

# Five A's of the Coral Reef Indicators

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) last year adopted a Recommendation to prioritize coral reefs within the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The Recommendation comes from the very real need to safeguard coral reef ecosystems and their [significant value](#) from the current trajectory of collapse due to climate change, over-fishing, pollution and other regional/local pressures. Each of the recommended indicators provides a facet of the coral reef health and integrity:

- Live Coral Cover – provides a snapshot of overall reef health
- Coral Reef Extent – determines if the area of coral reef systems is increasing or decreasing
- Fleishy Algae Cover and cover of key benthic groups – indicates coral reef health, increases in algal cover can show declining health
- Fish Abundance and Biomass – marks a coral reef's function and productivity
- Percent Coral Reefs Effectively Protected – measures commitment to protecting coral reefs
- Index of Coastal Eutrophication – signals water quality impacts in coastal areas

Each coral reef indicator has been thoughtfully considered for its scientific validity, usefulness on national, regional and global scale and its widespread availability to reporting parties as noted below. Why are they important? How can they make a difference?

## The Coral Reef Indicators...

**ARE ACCESSIBLE** – These are not some lofty, esoterica indicators that no one can measure. There are already tools in place that facilitate the use of these indicators.

**CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY** – Together, these indicators will hold our collective feet to the fire, ensuring our global commitment can be tracked and progress measured in how we safeguard our coral reef ecosystems.

**HOLISTICALLY ASSESS PROGRESS** – The coral reef indicators provide a holistic snapshot of coral reef health status – they measure the most important elements of the vitality and integrity of a reef system.

**GUIDE ADAPTIVE ACTION** – If conservation and management plans are not on track, the indicators will guide alternate routes as necessary.

**GENERATE ALIGNMENT** – Global consistency including measurement standards is imperative as we understand the status and changing dynamics of our reefs.

ICRI is working through many channels in support of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to safeguard our coral reef ecosystems and those who depend on it. For more information visit our website, [coralpost2020.org](https://coralpost2020.org), and follow [#ForCoral](#) on Twitter.