

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the ICRI Recommendation on the Inclusion of coral reefs and related ecosystems in the Post-2020 Global biodiversity Framework?**

This is a Recommendation adopted by the [International Coral Reef Initiative](http://www.icriforum.org) (ICRI) on 21 May 2020 which focuses on three priorities:

1. Prominent recognition of coral reef ecosystems within the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).
2. The need for immediate prioritisation of action and appropriate timescales for response in the goals and targets for the stabilisation and recovery of coral reef ecosystems.
3. Explicit inclusion of clear, specific and actionable coral reef indicators within any monitoring framework. The Recommendation identifies a set of six coral-related indicators for adoption and highlights a further five indicators for priority development, particularly helpful to provide improved information on ecosystem integrity, function, intactness and resilience (see “Which indicators are being recommended and why?”).

The full text recommendation, including the recommended indicators, is available via [www.coralpost2020.org](http://www.coralpost2020.org) in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#).

A two-page summary is also available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

### **Which coral related indicators are being recommended and why?**

Six indicators, all of which are suitable for use at the global scale, have been recommended by ICRI to CBD parties for inclusion in the Post-2020 framework. In selecting these indicators, ICRI took into account both available and emerging tools and methods as well as various local and regional data collection resources. It is vital that the CBD Parties adopt these indicators, in order to motivate governments, civil society, and donors, to prioritize coral reef conservation outcomes.

Please take a look at our infographic explaining the Recommended indicators: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#).

*Table 1: Recommended Indicators (Source ICRI, 2020)*

|   |                  |   |
|---|------------------|---|
| 1 | Live coral cover | <i>A fundamental indicator of coral dominance and the most widely used indicator in coral reef science and national to international policy</i> |
|---|------------------|---|

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 2 | Coral reef extent  | <i>A metric for detecting changes in the area of coral reef ecosystems</i>   |
| 3 | Fleshy algae cover and cover of key benthic groups   | <i>Increases in fleshy algae indicate decline in coral reef health and can give information on ecosystem function and resilience</i>                             |
| 4 | Fish abundance and biomass   | <i>Important for any ecosystem scale target - necessary to understand the health, functioning and productivity of the reef</i>                                   |
| 5 | [Percentage/area] of coral reefs included in [effectively managed] Marine Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures | <i>Relevant to any target on area based protection, this indicator gives information on the area of coral reef habitat included within area-based management</i> |
| 6 | Index of coastal eutrophication  | <i>Relevant to pollution targets - nutrient pollution from land-based sources is of high concern for many inshore reefs</i>                                      |

The Recommendation also includes five additional indicators, which need further development but should be prioritised. These are designed to improve feedback on ecosystem integrity and resilience (Table 2).

Table 2: Future indicators for priority development (source ICRI, 2020)

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 7 | Red list of ecosystems (coral reef ecosystems) | <i>How close an ecosystem is to collapse, important for providing information on changes in function and integrity</i>   |
| 8 | Hard coral genera richness                     | <i>Helps understand coral community change and structure - relevant to ecosystem integrity</i>   |
| 9 | Structural complexity of coral reefs           | <i>Provides information on expected function and resilience of the system over time and changes in coral community structure, and/or complexity, in response to changing climate</i> |

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 10 | CATAMI Classification Scheme (Collaborative and Annotation Tools for Analysis of Marine Imagery and Video) | <i>A standardised, progressive approach to understanding the benthic habitats and improving information on community composition and intactness</i>     |
| 11 | Carbonate budgets  | <i>A proxy for understanding function and impacts of climate change relevant to understanding changes in integrity and resilience of the ecosystem.</i> |

This is not an exhaustive list of future indicators and should be kept under review.

## Where can I find out more information on the recommended indicators?

For more detail on each of these indicators, please see the Addendum to the Recommendation (starting Page 10) in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Arabic](#).

## What are indicators?

An indicator is a specific, observable and measurable characteristic that can be used to show changes or progress towards achieving a specific outcome - such as the targets and goals of the new Global Biodiversity Framework.

Indicators help to simplify complexity. They can inform decision making by helping to define a situation or problem - for example providing information on change in status, trends, or progress towards an objective. Tracking indicators can be a tool to help provide responsiveness, visibility and accountability.

A good indicator is:

*Specific:* the indicator should provide information that is helpful to inform/ adapt actions being taken (policy relevant)

*Measurable:* the indicator should be quantifiable using available tools and methods

*Achievable:* the indicator should be operationally clear in how it can be implemented

*Reliable:* the indicator should be consistently measurable over time in the same way by different observers

*Timely:* the indicator should provide a measurement at time intervals relevant and appropriate to the intended target/ goal

(Source: *adapted from UN Women: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/336-indicators.html>*)

Even meaningful targets can fail to deliver if they are not accompanied by appropriate indicators. To ensure coral reefs do not slip between the cracks of the new Global Biodiversity Framework, it is critical that good indicators for understanding the health and functioning of coral reef ecosystems

are included - providing accountability in a decade where urgent action is needed to prevent the collapse of this critical ecosystem.

## How do indicators help save coral reefs?

*“As a country that literally lives and breathes by virtue of our coral reefs, we understand the need to prioritize and safeguard this fragile ecosystem,” said Umiich Sengebau, Minister of Nature Resources, Environment and Tourism for Palau. “It is not enough to just have indicators. Unless they’re being used as part of the strategy to change and implement policies, it’s just paper and coral reefs could slip further into the abyss.”*

We believe that strong, actionable and measurable goals, targets and indicators incentivize conservation and restoration. Monitoring clearly defined metrics repeatedly and consistently enables countries to detect changes in reef ecosystems that result from their interventions. This feedback will accelerate learning and adaptation, which will help countries better protect coral reefs.

Through the Recommendation, CBD Parties are strongly encouraged to prioritise coral reefs by including clear, specific and actionable indicators in the Global Biodiversity Framework, which will inform interventions aimed at improving reef integrity, quality and function. By monitoring at the national level, countries can determine their progress towards meeting targets, learn which interventions are working or not working, and adapt their conservation and management efforts accordingly. These metrics will also enable an improved consistency of information available at global and regional scales contributing to a more informative overview of changes in coral reef systems. They will also focus governments and donors on delivery of conservation outcomes for coral reefs.

## Why are coral reefs important and why do they need to be prioritised?

Coral reefs are critical for the persistence of biodiversity, and provide important economic, social, and cultural benefits. Although they only cover 0.2 percent of the ocean floor, they support 25 percent of marine species and provide trillions of dollars in economic services. Estimates indicate coral reefs account for \$2.7 trillion per year in ecosystem service value. We have lost 50 percent of coral reefs and they continue to decline in the face of threats including climate change, pollution over-fishing and destructive fishing. The safety, well being, food, cultural heritage, and economic security of at least one billion people are at risk.

Coral reefs play a fundamental role in the health and function of our planet, impacting us all in many different aspects of our lives whether we live near a reef or not. These services would not be able to continue if reefs lose their integrity, or are otherwise destroyed.

- Nearly 3000 new marine natural products have been isolated from corals for use in developing medicines in the past two decades, (Ocha, J. et al. 2011)
- At least 94 countries and territories benefit from reef tourism (Burke et al., 2011).
- Emotional and social impacts of coral reefs are felt not only by individuals intimately connected with reefs on a day-to-day basis but also by populations far away from reef



locations. Charismatic and stunningly beautiful coral reefs continue to feature as the totem of many climate protests worldwide (Morrison et al., 2020)

Please watch this [1 minute video](#) that explains the value of coral reefs. Take a look at our infographic showing some of the benefits that humanity derives from coral reefs ([English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#))

## What is the International Coral Reef Initiative?

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), a global partnership organisation that was formed in 1994 by eight governments: Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It 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 Intersessional Meeting of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development in April 1995.

ICRI now has almost [90 members](#) (including national governments, IGOs, and NGOs). The majority of its country members (>40) participate in negotiations for the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The ICRI Secretariat is hosted for a determined term (usually two years) by State members, on a voluntary basis, and is currently co-hosted by the governments of Australia, Indonesia and Monaco.

Many nations face similar threats to coral reefs and related ecosystems as well as similar management problems. Recognising this, ICRI's objectives are to:

- Encourage the adoption of best practice in sustainable management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems
- Build capacity
- Raise awareness at all levels on the plight of coral reefs around the world.

The work of ICRI is guided by the “[Continuing Call to Action](#)” and “[Framework for Action 2013](#)” which were adopted at the 28th General Meeting (these documents renewed the original 1995 ‘[Call to Action](#)’ and ‘[Framework for Action](#)’).

Please find out more [About – ICRI](#)

## Why is ICRI doing this?

ICRI plays a unique and central role in convening the diverse stakeholders that comprise the global coral reef community (including coral reef States, non-coral reef countries, the private sector, NGOs, IGOs, foundations, and the scientific community). This provides a definitive opportunity to coordinate and develop consensus across its member countries and organisations.

## What does an ICRI Recommendation mean?

ICRI makes Recommendations to call attention to issues of serious, widespread concern to the global community. ICRI members adopt Recommendations by consensus. ICRI's recommendations have been pivotal in continuing to highlight globally the importance of coral reefs and related ecosystems to environmental sustainability, food security, and social and cultural wellbeing. The work of ICRI is regularly acknowledged in United Nations documents, highlighting the Initiative's important cooperation, collaboration and advocacy role within the international arena.

You can find out more in the ICRI [Organisation and Management procedures](#)

## Who is adopting what and for whom?

This Recommendation is made by all 89 ICRI members. It was adopted by consensus on 21 May 2020. The Recommendation calls for action by ICRI members, especially those who are Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to ensure that the elements of the [Recommendation](#) are incorporated into the national negotiating positions and the text of the Global Biodiversity Framework in advance of the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

## What is the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework?

*"The Framework will set the shared objectives and priorities for biodiversity over the next decade to ensure the realization of CBD's vision - that society is living in harmony with nature by 2050,"* said H.E. Edhy Prabowo, Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Republic of Indonesia. *"It is our intention that the Framework goals, targets and indicators make it clear how actions to address coral reef decline contribute to this vision."*

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international legally-binding treaty that came into force on 29 December 1993. To date there are 196 Parties. The organization has three main goals: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of biodiversity; fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Its overall objective is to encourage actions which will lead to a sustainable future.

The CBD will adopt a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as a stepping stone towards the [2050 Vision of "Living in harmony with nature."](#) In its [decision 14/34](#), the Conference of the Parties to the CBD adopted a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the Framework that will be undertaken by a dedicated open-ended intersessional working group under the leadership of its two co-chairs, Mr. Francis Ogwal (Uganda) and Mr. Basile van Havre (Canada), and overseen by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties.

More information <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020>

## Who is responsible for this work?



In December 2018, ICRI members agreed to establish an [Ad Hoc Committee](#) to develop a Recommendation that would contribute to the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and ensure that coral reefs and associated ecosystems are prioritized in this new Framework.

The Ad Hoc Committee is chaired by Monaco, Vulcan Inc. and the ICRI Secretariat. Members include Australia, France, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Maldives, New Caledonia, Seychelles, UK, USA, CORDIO East Africa, GCRMN, ICRS, The Reef-World Foundation, SPREP, UN Environment, UNEP-WCMC, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Resources Institute, and WWF International.

After more than 18 months of work by the committee and many consultations, ICRI adopted a [Recommendation](#) for the inclusion of coral reefs and related ecosystems in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Recommendation has been made available to CBD Parties via the CBD Post-2020 [submission page](#).

## What kinds of materials has ICRI Produced to support the ICRI Recommendation?

ICRI and its partners have produced a range of materials to help explain and raise awareness about the Recommendation. The Ad Hoc Committee will continue to release content between now and COP 15 in May 2021. These materials can be accessed here [www.coralpost2020.org](http://www.coralpost2020.org). For more information contact [claire.rumsey@icriforum.org](mailto:claire.rumsey@icriforum.org).

### Translation and language/ الترجمة واللغة/Traduction et Langue/Traducción e idioma/ Tradução e Língua

Materials are being translated where possible. To date the following resources are available in multiple languages:

The **Recommendation** is available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic

A **summary 2 pager** is available in English, French, Spanish

**Infographics** are available in English, Spanish and Portuguese

Find these at [www.coralpost2020.org](http://www.coralpost2020.org) and please check back for more!

## Who can I contact for more information?

For more information about ICRI and its Recommendations for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, please contact Francis Staub, Global Coordinator, ICRI Secretariat at [fstaub@icriforum.org](mailto:fstaub@icriforum.org).

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**International Coral Reef Initiative**

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*[www.icriforum.org](http://www.icriforum.org)*

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