



International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

Member's Report | 37th General Meeting

19th – 23rd September 2023 Hawai'i, – United States of America

Reporting Period: 2021 – 2023

A. Member Information:

- Name of ICRI member: The Commonwealth Secretariat
- Name of person(s) completing member's report: Ms Heidi Prislán
- Email: h.prislan@commonwealth.int
- Are you a Focal Point: Yes No
 - If no, who are you completing the form on behalf of: Dr Nicholas Hardman-Mountford
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended: 36th ICRI AGM (virtual)
- Will you be attending the 37th ICRI General Meeting: Yes No
- Member social media:
 - Twitter: [@commonwealth](#) #BlueCharter
 - LinkedIn: [@theCommonwealth](#)

B. Reporting on the implementation of ICRI Plan of Action 2021-2024: turning the tide for coral reefs. *Your responses will help inform the Secretariat about members' contributions toward the current Plan of Action*

Theme 1 - Preparing for the Future: Promoting Resilient Coral Reefs

1.A - Strengthening policies - Supporting conservation and recovery of coral reefs and associated ecosystems through resilience-based management frameworks.

- (ICRI) How have you embedded resilience-based management into your policies? (Tip – refer to the RBM policy brief: <https://icriforum.org/resilience-hub/>)

Answer:

The Commonwealth Blue Charter (CBC) through the Coral Reef Protection and Restoration Action Group, co-Championed by Australia, Belize and Mauritius, has been working with countries through the delivery of virtual and self-paced training on the mapping of coral reefs (with separate modules for managers and technical staff). Evaluating the health of mapped coral reefs is the next step.

In addition to these trainings, the CBC along with the Action Group members and champions, have been collating a series of case studies to assist member countries to learn from the actions of others to protect, restore and build resilience through management actions and policies. These have included themes such as coral reefs, MPA management, mangroves and coastal fisheries:

- [Case Study: Fragments of Hope – Community-Led Coral Reef Restoration, Laughing Bird Caye National Park, Belize \(on-going\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](#)
- [Case Study: Coral Communities: Building Socio-Ecological Resilience to Coral Reef Degradation in the Islands of the Western Indian Ocean \(2017\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](#)
- [Malaysia – Two MPA Candidates for the Green List](#)
- [Lessons From the Restoration of a Mangrove System in Point Lisas, Trinidad and Tobago](#)

In addition, the CBC has been assisting countries through a series of meetings and webinars relating to the implementation of targets 2 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Convention on Biodiversity) and more recently defining assistance relating to other conventions such as Global Plastics Treaty and BBNJ.

1.B - Promote capacity building for applying resilience-based management approaches to coral conservation Ad Hoc Committee on Resilience-based Management.

- (ICRI) Please list any examples of leading practices, techniques and strategies for building reef resilience that your organisation/country is involved in. Include their location and extent, methods of implementation, financing, and an assessment of their results (or likely results), with links for more information if possible.

Answer:

NA

- (ICRI) Have you developed, or are you aware of, training materials that you can share?

Answer:

The CBC has developed a Commonwealth Ocean Training Database ([Commonwealth Ocean Database \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)). This database assists members of the Commonwealth access and find training resources across the 10 thematic Action Groups of the CBC, including coral. The database is searchable by theme, resource type, geographic focus, and frequency allowing for the participant to access training programs both in person and online that meets their needs. We welcome partners to contact the CBC and include their training materials for publishing.

Further to the Commonwealth Ocean Training Database the CBC has created and delivered a range of virtual training sessions relating to technical expertise such as Ocean Observations, Mapping of corals and mangroves. In addition to these technical trainings the CBC has also carried out virtual policy and management courses such as effective compliance in coastal fisheries, integration of policy and science, blue carbon and blue economy. All of these courses have been developed into online self-paced modules which users can take at their own pace -

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Using R to Analyse and Interpret Ocean Observational Data \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Science - Policy Communication and Integration \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Policy considerations when developing a sustainable blue economy \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Managing for Effective Compliance in Coastal Fisheries \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Commonwealth Blue Charter Introductory Training on Blue Carbon \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Remote Sensing and Mapping for Coral Reef Conservation \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

[Commonwealth Ocean Database | Commonwealth Blue Charter Training on Mangrove Mapping – for Technicians and Managers \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

Over the coming 12 months the CBC will be working with members and partners to compile new training sessions to assist in the building of capacity and knowledge relating to the 10 thematic areas and the negotiation of relevant treaties.

1.C - Promote and build capacity for the restoration of resilient coral reefs Ad Hoc Committee on Reef Restoration

- (ICRI) Please list any examples of reef restoration mechanisms that your organisation/country is involved in. Include their limits, conditions of implementation, financing and an assessment of their results, with links for more information if possible.

Answer:

The Commonwealth Blue Charter Project Incubator's first call for proposals was announced at UNFCCC COP 27. The Incubator directly supports countries and their partners in ocean-related projects, offering grants (£5k - £50k), training, rapid assessments, and assistance in writing funding proposals. In the first round, a total of 47 proposals from 20 Commonwealth countries were received. After careful consideration by the review panel, eight promising projects were selected to proceed.

The incubator received one successful coral reef project that aims to offer capacity building expertise and marine education on the monitoring and restoration of corals in Kenyan communities. This project is targeted at local research institutions, environmental organisations, cultural associations, and recreational tourism operators to develop long-term capacity in the region. The project also aims to empower local and youth leaders in educational and technical skills on marine spatial mapping and coral reef monitoring to promote local advocacy of reef protection alongside empowering stewardship of these communities.

We are hopeful of further coral-related projects will be submitted through partnership with countries and ICRI members in the next round.

Theme 2 – Coral Reef Science and Oceanography: Advancing and Utilizing the Latest Science and Technology

2.A – Coral monitoring capacity building

- (ICRI) Do you have information / case studies that could contribute to the update of the “Methods for ecological monitoring of coral reefs” (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/2004-023.pdf>), especially related to the use of new technologies.

Answer:

None of our case studies are directly related to this technical question.

In general, the CBC has been working with its member countries and Champions of the Action Groups to highlight areas of best practices across the Commonwealth. These cover all of the 10 thematic areas (and our three cross cutting themes of gender, youth and indigenous) of the CBC and are located at [Case studies | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org).

Examples of case studies more generally relating to coral reef monitoring, protection and restoration include:

- [Case study: Reef Credits – A New Environmental Market-Based Instrument to Improve Water Quality in the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, Australia | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)
- [Case Study: Coral Communities: Building Socio-Ecological Resilience to Coral Reef Degradation in the Islands of the Western Indian Ocean \(2017\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)
- [Case Study: A Community of Practice for Coral Reef Rehabilitation – Bali Reef Rehabilitation Network, Bali, Indonesia \(on-going\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)
- [Case Study: Fragments of Hope – Community-Led Coral Reef Restoration, Laughing Bird Caye National Park, Belize \(on-going\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)
- [Case study: Master Reef Guides Programme, Great Barrier Reef, Australia \(launched 2018, on-going\) | Commonwealth \(thecommonwealth.org\)](http://thecommonwealth.org)

- (ICRI) Are you aware, developing, or involved with, any capacity building activities related to the use of coral reef monitoring mechanisms, especially regarding the advancement of monitoring practices (noting technology)?

Answer:

The CBC in partnership with Allen Coral Atlas has created coral reef maps for 21 Commonwealth countries that convert various sources of data on coral reefs to generate detailed maps, monitoring, images and notifications to support the implementation of coral reef and other ecosystem planning, as well as governance, evaluation, and management throughout Commonwealth countries.

<https://thecommonwealth.org/bluecharter/coral-map>

2.B – The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)

The GCRMN would like to receive feedback on the [Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 report](#) to improve the production of future regional and global reports. As such, please kindly respond accordingly to the questions below:

- (ICRI) In reference to the Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 report:
 - Have you read the report?

- Did you utilise the report and/or use the results and contents?
- How could the next report be improved (considering the entire process from data acquisition to reporting)?

Answer:

Yes, we have read the report. The CBC has promoted the Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 report through communications with our members and the members and Champions of the Coral Reef Protection and Restoration Action Group.

The next report would benefit from higher resolution data and inclusion of more models.

The Action Group Champions are referring to the status report to assist in the development and identification of short, medium and long term actions and capacity under their new Plan of Action, which will feed into the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2024, Samoa.

- (ICRI) The GCRMN intends to establish time-bound task forces to address specific priority issues and to build capability and capacity across the network. As a first priority, a Data Task Force was established. The Task Force brings together subject matter experts to increase the transparency, reproducibility, and robustness of future GCRMN reports alongside capacity in monitoring, data collection, analysis, management and sharing of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. The Task Force will focus on:
 - Improving data integration and analyses to facilitate the production of GCRMN regional and global reports; and
 - Promoting good data management practices based on FAIR data principles for the coral reef scientific community.

Tell us if you will be interested in joining the Data Task Force, or upcoming task forces. More so, please inform us if you have data to contribute to upcoming regional, or global, reports and if you will be organising and/or partaking in any capacity building activities regarding data monitoring:

Answer:

1. *Taskforces:*
2. *Data to contribute (GCRMN Region Country, Data description): the CBC would be pleased to assist in the collection of data at a regional or country level through the drawing together of GCRMN experts, regional node coordinators and country contact points to conduct capacity and knowledge sharing around the type of data needed, formats and timelines.*
3. *Upcoming capacity building activities: the CBC would be interested in sharing ideas around capacity building and training needs in the following areas –*
 - a. *Closing the gap between restoration data and implementation of policies*
 - b. *Analysis and trainings on current and capacity gaps for tool kits.*
 - c. *Joint project proposals for regional based restoration and policy implementation to assist countries in selecting the correct restoration and policy methods for coral reefs. Joint project proposals for regional based restoration and policy implementation to assist countries in selecting the correct restoration and policy methods for their coral reefs.*

Theme 3 - Local Threat Reduction: Integrating Response Planning Frameworks

Please tick the most appropriate box/boxes:

- (ICRI) Do you have (or in the process of developing) a coral reef response plan(s) on, for example, but not limited to:
 - coral disease
 - vessel groundings
 - bleaching
 - invasive species outbreaks (lionfish and COTS)
 - large storm events
 - other:

If yes, please provide us with more information.

Answer:

NA

Theme 4 - Diversity and Inclusion: Expanding the Coral Reef Community

4.A – Connect with youth audiences:

- (ICRI) Are you developing (or planning to develop) any communication campaigns or outreach materials? What will your primary target audiences be and what would your key messages include?

Answer:

The Secretariat has hired an Ocean Youth Outreach Assistant to encourage and facilitate youth engagement in the critical work of the Commonwealth Blue Charter including protection and restoration of coral reefs. The CBC is interested in collaborating with relevant coral data and policy experts in relation to the development of a self-identification platform (online decision tree) to assist member countries identify the existing tool kits and templates to assist in the creation of restoration plans and management plans. Embedded in this online platform would be a list of experts, NGOs, etc who may be able to assist as they progress through the tool kit identified.

4.B - Collaborate with Indigenous people and seek to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge into policies and management plans:

- (ICRI) How do you incorporate indigenous and local knowledge into policies and management frameworks. Please provide us with some examples. Do you have any plans or strategies to further promote this incorporation?

Answer:

The Commonwealth Blue Charter has as cross-cutting themes the inclusion of gender, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In the recently advertised, Blue Charter Project Incubator, the Secretariat encouraged applicants to address one or more of these issues.

- (ICRI) Do you have any, or know of, best practices to solicit Indigenous and local community knowledge?

Answer: The Commonwealth Blue Charter and member countries are aware of several guides that solicit best practices for Indigenous and local community knowledge and engagement, two of which included -

Answer:

https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/NOAA_IK_Guidance_FINAL_2023.pdf

https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/2650/MMIS12_2021_REYKJAVIK_PAME_MEMA.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

C. Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework

- (ICRI) Do your current National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) incorporate coral reefs? If not, what kind of material will be useful for your Country/organisation to ensure coral reefs are integrated in the revision of NBSAPs?

Answer:

NA.

However, it would be interesting to know the results of this survey with respects to Commonwealth countries.

- (ICRI) How are you planning to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. For you, which targets are the most relevant for coral reefs?

Answer:

The CBC is exploring how to best support Commonwealth countries. The restoration and protection targets are probably most relevant, though many could apply.

D. Upcoming events

Please tick the most appropriate box/boxes:

- September 19th – 23rd 2023: 37th ICRI GM, USA, Hawaii
- 30th November – 12th December 2023: 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
- 26th February – 1st March 2024: 6th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
- 10th – 12th April 2024: 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2024: United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Turkey.
- Other

Please list any upcoming regional / international events relevant to ICRI that your organisation plans to attend:

Answer:
INC3 and 4
BBNJ

E. Publications. Please list relevant publications / reports you have released recently (+ add a link if possible)

Public ation	URL
Ocean Action Report 2022	https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/D18080v5TONRCBCProgressReport%20BOOKFILElr.pdf?VersionId=gZhe2lTFHd.51Kh9.I3eJFaX8rVCPpv4
Rapid Readiness Assessment for the Transition to a Sustainable Blue Economy: Pilot project in Trinidad and Tobago	https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/rapid-readiness-assessment-transition-sustainable-blue-economy-pilot-project-trinidad
Rapid Readiness Assessment for the Transition to a Sustai	https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/rapid-readiness-assessment-transition-sustainable-blue-economy-pilot-project-antigua

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F. ICRI Member Feedback. What do you find most valuable about being a member of ICRI as well as completing the ICRI member reports? If you have any ideas to improve the Member Reports, please list below:

Answer: We appreciate ICRI's updates on global coral reefs and access to expertise and support.

G. Contact information & member information. (Note that this information will be posted on the ICRI website on your member page: <https://icriforum.org/members/>).

Please use the table below to provide us updates to your member's focal points as well as the blank cells to indicate changes to information (please add more rows, as needed):

Focal Point 1:	
<i>Name:</i>	Dr Nicholas Hardman-Mountford
<i>Title/Organisation:</i>	The Commonwealth Secretariat
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Focal Point 2:	
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<i>Title/Organisation:</i>	The Commonwealth Secretariat
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Focal Point 3:	
<i>Name:</i>	
<i>Title/Organisation:</i>	
<i>Email:</i>	
Member page updates:	



<i>Section</i>	<i>Update</i>
Do you have new resources (reports, guidelines etc.) that you would like to display?	
<i>Resource description</i>	<i>URL</i>

Thank you very much for sharing your valuable experiences and information with ICRI. Members reports, meeting outputs and resources will be uploaded to: <https://icriforum.org/events/37th-icri-general-meeting/>