



“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.”

## Pacific Oceanscape Vision:

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

# A Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape

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.

A Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape was first proposed by the government of Kiribati and later endorsed by leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum as it was seen as a catalyst for action for our Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) 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.

Subsequently, the 'Pacific Oceanscape' could be a vehicle to build pride, leadership, learning and cooperation across this ocean environment.

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”.

## Framework objectives

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.

The following broad objectives seek to achieve the goal for a Pacific Oceanscape and will initially address six strategic priorities identified for immediate implementation under the Framework:

1

### INTEGRATED OCEAN MANAGEMENT

– to focus on integrated ocean management at all scales that results in the sustainable development, management and conservation of our island, coastal and ocean services

2

### ADAPTATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE

– to develop suitable baselines and monitoring strategies that will inform impact scenarios and specific understanding of environmental and climate change stressors.

3

### LIAISING, LISTENING, LEARNING AND LEADING

– to articulate and use appropriate facilitative and collaborative processes, mechanisms and systems and research that results in the achievement of the objectives for Integrated





## Strategic priority 1 – Jurisdictional Rights and Responsibilities

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

**ACTION 1A** – PICs formalise maritime boundaries and secure rights over their resources

PICs, 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 PICTs 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.

## Strategic priority 2 – Good Ocean Governance

“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.”

**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

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**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

“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.”

**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 requires 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

“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...”

**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 program 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.

**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

“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.”

**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 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 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. 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 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

“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.”

**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 6A** – 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.



All quotes are from: Hau'ofa, E. 2008. *We are the Ocean: Selected Works*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

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