



## Recent developments and announcements

### A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas

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The first major phase of the IUCN's program to establish a global representative of marine protected areas was completed with the publication by IUCN of *Guidelines for Establishing Marine Protected Areas* and, in association with the World Bank and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, of the four volume report *A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas*.<sup>1</sup> This latter report lists existing marine protected areas (MPAs) in each of the major biogeographic regions into which the world's coastal seas have been divided and identifies priorities, on both regional and national bases, for establishing new MPAs or for improving management in those which exist but are poorly managed or not managed at all. In addition, general recommendations are made relating to the protection and sustainable use of marine biological diversity and productivity, with particular emphasis on the need for management regimes which provide for integrated management of ecosystems, either by incorporating complete ecosystems in MPAs or by using MPAs as a component of a wider integrated system of planning and management, such as integrated coastal management.

The next (second) phase will consist of two distinct, parallel courses of action;

- (1) implementing the recommendations in the Report; and
- (2) applying systematic methods and programs to establish truly representative regional and national systems of MPAs over the longer term.

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This phase will bring together the expertise and commitment of IUCN, the World Bank, the GEF and, as circumstances permit, the partners in the GEF-UNEP and UNDP. Also, the expertise of members of IUCN, such as GBRMPA, and of IUCN's six Commissions will be deliberately involved, as appropriate. The program will explicitly aim to involve local communities and non-government organisations, as has occurred in the preparation of the Report on which it builds.

## 1. IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REPORT

The elements which will make up this next part of the MPA program will include:

- plan the process to assist the development by countries/regions of proposals to implement the Report priorities';
- the Marine Management Working Groups develop country-specific or region-specific field project proposals, for submission to the GEF or to some other funding/investment institution; and
- on the receipt of resources, regional or country working groups would cooperate with the relevant government(s) to develop individual MPAs in the field, including all the ingredients necessary for successful MPA management listed below.

I hope that the Marine Management Network will be able to develop at least two field project proposals per year. However, this too will depend on us receiving financial support, which is being sought. These field projects will be for the establishment of fully functioning marine protected areas and will cover planning, information exchange, management, training, education, research and monitoring.

Advantage will be taken of other existing or proposed programs and processes to improve co-ordination, reduce costs and increase benefits. It will be necessary continuously to evaluate priorities, define human and financial resource needs and establish time and cost programs.

## 2. FURTHER SYSTEMATIC DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEMS OF MPAs

This will be the main function of regional and national working groups in the longer term. Each national working group will be suited to assist and encourage government agencies to develop, adopt and apply national

action plans aimed at achieving national representative systems of MPAs and to work with neighbouring countries in developing regionally representative systems. The regional working group will provide a focus for this sort of cooperative action.

Two essential elements in this phase will be:

### **2.1. Refining the data in the Report's database and making them available on Internet†**

The data presented in the Report were obtained from various sources, with varying degrees of accuracy and completeness. In Phase 2 of this program there should be a specific objective to update the data and to correct errors.

### **2.2. Further developing biogeographic classification systems at various scales**

There is no universally accepted global biogeographic classification system for the marine realm. For this reason and in order to take advantage of the work that has been done historically at country and regional scales, the Report deliberately was based on the classification system that had been used previously in each region or was deemed the most suitable for the particular region.

It will be desirable in the future to work towards the development and acceptance of a single global classification system, so that the degree to which biogeographic zones have been represented in MPAs can be determined globally and so that inter-regional assessments of priorities for creating MPAs can be made.

Further, regional classifications should preferably be compatible with the global system and national classification should be developed as subsets of regional systems in order to achieve the IUCN goal of national representative systems of MPAs.

## **3. ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS**

Eighteen working groups produced the report. A nineteenth has now been established to deal with non-coastal MPAs. These 19 working groups need to continue, but their membership might have to change to reflect the change in function from investigation to implementation. Functions which can be summarised as regional coordination and which they can perform include:

† The full Report is accessible now on the WWW at (<http://www.erin.gov.au/sea/sea.html>)

- the development of regional MPA action plans and methodologies;
- cooperation in matters affecting more than one country.

Creation of new MPAs and improvement in management will occur largely on a national basis. Therefore, there will be the need to establish national working groups in countries where they do not already exist, in addition to the regional working groups. Their function in the short term will be to develop and apply strategies and action plans to implement the recommendations in the Report.

The essential relation between the national and the regional working groups should be established by ensuring that at least the leader of each national working group is a member of the regional working group. It will also be desirable for each regional working group to liaise with the appropriate IUCN regional office, where one exists, and with the WCPA regional vice-chair. Advantage should be taken of existing arrangements to improve coordination and save costs.

It is envisioned that overall global coordination of the next phase of the program will occur by communication between the Vice-chair (Marine) of WCPA and regional working group leaders. The regional working groups will act as conduits to the national working groups for communication and coordination in both directions.

## REFERENCES

1. Kelleher, G. G., Bleakley, C. J. & Wells, S., *A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas*. A Report published by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the World Bank and IUCN, Washington DC, 1995.