



Member Report on Activities to ICRI

Presented by United States of America

Reporting period July 2008 – April 2009

1. General Information

Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	United States of America
Focal Point 1:	Christine Dawson & Kelly Milton (State Department)
Focal point 2:	Barbara Best (USAID) / Arthur Paterson (NOAA)
Last meeting attended:	July General Meeting – Ft. Lauderdale
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	Through an inter-agency process
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	

For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	YES
Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:	
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	YES
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs:	YES
If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:	Coral Triangle Initiative, Micronesia Challenge, Caribbean Challenge, GLISPA, and others elaborated below.

2. Member contribution to the ICRI GM: Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the Mexico-United States action plan. 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. Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences of developing partnerships with the private sector that might be relevant to ICRI members?

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has developed a guide on creating public-private partnerships. The guide contains many useful case studies and is available for the general public at:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_partnerships/gda/resources/GDA_Report_Jan_2006_Full.pdf

- b. Are you aware of programmes or policies by your country/organization for implementing integrated ecosystem management from watershed to reef slope?

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program - Threat-based Working Groups: In response to an independent assessment conducted in 2007, the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) has developed a Roadmap for the Future, establishing new principles and priorities for the Program. As outlined in the Roadmap, the primary objective of the CRCP will be to address strategic coral reef management needs and emphasize the top three global and national threats to coral reef ecosystems: fishing impacts, land-based sources of pollution and climate change. In order to implement the proposed changes, the CRCP has established three working groups to provide recommendations on the strategic goals and objectives the Program should work towards to effectively address each of these threats. Each working group is comprised of approximately 15 NOAA and non-NOAA representatives from the Atlantic/Caribbean Pacific regions. Draft 20-year goals and 5-year objectives for each of the three threat groups were released in March and will be open for public comment until April 24. The final document will be made public May 29, 2009.

Local Action Strategies: Since 2002, NOAA and U.S. Coral Reef Task Force partners have established Local Action Strategies (LAS) in the seven U.S. territories with coral reefs (Florida, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) to implement priority actions to reduce coral reef threats. Six goals, identified in the U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral, have been prioritized for immediate local action: over-fishing, land-based sources of pollution, recreational overuse and misuse, lack of public awareness, climate change and coral bleaching, and disease. Applying a collaborative decision-making process based on local needs, concerns and capacities, each jurisdiction has developed LAS that contain a variety of projects designed for implementation over a three-year period. The LAS initiative is in different stages with diverse approaches within each jurisdiction; sometimes with multiple LAS on different timelines. Several jurisdictions have complete the core elements of their initial LAS and are beginning to examine how best to revise their LAS to more effectively achieve coral reef management objectives in the future. An accomplishment report, "Status of Local Action Strategies to Conserve and Protect Coral Reefs: 2002-2006" was published last year.

- c. Are there any monitoring or research activities you are either involved in or aware of aimed at improving understanding of adaptive management of coral reefs and related ecosystems that may be of interest to ICRI members?

Examples could include any efforts through workshops, environmental education programs, beach and underwater clean ups, etc. with coastal/local communities to promote understanding and recognition of the environmental services coral reefs provide.

Responding to Climate Change Workshops: NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and partners, including the World Bank/Global Environmental Facility's Coral Reef Targeted Research (CRTR), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), have developed a 3-day capacity-building "Responding to Climate Change" workshop curriculum. Since 2007, workshops have been conducted in Australia, American Samoa, Florida, and Hawaii, training over 120 coral reef resource managers from over 20 nations. Through presentations, interactive discussions and exercises, and in-water field activities, the workshops provided participants with the skills and tools they need to adapt their management programs to address the growing threat climate change poses to coral reefs, such as predicting where coral bleaching will occur, measuring coral reef

resilience and assessing the socioeconomic impacts of coral bleaching. Participants shared strategies and local management actions and participated in exercises that planned draft coral bleaching response plans and hypothetical Marine Protected Areas that emphasize resilience to climate change. Two workshops are planned for 2009, in Bonaire and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands.

Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures (ARMS): As part of the international Census of Marine Life (CoML), the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center is working with international partners to establish a global coral reef biodiversity assessment using Autonomous Reef Monitoring Structures (ARMS), which the Center is developing as a standard method to mimic the structural complexity of coral reef habitats and attract colonizing noncoral invertebrates. With an increasing scarcity of trained invertebrate taxonomists, ARMS will enable researchers around the world to obtain indices of invertebrate biodiversity utilizing molecular techniques that would otherwise be challenging and time consuming using traditional morphological analyses alone. In addition to ARMS deployed in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, American Samoa, and the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA), in 2008 the Center provided ARMS for deployment in Australia and Brazil. This month the Center joined the Moorea Biocode project by deploying ARMS in Moorea, French Polynesia. The Center is also collaborating with international institutions and NGOs to deploy ARMS in Papua New Guinea, Puerto Rico, Cayman Islands, Taiwan, Panama, Mauritius, and the Seychelles Islands.

Socioeconomic Monitoring in the Pacific (SEM-Pasifika): The SEM-Pasifika Training Program is a partnership between the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Islands Marine Protected Areas Community (PIMPAC), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Micronesia. Recognizing that one-off training workshops are not the most effective way to build capacity for coastal management, SEM-Pasifika is designed to address end-to-end needs for practitioners conducting socioeconomic assessments in the Pacific region. Selected applicants from Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Chuuk, Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Palau, and Republic of the Marshall Islands receive training in an intensive workshop, funds to conduct a socioeconomic assessment at their site, and follow-up consultations and a site visit from a technical adviser. Participants in the initial training workshop, held May 4-9 2008 in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, finished the week-long training with a draft work plan to undertake a socioeconomic assessment at their home site. As of August 2008, we have received final workplans from four of the jurisdictions and two jurisdictions have begun monitoring. Each of the SEM-Pasifika trainers will provide technical assistance to ensure successful completion of socioeconomic assessments by each jurisdiction. Ten socioeconomic assessments are expected to be completed by mid-2009.

Midway Atoll Marine Debris Coastal Monitoring Project

Marine debris is one of the crucial management problems facing the islands of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. The coastal areas of these islands are dynamic environments in which debris is deposited on the beaches and re-circulated into the near-shore area via wave action, tides, and storms. From derelict fishing nets and gear to remnants of packaging and containers for beverages and food and smoking materials, marine debris can have a variety of impacts on island systems with the smothering off-shore coral reefs and harming wildlife by entanglement and ingestion. The partners for this project are National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Dow Chemical. Efforts on Midway to implement a monitoring strategy include establishing on Sand Island, four – 150m monitoring sites for monthly assessments of beach debris, two – 50m sites for a “mark and recapture” experiment to track the movements of debris

weekly and one 150m beach monitoring site on Eastern Island. In addition, pieces of plastic debris that are not identifiable as to original source or form are being collected and will be sent to Dow Chemical for analysis. This analysis will be used to help connect these small pieces of debris back to their original form so that programming can be developed to enhance our ability to address the behaviors that have resulted in the deposition of these products.

- d. Please indicate the impacts of the Live Reef Food Fish Trade on your nation's reefs. Are you aware of any programs/policies in place to address these impacts?

Advanced Field of Cyanide Detection: The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program has implemented a series of initiatives to address the illegal use of cyanide to capture live reef fish for both the food industry and the aquarium trade, a practice that leads to high mortality rates of the captured fish and also damages or kills corals and other organisms on the reefs. In February, 2008, the CRCP funded and hosted the International Cyanide Detection Testing Workshop for representatives from fisheries and law enforcement agencies, and forensic laboratories. In August, 2008, the CRCP released the "Proceedings of the International Cyanide Detection Testing Workshop," which provides a framework to implement networks of detection laboratories to advance international efforts to enforce bans on this type of fishing.

- e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since January 2008, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, integrated coastal zone management measures, policy changes influenced by economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

Pacific Monuments: On January 6, 2009, President Bush designated three ecologically significant areas encompassing 195,000 square miles in the Pacific Ocean as Marine National Monuments under the Antiquities Act. The three areas, the Marianas Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, include some of the most pristine tropical islands and coral reef ecosystems in the world. The Rose Atoll and Pacific Remote Islands monuments overlay existing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges. The Secretary of the Interior has management responsibility for the monuments in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, through NOAA. NOAA has primary management responsibility over fishery related activities in these monuments outside refuge boundaries, and was directed to begin the process of adding the non-refuge marine areas of the Rose Atoll Monument to the existing Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary in American Samoa. Each of the monuments has a slightly different management regime and the Department of Interior in Washington, through Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service in Honolulu are working with NOAA to insure that there is close coordination and cooperation in these management activities. The intention is that as much of this work would be coordinated and organized in the Pacific islands as possible.

Palmyra Atoll – A Wetland of International Importance: Ramsar site designation
The Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is the first ever Ramsar site designation by the United States to include coral reefs and other marine areas. It is located at the northern end of the Line Islands in the equatorial Pacific, approximately 960 nautical miles south of Honolulu, Hawaii, and has 617 acres of uplands and over 15,000 acres of submerged coral reefs and tropical lagoons. It is described as one of the few remaining coral reef ecosystems with intact food chains and large predator assemblages. The Atoll is also rich in biodiversity, supporting one of the last *Pisonia grandis* forests in the Pacific and more than a million seabirds nest there and use the surrounding waters as forage areas. The Atoll is managed by the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service with The Nature Conservancy as a close partner. Together they support the Palmyra Atoll Research Consortium on the atoll.

The Two Samoas Initiative is a program established between environmental organizations in American Samoa and the Independent State of Samoa to collaborate more effectively on shared environmental issues and concerns. The initiative was called for by the leaders of Samoa and American Samoa. In September 2007 the Governor of American Samoa and the Prime Minister of Samoa recognized that only by strengthening collaborative efforts can threats common to both jurisdictions be adequately addressed. At this meeting, the leaders called for an annual forum to discuss environmental issues, along with the creation of an archipelago-wide Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network, sharing of knowledge on the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, Coastal Management Program, and National Parks and the development of uniform regulations for the protection of certain marine species. Several meetings have taken place to further develop this initiative and to identify actions that each agency can undertake to increase coordination and collaboration and next steps and implementation tasks. A message board was set up to help facilitate communications.

The Micronesia Challenge: NOAA has played a key role as a member of the support team to the MC, and in this role has provided capacity and technical support to various working groups of the MC (e.g. the communications & effectiveness working groups). NOAA has also provided funding through coral reef management and monitoring grants to jurisdictions to help support implementation of MC efforts. NOAA has also provided funding for the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Area Community (PIMPAC) which continues to provide technical assistance to improve management effectiveness of sites. The Micronesia Challenge was established in 2006 when the Chief Executives of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands made an historic commitment to work together, setting ambitious goals to effectively conserve at least 30% of the nearshore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020. Under the Micronesia Challenge these five jurisdictions are working together to address common critical threats such as climate change, introduced species, increasing development and declining fish stocks.

ICRI and Other Meetings

Are your **ICRI Focal Points** considering attending any of the following meetings in 2009?

- IMCC, Washington DC - **YES**
- World Ocean Congress, Manado, Indonesia - **YES**

Other (please specify):

- **CTI Summit**