groundbreaking coral research. KAUST has funded and supported the entirety of CORDAP's administrative costs, and has provided resources for operational costs, including high-level international events. This foundational support ensures that all additional funds raised from donors go directly towards the research and development programs.

Photo Blue Indigo Foundation

Ways of Supporting Our Work

Letter from the Director of Partnerships

As Director of Partnerships at CORDAP, I see the extraordinary impact that collaboration can have on the future of coral reefs every day. At a time when coral ecosystems are under unprecedented pressure, partnership is not optional, it is essential.

CORDAP was established to accelerate science, innovation, and capacity building for coral conservation at a global scale. We work at the intersection of research, technology and on-the-ground application, ensuring that breakthrough ideas are translated into real-world solutions for the reefs and communities that depend on them. With our 45 ongoing projects all over the globe, research teams are making strides that would be impossible without our donors. But our ability to deliver this impact depends on the strength and diversity of our partnerships.

There are many ways you can support and engage with CORDAP, including:

- Strategic partnerships to co-develop and scale innovative solutions for coral resilienceand restoration;
- Research collaborations to advance cutting-edge science and accelerate knowledge exchange;
- Programmatic funding to enable long-term, high-impact projects;
- Capacity-building support that empowers researchers and practitioners, particularly in the Global South;
- Corporate engagement through sponsorship, employee involvement and technology partnerships.

By partnering with CORDAP, you are not only supporting individual projects - you are investing in a global platform designed to deliver systemic change for coral reefs.

The coming years will define the future of the world's corals. We have the science, the talent and the momentum.

What we need now is bold partnership and sustained commitment. I invite you to work with us as we accelerate solutions, strengthen resilience, and help secure a future in which coral reefs continue to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you.
Kind regards,

Hetal Ganatra
Director of Partnerships

Photo Robin Philippo

How to support our mission

CORDAP accelerates and scales practical coral reef conservation bridging science, innovation and on-the-ground delivery across regions and partners. Our work is catalytic: we back the people, solutions and systems that can shift outcomes at scale, and we co-create projects that unlock wider investment and long-term stewardship.

Ways to support

Trusts & Foundations

Multi-year and programme grants, project funding and in-kind support to test, strengthen and scale what works.

Government & public sector

Programme co-funding, capacity building and technical collaboration to bring proven approaches to scale.

Corporates

Sponsorship, co-funding, match funding and in-kind support (expertise, technology, logistics, communications and convening).

Individuals

One-off donations, regular giving, major gifts and match appeals through your network or employer.

What it enables

Funding to CORDAP helps us to:

Back and scale solutions
that accelerate reef restoration and regeneration

Build capability
through training, knowledge exchange and practitioner support

Bridge science
and delivery through practical tools, standards and partnerships

Catalyse co-investment
by unlocking larger funding flows and stronger collaborations

To explore partnerships, co-funding, or in-kind support, please get in touch.

Thank you to those who make our work possible

We are deeply grateful to the funders and partners who enable our mission and make our impact possible.

Core and principal donor

Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA)

MEWA provides the foundational support for CORDAP's core programs and platform, underpinning our ability to operate with ambition, credibility and long-term commitment.

Program and project donors

We extend our sincere thanks to the organisations supporting our work through funding, co-funding and collaboration, including:

In-kind supporters and delivery partners

We are also grateful for the in-kind contributions and partnership support that strengthen delivery and accelerate outcomes, including:

Hosted by KAUST

We are grateful to KAUST for hosting CORDAP and supporting our administration. This allows us to direct resources where they matter most, meaning 100% of donor contributions go to programs.

To every donor, partner and collaborator: thank you for your trust, commitment and shared belief that coral reefs and the communities and economies that depend on them, are worth fighting for.

Photo Robin Philippo

Annex

The following articles and reports were published in 2025 as part of CORDAP funded projects and activities:

"The 4th global coral bleaching event in Malaysia: insights, outcomes, and paths forward."
- By Sebastian Szereday and colleagues published in April 2025.

"Identification of housekeeping gene for future studies exploring effects of cryopreservation on gene expression in shrimp"
- By Yen-Po Chen and colleagues, published in Frontiers of Marine Science, in April 2025.

"Volcanic ash leaching alters the trace metal distribution within the coral holobiont of Stylophora pistillata"
- By Frank Förster and colleagues published in EGU Interactive Community Platform, in May 2025.

"Enhancing coral photosynthesis: The power of manganese-alginate gels"
- By Gabriel Moreira and colleagues, published in Journal of Trace Elements in Medicine and Biology, in June 2025.

"Conservation of coral genetic diversity through a global biorepository network"
- By Mary Hagedorn and colleagues, published in Bioscience, in August 2025.

"Status of Florida's pillar coral population: in situ declines and ex situ successes"
- By Karen Neely and colleagues, published in Scientific Reports, in September 2025.

"Induced bleaching enhances cold tolerance in coral larvae: a potential strategy for cryopreservation optimization"
- By Federica Buttari published in Coral Reefs, in October 2025.

"Species-specific bleaching trajectories during the 4th global coral bleaching event in northeastern Peninsular Malaysia"
- By Sebastian Szereday and colleagues published in bioRxiv in October 2025.

"DNA preservation on blotting paper & DNA extraction protocol for field collection of coral samples suitable for marker gene sequencing approaches"
- By Marlen Schlotheuber and colleagues, published in Zenodo, in November 2025.

"Sound properties and shallow water propagation for acoustic enrichment in coral reefs"
- By Youenn Jézéquel and colleagues, published in The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, in November 2025.

Status and Trends of Caribbean Coral Reefs: 1970 – 2024. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) and International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI).

Strategies using sexual reproduction to conserve and restore corals: a case study from the Mexican Caribbean
- By Anastazia Banaszak and colleagues, published in Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution, in December 2025.

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G20 Coral Research
& Development
Accelerator
Platform

G20 Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform (CORDAP)

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
(KAUST), Innovation Center (Building 24),
Thuwal 23955-6900, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
T: 00966 12 808 2617
pcn@kaust.edu.sa

https://cordap.org

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Photo Robin Philippo