



REVIEW OF THE POTENTIAL APPLICATION OF MARINE OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES IN FIJI

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issue date: 15 May 2025

Closing date and time: 23 May 2025, 5:00 PM (Fiji)

Available budget: USD 15,000

Background

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is an international non-government organisation committed to working with communities, government, and other partners to safeguard Fiji's biodiversity and ensure the sustainable management of its natural resources. A critical focus of our work is Fiji's globally recognized marine biodiversity. The country's marine space encompasses 1.3 million square kilometres of ocean. This marine biodiversity is deeply woven into Fijian culture, identity, and livelihoods. Most of the country's population lives in coastal areas, relying heavily on marine resources for food security.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, was adopted in December 2022 at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The KMGBF outlines 23 targets to be met by 2030 and four global goals to preserve biodiversity for current and future generations. Other Effective Area Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are recognised as a conservation approach to support achieving Target 3 of KMGBF, which aims to effectively conserve at least 30% of terrestrial and 30% of marine and coastal areas by 2030 (the "30x30 target"). OECMs are defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity as *"A geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values"*. OECMs provide an opportunity to recognize and report on existing and new conservation efforts that do not meet the formal definition of an MPA but nevertheless contribute to long-term biodiversity conservation.

Fiji has demonstrated ambitious leadership on marine conservation, such as committing to safeguarding 30% of the country's EEZ within MPAs and having 100% sustainable ocean management. It also has extensive areas recognised as Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) within customary fishing grounds (*iqoliqoli* areas). Despite this, the spatial extent of formal MPAs is very low (<1%). There is an opportunity in Fiji to assess the applicability

and potential adoption of marine OECMs within its national context. This would potentially contribute to reporting on KMGBF commitments and mobilise additional support to enable the success of existing conservation efforts.

This consultancy will conduct a comprehensive review of the application and adoption of marine OECMs in Fiji. It will review the potential opportunities and risks and clarify the types of management approaches that could qualify. The consultancy will also review governance frameworks and make recommendations for integration into national policy arrangements.

Objectives

The objectives of the consultancy are to:

- Review and document the potential opportunities and risks for Fiji pursuing the application of marine OECMs, with a strong consideration of the context and governance arrangements (including customary rights).
- Assess existing area-based marine management approaches and evaluate their alignment with the OECM criteria.
- Provide recommendations to guide the implementation of OECMs in Fiji to support national policies such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

Scope of Work

The consultant will conduct the following tasks:

1. **Comprehensive review and evaluation of the potential opportunities and risks of applying marine OECMs in Fiji.** This should consider:
 - Lessons learned from other countries, particularly with a similar context
 - Customary rights of Indigenous resource owners (ensuring that these are not undermined)
 - Current gaps in achieving sustainable ocean management and how OECMs could address these issues (e.g., resourcing)
 - Fiji's current legal and policy framework, particularly how potential OECMs might relate to these instruments.
2. **Assess current marine area-based management approaches to evaluate whether OECMs could be applied to these areas.** This should consider:
 - Identifying and categorizing the types of marine OECMs feasible in Fiji
 - Compatibility of marine area-based management systems with the OECM criteria
 - Quantifying the potential contribution (of different OCEM categories) to national targets
 - Cost estimation for the potential process to gain recognition of OECMs in Fiji.

- 3. Provide recommendations to guide the implementation of OECMs in Fiji.** This should include providing clear advice on:
- How and if OECMs should be applied in Fiji, and the mitigation of potential risks
 - Management approaches that would meet the OECM criteria
 - Provide practical guidance for integrating OECMs into the country's national policy framework, ensuring that it does not undermine or erode customary rights over coastal waters
 - Potential financing mechanisms to support the recognition process and management of potential OECMs, with a focus on mobilising resources to enable rightsholders to sustainably manage coastal resources.
- 4. Stakeholder validation:**
- Present findings and draft recommendations at a stakeholder validation workshop. The validation costs will be covered by WCS (including consultant travel and accommodation costs).
 - Incorporate feedback from the workshop into the final report.

Deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

	Item	Estimated timeframe (after signing consultancy contract)
1.	Draft report outline for endorsement by WCS	1 week
2.	Draft report and recommendations for review	4 weeks
3.	Present findings and recommendations with key stakeholders at a validation workshop	5 weeks
4.	Submit revised draft report based on validation workshop	6 weeks

Timeline

The consultancy work will ideally be completed by the end of June 2025.

Requirements and qualifications

The consultant will have the following minimum experience and qualifications:

- Considerable experience and understanding of marine OECMs, ideally in the Pacific region.
- Advanced degree in a relevant field.
- Fluency in both spoken and written English.

Submission requirements

The following must be submitted:

1. Brief technical statement outlining previous experience relevant to the consultancy (one page). Proposers are encouraged to submit examples of previous work or provide links.
2. Curriculum Vitae.
3. Short financial proposal.

Submitted rates are deemed to include all costs, insurances, taxes, fees, expenses, liabilities, obligations, risk and other things necessary for the performance of the Requirement. Any charge not stated in the Proposal as being additional, will not be allowed as a charge against any transaction under any resultant Contract. All rates and prices submitted by Proposers shall be in US dollars.

All proposal documents should be emailed directly to jalbert@wcs.org by the closing date. Late submissions will not be considered.

Evaluation criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

Evaluation criteria	Weighting given
Financial proposal	30 %
Technical experience and capacity	60 %
Experience working in a Pacific context	10%