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January 28, 2009

Dear ICRI Member,

The use of economic tools and thinking continues to spread through the international coral reef management community. Economic tools help direct management and also help managers explain why protecting reefs is important to local communities. Unfortunately, the demand for economic information and tools often exceed the capability of local users – there is considerable variation in the economic skills and knowledge of people who are ready and able to use these tools.

At the July 2008 ICRI General Meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee on Economic Valuation of Coral Reef Ecosystems was asked to provide and post to the ICRI Forum cost estimates to provide ICRI members with the economic tools and resources that are needed to improve their conservation efforts (see Terms of Reference, 16 July 2008). The Coastal Ocean Values Center (COVC) and UNEP-WCMC jointly prepared a proposal to take advantage of their individual and complementary efforts to provide ICRI members with the needed economic tools and resources, specifically, increased references, web-based training, and an on-line searchable database of coral reef economic values. This proposal is hereby attached for posting to the ICRI Forum.

After initial review, it appears that funding for the searchable database component of this proposal (Item B) may not be available at this time. However, we still encourage support of the development and facilitation of COVC's Coral Reef Economics Community of Practice (Coral CoP). COVC is well positioned to assist the ICRI Ad Hoc Committee in its efforts to expand the current on-line compilation of resources by developing the existing on-line Coral CoP with additional literature and references on coral reef economic valuation, including permissions to access published journal articles through its members-only, password-protected documents library. The Coral CoP will remain poised to assist with the development of a searchable database when funding allows. Furthermore, with the support and collaboration of its numerous partners, the Coral CoP is positioned to facilitate and host web-based seminars (webinars) led by experts in coral reef economics, as well as offer guided interaction and outreach for coral reef economics researchers worldwide.

COVC is a self-supported, not-for-profit project of the Ocean Foundation. Funding will allow Dr. Pendleton and Program Associate Sharon Khan to devote more time to build on-line resources and facilitate education and outreach through the Coral CoP. Dr. Linwood Pendleton is a former professor and expert in marine and coral reef economics. As a board member of the Conservation Strategy Fund, Dr. Pendleton has been teaching economics to international conservation professionals for more than a decade. Through webinars and through other types of online interaction, Dr. Pendleton and Ms. Khan can help Coral CoP members better navigate the literature (including new literature compilations by COVC and the joint effort between CI, WRI, NOAA, and COVC), apply values appropriately, utilize existing valuation tools and communicate findings.

The proposed components focused on expanding the current literature and online resources available through Coral CoP and provisions of webinars (Items A, C and D) are estimated at US\$

24,506. Support by ICRI Members would allow Coral CoP to expand its literature holdings and support the conservation community interested in coral reef valuation. Available funds would also to serve as important initial capital that will enable COVC to develop consistent sources of future funding for the Coral CoP. I encourage your consideration of this proposal.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laretta Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laretta Burke
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