

MAKING WAVES

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS,
SUSTAINABLE OCEANS



Contributing Authors:

Nicole DeSantis, Jamison Ervin, Anne Virnig, Ana Maria Currea and
Eva Gurria

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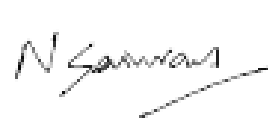
Preface

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, sets forth a bold and ambitious vision for the future. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals together shape a better world that supports people, prosperity and planet. If implemented, these goals would radically reshape our common trajectory, and point us toward a sustainable future for the coming century.

Of all of the goals, Goal 14 on sustainable oceans poses some of the most difficult and intractable challenges. 90 percent of global fisheries stocks are either fully exploited, over-exploited or have fully collapsed. By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. We have lost over half of the world's mangrove forests, and of those that remain, more than half are degraded.

If we are to make progress, we must follow three basic principles. First, we must follow the principle of indivisibility – we cannot achieve one goal at the expense of any others. We cannot achieve economic success by more mangrove depletion, more overfishing, more pollution – such growth is not sustainable. The second is inclusion – we can leave no one behind in our race toward economic prosperity, including coastal communities. The third is the principle of acceleration – we must focus on those actions that have multiple development dividends. Actions on Goal 14 follow all three principles. By restoring, protecting and sustainably and equitably managing the world's coastal and marine ecosystems, we are ensuring that coastal communities thrive, that we have a reliable source of protein, that coastal cities and communities are buffered from severe storms, that marine tourism provides an engine of economic growth, and that millions of the world's poorest community members have reliable livelihoods.

We know from experience with the Millennium Development Goals that concerted political will can make a difference – the world was able to lift a billion people out of extreme poverty in under 15 years. We can do the same for oceans. We can sustainably manage fisheries, restore and protect degraded habitat, and prevent and clean-up marine pollution. However, we need innovative solutions and models. Communities are at the very forefront of showing us the way forward on sustainable oceans. By shining a spotlight on effective and innovative community solutions through the UNDP-led Equator Initiative, and by fostering innovation through the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme, we are helping to accelerate progress on sustainable oceans, and helping to achieve the world we all want.



Nik Sekhran
Chief of Profession
Sustainable Development
United Nations Development Programme



Gustavo Fonseca
Director of Programs
Global Environment Facility



Foreword

Fiji's marine and coastal resources provide a lifeline to Fiji's people in forms of cultural significance, coastal protection, livelihoods from marine resources, water sources and other possible income from tourism and research. Fiji has enshrined recognition of the value of oceans and the importance of protection at the national level within its Green Growth Framework, which builds upon the Government of Fiji's commitment to protect 30 percent of its seas as marine protected areas by 2020, and its Oceans Policy Framework. At the community level, Fiji recognizes the importance of marine and coastal ecosystems through its intimate cultural and traditional links to the sea.

Fiji is a leader in addressing the unique marine and coastal challenges that beset other Small Island Developing States, and we have shown that through our community-based efforts, we can strengthen national resilience, and achieve our own Sustainable Development Goals. We are proud to see that the efforts of the first locally managed marine area in Verata, Fiji – one of 15 community initiatives profiled in this publication – is a model of sustainable development which has been widely replicated not only locally and within the Pacific region, but around the world. Fiji recognizes that community-based initiatives can be a powerful pathway to sustainable development.

The Verata-based Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network has shown how a community can play an active role in marine conservation programme as well as fulfilling their livelihood needs. The project was conceived through the active involvement of the indigenous resource owners, with their traditional ecological knowledge providing the foundation for establishing an ongoing marine conservation initiative between relevant partners. The key underlying factor that has resulted to the success of the Verata project is the commitment to conservation at the outset from the community leadership.

As a leader in global efforts to protect, restore, and sustainably manage marine ecosystems, and co-host of the UN Ocean Conference, Fiji is proud to both support national plans and policy frameworks as well as community-based initiatives that deliver on Sustainable Development Goal 14, and across the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

H.E. Mr. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama
Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji
Minister for i-Taukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Foreign Affairs

National perspectives



The sustainable use and conservation of the world's marine ecosystems can directly contribute to many of the Sustainable Development Goals. These actions are particularly critical for the local communities and indigenous peoples whose welfare depends on oceans for their food, their

livelihoods, their protection from coastal disasters and their well-being. Seafood provides a crucial source of nutrition for millions of people. Local communities and indigenous peoples all over the world are taking action, demonstrating how sustainably managing fisheries and their habitats can provide lasting, durable sustainable development. We can all learn from this.

Børge Brende

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Government of Norway



Unsustainable fishing practices, exploitation of marine resources, and plastic pollution are some of the most serious environmental challenges of our time. Successful community-based initiatives to restore, conserve and sustainably manage coastal and marine ecosystems are having an impact

around the world. These initiatives show that communities can strengthen resilience by improving food security, sustaining livelihoods, reducing risks from natural disasters, and creating sustainable jobs from community-based tourism. By taking marine action, local communities are showing that a resilient, sustainable world is possible, and an important role for us within the development community is to support and strengthen these initiatives.

Carin Jämtin

Director-General
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency



Local communities are driving effective and innovative solutions for addressing marine and coastal threats. These initiatives already have shown a wide diversity of successful models, many of which are being shared, replicated and scaled up within and across countries. The potential to learn from and

scale up community-based initiatives in sustainable fisheries, marine protection and coastal restoration is essential if we are to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Germany recognizes the increased need for learning and knowledge sharing, and sees community-based initiatives as one pathway to accelerating progress on the 2030 Global Agenda. This is why German Development Cooperation puts great emphasis on working closely with local communities in the realm of marine conservation projects.

Dr. Tania Rödiger-Vorwerk

Deputy Director General Environment and Infrastructure
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



Oceans, communities and the Sustainable Development Goals

Our global oceans generate immeasurable social, economic, and environmental benefits that catalyze sustainable development, alleviate poverty and sustain livelihoods in communities around the world. Our oceans are the lungs of our planet, generating 70 percent of the oxygen in our atmosphere, and regulating our climate across the globe by absorbing 30 percent of greenhouse gases. Our oceans contribute more than US\$3 trillion annually to the world economy, with global fisheries sustaining over 750 million jobs and livelihoods, and marine tourism sustaining

another 200 million jobs. And our oceans provide more than 160 million tons of fish – 16 percent of the world’s protein, and as much as 60 percent of the protein consumed by coastal communities. In addition, mangroves, sea grasses and coral reefs protect more than 100 million communities from storm surges and natural coastal hazards.

Protecting, restoring and sustainably managing marine ecosystems is key to sustaining these benefits and services, and to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although

Sustainable Development Goal 14 focuses on conserving and sustainably using marine resources, achieving this goal will deliver benefits across multiple Sustainable Development Goals, including reducing poverty (Goal 1), strengthening food security (Goal 2), empowering women and girls (Goal 5), sustaining jobs and livelihoods (Goal 8), and mitigating climate change and reducing risks from disasters (Goal 13), among others.

Despite the multiple benefits of global oceans to humanity, ocean ecosystems are currently under threat. Unsustainable fishing policies,

marine and land-based pollution, invasive species, habitat loss, and ocean acidification are all straining the health of the world’s oceans, with great cost to national and global economies, public health and social welfare. Local coastal communities and indigenous peoples are on the frontlines of marine environmental degradation. These groups are disproportionately dependent upon marine resources for their well-being, and are therefore disproportionately vulnerable to the devastating effects of unsustainable marine and coastal management practices. Indigenous peoples and local communities

have also been the local stewards of the natural resources for thousands of years, and often hold rich traditional knowledge and local solutions to effectively manage and adapt to the environment.

In response to threats to ocean ecosystem health, indigenous peoples and local communities living in marine and coastal areas around the world are taking action. They are protecting, restoring and sustainably managing marine and coastal resources by implementing carefully tailored development models that meet their local

needs. Localizing action to achieve Goal 14 empowers communities to implement locally relevant solutions to the pressures threatening the marine and coastal resources on which their livelihoods depend. The lessons and innovations inherent in successful community-led marine and coastal initiatives demonstrate the linkages between biodiversity and human welfare, contribute to the knowledge necessary for replication and scaling-up to achieve greater impact, and serve as a compliment to global policy action for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Supporting community action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals

The Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses and grassroots organizations to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. The Equator Initiative accomplishes this through action in three key areas: hosting the flagship Equator Prize, documenting best practices, and convening local-national dialogues. Since 2002, the Equator Initiative has recognized 208 outstanding community initiatives, more than 50 of which are marine. These marine initiatives alone span 29 countries.

The Equator Initiative has recognized some of the leading community-led initiatives with the potential for scale-up and replication. Partners and donors are directly involved in recognizing and championing local action and build unique relationships with some of the most successful, community-driven sustainable development initiatives across the globe. By partnering with and supporting the Equator Initiative, partners and donors gain access to leading community action representatives and knowledge, recognition at the Equator Prize ceremonies and UN conferences, and the opportunity add their voice to the collective, advocating for the power of indigenous people and local community action.

The GEF Small Grants Programme

Established in 1992, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by UNDP. SGP grantmaking in over 125 countries promotes community-based innovation, capacity development and empowerment through sustainable development projects of local civil society organizations with special consideration for indigenous peoples, women, and youth. The GEF Small Grants Programme embodies the very essence of sustainable development by 'thinking globally, acting locally'. By providing financial and technical support to local and community-based projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods, SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives.

SGP has funded over 20,000 community projects. Of these, 1,027 are in international waters and represent an investment of approximately US\$26 million that has generated an additional US\$38 million in co-financing for the protection of international waters, including oceans. In addition, many biodiversity projects have also been allocated for work in coastal and marine areas, contributing to the rehabilitation and conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems.

SGP projects related to ocean have focused on conservation and rehabilitation of coastal ecosystems and habitats; prevention and reduction of land-based pollution; freshwater resources management; fisheries, land and forest and other natural resources management; and capacity development, networking, knowledge sharing and learning. In addition to direct investment, these small-scale investments have been scaled-up and replicated locally, nationally, and globally through collaboration with other GEF full sized projects, South-South cooperation, links and contributions to policy frameworks and regulations, creation and strengthening of networks, clustering of projects and a wide range of partnerships. SGP has established close partnerships with several GEF full-sized international waters projects to support the community implementation of regional Strategic Action Programmes (SAPs) and plays a role in knowledge exchange about innovative solutions from the ground up.

Community action for oceans management

This publication describes 15 outstanding community-based marine initiatives that illustrate nature-based solutions for local sustainable development. These solutions range from the creation of a locally managed marine area, to implementing sustainable fishing practices, to fostering community-based tourism, to empowering women to start their own marketing collective, and more. These actions deliver on multiple Sustainable Development Goals at once, and ultimately strengthen the well-being and resilience of each community.

These initiatives demonstrate that with proper support and recognition, local actions can lead to substantial impacts at national and international levels. Each of the communities featured in this publication have received the Equator Prize. Eight of these communities have also received grants from the GEF Small Grants Programme.

These stories show that indigenous peoples and local communities are some of the most effective stewards of the planet's marine ecosystems. They also show that the actions taken by these local initiatives can have widespread impact, in many cases across their entire country and beyond. Together, the 15 community initiatives featured in this publication have conserved more than 3,700,000 hectares of marine area, planted more than 1,800,000 mangrove trees, and engaged over 54,000 young people in community marine initiatives, among many other achievements.

The purpose of this publication is to show the importance of these and similar community initiatives around the world by illustrating how they can help us achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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