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JICA's Technical Cooperation on Pacific Islands Capacity Enhancement for Achieving SDG 14 (2020 – 2025)

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SDG 14 Project Overview

1. Sustainable Development Goal 14 is about "*Life Below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*" and is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015. During the 47th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders' Meeting in 2016, the Leaders reaffirmed that the "*ocean is the most important resource in the region; therefore, the Pacific had shown strong global leadership on oceans through the SAMOA Pathway and in ensuring a stand-alone SDG on the ocean and seas (SDG 14)*"¹. On Monday 5th June 2017, Fiji's Prime Minister Mr. Frank Bainimarama in addressing the opening session at the United Nations Ocean Conference in New York, urged the meeting "*To place SDG 14 at the very top of the global agenda alongside decisive climate action. We can do it. We must do it. Because the alternative in both cases is catastrophe*"². Based on these high-level commitments at these international events, the Government of Fiji made an official request to the Government of Japan to assist with capacity enhancement for achieving SDG 14 in Fiji and the other Pacific Island Countries.

Figure 1: SDG 14 Logos in English, French and Japanese



2. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in collaboration with USP's School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean, and Natural Science (SAGEONS) and SPC FAME has implemented the 4-years technical cooperation, named the Pacific Islands Capacity Enhancement for Achieving SDG 14. Table 1 shows the narrative summary of the project.

¹ Forty-Seventh Pacific Islands Forum Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 8 – 10 September, 2016 Forum Communique

² The Ocean Conference, United Nations, New York, 5 – 9 June 2017

Table 1: Narrative Summary of Project

Project Title:	Pacific Islands Capacity Enhancement for Achieving SDG 14 ³
Counterpart Agencies:	1) Fiji Ministry of Fisheries (Project Base) 2) Palau Bureau of Fisheries 3) Vanuatu Fisheries Department (South-South Cooperation Base)
Cooperative Agencies:	1) School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS), The University of the South Pacific (USP) 2) Division of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME), The Pacific Community (SPC) ⁴
Target Groups:	Fishery officers & staffs, fishers and other fisheries stakeholders in Fiji, Palau, Vanuatu and other Pacific Island countries
Project Period:	From 24th December 2020 to 31st March 2024 (4 years and 4 month)
Overall Goal: (by 2030)	Enhanced capacities of regional fisheries stakeholders to promote actions for achieving SDG 14 in the PICs.
Project Purpose: (by 2025)	Enhanced capacities of Fijian fisheries stakeholders to promote actions for achieving SDG 14 in the PICs.
Outputs:	1) Approval of Plan for capacity enhancement for Fijian fisheries stakeholders and plan for South-South cooperation for regional fisheries stakeholders by SDG 14 training committee (2021 – 2022). 2) Improved technical competency of Fijian fisheries stakeholders to support actions for achieving SDG14 in Fiji (2022 – 2023). 3) Improved technical competency of Fijian fisheries stakeholders to implement South-South cooperation for achieving SDG14 (2023 – 2024). 4) Adopt a Regional roadmap for capacity enhancement of fisheries stakeholders for achieving SDG 14 in the PIC (2024 – 2025).

SDG 14 Project Activities in Fiji

4. JICA's Technical Cooperation adapts the problem-solving approach through practical activities at the community level. The actions shall be taken by local counterparts and stakeholders, while JICA Experts can just technically and financially assist them to facilitate their actions. Thus, the project success is totally dependent on responsibilities assumed by and actions taken by the local counterparts, particularly the Fisheries Ministry personnel (Fisheries Officers) in the project countries.

³ The information in Table 1 is based on Record of Discussions (R/D) exchanged Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and JICA on 14th February 2020. A new R/D will be exchanged between Vanuatu Fisheries Division and JICA in 2023. South-South cooperation in Palau will be implemented under the project framework of the Project for Forming Good Practices of Islands-type Blue Economy.

⁴ SPC FAME in Fiji provides the technical assistances and advices to SDG 14 Project activities such as Tilapia aquaculture in Fiji based on the requests from Fiji Ministry of Fisheries.

5. JICA and USP provided the Project Cycle Management (PCM) trainings to local counterparts, Fiji Ministry of Fisheries, to analyze the stakeholders concerns, management issues and development objectives in the fishing communities. Each of the Fisheries Division was then given time to develop their small-scale projects to solve the problems in their targeted fields and communities. JICA, USP and SPC have provided the financial and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of Fisheries Officers and other stakeholders to effectively implement the small-scale project.

6. Table 2 shows each Division’s small-scale project in Fiji and its progress since April 2022. The Divisions have differed in the progress they have made based on actions taken by Fisheries Officers and their stakeholders. The SDG 14 Project team will continue with the project activities in Fiji until the end of 2023 and will analyze the progress made through the small-scale projects.

Table 2: Small-Scale Projects in Fiji

Division	Project Title	Progress ⁵
Inshore Fisheries Management	1) Non-finfish data collection 2) Mapping of Fiji’s Fish Landing Sites to Combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Inshore Fisheries Activities	Good progress
Offshore Fisheries Management	Establishing economically viable alternatives from offshore Marine Protected Areas	No progress
Aquaculture	Up-scaling tilapia production through cost effective farming regimes	Good progress
Economic Policy, Planning and Statistical	Improving Fiji’s central fisheries information and statistical system for evidence-based decisions and reporting for SDG 14	No progress
Research and Eastern	Encourage sustainable fisheries conservation and improve livelihood initiative towards a climate change resilient community	No progress
Central	Mud crab fattening for the village of Vunuku, Rewa	Good progress
Western	Maximize economic return/opportunities for LFA’s members through sustainable utilization of fisheries resources	Moderate progress
Northern	Improvement of Enforcement Activities in Qoliqoli Cokovata Macuata focusing on Kia Island	Moderate progress

South-South Cooperation in Fiji, Palau, Vanuatu and Other Pacific Island Countries

7. According to UN Office for South-South Cooperation, “the South-South cooperation is the understanding that exchanging knowledge, skills, experiences and lessons learned between

⁵ As of September 2022

and among countries of the global South serves as a powerful catalyst for development⁶. This approach is considered to be affordable, feasible, cost-effective and sustainable through the mutual capacity enhancement in the developing countries. In fact, the effectiveness of South-South cooperation on marine resources management has been observed among Eastern Caribbean Island Countries under the JICA’s Technical Cooperation on Caribbean Fisheries Co-Management Project (CARIFICO) where the natural environment and economic scale are similar to PICs.

8. In addition to the SDG 14 Project based in Fiji, JICA has implemented other comprehensive Technical Cooperation for the fisheries sector as shown in Table 3.

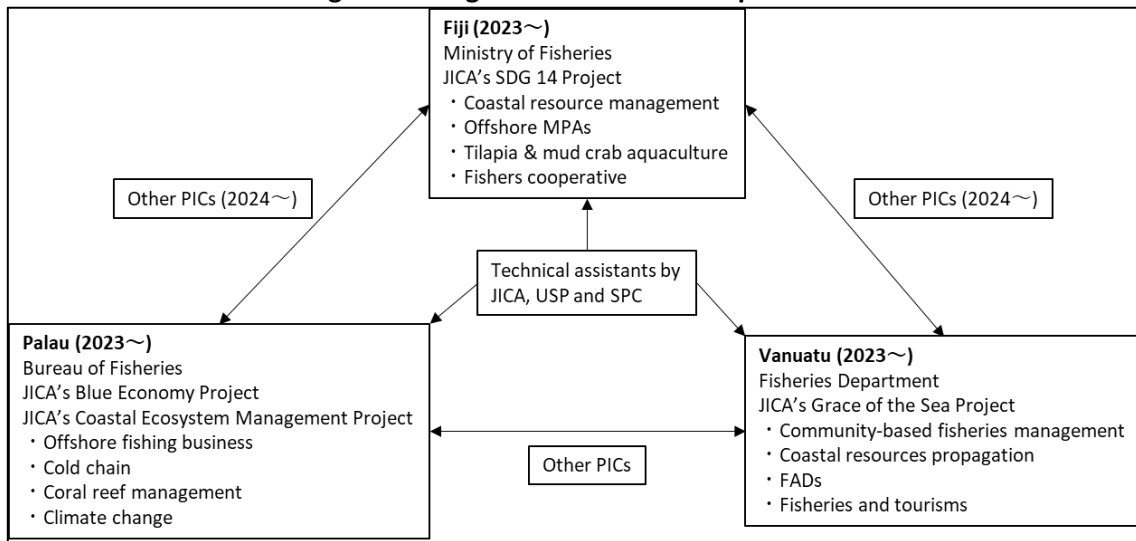
Table 3: JICA’s Technical Cooperation for the fisheries sector in PICs

Country	Project Name	Period
Palau	Project for Forming Good Practices of Islands-type Blue Economy	2022 – 2025
Palau	Project for Enhancement of Integrated Management of Coastal Ecosystem in Palau for Strengthening their Resilience to Climate Change	2022 – 2025
Palau	Improvement of Pelagic Fish Catch and Organizational Strengthening through Processing and Sales of Marine Products with the Northern Reef Fisheries Cooperative	2022 – 2025
Solomon Islands	Community-Based Resources Management Advisor	2017 – 2022
Vanuatu	Grace of the Sea Project Phase 3	2017 – 2023

9. SDG 14 Project team as well as other JICA’s project team are currently monitoring the project progress, analysing the good practices and sharing the lessons learnt from the projects to formulate the detailed contents of South-South cooperation. The South-South cooperation will start among Fiji, Palau and Vanuatu from 2023. For instance, Fiji Ministry of Fisheries will share their lessons learnt from tilapia and mud crab aquaculture with other countries, while Vanuatu Fisheries Department will assist the community-based fisheries management (CBFM) in other countries (see figure 2). The participating PICs will be added based on their issues, needs and good practices, which they can share with other countries.

⁶ UNOSSC/UNDP (2022) Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development – Volume

Figure 2: Image of South-South Cooperation



The Way Forward

10. JICA already observed the effectiveness of South-South cooperation in the Eastern Caribbean Island Countries through CORIFICO and now the approaches are being applied to PICs. Fiji Ministry of Fisheries is responsible for the implementation of their small-scale project to produce the good practices and share the lessons learned from the projects with other PICs. Palau Bureau of Fisheries as well as Vanuatu Fisheries Department are also expected to capture and share the good practices through their JICA's Technical Cooperation projects. The other PICs, which are interested in participating in the South-South cooperation are welcome to contact the SDG 14 Project team.

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