



Great Sea Reef Conservation and Climate Resiliency Program Ministry of Economy, Fiji

Purpose: This program will support the sustainable management of coastal ecosystems of the Great Sea Reef (GSR) to maintain and enhance the climate resiliency benefits they provide, especially for the benefit of vulnerable coastal communities as well as protection of valuable coastal infrastructure - including for the tourism industry.

Background: The GSR stretches over 200 kilometers from East to West across the northern reach of the Fiji Islands, and is home to 55% of the population - providing 80% of the country's fish supply and a high proportion of the tourism income. This is the third longest contiguous coral reef system in the Southern Hemisphere, and it is extremely rich in biological diversity, with more than 500 types of reef building corals and more than 700 fish species, extensive seagrass beds feeding grounds for green and hawksbill turtles of the Pacific and 12 threatened species of the IUCN Red List. Unfortunately, this locally vital and globally significant resource is under threat from warming seas, causing rapid coral bleaching, other climate change threats such as growing storm intensity. Building coastal and reef climate resiliency will also require dealing with pollution from terrestrial landscapes, especially unsustainable agricultural addressing deforestation of upland forests and mangroves.

Significance: Fiji is facing increasingly adverse impacts of climate change on its people, economy, and natural heritage, and these are most acute in coastal communities. Recent science indicates that Fiji's Great Sea Reef is one of the most resilient to global sea warming and coral bleaching, but it is under stress from land based pollution and over-fishing. Protecting the GSR from these stresses would thus benefit not only Fiji but allow the reef to serve as a regeneration site for reefs in other Pacific nations under threat.

Implementation: The Ministry of Economy provides overall leadership and coordination of climate change planning and action as well as related international cooperation. Under its Green Growth Plan and as part of its National Climate Change Policy and Adaptation Plan, the Government of Fiji has prioritized actions to address stresses to its coral reefs to help maintain their productivity in the face of stresses from warming seas due to climate change. There are several current adaptation projects being implemented in cooperation with the Green Climate Fund (water supply) and Adaptation Fund (urban sustainability). The Government is partnering with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to develop a GSR proposal for the Green Climate Fund, but additional resources are needed to cover all elements of this program.

Financing: Full implementation of the GSR Conservation and Climate Resiliency Program is expected to cost approximately US\$120 million, to be implemented in phases, with those aspects focused on building climate resiliency to be given earliest priority.