

Strengthening small-scale fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas in Aceh, Indonesia

Beneficiary: Fauna & Flora International
Location: Indonesia, Southeast Asia
Grant Cycle: 2024 - 2026
Type of Grant: two-year program support
Environment & Biodiversity Protection
Website: fauna-flora.org

Established in 1903, Fauna & Flora is the world's oldest international conservation organisation. For more than 120 years FFI has been working with its partners around the world to protect and conserve threatened species and ecosystems. The Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation's commitment to protecting the environment dates back to its founding in 2000, and Flora & Fauna was one of the first organisations the Foundation partnered with to help preserve the world's biodiversity. Since 2001, the NaEPF has worked with Flora & Fauna on several projects, and in 2023 the NaEPF renewed its support for the organisation with a grant of over EUR 3 million that will fund six new projects to preserve the environment and biodiversity worldwide.

The Kepulauan Banyak and PiSiSi Marine Protected Areas (MPA) are located off the West Coast of Aceh province and Southeast of Simeulue Island, Indonesia. They cover an area of circa 250.000 ha. and host critical habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds. This area is managed by the Government of Aceh who work to protect its biodiversity and coral reef fisheries.

Despite the importance of the coastal and marine ecosystems and resources of Aceh, its coral reefs, and the people's livelihoods that they support, are under increasing threat, primarily from illegal and destructive fishing practices. Particularly notable is compressor fishing, which catches not only marine life indiscriminately but also poses severe health risks to those who make use of the practice. PiSiSi and Kepulauan Banyak MPAs also face a number of other challenges that include: a lack of community participation/involvement to support protection and monitoring efforts in the MPAs; insufficient

sustainable fisheries management; unsustainable fishing practices; lack of community and stakeholder awareness of the fishery benefit of MPAs and lack of willingness to comply with fishery regulation; lack of an MPA management unit to utilise research findings for adaptive management; lack of adequate patrol, surveillance, and enforcement of fishery zones; and limited important data on endangered, threatened, and protected species such as whales, dolphins, dugongs, whale sharks, turtles, and reef fish species. The project will benefit ten fishing communities within the Locally Managed Marine Area through the management of marine biodiversity and traditional fisheries of two MPAs in Aceh. Fauna & Flora International will promote and increase participation in community-led fisheries management practices, strengthen and maintain adequate community-led patrol, surveillance, and enforcement efforts of fishery zones in two MPAs in Aceh, and conduct training for the implementation of community-based fish catch monitoring. The project will contribute to establishing a system of participatory biodiversity conservation (including tackling fisheries issues), prioritising community engagement and traditional fisheries institutions so that local stakeholders can take the leading role in sustainable marine resource co-management in the MPAs. Those who will directly benefit from improved community-based fisheries management practices and documentation of the lessons learned are two MPA management units, 10 Panglima Laot, and 1,072 fishers in 10 LMMAs around the two MPAs. The project funded by the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation is due to be completed by June 2026.

“What instilled my profound respect for the ocean was to dive deep into it, to feel myself inside it and at the same time under it. Like an intruder, conscious of every movement of my breathing as the oxygen from the tanks filled my lungs, I watched my friends fishing, fascinated by the things I saw. The fleeting, short-lived miracle never ceased to amaze me.”

Elsa Peretti