



REGIONAL STRATEGIC WORKSHOP Building Resilience and Addressing Risk in the Mesoamerican Reef

PRESS RELEASE

On Tuesday November 23rd and Wednesday November 24th, 2021, the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD, for its initials in Spanish), within the framework of the Integrated Ridge-to-Reef Management of the Mesoamerican Reef Ecoregion Project (MAR2R/CCAD), and the Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund), through the Mesoamerican Reef Rescue Initiative (RRI) carried out the **Regional Strategic Workshop "Building Resilience and Addressing Risk in the Mesoamerican Reef"**.

The primary objective of the workshop was to strengthen the governance of the MAR region, through the coordination of actors from different sectors and their agendas to achieve sustainable results that contribute to the recovery and resilience of the Mesoamerican reef.

The workshop included the participation of representatives of national and regional authorities of the MAR, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations that collaborate with the conservation of the Mesoamerican Reef. Among the more than one hundred key actors who attended the event, were the Executive Secretary of the CCAD, Lic. Jair Urriola; the Executive Secretary of the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA), Licda. Ilka Aguilar; the Executive Director of the Central American Maritime Transport Commission (COCATRAM), Otto Noack Sierra; and the Executive Secretary of the Council of Ministers of Finance of Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic (COSEFIN). Lic Efrain Flores who gave a strategic presentation. In addition, participants included representatives from the environment ministries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, as well as important cooperating agencies such as KfW, the InsuResilience Fund (ISF), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Among the prominent speakers were Jorge Cabrera, Executive Director of the General Secretariat of the System of Economic Integration (SICA); Simon Young, from Willis Towers Watson; Itziar Ruiz, from Metroeconomica; Ana Giró, from Healthy Reefs Initiative (HRI); José Funes, an environmental lawyer who is an expert in public policy, and Juan Carlos Huitrón, an expert in post-storm response for reefs. All made thematic presentations to orient the coordination between actors and sectors. Some of the topics addressed were the results of the economic valuation of the MAR and the services it provides; financial instruments and public policies to strengthen resilience and attention to risk; governance and local participation in reef resilience and risk; and the different tools for the exchange of information, regional coordination and decision-making.

ABOUT THE MESOAMERICAN REEF SYSTEM -MAR-

The MAR is the largest coral reef system in the Atlantic Ocean that extends for more than 1,000 kilometers along the coast of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. The MBRS is home to extensive mangrove forests, seagrass meadows and coastal lagoons and supports a diversity of ecosystems that offer essential environmental services that contribute to the livelihoods of coastal communities and to the economic growth of the region. Yet despite its wealth and economic importance, the MBRS and the ecosystem services it provides are at risk from anthropogenic activities and extreme weather events.

ABOUT MAR2R PROJECT

The MAR2R Project is implemented by the CCAD, in coordination with the environmental ministries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), through World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as an implementing agency.

The goal of the project is to support the regional collaboration for the integrated ridge-to-reef management of the Mesoamerican Reef ecoregion by showcasing its benefits and improving regional, national, and local capacities for the integrated management and governance of fresh water, coastal, and marine resources.

Through this project, the CCAD seeks to foster the ridge-to-reef approach to strengthening policies, instruments, and landscape restoration actions, blue economy, and the harmonization of discharge standards, in order to obtain comprehensive benefits connected between land and coastal marine areas.

ABOUT MAR FUND REEF RESCUE INITIATIVE -RRI-

MAR Fund is a regional environmental fund, whose mission is to drive funding and partnerships regional for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of the Mesoamerican Reef.

The Reef Rescue Initiative is carried by MAR Fund as part of its Climate Change program. The objective of the Initiative is to increase the resilience and recovery capacity of the MAR region and the environmental and cultural services it provides, through financial sustainability, policy analysis and legislation that enables reef restoration and response, and capacity building to support science restoration.

The RRI is a project implemented by MAR Fund in collaboration with the CCAD, thanks to the generous support of the German Cooperation through KfW.

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