

FY22-23 Domestic Capacity-Building Partnership Cooperative Agreement Priority List by Jurisdiction

American Samoa

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the American Samoa Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG), within the Dept. of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) :

- 1. Increase management capacity of the CRAG multi-agency coral reef conservation collaboration.** Provide expert facilitation for annual implementation planning for CRAG and its members through in-person workshops and the development of relevant materials.
- 2. Improve territorial management of land-based sources of pollution.** Conduct training workshops for relevant American Samoa Government staff and village leaders on structural stormwater control measures. This will include training on the design, installation, and maintenance of residential and nonresidential stormwater control measures. A demonstration project should be included. Specific stormwater control needs and project development should be guided by input from the AS Department of Public Works, AS Environmental Protection Agency, and the AS Department of Commerce.
- 3. Assessment and siting of green infrastructure shoreline protection opportunities.** Projects should include close collaboration with relevant local agencies such as the DMWR, AS Department of Commerce, AS Environmental Protection Agency, AS Department of Public Works, and the AS Office of Disaster and Petroleum Management.

CRAG agencies have a guiding document they use to effectively manage the territory's coral reef ecosystems and may be referenced:

[American Samoa Healthy Reef Local Action Strategy for 2020-2015](#)

Please refer questions regarding these priorities to the NOAA CRCP Grant Coordinator, Craig Reid <craig.a.reid@noaa.gov>.

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Coral Reef Initiative (CRI):

- 1. Conservation Law Enforcement Assessment and Training.** Clarify the administrative and criminal pathways of enforcement and identify where appropriate law training is needed. An assessment of agency powers, roles, and responsibilities, along with a review of all enforceable policies is required, with recommendations for relevant training to build capacity and navigate through program jurisdictional boundaries.
- 2. Develop/Expand on Citizen Science Opportunities/Programs.** Assess current and past CNMI citizen science programs (such as [Tasi Watch](#), [International Coastal Cleanup](#), [Plastic Free Marianas](#), Watershed Warriors, and [Eyes of the Reef Marianas](#)) and provide recommendations on a standard implementation/operating plan based on various factors contributing to both successes and failures observed.
- 3. Establish a System of Collaboration and Information Sharing Among the CRI Agencies to Respond to Military Defense Readiness.** Assist in the development of a standard review and response protocol for the CRI agencies on military-related activities in the CNMI. The Department of Defense continues to build up its military presence in the Pacific and CRI agencies are engaged to provide comments to various separate Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) (such as the [Commonwealth Joint Military Training](#) and the [Mariana Islands Training and Testing](#)) as proposed activities often occur within, around, or have the potential to negatively affect coastal resources, including coral reefs.
- 4. Support the Development of a Saipan Western Lagoon Coral Reef Fisheries Ecosystem Management Plan.** This plan will provide trends and current conditions of lagoon habitat, substrate, vegetation, coral health, fisheries recruitment, and other ecological data and list strategic actions to improve fisheries and habitat management.
- 5. Technical Assistance to Support the Continued Development of the CNMI's Coral Restoration Program.** Additional technical capacity and training to support the newly formed coral restoration program, including guidance on lessons learned from similar areas and technical expertise on genetics.
- 6. Technical Guidance to Support Implementation of Updated CNMI Water Quality Standards.** Technical guidance to support the Division of Environmental Quality's Water Quality Surveillance/Nonpoint Source Pollution Branch in implementing updated [CNMI Water Quality Standards](#) (anticipated to be adopted on October 12, 2021) by updating the [CNMI Water Quality](#)

[Standards Implementation Guidance Manual](#) and coordinating staff training that includes education/engagement techniques with contractors/applicants.

Supporting Documents:

[2019-2029 CNMI Coral Reef Management Priorities](#)

[Micronesia Challenge Evaluation, 2020](#) (CNMI Chapter begins on pg. 190)

[CNMI CRI Communications Plan](#)

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State of Florida

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) - Coral Reef Conservation Program:

1. **Provide coordination of the Florida Reef Resilience Program.** This includes support for the disturbance response monitoring program; as well as implementation, communications and outreach for the newly developed [Resilience Action Plan for Florida's Coral Reef 2021-2026](#).
2. **Support Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative and Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area (ECA) management efforts and management plan development** including stakeholder and public engagement.
3. **Assist in developing a coral reef restoration and sustainable financing plan for the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area (ECA)** including stakeholder engagement.
4. **Build technical capacity for propagation and husbandry of coral species affected by stony coral tissue loss disease**, such as:
 - a. Development of standards for coral propagation and husbandry in Florida
 - b. The creation of a practitioner training and learning exchange program
 - c. Training to develop experienced aquarists who can propagate corals
5. **Provide technical assistance on water quality efforts in the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area (ECA) and the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves (BBAP)** including analysis and reporting on existing water quality data as well as coordination with ongoing watershed management planning efforts.

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Guam

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans, and the Department of Agriculture:

- 1. Work with tourism partners to implement sustainable marine tourism training; develop and implement policy strategy to include it as overall tour operator licensure requirements.** A Coral Fellow developed a reef-safe [tourism strategy](#), and the Guam Visitors Bureau has begun to implement relevant tour operator training. However, the training is not yet part of the Tour Guide Accreditation Course. A project would continue relationships with existing operators and make progress in institutionalizing the reef-safe modules as a licensing condition.
- 2. Implement training targeting construction contractors about erosion and sediment control.** Training may feature contractors who model best management practices and site visits. A final report may offer recommendations for sustainable financing of the course, strategies to increase participation, and cost effective ways to increase participation. CRCP last funded implementation of a course in 2017 with satisfactory attendance. However, given an on-going increase in construction activities, it is timely to revisit the course as a regularly occurring offering.
- 3. Conduct a strategic education and outreach campaign to gain support for stronger sediment control regulations.** There has recently been a high profile case of environmental degradation resulting from non-implementation of erosion control plans.
- 4. Develop and implement training targeting contractors to identify Guam's endangered species.** The Department of Agriculture currently reviews land use and construction permits. Contractors submit inadequate biological assessments, which causes delays. Training specifically for contractors can expedite the review process. Ideally, training would include field-based ID sessions.
- 5. Support pilot demonstration efforts in aquaculture and aquaponics.** In 2019, the Governor re-established an Aquaculture Task force ([Executive Order 2019-12](#)). The Task Force is prioritizing on-going technical assistance for backyard aquaculture and aquaponics operations.
- 6. Community focused programs and other outreach initiatives that promote engagement in conservation monitoring, citizen science, climate change adaptation, fisheries, and/or coral reef restoration.**

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State of Hawaii

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the State of Hawaii's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR):

1. **Sustainable Financing.** Currently, DAR and partners are developing an implementation plan for the Ocean Stewardship funds. The next priority steps should research, identify, and provide recommendations for additional sustainable financing mechanisms such as a coral reef mitigation bank, donations, and fees associated with a coral restoration eco-tourism opportunities.
2. **Conduct an evaluation of DAR's permitting and environmental protection processes; Develop workflows of Environmental reviews of projects, EIS, and EA's that may impact aquatic resources; provide staff training on the various State and Federal Environmental Protection Laws.** Currently DAR's special activity permitting process is slow and arduous. In addition, environmental reviews of projects, EIS, and EA's that may impact aquatic resources could be improved. Assessment should identify all relevant State and Federal Environmental Protection Laws, and evaluate DAR's current process and workflows for processing evaluations and permits. The evaluation should include recommendations to improve efficiency, accountability, and improve project reviews to ensure Hawaii's reefs are protected from impacts. Results from this project should provide DAR with direction to best to allocate resources designated for permitting, and environmental reviews.
3. **Provide support for DAR to make use of photomosaic tools in benthic habitat analysis.** Photomosaic processing is an advanced toolset that can greatly increase DAR's ability to track changes in benthic condition. Photomosaics have been used for a range of tasks within reef systems including benthic habitat mapping, analysis of seafloor topography, and assessment of fine scale changes in reef environments. DAR requests assistance to build its capacity to utilize this tool by providing the required field equipment, computers, software, and initial analysis, as well as staff training needed, during the award period for DAR to be able to independently use photomosaic tools and analysis in the future.

Assess, Train, and Recommend: Activities considered in the next two evaluation priorities described in #4 and #5 include identifying all data sets that are being collected and what it is being used for, identifying management questions relevant to the current data set, identify the data stream needed to answer identified questions, identifying the appropriate data needed to address spatially relevant questions, power analyses to determine the amount of data required to answer identified questions, and identify opportunities to increase and improve data collection to address management priorities. Collaboration should occur with DAR to accomplish these activities. Results from these projects should

provide DAR with direction as to how best to allocate resources in addition to training to modernize this effort.

4. **Evaluation of DAR's non-commercial fishery dependent data collection efforts and make recommendations to improve fishery dependent data for non-commercial fisheries in Hawaii.**
There are multiple efforts within DAR to collect non-commercial fishery dependent data for various reasons with various methods. DAR requests an external review of its non-commercial fishery dependent data collection methods and use for the purpose of developing an efficient and effective framework that will provide information required for management decisions.
5. **Evaluation of DAR's coral reef monitoring efforts and make recommendations to improve coral reef data in Hawaii.** DAR conducts coral reef monitoring throughout the state. However, due to the various questions being considered there are a variety of methods being applied. DAR would appreciate an external review of its coral reef monitoring efforts for the purpose of developing an efficient and effective framework that will provide information required for management decisions.

Links to relevant strategic plans:

[Hawaii's Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#)

[Holomua: Marine 30x30](#)

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Puerto Rico

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the Puerto Rico Department of Environmental Resources:

- 1. Enhance and strengthen capacity for the DNER Ranger Corps.** Provide training and workshops regarding coral reefs, including support for emergencies to coral reef ecosystems. Education on Coral disease, coral threats, etc.
- 2. Work closely with local partners to implement and update marine protected areas and watershed management and action plans.**
- 3. Support for the development of a coral reef conservation sustainable finance plan including specific financing strategies for coral reef conservation in Puerto Rico.** Build capacity to take advantage of innovative potential funding sources, including tourism user fees, tourism and entry/exit fees, mooring user fees, as well as mechanisms for generating funding to encourage conservation activities, including cost and benefit sharing, using social media and “text to donate” services, investment and enterprise funds, and fiscal instruments and arrangements for private or community management of natural and marine reserves, protected areas and facilities.
- 4. Support development of valuation studies, including revision and update of current studies.** Revise available inventory and conduct or update, as appropriate, studies that document the market and nonmarket value of healthy coral reefs. Values can include the revenue generating dimensions of enhanced reef tourism and revitalized recreational fisheries, as well as important non-market, ecosystem services of healthy reefs.

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US Virgin Islands

Please address one or more of the following priorities identified by the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR):

1. **Increase existing capacity within the Division of Environmental Enforcement (DEE) through natural resource training and/or development of tools and training materials for DEE officers.**
This priority has been highlighted multiple times as a critical need for more effective enforcement of local environmental regulations. Tools and training (learning exchanges, fish and coral identification and biology, GIS, conflict management, communication skills) would help DEE officers be better prepared to identify, respond to and process environmental infractions.
2. **Leverage DPNR's existing community engagement activities to expand research and development of innovative habitat restoration techniques for coral reefs and/or mangroves.**
Scaling up and diversifying coral and mangrove restoration is a need both globally and locally. The USVI DPNR is interested in collaborating to be a testing ground for new restoration techniques that can increase the abundance, resilience and diversity of these habitats.
3. **Increase coordination capacity to respond to and prevent coral disease impacts to coral reefs.**
Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) is present throughout the territory. In-water Strike Teams have been set up in order to actively respond to the outbreak with the latest treatment methods. However, current Strike Team efforts are lacking dedicated field team coordination and any projects or initiatives that would provide this added capacity are desperately needed.
4. **Update St. Croix East End Marine Park Management Plan.** [The East End Marine Park Management Plan](#) was first written in 2002 and last updated in 2016 with a timeframe of 2016-2021. Since 2016, biotic and physical changes in St. Croix's marine environment have created changes and new stressors to the MPA. Additional capacity is needed to facilitate stakeholder outreach, synthesize new scientific information, update management priorities, and prepare a new Management Plan for eventual adoption by the USVI Government.
5. **Develop and conduct CZM and Building Permits BMP training program.** Building on the creation of a common set of up to date and agreed-upon standards, create an Erosion and Sediment Control Training and Promotion Program for Engineers, Contractors, Heavy Equipment Operators, Developers, Architects, and DPNR permit inspectors and reviewers. The training would include proper techniques for site planning and the application of best management practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion and improve sediment control.
6. **Coral reef impacts training for decision makers.** Develop and implement an environmental training overview which would be tailored for decision makers with little to no experience with natural resource management. Products could include habitat overview, benefits analyses, and

connection models. This would be similar to a school curriculum but developed for adults in positions of decision making.

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FY22-23 Domestic Capacity-Building Partnership Cooperative Agreement National Priorities

National

Please address at least one of the following priorities identified by the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program:

- 1. Online and/or in-person training and skill development opportunities to benefit local government staff of the coral reef management agencies as well as the public, if appropriate.**
- 2. Development of tools that address the needs of the general coral reef community that will be made publicly available at no charge.**

These priorities are purposefully general but any project proposed is expected to be applicable across all domestic jurisdictions and should very clearly demonstrate the need and the applicant's history of providing similar services in the format indicated.

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