

CHAPTER 05:

Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

From inception, GMT has sought to be a learning organization. This is perhaps unsurprising, given our founding by two teachers and researchers in environmental policy and innovation. In any case, our commitment to knowledge generation and sharing has served as a consistent guide in setting priorities both in the field and among global communities of practice. For us, generating new knowledge, synthesizing research and practice, and sharing new learnings serve as touchstone activities in the pursuit of GMT's mission. These efforts manifest in several forms.

Collaborations with Universities

GMT's relationships with academic institutions—such as Oxford, Singapore Management University, the National University of Singapore, University of Bogor, and the University of Southern California—have all played vital roles in bridging research and practice in the service of global mangrove conservation. Key collaborations have enabled GMT to implement cutting-edge methodologies—from remote sensing analysis for biomass estimation to polyculture reforestation—while ensuring its projects employ the latest advances in conservation science.

Collaborations with Policymakers

GMT has worked diligently to bring new information to policymakers and policy entrepreneurs across ASEAN. Since 2023, GMT has detailed key findings regarding project origination, financial planning, and patterns of regulatory impact on blue carbon organizations to policy communities in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam. At the United Nations (UNFCCC), GMT continues to advocate for strengthening indigenous forest rights and enhancing requirements for transparent data and legal disclosures in harmonized climate regulations.

Mentoring Future Conservation Leaders

GMT is passionate about supporting the next generation of conservationists. Dr. Merrill leads GMT's mentorship initiatives, which focus on hands-on training, leadership development, and context-specific educational outreach. Our commitment to empowering future leaders is reflected in field-level training, collaborative work with local communities to ideate adaptive conservation efforts, and annual internship programs that involve young change-makers from Switzerland, Tunisia, Morocco, Zambia, and Singapore in building a better future. A warm hat tip to our incredible interns!

Sharing Best Practices through Tools and Open Resources

Since our founding, GMT has advanced passionate arguments for using transparency and collective action to drive positive global change. As innovators, GMT has developed open-source resources such as GROVE, the GMT Legal Library, and ForestScan. These tools provide essential frameworks for managing mangrove projects, implementing benefit-sharing agreements, and monitoring impact. By sharing resources freely, GMT enables replication and scalability across the blue carbon ecosystem.

Looking ahead, GMT is committed to expanding knowledge-sharing efforts by developing new tools and enhancing existing ones within GMT and among its partners. Open resources empower stakeholders—from grassroots organizations to global policymakers—towards an adaptive, collaborative approach to mangrove conservation.

Empowering Communities Through Capacity Building

Capacity building stands at the core of GMT's mission, equipping communities with tools and knowledge to drive conservation outcomes. Co-design fosters inclusivity, ensuring diverse voices of women and youth inform project development. GMT workshops not only enhance local skills but also establish new leadership structures to support long-term sustainability.

In documenting best practices, GMT has sought to bring together techniques from diverse geographies. These include the Bay of Bengal (Worldview International Foundation), the Niger Delta (Tropical Research and Conservation Center), Madagascar (Blue Ventures), and East Java (YAGASU). We combine implementation skills with management tools ranging from legal contracting (Hogan Lovells) to remote sensing (NUS Mangrove Lab, Kumi Analytics). Combining best practices into toolboxes for communities of practice is a key passion of our leadership and serves as an enduring pillar of GMT's theory of change.

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"Education and capacity building stand at the heart of empowering communities to take sustained ownership of conservation initiatives."

- Elisa Sabbion,
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"At GMT, we know that knowledge and tools are keys to success. As we learn, we bring a mix of soft and hard skills to the field, and strengthen local leaders to use those resources in their teams. Together, we ensure mangrove conservation is more than a localized effort; it links to global movement."

-Siddharth Samal,
GMT Communications Lead