

## **Resolution to extend the ICRI ad hoc committee for coral reef restoration and adaptation**

*Adopted at the 36<sup>th</sup> ICRI General Meeting (online), December 2021*

In response to the acceleration in coral reef declines, there is growing recognition that traditional coral reef management approaches alone are not sufficient to counter the increasingly frequent stresses imposed by a changing climate. This has led to a surge in interest in active interventions to restore, protect and increase the resilience of coral reefs, and funding to support these efforts.

The ICRI Plan of Action 2018-2020 called for the promotion of leading reef restoration practices by facilitating partnerships, investment and capacity-building among ICRI members. ICRI established an *Ad Hoc* Committee on Coral Reef Restoration at its General Meeting in Monaco in December 2018 and this ran for three years. Membership included representatives from 19 ICRI members. The Committee produced several products, identified common interests, facilitated global and regional collaborations, and helped identify opportunities for co-investment in research and development on coral reef restoration and adaptation.

While undertaking this work, opportunities emerged to work with a broader group of nations and partners including the Commonwealth Blue Charter's Action Group on Coral Reef Protection and Restoration, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the French Coral Reef Initiative (Ifreco), Australia's Reef Restoration and Adaptation Program, and the Coral Restoration Consortium (CRC). There are now new funding and coordinating platforms such as the G20 Global Coral Reef Research & Development Accelerator Platform and the Global Coral Reef Fund as well as upscaled restoration projects such as Mission: *Iconic Reefs* in Florida, USA, the Shousha Island coral garden in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the multi-hectare coral restoration project in the Republics of Mauritius and Seychelles funded through the UNDP Adaptation Fund.

The proposed ICRI Plan of Action 2021-2024 includes:

### Action 1.C - Promote and build capacity for the restoration of resilient coral reefs

Coral reefs are threatened by rapidly deteriorating environmental conditions that are warmer, less favorable for calcification, have impaired water quality, and pose continuing disease threats. Coral intervention strategies have arisen with the goal of increasing the long-term persistence and resilience of tropical coral reefs and their ecological functions. These interventions include stress-hardening, translocation of coral stocks or species, manipulation of symbiotic partnerships within the coral holobiont, managed selection, genetic modification, and engineering of the local environment.

### **Annex: Terms of Reference**

Working with ICRI members, reef-bearing nations and relevant partners, the ad hoc committee will:

- Provide a coordinating mechanism for international collaboration on coral reef restoration research and development.
- Advocate for the use of best practice restoration techniques and highlight examples of relevant policy and legislation as part of a broader strategy that involves traditional management and reducing carbon emissions in order to maintain coral reef function, structure and resilience.
- Facilitate the transfer of new knowledge of restoration techniques to managers and restoration practitioners.
- Explore the option of creating an ICRI Network on coral restoration and adaptation

- Maintain the Restoration Hub on the ICRI website
- Support the UN Decade of Ocean Science and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to help prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of coral reef ecosystems worldwide by promoting science-based restoration, upscaling, monitoring and capacity building

If resources allow the ad hoc committee would also:

- Update materials based on experiences thus far and conduct mentored trainings using the Manager's Guide to Coral Reef Restoration Planning and Design
- Continue to work on recommendations in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's: A Decision Framework for Interventions to Increase the Persistence and Resilience of Coral Reefs
- Train facilitators to conduct mentored trainings using the Manager's Guide to Coral Reef Restoration Planning and Design
- Support efforts to improve coral reef restoration monitoring

**Chair:** Australia

**Members:** Experts from the ICRI Membership, other reef-bearing nations and relevant partners.

**Duration:** The ICRI ad hoc committee will be extended for one year, with the final report to be presented at the 37th ICRI General Meeting. The report will be available on the ICRI Forum.

**Working procedures:** The ad hoc committee will conduct its work via email, telephone, video conference and, when necessary, internet-based services.