

## BIODIVERSITY



Biodiversity, the variety of biologic life within a particular habitat or ecosystem, sustains and stabilizes ecosystems.

Ecosystems provide vital services to humans and other species, including pollination or seed dispersal, water purification, nutrient cycling, agricultural pest control, and climate regulation. Ecosystems may also provide cultural value, for example, for spiritual or religious reasons. Human activities have greatly altered ecosystems and caused loss of biodiversity across the planet. Corporations, governments and civil society alike recognize the challenge that biodiversity loss represents and are increasingly working together to find innovative new solutions for the protection of biodiversity.

Mining activities have the potential to impact biodiversity and to alter ecosystems, in both direct and indirect pathways. We are committed to biodiversity conservation in our areas of influence. Our Biodiversity Policy and Biodiversity Performance Standard guide our biodiversity management strategy. Biodiversity and ecosystem considerations are included in the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) conducted at all of our operations prior to their construction. Where biodiversity management and protection are identified as a potential or actual environmental risk, operations must develop, implement, communicate, adhere to, and maintain a Biodiversity Management Plan.

Through good conservation practices and sound land use we can not only avoid or mitigate negative impacts to biodiversity, but we can also build long-term management strategies that deliver sustainable conservation outcomes.



**SDG** covered by  
this initiative: **14**



## ONE MILLION MANGROVES, TEN THOUSAND CORALS CONSERVATION EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OCEANS AND ECOSYSTEMS

B2Gold's Masbate Mine in the Philippines has reached a significant milestone in its mangrove reforestation and coral reef rehabilitation efforts in Aroroy, Masbate. By the end of 2019, a total of 1.2 million mangrove propagules were planted, and 9,700 corals were propagated on 2,200 artificial reef modules (Reefballs).

The mangrove reforestation project was launched in 2013 by the Masbate Mine, along with the fisherfolk associations of the Balawing, Puro and Amoroy barangays (communities). Over the years, the project expanded to include the five coastal barangays of Panique, Matalangtalang, Don Pablo Dela Rosa, San Agustin and San Isidro. With a demonstrated 80% propagule survival rate, the project has covered 264 ha of coastal areas, significantly increasing the existing mangrove forest coverage in the Municipality of Aroroy, while providing breeding and feeding grounds, and habitat for fish and other marine organisms. This ongoing environmental initiative is carried out in partnership with the Aroroy Local Government Unit (LGU) and local fisherfolk associations.

The coral reef restoration initiative aligns with the Port Barrera Rehabilitation Project, launched in 2013 in partnership with the local government. The restoration consists of propagating coral species on artificial reef modules or Reefballs. The construction and deployment of Reefballs started in 2017, in collaboration with the Reefball Foundation – a non-profit environmental conservation organization based in the USA – with the mission to rehabilitate and protect the world's ocean reef ecosystems using artificial reef technologies. The coral reef restoration is performed in conjunction with conservation of

the marine environment. B2Gold worked with stakeholders to develop a marine protected area (MPA) at Colorada Point – ensuring a designated foundation for the project.

In 2019, two independent consultants (one from Green Development Solutions and one from De La Salle University) were commissioned to conduct assessments, respectively, of the Port Barrera's mangrove ecosystem and the coral reef restoration project. An assessment of the flora and fauna of the mangrove ecosystems of Port Barrera shows that the mangrove ecosystem is in excellent condition. It recommended planting different mangrove species to enhance diversity and to introduce temporary regulation of access to the reforested areas to limit damage. Conducting further in-depth research of the ecosystem was also recommended. B2Gold is incorporating these recommendations into its initiatives.

The assessment of the coral restoration project provided recommendations to further enhance the positive impacts of the Reefball solution. Coral transplantation could be diversified with the use of hardier, massive corals, and greater community buy-in should be encouraged, among other recommendations being implemented. The study confirmed that the sites chosen for deployment were suitable and coral growth demonstrates the success of the MPA and the conservation measures.

Going forward, B2Gold remains committed to conserving biodiversity. Finding opportunities to maintain natural ecosystems, manage protected areas, and involve local community in conservation and development decision-making is within the mandate of the Masbate Mine.

