
REEF CHECK MALAYSIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



BUILDING RESILIENCE

one step at a time





Reef Check Malaysia is a non-profit organisation working to build healthy oceans and healthy communities

We create **impact by bringing together stakeholders to improve management of marine resources**

NEW LOOK,
SAME GOALS

OLD LOGO



Reef Check
MALAYSIA

OUR VISION

*SUSTAINABLY MANAGED
CORAL REEFS IN MALAYSIA*

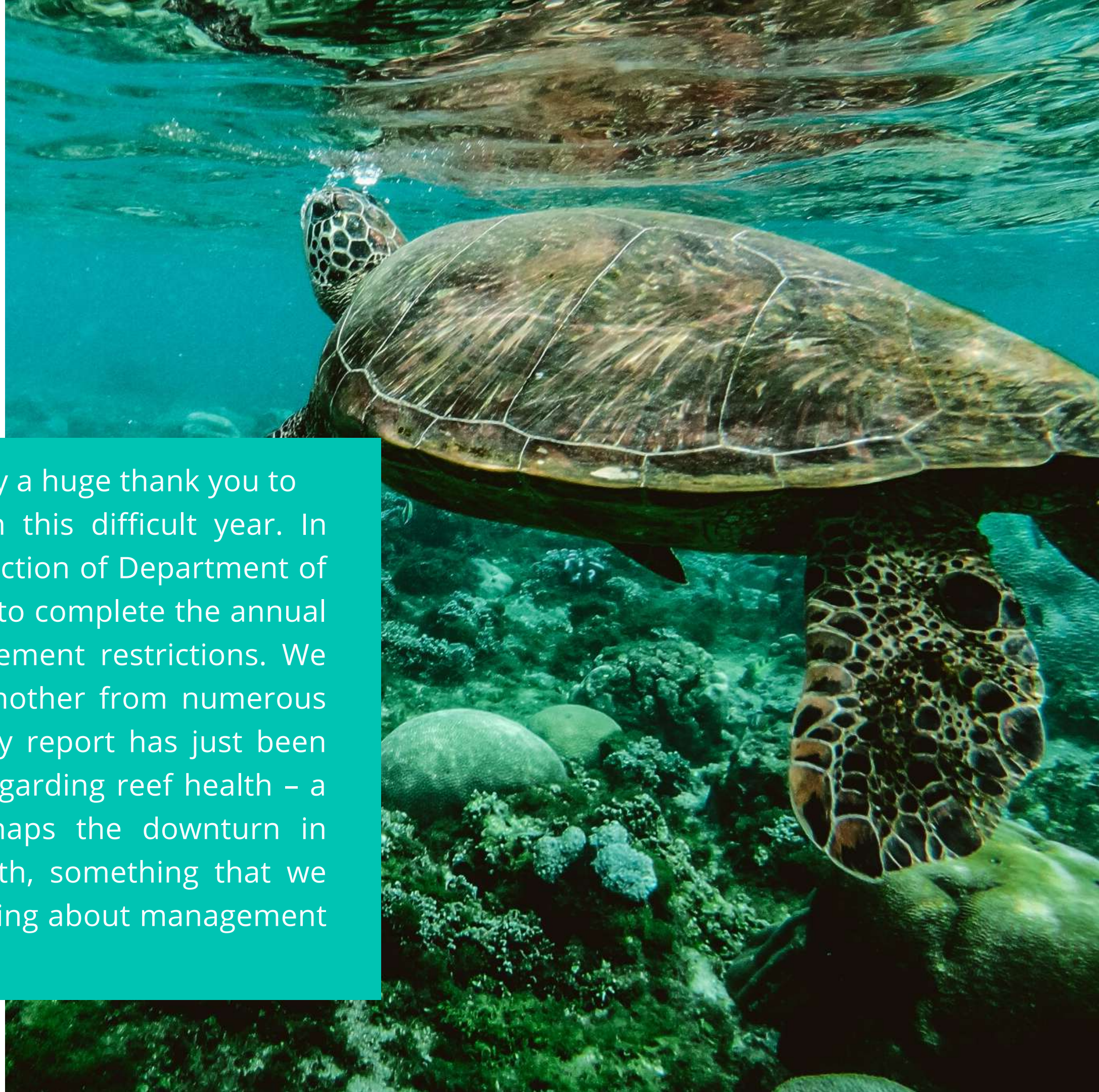
OUR MISSION

*TO BRING TOGETHER STAKEHOLDERS TO
COLLABORATE ON CORAL REEF
MONITORING, MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH,
CONSERVATION, AND ADVOCACY*



FOREWORD

On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone that has supported us through this difficult year. In particular, I'd like to thank Marine Parks section of Department of Fisheries and Sabah Parks, who helped us to complete the annual survey programme in a year full of movement restrictions. We also received assistance in one way or another from numerous operators on the islands. The 2021 survey report has just been published, and shows some good news regarding reef health – a slight improvement over last year. Perhaps the downturn in tourism has had an impact on reef health, something that we need to consider very carefully when thinking about management measures.





Tioman, Mersing, Mantanani – our three field locations: a truly heroic response from all our field staff who, also dealing with movement restrictions, COVID clusters and more, have continued important work with local stakeholders to build ecological and community resilience, while helping to ensure local stakeholders have a say in management – because it affects their livelihoods.

Suffice to say, a challenging year on top of a challenging 2020 – no-one knew it would last this long, but we are soldiering on and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the whole RCM team.

Julian Hyde

General Manager of RCM



**WHAT
WE
DO**



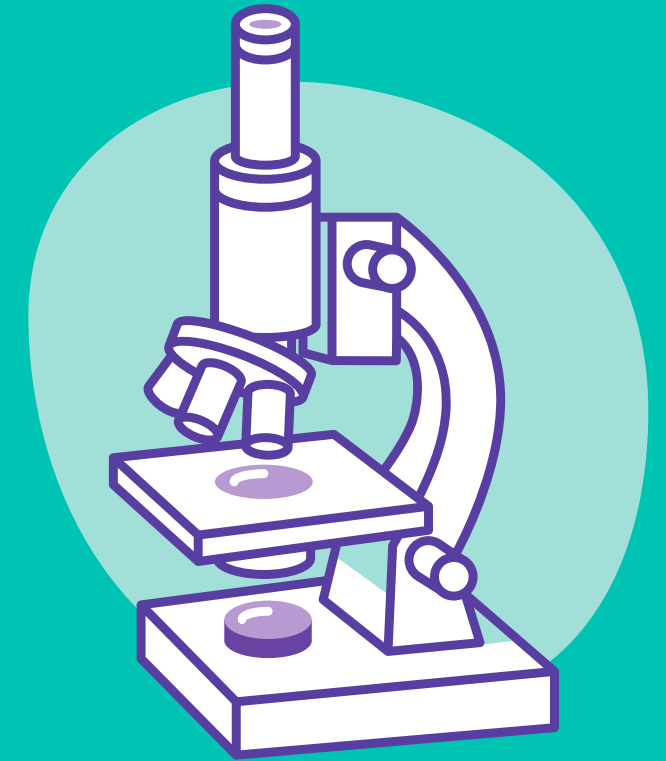
ECOACTION

We monitor coral reefs around Malaysia, providing valuable information for managers and scientists.



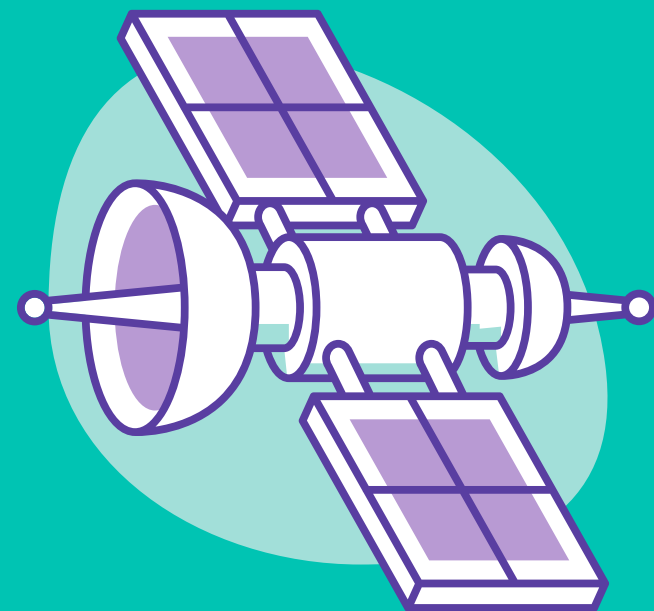
SCIENCE

We conduct reef rehabilitation programmes and resilience surveys.



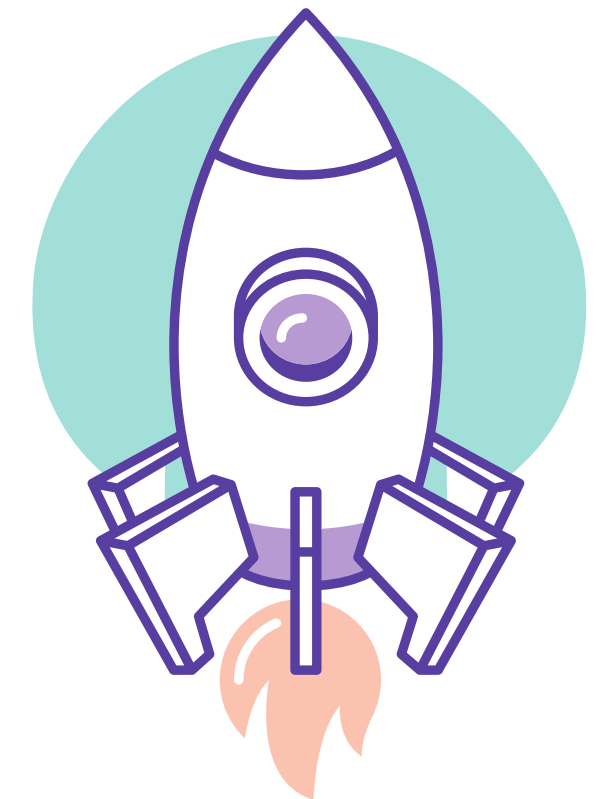
ADVOCACY

We raise awareness of the importance of coral reefs.



MANAGEMENT

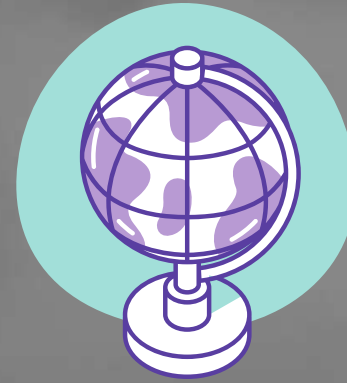
We empower local communities to manage marine resources.



**WHERE
WE
WORK**



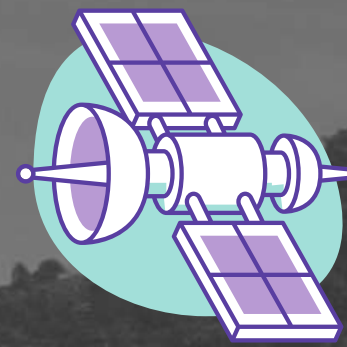
TIOMAN ISLAND



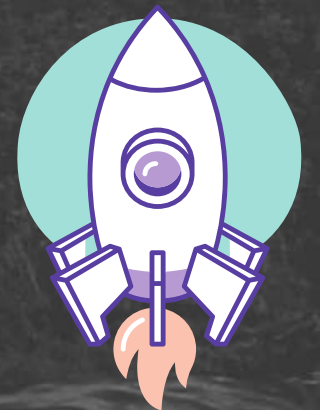
Annual reef surveys to monitor reef health and supplement research



Collaborate with the Department of Fisheries to carry out reef rehabilitation programmes to build reef resilience



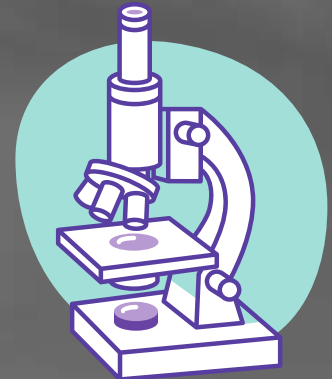
Cintai Tioman is a long term, community-based program to promote sustainable use of natural resources and increase social and ecological resilience



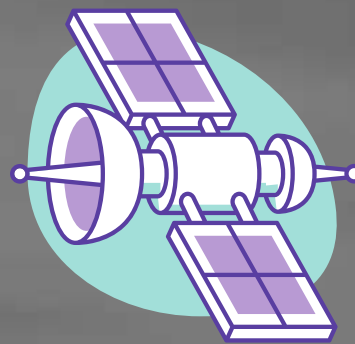
Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG) was set up in 2015 to allow local involvement in the management of the island's marine park



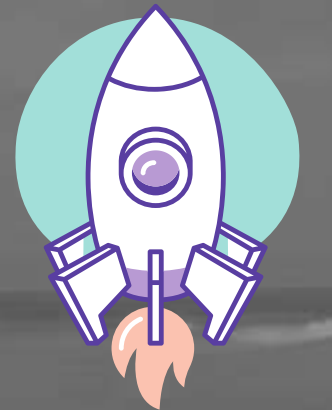
Annual reef surveys to monitor reef health and supplement research



Monitoring fish bombing incidences around the island using underwater detectors



Cintai Mantanani was established in 2012 to promote sustainable tourism and introduce alternative livelihood programmes for locals such as homestays, small farming activities and virgin coconut oil (VCO) products

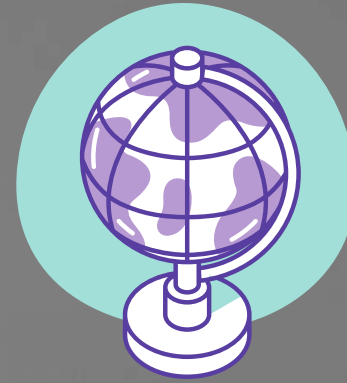


Establishing proper waste management system and advancing recycling efforts on the island

MANTANANI ISLAND



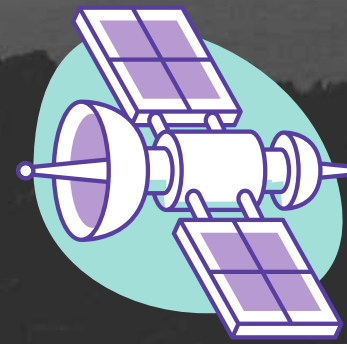
MERSING ISLANDS



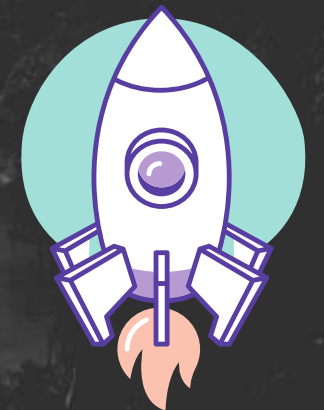
Annual reef surveys to monitor reef health and provide input to management actions



Multi-stakeholder collaboration to carry out reef resilience assessment and rehabilitation programmes



Cintai Kepulauan Mersing was founded to support sustainable reef management, effective plastic waste management and promote sustainable tourism



Resilience-based conservation activities to allow local stakeholders' participation in management of marine resources



CONDUCTED REEF SURVEYS AT 206 SITES AROUND MALAYSIA TO MONITOR THE HEALTH OF OUR CORAL REEFS.



PREVENTED OVER 10 TONNES OF WASTE FROM POLLUTING THE ENVIRONMENT BY RECYCLING OR SENDING FOR DISPOSAL ON MAINLAND.



TRAINED 100 LOCAL ISLANDERS IN MARINE CONSERVATION, ECOTOURISM, AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS.



RESCUED OVER 500 CORAL FRAGMENTS BY USING THEM IN RESTORATION PROJECTS.



ADVISED AND ASSESSED 43 RESORTS AND HOTELS ON GREEN PRACTICES.



REMOVED OVER 4000KG OF GHOST NETS FROM THE OCEAN.



2021 MILESTONES



REEF CONSERVATION



LAND-BASED TOURISM



ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

This project aims to strengthen the management of marine resources on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia by incorporating coral reef resilience and stakeholder participation into management. We plan to establish the importance of a network of biological connectivity among the marine parks and develop a holistic strategy for effectively managing marine resources in the area. A series of trainings, workshops and consultations (in-person and digitally) were conducted to build the capacity of all stakeholders in resilience-based conservation and community participation in marine resource management. This will also assist in developing comprehensive marine park management plans.

A grayscale underwater photograph showing a large school of fish swimming over a coral reef. The fish are silvery with dark stripes. The reef structure is visible in the background.

NOAA CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

“

I was involved in a Reef Check survey training as part of the reef resilience programme and I think it is important for locals to have knowledge on coral reef preservation and conservation. Our experience as locals can surely benefit the marine resource management of this island.

- Zarif

NOAA CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



HIKING TRAIL & GUIDE TRAINING

In an effort to diversify activities on Tioman Island and reduce pressure on reefs, an initiative was taken to promote land-based tourism activities on the island. This was also done to create monetary value for the pristine forest reserve on Tioman, in hopes that the generation of income from the reserve will be a greater motivation to protect and maintain it.

7 existing hiking trails were cleared, one in each village. **20 local villagers** also had the opportunity to be trained as basic guides by the Malaysia Nature Guides Association. This initiative was funded by Yayasan Sime Darby and the Ministry of Finance.



One of the 20 participants provided some feedback on the training:

“

Through this hiking course, I am more conscious about environmental issues especially in the jungles of our island. I can't wait to show the world the beauty of our jungles now that I am a certified hiking guide.

- Suhaimi Awang



HIKING TRAIL & GUIDE TRAINING



One focus of our community-based project on Mantanani Island is to develop alternative livelihood opportunities. When the pandemic hit in 2020, many were affected and left unemployed, especially those who rely on tourism activities. Some islanders went back to fishing and other environmentally destructive activities. As a long-term, sustainable solution, we established the Yayasan Hasanah Economic Recovery (YHER) program that aims to diversify and create new economic activities on the island. The community farm (Kebun Komuniti) is part of this project.

COMMUNITY FARM

Despite constant challenges including flooding and land conflict, those working on 'Kebun Komuniti' have managed to harvest **more than 120kg** of fruits and vegetables for their own consumption. Although they were unable to produce enough to sell, they have benefitted by indirectly **saving on the purchase of fruits and vegetables - worth approximately RM 4800**. On a positive note, the team will continue working on the Kebun Komuniti program as it has helped them and their families to have access to vegetables or saved them the cost of purchasing it from the mainland.

COMMUNITY FARM



“

The most important thing I learned from taking part in this project is the proper gardening knowledge and technique. Not only we get to enjoy the fruits of our hard work, the harvest can even generate some income for us, especially in times of pandemic like this.

- Kak Himah



**COMMUNITY
FARM**

The virgin coconut project (VCO) Project in Mantanani saw a team of 6 local islanders establishing the VCO production facility and they have produced their own virgin coconut oil which sells at RM38 for a 320ml bottle. Several trainings have been conducted for the team, including product diversification. With continuous support and mentoring from our partner SOP.Co, the team is now selling more products including soaps, lip balm, small bottles of VCO, and coconut scones. They are now equipped with the necessary skills to continue producing products so that they can sell more and eventually use this as a supplementary livelihood for their families. The group is now **earning around RM300-RM400 a month** and we hope that with continuous marketing and mentoring, they will continue to expand their business.

VIRGIN COCONUT OIL PRODUCTION



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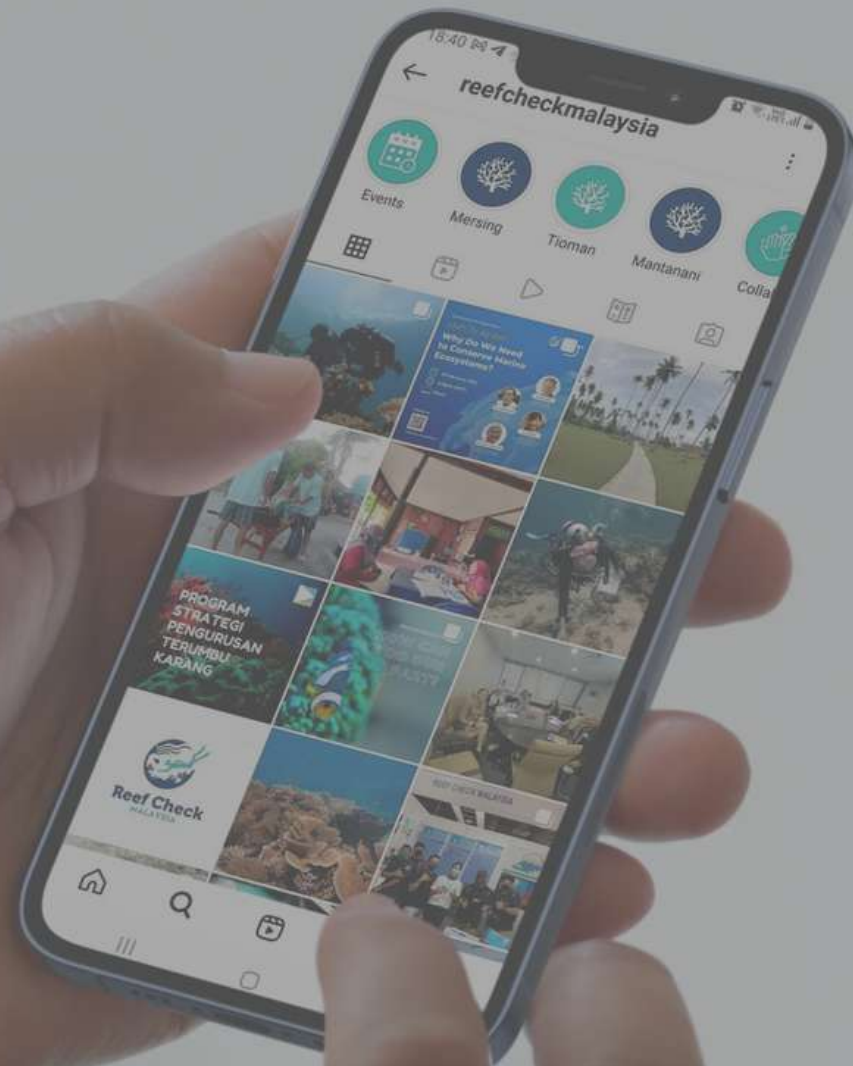
Through the VCO project, I gained an invaluable new skill - producing soaps, lip balm, and virgin coconut oil from scratch. Having a skill like this amidst this pandemic is extremely useful as it helps me and my family generate income. I wish there would be more programmes like this in the future.

-Kak Mainah



**VIRGIN COCONUT OIL
PRODUCTION**

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH



270 posts
649,043 reach

24,896 engagements
3.8% engagement rate



138 posts
123,995 reach

14,761 engagements
11.2% engagement rate



118 posts
99,862 impressions

3,027 engagements
3.03% engagement rate



52 webinars
5 radio interviews

67 press conferences
1 scientific publication

THE RCM TEAM



Julian



Alvin



Sue



Shahir



Ella



Suhaimi



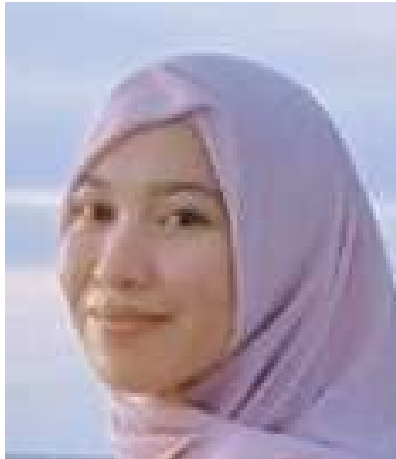
Ira



Adzmin



Faizal



Diana



Yun



Asma



Don



Theresa

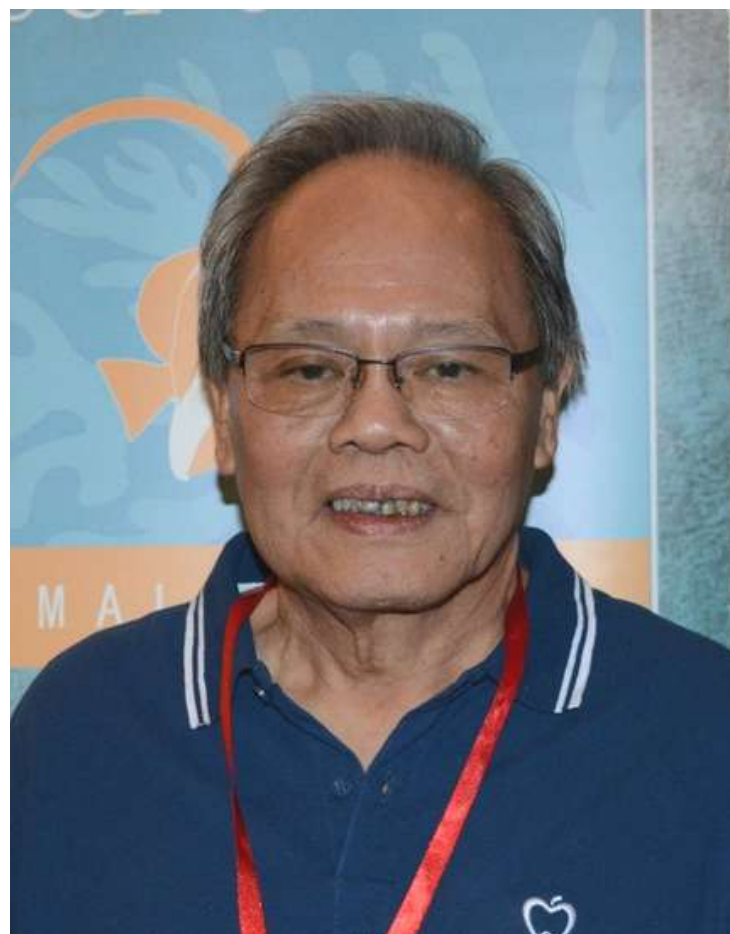


Cynthia



Jessie

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Kevin Hiew



Lim Jit Cheng

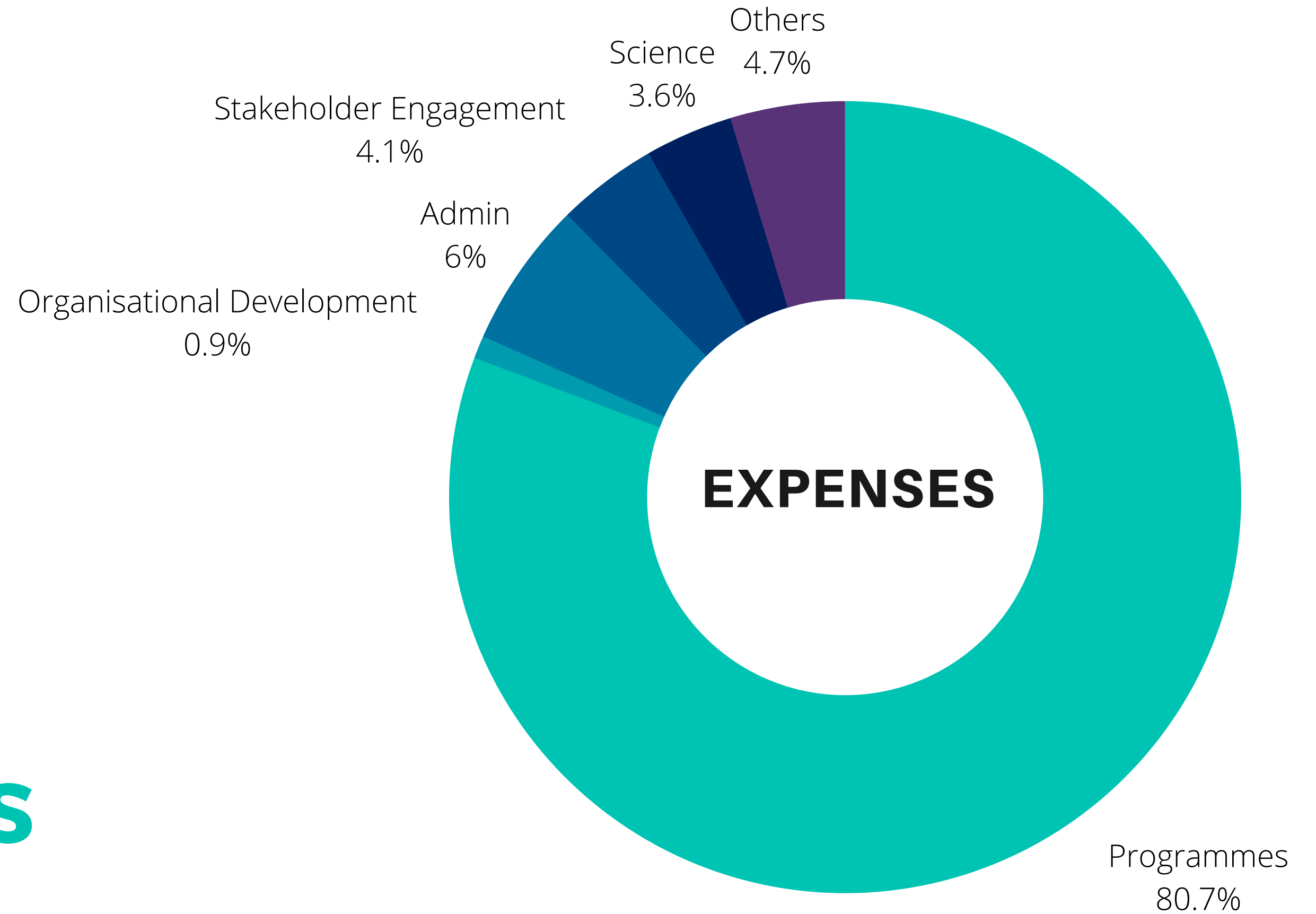


Datuk Hiswani Harun

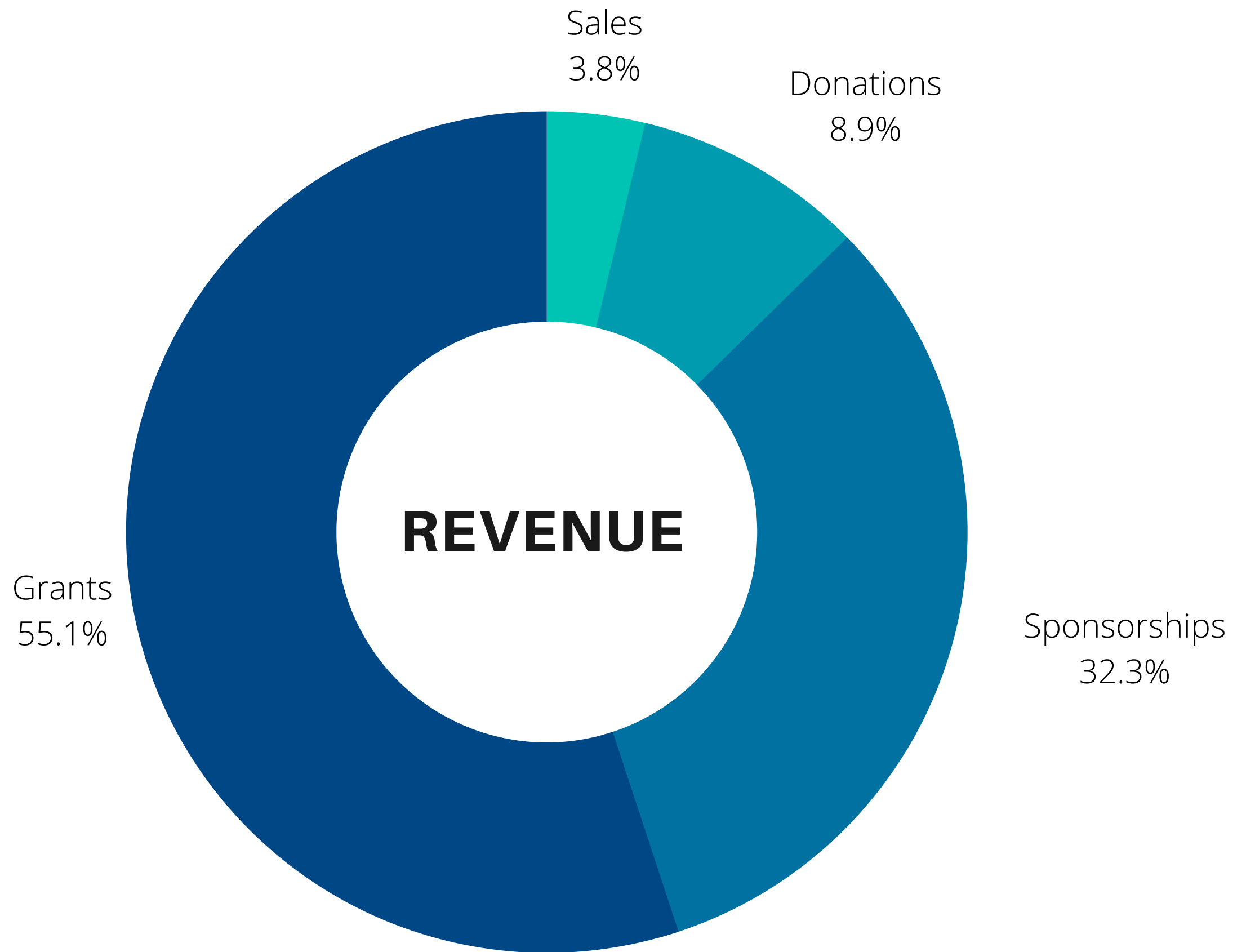


Ruth Yeoh

FINANCIALS



FINANCIALS





OUTLOOK

In 2022, we will continue to work with various government management agencies, to provide inputs and assistance where we can. In particular, we are hoping to expand our successful Tioman Marine Conservation Group (TMCG) programme to other East Coast islands, to replicate the participatory management approach and strengthen the Reef Care network.

We will also be rejuvenating our programmes for tourism operators - Green Fins, Green Hotels and Eco-friendly Snorkel Guide training; and we would like to thank the government of Sabah, particularly the Sabah Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment, for their support in this.

OUR SPONSORS



GET IN TOUCH



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