

The Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 authorizes cooperative conservation and management of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems with local, regional or international programs and partners. The *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs* (National Action Plan) calls on the United States to, “exercise global leadership in the international arena in shaping and developing environmentally sound and comprehensive coral reef policy, strengthen international conventions and foster strategic partnerships with other countries, international organizations and institutions, the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations to address international threats to coral reef ecosystems.”

In FY 2003, the International program consists of the following four project categories:

1. *Promote Watershed Management in Wider Caribbean Island Nations:* The National Action Plan encourages the U.S. to “provide assistance in managing and conserving reef ecosystems and their watersheds.” Further, the U.S. and its partners are launching the White Water to Blue Water Initiative presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This Partnership emphasizes a cross-sectoral approach to marine resources management beginning with the upstream watershed and extending to the adjacent marine environment, including coral ecosystems. It is intended to help implement international agreements and programs, for example, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention) and its three protocols (including The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities), and the International Coral Reef Initiative. Therefore, IPO will fund activities that implement best management practices that reduce or control runoff to near shore coral reef ecosystems in the Wider Caribbean; assess effectiveness of these management practices; engage stakeholders and government agencies in collaborative partnerships to implement these practices; and recommend a set of best management practices that can be applied to small island Caribbean systems.

2. *Enhance Management Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):* The National Action Plan calls for strengthening the protection of resources within existing MPAs. NOAA

has launched a strategic partnership with the World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International to improve the management of MPAs by providing managers, planners and other decision makers with methods for assessing the effectiveness of MPA sites. Therefore, IPO will fund activities at coral MPA sites that are building an adaptive management and evaluation program and will conduct an assessment of management effectiveness in order to strengthen and achieve the site goals and objectives.

3. *Encourage Regional Approaches to Further No-Take Marine Reserves in the Wider Caribbean and Southeast Asia:* The National Action Plan highlights the role that highly protected areas play in creating a network of coral marine protected areas for biodiversity, conservation and sustainable fisheries management. Through this program, IPO will fund regional level activities that benefit existing marine reserves in the Wider Caribbean and Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia shall be defined by Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Furthermore, proposed regional level activities must involve sites in two or more countries and address the needs of no-take marine reserves in the regions as identified in the WCPA - Marine Caribbean Regional Coordination Plan and the WCPA - Marine Southeast Asia Regional Action Plan. The plans with the priority themes can be found at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>.

4. *Promote Socio-Economic Monitoring in Coral Reef Management:* The National Action Plan highlights that the human dimension is often overlooked in developing coral reef management strategies and calls for measures to enhance understanding of stakeholder benefits and resolve important user conflicts. Recognizing the importance of the human dimension, the GCRMN published *The Socioeconomic Manual for Coral Reef Management*, in partnership with NOAA, WCPA, and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), a guide to conducting socioeconomic assessments of reef user groups.

As follow-up, the GCRMN, WCPA-Marine and NOAA are working with ICLARM, the University of West Indies and other partners in the regions to develop socioeconomic monitoring programs specific to Southeast Asia and the Wider Caribbean. These regional programs include three key phases: (1) development of SocMon, i.e., standardized, simple socioeconomic

monitoring guidelines for each region; (2) socioeconomic training workshops for reef managers to learn how to conduct SocMon, specifically how to establish socioeconomic monitoring programs at their sites; and, (3) establishment of socioeconomic monitoring programs at participants’ coral reef management programs.

Under this project category, IPO will fund phase three - the establishment of socioeconomic monitoring programs at coral reef sites in Southeast Asia and the Wider Caribbean. Proposals for such work in the Wider Caribbean must utilize the SocMon-Wider Caribbean Guidelines; and similarly, proposals for work in Southeast Asia must utilize the SocMon-Southeast Asia Guidelines. For the purpose of this project category, Southeast Asia shall be defined as Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Both sets of Guidelines can be found at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>.

#### B. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants include all international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, including the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Eligibility is also contingent upon whether activities undertaken with respect to the application would be consistent with any applicable conditions or restrictions imposed by the U.S. governments. Specific guidance for each International program project category is noted below:

1. Projects proposed under “Promote Watershed Management in Wider Caribbean Island Nations” must include:

- a. Activities that support the implementation of the annexes of The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land Based Sources and Activities to the Cartagena Convention (for details, refer to <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>);

- b. A letter of support from the government agency responsible for planning and development;

- c. A project site which includes near shore fringing reef system (with description of project site uniqueness) that is impacted by agricultural runoff or intensive land-based development associated with tourism sector activities;

- d. Evidence of local stakeholder support, for example, agricultural businesses, NGOs, tourism sector, and port facilities;

- e. Demonstration of local or national potential for developing enforceable policies and mechanisms for long term watershed management; and,