

# ACT LOCALLY, THINK GLOBALLY.

*How local actions can contribute to just climate mitigations.*

*Policy Brief*



## HOW CAN THIS POLICY BRIEF SUPPORT YOU?

This policy brief serves to inform the IPCC and national and international policy makers to communicate and engage with local coastal communities, where involvement of decision making bodies and local actors work on strategic and locally targeted climate mitigation.

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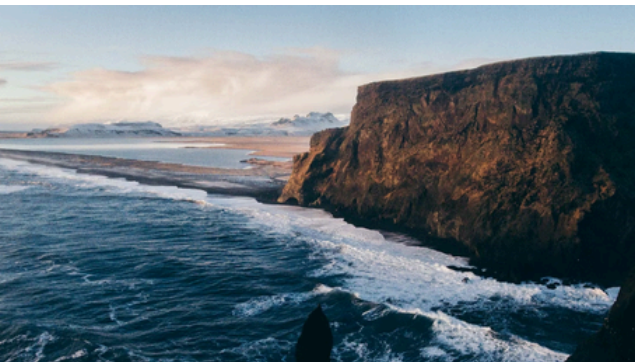
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## KEY MESSAGES

- Community engagement is a critical part of climate mitigation
- Programs should not only consist of information sharing but also promote individual and community actions
- Support needed is dependant on the particular community and unique challenges faced

## NARRATIVE OF THE PROBLEM

Coastal communities, who are dependent on coastal and marine systems for social, economic, and cultural benefits, represent a unique context that requires robust consideration by governing bodies, across all scales (International, Regional, National, and Local).

Within this context, just climate mitigations need to respond to global climate and sustainability challenges, whilst not amplifying existing inequalities, or worse, create new ones. As such, the global community holds an obligation to ensure that benefits from marine systems are equitably shared.

Equally, when considering the risks associated with the impacts of climate change, it is important that these are also addressed equitably. This includes local communities; not only in the final plan but also in the process of creation itself.

## FINANCE

Economic opportunities and incentives play a vital role in climate mitigation by enabling communities to take an active role in shaping their own future.

At the national level, governments and organizations have used Blue Bonds to raise funds for ocean conservation and sustainable development projects. These bonds have supported successful initiatives led by The Nature Conservancy in Seychelles and Belize, where both countries committed to protecting 30 percent of their marine areas (The Nature Conservancy, n.d.a; The Nature Conservancy, n.d. b).

At the local level, BlueInvest has supported more than 330 start-ups and sustainability initiatives within the European blue economy, including Magallanes Renovables, which develops tidal energy technologies, and SEAWATER Cubes, which has developed compact aquaculture systems (EC, n.d. a).

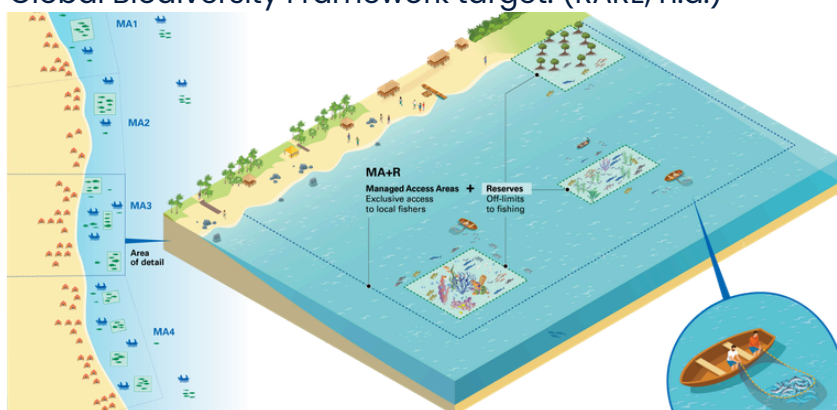
EU's funding programme for research and innovation, Horizon Europe, also supports financing climate mitigation by providing targeted EU funding for regions, local authorities, and research partnerships (EC, 2021).

## RESTORATION

Conservation initiatives, habitat restoration projects, and regenerative fisheries practices by small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Indonesia are a direct act of locally led climate mitigation (Marciano, 2025). For example, Managed Access with Reserves (MA+R), piloted by the SSF Impact Bond in Indonesia, represent tangible climate-positive interventions in coastal seas.

By pairing sustainable use and protection of coastal waters, this conservation measure brings positive outcomes for both people through "Managed Access", and nature through "Reserves". Mapped areas of water with Managed Access are legally established and cooperatively managed by local authorities and fishing communities, ensuring preferential rights to fishing in those areas. Reserves are within or adjacent to areas of Managed Access, where fishing prohibitions exist so marine habitats and fish populations can regenerate.

Restoration through MA+R sites demonstrates that conservation and human welfare need not be in conflict. They show that climate impact of locally led conservation interventions is proportional to strategic planning and coordination, offering a pathway to meeting the 30x30 Global Biodiversity Framework target. (RARE, n.d.)

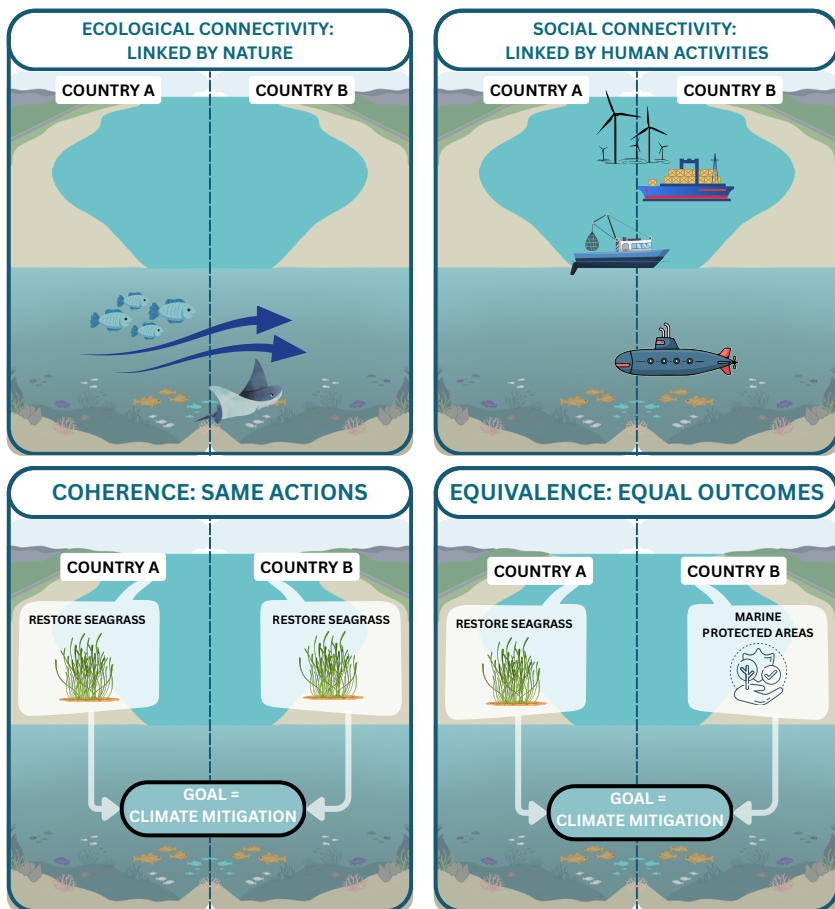


## EDUCATION

Tackling misinformation through ocean literacy is essential for just climate mitigation. Coastal communities and young people need the skills to understand climate risks, evaluate information, and participate in decisions affecting marine futures. Effective climate mitigation must include marginalized communities and underrepresented voices in ocean knowledge and governance (Puskic et al., 2025).

Local and community-based initiatives show how such literacy can become action. The EU-funded GES4SEAS project provides a practical example where it co-created the comic book to communicate marine-science messages in accessible formats (GES4SEAS, n.d.). This shows that education can move beyond technical communication by making ocean knowledge understandable, inclusive, and youth-oriented.

Bølgen Sustainability Centre in Norway, is a regional sustainability and innovation hub that offers meeting spaces and project support for green transition and community collaboration (Bølgen bærekraftsenter, n.d.). RARE is a global nonprofit that uses behavioral science, local leadership, and partnerships to help communities protected and restore natural resources (RARE, n.d.). Investing in education, ocean literacy, and community platforms can build trust and empower the next generation of ocean stewards.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- **Expand accessible climate finance**, such as Blue Bonds, Horizon Europe, and BlueInvest, to support locally led coastal mitigation and restoration.
- **Invest in ocean literacy** and misinformation resilience so coastal communities and youth can participate meaningfully in climate decisions.
- **Prioritize nature-positive, community-led solutions** that restore coastal ecosystems while protecting local livelihoods.
- **Align IPCC guidance**, Paris Agreement implementation, national policies, and regional action plans to ensure just and coordinated coastal mitigation.

## TRANSBOUNDARY COHERENCE

To achieve global climate mitigation targets equitably, it is necessary to co-produce local interventions with nations and vulnerable communities most affected by climate change (Elsler et al., 2025).

Marine governance must move beyond isolated national strategies and embrace transboundary coherence (Elliott et al., 2023). This process ensures that local climate mitigations are context specific, the best fit for the local community and mobilise fragmented jurisdictions into a unified global effort.

This principle is shown in practice by the Caribbean Challenge Initiative (CCI, 2013) and the Caribbean Protected Areas Network (Global Parks, 2014). These best practice cases illustrate that neighbouring island nations can harmonise localised Protected Area designations to enhance blue carbon systems; scaling up the local sequestration capacity for regional contribution to global climate mitigation.

This example demonstrates how administrative coherence can prevent small island developing states from bearing disproportionate conservation costs alongside safeguarding local fishers. Also, it secures equivalent outcomes across borders. Hence, for local actions to have global impact, climate initiatives need to embrace connectivity, coherence, and equivalence (Elliott et al., 2023).



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ADDRESSED:



## FINANCING

- **National level: Blue bonds:** National incentives like Blue bonds help national governments and corporations to have long term sustainability objectives and benefits.
- **Local level: BlueInvest:** Local incentives such as BlueInvest are essential for driving economic growth, as they help innovative small companies start-up and expand.
- **International cooperation and strategic partnerships:** Horizon programs is EU's funding programme for research and innovation

- **Managed Access with Reserves (MA+R):** Small-scale fisheries led climate mitigation, pairing sustainable use and protection of coastal waters (Marciano, 2025).
- **Mutual Benefits:** People are impacted positively through MA, while Nature benefits through R.
- **Positive outcomes:** MA+R sites demonstrate that conservation and human welfare need **not** be in conflict.
- **Strategy & Coordination:** Climate impact of locally led conservation interventions is **proportional** to strategic planning and coordination.

## RESTORATION

## EDUCATION

- **Counter misinformation through ocean literacy:** Help coastal communities and youth understand climate risks and evaluate information critically.
- **Make knowledge inclusive and accessible:** Translate complex marine science into clear, engaging, and youth-oriented education.
- **Empower local stewardship:** Build trust, participation, and community ownership for just climate mitigation and restoration.

- To achieve **global climate mitigation targets** equitably **requires local interventions that are co-produced** with nations and vulnerable communities most affected by climate change.
- Administrative coherence can **prevent localities from bearing disproportionate conservation costs alongside safeguarding local economies** and securing equivalent outcomes across borders.
- **Transboundary coherence** ensures that local climate mitigations are context specific and the best fit for the local community and mobilise fragmented jurisdictions into a unified global effort.

## TRANSBOUNDARY COHERENCE

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