

GOAL 13: **IMPROVE COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

KEY THREATS ADDRESSED:

Improving coordination and accountability will help ensure effective action to reduce key threats to coral reef ecosystems. The figure below is a general summary of the relative importance (H = high, M = medium, L = low) of this goal in addressing the impacts from these threats. A higher ranking suggests that activities under this goal are considered more important to addressing the threat. Lower rankings suggest that although activities under this goal may make significant contributions, they may currently be less important to addressing the threat. The rankings are a summary of input shown in Table 2. The actual importance of this goal to addressing threats to reefs will depend on location and other factors (see Tables 3 and 4 for regional comparisons).

	Global Warming/ Climate Change	Diseases	Hurricanes/ Typhoons	Extreme Biotic Events	Overfishing	Destructive Fishing Practices	Habitat Destruction	Invasive Species	Coastal Development	Coastal Pollution	Sedimentation & Runoff	Marine Debris	Overuse from Tourism	Vessel Groundings	Vessel Discharges
Improve Coordination and Accountability	H	M	L	L	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	M	L	H	H

RATIONALE FOR ACTION:

Given the broad and overlapping aspects of many coral reef conservation issues, coordination among government agencies is essential for implementing effective and efficient actions. Collaboration among government and non-governmental entities is also critical to addressing many threats to coral reefs. Setting goals and objectives, tracking progress to achieve these goals, and regularly assessing the status of current or new threats is a key part of effective stewardship of these valuable resources. In addition, Executive Order (E.O.) 13058 on Coral Reefs directs U.S. Government agencies to avoid actions and decisions that may harm coral reefs. Specifically, federal agencies are required “to the extent permitted by law, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund or carry out will not degrade the conditions of such ecosystems.”

Communication, collaboration and accountability are essential part of a successful strategy to implement the National Action Plan and achieve the purposes of the CRCA.

STRATEGY

The goal of this strategy is to increase coordination and accountability among federal, state and territorial partners of U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to ensure efficient and successful implementation of the National Action Plan and other coral reef conservation efforts. The strategy is outlined in the U.S. National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs and related documents of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. For more detailed information see <http://coralreef.gov/>. The strategy includes the following objectives to achieve the goal:

- Objective 1: Coordinate the submission of Coral Reef Protection Implementation Plans, annual reports and other documents by Task Force member agencies
- Objective 2: Coordinate planning and development of crosscutting initiatives, promote exchange of information on activities, needs and concerns, and facilitate resolution of issues related to coral reef conservation.
- Objective 3: Coordinate the annual submission of agency reports of programs, policies and actions.
- Objective 4: Coordinate the process for the public inquiry about, and agency response to issues or concerns relating to federal agency actions and coral reef protection.
- Objective 5: Work with the Council on Environmental Quality, federal agencies and other interested entities, to develop guidance and tools assessing alternatives and potential impacts of actions through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order 12114.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2001)

The following is a partial summary of recent accomplishments by members of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force to achieve the goal and objectives. For more detailed information see www.coralreef.gov.

Objective 1 Accomplishments:

- Revised reporting process concerning member implementation plans and other reports as outlined in the Task Force Oversight Policy (for Task Force review and possible adoption).

(Task Force)

- Drafted Task Force Charter outlining mission and objectives (for review and possible adoption by the Task Force). (Task Force)

Objective 2 Accomplishments:

- Developed multiple joint initiatives among government and non-governmental partners on coral reef conservation (see Summary of Accomplishments (2001) of other goal sections for more information). (multiple partners)
- Promoted information exchange and resolution of issues through two meetings of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. (Task Force)

Objective 3 Accomplishments:

- Drafted revised reporting process outlined in the Task Force Oversight Policy and other sources for Task Force review. (Task Force)
- Provided agency reports of programs, policies and actions at two Task Force meetings (and meeting summaries). (Task Force)

Objective 4 Accomplishments:

- Drafted revisions to the Task Force Oversight Policy to clarify and streamline process for public inquiry concerning federal actions (under Task Force review). (Task Force)
- Provided opportunity for public input at all Task Force meetings (two held in 2001). (Task Force)

Objective 5 Accomplishments:

- Developed agency guidance and other resources to help guide review and development of alternatives, documents associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Executive Order 12114 (NOAA, DOD). (NOAA and other agencies)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2002-2003

Successful implementation of the strategy is contingent on continued cooperation, collaboration and other factors. The following is a partial summary of key actions needed from government and non-governmental entities in 2002-2003 to help fulfill the goal and objectives. This information was developed in consultation with the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. For more detailed information see www.coralreef.gov.

To address Objective 1:

- Update and adopt revised process to better track and report accomplishments and progress to implement the Task Force National Action Plan (as outlined in the Task Force Oversight Policy and other sources, as appropriate).
- Adopt a Task Force Charter outlining mission and objectives of the Task Force.

To address Objective 2:

- Identify key areas for joint planning and develop specific action initiatives for 2002, 2003 and 2004.
- Increase information exchange among Task Force members and interested parties through Task Force meetings, workshops, upgraded Task Force Web site and other mechanisms as appropriate.

To address Objective 3:

- Update and adopt revised reporting process outlined in the Task Force Oversight Policy and other sources, as appropriate.

To address Objective 4:

- Update, as appropriate, the existing process outlined in the Task Force Oversight Policy.

To address Objective 5:

- Complete, review and adopt pilot “toolbox” and other guidance as appropriate for federal agency use in developing and reviewing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents related to coral reefs.