PACIFIC ISLANDS
FORUM SECRETARIAT

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM – REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	SPREP
Name and position of primary contact	***Mr Kosi Latu, Director General***
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2. Name of Initiative

Integrated Oceans Management - getting better outcomes for our oceans and coasts

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3. What is the <u>common regional issue or challenge</u> that this regional initiative aims to address?

You may also want to address the following: What are the causes of this issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

The issue and challenge

Oceans issues are vital to all Pacific island societies and economies. This has been recognised through the adoption of the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape* by Pacific Leaders and the establishment of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, which have provided useful impetus towards Integrated Oceans Management. However, while the Pacific region has shown global leadership on ocean management, it still requires fully integrated action at local, national and regional ocean scales. With the convening of a major UN conference on Oceans in Fiji in June 2017, the time is right for bringing together the various elements of managing our ocean in a more integrated manner.

The Pacific Islands region covers over 10% of the global oceans. The vast majority of this enormous area is contained within the Exclusive Economic Zones of Forum members, and the neighbouring high seas areas form an important part of our total ocean ecosystem. Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) have a uniquely high dependence on the ecosystem services the ocean provides for food, transport, employment, human health and cultural identity. The diversity and complex interdependencies across our oceanic EEZ waters, marine resources, islands and peoples is the foundation upon which our shared future depends.

In a time of climate change, changing ocean chemistry and unprecedented scale of threats to the sustainability of the region's natural resources, there is an urgent need to achieve a degree of more integration across the region that ensures the combined resilience of these diverse but interdependent Pacific Ocean and Island ecosystems, economies and societies. Multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional efforts are vital to address the complex ecological, economic and social sustainability challenges that can result from conflicts and intersects between tuna fishing, deep sea minerals extractions, coastal developments, shipping, eco-tourism, energy systems and the marine ecological systems that underpin these industries and economies. Decisions and actions within any single sector often lead to adverse impacts on other less obvious, but very critical, economic sectors and underlying ecosystems.

At the regional scale, the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner has facilitated some steps in this direction - e.g. through the establishment of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, and the co-ordination of advice from multiple agencies to Pacific Island Missions in New York. Leaders and agencies have acknowledged the need for cross-sectoral action, as evidenced in several documents such as the SAMOA Pathway (paras 57, 58) and the recently-adopted *Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*. The Marine Sector Working Group provides a

useful forum for CROP Agencies and other IGOs and NGOs with a recognised interest, although the MSWG has no formal funding structure and meets only periodically. There is currently no single group with the financial support and mandate to effectively drive integrated management of our marine environment. Whilst broad regional frameworks such as the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* and the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape* also provide a general mandate for integration and collaboration, it remains up to individual agencies or countries to attempt what they can via limited partnerships and collaborations. Active and sustained high level political impetus across the region is still required to drive implementation of these regional frameworks such that comprehensive multi-sector and integrated ocean management becomes mainstream practice at regional and national levels.

The region still lacks comprehensive and professionally facilitated, multi-sector and multi-jurisdiction, science- and traditional knowledge-based, sharing and planning exercises for our ocean, EEZ and coastal waters.

Regional integrated ocean management will not be effective unless mirrored at national EEZ and sub-national levels. Integrated and collaborative management requires concrete understanding, commitment and action by multiple sectors to work together. Whether for financial planning and economic development, social wellbeing and resilience, marine spatial planning, ecosystem-based adaptation, or environmental impact assessments, all sectors still need to work more with "the whole" rather than the immediately obvious "parts" of our interconnected systems. Within many countries, multi-sector integration in planning and management is still poorly understood or narrow in scope. Policies and legislation often promote integration, but active implementation of these remains limited. Lead agencies often fail to adequately capture together the range of inter-dependent processes and drivers between the environment, industry, business, finance, health, economic development, etc.

To attract such diverse sectors and governances to come together, a strong and sustained high level political impetus is needed. Similarly, political motivation and pledges plus regional frameworks and intents only manifest systemic change if coupled with targeted and well facilitated action in multi-sectoral planning. A series of pro-active activities of leaders working together on "the whole integrated system" would produce the enabling environments for lower levels of governance to pursue ongoing collaborative planning and management. The result would be a more cohesive and resilient system of sectors working with equal understanding and commitment in their joint responsibilities to each other and to the whole multi-sectoral system.

4. Briefly describe this regional initiative

You may also want to address the following in this section:

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?
Who are the main beneficiaries?
How would the initiative contribute to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?
Has the initiative been carried out previously?
What are the key risks in implementing this initiative?
Are there any complementary projects and programmes that are currently active?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

The Vision

By 2025, the Pacific islands and ocean community has developed and implemented an exemplary model for integrated ocean management, that guarantees sustainable and profitable blue economies and wellbeing of its people, secured and underpinned by healthy, resilient ocean, EEZ and coastal ecosystems.

Considerations for Forum Leaders:

1. Initiate with a series of *Leaders Scenario Planning Workshops* on **Our Pacific Ocean Future** – an expertly facilitated, strategic futures and scenario planning process - to be conducted at two levels:

   i) regional leadership and other strategic stakeholders, and

   ii) national and sub-national leadership and other strategic stakeholders.

   Desired outcomes:
   a. Clear and common understanding among Leaders on the interdependencies between sectors and ecosystem services
   b. Agreed visions for the long-term shared futures for the Pacific Islands region;
   c. Common understanding on what will be needed as a whole group to reach our shared future.
   d. Clarity on what is needed to achieve Integrated Ocean Management.
   e. Increased capacity to empower and enable regional, national and sub-national players to proceed with Integrated Ocean Management, and to bridge the frequent disconnect between community scale initiatives, such as Locally Managed Marine Areas, and national governance and support mechanisms.

2. Strengthening the roles and resources of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, CROP Marine Sector Working Group and other relevant CROP working groups for effective multi-sectoral planning and advice to Leaders on Integrated Ocean Management and to strengthen collaboration across Blue Economy sectors, for sustainable fisheries and socio-economic benefits to Pacific Island states.

3. Renewed political and financial commitment by Leaders to the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape* and the *Pacific Ocean Alliance,* to take action on: i) clearly defining regional sustainable development priorities for oceans; ii) detailing a structure and mechanism for more effective collaboration across regional organisations in ocean management, and iii) providing practical suggestions and options for concrete projects in integrated ocean management.

How would this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region?

The Pacific Islands Regional Initiative for Integrated Ocean Governance will:

- enable our region to more effectively address the rapidly increasing global pressures and demands on our ocean and its resources;
- assist regional and national leaders in delivering strong guidance and empowerment to the region, to create the political enabling environments and motivations required for effective multi-sectoral and integrated ocean resource management; and
- lead to a comprehensive and enduring focus by Leaders, governments and other stakeholders to support integrated marine resource planning and management.

The main beneficiaries:

Both the region and individual states will benefit through:

- Strengthened cohesion and capacity in responding to global drivers and pressures on oceanic and coastal resources,
- Increased donor recognition and confidence regarding our capacity to manage our ocean resources wisely,
- Increased investment in the region by responsible industry sectors vs irresponsible or corrosive sectors.

Contribution to the vision, values and objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism?

Help Forum Leaders/ member states to direct and attract better use of international resources for integrated oceans management and sustainable development for the region.

Showcase and further consolidate instances where the Pacific Islands region is leading with progressive models on ocean governance and management for sustainable use, social and economic resilience and biodiversity conservation. This will further position the Pacific as a global leader and a region that has earned the positive attention and support of the international community.

Has the initiative been carried out previously?

Successful beginnings include: the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape*; establishment of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner; establishment and implementation of the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA); and meetings of the Marine Sector Working Group (MSWG) and other WGs. However these mechanisms have no formal funding structure and insufficient scope and mandate to effectively achieve integrated ocean management. This initiative, in bringing regional and sectoral leaders together in a more coherent and shared understanding of how to reach our common future, would significantly assist the existing frameworks and mechanisms to more effectively reach their overarching objectives.

Complementary projects and programmes currently active:

CROP Working Groups, Pacific Island Forum Leaders meetings, Pacific Island Development Forum, Ocean 21, Pacific Ocean Alliance, Micronesian Challenge, Melanesian Spearhead Group, Polynesian Leaders.

Facing the Risks:

Key Risks	**Response**
Additional burden on meetings and coordination across sectors reduces the will to participate.	1. Lead agencies must have political and financial mandates to attract participation by all sectors. 2. Use expert facilitators to ensure efficient, strategic and effective outcomes from each multi-stakeholder planning event.
Habitual tendencies to revert to sectoral silos, competing roles and abrogating responsibility to "the whole".	1. Adopt collaborative and equal power-sharing governance arrangements to empower all players equally.
Competing, conflicting or unclear distinctions in mandates and priorities between organisations may create competition for resources and roles.	Appoint a neutral lead organisation to drive harmony and collaboration in resource mobilisation and project implementation.

5. Why does this initiative require the attention of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum?

Please consider whether this initiative requires the attention and consideration of the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in order to be implemented and outline why this is the case. Could it not be overseen or implemented at the level of Ministers, officials or by a regional agency?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

As the Pacific Islands Regional Initiative for Integrated Ocean Governance, this initiative is pivotal to the region's ability to address the global pressures and demands on our ocean and our ocean resources. Being entirely founded on the need for stronger regional level political leadership, the immediate and long term success of this initiative rests on the focus and commitment of Forum Leaders.

Existing bodies and initiatives such as the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, the Pacific Ocean Alliance, and the Marine Sector Working Group currently lack the sustained financial support required to achieve regional scale integrated ocean resource management. Furthermore, whilst broad regional frameworks such as the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* and the *Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape*, provide a general mandate for action by these players, a strong and sustained political impetus across the region is required to drive implementation of these frameworks to foster regional and national level application of multi-sector and integrated ocean management.

Sustainable development targets and long term resilience of Pacific Island countries are dependent on these approaches. Likewise, regional integrated ocean management will not be effective unless mirrored at national EEZ and sub-national levels. Within many countries, multi-sector integration in planning and management is still poorly understood or narrow in scope; and the concept is more often quoted and discussed than implemented or experienced.

Our existing regional agencies and players continue to undertake resource mobilisation and concrete action to implement more integrated management of coastal and marine resources. However single agencies still require strong and consistent political encouragement and impetus from Leaders in order to attract donors, government agencies, communities, finance, business and industry sectors and jurisdictions to the same table for comprehensive integrated planning. This active motivation and leadership would assist all levels of government to provide the enabling environment, permission and motivation for stakeholders to proceed together in fully integrated ocean management that properly considers “the whole”.

6. Attachments

Please attach additional information in support of this initiative.

There are no attachments.

7. Uploading initiatives to the Forum Secretariat website

In line with the process outlined in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, all submitted initiatives, inclusive of all attachments, will be publicly available via the Forum Secretariat website.

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8. Guidelines and Contact Details

For further information on completing this template, consult the submissions guideline below or contact Pacific Regionalism Adviser Joel Nilon at the Forum Secretariat: Email: FPR@forumsec.org | Phone: +679 322 0327