



## International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

### Member's Report | 38<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 Jeddah, – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Reporting Period: 2023 & 2024**

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#### A. Member Information:

- Name of ICRI member: [Maldives](#)
- Name of person(s) completing member's report: [Shafiya Naeem](#)
- Position/Title: [Director General – Maldives Marine Research Institute \(ICRI National Focal Point\)](#)
- Email: [shafiya.naeem@mmri.gov.mv](mailto:shafiya.naeem@mmri.gov.mv)
- Are you a designated ICRI Focal Point:  Yes  No
  - If no, please indicate who you are completing the form on behalf of:
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended: -
- Will you be attending the 38<sup>th</sup> ICRI General Meeting in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:  Yes  No
- Member social media:
  - Twitter/X: [@MMRI\\_Maldives](#)
  - LinkedIn: -

**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:

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

- *The new Strategic Action Plan in draft stages contain policies that promote resilience-based management. Designation of environmentally significant areas as protected under the law and establishing effective management of existing and new protected areas are areas being focused on. These will also contribute to the international KM-GBF goals.*
- *The draft SAP also has policies focusing on the rehabilitation and restoration of coral reefs in the Maldives. To achieve these, Maldives is working with international partner research organisations to develop technologies for larval-based restoration as an option to scale up restoration efforts in a cost-effective manner.*

**1.B – Promote capacity building for applying resilience-based management approaches to coral conservation**

- *To develop local capacity on restoration efforts, MMRI engages with local NGOs through 2 CORDAP funded projects, establishing local skills on larval restoration technologies.*
- *MoCCEE has published a guidance document on protected and conserved area (PAC) management plan development, which guides the development of management plans for these areas. And there are on-going efforts to develop capacity within local communities, NGOs and other relevant parties, to use this document in the development of management plans for PCAs.*

**1.C – Promote and build capacity for the restoration of resilient coral reefs**

- *The establishment of a coral reef restoration practitioners' network is underway. Through a CORDAP funded project in collaboration with a local NGO, an island council and research partners from various Australian organisations, environmental NGOs, resort biologists and other interest groups are being trained on larval-based restoration techniques to speed up reef restoration in the Maldives. The first of this series of trainings*

was conducted at the Mariculture Research and Training Facility in Maniyafushi Island in early 2024. In addition to increasing local capacity for using this technology, these trainings are also aimed at providing a platform for parties involved in coral restoration to work together with a common goal of scaling up restoration, and ultimately forming a network of such practitioners.

- *The Fifth Maldives Marine Science Symposium (a biennial series of symposia hosted by MMRI) with corals and coral restoration as one of the six themes featured findings of several monitoring and restoration efforts in the Maldives. This series of symposia are aimed at disseminating information about marine scientific research conducted in the Maldives to the wider public, and providing a networking platform for researchers active in the country.*
- *Restoration efforts are underway, by EPA, in the Rasfari Protected Area, which was damaged after a cargo ship ran aground in 2021. Part of the legal fines from the damage to the environment is being used for the project.*

#### **2.A – Coral monitoring capacity building**

- *The Maldives began the National Coral Reef Monitoring (NCRM) Program in 1998 following the mass bleaching event. As part of this program 16 sites from six atolls were established as long-term monitoring sites. Additional sites and atolls were included over the years and by the end of 2021, 57 sites from the atolls Haa Dhaal, Noonu, Raa, Baa, Lhaviyani, Kaafu, Alif Alif, Gaaf Alif and Addu (Seenu) have been selected for long-term monitoring in the NCRM program. For more information on long-term monitoring sites please refer to the report Status and trends of hard coral cover derived from long-term monitoring sites in the Maldives 1998-2021. The NCRM Program is government financed and implemented by Maldives Marine Research Institute. Please refer to the Member Report of 2023 for more background on the NCRM Programme.*
- *CoralDatabase, the online national repository to collect and manage data on coral reef ecosystems was relaunched in December 2021 (<https://www.coraldatabase.gov.mv/>). One of the major aims for CoralDatabase was to expand the coverage for coral monitoring by including civil society in the data collection.*
- *PCA monitoring data for coral reefs is collected in accordance to the guidelines by MMRI and these are encouraged to be uploaded to the CoralDatabase.*

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

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#### **3 – Local threat reduction: Integrating response planning frameworks**

- *Following the announcement of the fourth global mass coral bleaching event in 2024, and the Maldives bleaching forecast reaching alert level 1 based on the NOAA criteria, all coastal development projects were advised to temporarily halt any activities that may further stress the reefs. No new projects were issued permits to commence work under the EIA process until the alert levels were lifted.*
- *Bleaching severity assessments of the long term monitoring sites were not possible due to shortage of staff and budget limitations following a budget reduction exercise that coincided with the bleaching window.*

#### **4.A – Connect with youth**

- *The first of a series of workshops on empowering local communities in larval based coral reef restoration was attended by a number of young Maldivian restoration practitioners.*
- *One of the most frequent users of PCAs in Maldives are youth, be it as divers or surfers. And so they are a key stakeholder, who are included in consultations and at the decision making level for PCA management via advisory committees.*

**4.B – Collaborate with indigenous people and seek to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge into policies and management plans**

- *Maldives PCA management includes traditional and local knowledge into their management practices such that these practices can be passed along to the future.*

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

Answer:

- *Scaling up coral reef restoration activities using larval-based methods through optimizing technologies to suit Maldivian environment, and through building capacity of locals to engage meaningfully in restoration efforts.*
- *Increasing the geographical coverage of coral reef monitoring sites through citizen science approaches*
- *Promoting CoralDatabase for citizen scientists and marine biologists carrying out coral reef monitoring work*
- *Expanding the Maldives MPA network, to include coral reef habitats that are important for the healthy functioning of the ecosystems as well as the wellbeing of the communities that depend on them.*
- *Expanding the Maldives PCA network to include marine areas under some form of management, which contributes to conservation of the ecosystem, including coral reefs.*

**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 (km<sup>2</sup>) 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: **Data not available** km<sup>2</sup>
  - Total area considered to be restored in 2023: **Data not available** km<sup>2</sup>
- (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:*

*Larval based restoration strategy is to be developed through the ongoing CORDAP projects, and will focus on site selection for colony sourcing as well as restoration, and monitoring of restoration success. An estimate of larval-based restoration areas will be possible then.*

- (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:*

*Under active Restoration:*

*Not defined at present*

*Restored:*

*Not defined at present*

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

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:*

*No specific policies or regulations are in place at present. All restoration projects now require a permit under Regulation no: 2020/R-91.*

## **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?

- 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:*

*Contact Name: Khadeeja Ali  
Organisation: Maldives Marine Research Institute  
Email Address: khadeeja.ali@mmri.gov.mv*

*Contact Name: Muhsina Abdul Rahman  
Organisation: Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy  
Email Address: muhsina.abdulrahman@environment.gov.mv*

*Contact Name:  
Organisation:  
Email Address:*

### 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:*

*Not attended*

- (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:

-

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:

*It provides useful updates on ICRI activities*

## 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*

- (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:

*National targets have been drafted, and will be finalised through an advisory committee after stakeholder engagement. The targets include coral reefs.*

- (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:*

*Designation of new areas as protected and recognition of areas as OECMs and their effective management will contribute directly to Target 3 of the KM-GBF and will also contribute to targets 4, 9 and 11 as well.*

## **G. Upcoming events**

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

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

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

*Answer:*



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

Publication	URL
Status and trends of hard coral cover derived from long-term monitoring sites in the Maldives: 1998-2022	Available via the Coraldatabase: <a href="https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/5dbe2148-25c3-4eca-8cbf-4f7aa7cab503.pdf">https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/5dbe2148-25c3-4eca-8cbf-4f7aa7cab503.pdf</a>  Available via MMRI website: <a href="http://www.mrc.gov.mv/assets/Uploads/MaldivesCoralReefReport-2022.pdf">http://www.mrc.gov.mv/assets/Uploads/MaldivesCoralReefReport-2022.pdf</a>
Report of Protected Area Management Effectiveness Evaluations for three sites in the Maldives	Available via the MECCT website: <a href="http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/download/19886">http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/download/19886</a>
Standard operating procedures for larval-based restoration of Maldivian coral reefs	<a href="https://publications.csiro.au/publications/publication/Picsiro:EP2023-1605">https://publications.csiro.au/publications/publication/Picsiro:EP2023-1605</a>
Status of bleaching in the Maldives 2016	<a href="https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/2b153f84-0b04-43ea-ad78-fc2e04fbcd93.pdf">https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/2b153f84-0b04-43ea-ad78-fc2e04fbcd93.pdf</a>
A rapid assessment of natural environments in the Maldives	<a href="http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/download/10625">http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/en/download/10625</a>
2020 Maldives coral reef assessment report	<a href="https://www.nooraajje.org/files/ugd/47d1fd_993e15f39aa6474dae789be839feeca0.pdf">https://www.nooraajje.org/files/ugd/47d1fd_993e15f39aa6474dae789be839feeca0.pdf</a>
Assessment of Maldivian coral reefs in 2009 after natural disasters	<a href="https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/b93ef6cb-cf5d-4e86-a449-84a3d24dd180.pdf">https://coraldocsproduction.blob.core.windows.net/docs/b93ef6cb-cf5d-4e86-a449-84a3d24dd180.pdf</a>

**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:*

**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):*

<b>Focal Point 1:</b>	
Name:	<i>Shafiya Naeem</i>
Title/Organisation:	<i>Director General / Maldives Marine Research Institute</i>
Email:	<i>shafiya.naeem@mmri.gov.mv</i>
<b>Focal Point 2:</b>	
Name:	<i>Muhusina Abdul Rahman</i>
Title/Organisation:	<i>Director / Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy</i>
Email:	<i>muhsina.abdulrahman@environment.gov.mv</i>
<b>Focal Point 3:</b>	
Name:	<i>Khadeeja Ali</i>
Title/Organisation:	<i>Director / Maldives Marine Research Institute</i>
Email:	<i>khadeeja.ali@mmri.gov.mv</i>
<b>Member page updates:</b>	
Section	<i>Update</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/>*