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**Evaluation of the Pacific oceanscape to manage the Pacific Islands and  
ocean environment**

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# Evaluation of the Pacific oceanscape to manage the Pacific Islands and ocean environment

## Abstract

The forty-first meeting of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) in Port Vila, Vanuatu in August 2010 endorsed the new concept of 'Pacific Oceanscape' to support development, management and conservation of the Pacific Islands region. The leaders also encouraged all Pacific Islands regional organisations to implement the concept in partnership with other relevant organisations. The Pacific Oceanscape concept is a renewed effort to implement the Pacific [Islands Regional Oceans Policy (PIROP). [It reflects all PIROP principles and aligns them with urgencies associated with climate change impacts on small island developing states. It also promotes regional cooperation in the establishment and management of large-scale marine protected areas (MPAs). MPAs are expected to minimise imminent threats to the marine environment and optimise opportunities for scientific studies and monitoring. Threats are minimised because large MPAs increase the resilience of the ecosystems and therefore protect associated conservational values for Pacific Islanders. Some challenges anticipated in implementing the Pacific Oceanscape relate to timeframe, funding integrity and sustainability, harmonisation mechanisms within the existing national and regional institutions and programs and compliance and enforcement.

## Keywords

manage, ocean, oceanscape, pacific, evaluation, islands, environment

## Disciplines

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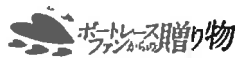
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## Foreword

Today, islands, which are dependent on the sea, are faced with various problems accompanying climate change, such as the increasing intensity of natural disasters, sea level rise and even land submersion. Problems concerned with urbanization and waste management have also been increasing.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) recognizes the rights of coastal states over the marine resources in their EEZs, while also assigning to them responsibility for the protection and preservation of the marine environment. Therefore, the management of ocean areas surrounding islands should be conducted in an integrated way, including from the perspective of marine conservation.

Island life and the ocean are closely connected in many ways. Nonetheless, in terms of the responsibility to manage and conserve their surrounding ocean areas, island states have difficulty in fulfilling the task on their own coordination and cooperation by the international community towards solutions with island states are called for.

Based on this understanding, from 2009 OPRF has started a three-year research project entitled 'Management and Conservation of Islands and their Surrounding Ocean Areas'. As a part of this project, OPRF has decided to seek cooperation with the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) and the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), to host an international seminar to examine issues covering the conservation and management of islands and their surrounding oceans each year.

The purpose of this seminar is to guide and support our three-year research project 'Management and Conservation of Islands and their Surrounding Ocean Areas.' as it progresses and develops. The Seminar is held to address the following three themes:

- 1) The management and conservation of islands
- 2) Adverse effects of climate change and variability on islands
- 3) Island-based management of ocean areas

In the first year, we studied the current issues facing island conservation and marine management in Pacific island states, i.e., carried out fact-findings. Then, in the second year, we have identified the most pressing of these issues and discussed possible solutions. In the third year, based on the results of studies conducted in the previous two years, we will discuss how to address those issues and make policy proposals accordingly. In this second seminar, therefore, we focused on addressing our second year's research agenda, which are the most pressing issues and possible solutions.

On these themes, both Japanese and overseas experts, working on issues of Pacific island states, exchanged research outcomes and opinions and discussed related issues. It is our hope that the seminar provides an ideal platform for cross-disciplinary exchange, encouraging participants to consider island and ocean issues from an integrated perspective and share their understanding, knowledge and expertise, as well as distill and consolidate the issues.

Ocean Policy Research Foundation

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# Evaluation of the Pacific Oceanscape to Manage the Pacific Islands and Ocean Environment

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## Abstract

The forty-first meeting of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) in Port Vila, Vanuatu in August 2010 endorsed the new concept of 'Pacific Oceanscape' to support development, management and conservation of the Pacific Islands region. The leaders also encouraged all Pacific Islands regional organisations to implement the concept in partnership with other relevant organisations. The Pacific Oceanscape concept is a renewed effort to implement the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy (PIROP). It reflects all PIROP principles and aligns them with urgencies associated with climate change impacts on small island developing states. It also promotes regional cooperation in the establishment and management of large-scale marine protected areas (MPAs). MPAs are expected to minimise imminent threats to the marine environment and optimise opportunities for scientific studies and monitoring. Threats are minimised because large MPAs increase the resilience of the ecosystems and therefore protect associated conservational values for Pacific Islanders. Some challenges anticipated in implementing the Pacific Oceanscape relate to timeframe, funding integrity and sustainability, harmonisation mechanisms within the existing national and regional institutions and programs and compliance and enforcement.

## Introduction

Impacts of climate change will affect the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of Pacific Islanders and therefore pre-empt a response to mitigate adverse consequences.<sup>1</sup> A warming of the ocean surface around small island states has already begun and it is predicted to be the cause of increased heavy rainfall events and more intense or frequent cyclones.<sup>2</sup> With climate change, coral reefs can be adversely affected by bleaching, oceans by acidification, mangroves by sea level rise. An increase in extreme weather events, and shift or depletion in fish stocks by changing ocean parameters are also likely to occur.<sup>3</sup> The concentration of large settlements at or near the coast is characteristic of small islands in the Pacific region making them particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Villages are mainly located on the sand terrace or on the beach itself.<sup>4</sup>

Islands in the Pacific region share similar economic and sustainable development challenges including a small but rapidly growing population, rapid urbanisation, poverty, geographic remoteness, waste management and a high dependence on coastal marine resources for

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<sup>1</sup> Forum Communiqué, Forty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Port Vila 4-5 August 2010 2.

<sup>2</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 'Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in Small Island Developing States' (2007) 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 16.

livelihood and well-being.<sup>5</sup> Climate change is likely to exacerbate problems. Island states also have to contend with lack of economies of scale and costly public administration.

Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), geopolitical and technical agencies under the Council for Regional Organisations (CROP) are mandated by Pacific Island Forum Leaders to implement specific regional initiatives to assist in sustainable development.<sup>6</sup> In 2010, Forum Leaders endorsed an oceans framework covering the largest marine area in the world. This is an area of 38.5 million square kilometers of ocean, larger than the land territories of the United States, Canada and Mexico combined. The framework was designed to mitigate increasing threats to the integrity of the marine environment, particularly climate change. The concept of Pacific Oceanscape was initiated by Kiribati in response to the need to collaboratively manage conservation and sustainable development of the marine environment, principally through a series of Pacific Ocean Arcs or large-scale marine protected areas (MPAs).<sup>7</sup>

MPAs are an important tool for managing climate change impacts on biodiversity. This is because MPAs can increase the resilience of the marine environment to imminent damages caused by climate change.<sup>8</sup> The major impact of climate change on reef ecosystems is coral bleaching, and scientific evidence suggests that increasing the magnitude of protected areas minimise its damaging impacts.<sup>9</sup> In the last decade, MPAs that have been listed as world heritage area in accordance with the World Heritage Convention<sup>10</sup> have increased in magnitude to increase the resilience of the ecosystems to climate change impacts. Examples in the South Pacific include the Great Barrier Reef in northeast Queensland, Australia and Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA) in Kiribati. In July 2004, the proportion of protected zones in the Great Barrier Reef was increased from 4.5 per cent to over 33.3 per cent.<sup>11</sup> Kiribati announced the largest marine protected area in the world in 2010 by declaring the entire archipelagic systems of the Phoenix Islands and Line Islands as the first two Pacific Ocean Arcs.<sup>12</sup>

The management of climate change impacts through planning in coastal developments can reduce its adverse social and economic impacts. Scientific uncertainties and the long term scales relative to more immediate problems generally act as barriers to the development and

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<sup>5</sup> Hugh Govan (2009) *Community Conserved Areas: A Review of Status and Needs in Melanesia and Polynesia*, ICCA regional review for CENESTA /TILCEPA /TGER/IUCN/ GEF-SGP 12; Commonwealth of Australia (2006) *Pacific 2020: Challenges and Opportunities for Growth* 29.

<sup>6</sup> See Pacific Island Forum Secretariat 'CROP' Available at <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/about-us/crop/>; See also discussion Martin Tsamenyi, 'The institutional Framework for Regional Cooperation in the Ocean and Coastal Management in the South Pacific' (1999) 42 *Marine Policy* 465-481.

<sup>7</sup> President Anote Tong (Kiribati), 'Pacific Oceanscape: A Secure Future for Pacific Island Nations Based on Ocean Conservation and Management', Pacific Island Leaders Meeting.

<sup>8</sup> *PACT 2020: Protected Areas and Climate Turnaround, Climate Change and Protected Areas Summit*, Grenada, Spain, 16-19 November 2009 Available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

[http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa\\_events/wcpa\\_climatepasummit/wcpa\\_pact2020/](http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_events/wcpa_climatepasummit/wcpa_pact2020/)

<sup>9</sup> IPCC 'Climate Change and Biodiversity' (2002) *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Technical Paper V*.

<sup>10</sup> World Heritage Convention, opened for signature 16 November 1972 (entered into force 17 december 1975)

<sup>11</sup> 'Impact of Climate Change on World Heritage Properties', *Expert Meeting on Issues Related to the State of Conservation of Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List* WHC-06/30.COM/7.1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> President Anote Tong (Kiribati), 'Pacific Oceanscape: A Secure Future for Pacific Island Nations Based on Ocean Conservation and Management', Pacific Island Leaders Meeting. See also: UNESCO 'Phoenix Islands Protected Area' Available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1325/>

adoption of management responses.<sup>13</sup> Coping strategies such as the Pacific Oceanscape should fully integrate climate change and implement mitigation measures that ensure long-term sustainability of coastal resources in the Pacific region.

This paper analyses regional policy development and evaluates the role of the Pacific Oceanscape in implementing ocean governance principles in PICTs. The source of ocean governance principles in the context of this paper is the PIROP. The Pacific Oceanscape is perceived by Forum Leaders as a 'catalyst for action' to implement PIROP.<sup>14</sup>

### Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy

PIROP is the first policy framework that has been developed at a regional scale.<sup>15</sup> The development of the policy began following a recommendation at the 1999 Pacific Regional Follow-up Workshop on the Implementation of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention<sup>16</sup> (LOSC). This recommendation was endorsed by Forum Leaders in the same year.<sup>17</sup> Consultants were engaged at different stages in the regional policy process to identify the elements of PIROP.<sup>18</sup> A draft policy was produced from the background papers in 2002 and circulated among stakeholders before it was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2002.<sup>19</sup> The development of the regional policy was a four year process which was accepted by Pacific Island Leaders from the inception of the concept.

Through PIROP, the region has an agreed reference point for developing and presenting regional positions at the international level.<sup>20</sup> The goal of the PIROP is to 'ensure sustainable use of our ocean and its resources by Pacific Island communities and partners'.<sup>21</sup> The policy adopts five guiding principles:<sup>22</sup>

- improving our understanding of the oceans
- sustainably developing and managing the use of ocean resources
- maintaining the health of the ocean
- promoting the peaceful use of the ocean, and
- creating partnerships and promoting cooperation

<sup>13</sup>, Donald Boesch, John Field and Donald Scavia 'The Potential Consequences of Climate Change Variability and Change on Coastal Areas' (2000) *Decision Analysis Series Number 21*, NOAA's Coastal Ocean Program, xv.

<sup>14</sup> *Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania: Framework for Pacific Oceanscape*, Forty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Port Vila 4-5 August 2010 3.

<sup>15</sup> Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum Communiqué, *The Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy – From Policy to a Framework for Integrated Strategic Action*, 2-4 February 2004.

<sup>16</sup> *United Nations Law of the Sea Convention*, opened for signature 10 December 1982 (entered into force 16 November 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Endorsed at the 30<sup>th</sup> Pacific Island Forum Meeting, 3-5 October 1999, Koror.

<sup>18</sup> For background papers, see Martin Tsamenyi (2001) *A Pacific Regional Oceans Policy* Available at <http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Asides/Ocean/PROPScope.pdf>; Seremaia Tuqiri (2002) *Overview of an Oceans Policy for the Marine Environment* Available at [http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Asides/Other\\_orgs/SPOCCMSG/PIROP\\_overview\\_seremaia.pdf](http://www.spc.int/coastfish/Asides/Other_orgs/SPOCCMSG/PIROP_overview_seremaia.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Endorsed at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Meeting, 15-17 August 2002, Suva.

<sup>20</sup> Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum Communiqué, *The Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy – From Policy to a Framework for Integrated Strategic Action*, 2-4 February 2004.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid* 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid* 5.

The five principles commit Pacific Island nations to meet national obligations under the United Nations Millennium Development Goals on environmental sustainability, reduction of poverty, improving health and livelihood of the people.<sup>23</sup> Due to the high dependence of the region on donor funding, the principles are also to encourage the international community to guide development in this context.<sup>24</sup> PIROP provides the framework for integrated and sustainable development by dealing with multi-sectoral issues that cut across the institutionalised roles and responsibilities of the CROP agencies. PIROP adopts an ecosystem-based approach to ocean management wherein it also seeks to sustain livelihoods of its people.<sup>25</sup> Ecosystem-based approaches are also multi-sectoral and require a coordinated and integrated strategy for implementation.

#### *Implementation of PIROP Prior to the Pacific Oceanscape Concept*

Concurrent to the endorsement of PIROP, Forum Leaders called for follow-up actions, including the development of a Framework Integrated Strategic Action to implement PIROP. PIROP's Framework Integrated Strategic Action (PIROP-FISA) was endorsed by a newly formed Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Forum.<sup>26</sup> The Oceans Forum consisted of PICTs, development partners, non-state actors, private sector and civil society representatives. The implementation strategy was released in 2004 and aimed to assist in the implementation of PIROP.

PIROP-FISA identifies the need for a central coordinating agency to streamline marine sector development and conservation to achieve the aspirations of PIROP through national ocean policies. National ocean policies were intended as the outcome of stewardship and ownership objectives of PIROP-FISA. However, implementation of PIROP under FISA has been limited by lack of funding and resources at the regional and national levels. To date, national oceans policies have not been developed among PICTs. This reflects a lack of political will to implement national programmes that may conflict with sectors supporting national economic growth.<sup>27</sup> In effect, this means that international and regional policies emphasising sustainable ocean management have limited impact at the level of grassroots people in rural communities.<sup>28</sup>

Nations generally do not have adequate legislation to protect traditional knowledge to inform management actions and processes or to institute systematic mechanisms such as environmental impact assessments which are a prerequisite for sustainable development.<sup>29</sup> Some of the inconsistencies between international and national laws are currently being met with the enactment of fisheries legislation encompassing resource conservation issues and

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum Communiqué, 2-4 February 2002, Suva, Fiji.

<sup>27</sup> Pio Manoa and Joeli Veitayaki 'Regional Ocean Governance in the Pacific Revisited' (2009)23 *Ocean Yearbook* 503.

<sup>28</sup> Rudolfo Dorah, 'Towards Integrated National Ocean Policy in the South Pacific: competing and Conflicting Issues in Ocean Policy - Solomon Islands' (2007) UN-Nippon Fellowship Thesis 4. Available at [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/nippon/unnff\\_programme\\_home/fellows\\_pages/fellows\\_papers/dorah\\_0607\\_solom\\_on\\_islands.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/nippon/unnff_programme_home/fellows_pages/fellows_papers/dorah_0607_solom_on_islands.pdf) accessed 24/10/2010.

<sup>29</sup> Laurence Cordonnery, 'Implementing the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy: How Difficult is it Going to Be?' (2005)36 *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 728.

tuna management plans in the Pacific Islands. In terms of integrating aid donor support and implementing the regional policy principles, there is also potential for conflicts of interests, particularly between donor agencies that also have fishing interests in the region.<sup>30</sup>

One of the major drivers for the PIROP process was the need to coordinate and integrate all marine sectors to fully implement United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) as a precondition to achieve sustainable development of the marine environment. All forum members have ratified LOSC, with Tuvalu and Kiribati being the last to ratify in 2002 and 2003, respectively. Since the release of FISA, a number of key developments in marine biodiversity conservation have occurred.

In 2006, the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention of Biodiversity<sup>31</sup> (CBD) called for action on the protection of seamounts and cold water coral reef ecosystems encouraging the establishment of MPAs beyond national jurisdictions.<sup>32</sup> A UN consultative process on oceans and LOSC in 2006 also invites states to implement an ecosystem-approach through the establishment of MPAs and the elimination of destructive fishing practices.<sup>33</sup> In 2008, scientific criterion for MPAs and representative networks of MPAs was adopted at COP 9.<sup>34</sup> In 2008, a United Nations General Assembly Ad Hoc working group acknowledged an urgent need for the implementation of existing agreements on conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity on areas beyond nation jurisdictions.<sup>35</sup> Developments in marine biodiversity conservation at the international level together with regional and national conservation aspirations have led to the development of an updated framework for implementing the guiding principles under PIROP in 2010. This is through the Pacific Oceanscape.

### Pacific Oceanscape

At the Forty First Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Port Vila, Vanuatu at Heads of State and Governments from 15 nations endorsed a draft Pacific Oceanscape framework for a secure future based on sustainable development, management and conservation of the ocean guided by PIROP principles.<sup>36</sup> The concept was initiated by Kiribati founded on its announcement to expand PIPA (first established in 2006). The expansion resulted in a twofold increase in PIPA's area in 2008. PIPA covers 408,250 km<sup>2</sup> and is the largest marine protected area in the world. Kiribati also declared a second Pacific Ocean Arc, the Line Islands Protected Area. The Pacific Ocean Arcs have been developed with funding and technical assistance from the non-governmental organisation, Conservation International, as

<sup>30</sup> Quentin Hanich and Martin Tsamenyi, 'Managing Fisheries and Corruption in the Pacific Islands Region' (2009) 33 *Marine Policy* 386.

<sup>31</sup> *Convention on Biological Diversity*, opened for signature 5 June 1992 (entered into force 29 December 1993). Available at [www.cbd.int/convention/](http://www.cbd.int/convention/) accessed 3 March 2008.

<sup>32</sup> COP 8 held 20-31 March 2006, Curitiba, Brazil.

<sup>33</sup> *UN Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea A/61/156*.

<sup>34</sup> COP 9 held 19-20 May 2008, Bonn.

<sup>35</sup> *UN General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* held April-May 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Forum Communiqué, Forty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Port Vila 4-5 August 2010. Countries include Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

part of a broader conservation project known as the Coral Reef Initiative of the South Pacific (CRISP).

Forum leaders welcomed Kiribati's Pacific Oceanscape concept and Pacific Oceans Arc initiative as an opportunity for investing in MPAs, learning and networking within the region. The Forum Leaders gave the concept precedence under the Pacific Plan. This is an important decision because the Pacific Plan reflects the region's priorities consistent with and in support of international frameworks. It provides a solid platform for regional cooperation guiding collective positions through international forums that advocate the 'special case' of small island developing states (SIDS).<sup>37</sup> Forum Leaders recognise that the success of the Pacific Oceanscape will depend on the level of regional cooperation in responding to 'national development aspirations and priorities which in turn would ... focus attention on critical issues such as climate change'.<sup>38</sup> The Leaders' focus on national development priorities is significant because it aims to create and maintain political will at the national level, a commitment that was absent during the earlier implementation under PIROP-FISA.

There are three broad objectives of the Pacific Oceanscape to be implemented through six strategic priorities. Objectives in the Pacific Oceanscape are:

1. Integrated ocean management that responds to nations aspirations and priorities.
2. Adaptation to environmental and climate change through the development of baselines and monitoring.
3. Liaising, listening, learning and leading through facilitative and collaborative processes, systems and research to achieve the first two objectives.

These objectives integrate the five guiding principles under PIROP. In addition, the actions and strategies allude to climate change adaptation strategies for the region and encourage PICTs to implement PIROP principles through the national development mechanisms.

#### *Priority Actions*

The six priority actions are listed in the Pacific Oceanscape as: jurisdictional rights and responsibilities; good ocean governance; sustainable development management and conservation; listening, learning, liaising and leading; sustaining action; and adapting to rapidly changing environment. A number of these priority actions are agreed to by Leaders at the regional level for implementation at the by nations. Each nation's implementation of specified priority actions is integral to the success of the Pacific Oceanscape concept. Priorities for both national and regional implementation are discussed below.

The majority of boundaries in the Pacific are yet to be formalised.<sup>39</sup> Nations are to deposit with the United Nations baseline coordinates and charts delineating their maritime zones. PICTs have substantial maritime opportunities with respect to claims to jurisdiction to around

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<sup>37</sup> The Pacific Plan: For Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration. See [http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific\\_Plan\\_Nov\\_2007\\_version.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific_Plan_Nov_2007_version.pdf) accessed 25/03/2009.

<sup>38</sup> *Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania: Framework for Pacific Oceanscape* (Draft), Forty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Port Vila 4-5 August 2010 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid* 6.

28 per cent (about 30 million km<sup>2</sup>) of the EEZ claims worldwide.<sup>40</sup> In addition, some PICTs were able to assert rights over the continental shelf beyond the area of EEZs.<sup>41</sup> Currently submissions have been made to the United Nations from Fiji, Cook Islands, Palau, Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (some of these are joint submissions).<sup>42</sup> Kiribati and Tuvalu may also make submissions within the ten years of ratifying LOSC. Maritime delimitation is an important priority not only due to deadlines imposed by United Nations. Sea level rise and coastal erosion due to climate change impacts are likely to change coastlines challenging baselines, which are imaginary lines systematically outlining the low water mark. The Pacific Oceanscape urges PICTs to cooperate in maritime delineation to finalise maritime jurisdictions as a matter of urgency, including the finalisation of 28 notational claims that are yet to be negotiated between countries (Figure 1).<sup>43</sup> Clear jurisdictional boundaries are important for managing resource utilisation in these areas, for the conservation of fragile ecosystems, and to facilitate collaborative mechanisms to keep oceans secure.

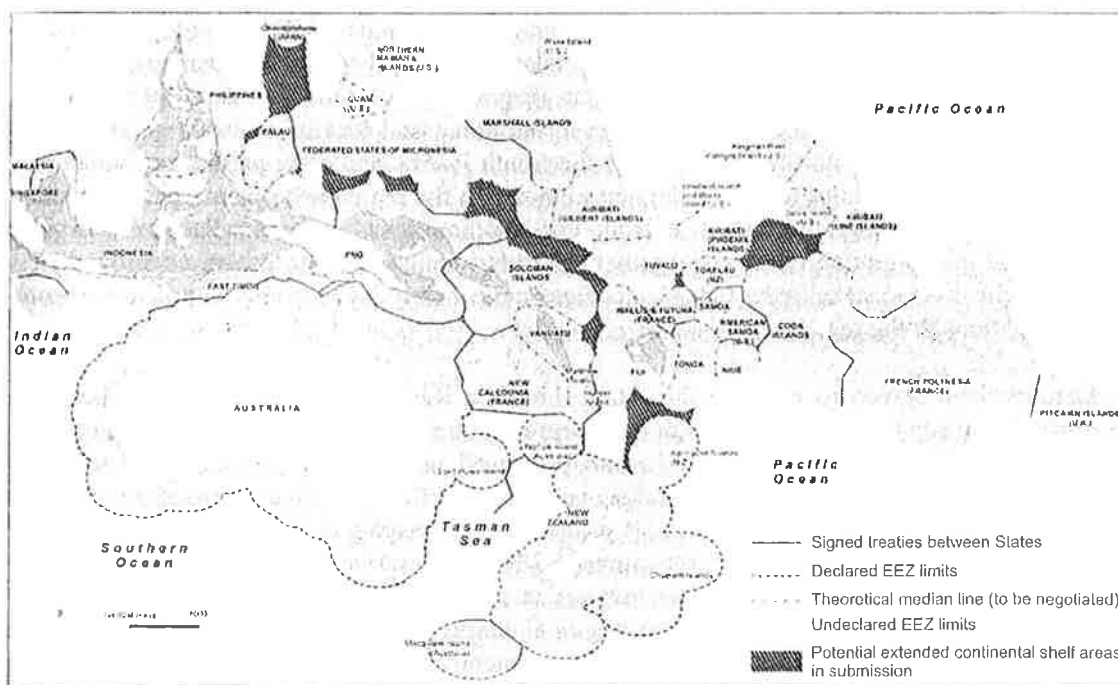


Figure 1. Status of maritime boundaries in the Pacific August 2010 (Source of data: SOPAC 2010<sup>43</sup>).

The Pacific Oceanscape also urges PICTs to incorporate principles relating to sustainable ocean and coastal development into national policy and planning, along with the establishment of coordinated institutional mechanisms for transparent implementation of

<sup>40</sup> Robert Gillet, 'Pacific Islands Countries Region', Review of the State of the World Marine Resources, FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 457 (2005) 144.

<sup>41</sup> SOPAC, 'Race Against Time as the Deadline to Claim Extra Seabed Resources 'Draws Closer' Available at [www.sopac.org/tiki-index.php?page=extended+continental+shelf+activities](http://www.sopac.org/tiki-index.php?page=extended+continental+shelf+activities)

<sup>42</sup> Submissions, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Available at [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs\\_new/commission\\_submissions.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/commission_submissions.htm)

<sup>43</sup> SOPAC 'Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Boundaries Project' Available at [http://map.sopac.org/Pacific+Island+Regional+Maritime+Boundaries+Project#\\_Status\\_of\\_Maritime\\_Boundaries\\_Treaties\\_in\\_the\\_Pacific\\_in\\_2009\\_br](http://map.sopac.org/Pacific+Island+Regional+Maritime+Boundaries+Project#_Status_of_Maritime_Boundaries_Treaties_in_the_Pacific_in_2009_br)

PIROP principles.<sup>44</sup> Importantly, the Pacific Oceanscape concept also highlights the need to incorporate strengths and traditions of coastal communities to attain 'sustainable island life'.<sup>45</sup> PICTs are also encouraged to adopt marine spatial planning mechanisms for improved management of multiple users towards both economic and environmental benefits, particularly in the context of MPAs (small traditional closures to large-scale reserves).<sup>46</sup> The Pacific Oceanscape requires nations to adopt cost-effective management approaches to PIROP principles within the national development framework with considerations for economic development opportunities within the coastal and marine sector. Overall, the priorities for national implementation are targeted towards self-sustainable activities that would complement priorities in the context of wider regional implementation actions listed in the Pacific Oceanscape.

The extent to which PICT governments succeed at implementing the Pacific Oceanscape in at the national level would determine the effectiveness of complementary regional strategies for climate change adaptation as well as other existing regional projects. Some long-term projects and programs of relevance that are underway include the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission's (SOPAC) Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Boundaries Project, coastal and fisheries projects and the maritime programme under the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Marine Affairs Studies programme and locally managed marine areas network (LMMAs) with the University of the South Pacific and other partner organisations. Each agency or organisation has a defined mandate in the region and operate under separate structured work programs that, in unison, fulfil commitments under the Pacific Plan. The challenge of integrating ocean management is to harmonise relevant programs and projects among the diverse stakeholder CROP agencies, and possibly include other non-governmental organisations in the region.

Leaders have agreed to mandate the establishment a Regional Oceans Commissioner with professional support to provide a high level representation that is 'urgently required to ensure dedicated advocacy and attention to ocean priorities' under the Pacific Oceanscape.<sup>47</sup> The Regional Ocean Commissioner will also be tasked to facilitate a centralised mechanism among existing organisations to cope with the rapidly changing environment, particularly in the economic and environmental context.<sup>48</sup> Multi-sectoral and long-term strategies are required to adapt to climate change impacts at national and regional levels. The Pacific Oceanscape states that a comprehensive regional adaptation assessment is required, probably also the development new relevant regional instruments to govern adaptation strategies.<sup>49</sup> The main instruments for climate change adaptation in the region are the Pacific Islands Framework for Climate Change (PIFCC) and the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC).

The Regional Ocean Commissioner is also to facilitate a Regional Ocean Alliance or Partnership for cooperation on matters of interest to the region but beyond the jurisdiction of one nation, such as the high seas and to fulfil extraterritorial responsibilities under multilateral environmental agreements. In addition, regional intergovernmental bodies are

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<sup>44</sup> *Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania: Framework for Pacific Oceanscape* (Draft), Forty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Port Vila 4-5 August 2010 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid* 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid* 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid* 12.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* 13.



encouraged to develop conservation and management approaches for high seas resources and deep sea ecosystems for common good. The Pacific Oceanscape is innovative in that it acknowledges the importance of regional institutions and mechanisms for the management of high seas MPAs.<sup>50</sup>

The framework also seeks to optimise learning opportunities within the region, from traditional marine management to government level approaches. This includes workshop and training, internships, mentoring, targeted scholarships, succession planning and on-the-job learning exchange opportunities. In acknowledgement of the Pacific way of life, the Pacific Oceanscape also urges the region to maintain an active presence in regional and international forums.<sup>51</sup>

One of the key priorities under the Pacific Oceanscape concept is discovering financial mechanisms to assist institutional set-up and processes arising from implementation, both regionally and nationally. In the future, donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness will be guided by regional and national priorities under the Pacific Oceanscape. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action provide the platform for funding.<sup>52</sup> Both the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda state that central parliaments play an integral role in ensuring effective development cooperation by defining development strategies and budgets. Under the Paris Declaration, donor countries committed to providing timely, transparent information to developing countries, enabling them to administer comprehensive budget planning at national level. Aid effectiveness is important for good ocean governance because it ensures that national development priorities are aligned to sectoral priorities.<sup>53</sup> This vision was in its infancy during the PIROP-FISA planning stage, although the need for developing partnerships and financial arrangements was recognised then.<sup>54</sup>

Priorities and actions as they appear in the Pacific Oceanscape re-organise and strengthen initiatives under the PIROP-FISA. The re-organisation is mostly to reflect urgent and emerging issues in the region. The new framework also devolves clear and specific responsibilities to nations to increase ownership and stewardship of PIROP principles. In this context, nations have agreed to prioritise sustainable coastal and ocean development particularly in their national development strategies and to undertake a number of actions already outlined to assist in the implementation of PIROP principles. Finally, the Pacific Oceanscape also depicts climate change as a major threat to ocean and coastal development in SIDS based on the latest findings of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 9-10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid 10.

<sup>52</sup> Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (signed in March 2005) Available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> See also, PIFS (2010) *Tracking the Effectiveness of Development Efforts in the Pacific Region* Available at [http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PIFS\\_2010\\_Tracking\\_Report.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PIFS_2010_Tracking_Report.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum Communiqué, *The Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy – From Policy to a Framework for Integrated Strategic Action*, 2-4 February 2004 19.

<sup>55</sup> Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, above n 22, 14.

## Evaluation of the Pacific Oceanscape

The Pacific Oceanscape provides a renewed framework for implementing PIROP principles. The jurisdictional scope of the Pacific Oceanscape includes waters in the national jurisdiction of member nations and the high seas pockets within the region. In this vast ocean space, the Pacific Oceanscape aims to implement, inter alia, strategies for adapting to climate change impacts, multiple user management in MPAs, and ocean security. There are a number of strengths in the new framework, and some implementation challenges are also evident. As the second implementation framework after PIROP-FISA, the Pacific Oceanscape demonstrates that PIROP is a living policy since its implementation is flexible depending on the urgent and emerging issues agreed to by Forum Leaders. Both frameworks encourage a holistic approach to marine issues in the region.

The Pacific Oceanscape is designed to promote stewardship at local, national, regional and international levels. One of the key challenges in the PIROP-FISA was the absence of directives and assistance programmes for nations that would encourage ownership and stewardship of the policy. The lack of political will among nations to implement PIROP in the past is partially addressed in the new framework through clear directives (including an outlook on financial aid), the scope for integrating the framework into the Pacific Plan, and through the integration of sustainable ocean management into national development plans. In the Pacific Oceanscape much needed emphasis is placed on incorporation of the marine sector priorities in national governance mechanisms, and therefore its implementation success will partly be a reflection of this. Since the impacts of climate change are also multi-sectoral in scope with adverse environmental consequences for coastal livelihoods and the economy, its incorporation into the Pacific Oceanscape provides significant impetus for parliaments to prioritise coastal and ocean issues.

One of the solutions for mitigating the impacts of climate change is the designation of a network of large-scale MPAs. An effective marine protected area system is needed to ensure that the oceans recuperate, continue to store carbon dioxide, that fish stocks recover and that coastlines are protected from harsh climatic conditions.<sup>56</sup> MPAs are also encouraged by the International Union of Conservation Networks (IUCN) under multilateral environmental agreements. The COP to CBD actively promote conservation of biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction through the adoption of measures such as the United Nations Resolutions and the implementation of international and regional network of MPAs.<sup>57</sup> The Pacific Oceanscape prioritises the establishment of MPAs at local and national levels and in the high seas. This can contribute to the wider management of the Pacific Ocean which contains a biodiverse array of marine life, processes and geological structures that are intrinsically linked within the Pacific Ocean. MPAs such as Pacific Ocean Arcs provide an opportunity to best conserve natural resources and conduct research. The first of Pacific Ocean Arcs, PIPA, will offer scientists opportunities to study impacts of climate change and variability in the Pacific Ocean. An extended network of high seas MPAs will be possible if more Pacific Ocean Arcs are established. Administration of Pacific Ocean Arcs would merit innovative ocean management approaches that can attest Pacific Island leadership in high seas oceans policy and management. The creation of the Pacific Oceanscape has the potential to provide legal protection and regulation of regionally protected marine areas such as PIPA. However,

<sup>56</sup> IUCN, 'Marine Protected Areas - Why have them?' Available at 01 February 2010 [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/pa/pa\\_what/74646/Marine-Protected-Areas--Why-have-them](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/pa/pa_what/74646/Marine-Protected-Areas--Why-have-them)

<sup>57</sup> Decision VII/5 adopted by the Conference of Parties to the CBD at its 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, 9-14 February 2004, UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21.

compliance and enforcement of large MPAs remains untested and potentially problematic given the resource constraints of SIDs.

Ocean policy development and implementation in the Pacific Islands is dynamic and complex. At the core of the regional policy implementation in the Pacific are the prevailing governance regimes of nations and intergovernmental organisations. Strategic priorities and actions under the Pacific Oceanscape are clearly designed for implementation by member countries and territories as well as CROP agencies, and with the assistance of non-governmental organisations. To implement PIROP principles in the region, the Pacific Oceanscape must be aligned with existing regional activities, and also sustain a central coordinating authority to maintain to integrity of PIROP. There is, however, a need for a formal review and gap analysis of existing regional projects to ascertain the way forward in terms of implementing some of the more challenging priorities in the Pacific Oceanscape. This is to streamline the implementation process to avoid duplication, enhance collaboration and avoid conflicts of interest.

The roles and responsibilities of the Regional Oceans Commissioner needs to be clearly defined, particularly where there may be administrative conflicts with the program facilitators under current regional projects and programmes within CROP. Formalised arrangements to facilitate the role of the Commissioner in the context of existing regional projects and programmes within CROP agencies are important. For example, a memorandum of understanding among regional organisations to coordinate projects and programmes under the premise of PIROP in collaboration with the Regional Oceans Commissioner may be a means to satisfactorily separate roles. Similarly, it is unclear what role the Commissioner may have, if any, in all the strategic actions under the framework.

The Pacific Oceanscape lists priorities and actions for 'immediate' implementation of PIROP principles. No additional timeframe is provided for implementation of the priorities and actions and neither is a chain of events or actions illustrated to clearly demonstrate how the full implementation phase can gradually unfold. A sequence or clear chain of events would be useful given the different levels of governance involved. For example, adoption of ocean management priorities in national development plans would be facilitated well partially on the precondition that supporting donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness is first achieved at regional and national levels.

During national consultations on adapting strategies for climate change in five participating Pacific Island nations, coastal management was confirmed as a priority sector due to their vulnerability to climate change.<sup>58</sup> The Pacific Oceanscape does not detail strategies for keys areas such as coastal fisheries, domestication of tuna industry, maritime transportation, and strengthening of fisheries, conservation and aquaculture legislation.<sup>59</sup> Even though it may be assumed that these areas are not priorities for 'immediate' implementation, and therefore not strategised in any detail in the framework, it is nonetheless reflected in the PIROP principles and therefore need to be addressed. For example, coastal fisheries can also be assisted by means of poverty alleviation strategies in the region, but the Pacific Oceanscape does not

<sup>58</sup> Kinch et al. (2010) *Outlook Report on the State of Marine Biodiversity in the Pacific Region*, SPREP and UNEP 32.

<sup>59</sup> Nathan Evans, Joytishna Raj (Jit) and Duncan Williams (2003) *Review of Aquaculture Policy and Legislation in the Pacific Islands*, SPC Aquaculture Technical Papers; Jeff Kinch 'Summary Report on the Status of Coastal Fisheries in the Southern Pacific Island Countries and Territories', Regional Workshop on Ecosystem Approach to Management of Coastal Fisheries in Pacific Islands, 17-21 November 2008.

offer enabling strategies for this to occur. In this case, however, the implementation of climate change adaptation strategies will address some coastal fisheries issues which are exacerbated by climate change, such as fish stock dynamics. Multiple user management of MPAs in coastal waters also have the scope to address issues resulting from overexploitation, lack of environmental or fisheries management, and inadequacies in fisheries regulation and enforcement.

In 2010, a number of key marine environmental issues in the Pacific Islands were identified. These include climate variability and climate change, habitat loss and the effects of coastal modification, invasive species, fishing pressure, increased sedimentation and nutrient loading and other forms of land-sourced and marine pollution.<sup>60</sup> While MPAs are an important solution to minimise several of these issues, there will remain a need for a more comprehensive set of management tools to overcome some of these issues, such as environmental impact assessments to protect coastal marine ecosystems.

A recent Pacific Island marine biodiversity status report reaffirmed that there is a lack of human, technical, institutional and financial capacity in the region that compromise national and regional efforts to conserve and manage the marine environment.<sup>61</sup> These limitations are addressed in the Pacific Oceanscape concept, particularly through its strategy for sustained action and cost effectiveness. Long term and coordinated funding will be required to complete implementation. Core funding is also a prerequisite to sustain implementation. Since the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda are based on the premise that developing countries having clear strategies and budgets to direct donor funding from partner countries, there is a need to develop these for the marine sector.

Regional and national cost-effectiveness may be achieved if the framework objectives can be more carefully aligned to ongoing and emerging regional projects where synergies exist (such as coastal fisheries and poverty alleviation) and close gaps through new or modified projects. Synergies can occur in national level programmes, CROP agencies and non-governmental organisations, even through collaborative efforts. Implementation of strategies by utilising prevailing synergies can minimise duplication of efforts and strengthen ongoing initiatives that are relevant.

## Conclusions

The development of the Pacific Oceanscape is another step towards improving the development, management and conservation of coastal and ocean resources in Pacific Islands. Since the release of PIROP, a lack of political will and financial and resource limitations impeded the early implementation through FISA. Some of these limitations are addressed through the Pacific Oceanscape.

First, the concept or framework recognises the need for ownership and stewardship of PIROP principles by each PICT. The Pacific Oceanscape concept is given precedence in the Pacific Plan, the governing document for sustainable development in the region. The strategic priorities and actions that require national implementation are clearly identified. In addition, the concept encourages nations to integrate sustainable ocean development into national development plans and establish mechanisms to centrally coordinate actions identified in the

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<sup>60</sup> Kinch, above n 58, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Kinch, above n58, 38.

concept. Implementation by targeting central governments is expected to create and maintain political will and improve ocean governance.

Second, the Pacific Oceanscape concept mitigates the financial and resource constraints by encouraging cost effectiveness and harmonising donor funding and aid effectiveness. Cost-effectiveness is enhanced by broadening existing national level or CROP agency programmes to include sustainable ocean development, such as in ongoing climate change adaptation projects. Donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness in the marine sector is challenging because of the lack of a clear strategy on precise funding needs.

Apart from addressing some of the shortfalls during the early implementation of PIROP-FISA, the Pacific Oceanscape provides an updated implementation framework for PIROP in the context of recent international, regional and national marine biodiversity aspirations. Key strengths include climate change adaptation strategies and the scope for the protection of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

On the contrary, the Pacific Oceanscape does not include a strategy to implement the priorities and actions described within in terms of timelines and cost of implementation. In particular, The Pacific Oceans Commissioner and a Regional Ocean Alliance appear to be critical for the effective implementation of a number of actions and priorities. In addition, other strategies such as for the alleviation of poverty are not emphasised in detail. In the context that poverty is intrinsically linked to livelihood and food security in PICTs coastal communities adversely affected by climate change, climate change adaptation strategies must incorporate poverty alleviation considerations.

Overall, the Pacific Oceanscape concept provides a renewed outlook at regional ocean governance, and incorporates new and emerging threats and opportunities. There are a number of challenges, very few of which are new in the realm of regional governance in general. However, these need to be elucidated in the context of ocean governance under the premise of PIROP principles and the Pacific Oceanscape. The Pacific Oceanscape concept is timely and consistent with the Pacific Plan. It is also a concept that the PICTs will have to work in unison to implement successfully.

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