



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

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SESSION SEVEN: GLOBAL & REGIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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Reef Resilience Network

Global

1) **What is the focus of this project?**

The Reef Resilience Network builds the capacity of coral reef managers and practitioners globally to better manage and protect coral reefs.

Coral reef resilience is ultimately about coral reef health. Building resilience into coral reef conservation means helping managers and stakeholders strengthen the “immune system” of coral reef ecosystems to increase the likelihood that they will continue to thrive.

Coral reef resilience is supported by specific management strategies:

- Maintaining healthy coral reef communities is the first line of defense. Reducing stresses that may affect coral community condition (e.g. overfishing, pollution, agricultural and urban waste, silt, and sewage, etc.) gives them a greater chance of surviving bleaching stress or other major disturbance.
- Building resilience into the design of marine protected areas (MPAs) and management actions.
- Restoration of reefs and associated coral reef habitats such as watersheds, mangroves and seagrass beds.

2) **Which organizations and other partners are involved?**

The Network is led and supported by The Nature Conservancy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program, however the design and implementation of Network activities are done in collaboration with many regional capacity building organizations, including IUCN, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Gulf of Caribbean Fisheries Institute, Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association, and the Indian Ocean Commission.

The Network works with coral reef managers because they are on the front lines of coral reef management and conservation and interface with all key stakeholders: communities, private business and high level policy makers. Reef managers are most often under-resourced and over-tasked. When reef managers and practitioners around the globe have the knowledge, capacity, and support to implement effective management strategies this will result in healthy, resilient coral reefs that fulfill their ecosystem function in supporting communities and oceans.

3) **What activities or tools have proven successful in building capacity?**

To effectively build the capacity of coral reef managers, the Network:

- **Shares and synthesizes** the latest coral reef and coral reef fishery science and management strategies through an online Toolkit. The site includes more than 45 case studies and 115 summaries of cutting-edge resilience science articles.
- **Connects** coral reef managers and practitioners around the world both to each other and to experts, allowing them to share lessons-learned and resources/tools to manage reefs for resilience. This includes hosting interactive [webinars](#) on hot topics in coral reef management and the Reef Resilience [Network Forum](#), an online member-only discussion forum where managers can start or join conversations, learn from each other, interact with experts, and share resources. In 2015, more than 70,000 people used the Network website and online resources.
- **Trains** managers and practitioners on reef resilience principles and management techniques through the Reef Resilience [online course](#) (both mentored and self-paced versions), [Learning Exchanges](#), which emphasize knowledge sharing within and across regions, and [Resilience Trainings](#), which train managers to apply cutting-edge science to policy and management actions and provide seed funding for participants' on-the-ground projects. Through these training programs, managers become prepared to more effectively address local coral reef management needs and they join a global network where they continue to share management strategies and lessons-learned from their region. This training has engaged 1,600 participants through online courses available in English, Spanish and French, helping managers from 62 countries and territories to now serve as change agents, educating their own communities and instituting projects based on best management practices and resilience principles.

4) **What are the next steps for the project?**

The Reef Resilience Network recently passed its first 10-year milestone and over the years has evolved to keep pace with changes in the field and the evolving needs of reef managers. Moving forward, over the next four years the Network will:

- **Connect managers and experts through the Reef Resilience Network** to share resources and lessons learned that inform and improve management decisions and inspire greater collaborations.
- **Explore and develop new online and in-person capacity building strategies and partnerships** to reach, engage and provide long-term support managers.
- **Provide training new science and technical support for managers** to launch necessary monitoring, and threat abatement projects, including those that:
 - **Expand the Network's ability to support marine resource managers in the Western Indian Ocean and the Middle East** by responding to the needs of Network members in these regions and develop appropriate in-person trainings, webinars, and connections to experts. The Network will develop regionally specific hot topic webinars, and in-person trainings, and recruit additional members through regional partners.
 - **Develop a new module on climate adaptation** for coral reefs, with information on tools to assess climate vulnerability, climate adaptation strategies, and communicating about climate change and coral reefs; and
 - **Develop a new module content, and training on coral reef restoration.** Resource managers, governments, and communities are already implementing coral reef restoration projects, however, unfortunately, often without the proper information. Updated tools and trainings to provide guidance for effective coral reef restoration projects, including aspects of community engagement, are essential.

