



LISTENING TO THE PACIFIC

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM REGIONAL INITIATIVE SUBMISSION TEMPLATE 2016

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

Regional Issues and Guidance

When preparing your submission, think carefully about why this is an issue of regional significance and why it should be placed before the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. For further information on the process and types of submissions being sought, please refer to the guideline below.

To Submit a Regional Initiative

1. Complete the below regional initiative template below.
2. Submit initiative to the Forum Secretariat by deadline: **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016**.
3. Initiatives should be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, through one of the following ways:



FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	Conservation International (CI)– Pacific Islands and Ocean Programme, member of the Pacific Ocean Alliance
Name and position of primary contact	Sue Miller Taei Executive Director, CI Pacific Islands and Ocean Programme
Email address	
Phone number	
Fax number	
Mailing address	<

2. Name of Initiative

<Higher Hopes for High Seas – addressing the challenges of our common ocean neighbourhood.
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3. What is the common regional issue or challenge that this regional initiative aims to address?

You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

Higher Hopes for High Seas – addressing the challenges of our common ocean neighbourhood.

The high seas are part of our neighbourhood in the Pacific Islands region. For the most part where your neighbour is not a fellow Pacific Island country or territory (PICT) it is the high seas. Effective and integrated management of the high seas is in the individual and common interest of every PICT as many resources are shared e.g tuna, or are in common e.g deep sea minerals, and more resources are yet to be discovered. Even more fundamentally the high seas are part of Pacific Island culture and heritage, one of voyaging and navigating through a vast ocean realm. It is a renewed voyage that this proposal calls for, led by Forum Leaders together to provide a united Pacific voice and action regionally and internationally to ensure that the management of high seas is complementary to, and harmonised with, ocean management within our jurisdictions.

Currently the high seas are not well managed and management:

- faces significant barriers within sectors, e.g lack of progress in many areas of tuna management by WCPO,
- lacks integration across sectors with no effective integration mechanism between mining, fisheries, transport, conservation and no environmental impact process to assess risks and conflicts between existing or new uses of the high seas ,
- has complete gaps in management e.g no mechanism to create marine protected areas,
- and is not cognizant of increasing threats to the ocean from climate change.

This must not continue as the lack of management in the high seas threatens the significant and empowering effort that PICT's have taken in recent years within their Exclusive Economic Zones, exemplified well by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement in the management of tuna and by the increasing number of large scale marine protected area commitments to the Pacific Oceanscape.

In essence we must ground ourselves back to the vision agreed in UNCLOS whereby the global community saw the need to:

“...promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment...”

This UNCLOS vision of our oceans, including high seas, has yet to be fully realised. We have not effectively conserved living resources in the high seas if track records on whales and trends in big eye tuna and shark issues are to judge by. We have not invested enough in study, or measures to protect or preserve this part of our marine environment. Indeed, our region needs investment, technology transfer and capacity to fulfil such an agreed role in an equitable manner given our responsibility as ocean stewards in the Pacific. Importantly, at the time UNCLOS was agreed there was no issue of climate change and concerns for the radiative (warming and sea level rise) and pollutant (acidification) effects on the ocean, issues which dominate our policies of today. It is time, more than time for Pacific Island Forum nations to unite and act on high seas



issues.

Key focus areas proposed are:

- to explore strategies to empower ourselves in this region to realise this vision of UNCLOS for not only our zones but the surrounding and enclosed high seas,
- to increase our capacity to track and engage in UNCLOS more effectively together on high seas issues, including in our effort to negotiate a new international instrument for Biodiversity in areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
- to realise the potential of the Leaders' Framework for the Pacific Oceanscape in this regard and resource and empower the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and its partnership with with the Pacific Ocean Alliance to unite all sectors, nations in realising action for improved high seas management.

Important links to national, regional and international goals/policies include:

- National: aim to ensure measures within jurisdiction e.g tuna fisheries management, large scale MPAs, are not threatened by or cause disproportionate burden to Pacific Island states due to a corresponding lack of management in this high seas.
- Regional: give effect to Pacific Island Leaders' aspirations for our ocean including the Pacific Oceanscape (Actions 3c, 4c, 6a) and Regional Roadmap for Fisheries and to develop successful empowering strategies as exemplified by the PNA in its management of tuna.
- International: to unite efforts in the region to engage in the development of a new instrument that will provide the needed implementation of UNCLOS's vision applied to the high seas.

Together Leaders can unite, act and realise a new era of integrated ocean management inclusive of high seas.

4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

You may also want to address the following in this section:

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?

Who are the main beneficiaries?

How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?

Has the initiative been carried out previously?

What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?

Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.



Higher Hopes for High Seas – addressing the challenges of our common ocean neighbourhood.

Efforts to date in ocean management by Pacific Island states have naturally focused on their respective jurisdictions. These Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) are some of the largest on the planet and represent domain for many island states that comprises > 95% of sovereign jurisdiction. They quite rightly demand our attention. But they are not isolated domain, indeed they are all connected reflecting the continuous ebb and flow of the ocean they are part of as the aquatic realm representing the largest ecosystem on our planet` the ocean. These high seas are part of this realm and one that increasingly warrants our attention. If managed well the high seas like EEZs can offer principal ways and means to significantly contribute to national development aspirations and indeed the vision for the Pacific Framework for Regionalism itself for a “*a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives*”. Currently not managed well these same high seas areas represent a real threat to our in`zone efforts due to lack of harmonization, complementarity and integration across ocean management. This threatens efforts in EEZs for improved fisheries, conservation in the form of MPAs, safe transport, and newer efforts to ascertain benefit and costs of deep`sea mining. In various combinations these issues are important to ALL Pacific Island states and require a new level of attention from Leaders.

The notable exception to this within EEZ focus of effort is collaboration on tuna where the shared nature of tuna resources has demanded both a collective and innovative approach to manage tuna. At the heart of success here is the manner in which Pacific Island parties to the Nauru Agreement empowered themselves to effect change in tuna management. It is this spirit of empowerment that is needed more broadly across our ocean realm and needed collectively to address issues for the high seas that surround us.

Conservation International is promoting to Forum Leaders the need for increased collaboration and action for high seas management as a founding NGO partner in the Pacific Oceanscape and the Pacific Ocean Alliance and we commit to working with Leaders and their respective countries to give this effect. Coordinated by the Forum’s Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner we have co designed and partnered in the region’s first` ever meeting focused on high seas issues in the Pacific. “High Hopes for High Seas” held in May 2015 in Fiji was a ocean`change event for gathering governments, regional and global agencies, experts and civil society together and the report of this meeting is attached to this application. In essence this proposal aims to support development and implementation of issues and actions identified at this regional meeting and by the Technical Working Group on BBNJ held immediately after.

Put simply the high seas are part of our ocean neighbourhood. Increased care for our ocean neighbourhood is needed. We ignore or under invest in these high seas issues as a region at our peril.

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?

By helping ensure that management beyond jurisdiction does not threaten measure taken within Pacific Island states.

Who are the main beneficiaries?

All Pacific Island Forum members and their peoples and all countries that hold EEZ domain in this region including territories and states from outside the region like France and the USA.



How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?

Increased attention by Pacific Island Leaders on high seas issues as part of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) is highly warranted as the FPR itself recognises the custodian role of this ocean by Pacific Islanders. The FPR explicitly values the integrity of the ocean meaning that working on high seas issues is not optional. Fostering integrated management and good governance of high seas will rely on all the values of the FPR to ensure the integrity of our ocean and in a manner that is inclusive, transparent, accountable and equitable. Improved high seas management will contribute to all the four objectives of the FPR as success will help ensure sustainable development and

Has the initiative been carried out previously?

No, Leaders have recognised issues for the high seas e. g in the Pacific Oceanscape but have yet to realise a comprehensive coordinate regional approach to give effect to actions needed.

What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?

None, rather the real risk lies in action as right now the relative poor management of high seas in our region threatens all measure to better manage within our jurisdictions.

Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?

Yes, the platform to effect this is design in the Forum's Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and Pacific Ocean Alliance but needs investment.

5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.



Improved high seas management in this region will only be effective if the region unites in common agreement and action. Pacific Island Leaders have provided the framework for this in their agreement in 2010 for the Pacific Oceanscape. However much of the potential of the Pacific Oceanscape remains unimplemented and/or under resourced. The key here is fostering integrated management of high seas that is complementary to and harmonised with measures taken within Exclusive Economic Zones. This does not substitute for action by Ministers, officials in respective sectors eg fisheries but to realise that action for integrated governance and management of the ocean transcends both national boundaries, sectors and issues. This goes to the heart of why Forum Leaders' established the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and Pacific Ocean Alliance and it is time for Leader's to give urgent needed attention to implement existing commitments together for the high seas and to explore ways to empower our nations and peoples in line with our voyaging heritage and cultures to navigate high seas issues for the common good of the planet. Put simply Pacific Island Forum Leaders together can integrate across all sectors and take the high level leadership in an inclusive, equitable, and just manner for needed improvement for management of this ocean.

6. Attachments

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

Please attach no more than 3 pages.

7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website

In line with the process outlined in the [Framework for Pacific Regionalism](#), all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

8. Guidelines and Contact Details

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



Submission Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist those submitting regional initiatives through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. For more information contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:

1. About the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

The Framework for Pacific Regionalism represents a high-level commitment to pursuing deeper regionalism and establishes a process for developing and prioritising regional public policy. It articulates the vision, values and objectives of an enhanced Pacific regionalism. It also sets out an inclusive process by which anyone can propose ideas for regional initiatives to address key challenges facing the Pacific. For more information, [click here](#).

2. How do I submit a regional initiative?

To submit a regional initiative, complete all sections of the submission template and submit to the Forum Secretariat by no later **5pm, Fiji time, Sunday 10 April 2016**.

Submissions must be made on this template. Submissions made directly via email, letter or other format will not be considered.

Delivery of submissions can be made via one of the following

3. Who can submit an initiative?

Any interested stakeholder can submit a regional initiative. This may include individuals, or groups of individuals or organisations, including government, civil society (including church or religious organisations), the private sector, community groups, multilateral agencies and CROP agencies.

4. What information is required?

In completing the regional initiative template, you should:

- a. Identify and seek to respond to issues and challenges that are common to the Pacific region and that could be best addressed through a regional response.
- b. Demonstrate that a high level political decision needs to be made.

This is not a process for seeking endorsement of existing projects or activities. No standing fund exists in which to allocate funds to initiatives that are endorsed. Submissions that consist of projects or initiatives that may be ordinarily carried out under the governance arrangements or work-plan of the submitting organisation are unlikely to be successful.



- c. Demonstrate how the initiative would contribute to one or more of the objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

5. What assistance will the Forum Secretariat provide through this process

The Forum Secretariat will provide general advice and suggestions to those making submissions. This advice will include clarifying the information set out in this guideline, such as how initiatives can be completed and submitted; the type and level of information sought; the assessment process; and clarification of the overall process.

6. Assessment process

Step 1 The Forum Secretariat will collate all submitted initiatives and check them for completeness.

Step 2 The Forum Secretariat will, in collaboration with CROP agency officials and other experts as required, conduct a first round of assessment of all submitted initiatives using the tests for regional action (see Table 1 below).

Step 3 The Forum Secretariat will provide all assessed initiatives to the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR), which will assess initiatives against the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework (see Table 2 below). Reports on current regional initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that are in progress will also be considered by the SSCR when they assess initiatives.

Step 4 Based on its assessment of all submissions, the SSCR may recommend a limited number of initiatives to Forum Leaders. Those initiatives recommended to Leaders will be first sent to the Forum Officials



Committee for commentary and incorporation on the Leaders' annual meeting agenda. Forum Leaders will then receive the final recommendations of the SSCR and make decisions on these at the annual Forum Leaders Meeting. In 2016 this meeting will take place in the Federated States of Micronesia

Proponents whose initiatives have been selected for Leaders' consideration will be informed of this selection within two weeks of the SSCR's decision. All proponents will be informed in due course of the outcome of their submissions.

7. Leaders' decisions on initiatives

Forum Leaders' decisions on initiatives will be publicly announced through the Forum Leaders' Communique that is issued at the conclusion of the Leaders' meeting. As directed by Leaders, the Forum Secretariat will initiate implementation of the decisions in consultation with the proponent, the proposed implementing agencies, funding partners, and other relevant organisations or stakeholders.

8. Further help and feedback

For further information or guidance or to provide feedback on the process, contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat:



Table 1 – Tests for Regionalism

TEST	CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
Market test	The initiative should not involve a service that markets can provide well.
Sovereignty test	The initiative should maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments (countries, not regional bodies, should decide priorities).
Regionalism test	<p>The initiative should meet one of the following criteria at a sub-regional or regional level, in support of national priorities and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ establish a shared norm or standard▪ establish a common position on an issue▪ deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope realise economies of scale▪ overcome national capacity constraints▪ complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law▪ facilitate economic or political integration▪ Where benefits accrue sub-regionally, the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.
Benefit test	<p>The initiative should bring substantial net benefits, as demonstrated by a cost-benefit analysis. The distribution of benefits across countries and across stakeholders within the region should also be considered—particularly with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The relative costs and benefits for smaller island states (an “SIS test”)▪ How inclusive the proposal is of all stakeholders who might benefit from regionalism.
Political oversight test	The initiative should require the Leaders’ attention and input (as opposed to being within the mandate of Ministers or other governing bodies).
Risk and sustainability test	The initiative should demonstrate a robust risk and sustainability evaluation, be based on a sound implementation plan, be supported by some identified funding, and demonstrate available capacity and experience for successful implementation.
Duplication test	The initiative should not be currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there should be no duplication of effort.



Table 2 – Vision, Values and Objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

Vision:

Our Pacific Vision is for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives

Values:

- We value and depend upon the integrity of our vast ocean and our island resources.
- We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.
- We embrace good governance, the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies.
- We seek peaceful, safe, and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific.
- We support full inclusivity, equity and equality for all people of the Pacific.
- We strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond.

These Pacific regional values will guide all our policy-making and implementation.

Principal Objectives:

- Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.