



Member's report on activities related to ICRI

Japan

Reporting period November 2016 – November 2017

1. **Contribution to the ICRI Plan of Action 2016-2018.** *Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI Plan of Action (<http://www.icriforum.org/icri-secretariat/current>)*

Theme 1 – “Help raise awareness of how coral reefs and related ecosystems help to fight climate change”

- *Goal 1-1: highlight the contribution of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses to mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts*

Question: Do you have examples of solutions provided by coral reefs and coastal systems to mitigate and adapt to climate change?

Effectiveness of seaweed beds and mangroves are being assessed on climate-change mitigation and adaptation, such as blue carbons and breakwater against waves, by Environment Research and Technology Development Fund of the Ministry of the Environment (S-14), Japan.

Question: Are you planning to add in your NDC the importance of coral reefs / mangroves?

Our Intended Nationally Determined Contribution does not mention coral reefs or mangroves.

Theme 3: “Help to reduce human threats to coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses, by making greater use of regulatory tools”

- *Goal 3-1: promote legal frameworks for the protection of coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses, with quantified targets and effective enforcement to protect these ecosystems*

Question: What are the legal frameworks for the protection of coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses in place in your countries? If you already replied to the previous request, you don't need reply

As reported, Japan formulated the Japan's National Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Action Plan for 2016-2020. This plan is not a legal framework, though it mentions nature restoration projects and projects for child-nature friendship in national parks. In this regard, there are legal frameworks of nature restoration and national parks in Japan (e.g., Natural Parks Act), and hence such laws are relevant to nature conservation including protection of coral reefs and mangroves.

Question: Did you to set quantified targets to protect their coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses? And are you able to provide a % of what is currently protected in your country? Please define what you mean by protection?

There are no quantified targets to protect specifically coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses. However, 72.2% of our coastal areas (167,000 km² out of 232,000 km²) are already covered by protected areas. As well, Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine Areas (*EBSAs*), which includes coral reefs, mangroves, and seaweed beds, was identified and reported in Japan in April, 2016. According to this report, 52,000 km² area in Japanese coasts are identified as *EBSAs*, and 68.4% of them are protected as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Herein, MPA is defined in our “Marine Biodiversity Conservation Strategy” as follows; “Marine areas designated and managed by law or other effective means, in consideration of use modalities, aimed at the conservation of marine biodiversity supporting the sound structure and function of marine ecosystems and ensuring the sustainable use of marine ecosystem services.”

- *Goal 3-2: encourage a ban on plastic microbeads in cosmetic products*

Question: How did you implement the recommendation to reduce plastic microbeads pollution in marine environment?

Regarding microbeads, cosmetic industry in our country is refraining from using them as compositions of cosmetic products on voluntary basis, while replacing them by natural materials such as cellulose. Besides, the current situation of micro-plastics in sea including microbeads is being monitored continuously.

- *Goal 3-3: improve regulation and enforcement to reduce direct anthropogenic damage due to dredging and physical alteration of reef structures*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible,

In national and quasi-national parks, reclaiming land in marine areas, physical alteration of sea floors, and some other activities are legally regulated according to Natural Parks Act.

- *Goal 3-4: promote the deployment of mooring devices limiting the mechanical destruction of coral reefs and seagrasses*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible,

Significant recovery of coral reef was observed at a diving point, which was closed for three years (1998-2001) by Zamami Fishery Cooperative after being damaged by ship anchors and divers. Thereafter, the same point has been opened to the public again. Herein, mooring devices are deployed to avoid anchor drop, and also the number of incoming ships is limited. By doing so, local people are trying to protect coral reefs. A similar measure is implemented in Tokashiki as well, and these efforts have actually resulted effective conservation of coral reefs.

- *Goal 3-5: review issues related to the impact of sunscreens and other endocrine disruptors on coral reefs, and encourage the production of sunscreens that are proven not to damage coral reefs*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible.

In Kerama/Zamami in Japan, coral-friendly sunscreens are sold. The sunscreens do not contain oxybenzone (Benzophenone-3), which is allegedly harmful to corals. However, scientific background of this idea is not clear, according to an ecologist. Furthermore, artificially produced

chemicals, such as DCMU (which is used for paintcoating of ship bottoms and agricultural chemicals), is damaging to growth of corals, according to research by WWF and others.

Theme 4: “Monitor the state of reefs in order to better manage them”

- *Goal 4-2: better monitor the phenomena of coral bleaching*

Question: How did you implement the recommendation on addressing the decline in coral reef health due to global bleaching events?

Last year, we have confirmed large-scale bleaching event of coral reefs in Japan. In response to this event, we held Conference on Emergency Countermeasures for Large-scale Coral Bleaching in this April. There, we shared the latest information on current situation and measures against the bleaching, and “Emergency Declaration of the Large-scale Coral Bleaching Event” was made. This declaration leads us to promote future measures against the bleaching. On the other hand, the Ministry of the Environment is monitoring bleaching event through the implementation of Monitoring Sites 1000. In addition, the Ministry of the Environment has also been undertaking spot surveys in Sekisei Lagoon. Furthermore, from this year, we are considering possible adaptation measures of coral reef ecosystems by conducting impact assessment of climate change (climate-change vulnerability assessment) as well as forecasting in Kerama and other locations.

Theme 5: “Progress via education”

- *Goal 5-1: prepare for the 2018 International Year of the Reef (IYOR)*

Question: How did you implement the Recommendation designating 2018 as the third International Year of the Reef? Please let us also know what are you planning to celebrate IYOR2018.

We organized a kick-off meeting and will organize an opening symposium of IYOR in Japan. By doing so, we are inviting various parties interested (private companies, researchers, media, and policymakers etc.) to collaborate with each other and address conservation of coral reefs.

Please also list the educational material that you’ve developed in the past, so we can share it on the IYOR website.

Question: Would you like to report on one of your activities during the ICRI GM meeting?

Yes, if time permits, we would like to report our activity briefly.

2. **Publications.** Please list relevant publications/reports (related to the ICRI plan of action) you have released during this reporting period.

The biodiversity-related magazine, “Iki Tomo” Vol. 14, focused on “Sea and coral and biodiversity”, in which IYOR 2018 was also introduced.

URL: http://undb.jp/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/WEB_IKITOMO_VOL.14.pdf

3. **General Information.** (Note that this information will be posted on the ICRI website on your member page: <http://www.icriforum.org/about-icri/members-networks>.)

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