

Panel Discussion with interaction via online engagement platform**Pacific approaches to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) that maximise local-leadership and build resilience to climate change.****Background**

As noted by PIF leaders in the 2021 Ocean Statement, 'the Ocean is our past, our present and our future'¹. The livelihoods and well-being of Pacific peoples are directly and indirectly connected to the health of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Pacific Island countries recognise this and are committed to deepening their collective responsibility and accountability for the stewardship of the ocean. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is one of the key tools to help achieve this, balancing the need to preserve and expand sustainable use of the ocean and build resilience to climate change.

However, MSP is a challenging area, and one that requires capacity, capability, and opportunities for sharing lessons learned and experiences. This session will share work taking place in the Pacific to contextualise MSP for the Pacific context, and to enable and facilitate knowledge exchange and scaling out of lessons learned.

MSP and marine protection approaches are being implemented across the Pacific with the support of different organisations. MSP is the process of analysing and allocating human activities in marine areas to achieve a range of objectives (e.g. ecological, economic and social/cultural). The methodologies developed to carry out MSP allow for careful consideration of trade-offs between different uses. They create space for consideration of diverse knowledge types, including Traditional Knowledge and, require a specialised set of skills, including stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Whilst creating spatial plans is the first, component of MSP, the future implementation of these plans, including resourcing for activities such as compliance, monitoring, and community engagement are all critical for success.

What are we doing?

The Climate and Biodiversity-Smart Marine Spatial Planning (CaB-Smart MSP) Programme involves a range of partners from across the Pacific working to build resilience of marine ecosystems, communities and economies through collaborative MSP initiatives. This programme, supported by the New Zealand government, is implemented by partners in Kiribati, Palau, Niue, Cook Islands and Solomon Islands. Each approach is different, contextualised for the individual challenges and contexts in each country.

SPREP and SPC, key technical partners in the region, are implementing projects that address common challenges in the region. Projects include:

- 1) Design of capacity building programmes for MSP
- 2) Research and development of guidance into how Traditional Knowledge and Customary Tenure/Practice can be considered as part of or alongside MSP processes,
- 3) Co-development of indicators (social, cultural, economic and environmental) for MSP
- 4) Design of data management/governance frameworks to support MSP processes.

What will this session cover?

This session will provide an overview of the approaches being undertaken through this programme to better plan for and manage marine areas, ensuring community views and practice are integrated into planning processes. At a recent talanoa session in the Solomon Islands, partners from across the Pacific came together to discuss common challenges. These include: capacity and resourcing issues, sustainable implementation and cross-government/multi-stakeholder engagement.

The outcomes of these discussions will be shared, and there will be opportunity for the audience to add additional context and recommendations via an online engagement platform. There will also be a panel discussion with opportunity to ask questions to the panel of experts.

¹ <https://opocbluepacific.org/download/69/pacific-regional-ocean-policies-declarations/973/pacific-islands-forum-ocean-statement-2021.pdf>

PARTICIPANTS

Full Name: Adelle Lukes Isechal

Organisation: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE), Palau

Ms Lukes Isechal is the project manager for Palau's MSP work. She previously worked as an applied scientist for the Palau Centre at the Palau International Coral Reef Centre and was awarded the European Union's Erasmus Mundus scholarship for her master's research in ecohydrology.

Full Name: Faye Siota

Organisation: Solomon Islands Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

Ms Faye Siota is the Deputy Director Inshore Fisheries in Solomon Islands. She has many years' experience working to support communities with climate-resilient fisheries. She previously worked at WorldFish and has extensive experience implementing Community Based Resource Management.

Full Name: Halatoa Fua

Organisation: National Environment Service, Cook Islands Government

Mr Halatoa Fua has been Director of the National Environment Service (NES), since 2022, leading initiatives focused on environmental policy, conservation, and sustainable development. He was previously Chief Executive Officer of Cook Islands Tourism Corporation. He is instrumental in helping to advance the work of the Marae Moana Technical Advisory Group.

Full Name: Kaiea Awira

Organisation: Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources (MFOR)

Kaiea Awira works at the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources in Kiribati as the Project Manager for the Phoenix Islands Marine Spatial Planning project. Kaiea is experienced in the development of ocean policy and planning within Kiribati, and also runs his own fishing company.

Full Name: Brendon Pasisi

Organisation: Niue Ocean Wide Project

Mr Brendon Pasisi is the project manager for the Niue Ocean Wide Project. He worked for the government of Niue for 25 years, including as the Director of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. He trained as a Marine Biologist and runs his own fishing charter and marine services business.

Full Name: Shanta Viviani-Hekau

Organisation: Niue Ocean Wide Project

Ms Shanta Viviani-Hekau is the Communications Manager and Grant funding officer for the Niue Ocean Wide Project. She collaborates closely with village communities to ensure conservation efforts are locally grounded and effectively communicated.

Full Name: Siosinamele Lui

Organisation: Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme

Siosinamele Lui is the Climate Traditional Knowledge Officer based at SPREP. She is the project lead for the CaB Smart MSP project to develop guidance for ensuring Traditional Knowledge is appropriately included in MSP processes. She previously spent a decade working for the Samoa Meteorological Service, in particular the Geoscience and Ocean observations.

Full Name: Dr. Carolyn Lundquist

Organisation: Earth Sciences New Zealand

Dr. Carolyn Lundquist has a joint position at NIWA and the University of Auckland. She is an interdisciplinary scientist, and specialises in development of decision support tools to inform stakeholder participatory processes for marine spatial planning and ecosystem based management from coasts and estuaries to the deep sea.

Full Name: Dr. Tom Brough

Organisation: Earth Sciences New Zealand

Dr. Tom Brough is a marine ecologist at NIWA with expertise in spatial and population modelling to inform stakeholder participatory processes for marine spatial planning. He has a specialisation in marine mammal ecology and works regularly across dual-knowledge systems.

Full Name: Malcolm Fraser

Organisation: Pacific Community (SPC)

Malcolm is Program Manager for the Pacific Data Hub hosted at SPC, specializing in data governance and innovation for the Pacific. With over 30 years' experience in NGOs, startups, and multinational consulting, he leads the efforts to build regional data capability, while pursuing a Professional Doctorate on governance frameworks for data collaboratives.

Full name: Sally Bailey

Organisation: Pacific Community (SPC)

Sally Bailey is the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Coordinator at SPC, leading efforts to support Pacific Island nations in sustainable ocean management. With a background in marine conservation and experience in seafood trade and fisheries policy, she specialises in stakeholder engagement, policy development, and capacity building to advance ecosystem-based MSP across the region.

Full Name: Lucy Jacob

Organisation: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand

Lucy Jacob designs and manages ocean-related projects in the Pacific region. Lucy has a background working on marine conservation in the Pacific and has also worked as the Ocean programme manager for WWF New Zealand. She is the manager for the Climate and Biodiversity-Smart MSP Programme.

Full Name: Bex Ansell

Organisation: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand

Bex Ansell is MFAT's Implementation Lead for the Climate and Biodiversity-Smart Marine Spatial Planning Programme, working bilaterally with Kiribati, Palau and the Solomon Islands. She works to support these Governments to build their marine spatial planning capability, and design approaches for their communities and contexts.