Marine Ornamental Farming

- Very simple fragmentation process for easy adoption by the farmers
- Products that have no edible or local value so farm interference/theft is minimal
- Few or no predators so cleaning and maintenance is minimal
- High value species – suitable for air cargo export
- Allow for other cultural and subsistence activities
- Extremely low environmental impact
Marine Ornamentals
Consists of: hard and soft corals
Giant clams
Other invertebrates such as zooanthids and corallimorphs
MERIP currently has a product list of 28 species most of which are grown locally by self-employed farmers.
Lagoon Based Coral Farming
Broodstock

- Large colonies from which cuttings are taken
- Some regulations require all corals grown to be cut from second generation broodstock
Giant Clam Farming

- Clams are grown at the MERIP facility then transferred to farmers for grow-out.
- This a new activity starting in 2011.
Sponge Farming

- Very simple fragmentation process for easy adoption by the farmers
- Products that have no edible or local value so farm interference/theft is minimal
- Few or no predators so cleaning and maintenance is minimal
- Lightweight species – suitable for shipment by mail or air cargo
- Allow for other cultural and subsistence activities
- Extremely low environmental impact
Sponge Species

- Two species of sponges are grown: Micronesian Wool sponge – *Cosinodermata matthewsi*. Larger and coarser. 2-2.5 year grow-out
- Facial sponge – *Spongia matamata*. Smaller and softer. 9-12 month grow-out
Setting up your farm
Natural Sea Sponge

An All Natural Eco-Safe Product from Micronesia
Community Technology Transfer

- Individuals from fishing communities/families are encouraged to begin farming
- MPA community members also encouraged
- Individuals, families or small groups run the farms. These are not village farms.
- Farmers receive all necessary training, equipment and supplies and broodstock to start their farm
Who are the Farmers

• Generally fishermen from poorer coastal communities
• Usually subsistence or semi-subsistence
• Many younger people
• Often unemployed or underemployed
• Selected through word of mouth or interest
• Currently work with over 50 individuals
What are some constraints

- Slow uptake by farmers, suspicion of new technologies and development agencies (private and public), other opportunities
- Slow grow-out time for wool sponges 2-2.5 years
- No history of organized farming, also people don’t eat these products so it is hard for them to imagine why they should grow it.
- Cultural obligations
What has worked

• Constant communication and training with farmers through meetings and site visits
• Growing the industry slowly to avoid disappointment for farmers
• Providing necessary resources for farmers
• Communication with government and NGO partners
• Building strong private sector marketing links
• Adopting a long term strategy to training and funding
• Ensuring our farmers know their obligations
• Incentivizing farmers through pro-rated payments