

### Program Overview

The Coral Reef Targeted Research & Capacity Building for Management (CRTR) Program is a long-term initiative established to address fundamental information gaps in our understanding of coral reef ecosystems, so that management options and policy interventions can be strengthened globally. Phase One of this initiative commenced on 1 December 2004 and will finish on 30 November 2009.

The Phase One goal is to:

*"Build scientific capacity necessary to provide the information needed for management and policy, so that coral reef ecosystems under threat from climate change and multiple human stressors can be sustained for current and future generations".*

### Centres of Excellence

Currently, most coral reef research is based in universities and research institutes in the developed world, whereas most coral reefs are located in developing countries. Rectifying this global imbalance in knowledge and capacity is a key mission of the CRTR Program.

To accomplish this, the Program intends to build or enhance the capacity of institutions in at least three developing country sites within the first phase so that they can function as regional Centres of Excellence. These three sites will be supported by a fourth site based in a developed country.

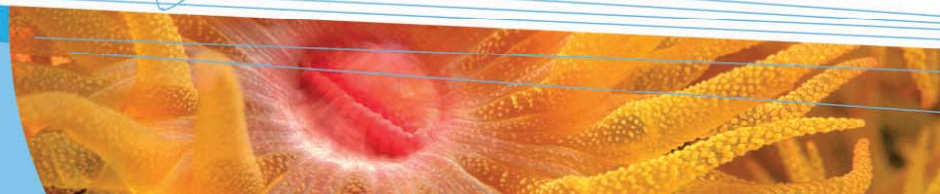
The four operational sites or Centres of Excellence are:

1. Southeast Asia: The Marine Science Institute/Bolinao Marine Laboratory of the University of the Philippines, Philippines
2. East Africa: Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Tanzania.
3. Mesoamerica/Western Caribbean: Unidad Academica Puerto Morelos, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, Mexico.
4. Australasia/South Pacific: Heron Island Research Laboratory, Centre of Marine Studies, The University of Queensland, Australia.

### Southeast Asian Centre of Excellence

The Southeast Asian Centre of Excellence 'hub' is The Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines (UPMSI) together with its Bolinao Marine Laboratory (BML). UPMSI is located at the Diliman Campus of UP in Quezon City (Metro Manila). BML is situated 275km north-west from Manila, at Cape Bolinao, Pangasinan Province, on the western side of the mouth of Lingayen Gulf in Luzon Island.

BML is the principal field research station of the UPMSI. It is sited only a few kilometres from a coral reef complex that UPMSI has studied since the early 1980s. BML serves as the main base for research on coral reefs around Lingayen Gulf and neighbouring towns.



## Activities

The Centre of Excellence has become the focus for coral reef research in Southeast Asia and will serve two important functions. Firstly, it will provide a venue and technical support for the research of the various Working Groups (particularly the Remediation & Restoration Working Group, Remote Sensing Working Group and Modeling and Decision Support Working Group), and secondly, it will develop and extend local research activities related to coral reefs.

The objectives of the COE include:

1. To provide technical support for the research activities of the Working Groups.
2. To upgrade the reference coral collections in BML and UPMSI, and to develop local expertise for the identification of Indo-Pacific species.
3. To undertake other research related to coral diseases and to connectivity with a view to expanding the activities of the Working Groups for these disciplines, while focusing on local issues.
4. To increase the capacity of the COE, in particular to conduct coral reef research and training, in order to extend information and skills to local and regional stakeholders, managers and researchers alike.

Initially focusing on two functions, upgrading facilities and supporting local research priorities, the COE will also initiate training and capacity building activities which will be given increasing prominence in subsequent years as the research results become available, with a view to making contributions for coral reef management in the country and in the region.

The local research priorities identified to be undertaken during Phase One include:

1. Coral identification and taxonomy

2. Coral disease and marine microbiology
3. Connectivity of populations of economically-important reef species

Within these research projects, the Centre of Excellence will also be supporting local MSc and PhD students. Trainings for local scientists will also be conducted alongside the scholarships.

Of the utmost importance to the COE will be the need to communicate results to the management and policy communities. The COE aims to initially undertake the building and maintaining of these networks through a series of targeted consultation workshops and meetings with relevant stakeholders. At the municipal level, steps have also been undertaken to liaise with organizations of fishers and coastal managers from local government units to address their needs. This dialogue will be expanded in the coming years.

## Further Information

Further information regarding the Southeast Asian Centre of Excellence can be obtained from:

Emeritus Professor Edgardo Gomez  
The Marine Science Institute  
University of the Philippines  
Diliman, Quezon City  
1101 Philippines

Ph/Fax: + 63 2 435-7417

Email: edgomez@upmsi.ph

CRTR Project partners include the Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Bank (WB), The University of Queensland (UQ), United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), UNESCO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO) and approximately 50 research institutes & other third parties around the world.

**Global Coral Reef Targeted Research & Capacity Building Project**  
c/o Centre for Marine Studies  
The University of Queensland  
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia  
**phone:** +61 7 3345 4333  
**fax:** +61 7 3346 9987  
**email:** info@gefcoral.org

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[www.gefcoral.org](http://www.gefcoral.org)