

The Fourth International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS4)

DRAFT Proposal

Location: To be determined

Proposed dates: early 2011

Hosts: to be confirmed

ITMEMS is a flagship activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) whose secretariat is currently co-hosted by the Government of France, assisted by Monaco and Samoa. Convened previously in Australia (1998), the Philippines (2003) and Mexico (2006), ITMEMS strengthens the capacities of coastal and marine managers and their partners to conserve and promote the sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and ITMEMS

ICRI is a partnership among governments, international organisations and NGOs. It strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems by implementing Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, and other relevant international conventions and agreements. The ICRI was announced at the First Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 1994 and at the high level segment of the Inter-sessional Meeting of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development in April 1995.

In mid-1995, an international ICRI workshop was held at Dumaguete City in the Philippines. The workshop provided a forum for governments, donors and funding agencies, development organisations, NGOs, the research community and the private sector to work together in order to develop a consensus framework for achieving sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems. Workshop participants endorsed a "Call to Action", which advocates international recognition that coral reefs are in serious decline globally due primarily to human activities, and a "Framework for Action".

ICRI was established in order to halt and reverse the global degradation of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. The ICRI partnership mobilises governments and a wide range of other stakeholders in an effort to improve management practices, increase capacity and political support, and share information on the health of these ecosystems.

ITMEMS facilitate productive discussion and information sharing by people involved in the management of coral reef ecosystems, and the implementation of the ICRI Framework for Action. In the past the final outputs of the Symposia are presented within a framework of the four ICRI cornerstones: integrated management; capacity building; monitoring and review.

The International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS)

According to the 2008 global update of the status of the world's corals status compiled by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), the world has effectively lost 19 percent of the original area of coral reefs; 15 percent are seriously threatened with loss within the next 10 to 20 years; and 20 percent are under threat of loss in 20 to 40 years¹. If current trends in carbon dioxide emissions

¹ Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2008. For further information, see www.gcrmn.org

continue, it is possible that many of the remaining reefs may be lost over the next 20 to 40 years. It is widely accepted that the loss of tropical marine ecosystems (including the degradation of seagrass beds and mangroves) will have huge economic impacts, threatening the balance of global biodiversity and endangering the food security of hundreds of millions of people relying heavily on marine and coastal resources for their livelihoods and survival.

Economies of scale exist across site level management practices and paradigms and in many cases capacity for management has not kept pace with the increasing number and severity of challenges threatening tropical marine ecosystems, despite significant financial investment and global commitment. An analysis of recommendations emerging from past and recent international meetings reveals that the management community is still grappling with similar challenges now, as it was 20 years ago. It is important to ensure that progressive global targets, project funding cycles and priorities for management and conservation are effectively aligned with the available capacity and incentives for management at the site level.

The three previous ITMEMS have provided an important opportunity for people working to conserve tropical marine ecosystems to come together with their peers and partners to share experiences and lessons learned; debate gaps and priorities for future action to manage tropical marine ecosystems; and strengthen and expand their contact networks (Annex 1).

Furthering these objectives, ITMEMS4 will be designed to focus on the grassroots needs and priorities of local marine and coastal managers and practitioners working on the front line of conservation and management of coral reefs and related ecosystems. It will seek to understand the realities of management in the local context (what is and is not working), to work practically with managers to build tailored action-oriented responses to specific local management challenges, and to support the translation of cutting edge science into management strategies and practices. It will elicit lessons from local management practice and support the exchange of local-level best practice and expertise, through an innovative programme of mentoring and skills training.

ITMEMS4 has a vital role to play as the principle vehicle for marine and coastal managers to relate the realities of the challenges they face to manage these threatened ecosystems, to the enabling agencies, research institutions and donor organizations committed to supporting their work, in order to inform international frameworks that impact management practices and the flow of resources to management projects.

The new ITMEMS approach

Recognizing the evolving trend of local leadership in advancing innovative projects in marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (and building on lessons learned from past ITMEMS), ITMEMS4 proposes to bring together a group of approximately 150 participants (including at least 100 managers and 50 scientists/specialists) to participate in an event designed and led by managers themselves.

The overall goal of the meeting will remain consistent with that of previous ITMEMS, to 'strengthen the capacities of managers to innovate and address management challenges in the local context'.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting include:

- Understanding hard 'management truths'
- Identifying responses to specific local management challenges
- Celebrating successful local initiatives
- Feeding science into local management strategies and programmes
- Targeted networking and mentoring for professional development
- Creating opportunities for sharing experiences and good practice
- Developing the capacities of managers to deliver results and scale-up impact
- Establish mentoring relationships in support of professional growth and learning that can continue between ITMEMS
- Facilitating consideration of 'management truths' among donors and enabling agencies
- Fostering an enabling environment for local action

Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the meeting are:

- Clear communication of management challenges and problems by managers
- Increased exposure of managers to shared challenges at a range of scales and local contexts
- Practical tailored suggestions of appropriate management responses, tools, systems and resources for responding to challenges
- Training and capacity development based on priorities and needs as defined by managers
- Enhanced skill sets and technical capacity
- Strengthened dialogue and interaction between science and management communities
- An active professional 'managers' network²
- Donors and agencies have greater understanding of management challenges in different local contexts, and update project support processes
- Strengthened linkages between ITMEMS and International Coral Reef Symposia, and other major international meetings and processes

Activities

Activities will include:

- The preparation, presentation and discussion of 'eye witness statements': To ensure that the agenda is driven in accordance with the priorities of managers, all manager participants will be invited to prepare a 'eye witness statement' in advance of ITMEMS4 documenting the key threat(s), barrier(s) and management challenge(s) where they work. These statements may be theme based or can represent a holistic analysis of problems faced. Managers can choose to prepare their statements using a range of technologies and methods, ranging from video diaries, a collage of digital images and objects, poster presentations, or simply as written statements – although it will be recommended that visual aides are used to bring the statements to life. The statements will be used to catalyze and deepen discussions around real-world management challenges based on the experiences of participants.

² It is proposed that an 'ITMEMS Managers Leadership' or 'Professional Development' programme is developed to celebrate and acknowledge management excellence in terms of individual competencies, professional growth and ethical conduct. This will serve to underline the vital contribution of managers to the global effort to conserve tropical marine ecosystems and celebrate the manager profession. Lessons from existing schemes such as WIOMSA Compass will be sought to devise an appropriate process.

- Dialogue spaces: Dialogue spaces will provide managers with the opportunity to present their eyewitness statements, provoke discussion around key management issues, share ideas and insights and build lasting partnerships. Through the dialogue spaces, managers will shape the programme of work for ITMEMS4 and design a base from which they can exchange knowledge; define priorities and messages for decision-makers and policy-making processes; undergo leadership training and mentoring; and guide international policy formation through the clear articulation of local realities.
- Mentoring and professional development: Through mentoring, managers will be able to pick up technical, strategic and career guidance from 'management leaders'. These leaders will represent a select number of scientists and expert practitioners who through their specialization and lengthy experience in the field may be able to shed light on challenges and problems faced by participants. The format for the sessions has yet to be devised. It is also hoped that through these sessions, a professional managers network will emerge to support the continuation of mentoring and technical support to managers by 'management leaders' beyond ITMEMS4.³ The most important dimension of the ITMEMS concept is that it is not a one-off meeting that takes place every few years – but a vehicle to support long-term multi-dimensional learning that can evolve and deepen between symposia.
- Tailored vocational training: Specific workshops will be held to strengthen the core skill sets and capacities of managers on issues to be agreed (through consultation with participants) such as communications and outreach; influencing policy processes; community engagement and social marketing; and other.
- Donor roundtable and webinar: Using innovative and cost-effective approaches to link the global network (via the internet through a webinar), donors and enabling agencies will be invited to discuss directly with managers.

Participants will be offered incentives to prepare their eye witness statements through the disbursement of small grants to cover preparation and production costs. A short summary of the intended eye witness statements will be requested from managers upon registration for ITMEMS4 to facilitate the development of the agenda and identification of critical vocational training sessions. Participants will be asked to explore a range of concerns, incorporating issues relating to science, strategic and process into their eye witness statements.

Proposed agenda

The proposed agenda is designed to enable local coastal and marine managers to articulate the key concerns, needs and priorities to be addressed by ITMEMS4. Using the proposed Dialogue Space methodology described above, managers will have the opportunity to present their eye witness statements, discuss key management issues, and shape the programme of work for the meeting. The statements will be used to catalyze and deepen discussions around real-world management challenges based on the experiences of participants.

In general terms, it is expected that the agenda will play out as follows:

- Following the introduction and icebreaker on Day 1, eye witness statements will be shared by local area managers to be followed by a field trip to see the reality of the issues raised.

³ Opportunities to support an 'ITMEMS professional development' programme will be explored through partners including Aldo Leopold Fellowship Programme; see <http://leopoldleadership.stanford.edu/about/overview>

- The morning sessions of Days 2, 3 and 4 will continue discussion around key management issues based on the presentation of further eye witness statements. The Statements will be clustered or shown separately depending on the themes and issues raised, and parallel sessions may run concurrently to ensure that all statements can be showcased over the course of the week.
- The afternoon sessions of Days 2, 3 and 4 will focus on mentoring and professional development. The format for the sessions is discussed above.
- On Days 1, 2, 3 and 4, managers will be asked for their feedback to ensure that the agenda and session outputs are well targeted.
- The morning of Day 5 will provide an opportunity to define the priorities and messages for the donor roundtable event in the afternoon of Day 5. These discussions will also serve to identify future opportunities and participants who would be willing to participate in sequential international meetings with the language and guidance for their participation.

An annotated version of the agenda is provided below.

Proposed ITMEMS4 agenda

Time	Weekend	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	ICRI GM
AM	Vocational Training (e.g. Communications) 1-2 day event for participants	Introduction and icebreaker	Eye Witness Statements (delivery of statements to plenary by managers)	Eye Witness Statements (delivery of statements to plenary by managers)	Eye Witness Statements (delivery of statements to plenary by managers)	Plenary	Participation by small ITMEMS4 group in ICRI GM to present compiled management witness statements.
PM	Workshop continues	Eye Witness Statements from local area followed by Field Trip Feedback	Mentoring session (exchange of practical responses to management challenges) Feedback	Mentoring session (exchange of practical responses to management challenges) Feedback	Mentoring session (exchange of practical responses to management challenges) Feedback	Donor Roundtable Event Closing	1 day event; TBC
Eve	Sunday night: Welcome reception		Tailored vocational training	Locally hosted event	Tailored vocational training	Conference Party	

Participants

ITMEMS4 will convene a team of approximately 150 coastal and marine managers representing all tropical marine regions of the world to join with a select number of marine, social and climate scientists; indigenous and community representatives; and local environment and development practitioners to strengthen capacities for the effective management of tropical marine ecosystems.

Logistics

Previous ITMEMS depended on the registration costs of participants to cover the costs of organization and dissemination of the outcomes. It is noted that the requirement to register and pay to attend may prevent some managers – the ITMEMS key constituency – from attending the event. The ITMEMS4 organizing committee proposes that the registration fee of all managers submitting an eye witness statement be asked to pay 50 percent of the full registration fee to facilitate participation.

Financial and in-kind resources to hold ITMEMS4 will therefore need to be mobilized to cover:

- Travel, accommodation and per diems of funded participants
- Small grants to support the preparation of management ‘witness statements’
- The 50 percent Registration Fee Waiver for managers preparing statements
- Interpreting requirements (English, French, Spanish)
- Local logistics (e.g. venue, technology, coordinator)
- Evening engagements
- Post event follow-up

Other resources will need to be sought for ITMEMS related activities beyond the meeting such as:

- Participation of a small ITMEMS group in other key meetings (e.g. ICRI GM, 12th ICRS)
- Development of a Leadership Programme

It is suggested that the venue for the meeting be low-key and low cost; a partnership with a university is to be explored.

The ITMEMS4 Ad hoc Committee has been tasked by ICRI to lead in the planning and the organization of ITMEMS4. In addition to ICRI members who have already suggested interest to participate, members of the management and science communities may be invited to join the committee to provide essential perspectives.

The Ad Hoc Committee comprises:

- Chair – Kristian Teleki
- ICRAN Coordinating Unit
- A representative from the France-Samoa ICRI Secretariat
- A representative from the Mexico-USA ICRI Secretariat
- Two members from the ICRI Membership
- A representative of the ITMEMS 4 host location

ITMEMS4 Secretariat

It is proposed that ICRAN serve as the secretariat for ITMEMS4.

Timeframe

The following timeframe for delivery of ITMEMS4 is proposed:

Timeframe – months	Tasks

November-December 2009	Visioning and planning, assignment of roles and responsibilities, strategy development, partnership development, stakeholder consultation, resource mobilization and budget.
January-July 2010	Strategy implementation, substance and logistics progressively in place, eye witness statements under preparation and summaries submitted, participant funding agreed, resource mobilization continues, advertising begins.
July-December 2010	Final stages of implementation: Substance of sessions and training defined, logistics, finances, communications, media and outreach strategies defined.
Early 2011	Event takes place
March-June 2011	Preparation of Proceedings, post-event follow-up.

Budget

See ITMEMS4 draft budget.xls.

Conference Coverage

Full details of ITMEMS4 will be available at the web site www.itmems.org, designed specifically to inform participants and audiences around the world about the context and work of ITMEMS and ICRI using rich media. It is hoped that the International Institute for Sustainable Development-Reporting Services (IISDRS) will provide daily coverage of proceedings and the Earth Negotiations Bulletin Summary of ITMEMS4 will be available online. Costs for this service will be explored.

In addition, coverage of the Symposium by the international and national media will be explored.

Conference Languages

The Symposium will be conducted in English, with interpretation into French and Spanish throughout.

Post-Conference Developments

A series of groups, made up from the ITMEMS4 community, will be organized to participate at a number of key meetings and events to ensure that the outcomes and experiences of ITMEMS are conveyed to a wide an audience as possible. This would also include promoting ICRI and the linkages between management and policy. These include, inter alia:

- **ICRI General Meeting:** In place of recommendations, a number of participants will be supported throughout the week long symposium, through communications, mentoring and training sessions (and the support of a participatory video consultant) to prepare an innovative presentation session at the ICRI GM following ITMEMS4. At this event, the ITMEMS4 participants will present key management eye witness statements and lead a dialogue on behalf of the ITMEMS4 community to encourage consideration of key site based management issues by the global ICRI community, and stimulate discussion around on the ground realities and the importance for policy to reflect and consider this. This ITMEMS4 group will consist of a small group of participants, nominated by their peers, who would present to the ICRI GM in their own voice (applying some of the training they will have just received).

- International Coral Reef Symposium⁴: As above, tailored to address the global coral reef science community and enhance interaction between the management and science communities for the more effective translation of science into management action. The template for the manager eyewitness statements will be designed in such a way as to facilitate this process.
- Further opportunities for the promotion of the outputs of ITMEMS4 can be made at other key global meetings (e.g. CBD COP) and via the website to relate these messages. This marks an attempt to continue the momentum of ITMEMS, which can be lost once the Symposium ends, and provide continuity between meetings.
- ITMEMS Management Leadership Programme: A programme is proposed that will serve to underline the vital contribution of managers to the global effort to conserve tropical marine ecosystems and celebrate the manager profession, and continue valuable mentoring beyond the event.
- The ITMEMS4 Summary of Proceedings will be prepared directly following the Symposium and will be available online in a range of languages. A limited number of hard copies with accompanying CD will be made available for those who do not have access to the internet version.

⁴ Efforts to connect with the ICRS programme, and particularly ICRS12, will be enhanced to improve the two-way flow of information between management and science communities; help managers access real time and cutting edge information in ways that can be efficiently translated into action at the local level; and provide scientists and researchers with feedback on emerging issues that may warrant further investigation. This will also be linked into ICRI given that ITMEMS is one of its major activities.

ANNEX 1: ITMEMS3

The Third International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium⁵ (ITMEMS3) took place in October 2006 in Cozumel, Mexico. Convened previously in Australia (1998) and the Philippines (2003), ITMEMS strengthens the capacities of coastal and marine managers and their partners to conserve and promote the sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

Focused on practical issues relating to management and conceived to support implementation of the ICRI Framework for Action, ITMEMS provides an important opportunity for people working to conserve tropical marine ecosystems to come together with their peers and partners to:

- Share experiences and lessons learned.
- Identify effective local solutions to common management problems.
- Debate gaps and priorities for future action to manage tropical marine ecosystems.
- Evaluate progress since prior ITMEMS.
- Strengthen and expand the network of tropical marine managers.

Lessons and experience in the management of coral reefs and related ecosystems demonstrate the need to work increasingly with local communities and their partners to develop effective strategies and solutions, negotiate trade-offs, and shape and realize national and local policies. ITMEMS thus represents the most important forum for ensuring that the hands-on, day-to-day concerns of marine and coastal managers reach and inform the global agenda.

ITMEMS is the core activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). ICRI is a partnership among governments, international and non-governmental organizations. It strives to preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems by implementing Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and other relevant international conventions and agreements. The ICRI secretariat is currently co-hosted by the Government of France, assisted by Monaco and Samoa.

The International Coral Reef Action Network⁶ (ICRAN) served as the contracted organizer for ITMEMS3 and is currently leading the Ad Hoc Committee to organize ITMEMS4.

ITMEMS3 programme of work

The ITMEMS3 programme of work was designed to enable participants to develop key action recommendations relating to the conservation, management and sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems. These were included in the ITMEMS3 Action Statement⁷ for consideration by ICRI and the international community.

The programme was built around 50 short format workshops (prepared and run by participants), two special sessions, regional caucus meetings, and a field trip to Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve arranged in partnership with the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme⁸. The thematic workshops were organized to address challenges, problems and opportunities relating to thirteen themes (see box overleaf) identified by managers from all coral reef regions of the world early in the Symposium

⁵ See www.itmems.org for more information.

⁶ See www.icran.org for more information.

⁷ See www.itmems.org to download a copy of the ITMEMS3 Action Statement.

⁸ See www.undp.org/sgp.

planning process. The regional caucuses were set up to provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to specific regions.

Each workshop⁹ and regional caucus was tasked to develop a set of specific action recommendations for inclusion in the ITMEMS3 Action Statement. Ultimately, more than 400 recommendations were submitted and the ITMEMS3 Action Statement was compiled using the thematic and regional workshop reports to establish the overarching priorities for action in the next 5 to 10 years in the context of the four elements of the ICRI Call to Action¹⁰, namely:

- Integrated Coastal Management.
- Capacity Building for Management.
- Research and Monitoring.
- Performance Evaluation and Review.

ITMEMS3 also broke new ground through the inclusion of two innovative special sessions. To develop recognition and mutual understanding of the roles of local government in management for coral reefs and related ecosystems, a Local Government Leaders Forum was chaired by Hon. Gustavo Ortega Joaquín, the Mayor of Cozumel, with participants representing local and indigenous leaders from Tanzania, Philippines, Cook Islands, Australia and Hawai'i, USA.¹¹ The Forum developed the Cozumel Declaration¹², which can be found as an annex to the ITMEMS3 Statement and the Proceedings.

The ITMEMS3 Themes

1. Building resilience into coral reef management
2. Disaster Management and Restoration
3. Enforcement and investigation
4. Fisheries and aquaculture
5. Pollution and disease management
6. Information and knowledge management
7. Modeling and decision support
8. Integrated and participatory strategies
9. Communication, education and awareness
10. Economic valuation of marine natural resources
11. Sustainable tourism
12. Partnerships and strategic alliances
13. Sustainable financing

The second special session focused on the facilitation of peer to peer networking between the full range of participants from managers to scientists to local community representatives, NGOs and government. The session provided participants with an informal opportunity to share knowledge, update their professional contacts, and catalyse new and strengthen existing partnerships.

The ITMEMS3 field trip was co-organized by ICRAN in partnership with GEF SGP. It took place in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve over the course of three days prior to the start of ITMEMS3, where participants were able to visit various SGP sponsored projects with a focus on community-led coastal and marine conservation. For ITMEMS4, efforts will be made to secure funding for participants unable to attend without financial support.

A number of side events and meetings were scheduled around the main ITMEMS3 programme. These included specialized workshops on Coral Disease, the SocMon Initiative (NOAA) and Coral Reef Health

⁹ The proceedings of ITMEMS3 contain the detailed reports and recommendations of each workshop.

¹⁰ See http://www.icriforum.org/library/renewed_call_to_action.pdf.

¹¹ The Local Government Leaders Forum benefited from the participation of Gustavo Ortega Joaquín, Mayor, Island of Cozumel, Mexico; Mahmoud Juma Issa, Mayor, Zanzibar Municipal Council, Tanzania; Ms. Ann Bunnell, Deputy Mayor, Townsville, Queensland, Australia; Lucilo Bayron Vice Mayor, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines; Teariki Matenga, Mayor, Tikitumea, Rarotonga, Cook Islands; Hermani Braganza, Mayor, City of Alaminos, Pangasinan, Philippines; and Jeremy Harris, Former Mayor, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

¹² See http://www.itmems.org/itmams3/final/ITMEMS3_Local_Gov_Lead_Stat3.pdf.

(led by GEF IW:LEARN and the World Fish Centre) that took place a day before the formal start of ITMEMS3; additional SocMon, GCRMN and ReefCheck meetings that took place during the course of the week; and an Enforcement/Crime Scene Investigation workshop that took place over four days following the end of Symposium.

In a further move, ITMEMS3 participants recognized that the emergence of climate change as an overarching threat to tropical marine ecosystems increases the imperative for action and effective management. As such a separate Statement on Climate Change in relation to tropical marine ecosystems was drafted and adopted by the Symposium, and is provided as an annex to the ITMEMS3 Action Statement.

ITMEMS3 and the subsequent ICRI General Meeting (GM) were held back to back in Cozumel, creating a direct pathway between the two meetings. The agendas of the two meetings were designed and developed in tandem to maximize interaction between managers and decision makers. Delegates from ITMEMS3 addressed the ICRI GM to deliver the ITMEMS3 Final Statement and emphasize key action points. The Mayor of Cozumel shared the outcomes of the Special Session on Local Government, which drew out the importance of engaging effective local political, community and indigenous leadership to achieve sustainable management and conservation of tropical marine and coastal ecosystems and natural resources.

The ITMEMS3 Statement builds upon and reflects the principles and processes established in multilateral environment agreements and other relevant international programmes.¹³ The principles and overarching actions identified in the 1995 Framework for Action continue to provide a valid strategic context for future ITMEMS Action Statements.

¹³ These include the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the United Nations (UN) Commission on Sustainable Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, Global Programme of Action to Protect the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, the Ramsar Convention, the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, and the Convention on Migratory Species.