

REEF WITHOUT BORDERS

Restoring and protecting the coral reefs of Cebu,
Philippines



A Letter from the Executive Director

I learned to read a reef the way some people learn to read a face. For twenty five years I have dived the waters of the Philippines, and the reefs of Cebu are the ones I know best. I have watched the same dive sites change across decades. Where there were once dense thickets of staghorn coral and clouds of fish, there are now stretches of broken rubble and bleached skeletons. This did not happen by accident, and it does not have to be permanent.

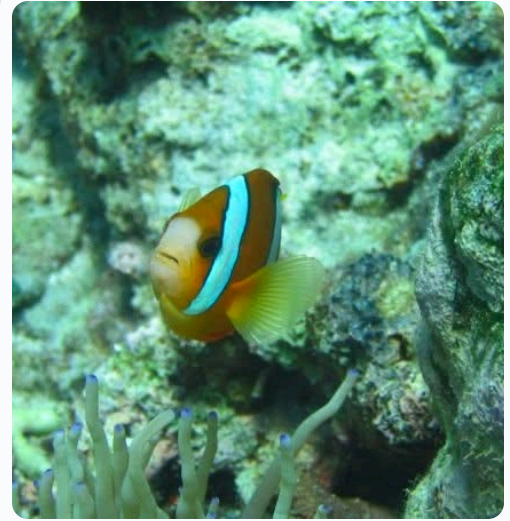
Reef Without Borders exists because of what I have seen with my own eyes underwater, and because of what I believe as a person of faith. Care for creation is not a slogan to me. It is a responsibility. The reefs of Cebu feed families, shelter the coast from storms, and hold a richness of life that took thousands of years to build. We are losing them in a single generation, and the communities that depend on them are losing them first.

This plan is not a wish list. It is a working roadmap built around what actually moves the needle in Philippine waters: trained local divers, real monitoring data, marine protected areas that communities help design and defend, and honest funding that lasts. We start small and specific, in the reefs around Cebu City and the surrounding islands, and we grow only as fast as we can do the work well.

I am asking you to read this plan and to join us. Every dollar here is tied to an outcome we can measure and show you. The reefs do not recover on sentiment. They recover on action.

Clarisa Strohmeyer

Founder and Executive Director, Reef Without Borders



An anemonefish on a reef in the central Philippines. Photo by Clarisa Strohmeyer.

AT A GLANCE

25 years diving the reefs of the central Philippines

2026 year of incorporation

14-year roadmap to 2040

A Fourteen-Year Roadmap for Cebu's Reefs

The Philippines sits at the center of the Coral Triangle, the most biodiverse marine region on Earth. It is also among the most threatened. The most recent nationwide assessment found that not a single surveyed Philippine reef ranked as excellent, and more than 90 percent fell into poor or fair condition for hard coral cover (A.M. Licuanan et al., 2017). Cebu, with its dense coastal population and heavy reliance on fishing and tourism, sits at the sharp edge of this crisis.

Reef Without Borders is a Houston based nonprofit with field operations in Cebu. Our work is led on the ground by experienced Filipino dive professionals and grounded in local knowledge. This plan sets a fourteen year course, from 2026 to 2040, organized in four phases that move from establishing a credible field presence to handing durable, community managed marine protected areas to the people who live beside them.

What We Will Accomplish by 2040

- Establish active reef monitoring across at least 20 priority sites around Cebu and neighboring islands
- Restore coral on degraded reefs covering a cumulative 10 hectares using science based methods
- Support the creation or strengthening of 12 community managed marine protected areas
- Train more than 300 local divers, fishers, and youth in monitoring, restoration, and stewardship
- Build alternative livelihood programs reaching 1,000 coastal households

20+ REEF SITES MONITORED	12 MARINE PROTECTED AREAS SUPPORTED	10 ha CORAL REEF RESTORED	300+ PEOPLE TRAINED
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By the Numbers, 2026–2040

20+

Reef sites monitored

12

Community managed MPAs

10 ha

Coral reef restored

300+

People trained

1,000

Households reached

\$2.85M

14-year total investment



A healthy, diverse reef of the kind Reef Without Borders works to protect and restore. Photo by Clarisa Strohmeyer.

INVESTMENT PROFILE

The total fourteen year investment is approximately **2.85 million US dollars**, beginning at roughly **95,000 dollars** in the first year and scaling with proven results.

This plan shows funders exactly where that money goes and what it buys.

Mission, Vision, and Values

OUR MISSION

Reef Without Borders restores and protects coral reefs in the Philippines by combining field science, trained local divers, and community led marine protection, so that reefs and the people who depend on them can thrive together.

OUR VISION

A Cebu coastline where living reefs again sustain abundant fisheries, shelter communities from storms, and are protected for generations by the people who live beside them.

Our Values

Stewardship. We treat the ocean as a trust to be cared for, not a resource to be spent.

Local first. Filipino divers, fishers, and leaders guide the work in their own waters.

Evidence. We measure what we do and report it honestly, including what does not work.

Durability. We build protection that outlasts our funding and our founders.

Dignity. Conservation must improve, not threaten, the livelihoods of coastal families.

Twenty-Five Years in the Making

Reef Without Borders was incorporated in May 2026, but its roots run twenty five years deep in the dive sites of the central Philippines. Our founder, Clarisa Strohmeyer, spent decades diving these reefs and watching them decline. Reef Without Borders was created to turn that long firsthand witness into organized, fundable action, pairing a United States nonprofit base with a Cebu field team who know these waters and these communities.

"Reef Without Borders exists because coral reefs do not recover on sentiment. They recover on action."

— Clarisa Strohmeyer, Founder



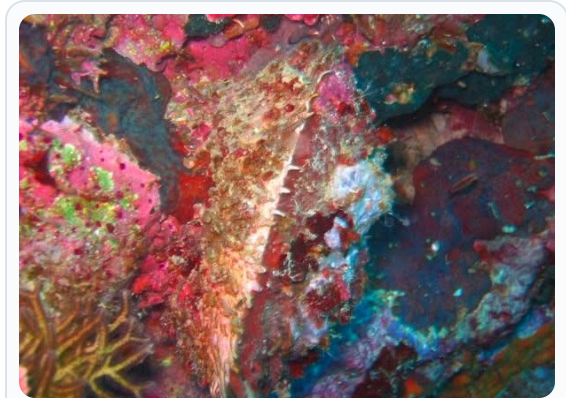
A mature brain coral colony. Corals like this take decades to grow and are lost in moments to destructive fishing. Photo by Clarisa Strohmeyer.

THE CHALLENGE

Cebu's Reefs in Crisis

The Philippines holds some of the richest coral reef biodiversity on the planet, part of the Coral Triangle that spans the waters of Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. The Coral Triangle contains roughly 76 percent of the world's coral species and 37 percent of its coral reef fishes (World Resources Institute, Reefs at Risk Revisited in the Coral Triangle, 2012).

That richness is in steep decline. The most recent nationwide scientific assessment of Philippine reefs, led by researchers at De La Salle University, surveyed reef stations across the country and found that not one qualified as being in excellent condition, and more than 90 percent fell into the poor or fair categories for hard coral cover (A.M. Licuanan et al., Philippine Journal of Science, 2017). The national average hard coral cover measured only about 22 percent (W.Y. Licuanan et al., 2019), and comparisons indicate roughly a third of reef corals were lost over a single decade.



A degraded reef section overtaken by algae, sponge, and encrusting growth, a sign of a reef under stress. Photo by Clarisa Strohmeyer.

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PHILIPPINE REEFS SURVEYED
THAT RANK AS EXCELLENT

~22%

NATIONAL AVERAGE
HARD CORAL COVER

98%

REEFS HIT BY OVERFISHING AND
DESTRUCTIVE FISHING

Sources: A.M. Licuanan et al. (2017); W.Y. Licuanan et al. (2019); WRI Reefs at Risk Revisited in the Coral Triangle (2012).

Where the Pressure Falls Hardest

Cebu is one of the most densely populated provinces in the Philippines, and its coastal communities depend directly on the sea. That dependence, layered onto decades of destructive practices, has hit local reefs hard. The reef systems we focus on include:

Mactan Island reefs.

Heavily used for tourism and diving, under pressure from coastal construction, sedimentation, and crowding.

Olango Island and its reef flats.

Adjacent to a wildlife sanctuary of international importance for migratory birds, with reefs that support local fishing families.

Camotes Islands.

Reefs that remain comparatively healthy in places and are worth protecting before they decline further.

Tañon Strait.

The largest marine protected area in the country, stretching about 161 kilometers between Cebu and Negros and covering more than 5,000 square kilometers. It holds an estimated 62 percent of all Philippine coral species and 14 species of whales and dolphins, yet remains one of the most heavily exploited fishing grounds in the nation (Tañon Strait Protected Seascape; DENR).

What Is Driving the Decline

Overfishing and destructive fishing.

Destructive and unsustainable fishing affects an estimated 98 percent of Philippine reefs, and the national harvest rate runs roughly 30 percent above the maximum sustainable yield (WRI, 2012).

Coastal development and sedimentation.

Coastal development threatens nearly 60 percent of the country's reefs, smothering corals and blocking the light they need (WRI, 2012).

Climate driven bleaching.

When warming driven bleaching is added to local pressures, more than 90 percent of reefs across the Coral Triangle are rated as threatened (WRI, 2012).

Weak local enforcement.

Across the Coral Triangle, less than one percent of marine protected areas were found to be fully effective at curbing threats such as overfishing, so many protected areas exist mainly on paper (WRI, 2012).

Why This Matters to People

Healthy reefs in the Philippines are not a luxury. They are food security, storm protection, and income. Reef fisheries support more than one million small scale fishers and the country's reefs deliver sustainable net benefits estimated at over one billion US dollars a year, drawn chiefly from fisheries, coastal protection, and tourism (A.T. White et al., *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 2000; WRI). More than half of the animal protein eaten in the Philippines comes from marine fisheries and aquaculture. When a reef dies, the fishing family beside it feels it first.

1M+

SMALL SCALE FISHERS
SUPPORTED BY REEF FISHERIES

\$1B+

IN ANNUAL NET BENEFITS
FROM PHILIPPINE REEFS

50%+

OF ANIMAL PROTEIN FROM
MARINE FISHERIES &
AQUACULTURE

Sources: A.T. White, H.P. Vogt, and T. Arin, *Philippine Coral Reefs Under Threat: The Economic Losses Caused by Reef Destruction*, *Marine Pollution Bulletin* (2000); World Resources Institute, *Reefs at Risk Revisited in the Coral Triangle* (2012).

Our Theory of Change

Our logic is simple and testable. Each step is something we can fund, do, and measure.

IF	Train and equip local divers and fishers to monitor and restore reefs	Cebu gains a skilled local workforce and reliable reef data	so that conservation continues without depending on outside experts
IF	Restore degraded reefs using proven, science based methods	Coral cover and reef structure begin to recover at target sites	so that fish populations and biodiversity rebuild over time
IF	Help communities design and enforce marine protected areas	Fishing pressure eases and reefs are guarded by the people nearby	so that protection lasts because the community owns it
IF	Build alternative and reef friendly livelihoods	Families gain income that does not depend on stripping the reef	so that conservation and household survival pull in the same direction
IF	Report results honestly to funders and communities	Trust and funding grow with demonstrated impact	so that the work scales responsibly across more of Cebu



THE THROUGH LINE

Local capacity plus restored reefs plus community owned protection plus stable livelihoods produces reef recovery that endures. Remove any one piece and the gains erode. Our strategic pillars are built to deliver all four together.

Reef Monitoring and Scientific Assessment

Our work is organized into five pillars, each carrying milestones across four phases: Foundation (2026–2028), Growth (2029–2032), Scale (2033–2036), and Legacy (2037–2040). We cannot protect what we do not measure. This pillar builds a standardized monitoring program around Cebu so every later claim of recovery rests on real data.

FOUNDATION · 2026–2028

Establish baseline surveys at 5 priority sites; adopt standard reef survey protocols; train first cohort of local divers.

GROWTH · 2029–2032

Expand monitoring to 12 sites; publish annual reef health reports; build a public data dashboard.

SCALE · 2033–2036

Reach 20 monitored sites; integrate data with national and regional databases.

LEGACY · 2037–2040

Hand routine monitoring to trained local teams and partner schools; sustain long term datasets.

1 · Monitoring

2 · Livelihoods

3 · MPA Policy

4 · Education

5 · Funding

Community Based Conservation and Livelihoods

Reef protection holds only when it makes sense for the families living beside the reef. This pillar pairs conservation with income.

FOUNDATION · 2026–2028

Partner with 2 coastal barangays; launch first alternative livelihood pilots; reach 150 households.

GROWTH · 2029–2032

Scale livelihood programs to 6 communities; reach 500 households; establish women led enterprise groups.

SCALE · 2033–2036

Reach 1,000 households; develop reef friendly tourism and mariculture enterprises.

LEGACY · 2037–2040

Transition enterprises to community ownership and local cooperatives.

1 · Monitoring

2 · Livelihoods

3 · MPA Policy

4 · Education

5 · Funding

Marine Protected Area Advocacy and Policy

Many Philippine marine protected areas exist on paper but not in practice. We help communities build ones that actually work.

FOUNDATION · 2026–2028

Support 2 community managed MPAs; map enforcement gaps with local government units.

GROWTH · 2029–2032

Support 6 MPAs; train bantay dagat sea patrol volunteers; strengthen local ordinances.

SCALE · 2033–2036

Support 12 MPAs; link sites into a managed network across Cebu waters.

LEGACY · 2037–2040

Secure long term local government funding and legal protection for the MPA network.

1 · Monitoring

2 · Livelihoods

3 · MPA Policy

4 · Education

5 · Funding

Education, Youth, and Dive Training

The next generation of reef stewards is in Cebu classrooms and fishing boats today.

FOUNDATION · 2026–2028

Launch youth reef education in 3 schools; certify first youth ambassadors; run dive and snorkel training.

GROWTH · 2029–2032

Reach 10 schools; establish a youth reef monitoring corps; scholarship pathway for local divers.

SCALE · 2033–2036

Build a regional training center; train 300 cumulative participants.

LEGACY · 2037–2040

Embed reef curriculum with education partners for lasting reach.

1 · Monitoring

2 · Livelihoods

3 · MPA Policy

4 · Education

5 · Funding

Sustainable Funding and Partnerships

A reef program that runs out of money helps no one. This pillar builds diversified, durable funding.

FOUNDATION · 2026–2028

Secure founding donors and 2 institutional grants; launch Adopt a Coral and recurring giving.

GROWTH · 2029–2032

Diversify across grants, tourism partnerships, and individual giving; build 12 month reserve.

SCALE · 2033–2036

Establish earned revenue from training and eco tourism; form corporate partnerships.

LEGACY · 2037–2040

Build an endowment base to sustain core operations beyond founder leadership.

1 · Monitoring

2 · Livelihoods

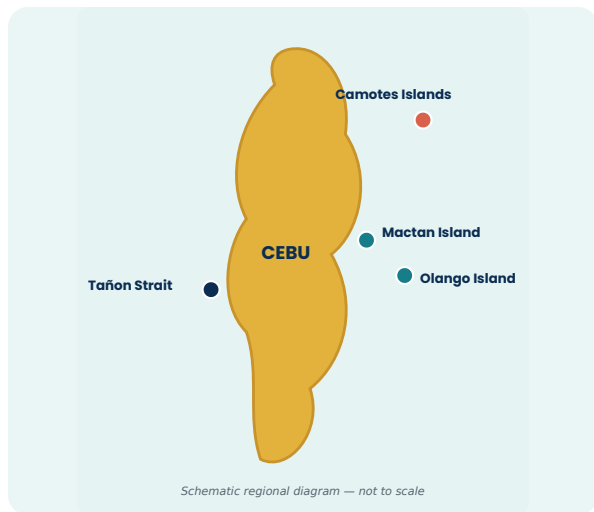
3 · MPA Policy

4 · Education

5 · Funding

Geographic Focus

Our work is anchored in Cebu City and radiates out to the reef systems within reach of our field team. We start where we have the deepest local knowledge and strongest community ties, then expand along the coast and to neighboring islands as capacity grows.



Mactan Island Foundation

High tourism use, urgent pressure, strong dive access for our team.

Olango Island Foundation→Growth

Fishing dependent communities beside a wildlife sanctuary.

Camotes Islands Growth

Reefs still partly healthy and worth protecting early.

Tañon Strait Scale

Largest protected seascape in the country, high biodiversity.

\$6,000 A field team reaches reefs by boat. Our first major capital purchase is a second hand **bangka**, the traditional Filipino outrigger boat, at a cost of roughly 6,000 US dollars. This single asset unlocks independent access to monitoring and restoration sites across our priority zones.

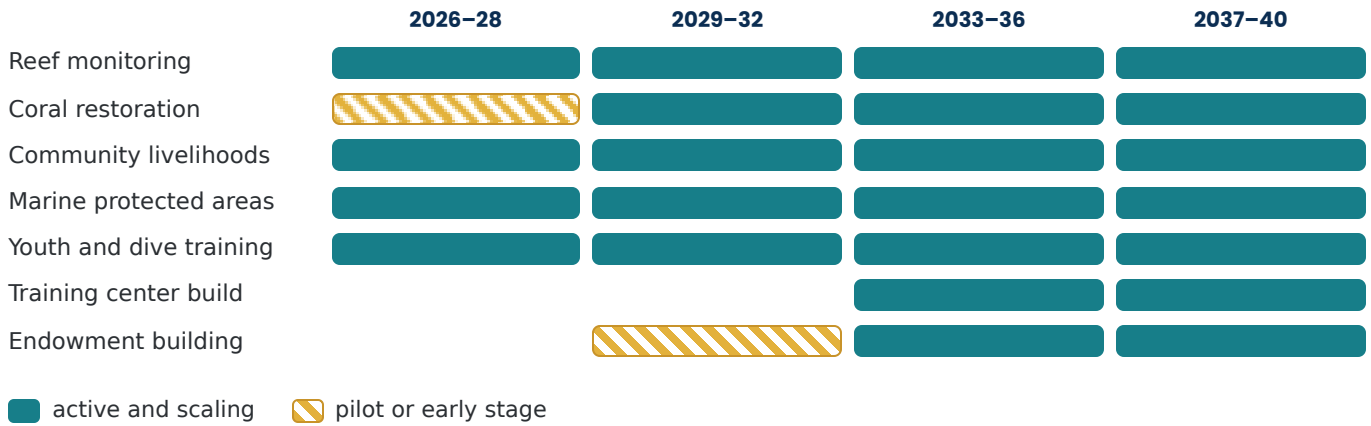
ZONE ENTRY SEQUENCE



IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

A Fourteen-Year Visual Roadmap

The plan moves through four phases. The roadmap below shows when each major workstream is active.



READING THE ROADMAP

Coral restoration and endowment building begin as pilots in the Foundation phase, then move to full, scaling activity from the Growth phase onward. The training center is built once the Scale phase begins. Every other workstream — reef monitoring, community livelihoods, marine protected areas, and youth and dive training — runs as an active, scaling program across all four phases.



Phase Goals at a Glance

FOUNDATION

2026–2028

Credible field presence: boat, baseline data, first MPAs, first communities, first trained divers.

GROWTH

2029–2032

Prove the model: more sites, more households, public reporting, a financial reserve.

SCALE

2033–2036

Network the work: 20 sites, 12 MPAs, a training center, 1,000 households.

LEGACY

2037–2040

Make it last: community ownership, endowment, protection that survives beyond us.



TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

Leadership, Field Team, and Board

Reef Without Borders pairs United States nonprofit governance with a Filipino field team rooted in Cebu. Decisions about reef work are made by people who dive these waters and live in these communities.

LEADERSHIP AND FIELD TEAM

Clarisa Strohmeyer
Founder and Executive Director
Houston, Texas

Dindo Paquibot
Director of Dive Operations
Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu

Clarice Eufre Chavez
Manager, People and Culture
Cebu

John Joseph Florido
Community Engagement Coordinator
Carcar City, Cebu

Wolfgang S.
Youth Ambassador
Houston / Cebu

Ethan G.
Youth Ambassador
Cebu

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Vanessa Iway
President

Rosalinda Maddoux
Treasurer

Renato Solis
Secretary

Budget Framework

The budget grows with proven results. Year one is deliberately lean and centered on the assets that unlock fieldwork. Figures are in US dollars and are planning estimates, not commitments.

Year One Budget, 2026

Category	Amount (USD)	Notes
Field boat (second hand bangka)	\$6,000	One time capital purchase
Dive and monitoring equipment	\$12,000	Tanks, gauges, survey gear, safety kit
Field staff and stipends	\$30,000	Dive operations and community coordinators
Community livelihood pilots	\$15,000	First two barangays
Monitoring and data program	\$10,000	Baseline surveys and reporting
Youth and dive training	\$8,000	School programs, certifications
Administration and compliance	\$9,000	Filing, insurance, banking, governance
Fundraising and website	\$5,000	Donor systems, site, materials
TOTAL YEAR ONE	\$95,000	

Fourteen Year Projection by Phase

Phase	Years	Annual Range	Phase Total
Foundation	2026-2028	\$95k to \$130k	\$330,000
Growth	2029-2032	\$150k to \$200k	\$700,000
Scale	2033-2036	\$220k to \$300k	\$1,040,000
Legacy	2037-2040	\$180k to \$220k	\$780,000
FOURTEEN YEAR TOTAL			\$2,850,000

Every figure in this plan ties to a deliverable in the strategic pillars. We report spending against outcomes each year.

Impact Metrics

We hold ourselves to measurable outcomes. These are the indicators we track and report every year.

LIVE HARD CORAL COVER (%)

Reef health at restoration sites

2040 target: Measurable gains at all active sites

FISH BIOMASS & DIVERSITY

Recovery of reef life

2040 target: Rising trend inside MPAs

HECTARES OF REEF RESTORED

Scale of active restoration

2040 target: 10 hectares cumulative

REEF SITES MONITORED

Reach of our data program

2040 target: 20 or more sites

MPAS SUPPORTED

Durable protection established

2040 target: 12 community managed MPAs

PEOPLE TRAINED

Local capacity built

2040 target: 300 or more

HOUSEHOLDS REACHED

Livelihood impact

2040 target: 1,000 households



A damselfish over branching coral, the kind of reef life we track for recovery.



An anemonefish pair in its host anemone, one of many species these reefs shelter.

GET INVOLVED

How to Support Us

Reef Without Borders is a Houston based nonprofit working in Cebu, Philippines. Every gift is tied to work we can show you. Here is how your support translates into reef recovery.

GIVING TIERS

\$25 / mo	Ongoing reef monitoring at one site
\$250	A coral restoration unit through Adopt a Coral
\$1,000	Dive and survey gear for a local team member
\$6,000	A second hand bangka, our core field boat
\$25,000	One full year of work in a partner community

PARTNER WITH US

Foundations and grantmakers. Fund a pillar or a phase and receive annual outcome reporting.	Corporate partners. Sponsor a reef site, a boat, or a training cohort.
Dive operators and tourism businesses. Build reef friendly tourism with us in Cebu.	Researchers and universities. Collaborate on monitoring and restoration science.



A feather star perched on the reef. Every species here depends on the reef structure we work to protect. Photo by Clarisa Strohmeyer.

**Join us. The reefs of Cebu cannot wait, and neither can
the families who depend on them.**

reefwithoutborders.org

Grassroots and Dive-Led Grant Opportunities

Reef Without Borders pursues funding in step with its capacity. Early on we target grassroots and dive led grants sized for a new organization. The funders below are organized by the phase in which they are the strongest fit.

<p>PADI AWARE Foundation, Community Grants</p> <p>Built for grassroots, dive led conservation; open to nonprofits under \$1M budget. Note: cannot fund capital assets such as a boat.</p> <p>Small grant</p>	<p>New England Aquarium, Marine Conservation Action Fund</p> <p>Funds community based projects led by local conservation leaders in middle income countries.</p> <p>\$1,000–\$12,000</p>
<p>The Rufford Foundation, Small Grants</p> <p>Staged grassroots nature conservation funding in developing countries; grows as you deliver.</p> <p>Small to mid</p>	<p>UNEP and International Coral Reef Initiative</p> <p>Coral, mangrove, and seagrass innovation grants; has funded Philippine projects.</p> <p>Up to ~\$80,000</p>
<p>Patagonia Environmental Grants</p> <p>Prioritizes grassroots, community based conservation; funds select Asian countries.</p> <p>Small to mid</p>	<p>Disney Conservation Fund</p> <p>Community based conservation in biodiversity hotspots; favors youth engagement.</p> <p>Mid</p>

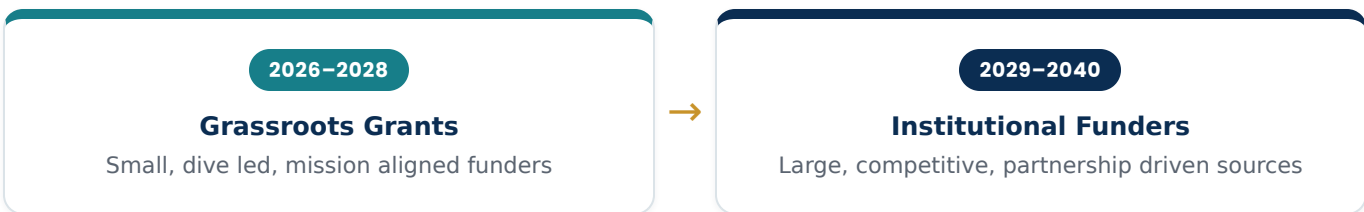
Institutional Funders and Partnerships

As we build a track record and real monitoring data, we move toward larger institutional funders and partnerships, pursued once we have monitoring data and proven results.

<p>NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (with NFWF)</p> <p>Competitive US program open to nonprofits; we are eligible as a US registered organization.</p> <p>Large, competitive</p>	<p>Global Fund for Coral Reefs</p> <p>UN fund active in the Philippines, including the Tañon Strait network. Best as a partner or sub grant early on.</p> <p>Large, blended</p>
<p>The Pew Charitable Trusts</p> <p>Funds science based ocean policy; matches our marine protected area and policy work.</p> <p>Large</p>	<p>WWF and The Nature Conservancy Marine Programs</p> <p>Fund marine habitat protection and coastal resilience in the Coral Triangle; likely partners.</p> <p>Large</p>

Our edge with funders is specificity. A named Cebu field team, named reef zones, real baseline data, and a clear plan with measurable outcomes set us apart in a crowded field. Every application leads with that.

THE FUNDING JOURNEY



BRAND MESSAGING

Homepage and Messaging

Approved language for the Reef Without Borders website and outreach. Choose one hero statement as the main banner, with its supporting line beneath.

HERO STATEMENTS

Option 1 · Mission Forward

We restore the coral reefs of Cebu, and the communities that depend on them.

A Houston based nonprofit with a Filipino field team, working reef by reef across the Central Visayas.

Option 2 · Urgency Forward

Not one surveyed reef in the Philippines is still in excellent condition. We are working to change that.

Reef Without Borders pairs trained local divers, real science, and community led protection in Cebu.

Option 3 · Action Forward

Coral reefs do not recover on sentiment. They recover on action.

Join us in restoring and protecting the reefs of Cebu, Philippines.

SHORT ABOUT PARAGRAPH

Reef Without Borders is a Houston based nonprofit restoring and protecting coral reefs in Cebu, Philippines. We combine field science, trained local divers, and community led marine protection so that reefs and the people who depend on them can thrive together. Our work is led on the ground by experienced Filipino dive professionals and grounded in twenty five years of diving these waters.

CALLS TO ACTION

Donate. Every gift is tied to work we can show you, from reef monitoring to a coral restoration unit.

Adopt a Coral. Fund a restoration unit and follow its progress.

Partner with us. Foundations, dive operators, and researchers can build reef recovery with us in Cebu.

Give monthly. Sustained giving keeps a reef site monitored all year.

Data Sources and Methodology

This plan draws on established sources for the state of Philippine and Cebu reefs. Specific site level figures will be confirmed and updated through our own baseline surveys in the Foundation phase.

KEY SOURCES

- Licuanan, A.M., Reyes, M.Z., Luzon, K.S., Chan, M.A., and Licuanan, W.Y. (2017). *Initial Findings of the Nationwide Assessment of Philippine Coral Reefs*. Philippine Journal of Science 146(2): 177 to 185.
- Licuanan, W.Y., Robles, R., and Reyes, M. (2019). *Status and recent trends in coral reefs of the Philippines*. Marine Pollution Bulletin. National average hard coral cover of about 22 percent.
- World Resources Institute (2012). *Reefs at Risk Revisited in the Coral Triangle*. Threat figures for overfishing, coastal development, and combined bleaching across the Coral Triangle.
- White, A.T., Vogt, H.P., and Arin, T. (2000). *Philippine Coral Reefs Under Threat: The Economic Losses Caused by Reef Destruction*. Marine Pollution Bulletin 40(7): 598 to 605.
- Tañon Strait Protected Seascape and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Region 7. Protected area size, coral species share, and cetacean diversity.
- Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). Regional reef status and management context.
- Philippine Fisheries Code and local government unit coastal management ordinances.

METHODOLOGY NOTES

- Reef health is assessed using standardized survey methods for hard coral cover and reef fish.
- Restoration follows science based coral gardening and outplanting practices suited to local conditions.
- All targets are reviewed annually and adjusted based on field results and funding.
- Financial figures are planning estimates in US dollars and will be reconciled in audited annual reports.