

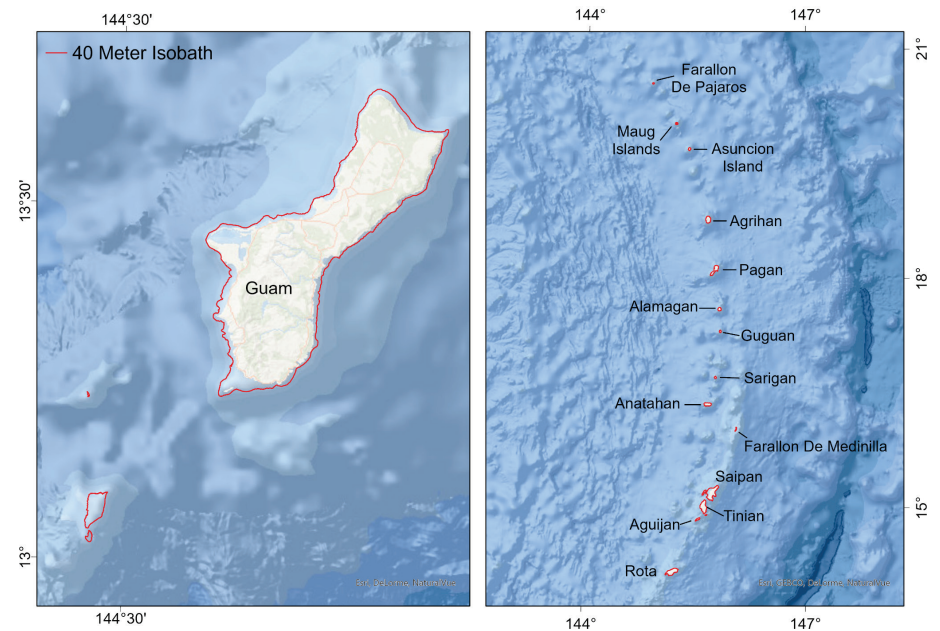
Agency Priorities for Mapping Shallow Coral Reef Ecosystems in Guam and CNMI

Overview

NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) has identified a need for priority locations based on emerging management requirements in shallow coral reef areas along the coasts of Guam and Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The priorities provided by participating agencies will inform research and monitoring activities, address current and future management needs, and maximize opportunities to leverage and complement existing regional efforts. To meet this need, NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) developed a systematic, quantitative approach and online GIS application to gather seafloor mapping priorities from researchers and coral reef managers.

What We Are Doing

In 2023, NCCOS will build a web-based digital inventory of relevant shallow water (up to 40 m) mapping datasets and conduct a data needs assessment for shallow water areas surrounding Guam and CNMI (Rota to Farallon de Pajaros). In February of 2023, NCCOS will work with local agencies to gather their inputs and priorities. The analysis will be conducted once all inputs are received, and results will be shared with participants. The final results of this project will be summarized and shared online and in a final report.



Mapping prioritization area for Guam and Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project focuses on mapping needs in shallow coral reefs (0–40 meters depth).



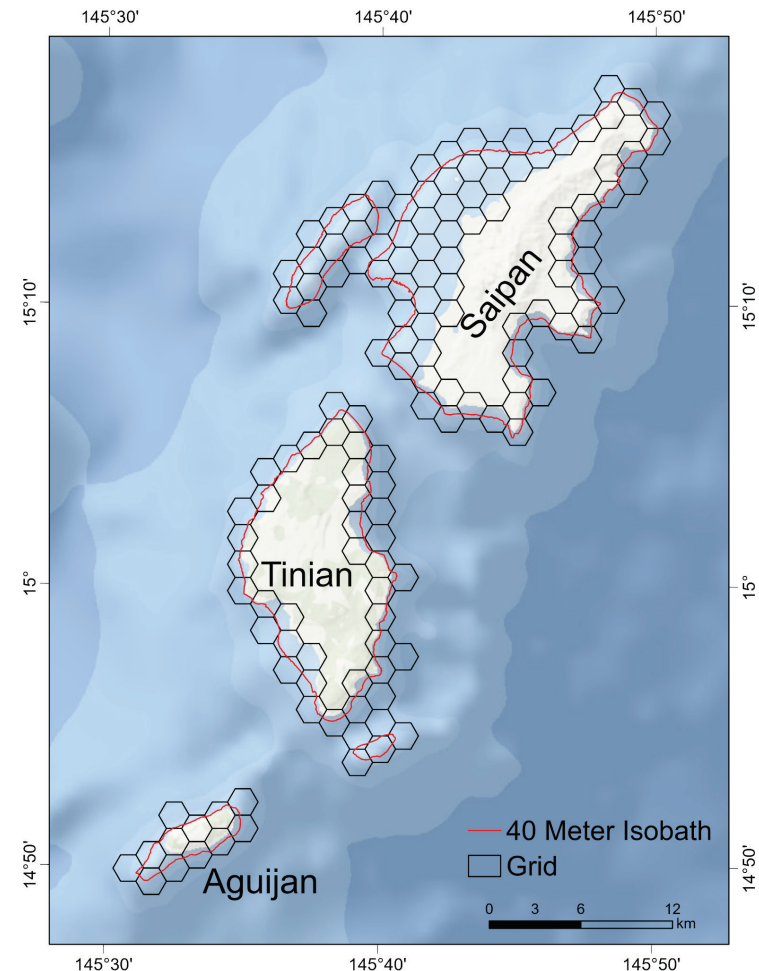
How We Will Do It

To identify priority areas within each jurisdiction, a spatial framework and participatory [online tool](#) will be used to solicit input from select local participants. Input will be combined to identify areas of high priority for collecting contemporary, high quality benthic mapping data (i.e., acoustic surveys, underwater photos). Ultimately, this will provide CRCP and local agencies with a detailed framework of mapping needs for coral reef management in order to protect, conserve, and restore the nation's coral resources. Using similar methods, this effort has been completed in Florida, the Main Hawaiian Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) (see links to results below). Agency priorities will be collected in American Samoa during the summer of 2023.

Project Results and Links

- [Project Page and Online Hub](#)
- [NCCOS Project Page](#)
- Results: Agency Priorities in the Main Hawaiian Islands ([Report](#)) ([Dashboard](#))
- Results: Agency Priorities in Puerto Rico and USVI ([Report](#)) ([Dashboard](#))
- Results: Agency Priorities in Florida ([Report](#)) ([Dashboard](#))

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Example of the spatial framework used to identify benthic mapping priorities off the coast of Saipan, Tinian, and Aguijan. Each grid cell is 1 km per side, or an area of 2.6 km².

