



INDONESIA'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN CTI-CFF COOPERATION IN SUPPORTING NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY

STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI INDONESIA DALAM KERJASAMA CTI- CFF DALAM MENDUKUNG KETAHANAN PANGAN NASIONAL

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Abstract

This article analyzes Indonesia's communication strategy in the multilateral Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) cooperation, focusing on strategic communication approaches and environmentally-based digital diplomacy. The CTI-CFF is a crucial platform for Indonesia to build its image as a maritime leader and protector of the region's environment. This research employs a literature review and exploratory content analysis of scientific literature, policy documents, and social media content from relevant institutions, such as the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat. The findings indicate that Indonesia utilizes the CTI-CFF not only as a policy cooperation instrument but also as a strategic communication medium that combines the framing of environmental and food security issues. The "healthy ocean = safe food" framing is a key narrative used to frame environmental issues within the context of national security. Furthermore, using social media as a digital diplomacy tool demonstrates Indonesia's efforts to expand the influence of environmental communication in a public and participatory manner. This study emphasizes the importance of strategic communication in ecologically based regional cooperation. It opens up opportunities for further research on the effectiveness of digital diplomacy and public engagement in national environmental campaigns.

Keywords: Strategic Communication, CTI-CFF, Food Security, Environmental Communication, Digital Diplomacy



Abstrak

Artikel ini menganalisis strategi komunikasi Indonesia dalam kerja sama multilateral Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) dengan fokus pada pendekatan komunikasi strategis dan diplomasi digital berbasis lingkungan. CTI-CFF menjadi platform penting bagi Indonesia dalam membangun citra sebagai negara pemimpin maritim sekaligus pelindung lingkungan kawasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian pustaka dan analisis isi eksploratif terhadap literatur ilmiah, dokumen kebijakan, serta konten media sosial institusi terkait seperti Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan (KKP) dan CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Indonesia memanfaatkan CTI-CFF tidak hanya sebagai instrumen kerja sama kebijakan, tetapi juga sebagai medium komunikasi strategis yang menggabungkan framing isu lingkungan dan ketahanan pangan. Framing “laut sehat = pangan aman” menjadi narasi kunci yang digunakan untuk membingkai isu lingkungan dalam konteks keamanan nasional. Selain itu, penggunaan media sosial sebagai alat diplomasi digital menunjukkan upaya Indonesia dalam memperluas pengaruh komunikasi lingkungan secara publik dan partisipatif. Kajian ini menegaskan pentingnya komunikasi strategis dalam kerja sama kawasan berbasis ekologi, serta membuka ruang untuk riset lanjutan terkait efektivitas diplomasi digital dan keterlibatan publik dalam kampanye lingkungan nasional.

Kata Kunci : Komunikasi Strategis, CTI-CFF, Ketahanan Pangan, Komunikasi Lingkungan, Diplomasi Digital

1. INTRODUCTION

The current global environmental crisis has entered a critical phase, particularly in the marine ecosystem sector, which is facing pressure from climate change, overexploitation of resources, and coastal ecosystem degradation. Global climate change and marine environmental degradation have posed significant threats to the sustainability of coastal communities, particularly to food security (Novianti, Kurnia et al., 2017).

The IPCC (2023) report states that global ocean temperatures have continued to rise over the past three decades and are accelerating the bleaching process of coral reefs in tropical regions. Meanwhile, the marine sector is increasingly important in supporting global food security. According to the FAO (2022), more than 3.3 billion people depend on seafood as their primary source of protein, and approximately 60 million people work directly in the fisheries sector.

The Coral Triangle region, encompassing Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands, is a global center of marine biodiversity with strategic ecological and economic value (Biorock Indonesia, 2021). This region contributes nearly 76% of the world's coral species and is a critical habitat for thousands of marine species. However, this region is also highly vulnerable to threats from climate change, illegal fishing, and coastal area conversion.

As a country with a vast ocean dominating its territory, Indonesia is in a highly vulnerable position. It also plays a key role in efforts to save this marine ecosystem. A recent study warned that more than half of Indonesia's protected coral reef areas will experience mass coral



bleaching by 2044 due to rising sea temperatures caused by climate change (The Conversation, 2024).



Coral bleaching in Indonesia
(Source: The Conversation)

In this context, a communication approach is crucial. Environmental issues can no longer be conveyed solely in technical reports; they must be communicated strategically to shape perceptions, build public support, and strengthen the nation's position. Strategic communication enables countries like Indonesia to frame climate change and marine issues as national and regional interests while expanding their influence through digital diplomacy.

As a multinational organization, the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF) has become relevant as a platform for environmental diplomacy and regional strategic communication. Indonesia has leveraged its role as the initiator of the CTI-CFF to build a narrative as a maritime leader and guardian of global marine areas. Beyond conventional diplomacy, Indonesia's communication strategy now also includes using social media and digital channels to convey environmental messages, build trust, and strengthen its international identity. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat actively use Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to educate the public and promote marine conservation campaigns.

Based on this background, this article aims to answer the question: What is Indonesia's communication strategy in the CTI-CFF collaboration to support marine-based food security? This study focuses on the dimensions of strategic communication and digital diplomacy as approaches to understanding environmental-based regional cooperation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical literature review method. This study aims to understand Indonesia's communication strategy in the CTI-CFF multilateral cooperation from the perspective of strategic communication and environmental communication. The literature reviewed includes scientific journals, reference books, policy reports, official government documents, and articles from trusted media outlets nationally and internationally (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Snyder, 2019).

To strengthen the digital communication dimension, this study also conducted an exploratory content analysis of the social media accounts of relevant institutions, such as the official account of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia (@kkpgoid) and the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat accounts on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. This analysis identified how public narratives about marine conservation, food



security, and environmental diplomacy are strategically constructed and disseminated to public audiences (Liu et al., 2021; Marland, 2020).

The literature and secondary data used were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) directly relevant to the CTI-CFF themes, state strategic communication, and environmental diplomacy; (2) published within the last five years (2019–2024); and (3) sourced from official institutions, accredited journals, or media platforms with academic reputations. The analysis process was conducted using a thematic approach that grouped content based on key themes, such as environmental issue framing, digital public diplomacy, and climate change-based crisis communication (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In recent years, studies on strategic communication in the context of environmental issues and regional diplomacy have begun to develop. However, they are still limited to policy perspectives or international relations studies. For example, research by Dewi & Nasution (2020) examines Indonesia's maritime diplomacy within the CTI-CFF framework as part of a non-traditional security strategy. However, it has not yet highlighted the dimensions of public communication and digital narratives developed post-2015.

Meanwhile, research by Fitriani et al. (2021) examined the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries' social media strategy in its "Healthy Seas, Safe Food" campaign. It concluded that data visualization and popular language were key to public engagement. However, this study was local and failed to link these digital strategies to Indonesia's diplomatic narrative in international forums.

Thus, this article offers a novel contribution to the study of strategic environmental communication in Indonesia, particularly by combining the CTI-CFF literature approach, framing, and analysis of institutional social media-based digital diplomacy as a unified regional communication strategy.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The literature review and thematic analysis in this study yielded three key findings related to Indonesia's communication strategy in the CTI-CFF collaboration:

a. Indonesia's Strategic Representation in the CTI-CFF

Indonesia has served as the initiator and host of the permanent secretariat of the CTI-CFF since its inception in 2009. This decision is not merely a foreign policy decision, but a strategic articulation of Indonesia's desire to be known as a maritime nation proactive in preserving marine ecosystems and leading the narrative of regional environmental cooperation. The 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) document emphasizes the importance of the blue economy, conservation, and food security as cross-sectoral priorities (Bappenas, 2020).

Furthermore, Indonesia's 2009–2015 National Plan of Action (NPoA) lists five strategic targets that support this communication narrative: development of priority seascapes, implementation of an ecosystem approach, management of marine protected areas, climate change adaptation, and protection of threatened species (CTI-CFF, 2011). This target symbolically and substantially frames Indonesia's "regional leader" position in marine ecological security.



b. Public Communication through Institutional Social Media

With over 220 million internet users—approximately 80% of the total population—Indonesia has witnessed a significant increase in digital access, especially in rural areas (We Are Social, 2025). Active social media users now number over 190 million, with Instagram remaining the most popular platform, reaching 150 million users (dipstrategy, 2025).

This makes Instagram a strategic asset for environmental communication—an effective channel to disseminate educational messages, shape public opinion, and encourage collective behavioral change. Content analysis of the official Instagram account of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (@kkpgoid) shows active efforts to construct public narratives around marine conservation, the blue economy, and ocean-based food security. In 2024, the posts with the highest engagement featured short, educational reels that combined light-hearted, humorous tones with visually appealing storytelling.



Short video content

Upload date	Likes	Comments	Engagement Rate
19 January 2024	12,287	95	5.3%

Source: Fanpage Karma (January-December 2024)

However, there is still a notable absence of explicit content related to CTI-CFF initiatives, ongoing programs under the CTI-CFF framework, or the issue of coral bleaching. Considering the urgency of coral bleaching as a serious threat to reef ecosystems and coastal livelihoods—and the alignment of CTI-CFF programs with sustainable marine resource management—this omission represents an underutilized opportunity.

Likewise, the Instagram account of the CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat (@cticff), despite having 3,153 followers and 699 posts, demonstrates relatively low public engagement. The top-performing content in 2024 received only 100–200 likes, with fewer than 10 comments per post. This may be attributed to inconsistent posting frequency, limited content variation, and a lack of strategic targeting.



			Number of Likes	Number of comments
1	CTI-CFF	Hello Everyone.. CTI-CFF RS in Collaboration with National Coordinating Committee Indonesia...	191	6
2	CTI-CFF	Congratulations to the CTI-CFF Youth and Young Professional Ambassadors 2024! Your...	126	6
3	CTI-CFF	Coral Triangle Day 2024 is coming up soon. Are you ready to join the events? We'll keep you posted on a...	125	1
4	CTI-CFF	CALLING ALL YOUTH & YOUNG PROFESSIONAL FROM CT6 COUNTRIES TO JOIN THE CTI-CFF...	104	0
5	CTI-CFF	Every day is an opportunity to make a difference. A major factor contributing to the leakage of...	103	0

@cticff five top content in 2024

Source: *fanpage karma*

There is a need to optimize digital communication by considering audience segmentation, platform algorithms (e.g., using boosted posts or environmental influencers), and interactive formats such as polls, quizzes, or challenge-based campaigns that promote user-generated content. Similar strategies have proven effective in campaigns like #ClimateStrike (Fridays for Future) and #OnlyOneEarth (UNEP, 2022). Indonesia could adopt such models to enhance CTI-CFF message outreach, especially among youth audiences.

c. Ecological-Economic Narrative Framing in National Discourse

Indonesia strategically frames marine ecosystem sustainability as a prerequisite for food security and national economic development. Both President Yudhoyono's 2009 speech and President Jokowi's "Global Maritime Fulcrum" narrative consistently link marine conservation to economic stability and national sovereignty. With one of the highest rates of seafood consumption in Southeast Asia and globally ranking fifth, Indonesia's food security is directly tied to ocean health (Kusumastanto & Tridoyo, 2016).

Alarmingly, nearly 95% of Indonesia's coral reefs are threatened by local human activities, with more than 35% facing high or very high risk. Combined with climate change threats, these conditions may support the controversial 2006 prediction in *Science* journal that global fisheries could collapse by 2048 (Kusumastanto & Tridoyo, 2016).

This ecological-economic framing is consistently translated across various communication platforms—both in international forums and digital communication. Through this approach, Indonesia seeks to integrate its national identity as a "maritime nation" with an international image as a "regional conservation leader," demonstrating coherence in multi-level communication strategies.

Discussion

The findings reveal that Indonesia's strategic communication in the CTI-CFF partnership is multidimensional, involving foreign policy, public communication, and digital diplomacy.



This aligns with Hallahan et al.'s (2007) definition of strategic communication as a planned and consistent effort designed to achieve an organization's long-term goals—including the goals of a nation-state.

a. Strategic Communication and Maritime Identity Framing

Indonesia's communication strategy within the CTI-CFF reflects a national framing practice that connects marine conservation with food security and economic development. According to Entman (1993), framing is the process of selecting and emphasizing specific aspects of reality within a communication message. Indonesia frames "healthy oceans = secure food" to emphasize that environmental issues are not merely technical matters but integral to human security, economic stability, and sustainable development.

This framing serves both diagnostic (identifying the problem: ocean degradation and food insecurity) and prognostic (offering solutions: CTI-CFF cooperation and conservation) functions. It is reinforced through national symbols such as the global maritime fulcrum narrative and presidential speeches that associate ecological responsibility with regional leadership.

b. Digital Communication: A Latent Potential

Although the @kkpgoid account has generated visually engaging content with high engagement, it has yet to highlight specific issues such as coral bleaching or CTI-CFF programs. These topics have strong potential to improve public understanding of the links between marine ecology and food security.

Similarly, while @cticff has documented institutional activities, public engagement remains low due to limited emotional, educational, or participatory content. This highlights a gap between strategic messaging in policy and its actual implementation in digital communication, which remains inconsistent and unfocused.

c. CTI-CFF as a Narrative and Regional Diplomacy Arena

Indonesia does not merely treat CTI-CFF as a technical policy forum, but as a platform to project a strategic narrative positioning itself as a steward of the global oceanic region. This reflects the concept of *strategic narrative*, whereby states frame their participation in international cooperation as part of broader moral, political, and national identity goals (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, & Roselle, 2013).

However, as shown in the results, this narrative has yet to be consistently reflected in digital communication platforms capable of reaching wider public audiences. Thus, coherence between formal diplomacy and public digital communication is essential to ensuring that strategic communication shapes collective perception both domestically and globally.



4. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Indonesia's communication strategy within the CTI-CFF framework is pursued through three main approaches: national identity framing, digital public communication, and environmental diplomacy.

First, Indonesia utilizes the CTI-CFF to promote its image as a responsible maritime state, centered on the key narrative "healthy oceans = secure food," linking marine conservation to food security.

Second, institutional social media—particularly @kkpgoid—has been leveraged for educational campaigns but has not consistently highlighted crucial issues such as coral bleaching or CTI-CFF programming, which are essential for raising public awareness.

Third, CTI-CFF functions as a narrative platform where Indonesia asserts its diplomatic role as a regional leader in marine environmental issues.

Therefore, Indonesia's strategic communication must further emphasize inter-institutional integration, enhanced digital communication capacity in ministries/agencies, and broader engagement of local communities and non-state actors. In particular, Generation Z—digital natives with strong environmental concerns—must be prioritized. As both content consumers and producers, they can significantly extend the reach of environmental narratives through social media. By designing digital campaigns that are interactive, emotionally resonant, and visually compelling, the broader narrative of ecological-based food security will not remain confined to diplomatic spaces, but can inspire grassroots awareness and tangible action—especially among youth who now play a central role in Indonesia's digital communication ecosystem.

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