



## Let's talk about Coastal Challenges

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Inspire Area – European Digital Ocean Pavilion

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### Abstract

# Accelerating Coastal Community Led Conservation

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Coastal communities, Indigenous Peoples, and small-scale fishers have historically acted as stewards of the coastal ecosystems vital for their sustenance, livelihoods, and cultural identity. However, mounting challenges such as unsustainable fishing, habitat degradation, and climate change pose significant threats. Coastal communities' rights to manage their resources are often not recognized, and capacity is lacking to develop alternative livelihoods to improve community well-being while reducing threats to biodiversity.

Despite decades of cooperative effort and important local successes, achievements to date are not commensurate with the challenges: 3.1 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and 37.7% of fish stocks are fished beyond biologically sustainable limits. With climate change bearing down on the planet, the vicious cycle of poverty, lack of political power and environmental degradation threatens to spin out of control. It's time to act at scale to fundamentally reverse that cycle by deploying just and socially inclusive approaches to build the resilience of coastal communities and of the natural systems they depend upon.

At WWF, our track record shows that to drive transformative change, coastal community-led conservation has to be built on an holistic approach: our “five-point plan”. The initiative applies a “scaling by design” framework to scale and accelerate coastal community led conservation. Together with 700 local and international partners we are going viral, reaching 300 sites across 33 countries globally.

