

International Coral Reef Initiative
Framework For Action
Approved 3 June 1995

PREAMBLE

Maintaining the biological diversity, condition, resources, and values of coral reefs and related ecosystems is a matter of global urgency. While the majority of countries which have coral reefs are developing countries, there are many reefs in the waters of developed countries. This unites the developed and developing countries and should command the attention of the international community. Coral reef survival depends upon the world community acquiring and maintaining the knowledge and capacity to conserve and sustainably use coral reefs and related ecosystems. This requires that all uses and impacts be brought within and maintained at levels which do not exceed these systems' natural capacity for production and regeneration.

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Workshop was held at Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Philippines in May, 1995 to enable countries, donors, development and funding agencies to work with coral reef managers, private sector representatives, non-governmental organizations and scientists to develop this Framework as a basis for achieving sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

The ICRI Framework for Action builds upon and reflects the principles and processes established by Agenda 21, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, Global Program of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities and other relevant international programs. It has been developed as a succinct statement which should be read and interpreted in light of these documents.

This Framework addresses the four elements of the ICRI Call to Action, which are:

- management;
- capacity building;
- research and monitoring; and
- review.

FRAMEWORK PURPOSE

The purpose of this Framework for Action is to mobilize governments and the wide range of other stakeholders whose coordinated, vigorous and effective actions are required to implement the Call to Action.

PRINCIPLES

The ICRI recognizes the following principles:

- Achieving the ICRI's purpose requires the full participation and commitment of governments, local communities, donors, NGOs, the private sector, resource users and scientists; therefore true partnerships, cooperation and collaboration exemplify the ICRI activities.
- The over-riding priority is to support actions that will have tangible, positive and measurable effects on coral reefs and related ecosystems and on the well-being of the communities which depend upon them.
- Human activities are the major cause of coral reef degradation; therefore managing coral reefs means managing those human activities. Individuals whose decisions and actions affect coral reefs--from board rooms to beaches--need to become aware of and committed to the conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- The diversity of cultures, traditions and governance within nations and regions should be recognized and built upon in all the ICRI activities.
- Integrated coastal management, with special emphasis on community participation and benefit, provides a framework for effective coral reef and related ecosystem management.
- Developing national capacity to conserve and sustainably use coral reefs and related ecosystems requires a long term (decadal) commitment. Improvement of coral reef management requires a permanent commitment and an adaptive approach.
- Strategic research and monitoring programs should be an integral part of the ICRI because management of coral reefs and related ecosystems should be based on the most relevant scientific information.
- Actions promoted under this framework should take account of, and fully use, the extensive body of international agreements and organizations that address issues related to coral reefs and related ecosystems. The

ICRI will facilitate the leveraging and channeling of existing resources among all sectors for the benefit of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

ACTION

- All those committed to supporting the ICRI and this Framework for Action are called upon to take account of and to act on the following at the international, regional and national levels.
- Support national and regional efforts to establish and coordinate strategies, priorities and programs to implement the ICRI Framework for Action, starting with regional workshops to be held by early 1996.
- Ensure that sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems is considered at future relevant international meetings.
- Develop and/or strengthen national, regional and international mechanisms for gathering and sharing information and expertise on the sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- Promote improved access to financial and technological resources to enable institutions, regional centres and networks to assist and inform governments, industries and communities.
- Addressing conservation and sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems requires activities in the following areas:
 - integrated coastal management;
 - public awareness, education and training;
 - ratification of or accession to relevant international instruments;
 - stakeholder participation at all levels;
 - training policy makers and private sector decision makers in the development and implementation of coral reef management;
 - marine science and technology;
 - environmental law, particularly environmental impact assessment regulations; and
 - assessing the potential for micro-enterprise development and facilitating access to financing on a small to medium scale.

Management

- Encourage governments to develop and adopt integrated coastal management measures, including:

- protection of the marine environment from land based sources of marine pollution;
 - environmentally sound land use practices, including zoning where appropriate;
 - measures to protect the marine environment from the adverse effect of maritime activities;
 - national and regional disaster strategies;
 - measures to prevent illegal fishing practices, achieve sustainable fisheries and protect the ecological systems that support them;
 - tourism management and planning;
 - cultural aspects of resource use; and
 - enforcement of regulations.
- Encourage governments and funding agencies to consider the ICRI Framework in project and program design and implementation.
 - Encourage, where appropriate, an intersectoral systems approach to planning and management.
 - Encourage improved coordination among international organizations, donors and NGOs to provide more effective programs at the regional and national level.
 - Encourage prompt implementation of the outcomes of FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Global Program of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities.
 - Promote awareness and action by the global tourist community to minimize individual and collective impacts of tourism on coral reefs and related ecosystems.
 - Promote the establishment and effective management of coastal and marine protected areas for coral reefs and related ecosystems, within the framework of customary international law as exemplified by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This will contribute to the development of the Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas as proposed by the World Bank, IUCN and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.
 - Promote the regulation of international trade in endangered and threatened reef-associated species through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), and improve its implementation where required.
 - Encourage governments to develop and promote mechanisms for regulating international trade in species that are illegally harvested.

- Encourage governments to develop legislation, policy and institutional capacity to apply environmental assessment to development activities.
- Promote appropriate technologies, including voluntary programs and economic incentives and best management practices, for control of land-based causes of marine pollution.
- Promote and replicate successes in integrated coastal management, including community based management, as appropriate.
- Support management measures to improve the socio-economic condition of local communities through such means as retraining and sustainable alternative livelihood development.

Capacity Building

- Capacity building includes establishing and strengthening human resource and institutional capabilities for coastal management, science, training and education.
- Encourage regional organizations to assist countries and communities implementing ICRI, for example through measures including:
 - preparation of project proposals
 - implementation of small grant programs.
- Establish, strengthen and sustain mutually supportive networks of centres of expertise in management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- Base human resource development strategies on needs assessments and ensure that they address:
 - the diversity of cultures traditions and governance structures;
 - increased community awareness and involvement;
 - improving the capacity of today's managers;
 - providing for the education of tomorrow's managers;
 - coverage of coral reef management issues in the training of all professionals whose work involves decisions which affect coral reefs and coastal resource management;
 - technical training needs for people at the field level;
 - training and supporting trainers to work at the community and field level;
 - evaluation of the effectiveness of training; and
 - the need to target children in awareness raising.

- Improve coordination and targeting of the education and human resource development programs provided by development partners.
- Support formal and informal environmental education programs for all levels of the community on the subject of coral reefs and related ecosystems, with curricula and materials tailored to the interests and needs of the regions and end-users.
- Encourage maximum use of national and regional expertise in management, research and capacity building activities.
- Support the development, identification and dissemination of materials which address the interests and needs of the regions, including:
 - the value of coral reefs and related ecosystems;
 - practical monitoring and management techniques;
 - inventories of formal and on-the-job training opportunities;
 - case studies of management, including success stories as well as examples which have not been successful; and
 - case studies of human impact and natural variation in coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- Increase the relevance to ICRI of existing donor scholarship programs by:
 - devoting a proportion of scholarship awards to environmental studies; and
 - encouraging thesis and dissertation studies carried out in home countries.
- Encourage the private sector's role in management of coral reefs and related ecosystems through:
 - use of appropriate technologies;
 - development of a trained and educated workforce; and
 - innovative approaches to better environmental operating standards.

Research & Monitoring

- Research and monitoring are needed to assess the status of coral reefs, evaluate the success of management and conservation actions and develop more effective management practices. As tropical ecosystems, coral reefs and related ecosystems are subject to dynamics which are generally less well understood than temperate systems. Therefore, without evidence it should not be assumed that they will react to natural and human disturbances in the same way as temperate systems.

- Research and monitoring programs should address biological, physical, social, cultural and economic studies and should be carried out over time periods appropriate to their objectives. They should be supported by information management, interpretation and dissemination. In the collection of data for both research and monitoring, resource users should be involved to the maximum extent practicable.
- Promote the involvement of managers in the development, conduct, interpretation and application of research and monitoring programs.
- Promote and assist the development and application of resource assessment methods that:
 - allow for rapid assessment to establish baselines and initiate management
 - can be used in Geographic Information and Decision Support Systems
- Promote the development of a Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network under the Coastal Zone Module of the Global Ocean Observing System by incorporating and, as necessary, establishing or strengthening regional nodes.
- Encourage studies of coral reefs and related ecosystems which:
 - address priority management issues in individual countries or regions;
 - address the synergies between human effects and natural variations as causes of stress and degradation in coral reefs and related ecosystems;
 - involve interdisciplinary research into human impacts with initial priority of fisheries and tourism;
 - integrate traditional knowledge;
 - quantify the socio-economic impacts of conservation and habitat destruction;
 - address the scales and linkages of the biological communities; and
 - develop methods for impact mitigation and reef restoration.
- Develop programs to involve communities, resource users, the private sector and others in monitoring the condition of coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- Encourage regional and international forums which bring together managers and scientists to identify priority information requirements for management of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

Review

- Review of the state of coral reefs and related ecosystems and of action taken to implement the ICRI Framework for Action should be conducted at national, regional and international levels on a regular basis.
- The four yearly cycle of the international coral reef symposia provides an excellent opportunity to discuss the ecological condition of coral reefs. This should be matched by an equivalent program to review the effectiveness of implementation of actions in accordance with the ICRI Framework For Action. At the international level, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development provides an appropriate forum for review of international actions taken at all levels by governments, international organizations and agencies. The 1996 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, with its focus on Chapter 17 (Protection of Oceans) of Agenda 21 will deal, inter alia, with coral reefs and related ecosystems.
- UNEP should be encouraged to review the implementation and success of the ICRI Framework For Action through relevant programs including the Regional Seas Programmes.
- Similarly the IOC through the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, should be encouraged to produce reports on the ecological condition of coral reefs and related ecosystems for discussion at the quadrennial International Coral Reef Symposia and other relevant international forums.