



THE BAHAMAS POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT

Caribbean Coral Reef Restoration & Tourism Policy Analysis



CARIBBEAN
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CONTENTS

<i>Acronyms.....</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Executive Summary.....</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Acknowledgement.....</i>	<i>xv</i>
1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	1
1.1 Report Objectives.....	1
1.2 The Bahamas in Context	1
1.3 Importance of & Threat to Coral Reefs in The Bahamas	2
1.4 Addressing Threats.....	3
1.5 Tourism as an Opportunity for Coral Reef Restoration	5
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Definitions & Concepts Clarification	7
2.2 Data Collection Approach	7
2.3 Analysis & Assessment Framework.....	8
3. POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION	9
3.1 National Policy Context.....	9
3.2 National Policy & Regulatory Agencies	10
3.3 Framework Governance	11
3.4 Agencies Involved in Coral Reef Restoration	11
4. REGULATIONS & OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.....	12
4.1 Permitting.....	12
4.1.1 Regulations & Permitting Prior to COVID-19	12
4.1.2 Regulations & Permitting Post COVID-19.....	12
5. ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS.....	14
5.1 Overall Assessment	14
5.2 Feedback from Tourism Businesses	16
5.3 Feedback from Public Agencies.....	18
5.4 Best Practice & Lessons Learnt.....	20
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	24
6.1 Conclusions.....	24
6.2 Recommendations	25
7. CLOSING STATEMENT.....	28

ANNEXES

1. Bahamas Protected Areas Register Database
2. Key Policy Framework Indicators: The Bahamas
3. Policy Gap Analysis Summary: The Bahamas
4. Summary Conclusions
5. Summary Recommendation
6. Guidelines for National Public Sector Agencies in The Bahamas
7. Strategy Guidelines for The Tourism Industry in The Bahamas
8. Guidelines for NGOs & Funding/Development Agencies

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Coral Reef Zones, The Bahamas	2
Figure 2: The Value of Key Ecosystem Services provided by The Bahamas MPA Network	3
Figure 3: Location of Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park.....	4
Figure 4: Strong Visitor Market for Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas	16
Figure 5: Barriers to Industry Participation in Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas	17
Figure 6: Reef Rescue Network Strategic Business Principles	20
Figure 7: Reef Rescue Network Bahamas - Core Starting Member.....	20
Figure 8: Five RRN Reef Rescue Dive Products Launched.....	21

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Research Permits & Fees for Coral Reef Restoration Activities, The Bahamas	13
Table 2: Priority Given to Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas	17

ACRONYMS

ABS:	Access and Benefit-Sharing	GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
AI:	Artificial Intelligence	IDB:	InterAmerican Development Bank
BAMSI:	The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute	MoAMR:	Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources
BMA:	The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA)	MoE:	Ministry of Environment
BMOTIA:	The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation	MPA:	Marine Protected Area
BNT:	Bahamas National Trust	MSME:	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
BPAF:	The Bahamas Protected Area Fund	MTLA:	Ministry of Transport and Local Affairs
BREEF:	The Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation	NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
CAST:	Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism	PA:	Protected Area
CCPF:	Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility	PIMS:	The Perry Institute for Marine Science
CEI:	The Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute	RCL:	Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines
CHTA:	Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association	RRN:	Reef Rescue Network, Bahamas
CITIES:	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	SAVE:	Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational
DEPP:	Department of Environmental Planning & Protection	SCTLD:	Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease
DMR:	Department of Marine Resources	TNC:	The Nature Conservancy
ECLSP:	The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park	UNFCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
		UoB:	The University of The Bahamas
		WB:	World Bank

THE BAHAMAS POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the overall project “to identify and understand regulatory obstacles and enabling conditions for coral reef restoration implementation with tourism sector participation to support future policy changes to increase coral reef restoration in the Caribbean”, this report looks specifically at The Bahamas. This report, therefore:



- (i) identifies the national policy, regulatory and operational framework (policy framework) in The Bahamas that guides and influences the implementation of coral reef restoration by the tourism industry; and
- (ii) identifies obstacles, gaps, opportunities and best practices lessons learnt for the participation of The Bahamas tourism industry in coral reef restoration.



2. CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The Policy Framework

The is broadly defined as including National Policies, Legislation, Regulations, Operational Requirements and related documented Policy Statements of the Government of The Bahamas that impact upon or guide coral reef restoration as well as the guiding Conventions, Agreements and Protocols to which the country is a signatory. The “Policy framework” also includes the agencies, and governance and institutional arrangements in place, that administer and implement the policies.

Tourism Industry Participation

This is defined as the direct involvement of tourism businesses (i.e., enterprises that cater to international and domestic visitors) in coral reef restoration as an economic and/or philanthropic activity to increase the conservation and sustainability of the marine environment, the diversification and offer of tourism experiences, the benefits derived to communities, and the added value provided for visitors, employees and their tourism businesses.

3. METHODOLOGY

The Bahamas analysis was heavily informed by desk research. This included online searches and website reviews of entities involved in coral reef restoration or that impact upon marine conservation and resource use in the country. Research studies, strategic plans and reports on, for example, the blue economy, national development, the value and status of the country’s coral reef ecosystems, coral reef restoration and marine conservation.

The analysis was further informed by representatives from targeted public, private, and NGO sector agencies and tourism businesses involved in coral reef restoration via one-on-one interviews and survey participation.

4. SETTING THE CONTEXT

This report first sets the context for the policy analysis with an outline of the important role played by coral reefs in The Bahamas and in supporting the country’s key economic activities and development goals.

Coral reef restoration is noted as a strategy that aligns with and fits into the framework of *The Bahamas National Development Plan: Vision 2040*. This plan sets economic diversification as a priority goal for resilient growth, including the sustainable development of new sectors, increased employment for young people in blue jobs and greater protection of coastal and maritime ecosystems.



The analysis, therefore, emphasizes the need to ensure that as many avenues as possible are made available for coral reef protection, restoration and sustainability. It points out that one such key avenue is tourism and the opportunity to effectively engage and enable the tourism industry to improve the protection and condition of coral reef ecosystems across the country.

5. REPORT OUTLINE

The full report is presented under the following sections:

1. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT
2. METHODOLOGY
3. POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION
4. REGULATIONS & OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS
5. ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report ends with **CLOSING STATEMENTS** that include a key action strategy in moving ahead.

6. REPORT SUMMARY

POLICY ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Overall, while over 60 policy and related documents in The Bahamas were identified that guide, regulate, influence or impact upon the use, conservation, protection, and/or sustainability of the natural flora, fauna, landscape, marine and other environmental resources, no documented national public sector policy or legislation that specifically encourages and guides coral reef restoration for tourism purposes was evident.



Policy Framework: Marine Conservation

Policy-wise, coral reef restoration in The Bahamas has traditionally been deemed, first and foremost, as an activity that falls within and linked to (i) the use of marine natural resources, (ii) marine protection and conservation, and (iii) marine research and scientific governance - all guided by environmental and marine/fisheries agencies and **not** by tourism agencies.

Based on this tradition, coral reef restoration in The Bahamas is influenced accordingly by a policy framework comprising a complex legislative landscape for marine and coastal operation and management centered on conservation, protection and scientific research.

The report notes that, with the high vulnerability of The Bahamas to natural disasters, and its vast biodiversity, there has been increased focus since 2021 on protecting natural resources and the environment, and promoting scientific developments in the Blue Economy for better environmental resiliency.

Range of Framework Policies

The Bahamas policy framework covers a range of areas:

(i) Climate Change; (ii) Carbon Market/Credits (iii) Nationally Determined Contributions/Green House Gas Emission (iv) Energy; (v) Plastics; (vi) Wetlands; (vii) Fisheries; (viii) Flats Fishing; (ix) Invasive Species; (x) Ozone Depletion; (xi) Biodiversity; (xii) Wildlife; (xiii) Marine Protected Areas (xiv) Environmental Impact Assessment; (xv) Economic Recovery; and (xvi) Access to Genetic/Biological Resources.



Policy Framework: Tourism

On the tourism side, The Bahamas is a leading tourism destination in the Caribbean with a tourism industry that is well regulated. Tourism's importance to national development and its dependence on the country's marine resources are understood. The "Derecho Del Turismo En Las Americas," published in 2020 by the University of Portugal, links the country's success in tourism to its tourism legislation.

Through its policy and legislative framework, the Government of The Bahamas has actively budgeted for and effectively promoted the country, encouraged private investment, and enabled the development of an accommodation sector that adheres to high standards. In addition, The Bahamas is actively involved both directly and indirectly in areas that impact upon tourism, with sustainability and conservation factored as a guiding principle for tourism development.

A national tourism policy for all aspects of tourism development, however, is not articulated and no policy related to coral reef restoration and the participation of the tourism industry is documented.

Critical Policy & Regulatory Agencies

The analysis further reveals that, of the broad range and number of policies, coral reef restoration operates in a framework most influenced and regulated by five (5) main legislation that are administered accordingly by respective agencies, each overseeing different elements of environmental management, i.e.:

- (i) The Environmental Planning & Protection Act (2019), administered by the Department of Environment Planning and Protection (DEPP);
- (ii) The Fisheries Act 2020, administered by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR);
- (iii) The Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act (2021), administered by the Ministry responsible for the Environment;
- (iv) The Bahamas National Trust Act (2019), administered by The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) (for activities undertaken in the a BNT-managed land and marine parks); and
- (v) Depending on the project, a seabed lease may be required from the Office of the Prime Minister, as the Minister responsible for Crown Lands under the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act, administered by the Department of Lands & Surveys.



Other Institutional Arrangements

Regulatory agencies are part of a governance structure called the *Inter-Departmental Blue Economy Coordination Group*. This group is spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources (MoAMR) and includes The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), the Ministry of Environment (MoE), The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), the Ministry of Transport and Local Affairs (MTLA), The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA), the University of The Bahamas (UoB) and the BNT.

7. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The report notes that, to utilize resources within the marine space, a permit must be obtained from the respective regulatory agencies based on the research, work, location and resource collection requested. Permit related fees must also be paid to respective agencies.

Regulations & Permitting Prior to COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, the analysis outlines the following related to coral reef restoration activities:

- A permit is required under the Fisheries Act 2020 to conduct marine scientific research in “Bahamian fisheries waters”.
- Permit clearance is first required from the DEPP, with further permitting if needed from BNT etc.
- With submission of the appropriately completed application and supporting documents, research permits were issued between 2 weeks to 4 weeks. The total process of obtaining the permits from the various agencies took up to 4 to 6 months.

Regulations & Permitting Post COVID-19

Currently post-COVID, this report points out that:

- The Bahamas established a Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act in 2021 to provide for the conditions of use and access to the country’s resources and protected species for purposes of scientific research, and for commercial use.

This Act was based on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) aimed to allow a fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the country’s genetic marine resources.

- No research permits were issued in 2019 and 2020 as the country transitioned its environmental management to the new DEPP and, as the new Biological Resources Act was being established.
- The country established a one-stop online portal for the permitting process, i.e., *The Bahamas Research and Permitting System*, to allow application and payment for permits and registrations relevant to marine research in The Bahamas in one place.



- With an existing backlog of permit applications along with administrative adjustments to facilitate the provisions of the new Act and to adjust to the online portal, bottlenecks and delays in the issuance of permits occur.
- Notwithstanding the transitional delays, applications for all related permits are now facilitated through the country’s online permitting system and include permits for and registration of:
 - (i) Research;
 - (ii) Research Facility Operation;
 - (iii) National Research Vessels;
 - (iv) Non-National Research Vessels; and

- (v) Access to Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge in The Bahamas.

As work occurs in the ocean space, there is a linked permit for the research vessel to be utilized which must meet government safety and operational standards and be manned by a licensed captain.

- Online, permit issuance has been allocated a turn-around time of 4 weeks once all required documents and fees are submitted.
- All permits require a contractual agreement between the institution/applicant and the government of The Bahamas done in the interest of ensuring equitable outcomes for researchers, communities and biodiversity in the country.
- Among other details, research permits require technical and scientific information to be provided including (i) Data Management Plans; (ii) Cruise Plans; (iii) Information on the samples; (iv) the work to be done; (v) the scientific, conservation and monitoring guidelines to be followed, and (vi) the equipment to be utilized.

The table below summarizes the institutional fees to be paid per application for Research Permits along with the annual registration fee requirement.

RESEARCH PERMITS & CHARGES, THE BAHAMAS
(Items 1 –4 are Coral Reef Restoration Related)

#	INSTITUTION	TYPE OF PERMIT	PERMIT FEES (BH\$)	
			Institutional	Annual Registration
1	DEPP	Terrestrial Marine Permit	\$125.00	\$3,000- \$5,000 and
2	DMR	(1) Marine Research Permit (2) Permit to Export Marine Mammals (3) Permit to Capture & Export Shark	\$55.00	• Researcher- \$1,500
3	BNT	Research Permits within National Parks Boundaries	\$82.50	• Foreign Student (Undergrad)- \$400
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Reviews Marine Research Permits (review of marine scientific research permits in the EEZ)	-	• Foreign Student (Grad)- \$700
5	Department of Agriculture (DoA)	CITES Permits (for wild animals and plants)	\$11.50	• Bahamian Student (International)- \$300
6	The Port Department	Coastline Activity and Projects Permits (vessels, crew and their activities)	-	• Bahamian Student (Local)- \$50
7	Forestry Unit	(1) Permit to harvest Timber & Non-Timber Forest Produce (2) Permit to harvest a protected Tree	-	
8	Antiquities, Monuments & Museums Corporation (AMMC)	Exploration and Recovery Permit (relevant to the use of ancient DNA from remains in caves, blue holes etc.)	\$56.00	

Source: Compiled from The Commonwealth of The Bahamas Research & Permitting System (depp.gov.bs)

8. TRADITIONAL AGENCIES IN CORAL REEF RESTORATION

Type of Agencies

With the level of marine expertise and scientific knowledge required, it is not surprising that, in The Bahamas, coral reef restoration has been traditionally associated with or undertaken by scientific, academic, educational, conservation and environmental related private sector and not-for-profit agencies.

Work Undertaken

These entities carry out research related work that includes monitoring and reporting on the status of corals

and propagating and replanting endangered species for reef protection and conservation.

These agencies, inter alia, raise awareness, educate and share knowledge among other coral scientists, practitioners, educators, and communities of the importance of and threats to coral reefs; offer hands-on-education to students; introduce and utilize technology and programmes to support the growth and survival of corals; provide relevant advice to Government; and advocate for coral reef restoration and conservation. Based on the work required, these entities are led by innovation, scientific guidelines and scuba diving principles.

Among the science and research-based agencies involved in coral reef restoration related activities are:

- (i) The Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS);
- (ii) The Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute (CEI); 
- (iii) The Nature Conservancy (TNC);
- (iv) Coral Vita with the only land-based coral farm (*commercial*); 
- (v) Forfar Field Station, International Field Studies Inc.;
- (vi) Friends of the Environment; and
- (vii) Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF). 

9. OBSTACLES, GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

The analysis notes several issues and gaps covering:

Tourism and Coral Reef Restoration Policy Environment

- (i) **Marine Conservation/Tourism Policy Silos:** Marine conservation and tourism are formally two separate areas in the policy framework of The Bahamas. Each of these two priorities operates as a silo and explicit link between them within public sector policies is limited. This creates one of the most significant obstacles to the involvement of the tourism sector in coral reef restoration:
 - Coral reef restoration, as a research and marine conservation activity, is handled under conservation and marine-related policies and linked administrative agencies.
 - Coral reef restoration, as a tourism activity, is not explicitly included in the existing national marine conservation policy framework.
 - Tourism focuses on its own legislations related to tourism promotion, standards and licensing and in 2023, by legislation, Tourism MSME Development. While sustainable development is an underlying principle throughout, coral

reef restoration is not a specific linked policy factor.

- (ii) **Limited Coral Reef Restoration Expertise in Tourism:** A notable challenge is the fact that, while national tourism agencies have been represented on various committees and attended workshops on reef health etc., scientific and technical expertise do not lie in the hands of these agencies.
- (iii) **Lack of a Comprehensive and Current National Tourism Policy:** There is no specific and clearly articulated current national tourism policy that officially places coral reef restoration in the tourism sphere as a legitimate business activity for development and incentivizing.

This is a challenge as, in the **blue tourism economy** in the country, coral reef restoration is a rapidly emerging tourism and conservation activity that has an opportunity to be guided by or governed under a formal national tourism policy, and/or a blue tourism coral reef restoration policy framework.

The report notes that such a national tourism policy or regulatory framework will serve as an opportunity to officially establish the value that coral reef restoration, as a tourism activity, brings to the national development goals related to climate change, employment, diversification and building a resilient, dynamic, and sustainable economy.

Key Legislation

- (iv) **Biological Resources & Knowledge Act & Limitations on Reef Restoring:** While the 2021 Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act requires permitting to access resources for scientific research or commercial use, it does not clearly delineate where coral reef restoration tourism activities fall. Operationalization of the Act for tourism activities is, therefore, left to the interpretation of the agency tasked with administering the Act.
- (v) **The Fisheries Resources Act 2020 & Permitting Documentation for Coral Reef Restoration:** The analysis shows that this Act specifically provides for marine scientific research in the Fisheries Waters of the country, for which a license must be obtained. The provisions of this Act continue to guide coral reef restoration permitting in the post COVID-19 environment and confirms that coral reef restoration has to apply scientific principles – an operating capacity gap of most tourism enterprises. Applications must be accompanied by, for example; a Research Plan that include details on:

- The nature and objective of the project;
- The method and means to be used, including name, tonnage, type and class of vessels, and a description of scientific equipment;
- The precise geographical areas in which the project shall be conducted;
- Reporting and results submission; and
- The list participants, sponsors and personnel involved in the research project.

Institutional Arrangements/Governance Structure

- (vi) **Lead Agencies in Marine Permitting:** There is opportunity for the formal inclusion of a public sector tourism agency to the agencies involved in the review of permits for marine related activities that are marine tourism development and coral reef restoration related.

Currently, no tourism entity is part of the lead agencies permit issuance and review process. *(This may be a demonstrated of the “silo” effect where, in practice, tourism is not integrated as a critical or equal partner in national marine and environmental protection and conservation).*

- (vii) **Range of Representatives on the Inter-Departmental Blue Economy Coordination Group.** This group excludes public or private sector tourism representation. Given the role and importance of tourism in the marine environment, this further demonstrates the silo and separation of tourism from conservation and marine resource use in the country. There is relevance and opportunity for tourism – public and private representation, to be part of this Group.

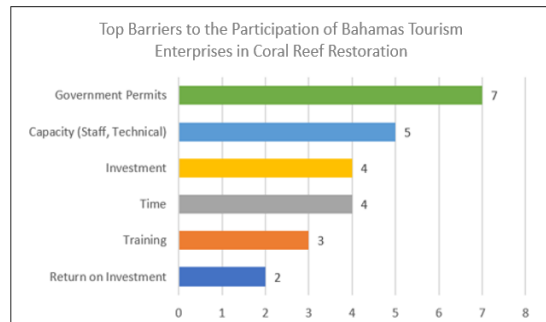
Stakeholder Views

- (viii) **Permitting for Coral Reef Restoration:** The research results, summarized in the following graph, revealed that tourism businesses in The Bahamas place “Government Permitting” as the biggest challenge to their participation in coral reef restoration.

Tourism businesses have also noted the delays and actual time-frame involved in receiving permits, which they felt were too long. This was compounded with a short time span for the duration of the permit (on average 6 months).

Overall, tourism businesses felt that the current permitting to operate within the coastal and marine space is more reflective of the nature of traditional research entities and not that of tourism operators. Stakeholders note that what tourism businesses sell is the experience of coral reef

restoration as opposed to any coral or physical biological material that is removed for commercial purposes.



Source: IDB/CCPF Bahamas Blue Economy 2023. Responses of Reef Rescue Network Tourism Business Enterprises

- (ix) **Capacity: “Technical and Staff Capacity”** or rather the lack thereof, closely followed “permitting” as a barrier to the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. The analysis notes that tourism dive operators and resorts are not in the scientific business but in the vacation, leisure or recreational dive business. They do have complementary but differing skill-sets to that of the marine and coral reef restoration scientists and conservation & marine research NGOs involved in coral reef restoration. Their technical capacity is, therefore, limited. Stakeholder views expressed that restoration practitioners are trained and experienced.
- (x) **Government Regulation for Tourism Coral Reef Restoration:** All engaged stakeholders in The Bahamas – private, public & NGOs, felt that coral reef restoration activities by the tourism industry should be regulated by Government. Views expressed the need to ensure that restorative activities are properly done and that standards and guidelines and reporting mechanisms in place.

There is a view that approvals of all operations in the marine space should be handled with the same efficiency and care for best practices and management of resources.

Partnership Potential for Coral Reef Restoration

- (xi) **Established Partnerships:** In The Bahamas there are strong existing partnerships that can be maximized to facilitate coral reef restoration and the expanded involvement of the tourism industry:

- **NGO/NGO Partnership:** The NGO and scientific agencies involved in coral reef restoration in The Bahamas are collaborating partners. This allows coordinated support to private sector tourism businesses across the country. Leading the NGO/NGO coral reef restoration partnership is PIMS.





- **Scientific, Research NGO/Tourism Business Partnership:** This partnership is exemplified by the RRN in which PIMS facilitates and leads the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. There is opportunity for a policy framework that facilitates this partnership for the expansion of coral reef restoration with the involvement of tourism.
- **Scientific, Research NGO/Public Sector Partnership:** The NGOs in The Bahamas have a good working relationship with the public sector agencies responsible for the environment and marine protection. Some also have an ongoing link with public sector tourism agencies. There is an opportunity for formal expansion of these relations with tourism agencies for coral reef restoration and the participation of the tourism industry.
- **Public Tourism Agency/Tourism Businesses:** Tourism public and private sector agencies have a long standing and well-established relationship that now needs to expand to ensure that coral reef restoration is recognized and supported as a valid tourism industry activity for development.
- **Public Conservation Agency/Public Tourism Agency Relationship:** There is an opportunity for formal expansion and fine-tuning of public conservation/public tourism agency relationships to remove silos where they exist and to effectively facilitate coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry.

10. BEST PRACTICE LESSON LEARNT

This report highlights The Bahamas Reef Rescue Network (RRN) as a best practice. RRN is a group of resorts, hotels, marine tours and dive businesses, that works collaboratively under the scientific and expert guidance of the PIMS to improve reef health with the inclusion of the dive market, local communities, students and women.



In December 2023, as part of its business plan, this network launched its tourism reef restoration products in a collaborative public/private sector promotional campaign, “Coral is Calling”, with the country’s private sector Promotion Boards and The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism to, inter alia, generate greater awareness of coral morbidity and to elicit the support and collaboration of the vertical dive market in addressing this challenge.

The experience of this network serves to clearly identify the policy gaps, opportunities and current optimal

operating conditions for coral reef restoration with tourism sector participation in The Bahamas:

- **Combined Strengths:** The RRN is a union between the NGO/scientific agencies, led by PIMS, with their expertise and strengths in coral reef restoration, and tourism industry businesses, whose strength is the development and sale of tourism experiences and the engagement of their established, ready and growing tourism customer base in the niche markets for dive, coastal and marine adventure.
- **RRN Members:** The Network has a growing membership of 27 tourism related businesses located across The Bahamas. Tourism industry businesses involved range from Atlantis Resort with its “Coral Gene Bank” and Stuart Cove, an internationally known dive center, to small and medium sized properties and businesses on Grand Bahamas and in the Out Islands of The Bahamas.
- **Achievements:** In the past 12 months, the RRN has:
 - (i) added 14 new coral nurseries;
 - (ii) expanded 4 of their existing coral nurseries;
 - (iii) added 10 new shallow coral nurseries;
 - (iv) trained 53 new PADI instructors from tourism businesses to support tourists in reef rescue dives);
 - (v) trained 15 women in Reef Rescue Entrepreneurship;
 - (vi) Engaged over 80 youths, school students and community members in reef rescue education, field trips and sensitization;
 - (vii) Certified 20 new snorkel guides in reef rescue for shallow water experiences; and
 - (viii) restored 15K or about 3.84 acres of reefs.
- **Blanket Permit:** In order to involve the RRN in coral reef restoration, PIMS completes the application and obtains a blanket research permit that allows each PIMS tourism business to participate in coral propagation (coral nurseries) and coral replanting under the scientific guidance, monitoring and reporting done by PIMS.

Spread of RRN Members



Network Funding: To defray the cost involved, the PIMS/RRN sought and received funding support from Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and other international and local donors.

The table below summarizes the key policy analysis indicators.

Summary Overview of Coral Reef Restoration Policy Analysis Framework Indicators & Initial Finding

	Indicators	Summary Finding	#	Indicators	Summary Finding
1	Key Public Sector Regulatory/Governing Bodies Impacting Coastal and Marine Conservation and Reef Restoration	(i) Department of Environmental Planning & Protection (ii) Department of Marine Resources (iii) Bahamas National Trust (iv) The Port Department (v) Office of the Prime Minister	7	Tourism Policy	(i) Established Legislation/Policy for: - tourism promotion - accommodation standards/licensing
2	Key Public Sector Regulatory/ Governing Agencies for Tourism	(i) Department of Tourism (ii) Tourism Development Corporation	8	NGO/Public/Private Partnerships for Coral Reef Restoration	(i) Significant Partnerships and Opportunities for Partnership
3	Agencies most involved in or opportune for Coral Restoration related Regulation	(i) Department of Marine Resources (Fisheries) (ii) Department of Environmental Planning & Protection	9	Tourism Operator/ Private Sector Support for Coral Reef Restoration	(i) In place/started (ii) Best Practice Noted (iii) Still to be effectively developed
4	NGOs leading in Reef Restoration Activities & Sensitization	(i) Perry Institute for Marine Science (ii) The Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute (iii) Forfar Field Station, International Field Studies (iv) The Nature Conservancy (v) The Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation	10	Tourism Businesses involved in Coral Reef Restoration (all part of The Bahamas Reef Rescue Network)	(1) Small Hope Bay Lodge; (2) Andros Beach Club; (3) Coral Vita; (4) Bimini Scuba Center; (5) Dive Exuma; (6) Greenwood Beach Resort; (7) Atlantis Resort; (8) BAHAMAR; (9) Baker's Bay; (10) Caerula Mar Club; (11) Sandals; (12) ForFar Field Station, International Field Studies (SAVE Market); (12-14) All Star Liveaboards-Cat Ppalu; Aqua Cat & Blackbeard's Cruises; (15) Only Blue Diving (at Club Med); (16) Kamalame Cay Adventures; (17) Paradise Cove; (18) West End Ecology Tours; (19) UNEXSO; (20) Brenda's Dive Center; (21) The Abaco Club on Winding Bay; (22) Riding Rock Resort & Marina; (23) Bimini Blue Adventure; (24) West End Water sports; (25) Reef Oasis Viva Bahamas (at Wyndham Resort); (26) Long Island Boat Rentals.
5	Government Coordination and Procedures	(i) Minimal Public Sector Connection/Linkages between Tourism and Coastal and Marine Conservation and/or Coral Restoration	11	Coral Reef Restoration & Policy	(i) Significant NGO/Private Sector Operation within this space; (ii) No Policy in place for Reef Restoration (iii) Policy on the table/in Development led by DEPP,
6	Permit/Licensing Procedures	(i) Permitting Time/Cost/ Procedures Impede Coral Reef Restoration (ii) Does Not Allow for Easy Tourism Operator Adaption (iii) Tourism Engagement of Coral Restoration operates in Gray Area	12	Existing Frameworks for Coral Reef Management, Conservation, and/or Restoration Implementation in Tourism Sector	The elements exist separately for coral reef conservation and tourism sector blue economy operations. However, they need to be linked on a regulatory level.
			13	Existing Frameworks for Blue Economy Tourism Operations	Government support noted for Blue Economy Tourism (based on IDB Loan Programme)

11. CONCLUSIONS

- (i) **Formal “marrying” of Conservation, Coral Reef Restoration and Tourism:** While conservation and tourism are on the country’s priority agenda, their link is not effectively demonstrated in the policies and institutional arrangements especially when coral reef restoration is considered.

Therefore, while The Bahamas has created a vast network of legislative documents related to the marine and costal environment and tourism, they are not linked in a way that makes it clear that there is an understanding of the interdependence of the two priorities.

- (ii) **Conducive Conditions for Advancing Coral Reef Restoration:** The government is currently working towards capturing coral reef restoration in the legislative framework and receiving guidance from relevant stakeholder agencies. The time is, therefore, currently conducive for discussions and collaboration with public sector policy makers on coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry.
- (iii) **Comprehensive Legislative Framework in Place:** The Bahamas is not lacking for marine conservation

and protection policies and legislation. Gaps seem to exist, however, in the related monitoring, regulation, and verification framework.

- (iv) **Multiple Permits:** The Biological Resources Act did not replace any other Act so there still remains a process that requires multiple permits from different agencies.
- (v) **Potential for Fisheries Regulation:** The Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 offers a good opportunity for the development of accompanying regulations to address coral reef restoration guidelines for the tourism sector. Precedent has been set with the Flats Fishing Regulations that were developed to guide that activity. Fly Fishing is an official tourism related niche market promoted by the BMOTIA.
- (vi) **NGO/Private Sector Leadership:** Given the lessons learnt in The Bahamas, the way forward is one spearheaded by a Scientific, Research NGO and Private Sector collaboration. These entities merge the experience, knowledge, technical expertise and tourism acumen that are complementary and ideal for increasing coral reef restoration with tourism industry participation.

- (vii) **Community Engagement:** The potential for engaging the community and vulnerable groups is increased with the involvement of tourism businesses (exemplified by the RRN).
- (viii) **Sustainable Funding:** Funding support is necessary to encourage further advancement of the existing NGO/Tourism Industry collaboration in place for coral reef restoration. The permitting costs for coral reef restoration activities by The Bahamas tourism industry may also need special consideration.
- (ix) **Institutional Strengthening:** Tourism agencies may consider additional technical support to strengthen their capacity to develop suitable national tourism policies that effectively engages the participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) **Support Scientific/Conservation NGO & Tourism Industry Collaboration for Coral Reef Restoration.**
Support the participation of the tourism industry by providing a suitable policy framework that encourages and incentivizes coral reef restoration as a bona fide and valid tourism business and visitor activity. The report draws attention to the global conglomerate Dell Technologies that have noted the power of tourism in supporting reef monitoring and health (graphic below).



Dell is capitalizing on this to increase the utilization of their technology by tourists. Tourists are encouraged to take pictures of the reefs they visit and have them analyzed by AI in real time so that researchers will build a global picture of areas that are at risk.

- (ii) **Approach to Permitting:** Highlighted by the case of The Bahamas RRN, the approach in place for research permitting to engage the participation of the tourism industry should remain. The technical and scientific details will be provided by the scientific NGOs that hold this expertise. Permitting will have some budgetary implications but a sharing of costs will be far less burdensome. This

will also allow the tourism industry to focus on the tourism business of coral reef restoration following scientific guidelines made available by the NGO partners rather than on an application process that may place them at a disadvantage.

- (iii) **Capacity Development/Training.** Blue Tourism expansion and coral reef restoration with the involvement of the tourism sector in The Bahamas requires a supportive policy framework that encourages capacity building and training. This must be two-fold, i.e.:

- **For Tourism Businesses:** Staff capacity building and training on the technical aspects of coral reef conservation must be undertaken. This includes development and maintenance of coral nurseries; instructor training in reef restorative dive; principles of guiding visitors in coral restorative dive and developing coral restorative dive and non-dive products.

There should also be capacity building for tourism operators on ways to ensure that there is less negative impact on corals, e.g., touching and anchoring to reduce damage. Tourism can be one of the main causes of direct coral damage, so operators can support coral reefs restoration as well as through less direct damage.

- **For Public Agencies:** Capacity for the staff of public agencies (both those in tourism agencies and those in conservation agencies) could be improved as it relates to linking conservation, tourism and coral reef restoration in their policy framework, the value that coral reef restoration can bring to achieving their respective public sector goals,

- (iv) **Continued Socialization, Sensitization & Awareness Building:** This is an associated element to capacity development but with greater focus on sensitization at the policy leadership level to (i) build awareness of the connection with coral reefs as an economic driver, (ii) understand the status of coral reefs and factors that bear upon their survival, and (iii) understand and provide policy support related to safety aspects for the tourist.

- (v) **Establish a National Sustainable and Blue Tourism Policy & Action Plan:** Advocate for the development of a Comprehensive National Sustainable Tourism Policy for The Bahamas that Incorporates Coral Reef Restoration as a growing aspect of Blue Tourism for development and incentivizing, or alternately, for a Sub-Policy on Blue Tourism that covers coral reef restoration as a tourism activity for development and promotion.



- (vi) **Recognize and cover tourism in all policies related to the marine/blue economy.** This must be strongly advocated by both public and private sector tourism entities. Given the role of tourism in the country's economy, and importance of the marine environment to the tourism sector, marine and blue economy policies in The Bahamas should specifically include guidance for tourism activities.
- (vii) **National Coral Reef Restoration Framework and Management Plan:** The research findings reveal that consultations on such a Plan are currently being undertaken by TNC and government as a technical support to DEPP. The intention is to develop new regulations to strengthen the regulatory environment for coral conservation. The recommendation is for this plan to also include a framework for the participation of the tourism industry. The Framework and Management Plan could, therefore, be the springboard to support drafting suitable legislation, not only on the coral reef restoration conservation side but also on the tourism side with both including the participation of the tourism industry.
- (viii) **National Maritime Instruction and Training Bill:** The research found that pursuant to the Government's 2023 agenda to encourage education and opportunities in the Blue Economy, a "*National Maritime Instruction and Training Bill*" was drafted and is currently under review. This Bill can be an important opportunity to capitalize upon, as it can help to provide the policy framework to fill the capacity development gap faced in the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. Advocacy for the inclusion of relevant capacity building is, therefore, recommended. It is important that the tourism sector – private and public – provide input into the review of this Bill.
- (ix) **Consider New Regulations for the Fisheries Act**
In the short term, advocate for the development of new Regulations for the Fisheries Act 2020 to provides guidelines specifically for coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism sector. Such Regulations may be quickly available as it will not require the process of going through Cabinet and Parliament for approval – as would be required by a new legislation.
- (x) **Governance Structure for Marine Protection & Tourism:** The participation of public and private sector tourism enterprises must be factored into



the governance structure for research permitting and in relevant decision-making that will impact the way the already highly regulated tourism industry must operate.

- (xi) **Advocacy:** The private sector in tourism should continue to provide advocacy and lobbying support for policy development and a suitable enabling environment to facilitate the increased participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration.

13. CLOSING STATEMENT

With the collaboration between NGOs with expertise in marine science, and tourism businesses to support coral reef restoration, The Bahamas has demonstrated that the tourism industry can be effectively engaged as an avenue to support the restoration of coral populations across the country based on scientific and technically sound coral reef restoration principles.

This collaboration between scientific experts and the tourism industry also facilitates the recommendation of the IDB for expanding the Blue Economy in The Bahamas by fostering niche markets, and new tourism activities. Coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry can have a triple win impact:

- (i) The first impact is ecological as **reef health** will be improved, positively impacting the sustained quality of the blue tourism products offered by The Bahamas.
- (ii) The second impact is on tourism **market expansion**. Tourism businesses can capitalize on their existing markets while expanding to attract new clientele - much needed as they continue to recover and grow in the post COVID-19 environment.
- (iii) The third impact is on tourism **product expansion and diversity**. The recreational adventure dive market targeted by the country will have a choice of products that cater to experiences they demand as they explore ways to contribute to protecting the natural resources they use – experiences in even greater demand post COVID.

In The Bahamas, further expansion of coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry, however, would be best supported by a **strengthened enabling policy framework**. This strengthened framework would further demonstrate public sector leadership in advancing blue economy activities that contribute, inter alia, to protecting the country's marine resources and to combating climate change. This enabling framework should be one that:

- creates a national policy that supports blue tourism practices such as coral reef restoration;

- recognizes the opportunity offered by the involvement of tourism in coral reef restoration;
- regulates the participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration without creating an overly burdensome and bureaucratic regulatory process;
- establishes national guidelines for tourism industry involvement in coral reef restoration, in collaboration with the NGO and private sector already involved in coral reef restoration;
- provides incentives for local businesses that participate in coral reef conservation and restoration efforts; and
- establishes partnerships between government entities, NGOs, and tourism businesses to oversee and fund restoration projects in which the tourism industry is involved.

REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Moving ahead, the report highly recommends that a [Regional Policy Dialogue on Coral Reef Restoration](#) is organized.

This Dialogue would help to discuss regulatory frameworks, best practices, institutional capacity, governance, and innovative funding mechanisms for coral reef restoration. It should aim to exchange knowledge, attract donors, and foster cooperation and collaboration.

Most importantly, it will encourage public, private and other stakeholders in The Bahamas to better recognize the need for a strengthened national policy framework that specifically facilitates coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry.

14. CLOSING GUIDELINES

Based on the recommendations, the report ends with summarized strategic guidelines for the consideration of each of the following group of stakeholders:

- National Public Sector Agencies in The Bahamas;
- The Bahamas Tourism Industry; and
- NGOs and Funding/Development Agencies with interests in The Bahamas.

Guidelines follow.

Guidelines for National Public Sector Tourism Agencies in The Bahamas

#	Policy/Strategic Support Area	Detail
1	National Sustainable Tourism Policy	Development of a comprehensive Nation Tourism Policy with a clear Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles that addresses current issues, trends and market demands. This will lead stakeholder involvement and guide all areas of tourism development and partnership by providing a common framework for the advancement and operation of tourism in the new post-COVID era and for the coming years.
2	Blue Tourism Sub-Policy	- Blue tourism should be established as part of the National Tourism Policy or as a separate Sub-Sector Policy. - This sub-policy should consider sub-policy statements for blue tourism that include reef restoration as a valid economic activity within the blue tourism economy for development and local investment.
3	Regulations for Coral Reef Restoration	Request that the Department of Marine Resources explore drafting of Regulations for the Restoration of Coral Reefs (for tourism purposes) under the existing Fisheries Resources Act 2020.
4	Business Registration & Planning	Facilitate the registration of Tourism Reef Restoration Businesses as a specific category in the country's Tourism Enterprise Register (currently housed by the Tourism Development Agency), and accordingly support business planning and related entrepreneurial training for the sustainability of these enterprises.
5	Incentives & Concessions	To spur tourism business investment and involvement in reef restoration (especially local tourism MSMEs), a special investment incentive and concession policy should be established.
6	Promotion	Continue to promote reef restoration as a tourist activity and collaboratively run promotional campaigns and events to support the involvement of visitors in purchasing and participating in reef restoration
7	Product Packaging	Support tourism reef restoration businesses especially MSMEs, in product development, packaging and pricing techniques for the coastal and marine adventure traveler and dive market
8	Customer Service	Set customer service standards for tourism reef restoration businesses & carry out/facilitate training to ensure that the visitor experience is consistent with the customer service goal established by tourism for the country (and as addressed within the National Tourism Policy).
9	Visitor Safety (Link with Hyperbaric Chamber)	Identify and confirm that visitor safety considerations are in place for their participation in tourism reef restoration activities. This could include verification that tourism reef restoration businesses have relevant link with a hyperbaric chamber facility and procedures for transporting clients if needed to such facilities.
10	Awareness Building	Establish and implement an awareness building and sensitization strategy for reef restoration and the benefits of the involvement of tourism and tourism entrepreneurs
11	Capacity Development	Support capacity development and training for public sector staff in tourism agencies and in private sector tourism businesses to increase the effectiveness of the tourism industry's involvement in coral reef restoration
12	Partnership	- Develop formal, effective and sustained partnerships with other public agencies involved in coastal and marine management and regulation and with all NGOs and private sector tourism agencies relative to reef restoration - Collaborate to advocate for, guide, support and encourage the increase in reef restoration activities - Partner with and/or build upon existing relationships for promotion, capacity development and training with private sector tourism entities and businesses engaged in reef restoration. - Partner to mobilize funding opportunities to advance reef restoration with tourism sector participation.
13	Awarding	Recognize business leadership in Coral Reef Restoration at the Annual Cacique Award
14	Permit Review	Advocate for the involvement of tourism representation in the review of applications for permits related to reef restoration in which tourism businesses are involved

Policy and Strategy Guidelines for The Bahamas Tourism Industry

#	Policy/ Strategy Area	Detail
1	Reef Restoration Leadership	Continue to demonstrate leadership in reef restoration as a business policy for supporting conservation and sustainability
2	Business Policy	- Adopt reef restoration (direct or indirect) as a business policy - Incorporate a business strategy that supports opportunities for guests/clients to participate in marine conservation and coral reef restoration activities
3	Advocacy	Advocate for: National Policy: A current National Tourism Policy developed with the input of the tourism private sector Blue Tourism Policy: A Blue Tourism Sector Policy that recognises the importance of tourism in the country's blue economy and coral reef restoration as a valid tourism business investment opportunity that can be further supported by investment and operational incentives Reef Restoration Regulations: Coral Reef Regulations for tourism purposes that considers the situation of tourism businesses and allows permitting accordingly Inclusive Decision Making: Better engagement of tourism businesses in policy and regulatory decision-making and governance related to coral reef restoration that impact upon the sector
4	Capacity Development & Training	Engage in and seek out opportunities for capacity development and training to enhance participation in coral reef restoration
5	Partnership	Build upon or develop formal, effective and sustained partnerships with: - Public agencies involved in coastal and marine management and regulations in the country - Public tourism agencies to, inter alia, expand tourism entrepreneurship in reef restoration and for continued product development and promotion of reef restoration experiences - NGOs engaged in reef restoration and in leading the technical and scientific aspects of reef restoration - Community and other groups to ensure wide support and engagement in reef restoration awareness building and related reef restoration activities organised by tourism businesses
6	Reef Rescue Network	Join the Reef Rescue Network as a strategic means to build synergies for coral reef restoration and for easy facilitation of reef restoration activities within the regulatory requirements of government
7	Funding Opportunities	Seek out funding opportunities for technical and development support that encourage tourism businesses in reef restoration

Policy & Strategy Guidelines for NGOs & Funding/Development Agencies

#	Policy/ Strategy Area	Detail
1	Technical Leadership	Continue to provide leadership in the scientific and technical knowledge of coral reef restoration
2	Advice	Sensitize and advise the Governments, the private sector and other stakeholders on the benefits and status of coral reefs and the policy, action plan and strategic approaches best suited to the restoration and continued health of the reef ecosystem across the country
4	Capacity Development & Training	- Build capacity of tourism agencies and businesses on the technical aspects of coral restoration - Continue to build the awareness of all public agencies of the benefits to be derived by the involvement of the tourism sector in reef restoration
5	Partnership	Build effective partnerships with public sector tourism agencies (Ministry of Tourism and the Bahamas Tourism Development Corporation) for collaboration on reef restoration efforts to increase the participation of the tourism sector
6	National Coral Reef Restoration Framework & Management Plan	Engage tourism public sector agencies in meaningful discussions related to the development of the <i>National Coral Reef Restoration Framework and Management Plan</i>. This plan is being proposed by TNC in The Bahamas and is being discussed with DEPP. There is no input from tourism.
7	Reef Rescue Network	- Showcase this network, led and supported by NGOs in The Bahamas, to demonstrate that the participation of tourism businesses in reef restoration is possible - Continue to support this network to allow expanded participation of tourism businesses across the country
8	Funding Opportunities	Seek funding opportunities for technical and development support for reef restoration and the participation of tourism businesses and to support capacity building in public agencies
9	Award	Encourage the Ministry of Tourism and its partners to establish a tourism business award for leadership in coral reef restoration and sponsor this award.
10	Regional Policy Dialogue	Mobilise funding for and organise a Regional Policy Dialogue on Reef Restoration & the Participation of the Tourism Industry

THE BAHAMAS POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT

Caribbean Coral Reef Restoration & Tourism Policy Analysis



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THE BAHAMAS POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT

Caribbean Coral Reef Restoration & Tourism Policy Analysis



1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 REPORT OBJECTIVES

Under the overall project “to identify and understand regulatory obstacles and enabling conditions for coral reef restoration implementation with tourism sector participation to support future policy changes to increase coral reef restoration in the Caribbean”, this report looks specifically at the situation in The Bahamas.



This report, therefore:

- (i) identifies the national policy, regulatory and operational framework (policy framework) in The Bahamas that guides and influences the implementation of coral reef restoration by the tourism industry; and
- (ii) identifies obstacles, gaps, opportunities, best practices and lessons learnt for the involvement of The Bahamas tourism industry in coral reef restoration.



1.2 THE BAHAMAS IN CONTEXT

Extending for 760 miles from its north-western border to the southeast coast of the US State of Florida, to just north of Hispaniola on its south-eastern border, The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 low-

lying coral islands and cays. The archipelago has a land area of 3,865 sq. miles (10,010 sq. km.), water area of 1,494 sq. miles (3,870 sq. km) and a coastline of 2,201 miles (3,542 km). The country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers 260,000 sq. miles of which 5% is land and 95% is sea.



The islands of the archipelago, of which thirty (30) are inhabited, are divided into three zones:

- (i) **North-western Islands** – the major inhabited islands in this zone are New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, Andros, the Berry Islands, Bimini and Eleuthera.
- (ii) **Central Islands** – these islands include Cat Island, Exuma Cays, Long Island, Rum Cay and San Salvador.
- (iii) **South-eastern Islands** - these islands include: Acklins, Crooked Island, Ragged Island, Mayaguana and Inagua

Surrounding these three island zones is a coastal and marine ecosystem with pristine waters and a medley of interrelated habitats. The biodiversity of these ecosystems hosts a vast range of plant and animal species that includes a rich diversity of reef fish, lobster, conch, turtles, algae, resident and migratory birds.

With 95% of the country's territory located in the marine habitat and a regional average of 70% of the country's population living on the coast, the country's coastal and marine ecosystems are an important source of economic production.

IDB estimates that the coastal and marine economy (blue economy) in The Bahamas, of which fisheries and tourism are important elements, makes up 21.5% of the country's GDP¹ and up to 50% when the indirect impacts are included.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF & THREAT TO CORAL REEFS IN THE BAHAMAS

Importance

Within the coastal and marine ecosystem, coral reefs hold the greatest biodiversity in The Bahamas. It is home to 35% of the coral reefs in the wider Caribbean region and houses the 3rd longest barrier reef in the world – the Andros Island Barrier Reef.²

The coral reefs are located along the coastal and marine zones of The Bahamas as identified in The Nature Conservancy Mapping outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Coral Reef Zones, The Bahamas



By supporting a wide range of ecosystem services in the country including the country's leading tourism, fisheries, and sponging sectors, The Bahamas is heavily reliant on its coral reef ecosystem as a source of food, jobs and opportunities for recreation.

Further, the country's coral reef system supports beach nourishment and protects the coastlines and its population across the country against hurricanes, storms and erosion as they break up waves during high tide and storm surges. Estimates from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are that coral reefs **reduce wave energy by 97%**. Given the high vulnerability of the **low-lying coral islands to natural disasters such as hurricanes**, the protection of the coastline provided by coral reefs is of paramount importance.

Threats

In the past ten (10) years, threats to and degradation of the reef system in The Bahamas have increased significantly. A Coral Reef Health Report Card by Dahlgren et al 2020 at the Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS), rated 74% of Bahamian reefs surveyed over 5 years as being in poor to impaired condition and **less than 1% in good condition**.

The threat faced by the country's coastal ecosystem is reported to be from human-induced factors, which disrupts the ecological balance and disturbs the habitat that houses the diverse group of organisms which play a key role in keeping the ecosystem intact.

The plethora of adversities identified as threatening reefs in The Bahamas include:

- damage caused by anchors;

¹ 2021 Project to boost resilient and inclusive growth in The Bahamas

² Bahamas National Trust

<https://bnt.bs/explore/andros/northsouthmarinepark/>

- pollution;
- unregulated fishing and overharvesting of fish populations – particularly the Nassau Grouper;
- coastal development;
- rising sea temperatures;
- coral bleaching;
- the spread of the Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD);
- invasive species including the lion fish which feeds on important species that maintain the health of coral reefs and other fish;
- hurricanes; and
- the broader impacts of climate change.



With the key economic sectors in the country tied to the health of the marine and coastal ecosystems, the economic stability of The Bahamas can be affected by decline in the coral ecosystems.

Therefore, conserving coastal and marine resources is imperative, not just for the environment's sake but also to maintain The Bahamas' economic vitality which includes its record-breaking stance in the global tourism market.

1.4 ADDRESSING THREATS

Given the country's vast biodiversity and its high vulnerability to natural disasters, increased focus has been placed on protecting natural resources, protecting the environment and promoting scientific developments in the Blue Economy for better environmental resiliency. The Bahamas has, therefore, seen greater and

growing commitment and strategies to effectively conserve and manage its marine and coastal environment that also address threats to the coral reef ecosystem.

(i) Marine Protected Areas (MPA)

One such strategy is the designation on an increased number of MPAs where the marine and coastal biodiversity receive a higher level of protection. Through MPAs the country aims to prevent and reverse declines in ocean resiliency and biodiversity and effectively provide for marine research.

In 2016, The Bahamas achieved a protection of 10% of its marine and coastal habitat and in 2017, the country committed to protect 20% by 2020. The White Paper prepared by the Nature Conservancy et al³ shows the value of four key ecosystems services provided by the MPA network in the country (**Figure 2**), i.e. (i) Nursery habitats; (ii) Tourism; (iii) Communities; and (iv) Carbon Storages.

Figure 2: The Value of Key Ecosystem Services provided by The Bahamas MPA Network



Today, 5.3 million acres have been added to its MPA, allowing the country to protect 20% of its marine and coastal habitat. The Bahamas National Trusts (BNT) manages the majority of

³ BNT, PIMS, TNC, BREEF, 2018 20 by 20 White Paper: Marine Protection Plan for Expanding The Bahamas MPA Network

the assigned MPAs with the remaining managed by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR).

Figure 3: Location of Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park

The Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP) is the oldest and best-enforced Marine Protected Area in The Bahamas (Figure 3).



According to The Bahamas Coral Reef Report Card (2020), many studies have revealed that populations of conch, fish, crawfish and corals are healthier in the ECLSP than any other part of The Bahamas.

(ii) The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund⁴

A relevant policy framework strategy



implemented in The Bahamas is The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF). This Fund was established as a corporate body by an Act of Parliament in 2014. The purpose of the Fund is to “ensure sustainable financing into perpetuity” for scientific and policy research, education, conservation and management of protected areas.

BPAF is mandated to support areas established for biodiversity conservation for the protection of carbon sinks, water resources, wetlands, blue holes, and degraded or threatened ecosystems as well

as areas established for adapting to and mitigating against, climate change.

As a National Conservation Trust Fund, BAPF extends grants to various protected area (PA) managers such as The Bahamas National Trust, The Bahamas Undersea (Caves) Research Foundation, Waterkeepers Bahamas, the Forestry Unit of the Ministry of Environment, the Department of Marine Resources, the University of The Bahamas, and other Government Agencies, academic and research institutions, and environmental NGOs, whose project or program aligns with the Fund’s strategic plan and funding priorities.

Overall, the Fund works to ensure that Bahamian PAs will have a dedicated, sustainable source of revenue to implement management plans, galvanize local community support, purchase equipment, build visitor facilities and monitor ecosystem health.

The BPAF has a Protected Areas Register Database of 122 land and sea sites across the country (listed in Annex 1). Marine habitats are impacted by activities that occur on both land and sea making this a comprehensive scheme for both land and sea protection.

(iii) Expanding the Blue Economy

With its vast EEZ, attention has turned to the **Blue Economy expansion as an emerging strategy in The Bahamas** to address conservation in and the economic use of marine resources and to positively impact climate change. Included in this strategy is **fisheries management** – conch, lobster and grouper (groupers being of ecological significance to coral reefs) have regulation such as size limits and open and close

⁴ <https://bahamasprotected.com/about/>

seasons to protect and promote sustainable fisheries.

The country has also paid attention to **Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)** in the Blue Economy that regulates how genetic resources are accessed, and how those benefits are shared between the countries that use the resources of The Bahamas and the people of The Bahamas.

IDB reporting suggests that expanding the Blue Economy in The Bahamas requires the promotion of emerging ocean-based activities, including the exploitation of new marine products, and fostering niche markets, and **new tourism activities**.

(iv) NGO/Private Sector Collaboration for Coral Reef Restoration

In addressing threats, coral reef restoration is a specific strategy on the national agenda of the various NGOs and their partners in The Bahamas.

The Perry Institute of Marine Science



(PIMS) versed in the science of coral reef restoration, leads the collaboration of these partners as part of the Reef Rescue Network, in the largest coral reef restoration initiative in the country. NGOs, businesses and citizen scientists work together to establish coral nurseries and replant corals on damaged reefs.

The approach of the collaboration emphasizes the need to ensure that **as many avenues as possible are made available for coral reef protection and restoration**. One such key avenue identified by PIMS and its partners is tourism and the

opportunity to utilize the tourism industry to scale-up coral reef restoration and reef health.

The majority of the network's business members are, therefore, in the tourism industry and a sub grouping has focused on the **leadership of the tourism industry in offering coral reef restoration dive packages as unique tourism experiences** (*highlighted as the Best Practice later in this report*).

The efforts of this network continually monitor the nation's coral reefs to make sure that they remain healthy and have helped with ocean research, conservation and coral reef restoration across country. The combined efforts have also helped with public awareness and education as these are significant in the preservation of marine life and specifically of coral reefs. New and innovative techniques are also continually introduced to help increase live coral cover.

Among the corals being restored in this effort are coral species such as the staghorn (*Acropora Cervicornis*) and elkhorn coral (*Acropora Palmata*), identified as being among those critically endangered.

1.5 TOURISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION

Strong Tourism Economy

Representing **60% of total GDP**, tourism is well established as the leading economic sector in the Bahamian economy.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the country has seen an economic resurgence, which has been attributed to **tourism having a robust performance**. World Bank data indicates a 14.4 percent GDP recovery in 2022 and a 4.3 percent increase in GDP in 2023.

This GDP performance is linked to 2023 when The Bahamas welcomed a total of 9,654,838 foreign visitors surpassing all previous records. This is a 38% increase over 2022 and a 33% increase compared to the previous pre-COVID 2019 record. The 2023 visitor arrival figures reveal that foreign air arrivals, which totaled 1,719,980, was a 17% percent increase compared to 1,470,244 in 2022. Sea arrivals also saw a remarkable surge, with 7,934,858 visitors in 2023, up 43.5% from the 5,530,462 who visited in 2022.⁵



The general consensus is that tourism in The Bahamas provides **an opportunity and avenue to scale-up coral reef restoration activities** by using the already **established and large visitor and dive market**, the already known brand of **The Bahamas as a dive destination** and the growing **demand for new and unique tourism experiences**⁶.

Top Dive Destination

The Bahamas is among the **top dive destinations** in the Caribbean recognized accordingly with the **2021 Reader's Choice Award** for snorkeling, wall diving, wreck diving; shore diving; beginner and advanced diving. BMOTIA describes diving in The Bahamas as “one of endless thrills” for experienced and first-time divers. The country’s dive sites are generally categorized under six (6) descriptions: (i)

Reefs; (ii) Shark Dives; (iii) Blue Holes; (iv) Walls; (v) Caves, and (vii) Shipwrecks.

According to BMOTIA, **coral reefs are the most represented dive sites in the country**. With this, dive tourism is led by and dependent on the country's coral reefs. The Victory Reef near Bimini, Fowl Cays off Abaco, Amberjack Reef in The Exumas and the Devil's Backbone in Eleuthera are a few of the legendary coral reef dive sites in the country.



As part of the tourism economy, dive packages contribute \$340 million annually⁷ or roughly 3% of the total Bahamian GDP with additional indirect contributions across the economy. The BMOTIA data shows that **divers spend 60% - 80% more** than the average tourist and is one of their **growing vertical niche** markets.

As BMOTIA promotes The Bahamas “island by Island & Wonder by Wonder”, the strategy is to grow and capture a larger dive market share. In this regard, there is a specific Dive Market Officer at the BMOTIA directly responsible for promoting the dive market.



With a well-developed tourism dive sector in the country, and the readiness attention already given this market by BMOTIA, it is opportune for the country to capitalize on this market to expand coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry.

⁵ Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation (February 2024)

⁶ The Bahamas C-CORAL Cluster Development Plan November 2021: IDB Compete Caribbean (Closed Report)

⁷ The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation 2014 data

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DEFINITIONS & CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION

(i) The Policy Framework

The “Policy Framework” is broadly defined as including National Policies, Legislation, Regulations, Operational Requirements and related documented Policy Statements of the Government of The Bahamas that impact upon or guide coral reef restoration as well as guiding Conventions, Agreements and Protocols to which the country is a signatory. The “Policy Framework” also includes the entities and institutional arrangements in place that administer and implement the policies.

(ii) Tourism Industry Participation

This is defined as the direct involvement of tourism businesses (i.e., enterprises that cater to international and domestic visitors) in coral reef restoration as an economic and/or philanthropic activity to increase the conservation and sustainability of the marine environment, the diversification and offer of tourism experiences, the benefits derived to communities, and the added value provided for visitors, employees and their tourism business.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

(i) Surveys & Structured Interviews:

In the implementation of the “Caribbean Coral Reef Restoration & Tourism Policy Analysis Project”, two data collection survey instruments were developed:



- One to gather data from private sector and NGO stakeholders, and
- the other to gather data from public sector stakeholder.

Guidelines for structured interviews with the various stakeholders were also established for utilization accordingly.

These instruments were followed and/or adapted as necessary for the situation faced in The Bahamas.



(ii) The Approach in The Bahamas

DESK RESEARCH

The Bahamas analysis was heavily informed by desk research. This included online searches, and website reviews of entities in the country involved in coral reef restoration or that impact upon marine conservation and resource use in the country. Policies and laws, research studies, strategic plans and reports on areas related to, inter alia, blue economy, national development, the value and status of the country’s coral reef ecosystems, coral reef restoration and marine conservation were also searched and reviewed.

INTERVIEWS

The analysis was also informed by representatives from a targeted public, private, and NGO sector agencies and tourism businesses via one-on-one interviews. These interviews provided quality information that was suited for the depth of analysis required in this report.

Interviewed individuals were drawn from the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, Ministry of Tourism, Investment and Aviation, The Nature Conservancy, Atlantis Paradise Island, Perry Institute for Marine Science; and The Bahamas RRN.

SURVEY

While interviews were a key method of primary data collection, input was received from a total of 13 participants in the online survey, which added to the breath of information received from the research and interviews. These agencies included The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP), and People of the Water.

The survey saw participation from eight (8) of the local tourism businesses located on Grand Bahama and in the Family Islands of The Bahamas (The Bahamas Out Islands), that are part of the Reef Recue Network. These include:

- (i) Kamalame Cay;
- (ii) Paradise Cove Beach Resort;
- (iii) Long Island Bahamas Boat Rentals & Tours;
- (iv) Andros Beach Club;
- (v) West End Ecology Tours; and
- (vi) All Star Liveaboards that has a total of three liveaboards located in different area in the country.

2.3 ANALYSIS & ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

(i) National and Public Sector Context

This area of the analysis focuses on understanding the broader national and public sector context in which coral reef

restoration and tourism initiatives are implemented. It also considers the mandates, roles, and priorities of key public agencies involved in regulating activities in the marine space in The Bahamas.

(ii) Policy and Regulatory Framework

This aspect evaluates critical policies and regulations related to fisheries, marine resources and tourism, which impact coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the policy framework.

By analyzing the governance structure and responsibilities across agencies, this assessment determined the effectiveness of coordination and collaboration among different stakeholders.

Overall, this analysis provides insights into the regulatory environment and helps identify opportunities for policy integration and coherence related to the participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration.

(iii) Permitting and Operational Requirements

This area focuses on evaluating the permitting processes and operational requirements for coral reef restoration and tourism activities. By understanding the application requirements and associated timelines and costs, the analysis is able to identify potential barriers or bottlenecks in the process.

(iv) Private Sector Engagement and Best Practices

This examines the role and initiatives of the private sector. It specifically identifies and reviews The Bahamas RRN as a best practice. RRN's serves to identify opportunities and current optimal operating conditions for coral reef restoration with tourism industry participation in The Bahamas.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION

3.1 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

There are no documented national policy, legislation or regulation that specifically encourages and guides coral reef restoration for tourism purposes. Guidelines are in place at the business and NGO level for members of the Reef Rescue Network as part of their self-regulation.

Policy-wise, coral reef restoration in The Bahamas at the national level has traditionally been deemed, first and foremost, as an activity that falls within and linked to the use of marine natural resources, marine protection and conservation, and marine research and scientific governance – **guided by environmental and marine/fisheries agencies** and **not** by tourism agencies.

Based on this tradition, coral reef restoration in The Bahamas is influenced accordingly by a policy framework comprising a **complex legislative landscape for marine and coastal operation and management** centered on conservation, protection and scientific research.

Also influencing this landscape are numerous **Conventions, Agreements and Protocols** to which the country is a signatory. These include, for example:

- Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Since 2021, the blue economy and climate change has been further emphasized along with greater focus on the country's Marine protected areas (MPAs). Of concern to the country in 2023 was the widespread coral bleaching that occurred due to the extremely high ocean temperatures that occurred in the surrounding waters of the country – a temperature level linked to climate change.

Range of Framework Policies

The policy research found **over 60 policy and related documents** in The Bahamas that guide, regulate, influence or impact upon the use, conservation, protection, and/or sustainability of the natural flora, fauna, landscape, marine and other environmental resources and activities. These policies cover areas such as:

- (i) Climate Change;
- (ii) Carbon Market/ Credits
- (iii) Nationally Determined Contributions/ Green House Gas Emission
- (iv) Energy;
- (v) Plastics;
- (vi) Wetlands;
- (vii) Fisheries;
- (viii) Flats Fishing;
- (ix) Invasive Species;
- (x) Ozone Depletion;
- (xi) Biodiversity;
- (xii) Wildlife;
- (xiii) Marine Protected Areas
- (xiv) Environmental Impact Assessment;
- (xv) Economic Recovery;
- and (xvi) Access to Genetic/Biological Resources.



Tourism Policy

On the tourism side, the industry is well regulated and its importance to national development and its dependence on the country's marine resources are understood.

The “Derecho Del Turismo En Las Americas,” published in 2020 by the University of Portugal, links the country’s success in tourism to its tourism legislation. Through its policy and legislative framework, the Government of The Bahamas has actively budgeted for and effectively promoted the country, encouraged private investment, and enabled the development of an accommodation sector that adheres to high standards. The Bahamas is seen to be actively involved both directly and indirectly in areas that impact upon tourism development.

The BMOTIA has outlined that the tourism policy of The Bahamas Government is to increase employment, to advance the country’s economic and social development, through earnings from tourism, and to take all possible steps to ensure its continuance as a significant national industry (*BahamaHost, Undated*).

The Bahamas has, therefore, adopted a policy to strengthen linkages between tourism and other sectors, such as agriculture to increase the multiplier effect and to reduce the leakage of foreign exchange (*Tourism Development Corporation of The Bahamas Act 2023*). The policy also seeks to distribute the economic benefits of tourism throughout the country while ensuring sustainability and adaptation to climate change.

Within its wide tourism development policy, BMOTIA supports the Reef Rescue Network, and sustainability and conservation are factored into the work of tourism. A national tourism policy for all

aspects of tourism development, however, is not articulated and no tourism policy pertaining to coral reef restoration and the participation of the tourism industry is documented.

3.2 NATIONAL POLICY & REGULATORY AGENCIES

The analysis reveals that, of the broad range and number of policies, coral reef restoration operates in a framework most influenced and regulated by **five (5) main legislation** that are administered accordingly by respective agencies, each overseeing different elements of environmental management, i.e.:

- (i) The Environmental Planning & Protection Act (2019), administered by the Department of Environment Planning and Protection (DEPP); 
- (ii) The Fisheries Act 2020, administered by the Department of Marine Resources (DMR);
- (iii) The Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act (2021), administered by the Ministry responsible for the Environment; and
- (iv) The Bahamas National Trust Act (2019), administered by The Bahamas National Trust (BNT) (for activities undertaken in the a BNT-managed land and marine parks). 
- (vi) Depending on the project and its location, a seabed lease may be required from the **Office of the Prime Minister**, as the Minister responsible for Crown Lands under the **Conveyancing and Law of Property Act**, administered by the Department of Lands and Surveys.

3.3 FRAMEWORK GOVERNANCE

The regulatory agencies are part of a governance structure called *the Inter-Departmental Blue Economy Coordination Group*. This group is spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources (MoAMR) and includes:

- The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI);
- The Ministry of Environment (MoE);
- The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP);
- The Ministry of Transport and Local Affairs (MTLA);
- The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA), and
- the University of The Bahamas (UoB) and the BNT.

3.4 AGENCIES INVOLVED IN CORAL REEF RESTORATION

With the level of marine expertise and scientific knowledge required, it is not surprising that in The Bahamas, coral reef restoration has been traditionally undertaken **by and associated with scientific, academic, educational, conservation and environmental related private sector and not-for-profit agencies.**

As part of the policy framework, these NGOs and private sector entities also developed guidelines for coral reef restoration and for operating in the marine space. These guide their actions as part of their own self-regulation and also to meet the standard of the field in which they operate. These agencies play a pivotal role

in the collective mission to preserve and rejuvenate the nation's coral reefs.

Work Undertaken

In The Bahamas, these entities carry out research related work that includes monitoring and reporting on the status of corals and propagating and replanting endangered species for reef protection and conservation purposes.

These agencies, inter alia, raise awareness, educate and share knowledge among other coral scientists, practitioners, educators, and communities of the importance of and threats to coral reefs; offer hands-on-education to students; introduce and utilize technology and programmes to support the growth and survival of corals, provide relevant advice to Government and advocate for coral reef restoration and conservation.

Based on the work required, these entities are led by innovation, scientific guidelines and, for underwater work, scuba diving principles.

Key Agencies

Agencies in The Bahamas involved in coral reef restoration related activities include agencies as:

- (i) The Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS);
- (ii) The Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute (CEI); 
- (iii) The Nature Conservancy (TNC);
- (iv) Friends of the Environment;
- (v) Forfar Field Station, International Field Studies Inc.;
- (vi) Coral Vita (commercial); and 
- (vii) The Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF). 

4. REGULATIONS & OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 PERMITTING

To facilitate coral reef restoration efforts, a permit to operate in the marine space is necessary. This permit must be obtained from the respective agency based on the research, its location and the resource collection to be undertaken. Related fees must also be paid accordingly.

4.1.1 Regulations & Permitting Prior to COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19, the following were in place for coral reef restoration activities:

- A permit is required under the Fisheries Act 2020 to conduct marine scientific research in “Bahamian fisheries waters”. This permit requires a plan for the work to be undertaken.
- Permit clearance is first required from the DEPP, with further permitting needed depending on whether the work will be undertaken in a BNT marine park.
- With submission of the appropriately completed application and supporting documents, research permits were issued between 2 weeks to 4 weeks with the total process of obtaining the permits from the various agencies taking up to 4 to 6 months. (Obtaining permits prior to COVID-19, according to a surveyed respondent, “took no time at all”).

4.1.2 Regulations & Permitting Post COVID-19

In the current post-COVID environment, this report notes that:

- The Bahamas established a **Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act in 2021** to provide for the conditions of use

and access to the country’s resources and protected species for purposes of scientific research, and for commercial use. This Act was based on the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)** aimed to allow a fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the country’s genetic marine resources.

- **No research permits were issued in 2019 and 2020** as the country worked on establishing its new Biological Resources Act and as the new DEPP transitioned as a newly legislated entity.
- The country established a **one-stop online portal for the permitting process**, i.e., *The Bahamas Research and Permitting System*, to allow application and payment for permits and registrations relevant to marine research in The Bahamas in one place.



- With an existing backlog of permit applications along with post COVID-19 administrative adjustments to facilitate the provisions of the new Act and to adjust to the online portal, bottlenecks and delays in the issuance of permits occurred.
- Notwithstanding the transitional delays, applications for all related permits are now facilitated through the country’s online permitting system and include permits for and registration of:

(vi) Research;

(vii) Research Facility Operation;

- (viii) National Research Vessels;
 - (ix) Non-National Research Vessels; and
 - (x) Access to Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge in The Bahamas.
- With most of the work occurring in the ocean space, a permit for vessels is a linked requirement to ensure that the vessels utilized during the activity are in good-standing with all government requirements, and are manned by a licensed captain.
 - **Timeline:** Permit issuance has been allocated an online tune-around time of 4 weeks once all required documents and fees are submitted;
 - **Obligation of permit holder:** All permits require a contractual agreement between the institution/applicant and the

government of The Bahamas done in the interest of ensuring equitable outcomes for researchers and communities and biodiversity in The Bahamas.

Among other details, research permits require technical and scientific information to be provided including:

- (i) Data Management Plans;
- (ii) Cruise Plans;
- (iii) Information on the samples;
- (iv) the work to be done;
- (v) the scientific, conservation and monitoring guidelines to be followed, and
- (vi) the equipment to be utilized.

Table 1 summarizes the institutional fees involved in obtaining Research Permits.

Framework Indicators & Policy Gap Analysis Summary are place at Annexes 3 &4.

Table 1: Research Permits & Fees for Coral Reef Restoration Activities, The Bahamas

RESEARCH PERMITS & CHARGES, THE BAHAMAS (Items 1 -4 are Coral Reef Restoration Related)				
#	INSTITUTION	TYPE OF PERMIT	PERMIIT FEES (BH\$)	
			Institutional	Annual Registration
1	DEPP	Terrestrial Marine Permit	\$125.00	\$3,000- \$5,000 and
2	DMR	(1) Marine Research Permit (2) Permit to Export Marine Mammals (3) Permit to Capture & Export Shark	\$55.00	• Researcher- \$1,500
3	BNT	Research Permits within National Parks Boundaries	\$82.50	• Foreign Student (Undergrad)- \$400
4	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Reviews Marine Research Permits (review of marine scientific research permits in the EEZ)	-	• Foreign Student (Grad)- \$700
5	Department of Agriculture (DoA)	CITES Permits (for wild animals and plants)	\$11.50	• Bahamian Student (International)- \$300
6	The Port Department	Coastline Activity and Projects Permits (vessels, crew and their activities)	-	• Bahamian Student (Local)- \$50
7	Forestry Unit	(1) Permit to harvest Timber & Non-Timber Forest Produce (2) Permit to harvest a protected Tree	-	
8	Antiquities, Monuments & Museums Corporation (AMMC)	Exploration and Recovery Permit (relevant to the use of ancient DNA from remains in caves, blue holes etc.)	\$56.00	

Source: Compiled from The Commonwealth of The Bahamas Research & Permitting System (depp.gov.bs)

5. ASSESSMENT AND GAP ANALYSIS

The analysis notes several issues and gaps for consideration including:

5.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Tourism and Coral Reef Restoration Policy Environment

(i) Marine Conservation/Tourism Policy Silos:

Marine conservation and tourism are formally **two separate priority areas** in the national policy framework of The Bahamas.

Policy development in each of these two priority areas operates as a silo and explicit link between them within public sector policies is limited. This creates one of the most significant obstacles to the involvement of the tourism sector in coral reef restoration:

- Coral reef restoration, policy-wise, is a research and marine conservation activity and is handled under conservation and marine-related policies and linked administrative agencies.
- Coral reef restoration as a tourism activity is not included in the existing national marine conservation policy framework.
- Tourism focuses on its own legislations related to tourism promotion, standards and licensing and recently in 2023, Tourism MSME Development. While sustainable development is an underlying principle throughout, coral reef restoration is no a specific linked policy factor.

(ii) Limited Coral Reef Restoration Expertise in Tourism:

A notable challenge is the fact that, while national tourism agencies have been represented on various committees

and attended workshops on reef health etc., scientific and technical expertise do not lie in the hands of these agencies.

(iii) Lack of a Comprehensive and Current National Tourism Policy:

While the Ministry of Tourism has flexibility to collaborate with, support and engage in activities that align with the overall policy to advance tourism development, it opens a level of guess work as to whether or not certain activities will be facilitated.

This is due to there being no specific and clearly articulated current national tourism policy. Such a policy could officially place coral reef restoration in the tourism sphere as an importantly recognized tourism business activity for development and incentivizing.

This is a challenge as, in the **blue tourism economy**, coral reef restoration is a rapidly emerging tourism and conservation activity that has an opportunity, in **conjunction with marine conservation**, to also be guided by and governed under a formally documented and current national tourism policy framework, or a combined blue economy/tourism coral reef restoration regulatory framework, both of which the country does not have or which are not in place.

Such a tourism policy framework serves as an **opportunity to officially establish the value that coral reef restoration, as a tourism activity, brings to the country's** national conservation, blue economy, and climate change objectives. It will also bring attention to the importance of coral reefs in economic recovery, job creation, diversification and in the country's development goals. for a

resilient, dynamic, inclusive and a sustainable economy.

Key Legislation

(iv) **Biological Resources & Knowledge Act & Limitations on Reef Restoring:** While the 2021 Biological Resources & Traditional Knowledge Act requires permitting to access resources for **scientific research or commercial use**, it does not clearly delineate where coral reef restoration tourism activities would fall under ABS. In this regard, the following is noted:

- Although certain activities are stated as being covered under this Act, given the preceding words “such as” before the listed examples indicate that the activities stated are not exhaustive and other activities will be viewed as commercial activities within the interpretation of the Act.
- The **selling of tourism coral reef restoration products and experiences is not clearly excluded** from coverage under this Act. Operationalization of the Act related to tourism activities, is therefore, left to the interpretation of the agency tasked with administering the Act.

There remains a gray area as to where tourism coral reef restoration falls.

(v) **The Fisheries Resources Act 2020 & Permitting Documentation for Coral Reef Restoration:** This Act specifically provides for marine scientific research activities in the Fisheries Waters of the country, for which a license must be obtained.

The provisions of this Act continue to guide coral reef restoration permitting in the post

COVID-19 environment and confirms that coral reef restoration has to apply scientific principles – an **operating capacity gap of most tourism enterprises** especially those in the micro, small and medium size enterprise (MSME) category. Applications must be accompanied by, for example; a Research Plan that must include details such as:

- The nature and objective of the project;
- The method and means to be used, including name, tonnage, type and class of vessels, and a description of scientific equipment;
- The precise geographical areas in which the project shall be conducted;
- Reporting and results submission; and
- The list of participants, sponsors and personnel involved in the research project.

Institutional Arrangements/Governance Structure

(vi) **Lead Agencies in Marine Permitting:** There is opportunity for the formal inclusion of a public sector tourism agency to the agencies involved in the review of permits for marine activities that are marine tourism related in nature - specifically coral reef restoration that involves tourism enterprises.

Currently, no tourism entity is part of the lead agencies permit issuance and review process. *(This may be a demonstrated result of the “silo” effect where, in practice, tourism is not integrated as a critical partner or equal in marine and environmental protection and conservation).*

(vii) **Range of Representatives on the Inter-Departmental Blue Economy Coordination Group.** This group excludes public or private sector representation from tourism. Given the

role and importance of tourism in the marine environment, this further demonstrates the silo and separation of tourism from conservation and marine resource use in the country. There is relevance and opportunity for tourism – public and private representation, to be part of this Group.

Partnership Potential for Coral Reef Restoration

(viii) **Established Partnerships:** In The Bahamas there are strong existing partnerships that can be maximizing to facilitate coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry:

- **NGO/NGO Partnership:** The NGO and scientific agencies involved in coral reef restoration in The Bahamas are collaborating partners. This allows coordinated support to private sector tourism businesses across the country. Leading the NGO/NGO partnership is PIMS.
- **Scientific, Research NGO/Tourism Business Partnership:** This partnership as exemplified by the RRN is one in which PIMS facilitates and leads the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. There is opportunity for a policy framework that facilitates this partnership for the expansion of coral reef restoration with the involvement of tourism.
- **Scientific, Research NGO/Public Sector Partnership:** The NGOs in The Bahamas have a good working relationship with the public sector agencies responsible for the environment and marine protection. Some also have an ongoing link with public sector



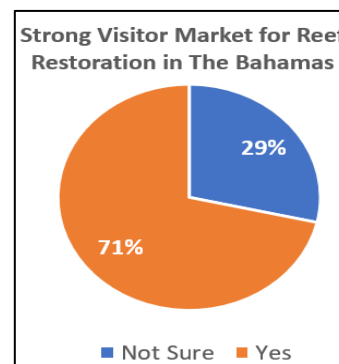
tourism agencies. There is an opportunity for formal expansion of these relations (particularly with tourism agencies) for coral reef restoration and the participation of the tourism industry.

- **Public Tourism Agency/Private Tourism Businesses:** Tourism public and private sector agencies have a long standing and well-established relationship that now needs to expand to another level to ensure that coral reef restoration is recognized and supported as a valid tourism business for development.
- **Public Conservation Agency/Public Tourism Agency Relationship:** There is an opportunity for formal expansion and fine-tuning of public conservation/public tourism agency relationships to remove silos where they exist and to effectively facilitate coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry.

5.2 FEEDBACK FROM TOURISM BUSINESSES

- (i) **Visitor Market for Restoration:** As seen in **Figure 4**, the majority (71%) of tourism businesses involved in coral reef restoration in The Bahamas that participated in the online survey felt that there was a strong visitor market for coral reef restoration.

Figure 4: Strong Visitor Market for Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas



(ii) **Importance & Priority Given to Coral Reefs:**

Very high importance was placed on coral reefs to the economy of The Bahamas by surveyed participants showing that there is a sense in the tourism business community of the importance of coral reefs in the economic structure of the country.

Given the business participants targeted to participate in the survey, it was not surprising to find that coral reef restoration was of high importance/priority in their business (priority percent of 76%).

While it was seen as important to the economy and to the businesses involved, a lower priority percentage was given to the importance/priority placed on coral reef restoration in the national agenda of the country (48%). This demonstrates that there is opportunity for improvement in the perceived priority given to coral reef restoration nationally. These results are summarized in Table 2.

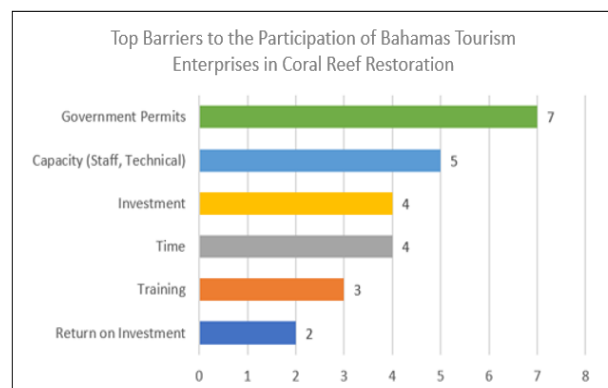
Table 2: Priority Given to Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas

#	Importance /Priority of:	To:	Importance /Priority (0 = none & 6 = highest)	Priority (%) ⁸
1	Coral Reefs	the Bahamian economy	5.7	95%
2	Coral Reef Restoration	your business	4.6	76%
3	Coral Reef Restoration	the National Agenda of The Bahamas	2.9	48%

- (i) **Permitting for Coral Reef Restoration:** The results revealed that tourism businesses in The Bahamas place “Government Permitting” as the biggest challenge to their

participation in coral reef restoration. The research results on this are summarized in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Barriers to Industry Participation in Coral Reef Restoration: The Bahamas



Source: IDB/CCPF Bahamas Blue Economy 2023. Responses of Reef Rescue Network Tourism Business Enterprises

As the tourism industry is not necessarily involved in research, the experience of the RRN demonstrated that it is not ideal for each and every dive operator, dive resort and marine tour operator (mainly MSME) in the tourism sector to obtain individual permits related to their involvement in coral reef restoration given the scientific and technical know-how and supporting documentation required.

Timelines: Tourism businesses have also noted the delays and time-frame required for permitting (up to 6 month or longer when faced with the backlog situation), which they felt were too long. This was compounded with a short time span for the duration of the permit (6 months).

Cost: While overall costs were noted as a hindrance, it was not generally identified as a major factor.

⁸ The % reflect the averages of responses)

Bureaucracy: Tourism businesses felt that the current permitting and allowances for operation within the coastal and marine space are bureaucratic and **do not consider the situation of tourism operators**. Stakeholders note that what tourism businesses sell is **the experience of coral reef restoration as opposed to any coral or physical biological material**.

- (ii) **Capacity:** “Technical and Staff Capacity” or rather the lack thereof, closely followed “permitting” as a barrier to the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. Tourism dive operators and resorts are **not in the scientific business** but in the vacation, leisure or recreational dive business, with complementary but **differing skill-sets to that of the marine and coral reef restoration scientists** and conservation & marine research NGOs that are involved in coral reef restoration.

A view was expressed in the online survey noted:

“it is important that restoration practitioners are trained and experienced”.

- (iii) **Government Regulation for Tourism Coral Reef Restoration Activities:** There was unanimous agreement (100%) by the tourism businesses engaged that that coral reef restoration activities by the tourism industry **should be regulated by Government**. Views expressed the need to ensure that restorative activities are properly done and that standards, guidelines and reporting mechanisms are in place. Comments included:

To ensure that our reefs are protected

We need to ensure things are done properly but we do not want to hamper efforts

There should be standards and guidelines in place as well as reporting

5.3 FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC AGENCIES

(i) Recognition of Involvement in Regulating Tourism

All public sector participants recognized that their agency facilitated some aspect of tourism activities that occurs in the country’s marine space. This includes from, for example, training of flats fishing guides by one agency, to providing permits for recreational fishing by another.

For tourism, it is noted that the dive industry, which is linked to coral reef restoration, is independently operated by the tourism industry but it is monitored and promoted through the Niche Markets Department.

(ii) Regulation of Tourism Restoration Activities:

Like private sector businesses, there is unanimous agreement (100%) by participating public sector agencies (both in tourism and marine conservation agencies) that coral reef restoration activities undertaken for tourism purposes should be regulated by Government.

They all agreed that coral reef ecosystems in The Bahamas are under threat and with that, there was a view that there should be common standards for all coral reef restoration activities including those done by tourism, based on these threats.

A view is that to ensure success, Government must put the standards in place “by engaging NGOs and practitioners with expertise in this area.”

Further, views stressed that better control and regulation must be in place with Government developing protocols that the tourism sector must adhere to.

(iii) **Tourism VS Traditional Coral Reef Restoration**

There was a view that tourism coral reef restoration is “completely different” from the traditional coral reef restoration work done in The Bahamas, and should be handled differently.

With this view, the majority of input from the public sector participants weighted in favour of handling tourism coral reef restoration activities differently from other traditional coral reef restoration activities in a regulatory framework. There were, however, differing views on what “differently” meant. Differently for some meant different “in terms of the data collection framework and processes”; and for other meant, “for permitting fees per person as well as for permit holders”.

On the other hand, the view against handling coral reef restoration differently noted that “approval of activities in the marine space should be handled with the **same efficiency and care for best practices and management of resources** across the board” and “economic and research requirements should be **pre-requisites for tourism industry activities for coral reef restoration** (as it is for all other activities that involve coral reef restoration).

(iv) **Differing Agency Views:** Interestingly, tourism agencies were more in favour of handling tourism coral reef restoration

activities differently than agencies in charge of marine protection and management.

On one hand, tourism agency representatives felt that legislation and regulation can be amended to facilitate direct visitor involvement in coral reef restoration. On the other hand, marine management agencies felt that the protocols already established by DEPP should be pre-requisites to the activities by the tourism industry and, as such, existing policy and legislation do not need adjustments.

There is a view that coral reef restoration can be handled within the current policy framework although “by default” and not “by design”.

(v) **Visitor Engagement in Marine Activities:** There was public sector confirmation that the majority (more than 2/3) of visitors to the country arrive by sea with the majority of them participating in some kind of marine activity including snorkeling, diving, swimming, beaching, fishing and boating.

An opinion expressed the view that “Given the importance of tourism to the economy of The Bahamas and its impact on usage of the natural resources, visitors to the destination should be included in coral reef restoration efforts, either through direct financial or work contribution”.

A view was expressed that today’s travelers are more responsible and desire to make a tangible contribution to the destination visited. “More opportunities should be made to promote their participation in restorative resource campaigns such as mangrove and coral reef restoration”.

(vi) **Tourism Policy Framework Gaps:**

Specific to tourism, there was confirmation that existing tourism legislation does not consider the involvement of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration activities and recognition that there is room for policy to address current issues including this.

5.4 BEST PRACTICE & LESSONS LEARNT

The Bahamas Reef Rescue Network is a best-case example of coral reef restoration with tourism industry participation.

- The RRN is a formally organized, 23-member and growing group of tourism businesses that are committed to improving the condition of coral reefs by restoring populations of coral and other species that will build coral reef resilience. The Network actions are targeted to result in meaningful coral reef restoration across large spatial scales to make substantial improvements to coral reef health.



The Business Plan Vision, Mission, Strategic Positioning and Goal of the Network are indicated in **Figure 6**. The vision, as stated in the plan is for “....a sustainably healthy

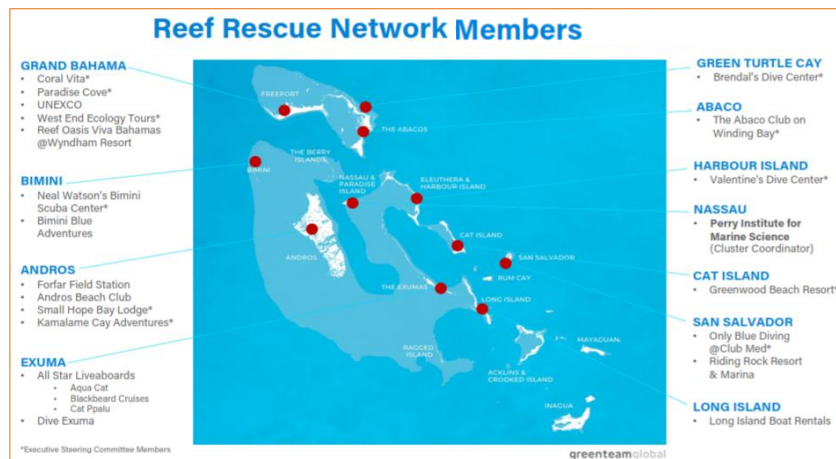
and thriving reef and ocean ecosystem in the surrounding waters of every island and cay in The Bahamas that continually provides value to our communities, visitors and network partners”

Figure 6: Reef Rescue Network Strategic Business Principles



- These core businesses in the RRN comprise MSMEs spread across 11 key destinations in The Bahamas island archipelago (**Figure 7**⁹) and include:
 - Dive Resorts and other accommodation offering diving and/or snorkeling
 - Independent Dive Centers
 - A Specialized Land-Based Coral Farm
 - Operators offering marine-related tours, excursions and experiences and
 - Facilities catering to the Scientific, Academic, Volunteer and Educational (SAVE) tourism market.

Figure 7: Reef Rescue Network Bahamas - Core Starting Member



⁹ Source: CCPF RRN- GreenTeam Global

- The network has a broader membership of partners who are also involved in coral reef restoration activities and/or that support the network's efforts. Larger resorts including Atlantis Paradise Island and BAHAMAR, as well as other supporting public, private and NGO partners are involved with the network.
- **Research Permit:** The majority of the core members are facilitated under the research permit obtained by PIMS, who completes the application and obtains a blanket research permit that allows each PIMS tourism business to participate in coral propagation under the scientific guidance, monitoring and regulatory reporting done by PIMS. Network members agree and officially sign to adhere to the guidelines as established or face expulsion from the network (RRN website: <https://www.reefrescuenetwork.org>).
- **Science & Tourism Merger:** PIMS, therefore, provide the scientifically-guided and innovative coral rearing techniques and expertise while the businesses provide the tourism business acumen and market for the restorative dives. The businesses are trained in coral nursery maintenance, and in leading restorative dives.
- **Coral Reef Restoration Dive Experiences:** With the funding support of the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility (CCPF) and other donors, the network developed several reef restorative dive packages for the visitor market that teaches

and engages them in coral nursery care, coral replanting and reef monitoring. Visitors can, in turn, adopt the coral that they plant and monitor its progress with the photogrammetry provided. They can return to care for and continue to replant corals as frequently as they like.

- **Launch of Coral Reef Restoration Campaign:** In December 2023 RRN, with the support of key public, private and NGO partners, launch its "Coral is Calling - Dive in. Make a Difference" Campaign that launched five new reef rescue products: (i) Reef Rescue Diver: PADI Distinctive Specialty Course; (ii) Reef Rescue Dive Experience; (iii) Reef Rescue Snorkeling; (iv) Reef Rescue Shark Conservation; and (v) Reef Rescue Dive: Sea Turtle Experience (Figure 8).



The target audiences for the campaign include:

- Divers in the US, Canada and on-island
- Water sports enthusiasts, including snorkelers
- Dive Shops in the US, and
- Tour Operators/Wholesalers that sell diving experiences and packages.

Figure 8: Five RRN Reef Rescue Dive Products Launched



RRN Campaign Partners' Info

	ATLANTIS PARADISE ISLAND Resort features one of the world's largest open-air marine habitats, a waterpark, casino, and has an ocean coral nursery accessible for guests to snorkel and explore.		WORLD NOMADS Travel insurance policies will be provided by World Nomads. For 20 years, World Nomads has been protecting, connecting, and inspiring travelers from around the world.
	PADI INTERNATIONAL PADI enables people globally to seek adventure and save the ocean through underwater education and life-changing experiences. Win complimentary branded gear.		BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF TOURISM With 16 major islands, The Bahamas is an unmatched destination, a heart-pounding adventure across 100,000 square miles of the world's clearest ocean.
	SEALIFE CAMERAS SeaLife creates underwater cameras, housings, lighting, and accessories to capture and keep remarkable memories—win a SportDiver & a Micro 3.0 camera.		NASSAU PARADISE ISLAND PB Warm, sun-kissed beaches, clear turquoise waters, and vibrant local culture weave together an authentic Bahamian island experience. Discover your new favorite place to recharge.
	STREAM2SEA Win a "Day at the Reef" gift bag from Stream2Sea, whose reef-safe products are developed for the outdoor adventurer—perfect for coral reef activities.		BAHAMA OUT ISLANDS PB Our purpose is to help spur economic growth for the Out Islands, while enhancing and protecting their ecological beauty. Find your bliss on these laidback islands.

- **Achievements:** In 2023, with the RRN has, inter alia:

- (i) added 14 new coral nurseries at member sites; 
- (ii) expanded the capacity at 4 of their existing member coral nurseries;
- (iii) added 10 new shallow coral nurseries;
- (iv) trained 53 new PADI instructors from tourism businesses to support tourists in reef rescue dives; 
- (v) Participated at the 2023 New Orleans DEMA Show – one of the largest trade

events on the annual calendar for dive businesses;

- (vi) engaged over 80 youths, school students and community members in reef rescue education, field trips and sensitization;
- (vii) certified 20 new snorkel guides in reef rescue for shallow water experiences;
- (viii) trained 15 women in Reef Rescue Entrepreneurship; and
- (ix) out-planted over 2,500 coral fragments and restored 15K square meters or about **3.84 acres of reefs**. 

- **Costs:** RRN members contribute to defraying costs. Given the fund needed to support the Network's Business Plan, the Network continually seeks ways to raise funds.

5.4.1 LESSONS LEARNT

The RRN network has demonstrated through the lessons learnt, the following:

- (i) **Tourism Industry Participation:** Tourism businesses could directly participate in a meaningful way in coral reef restoration in The Bahamas that can simultaneously help the tourism business and the health of the reef.
- (ii) **Product Expansion and Diversification:** Coral reef restoration experiences are new and additional means of expanding and diversifying the tourism product while still supporting product protection and sustainability.
- (iii) **Collaboration is Best:** A collaborative and coordinated approach among NGOs, public and private sector tourism agencies and the tourism industry serve well in The Bahamas. Synergies, shared costs and a singular goal have been most helpful in advancing coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry.
- (iv) **Scientific & Technical Support:** The scientific and technical input of NGOs are needed and complement the advantages that tourism businesses have in the industry. This has allowed shared knowledge and learning exchanges in a manner most suited to expand coral reef restoration and the participation of the tourism industry.
- (v) **Permitting:** With a permitting system that is heavily weighted on the science and project activities, the quickest and easiest way to increase the participation of the tourism industry is to follow the model utilized by the RRN – collaborate with a

scientific NGO and work under the permitting and guidance of the NGO.

It must be noted that the DEPP has declared that coral reef restoration by local businesses would not require permitting.

Notwithstanding, given the scientific and technical approach needed in coral reef restoration, it is still best for tourism businesses to operate in collaboration with a technical NGO with the expertise to support accordingly.

- (vi) **Self-Monitoring:** Working with PIMS, Tourism businesses are positioned for self-monitoring and continuous monitoring by PIMS. This continuous monitoring will enable readiness for any monitoring that may take place on the national level by public agencies.
- (vii) **Marine Protected Areas:** MPAs are well established in The Bahamas. This has further served to protect the marine environment as additional permitting with careful consideration of the work to be done in these areas, is facilitated within the policy framework.
- (viii) **Costs & Sustainable Financing:** In the case of the RRN, coral nursery development and maintenance, and staff training are among the additional costs to be covered by tourism businesses. There are also costs involved for the scientific and technical expertise needed. The bulk of the initial costs to set up the network and to establish coral nurseries at tourism businesses, provide necessary training, and develop reef rescue products were facilitated by PIMS with funding from CCPF and other donors. Sustainable financing is needed for expanding the network with the increased participation of tourism businesses.

(NB: Large Resorts in The Bahamas like Atlantis Paradise Island, also provide funding support to the Network demonstrating the possible dual

role of the tourism industry of both participating in coral reef restoration and funding restoration activities).

CARIBBEAN
HOTEL & TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

- (i) **Formal “marrying” of Conservation, Coral Reef Restoration and Tourism.** While conservation and tourism are on the country’s priority agenda, their link is not effectively demonstrated in the policies and institutional arrangements especially when coral reef restoration is considered.

Therefore, while The Bahamas has created a vast network of legislative documents related to the marine and costal environment and tourism, they are not linked in a way that makes it clear that the Government understands the interdependence of the two priorities.

- (ii) **Conducive Conditions for Advancing Coral Reef Restoration:** There is currently a conducive and promising environment in The Bahamas for discussions and collaboration with Government leaders and policy makers on coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism industry.

The government is currently working towards capturing coral reef restoration in the legislative framework and receiving guidance from relevant stakeholder agencies. Linking technical coral reef restoration experts with tourism operators to ensure implementation will be a critical

approach needed by government as this moves ahead.

- (iii) **Comprehensive Legislative Framework in Place:** While allowances made for coral reef restoration by the tourism sector does not exist, The Bahamas is not lacking for marine conservation and protection policies and legislation. Gaps seem to exist, however, in the related monitoring, regulation, and verification framework, and the effectiveness of the relevant agencies and their related systems to administer and implement the Act.
- (iv) **Multiple Permits:** The Biological Resources Act did not replace any other Act so here still remained a permitting process that required multiple permits from different agencies as done prior to the Act/COVID-19.
- (v) **Potential for Fisheries Regulation:** The Fisheries Resources Act of 2020 offers the best opportunity for the development of accompanying regulations to address coral reef restoration guidelines for the tourism sector. Precedent has been set with the Flats Fishing Regulations that was developed to guide this activity, which serves an official tourism related niche market promoted by the Ministry of Tourism.
- (vi) **NGO/Private Sector Leadership:** From all indications, the way forward for The Bahamas

is one led by Scientific, Research NGO/Private Sector collaboration. These entities bring together the experience, knowledge, expertise and business acumen that are complementary and ideal for increasing coral reef restoration with the involvement of tourism businesses.

- (vii) **Community Engagement:** The potential for engaging the community and vulnerable groups is increased with the involvement of tourism businesses (exemplified by the RRN)
- (viii) **Funding:** Soliciting funding support should be considered to encourage further advancement of the existing NGO/Tourism Industry collaboration in place for coral reef restoration.
- (ix) **Technical Support:** Public sector tourism agencies will benefit from technical support to develop suitable national tourism policies and to build the capacity and awareness of staff to better support coral reef restoration and the participation of tourism.

Summary of the Conclusions are at Annex 4.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) **Support Scientific/Conservation NGO & Tourism Industry Collaboration for Coral Reef Restoration.**

Allow the Private Sector and NGOs to engage further in coral reef restoration activities by providing a suitable policy framework that encourages and incentivizes coral reef restoration as a bona fide and valid tourism business and visitor activity.

The report draws attention to the global conglomerate **Dell Technologies** which has **noted the power of tourism in supporting reef monitoring and health** (pictured below).



Dell is capitalizing this for its commercial benefit to increase the utilization of its technology by tourists who will take pictures of the reefs they visit and have them analyzed by AI in real time so that researchers will build a global picture of areas that are at risk.

- (ii) **Approach to Permitting:** Highlighted by the case of The Bahamas RRN, the approach in place for research permitting to engage tourism businesses tourism industry should remain. Until the system changes, a blanket permit by PIMS should be obtained that would allow the entry of more and more tourism businesses as they sign on. This will have some budgetary implications but a sharing of costs will be far less burdensome. This will also allow tourism businesses to focus on the tourism business of coral reef restoration following the scientific guidelines of PIMS and its scientific/research partners rather than engaging in an application process that places them at a disadvantage.

- (iii) **Capacity Development/Training.** Blue Tourism expansion and coral reef restoration with the involvement of the tourism sector in The Bahamas requires a supportive policy

framework that encourages capacity building and training. This must be two-fold, i.e.:

- **For Tourism Businesses:** Staff capacity building and training on the technical aspects of coral reef conservation must be undertaken. This includes development and maintenance of coral nurseries; instructor training in reef restorative dive; principles of guiding visitors in coral restorative dive and developing coral restorative dive and non-dive products. Additional training and awareness building is also needed on reducing tourism-related damage to reefs such as anchoring on corals or touching/kicking/breaking or taking corals or other marine life.
- **For Public Agencies:** Capacity for the staff of government agencies (both those in tourism agencies and those in conservation agencies) could be improved as it relates to, inter alia, linking conservation, tourism and coral reef restoration in their policy framework and the value that coral reef restoration can bring to achieving their respective public sector goals.

(iv) **Continued Socialization, Sensitization & Awareness Building:** This is an associated element to capacity development but with greater focus on socialization at the policy leadership levels and at the specific technocrat levels to:

- build awareness of the connection between coral reefs as an economic driver;

- understand the status of coral reefs and factors that bear upon their survival, and
- understand and provide policy support related to safety aspects for the tourist.

(v) **Establish a National Sustainable and Blue Tourism Policy & Action Plan:**

Advocate for the development of a Comprehensive National Sustainable Tourism Policy for The Bahamas that incorporates coral reef restoration as a growing aspect of Blue Tourism for development and incentivizing or for a Tourism Sub-Policy on Blue Tourism that covers coral reef restoration as a tourism activity for development and promotion.

(vi) **Recognize and cover tourism in all policies related to the marine/blue economy.** This must be strongly advocated by both public and private sector tourism. Given the role of tourism in the country's economy, and the use and importance of the marine environment to the tourism sector, marine and blue economy policies in The Bahamas should specifically include guidance for tourism activities (with the input of the tourism public/private sectors).

(vii) **National Coral Reef Restoration Framework and Management Plan:** The research findings reveal that consultations on such a Plan are currently being undertaken by TNC and government as a technical support to DEPP.

The intention is to develop new regulations to strengthen the regulatory environment for coral conservation. The recommendation is for this plan to also include a framework for the participation of the tourism industry.

The Framework and Management Plan could, therefore, be the springboard to support

drafting suitable legislation, not only on the coral reef restoration conservation side but also on the tourism side with both including the involvement of the tourism industry participation.

- (viii) **National Maritime Instruction and Training Bill:** The research found that pursuant to the Government's 2023 agenda to encourage education and opportunities in the Blue Economy, a "National Maritime Instruction and Training Bill" was drafted and is currently under review.

This Bill can be an important opportunity to capitalize upon, as it can help to provide the policy framework to fill the capacity development gap faced in the involvement of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration. Advocacy for the inclusion of relevant capacity building is, therefore, recommended. It is important that the tourism sector – private and public – input into the review of this Bill.

- (ix) **Consider New Regulations for the Fisheries Act**

Advocate for the development of new Regulations for the Fisheries Act 2020 to provides guidelines specifically for coral reef restoration and the involvement of the tourism sector. Such Regulations can be easily and quickly done as it will not require the process of going through Cabinet and



Parliament for approval – as would be required by a new legislation.

- (x) **Governance Structure for Marine Protection & Tourism:** The participation of public and private sector tourism enterprises must be factored into the governance structure for research permitting and in relevant decision-making that will impact the way the already highly regulated tourism industry must operate.
- (xi) **Advocacy:** Private sector tourism enterprises are at the forefront in leading the way for coral reef restoration by the tourism industry. The private sector in tourism must, therefore, continue to provide advocacy and lobbying support for policy development and a suitable enabling business environment to facilitate the increased participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration.

Summary Recommendations are at Annex 5.

CLOSING GUIDELINES

Based on the recommendations, summarized strategic guidelines for the consideration of each of the following group of stakeholders were developed:

- (i) National Public Sector Agencies in The Bahamas;
- (ii) The Bahamas Tourism Industry; and
- (iii) NGOs and Funding/Development Agencies with interests in The Bahamas.

These Guidelines at placed at Annexes 6 – 8.

7. CLOSING STATEMENT

With the collaboration between NGOs with expertise in marine science, and tourism businesses to support coral reef restoration, The Bahamas has demonstrated that the tourism industry can be effectively engaged as an avenue to support the restoration of coral populations across the country based on scientific and technically sound coral reef restoration principles.

This collaboration between scientific experts and the tourism industry also facilitates the recommendation of the IDB for expanding the Blue Economy in The Bahamas by fostering niche markets, and **new tourism activities**. For tourism, this results in a **triple win impact** for conservation, tourism and blue economy tourism (blue tourism) expansion in the country:

- (iv) The first impact is ecological as reef health will be improved, positively impacting the sustained quality of the blue tourism products offered by The Bahamas.
- (v) The second impact is on tourism market expansion. Tourism businesses can capitalize on their existing markets while expanding to attract new clientele - much needed as they continue to recover and grow in the post COVID-19 environment.
- (vi) The third impact is on tourism product expansion and diversity. The recreational adventure dive market targeted by the country will have a choice of products that caters to experiences they demand as they explore ways to contribute to protecting

and restoring the natural resources they use – product experiences in even greater demand post COVID-19.

In The Bahamas, further expansion of coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry, however, would be best supported by a **strengthened enabling policy framework** to facilitate this participation more effectively.

This strengthened framework would further demonstrate public sector leadership in advancing blue economy activities that contribute, inter alia, to protection of the country's marine resources and to combating climate change. This enabling policy framework should be one that:

- creates a national policy that supports blue tourism practices such as coral reef restoration;
- recognizes the opportunity offered by the involvement of tourism in coral reef restoration;
- regulates the participation of the tourism industry in coral reef restoration without creating an overly burdensome and bureaucratic regulatory process;
- establishes national guidelines for tourism industry involvement in coral reef restoration, in collaboration with the NGO and private sector already involved in coral reef restoration;
- provides incentives for local businesses that participate in coral reef conservation and restoration efforts; and

- establishes partnerships between government entities, NGOs, and tourism businesses to oversee and fund restoration projects in which the tourism industry is involved.

8. MOVING AHEAD: REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE

In moving ahead, the report highly recommends that a [Regional Policy Dialogue on Coral Reef Restoration](#) is organized in which stakeholders from The Bahamas are invited to participate.

This Dialogue would help to discuss regulatory frameworks, best practices, institutional capacity, governance, and innovative funding mechanisms for coral reef restoration. It should aim to exchange knowledge, attract donors, and foster cooperation and collaboration.

Most importantly, it will encourage public, private and other stakeholders in The Bahamas to better recognize the need for a strengthen national policy framework that specifically facilitates coral reef restoration with the participation of the tourism industry.

ANNEX 1

List of Protected Areas in The Bahamas

Protected Areas Register Database¹⁰

Abaco National Park	Fowl Cays National Park	Perpall Tract
Acklins Bight	Goat Cay	Peterson Cay National Park
Adelaide Creek	Goulding Cay	Pigeon Cay
Andros North Marine Park	Graham's Harbour Iguana & Seabird National Park	Pigeon Cay (Private)
Andros South Marine Park	Grassy Creek Cays	Pigeon Creek & Snow Bay National Park
Betty Cay	Green Cay	Primeval Forest National Park
Big Darby Island	Green's Bay National Park	Prospect Ridge
Big Galliot Cay	Guana Cay	Prospect Water Works
Big Green Cay	Harrold & Wilson's Ponds National Park	Rand Nature Centre
Black Sound Cay National Park	Harvey Cay	Red Bays
Blue Holes National Park	High Cay	Red Sound
Bonefish Pond National Park	Hogsty Reef	Rock off Hog Cay
Booby Cay	Hope Great House	San Andros
Bottle Cay	Inagua National Park	Sandy Point
Cable Beach Golf Course	Joulter Cays	Sea Breeze
Carmichael North	Kemps Bay	Sister Rocks
Carmichael South	Lake Cunningham	Skyline Heights
Cat Cays	Lakeview	South Abaco Blue Holes National Park
Cay Sal	Leaf Cay	South Berry Islands Marine Reserve
Cedar Cay	Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve	South Bight
Central Abaco	Little Abaco	South West Marine Managed Area
Central Andros	Little Derby Island	Southeastern Bahamas Marine Managed Area
Channel Cays & Flat Cay	Little Harbour	Southern Great Lake National Park
Cistern Cay (Private)	Little Inagua National Park	Stafford Creek
Clifton Heritage Park	Little San Salvador	Sweet Bread
Conception Island National Park	Lucayan National Park	The Caves
Coral Harbour West	Mamma Rhoda Cay	The Exuma (Jewfish Cay) Marine Reserve
Corry Sounds	Mangrove Cay	The Retreat
Crab Cay Marine Reserve	Marine Farm	Tilloo Cay Reserve
Crab Replenishment Reserve	Marls of Abaco	Twin Lakes
Cross Harbour	Mars Bay	Union Creek Reserve
Deals Creek	Marsh Harbour	Walker's Cay National Park
Dolly Cay	Marshall	Washerwoman Cut Cays
East Abaco Creeks - Cherokee	Millars Sounds	Water Cay
East Abaco Creeks - Snake Cays	Moriah Harbour Cay National Park	Waterloo
East Abaco Creeks - The Bight	No Name Cay Marine Reserve	West Coast Marine Park
East Grand Bahama	Normans Castle	West Side National Park
East Grand Bahama Cays	Northshore/Gap-Marine	Westward Villas
Eight Mile Bay	Paradise Island	Wood Cay
Exuma Cays Land & Sea Park	Pelican Cays Land and Sea Park	
Finley Cay		

¹⁰ Bahamas Protected Areas Fund <https://bahamasprotected.com>

ANNEX 2

Key Policy Framework Indicators & Finding: The Bahamas

	Indicators	Summary Finding	#	Indicators	Summary Finding
1	Key Public Sector Regulatory/Governing Bodies Impacting Coastal and Marine Conservation and Coral Reef Restoration	(i) Department of Environmental Planning & Protection (ii) Department of Marine Resources (iii) Bahamas National Trust (iv) The Port Department (v) Office of the Prime Minister	7	Tourism Policy	(i) Established Legislation/Policy for: - tourism promotion - accommodation standards/licensing
2	Key Public Sector Regulatory/ Governing Agencies for Tourism	(i) Department of Tourism (ii) Tourism Development Corporation	8	NGO/Public/Private Partnerships for Coral Reef Restoration	(i) Significant Partnerships and Opportunities for Partnership
3	Agencies most involved in or opportune for Coral Reef Restoration related Regulation	(i) Department of Marine Resources (Fisheries) (ii) Department of Environmental Planning & Protection	9	Tourism Operator/ Private Sector Support for Coral Reef Restoration	(i) In place/started (ii) Best Practice Noted (iii) Still to be effectively developed
4	NGOs leading in Coral Reef Restoration Activities & Sensitization	(i) Perry Institute for Marine Science (ii) The Island School, Cape Eleuthera Institute (iii) Forfar Field Station, International Field Studies (iv) The Nature Conservancy (v) The Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation	10	Tourism Businesses involved in Coral Reef Restoration (all part of The Bahamas Reef Rescue Network)	(1) Small Hope Bay Lodge; (2) Andros Beach Club; (3) Coral Vita; (4) Bimini Scuba Center; (5) Dive Exuma; (6) Greenwood Beach Resort; (7) Atlantis Resort; (8) BAHAMAR; (9) Baker's Bay; (10) Caerula Mar Club; (11) Sandals; (12) ForFar Field Station, International Field Studies (SAVE Market); (12-14) All Star Liveaboards-Cat Ppalu; Aqua Cat & Blackbeard's Cruises; (15) Only Blue Diving (at Club Med); (16) Kamalame Cay Adventures; (17) Paradise Cove; (18) West End Ecology Tours, (19) UNEXSO; (20) Brenda's Dive Center; (21) The Abaco Club on Winding Bay; (22) Riding Rock Resort & Marina; (23) Bimini Blue Adventure; (24) West End Water sports; (25) Reef Oasis Viva Bahamas (at Wyndham Resort); (26) Long Island Boat Rentals.
5	Government Coordination and Procedures	(i) Minimal Public Sector Connection/Linkages between Tourism and Coastal and Marine Conservation and/or Coral Reef Restoration	11	Coral Reef Restoration & Policy	(i) Significant NGO/Private Sector Operation within this space; (ii) No Policy in place for Coral Reef Restoration (iii) Policy on the table/in Development led by DEPP,
6	Permit/Licensing Procedures	(i) Permitting Time/Cost/ Procedures Impede Coral Reef Restoration (ii) Does Not Allow for Easy Tourism Operator Adaption (iii) Tourism Engagement of Coral Reef Restoration operates in Gray Area	12	Existing Frameworks for Coral Reef Management, Conservation, and/or Restoration Implementation in Tourism Sector	The elements exist separately for coral reef conservation and tourism sector blue economy operations. However, they need to be linked on a regulatory level.
			13	Existing Frameworks for Blue Economy Tourism Operations	Government support noted for Blue Economy Tourism (based on IDB Loan Programme)

ANNEX 3

Policy Gap Analysis Summary: The Bahamas

#	POLICY ANALYSIS				
	Area	Issue	Obstacle/Challenge	Gap	Opportunity
1	Tourism & Reef Restoration Policy Environment	Marine Conservation/ Tourism Policy Silos. No explicit link between these 2 priorities within public sector policies	To effective engagement of tourism industry and involvement of tourism in coral reef restoration	Tourism gaps in marine conservation policy	For public marine conservation agencies and tourism agencies to work closer/collaborate for policy development in support of tourism industry participation
2	Limited Tourism Sector Expertise in Marine Conservation	Coral reef restoration expertise is not in the hands of tourism	To the direct and singular involvement of tourism	In capacity of tourism industry	For capacity building, technical support, sensitization
3	National Tourism Policy	Lack of Comprehensive, Current National Policy that supports restoration	To recognition of coral reef restoration as a tourism business activity/niche market, and one that should be incentivised	Policy leadership for tourism & restoration	For the development of a comprehensive, relevant policy framework that guides tourism
4	Key Legislation: Biological Resources & Knowledge Act 2021	Does not clearly delineate where tourism conservation falls in this Act	Open to mis-interpretation when trying to advance restoration	In addressing coral reef restoration	To revise this Act for clarity and to positively support restoration by tourism
5	Key Legislation: Fisheries Resources Act 2020	Specifically provides for operation in Fisheries Waters	Lengthy documentation and scientific details to obtain permit that is a deterrent to tourism businesses	Does not consider situation of tourism operators	To develop specific Regulations to guide coral reef restoration by tourism. Precedent set with the Flats Fishing Regulation.
6	Institutional Arrangement & Governance	Lead agencies in Marine Conservation Permitting & Review excludes tourism	To the involvement of tourism in marine conservation decision making that impacts it	In the inclusion of tourism public/private agencies	To include tourism at this important permitting and decision-making level
7	Inter Departmental Blue Economy Coordination Group	Lead public sector agencies for blue economy development	Does not recognise tourism as important in the blue economy	Excludes tourism participation	To demonstrate tourism importance in the marine space and I blue tourism
8	Tourism Industry Views: Permitting	Government Permitting – biggest challenge to tourism business participation in restoration	Application process and requirement lean more on research agencies and not on tourism operators	No permitting or review input from tourism agencies	For more tourism relevant considerations to encourage tourism participation
9	Tourism Industry Views: Capacity	Tourism Technical and Staff Capacity for coral reef restoration	No/limited scientific knowledge of tourism industry needed in coral reef restoration	In tourism industry staff capacity and expertise	To build staff capacity and to train and build staff awareness so that tourism business can effectively participate in coral reef restoration
10	Partnerships	NGO/Public/Private partnerships for coral reef restoration	Excellent Partnerships exist with Tourism Public Agencies/Private Sector partners on the one hand and Conservation Public Agencies/Private Sector on the other	Public sector Partnerships not maximized	To build further partnerships to increase coral reef restoration by tourism
11	Regulation	Regulation of tourism industry participation in restoration	Ensuring application of best practices and resource management	No specific guidelines exist	To develop national guidelines for tourism industry participation in coral reef restoration
12	Best Practice Lesson Learnt	RRN as a best practice for tourism participation	Funding and technical support needed for expansion	Short-term Research Permitting	To mobilize funding & use lessons learnt from RRN to increase coral reef restoration by tourism industry

ANNEX 4

Summary Conclusions: The Bahamas

#	SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS	
	Statement	Detail
1	Meeting National Economic, Conservation & Development Goals	Coral reef restoration, with the participation of the tourism industry, supports the country's development vision for the blue economy, climate change mitigation; tourism product diversification, job creation; and greater protection of the country's marine resources.
2	Formal "marriage" of Conservation/Coral Reef Restoration & Tourism Needed:	No clear link between conservation and tourism that clearly demonstrates public sector understanding of the interdependence of these two country priorities
3	Conducive Conditions for Advancing Coral Reef Restoration	The time is right for collaborative discussion with Government as coral reef restoration legislation is on the table
4	Comprehensive Legislative Framework in place	The Bahamas is not lacking for marine conservation and protection policies and legislation. Amendment for tourism inclusion is an option.
5	Multiple Permit Bureaucracy	The number of marine operating permit required increased with new legislation.
6	Potential for Tourism & Coral Reef Restoration Regulations	The Fisheries Act has the best opportunity for regulations drafting for tourism coral reef restoration activities
7	Excellent NGO/Private Sector Collaboration & Stewardship	The PIMS/RRN collaboration is a best practice for the involvement of tourism enterprises in coral reef restoration
8	Sustained Funding	Tourism industry participation in coral reef restoration is still in its infancy. Expanding their participation would require funding to defray investment costs (nurseries, capacity building and training etc).
9	Technical Support	Technical support to develop policies, and to build awareness and capacity for coral reef restoration is critical

ANNEX 5

Summary Recommendations: The Bahamas

#	SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
	Action	Details
1	Support NGO/Tourism Sector Collaboration for Coral Reef Restoration	NGOs and Private Sectors must continue to lead the way. Government policy support is lagging behind and demonstration of the impact possible will be key in gaining government support
	Retain current Permitting Approach Used for Tourism Business Engagement	Scientific NGO gets blanket approval that allows tourism businesses to collaborate and participate in coral reef restoration.
4	Socialization, Sensitization & Awareness	For stakeholder understanding of coral, conservation For Tourism Businesses to effectively participate and for public agencies to better facilitate conservation and tourism linkages at the policy and governance levels
5	National Tourism Policy & Action Plan Needed	National Policy needed and must be advocated for with support of tourism stakeholders
6	Include Tourism in all marine & blue economy policies	Public/Private/NGO sector advocacy to be provided
7	Tourism input into Coral Reef Restoration Framework and Management Plan	This is currently on the table but discussions are currently being done between Government and NGOs
8	National Maritime Instruction & Training Bill	This is also currently on the table and tourism stakeholders need to ensure that they input into this.
9	Governance Structure for Marine Protection & Tourism	This has to be more encompassing and include tourism sector stakeholders
10	Advocacy	The private sector in The Bahamas has to be the biggest advocate for tourism coral reef restoration and suitable policies that enable the participation of tourism businesses.

ANNEX 6

Guidelines for National Public Sector Agencies in The Bahamas

#	Policy/Strategic Support Area	Detail
1	National Sustainable Tourism Policy	Development of a comprehensive Nation Tourism Policy with a clear Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles that addresses current issues, trends and market demands. This will lead stakeholder involvement and guide all areas of tourism development and partnership by providing a common framework for the advancement and operation of tourism in the new post-COVID era and for the coming years.
2	Blue Tourism Sub-Policy	- Blue tourism should be established as part of the National Tourism Policy or as a separate Sub-Sector Policy. - This sub-policy should consider sub-policy statements for blue tourism that include coral reef restoration as a valid economic activity within the blue tourism economy for development and local investment.
3	Regulations for Coral Reef Restoration	Request that the Department of Marine Resources explore drafting of Regulations for the Restoration of Coral Reefs (for tourism purposes) under the existing Fisheries Resources Act 2020.
4	Business Registration & Planning	Facilitate the registration of Tourism Coral Reef Restoration Businesses as a specific category in the country's Tourism Enterprise Register (currently housed by the Tourism Development Agency), and accordingly support business planning and related entrepreneurial training for the sustainability of these enterprises.
5	Incentives & Concessions	To spur tourism business investment and involvement in coral reef restoration (especially local tourism MSMEs), a special investment incentive and concession policy should be established.
6	Promotion	Continue to promote coral reef restoration as a tourist activity and collaboratively run promotional campaigns and events to support the involvement of visitors in purchasing and participating in coral reef restoration
7	Product Packaging	Support tourism coral reef restoration businesses especially MSMEs, in product development, packaging and pricing techniques for the coastal and marine adventure traveler and dive market
8	Customer Service	Set customer service standards for tourism coral reef restoration businesses & carry out/facilitate training to ensure that the visitor experience is consistent with the customer service goal established by tourism for the country (and as addressed within the National Tourism Policy).
9	Visitor Safety (Link with Hyperbaric Chamber)	Identify and confirm that visitor safety considerations are in place for their participation in tourism coral reef restoration activities. This could include verification that tourism coral reef restoration businesses have relevant link with a hyperbaric chamber facility and procedures for transporting clients if needed to such facilities.
10	Awareness Building	Establish and implement an awareness building and sensitization strategy for coral reef restoration and the benefits of the involvement of tourism and tourism entrepreneurs
11	Capacity Development	Support capacity development and training for public sector staff in tourism agencies and in private sector tourism businesses to increase the effectiveness of the tourism industry's involvement in coral reef restoration
12	Partnership	- Develop formal, effective and sustained partnerships with other public agencies involved in coastal and marine management and regulation and with all NGOs and private sector tourism agencies relative to coral reef restoration - Collaborate to advocate for, guide, support and encourage the increase in coral reef restoration activities - Partner with and/or build upon existing relationships for promotion, capacity development and training with private sector tourism entities and businesses engaged in coral reef restoration. - Partner to mobilize funding opportunities to advance coral reef restoration with tourism sector participation.
13	Awarding	Recognize business leadership in Coral Reef Restoration at the Annual Cacique Award
14	Permit Review	Advocate for the involvement of tourism representation in the review of applications for permits related to coral reef restoration in which tourism businesses are involved

ANNEX 7

POLICY & STRATEGY GUIDELINES FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES & PRIVATE SECTOR AGENCIES: THE BAHAMAS

#	Policy/ Strategy Area	Detail
1	Coral Reef Restoration Leadership	Continue to demonstrate leadership in coral reef restoration as a business policy for supporting conservation and sustainability
2	Business Policy	- Adopt coral reef restoration (direct or indirect) as a business policy - Incorporate a business strategy that supports opportunities for guests/clients to participate in marine conservation and coral reef restoration activities
3	Advocacy	Advocate for: National Policy: A current National Tourism Policy developed with the input of the tourism private sector Blue Tourism Policy: A Blue Tourism Sector Policy that recognises the importance of tourism in the country's blue economy and coral reef restoration as a valid tourism business investment opportunity that can be further supported by investment and operational incentives Coral Reef Restoration Regulations: Coral Reef Regulations for tourism purposes that considers the situation of tourism businesses and allows permitting accordingly Inclusive Decision Making: Better engagement of tourism businesses in policy and regulatory decision-making and governance related to coral reef restoration that impact upon the sector
4	Capacity Development & Training	Engage in and seek out opportunities for capacity development and training to enhance participation in coral reef restoration
5	Partnership	Build upon or develop formal, effective and sustained partnerships with: - Public agencies involved in coastal and marine management and regulations in the country - Public tourism agencies to, inter alia, expand tourism entrepreneurship in coral reef restoration and for continued product development and promotion of reef restoration experiences - NGOs engaged in coral reef restoration and in leading the technical and scientific aspects of coral reef restoration - Community and other groups to ensure wide support and engagement in coral reef restoration awareness building and related coral reef restoration activities organised by tourism businesses
6	Reef Rescue Network	Join the Reef Rescue Network as a strategic means to build synergies for coral reef restoration and for easy facilitation of coral reef restoration activities within the regulatory requirements of government
7	Funding Opportunities	Seek out funding opportunities for technical and development support that encourage tourism businesses in coral reef restoration

ANNEX 8

POLICY & STRATEGY GUIDELINES FOR NGOs & FUNDING/DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

#	Policy/ Strategy Area	Detail
1	Technical Leadership	Continue to provide leadership in the scientific and technical knowledge of coral reef restoration
2	Advice	Sensitize and advise the Governments, the private sector and other stakeholders on the benefits and status of coral reefs and the policy, action plan and strategic approaches best suited to the restoration and continued health of the reef ecosystem across the country
4	Capacity Development & Training	- Build capacity of tourism agencies and businesses on the technical aspects of coral reef restoration - Continue to build the awareness of all public agencies of the benefits to be derived by the involvement of the tourism sector in coral reef restoration
5	Partnership	Build effective partnerships with public sector tourism agencies (Ministry of Tourism and the Bahamas Tourism Development Corporation) for collaboration on coral reef restoration efforts to increase the participation of the tourism sector
6	National Coral Reef Restoration Framework & Management Plan	Engage tourism public sector agencies in meaningful discussions related to the development of the <i>National Coral Reef Restoration Framework and Management Plan</i>. This plan is being proposed by TNC in The Bahamas and is being discussed with DEPP. There is no input from tourism.
7	Reef Rescue Network	- Showcase this network, led and supported by NGOs in The Bahamas, to demonstrate that the participation of tourism businesses in coral reef restoration is possible - Continue to support this network to allow expanded participation of tourism businesses across the country
8	Funding Opportunities	Seek funding opportunities for technical and development support for coral reef restoration and the participation of tourism businesses and to support capacity building in public agencies
9	Award	Encourage the Ministry of Tourism and its partners to establish a tourism business award for leadership in coral reef restoration and sponsor this award.
10	Regional Policy Dialogue	Mobilise funding for and organise a Regional Policy Dialogue on Coral Reef Restoration & the Participation of the Tourism Industry

END OF POLICY ANALYSIS DOCUMENT