



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: [Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme \(SPREP\)](#)
- Name of person(s) completing member's report: [Nicolas Rocle](#), [Juney Ward](#), [Rahul Tikaram](#)
- Email: nicolasr.ext@sprep.org
- Are you a Focal Point: Yes No
 - If no, who are you completing the form on behalf of:
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended: [2021 \(online\)](#)
- Will you be attending the 37th ICRI General Meeting: Yes No
- Member social media:
 - Twitter: [@SprepChannel](#)
 - LinkedIn: [@sprep](#)

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: As the regional environmental organisation for the Pacific, SPREP supports and contributes to many conversation and climate resilience efforts at the regional and national levels for all SPREP member countries and territories. Regional Goal 2 of SPREP's Strategic Plan 2017-2026 emphasizes the importance of the Pacific coral reefs and the need to ensure healthy and resilient ecosystems benefit the people.

The Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021-2030 has been developed in consultations with members and partners and has been endorsed in September 2021. The main vision for the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan is that “By 2030, the resilience and health of reef ecosystems in the Pacific islands are improved”. The Plan identifies 8 key areas of action and four thematic priorities, namely conservation of habitats and biodiversity, sustainable fisheries and food security, resilience and adaptation to climate change, sustainable tourism. Please visit the coral reef webpage at www.sprep.org/corals.

SPREP is also part of other regional initiatives promoting resilience-based management at the regional and national levels, e.g., the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP), the Pacific Island Round Table for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (PIRT) and its Pacific Regional Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, as well as programmes and projects such as the Kiwa Initiative, the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC+, 2022-2026), the Promoting Pacific Island Nature-based solutions (PPIN, 2023-2026), or the EU-funded Pacific BioScapes programme (2022-2027).

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: SPREP supports and carries out a number of projects and initiatives to develop, mainstream, and sustain ecosystem-based management and ecosystem-based adaptation approaches at different scales, providing technical advice, policy analysis, capacity building and regional cooperation on ecosystem-based and resilience-based management policies. One of the key approaches and tools SPREP has developed in this area over the past few years is the Ecological and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) methodology, providing the evidence for identifying and implementing ecosystem-based adaptation options including for coral reef ecosystems. This has given way to different on ground activities, such as the community-based marine management area in Port Resolution, on Tanna Island, Vanuatu. This activity will be further supported through the PEBACC+ project from 2023 to 2026. Please visit the PEBACC/PEBACC+ webpage for further information:

<https://www.sprep.org/pebacc/pebacc-esources> . Other projects also include the Pacific Adaptation to Climate and Resilience Building (PACRES) project which works within the Pacific to develop nature-based interventions to address climate change and includes activities such as capacity building training such as coral reef restoration.

SPREP had also been supporting a project proposal (under the Kiwa Initiative) focusing on “heat adapted corals”, i.e. coral reefs that are resilient to marine heat waves. The proposal, although unsuccessful under Kiwa, was involving research capacities and activities in coral genetics and genomics (IRD New Caledonia) to identify heat adapted corals and how they are ecologically connected through oceanic currents across 6 Pacific Island countries, as well as support for coral nurseries and capacity building activities at national and local levels.

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

Answer: No recent training materials developed under SPREP activities, only a few webinars to promote resilience-based management and latest development in scientific research, available on the SPREP webpage www.sprep.org/corals as well as on the SPREP YouTube Channel.

Aware of the existing training materials such as the Manager’s Guide to Coral Reef Restoration Planning and Design (NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program), MOOC on coral reef ecology and restoration from the Reef Resilience Network, etc.

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:

SPREP supported government staff and community representatives to participate in the regional workshop on coral reef restoration organised in 2022 in Fiji by the Kyeema Foundation and Corals for Conservation (C4C) under the Climate Resilient by Nature programme (DFAT funded). This has increased participants' knowledge and capacities in understanding and developing reef restoration techniques based on C4C expertise and experience in Fiji, working on bleaching resistance and supporting tourism initiatives in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

SPREP also partnered with the government of Samoa (MNRE and MAF) to support reef restoration (coral nurseries and tables, working with communities around Upolu and Savaii islands in growing and planting young corals), through the PACRES project and Marine Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change project (Monaco funding support). Key aspects are now in monitoring and keeping the momentum with communities, especially on securing a healthy environment for juvenile corals (water quality, parrot fish protection, etc.).

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: ReefCloud platform developed by AIMS using AI technologies to compile and analyse coral reef images (aerial and submarine photos) and providing user-friendly platform and datasets.

- (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: SPREP is involved in the Pacific Coral Reef Monitoring Project, led by AIMS and in partnership with Ministries for Environment (MNRE) and Fisheries (MAF) in Samoa to roll out implementation of the ReefCloud platform and build capacities of national authorities and local communities in standardised monitoring for input into ReefCloud as well as combining traditional ecological knowledge with scientific-based monitoring. The project is conducted in 2023 and 2024 and will be further expanded to other Pacific Island Countries.

Ahead of this project, SPREP hosted a regional Pacific Coral Reef Monitoring workshop, from the 12th to 14th October 2022, which brought together (in-person and online) 35 professionals representing 15 organisations (French and Australian institutions, Ministries from the Samoa government, as well as key NGOs working in this space (WWF, WCS, CI, Sea Women of Melanesia...)) to share their respective expertise and elaborate on the key components of the project and more broadly on last developments and updates on monitoring techniques, initiatives and collaborations. A summary report is available upon request.

As different organisations are currently developing coral monitoring methods based on best available techniques while also developed to be user and community friendly, there would be a need to better understand and assess how we can prevent duplications, overwhelming communities, as well as allowing communities to have the most suitable tool that they can use to assess the reef and make informed decisions. Without standardising or developing a one size fits all approach, this is identified as one of the challenges when assisting government and non-government partners and avoiding duplications or overlapping situations in the future.

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: The 2020 report is used by SPREP in most of the presentations (webinars, workshops...) where an overview of the Pacific coral reef status is given (with background information on the global status and trends). This is used in a complementary manner to any other data sources/reports available at the regional scale to provide background information and analyse key trends and factors. SPREP was also involved in as a member of the Working Group that developed the 2020 report.

A Pacific regional report is in progress and will likely be a great resource for SPREP and partners involved in coral reef conservation in the Pacific. SPREP is willing to be involved in the process and support its member countries and territories to provide data, feedback and analysis, as well as ensuring the Pacific report will be fully shared and appropriated by governments and partners. The State of Environment and Conservation in the Pacific: 2020 Regional Report contains information on the status and trends of the endorsed regional environment indicators across 7 thematic areas which includes live corals and wetlands <https://soec.sprep.org/>

Finally, SPREP has been developing country profiles on coral reef status and management for each of its member countries and territories, however these factsheets have not been shared and promoted so far. In view of the upcoming Pacific GCRMN report, there would be an excellent opportunity to update these country profiles based on last available knowledge and data, so that they can be shared and promoted to governments, national authorities and partners to provide up to date information, support data and knowledge sharing, and help inform decision making and management policies and frameworks.

- (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: To be discussed depending on availability and SPREP potential added value.*
- 2. Data to contribute (GCRMN Region Country, Data description): To be discussed based on SPREP available resources and data, but more importantly SPREP can support and facilitate liaisons with Pacific member countries and territories to gather existing data and further contribute to the entire process*
- 3. Upcoming capacity building activities: As part of the Pacific ReefCloud Monitoring Project, capacity-building activities are conducted in Samoa, in partnership with AIMS, the government of Samoa (MNRE and MAF), Conservation International, and local communities from the Aleipata District around data collection, standardisation and integration into the ReefCloud platform and datasets. Training, monitoring guidelines and tools are developed by AIMS to ensure data collection is processed in a standardised and usable format. Cultural learning exchanges between Samoa and First Nations in Australia are also part of the project to further strengthen integration of traditional ecological knowledge in monitoring and management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. The project will be expanded to other Pacific Island Countries through Australian DFAT and AIMS support, as well as under the Pacific BioScapes Programme implemented by SPREP.*

Within the framework of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021-2023 and the UN Decade endorsed Action Pacific Coral Reef Action Science”, SPREP will also coordinate or contribute to other capacity building activities, to be identified and discussed with the GCRMN Pacific node, member countries and territories, as well as interested partners involved in this area.

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: No specific response plan but SPREP provides support to any request coming from its members, or in case of specific event: the aftermath of the volcano eruption in Tonga, COT outbreaks, bleaching events in Samoa, awareness campaigns are such examples of SPREP support to our members.

If yes, please provide us with more information.

Answer: /

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: Following endorsement of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan in 2021, communication materials have been developed to promote and showcase the Plan, through short videos, interviews and brochures. Primary target audiences are SPREP member countries and territories, but also key partners and donors to seek further collaboration and funding for implementation. Key messages outlined in these materials focus on:

- the vital role of coral reefs for Pacific Island countries and communities, their livelihoods and the sustainability of many social and economic sectors and activities*
- the importance of regional cooperation to strengthen capacities in sustainably manage and restore coral reef ecosystems in the Pacific*
- the critical need to ensure that scientific and traditional ecological knowledge are integrated and the recognition of traditional knowledge, know-how and custodianship of coastal communities. The role of local NGOs, women and youth groups is particularly emphasised to ensure that collective and inter-generational efforts are well promoted throughout communication.*

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 Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan deeply values and promotes traditional ecological knowledge as a key component in understanding and sustainably managing coral reefs in the Pacific. To further promote the role of TEK and their incorporation in coral reef management policies and frameworks, the “Pacific Coral Reef Action Science” action is now endorsed under the UN Decade for Ocean Science. This action is part of the UN Decade for Ocean Science regional programme “Integrated Ocean Management” coordinated by SPC and emphasising TEK as one of the three pillars of the programme.

SPREP has been partnering with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in the organisation of the inaugural Pacific Coral Reef Collective, hosted in Cairns in July 2023. During this weeklong event Pacific delegates have been learning about GBRMPA programmes and key activities, including the Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreements that recognise and value traditional knowledge and practices from First Nations people and groups in coral reef management plans and initiatives. Based on those examples as well as other approaches throughout the region, SPREP remains committed to further strengthen and promote TEK in coral reef monitoring and management, and would welcome any collaboration to better assist its member countries and territories in this effort.

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

Answer: This is part of the current work carried out in Samoa under the Pacific Coral Reef Monitoring Project, in partnership with AIMS and Samoa MNRE and MAF (and in collaboration with Conservation International). Local trainings and workshops are conducted to better identify local and traditional knowledge, values and practices in managing the reefs, especially through monitoring and field visits, cultural mapping exercises, interviews, etc. all of this after FPIC processes performed by AIMS. Cultural learning exchanges between Samoan community representatives, Australian First Nations representatives and other groups (esp. Sea Women of Melanesia) also bring added value and valuable insights on how different traditional systems value, care, monitor, and manage coral reefs.

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: SPREP will be working with our Members to ensure that the review and update of NBSAPs includes key priorities for the Pacific region which includes coral reefs.

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

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: Member Reports are a good way to share information and updates with other ICRI members and being aware of activities developed as part of the networking and coordination mechanism. Being a member of ICRI, and participating in ICRI working groups, is incredibly valuable for SPREP as it gathers a good network of experts and works around the globe that is very useful for SPREP as a regional organisation.

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:	
Name:	Dr. Nicolas Rocle
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Member page updates:	
Section	Update
Do you have new resources (reports, guidelines etc.) that you would like to display?	
Resource description	URL

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/>