



7 International Coral Reef Conservation Grants

Introduction

The CRCP International Coral Reef Conservation Grants Program is one of the primary instruments NOAA uses to support global, site-based coral reef conservation. The program supports the development of coral reef conservation and management strategies and their application in the field, often in conjunction with broader initiatives supported by partner agencies. In addition to promoting site-based conservation efforts, the program has advanced the development of tools for addressing threats to coral reefs around the world, including in the U.S. Since its inception, this grants program has supported an evolving set of funding priorities, including:

- Expanding community-based projects for biophysical monitoring and public awareness promotion (2002 only).
- Promoting use of socioeconomic assessments in coastal management, conducting capacity building in socioeconomic assessments, and promoting implementation of new regional guidelines to help managers better understand the communities whose activities affect marine protected areas (MPA) and who are affected by MPA management decisions (2002-06).
- Demonstrating best management practices to reduce and control runoff to nearshore coral reef ecosystems in the Caribbean (2003-06).
- Implementing management effectiveness programs to enhance adaptive management of MPAs, conducting capacity building using a management effectiveness methodology, and contributing to the development and implementation of new guidelines for MPA practitioners (2002-06).
- Supporting regional approaches to promote marine reserves in the Caribbean and Southeast Asia (2003-05).
- Promoting development of MPA Networks (2006).

Project Funding by Region, 2002-2006

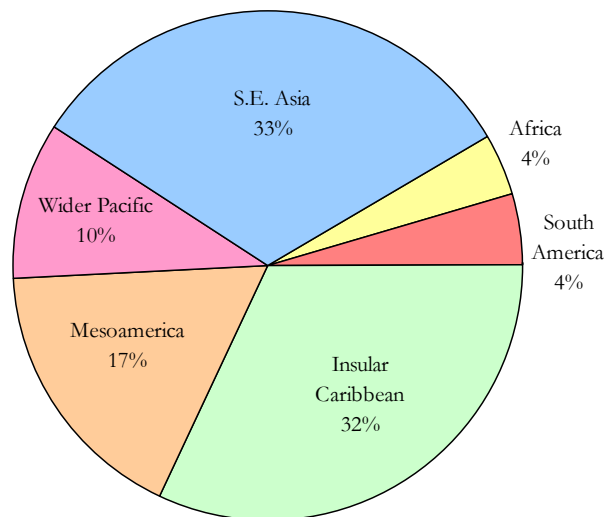


Exhibit IV-7-1. Funding by Region.





Since 2002, the CRCP has invested \$2.1M and leveraged an additional \$2.2M in non-Federal matching funds; supporting 56 coral projects in over two dozen countries (Exhibit IV-7-1). To date, grant recipients have been comprised mostly of local community-based, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), followed by larger NGOs, science institutions, and academia. Only two recipients, the World Wildlife Fund and World Conservation Society, have received more than two grants.

a. Eligibility

Eligible applicants include all international, governmental (except U.S. Federal agencies), and non-governmental organizations. Proposed work must be conducted at non-U.S. sites and some grant categories are limited to specific regions. For instance, grants for watershed management initiatives are restricted to the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, and Bermuda. Many other restrictions are specified by each funding category. For example, some grants require participation from one or more verifiable MPAs, i.e., sites that are identifiable by name and exact location with a management program in place, including a management plan and on-site staff.

b. Activities

Most awards have been granted in the program’s priority regions: Southeast Asia, the Insular Caribbean, and the Pacific (Exhibit IV-7-1). Other geographic areas represented by the program include the Western Indian Ocean, Bermuda, and Brazil. MPA management effectiveness received the greatest number of awards per category and the greatest amount of awarded dollars (Exhibit IV-7-2). Overall match for all years was at least 1:1. The countries that received multiple awards, as well as the most funding were Belize (9 projects, \$233K), Indonesia (10 projects, \$285K), and Philippines (9 projects, \$263K). Belize was the only country where most grant themes were represented.

Project Funding by Activity, 2002-2006

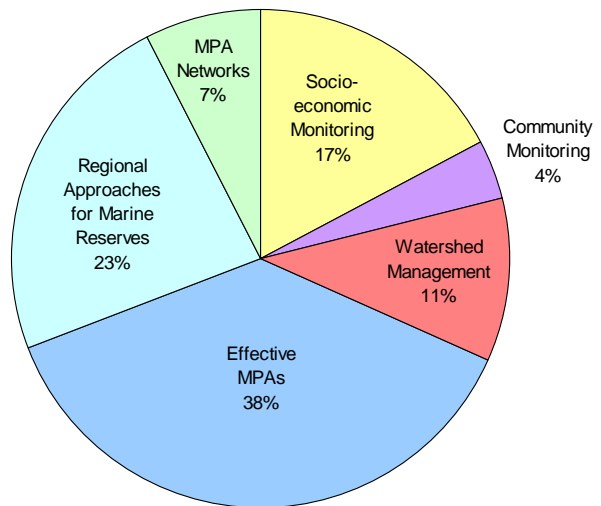


Exhibit IV-7-2. Funding by Activity.

c. Outputs

The CRCP International Coral Grants Program has yielded 32 products (not including 2004 and 2005 projects, which have approved extensions, and 2006 projects, which have not yet concluded). Products are summarized below for each grant category:





- **Regional Approaches to Promote Marine Reserves** category includes: reports on techniques for designing remote MPAs, comparison of monitoring methods, and characterization of species movement. Other products include a DVD on species movement, an audio radio jingle and public service announcement on fish conservation awareness, maps, T-shirts, and posters.
- **Socioeconomics** category includes: reports from Colombia, Indonesia, Jamaica, and Thailand, and an article describing the establishment of socioeconomic programs in Lapu Lapu City, Philippines and Glover's Reef Atoll, Belize. All reports included descriptions on how monitoring results would be incorporated into adaptive management.
- **Biophysical Monitoring** category was represented only in 2002 and yielded spreadsheets of raw biophysical Reef Check monitoring data for Indonesia and East Africa. A third project produced a report on the development of a national coral reef monitoring network for the Solomon Islands.
- **Management Effectiveness** category includes: 11 evaluation reports on governance, biophysical and socioeconomic indicators for MPAs in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Western Caribbean. Developed, promoted, and implemented the management effectiveness guidebook "How is Your MPA Doing?"
- **Watershed Management** category includes: the following reports: *Soufriere Marine Management Area Manual of Methods for Environmental Monitoring and Assessment of the Infrastructure for Improved Wastewater Management in Soufriere*. A public awareness DVD was also produced on best management practices for disposing solid waste.

d. Outcomes

International coral grant projects have made significant impacts at the local level. All projects require local stakeholder participation and must yield information that will inform local management decisions. Outcome highlights include:

- Achieved the redesign of the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau database to make it a more dynamic and updated monitoring tool.
- Increased enforcement personnel and surveillance activities in the Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve, Belize. Community involvement was the key in this achievement.
- Worked with the natural resource authority, the General Kuna Congress, to designate five MPAs in this Central Caribbean marine eco-region. The areas were chosen based on their high conservation value and the interest and willingness of their indigenous inhabitants to establish protected areas. Other Kuna villages are now interested in establishing their own MPAs.
- Created a draft management plan template for the Bahamian Marine Reserve Network.
- Documented the only black grouper spawning aggregation in Belize to have been filmed and reported in detail. The documentation is currently being considered in management planning.





- Supported the development of socioeconomic monitoring guidelines and manuals for Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. These actions catalyzed worldwide establishment of the SocMon methodology. SocMon approaches and methods were formally adopted by the local government unit, Lapu Lapu City, Philippines, as well as by public and private project partners.
- Implemented a socioeconomic project to monitor stakeholder perceptions to improve MPA management effectiveness in Indonesia. Results demonstrated a lack of awareness of mangrove ecosystem benefits.
- Increased capacity of protected area managers to evaluate and improve management effectiveness by promoting (trainings) and implemented the management effectiveness guidebook “How is Your MPA Doing?”
- Preliminary data analysis demonstrated that marine reserves involved in the Ngunu-Pele MPA do in fact improve abundance and biomass of target marine organisms within the boundaries of the no-take zones.

f. Challenges

- International coral grants present unique challenges which often cause delays, including complex approval processes at the project site, frequent changes in project personnel, severe weather conditions, and delays in obtaining NOAA funds. This has resulted in a high number of no cost extension requests, with some projects extending from 18 months to 24 or even 30 months.
- Unless grantees have U.S. bank accounts, they cannot enroll in the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), which allows for the easy withdrawal of funds. Grantees with non-U.S. accounts must request advance payments, requiring participation and approval from the Grants Management Division, NOAA Finance Department and U.S. Treasury Department. This process often takes up to three months and involves a significant degree of the Federal program officer’s time to resolve delays. These delays are not an issue for domestic grants.
- Non-U.S applicants and grantees are often not versed in the U.S. Federal grant process or grant websites, and require significant Federal program officer assistance to complete financial forms and report financial progress.
- The program office also invests substantial time assisting international grantees with their NOAA Grants Online (GOL) account (NOAA’s electronic grant system). The GOL Help Desk cannot make or receive international phone calls and time differences make communication difficult. Program staff must often assist grantees on GOL issues or coordinate 3-way phone calls with the grantee and the GOL Help Desk.
- International projects pose a significant challenge in the search for reviewers who are well-versed on both the grant theme and the international geographic area where the theme will be implemented.

