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French initiatives for coral reefs (IFRECOR and CRISP)

As a consequence of his worldwide presence, France has coral reefs in the 3 oceans, representing almost 10% of the total reefs surface. Considering their ecological importance and their potential economic role, France has been holding the ICRI secretariat in 1999 and 2000 and, in the same context, has launched initiatives for coral reefs, firstly IFRECOR in 1998 and more recently CRISP.

The IFRECOR (French initiative for Coral Reefs) is a national operation for the protection and the sustainable management of the coral reefs of the French overseas communities.

At the national level the objectives of IFRECOR are:

- The awareness by all stakeholders of the importance of social, cultural, ecological, economic issues regarding coral reefs;
- The protection and the sustainable management of coral reefs, within the framework of integrated coastal zone management of the overseas communities, with the involvement of populations;
- The establishment of a monitoring network of the French coral reefs, as an integral part of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network;
- The exchange of experience between the various overseas communities and the promotion and dissemination of the national knowledge at the international level.

To lead this initiative, France has created a national steering committee, placed under the Prime Minister authority, and local committees in each community of overseas, bringing together local actors of reefs' management as elected representatives, NGO, scientists, representatives of the private sector, government departments.

At the international level, the 3 local committees of the IFRECOR in the Pacific will take part, in particular through their expertise, in the Regional Initiative for the Protection and Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs in the South-Pacific, well known as CRISP.

This initiative, led by France and open to all contributions, seeks to put in place strategies and projects to preserve the biodiversity of the reefs and to spur the future development of the economic and environmental services that they offer both locally and globally.

The initiative is structured in three principal components:

- The first component will encourage the development of marine protected areas (MPA) and will also deal with watershed management to prevent pollution from land-based sources and activities.
- The second component will support knowledge on the coral ecosystems in order to better protect, develop and restore the biodiversity.
- Finally, the third component will ensure the coordination, leverage, communication and popularization of actions undertaken with the contribution of the SPREP.

This initiative is organized around multiple partnerships, including regional organizations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the University of South Pacific, international organizations like ICRAN, environmental NGOs, Australian and French research institutes, the SPREP, the local committees of the IFRECOR and private companies.

In its current configuration, the funding of the initiative adds up to 9 million Euros covering the next 3 years. It associates financing of the French Development Agency, the French GEF, the Ministry of Foreign

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Affairs, the French Pacific Fund, the United Nations Foundation, CI and WWF, and Pierre Fabre laboratories.

The initiative is now close to its effective start, which is scheduled at the beginning of 2005.

Finally, we hope that this initiative will serve as a vector for regional integration between the developed and the developing countries of the Pacific and we encourage similar partnerships in other coral reef regions considering the critical issues which face people and reefs, especially in SIDS.

Thank you for your attention.