



International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

Member's Report | 38th General Meeting

9th – 13th September 2024 Jeddah, – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Reporting Period: 2023 & 2024

A. Member Information:

- Name of ICRI member: International Coral Reef Society (ICRS)
- Name of person(s) completing member's report: Igor Pessoa
- Position/Title: Dr
- Email: ipessoa@ucsc.edu
- Are you a designated ICRI Focal Point: Yes No
 - If no, please indicate who you are completing the form on behalf of: Dr Simon Harding
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended: ICRS attended the 37th ICRI General Meeting in Hawai'i.
- Will you be attending the 38th ICRI General Meeting in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Yes No
- Member social media:
 - Twitter/X: [@ICRSCoralReefs](https://twitter.com/ICRSCoralReefs)
 - LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-coral-reef-society/>

B. Reporting on the implementation of the 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. You can download the ICRI Plan of Action here: <https://icriforum.org/documents/plan-of-action-2021-2024/>*

What are the main contributions you, as an ICRI member, have made to the ICRI Plan of Action?

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

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

Theme 3 - Local Threat Reduction: Integrating Response Planning Frameworks

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

Answer:

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

ICRS has provided guidance and action points that promote coral reef resilience in the face of climate change through its publications (e.g. the Science to Policy paper - Knowlton et al 2021) and through panel discussions at international fora organised by ICRS (e.g. the last (15th) International Coral Reef Symposium in Bremen in 2022 and the recent European Coral Reef Symposium in Naples in 2024). ICRS is also involved in providing guidance through specific ICRI Ad Hoc Committees such as the recent AHC to provide guidance on integrating coral reefs into NBSAPs. ICRS is also involved in different initiatives with other scientific societies and the preparation of a call to action for the deployment of solutions to mitigate climate change and accelerate adaptation (which includes but is not restricted to coral reefs), together with microbiology societies (Peixoto et al, under review). We have also published an editorial about the fourth global coral reef bleaching event and discuss what to do from there (Reimer et al., 2024). Furthermore, ICRS has observer status at UNFCCC CoPs, to interact and engage with stakeholders providing scientific support and advocate for coral reef conservation and rehabilitation. As part of these activities, ICRS has, for example, organized and participated in several events and side events in both the Blue and Green zones of UNFCCC CoPs 26, 27 and 28, advocating and indicating roadmaps for action on the three pillars described in the ICRS Science to Policy paper (Knowlton et al. 2021).

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

ICRS members are at the forefront of advancing and utilising the latest science and technology for the study, monitoring and management of coral reefs. Many leading coral reef scientists

and researchers are members of ICRS and several of them are advocating for resilience-based restoration efforts and suggesting frameworks to implement it.

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

ICRS provides support to scientists and organisations across the world, aiding their own, ongoing research projects. ICRS has collaborated with a number of early-career researchers and scientists from developing countries who are looking to apply their research questions within a coral reef ecosystem, and welcome opportunities to build further partnerships. Through the John Ogden President's Award, ICRS will increase the diversity of students and professionals from under-represented regions who are actively involved in aspects of coral reef science, management, policy, advocacy, conservation, or restoration, or similar activities on coral reefs in these regions

- (ICRI) What are your upcoming priorities for coral reefs?

Answer:

ICRS's priorities are to continue to promote the three equally important pillars of the science-to-policy paper (Knowlton et al, 2021) for protecting coral reefs: 1) Mitigate global greenhouse gas emissions; 2) Mitigate local stressors; and 3) Conduct active restoration to maintain coral reefs while achieving pillars 1 and 2.

C. Reporting on the Restoration of Coral Reefs *(Target 2 GBF/Action Point 3 Coral Reef Breakthrough)*

- (ICRI) Are you able to estimate the total area (km²) of coral reef under active restoration and the total area you consider to be 'restored', as a result of your organisation/country's in 2023?
 - Total area under active restoration in 2023: km²
 - Total area considered to be restored in 2023: km²
- (ICRI) If available, please provide further information on the total area considered to be restored, and under active restoration for the total period of the restoration programme, including the timeframe:

Answer:

This question is not directly applicable to ICRS. However, ICRS members are involved in various approaches and mechanisms for coral reef restoration through academic research and practical methods, primarily via the Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC), an ICRS Chapter.

The CRC, established in 2017, serves as a platform for global collaboration and knowledge sharing. CRC does not advocate for a single method of coral restoration but rather focuses on providing a broader toolbox, shared resources, and a robust planning framework.

Comprised of thousands of dedicated researchers, practitioners, resource managers, and reef community members, the CRC develops and shares essential products and resources. The CRC has produced and supported a wide variety of web-based products. These include standards, webinars and training materials designed to help the restoration community work more strategically and efficiently.

- (ICRI) For the purpose of the above, please provide definitions for how your programme/organisation/country considers coral reefs to be:
 - A) Under active restoration
 - B) Restored

Answer:

The CRC uses the following definitions for terms that equate to the ones above, which will soon be published in a paper on reef restoration definitions (Suggett et al., in prep.):

Under active Restoration:

Term	Synonyms	Definition
Reef restoration	Ecosystem restoration; Coral reef restoration	Actions assisting the recovery – to as-near-as-possible the native condition (or the highest level of recovery possible) – of a coral reef ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

Restored:

Term	Definition
Reef recovery	Ecosystem state following active and passive repair-based activities – may be full, i.e. all key ecosystem attributes closely resemble those of the reference model, or otherwise partial.

[Does your country have any restoration policies or regulations?](#)

Answer: Not applicable to ICRS

Many locations have outdated and insufficient regulations for coral reef restoration, resulting in inadequate oversight of restoration efforts. In addition, the absence, limitations, or differences among regulations between countries prevents the development and implementation of effective regional coral reef conservation strategies.

- (ICRI) Please describe the restoration policies or regulations (if any) that are in place in your country.

Answer:

This question is not applicable to ICRS

D. The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)

The production of future GCRMN reports, both at the regional and global level, relies on the ongoing support of data contributors who are willing to share their coral reef monitoring data for this purpose. As such, from 2024 to 2026, the GCRMN will undertake the rigorous process of developing the **Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2025** global report, including an extensive data collation process.

Do you have data to contribute to the upcoming GCRMN global report?

Answer:

ICRS as a society does not have data to contribute although ICRS members are very likely to contribute through their respective organisations via regional GCRMN nodes.

- Please provide the contact information for the data providers to allow for the GCRMN data collation team to request data and discuss the process of data contribution.

Please add further contacts as needed.

Answer:

E. Capacity Building & Communications

Have you found the ICRI #ForCoral Webinar Series useful?

Through 2024, ICRI has hosted multiple webinars that aim to share knowledge and foster collaboration across critical topics concerning the conservation, protection, and restoration of coral reefs. These webinars form the #ForCoral webinar series, and topics include the 4th Global Bleaching Event, impacts of land-based sources of pollution and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

The full list of webinars and recordings can be found here: <https://icriforum.org/forcoral-webinar-series/>

- (ICRI) Did you attend any of the series' webinars, and if so which topics have you found the most useful and engaging? If you did not attend the webinars, please explain why, and how what we could have done better.

Answer:

Yes, I (IP) have attended several of the ICRI Monthly Round of News webinars and found them to be highly informative and engaging. The webinar on "How to Apply Coral Reef Connectivity Models to Reef Management" was particularly useful. This webinar provided valuable insights into the application of scientific models to inform effective reef management strategies. I appreciated the practical examples and the opportunity to learn from experts in the field.

ICRS was also strongly involved in the NBSAP webinar as the co-chair of the ICRI NBSAP AHC

- (ICRI) Do you have any suggestions or request for topics that you wish for ICRI to host as part of this series? If you have a specific topic in mind, and would like to host a webinar, please indicate below.

Answer:

Specific webinars featuring successful and replicable projects that address local threats to coral reefs and also offer communities sustainable co-benefits, such as food security, gender empowerment, sustainable livelihoods, clean water, and education, would be valuable.

[Have you found the ICRI communications useful?](#)

- (ICRI) Do you find the ICRI Monthly Round of News Useful? If yes, what do you like about it and how would you suggest improving ICRI's communications?

Answer:

Yes, the ICRI Monthly Round of News is a valuable resource. It provides a concise overview of recent developments in coral reef science, conservation, and policy. To improve ICRI's communications, I would suggest: 1) Highlighting opportunities for funding related to coral reef conservation; and 2) Adding a section dedicated to job postings for students and early-career researchers.

F. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

ICRI has continually supported the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 process, developing a recommendation for coral reef indicators to be included in the Global Biodiversity Framework and supporting Parties during the negotiation process. Following the Framework's adoption in 2022, ICRI's support now aims to support parties in implementing the framework, especially through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPS) and the Marine and Coastal Work Programme.

In 2024, ICRI released [A Guide for Integrating Coral Reefs and Associated Ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans](#) to support coral reef countries to integrate coral reefs and associated ecosystems into their NBSAPs.

- (ICRI) Did you use read, use, and/or apply the Guide on integrating coral reefs and associated ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) useful? *Where possible, indicate specific elements that were useful or alternatively provide information if you did not find the guide useful.*

Answer:

Yes – many ICRS members have read the guide and have utilised the contents in scientific studies, publications or reports. The guide provides valuable insights and practical guidance for incorporating coral reef conservation into national-level biodiversity strategies. It outlines key actions and considerations for countries to protect and restore these coral reefs, highlighting the importance of partnerships and stakeholder engagement in local contexts.

- (ICRI) Did you revise your current National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) to include coral reefs? **N.B.** *if you are not a country representative, are you working with national focal points to help update their NBSAPs? Please provide further details.*

Answer:

ICRS is currently not revising specific coral reef National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans but does produce briefing papers on key coral reef issues including Biodiversity Strategies (e.g. Knowlton et al., 2021). ICRS members are likely to be providing technical advice or support for NBSAP revision in some countries.

ICRS's official guidance is clear: the only way to save coral reefs is to urgently recognize and address the need for protection and management measures for both global and local stressors..

ICRS outlines a series of actions for global discussions and identifies three equally important pillars for protecting coral reefs: 1) Mitigate global greenhouse gas emissions; 2) Mitigate local stressors; and 3) Conduct active restoration to maintain coral reefs while achieving pillars 1 and 2.

- (ICRI) How are you planning to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? Please list the target(s) and decisions that your work attributes to.

Answer:

ICRS is committed to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (K-M GBF) to conserve coral reefs by identifying information on critical remaining gaps that can be used to complement or refine the priorities. ICRS prioritizes the following K-M GBF targets for coral reef conservation and sustainable use: Target 1 (Spatial planning), Target 2 (Restoration), Target 3 (MPAs/OECMs), Target 4 (Species conservation/recovery), Target 5 (Wild species harvest/trade), Target 7 (Pollution), Target 8 (Climate change), Target 9 (Sustainable use of wild species), Target 20 (Capacity Building), Target 21 (Information and

knowledge), Target 22 (Participation of IPLCs) and Target 23 (Participation of women, girls and youth).

G. Upcoming events

Please tick the most any events that you will be, or are planning to attend:

- September 10th – 24th: 79th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 79)
- September 23rd – 26th: GEF International Waters Conference
- October 13th – 18th: 7th International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC7)
- October 21st – November 1st: CBD COP16
- November 4th – 8th: 77th Annual meeting of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI77)
- December 10th – 12th: The International Mangrove Conservation and Restoration Conference
- December 9th – 13th: Reef Futures
- June 9th – 13th 2025: United Nations Ocean Conference
- October 9th – 15th 2025: IUCN World Conservation Congress
- Other

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

Answer:

The 16th International Coral Reef Symposium will be held in New Zealand in July 2026

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

Publication	URL
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Reimer <i>et al.</i> 2024. The Fourth Global Coral Bleaching Event: where do we go from here? Coral Reefs Journal.	https://doi.org/10.1007/s00338-024-02504-w
Knowlton <i>et al.</i> 2021. Rebuilding Coral Reefs: A Decadal Grand Challenge	https://doi.org/10.53642/NRKY9386
Coral Reefs Journal	https://www.springer.com/journal/338
Reef Encounter Newsletter	https://coralreefs.org/society-publications/reef-encounter/

I. 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:

ICRI is a renowned global partnership that strives to preserve coral reefs and associated ecosystems. The Initiative plays a vital role in informing international efforts to conserve reefs and associated ecosystems, providing both a forum for global advocacy on coral reefs and assisting managers of coral reefs at the national and local levels. The Initiative serves as a platform for global leaders in coral reef management to exchange knowledge and best practices, fostering collaboration and ensuring alignment with international standards. Being a member of ICRI enables ICRS to contribute to the various programmes and activities that ICRI implements and provide scientific and technical advice at the global level.

Although current investment flows are insufficient to scale up restoration efforts, increased funding is necessary to accelerate reef restoration globally. Innovative, multi-stakeholder financial funds are key to addressing this financial gap. Strengthening multi-disciplinary partnerships will create a robust marketplace for restoration efforts, attracting significant capital towards the coral restoration economy across diverse economic, environmental, social, and cultural contexts.

J. 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>	Christian Voolstra
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<i>Email:</i>	christian.voolstra@uni-konstanz.de
Focal Point 2:	



<i>Name:</i>	Tracy Ainsworth
<i>Title/Organisation:</i>	ICRS Vice-President / University of New South Wales
<i>Email:</i>	tracy.ainsworth@unsw.edu.au
Focal Point 3:	
<i>Name:</i>	Simon Harding
<i>Title/Organisation:</i>	ICRS Conservation Committee Co-chair / The University of The South Pacific / ICRS ICRI representative
<i>Email:</i>	simon.harding@usp.ac.fj / simonharding@yahoo.com
Member page updates:	
<i>Section</i>	<i>Update</i>
<i>Related websites / Social Media</i>	https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-coral-reef-society/

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/>