



## **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat response to the sCBD Invitation for views on the initial discussion paper on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

12 April 2019

For the attention of the CBD Executive Secretary, Cristiana Paşca Palmer

1. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to SCBD Notification 2019-008 inviting views on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and in particular to the initial discussion paper (CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1). This response is submitted further to our initial views on the preparation, scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (notification 2018-102) submitted on the 11 December 2018.

2. The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is an informal partnership between Nations and organizations that strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems around the world by promoting sustainable management practices, building capacity, raising awareness and promoting action to address the continuing decline of coral reefs. ICRI was founded in 1994 and has more than 60 members, including 38 countries. ICRI is currently chaired by Australia, Indonesia and Monaco.

3. At its 33<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting held in December 2018, the members of ICRI established an ad hoc committee, which was requested to follow the post-2020 framework development process and contribute on matters relating to the critical status of coral reefs and how these can be sufficiently addressed within the post-2020 framework. The ad hoc committee has generated great interest amongst ICRI members with 15 ICRI members represented (Australia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Monaco, New Caledonia, Seychelles, UK, USA, ICRS, SPREP, Vulcan Inc., Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF International and UNEP-WCMC). According to its terms of reference, the ad hoc committee will develop a recommendation for a future target noting that *“any future target should be quantifiable and have an ambitious but realistic timeframe with a holistic view of coral reefs within the broader marine system as well as relate to the broader sustainable development agenda, with clear cross-reference to other global and regional policy instruments and commitments relevant to coral reefs.”*<sup>1</sup> Coral reefs are subject to many stressors impacting overall ecosystem health and function, some of which are beyond management control. For example, the Great Barrier Reef is an example of the best coral reef management in the world, and yet difficulties remain in managing anthropogenic impacts on the health of the ecosystem. *“The reduction in anthropogenic pressures continues to be necessary to give coral reefs a chance of*

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<sup>1</sup> see <https://www.icriforum.org/groups/our-committees/post-2020-coral-reef-target>



*surviving by supporting their health and resilience*". The work of the ad hoc committee is now underway, and we look forward to providing further contributions in due course, in line with the CBD process for the development of the post-2020 framework.

4. We would like to draw the attention of the Secretariat of the CBD and co-chairs of the Post-2020 process to the recent adoption of UNEA Resolution UNEP/EA.4/L.14 on "Sustainable coral reefs management"<sup>2</sup>. In this Resolution, the text in §1 calls on Member States to strengthen sustainable coral reef management, including through the streamlining of international policy instruments, identifying the role of ICRI in helping to achieve this.

5. ICRI adopted an implementation and governance plan for the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network at its 33rd General Meeting in December 2018. The plan establishes new operational practices for the GCRMN, including strengthening the role and importance of the regions in coordinating the collection and reporting of data, developing procedures for establishing data and metadata standards, ensuring data quality and developing key indicators from varied but comparable methods. These elements being addressed within the GCRMN implementation and governance plan are critical components to be developed to support any coral related target.

6. It is noted from our review of the initial discussion paper (CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1) that there are currently no mentions of coral reef ecosystems, either in this document or in the information document synthesising submissions from Parties and organisations (CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/INF/1), despite the fact that seven (7) of the individual submissions made specific reference to coral reefs.

7. The objectives of the ICRI ad hoc committee are to "Coordinate ICRI's contribution to a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including preparing a timeline, according to the ICRI Rules of Procedure;" and to "Develop a draft recommendation for a coral reef target and an appropriate alternative that aligns with and builds on other relevant processes". Within this context, please find in Annex 1 our reflections on the list of questions set out in section IV of the initial discussion paper (CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1).

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<sup>2</sup> [https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/l14\\_sustainable\\_coral\\_reefs\\_management\\_1.pdf](https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/l14_sustainable_coral_reefs_management_1.pdf)

## ANNEX 1: Reflections on the list of questions set out in section IV of the initial discussion paper (CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1)

### E. Biodiversity Targets

*(a) What does “SMART” targets mean in practical terms?*

- A SMART target should meet all aspects of the SMART definition (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound). It should be simple to communicate and clearly articulated. A SMART target should be accompanied by a clear baseline to allow for effective assessment and review of progress and implementation.
- As pointed out in an ICRI review and at SBSTTA 22<sup>3</sup>, the previous Aichi target for coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems (Aichi Target 10) was ambitious but fell short on the realistic and measurable aspects, especially setting an original deadline of 2015 without suitable metrics in place.
- There is a tension between a target that is “specific and measurable” vs one that enables a “systems approach” and sufficiently embraces complexity. This will require some consideration and further definition to how these could fit together.

*(b) How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework relate to existing Aichi Biodiversity Targets?*

- With specific reference to a coral reef related target within the broader marine ecosystem, this should build on the previous elements of Aichi Biodiversity target 10 that addressed coral reefs and associated ecosystems, taking into account the major issues that have been identified with the wording, time frame and implementation of Aichi Target 10.
- We should also distinguish outcome goals showing outcome situations from output targets showing specific actions to be taken under each outcome goal. In the case of coral reefs, we should recognize the fact that there are many actions that need to be taken, such as climate-change mitigation/adaptation, reduction of land-based sources of pollution and controls of fishery efforts, that may be addressed through other targets within the CBD post-2020 framework. They have also been discussed and reflected in global targets within other international frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals.

*(c) How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework align with other global targets, including those adopted under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/bf53/55a1/41afdeacdff7bba10267f20b/sbstta-22-inf-35-en.pdf>

- The review of Aichi Target 10 undertaken by ICRI noted that there needs to be continuity and coherence between the Aichi biodiversity targets and whatever comes next in the post-2020 framework to avoid detrimentally affecting progress of actions that have already been started.
- Post-2020 targets, including a coral reef related target, should be aligned and build coherence with other global targets that relate to coral reefs where possible, such as the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Agreement and where applicable use those same indicators. A new target for coral reefs and its associated ecosystems should complement/clearly relate to relevant targets within the SDGs that cover the main pressures on this particular ecosystem such as climate change, development, pollution and overfishing to name a few and connect to the broader context of sustainable development. (also relates to G. Relationships between post-2020 framework and other relevant processes §17).
- The post-2020 framework should also relate to the UNFCCC climate change agreement, given the critical need to meet these goals as the highest priority as noted in the IPCC 1.5 Special report<sup>4</sup>, published in 2018 (also relates to G. Relationships between post-2020 framework and other relevant processes §17).
- The post 2020 framework could also include a target on Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction. Coral reefs are one of the most typical examples of such Ecosystem-based approaches, and hence these concepts could be linked to each other in the next framework.

**I. Relationship with the current Strategic Plan:** *How can the transition from the current decade to the post-2020 framework avoid further delays in implementation and where should additional attention be focused?*

- An analysis of experience in implementing Aichi Target 10 by some coral reef countries was undertaken by ICRI in December 2018. The review concluded that despite actions under Aichi Target 10 the urgency for coral reefs remains and warrants special attention.
- The report highlighted lessons learned from the implementation of Aichi Target 10, including the value of Aichi Target 10 target in leveraging action in the marine environment. It also identified opportunities to strengthen the implementation and impact of any subsequent target through (a) improved articulation, clarity and ability to measure the target (b) the need to build on opportunities for multi-stakeholder partnerships across governance levels and sectors, and (c) the role of regional and international initiatives.
- Additional attention should partly focus on ensuring implementation can start as early as possible with appropriate tools and guidance in place for countries and implementing organisations. The ICRI review indicated that previous guidance for Aichi Target 10 was late in development and so not as useful for coral reef countries as had been anticipated.
- One action that would support timely implementation would be to have the indicators agreed before implementation is due to start (2021?).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>



- Another aspect is to ensure that the reporting on progress is well coordinated at the national level, especially for multi-faceted targets such as those for coral reefs.

**J. Indicators:** *What indicators, in addition to those already identified in decision XIII/28, are needed to monitor progress in the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the national, regional and global scales?*

- In order for the elements of a global biodiversity framework to be measurable, it is important that at least some tools (such as, indicators and data streams) are in place to quantify progress, or lack thereof, from the beginning of the implementation period – with scope for improvement and development of these tools through the period.
- For any new coral reef target a number of additional indicators could be considered and would need further discussion to determine which of them would be available for use from the start of the implementation phase. Furthermore, some existing indicators may be relevant and helpful for any new coral reef target.