



INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: Coastal Resilience Workshop (CRW)

1. Purpose: To provide stakeholders with the concept, background, description and objectives of the CRW.
2. Background: Coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, salt marsh and other coastal ecosystems are critical to biodiversity, addressing climate change, food security, economic well-being, and coastline stability for many countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Compared with the Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean has twice as many coral species, which also play an important role in the earth's carbon cycle as carbon dioxide is drawn out of the atmosphere as corals build their exoskeletons. The health of these habitats impacts not only national security but also regional security. Unsustainable fishing, land-based sources of pollution, and increasing ocean temperatures and acidification can significantly and negatively impact coastal ecosystems and local, national, and regional economies, increasing potential for hunger, poverty, instability, and conflict. From a military perspective, coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, and salt marsh ecosystem preservation are important because of the protection against storm surge and severe weather events for military installations and civilian communities.

The CRW is a direct result of discussions between the Strategic Environmental Research and Development (SERDP) and USINDOPACOM on the importance of addressing coastal resiliency challenges at the 2019 Indo-Pacific Environmental Security Forum (IPESF) held in Wellington, New Zealand.

USINDOPACOM believes security for all improves by sharing lessons-learned and encouraging governments and their militaries to plan, operate, and execute activities in an environmentally sustainable manner. Collaborative forums support regional cooperation and contribute to the development of resilient communities and practices. The CRW will engage military and civilian agencies on research and development topics concerning coastal ecosystem preservation, conservation, and restoration as well as our mutual environmental stewardship obligations. SERDP is interested in 1) identifying the most pressing coastal resilience and environmental security needs that are not currently being addressed and 2) developing concepts for research and development.

3. General Description:

WHO:

- USINDOPACOM will organize the CRW and work closely with Palau's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment (MAFE) and Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC).
- SERDP will help fund the CRW and support USINDOPACOM.
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in the Indo-Pacific Region, and Internationally will speak at the CRW and spark discussions around how to best address coral reef and seagrass degradation challenges.
- Participants will be SMEs in coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, salt marsh, and other coastal ecosystems and military partners.

WHAT:

- The CRW will be a three-day event with presentations from SME's, exercises and training, and possibly field activities.



WHEN:

- 12-14 September 2023

WHERE:

- Koror, Palau

4. CRW Objectives: The initial objectives and targeted outcomes of the CRW throughout the planning process are to:
 - a. Present and discuss the most pressing needs that are NOT already being addressed in the Indo-Pacific region in order to protect and restore important coastal ecosystems.
 - b. Gather relevant Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the Indo-Pacific Region and internationally to speak at the CRW and spark discussions around how to best address coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, and salt marsh degradation challenges, such as through research, training, and policy solutions.
 - c. Identify gaps in science for coral reef, seagrass, mangrove, salt marsh, and other coastal ecosystems in the Indo-Pacific Region.
 - d. Identify research needs and develop best practices and SOPs for addressing the security challenges faced by degrading coastal ecosystems, and develop potential concepts for collaborative research and development projects that SERDP and/or ESTCP could fund.
 - e. Improve partner capacity related to biodiversity, coral reef and other ecosystem health, economic impacts, and long-term sustainability on islands.
 - f. Improve collaboration among partners in coastal ecosystem conservation, preservation, and restoration.
5. Event Organization: Organizers from the host nation (MAFE and PICRC), USINDOPACOM, NOAA, and SERDP have formed a planning team. They will develop an agenda and invitation list collaboratively throughout the planning process.
6. Points of Contact:
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