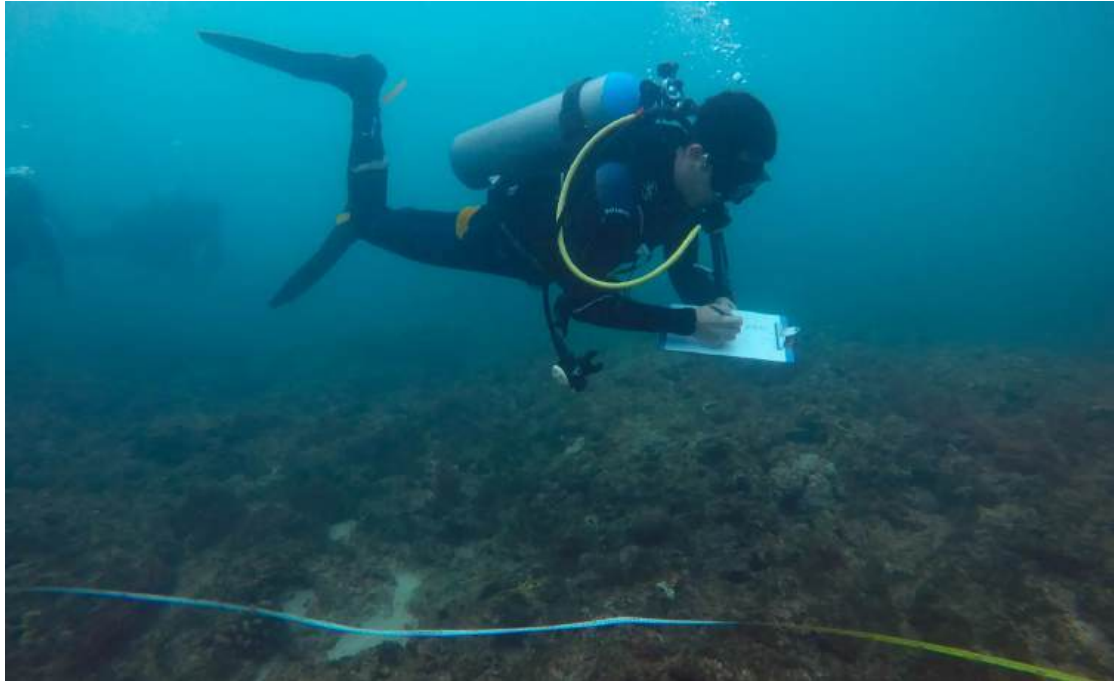


Dive with Better Blue, Guard the Coral Sea



The blue planet we humans call home is not divided into isolated islands by the ocean, but is instead connected by the ocean into a community with a shared future.

China's absolute maritime territory covers 3 million square kilometers, ranking fourth in the world. With a coastline of 18,000 kilometers and an island shoreline of 14,000 kilometers, and governing over 6,500 islands, China is truly a major maritime nation.



China's marine ecosystems exhibit remarkable biodiversity, with species distribution showing a clear trend of increasing numbers from high latitudes to low latitudes. The South China Sea, located at low latitudes within the Indo-Pacific convergence zone—one of the world's three major centers of marine biodiversity—is China's largest marine biological resource treasure trove.

Coral reefs are the most regionally distinctive marine ecosystem within this treasure trove of the South China Sea, with reef-building stony coral species accounting for 40% of the world's total discovered species.



Coral reefs are among the most diverse ecosystems on Earth. They serve as habitats for countless marine species and form the foundation of livelihoods for many coastal communities. They provide us with food, stabilize coastlines, store carbon, and support tourism development. Against the backdrop of global climate change, they also play a critical role in sustaining human survival.



Coral reefs are often referred to as the "rainforests of the sea." Together, they nurture the blue homeland on which we all depend. The protection of coral reefs cannot be delayed, but our efforts must extend beyond coral reefs alone. At the same time, coral reefs stand on the front lines of global climate change and biodiversity loss.

According to the latest global assessment of reef-building corals by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the report shows that 44% of reef-building coral species globally are threatened with extinction.

Climate change remains the greatest threat to reef-building coral species. Beneath the surface, where we cannot speak, coral reefs are silently beginning to fade from their once-vibrant colours.



In the summer of 2020, coral bleaching occurred across much of the South China Sea, with severe bleaching in the Beibu Gulf and parts of the Xisha Islands, marking the largest coral bleaching event on record in China.



Beyond rising sea temperatures and mass bleaching events driven by climate change, corals also face threats from marine debris, outbreaks of harmful organisms, and unsustainable fishing or tourism activities.

Under the impact of various anthropogenic pressures, China has lost 80% of its coral reefs.



Among typical coastal marine ecosystems, seagrass beds have followed a similar path of decline. Compared to historical distribution and species records, six seagrass species once found in China have disappeared, and over 80% of seagrass beds in nearshore waters have been lost.

Whether the loss of coral reefs or seagrass beds, it is not only a tipping point for the collapse of marine biodiversity, but also a critical turning point for human survival. Only sustained public attention, long-term investment in conservation, and genuine action can help us pull back before reaching the tipping point. And this is not only the responsibility of governments, but also the duty of every citizen living on this same blue planet.

A non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of China' s coastal typical marine ecosystems.

From Ocean to Land, Better Blue in Action.

"Protect the Ocean in the Name of Divers – Are You In?"

In 2017, a letter to divers across China began circulating on WeChat. A group of ocean-loving divers from all walks of life came together to form the foundation of a national network of volunteer divers. They became the first "Partners" of Better Blue' s marine conservation efforts. With the co-creation and support of these "Partners," Better Blue was officially registered as a private non-enterprise entity in 2020. Today, we have 5 full-time staff members and over 1,000 registered volunteers on our platform.

Rooted in the diver community and guided by the principle of real, effective action, we carry out our long-term work along three pathways—from ocean to land:

1.Citizen science supporting marine habitat data collection to assist government and research institutions in jointly developing conservation strategies.

From 2018 to 2023, Better Blue participated in the Guangxi Coral Reef Survey for six consecutive years. Nearly 300 divers took part, effectively supporting data collection across nine survey sites in Guangxi, helping government and research institutions better understand the distribution and biodiversity of coral reefs.



In response to increasingly frequent coral bleaching events, Better Blue launched a coral observation citizen science project. To date, 34 coral observation sessions have been conducted, involving nearly 400 divers. Nanao in Shenzhen has now become a site with mature, sustained data monitoring for coral bleaching. We hope that those with the strongest connection to the ocean can become “whistleblowers,” ensuring monitoring and early warning happen at all times.



In response to the threats posed by marine debris and ghost gear to critical marine habitats such as coral reefs, Better Blue has carried out underwater cleanups and debris surveys in over 20 cities. We identify the composition, distribution, primary sources, and threat levels of underwater debris to inform upstream prevention decisions and guide effective downstream removal.

From 2018 to 2025, Better Blue has conducted underwater cleanup and debris surveys at 20 sites. A total of 9,764 divers have participated in 1,125 such actions, directly removing approximately 13,760 kg of underwater debris, totalling 45,087 items.

We have consistently published 75 monthly reports on underwater debris, and our data has been used by relevant government departments in Shenzhen as a foundational resource for preliminary assessment in marine debris management.



We aim to build lasting expertise and depth in marine habitat data collection, so that more divers can become citizen scientists—where every dive is not just an adventure, but a contribution of targeted data to the protection of China's coral reefs and other typical marine habitats.

2. Selecting key or underrepresented areas for typical marine ecosystem protection to carry out in-situ conservation practices and ecological restoration.

The protection of vital marine habitats requires the involvement of local communities and other social sectors. Sustainable in-situ conservation also depends on the healthy development of those communities.

To explore a prototype model that combines monetisation of ecological value with multi-stakeholder engagement in development and conservation, we selected Weizhou Island in Guangxi—a critical coral reef conservation area—and Tangjia Bay in Zhuhai—an underrepresented seagrass bed area.

Through scientific monitoring, community engagement, public advocacy, and policy recommendations, we work to intervene in and reduce threats from human activities, and carry out artificial restoration in ecologically damaged areas.



Science communication and dissemination of marine ecological knowledge, promotion of responsible island tourism concepts and practices, and the development of local eco-tourism and cultural IP allowing conservation and development to complement each other.



Though our project sites are still young in their development, the tangible results are more than enough to keep us motivated.

From 2021 to 2023, a total of 576 people participated in coral reef restoration efforts in Guangxi, planting approximately 1,820 coral fragments, with an average survival rate of 80%. In contrast to the sharp decline observed in 2023, the seagrass bed in Tangjia Bay showed actual recovery, with average coverage increasing by 93% in 2024 compared to 2023. In 2025, efforts successfully advanced the inclusion of seagrass bed protection legislation into the legislative plan of the People's Congress.



Both project sites have demonstrated the positive synergy between ecological conservation and tourism development, receiving coverage and live broadcasts from multiple media outlets. Relevant government departments have taken note and included these efforts in their work reports, bringing positive feedback and renewed momentum to the project sites and communities.



3. Conducting public advocacy to enhance social consensus on positive and science-based human-ocean interactions, empowering a nationwide marine conservation action network, and driving more people to move from conservation awareness to conservation action.

From online knowledge-sharing platforms to cross-sector offline events and training, we aim to reach schools, communities, and urban spaces—sharing stories of science and conservation, bringing more knowledge and skills for protection, and inspiring more people to understand, cherish, and protect the ocean.



Public service announcements, documentary shorts, science videos, audio programmes, and research reports—these diverse formats are all used to better tell the story of the ocean and the need to protect it.



Exhibitions, workshops, film screenings, public talks, coastal cleanups, art installations, nature education activities—these have all taken root and thrived in cities across China.

From 2017 to the present, Better Blue has achieved over 3.8 billion online impressions. On average, we hold over 100 offline events each year, reaching more than 10,000 people annually. We have over 1,000 registered volunteers on our platform, and the number of divers with conservation specialisations has grown at least tenfold since 2017.

Our work has been featured in over 300 provincial- and national-level media reports. These are more than just numbers. They represent the real actions of the “Blue Partners” behind them. We have witnessed how they began with a simple curiosity about the ocean, gradually reflected on their relationship with it, and eventually became leaders of local marine conservation groups.



Marine conservation is a long and challenging journey. But the more people come to understand China's oceans and the biodiversity around them, the more guardians this blue planet will have.

We are full of hope. We believe that on this path, there will not only be Better Blue, but also thousands and thousands of “you.”



Join our monthly giving program and become a “Partner” in the better blue.

At the very heart of Better Blue’ s DNA is “people.” From a single letter and one individual to a nationwide network of diving volunteers, it all happened because a group of people kept pushing the wall forward.

This year marks Better Blue’ s ninth anniversary. There is no denying that marine conservation is a challenging journey. Sustained, effective action is the key to driving progress. Passion alone is far from enough to advance the cause of marine conservation. What is needed is a growing, dedicated team, and a professional organisation that is financially independent and sustainably run. Only then can the team move forward with confidence and without worry, keeping pace with and responding to the needs of conservation.

All of this becomes possible with your support.

Project Budget

Use of Funds / Allocation Ratio	Details
Coral Reef Ecological Restoration 10.8%	Reef substrate customization and casting costs, base production, vessel rental for planting, equipment costs, seedling replacement, regular ecological environment maintenance, and data/imagery collection
Marine Biodiversity Survey 4.32%	Tank rental, vessel rental, transportation, and accommodation
Seabed Debris and Ghost Gear Cleanup 12.74%	Tank rental, equipment costs, vessel rental, transportation, accommodation, imagery collection, and promotional expenses
Marine Public Advocacy Activities 17.17%	Implementation of online and offline marine conservation awareness campaigns, including materials, guest speaker honorariums, underwater photography and video editing, and promotional expenses
Marine Conservation Research and Workshops 3.24%	Venue, materials and supplies, insurance, travel, and workshop content development and documentation
Community Collaborative Actions 8.42%	Design, production, and logistics of thematic activity toolkits, and promotional expenses
Personnel Costs 26.83%	1. Project part-time staff/volunteer stipends; 2. Project staff salaries; 3. Accounting and finance personnel costs; 4. Team capacity building expenses
Fundraising Costs 6.48%	Monthly donor development, operational maintenance, and donor engagement and appreciation
Organizational Administrative Expenses 10%	Office space, property management, utilities, internet, and logistics

