

## *Building Capacity for Community-based Marine Conservation*

Myanmar has diverse coastal and marine habitats, including coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, sandy beaches and mudflats. Because of political issues, subsequent sanctions and lack of technical assistance, information on these habitats is extremely limited, as are effective conservation measures.



A Report by Frank Momberg

Even so, the threats facing Myanmar's coastal and marine environments – overfishing, coastal development, and the use of destructive fishing practices such as dynamite and cyanide - are high and understood to be increasing.

The Myanmar government has expressed its commitment, through international conventions, to put 10% of its marine areas under protection by 2020; however a range of factors including the lack of biological and socio-economic data and a lack of financial and technical resources severely constrain the ability of the government and other actors to meet this target.

The Lighthouse Foundation is supporting Fauna & Flora International to help build the capacity of government departments, local Burmese

NGOs, and coastal communities so that they are able to survey Myanmar's marine environments and then design and implement effective marine conservation measures to protect them.

This project will pilot the establishment of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) which will be managed by local communities and government departments together. LMMAs have the potential to protect key habitats and fisheries whilst alleviating poverty and empowering local fishing communities to take an active role in managing the resources on which they depend.

The project will focus on the Tanintharyi Division which is home to some of Myanmar's best coral reefs.

### [Project objective](#)

Build the capacity of local NGOs and local com-

munities in the Tanintharyi Division in coastal and marine ecosystem assessment for the development of a network of locally managed marine areas (LMMAs) and formally designated marine protected areas in the Central Tanintharyi Marine Area.

#### Activities in year 1

The project will take a phased approach, initially focussing on the technical capacity building of government and NGO partners. Training will be provided in swimming, scuba diving and in marine survey techniques. This will be followed by a period of on the job training, during which project partners will be supported to conduct some of the first underwater surveys in Myanmar. The results of these surveys will feed into the identification of a suitable pilot project site in year one where the LMMA approach can be developed and implemented. The process of training and implementation will help to ensure that project partners are subsequently able to take a more active and independent role in marine spatial planning and equipped to replicate approaches in other sites and at larger scales.

#### Project activities in year 1 include

A study tour or exchange visit to the Lighthouse Foundation project site in India to explore and learn from appropriate marine management models

- Skill development (swimming, GIS, PADI diving certification, in-water surveys)
- Collection and analysis of biological and socio-economic data
- Identification of pilot site for LMMA approach
- Community consultations and participatory planning for LMMAs
- Training in methodologies for marine protected area design and governance
- Institutional strengthening (local NGOs)

#### Period:

since January 2013

#### Funding 2013:

15.000 EUR

#### Project partner:

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