

Our Sea of Islands Our Livelihoods Our Oceania

Pacific Regional Ocean Policies

Catalysts for implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (2002):

- Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (2010)
- Palau Declaration on '*The Ocean: Life and Future*' - Charting a course to sustainability (2015)
- Pohnpei Ocean Statement: *A Course To Sustainability* (2016)
- Future of Fisheries: A Regional Roadmap For Sustainable Pacific Fisheries (2015)

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All quotes are from Epeli Hau'ofa: *We Are The Ocean-Selected Works*, University of Hawaii Press, 188 pages (Hau'ofa, 2008)

Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania

Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape

Introduction

In our Pacific Islands Ocean Region the ocean unites and divides, connects and separates, sustains and threatens our very survival. For all those who venture within this, the world's largest ocean, and who have made it their home the ocean influences every aspect of life. It has done so for millennia.

In essence the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape is seen as a catalyst for action for our Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy to protect, manage, maintain and sustain the cultural and natural integrity of the ocean for our ancestors and future generations and indeed for global well-being.

The 'Pacific Oceanscape' is a vehicle to build pride, leadership, learning and cooperation across this ocean environment.

Overall the intent is to foster stewardship at scale – local, national, regional and international to ensure in perpetuity the health and wellbeing of our ocean and ourselves.



“Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth”

Epeli Hau'ofa

Framework principles

In recognising the importance of building on existing policies and agreements, the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape supports implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) through catalyzing efforts and creating synergies, with emphasis on those elements that relate to integrated ocean management and biodiversity conservation.

The guiding principles are drawn from the PIROP and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (2014), as the pre-eminent regional policy instruments for our ocean, good governance, sustainable development and, peace and security:

- **Improving ocean governance** - to engage leaders, decision-makers, resource custodians and other stakeholders to establish, strengthen, and implement appropriate and practical governance mechanisms that contribute to effective coordination and implementation for a healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods of Pacific Island people
- **Sustainably developing and managing the use of ocean resources** - to develop and embrace practices, approaches and processes that promote sustainable ocean resource use, development and management based on existing experiences and foreseeable levels of national funding and capacity to address challenges of isolation and infrastructure. In order to replenish, sustain and increase our knowledge base, it is necessary to generate new knowledge about the oceans upon which our way of life depends. Fundamental to the sustained generation of new knowledge and capacity is the continuing education of a cadre of scientists and policy makers. Educating and training people within the region is the best strategy for ensuring the continuity of marine understanding and replenishment of knowledge
- **Maintaining the health of the ocean** - to reduce the negative impacts of human activities and implement measures that protect and conserve biodiversity by ensuring that the lack of full scientific certainty of the causes and effects of damage to the ocean should not be a reason for delaying action to prevent such damage and that polluters should bear the cost of pollution, wherein damage costs should be reflected in benefit cost assessments of actions affecting the ocean environment.
- **Improving our understanding of the ocean** - to improve the availability, management, use and dissemination of information targeted at better-informed decision-making and increased support for practical ocean management that embraces precautionary management approaches that are more robust where comprehensive scientific understanding and intensive monitoring are difficult.
- **Ocean security** – has economic, environmental, political, and military dimensions which seek to discourage and reduce unacceptable, illicit, criminal or other activities that are contrary to regional and international agreements and threaten our ocean, the major source of livelihood for Pacific Island people.
- **Partnerships and cooperation** – effective implementation will be founded on developing strong partnerships and, fostering cooperation and inclusiveness.

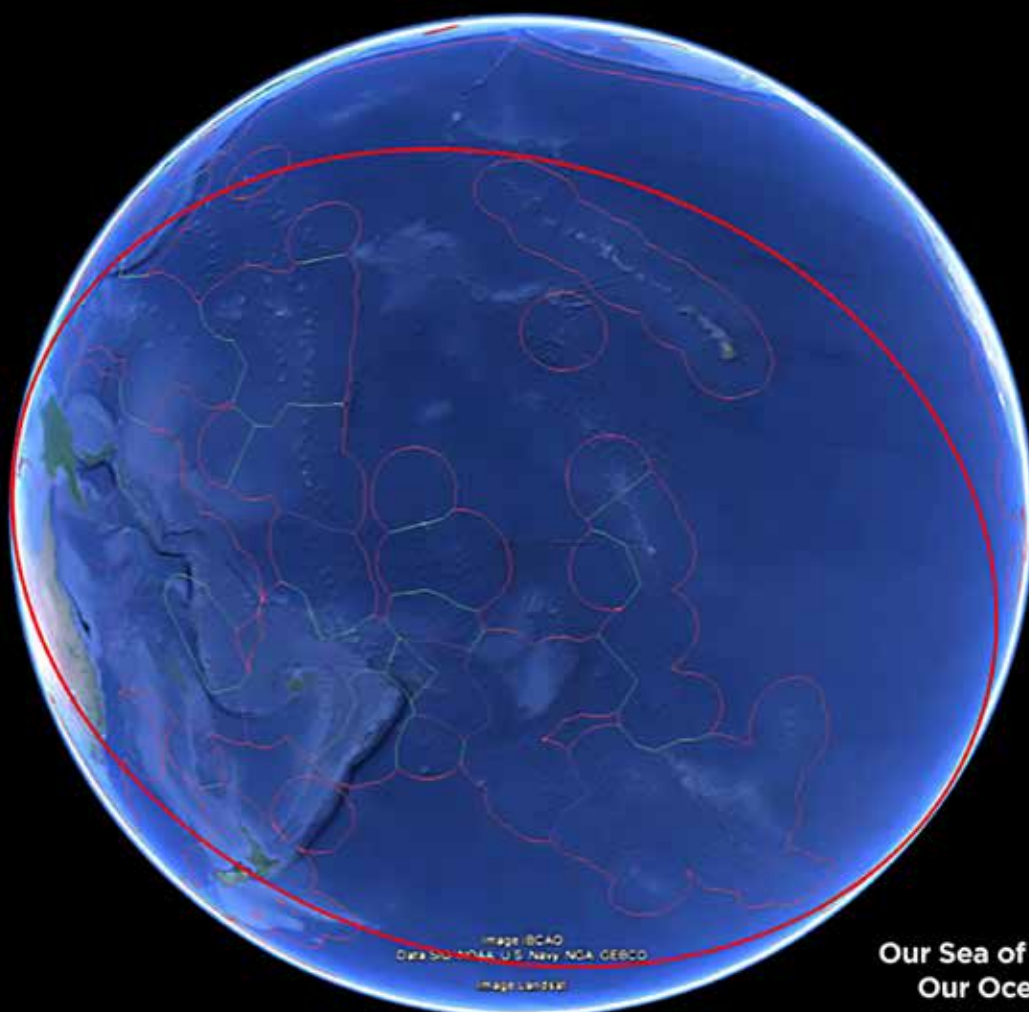
Vision

As an operational, living instrument supporting a broader regional ocean policy, the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape has the overarching vision of:

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

Scope

The geographic scope of this Framework mirrors that of PIROP, which is 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. The ‘ocean’ is defined to include the waters of the ocean, the living and non-living elements within, the seabed beneath and the ocean atmosphere and ocean-island interfaces (Figure 1).



**Our Sea of Islands
Our Oceania**

Strategic priority 1 – Jurisdictional Rights and Responsibilities

Establishing jurisdictional rights and responsibilities over maritime zones.

*“Together with our EEZs, the area of the earth’s
surface that most of our countries occupy
can no longer be called small”*

Epeli Hau’ofa

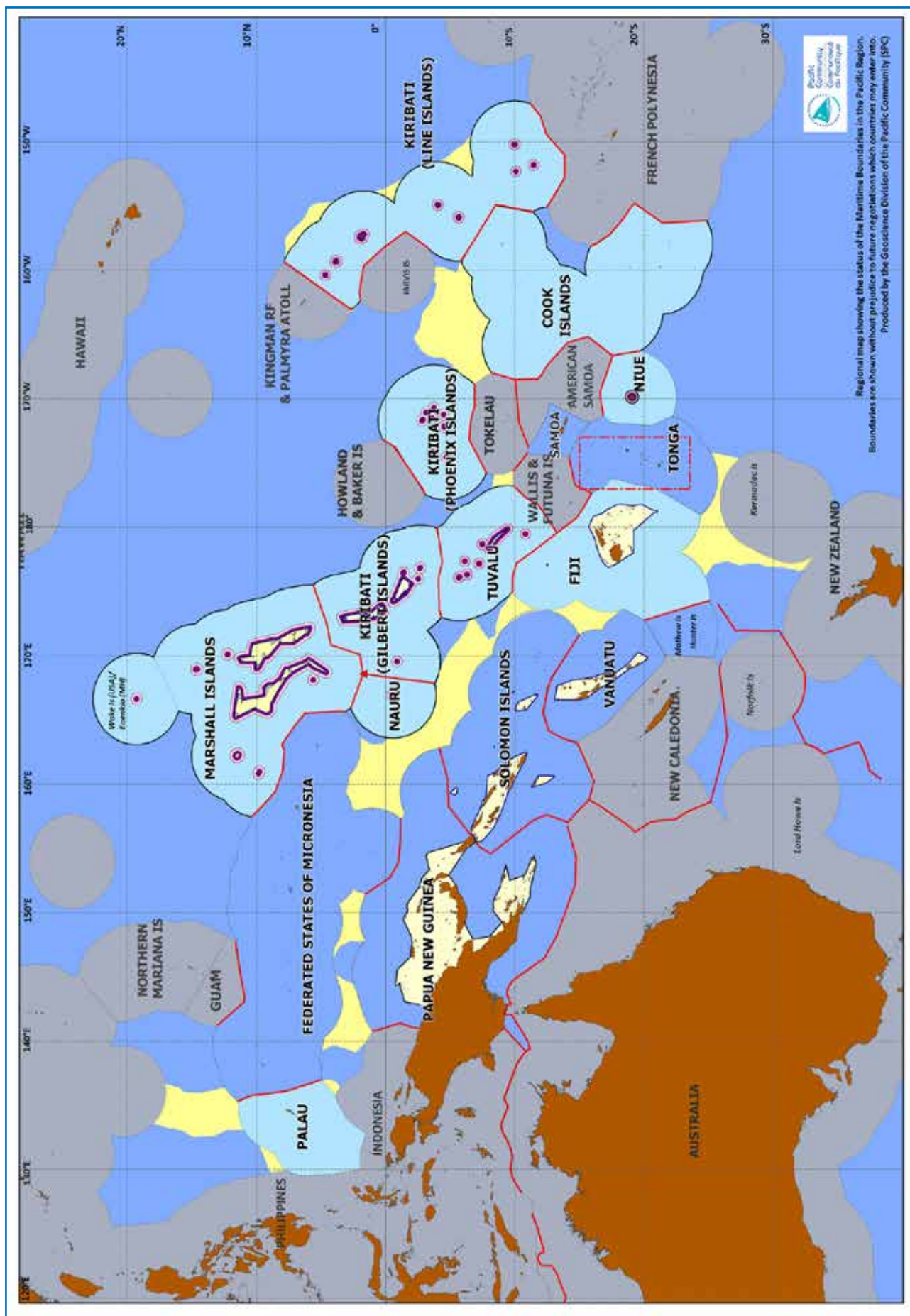
The majority of maritime boundaries in the Pacific are yet to be negotiated and declared, despite their importance for ocean management and securing interests such as fisheries rights to access, exploit and conserve, the exploration and mining of minerals, oil and gas resources, biological diversity conservation, navigation and military uses.

Action 1a – PICs formalise maritime boundaries and secure rights over their resources

Pacific Island Countries, as States Parties to UNCLOS, should in their national interest, deposit with the United Nations, base-point coordinates as well as charts and information delineating their maritime zones as a requisite to establishing and securing their rights and responsibilities over these large areas of ocean space.

Action 1b – Regional effort to fix baselines and maritime boundaries to ensure the impact of climate change and sea-level rise does not result in reduced jurisdiction of PICTs

Once the maritime boundaries are legally established, the implications of climate change, sea-level rise and environmental change on the highly vulnerable baselines that delimit the maritime zones of Pacific Island Countries and Territories should be addressed. This could be a united regional effort that establishes baselines and maritime zones so that areas could not be challenged and reduced due to climate change and sea-level rise.



Status of maritime boundaries in the Pacific (SPC 2016)

Strategic priority 2 – Good Ocean Governance

Setting policies and plans of action that promote the sustainable management and development of our ocean and its resources.

“No people on earth are more suited to be guardians of the world’s largest ocean than those for whom it has been home for generations.”

Epeli Hau’ofa

Our elders and forefathers understood the ocean and islands as one and made decisions that incorporated present and future interests across peoples and territories. We need to build appropriate frameworks that provide the best chances of successfully managing our resources in an integrated and sustainable way, drawing on our heritage and more recent best practices, standards and limits set by our communities and leaders, and international bodies.

Institutions that are a legacy of other cultures and places need to be adapted to the realities and strengths of the Pacific way and in particular the capacity for dialogue and consensus across cultures and distances to reach a common goal. Governance of our natural heritage should be built on the capacity of our most valued resource, people and communities, based on their traditional ties of stewardship to the land and sea. This local guardianship will need to be supported and coordinated by government institutions that have regained the wider perspective of sustainable development, management and conservation to facilitate dialogue including the interests of other groups. This coordination role, supported by inter-governmental organizations, includes overview of emerging issues and threats and international dimensions as well as management of the resources that sit outside the community purview, for geographical or other reasons. We call for support in developing this vision and practical aspects of institutionalizing this will need to emerge from the different national processes, some of which have made advances already.

Action 2a – Leaders mandate a strengthening of the regional institutional framework for ocean governance and policy coordination.

Establishment of a Regional Ocean Commissioner, with dedicated professional support, would provide the necessary high level representation and commitment that is urgently required to ensure dedicated advocacy and attention to ocean priorities, decisions and processes at national, regional and international levels.

Action 2b – Foster partnerships to integrate and implement ocean priorities in the Pacific Plan and other relevant regional and international instruments

Establishment of a Regional Ocean Alliance/ Partnership mechanism facilitated by the Regional Ocean Commissioner to provide effective ocean policy coordination and implementation, facilitate regional cooperation for the high seas, as well as support for national ocean governance and policy processes when required. This should include the context for support and streamlining to achieve national commitments to MEAs. Inter-regional cooperation should be developed and fostered.

Action 2c – PICTs incorporate sustainable use and development of coastal and ocean priorities in national development policy and planning

Ocean governance guidance should be incorporated into national policy and planning, seeking to lay out specific implementation responsibilities, strategies and appropriate national budget allocations for integrated management and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic resources. This aims to offer a practical and inclusive approach to ocean and coastal issues building on existing processes rather than creating more policy documentation.

Action 2d – PICTs design and/or consolidate clear coordinated institutional mechanism for integrated ocean and coastal management

Embracing integrated national approaches to ocean and coastal management across relevant sectors such as fisheries, minerals, transport, tourism, energy and environment will require institutional reform seeking to avoid duplication and clarifying responsibilities in the interests of cost effectiveness and efficiency.

Strategic priority 3 – Sustainable development, management and conservation

Putting policy into action to reclaim stewardship of the ocean as core to our Island livelihoods in a rapidly changing world.

“The importance of our ocean for the stability of the global environment, for meeting a significant proportion of the world’s protein requirements, for the production of certain marine resources in waters that are relatively clear of pollution, for the global reserves of mineral resources, among others has been increasingly recognised and puts paid to the notion that Oceania is the hole in the doughnut.”

Epeli Hau’ofa

The heart of sustainable management, use and conservation of the Pacific Islands Ocean Region is translating the culture of ocean stewardship into effective management action. Significant threats and challenges face our islands and ocean including overfishing, depletion of resources, habitat damage, pollution, invasive species, inappropriate land management practices, and climate change. The management systems developed should above all build on our strengths of knowledge and culture as oceanic peoples to ensure cost effective management that can be sustained with a maximum of self reliance. Traditional and new tools are at our disposal including processes for dialogue and action by resource owners and users, large and locally-managed marine areas, protected areas, specific species sanctuaries, as well as zone-based management and use measures for target and non-target resources.

Action 3a – PICTs implement integrated coastal resource management arrangements drawing on the strengths and traditions of community, district, provincial and national levels of government to achieve sustainable island life

PICTs are increasingly demonstrating the key role their communities play in managing local resources. These efforts should be supported and coordinated at provincial and national levels to ensure enforcement and information is supplemented where necessary and that wider ecosystem and national interests can be incorporated into joint action.

Action 3b – PICTs explore and build on marine spatial planning mechanisms for improved EEZ management to achieve economic development and environmental objectives

Develop and strengthen appropriate security and enforcement mechanisms and spatial planning systems that guide multiple use for economic growth while maintaining ecosystem function and biodiversity integrity of coastal and ocean areas. These higher order management systems provide the fundamental basis for the use of spatial management tools in a nested fashion drawing from experiences in strict traditional closures, locally managed areas and large multiple use managed and protected areas. Aspects such as cross border security, food security, monitoring control and surveillance are fundamental for effective management systems.

Action 3c – Regional intergovernmental bodies explore and build on approaches to conserve and manage high seas resources and deep sea ecosystems for the common good

The high seas areas are under severe threat with evidence of overfishing of fish stocks, the destruction of deep sea ecosystems associated with sea mounts and increasing levels of illegal fishing. As stewards of the Pacific Islands Ocean region, our interests transcend the limits of EEZs and require novel management approaches. For example establishing and managing representative networks of marine protected areas, require prior environmental assessments to prevent harmful impacts from new and emerging activities, and protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems, including conditions on conservation and management of high seas resources, mindful of agreements relating to fishing access licenses and permits.



Strategic priority 4 - Listening, Learning, Liaising and Leading

Seeking ocean leadership based on enriching our culture further and reinforcing our identities while sharing and learning with others

“We begin with what we have in common and draw inspiration from the diverse patterns that have emerged from the successes and failures in our adaptation to the influence of the sea...”

Epeli Hau'ofa

Resource management approaches based purely on scientific information have had limited success. There is still much to learn and share from existing knowledge and experience in managing our complex and vast coastal and ocean environment. Capacity building, including formal, tertiary and vocational training, and research needs to be more carefully targeted at addressing our governance and management requirements. Effective processes are critical for sharing information and supporting leaders and champions which will underpin the success of these strategic priorities.

Action 4a – Facilitate processes that utilize existing knowledge and results in needs driven information acquisition and targeted capacity building for achieving policy and management objectives

Given the often limited human and financial resources for sustainable ocean management and development, capacity building actions and formal education programmes will have to be cost-effective, targeted and thoughtful. Initiatives for consideration include establishing a supervised internship programme for recent graduates and school leavers; targeted scholarships; adopting “learning by doing” approaches which are an efficient and effective way of ensuring retention of knowledge and skills while implementing locally; providing support for mentoring programmes which allow for knowledge and skills transfer as well as offering opportunities for succession planning; encourage national training opportunities that are tailored to suit a country's needs and only strategic attendance to regional and international workshops based on relevance; “on-the-job” learning exchanges between PICTs such as staff exchanges of marine protected areas to share experiences and lessons; and, strengthening negotiation skills for specific issues such as for shared maritime boundaries and impacts of climate change on the ocean. Similarly, processes must be improved to ensure that managers and local decision-makers define crucial information priorities and needs.

Action 4b – Influence international and regional ocean priorities, decisions and processes through reclaiming the Pacific Way and establishing a high level representation on oceans

Establish strong and well supported networks of leaders drawn from local communities, districts and provinces through to national and regional special issues advocates, ocean champions and ambassadors to bring the ocean and related issues to centre stage at local through to global levels. PICTs have shown important progress in specific aspects of ocean and coastal management, political leaders of these countries should be supported in championing national and regional priorities in a regionally concerted way – the whole is more than the sum of its parts.



47th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held in Pohnpei, FSM, September 2016

Action 4c – Connecting people and places for sharing, learning and action

Build on traditional and more recent networks of relationships between peers for informing decision making at community, national and regional levels. National networks of practice have demonstrated their importance and these can be serviced by existing and future sub-regional networks and in turn learning can be stimulated between these at regional and international scales.

Strategic priority 5 – Sustaining action

Building self reliance through nationally cost effective solutions and realizing the value of regional and international partnership

“Those who maintain that the people of Oceania live from day to day not really caring for the long term benefits, are unaware of the elementary truth known by most native islanders that they plan for generations, for the continuity and improvement of their families and kin groups.”

Epeli Hau'ofa

The strategic priorities will require resourcing. Pacific island countries conventionally rely on development assistance for resource management activities but such sources are erratic and subject to external drivers. Governments will need to ensure that management systems are practicable and cost effective, maximizing the value of their cultural and human capital and wherever possible funded internally. Countries should explore the opportunities for regional alliances to improve returns from ocean resources and exploit emerging opportunities and strategic alliances with donors to improve coordination and novel mechanisms for financing.

Action 5a – PICTs to ensure cost-effectiveness of management approaches as a priority step towards sustainability of financing

The design or improvement of governance and management structures will need to be appropriate and affordable for each PICT, seeking efficiency in local and national institutions and maximizing the value of cultural and human capital to increase the likelihood of needs being met by national budgeting processes.

Action 5b – PICTs incorporate consideration of the economic development benefits of sustainable management of coastal and marine resources in decisions affecting national development

PICTs explore opportunities for cooperation to strengthen their economies through cross-border investments and trading, shared access, common branding and consolidated marketing of marine resources. Other financial arrangements that could be explored include benefit or cost sharing strategies (more commonly referred to as 'polluter pays' or 'beneficiaries pays'), incorporating marine environmental costs and benefits into national accounts, potential earnings from national enforcement of fishing regimes. For example, in the enforcement of penalties for illegal foreign fishing. Improved ocean management in the Pacific region will result in benefits not only to the PICTs but also to the global community, for example the protection of threatened species, food security or blue carbon sinks. To ensure that these systems persist, such financing mechanisms will need to incorporate approaches to ensure that sufficient benefits/costs reach the appropriate decision makers.

Action 5c – Explore and test financing mechanisms to support implementation of ocean priorities at regional and national level

The lack of secure and sustainable financing for ocean governance, management and development needs to be addressed. For example, a system of international, regional (and national) ocean goods and services taxation/levies could be introduced that secures sustainable ocean development, management and conservation.

The region, their oceanic resources and ecosystems provides a bank of critical environmental services underpinning the health of the planet. The health of our ocean must be acknowledged as a significant global economic, social and environmental contribution. Therefore support from the global community to strengthen the capacity of PICTs to sustainably manage the ocean must be seen as an ongoing global investment.

Action 5d – Enhance donor harmonization and aid effectiveness to support implementation of ocean priorities at regional and national level

Improved donor harmonization and aid effectiveness must be guided by regional and national priorities and plans of action. The Paris and Accra Declarations and Cairns Compact provide a platform for this.

Strategic priority 6 – Adapting to a rapidly changing environment

Seeking opportunities to adapt to, and mitigate, the impacts of climate change, climate variability, sea level rise, extreme events and, environmental and economic change

“No single country in the Pacific can by itself protect its own slice of the oceanic environment; the very nature of that environment prescribes regional effort and to develop the ocean resources sustainably, a regional unity is required.”

Epeli Hau'ofa

The Earth's ocean and atmosphere are inextricably linked and in turn play an important, critical role in driving regional and global scale climate variations with increasing recognition of the role that the coastal and ocean environment play. The impacts of climate change to our ocean and islands are of great concern but more effort is needed to identify and taking advantage of emerging opportunities in the context of sustainable development priorities.

Action 6a – Identify a centralized mechanism to assess emerging issues, manage risks and explore opportunities

Working with existing organizations to identify a centralized mechanism, facilitated by the Regional Ocean Commissioner, that will assess and explore emerging issues and to ensure effective coordinated action. Issues requiring immediate attention include: the impacts of ocean acidification on our ecosystems, the role of our ecosystems as carbon sinks and sources and impacts on commercial and subsistence harvests. The focus of these regional efforts should be ensuring our resilience for the national and local interest and fostering greater international investment and expertise to support our research priorities. Results will allow greater confidence in negotiations and influencing international processes and mechanisms for scoping potential compensation or trading in the values of our ecosystem services.

Action 6b – Ensure environmental and climate change adaptation and mitigation are appropriately incorporated into sustainable development, conservation and governance actions

Environmental change, climate change and loss of biodiversity cut across the whole development spectrum and therefore should be integrated within existing development processes. Adaptation to climate change will require long term engagement and investment at the international, regional, national and local levels and should support urgent development priorities, such as improved resource management systems, which provide the necessary basis for future adaptation actions. At the regional level there is a need to scope a comprehensive adaptation assessment that covers ocean ecosystems and addresses the radiative (such as sea level rise) and pollutant effects (such as ocean acidification) of climate change and synergies with other, relevant regional instruments must be made.



Palau Declaration on 'The Ocean: Life and Future'

Charting a course to sustainability

Importance of the Ocean to us

1. As Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, we have and will continue to play a central role in the stewardship of one of the greatest natural endowments in the world – the Pacific Ocean. It is the lifeblood of our economies and societies and is crucial to global climatic and environmental stability. It is the fabric of unity upon which we have woven individual and collective relationships and agreements on sustainable development, now and into the future. The Ocean is our Life and our Future. The people of the Pacific Ocean are a living testament to that truth. Our way of life, our culture, our direction and our actions should reflect that truth, as it is our very identity: People of the Ocean.

2. The well-being of our Pacific people remains the central point of reference and convergence for our efforts to sustainably develop, manage and conserve our Pacific Ocean and its resources. This is made all the more important as many of our countries are faced with: increased dependency on imported foods; a growing Non-Communicable Disease crisis in Pacific communities; slow to moderate economic growth rates; high transport costs; fossil fuel dependency; growing urbanization; growing population rates and adverse impacts from climate change. The health and productivity of the Pacific Ocean is significant for all of these development challenges, now and into the future.

Threats to the Ocean and populations

3. In our life time, a dangerous combination of human impacts has come to threaten the foundation of our Pacific livelihoods, which centers largely on the Pacific Ocean, and indeed those of the rest of the world. Over harvesting and overfishing, dangerous fishing practices and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU), damaging extractive industries, pollution, invasive species, coastal runoff, and other stressors (both local and exogenous) have weakened the resilience of many marine ecosystems and constitute a massive threat to the health and productivity of the ocean and its resources. Compounding these pressures, global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are contributing to ocean warming, more frequent and extreme weather events, sea level rise and acidification and potential loss of territories present the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific and one of the greatest challenges for the entire world. The implications of these challenges to the populations of the Pacific are very significant and must be addressed.

4. IUU fishing robs the Pacific of its development opportunities, reduces revenue from fisheries, undermines investment and employment opportunities and threatens the sustainability of fish stocks. A growing number of marine protected areas and conservation initiatives implemented in the region have significant opportunity costs largely borne by Forum Island countries themselves. Effectively implementing marine protected areas will provide global and regional benefits.

Lifting accountability across Ocean development

5. The outcome of Rio+20 Conference, The Future We Want, placed Oceans as central to sustainable development, stressing the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas, and of their resources, to sustainable development through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. It further called for the establishment of global sustainable development goals (SDG).

6. The Forum membership took a strong position on the importance of having a comprehensive stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans complemented by comprehensive national, regional and international commitments and action as a key part of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and as central elements of our priorities as we prepare for the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia, Samoa, 1 - 4 September 2014.

7. Leaders and communities have developed and are implementing many significant local, national, sub-regional, regional and international initiatives across all aspects of sustainable Ocean management. To this end, as a comprehensive regional umbrella framework, Forum Leaders approved the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) in 2002 and towards its reinvigorated commitment and implementation, endorsed the 'Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania: a Framework for Pacific Oceanscape' in 2010. These holistic Pacific Ocean policy frameworks for sustainable development are underpinned by some of the world's most advanced regional multilateral organizations and processes.

Integrated and Mixed Management Approach

8. These umbrella frameworks stress the fact that the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Ocean can only be achieved through integrated and mixed management approaches to maximize benefits for our people and conserving our Ocean assets for future generations. This approach recognizes jurisdictional rights, fosters good ocean governance, encourages sustained action and facilitates adaptation to a rapidly changing environment. It also recognizes that what works best for one community or country may not work best and may not be possible in another – and in spite of our different approaches, we are fundamentally working towards the same objective – responsible and sustainable development of our Ocean and its resources.

A call to Action

9. We call on regional and global partners, including civil society and the private sector to work with members and the Forum Fisheries Agency to evaluate and implement appropriate solutions to address IUU and associated significant loss of fisheries earnings to Pacific Island countries. Accordingly, we welcome the entry into force of the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region which provides for enhanced regional coordination and cooperation in fisheries surveillance and law enforcement, for example through the sharing of fisheries data and intelligence and cross-vesting of fisheries enforcement personnel amongst parties.

10. We call for strengthened regional efforts to fix baselines and maritime boundaries to ensure that the impact of climate change and sea level rise does not result in reduced jurisdiction.

11. We call for members to ensure that, where appropriate, effective environmental impact assessments are undertaken and incorporated into approval processes for any extractive activities in the Pacific Ocean, and where necessary, the precautionary principle is applied. We further call for fisheries and extractive industries, stakeholders and States operating in the region to take on the responsibility to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Ocean and its resources.

12. We call on the global community to support the efforts of Forum Island countries to sustainably conserve their Ocean resources and explore ways to share costs and avoid a disproportionate burden on Forum Island countries.

13. We support a decision in favour of launching negotiations by September 2015 for an International Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

14. Taking 'leadership through action' promoted by the 44th PIF Majuro Declaration as our inspiration, we have prepared a list of current and proposed initiatives and commitments on the ocean taken by Forum member States. Those initiatives are listed with this declaration and serve as a basis and an inspiration for future integrated management approaches, actions and commitments by PIF nations as well as other nations and regional and international partners and institutions. These actions should assist to foster further implementation and accountability towards the achievement of the Post-2015 Development agenda and associated SDG on Oceans and Seas.

15. We call on the office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, with the support of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, to build on the actions listed with this Declaration and maintain a more comprehensive ongoing register of initiatives and relevant data and information across the spectrum of the Pacific Ocean as a basis for promoting and monitoring the sustainable development of our Ocean and fostering integrated management approaches, where appropriate. This register should assist in reducing individual country reporting in the long term and help to facilitate the necessary collective reporting from this region towards global monitoring efforts under the SDG on Oceans and Seas and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

16. This Declaration will be presented by the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a contribution to the global effort to support a comprehensive, effective and implementable stand-alone Oceans Sustainable Development Goal and to the preservation of our Pacific Ocean.



POHNPEI OCEAN STATEMENT: A COURSE TO SUSTAINABILITY

We, the Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments of the Pacific Island Forum, gathered in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia on 11 September 2016:

1. Recognise the inseparable link between our, ocean, seas and Pacific island peoples: their values, traditional practices and spiritual connections. The invaluable methods and principles passed down from our fore bearers are key to a sustainable future for our ocean. We are custodians of some of the world's richest biodiversity and marine resources and recognise that this natural endowment is our greatest asset that must be sustainably managed for the benefit of our present and future generations. A shared Ocean means a shared responsibility and shared benefits for our environment, our economies and our communities. We also acknowledge that the ocean brings unity in a diverse and dynamically evolving world. Therefore as guardians of the largest portion of the Pacific Ocean, our leadership matters.
2. Recognise that the ocean is the basis of livelihoods for Pacific peoples and is also susceptible to the effects of climate change. In this regard, we call for early action by all countries to ratify and implement the Paris Agreement and provide adequate and simplified access to finance for adaptation and mitigation by Pacific Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) to address the impacts of sea level rise and climate change. .
3. Reaffirm our call to action under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the 2014 Palau Declaration: "The Ocean: Life and Future" to chart a course to sustainability and its support of the 'pre- cautionary principle'. We also reaffirm the 2002 Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and the 2010 Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape: "Our Sea of Islands, Our Livelihoods, Our Oceania" and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific as our guiding regional Ocean policy instruments and reaffirm our commitment to implementing the "Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries" to ensure our ocean and its resources are managed sustainably.
4. Support the decisions taken by the Leaders of Smaller Island States in June 2016 and recognise the importance of sustaining and preserving our coral reefs to the health and well-being of our most vulnerable communities. We encourage investments in science and research in order to better understand the capacity of our Ocean to provide for our future, and we underscore the unique and particular vulnerabilities of Pacific SIDS in managing these natural assets, including the need to understand and build resilience to ocean acidification.
5. Welcome the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal, overarching plan for eradicating poverty, fighting inequalities, building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies, and securing the future of the planet and the wellbeing of future generations.
6. Commit to continue the strong leadership as demonstrated by the Pacific region in calling for urgent action on oceans which led to the adoption of SDG14 and its many targets, including: the prevention and reduction of marine pollution of all kinds; sustainable management and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems; minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification; conservation of marine areas, sustainable management of fisheries and the elimination of fisheries subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; and increasing economic benefits for all from the ocean including fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

7. Underscore the need for meaningful implementation of SDG14 commitments, in particular, genuine and durable “partnerships for action”, as articulated in the SAMOA Pathway, to accelerate the realisation of our regional and national commitments towards our common global vision and recognise this should be country-led and country-driven.
8. Call on the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, regional and sub-regional organisations and commissions and partners of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, based on their individual mandates competencies and comparative advantages, to provide the necessary technical, financial and administrative support to countries’ implementation of SDG14.
9. We note the opportunity presented by the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development, in June 2017. We reaffirm the leadership, advocacy and facilitative role of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner under the region’s Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape, to coordinate with Forum Member States and partners in the Pacific Ocean Alliance, Pacific regional engagement, technical support and initiatives for the UN Conference.
10. Reflect on the significant international developments over the past year on oceans and urge a timely and comprehensive conclusion to the Preparatory Committee process established to make substantive recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. We support the convening of a time-bound intergovernmental conference no later than during the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.
11. Commit to this shared vision for a secure future for our people based on the sustainable development, management and conservation of our Ocean and its resources. To ensure that no one is left behind, we must embrace transformative change and action now.

A REGIONAL ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE PACIFIC FISHERIES



Photo: Malo Hosken

Introduction

In proposing the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, Sir Mekere Morauta, stated that, *we see a region that is at a crossroads and one that needs regionalism more than ever before*. Nowhere is this more true than in fisheries, the region's largest shared natural resource and a sector in which regional cooperation has already provided real results – but can do much more.

In 2010, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders were presented with the outcomes of a forward-looking study on the Future of Fisheries, which identified very broad focal areas to achieve a best-case scenario for the region over the following 25 years. Five years on, it is clear that our region is instead following a pathway of missed opportunities.

Bigeye tuna is overfished, and the region's longline fisheries – although targeting the highest value tuna species – are barely economic. Despite controls on fishing effort, purse seine catches continue to increase, driving down the value of the catch. Fishing on the high seas is virtually uncontrolled. Although tuna fisheries are seen as an important opportunity for economic development, we are still in the situation of allowing two-thirds of our tuna to be harvested by foreign fishing boats; and nearly 90% is taken out of the region for processing. Larger and more developed countries are taking our fish to create their profits, exports and jobs.

Inshore fisheries resources have supported the survival of coastal communities since our islands were first settled. They are enormously important for food security and livelihoods, but are under threat from growing populations and, in the longer term, from the impacts of climate change. Finfish resources in many areas are now overfished to meet local demand, while high value export species like *bêche-de-mer* have been driven almost to extinction. Only a concerted effort to improve the management of coastal fisheries and provide alternative livelihoods and protein sources can prevent a decline in fish supplies and further degradation of the coastal environment. Traditional 'top-down' management is not working and there is a need to empower coastal communities to manage and use their fisheries resources sustainably. Although aquaculture has potential, it currently makes only a tiny contribution to fisheries production in FFA member countries. This paper therefore focuses on tuna and coastal fisheries.

This brief paper outlines seven clear goals for oceanic and coastal fisheries for the next ten years, as well as indicators that can be used to measure progress. To achieve these goals will require commitment by leaders to 11 strategies that will allow our region to take control of the future of our fisheries. As a Regional Roadmap, the strategies outlined below will be facilitated through regional agencies (primarily the Forum Fisheries Agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community) working together. However, it is important to note that many of the issues require high-level political direction and whole-of-government implementation at the national level.

Tuna fisheries

Goals and indicators:

1. Sustainability

A sustainable resource is a prerequisite to sustainable development. Within 3 years, there will be agreed Target Reference Points for the four key tuna species. Within 10 years, the status of each species will be clearly moving towards these targets. In particular, the overfishing of bigeye tuna will have been removed and the stock will be rebuilding. Impacts of fishing on by-catch such as sharks, turtles and seabirds will have been significantly reduced. Management measures will not be undermined by Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU).

2. Value

The region's tuna catch in 2024 will be worth double what it is in 2014. This will be achieved by increasing value rather than volume, by eliminating oversupply and targeting higher value products and markets. In line with increased value and profitability, there will be scope to increase access fees for countries that wish to continue licensing foreign vessels.

3. Employment

18,000 new jobs will be created in the tuna industry within 10 years. While many of these will be in tuna processing in Melanesia, opportunities for nationals of all FFA members will be created for vessel crew, observers and fisheries management staff. Standards to ensure that employment is safe and worthwhile will be harmonised.

4. Food security

The supply of tuna for domestic consumption in the region will increase by 40,000 tonnes per year by 2024, to provide nutritious food and reduce pressure on inshore resources. Depending on national circumstance, small-scale catches, supplies from processors in the region, and by-catch from industrial vessels will all contribute to this increase.

Strategies:

1. Effective zone-based management

The long-held PIC commitment to zone-based management provides the key to taking control of the major fisheries. FFA members commit to vigorously assert a system of national rights, within a cooperative framework of binding limits that will be managed under formal harvest strategies, including through equitable and responsible reduction where necessary. Within 10 years, catch-based (quota) systems will replace effort controls.

2. Continue to reduce IUU fishing

IUU fishing robs the Pacific of revenue as well as economic and social development opportunities. The region will continue to invest in cooperative monitoring, control and surveillance programmes that maximise the ability of countries and their surveillance partners to effectively detect, deter and eliminate IUU fishing. This will include enhanced investment in satellite and electronic surveillance, at-sea boardings and

inspections, cooperation to increase aerial surveillance, and enhanced port controls. In particular, Pacific Island countries will cooperate through the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement to achieve multilateral monitoring control and surveillance outcomes.

3. Progressively restrict fishing on the high seas by foreign fleets

Expansion of fishing effort in the high seas is of no benefit to Pacific Island countries. Imposition of controls through licensing conditions and work within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and other international processes will level the playing field. NGOs active in major market states will be encouraged to promote fish sourced from well managed national zones as a higher standard deserving of market and price recognition.

4. Prioritise the supply of raw materials to processors in the region

Development of domestic tuna processing has always struggled against low-cost economies in Asia; but those operations are not viable without massive supplies of tuna from our region. The region will move to mandatory offloading of part of the catch of access vessels and increased transshipment fees (in a harmonised way).

5. Establish high standards for employment in the fishing and processing industry

Development of a tuna industry should not compromise the health, safety and well-being of Pacific Islanders. Uniform minimum standards and a renewed emphasis on training will help to avoid countries being played off against each other.

6. Establish regional processing hubs in partnership between countries

The diversity of opportunities for processing and the need for economies of scale will be addressed by developing 'processing hubs' in two or three countries that can receive the fish from other FFA waters and provide benefits through employment and ownership.



Coastal fisheries

Goals and indicators:

1. Empowerment

Within 10 years, all FICs will have put in place policies and legislation that provide for the involvement of coastal communities in the management of their fisheries resources. Supported by national controls on export commodities, communities will drive local management regimes with clear user rights.

2. Resilience

Within 10 years, all FICs will be implementing strategies to manage the various threats to coastal ecosystems. Only by conserving fisheries habitats, controlling pollution and addressing damage from outside the fishing sector can we develop resilience to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.

3. Livelihoods

Within 10 years, all FICs will have adopted policies to develop alternative livelihoods for coastal communities that are impacted by declining fisheries resources. In most cases, overfishing occurs because coastal communities have no alternative. Aquaculture, water-based tourism and small-scale fishing for tuna provide options, but many solutions will lie outside the fisheries sector.

Strategies:

1. Provide relevant information to inform management and policy

The decisions of governments and community managers will be based on good information; science will be translated into simple and informative material to guide community management; and communities will be able to combine their traditional knowledge with scientific understanding.

2. Re-focus fisheries agencies to support coastal fisheries management

Many fisheries agencies are under-resourced, and focus mainly on tuna and outdated fisheries development activities. There is a need to re-direct staff and resources into supporting community based management, and enforcing national regulations and restrictions where appropriate. Greater collaboration between national agencies and exchange of staff will be supported.

3. Ensure effective collaboration and coordination of stakeholders

There are many stakeholders with an interest in the management of coastal areas apart from Fisheries Departments. There is a need to coordinate the work of different government departments, NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and donors – and to engage better with organisations that have good community outreach, such as faith-based organisations.

4. Develop and enforce strong and up-to-date legislation, policy and plans

The new approach of empowering communities to manage their resources needs to be backed by strong and appropriate legislation, policies and plans. Strengthened enforcement will be needed, both by community authorised officers, fisheries and law enforcement officers and customs.

5. Ensure equitable access to benefits and involvement in decision making

Involving women, youth and disadvantaged groups in decision making and access to the benefits of marine resource use is not only fair, it is necessary for success. Women and youth are closely involved in harvesting and selling marine resources, but are less likely to respect management measures on which they are not consulted.



Photo: Malo Hosken

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Photo: Michel Blanc

Implementation

Delivering on this Roadmap towards a better future for our fisheries requires commitment at the highest political level, and a willingness to drive change in national laws and institutions, including though greater investment to reflect the value of our fisheries resources.

The Roadmap sets clear goals and targets against which progress will be measured. An annual 'fishery report card' will be provided to the annual meeting of the Ministerial Forum Fisheries Committee. The report card will measure the relative success of each strategy in terms of the changes to the indicators that are set out for each goal.

There are elements of this Roadmap that can be progressed by regional fisheries ministers in their own right. However, many others require the highest degree of political support. In particular:

- The strategies on sustainability of stocks, fisheries management and monitoring, control and surveillance require dedicated cooperation amongst Pacific Island countries in ways that differ from the historic approach of distant water fishing nations. Leaders will play a key role in directing and defending these efforts in the pursuit of sustainable stocks that are managed in ways that create development opportunities.

- Industry development and employment strategies require whole-of-government approaches that can only be achieved through high-level support. For example, fisheries development often touches on wider issues such as investment and taxation law, labour mobility and cross-border transactions. These are processes that must be cooperative both within and between governments.
- Many of the strategies require additional investment in fisheries agencies at the national level. The success of individual members that have already progressed some of the strategies discussed in this Roadmap highlight the positive nature of this investment. In particular, necessary reforms to the management of coastal fisheries will require enhanced investment at the national level and through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Fisheries Ministers will report to Forum Leaders to provide information on any key areas of success, and more importantly areas where progress is not likely to achieve the goals without further intervention from Leaders.



Photo: Colette Wabnitz



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Produced by the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

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