

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat response to the CBD Secretariat’s Invitation to contribute to the peer review of documents for SBSTTA 24, Agenda Item 3, relating to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

For the attention of the CBD Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to notification 2020-024 initiating a peer review process in preparation for SBSTTA 24, which will be take place from to 2-7 November 2020.

In May 2020, ICRI members adopted a [Recommendation](#) for the inclusion of coral reefs within the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. This Recommendation comes from the very real need to safeguard coral reef ecosystems around the world from potential collapse.

The Recommendation includes a set of clear indicators that measure the health, integrity and function of coral reefs. In recommending these indicators, ICRI took into account available and emerging tools, methods and approaches, including the [Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network](#), [Allen Coral Atlas](#), [World Database on Protected Areas](#), as well as various local and regional data collection resources. The Recommendation also includes a select number of new indicators for priority development that will be important for improving feedback on ecosystem integrity and resilience.

The peer review comments are submitted by the Co-Chairs of ICRI, using the templates provided as Annex 1-3, and reflect the ICRI Recommendation.

Annex 1 (page 2): Comments in response to the: “[Draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for review](#)”

Annex 2 (Page 7): Comments in response to the document: “[Indicators for the post-2020 framework: Information Document prepared for SBSTTA24 by UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership](#)”

Annex 3 (Page 15): Comments on: “[Linkages between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)”

Annex 1: “Draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for review”

Overview: Provided by CBD Secretariat, SBSTTA Chair and OEWG Co-Chairs, this is the current version of goals, targets, monitoring elements and indicators for the post-2020 framework. This draws on existing CBD/SDG/BIP indicators.

Review comments on the draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework	
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Table	Page	Column	Row	Comment
0	0	0	0	<p>NOTES: It is acknowledged that the goals and targets are not subject for review as part of this process and so these comments are provided for additional information.</p> <p>Goal A:</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The revised text of Goal A in column A has now combined ecosystems and species. This is counter to the recommendation from ICRI, which <i>“recommends the retention of this ecosystem conservation goal as a critical component within the Global Biodiversity Framework. ICRI stresses the importance of keeping this distinct from any long-term goals on conservation of species. Ecosystems are a critical component of biodiversity that any global framework must address and are particularly important at the intersection of the mandate of the CBD and the mandates of other frameworks related to climate and/or sustainable development. The key to the conservation of coral reefs on a global scale is to focus on ecosystem integrity, which is part of with, but goes beyond area-based and species-focused actions.”</i> ● Milestone 1 calls for an increase in area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems by 2030. We reiterate that this timeline is not achievable for certain ecosystems, including coral reefs. Inline with the ICRI Recommendation - a 2050 timeline is ambitious and appropriate for the stabilization/recovery of coral reefs, requiring immediate action as an urgent priority. ● Welcomes the retention of the concept of integrity in the text; ● However, notes with concern that as now written, the concept of “resilience” in goal A relates only to species populations. The ICRI Recommendation stresses the importance of resilient ecosystems as <i>“critical for coral reefs to ensure focus on the function of the ecosystem and the delivery of vital ecosystem services over time for both biodiversity and sustainable development”</i>; ● ICRI also recommended that Parties find a way to enshrine the concept of critical and vulnerable ecosystems, such as coral reefs into the goal with suggestions for achieving this. <p>Target 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We welcome that reference to “intactness” is included but note with concern that the concept of “integrity” is no longer in the text. ‘Intactness’ is used in indices quantifying the relative abundance of species, whereas ‘integrity’ relates to ecosystem functions,
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				<p>which often depend on intactness, but not exclusively. The concept of integrity is important in terms of retaining function and recommend it is re-inserted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notwithstanding issues of definition for “intact” “degraded” “spatial planning” - we continue to welcome the focus of this target at the ecosystem level, including marine ecosystems. • Reiterate the recommendation made by ICRI that whilst restoration will play a role, there is caution that it should encourage appropriate and achievable employment of this strategy for all ecosystems to avoid perverse incentives for inappropriate restoration, that cause more harm than good. • The recommendation to pay special attention to critical and vulnerable ecosystems could help to differentiate those ecosystems the defined % of area restored could be more appropriate, without lowering the ambition elsewhere.
1	2	C	8	We support the inclusion of live coral cover as a priority indicator as recommended by ICRI (May 2020) and included in the draft monitoring framework (line 8).
1	2	C	9	We support the inclusion of global coral reef extent as a priority indicator as recommended by ICRI (May 2020) and included in the draft monitoring framework (line 9).
1	3	B	24	<p>We recommend the inclusion of additional indicators (i.e. new rows after row 24) within “Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs” in line with the ICRI recommendation and as included in the BIP Inf. Document. This recommends the following indicators would include as a priority:</p> <p>1) Fleshy algae cover and cover of other key benthic groups, 2) Reef fish abundance and biomass, as well as the following indicators for priority development: Red List of Ecosystems (coral reefs), Structural complexity and Carbonate budgets.</p> <p>NOTE: Fleshy algae cover, Cover of key benthic groups have global baselines and will be updated regularly from 2020 onwards.</p>
1	4	B	34-35	We recommend the inclusion of an additional indicator (i.e. a new row after row 35) within “Trends in species abundance,” to include “ Reef fish abundance and biomass ” in line with the ICRI recommendation and as included in the BIP document.

2	9	B	14	We support the inclusion of live coral cover (line 14) as a priority indicator.
2	9	B	14	We recommend the inclusion of additional indicators (i.e. new rows after 14) within “Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs” to include the following indicators, in line with the ICRI Recommendation and the BIP Inf. document: Fleshy algae cover and cover of other key benthic groups; Fish abundance and biomass . In addition to the following indicators that are recommended for priority development: Hard coral genera richness; structural complexity of coral reefs, Carbonate budgets and the CATAMI Classification scheme
2	9	B	25	Indicator gap: Trend in the area of degraded corals restored. This was not considered by ICRI members as part of the Recommendation but relevant to note that ICRI has an active work stream on coral reef restoration (see https://www.icriforum.org/reef-restoration-ad-hoc-committee/) and sees value in further discussions to see how to fill this gap. It is also noted that 2021-2030 is the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.
2	11	B	43-45	We recommend the inclusion of an additional indicator (i.e. new row after row 45) within “Trends in ecological representativeness of areas conserved”: [Percentage/ area] of coral reefs included in effectively managed MPAs and OECMs as recommended by ICRI and included within the BIP Inf. Document
2	16	C	81	We welcome the inclusion of Index of coastal eutrophication in the monitoring framework as an important indicator for coral reef ecosystems associated with “reduction of pollution from excess nutrients”, as recommended by ICRI (May 2020) and included in the BIP Inf. Document.
2	22	B	137	Indicator gap for “Trends in contributions to human health and well-being from coral reefs”: It is appreciated that coral reefs have been identified as a flagship ecosystem within this target and monitoring element. There is not a proposal for an indicator included in the current ICRI Recommendation but this is an important aspect to start connecting the ecological and social changes and see value in exploring how to fill this gap.

Annex 2: “Indicators for the post-2020 framework: Information Document prepared for SBSTTA24 by UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership”

Overview: This document was produced by UNEP-WCMC as the Secretariat of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. The BIP reached out to members and stakeholders on potential new indicators, which are included in this template. ICRI provided feedback and we are therefore supporting elements in this document and encouraging their update into the document above.

Note: Some columns are removed from the template. See blue numbers of original column number.

1	2	3	4	5	9	10	11	13	15
Components of the draft Goals	Goal Monitoring Elements	Indicator name	Responsible Institution for the indicator	Available today (X) or under active development (Y)	Methodology available for national use (Y/N)	Can be disseminated for national use (Y/N)	National data aggregated to form global indicator (Y/N)	Indicator for SDGs	Comments
GA1. Increased extent of natural ecosystems (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in area of coral reefs	Live coral cover	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Support the inclusion of this important and widely used indicator indicator. . 2020 baseline will be available.
GA1. Increased extent of natural	Trends in area of	Coral reef extent	Global Coral Reef	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Delete text in column 3 “and condition” in the title of this indicator as this is covered by other

ecosystems (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	coral reefs	[strike: and condition]	Monitoring Network/ Allen Coral Atlas						indicators and will not be part of the “extent” indicator. Retain other information as written. 2020 baseline will be available.
GA1. Increased extent of natural ecosystems (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in area of coral reefs	Global coral reef extent	UNEP-WCMC, WorldFish Centre, WRI, TNC and partners	X			Y		This is expected to be superseded by the GCRMN / Allen Coral Atlas version of coral reef extent.
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Live coral cover	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network; Global Ocean Observing System	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Support the inclusion of this important indicator. Note amendment that indicator is available today. In column 5 change the Y in the draft document to an X (as highlighted) 2020 baseline will be available as part of the GCRMN Global Status report
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Fleshy Algae Cover	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and support its uptake in the Monitoring Framework. 2020 baseline will be available. Assessed as part of the GCRMN 2020 Status report

GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Cover of key benthic groups	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and support its uptake in the Monitoring Framework.
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Reef Fish abundance and biomass	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Propose inclusion of this indicator under this element.
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Structural Complexity	WCS	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and Support its recognition as a priority indicator for development
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Carbonate budgets	University of Exeter	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and Support its recognition as a priority indicator for development

marine ecosystems)									
GA2. Ecosystem integrity and connectivity (terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems)	Trends in fragmentation and quality of coral reefs	Red List Index (coral species)	Strike “Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network” Replace with IUCN						Correction In column 4. IUCN is responsible for this indicator not GCRMN
GA4. Increase the number and health of species	Trends in species abundance	Reef Fish abundance and biomass		Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome inclusion. Edit indicator title to include “Reef” fish
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Live coral cover	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network; Global Ocean Observing System	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Support the inclusion of this important indicator. Note amendment that indicator is available today. In column 5 change the Y in the draft document to an X (as highlighted). 2020 baseline will be available as part of the GCRMN Global Status report
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats	Trends in extent and rate of change	Hard coral genera richness	Global Coral Reef	Y				N	Support inclusion of this indicator in the compilation. Recommended by ICRI as an indicator for priority development. Change column 5 to a Y

due to land/sea use change	of coral reefs		Monitoring Network;						
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Coral reef extent [strike: and condition]	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network/ Allen Coral Atlas	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Delete “and condition” in the title of this indicator as this is covered by other indicators and will not be part of the “extent” indicator. Retain other information as written. 2020 baseline will be available.
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Fleshy Algae Cover	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and support its uptake in the Monitoring Framework. 2020 baseline will be available. Assessed as part of the GCRMN 2020 Status report
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Cover of key benthic groups	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and support its uptake in the Monitoring Framework.

T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Reef Fish abundance and biomass		Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome inclusion. Edit indicator title to include “Reef” fish
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Red List Index (coral species)	Strike “Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network” Replace with IUCN						Correction In column 4. IUCN is responsible for this indicator not GCRMN
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Structural Complexity	WCS	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and Support its recognition as a priority indicator for development
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats	Trends in extent and rate of change	Carbonate budgets	University of Exeter	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Welcome the inclusion of this indicator and Support its recognition as a priority indicator for development

due to land/sea use change	of coral reefs								
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Large Reef fish index							This was not included as a recommended indicator by ICRI
T1.2. Prevention of reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats due to land/sea use change	Trends in extent and rate of change of coral reefs	Reef Fish Thernal index							This was not included as a recommended indicator by ICRI
T2.4. Effective and equitable management of the system of protected areas and other effective area-based	Trends in management effectiveness	[Percentage/area] of coral reefs included in effectively managed MPAs and OECMs	French Agency for Biodiversity/ UNEP-WCMC (WDPA)	X	Y	Y	Y	N	Propose to move this whole row up in table as an indicator under T2.3/ Trends in ecological representativeness of areas conserved. This indicator is in use and can be calculated from existing data

conservation measures									
T6.1. Reduction of pollution from excess nutrients	<p>Move from Trends in levels of pollution from sediments</p> <p>To Trends in the levels of pollution from Nitrogen</p>	Index of Coastal eutrophication	UNEP/ IOC-UNESCO	Y				Y (14.1.1a)	Welcome inclusion of this indicator here and in the monitoring framework. Suggest move or inclusion of indicator

Annex 3: “[Linkages between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)”

Overview: This document examines the linkages between CBD goals targets and indicators and SDG counterparts.

Page	Paragraph	Comment
0	0	<p>General reflection on Coral reefs and the SDGs:</p> <p>Together healthy coral reefs and associated ecosystems play an important role in the broader sustainable development agenda and as Nature Based Solutions for addressing impacts of climate change, protecting the built environment, reducing wave energy, providing novel compounds for breakthrough medicines, marine eco-tourism, fisheries, contributing to GDP, local livelihoods, and food security. Retaining and improving the health of coral reefs is an important key to realising the value of these ecosystems to human society. The ecosystem services of coral reefs and associated ecosystems can be linked to all of the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – not just SDG 14: Life Below Water (Obura, 2020</p> <p>Your attention is brought to a recent paper linking Post-2020 GBF and Agenda 2030 focusing on the marine perspective: Obura, D.O. (2020) Getting to 2030 - scaling effort to ambition through a narrative model of the SDGs. Marine Policy 117: 103973</p>