

Notes Regarding ICRAN Strategic Plan Revisions

Dear ICRAN Colleagues:

Based on the directives from the Steering Committee Meeting held in Mexico in June, 2002, the attached files represent draft changes to components of the ICRAN Strategic Plan for your review and comment.

Comments received from partners who have responded so far (which are relatively few) have been considered within the draft material prepared here. Please note, however, that with the exception of these additions, this draft of the SP is a general reorganization of existing information with some updates incorporated, as directed by the SC, and does not address any reprioritization of activities.

Where possible, I have included reviewers' suggestions within the draft sections *using colored italics*. I have not indicated where text has been deleted in my editing of the existing Plan (as this would make the review quite difficult to decipher), so you will need to compare this text to the original if there are sections that you believe require revisiting.

Please keep in mind that the ICRAN priorities—as defined during the Start-up Phase and are still represented in this current version of the Strategic Plan—did not originally go through any formal evaluation process through which those priorities were voted on by the partnership. By opening ICRAN's planning to re-evaluation, the SC may wish to seriously consider some new and different approach to Strategic Planning for ICRAN, but this is beyond the scope of this current draft. Its intention is to get a document produced that the Partnership feels can be used as an outreach tool in advocating for ICRAN.

As you are already aware, last year a proposed framework for Strategic Plan development and revision was put forward by Mary Power and Elizabeth Patterson of SPREP, based upon an earlier, mutual agreement of their soliciting comments from the partners on suggested Strategic Plan revisions in the summer of 2002. Thanks and recognition to Mary and Elizabeth for taking the time and original initiative in organizing the partner's comments, and in suggesting an in-depth consideration of Strategic Planning for ICRAN. This is something the Partners may wish to consider as a process to undertake at a time that it believes is the most suitable. Some of the documents presented by Mary and Elizabeth are included on this section of ICRAN's website for you to look over and consider as well.

In line with the above considerations, I wish to bring your attention comments submitted on September 12, 2002 by Gilly Llewellyn of WWF-USA. Gilly raised several points that I believe should involve discussion and decision by the SC for official incorporation into the Plan. Specifically, a recommendation is made to expand the overall goal of ICRAN "to include the successful application of management practices and the protection of the large-scale integrity of coral reef ecosystems." Since this may represent an additional role for ICRAN to assume in its Strategic Planning, and resources needed to also incorporate this aim, this should—among other points—be discussed among the SC membership. Additional recommendations also included establishing "Ecologically connected networks of Marine Protected Areas that protect large-scale integrity of reef ecosystems...", to review the distribution of MPAs in a given region, and to adopt procedures for nominating additional ICRAN sites. These recommendations clearly fall in-line with ICRAN's originally stated objectives, but the added objective of large-scale ecosystem planning and management as a strategic focus should be discussed during the SC meeting before formally incorporating into the Strategic Plan.

Plan Reorganization

As has been recommended by some of the partners, this draft of the SP Revision suggests a separation of documents, so that there may be opportunities for various changes without the need to routinely update a single, large document. This revision proposes separation into four distinct volumes.

These are:

1. The ICRAN Strategy

The Strategy is intended to be a succinct document, approximately 20 pages. The Strategy is intended to serve as the overall guiding document for ICRAN. It will present the challenges facing coral reef conservation, ICRAN's mission, over-arching goals and objectives, and will describe how the strengths and talents of ICRAN's partners are being brought together in reversing coral reef decline. It is anticipated that from year-to-year, this volume of the ICRAN Strategic Plan would likely be subject to fewer modifications relative to the other Plan components.

2. ICRAN Operations

The ICRAN Operations component discusses specifically how ICRAN is working toward its mission, and how the current and planned project activities are being implemented. This will be the largest of the four sections and is organized by ICRAN component (Assessment, Communication and Management Action) and within the context of the Regional Seas. Where possible, this section will report general progress to date since the start of the Action Phase, but will largely focus on how the ICRAN Partnership will make its short to medium-term work (i.e. the Action Phase) operational. This section also identifies the measurable outcomes anticipated from each of the projects currently supported. Finally, this section also discusses the needs for each location/project/partner.

3. ICRAN Governance

This component describes ICRAN's governance structure—how the ICRAN Partners relate to one another, the structure and Terms of Reference for the Board, Steering Committee, Sub-committees and the ICRAN Coordinating Unit. This component also describes the terms of the ICRAN Coral Reef Fund, and its structure and operation.

4. Financial Support and Projections

This final component is intended to provide financial information. This section includes how ICRAN is currently supported, where additional support is needed to strengthen short-falls in current ICRAN operations, and where future support is needed in further expanding ICRAN's impact. It is anticipated that this section, in concert with the Operations section, will be routinely modified to accurately reflect the progress of the ICRAN program. Parts of this section are also intended to be used in conjunction with the ICRAN Case for Support, so that prospective donors have a clear understanding of how sponsorship of ICRAN can lead to positive outcomes.

Regarding any discussion of budget, there has been repeated dissatisfaction expressed with placing various levels of funding (for example, "Optimum" or "Minimum" scenarios, or "High, Medium and Low" pricing options) for ICRAN. This may at one time have had a place in attempting to sort out priorities when ICRAN was struggling with the uncertainties of initial funding limits that were not clear from UNF prior to their Board's approval. However, from this point forward, the Partnership will need to be clear to prospective supporters about the money needed to meet ICRAN's objectives, and some indication of costs to prospective co-financiers will be routinely requested. The more accurate these figures are, the more credibility ICRAN will have when pursuing such discussions.

As an ICRAN partner, you are encouraged to critically review this reorganization of Strategic Plan text, and improve the information with your comments. In particular, the section identifying the demonstration sites and target communities and their reasons for existence (i.e. improving the content of the tables) would be particularly helpful. But there are myriad locations where the content can be added to and improved. The people best suited to do this are those of you with hands-on experience on-the-ground, rather than those of us who spend a majority of our current time behind desks and computer screens.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andy Hooten