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: WWF International
- Name of person(s) completing member’s report: Carol Phua & Alejandra Calzada
- Email: cphua@wwf.org.au, acalzada@wwfmex.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: Lisbon, 2022.
- Will you be attending the 37th ICRI General Meeting: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Member social media:
  - Twitter: @wwf @CoralRescue
  - LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/wwf-international/mycompany/
    https://www.linkedin.com/company/coral-reef-rescue-initiative
  - Website: www.panda.org  www.coralreefrescueinitiative.org

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:**

*WWF Oceans Practice Strategy* identifies four ‘pathways to change’ and four high-level conservation themes. For each pathway and theme, the strategy identifies priorities for coordinated action by the WWF Oceans Practice community to advance our vision of productive and resilient ocean ecosystems, sustaining people and nature. The four pathways to change are:

1. **Community-led conservation**: Working with communities to support local conservation and management.
2. **Governance and policy**: Securing large-scale conservation outcomes through strategic policy advocacy.
3. **Markets and partnerships**: Engaging with industry and value chains to improve practice and management.
4. **Sustainable ocean finance**: Mobilizing resources for conservation and redirecting harmful financial flows.

The four conservation themes are:

1. **Resilient coastal habitats**: Build ecologically representative, effectively managed networks of marine protected and conserved areas, supported by integrated seascape management and targeted habitat conservation and restoration initiatives.
2. **Sustainable fisheries**: Tackling overfishing, reducing bycatch and restoring depleted wild fish populations.
3. **Conserving marine species**: Targeted conservation measures to reverse declines in priority marine species.
4. **Marine pollution**: Engaging policymakers and industry to reduce pollution and promote a circular economy.
5. **Oceans and climate change (crosscutting)**: Ensure our marine conservation efforts are informed by climate science and prioritize conservation actions that enhance climate resilience and deliver win-win solutions for climate, nature and people.

The nexus between **oceans and climate** is identified as a crosscutting theme due to the pervasive impacts of climate change on marine habitats, species, fisheries and coastal communities.

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:**

**Coral Reef Rescue Initiative** (CRRI) led by WWF, works with partners, policymakers and communities to reduce pressure on these vitally important coral reefs at priority sites across seven countries. The initiative prioritizes integrated coral reef conservation and climate adaptation interventions in sites that are likely to survive a 1.5-2.0°C warming scenario.

**CRRI Components**

In addition to the targeted approach adopted by the Coral Reef Rescue Initiative, WWF offices are working to reduce pressure on coral reef systems and to enhance the long-term resilience of vulnerable coastal communities by supporting locally managed marine areas, advocating for marine protected areas networks and sustainable fisheries management, mobilizing finance for coral reef conservation and seeking to address land-based pollution.

Under the CRRI, a GEF7 International Waters Project is being implemented in 6 countries (Tanzania, Madagascar, The Philippines, Indonesia, Fiji and Solomon Islands). The CRRI Strategy and CRR GEF Inception Workshop and the first GEF Global Project Steering Committee were launched in June 2023 and helped to finalise the full proposal and country work plans to start implementation in 6 countries.
WWF also hosted a training series on climate change adaptation in coastal and marine ecosystems. 25 representatives from 19 WWF offices from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe participated over the course of 6 training sessions.

Participants included practitioners working across various coastal habitats: seagrass beds, coral reefs, mangroves, coastal dunes, and kelp forests.

The training consisted of 6 sessions:
1) Introduction, 2) Vulnerability, 3) Vulnerability (continued), 4) Social participation, 5) Implementation and MEL and 6) Networking.

The training presented many resources available to support each of the previously mentioned steps. The content, case studies and resources are made available to participants and more broadly in a website.

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

**Answer:**
Climate Change Adaptation Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Training Series Google Site. Includes session recordings and slide decks, additional reading materials, and case study presentations.

Final report is forthcoming.

https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/coastaladaptationtraining?usp=sharing

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:**
WWF also hosted a webinar and discussion call with participation from the Coral Triangle Center and MARS Sustainable Solutions in which they shared their experience:
1) establishing a task force to support coral restoration, 2) addressed challenges with regards to coral restoration; and 3) developing online training modules for restoration practitioners.

The session was attended by WWF coral practitioners that had previously shown interest in further understanding coral restoration processes and techniques.

Under EU funded Ocean Governance Project the following activities were also carried out:
- WWF staff from Tun Mustapha Park Malaysia and Derawan MPA Indonesia and community representatives from Derawan Island presented their coral restoration works in Asia Pacific Coral
Reef Symposium on 19-23 June 2023 at National University Singapore. There were 12 representatives from WWF CTP, ID, WWF MY, WWF Hong Kong and WWF Singapore and partners participated in this symposium.

- WWF facilitated the Coral Restoration Learning Exchange for CTI-CFF country members in Bali on 3-5 July 2023. 49 participants from CT6 country joined in and shared their works on Coral Restoration in each country. Some experts from universities share their innovation and best practices. On the last day participants discuss the opportunities to develop a network of MPA managers to follow up the learning exchange with a series of discussions and lessons learned from their coral restoration works.

- WWF facilitated Sabah Parks Malaysia and Derawan Islands MPA Manager and their stakeholders to do cross visits to improve their capacity in managing coral restoration. The first cross visit was conducted in October 2022 in Manukan island, Sabah. Both participants shared experience and lessons learned on coral restoration works in their MPA. and the second one in Derawan Islands MPA, Indonesia in August 2023. This exchange can be as embryo to develop twinning on coral restoration between MPA managers in Malaysia and Indonesia and their stakeholders.

- Work with IPB University-Indonesia, WWF developed School of Coral Restoration (SCORES) as a learning hub to support knowledge management on Coral Restoration projects in the Coral Triangle. The series of webinars documentation can be accessed in https://www.youtube.com/@scores-schoolofcoralreefre7605/playlists

Theme 2 – Coral Reef Science and Oceanography: Advancing and Utilising 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:
WWF in collaboration with the Natural Capital Project (Stanford University), Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MARFUND), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Healthy Reefs Initiative (HRI) and with support of the German Government via the International Climate Initiative (IKI) and The Pew Charitable Trust undertook a project to assess resilience of targeted marine protected areas (MPAs) within Belize, Honduras and Mexico, a copy of this report can be found here.

The initiative included analysing a matrix of ecological, physical, and socio-economic indicators to better understand the resilience potential of the targeted marine
protected areas (MPAs). Using a combination of local data (i.e., surveys) in combination with satellite imagery/global data can help provide a better understanding of the systems resilience capacity. Nine indicators are analysed within the matrix grouped into three main categories: 1) ecology of reef systems within MPAs to understand benthic and fish community cover/density, species redundancy, and spatial heterogeneity (7 indicators); 2) in-situ and satellite sea surface temperatures to understand exposure of reefs to climate change; and 3) threats such as land-based sources of impact.

Under the CRRI a series of ecological surveys have been planned, we have carried out two training sessions in Indonesia on Reefcloud conducted by AIMS (Australian Institute of Marine Science), once during our Global Strategy and GEF7IW Project Workshop (in Bali) and a second training session in Alor MPA.

- (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:**

WWF is working under the Coral Reef Rescue Initiative with PALO IT (a software development company) to build a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) platform for the initiative that brings clarity to the main data and information collection challenges facing the global initiative. It aims to establish a data management ecosystem that helps standardise and streamline information inputs and outputs.

The systems will provide a platform to integrate ecological health monitoring with management actions to guide stakeholders towards desired impacts and potential adaptation needs.
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 and utilise the findings. It will be important to include reef fish survey data into future monitoring efforts. As coral cover alone does not give us an adequate picture of the ecological integrity and health of the coral reef ecosystem.*

*We have been testing the efficiency of MERMAID vs. Reefcloud in the field, and it would be good to do more capacity building amongst ICRI members on these two tools. We are working towards identifying an AI based tool for reef fish monitoring.*
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:

- Taskforces:
- Data to contribute (GCRMN Region Country, Data description):
- Upcoming capacity building activities:

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
  - [x] other:

If yes, please provide us with more information.
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:

WWF is currently working on the production of a video to be launched on the WWF YouTube Channel - Untangled. The video will focus on Marine Heatwaves and effects on Coral Reefs and highlight CRRI as an initiative to support resilient reefs. Primary Target audience is Public Supporters and advocates, General Public in Tanzania, Madagascar, the Philippines, Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Fiji.

Key messages:

- Marine heatwaves can be devastating for coral reefs and those who depend on them, 850 million people depend on coral reefs for food security and livelihoods
- One-quarter of marine species spend part of their life around a coral reef, the loss of these habitats has major consequences for ocean health.
- The CRRI focuses efforts on climate resilient coral reefs. They are refuges of resilience. Linked by ocean currents which transport coral larvae and fish, these pockets of hope could act as source reefs from which the world’s corals can regenerate in the future.

The WWF Coral Triangle Programme is launching 4 videos on restoration heroes at the upcoming EU Ocean Governance conference in Spain (20 - 22 September) to showcase progress made, lessons learnt and knowledge gained/shared from the past 2 years of restoration and community engagement efforts.

The videos aim to raise awareness of the critical role coastal communities play in restoring protecting their marine/coastal resources and places, especially in the UN Decade of Restoration
- Showcase innovative and exciting on-ground efforts and scaling-in-progress made with regard to habitat restoration (coral reefs, mangroves) in this project
- Spark inspiration through a vision of coastal communities taking lead in restoration, protection and conservation of marine and coastal resources.
International Coral Reef Initiative

**Audience is**
- European Commission, European Union, CTI-CFF, other multilateral/regional government networks; as well as relevant national governments
- Corporates and financial institutions
- Major donors and funders
- Wider public audience (urban youths, local community leaders, media, etc.)

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:**

Consistent with WWF principles and policy, WWF’s Oceans Practice is committed to promoting inclusive, equitable and human rights-based approaches to conservation at the local, national and international level.

WWF has a role to play in working with local partners to create the enabling conditions for participatory and equitable management of coastal marine resources, especially when factors like poverty and social exclusion hamper the ability of community members to exercise custodianship of their territories.

Building on WWF’s long track record of collaboration with coastal communities, WWF is committed to promoting conservation approaches informed by local and traditional knowledge and based on understanding of local resource use, livelihoods, culture, socio-economic conditions, politics and traditional governance mechanisms.

Worldwide, WWF works with nearly 1,000 communities to support community institutions, sustainable livelihoods, effective resource management and improved ecological outcomes. To date, our efforts have enabled community co-management of 87 million hectares of coastal seas (including 129 fisheries closures), trained more than 19,000 people and supported almost 1,000 community enterprises, village banks and microfinance schemes.

WWF’s [Coastal Communities Initiative](https://www.wwf.org/en/our-work/fish/our-approach/coastal-communities-initiative/) provides a framework for replicating success, supporting peer to peer learning and advocating for an enabling policy environment. By 2030, the initiative aims to accelerate community-led conservation by supporting regional and local networks, building capacity and advocating for policies to secure at least 400 million hectares of coastal ecosystems vital to the food security and livelihoods of coastal communities.
WWF PRINCIPLES AND SAFEGUARDS

**WWF Statements of Principles** encapsulate our social commitments to respect and promote human rights, foster gender equality, and uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples. These principles apply to all activities that we undertake, including policy advocacy, research, partnerships and communications.

**We respect human rights in everything that we do:** WWF respects and promotes internationally proclaimed human rights, and is committed to integrating a human rights based approach in its work.

**We treat gender equality as a right in all our work:** Gender equality is an internationally recognised human right, and WWF is committed to advancing and integrating gender equality across its work.

**We respect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples:** Respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and recognising their knowledge and leadership are at the foundation of our conservation efforts.

For WWF’s place-based work, these principles are implemented through the [WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework](https://www.penguin.com.au/about-wwf/our-work/our-principles-and-safeguards/). This framework establishes a mechanism to manage risks, deliver better conservation outcomes and contribute to the well-being of local communities. The framework addresses nine key themes: safeguards process, stakeholder engagement, grievance mechanisms, restriction of access, Indigenous peoples, health, safety and security, biodiversity and natural resources, pest management and cultural heritage.

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

**Answer:**

1. Linkages Between Participatory Natural Resource Management and Democratic Outcomes: A Review of the Evidence by USAID
2. Working with Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services - An Analysis of Selected Case Studies from WWF Projects Worldwide as a Contribution to IPBES-2 by WWF
3. Responding to change: working with communities - building effective coastal conservation and sustainable resource management partnerships by WWF
4. WWF examples where Indigenous and local community knowledge meets conservation:
   a. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and sea management practice is combining forces with cutting edge conservation technology to Regenerate Australia
   b. Recognising indigenous knowledges is not just culturally sound, it’s good science
   c. Blending indigenous knowledge and artificial intelligence to enable adaptation
**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:**

WWF is committed to supporting countries with the effective implementation and delivery of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes targeted support and assistance with the revision of NBSAPs. WWF has produced guidance to support this process, including this WWF brief, The NBSAPS we need, with recommendations for countries’ governments on developing strong NBSAPs.

- (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 adoption of the GBF provides a historic opportunity to advance the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity through a whole of society approach by governments and the public and private sectors. The entire GBF - and the outcomes it will deliver - is fundamental to conserving, restoring and sustaining coral reefs.

WWF is committed to supporting all actors with successful implementation of all GBF targets and is actively engaged at national, regional and global levels in doing so. This includes working with national governments to set and implement commitments related to the GBF, supporting international agencies and institutions in global or regional efforts and working on the ground on local conservation programmes in line with the GBF goals.

For example, between 2017 and 2022, WWF national offices and regional programmes helped to establish new marine protected and conserved areas covering over 677 million hectares, and improved management of 274 million hectares of marine protected areas. WWF efforts will continue over the coming years to deliver conservation, restoration and sustainable management in line with the GBF.
D. Upcoming events

Please tick the most appropriate box/boxes:

**WWF Representatives will be at the following meetings:**

- ✔ 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.
- ☐ Other

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

*Answer:*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WWWF -CARE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Good Practice and Technical Brief: Gender Transformative Approaches for Advancing Gender Equality in Coral Reef Social-ecological Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Coastal community-led conservation Impact Stories: | 1. Traditional indigenous fishing closures: Sasi  
2. Fishing less and earning more: Pescatourism  
3. Better SSF marketing  
4. Putting back today to catch more tomorrow  
5. Fishing in the time of Climate change  
6. Managing fishery together: Co-management |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal communities and the Sustainable Blue Economy (SBE) report provides the foundations for an internal strategy on how to promote an inclusive and just SBE.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2022.1032204/full">https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2022.1032204/full</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying management opportunities to combat climate, land, and marine threats across less climate exposed coral reefs.</td>
<td><a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13856">https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13856</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 find the advocacy and political platform that ICRI has access to very useful to promote stronger conservation measures for coral reefs. We have co-organised advocacy events with ICRI, it has been a collaborative and positive experience for WWF.

In terms of reporting it would be good to have defined indicators and targets that we are all reporting against.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Point 1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Carol Phua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Organisation: WWF, Coral Reef Rescue Initiative Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:cphua@wwf.org.au">cphua@wwf.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Point 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Alejandra Calzada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Organisation: WWF, Resilient Coastal Habitats ACAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:acalzada@wwfmex.org">acalzada@wwfmex.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focal Point 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title/Organisation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member page updates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section Update</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you have new resources (reports, guidelines etc.) that you would like to display?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching in late 2023, the Coral Reef Rescue Initiative Knowledge Hub will it is where CRRI stakeholders can share experiences, case studies, tools and advice, while also training via a variety of online and accessible educational courses. Our goal is to support the diverse range of communities of practice needed to protect climate-resilient coral reefs and promote sustainable development in coastal communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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/