

**INDIA Member's report on activities to ICRI**

Presented by

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Ministry of Environment and Forests,
Government of India, New Delhi, INDIA****Reporting period January, 2008 – December, 2009**

Please note that the purpose of this report is to help you share information about your activities within the ICRI community to allow discussion at the next ICRI General Meeting. The reports will be made available on the ICRIForum prior to the meeting. The ICRI secretariat is well aware of your busy schedule, thus don't hesitate to submit an incomplete report.

1. General Information

Are you an ICRI Member?	YES
Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	INDIA / Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India
Focal Point 1:	
<i>Name:</i>	Dr. B.P. Nilaratna, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 003
<i>Organization:</i>	Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India
<i>Email:</i>	Jsbpn-mef@nic.in
Focal point 2:	--
<i>Name:</i>	
<i>Organization:</i>	
<i>Email:</i>	
Last meeting attended:	Washington DC, 22-25 January 2008
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Through Letters / email / fax
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	Rs.6.99 crores for 2009-10 for coral reefs, mangroves, coastal and marine biodiversity

For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	YES. The concerned States and Union Territories (UTs) submit annual management action plans for conservation and protection of corals reefs
Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:	YES. The annual action plans of concerned States / UTs are sent to the Ministry of Environment and Forests to focal point for approval and obtainment of requisite financial assistance
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	YES. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have constituted a

	National Committee on Mangroves and Coral Reefs to oversee their conservation and protection
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs:	YES.
If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:	India has been actively participating in South Asia Coral Reef Task Force. India is also implementing a UNDP sponsored project in Gulf of Mannar.
Marine Protected Areas	
How many MPS(s) with coral reefs	Four National Coral Reef Sites have been identified viz., i. Gulf of Kutch, Gujarat ii. Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu iii. Andaman & Nicobar Islands iv. Lakshadweep Islands
What is the percentage of coral reefs MPA(s) to the (Coastal zone / marine area)	31%
Please provide the appropriate contact name for MPA data holdings	Dr. J.R. Bhatt, Director, Ministry of Environments and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 003
Deetails for contact (email/fax/telephone)	E.mail: jrbhatt@nic.in Telefax: +91 11 2436 3962

2. Updates on your activities (new initiatives/programs/projects of your government /organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members)

The Government seeks to sustain Coral Reefs in the country by both promotional & regulatory measures. Under the promotional measures, the Government has identified four National Coral Reef Areas viz: i) Gulf of Mannar, ii) Gulf of Kutch, iii) Lakshadweep and iv) Andaman & Nicobar Islands. It provides financial assistance to the State Forest Departments of all the four identified Coral Reefs areas in the country for implementation of approved Management Action Plans for conservation & management of corals and coral reefs. The National Environment Policy, 2006 embodies that Coral Reefs are an important coastal environmental resource and underlines the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (1991) under the Environmental Protection Act (1986) recognizes the Corals & Coral Reef areas as ecologically sensitive and categorizes them as CRZ-I (i) which implies that these areas are afforded protection of the highest order. Some species of corals are also included in the Schedules of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 according them a high degree of protection. Some of the new initiatives are as given below:

- **R&D on coral reef restoration through transplantation using native coral species.**

- **Study on Fish Spawning Aggregations in coral reef areas.**
- **Study on coral disease prevalence.**
- **Identification of new National coral sites in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat.**
- **Capacity building and training of frontline forestry staff for conservation and management of coral reefs.**
- **Regular coral reef monitoring**

3. Contribution to the ICRI GM: Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI action plan and objectives of the general meeting. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

a. **Fisheries session:** Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences in managing fisheries and any projects/programs you are involved in.

- **What was The Problem or the Challenge? – including information on the location, the perceived problem and the effects on the coastal resources**
 - Shrinking coastal resource base, inadequate education and awareness, over exploitation, over fishing, illegal fishing and poaching of endangered species, lack of infrastructure and manpower for protection and vigilance and inadequate capacity for regular surveillance and monitoring
- **What was done? Both ecological and sociological interventions**
 - Awareness building among fisher folk and traders.
 - Capacity building of fisher folk in alternate livelihood options.
 - Capacity building of enforcement officials and natural resource managers in biodiversity identification to check illegal trade.
 - Promotion of participatory biodiversity conservation (E.G. in Gulf of Mannar through UNDP-GEF project)
 - International Year of the Reef 2008 was celebrated involving all stakeholders covering all four major reef areas – Village and national level workshops, awareness building meetings, television and radio campaign were conducted. Posters and brochures were released.
 - The Ministry in collaboration with the South Asia Cooperation Environment Programme jointly sponsored a four day International Workshop 'Managers Exchange Programme' which was implemented by GEER Foundation during 5th to 8th November, 2008. Twenty Two delegates participated in this programme which included ten managers from South Asian countries, namely, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan.
 - A seminar on status and protection of Coral Reefs was organized by the ministry jointly with NIO, Goa from January 21 to 23, 2008 at Kadamat Island, Lakshadweep. A total of 53 delegates participated in this seminar which deliberated upon conservation of coral reefs.
 - The Ministry is also organized a Brain Storming Session on Coral Reefs at SDMRI, Tuticorin on 29th -30th December, 2008. The

proceedings are being brought out by the ministry in association with IUCN.

- **How successful was it? E.g. has fisheries improved; positive effects on coral reefs; better reef resources exportation?**
 - Fisher folk started realizing the importance of coral reefs
 - Complete halt of coral mining in Gulf of Mannar
 - Increase of live coral cover in Gulf of Mannar
 - Reduced disturbance through fishing in reef areas
 - Due to the increased capacity among enforcement officials and natural resource managers, many illegal trades of protected species were stopped.

- **Lessons learned and recommendations; Key messages to convey to other people**
 - Awareness building should be a continuous process among all stakeholders.
 - Capacity has to be developed among fisher folk in eco-friendly fishing practices and other alternate livelihood options to reduce pressure on marine ecosystem.
 - Capacity has to be developed among enforcement officials continuously to check illegal trade.
 - Capacity has to be developed continuously among natural resource managers in biodiversity identification, resource assessment and monitoring.
 - Refreshers training programmes in capacity building have to be conducted every year.
 - Scientifically supported SCUBA dive facility has to be created in order to develop capacity in regular reef assessment and monitoring.
 - Targeting R&D related to climate impact on coral reefs and associated fisheries.

- b. **The ICRI secretariat is planning on revisiting/updating the ICRI “call to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/call_action.pdf) and ICRI “framework to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/framework_action.pdf). Please provide any guidelines you think would be useful.**

Nil

- c. **During the meeting, a full day will focus on the Caribbean region. If you have any question about the region, ongoing projects in the region, please let us know.**

Nil

d. During the meeting, we are planning on having a presentation on the “Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)”. Could you please list your coral reef sites listed under the MAB programme.

The four national sites are as follows:

1. Gulf of Kutch, Gujarat
2. Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu
3. Andaman & Nicobar Islands
4. Lakshadweep Islands

Some parts of these sites are also under Biosphere Reserves.

e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since April 2009, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, policy changes, economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

- R&D on coral reef restoration through transplantation using native coral species.
- Promotion of targeted research on hard and soft corals and on coral reef associates.
- Study on Fish Spawning aggregations in coral reef areas.
- Study on coral disease prevalence.
- Identification of new National coral sites in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat.
- Stakeholders consultation for achieving synergy and linkages.
- Finalization of guidelines for National Coral Reef Sites.
- Promotion of education and awareness.
- Capacity building and training of frontline forestry staff for conservation and management of coral reefs.
- Regular coral reef monitoring

The following initiatives / programmes merit attention for future implementation

- Impact of climate change on corals reefs and associated fisheries.
- Reef resilience survey and coral reef restoration using resistant / resilient species
- Carbon fluxes and quantification of carbon sequestration in coastal ecosystems
- Ocean acidification and coral reefs
- Economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services

f. Please list publications, reports you have been released since April 2009

- Proceedings of the national workshop on mangrove biodiversity in India, held in GEER Foundation, Gujarat, 12-13 February 2008 – in press
- Proceedings of the national workshop on the current status, threats, and conservation measures of coral reefs in India, held in SDMRI, Tuticorin, 29-30 December 2008 – in press.

ICRI and Other Meetings - Are you considering attending any of the following meetings in 2009?

- ❑ 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010
- ❑ **[yes]** 5th Global Oceans Conference: Ensuring Survival, Preserving Life, and Improving Governance:
 - Policy, Science, and Technical Symposium (May 3-4, 2010)
 - Policy Conference (May 6-7, 2010)
- ❑ **[yes]** 10th Meeting of the conference of the Parties to the convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10), October 18-29, 2010, Nagoya, Japan
- ❑ Other (please specify):