



Background

The **U.S. All Islands Coral Reef Committee (AIC)**, in partnership with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF), initiated the development of Local Action Strategies (LAS) in 2002. The purpose of the Local Action Strategies is to increase resource coordination and effectiveness of local coral reef conservation efforts in the seven U.S. coral jurisdictions of **American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands**. The Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau are affiliate members of the AIC.

The LAS initiative was designed to link the goals and objectives of the USCRTF National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs (2000) to the specific coral reef priority needs and actions of the seven jurisdictions. The Committee works collaboratively in partnership with key federal partners, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Departments of Interior, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, and State, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The LAS are coral reef conservation roadmaps that are locally driven, collaborative and cooperative efforts among federal, state, territory, and non-governmental partners. The LAS identify and implement priority projects that reduce key threats to valuable coral reef ecosystems in each jurisdiction. The jurisdictions have identified hundreds of projects to address priority threats to coral reef ecosystems. The priority threats to coral reef ecosystems include: *land based sources of pollution; overfishing; lack of public awareness; recreational overuse and misuse; climate change, coral bleaching and disease; population pressure; aquatic invasive species; and coastal construction impacts*. NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP), which provides funding for LAS projects, is focusing on impacts of land based sources of pollution, fisheries and climate change.

Through the LAS process, the accomplishments and most significant progress in each jurisdiction has been improving our understanding of coral reef processes and ecosystems; improving coral reef management; developing new or expanded partnerships among governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions; and increasing outreach and public awareness of coral reef issues. Each jurisdiction's coral reef conservation efforts to address specific priority threats to coral reef are highlighted in this folder.