Aquahub Philippines Launches Sustainable Aquaculture Ventures to Boost Marine Conservation and Coastal Livelihoods

Philippines, October 14th, 2025– Blue Alliance, one of the leading environmental organisations working to maintain and strengthen marine protected areas and blue economy across the globe, proudly announces its first impact investments in community-based aquaculture enterprises in the Philippines. This innovative investment supports Aquahub, a reef-positive business designed to regenerate marine ecosystems, prevents overexploitation of wild stocks, and creates sustainable income for coastal households.

This investment is part of the Blue Finance impact loan facility, launched at COP16 in 2024 with initial commitments from BNP Paribas. The facility provides patient debt capital to reef-positive businesses with performance-linked returns based on environmental and social outcomes. It is designed for investors seeking long-term impact in marine biodiversity, climate resilience, and livelihoods.

Regenerating Ecosystems & Empowering Communities Through Sustainable Aquaculture

Aquahub Philippines is a vertically integrated aquaculture enterprise focused on two high-value tropical species: sea cucumbers (Scabra sp.) and mangrove crabs (Scylla sp.). The company combines cutting-edge hatchery and processing infrastructure with community-driven sea ranching operations in and around MPAs managed by Blue Alliance. The company is 100% owned by non-profit Blue Alliance.

- Sea cucumbers are slow-growing marine invertebrates prized in Asian markets for their culinary and medicinal value. Through domestication programs and optimised hatchery-nursery systems, Aquahub Philippines can reduce the production cycle from two years to one, significantly increasing productivity and economic return.

- Mangrove crabs, known for their rapid growth and premium market value, reach market size within 4–6 months under optimal conditions. Aquahub's operations utilise genetically diverse, disease-resistant broodstock and formulated feeds to improve growth rates and reduce reliance on unsustainable feed sources.

These aquaculture systems not only generate income for coastal households they also contribute to the regeneration of mangrove forests and seagrass beds, both of which are critical habitats for marine biodiversity and climate resilience.

Community-Led Conservation with Government Support

As the delegated manager of MPAs in the Philippines, Blue Alliance benefits from strong government support, including legal frameworks for leases and concessions. The organisation's longstanding engagement with local communities has resulted in trust and willingness to collaborate, making Aquahub initiatives highly inclusive and impactful.

Profits from Aquahub Philippines are reinvested into the management of MPAs, ensuring long-term conservation of coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass ecosystems. These protected areas rebuild fish stocks, enhance food security, and safeguard endangered marine species while improving ecosystem services that benefit aquaculture operations.

Unlocking Global Market Opportunities

Market-Driven Sustainability

The global sea cucumber market, valued at USD 1.38 billion in 2024, is projected to reach USD 2.19 billion by 2033, driven by culinary and medicinal demand in Asia. In dried and processed form, known as "Bêche-de-mer", "Trepang", or "Haisom" they command premium prices in East Asian markets,

reaching up to USD 2,000/kg. Sea cucumbers are also gaining traction in nutraceuticals, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals due to their bioactive compounds.
Mangrove crabs, prized for their flavour and resilience, are in high demand across Hong Kong, China, the U.S., and Singapore. The global crab market is expected to grow from USD 13.04 billion in 2025 to USD 16.17 billion by 2030. Aquahub's sustainable hatchery-based production offers a scalable alternative to unregulated wild harvesting.

Roadmap for Aquahub Philippines

Aquahub Philippines is advancing two sustainable aquaculture ventures, sea cucumbers and mangrove crabs, through phased expansion in coastal communities. The sea cucumber program began with 12 hectares in 2025 and is set to scale to 100 hectares by 2028. The mangrove crab initiative, launched with a 15-hectare pilot in 2023, will expand to 180 hectares by 2034. Both aim for multi million in yearly revenue, sharing profits with communities and MPAs. Both projects are designed to scale sustainably, with first sales expected by 2026. The initiative also holds potential for generating blue carbon credits, offering an additional revenue stream for local communities.

Positive Impacts

Aquahub Philippines is designed to deliver measurable conservation and community benefits. The reef-positive business supports job creation, livelihood enhancement, and community empowerment by integrating coastal households into sustainable aquaculture operations.

Environmentally, the grow-out farms contribute to ecosystem regeneration:

- Seagrass beds are regenerated through the natural sediment bioturbation performed by sea cucumbers, improving habitat quality and nutrient cycling.

- Mangrove forests are regenerated and conserved through the establishment of mangrove crab farms, strengthening coastal resilience and biodiversity.

Measuring Impact and Ensuring Sustainability

Impact loans will be repaid through revenue from seafood sales, with interest rates linked to environmental and social performance. Metrics include biodiversity regeneration, job creation, gender inclusion, carbon emissions reduction, and MPA management effectiveness. All reef-positive businesses undergo rigorous Environmental & Social Due Diligence (ESDD) to mitigate risks and ensure sustainability.

A Proven Model for Marine Protection

Blue Alliance has already demonstrated the viability of its model in Belize, where an MPA covering 280,000 hectares is now 60% self-financed through reef-positive businesses. With this investment in the Philippines, the organization reaffirms its commitment to harnessing the Blue Economy to drive large-scale marine conservation and economic resilience.

About Blue Alliance

Founded in 2015, non-profit Blue Alliance is one of the leading environmental organisations working to maintain and strengthen marine protected areas and blue economy across the globe. As of 2025, under long-term agreements with governments, BA manages and finances 1.7 million hectares of coral reef ecosystems across large MPAs in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Tanzania and has developed a portfolio of 7 social enterprises in community-based aquaculture, sustainable fishery and ecotourism.

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