



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO  
COMBAT OCEAN ACIDIFICATION



## Fiji's Approach to Addressing OA

**Region:** South Pacific

**Kilometers of Coastline:** 1,129

**Regionally Significant Marine Resources:** Coral reef, pearl oysters, aquaculture, reef fisheries, tuna.

**Status of Action Plan:** In Progress as part of the National Ocean Policy

**Key statistics on ocean economy:** Fiji's marine resources and their services to Fiji's people are worth more than FJD2.5 billion per year.

### What Is at Stake in Your Region?

Fiji is an archipelago of more than 300 islands. Known for its beautifully rugged landscapes, palm-lined beaches and coral reefs with clear lagoons, the major two islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, contain most of the population.

Fish and fishing are extremely important to the economy. A large number of people are employed in the fisheries sector and fish makes an important contribution to the diet of local residents. In addition, fishing is cherished for its recreational and social aspects. Fisheries is the third largest natural resource sector. Additionally, tourism an important industry for Fiji which relies on healthy marine ecosystems to sustain (FOA.)

Increased acidification, combined with other climate impacts like ocean warming, is causing the loss of coral reef and other dangers to marine life. Even with efforts to reduce carbon emissions aggressively and limit this global temperature rise, it is predicted that 90% of coral reefs will be lost by 2050. This not only affects our coastal communities, but the fisheries sector and the economies generated through them. The immediate effects of this are already being faced in the Pacific, for example in Kiribati where 90% of the coral reefs were lost in the years 2015- 2016.

In Fiji, we also have an oyster industry - it produces beautiful colorful pearls and these are a revenue generator for our people. Justin Hunter, who owns J. Hunter Pearls, is founder of the Blue Pledge which recognizes that pearls and oysters are on the frontline of climate change since ocean acidification will affect the formation of both the oyster shell and the pearl. Pearls also need pure ocean conditions to develop. The Blue Pledge supports the work of the pearl producers with coastal communities and promotes efforts to sustain a clean and healthy ocean. Buying a beautiful Fiji pearl also means you are investing in keeping our oceans in Fiji healthy and contributing to efforts that address climate change.



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## Policy Vehicle, Enabling or Authorizing Conditions for Creating an OA Action Plan

Fiji joined the OA Alliance in 2017 at COP23. Fiji helps lead and coordinate numerous activities and negotiations internationally and across Pacific Island Countries, finding the synergies and the gaps across the different UN bodies to address climate and ocean issues such as ocean acidification. Specific vehicles include UN SDGs, UNFCCC, CBD, BBNJ and blue carbon initiatives including MPAs. We also work together in areas of adaptation and mitigation such as those relating to fisheries, shipping transport, MPAs, and the exploration of blue carbon economies and putting in a strategy into the UNFCCC proves OA is an important part of this bigger picture approach. As a member of the OA Alliance, Fiji can further encourage a global vision for engagement on ocean acidification while also helping to elevate the economic and cultural value of our oceans.

“Support and cooperation are needed by the alliance. This can be achieved in the form of information sharing of recent science, importance of best practices to mitigate and adapt and a call for collaboration.”  
Semi Koroilavesau, Fiji Minister of Fisheries

## Priority Areas or Actions in Your Plan

Through the New Zealand Pacific Partnership on OA, the New Zealand government is helping to provide trainings and leading efforts to educate scientists, marine specialists, communities and villages about OA across the Pacific region. The Ocean Foundation is also providing training and resources to universities in Fiji, which will help to carry out measurements of alkalinity and report statistics for immediate action. Thanks to these efforts, a total of 13 sites are being monitored since November 2012.

It is essential to develop long-term monitoring of OA and related physical parameters in Pacific Island Countries, as no OA baseline yet exists for Pacific Island Countries. Through the generosity of the Ocean Foundation, a GOA-ON Monitoring Kit was given to Fiji and is managed by the University of the South Pacific. The National Oceanography Centre of the UK further donated a pH sensor and Nitrate sensor (both climate-quality) which have been deployed since March 2018.

Following a successful Advanced Training in OA Monitoring Techniques at the University of Hawaii in 2018, the Pacific Islands and Territories Ocean Acidification Monitoring Network (PI-TOA) was created.

## Measures of Success, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

Going forward, Fiji's National Ocean Policy addresses climate-related impacts to ocean resources in goal two and its complimentary strategies. Goal two commits to protecting, restoring and improving ecosystem and climate services, biodiversity, and equitability of benefits through sustainable management of 100% of Fiji's Ocean, including its internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial seas and the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).



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Strategies for this goal include:

- Define and build awareness of the range of ecosystem and climate services, biodiversity and associated economic and non-economic benefits.
- Identify and strengthen sectoral policies and processes, or establish new approaches, to secure or improve service provision and equitability across 100% of the Ocean under national jurisdiction.
- Employ area-based management tools to ensure sustainable and equitable provision of Ocean services, including establishment of Marine Protected Areas covering 30% of the Ocean by 2030.
- Periodically review and horizon scan Ocean service provision and equitability of benefits in light of emerging knowledge and understanding and future projections of change.

Additionally, working to monitor for OA within Fiji and across other Pacific Island Countries helps us to implement UN Sustainable Development Goal 14.3, which aims to develop a specific indicator on ocean. There is need to fill in the knowledge gaps and work across silos and with stakeholders to address this immediate threat.

### How Does OA Action Support Your Existing International and Domestic Climate Commitments?

Ocean and climate are intrinsically linked -The ocean is a major driver and amplifier to our climate system and, at the same time, the ocean is impacted by changes to our climate. We must do our part to protect the marine species and ecosystems that sustain and protect the culture and livelihood of the Pacific.

Additionally, Fiji is exploring the option to register its OA Action Plan—via the National Ocean Policy—as a Voluntary Commitment to help support the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14, Life Below Water.

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