

**Member's report on activities to ICRI****Presented by United Kingdom**

1. **General Information** (note that this information will be post on the ICRIForum in your member page: <http://www.icriforum.org/about-icri/members-networks>)

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|--|---|
| Are you an ICRI Member?  | Yes   |
| Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):                                     | United Kingdom  |
| <b>Focal Point 1:</b>  |   |
| <i>Name:</i>   | <i>John Clorley</i>   |
| <i>Organization:</i>   | <i>Defra</i>  |
| <i>Email:</i>  | <i>John.clorley@defra.gsi.gov.uk</i>  |
| <b>Focal point 2:</b>  |   |
| <i>Name:</i>   | Tina Blandford  |
| <i>Organization:</i>   | Defra   |
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| Last meeting attended:   | Secretariat 2003-2005   |
| How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?       | ICRI information is shared with relevant policy teams and delivery bodies across Government. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (a UK agency) works closely with UK Overseas Territories on ICRI related matters |
| Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period): | Not able to determine for the whole of the UK and its Overseas Territories  |

For countries only:

| <b>National Action Plan / Initiative</b>  |    |
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| Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?                                  | NO |
| Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:                 |    |
| Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?                     | NO |
| Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs: |    |
| If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:                           |    |

2. **Updates on your activities** (new initiatives/programs/projects of your government /organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members)
3. **Contribution to the ICRI GM:** Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI action plan and objectives of the general meeting. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

## a. Rio+20

To support efforts to share ideas and plans for coral reefs/marine initiatives at Rio+20 and nurture opportunities for collaboration, we would like to invite you to share your proposed events and ideas:

- Are you/your organization attending Rio+20? **Yes, the UK Government will be attending as it is a priority**
- Are you proposing an event or other initiative? (please share any ideas and/or details) **The UK is not yet in a position to propose specific initiatives, but we recognize that oceans and coral reefs are an important part of the green (or blue) economy.**
- Are you looking to collaborate with others? **The UK would interested in the views and thoughts of others on what RIO+20 could deliver, and their plans on the topic.**

We would also appreciate ideas that you may have around how we can work together to ensure we have attention on coral reefs.

A summary of the response received will be compile by the secretariat and share during the meeting in a session on Rio+20.

- b. During the meeting, a full day will focus on the Indian Ocean region.** If you have any question about the region, ongoing projects in the region... please let us know.
- c. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since November 2010, has been made by your government/organization relative to i) Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar, World Heritage sites, and Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) sites designation containing coral reefs; ii) Policy changes; iii) Economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

The UK Government designated, in 2010, an MPA to protect the Chagos Archipelago. This globally significant initiative is summarised below in an extract from the Chagos Conservation Trust Chairman's report for 2010. A fuller version of this report is available at: <http://www.chagos-trust.org/news.asp?id=22>

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'This year the designation of the whole of BIOT and its seas (with the exclusion of Diego Garcia) as an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Category 1 no-take marine protected area (MPA) was announced by the Labour Government and is being fully implemented by the Coalition Government.

Britain, by protecting the Chagos in this way, has taken a conservation action of immense scale and significance. Ninety percent of the ocean's largest fish have disappeared over the past 50 years at the hands of commercial fishing, and the hunt for these, and especially tuna, continues unabated. Roughly one-quarter of coral reefs worldwide are already considered damaged beyond repair, with another two-thirds under serious threat. Through protecting the Chagos, the UK government has made a huge step forward on a number of globally agreed targets, such as establishing a representative marine protection network by 2012 and restoring depleted fish stocks by 2015 where possible. Much credit is due to the Ministers and officials involved.

Benefits of the new MPA

The Chagos Marine Reserve will safeguard in its entirety one of the world's most important and healthy ecosystems, deep sea, reefs and islands and provide a bastion against this tide of destruction. It provides an essential reference site for future scientific research and study. It also provides a safe refuge and breeding site for migratory and reef fish, marine mammals, birds, turtles, corals and other marine life, enabling them to play their full part in a vibrant ecosystem.

As things stand, the Western Indian Ocean is a region with one of the most exploited, poorly understood and badly enforced fisheries in the world. The Chagos marine reserve will assist in reducing the regional loss of biodiversity and in replenishing fish stocks for the benefit of food security, fish stocks and sustainable livelihoods.

Understanding the changes to ocean systems caused by pollution and over exploitation of fisheries is possible only if these effects can be compared with a part of the ocean that is comparatively unaffected by pollution and fishing. For the benefit of global science, the MPA provides a vital global scientific 'control site.'

Coral reefs risk becoming the first global ecosystem to collapse and disappear because of climate change and ocean acidification. Maintaining the Chagos' pure and unpolluted waters will make an important contribution to the survival of coral reefs.'

Since then, a British Indian Ocean Territory Scientific Advisory Group (BIOT SAG) has been established which has the broad aim to make recommendations on a science strategy for BIOT that could address questions of interest to others in the western Indian Ocean; in particular genetic studies and long-term studies on reef condition (bleaching and recovery) are being carried out.

- d. Is there any topic you would like to raise during the meeting?
- e. Please list publications, reports you have been released since the last meeting.
- f. Please indicate upcoming coral reef-related meetings you will attend?
  - Third Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-3), 25-27 January 2012, and Global Conference on land-ocean interaction 23-24
  - IUCN World Conservation Congress, 6-15 September 2012, Jeju. Are you planning to organize an event?
  - 26th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee, 15-20 March 2012, Geneva, Switzerland – it is intended that the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) will attend
  - Others: