

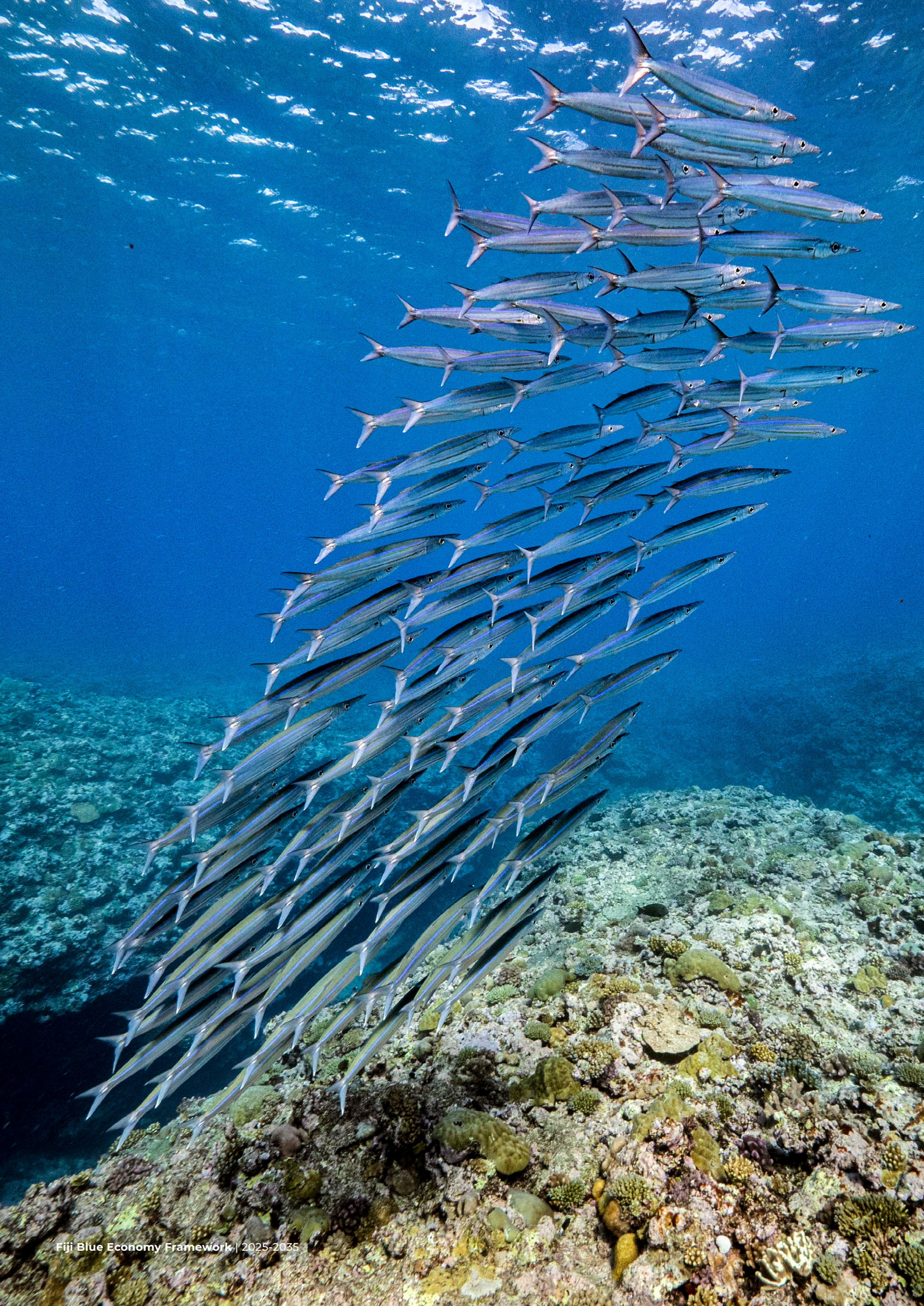


# Fiji Blue Economy Framework 2025-2035



BLUE  
PROSPERITY  
FIJI







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*This document is the final version of Fiji's proposed Blue Economy Framework, which lays out processes and priorities for the sustainable development of Fiji's economy. The contents of this document have been reviewed and updated with inputs from a variety of stakeholders.*



# FOREWORD

As Prime Minister for the Republic of Fiji, I am honored to present the Fiji Blue Economy Framework 2025–2035. It charts a course toward unlocking the full economic potential of our ocean, delivering environmental, economic, social and cultural prosperity to the people of Fiji. This Framework reflects Fiji's responsibility not only to chart its own development path, but to lead with integrity in the stewardship of our shared ocean heritage.

As a large ocean state comprising over 300 islands in 1.3 million square kilometers, our fate is inextricably linked to that of the ocean. The Blue Economy is not new to us. This Framework is a contemporary articulation of cultural norms and traditional knowledge systems that have sustained us for millennia, applying these values of ocean governance to modern-day challenges and opportunities.

The framework harnesses an ocean of potential by centering the ocean as a key driver of economic growth that is inclusive and enduring. Growth that strengthens resilience, safeguards sovereignty, and delivers long-term value rather than short-term gain. It challenges the prevailing paradigms that imply that the ocean is an object of exploitation. These paradigms have led to depleting fish stocks, rising levels of pollution and carbon in the atmosphere and a growing chasm between the wellbeing of rich and poor, urban and rural, local and foreign.

Fiji is blessed with a vast and diverse oceanscape. It is the shared inheritance of all Fijians, from coral reef systems, mangroves and seagrass beds to deep-sea plains and

seamounts. This natural heritage must be afforded the protection it rightfully deserves. The protection and restoration of marine ecosystems, particularly through the creation of Marine Protected Areas, underpins its sustainability, productivity and economic potential.

This Framework operationalizes Fiji's vision of the Pacific as an Ocean of Peace, where cooperation prevails over competition and stewardship underpins stability. Through its emphasis on stewardship of marine ecosystems, the Framework strengthens Fiji's role as a responsible guardian of the Blue Pacific, ensuring that development is pursued in a manner that avoids conflict, reduces resource pressures, and reinforces cooperation across islands and sectors. Our ocean is not merely an environmental or economic asset; it is space of unity and cooperation.

This policy document is a call to action for all Fijians—from government and industry leaders to coastal communities and young ocean stewards—to play a role in building our blue future. I affirm that the health of our oceans sits at the top of my decision hierarchy, as the choices we make today determine the inheritance we leave to future generations. Our ocean binds us together as one people and connects Fiji to the wider Pacific family. Let us move forward with unity and determination to ensure our oceans remain a source of pride, prosperity, and resilience for generations to come.

**Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka**  
Prime Minister of Fiji





# PERMANENT SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

The National Blue Economy Framework marks a defining step in strengthening Fiji's leadership as a large ocean state and translating our policy commitments into actionable pathways for sustainable ocean development. Under Part 13 of the Climate Change Act 2021, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is mandated to develop and implement measures that promote the sustainable management and use of ocean and marine resources. The Framework provides integrated, strategic, and cross-sectoral oversight of ocean-based development, ensuring the protection of the marine environment and the oversight of ocean development.

The development of the Framework has been grounded in inclusivity and collaboration. Through inter-ministerial dialogue, private sector engagement, and community consultations guided by the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee, we have crafted a framework that reflects the expertise and aspirations of Fiji's ocean stakeholders.

It aligns with global and regional commitments—including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention of Biological Diversity, Paris Agreement—and with national policies such as the National Development Plan 2025–2029, which positions the Blue Economy as a pillar of economic resilience; the National Ocean Policy 2020–2030; the Fiji Foreign Policy White Paper 2024; the Sustainable Tourism Framework 2024–2034; and the Fiji National Fisheries Policy 2024–2028.

The Framework provides coherent national direction for all Blue Economy sectors, namely fisheries, tourism, aquaculture, maritime transport, marine conservation, renewable energy, and emerging ocean industries.

This framework identifies key enablers and describes how Fiji will leverage innovative financial instruments, such as blue bonds, ecosystem service payments, blue carbon credits, and blended finance mechanisms to unlock and mobilize sustainable investment for Blue Economy development.

The Framework principles embed Pacific ways of knowing and doing into national planning while reaffirming that sustainable development in Fiji must be grounded in philosophies that have long guided balance, stewardship, and harmony. The Framework also emphasizes that the Blue Economy is inseparable from the vanua—our land, people, customs, and governance systems.

This Framework is a living instrument that is intended to serve all the people of Fiji, while recognising that every Fijian has a role to play in bringing this Framework to life. Its success rests on our continued partnership, innovation, and shared commitment to a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous Blue Economy for all Fijians.

## **Dr. Sivendra Michael**

Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Environment and Climate Change

*S Michael*







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiji, a nation deeply connected to its marine environment, is committed to advancing a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient Blue Economy. This framework outlines a **high-level approach to ocean-based economic development** that balances ecological protection, social equity, and economic growth, and is adaptable to changing environmental conditions.

**Built on principles of sustainability, inclusivity, innovation, and accountability**, the framework sets the foundation for future goals, including increasing the Blue Economy's contribution to Fiji's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fully protecting 30% of Fiji's marine areas by 2030, and supporting community wellbeing.

Aligned with national, regional, and global commitments, the framework **integrates traditional knowledge with modern strategies**. It promotes coordinated governance, strong stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management through a dedicated Blue Economy Taskforce.

**Sustainable finance** is central to the framework, with mechanisms such as blue bonds, biodiversity credits, and a proposed Environmental Trust Fund to support marine conservation, climate resilience, and community-driven enterprise.

This framework serves as an important milestone in the journey towards an economy that brings **empowerment, resilience and benefits for Fijian communities**, while safeguarding resources for continued sustainable development. Successful implementation of this framework will position Fiji as a regional leader in sustainable ocean management, offering a model for other Pacific Island nations to build a thriving Blue Economy rooted in equity, environmental stewardship and long-term sustainable growth.

**The Blue Economy Framework is a living document**, updated biennially to reflect evolving policies, financing instruments, and implementation lessons. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will coordinate updates and ensure alignment with the broader policy environment.



# INTRODUCTION

As a member of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, Fiji is working to build a long-lasting and comprehensive Blue Economy. Fiji's National Ocean Policy supports this commitment, as do a number of other policies and commitments, including Fiji's Climate Change Act and the country's commitment to 100% sustainable ocean management.

As a framework, this document sets forth guiding principles and key considerations for Fiji's blue economic development. It aims to facilitate a common understanding of the Blue Economy and its unique role in Fiji, and serves as a reference while also identifying directions for future strategy development. While it establishes a strategic foundation, the framework is not prescriptive—it does not define specific targets, nor does it present detailed approaches or plans. All Blue Economy activities will avoid duplication with existing Acts, with ministries retaining sector mandates.

This document should serve to:

- **Guide development** of future government policies, plans and strategies
- **Aid in decision making** related to allocation of government support and investment
- **Guide private sector initiatives** and development

Recognising the ocean as a critical driver of economic growth, this framework seeks to balance the sustainable use of marine resources with environmental conservation and social wellbeing, whilst being a catalyst for emerging sustainable sectors and industries. The framework sets a general course for the government to realise a sustainable and prosperous future, where the health of the ocean and the wellbeing of its people are closely intertwined. Achieving Fiji's vision will require continued, collaborative efforts to develop the policies, mechanisms, and implementation pathways necessary to bring the Blue Economy to life.





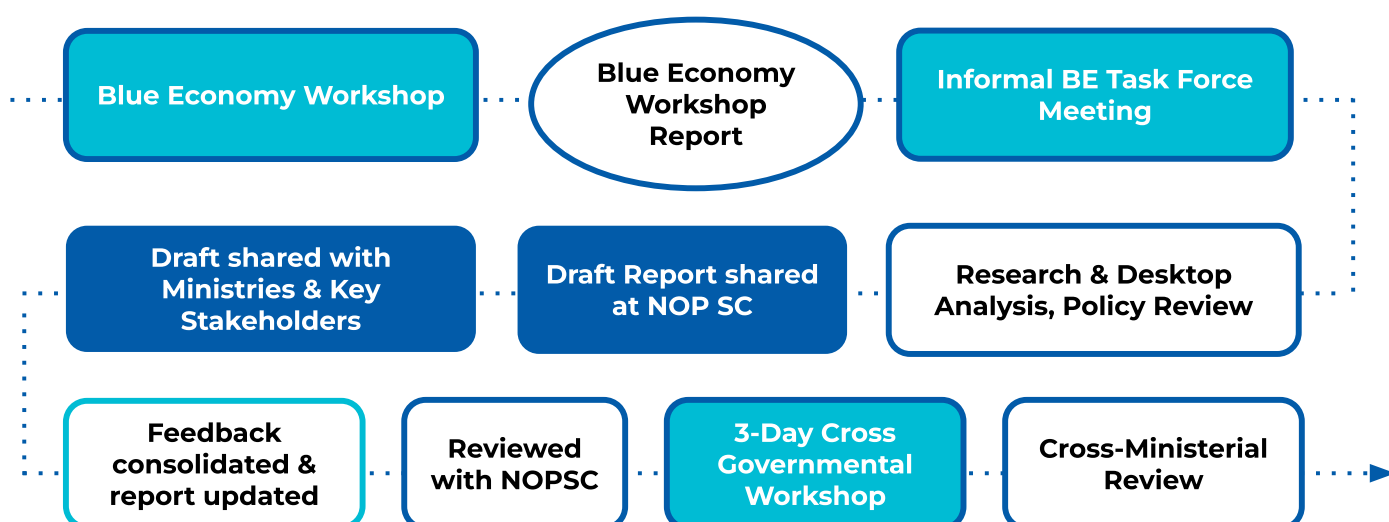
# METHODOLOGY

On May 9-10, 2024, the Government of Fiji, in collaboration with Blue Prosperity Fiji and the United Nations Development Programme, convened a workshop to discuss the development of Fiji's Blue Economy. The workshop was attended by 60 participants from 40 organisations, including government ministries, civil society, international development partners, academia, and the private sector, and was led by Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Professor Biman Prasad, and Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Dr. Sivendra Michael.

This engagement provided the basis for the development of the Blue Economy Framework and definition. The breadth of representation ensured that the formulation of the Blue Economy Framework would be informed by a wide range of perspectives, interests, and expertise, thereby enhancing its relevance and applicability across sectors.

As part of the framework development, a range of cross-cutting national and international policies, activities, literature, and data were consulted to aid in the development of the framework.

An early draft was reviewed at an informal Blue Economy Taskforce meeting at the end of 2024, where attendees discussed priorities, projects, the overarching definition, and governance mechanisms. Later drafts were then circulated to key experts and presented to the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee (NOPSC), prior to final review and consultation with the NOPSC and a three-day dedicated workshop.



**Figure 1:** Development Process of BE Framework Report



## Fiji's Blue Economy Definition

Fiji's draft Blue Economy definition was developed as part of a collaborative process during the Blue Economy Workshop. Synthesizing the recommendations from that process, with additional review and refinement, has created the following definition:

***"The Blue Economy is the sustainable management of resources, from ridge to high seas, that promotes improved livelihoods, safe and secure communities, and economic prosperity through a holistic and inclusive approach for all Fijians. It includes investing in Fijian-led/owned activities like sustainable fisheries, tourism, and renewable energy, while prioritising climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation, waste management, community livelihoods, traditional knowledge, conservation, and inclusive ocean benefits."***

*Na Blue Economy oya na kena vakayagataki vakamatau na noda iyaubula me tekivu mai na ulunivanua kei na veitokaitua ki na wasawasa titobu, me vakatorocaketaki kina na nodra bula na lewenivanua, maroroi na nodra itikotiko mera sautu tiko ga ka taqomaki mai na veidredre e rawa ni sotavi, kei na rawati ni bula vakailavo ena nodra veitikotiko kece ena noda vanua. E okati ena iwalewale ni veivakatorocaketaki qo na kena tokoni na nodra vakaitavi ka taukena na lewenivanua e Viti na veimataqali walewale ni qoli e vakabibitaka na vakayagataki vakayalomatua ni iqolliqoli, na saravanua kei na vakayagataki ni vurevure ni kaukauwa e sega ni vakacacana na vuravura me vaka na vakayagataki ni katakata mai na siga (solar), wai (hydro) kei na cagi (wind) ka qarauni kina na vakavakarau kei na kena sotavi na vakacaca ni draki veisau. Na vakayagataki ni qoli vakavuku, na saravanua, na maroroi vinaka nibenu, na bula ni lewenivanua, na vuku vakavanua, na veitaqomaki, kei na kena wasei vakatautauvata na iyau kei na veimataqali ivakavakayagataki ni wasawasa*



# GLOBAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL CONTEXT

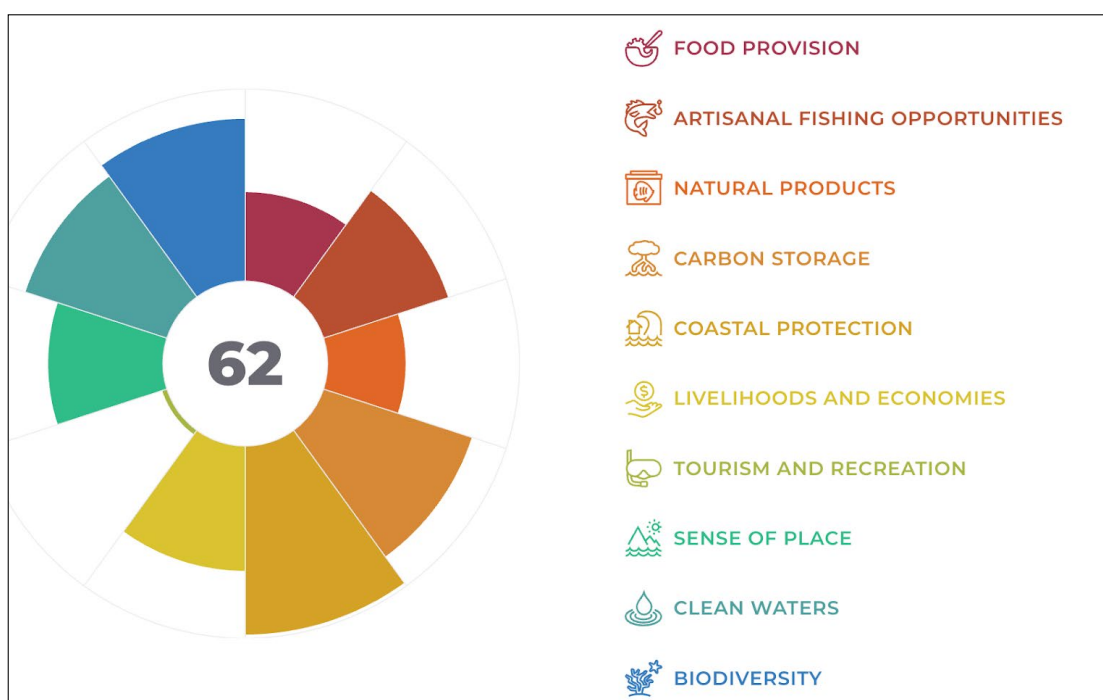
## Fiji's Blue Economy Definition

Fiji's Blue Economy Framework has been developed as a response to escalating global environmental challenges, particularly those affecting marine ecosystems. Climate change, characterised by rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and more frequent extreme weather events, has placed small island nations like Fiji at significant risk. Additionally, overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction are threatening marine biodiversity and the health of the world's oceans. Fiji also faces environmental challenges such as coral reef degradation and coastal erosion, which are exacerbated by global environmental pressures.

Fiji currently holds an Ocean Health Index (OHI) score of 62 out of 100, which is below the global average of 69 and a decline from a score of 70+ in the past few years. This places Fiji 174th out of 220 assessed regions.

The recent drop in score is driven primarily by Fiji's low rating on the OHI's Tourism and Recreation goal, which represents how well a country "utilizes its full recreational potential without harming the ecosystem." Other goals affecting Fiji's score include Food Provision, which measures how well a country "has maximized the amount of sustainably produced seafood from wild or ocean-cultured stocks," and Natural Products, which examines if "natural resources are maximally harvested at a rate that does not threaten future harvest and minimizes ecological harm."

These OHI measures align with Fiji's existing goals and priorities, codified in numerous policies and plans highlighted in the section below. A key priority of Blue Economy development includes bringing benefits to rural and coastal areas, including jobs and public services, investments in climate resilience and adaptation, and infrastructure that serves these needs.

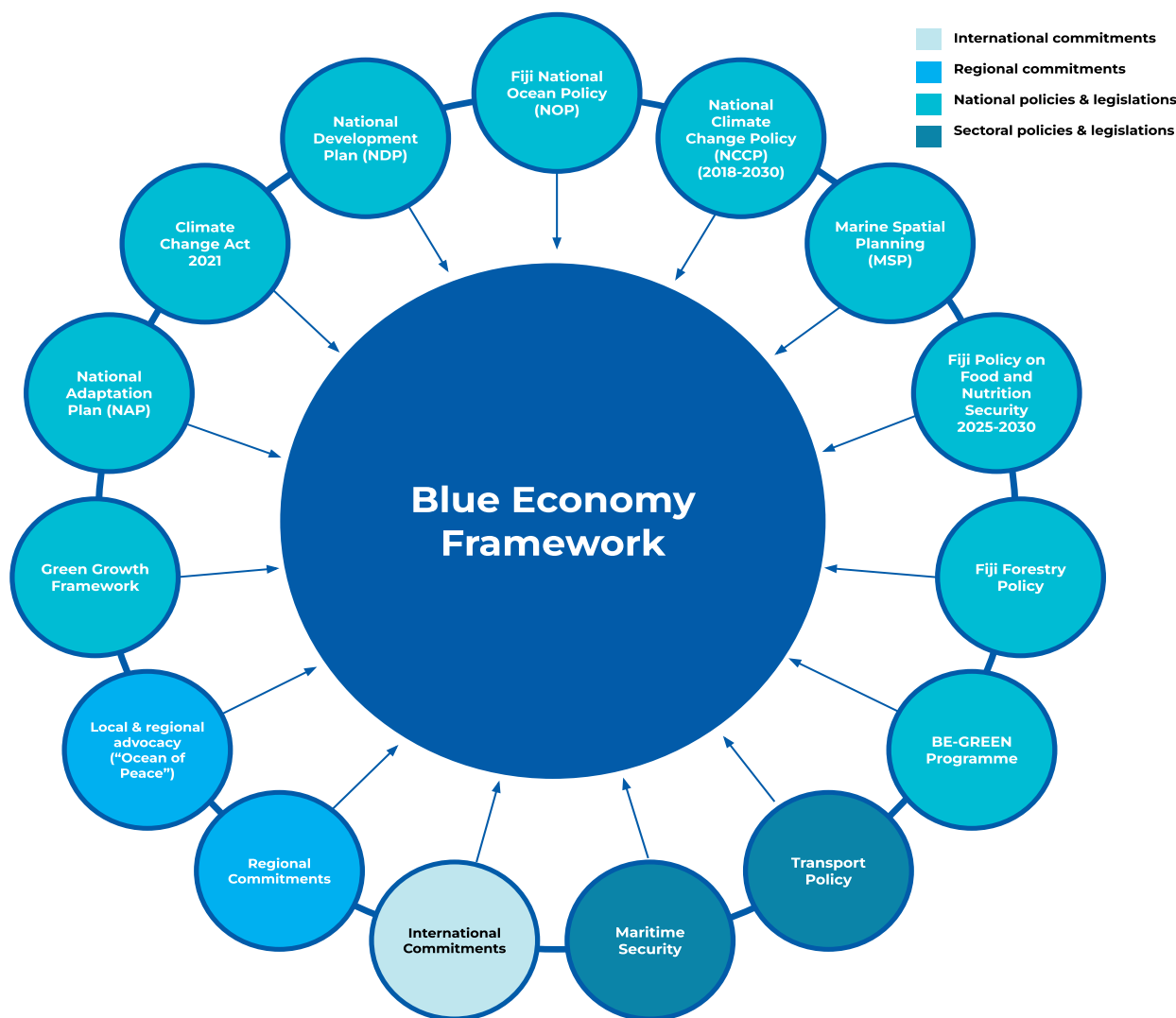


**Figure 2:** The overall Ocean Health Index score for Fiji is 62 out of 100 (Source: Ocean Health Index)



## Policy Context

Fiji has demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to advancing the Blue Economy through various national and regional policies and commitments. This framework aims to complement and build on Fiji's existing policies, plans and commitments, including the following:



**Figure 3:** Fiji's existing policies, plans and commitments that were foundational to the Blue Economy Framework

**International Commitments:** Fiji is a signatory to several international agreements which align with the principles of sustainable ocean management and conservation, including the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Biodiversity Beyond National Borders Jurisdiction (BBNJ), and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

**Regional Commitments:** As a member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Fiji collaborates with neighboring countries on regional initiatives such as the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, which aims to ensure sustainable ocean management across the Pacific region.



**Local and Regional Advocacy: Fiji as a Champion of the “Ocean of Peace”:**

Fiji champions the concept of the “Ocean of Peace,” advocating for peaceful and sustainable use of marine resources through diplomatic leadership, regional advocacy, and community-led initiatives.

**Green Growth Framework:** The Green Growth Framework promotes sustainable, inclusive development while preserving environmental integrity and enhancing climate resilience. It provides a strategic roadmap to transition Fiji toward a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy by integrating environmental sustainability into economic planning and social development, and outlines targeted actions across key sectors.

**National Adaptation Plan (NAP):** Fiji’s NAP outlines prioritised actions to address climate risks across key sectors such as water, agriculture, and infrastructure. It serves as a strategic tool for long-term adaptation planning and mobilizing resources to enhance national and community resilience.

**Climate Change Act 2021:** This landmark legislation establishes a legal foundation for Fiji’s climate response and adopts a target for net-zero emissions by 2050. It mandates carbon budgeting, risk assessments, institutional accountability, and climate-smart ocean industries.

**National Development Plan (NDP):** The plan is a blueprint for progress, aiming to empower people, uplift social wellbeing, and achieve a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable nation by 2050.

**Fiji National Ocean Policy (NOP):** The Fiji NOP provides a framework for sustainable ocean governance, aiming to balance ecological health with economic development. It promotes integrated ocean management, Marine Spatial Planning, and protection of marine biodiversity across Fiji’s territorial seas and exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) (2018-2030):** The NCCP guides Fiji’s efforts to reduce vulnerability and build resilience to climate change impacts. It focuses on mainstreaming climate adaptation and mitigation into national planning while also promoting community engagement and sustainable development.

Updates to the Blue Economy Framework should comply with Article 83-5 of Climate Change Act 2021.

**Marine Spatial Planning:** Though still in process, Fiji’s Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) strategy and Blue Economy Framework are intricately connected within the nation’s development agenda and National Oceans Policy. A MSP serves as a strategic approach to organizing ocean use and interactions to support sustainable economic growth and environmental conservation. By identifying key areas for ocean use, MSP supports Blue Economy initiatives across critical sectors such as fisheries and tourism, ensuring holistic, environmentally sustainable economic activities.

**Fiji Policy on Food and Nutrition Security 2025-2030:** This national policy sets out a whole-of-government framework to ensure all Fijians have year-round access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food by strengthening resilient, diversified, and nature-positive food systems. It establishes multi-sector coordination, evidence-based strategies, and aligned national actions to address the burden of malnutrition, improve food safety, and support healthier diets across Fiji.

**Fiji Forestry Policy:** Fiji's Forestry Policy prioritizes sustainable forest management, economic development, and environmental conservation. Key objectives include increasing the sustainable contribution of forestry to the economy, engaging local communities and resource owners, and conserving biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**BE-GREEN Programme:** The Fiji Blue Economy and Green Community Development (BE-GREEN) Programme, led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, integrates climate-resilient agriculture, watershed management and community-based resource stewardship. It serves as a key implementation mechanism for ridge-to-reef interventions that reduce land-based pollution, improve soil conservation and lower sediment and nutrient loads entering rivers and coastal waters, and is a core delivery partner for operationalising this Framework.

**Transport Policy:** Fiji's Transport Policy aims to improve and modernise the transport sector, with a focus on sustainability, decarbonization, and efficiency. Key aspects include developing a national decarbonization strategy, investing in electric vehicle infrastructure, and promoting the use of biofuels and renewable energy.

**Maritime Security Strategy:** Maritime security is critical to effective implementation of the Blue Economy Framework, ensuring that ocean-based economic activities are conducted within the bounds of national and international law. Regional cooperation through frameworks like the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is necessary, as is supporting community-based maritime stewardship and involving traditional custodians in coastal security at the local level. The MSS will be the means of ensuring sustainable use of Fiji's ocean resources through capability, capacity, and institutional strengthening and improving policy and legislative measures.



**Note:** There will need to be a review of legislative mandates to ensure harmonisation as well as the introduction of new regulatory instruments, as necessary to fulfill Blue Economy development.

The Blue Economy Framework will be aligned with existing financial, environmental, and sectoral reporting and budgeting processes.



# PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

In alignment with national policies and international commitments, and in support of Fiji's commitments to conserve 30% of its ocean and sustainably manage 100% of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the Government of Fiji has identified proposed Principles, Goals and Objectives to help facilitate development of the Blue Economy.

## Principles

**The principles outlined below should be referred to as guiding principles for policy development, sustainable finance and Blue Economy initiatives.**

### Sustainable Development

A Blue Economy must balance economic growth, environmental health, and social wellbeing. This framework positions Fiji's conservation commitments and Fiji's National Ocean Policy (NOP) as the overarching guide for sustainable ocean governance. This includes Objective 2 of the NOP on Sustainability to "Protect, restore, and improve ocean ecosystems, and enhance climate resilience and biodiversity so benefits can be equitably shared through the sustainable management of 100 percent of Fiji's ocean within national jurisdiction."<sup>1</sup>

### Integrated Management

Sustainable blue economic planning must align with an ecosystem-based approach to natural resource management, including ridge-to-reef principles, recognising that activities on land impact the ocean. This approach relies on cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination among stakeholders across disciplines and sectors. This includes coordinated planning across the agriculture, water and environment sectors to manage land-use change and agricultural practices in a way that reduces marine impacts while supporting viable and just transitions for farmers and rural communities.

### Inclusive Participation

Planning, development and management of Fiji's Blue Economy and marine resources should include government agencies, the private sector, civil society, youth, and local communities. The active participation of resource owners, Indigenous peoples, local communities, and relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes is central to the development of Fiji's Blue Economy as well as considerations for intergenerational equity and youth participation. A Blue Economy Taskforce reporting to the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee will facilitate this collaboration. This will help ensure that decisions are beneficial for all Fijians for generations to come.

### Integration of Indigenous Knowledge

As traditional custodians of the land and sea, Indigenous Fijians possess deep-rooted knowledge of marine ecosystems, which enriches conservation strategies and supports resilient, community-led resource management. Their participation strengthens social cohesion, enhances the legitimacy of policy frameworks, and ensures that economic benefits are fairly shared among those who have historically depended on marine resources for livelihoods, identities, and wellbeing.

### Innovation and Adaptation

The Blue Economy Framework encourages the development and adoption of innovative technologies and practices that enhance the sustainability of the Blue Economy.

<sup>1</sup> Government of Fiji. (2020). *Fiji National Ocean Policy 2020–2030*. Ministry of Economy. Retrieved from: <https://library.sprep.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Fiji-National-Ocean-policy-2020-2030.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Updates to the Blue Economy Framework should comply with Article 83/5 of the Climate Change Act of 2021

## **Innovation and Adaptation (continued)**

This includes promoting adaptive management practices and mitigation measures to respond to changing environmental and socioeconomic conditions.<sup>2</sup>

## **Equity and Social Justice**

A central principle of the framework is to ensure equitable access to marine resources and the benefits of the Blue Economy. This includes advancing projects that address community needs and promote social justice by protecting vulnerable populations and fostering gender equality and broader diversity within the Fijian context.

## **Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and accountability are key in decision-making processes related to the Blue Economy and ocean resource management. The framework recommends establishing mechanisms for accountability and monitoring to ensure adherence to sustainability principles (see Governance section). The principles of Free and Prior Informed Consent, Access and Benefit-Sharing are also critical for safeguarding the interests of natural resource owners and local communities.

## **Goals**

The following goals guide Fiji's efforts in harnessing the full potential of its ocean resources while also safeguarding them for current and future generations.

**Foster Sustainable Economic Growth and Diversification** in key sectors including fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, renewable energy, green shipping, conservation-based business models, and marine biotechnology. This will enhance the economic resilience of coastal communities and the broader Fijian population through sustainable livelihood opportunities.

**Prioritise Marine Conservation and Ecosystem Health** by protecting and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems to maintain their biodiversity and productivity. This includes the implementation of effective Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other

conservation measures in line with the 30x30 target, which aims to designate 30% of the ocean as fully protected areas by 2030.

**Develop Climate Resilience and Adaptation** to strengthen the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems and communities to climate change impacts, and promote climate-smart practices in Blue Economy sectors.

**Support Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture** by ensuring the sustainable management of fisheries resources to prevent overfishing and habitat destruction, as well as to support food security and nutrition. Promote sustainable aquaculture practices that minimize environmental impacts, in line with fisheries targets, including key species and regenerative aquaculture.

**Encourage Pollution Reduction and Waste Management** by minimising marine pollution from land-based and sea-based sources, including plastic waste, chemicals, and other pollutants, and promote circular economy principles. Implement effective waste management systems to prevent negative marine impacts.

**Enable Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing** by enhancing the capacity of stakeholders, including local communities, to participate in and benefit from the Blue Economy. This includes promoting research, education, and knowledge sharing on sustainable Blue Economy practices.

**Integrate Traditional and Indigenous Knowledge with Science-Based Knowledge** through comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Recognize that Indigenous communities are custodians of the ocean, with specific historic and cultural knowledge that can strengthen outcomes of Blue Economy initiatives and sustainable development.



## Objectives

These interlinked objectives provide a blueprint to align national efforts with global commitments, while also honouring Fiji's unique cultural and ecological heritage. The following objectives reflect the integrated pathways required to drive transformative outcomes for people, nature, and the economy.

Across all objectives, gender equality and social inclusion are upheld as core principles to ensure that Blue Economy development is both equitable and empowering for all communities.

### Economic Objectives:

- Increase the contribution of Blue Economy sectors to Fiji's GDP by fostering sustainable investments and creating jobs. This should include the quantification of economic contribution increases and employment.
- Develop value-added products and services in Blue Economy sectors to enhance market competitiveness.

### Environmental Objectives:

- Support sustainable management of 100% of Fiji's marine and coastal areas and 30% fully protected Marine Protected Areas by 2030.
- Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on SDG 14 targets and sub-targets, including but not limited to conservation, sustainable fisheries, artisanal fishing and marine pollution reduction.

### Cultural Objectives:

- Ensure Blue Economy initiatives align with traditional and cultural values.
- Enhance Indigenous marine stewardship by protecting and utilising traditional knowledge and preserving culturally significant maritime areas.
- Foster the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) while safeguarding equitable benefit-sharing in Blue Economy development.
- Strengthen customary rights to marine resources and guarantee diverse cultural perspectives in Blue Economy developmental procedures.

### Educational Objectives:

- Increase awareness and understanding among coastal communities of sustainable marine-resource use and the importance of healthy marine ecosystems
- Build capacity and skills for enterprise and innovation in blue economy sectors among local entrepreneurs and communities, including development of a national blue workforce plan to bridge skills gaps
- Improve financial literacy for blue enterprise development and scaling, including strengthening the science curriculum and increasing Technical and Vocational Education and Training in BE.





## **Social Objectives:**

- Ensure equitable access to BE initiatives and equitable benefit distribution for local Indigenous communities, enhance their wellbeing, and promote job creation and training.
- Promote gender equality and social inclusion in Blue Economy sectors.
- Embed Indigenous communities as key partners in the development of Fiji's Blue Economy by integrating traditional knowledge, securing their rights to marine resources, enhancing their capacity to participate in decision-making processes, and ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities.

## **Governance Objectives:**

- Establish a robust institutional framework for the governance of Fiji's Blue Economy, including clear roles, responsibilities and accountability for stakeholders, in line with the NOP priorities.
- Implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to track and report on progress and ensure accountability.

## **Scientific and Technological Objectives:**

- Support research, development and capacity building in marine biotechnology, science, and technology, including traditional knowledge systems.
- Foster innovation in Blue Economy sectors through partnerships with academic and research institutions and develop the knowledge economy.





# ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE



Fiji is an island nation, comprising approximately 330 islands with a population of around 920,000 people. The country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) spans approximately 1.28 million square kilometers, containing a rich array of marine resources. Fiji's EEZ is 70% larger than its landmass and is ranked the 26th largest sovereign ocean space in the world. Fiji is also home to 3.5% of the world's coral reefs and over 65,000 hectares of mangroves. Because of these valuable resources, the Government of Fiji plans to operationalise its Blue Economy ambitions and sustainably leverage its ocean-based resources to support its post-pandemic recovery and economic diversification.

## General Economic Overview

Fiji's National Development Plan (2025-2029) predicted a broad-based economic growth of 2.8% in 2024 and 3% in 2025 and 2026, due to economic recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic and a rebound in tourism and related sectors.<sup>3</sup>

The National Development Plan emphasizes the importance of the private sector and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The government is focused on strengthening macroeconomic stability, achieving price stability, and improving its fiscal position.

Fiji has been facing a growing labor exodus, leading to skill shortages across all sectors. There is a need to move up the value chain to produce higher value-added products and services.

## Key Imports, Exports and Trade Partners

Fiji relies on imports for food, fuel, and manufactured goods. The country's main exports include fish, timber, and agricultural products. Fijian exports of goods and services account for 27% of GDP; imports of goods and services account for 55% of GDP. The tourism industry contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings.

The government is working to improve market access through trade agreements; it is a member of the World Trade Organization and has made various international trade commitments with other member countries. There are efforts to expand export opportunities for aquaculture and non-tuna species, as tuna is currently the main fish export.

## Key Economic Sectors

The tourism sector is a major contributor to Fiji's GDP, and has historically been a key focus of economic development strategies. Tourism accounts for nearly 40% of GDP (both directly and indirectly) and is the largest formal employer in the country, with over a third of all workers working in tourism. In 2019, the tourism sector employed around 97,000 people, accounting for approximately 40% of total employment in Fiji and generating ~FJ \$2.1 billion in foreign exchange earnings, accounting for around 44% of total foreign exchange earnings. This sector provides opportunities for sustainable development of coastal and island communities.

Agriculture is also a major component of the economy, and the industry is currently focused on enhancing farming practices and access to markets.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics. (2024). *Fiji National Development Plan 2025–2029 and Vision 2050*. Government of Fiji. [https://www.finance.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NPDF\\_final-9.pdf](https://www.finance.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NPDF_final-9.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Fiji Bureau of Statistics. (2025). *Tourism and Migration Statistics*. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/statistics/social-statistics/tourism-and-migration-statistics/>

The marine resources sector is an area of opportunity for economic diversification, with room to expand upon current practices. The forestry and manufacturing sectors are also targeted for growth.

Cost-benefit analyses of high priority BE development sectors should be undertaken as part of the implementation of this Framework. Sector diversification and financing initiatives must undergo financial impact assessment and Ministry of Finance consultation prior to implementation.

TOURISM

Tourism is the main driver of Fiji's economy and provides opportunities for sustainable development of coastal and island communities. In 2019, the tourism sector employed around 97,000 people, accounting for approximately 40% of total employment in Fiji and generating ~FJ \$2.1 billion in foreign exchange earnings, accounting for around 44% of total foreign exchange earnings.<sup>5</sup>

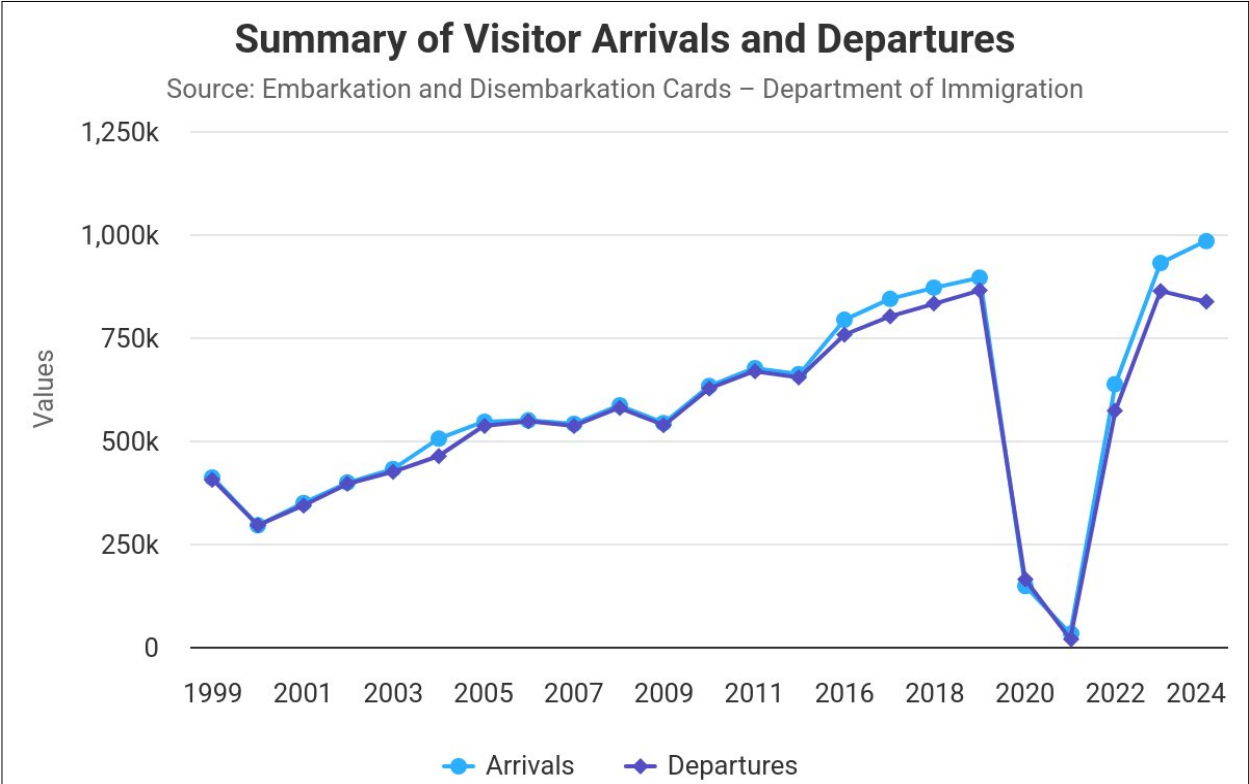


Figure 4: Summary of visitor arrivals and departures to Fiji over time

The graph above illustrates a clear long-term growth trend in Fiji's tourism sector, marked by steady increases in both visitor arrivals and departures from 1999 to 2019. The sharp decline in 2020–2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic was followed by a rapid recovery beginning in 2022. By 2024, arrival numbers exceed pre-pandemic levels, signaling a resilient tourism sector.

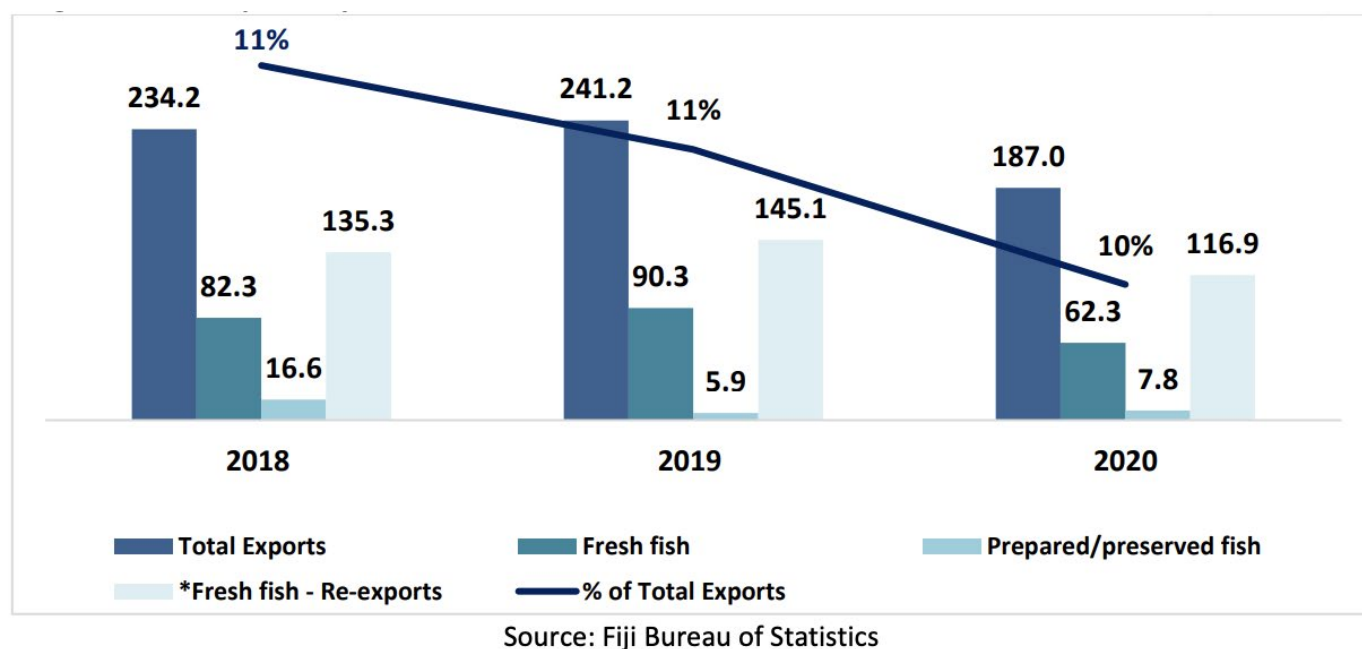
Sustainable tourism is a key component of Fiji's tourism development objectives, including the National Sustainable Tourism Framework and the Blue Town model, which aims to create sustainable, climate-resilient communities while protecting the environment and fostering economic growth through a Blue Economy approach.

<sup>5</sup> Fiji Bureau of Statistics. (2025). Tourism and Migration Statistics. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/statistics/social-statistics/tourism-and-migration-statistics/>



## FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

Fisheries play an important role in Fiji's economy, culture, food security, and nutrition, and the Government is promoting the sustainable management of offshore fisheries, inshore fisheries and aquaculture. In 2020, the fisheries sector contributed \$61.1 million to Fiji's GDP, then declined to \$50.8 million in 2021 before recovering in 2022 to \$56.7 million. Combined fisheries-related activities within the fisheries sector contributed \$56.9 million, or 0.7%, to the national GDP in 2021.



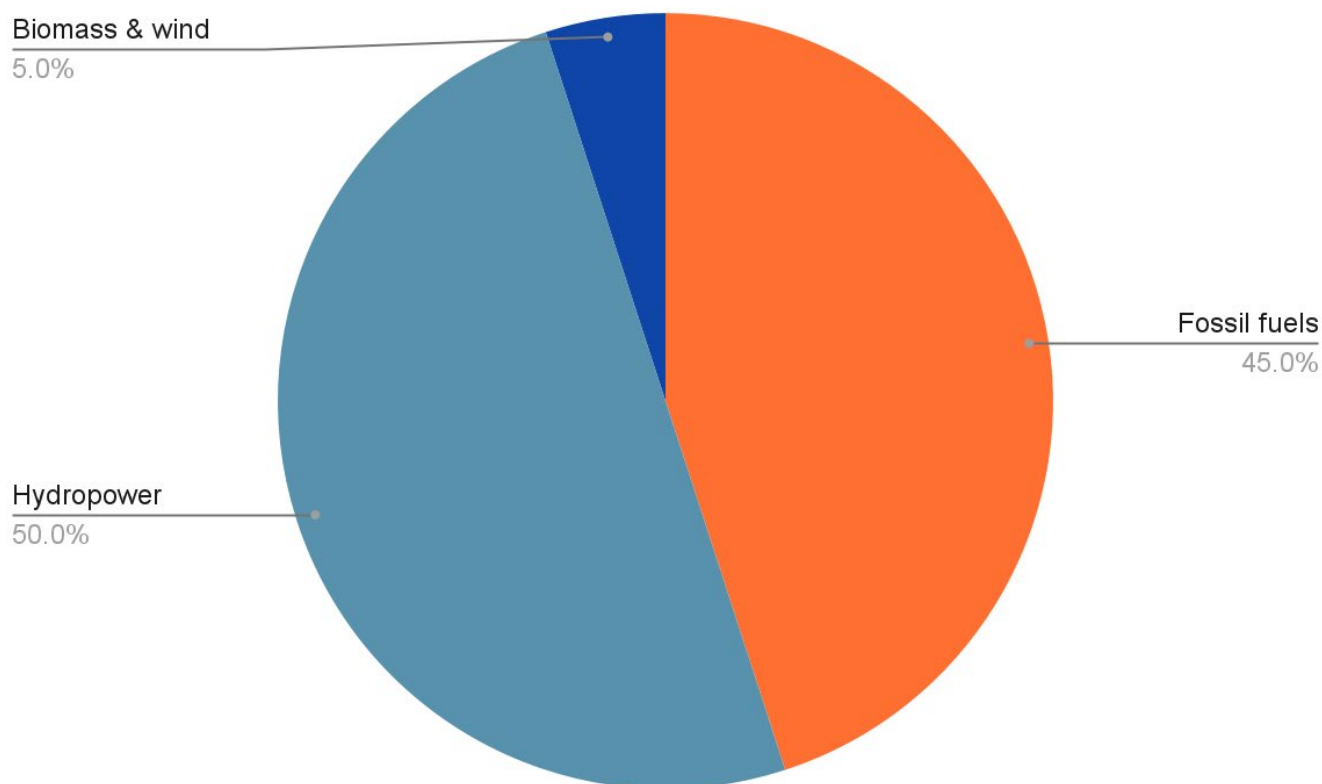
**Figure 5:** Fish exports by standard international trade classification over time.<sup>6</sup>

From 2018-2020, total fish exports in Fiji declined from \$234.2 million in 2018 to \$187 million in 2020, reflecting a reduction in overall marine resource output, likely due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fresh fish exports also decreased, from \$82.3 million in 2018 to \$62.3 million in 2020. Re-exports of fresh fish, which form the bulk of exports, peaked in 2019 at \$145.1 million before falling to \$116.9 million in 2020. Fish's contribution to Fiji's total exports declined slightly, from 11% in 2018 and 2019 to 10% in 2020, indicating relative underperformance compared to other sectors.

This underlines the importance of diversification, enhancing local processing capacity, reducing dependence on re-exports, and implementing marine protection efforts, which can boost domestic fishing by improving brand value and protecting breeding and nursery grounds, and investing in sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and high-value marine products to boost resilience and long-term economic gains from ocean resources.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Fisheries. (2023). Annual Report 2021–2022. Parliament of the Republic of Fiji <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ministry-of-Fisheries-Annual-Report-2021%E2%80%932022.pdf>

## RENEWABLE ENERGY



**Figure 6:** Fiji's current energy consumption by type of energy

Currently, 50% of Fiji's energy is generated through hydropower, 45% is supplied through fossil fuels, and 5% is generated from biomass and wind. Increased usage of renewable energy sources can minimize Fiji's reliance on fossil fuels. Fiji aims to increase private sector participation in the energy sector and has developed an Electrification Master Plan to help achieve this goal. Fiji's 20-year National Development Plan calls for all power to be generated from renewable sources by 2030, and an additional 120 megawatts of renewable energy will be required to achieve this target. Four 5-megawatt solar farm projects are currently in progress.

The main distributor of Fiji's power, Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), supplies grid-based power to 90% of Fiji's population on the main islands. EFL aims to be 99% renewably powered by 2030.

Fiji is also working to promote the use of sustainable shipping practices within Fiji and in other Pacific Island countries.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Fisheries. (2023). Annual Report 2021–2022. Parliament of the Republic of Fiji <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ministry-of-Fisheries-Annual-Report-2021%E2%80%932022.pdf>



# BLUE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Fiji's Blue Economy encompasses a diverse range of ocean-based sectors that are vital to the nation's sustainable development, economic resilience, and cultural identity. This section aligns with Fiji's National Development Plan and outlines how priority sectors can be leveraged to drive sustainable blue economic development. Potential priorities and metrics to assess progress for each sector are listed below.



**Forestry, Land Management  
& Agriculture**



**Marine Resources & Water**



**Education**



**Tourism**



**Energy & Transport**



**Solid Waste  
& Pollution Management**



**Other Sectors**







## Forestry, Land Management & Agriculture

Fiji's rich forest ecosystems, spanning coastal mangroves, inland rainforests, and watershed systems, are deeply intertwined with the country's environmental, economic, and cultural identity. Fiji's agriculture and food systems are a critical interface between ridge and reef. These systems hold untapped potential to support sustainable development and enhance terrestrial and marine resilience while also safeguarding valuable ecosystem services and Fiji's natural and cultural capital.



### Blue Economy Opportunity

Forests, particularly mangroves and upland catchments, serve as vital interfaces between terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Through sustainable forest management practices, these systems help maintain ecological balance by reducing sediment and nutrient runoff, improving coastal water quality and protecting coral reefs from degradation.

Restoration and conservation of mangrove forests directly advance Blue Economy priorities by safeguarding coastlines from erosion, providing critical nursery habitats for fisheries, and enhancing carbon sequestration and storage. Likewise, sustainably managed upland forests regulate freshwater flows, prevent soil erosion, and sustain downstream marine productivity. These linkages position forestry as both a green economy asset through carbon credits, timber alternatives, and biodiversity conservation and a Blue Economy enabler by protecting marine habitats, supporting fisheries, and enhancing ecotourism potential.



## Potential Projects

**Sustainable Forestry, Agroforestry and Non-Timber Forest Products for Communities, Resilience and Watershed Protection:** Supporting sustainable forestry-based economic activities, providing long-term economic and livelihood benefits for communities while reducing deforestation and protecting watershed health and water quality; promoting green infrastructure and erosion control techniques in new developments to maintain ecosystem connectivity from ridge to reef.

**Integrated Mangrove, Ridge to reef Reforestation and Afforestation:** Replanting and protecting mangroves and adjacent coastal forests in key provinces with strong community engagement; restoring upland forests to reduce sedimentation and nutrient loading into sensitive coastal and marine areas.

**Blue-Green Carbon Pilot Projects:** Designing carbon offset programs that integrate blue (mangrove) and green (inland forest) carbon credits to attract blended finance from nature-based climate investors.

**Climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land-use planning:** Integrated agricultural land management and improved nutrient and sediment management can significantly reduce pressures on rivers and coastal ecosystems while supporting food security and rural livelihoods.

## Community & Environmental Benefits

Job creation in forest restoration, nursery development, eco-tourism, and community-based monitoring can support local communities who are already environmental stewards, aligning with traditional knowledge and customary land-use practices. Agroforestry systems provide food security and income diversification.

Mangrove projects can provide coastal protection benefits by reducing erosion, creating buffers from storm surges, and

supporting fisheries vital to existing communities. In addition, improved water quality and sediment control will benefit coral reefs, seagrass beds, and nearshore fisheries whilst supporting enhanced carbon sequestration and reduced disaster risk through nature-based solutions.

All projects should include a robust plan to ensure long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for the community.

## Challenges

Fiji faces several interlinked challenges in advancing integrated forestry and land management as part of its green and Blue Economy strategies. Financing barriers, including underdeveloped carbon markets and limited incentives for sustainable land use, constrain community uptake of restoration and agroforestry initiatives. Environmental vulnerabilities such as cyclones and soil erosion threaten the durability of reforestation efforts, while technical capacity gaps and weak integration of traditional and scientific knowledge could limit effective implementation. Ensuring equitable community engagement and benefit-sharing, particularly for women, youth, and customary landowners, remains critical to achieving long-term success.

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### Potential Metrics:

- Number of community members trained and employed in forestry-linked activities
- % increase in local income from ecotourism or sustainable forest products
- Volume of carbon credits generated and traded (blue and green)
- Improvement in water quality indicators in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Hectares of mangroves and upland forests restored or protected
- Increased abundance of juvenile fish in restored mangrove areas



## Marine Resources & Water

Healthy marine environments and waterways, including rivers, streams and drainage networks, under the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, are critical to maintaining ecological balance. They support Fiji's marine resources, including coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, freshwater systems, and diverse fisheries, forming the core of the nation's food security, cultural identity, and economic vitality.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

Fiji can leverage its abundant marine and freshwater resources to advance a Blue Economy that supports Fijians and local communities through sustainable fisheries, climate-resilient tourism, renewable marine energy, improved watershed management, and blue carbon markets. Well-managed initiatives that protect the quality and flow of freshwater into coastal areas can enhance marine resilience, support biodiversity, and sustain economic activities. With sufficient social acceptance and community involvement, this integrated approach can boost economic resilience, create green and blue jobs, and strengthen climate adaptation efforts, especially for vulnerable coastal and riverine communities.

### Potential Projects

- **Artisanal Fisheries Business Incubators:** Provide seed capital and incubation support for community-owned fisheries adopting value-added processing, cold chain tech, and eco-labeling, as well as community-based fisheries management and stock restoration programs.
- **Hatchery Scaling:** Develop hatchery programs for high-value species such as sea cucumbers, seaweed, grouper, giant clams, and shrimp for local consumption and export demand, and invest in the modernisation of existing hatchery infrastructure. Consideration should also be made for coastal agroforestry systems.

- **Blue Seafood Cooperatives & Climate-Resilient Crop Aquaculture Farming Models:** Support integrated farming systems that combine crops and aquaculture and supports the scale-up of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) into formal cooperatives with business plans, traceability systems, and premium product channels for export or eco-tourism supply chains.
- **Eco-Aquaculture Innovation Zones & Brackish-Water Aquaculture Systems:** Establish investment-ready clusters for seaweed, shellfish, or other aquaculture, supported by shared infrastructure and venture financing.
- **Sustainable Marine and Freshwater Tourism:** Develop eco-tourism businesses and support tourism entrepreneurs that showcase coral reefs, marine wildlife, protected areas, and freshwater sites, underpinned by traditional ocean and river stewardship practices.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

Investing in the sustainable management of Fiji's marine resources offers a powerful pathway for economic development, enabling coastal and Indigenous communities to benefit from stable, long-term income streams through fisheries, eco-tourism, and conservation-based enterprises. By promoting sustainable fishing practices and supporting the recovery of marine ecosystems, these efforts also strengthen food security, ensuring that seafood resources remain abundant for future generations. Supporting community and traditional ownership can also safeguard cultural heritage and preserve traditional knowledge systems and customary marine stewardship practices that have sustained Fijian communities for centuries.



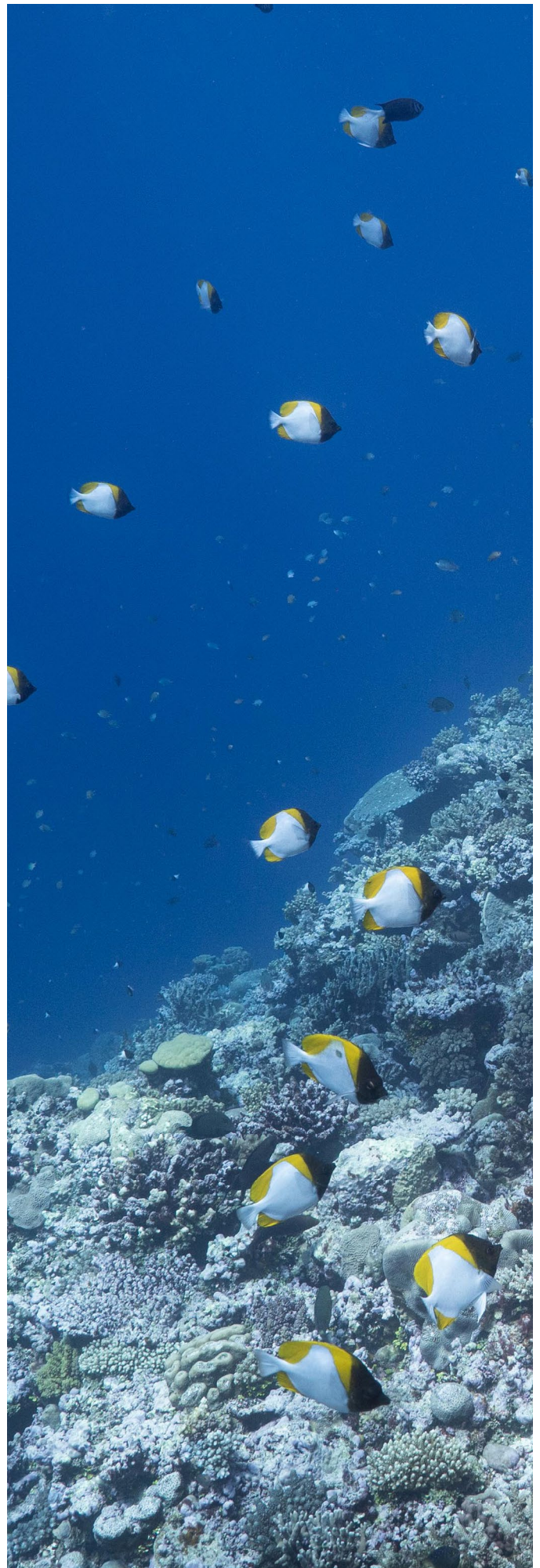
## Challenges

Despite the significant opportunities presented by Fiji's marine and freshwater resources, several challenges remain. These include fragmented management of interconnected ecosystems, limited enforcement of marine protection measures, and pressures from overfishing, pollution, and poorly managed land-based activities that degrade water quality and marine habitats. In the aquaculture sector, challenges remain with larval survival, grow-out conditions, and biosecurity. Market access hurdles, including traceability and cold chain gaps, also affect profitability in fisheries and aquaculture. Integrating traditional stewardship with modern practices across relevant sectors requires careful, inclusive engagement to ensure cultural integrity and equitable community benefits.

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### Potential Metrics:

- Increase in sustainable fisheries yields (metric tons)
- Number of community members trained and employed in Blue Economy sectors and number of new MSME's formed in the Blue Economy
- Number of Fijian-owned and/or community (iTaukei) owned sustainable fishery/aquaculture businesses supported
- Biodiversity improvements (e.g., coral health indices, fish abundance)
- Number and size of LMMAs and MPAs established or strengthened; achievement of 30% MPA coverage
- Hectares of mangroves and seagrass beds restored





## Education

By reimagining its education systems and investing in capacity building, particularly through cutting-edge Information and Communications Technology (ICT), research development, and applied innovation, Fiji can cultivate a dynamic, ocean-literate workforce, advancing solutions that safeguard marine ecosystems while positioning Fiji as a regional hub for ocean science, knowledge and innovation.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

Blue Economy growth can be catalysed by increasing the accessibility and availability of education and training opportunities, supporting research opportunities, and enhancing ICT infrastructures. Through these methods, Fiji can support its citizens in developing their sustainable business skills and ocean literacy to effectively contribute to the growing Blue Economy. Ensuring equitable access to education and training, especially for youth and women, is critical to achieving inclusive and sustainable Blue Economy growth.

### Potential Projects

- **Blue Economy Education and ICT Integration:** Develop specialised educational programs and digital learning platforms focused on ocean literacy and ocean science, sustainable fisheries, marine renewable energy, water management, and ecosystem restoration.
- **Marine Biotech Research:** Prioritise R&D and commercialisation of marine species suitable for pharmaceutical and nutraceutical inputs.
- **Innovation Hubs and Research Partnerships:** Establish regional Blue Economy Innovation Hubs that bring together universities, research institutions, traditional knowledge holders, and the private sector.

- **Smart Marine and Water Management Systems:** Deploy ICT solutions such as remote sensing, mobile applications, and data-driven management tools for fisheries monitoring, pollution tracking, and coastal protection initiatives.
- **Ocean Skills Bootcamps & Blue Jobs for Youth:** Launch fee-based vocational programs for aquaculture, marine robotics, eco-guiding, and renewable energy, linked to employer demand and startup pathways.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

Investing in education, ICT, research, and innovation will drive economic empowerment by building a competitive and inclusive workforce skilled in emerging Blue Economy sectors, creating new pathways for employment, entrepreneurship, and community-led development and innovation. Integrating traditional knowledge with modern science and digital tools will ensure that Fiji's cultural heritage continues to guide and enrich sustainable innovation.



## Challenges

Limited access to quality education and ICT infrastructure, particularly in rural and maritime communities, constrains the development of a skilled workforce equipped for emerging blue sectors. Investment in research and innovation remains low, and institutional capacity to deliver specialized ocean-related curricula is underdeveloped. Additionally, there is a gap in integrating traditional knowledge systems with modern science and digital tools, which is essential for context-appropriate solutions.

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### Potential Metrics:

- Number of students enrolled in Blue Economy and marine science-related educational programs, including accredited Blue Skills Training Programs
- Number of community-led research and innovation projects launched
- Increase in employment rates in emerging Blue Economy sectors
- Number of youth and women trained in ICT and Blue Economy skills
- Uptake of traditional knowledge integrated into modern marine management tools





## Tourism

Tourism is a cornerstone of Fiji's economy, supporting national employment and livelihoods. As Fiji develops its Blue Economy, the tourism sector provides opportunities to shift towards community-led ecotourism models that highlight local knowledge and traditions while supporting environmental commitments.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

A Blue Economy approach to tourism in Fiji emphasizes low-impact, climate-resilient, and community-driven models that preserve the integrity of marine ecosystems while generating inclusive economic benefits. Eco-marine tourism, such as snorkeling, diving, marine wildlife viewing, and cultural experiences, can provide sustainable income while incentivizing non-extractive conservation. Sustainable tourism also supports cross-sectoral synergies such as the development of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by reducing human pressure on fragile ecosystems and funding their protection through visitor revenues.

### Potential Projects

- **Eco-Marine Tourism Development**  
**Zones:** Designate and promote zones that align tourism with conservation goals, integrating MPAs, coral reef restoration, and mangrove replanting.
- **Blue Certification Schemes:** Establish national "Blue Tourism" certification standards for resorts, operators, and cruise lines to incentivise best practices in sustainability, waste management, and energy use.

- **Community-Based Marine Tourism Enterprises:** Support Indigenous and local communities to develop culturally grounded tourism businesses (e.g. traditional navigation, coastal storytelling, reef walks).
- **Blue Tourism Accelerator Program:** Incubate early-stage tourism businesses committed to zero-waste operations, MPA integration, and local supply chain sourcing.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

A blue-aligned eco-tourism model strengthens community resilience and ecological restoration by empowering local people, especially women and youth, through equitable job creation, skills development, and sustainable enterprise opportunities. It safeguards and revitalizes cultural heritage by integrating traditional marine knowledge, practices, and storytelling into visitor experiences. Environmentally, this model promotes regenerative tourism that minimizes ecological footprints, alleviates fishing pressure by diversifying livelihoods, and channels tourism revenues into habitat restoration, species protection, and long-term ocean stewardship.

Youth involvement in eco-marine tourism, sports-based stewardship, and supporting youth-led coastal recreation and restoration enterprises, can support additional opportunities for the next generation.



## Challenges

Key challenges include overreliance on mass tourism models that stress marine and coastal ecosystems, insufficient regulation of environmental impacts from tourism infrastructure and marine transport, and limited access to finance for small-scale or community-based tourism initiatives. There is also a need for greater coordination across tourism, environment, and community development agencies, along with improved data collection to monitor sustainability outcomes. Additionally, climate change poses escalating threats to key tourism assets through coral bleaching, sea-level rise, and storm damage.

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### Potential Metrics:

- Number and area of eco-marine tourism zones established
- Percentage of operators certified under sustainable tourism standards
- Revenue generated from eco-marine tourism reinvested into conservation
- Number of community-led and community-owned tourism enterprises established, supported and/or scaled
- Reduction in tourism-related waste and carbon emissions
- Coral reef and mangrove health indicators in high-tourism zones
- Percent of national visitorship utilizing community based accommodations or attractions





## Energy & Transport

Energy and transport, the backbone of Fiji's development, must now evolve to support a sustainable future. Maritime and land transport currently drive high emissions and expose the nation to volatile global energy markets. Yet within this challenge lies an opportunity to transition toward a decarbonized, decentralized, and climate-resilient infrastructure system. By rapidly scaling renewable energy solutions and sustainable transportation, Fiji can transform energy access and mobility from sources of vulnerability into pillars of national strength.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

Fiji can align energy and transport transformation with Blue Economy goals by decarbonizing marine and land-based mobility, expanding clean energy and low-impact infrastructure, and promoting nature-based resilience. Renewable energy (solar, hydro, wind, and marine-based sources) can power key blue sectors like fisheries, marine tourism, and coastal infrastructure. Transitioning to electric and hybrid vessels, green ports, and low-emission logistics will reduce pollution and operational costs while supporting climate adaptation. Consideration for youth apprenticeships (marine renewables maintenance, electrified maritime transport) can support the long-term sustainability of the sector.

### Potential Projects

- **Island Renewable Microgrids:** Deploy solar, hydro, and wind mini-grids for outer islands, reducing diesel dependence and enhancing energy resilience for coastal livelihoods.
- **Electric Vessel Leasing Models:** Establish financing mechanisms for electrified maritime transport, enabling cooperatives or tourism operators to lease vessels and access battery-swapping infrastructure.
- **Green Port-as-a-Service Models:** Develop turnkey “green port” service packages (solar cold storage, water treatment, and electrified cargo systems) offered under leasing or performance-based contracts.
- **Community Energy and Transport Hubs:** Create integrated energy-transport hubs managed by local cooperatives that provide clean power, cold storage, and shared mobility services.
- **Offshore Renewable Energy Pilots:** Explore wave and tidal energy solutions to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

Decentralized renewable energy systems and sustainable transport reduce fossil fuel costs, improve air and water quality, and boost local economic resilience. Electrification of fishing fleets and transport vessels reduces water pollution and noise, benefiting sensitive marine ecosystems such as coral reefs and seagrass beds. Clean energy access also powers essential services like fish processing, tourism facilities, and emergency services, which support food security and health. Community-managed systems offer job creation, capacity building, and energy independence, particularly for women, youth, and Indigenous landowners.



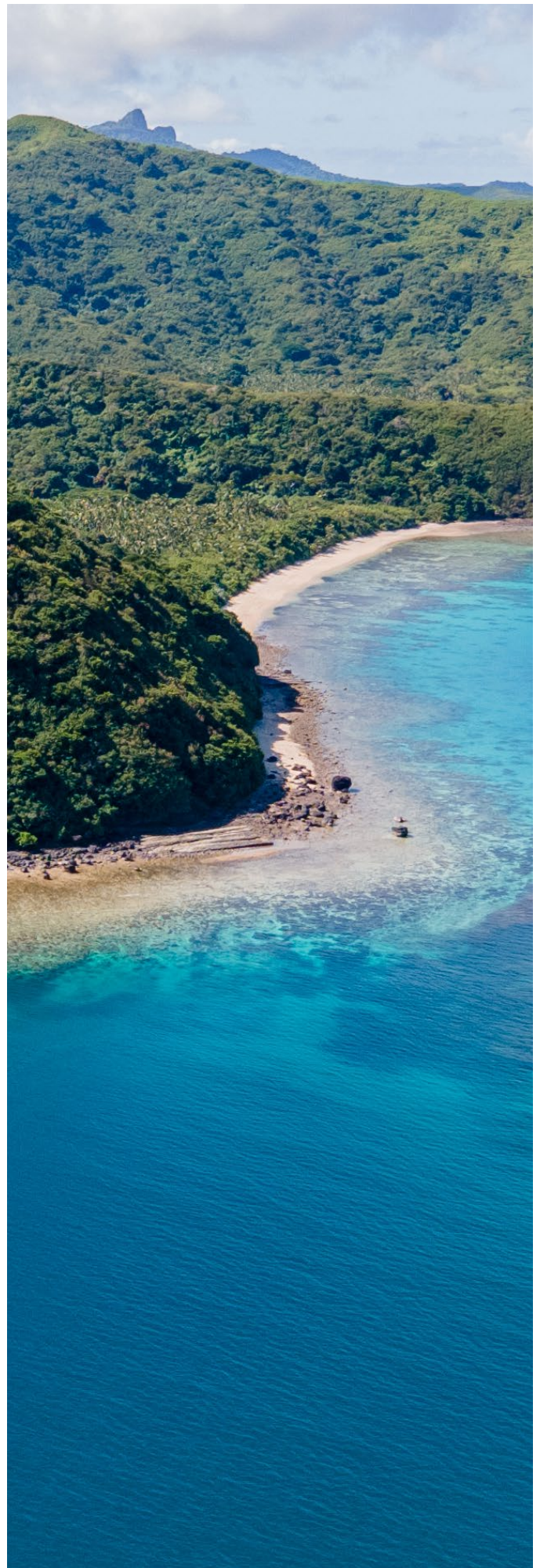
## Challenges

Barriers to scaling renewable energy and low-carbon transport in Fiji include high capital costs, bureaucracy, limited access to climate and concessional finance, and inadequate maintenance capacity in remote locations. The technology for marine renewables and electric vessels is still emerging, with limited availability of spare parts, technical expertise, and suitable maritime infrastructure. Policy and regulatory frameworks are evolving but require stronger incentives, private sector engagement, and cross-sector coordination.

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### Potential Metrics:

- MW of renewable energy capacity installed in coastal and outer island communities (by source: solar, wind, hydro, marine)
- % of energy needs in Blue Economy sectors (e.g., fisheries, tourism) met through renewable sources
- Average electricity cost per kWh in remote communities before and after renewable deployment
- Number of electric/hybrid maritime vessels (fishing boats, ferries) in operation (or % of domestic fleet)
- % reduction in fuel consumption and GHG emissions from maritime and land transport





## Solid Waste & Pollution Management

Fiji has the opportunity to shift toward a circular, zero-waste economy that safeguards both people and the planet. By embracing innovation in waste reduction, material recovery, and regenerative design, the country can transform plastic, organic, and hazardous waste from environmental threats into economic resources. An integrated waste strategy will not only clean up coastlines and restore habitats, but also position Fiji as a regional leader in ocean stewardship and circular economy solutions.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

**Improved solid waste management** can significantly enhance Fiji's Blue Economy by protecting coastal and marine ecosystems, boosting eco-tourism, reducing emissions from waste, and creating circular economy opportunities. By strengthening capacities and awareness on solid waste and pollution management and investing in integrated waste systems, recycling infrastructure, organic composting, and waste-to-energy solutions, Fiji can reduce environmental harm, increase economic value from discarded materials, and promote sustainable development aligned with ocean and community health.

### Potential Projects

- **Blue Circular Startups:** Incubate SMEs turning ocean-bound plastics and organic waste into marketable products like eco-bricks, furniture, reef-safe packaging, or construction materials. Youth-led circular economy enterprise and eco-product startups support should be developed.
- **Decentralised Waste Franchise Hubs:** Support franchised recycling and composting centers operated by youth or women's cooperatives in remote coastal communities.
- **Biofertilizer & Biogas Ventures:** Enable entrepreneurs to install and maintain biodigesters at resorts, markets, and farms to generate clean energy and sell organic inputs.
- **Wastewater Treatment Upgrades:** Invest in sustainable wastewater treatment upgrades to prevent ocean discharge and support ocean health.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

Community-based waste management supports local stakeholders in protecting their environment while generating jobs in recycling, composting, and waste innovation. Cleaner coastlines and urban spaces attract more sustainable tourism and reduce the health risks from open burning and contamination. Composting improves soil quality and food security while also reducing methane emissions. Waste-to-energy and plastic reduction efforts contribute to climate mitigation and protect marine habitats critical to fisheries and biodiversity.



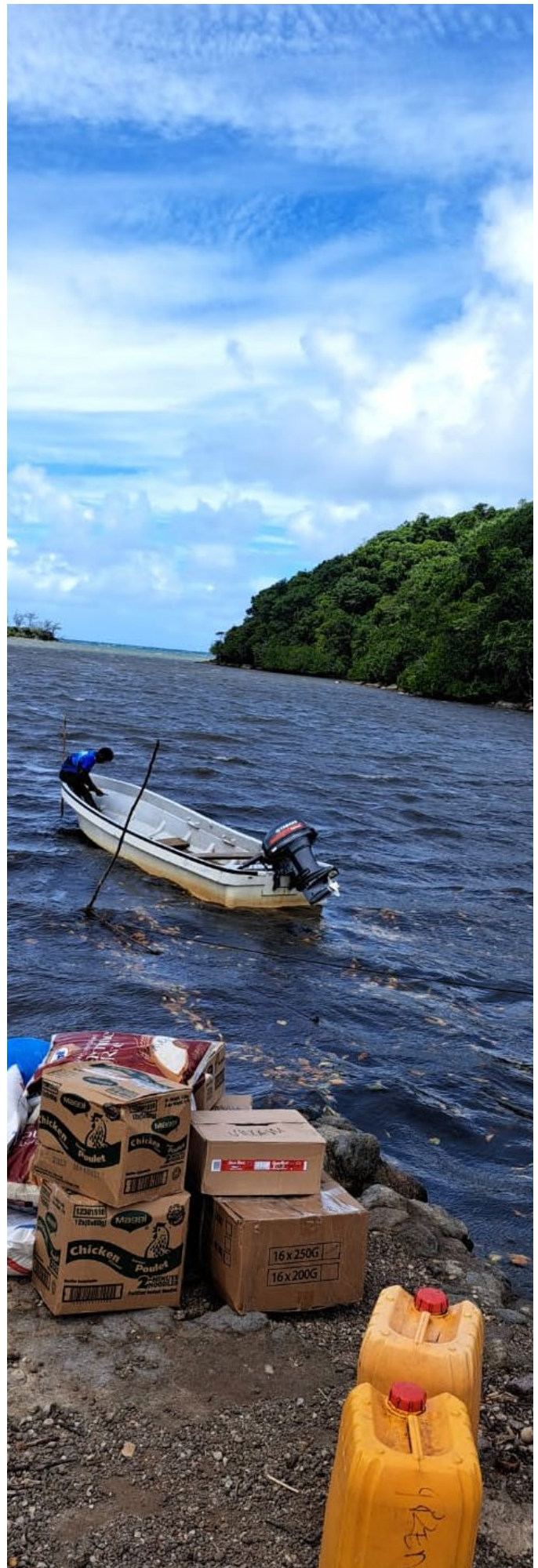
## Challenges

Fiji faces key challenges including limited waste infrastructure on remote islands, high logistics costs, and a lack of recycling markets and processing facilities. Public awareness on waste segregation remains low, and national policies are still evolving to support extended producer responsibility, plastic phaseouts, and circular economy incentives. Financing waste infrastructure and sustaining operations over time, especially in low-density areas, requires innovative public-private-community models and capacity building.

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### Potential Metrics:

- % of coastal and island communities with access to waste collection and recycling services
- Tons of plastic waste diverted from landfills and marine environments
- Volume of organic waste composted or bio-digested annually (tons/year)
- Number of community waste management hubs or recycling enterprises established
- % reduction in marine litter on monitored beaches or reef areas
- Number of circular business models established or supported





## Other Sectors

### Healthcare, Construction, Manufacturing, Housing, Marine Biotechnology, Blue Foods, and Agriculture

Often left at the margins of Blue Economy strategies, sectors like healthcare, construction, marine biotechnology, manufacturing, and housing are, in fact, essential building blocks of a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready island economy. These sectors shape the daily lives and wellbeing of communities, influence environmental and public health outcomes, and determine the strength of infrastructure in the face of climate shocks. Fiji has the opportunity to demonstrate how traditionally overlooked sectors can be reimagined as catalysts for social equity, environmental stewardship, and long-term coastal resilience.

### Blue Economy Opportunity

Greening construction and housing through nature-based designs, coastal-resilient materials, and climate-smart infrastructure can reduce environmental impacts and support adaptation.

Sustainable manufacturing, particularly for eco-friendly products, integrating circular economy principles, fisheries value chains, and renewable energy systems, can generate jobs and reduce imports.

Integrating clean energy and water systems into health and housing infrastructure strengthens resilience, reduces operational costs, and supports community wellbeing.

Healthcare systems adapted to marine and coastal challenges can better respond to waterborne disease, climate risks, and disaster events.

Marine biotechnology and research offers transformative opportunities by driving sustainable innovations in pharmaceuticals, aquaculture, and bio-based industries, while creating high-value jobs.

### Potential Projects

- **Blue Construction Enterprises:** Train and fund builders to deliver cyclone-resilient housing, permeable roads, and solar-powered clinics using local, low-impact materials.
- **Green Construction Standards:** Adopt low-impact construction practices including passive cooling, rainwater harvesting, and permeable surfaces.
- **Eco-Manufacturing Hubs:** Establish small-scale, low-emission manufacturing for solar components, battery recycling, fishing gear, and eco-tourism infrastructure, incorporating circular economy principles.
- **Blue-Ready Health Facilities:** Upgrade coastal health posts and clinics with solar power, clean water systems, and emergency preparedness for climate-related events.
- **Blue Wellness Programs:** Strengthen the role of the ocean in community cultural and recreational activities as a means to improve community health and wellness.

### Community & Environmental Benefits

Resilient housing and clinics reduce disaster risks and improve public health outcomes. Green construction and local manufacturing reduce imports, create jobs, and support circular economy models. These interventions also protect ecosystems from pollution and degradation associated with conventional development and waste-heavy practices.



## Challenges

Barriers include high upfront costs, limited access to appropriate materials and technologies, weak enforcement of sustainable building codes, and a lack of incentives for private sector adoption. Health systems often lack coastal-specific risk planning and rely heavily on diesel generators, exposing facilities to fuel insecurity.

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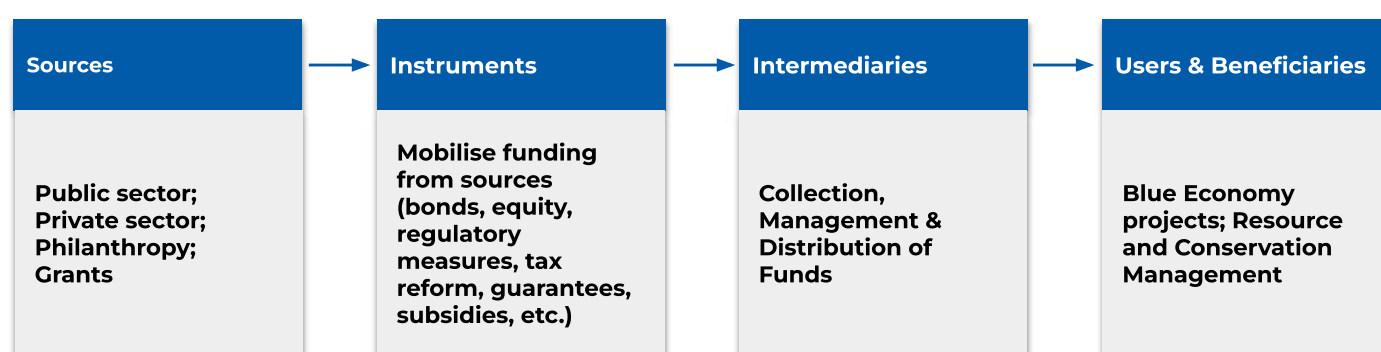
### Potential Metrics:

- % of new housing developments in coastal areas built to climate-resilient standards
- Number of healthcare facilities powered by renewable energy
- Volume of eco-friendly construction materials used in public infrastructure
- Jobs created in sustainable construction and local manufacturing
- Reduction in disaster-related health facility closures or service disruptions
- Number of eco-manufacturing enterprises established or supported



# SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Sustainable finance is a critical component of successful blue economic development. Diverse financing opportunities will be required to effectively facilitate sustainable growth in key sectors while also ensuring comprehensive resource management. Outlined below are intended financing uses, mechanisms and structures to meet those needs, and potential sources of financing. These elements can be deployed in tandem to create a model for financing that supports blue economic development and marine resource management and conservation.



**Figure 7:** Summary of financing uses, mechanisms and structures, and potential sources of sustainable financing

## Success Story: Blue Bond Case Study

In November 2023, Fiji issued its pioneering Sovereign Blue Bond (FSBB), raising FJD 20 million to channel private capital into four strategic blue sectors: coastal protection through nature-based solutions, sustainable aquaculture, resilient urban planning under the “Blue Town” concept, and improved waste/wastewater management. The bond was oversubscribed, attracting bids totaling around FJD 60 million, demonstrating **strong investor confidence in Fiji’s Blue Economy vision**.

**This innovative finance mechanism not only guards marine biodiversity and bolsters climate resilience but also stimulates job growth** in coastal communities, positioning Fiji as a blueprint for Small Island Developing States seeking sustainable blue growth. The sectors that were invested in as part of Fiji’s Blue Bond issuance include:

1. Sustainable Fisheries, Aquaculture/Mariculture
2. Marine Conservation and Protection
3. Blue Shipping and E-Mobility
4. Oceans Based Renewable Energy
5. Sustainable Waste Management
6. Sustainable and Ecotourism



There are a wide variety of financing options to be considered,<sup>7</sup> and developing a financing solution may involve the identification of sources, instruments and intermediaries. Selection should be based on the capacity of each to efficiently meet stated objectives in the appropriate context. Criteria used in the design of financing solutions may include:

- Feasibility and cost of operation
- Fit with local culture, values and capacities
- Scale of benefits (financing) generated matches need
- Type and timing of financing generated matches need

## Use of Funds

Financing will provide the necessary capital for Blue Economy projects as well as the conservation measures required to ensure effective resource management. Funding must be appropriately designated and protected (also known as “ring-fencing”) for the agreed blue economic and conservation uses and needs. Uses and needs within these two categories include:

- **Blue Economy**<sup>8</sup>: Financing to support Blue Economic development may take a variety of forms, including equity and debt investment, incubation and venture capital, subsidies, incentives and, importantly, derisking to unlock private investment. Target sectors include:
  - Renewable energy
  - Energy efficiency
  - Pollution prevention and control
  - Aquatic biodiversity conservation
  - Zero carbon transportation
  - Green buildings
  - Research and development
  - Education and vocational training
  - Blue-green value chains and coastal community enterprises

- **Conservation and Resource Management**: Funding for conservation and resource management often goes to a mix of public, NGO, and private implementing partners, and can be channelled through trust funds, NGOs, or other segregated vehicles or accounts. Target uses include:

- Spatial conservation measures
- Coastal rehabilitation
- Sustainable management and restoration of natural resources
- Reducing pressure on resources through measures such as the restructuring of the fishing industry
- Sustainable water and wastewater management
- Climate change adaptation

Note: Ongoing work to develop the pipeline of bankable projects will need to be done.



<sup>7</sup> For a taxonomy of financing mechanisms, see: United Nations Development Programme. (n.d.). *BIOFIN Catalogue of Finance Solutions*. Retrieved May 12, 2025, from <https://www.biofin.org/finance-solutions> and David Meyers et al., *Conservation Finance: A Framework* (Conservation Finance Alliance, 2020), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e1f17b37c58156a98f1ee4/t/5e8c97ecf33f8960fc2cbda3/1586272239963/Conservation+Finance+Framework.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Fiji Ministry of Economy. (2022). *Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework 2022*. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Economy. Retrieved from <https://fijiclimatchange-portal.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Fijian-Sustainable-Bond-Framework.pdf>

## Screening, Exclusions and Eligibility Criteria

Screening and exclusions are essential to ensure that funds are used for the intended purposes and do not directly or indirectly detract from sustainability objectives or other national priorities and principles. To meet these goals, investments should adhere to the exclusions list put forward in the Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework.<sup>9</sup> More generally, all projects should demonstrate a contribution to (and no investment shall run counter to) the targets for Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14 (Life Below Water), which have been adopted by the Government of Fiji. These are highlighted in the figure below. No project should undermine ocean health and conservation objectives.

### Target 14.1

By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

### Target 14.2

By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and taking action for their restoration.

### Target 14.3

Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

### Target 14.4

By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices, and implement science-based management plans.

### Target 14.5

By 2020, conserve at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.

### Target 14.6

By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing.

### Target 14.7

By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and tourism.

### Target 14.a

Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity, and transfer marine technology, in order to improve ocean health and enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity.

### Target 14.b

Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

### Target 14.c

Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

**Figure 8:** Targets for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, as standards for Blue Economy related financing.

<sup>9</sup> Fiji Ministry of Economy. (2022). Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework 2022. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Economy. Retrieved from <https://fijiclimatchange-portal.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Fijian-Sustainable-Bond-Framework.pdf>



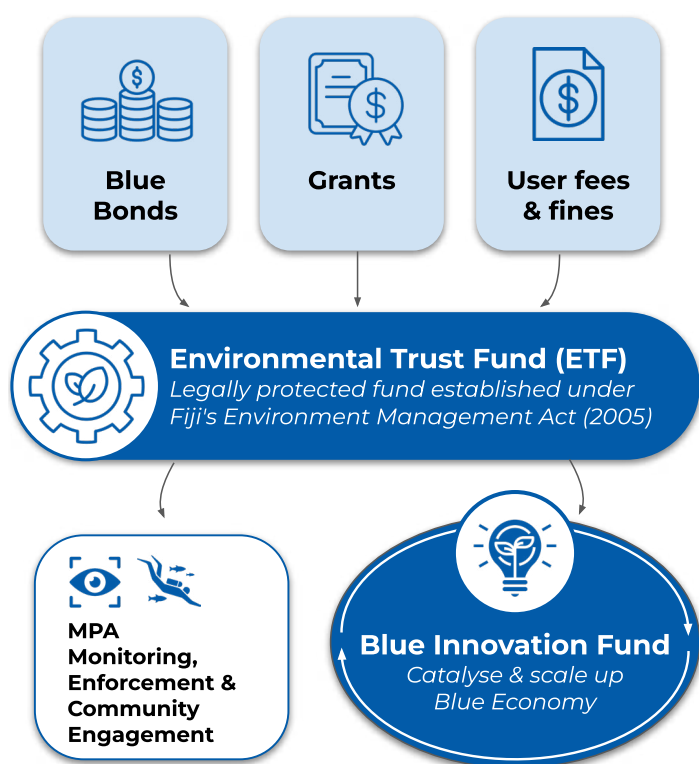
## Intermediaries

Financing can take many forms, including, but not limited to: direct debt or equity financing; the provision of risk-seeking capital including first loss capital or derisking of loans to facilitate private investment; the provisioning of technical assistance; and support to needed resource management and infrastructure development. These and other approaches can be developed to meet the unique needs of specific sectors or objectives. These can then be channelled through dedicated intermediaries or mechanisms which can support the effective ring-fencing and delivery of allocated funds.

Such mechanisms can take a variety of forms, including dedicated trust funds or investment funds. Several relevant options are outlined briefly below.

Fiji's **Environment Management Act (2005)**<sup>10</sup> provides a legal basis for an **Environmental Trust Fund (ETF)**, which can serve as a long-term, legally ring-fenced mechanism to support environmental protection, including for marine ecosystems. The ETF could aggregate and manage proceeds from blue bonds, grants, user fees, and environmental fines, provide stable financing for MPA operations, monitoring, enforcement, and community engagement, and offer co-financing for locally-level conservation projects and Blue Economy ventures.

A dedicated Blue Innovation Fund (BIF) could be established under the ETF as a ring-fenced, revolving finance window. Its purpose would be to catalyse and scale up marine-based SMEs, eco-tourism ventures, and value chains (e.g., seaweed, beche-de-mer), community-led MPA co-management initiatives, ocean technology innovations for monitoring and data collection, and sustainable aquaculture and fisheries diversification.



The BIF would operate with a mix of grants, concessional loans, and risk-sharing instruments, with repayments recycled back into the fund. Criteria could include climate-resilience, job creation, biodiversity impact, and alignment with national development plans.

A portion of ETF or BIF proceeds could be allocated to an endowment, or sinking fund to ensure financial sustainability of MPAs and long-term conservation targets. This mechanism would accumulate reserves to cover core conservation costs when donor funding wanes, reducing reliance on annual budget cycles and enhancing resilience to external shocks. Such a fund could be built over time using revenue from user fees (e.g., tourism levies, concession payments), blue carbon credit proceeds, or windfall financing.

**Figure 9:** Potential Environmental Trust Fund: Sources and Uses of Funds

<sup>10</sup> National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2005 (Act No. 1 of 2005), Fiji, Government Gazette No. 26436, March 17, 2005. Accessed May 12, 2025. <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC088449/>

## Complementarity with Existing Funds

Fiji is already engaging in a variety of climate and environment-related financing streams, including the Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund, and various multilateral donor programs. A well-structured ETF and Blue Innovation Fund can complement existing funds by focusing on ocean-specific and community-driven initiatives and serve as a domestic anchor institution for donor alignment and pooled financing. All funds should have a transparent governance structure, including representation from government, civil society, communities, and technical experts. Independent audits, public reporting, and results-based funding allocations would enhance accountability.

## Potential Sources of Funds

Public, private and philanthropic funding all play important and complementary roles in supporting blue economic development. Traditional sources remain critical, including funding generated from government revenues, as well as from resource users and beneficiaries. More innovative mechanisms may also be needed to fill gaps left by traditional sources and approaches. These may include blended investment mechanisms and blue bonds, such as was recently issued by Fiji. Carbon and biodiversity credits, crowdfunding, and numerous others may also play a role.<sup>11, 12</sup>

Fiji's ability to mobilise domestic resources from public budget allocations, taxation, and capital markets, is a precondition for successfully attracting external private investment. A strong local capital base enhances absorptive capacity, demonstrates national commitment, and creates co-investment opportunities. Instruments may include:

### **Environment, Conservation & Adaptation Levy (ECAL)**

Starting in 2018, the Environment and Climate Adaptation Levy (ECAL) was a tax charged on goods and services at businesses of a particular size, including most major resorts and hotels. It varied from 5-10% (the decrease occurred in Aug 2020). Infrastructure is the stated priority of the Government for ECAL funds, which represents 65% of the projects during that period. In March 2022, ECAL was proposed to be subsumed under the Social Responsibility Tax (SRT). SRT ranges from 13-19% and would be increased by 5%.

### **Arrival Fee / Departure Tax Increase**

Fiji currently has a departure tax that is included in the price of airline tickets. In 2020, this tax was reduced to FJD 100 to attract more tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was scheduled to increase to FJD 125 in August 2023 and is now FJD 140 in January 2024. A portion of this tax (currently FJD 10) is allocated as an environmental levy to the Consolidated Fund. However, these funds are not exclusively used for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), but rather for a broader range of environmental projects. This could be combined with a cruise head tax.

### **Plastic Bag Tax**

Fiji implemented a plastic bag tax in 2017, initially set at FJD 0.10 per bag. The tax was increased to FJD 0.50 per bag in 2020. The tax is designed to discourage the use of plastic bags and to generate revenue for environmental initiatives. In 2022, the plastic bag tax was rebranded as the "plastic bag levy" as part of a broader restructuring of environmental levies. The levy cut plastic bag consumption in Fiji in half from 2010 to 2018.

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<sup>11</sup> BioFin and the Conservation Finance Alliance both maintain useful taxonomies of conservation finance mechanisms.

<sup>12</sup> Niue's Ocean Conservation Commitments are a regional example of an innovative approach to crowd funding which allows the public to pay to protect 1 km<sup>2</sup> of Niue's ocean waters for 20 years. <https://niueoceanwide.com/ocean-conservation-commitments/>



## Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

A Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fee charged to developers to mitigate the impact of new developments on the community and the environment. The funds can be used to improve infrastructure and offset negative environmental impacts. In Fiji, developers are required to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and pay a fee based on the scale and potential environmental impact of their projects. Fiji currently does not have a developers mitigation fee in place.

## Blue Carbon

Mangroves, seagrass beds, and salt marshes are highly effective at capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), making them valuable tools in climate change mitigation. The concept of blue carbon turns this capacity into a financial asset, typically traded on voluntary carbon markets. Fiji boasts between 38,000-65,000<sup>13</sup> hectares of mangrove forest and a rate of deforestation of 1.7% annually<sup>14</sup> suggesting significant potential for carbon finance. However, it should be noted that carbon projects involve significant upfront investment, long lead times and high risk, making this an important but not central part of a strategy to generate sustainable financing in the near to mid-term.

## Blue Bonds

Blue bonds are debt instruments that raise money for projects that benefit the ocean and marine environment. They are issued by governments, development banks, and other organizations. Blue bonds are specifically tailored to finance projects related to the Blue Economy. Proceeds from these bonds can be used for marine conservation, sustainable fisheries, and coastal infrastructure development. Fiji issued a sovereign blue bond at FJD 20 million in 2023 to raise funds for sustainable ocean management.

*Note: All thematic bond issuances (blue, green, blended) require alignment with the Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework (FSBF), formal MoF consultation, and compliance with FSBF exclusion lists.*

## Debt-for-Nature Transactions

Debt-for-nature transactions are innovative financial mechanisms that enable countries, particularly those with high external debt and rich natural resources, to restructure or reduce their debt in exchange for commitments to invest in environmental conservation. Fiji's debt and creditor profile, along with the country's broader context, suggest that some initial assessment may be warranted. However, debt-for-nature transactions require a high level of effort and coordination across a wide variety of parties. While the amount of debt that is subject to a transaction may be significant, the scale of financing generated for environmental purposes may be small in comparison.

## Corporate loan recipient repayments

Under a corporate loan recipient repayment model, concessional or blended-finance loans are extended to private sector actors, such as marine tourism operators, sustainable fisheries enterprises, or blue tech innovators, whose operations align with national Blue Economy goals. As these businesses grow and generate revenue, their loan repayments are channelled back into a designated fund, such as a ring-fenced window under the Environmental Trust Fund or Blue Innovation Fund.

## Subsidy Reform

Reviewing and redirecting existing subsidies (e.g. fuel subsidies, agricultural incentives) toward climate-smart, ocean-friendly practices may also be an option. Introduction of performance-based subsidies for sustainable fisheries, renewable marine energy, and blue tech innovators can support development of these Blue Economy sectors.

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<sup>13</sup> MACBLUE (2023, May 22). Fiji. *MACBLUE – Management and Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems in Pacific Island Countries*. <https://www.macblue-pacific.info/pacificcountries/ocean-e3yd2>

<sup>14</sup> MACBIO, *National Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation: Summary Report – Fiji*. (2015) <https://macbio-pacific.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Fiji-MESV-Summary-Digital-LoRes.pdf>

## Grants / Concessional Financing

While long-term sustainability requires private capital, grants remain indispensable in the early phases of Blue Economy development in Fiji. Grants from bilateral donors, multilateral climate and conservation funds (such as the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility), and philanthropic sources can de-risk investments by covering early-stage costs like feasibility studies, technical assistance, or capacity building. They can also serve as anchor funding to leverage or match additional private capital through blended finance structures. For example, grants can help cover transaction costs in blue bond issuance or carbon project preparation, which often present a barrier to private sector participation. There should also be consideration for a benefit sharing mechanism.

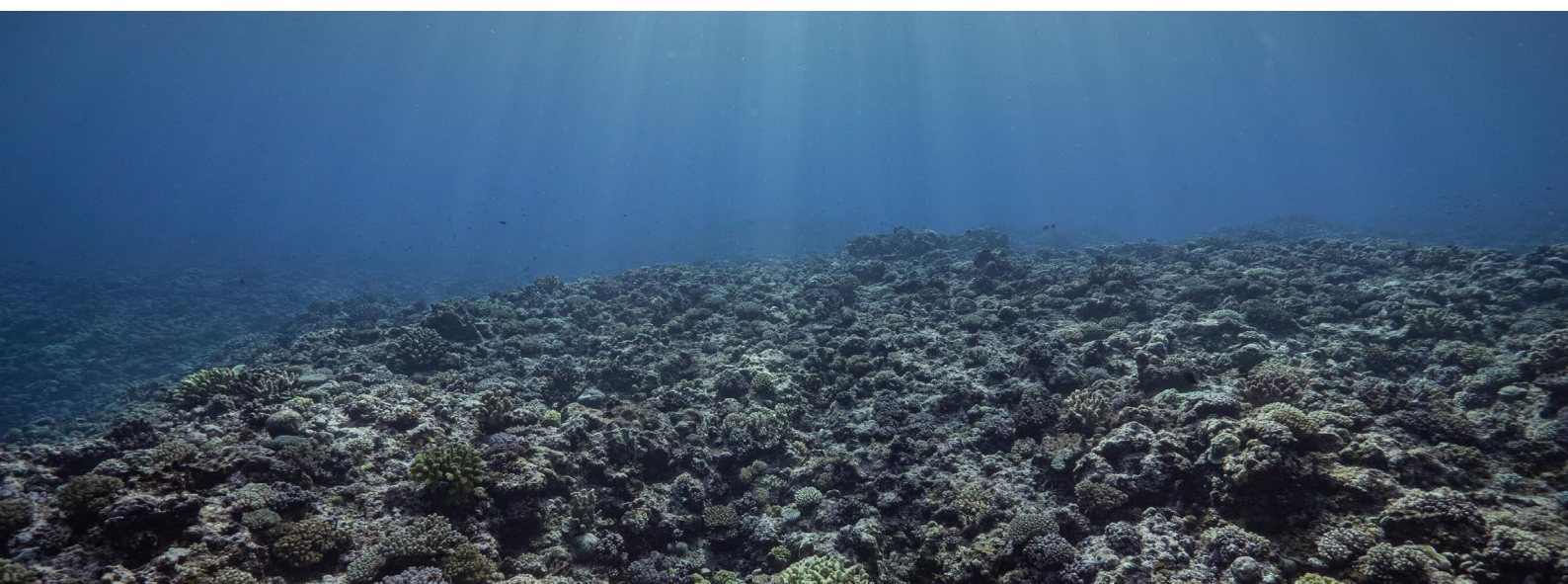
*Any new levies or financing instruments must undergo MoF fiscal review and be integrated into national budgetary processes.*

## Financing Mechanism Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

There must be a clear Social and Environmental Framework and reliable financing that does not compromise the interests of Fijians. Any financing mechanism will require its own governance and monitoring and evaluation systems. It is important that these be robustly constructed, participatory, and transparent, assuring intended use of funds and preventing capture by any specific stakeholder group.

### Potential Metrics

- Ring-fenced mechanism for funding blue economic development established
- Ring-fenced mechanism for funding resource management and conservation established
- Number of dollars generated for blue economic development
- Number of dollars generated for resource management and conservation
- Number of dollars allocated/delivered for blue economic development
- Number of dollars allocated/delivered for resource management and conservation
- Number of Fijians and local community members taking investment and ownership positions in BE enterprises





# MONITORING & EVALUATION

## Metrics for Impact Reporting

Impact reporting is essential for communicating the positive outcomes of blue bond investments to investors. While a globally accepted list of impact metrics for Sustainable Blue Economy projects is still evolving, International Capital Markets Association's (ICMA) Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting includes indicators under categories like Biodiversity and Climate Change Adaptation.<sup>15</sup>

Fiji's Sustainable Bond Framework, which was also developed under similar guidance, outlines key metrics relevant for determining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the Blue Economy:

## Fiji Sustainable Bond Framework<sup>16</sup>

Green and Blue Categories	Example of Impact Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmentally sustainable management of living natural resources and land use</li><li>• Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity conservation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintenance / safeguarding / increase of protected area in km<sup>2</sup> and in % for increase</li><li>• Absolute number of predefined target species and organisms per km<sup>2</sup> (bigger fauna) or m<sup>2</sup> (smaller fauna and flora) before and after the project</li><li>• Percent of MPAs relative to Fiji's marine area</li><li>• Changes in the CO<sub>2</sub>, nutrient or pH levels for coastal vegetation and coral reefs</li><li>• Absolute number of indigenous species, flora (trees, shrubs, and grasses) or fauna restored through the project</li><li>• Number of farmers trained in sustainable farming, aquaculture and biodiversity</li></ul>

<sup>15</sup> Asian Development Bank, International Capital Market Association, International Finance Corporation, United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, and United Nations Global Compact, Bonds to Finance the Sustainable Blue Economy: A Practitioner's Guide, September 2023 <https://www.icmagroup.org/assets/documents/Sustainable-finance/Bonds-to-Finance-the-Sustainable-Blue-Economy-a-Practitioners-Guide-September-2023.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Fiji Ministry of Economy. (2022). Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework 2022. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Economy. Retrieved from <https://fijiclimatechange-portal.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Fijian-Sustainable-Bond-Framework.pdf>

Appendix 1 of the ICMA's practitioner's guide also provides examples of outputs and impact indicators for various blue project categories, with examples provided below:

## ICMA - Bonds to Finance a Sustainable Blue Economy Guide<sup>17</sup>

Coastal Climate Adaptation & Resilience	
<b>Exclusions:</b> Grey infrastructure in ecologically sensitive areas	
Impact Reporting	
Example Project Outputs	Example Impact Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature-based solutions to coastal protection implemented</li> <li>Coral reefs protected or restored to help protect coastal communities from disaster impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area benefiting from improved climate resilience and disaster risk management (ha)</li> <li>Reduction in land loss from coastal erosion</li> <li>Area of protected or restored habitat (ha)</li> <li>Maintenance and safeguarding (km2) and increase (%) of protected area / other effective area-based conservation measure / habitat</li> </ul>
Potential Social Co-Benefits	
Improved early warning systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of people and/or enterprises (e.g., companies or farms) benefitting from measures to mitigate consequences of flooding or drought</li> </ul>

To fully support BE development and capture ridge-to-reef dynamics, the monitoring framework should be underpinned by a shared national data architecture that links agricultural, hydrological and marine datasets. MECC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, together with other relevant ministries and agencies, could collaborate to harmonise indicators on water quality, sediment loads, land-use change, climate impacts and marine ecosystem health, and to make these data accessible for planning, enforcement and public reporting.

<sup>17</sup> Asian Development Bank, International Capital Market Association, International Finance Corporation, United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, and United Nations Global Compact, Bonds to Finance the Sustainable Blue Economy: A Practitioner's Guide, September 2023 <https://www.icmagroup.org/assets/documents/Sustainable-finance/Bonds-to-Finance-the-Sustainable-Blue-Economy-a-Practitioners-Guide-September-2023.pdf>



A list of additional KPIs relevant to Blue Economic development and ocean conservation are also outlined below:

### **Additional KPIs for consideration and monitoring**

- Number of jobs created (and type: FT / PT, skilled / semi-skilled)
- Livelihoods for fishers created or supported
- Sustainable use of coastal and ocean assets (conserve, regenerate)
- Revenues generated (improved commercial viability, cashflow, profit margins, debt to equity ratio where applicable)
- Ecosystem benefits (nature restoration, waste reduction, MPA, carbon emissions related)
- Intellectual Property created / registered
- Circular economies created
- Investment raised to date
- Local enterprises supported through value chain
- Alignment with targeted Sustainable Development Goals; for example SDG13: Climate Action and SDG14: Life Below Water
- Growth in key Blue Economy sectors

- Demonstrates significant contribution to one or more ocean health objective(s)
- Community members represented in governance, value chains, distribution of benefits & infrastructure and embedded traditional knowledge
- Improvements in logistics, inter-island accessibility, trade and safety
- Increase in the number of formalised BE businesses
- Increase in the number of banks lending to BE development
- Improved data collection, data sharing and digitisation

The Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework<sup>18</sup> provides broader examples of impact metrics for their green and blue categories, such as renewable energy capacity and estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced/avoided. It also commits to using the guidance in ICMA's Harmonized Framework for Impact Reporting where possible. This helps to improve investor confidence and transparency.

By adhering to these established standards, developing clear frameworks, undergoing external reviews, and utilizing relevant metrics for reporting, Fiji can effectively channel investments towards projects that genuinely support ocean health and a sustainable Blue Economy.

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<sup>18</sup> Fiji Ministry of Economy. (2022). Fijian Sustainable Bond Framework 2022. Suva, Fiji: Ministry of Economy. Retrieved from <https://fijiclimatchange-portal.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Fijian-Sustainable-Bond-Framework.pdf>

## Risk Management Matrix

Identified Risk (OPM Comment)	Potential Negative Impacts	Mitigation Strategy
<b>Conflict between conservation objectives and commercial pressures</b>	Failure to meet the commitment to fully protect 30% of Fiji's marine area, leading to ecosystem degradation and a decline in ocean health score	<b>Integrated Management and Planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to strategically organize ocean use and interactions.</li> <li>Ensure the Blue Economy Task Force reviews all projects appealing for government support to guarantee alignment with BE conservation principles.</li> <li>Uphold the principle of Sustainable Development, which positions conservation commitments as the overarching guide.</li> </ul>
<b>Over-extraction risks in fisheries and aquaculture expansion</b>	Depletion of wild fish stocks, threatening food security and undermining the economic vitality of artisanal fisheries	<b>Sustainable Management:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise the goal of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture through measures like community-based fisheries management and stock restoration programs</li> <li>Implement Smart Marine and Water Management Systems using digital tools for improved fisheries monitoring and pollution tracking.</li> <li>Scale up Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs).</li> </ul>
<b>Governance capture by private sector interests</b>	Economic benefits centralized away from communities, undermining the core principles of social justice and inclusive participation	<b>Accountability and Inclusivity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce Transparency and Accountability in decision-making processes.</li> <li>Structure the Blue Economy Task Force to include structured inclusion of non-governmental stakeholders (communities, NGOs, private sector) to balance interests.</li> </ul>
<b>Inequitable benefit-sharing with Indigenous communities</b>	Loss of legitimacy for the Framework and failure to meet Cultural Objectives, hindering integrated traditional knowledge systems	<b>Equity and Justice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uphold the principle of Equity and Social Justice. Ensure Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is fostered and equitable benefit-sharing is safeguarded in development.</li> <li>Utilise financing mechanisms, such as the proposed Blue Innovation Fund (BIF), to support community-owned enterprises and recycle funding into local initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Blue carbon market volatility</b>	Significant financial exposure for projects relying on unstable voluntary carbon markets; high upfront costs may deter community participation	<b>Financing Diversification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge the high risk of carbon projects.</li> <li>Leverage a variety of financing instruments (e.g., blue bonds, grants, user fees) to attract blended finance and reduce reliance on a single mechanism.</li> <li>Utilize grants to cover early-stage costs like feasibility studies and technical assistance to de-risk investment.</li> </ul>
<b>Potential unsustainable tourism development in marine-sensitive zones</b>	Overreliance on mass tourism models and environmental impacts from infrastructure, leading to degradation of coral reefs, which are key assets	<b>Regenerative Tourism Models:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote low-impact, community-driven eco-tourism models.</li> <li>Establish Blue Certification Schemes for resorts and operators to ensure best practices.</li> <li>Develop robust regulatory measures to prevent unsustainable development.</li> <li>Channel tourism revenue into habitat restoration.</li> </ul>



# GOVERNANCE

The governance of Fiji's Blue Economy is anchored in a robust institutional framework that ensures coordination across various governmental agencies, private sector entities, local communities, and international partners.

## Blue Economy Task Force

A Blue Economy Task Force will be established to guide and coordinate efforts across all relevant ministries and sectors. This Task Force sits under the NOP SC and will be responsible for integrating Blue Economy strategies, reviewing projects, and aligning them with Fiji's broader sustainable development goals. Specifically, this Task Force, or its subsidiary bodies, will be responsible for:

- Reviewing government policies, policy proposals, plans, and strategies to ensure alignment with the Blue Economy Framework
- Reviewing projects or programs appealing for government support or approval to ensure alignment with the Blue Economy Framework
- Overseeing further developments in Blue Economy financing and investment, including targeted funding mechanisms and related programmes
- Overseeing monitoring and evaluation program to ensure progress towards stated objectives
- Making periodic adjustments to the Blue Economy Framework and related programs with emerging new legal requirements

- Ensure blue economic development informs, supports and aligns with development and implementation of Fiji's Marine Spatial Plan, including the commitment to sustainably manage 100% and fully protect 30% of its ocean.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will be the lead Ministry of the Blue Economy Task Force and Blue Economy Framework. The Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will oversee the planning and coordination of the Blue Economy Task Force.

The Task Force will include representation from across governmental ministries and agencies. The Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in particular all play pivotal roles in Blue Economy related to policy formulation, implementation, and oversight.

Fiji's governance framework emphasizes the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and practices, recognizing the vital role that local communities play in the stewardship of marine resources. More generally, effective governance in the Blue Economy also requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including local communities, traditional leaders, the private sector, NGOs, and international organizations. The Blue Economy Task Force will feature structured inclusion of non-governmental stakeholders, either as members of the Task Force, or as a consultative body to the Task Force.

## Regulatory Framework

The regulatory framework governing Fiji's Blue Economy is built on existing environmental laws, fisheries regulations, and maritime policies. Key regulations include the Fisheries Act, the Marine Spaces Act, and the Environmental Management Act, which are continuously updated to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities in the Blue Economy. The development of new regulations to support this may be required in future.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptation

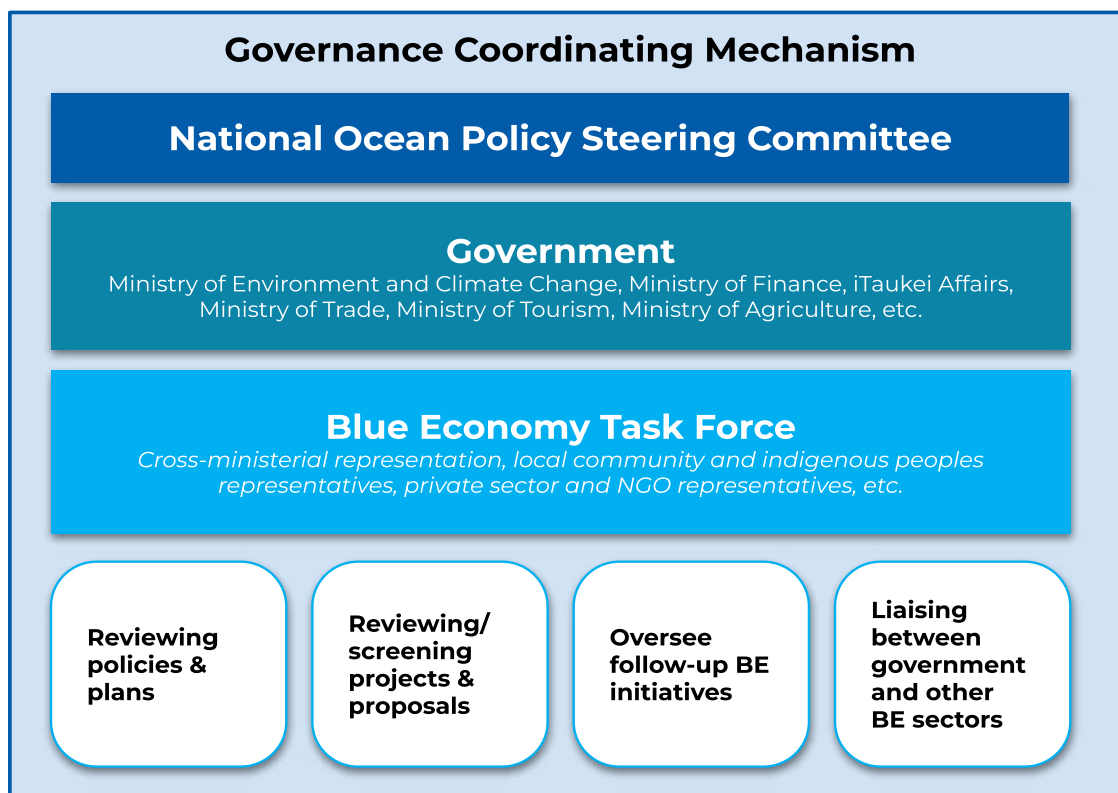
A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan should be developed to track the progress towards Blue Economy development goals and align under IPCC Guideline Article 6. The metrics and key performance indicators discussed above can be utilized and combined with identification of data sources, collection, management, analysis, and reporting processes and mechanisms that are transparent and accessible to all stakeholders. The Blue Economy Task Force will be charged with ensuring full development of the M&E plan and overseeing that process to ensure transparency and consistent progress towards goals.

## Coordination

There are numerous working groups, committees and task force bodies in Fiji. All efforts will be made to avoid duplication. The Blue Economy Task Force will seek to align itself within this context, and develop structured coordination, communication and participation across these various bodies. The Taskforce should ensure the integration of indigenous persons, as well as coordination with provincial and community governance systems to support equitable BE development.

## No-Duplication Reporting Protocols

KPIs will integrate with existing national systems: NDP, Climate Change Act, and NOP. The Blue Economy Task Force consolidates reporting but does not create duplicative ministry-level reporting burdens.



**Figure 10:** Summary of Governance Coordinating Mechanism

# CONCLUSION

The Fiji Blue Economy Framework represents a bold commitment to securing a sustainable future for the nation's people and marine resources. By adhering to its Principles, Goals, and Objectives, Fiji aims to enhance its economic resilience, protect its marine environment, and continue its leadership in global efforts towards marine conservation and climate resilience. Beyond its national benefits, the framework stands as a model for other Pacific Island nations, promoting a sustainable and inclusive approach to the Blue Economy.









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