

Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape Progress Report Card 2016

FOREWORD FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN COMMISSIONER

In 2010, the Leaders of Pacific Island Countries and Territories endorsed the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO)*, demonstrating great international leadership in integrated ocean management. Their overarching vision, as articulated in the FPO, is for:

“A secure future for Pacific Island Countries and Territories based on the sustainable development, management and conservation of our ocean”



Pacific Ocean Commissioner Dame Meg Taylor

As large ocean island states (LOIS), this vision remains relevant, and as the Leaders appointee for the important role of Pacific Ocean Commissioner in late 2014, it has been my goal to unite Pacific countries and territories through sustainable ocean management and use - across the vast ocean area that is the Pacific Islands Ocean Region – with a focus on coordination, collaboration and integration. This, of course, does not mean everything is as it was five years ago. With fast and ever-changing regional dynamics, we need to remain responsive, including to the direction provided by Pacific Leaders, and to the emerging issues, challenges and opportunities.

This document is the first report card measuring progress across the region towards the vision of the FPO. Overall, the Pacific has made positive steps toward a secure future for our people. Out of all the outcomes, positive change toward Outcome 9: Defined Jurisdictional Rights and Responsibilities, and Outcome 3: Sustainable development, management and conservation of our Ocean have been the most significant. There is now a dedicated and funded program in place to deposit Pacific Island maritime boundaries with the United Nations, and a doubling of marine areas now under management or protection. The Pacific region has also seen a very significant increase in the value of tuna fishery access fees to PICs, contributing to economic security of the region. This achievement has been largely led and driven by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Vessel Day Scheme (VDS).

Some key areas for improvement include recurrent budget allocations for coastal fisheries, and the need for sustainable financing and strengthened governance measures. Further to this, a key finding emerging from this evaluation is that existing monitoring and reporting efforts in the ocean sector are well developed with regards to fisheries, but highly underdeveloped for other sectors, such as deep sea mining and tourism. Developing appropriate indicators to accurately measure our progress in all relevant areas and aspects will require dedicated action and resources. These areas of improvement and information needs provide us with a snapshot of where future efforts might be directed in order to support the region’s progress toward a secure future for our ocean and people.

Progress has been measured against a set of outcomes identified as necessary in order to achieve this overarching vision. These outcomes and their associated indicators were developed through a consultative process with partners of the *Pacific Ocean Alliance*. Achieving the FPO vision involves all sectors and scales with an interest in the ocean, making it a complex and multi-faceted process. This report card is not a comprehensive assessment, but is designed to highlight key areas of progress, gaps and concerns for consideration by policy and decision makers. It is complemented by the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape 2016 Summary Report of Results*, which can be referred to for more information on the results, indicators and methods used to develop this report card.

Meg Taylor, DBE

Pacific Ocean Commissioner

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It is important to note that the FPO and outcomes described below do not have set target levels that the region should be striving towards. Therefore, the categories assigned to the outcome identify whether change has occurred, rather than progress toward a specific number or level of action.

The geographical scope of this results report includes that part of the Pacific Ocean in which the island countries and territories (Pacific Communities) that are members of the organizations comprising the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) are found. As such, the extent of the region includes not only the area within the 200 nautical miles Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) boundaries circumscribing these island countries, but also the ocean and coastal areas that encompass the extent of the marine ecosystems that support the region. Twenty-three Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) were assessed in this evaluation¹. The Pacific region was found to have made significant positive change towards the following outcomes:



Significant Positive Change

OUTCOMES

- 9: Jurisdictional rights and responsibilities defined**
- 3: Sustainable development, management and conservation of our Ocean**

The region has made commendable progress towards addressing 'jurisdictional rights and responsibilities'. Ensuring that all maritime boundaries have been appropriately defined and declared under international law underpins all other ocean related efforts by providing ongoing certainty over resource ownership and access for all stakeholders, at both the national and sub-national scale.

The Pacific has undergone significant positive change against this outcome, with 10 countries having deposited baseline and the outer limits of their exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with the United Nations since 2010 (bringing the number up to 15 of 23), a number of which are the result of the Pacific Community's Regional Maritime Boundaries project.

A significant positive change has also been identified against Outcome 3, based on the indicator of 'Proportion of Pacific EEZs under multiple use management or protection'. According to available data, the Pacific has seen a 134% increase since 2010 in the proportion of total PICT EEZ's under management or protection, with the current area estimated at 11,059,247km². Important to note, however, is that these areas also need to be effective in order to achieve positive change. The *Background Report* provides a list of 8 criteria proposed for future evaluations of effective multiple use managed areas.

¹ American Samoa, Australia, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna.

The Pacific region was found to have made moderate positive change towards the following outcomes and facilitators:



Moderate Positive Change

OUTCOMES	FACILITATORS
<p>1: A Secure Future for Pacific Island Countries and Territories</p> <p>6: Regional integration and solidarity</p> <p>7: Equitable, inclusive and accountable decision making</p> <p>11: Integrated conversations across sectors and stakeholders</p> <p>14: Creating space, inclusive processes for engagement</p>	<p>4: Working at regional, national and local levels</p> <p>5: Political will and leadership</p>

There is still a large amount of work to be done however. Progress against Outcomes 1 and 6 has largely been in the form of increased value of tuna fishery access fees and employment in the tuna industry, and the readily available information on these indicators. The Pacific region has seen very significant increase in the value of tuna fishery access fees to PICs, contributing to economic security of the region, largely drive by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Vessel Day Scheme (VDS). Achievements which have driven positive change against Outcomes 7, 11 and 14 and Facilitators 4 & 5 include political support for the FPO, recent establishment of, and efforts by, the *Pacific Ocean Alliance* to engage across ocean sectors and scales, and various open forums held throughout the region such as those held by the *Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation*, the *Pacific Islands Development Forum on the Blue Economy* and the *Pacific Ocean Alliance*. These initiatives are largely regional in focus, with insufficient information collated and available to report on their progress at national or sub-national levels. *The cause and effect of regional policy implementation on countries and communities should become a consideration in future assessments of high level regional forums and initiatives.*

Based on the indicators provided, little to no change has been observed for the outcomes below. It is important to note that little change may not be a negative outcome, but this can also mean maintenance of existing satisfactory levels, as with the case of 3 of 4 main tuna stocks.



Little to no change

OUTCOMES	FACILITATORS
<p>2: A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island communities</p> <p>4: Good ocean governance</p> <p>5: Pacific ownership, stewardship and shared responsibility for the ocean</p>	<p>1: Sustaining action</p> <p>5: Political will and leadership</p>

With respect to 'Good Ocean Governance', this is reflective of the indicator used, which is PICs as signatories to relevant multilateral environment agreements (MEAs). Noting that most MEAs predate the FPO, and only a small number of ratifications have occurred since adoption of the FPO in 2010, there remain significant gaps for a number of key instruments. *Enhancement of this indicator may be warranted for next reporting period to bring it in line with relevant indicators of SDG14.*

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Minimal progress has been made toward 'Pacific ownership, stewardship and shared responsibility for the ocean' and 'sustaining action', based on the indicator of allocated budget and staffing to coastal fisheries management. The data indicates that in recent years, only around 18% of total Pacific fisheries budgets is allocated to coastal fisheries, which is around 4% of the total production value of Pacific coastal fisheries.

With regards to Outcome 2 'A healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of Pacific Island Communities', this outcome is the result of the indicators which found no change to the status of the four main tuna stocks, with three remaining not-overfished and one (Bigeye) remaining overfished. By comparison, in terms of ecosystems sustaining livelihoods of Pacific Islanders, while the status of tuna stocks has neither deteriorated nor improved, the region has seen moderate positive change with an 87% increase of direct employment in the tuna fishing industry since 2010. The region's Ocean Health Index score also contributed to this result, with no clear trend observed. The global benchmark is 60, and PICT scores ranged between 49 and 67, with around 50% of PICTS with scores lower than 60, and 50% of PICTS with scores higher.

The following outcomes and facilitators were not assessed due to a lack of existing suitable indicators or data.

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Data Deficient – No Assessment

OUTCOMES

- 8:** Led and informed by those most directly affected
- 10:** States have the capacity to monitor and enforce
- 12:** Community engagement
- 13:** Recognition of Pacific ways and knowledge

FACILITATORS

- 2:** Embedding Pacific ways and knowledge
- 3:** Listening, learning, liaising and leading
- 6:** Adapting to rapidly changing environments

A key finding emerging from this evaluation is that existing monitoring and reporting efforts in the ocean sector are well developed with regards to fisheries, but highly underdeveloped for other sectors. Given that this report is based primarily on existing reporting processes, measurements of the outcomes in this report are often based largely on fisheries indicators, which are not necessarily a representative depiction of sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean in the Pacific. *There is a need to develop more comprehensive indicators addressing other sectors of high importance to the Pacific, such as deep sea minerals, tourism and transport.*

The FPO and results framework place significant emphasis on the need for inclusive, integrated and Pacific-led governance of the ocean, however there is a significant lack of existing data or reporting on these aspects. As a result, it is difficult, or often impossible, to measure progress towards these crucial objectives. *Identifying and developing appropriate indicators will require dedicated action and resources.*