



15th SPC Heads of Fisheries Meeting
20–24 March 2023



Original: English

Information paper 10

Update on PCCOS and the SPC Ocean Flagship

Jerome Aucan, Head of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS)
Katy Soapi, PCCOS Coordinator – Partnership and Engagement
Pierre-Yves Charpentier, Project Adviser PCCOS

PCCOS update

1. The creation of PCCOS was decided by the 2017 SPC Conference. It was formally created in 2019 in virtual form with funding from MFAT. The PCCOS implementation started in earnest in early 2021 with the hiring of the management team.
2. PCCOS actions will be mainly divided along three components:
 - i) Internal SPC coordination - PCCOS aims at facilitating and promoting cross-divisional engagement and cooperation internally at SPC for a better-integrated service to its members and continued building of ocean science excellence at SPC.
 - ii) Regional coordination and partnerships - PCCOS will actively contribute to strategic partnerships in ocean science with a large number of institutions and initiatives at the national level, regionally (particularly with other CROP agencies) and internationally.
 - iii) Provide ocean science products to SPC members - PCCOS will coordinate the approach with government agencies responsible for implementing ocean policies and tracking progress against SDG 14
3. PCCOS is working across 6 main work areas: 1) The UN Ocean Decade; 2) Pacific Early Career Ocean Professionals; 3) Science Products Development; 4) Integrated Ocean Management; 5) Ocean Acidification; 6) Traditional Ocean Knowledge and Practices.
4. During the period 2021-2023, we saw an increased collaboration emerging at SPC on ocean science with many new cross-divisional initiatives. The UN Decade of Ocean Science also truly started in the Pacific with five Ocean Labs co-organised by PCCOS and SPC divisions with high visibility for ocean science at SPC and PCCOS.
5. PCCOS now has four full time staff, a large network of collaborators across SPC, with regional and international partners, early career ocean professionals, and in SPC member country governments. PCCOS contributed to the signing of several new or revisited MoUs with scientific partners and submitted five funding proposals. PCCOS secured funding for 3 additional projects: Pacific Solutions Integrated Ocean Management Programme, the Climate Resilient Marine Spatial Planning project (both described here) and the Pacific Islands Ocean Acidification Centre (described in a separate briefing)
6. PCCOS is developing science products to inform decision making for stakeholders in Solomon Islands, Kiribati, and PNG. The Vanuatu Oceans Office benefitted from four interns and a consultant to work on key processes supporting their institutional capacity and the implementation on the Vanuatu Nation Ocean Policy.
7. 669 people participated to PCCOS-organised UN Ocean Decade activities in 2021 and 2022, learning from regional experts on key ocean issues.
8. PCCOS has also set up and is currently structuring the Pacific Early Career Ocean Professionals (ECOPs) Network, providing opportunities and sharing information to over 120 ECOPs in the region.



9. Some challenges remain, such as building trust with country stakeholders and advancing some issues related to National Ocean Policy (NOP) implementation, with travel limitation in 2021 and 2022 restraining PCCOS from fully achieving some of its expected outcomes.

Launching the Pacific Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) Report

10. PCCOS launched the Pacific Integrated Ocean Management (IOM) Report in December 2022 during the last Maritime Boundaries Dialogue in Sydney, The report is available online at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/3povb>
11. The report provides an overview of Ocean Governance in the Pacific and reviews how IOM is included in National Ocean Policies (NOPs) in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa. It demonstrates that integrated management is included in all NOPs and IOM being front and centre in the PNG NOP.

Pacific Solutions Integrated Ocean Management Programme (PSIOM)

12. Pacific solutions for a healthy Blue Pacific Continent: Integrated Ocean Management (PSIOM) to sustain livelihoods today and into the future is a 10-year programme from 2021-2030 endorsed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It is a regional programme aiming to leveraging the spate of National Ocean Policies (NOPs) launched in the Pacific in recent years to address the need for greater integrated ocean management (IOM). It seeks to increase scientific capacity and create opportunities for ocean science to feed into decision making.
13. PSIOM currently includes three projects included: 1) PacPATH (IRD-USP); 2) Pacific Coral Reef Action and Knowledge (SPREP); 3) Threatened and migratory marine species science (SPREP)
14. Seed-funding was secured from the EU (starting in February 2023) for an initial 3-year inception phase. It has started with the hiring of an IOM Adviser.
15. PSIOM is structured around three pillars:
 - i. **Law and Policy** – Direct support to Ocean Affairs Office (or similar structures) in their NOP implementation efforts
 - ii. **Science** – Raise awareness on ocean science for decision making; produce higher resolution models; build capacity to use science products and ocean models
 - iii. **Culture & Traditional Knowledge (TK)** – Work with TK/culture working groups in identifying relevant traditional non-confidential knowledge and know-how and traditional governance systems and integrating them into legal frameworks, decision support systems, tools and communication products.

Climate Resilient Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

16. The Climate Resilient MSP project aims at supporting the Integrated Ocean Management efforts from the Government of Palau, who launched its Blue Prosperity Plan in March 2022 aiming at a 100% managed EEZ. The project aims at supporting the Republic of Palau government and other Pacific Island countries in developing marine spatial plans (MSP) informed by the best scientific



information available, including climate change scenarios, paving the way to a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient ocean-based economic development. MSP is a key decision-making tool to design public policies.

17. The Climate Resilient MSP project is a 3-year project funded by the US Department of State and focusses on three main outputs:

- Output 1: The Republic of Palau and other Pacific Island countries are progressing towards a climate-resilient blue economy through an inclusive, science- and evidence-based MSP process including robust climate scenarios
- Output 2: The Palau government and other Pacific Island countries have strengthened capacity to coordinate, lead and implement MSP for a sustainable blue economy
- Output 3: Improved regional coordination for inclusive country-driven MSP processes with scientifically robust climate scenarios and information

18. The Climate Resilient MSP project is in inception phase, supporting the Government of Palau in defining the goal, objectives and work plan for the MSP process. It involves mapping existing data, collecting additional information and performing key analyses to inform ocean zoning decisions.

Pacific Islands Conference of Ocean Science and Ocean Management (PICOSOM)

19. SPC-PCCOS is convening the first Pacific Islands Conference of Ocean Science and Ocean Management (PICOSOM) from 11 to 15 September 2023 in Nadi, Fiji. The Conference aims to bring together relevant country stakeholders and science partners to discuss ocean science and ocean management priorities in the Pacific. It will be a key platform to identify national and regional needs, highlight key scientific questions and attract funds to bridge gaps between ocean science and ocean policy implementation.

20. The PICOSOM is for scientists, technical staff, decision-makers and policy implementers from the Pacific. Over five days, technical and scientific partners will showcase cutting edge science that PICT governments could use for their own purpose. It will also provide an opportunity for decision-makers and policy implementers to talk to their key ocean science and ocean management initiatives while expressing their needs and priorities.

21. PCCOS will provide travel support to two representatives per SPC member country and territory.

22. Registration for this event is now open:

- Nomination form for country representatives: <https://forms.office.com/r/sCUhVd61sM>
- Registration form for participants (scientist and technical staff): <https://forms.office.com/r/nZMzxE7AnW>



SPC Ocean Flagship

23. SPC is working on developing an Ocean Flagship to address key ocean issues in the region in line with the 2050 Blue Continent Strategy and the SPC 2022-2031 Strategic Plan. PCCOS is the anchor project for the future SPC Ocean Flagship.
24. Six dimensions are suggested for the Ocean Flagship: 1) Ocean Science; 2) Ocean Governance; 3) Ocean Traditional Knowledge; 4) Ocean Finance; 5) Ocean Economy; 6) Ocean Health.
25. SPC is currently working on a capability mapping based on the 6 dimensions. This mapping and the Ocean Flagship design process will build on other regional consultation mechanisms and will involve consulting country representatives and other CROPs. These consultations and the design process will take place in 2023.