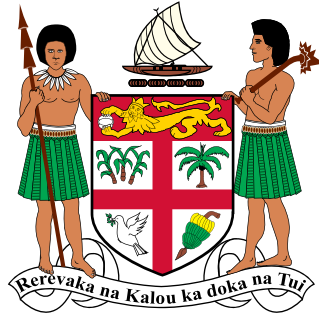




FIJI NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CORAL REEF CONSERVATION

2026 – 2031

RESILIENT CORAL REEFS
RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
RESILIENT FUTURE

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change



MINISTER'S FOREWORD



Bula Vinaka,

Fiji's coral reefs are more than ecosystems of extraordinary beauty — they are the foundation of our way of life, our identity, and our future as an island nation. For generations, our coral reefs have sustained our people by providing food security, livelihoods, cultural connections, coastal protection, and economic opportunities. From the *Qoliqoli* of our coastal villages to the vibrant marine environments that support tourism, fisheries, and biodiversity, coral reefs remain deeply connected to the daily lives and well-being of all Fijians.

Today, these globally significant ecosystems face increasing pressures from climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, pollution, and coastal habitat degradation. The impacts are not only environmental; they directly affect the livelihoods of our communities, the resilience of our coastlines, the security of our food systems, and the prosperity of future generations. The protection and restoration of Fiji's coral reefs is therefore not only an environmental responsibility, but also a national development priority.

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation (2026–2031) represents Fiji's collective commitment to safeguard these vital ecosystems through coordinated, inclusive, and science-based action. Developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, together with the Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation, communities, traditional resource owners, civil society organisations, academia, development partners, and the private sector, this Action Plan reflects a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to coral reef conservation.





This Action Plan is strongly aligned with Fiji's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2026–2030 and contributes directly to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including global commitments to conserve and effectively manage biodiversity, strengthen ecosystem resilience, reduce pollution, and achieve the global 30 by 30 conservation targets. Through this Action Plan, Fiji continues to demonstrate leadership in advancing integrated ocean management, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation at the national, regional, and global levels.

The Coalition Government remains firmly committed to protecting Fiji's natural heritage and strengthening the resilience of our communities against the growing impacts of climate change. Through our policies, legislation, and investments, we are advancing sustainable fisheries management, supporting locally managed marine areas, strengthening environmental governance, restoring degraded coastal ecosystems, and empowering communities to lead conservation efforts on the ground. We recognise that meaningful conservation can only succeed when communities, traditional custodians, women, youth, and vulnerable groups are fully included in decision-making and benefit-sharing processes.

This Action Plan is ultimately about the people of Fiji. It is about ensuring that future generations can continue to fish sustainably in healthy *Qoliqoli*, that our children inherit thriving reefs rich in marine life, that our coastal communities remain protected from storms and erosion, and that our culture, traditions, and Vanua remain strong and connected to our oceans. It is about protecting the natural systems that sustain our economy, support our tourism industry, and provide dignity and resilience for our people.

As we move forward together, let this Action Plan serve as a call for collective stewardship and shared responsibility. The future of Fiji's coral reefs depends on the actions we take today — in our communities, institutions, businesses, and homes. By working together in unity and partnership, we can secure resilient coral reefs, resilient communities, and a resilient future for Fiji.

L.D. Tabuya

Hon. Lynda Tabuya

Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Fiji

PERMANENT SECRETARY'S FOREWORD



Bula Vinaka,

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation (2026–2031) is an important operational framework for guiding Fiji's national efforts to protect, restore, and sustainably manage one of our country's most valuable natural assets — our coral reef ecosystems. As the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, I am pleased to present this Action Plan, which reflects the Government's commitment to strengthening environmental governance, improving coordination across sectors, and supporting practical implementation of coral reef conservation actions throughout Fiji.

Fiji's coral reefs are central to the nation's environmental resilience, food systems, coastal protection, livelihoods, and economic development. They support fisheries, tourism, and cultural practices that sustain communities across our islands. However, increasing pressures from climate change, unsustainable resource use, pollution, and habitat degradation continue to threaten the health and resilience of these ecosystems. Addressing these complex challenges requires stronger coordination, evidence-based decision-making, effective policies, sustainable financing, and partnerships across all levels of society.

This Action Plan provides that coordinated national framework. It translates Fiji's policy commitments into practical and measurable actions that can be implemented by Government ministries, provincial administrations, communities, civil society organisations, academia, development partners, and the private sector. Importantly, it establishes clear strategic priorities, outcomes, and responsibilities to strengthen accountability and improve the long-term management of coral reef ecosystems across Fiji.

The Action Plan is strongly aligned with Fiji's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2026–2030 and contributes directly towards the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It supports Fiji's national and global commitments relating to ecosystem restoration, pollution reduction, sustainable fisheries management, strengthened marine protected areas, integrated spatial planning, and the effective conservation and management of marine biodiversity. Through this Action Plan, Fiji is operationalising its contribution towards achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework targets while ensuring that national priorities and community realities remain central to implementation.

At the international level, Fiji remains firmly committed to advancing global environmental action and sustainable ocean governance through its obligations and leadership under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This Action Plan contributes towards Fiji's efforts to implement international commitments on biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, sustainable ocean management, and nature-based solutions. It also reinforces Fiji's advocacy as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), calling for stronger global action to address the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on vulnerable marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

From an operational perspective, implementing this Action Plan will require strong institutional coordination, sustained financing, reliable scientific data, and effective monitoring and reporting systems. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, through the Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation and in collaboration with relevant Government agencies and stakeholders, will continue to strengthen integrated planning, technical coordination, and cross-sectoral partnerships to ensure the successful delivery of the Action Plan outcomes.

The Ministry also recognises the critical importance of traditional ecological knowledge, customary governance systems, and community stewardship in achieving long-term conservation success. Effective coral reef conservation cannot be achieved by the government alone. It requires collective ownership, shared responsibility, and meaningful collaboration with resource owners, local communities, women, youth, NGOs, academia, and development partners.

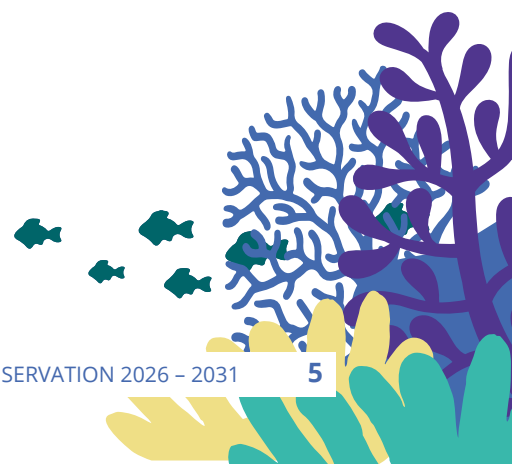
This Action Plan provides an important pathway for Fiji to strengthen the resilience of our coral reef ecosystems while supporting sustainable development, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and community wellbeing. It reinforces Fiji's commitment to protecting our marine environment for present and future generations and ensures that coral reef conservation remains an integral part of national development planning and implementation.

I acknowledge the contributions of all stakeholders, technical experts, communities, and partners who have contributed towards the development of this Action Plan. Your dedication, expertise, and commitment continue to strengthen Fiji's leadership in coral reef conservation and sustainable ocean management.

S Michael

Dr. Sivendra Michael

Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change



Acknowledgments

The development of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation represents a shared national commitment to safeguarding Fiji's globally significant coral reefs for the benefit of present and future generations. Developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society and guided by the Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation, the Plan has been shaped through the integration of science, Traditional Ecological Knowledge from resource owners and communities, and the contributions of government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academia, and local users.

This action plan has been made possible through the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) under the GEF-7 Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities Project.

The Global Environment Facility is the world's largest multilateral fund for the environment. Its family of funds work together to address the planet's most pressing challenges in an integrated way. Its financing helps developing countries address complex challenges and work towards meeting international environmental goals. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$27 billion in financing, primarily as grants, and mobilised another \$155 billion for country-driven priority projects.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
EbM	Ecosystem-based Management
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMA	Environment Management Act
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LMMA(s)	Locally Managed Marine Area(s)
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
MMA	Marine Managed Area
MOAW	Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFF	Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry
MSAF	Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji
MTA	Ministry of iTaukei Affairs
MTCSME	Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises
MWCSP	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection
MTCA	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
MPA(s)	Marine Protected Area(s)
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPCRC	National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCCC	National Climate Change Coordination Committee
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
NHCRC	National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation
NOP	National Ocean Policy
NOPSC	National Ocean Policy Steering Committee
NROCs	Natural Resource Owner Committees
OECM(s)	Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure(s)
<i>Qoliqoli</i>	Customary Fishing Ground
SPC	Pacific Community
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiji's coral reef ecosystems are one of the nation's most valuable natural assets, underpinning national food security, coastal protection, biodiversity, cultural heritage, and key sectors of the economy, including fisheries and tourism. These ecosystems contribute substantially to national well-being and to the livelihoods of communities across the archipelago. Despite their ecological and socioeconomic significance, Fiji's coral reefs are increasingly threatened by climate-related impacts, unsustainable fishing practices, land- and sea-based pollution, and coastal habitat degradation. While many reefs have demonstrated notable resilience, the cumulative and compounding nature of these pressures requires a coordinated and nationally driven approach to safeguard these ecosystems for present and future generations.

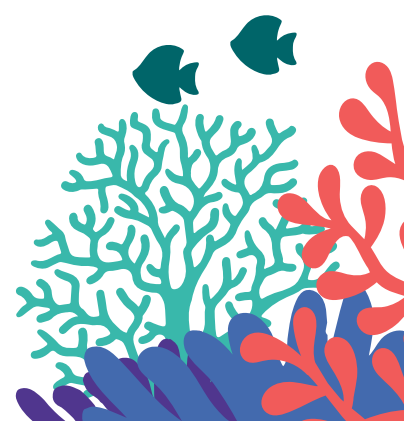
The National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation (2026–2031) – hereafter NAPCRC or Action Plan - establishes a coherent, evidence-based framework for addressing the most pressing threats to Fiji's coral reef ecosystems. Developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MECC) and supported by the Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation (NHCRC), the Action Plan reflects extensive consultation with government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, traditional leaders, and communities.

The Vision of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation, as articulated by diverse stakeholders, is:

"A future where coral reefs and associated ecosystems are resilient, sustainably managed, and remain central to the well-being of our nation. Our coral reefs will continue to support the national economy, sustainable livelihoods, ensure food security, and foster resilient, empowered communities through inclusive and collaborative stewardship."

It promotes a balanced pathway where environmental protection, economic development, and social inclusion are mutually reinforcing, ensuring that coral reefs remain a foundation of Fiji's prosperity and resilience for present and future generations. Central to this Vision is the principle of inclusive and collaborative stewardship, reflecting Fiji's commitment to community leadership, equity, and strong partnerships among government, traditional authorities, NGOs, CSOs, academia, development partners, and the private sector.

The Action Plan aligns with major national strategies and supports Fiji's global and regional commitments. Through this alignment, the Plan strengthens policy coherence, enhances cross-sectoral coordination, and provides clear national priorities for coral reef conservation.



The Action Plan is structured around four Strategic Areas and three Cross-Cutting Areas:



Strategic Area 1 **Resilient Coral Reef Ecosystems**

Builds ecological resilience, strengthening management of priority inshore coral reef ecosystems, restoring degraded coral, mangrove, and coastal habitats, and reducing land-based pressures through sustainable area-based management approaches.



Strategic Area 2 **Sustainable Fisheries and Inclusive Governance**

Ensures that coral reef fisheries are harvested within ecological limits through co-management, improved monitoring and enforcement, and diversification of sustainable marine livelihoods.



Strategic Area 3 **Community Empowerment**

Recognizes and strengthens customary stewardship and the leadership of provinces, communities, and women in fisheries, ensuring inclusive governance and climate-adaptive resource management.



Strategic Area 4 **Policy Governance and Coordination**

Strengthens national governance systems through updated legislation, robust cross-sector coordination, improved environmental standards, and enforcement mechanisms that support reef protection.



Cross-cutting Area 5 **Research**

Enhances the scientific foundation for decision-making by improving monitoring systems, expanding research capacity, integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and translating data into practical management tools.



Cross-cutting Area 6 **Communication, Education and Capacity Development**

Increases national awareness of the importance of coral reefs, their sustainable management, and their use by promoting targeted outreach, integrating reef conservation into school curricula, and building capacity for community- and youth-led environmental education.



Cross-cutting Area 7 **Sustainable Financing**

Ensures long-term investment in coral reef conservation by costing the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation to plan and mobilize finance for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

A Pathway to 2031

By delivering coordinated action across these seven areas, this Action Plan aims to ensure that Fiji's coral reefs remain resilient, productive, and central to national wellbeing. By improving how we manage our reefs, using fisheries wisely, supporting our communities, strengthening our laws, building our knowledge and awareness, and securing long-term funding, we can better protect these ecosystems. Implementation will be led by MECC, supported by the NHCRC and in partnership with government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, provincial officers, resource owners, academia, and the private sector.

The success of the Action Plan relies on collective stewardship. By working together - across sectors, islands, and generations - Fiji can secure the long-term health of its coral reef ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. This Action Plan sets the foundation for a resilient blue future, ensuring that coral reefs continue to provide essential ecosystem services, food security, cultural identity, and sustainable economic opportunities for decades to come.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Fiji's coral reefs and associated mangrove and seagrass ecosystems are among the most diverse and significant in the Pacific. Situated within one of the world's richest marine regions, Fiji's coral reefs form part of the 25 per cent of global corals found across Pacific Island countries (Toki & Davies, 2021). These interconnected ecosystems have evolved over millennia and collectively support the ecological integrity, cultural heritage, and economic well-being of Fiji's people. For many iTaukei communities, coastal ecosystems are deeply embedded in identity, traditions, and customary marine tenure systems (Veitayaki, 2011). Together they stabilise shorelines, provide essential habitats for marine species, sustain fisheries that contribute significantly to national nutrition and livelihoods, and underpin Fiji's tourism sector, one of the largest contributors to Fiji's gross domestic product (MCTA, 2024a).

Despite their significance, Fiji's coral reef ecosystems are increasingly under pressure from global and local stressors. Climate change, evidenced by rising sea surface temperatures, intensifying marine heatwaves, sea-level rise, and ocean acidification (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2018) along with tropical cyclones are a significant threat to coral reef ecosystems (Lovell & Sykes, 2008; Mangubhai, 2016). However, coral reef ecosystems across Fiji have generally displayed high resilience and recovery from coral bleaching and cyclone impacts (Ford et al., 2025; Mangubhai et al., 2019; 2025). Despite this resilience, compounding local threats stemming from anthropogenic activities including pollution, sediment, nutrient and chemical runoff, destructive and unsustainable fishing practices, and coastal development are directly impacting Fiji's coral reef ecosystems leading to reduced ecosystem health and resilience (Ford et al., 2018; Jupiter et al., 2008; Kuempel et al., 2024; Mangubhai et al., 2019; Prince et al., 2019; 2020).

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation responds to these local challenges by providing a cohesive, nationally driven framework aligned with Fiji's commitments under the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD, 2022), the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2030) (GoF, 2020), the Climate Change Act 2021, and the National Ocean Policy 2020. This Action Plan integrates existing national and community-based initiatives, including the expansion of Fiji's network of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs), establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), long-term monitoring programs, and coral restoration efforts, that have contributed to building resilience and improving management effectiveness (Jupiter et al., 2014; LMMA Network, 2020).

By setting clear priorities and strengthening collaboration, this Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation in Fiji provides a unifying, national framework to guide the protection, sustainable use, and restoration of Fiji's coral reef ecosystems. It translates national policies, scientific evidence, and traditional knowledge into coordinated, actionable priorities that support resilient ecosystems and thriving communities. By aligning government agencies, local communities, customary leaders, NGOs, academia and the private sector around shared goals, the Action Plan seeks to strengthen ecological integrity, enhance food security and livelihoods, and safeguard cultural heritage. Ultimately, it aims to ensure that Fiji's globally significant, climate-resilience coral reefs continue to provide essential ecosystem services and remain a foundation for wellbeing, prosperity, and climate resilience for present and future generations.

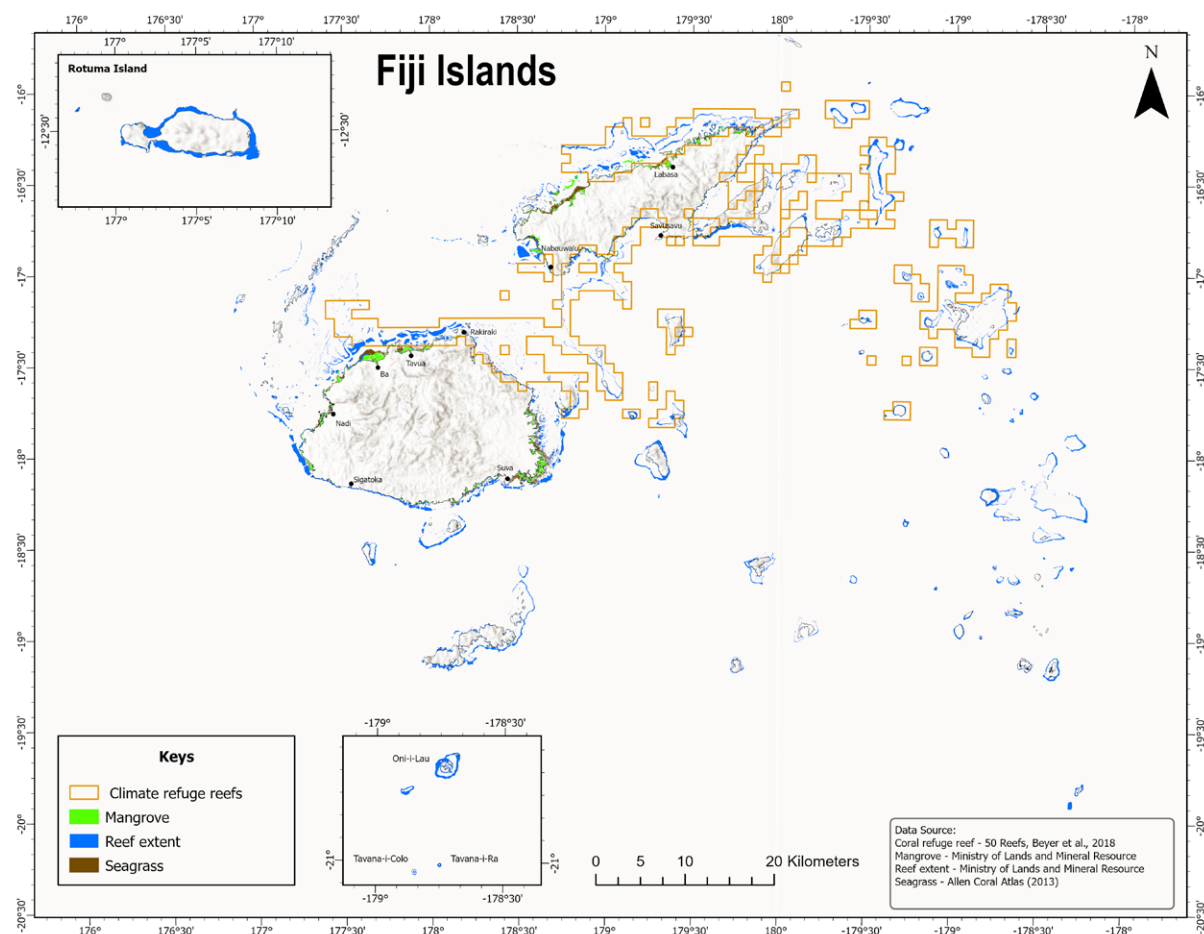


Figure 1. Map of Fiji coral reef, seagrass and mangrove ecosystems and the initial climate refuge areas identified in Fiji through global analysis (Beyer et al., 2018).

1.2 Formulation of Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation (2026–2031)

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation was developed through an inclusive, nationally driven process led by the MECC, grounded in Fiji's commitments to safeguard its marine ecosystems and shaped by the voices of communities and traditional custodians who depend on coral reef ecosystems for their livelihoods, culture, and identity. Its formulation reflects a journey that began with the establishment of the Fiji NHCRC, was strengthened through diverse perspectives, and was guided by multi-stakeholder collaboration and technical expertise.

In June 2024, the Government of Fiji, through the MECC and in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), formally launched the NHCRC. It serves as a national forum for coordinating, advising, and harmonising coral reef conservation efforts across the country, ensuring alignment among the Government, communities, NGOs, academia, and development partners. The NHCRC operates under the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee (NOPSC) and reports to the National Climate Change Coordination Committee (NCCCC), ensuring alignment with Fiji's broader sustainability and climate action goals.

Following the establishment of the NHCRC, the process began at the grassroots level to strengthen community voices in coral reef conservation. A collaborative workshop on 'Strengthening Community Voices for Coral Reef Conservation' was convened in September 2024, bringing together traditional custodians and community leaders. A collective vision for healthy reefs was developed, integrating TEK and providing a foundation for the NHCRC, ensuring that the perspectives of resource owners and local communities were central to its design.

To oversee the technical development of the NAPCRC, the NHCRC established a Technical Working Group on Conservation Planning and Policy that provided expertise, policy guidance, and strategic input.

The groundwork for the NAPCRC began at the inaugural NHCRC meeting in February 2025, where representatives from government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, provincial officers, resource owners, academia, the private sector and traditional owners engaged in a structured problem-solution tree analysis. Through this exercise, participants identified Fiji's three most critical local threats to coral reefs:

- Unsustainable fishing,
- Coastal habitat destruction, and
- Pollution.

A range of solutions was proposed at the meeting to address these pressures, which were subsequently organised into thematic areas that formed the basis of the draft action areas for the NAPCRC. This marked a key step in the Action Plan development process, bringing together government agencies, NGOs, CSOs, technical experts, traditional leaders, and community representatives to validate the emerging themes and refine the areas of action. Beyond the NHCRC process, the development of the plan incorporated broader consultations with multiple stakeholders across Fiji, particularly through the technical working group. Their contributions provided essential insights into priority objectives for coral reef management, dominant stressors, ongoing initiatives, institutional capacity and risks that may affect implementation.

The development of this Action Plan is guided by an inclusive, evidence-based approach that integrates community visioning, multi-sectoral input, scientific evidence, and policy reviews. While the NAPCRC provides national guidance, these priorities remain indicative. Provinces, districts, communities, and marine resource owners will need to contextualise and adapt them during local implementation planning, ensuring actions respond to ecological, cultural and socio-economic realities at the site level.

1.3 Purpose

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation has been developed to guide Fiji's coordinated, long-term effort to protect, manage and restore the nation's coral reef ecosystems. It provides a unifying framework for Government, CSOs, NGOs, provincial administrations, traditional leaders, communities, academia and private-sector partners to strengthen coral reef resilience and ensure sustainable use of marine resources. The Action Plan translates national policies, scientific evidence, and traditional knowledge into coordinated, actionable priorities that support resilient ecosystems and thriving communities.

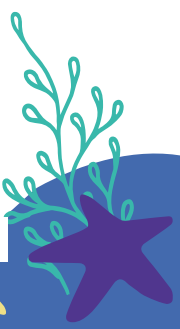
As the lead agency, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will coordinate implementation of the Action Plan, supported by the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Protection and other key government ministries, NGOs, technical and development partners through the NHCRC. While the NAPCRC aligns with regional commitments, including the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021 - 2030 and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent - it is designed specifically to reflect Fiji's national priorities, governance systems, and socio-ecological realities.

The NAPCRC provides national strategic direction, implementation will occur primarily at provincial, district and community levels, guided by local priorities and traditional governance structures. The Fiji NHCRC will work with stakeholders across Fiji to develop detailed implementation plans and priority projects tailored to provincial, and community needs and aligned with the NAPCRC.

1.4 Legal Framework of Fiji's Coral Reef Conservation

Coral reef conservation in Fiji is shaped by a suite of environmental, fisheries, climate, and marine statutes that collectively provide broad protection for marine ecosystems. A key feature of this governance framework is Fiji's customary marine tenure system, known as *qoliqoli*, which is one of the most well-documented and institutionally recognised systems of Indigenous marine governance in the Pacific. It operates within a hybrid legal arrangement that integrates customary law with formal statutory recognition under national legislation. The Fisheries Act 1942 (CAP. 158) is the central legal instrument governing Fiji's inshore fisheries and customary rights. The Act explicitly recognises customary fishing rights (Section 13) and the establishment of the iTaukei Lands and Fisheries Commission (TLFC) to identify and register *qoliqoli* boundaries, record customary rights holders. It also provides legal protection for customary access to fisheries resources. Together, these provisions create a dual governance system in which the State regulates fisheries and Customary groups control access and local resource use within their *qoliqoli* areas.

The key legislative instruments relevant to coral reef conservation in Fiji include the following.



1.4.1 Environment Management Act 2005 and Regulations

The Environment Management Act 2005 (EMA) provides the overarching framework for environmental protection and resource management in Fiji. It establishes mechanisms for; environmental impact assessments (EIAs), pollution control and waste management, water quality standards and environmental compliance, monitoring and enforcement. The Act indirectly supports reef protection by regulating activities such as coastal development, dredging, land clearing, and waste discharge — all of which affect reef ecosystems. The 2025 EMA amendment aims to strengthen enforcement, improve governance, improve EIA processes, and enhance pollution control and compliance. It also strengthens regulatory tool controlling main drivers of reef degradation such as coastal development, pollution and waste, and land-based impacts (ridge-to-reef).

1.4.2 Fisheries Act 1942 and Amendment Act

The Fisheries Act 1942 is one of Fiji's oldest laws governing natural resources and remains a foundational instrument for regulating fishing within Fiji's fisheries waters, although many of its provisions have been amended over time. The Fisheries Act provides a framework for licensing, fishery closures, the regulation of fishing methods and the establishment of marine reserves and it recognises customary fishing rights (*qoliqoli*). Fisheries law reform has been an ongoing process including proposed and enacted amendments including the draft Inshore Fisheries Decree and the amendments to the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012. In November 2025, Fiji Parliament passed the Fisheries Amendment Bill 2025 (Bill No.33 of 2025). The Amendment, expands the definition of “fish” and now expressly includes any aquatic plant or animal, whether piscine or not, and includes any oyster or other mollusc, crustacean, coral, sponge, holothurian (beche-de-mer), or other echinoderm, turtle and aquatic mammal, species of cetaceans, and includes their eggs, spawn, spat and all juvenile stages, and any of their parts” (Clause 2(b)).

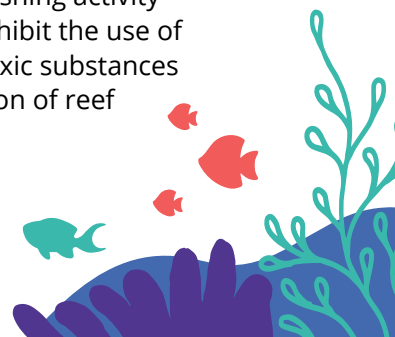
The Amendment creates a formal Inshore Fisheries Fixed Penalty Notice system, allowing authorised officers to issue on-the-spot penalties for inshore offences; non-payment within 21 days converts the notice into a court summons (Clause 7). Coral is now within the definition of “fish”, and any taking or harvesting of coral without a licence could attract these penalties.

Additionally, the Amendment expanded officers' powers, where authorised officers may now enter premises or board vessels, search and examine fish and gear, and detain vessels, gear and catch where there is reasonable suspicion of an offence; refusal or obstruction carries fines of up to \$20,000 for the individuals or \$50,000 for bodies corporate (Clause 5).

1.4.3 Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012

The Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012, together with the Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations 2014, provides the legal framework for the management of Fiji's offshore fisheries, particularly within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). While the legislation applies broadly to Fiji's fisheries waters, its provisions—particularly those relating to licensing, monitoring, control, surveillance, and reporting—are primarily designed for offshore and industrial fisheries, including tuna longline fleets, and for ensuring compliance with regional fisheries management obligations.

Under the Offshore Fisheries Management Regulations 2014, spatial restrictions are applied to offshore fishing activities. Schedule 1 designates areas within a three-nautical-mile radius of reef systems as prohibited zones for licensed offshore fishing vessels, with limited exceptions for specific fishing methods, such as drop-line fishing targeting deepwater snapper species. This approach functions primarily as an access restriction, separating industrial fishing activity from nearshore reef environments. Additional provisions under Schedule 2C prohibit the use of destructive fishing methods, including explosives (e.g. dynamite, gelignite) and toxic substances (e.g. derris, rotenone). While these measures contribute indirectly to the protection of reef



habitats, they are general fisheries controls rather than provisions specifically designed for coral reef ecosystem management.

Overall, the protection of reef systems under the offshore fisheries framework is indirect and limited, relying largely on spatial separation and general prohibitions, rather than explicit, ecosystem-based conservation measures targeted at coral reef habitats.

1.4.4 Customary Use of Marine Areas Bill 2025

The Customary Use of Marine Areas (CUMA) Bill (Bill No. 42 of 2025) proposes a new legal framework to regulate the commercial use of nearshore marine areas, replacing the Regulation of Surfing Areas Act 2010. The Bill seeks to strengthen the role of iTaukei customary rights holders in decision-making over commercially utilised marine areas—particularly for tourism—by formalising their authority to grant access and derive benefits from such uses.

In the context of coral reef conservation, the CUMA Bill has the potential to create stronger incentives for local stewardship by linking economic benefits to the sustainable management of reef-associated resources. By enabling customary rights holders to participate more directly in commercial activities, including tourism and other emerging marine-based enterprises, the framework may support conservation-linked revenue streams.

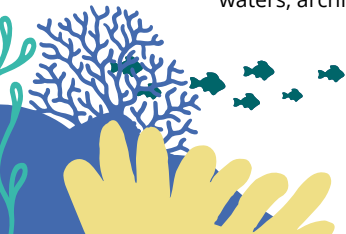
However, the extent to which the CUMA Bill contributes to coral reef conservation will depend on its implementation, including the integration of environmental safeguards, alignment with existing fisheries and environmental legislation, and the capacity of customary governance systems to manage increased commercial pressures on reef ecosystems.

1.4.5 The Climate Change Act 2021

The Climate Change Act 2021 positions Fiji as a global leader in climate resilience and low-carbon development legislation. The Act explicitly recognises the role of ecosystem-based adaptation, blue carbon, and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in achieving climate objectives, creating important opportunities to align coral reef conservation with climate mitigation and adaptation priorities. The Act establishes national targets for the sustainability management of Fiji's marine environment, including: 1) the effective and sustainable management of 100% of Fiji's waters¹ and 2) The designation of 30% of Fiji's waters as marine protected areas by 2030 (Art. 81 (1-3)). It further required the responsible Minister to take all reasonable steps to achieve these targets by developing and implementing relevant policies and measures. Supporting these targets, the NAPCRC outlines priority actions relating to climate-resilient reefs, sustainable fisheries, community empowerment, policy cohesion, research, communication and awareness and sustainable finance. These actions directly contribute to achieving national marine management and conservation targets.

The Act also gives the Minister responsible for Climate Change the power to develop and implement regulations, policies and measures that promote an evidence-based approach to the conservation and restoration of Fiji's marine ecosystem. In exercising these powers, the Minister is required to adopt science-based, data-driven approaches and to consult with the Ministers responsible for the environment and fisheries when proposed measures may affect marine resource management. The Act further enables the Minister to direct any state entities to undertake research on the impacts of climate change on the oceans and on the ocean system's capacity to sustainably provide resources for livelihoods, including for commercial, subsistence, and other purposes.

1 For the purpose of this report and based on the Climate Change Act 2021 "Fiji waters" are considered to be the internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial seas, contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.



1.4.6 Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002 and its Subsequent Amendments

The Endangered and Protected Species Act 2002 and subsequent amendments focus on the regulation of trade and protection of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)-listed species and on specific fauna of concern in Fiji, including corals, giant clams, fish, sharks, molluscs, bivalves, sea cucumbers, turtles and whales.

1.4.7 Marine Spaces Act 1978

The Marine Spaces Act establishes the legal boundaries of Fiji's marine jurisdiction by defining "Fiji fisheries waters," "archipelagic waters," and the 200 nautical mile EEZ. It also empowers the Minister to prescribe "conservation and management" measures for the sustainable use and protection of marine resources.

1.4.8 Other relevant legislation

Several other Acts complement coral reef governance, including the Town Planning Act (1946) and State Lands Act (1945), which regulate land-based development and coastal land use.

1 For the purpose of this report and based on the Climate Change Act 2021 "Fiji waters" are considered to be the internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial seas, contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.

1.5 Alignment to National Strategies and Policies

Fiji's national policy framework provides strong high-level commitments to biodiversity, sustainable oceans, climate resilience, and sustainable tourism. However, across all major strategies—including the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP), National Ocean Policy, National Sustainable Tourism Framework, Tourism Fiji Corporate Plan, National Climate Change Policy, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework, and the Green Growth Framework - coral reef conservation remains under-specified and insufficiently targeted. The NAPCRC builds upon, strengthens and supports key national frameworks.

1.5.1 Fiji National Development Plan 2025–2029 and Vision 2050

The Fiji NAPCRC is closely aligned with the Fiji National Development Plan (NDP) 2025–2029 and Vision 2050, which provides the national framework for achieving inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development in Fiji. Within the NDP framework, the NAPCRC can function as a sectoral implementation mechanism for marine and coastal sustainability, to strengthen coordination among government, communities, NGOs, and partners, support monitoring and reporting of biodiversity and climate outcomes, and mobilise investment in reef management through MECC. It translates high-level national objectives into practical, locally grounded interventions.

The NDP places strong emphasis on:

- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Climate resilience and disaster risk reduction;
- Blue economy development;
- Food security and livelihoods; and
- Environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.



The NAPCRC operationalises these priorities within the marine and coastal sector by translating national development objectives into targeted actions. It supports sustainable and inclusive economic growth by promoting reef-based economic activities that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive, including sustainable coastal fisheries and aquaculture, responsible marine tourism, value-added seafood enterprises, and community-based blue economy initiatives. By safeguarding coral reef ecosystems, the NAPCRC helps sustain long-term productivity in fisheries and tourism, reducing economic vulnerability and supporting rural livelihoods.

The NAPCRC contributes to strengthening food and nutrition security, supporting customary fishing practices and cultural heritage, enhancing community resilience to climate and environmental shocks, and promoting gender equity and youth participation in marine governance. By catalysing action, it aims to strengthen livelihoods and national food systems through the sustainable management of reef fisheries, the protection of spawning and nursery habitats, community-based stock recovery initiatives, and improved post-harvest handling and value chains. It also supports sustainable infrastructure and coastal development, integrating biodiversity safeguards into coastal infrastructure planning, promoting ridge-to-reef management approaches, and reducing sedimentation and pollution impacts on reefs.

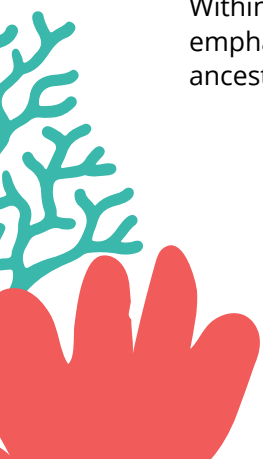
The NAPCRC strongly aligns with environmental protection and climate resilience through actions aimed at expanding and strengthening marine protected areas and LMMAs; restoring degraded reefs, mangroves, and seagrass habitats, reducing land-based and marine pollution, and integrating ecosystem-based adaptation and NbS. These actions contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, coastal protection, and biodiversity conservation.

1.5.2 Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2030

Fiji's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2030) serves as a comprehensive framework aimed at conserving and sustainably managing the nation's rich biodiversity, outlining strategic actions to address biodiversity loss and promote sustainable development. The NBSAP emphasises biodiversity conservation and recognises coral reefs as priority ecosystems needing urgent protection. The NAPCRC supports the achievement of the NBSAP biodiversity conservation targets including *Target 1 by 2030, implement one integrated National Spatial Plan covering 100% of terrestrial, waterway, and marine environments*, and supporting Fiji's 30% MPA commitment through *Target 3 by 2030, legally protect and effectively manage 30% of Fiji's terrestrial, inland water, and marine areas through the enactment of National Protected Areas Legislation by 2028 and the definition of Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)*. In addition, land-based threats such as sedimentation and pollution under *Target 7: by 2030, reduce pollution risks in priority national watersheds to non-harmful levels by establishing baseline reports for water quality and plastic waste by 2028 and strengthening enforcement of the Environment Management Act 2005*.

1.5.3 National Ocean Policy

Fiji's National Ocean Policy 2020 (NOP) provides an overarching framework for the sustainable development of the nation's ocean and marine resources with the vision to provide "a healthy ocean that sustains the livelihoods and aspirations of current and future generations of Fiji". The NOP outlines strategies for the integrated management of Fiji's entire ocean (the Areas Within National Jurisdiction), including ecological connections with land, rivers and waterways, emphasising ecosystem-based management (EbM) approaches and the rich and diverse ancestral ecological knowledge and governance approaches.



The NOP Goal 2 on sustainability provides a strong ecosystem-based governance framework and underpins Fiji's 30x30 commitment. However, it does not define coral reefs as a distinct ecosystem, set reef-specific targets, or establish actions for reef restoration, sediment control, or gear restrictions. The main link to the action plan is NOP strategic action 2.5 - *Implement area-based management instruments to support 100 per cent sustainable ocean management, including 30 per cent of ocean supporting restoration and conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem services*, of which this Action Plan aligns to through the strategic areas of resilient coral reef ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and community empowerment. The NAPCRC will also contribute to the establishment of LMMAs through site-based work on coral reef conservation, thereby supporting NOP strategic action 2.1: Define and build awareness of the range of ecosystem and climate services provided by healthy, fully functioning marine ecosystems and biodiversity, *and the associated economic and non-economic benefits*.

1.5.4 National Adaptation Plan

The Fiji National Adaptation Plan (NAP) provides a framework for climate change adaptation, addressing vulnerabilities highlighted in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment. It emphasises collaborative efforts among academic institutions, development partners, and private-sector stakeholders. The NHCRC contributes to NAP implementation by developing knowledge management tools, providing technical assistance, and enhancing threat analysis of climate change impacts on coral reef ecosystems.

1.5.5 National Climate Change Policy

The Fiji National Climate Change Policy (2018 – 2030) establishes the overarching framework for responding to climate change by integrating adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development across all sectors. It prioritises building resilience in highly vulnerable areas—particularly coastal and marine systems—through ecosystem-based adaptation, the protection of natural assets such as coral reefs and mangroves, and the strengthening of community-based approaches aligned with customary governance. The policy also promotes low-emission development pathways, improved institutional coordination, climate-informed planning, and access to international climate finance. In doing so, it positions climate action as central to safeguarding livelihoods, food security, and economic stability, while guiding national instruments such as the Nationally Determined Contributions, the Climate Change Act 2021, and relevant sectoral strategies, including those for coral reef conservation.

Within this framework, the National Climate Change Policy sets Fiji's climate resilience priorities, while the Fiji NAPCRC operationalises these priorities by translating climate policy objectives into targeted actions for reef protection, restoration, and sustainable management within Fiji's coastal and marine systems. Through its emphasis on ecosystem-based adaptation, sustainable fisheries, integrated coastal management, and climate finance mobilisation, the policy establishes coral reefs as natural infrastructure that supports disaster risk reduction, food security, and livelihoods.

1.5.6 Integrated Coastal Zone Management Framework

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Framework of the Republic of Fiji (2011) provides a comprehensive approach to sustainably managing the country's coastal resources. Developed by the National Integrated Coastal Management Committee (ICMC) and the Department of Environment, the framework emphasises the maintenance of ecological processes, conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources, and the improvement of the health and well-being of coastal communities. However, the framework no longer fully reflects current policy, legislative, and institutional developments and would benefit from an update.

The ICZM Framework adopts a holistic, cross-sectoral approach to coastal management that remains highly relevant to coral reef conservation. It supports the objectives of this Coral Reef Action Plan by recommending that coastal management considerations be extended inland, that provincial-level action plans be developed, that institutional coordination be strengthened, that multi-sectoral integration be promoted, and that data and information systems be improved to support evidence-based decision-making. These principles provide an important foundation for integrated reef-to-ridge management in Fiji.

1.5.7 Green Growth Framework

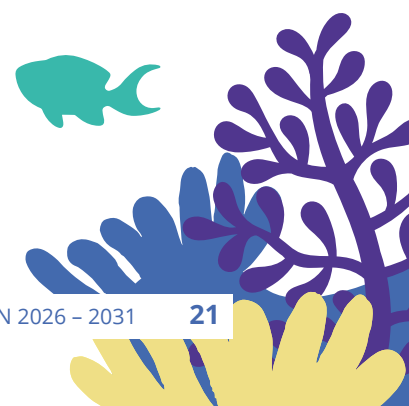
Fiji's Green Growth Framework (2014) is designed to shift the country from siloed sector planning toward integrated, sustainable development that simultaneously addresses economic, social, and environmental priorities — including the protection of natural resources. The Framework encourages actions that strengthen environmental resilience, improve the management of natural resources (land, water, and ocean ecosystems), and reduce environmental risks associated with development pressures. It explicitly includes “Sustainable Island and Ocean Resources” as one of its core thematic areas — aimed at sustainably managing terrestrial, coastal, and ocean ecosystems, which are the foundation of coral reef systems and the economies that depend on them. This integrated policy lens provides enabling direction for coral reef conservation planning by recognising that reef health is connected to climate, land use, waste, pollution, and broader socio-economic policies — all of which are part of the Green Growth agenda.

1.5.8 National Sustainable Tourism Framework

Tourism is an important component of the Fiji economy, contributing around 40% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2024 through employment, economic activity and taxation (MCTA, 2024a). Tourists are attracted to Fiji for its beaches, outdoor activities and natural environment, with most experiences offered being ocean-based (MCTA, 2024a).

Sustainable tourism, defined as practices that generate economic benefits for local people while preserving natural resources, protecting ecosystems, mitigating climate change effects and preserving local culture and community well-being (Font et al., 2019), is considered essential to secure the future of the tourism sector in Fiji. This recognition has led to the formulation of Fiji's National Sustainable Tourism Framework (2024 – 2034) with the vision of ‘a sustainable, thriving and inclusive tourism sector that promotes community wellbeing, provides equitable opportunities, and restores and protects our unique cultural heritage and biodiversity’ (MCTA, 2024b). Goal 4 of the framework prioritises strengthening the protection of island, coastal and ocean ecosystems and building resilience to climate change.

Across Fiji there are numerous examples of partnerships between communities, tourism operators and non-government organisations that are contributing to the conservation of marine resources, including tourism supported conservation initiatives such as the Namena Marine Reserve, and Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park (Mangubhai et al., 2020). The NAPCRC will support the implementation of Fiji's sustainable tourism framework by strengthening partnerships between conservation organisations, communities and tourism operators; identifying areas of high biodiversity, cultural heritage and environmental significance that require protection and restrictions for tourism and the collaborative development of best practice sustainable tourism guidelines.



1.6 Alignment to Regional and International Strategies and Policies

1.6.1 Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

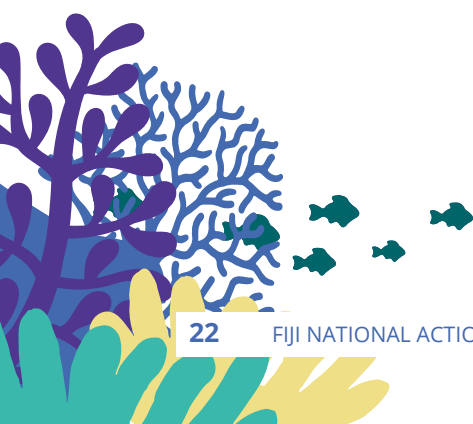
The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted in 2022 under the CBD, provides the overarching global framework for halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. It supports the vision of living in harmony with nature while advancing sustainable development. Fiji's NAPCRC is aligned with the GBF and serves as a national implementation mechanism for translating global biodiversity commitments into practical, community-centred and ecosystem-based actions for reef conservation, management, and restoration.

NAPCRC contributes directly to GBF's three core objectives: conservation of coral reef ecosystems and associated biodiversity, sustainable use of marine resources for food security and livelihoods, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from marine and genetic resources. It also reflects key GBF principles, including recognition of customary marine tenure, community stewardship, gender equality, human rights-based approaches, and whole-of-government and whole-of-society engagement.

1.6.2 Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan (2021 – 2030)

The Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021–2030 is a strategic framework developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to guide regional efforts to conserve and manage coral reef ecosystems across Pacific Island nations (Toki & Davies, 2021). With the vision "By 2030, the resilience and health of reef ecosystems in the Pacific islands are improved".

The Pacific Action Plan focuses on the conservation of habitats and biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and climate adaptation, sustainable fisheries and food security, and sustainable tourism. The Pacific Action Plan emphasises the importance of regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and integrating traditional practices with scientific approaches to enhance the resilience and health of Pacific coral reef ecosystems. These priorities are operationalised within the national context through this National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation.



2 FIJI NATIONAL HUB FOR CORAL REEF CONSERVATION

2.1 Institutional Framework

The Fiji National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation is a government-endorsed advisory body focused on safeguarding Fiji's globally significant coral reefs by strengthening collaboration and guiding decision-making at the national level. It is a multi-sectoral advisory body comprising government ministries, NGOs, CSOs, community representatives, academia and research institutes, and private-sector actors.

The NHCRC was established in 2020 to create coherence among ministerial priorities for sustainable ocean management. The NOPSC reports to the NCCCC, established under Section 12 of the Climate Change Act 2021. The NCCCC, comprising all Permanent Secretaries, ensures alignment and implementation of cross-cutting policies and sector plans, provides strategic advice, and resolves high-level issues to achieve Fiji's climate objectives.

The NHCRC is chaired by the Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, with the Director serving as Chair. The WCS functions as Secretariat. To support the development of the Action Plan and implementation of the GEF Coral Reef Rescue project, three Technical Working Groups were established under the NHCRC to provide technical guidance, facilitating stakeholder engagement and supporting priority workstreams: 1) Conservation Planning and Policy; 2) Sustainable Finance and Investment Strategies; and 3) Fiji Knowledge Unit.

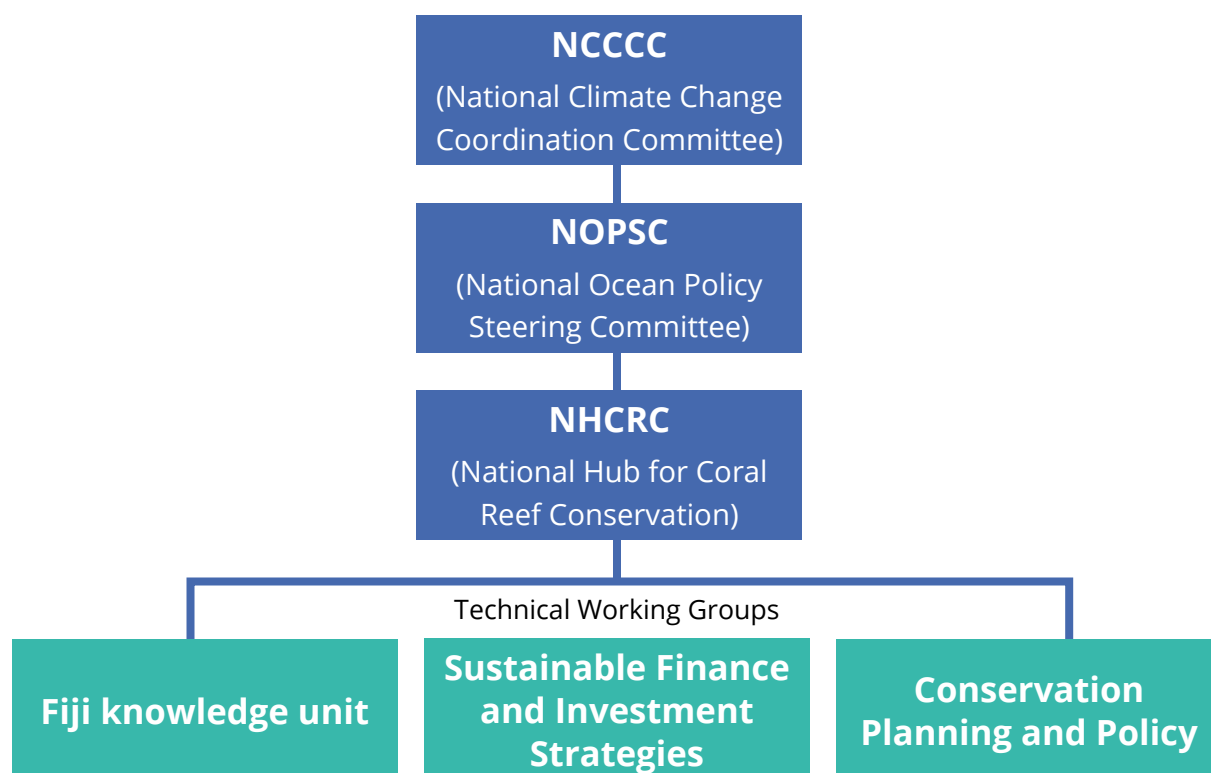


Figure 2. Institutional Framework of the National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation



3 FIJI'S CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEMS AND THREATS

3.1 Fiji's Coral Reef Ecosystem

Fiji hosts a vast array of coral reefs and associated ecosystems that are critically important to the nation's biodiversity, economy, and the livelihoods of its people. The archipelago's shallow, warm tropical waters give rise to a mosaic of reef types, including fringing, platform, pinnacles, submerged, barrier, oceanic ribbon, atolls, near-atoll, and drowned reefs, that cover an estimated 6,704 km² (Mangubhai et al., 2025). Ecosystems associated with coral reefs, including mangrove forests and seagrass meadows, play essential interrelated ecological roles, which, for the purpose of this Action Plan, are considered an integral part of Fiji's coral reef ecosystem. Mangroves and seagrass provide nursery grounds and habitats for many reef fish and marine invertebrates, protect shorelines from erosion and dissipate wave energy and support sediment and nutrient regulation. Mangrove coverage in Fiji is the third-largest in the Pacific, with an estimated spatial extent of 652 km² (Cameron et al., 2021). The largest areas of mangrove forests are on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, smaller mangrove areas exist along many coastal areas that are significant to coastal stability and community use (Ellison & Fiu, 2010). There is at least 59 km² of seagrass, with six reported species growing in near-shore environments across Fiji (McKenzie & Yoshida, 2020). In addition to their ecosystem services roles, seagrass meadows in Fiji are a significant foraging habitat for the Pacific green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).

Fiji's coral reefs are among the most diverse and valuable ecosystems in the Pacific, with four of the most notable being the Great Sea Reef, the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape, the Lau Seascape and the Great Astrolabe Reef. The Great Sea Reef is one of the world's longest barrier reef systems. The Great Sea Reef has astonishing biodiversity, with 55% of fish, 74% of hard coral, and 40% of algal species known to exist in Fiji (Andradi-Brown et al., 2022). The reef acts as a natural barrier protecting shorelines and contributes significantly to the local economy through fisheries and tourism. The Vatu-i-Ra Seascape, covering 20,000 km² of forests, mangroves, seagrass meadows, reefs, deep channels, and seamounts, is one of Fiji's last great wild places (Jupiter et al., 2012; Obura and Mangubhai, 2002). The Vatu-i-Ra Seascape is nourished by the deep Vatu-i-Ra and Lomaiviti Passages, which generate currents that support diverse coral reef ecosystems and support the livelihoods and culture of over 116,000 people.

The Lau Seascape, encompassing the whole of Lau Province - Fiji's most remote island group, is recognised as a significant marine ecoregion, serving as a biodiversity hotspot for species richness and endemism and supporting a population of 9,602 people. Covering an estimated 335,895 km², the seascape includes terrestrial, inshore, and offshore areas that support nesting and breeding grounds for endemic birds, insects, snakes, green and hawksbill turtles, and corals, and serve as migratory paths for megaceteans (Conservation International, 2018). The Great Astrolabe Reef stretches ~100 km along the western side of the Kadavu island group (Harding et al., 2022). This barrier reef system, composed of oceanic ribbon reefs that enclose a large lagoon, is home to a diverse array of coral, fish, sharks, rays and sea turtles (Morrison & Naqasima, 1999; Obura and Mangubhai, 2002). Coastal reef fish, pelagic fish, and invertebrates are vital for food security, income, and sociocultural value for the people of Kadavu (Harding et al., 2022).

3.2 Threats

Globally, coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrasses, have declined, raising concerns about the ecological and economic value they provide (Costanza et al. 1997; Halpern et al., 2008; Worm et al., 2006). Climate change-related drivers, including warming, ocean acidification, sea-level rise, and more intense storms, are contributing significantly to these global losses. Coral reefs are being lost at an unprecedented scale, with an expected loss of 70-90% of reefs by 2050, under 1.5 °C of global warming (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2018). Similarly, an estimated 50% of the world's mangrove area is at risk, with the effects of climate change (severe cyclones and sea-level rise) a growing threat to 37% of the world's mangrove area (Leal & Spalding, 2024). While climate-related impacts remain a critical concern for the future of coral reef ecosystems, threats are not uniform. Global analyses have found that Fiji's coral reefs exhibit higher resistance to thermal stress (McClanahan et al., 2020) and are among the coral reefs with lower exposure to climate change stress, higher connectivity, and a greater chance of surviving projected climate changes (Beyer et al., 2018).

In Fiji, this resilience is exemplified by the remarkable coral growth and recovery observed in the Namena Marine Reserve and Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park, just four years after these reefs were extensively damaged during Cyclone Winston in 2016 (Ford et al, 2025). Likewise, five years after the 2000/01 mass coral bleaching event, which resulted in 45-80% mortality of hard corals (Cumming et al., 2001), many reef areas had recovered to pre-bleaching coral cover (Lovell & Sykes, 2008). While mild bleaching has been recorded in subsequent years, Fiji has not had another mass bleaching event.

Despite this resilience, compounding localised natural and anthropogenic threats are placing pressures on these vulnerable ecosystems. Fiji is subject to frequent and often intense Tropical Cyclones, resulting in spatially variable impacts on coral reefs and mangroves along their paths (Cameron et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2025; Mangubhai, 2016; Price et al., 2021). Fiji's coral reefs are also vulnerable to crown-of-thorn starfish (*Acanthaster* spp) outbreaks and diseases (Mangubhai et al., 2019; 2025). Benthic cyanobacterial mats are also now an emerging issue, with flow-on effects impacting key processes such as coral recruitment and herbivory (Ford et al., 2018). Fiji comprises over 330 islands and 522 islets, of which approximately 110 are inhabited. The population of 884,887 is concentrated on the two largest islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, with 56% residing in urban areas (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2018) and an estimated 75% living within 5km of the coast (Andrew et al., 2019). Additionally, Fiji attracts >950,000 visitors per year, with most experiences offered being coastal/ocean-based (MCTA, 2024a). Rapid growth, development and a reliance on marine ecosystems for food security, livelihoods and the economy are placing increased pressure on coastal ecosystems (Mangubhai, et al. 2019).

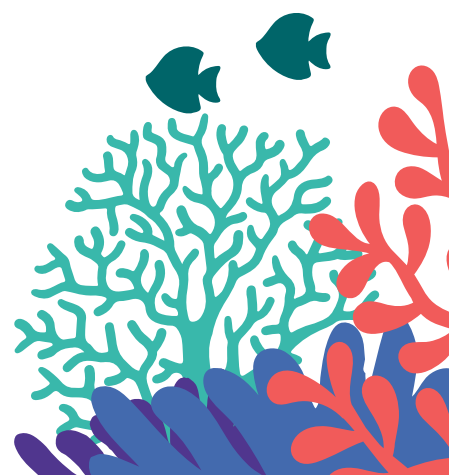
Anthropogenic stressors, including unsustainable fishing, pollution (land and sea-based) and coastal habitat destruction, are having compounding and interrelated impacts on the state of coral reef ecosystem health in Fiji (Mangubhai et al., 2019; 2025). These stressors directly impact coral reefs, mangrove and seagrass through habitat loss or degradation or indirectly by affecting ecological health and ecosystem processes. As a result, these pressures have an impact on broader society, including increasing distances and costs for fishing, driving challenges in enforcement and compliance, ultimately reducing fisheries-based income and livelihoods, and resulting in food insecurity, economic hardship, and enhanced vulnerability to climate change.

The management and abatement of these localised stressors is the underlying premise for the Fiji NAPCRC. Recognising the complex and interconnected nature of land-sea systems, the identified pressures were examined by members of the NHCRC using a participatory problem-solution tree analysis approach. This process enabled the identification of the underlying drivers, contributing factors, and practical solutions that informed the actions outlined in this Action Plan.

3.2.1 Unsustainable Fishing

Inshore fisheries are central to food and nutrition security, livelihoods, cultural practices and the Fijian economy. Many rural households depend directly on fish and invertebrates as their primary source of protein, with an estimated national per capita fresh fish consumption of 20.7kg (Bell et al, 2009). Coral reef ecosystems also support small-scale artisanal fisheries that provide important cash income for fishers and their families. The major market-targeted fish groups include emperors, surgeonfish, snapper, trevally, mullet, parrotfish, grouper, mackerel, goatfish, and rabbitfish, with market surveys by the Ministry of Fisheries and other researchers showing that several species are harvested below their size at maturity (Prince et al. 2018; 2019; 2020). While fisheries-based livelihoods help strengthen local economies and create alternative income streams, many coastal fisheries are near or fully exploited, especially close to urban centres (Mangubhai et al., 2019; Prince et al., 2020) and limited national fish status assessments provide challenges to the management of inshore fisheries in Fiji (Ministry of Fisheries, unpublished data).

The relationship between fisheries and coral reefs is crucial for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem health (Bellwood et al., 2019; Cinner et al., 2016; Moberg & Folke, 1999). Unsustainable fishing, including the use of destructive fishing practices and gear (nets and night fishing), poaching, and overharvest are undermining Fiji's fish stocks and coral reef ecosystem resilience (Prince et al., 2019; 2020). The causes and underlying factors behind unsustainable fishing are interrelated and complex and driven by various socio-economic, governance challenges and market drivers.

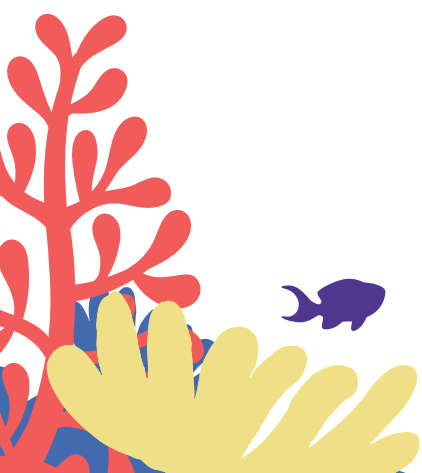


3.2.2 Pollution

The impacts of land and sea-based pollution on coral reef ecosystems are multifaceted and complex. Nutrients, sediments and other contaminants (e.g. pesticides, heavy metals, sewage) from human-altered watersheds and wastewater enter the marine environment via waterways and groundwater, reducing water quality and stressing coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass meadows, particularly those in inshore waters (Carlson et al., 2019; Fabricius, 2005; Jupiter et al., 2008; Kuempel et al., 2024). Enhanced nutrient and sediment levels reduce water quality, limit the light available to light-sensitive corals and seagrass, and favour the growth of algae, increasing their vulnerability to other stresses. Macroalgae, benthic cyanobacteria and algal turfs linked to declining water quality can smother and outcompete seagrass and slower growing corals, and impede coral recruitment (Ford et al., 2018; Speare et al., 2021; Sweirts & Vermeij, 2016; Waycott et al., 2009). In Fiji, pollution has been identified as a major risk to reef ecosystems, particularly from agriculture, urban areas and tourism hotspots (Mangubhai et al., 2019; Mosley and Aalsbersberg, 2003), with recent studies suggesting that 95% of Fiji's coral reefs are exposed to residential nutrient pollution (Kuempel et al., 2024). Ineffective septic and waste management systems, increasing agricultural use of fertilisers and pesticides, unsustainable deforestation and poorly regulated development were identified as the primary sources of land-derived pollutants in Fiji. Sea-based pollution from vessel discharges, maintenance, and spills contributes additional contaminants, often impacting certain areas (e.g., Suva harbour).

3.2.3 Coastal Habitat Destruction

Fiji is among the most economically developed nations in the Pacific, with more than 50% of the population residing in urban areas and tourism accounting for a significant portion of the nation's gross domestic product (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2024). With limited land area for development, coastal habitats in Fiji, including mangroves, wetlands, seagrass and coral reefs, are under pressure from human activity and environmental change (O'Brien et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021). For example, an estimated 40% loss of mangroves within the Suva Peninsula/Lami area and 19% along the Korolevu/Sigatoka Coral coast was documented between 1991 and 2007, primarily due to urban expansion and poor coastal development planning (Mangubhai et al., 2019). While these ecosystems can be severely impacted by cyclones and storms (Cameron et al., 2021; Ford et al., 2025; Waycott, et al., 2009), the conversion of mangroves and wetlands for urban settlements, agriculture and infrastructure development; removal of coral and coral rock for construction purposes, along with ecosystem loss associated with pollution runoff are considered by NHCRC members as the main threats to coastal habitats in Fiji.





4 FIJI NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CORAL REEF CONSERVATION (2026 – 2031)

4.1 Overview of Action Plan

The Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation sets out a comprehensive and integrated framework to ensure that coral reefs remain resilient, sustainably managed, and central to national well-being. It is anchored in a clear vision of reefs supporting livelihoods, food security, and economic development through inclusive and collaborative stewardship. The Action Plan is guided by key principles including EbM, climate resilience, equity and inclusivity, community leadership, and the integration of TEK. The plan recognises the interconnected “ridge-to-reef” nature of ecosystems and the importance of customary governance systems, ensuring that conservation approaches are both scientifically sound and culturally grounded.

The Action Plan is structured around four strategic areas—resilient coral reef ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and inclusive governance, community empowerment, and policy, governance and coordination—supported by three cross-cutting areas: research, communication, education and capacity development, and sustainable financing. Together, these areas aim to manage and abate localised threats to Fiji’s coral reef ecosystems, enhancing their resilience to the impacts of climate change and ensuring they continue to sustain the nation’s identity, well-being and economic prosperity. The Action Plan sets ambitious targets, including sustainably managing 80% of priority reef areas and ensuring that fisheries operate within ecological limits, while also promoting restoration, compliance, and diversified livelihoods.

Implementation will be coordinated by the MECC and supported by national governance structures, including the National Ocean Policy framework and the Fiji NHCRC. Clear roles are assigned across government ministries and partners to ensure accountability and cross-sector collaboration. The plan also emphasises evidence-based decision-making, public awareness, and long-term financing mechanisms, recognising that sustained investment and strong coordination are essential for success. Overall, the NAPCRC provides a strategic and actionable pathway to safeguard Fiji’s coral reefs while balancing environmental protection, economic development, and social inclusion.

4.2 Vision

Vision statement: “A future where coral reefs and associated ecosystems are resilient, sustainably managed, and remain central to the well-being of our nation. Our coral reefs will continue to support the national economy, sustainable livelihoods, ensure food security, and foster resilient, empowered communities through inclusive and collaborative stewardship”.

4.3 Guiding Principles

The Action Plan is grounded in the principles of ecosystem-based management, climate resilience, and equity, and recognises the vital role of traditional ecological knowledge, community ownership and multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving long-term sustainability.

4.3.1 Ecosystem-based management

Coral reef conservation in Fiji will be guided by ecosystem-based management that recognises the interconnectedness of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine systems. Management approaches will integrate ridge-to-reef planning to address cumulative impacts from land use, agriculture, forestry, urban development, and coastal infrastructure. This principle promotes the protection of ecological connectivity, the maintenance of water quality, the conservation of critical habitats, and coordinated management across sectors to ensure that activities in catchments, rivers, and coastal zones are managed to sustain reef health and resilience.

4.3.2 Climate resilience and adaptation

Given the increasing impacts of climate change, coral reef management will prioritise strengthening ecosystem resilience and adaptive capacity by protecting climate-resilient reefs, restoring critical habitats, supporting natural recovery processes, and reducing non-climate stressors such as overfishing, pollution, and habitat degradation. Nature-based Solutions will be integrated into coastal protection and adaptation planning to enhance ecosystem functionality and deliver community co-benefits. Management approaches will be adaptive and responsive to emerging climate risks, supported by regular monitoring, learning, and adjustment of strategies. Climate considerations will be mainstreamed across planning, financing, and implementation processes.

4.3.3 Equity and inclusivity

Fiji's coral reef ecosystems are vital to national wellbeing, livelihoods, and food security, yet access to marine resources, participation in decision-making, and the ability to benefit from conservation depend on gender, age, disability status, leadership position, ethnicity and geographic location. Evidence from Fiji and the wider Pacific shows that women are heavily engaged in inshore fisheries, gleaning, post-harvest processing, and fish marketing, yet their contributions remain largely invisible (Thomas et al., 2021), and their perspectives are rarely incorporated into management and policy decisions (Weeratunge et al., 2010). Fijians of Indian descent, while playing an important role in Fiji's small-scale fisheries sector (Nand, et al., 2021), have limited engagement and participation in fisheries management and decision-making processes (Reddy, 2019). Youth contribute significantly to conservation initiatives but lack opportunities to engage meaningfully in management decisions. Persons with disabilities face

multiple barriers that prevent their access and participation in reef conservation (House et al., 2024), while remote island communities struggle to access information, training, and livelihood opportunities due to geographic distance and limited infrastructure.

The NAPCRC is grounded in inclusive and collaborative stewardship, ensuring all people have fair opportunities to engage in and benefit from reef conservation. Key gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) principles guiding implementation include equitable participation, respect for human and customary rights, fairness, accessible communication, and recognition of a people-centred approach. GEDSI considerations are embedded across all seven strategic areas of this Plan, with actions focused on transparent processes, culturally appropriate engagement, accessible training, balanced representation, and inclusive communication. Strengthening participation, valuing diverse knowledge, promoting fair processes and ensuring equitable access to opportunities support both ecological sustainability and social cohesion, building long-term community stewardship of Fiji's coral reefs.

4.3.4 Community Leadership and Customary Co-Management

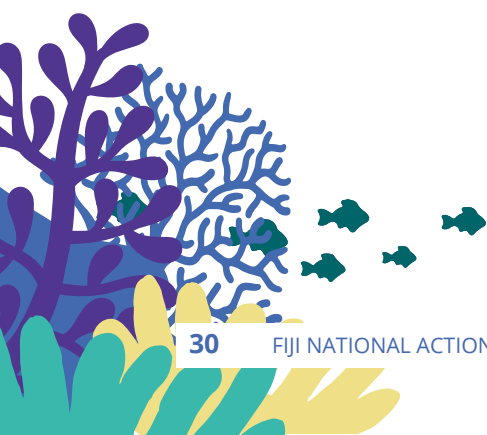
The customary tenure system of Fiji's coral reef calls on this principle of ensuring that communities and traditional custodians are central to coral reef stewardship in Fiji. This Action Plan promotes community leadership and co-management arrangements that strengthen shared responsibility between communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders. This principle supports the devolution of appropriate management authority, capacity development for local governance institutions, and recognition of traditional leadership structures. It ensures that management systems are locally legitimate, socially accepted, and sustainable over time.

4.3.5 Integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Cultural Values

Traditional ecological knowledge, customary practices, and cultural values form the foundation of reef management in Fiji. This Action Plan recognises these knowledge systems as complementary to scientific approaches and essential for effective conservation. Management frameworks will respect and incorporate indigenous knowledge, seasonal calendars, tabu areas, traditional fishing practices, and cultural protocols. This integration strengthens community ownership, enhances compliance, and preserves cultural heritage.

4.4 Strategic and cross-cutting thematic areas

The NAPCRC is structured around four strategic and three cross-cutting thematic areas. The thematic areas have been derived from an overarching Theory of Change, developed through a series of technical working group and NHCRC discussions, which articulates the long-term vision, pathways, and enabling conditions required to achieve coral reef conservation in Fiji. Together, the Strategic and Crosscutting Areas form a coherent and actionable framework to guide coordinated implementation, monitoring and adaptive management. They recognise the interconnected nature of ecosystems, communities and governance and lay out a pathway to safeguard Fiji's coral reefs for future generations.



4.4.1 Strategic areas and intended impact



1. Resilient Coral Reef Ecosystems

Goal: Coral reef ecosystems are resilient, restored and within well-connected networks of sustainably² managed areas.

Fiji aims to ensure that coral reef ecosystems remain healthy and resilient including protecting biodiversity, strengthening ecological connectivity and safeguarding the ecosystem services that underpin community livelihoods, food security and cultural practices. Actions under this area focus on improving reef condition, expanding and strengthening marine management networks, and reducing pressures that compromise reef resilience.

Outcomes:

- 1.1 Sustainably manage Fiji's inshore coral reefs to maintain their ecological integrity and support community well-being, with a focus on climate-resilient reefs.
- 1.2 Priority degraded marine and coastal ecosystems and endangered species are restored and strengthened, enhancing coral reef resilience, biodiversity, and ecosystem function and services.

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2. Sustainable Fisheries and Inclusive Governance

Goal: Small-scale commercial and subsistence fisheries are equitable, healthy and are harvested within the sustainable limits, and co-managed by communities, government and other relevant users.

Sustainable management of Fiji's inshore fisheries is central to food security and economic stability. This strategic area focuses on ensuring that subsistence and small-scale commercial fisheries are harvested within ecological limits and co-managed through effective partnerships between communities, government and resource users. The aim is to secure long-term fish stock health, reduce overfishing and restore threatened species.

Outcomes:

- 2.1 Fiji's inshore fisheries are harvested and managed within sustainable ecological limits.
- 2.2 Strengthened community leadership and governance for fisheries management.
- 2.3 Improve fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) to reduce poaching and unsustainable fishing practices.
- 2.4 Sustainable aquaculture, fisheries and value-added fisheries products are diversified supporting economic resilience and environmental sustainability.

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2 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 2022 – Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework). Particularly Target 3 (30x30), which refers to areas that are “*effectively conserved and managed*” including protected areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs).



3. Community Empowerment

Goal: By 2031, Resource users and multisectoral stakeholders are collectively leading the sustainable management, protection, and restoration of Fiji's globally significant coral reef ecosystems through an integrated and inclusive co-managed approach.

Communities are at the heart of coral reef stewardship in Fiji. This strategic area seeks to empower resource users and traditional resource owners with the tools, resources and authority needed to manage, protect and restore their marine ecosystems. It emphasises inclusive governance, TEK, climate-adaptive practices and strengthened local capacity to lead sustainable reef management.

Outcomes:

- 3.1 Strengthened integration of TEK supports effective EbM, promoting sustainable development and conservation of ecosystems.
- 3.2 Strengthened capacities of communities to effectively manage their coral reef resources and make informed decisions.
- 3.3 Strengthened and equitable partnerships that enable reef-friendly businesses to support economic opportunities through the sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems.
- 3.4 Equitable access to opportunities and decision-making for women and other marginalised or excluded groups to enable the sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems.

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4. Policy, Governance and Coordination

Goal: Ensure an effective and enabling policy and governance environment that supports coral conservation through coordinated multi-sectoral partnerships.

Strong governance is essential for effective coral reef conservation. This area focuses on ensuring that national and local institutions have clear, enforceable policies, coherent regulatory frameworks and strong coordination mechanisms. Investment in monitoring, surveillance and compliance enables adaptive management and improved accountability across all levels of reef governance.

Outcomes:

- 4.1 An effective NHCRC facilitates cross-sectoral coordination.
- 4.2 Strengthened and harmonised laws relating to natural resource protection

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4.4.2 Cross-cutting areas



5. Research

Goal: To ensure robust evidence-based decision making for coral reef management.

Management decisions must be informed by robust scientific evidence. This cross-cutting area strengthens the role of long-term monitoring, research partnerships, and knowledge integration—including TEK—to support informed decision-making, risk assessment, and adaptive management. It strives to ensure a continuous flow of actionable science to guide policy and practice.

Outcomes:

- 5.1 Coordinated, consistent and robust coral reef ecosystem research and data informs evidence-based decision making.
- 5.2 Increased coral reef science, knowledge and capacity for improved and sustainable management.

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6. Communication, Education and Capacity Development

Goal: People of Fiji appreciate and recognise (understand) the importance of coral reef conservation and management within the country, to influence the decision making.

Public awareness and knowledge are critical to sustaining conservation outcomes. This area focuses on strengthening societal understanding of the importance of coral reefs, the threats they face, and the actions required to protect them. By engaging schools, communities, leaders and the wider public, Fiji seeks to foster a culture of stewardship across generations.

Outcomes:

- 6.1 Increased public and community awareness on coral reef conservation management.
- 6.2 Coastal and reef conservation are integrated into school curricula (early childhood to higher education).

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7. Sustainable Financing

Goal: Secure long-term funding sustains coral reef conservation and sustainable management of marine resources.

Long-term conservation requires secure and diversified funding. This area prioritises building a resilient financing system that draws from government budgets, the private sector, communities, conservation funds and innovative financial mechanisms. Sustainable financing ensures continuity of management, restoration and monitoring efforts across the country.

Outcome:

- 7.1 A costed implementation of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation.
- 7.2 Identify and implement sustainable financing options for community stewardship and management of coral reef areas.

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4.5 Geographical focal areas and priorities

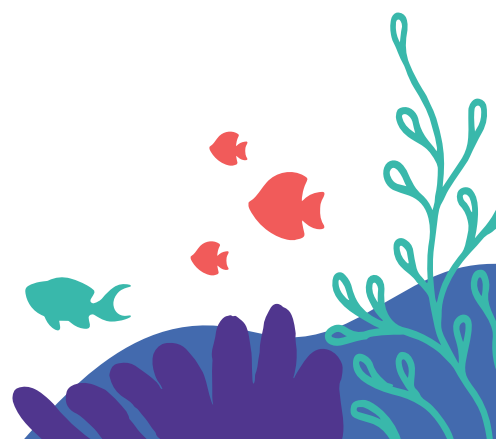
The initial geographic focus for coral reef conservation in Fiji was informed by the global 50 Reefs study, which identified *climate refuge* reefs, characterised by relatively low exposure to climate-change stress due to favourable oceanographic conditions, such as currents and upwelling (Beyer et al., 2018). Approximately 70% of these reefs were identified across seven countries: Cuba, Fiji, Indonesia, Madagascar, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Tanzania. In Fiji, the analysis highlighted two climate refuge reef areas: i). Northern Viti Levu, Southern Vanua Levu and Somosomo Strait and ii). Northern Vanua Levu and Vanua Balavu.

This global analysis catalysed a coordinated conservation response through the [Coral Reef Rescue Initiative](#), led by WWF. Financial support provided to six of the seven countries under the GEF International Waters project [Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Reefs, Resilient Communities](#), has enabled the establishment of national enabling environments (National Hubs) and the development of National Action Plans.

In recognition of advances in climate-resilient reef modelling and improved data availability since the 50 Reefs study, a national spatial prioritisation process was undertaken to refine priority conservation areas, informed by the actions herein.

This process focused on the identification of i) climate-resilient reefs; ii) priority areas for mangrove rehabilitation; iii) degraded catchments requiring restoration to mitigate poor land management practices; and iv) riparian zones in erosion-prone agricultural areas requiring restoration.

Further details on the datasets, methodology and analytical outputs are provided in Annex A.



4.6 Coordination, roles and responsibilities

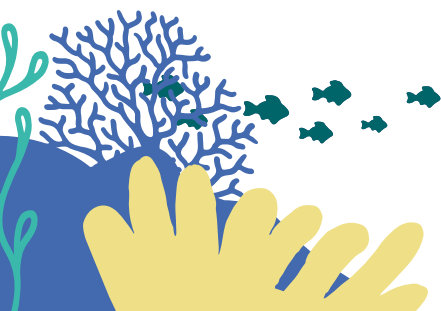
Implementation of the NAPCRC will be led by the primary coordinating authority. MECC will be supported by the Fiji NHCRC, which operates under the National Ocean Policy Steering Committee. NOPSC reports to the National Climate Change Coordination Committee, comprising Permanent Secretaries across government, ensuring whole-of-government alignment with national climate, environment, and sustainable development priorities.

The National Climate Change Coordination Committee provides strategic oversight, facilitates cross-sector coordination, and resolves high-level implementation challenges to ensure the Action Plan contributes effectively to Fiji's climate and environmental objectives.

To ensure clarity of responsibilities and accountability, each action within the Action Plan is assigned to a designated lead agency, typically the Government Ministry with a legal or policy mandate for that area of work. Key lead agencies include:

- Ministry of Environment and Climate Change – leads biodiversity conservation, environmental regulation, habitat protection, and national policy integration.
- Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry (MOFF) – all fisheries-related actions, including sustainable inshore fisheries management, enforcement, and species recovery.
- Ministry of iTaukei Affairs (MTA) – leads community empowerment, customary governance, and co-management initiatives, recognising the central role of resource owners in coral reef stewardship.
- Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources (MLMR) – coastal restoration activities, including mangrove rehabilitation and management of coastal land use.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways (MOAW) – leads actions related to land-based pollution, watershed management, and sustainable agriculture that support downstream marine ecosystem health.
- Ministry of Education (MOE) – leads education and curriculum integration for coral reef and marine conservation.
- Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection (MWCSP) – leads national initiatives that elevate and support the role of women and marginalised groups in fisheries, climate resilience, and community-based conservation.
- Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises (MTCSME) – leads actions related to sustainable business development, eco-tourism, and promotion of reef-friendly enterprises.
- Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MTCA) – leads national tourism initiatives, including reef-based tourism management and planning.

These lead agencies will work collaboratively with supporting agencies, NGOs, academia, and community partners.



4.7 The Plan – Programme Logic (Goals, Outcome and Actions)



4.7.1 Strategic Area 1: Resilient Coral Reef Ecosystems

Goal	Coral reef ecosystems are resilient, restored, and safeguarded within well-connected networks of sustainably managed areas.		
Outcome	1.1 Sustainably manage Fiji’s inshore coral reefs to maintain their ecological integrity and support community well-being, with a focus on climate-resilient reefs.		
Indicator	Percentage of climate-resilient reef ecosystems (area) under sustainable management.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
1.1.1	Ground-truth priority climate resilience reefs to verify/assess current status to guide their management.	Y2	WCS
1.1.2	Develop and implement area-based management plans (EbM, Ridge to Reef, Fisheries, LMMAs) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and integrating local and TEK (in support of the targets within the NOP).	Y2 – Y5	MOFF
1.1.3	Safeguard 30% of reef areas that are closed for use3 (in support of GBF targets).	Y1 – Y5	MECC
1.1.4	Develop a framework (including finance mechanisms) to implement, monitor and evaluate management plans.	Y2 – Y5	MOFF
Outcome	1.2 Priority degraded marine and coastal ecosystems and endangered species are restored and strengthened, enhancing coral reef resilience, biodiversity, and ecosystem function and services.		
Indicator	Number of degraded ecosystem sites restored and number of species under restocking programs.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
1.2.1	Undertake restocking programs for at least 2 key-stone species that are nationally listed as endangered and protected species, using appropriate restocking options.	Y2-Y5	MOFF
1.2.3	Promote planting in riparian zones and in village/agricultural areas prone to soil erosion.	Y2-Y5	MOAW, MOFF, MLMR
1.2.4	Implement mangrove replanting at appropriate sites with appropriate species (based on ecological and feasibility assessments).	Y2 - Y5	MECC
1.2.5	Implement coral planting and create strategically placed breeding patches with bleaching resilient lineages (based on ecological and feasibility assessments) to rehabilitate degraded ecosystems/enhance resilient coral larval supply.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
1.2.6	Develop a national best-practice guideline to support communities, tourism operators and NGOs in appropriate coral planting and restoration practices and undertake training.	Y1	MOFF
1.2.7	Integrate restoration of degraded catchments into EbM planning to mitigate poor land management practices in priority areas, leveraging NbS to minimise terrestrial runoff and soil erosion.	Y1-Y5	NGOs

3 Protected areas are considered areas under customary tabu (temporary/fully closed) or government gazetted.



4.7.2 Strategic Area 2: Sustainable Fisheries and Inclusive Governance

Goal	Small-scale commercial and subsistence fisheries are equitable, healthy and are harvested within the sustainable limits, and co-managed by communities, government and other relevant users.		
Outcome	2.1 Fiji's inshore fisheries are harvested and managed within sustainable ecological limits.		
Indicator	Percentage of fisheries management plans in place that are based on scientific stock assessments.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
2.1.1	Ensure the number of fishing licenses (and catch limits) issued (per <i>qoliqoli</i>) is within the ecological capacity of the traditional fishing grounds.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.1.2	Ensure license conditions (e.g. inclusion of local management rules [tabu area], LMMA rules, spawning aggregation sites, etc.) support community-led fisheries management.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.1.3	Develop at least 3 fisheries management/recovery plans for highly targeted species/native predatory species to invasives.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.1.4	Ensure the protection of critical fisheries life-history stages, processes and functions (e.g. spawning grounds, critical habitats for life stages, migratory pathways) within management plans.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
Outcome	2.2 Strengthened community leadership and governance for fisheries management.		
Indicator	Percentage of documented management plans integrating traditional and scientific knowledge.		
ACTION #	ACTION	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
2.2.1	Ensure information from diverse knowledge systems (TEK & scientific knowledge) are accessible to support local decision making for fisheries management.	Y1-Y5	MTA
2.2.2	Recognise and include community management tools (e.g. Tabu, LMMAs) in National Policy documents /frameworks / plans for managing fisheries resources, their habitats and the biodiversity of the systems they support.	Y1-Y5	MOFF, MECC, MTA
Outcome	2.3 Improve fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance to reduce poaching and unsustainable fishing practices.		
Indicator	Percentage increase in compliance rate with inshore fisheries regulations and permit conditions.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
2.3.1	A national framework for inshore compliance and surveillance, including enabling community compliance and establishing sustainable funding mechanisms.	Y4	MOFF
2.3.2	Increasing compliance of fisheries laws, policies/ permit through effective MCS at local and national levels.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.3.3	Working closely with the judicial system, improving the capacity of the judicial system, and ensuring the successful prosecution of repeated offenders.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.3.4	Strengthen internal systems and capacity of the MOFF and other relevant groups (e.g., confidentiality, database of licenses, offenders, evidence gathering, training and internal capacity, coordination with other enforcement agencies).	Y2	MOFF
2.3.5	Review options (legal, social aspects) for fisheries monitoring, control and compliance.	Y2	MOFF



Outcome	2.4 Sustainable aquaculture, fisheries and value-added fisheries products are diversified, supporting economic resilience and environmental sustainability.		
Indicator	Number of sustainable marine product value chains established or strengthened.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
2.4.1	Undertake a market review and develop a marketing strategy to support alternative/value-added marine products.	Y2	MOFF
2.4.2	Promote local supply chains to support local product supply (e.g. resorts) to create income and encourage decentralisation.	Y2	MOFF
2.4.3	Support community-based sustainable aquaculture projects (e.g. seaweed, giant clams, oysters) that have low or minimal impact on coral reefs.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.4.4	Provide training, resources and market connections for value-added marine products to enhance local income.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
2.4.5	Explore mechanisms for tracing, marketing and fair pricing for sustainably harvested marine products.	Y1-Y5	MTCSME



4.7.3 Strategic Area 3: Community Empowerment



Goal	By 2031, Resource users and Multisectoral stakeholders are collectively leading the sustainable management, protection, and restoration of Fiji's globally significant coral reef ecosystems through an integrated and inclusive co-managed approach.		
Outcome	3.1 Enhanced use of TEK supports effective EbM, promoting sustainable development and conservation of ecosystems.		
Indicator	Percentage of reef management plans incorporating documented TEK.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
3.1.1	Facilitate the documentation, compilation and consolidation of TEK through the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes.	Y2	MTA
3.1.2	Reinvigorate, and enable existing customary platforms, structures, and governance systems and engage new interested communities in conservation initiatives.	Y1-Y5	MTA
3.1.3	Encourage and strengthen the transfer of TEK across generations to support on-the-ground, community-led management (e.g. through talanoa sessions, storytelling, and social media). Ensure management plans incorporate TEK.	Y1-Y5	MOE
3.1.4	Advocate for greater involvement of communities in national-level decision-making processes.	Y1-Y5	MTA
Outcome	3.2 Strengthened the capacity of communities to effectively manage their coral reef resources and make informed decisions.		
Indicator	Percentage of community-based management units (<i>qoliqoli</i> or equivalent) with operational management plans and sustainable financing mechanisms.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
3.2.1	Strengthen the capacity of community-based management structures (<i>qoliqoli</i> or equivalent) to secure and leverage sustainable financing mechanisms for long-term resource governance and conservation outcomes through conducting a gap analysis on areas required for strengthening by providing targeted training, technical assistance, and partnerships that enhance financial literacy, governance systems, and access to innovative funding opportunities.	Y1-Y5	MTA

3.2.2	Reinvigorate customary management and strengthen governance systems and decision-making to safeguard and manage fisheries resources through MTA capacity building and governance training programmes.	Y1-Y5	MTA
3.2.3	Support alternative sustainable livelihoods for communities engaged in conservation.	Y1-Y5	MOFF, NGOs
3.2.4	Provide financial literacy training to support communities establish reef-friendly businesses.	Y1-Y5	MTCSME
3.2.5	Provide training and support for communities in writing grant proposals and accessing funds.	Y1-Y5	MTCSME, NGOs
3.2.6	Undertake a mapping exercise to identify viable communities for community-based resource management financing.	Y2	MOFF, MTA, MTCSME
3.2.7	Secure sustainable finance mechanisms for community-based management initiatives across sectors.	Y3	MTA
Outcome	3.3 Strengthened equitable partnerships to enable reef-friendly businesses to support economic opportunities through the sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems.		
Indicator	Number of formalised equitable partnership agreements between communities and private sector actors.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
3.3.1	Develop a community guide for developing equitable partnership arrangements.	Y2	MTA
3.3.2	Support the development of reef-friendly businesses, prioritising climate-resilient reef areas.	Y2	MTA
3.3.3	Establish sustainable finance mechanisms for community-based eco-tourism enterprises.	Y1-Y5	MTCA
Outcome	3.4 Equitable access to opportunities and decision-making for women and other marginalised groups to enable the sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems.		
Indicator	Number of national and provincial reef decision-making platforms with gender-inclusive participation standards adopted.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
3.4.1	Strengthen the active participation of women and other marginalised groups in community and national-level decision-making platforms and forums.	Y1-Y5	MWCSP
3.4.2	Improve market access for women-led and other marginalised group cooperatives.	Y1-Y5	MTCSME
3.4.3	Celebrate and support women and other marginalised groups as key contributors to fisheries, resilience and climate change adaptation.	Y1-Y5	MWCSP
3.4.4	Promote women, youth and other marginalised groups in conservation initiatives.	Y1-Y5	MWCSP





4.7.4 Strategic Area 4: Policy Governance and Coordination

Goal	Ensure an effective and enabling policy and governance environment that supports coral conservation through coordinated multi-sectoral partnerships.		
Outcome	4.1 An effective NHCRC facilitates cross-sectoral coordination.		
Indicator	Number of cross-sectoral coordination actions initiated through NHCRC annually.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
4.1.1	NHCRC sustainability strategy developed and implemented.	Y2	MECC,
4.1.2	Relevant NHCRC members actively participate in regular meetings and discussions.	Y1-Y5	NHCRC
4.1.3	Information and advisory papers channelled through NHCRC for higher-level directives.	Y1-Y5	MECC
4.1.4	Ensure the provision of spatial data on conservation and prioritisation of coral reef ecosystems is shared with all relevant government agencies.	Y1	MECC
Outcome	4.2 Strengthened and harmonised laws relating to natural resource protection.		
Indicator	Number of formal cross-sector policy alignments achieved (Fisheries–Environment–Ocean–Waste–Tourism).		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
4.2.1	Ensure comprehensive stakeholder consultations, including resource owners, users, technical experts and relevant Ministries to review the Fisheries Act and Regulations.	Y1-Y2	MOFF
4.2.2	Strengthen the Fisheries Act and Regulations by enhancing transparency and sustainability in license issuance, introducing <i>qoliqoli</i> -based Total Allowable Catch limits, implementing evidence-based species-specific catch and size limits, updating penalties and processes to ensure strict and enforceable compliance, establishing mechanisms to protect marine areas without extinguishing customary fishing rights and formally recognising co-management arrangements with resource owners.	Y1-Y2	MOFF
4.2.3	Undertake a technical review to clearly define marine conserved and protected areas in Fiji and establish an appropriate mechanism for legally demarcating LMMAs, MPAs, Marine Managed Areas (MMAs), and tabu areas to strengthen their enforcement.	Y2	MOFF, MECC, MTA
4.2.4	Undertake a review and strengthening of existing environmental policies, legislation and regulations - including waterways and drainage policies and EIA guidelines with monitoring and evaluation provisions - to identify regulatory gaps and establish measures necessary to prevent downstream impacts to reef ecosystems.	Y1-Y5	MECC
4.2.5	Integrate and align coral reef specific objectives and targets within the NBSAP and NOP as part of their review.	Y1	MECC
4.2.6	Review all coral extraction activities and related impacts to the ecosystem to inform decision making and policy.	Y1	MECC, MoF
4.2.7	Review relevant legislation and regulations and develop a framework to manage penalties and responses for vessel pollution and reef damage infringements.	Y1	MSAF
4.2.8	Support the finalisation and enforcement of the Environment Management (Mangrove Conservation and Management) Regulations 2022 to aid in their protection.	Y1	MECC
4.2.9	Support the finalisation and implementation of the National Integrated Waste Management Strategy.	Y1	MECC
4.3.10	Collaboratively develop guidelines and best practices for sustainable reef-friendly tourism in reef-adjacent areas.	Y2	MTCA



4.7.5 Strategic Area 5: Research

Goal	To ensure robust evidence-based decision making for coral reef management.		
Outcome	5.1 Coordinated, consistent and robust coral reef ecosystem research and data informs evidence base decision making.		
Indicator	National coral reef monitoring framework formally adopted and operational.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
5.1.1	Co-develop a nationally consistent monitoring framework and protocols (integrating TEK) for coral reef, mangrove and reef-fisheries assessments.	Y2	MECC, MOFF, NGOs
5.1.2	Undertake fish and invertebrate stock assessments (at <i>qoliqoli</i> scale) to inform total allowable catch limits and management actions.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
5.1.3	Undertake fisheries impact assessments and Non-Detrimental Finding surveys to inform CITES permits.	Y1-Y5	MOFF, MECC
5.1.4	Undertake research to develop tools for identifying thermally tolerant and disease-resistant coral lineages for use in reef restoration activities.	Y2	MECC, Academia
5.1.5	Update and revise the economic valuation of coral reef ecosystems (commercial and subsistence) to understand their real value and contribution to the national economy.	Y2	MOFF, NGOs
5.1.6	Identify and assess key sources/causes of coral reef physical damage (e.g. coastal development, tourism, vessels) and pollution to inform a framework for imposing penalties.	Y3	MECC
5.1.7	Undertake a review and develop a framework for the storage, management and sharing of scientific data (coral reef health, fisheries, connectivity) to ensure accessibility for decision making and communication/education purposes.	Y2	MECC, MOFF
5.1.8	Undertake targeted research on coral larval dispersal to map and characterise reef connectivity, to inform and strengthen evidence-based reef management actions.	Y2-4	MECC, MOFF, Academia
Outcome	5.2 Increasing coral reef science, knowledge and capacity for improved and sustainable management.		
Indicator	National coral reef research priority agenda developed and operational measuring increase in local technical capacity score.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
5.2.1	Support community research initiatives through the implementation of community-based marine resource monitoring and training for community members.	Y1-Y5	MECC, MOFF
5.2.2	Strengthen community-based management approaches (e.g. LMMA) to promote a ridge-to-reef/ecosystem-based adaptive integrated management approach to enhance livelihoods, biodiversity and community resilience.	Y1-Y5	MOFF, NGOs
5.2.3	Ensure results from coral reef and fisheries research and monitoring are presented to communities, NROC, traditional leaders' meetings and other relevant fora for informed decision-making.	Y1-Y5	MOFF
5.2.3	NHCRC develops a list of research priorities to direct coral reef ecosystem research in Fiji.	Y1	MECC
5.2.4	NHCRC facilitates partnerships between researchers, managers, communities and policy makers to co-design research topics to build local capacity for coral reef knowledge and management.	Y1	MECC
5.2.5	Enhance government capacity in monitoring, analysis and reporting.	Y2-Y5	MECC, MOFF





4.7.6 Strategic Area 6: Communication, Education and Capacity Development

Goal	People of Fiji appreciate and recognise (understand) the importance of coral reef conservation and management within the country, to influence the decision making.		
Outcome	6.1 Increased public and community awareness on coral reef conservation management.		
Indicator	Fiji National Coral Reef Conservation Strategic Communications Plan developed and operational measuring (the reach of coral reef awareness campaigns, %increase in public awareness of coral reef threats and conservation measures (baseline vs endline survey)).		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
6.1.1	Support the implementation of the Fiji National Coral Reef Conservation Strategic Communications Plan.	Y1	NHCRC
6.1.2	Develop a national network of members on coral reef awareness and education to implement the national communication strategy.	Y2	NHCRC
6.1.3	Build the capacity of national networks through the Training of Trainers (ToTs) programs on effective coral reef conservation management.	Y1-Y5	NGOs
Outcome	6.2 Coastal and reef conservation are integrated into school curricula (early childhood to higher education).		
Indicator	Number of schools, tertiary programmes implementing reef conservation learning activities, marine science, or EbM modules.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
6.2.1	Review of the national school curriculum to identify areas for the integration of coral reef conservation information.	Y2	MOE
6.2.2	Integrate holistic, science-based and TEK learning on reef conservation management into the national school curriculum.	Y2	MOE



4.7.7 Strategic Area 7: Sustainable Financing

Goal	Secure long-term funding to sustain coral reef conservation and sustainable management of marine resources.		
Outcome	7.1 A costed implementation of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation.		
Indicator	National Coral Reef Finance Plan developed and operational.		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
7.1.1	Undertake an expenditure review of private, public and conservation to define coral reef-related expenditure from national, sectoral budgets to calculate past coral reef-related expenditures, revenues including identification of harmful expenditures.	Y1-Y2	MECC
7.1.2	Determine the Investment needed for the NAPCRC per year for 5 years and make sure actions are costable e.g. reduce pollution vs establish 8 management centres for recycling and water treatment.	Y1-Y2	MECC
7.1.3	Develop and operationalise a financial plan for the NAPCRC and assess the suitability of a range of financing solutions(public/private, domestic/international, traditional/innovative): revenue generation potential, transaction costs, political feasibility, regulatory/institutional requirements (including sustainable finance and opportunities for partnerships).	Y1	MECC
Outcome	7.2 Identify and implement sustainable financing options for community stewardship and management of coral reef areas.		
Indicator	Community-based coral reef financing plan developed and operational receiving direct financial or in-kind support for coral reef stewardship (including women and youth groups).		
ACTION #	ACTIONS	TIMELINE	LEAD AGENCY
7.2.1	Support the establishment of community conservation funds for local communities (including transparent governance and benefit-sharing mechanisms).	Y1-Y5	MECC
7.2.2	Strengthen and scale locally managed revenue streams, e.g. eco-tourism user fees (diving, snorkelling, moorings), sustainable harvesting permits, Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES) and licensing.	Y1-Y5	MECC



4.8 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



4.8.1 Resilient Coral Reef Ecosystems

Goal: Coral reef ecosystems are resilient, restored and safeguarded within well-connected networks of sustainably managed areas.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
  1.1 Sustainably manage Fiji's inshore coral reefs to maintain their ecological integrity and support community well-being, with a focus on climate-resilient reefs.	Percentage of priority climate-resilient reef ecosystems (area) under sustainable management.	Current area of climate-resilient reefs under sustainable management.	80%	Status of marine protected areas reports (2030).	Continued Government commitment to 30x30 and marine protection targets. The National Hub for Coral Reef Conservation remains operational and adequately resourced.
		Current % of reefs protected under tabu or MPAs.	30%	Status of marine protected areas reports (2030).	
		Current # of management plans endorsed and implemented in priority seascapes.	10 new management plans.	Status of marine protected areas reports (2030).	
		# management effectiveness assessment reports (2026).	10 management effectiveness assessments carried out.	Management Effectiveness reports.	
  1.2 Priority degraded marine and coastal ecosystems and endangered species are restored and strengthened, enhancing coral reef resilience, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.	Number of degraded ecosystems site restored and number of species under restocking programs.	# of key-stone species nationally listed as protected and endangered within coral reef ecosystems that require restocking (2026).	2	Restocking program in place.	Ministries (MECC, MOFF, MTA) maintain coordination and enforcement cooperation. Legal reforms (Fisheries Act amendments, MPA recognition) progress as anticipated.
		# of NbS management plan currently implemented to minimize terrestrial runoff/soil erosion/terrestrial.		HA of restored riparian zones targeting the reduction of agricultural and development impacts adjacent to coral reefs.	
			100%	Percentage of EbM plans in prioritised areas integrate NbS solutions to minimize terrestrial runoff/soil erosion/terrestrial runoff.	



4.8.2 Sustainable Fisheries

Goal: Small-scale commercial and subsistence fisheries are equitable, healthy and are harvested within the sustainable limits, and co-managed by communities, government and other relevant user.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
2.1 Fiji's inshore fisheries are harvested and managed within sustainable ecological limits.	Percentage of fisheries management plans based on scientific stock assessments.	Current # of inshore fisheries management, including LMMAs.	All inshore fisheries management plans in priority areas are evidence-based.	Number of fisheries management plans based on scientific stock assessments and reef health data.	Government remains committed to fisheries reform and MCS strengthening. Funding availability. Communities continue to support LMMA and customary management systems.
2.2 Strengthened community leadership and governance for fisheries management.	Percentage of documented management plans integrating traditional and scientific knowledge.	TBD	80% of <i>qoliqoli</i> in priority reef areas.	# of <i>qoliqoli</i> in priority reef areas that receive capacity building and governance training.	
2.3 Improve community-based fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance to reduce poaching and unsustainable fishing practices.	Percentage increase in compliance rate with inshore fisheries regulations and permit conditions.	Annual status report showing current compliance.	Annual increase in compliance rates.	Surveillance and Compliance reports.	
2.4 Sustainable aquaculture, fisheries and value-added fisheries products are diversified supporting economic resilience and environmental sustainability.	Number of sustainable marine product value chains established or strengthened.	TBD	10 sustainable marine product value chains established.	Number of community-based sustainable aquaculture project supported.	





4.8.3 Community Empowerment

Goal: By 2031, Resource users and Multisectoral stakeholders are collectively leading the sustainable management, protection, and restoration of Fiji's globally significant coral reef ecosystems through an integrated and inclusive co-managed approach.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
3.1 Enhanced use of TEK supports effective EbM, promoting sustainable development and conservation of ecosystems.	Percentage of reef management plans incorporating documented TEK.	TBD	100%	Number of management plans incorporating TEK.	Customary leaders remain supportive of conservation initiatives. TEK holders are willing to share knowledge under FPIC safeguards.
3.2 Strengthened capacity of communities to effectively manage their coral reef resources and make informed decisions.	Percentage of community-based management units (<i>qoliqoli</i> or equivalent) with operational management plans and sustainable financing mechanisms.	TBD	80%	Number of community-based management initiatives within climate-resilient reef areas with long-term finance secured.	Women and vulnerable groups are socially enabled to participate. Sustainable finance mechanisms are accessible to communities. Private sector partners engage in good faith.
3.3 Strengthened equitable partnerships to enable reef-friendly businesses to support economic opportunities through the sustainable use of coral reef ecosystems.	Number of formalised equitable partnership agreements between communities and private sector actors.	TBD	5 partnership agreements.	Number of reef-friendly businesses developed/ strengthened within priority areas	
3.4 Ensure equitable access to opportunities and decision-making for women and other vulnerable groups to enable the sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems.	Number of national and provincial reef decision-making platforms with gender-inclusive participation standards adopted.	Current number gender reports from project sites.	5 new gender assessment reports.	Gender assessment reports from selected sites demonstrate that women increased participation in decision-making.	



4.8.4 Policy Governance and Coordination

Goal: An effective and enabling policy and governance environment that supports coral conservation through coordinated multi-sectoral partnerships.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
4.1 An effective NHCRC facilitates cross-sectoral coordination.	Number of cross-sectoral coordination actions initiated through NHCRC annually.	TBD	At least 2 NHCRC meetings / year.	Reports of NHCRC meetings.	Strong inter-ministerial cooperation continues. Legislative reform remains politically supported.
		TBD	At least 5 information papers per year.	NHCRC reports and information papers to NOP, NEC and other government governance bodies and networks.	
4.2 Strengthened and harmonised laws relating to natural resource protection.	Number of formal cross-sector policy alignments achieved (Fisheries–Environment–Ocean–Waste–Tourism).	List of current natural resource management laws and legislation under review (2026).	At least 3 priority sectors supported for policy alignment.	Relevant laws / regulations / policy developed or supported for coral reef conservation or prevent downstream impacts to reef ecosystems.	NHCRC maintains consistent participation and funding. Parliament prioritizes fisheries and environmental reform.



4.8.5 Research

Goal: To ensure robust evidence-based decision making for coral reef management.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
5.1 Coordinated, consistent (or systematic) and robust coral reef ecosystem research and data informs evidence base decision making.	National coral reef monitoring framework formally adopted and operational.	TBD	National coral reef ecosystem monitoring framework and protocols developed.	Nationally consistent monitoring framework and protocols developed. A framework for the storage, management and sharing of scientific data (coral reef health, fisheries, connectivity) to ensure accessibility for decision making and education purposes developed.	Long-term funding for monitoring can be secured. Research institutions and government cooperate on data sharing. Communities remain motivated to participate in monitoring. Data informs policy decisions (science-to-policy uptake).
5.2 Increasing coral reef science, knowledge and capacity for improved and sustainable management.	National coral reef research priority agenda developed and operational, measuring increase in local technical capacity score.	TBD	% of priority research identified implemented.	Capacity building strategy developed and implemented. List of research priorities to direct coral reef ecosystem research in Fiji.	





4.8.6 Communication, Education and Capacity Development

Goal: People of Fiji appreciate and recognise (understand) the importance of coral reef conservation and management within the country, to influence the decision making.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
6.1 Increased public and community awareness on coral reef conservation management.	National Coral Reef Communication Strategy developed and operational measuring reach of coral reef awareness campaigns, % increase in public awareness of coral reef threats and conservation measures (baseline vs endline survey).	TBD	% of communication strategy implemented annually	Communication strategy is in place that guides the delivery of education and awareness materials on coral reef conservation and fisheries management	Ministry of Education supports curriculum integration. Teachers are willing and trained to deliver reef content. Communication campaigns lead to behavioural change. Media platforms remain accessible nationwide.
6.2 Coastal and reef conservation are integrated into school curricula (early childhood to higher education).	Number of schools, tertiary programmes implementing reef conservation learning activities, marine science, or EbM modules.	TBD	No. of schools implementing reef conservation learning activities.	Report of coral reef conservation activities implemented.	
		TBD	Accessible information platforms for Fiji's coral reefs.	A holistic, science-based, and TEK learning on reef conservation management integrated into the national school curriculum.	



4.8.7 Sustainable Financing

Goal: Secure long-term funding to sustain coral reef conservation and sustainable management of marine resources.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification	Risks and assumptions
7.1 A costed implementation of the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation.	National Coral Reef Finance Plan developed and operational.	0	Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030) Finance Plan and Resourcing developed	Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030) Finance Plan and Resourcing developed and endorsed.	Ministry of Finance supports budget tagging and costing. Reliable financial data is available across sectors. Domestic revenue generation mechanisms are politically feasible. Private sector willing to co-finance reef-positive initiatives. Government (e.g., MECC, MOFF) continues to support decentralised, community-based marine management (LMMA framework).
7.2 Identify and implement sustainable financing options for community stewardship and management of coral reef areas	Community-based coral reef financing plan developed and operational (including women and youth groups).	TBD	Community-based Fiji Coral Reef Conservation Action Plan (2026-2030) Finance Plan and Resourcing developed	Community Conservation Fund operating.	



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6 ANNEXES

Annex A: Spatial prioritisation process for the Fiji National Action Plan for Coral Reef Conservation

Spatial prioritisation for coral reef conservation in Fiji was conducted by WCS Global Conservation and Planning team in collaboration with the NHCRC Conservation and Planning Technical Working Group.

Spatial prioritisation was undertaken for specific actions within the NAPCRC to systematically rank areas of highest priority including;

- 1.1.1 Identify priority **climate resilience reefs** and associated ecosystems for protection and management, integrating community knowledge.
- 1.2.4 Implement **mangrove replanting** at appropriate sites with appropriate species (based on ecological and feasibility assessments)
- 1.2.7 Integrate **restoration of degraded catchments** into EbM planning to mitigate poor land management practices in priority areas, leveraging NbS to minimise terrestrial runoff and soil erosion.
- 1.2.3 Promote **planting in riparian zones and in villages /agricultural areas** prone to soil erosion within priority areas

The methods and spatial analysis outputs for each of these actions are outlined below to refine and prioritise the geographical focus of activities within the Action Plan.

Climate-Resilient Reefs

The climate-resilient reef prioritisation builds on the global 50 Reefs+ framework (Zawada et al. 2026), which applies thermal stress modelling, oceanographic data and coral reef monitoring data to identify reefs with favourable conditions for long-term persistence under climate change. This analysis uses a multi-objective optimisation framework aiming to jointly maximise the following goals:

- Coral Cover (Present & Future): Prioritises places with high coral cover, both now and in 2050, considering future climate conditions
- Coral Life History Diversity: Ensures representation across coral life-history strategies (competitive, stress-tolerant, weedy)
- Spatial Cohesion: Rewards spatially clustered selections, rather than isolated reefs
- Risk Minimisation: Penalises areas with high predicted coral declines and high model uncertainty

The 50 Reefs+ prioritisation aims to identify 30% of each coral reef ecoregion that maximises the above objectives, and for Fiji, roughly 30% of reefs were identified as climate-resilient (Zawada et al. 2026). Global prioritisation outputs were obtained at 250 m resolution and clipped to the Fiji Exclusive Economic Zone boundary. Reefs scoring zero in the prioritisation were masked, and the remaining priority reef areas were retained as the primary conservation focus for subsequent analyses (Figures A1 – A5).

To contextualise the priority climate-resilient reefs within the broader threat landscape, a suite of human pressure layers was compiled and analysed (Andrello et al. 2022). Pressures assessed included commercial and artisanal fishing intensity, coastal and industrial development, nitrogen pollution from terrestrial runoff, sediment exposure from river plumes, and tourism activity. Sediment exposure data were derived from ocean plume modelling outputs, which provide spatially explicit estimates of total sediment exposure across the EEZ. Each pressure layer was projected to a common spatial reference and resampled to match the 250 m reef prioritisation grid to enable consistent comparison and overlay.

Pressures were analysed both individually and in combination to generate a cumulative pressure score for each reef pixel (Figures A6 – A9). The cumulative layer enabled identification of priority reefs facing multiple concurrent stressors, providing a basis for differentiating reefs where management interventions to reduce human pressure would most complement the climate resilience values identified through the 50 Reefs+ prioritisation. The combined climate resilience and pressure outputs were used to spatially delineate priority areas for protection and management, and to inform geographical focus for actions within the Action Plan.

Priority Areas for Mangrove Rehabilitation

The mangrove rehabilitation prioritisation was designed to identify sites with the greatest ecological suitability and likelihood of restoration success. The underlying assumption made was that areas which historically supported mangrove forests are more appropriate for restoration than establishing mangroves in locations where they have not previously occurred. The analysis, therefore, focused on areas of historical mangrove loss and degradation as the primary restoration opportunity zone.

Mangrove loss and degradation between 2000 and 2024 were assessed using Landsat-based change detection, analysing multi-decadal satellite imagery to identify areas where mangrove cover had declined. Mangrove extent in 2000 was taken from Giri et al. (2011), and data on surface water from Pekel et al. (2016) were used to mask small areas of water that were wrongly classified as mangrove. NDVI trend analysis was then conducted in Google Earth Engine using Landsat imagery at 30 m resolution to detect pixels exhibiting consistent productivity declines over a 15-year period (e.g., slow declines due to climate change, overharvesting), and to analyse areas of sudden mangrove loss (e.g., deforestation, cyclone impacts). The resulting change and degradation layers were combined to delineate the overall potential restoration footprint. It should be noted that some areas of mangrove loss are due to coastal development activities; as such, site assessments should be undertaken prior to restoration activities.

Within the broader restoration footprint, sites were further prioritised based on their proximity and connectivity to climate-resilient coral reefs identified in the 50 Reefs+ analysis. Mangroves in close spatial association with priority reef areas were classified as highest priority, reflecting the functional relationship between mangrove habitats and adjacent reef systems through sediment filtration, nursery habitat provision, and coastal buffering. This spatial filter narrowed the restoration target areas to those offering co-benefits for both mangrove ecosystem recovery and coral reef conservation outcomes (Figure A10). For more detailed views of the mangrove restoration sites, an interactive web app is [available here](#).

Priority Degraded Catchment Restoration to Mitigate Poor Land Management Practices

The catchment restoration prioritisation was designed to identify terrestrial areas where targeted intervention could most effectively reduce sediment loads reaching priority coral reefs. The analysis was structured around the causal pathway linking land management practices, sediment generation, riverine transport, and eventual deposition on reef systems. Sediment export data from the University of Queensland (Wakwella et al. 2026) provided spatially explicit estimates of total sediment exposure across reef areas within the Fiji EEZ, enabling identification of reefs most affected by terrestrial-derived sedimentation.

Ocean plume modelling (Wakwella et al. 2026) was used to trace the connectivity between individual catchments and the priority reef areas they influence, identifying which watersheds are the primary sources of sediment delivery. Within these priority catchments, the proportion of sediment originating from areas amenable to restoration intervention — such as degraded hillslopes, bare agricultural land, and deforested areas — was quantified (Figure A11). This allowed catchments to be ranked by the potential reduction in sediment export achievable through restoration, focusing resources on areas where intervention would yield the greatest reef-protection benefit.

Within the highest-priority catchments, spatially explicit maps of priority restoration areas were generated (Figures A12-A15). These delineated the specific land areas within each catchment that, if restored through revegetation or improved land management, would yield the greatest reductions in sediment export.

Priority riparian restoration in erosion-prone agricultural/settlement areas.

The riparian and agricultural erosion prioritisation followed a broadly similar analytical approach to the catchment restoration analysis, with a specific focus on areas of active soil erosion associated with riparian zones and agricultural land use. This component recognised that poorly managed riparian buffers and erosion-prone agricultural areas contribute disproportionately to fine sediment and nutrient loads in waterways, which are subsequently transported to coastal reef systems.

Sediment export modelling was used to identify catchments where reef areas are subject to elevated sedimentation, and ocean plume data were used to trace the connection between those catchments and downstream reef systems (Wakwella et al. 2026). Within priority catchments, areas of agricultural land and riparian zones exhibiting high erosion potential were identified using available spatial data on land use, slope, soil erodibility, and vegetation cover. Riparian corridors adjacent to waterways within these catchments were delineated as priority locations for planting interventions, as revegetation of these areas can rapidly reduce overland flow and bank erosion (Figure A16).

Priority areas were ranked according to the estimated contribution of the riparian and agricultural zone to overall catchment sediment export, and their spatial relationship to downstream priority reef areas (Figures A17 – A20). The resulting maps identify where targeted planting and agricultural land management improvements within villages and farming areas would deliver the greatest reductions in sediment and nutrient loads reaching priority coral reef systems. These outputs complement the broader catchment restoration analysis and together provide spatially explicit guidance for terrestrial intervention under the Action Plan.

Maps of Fiji's Priority Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs

Climate-Resilient Priority Coral Reefs — Fiji
50 Reefs+ analysis

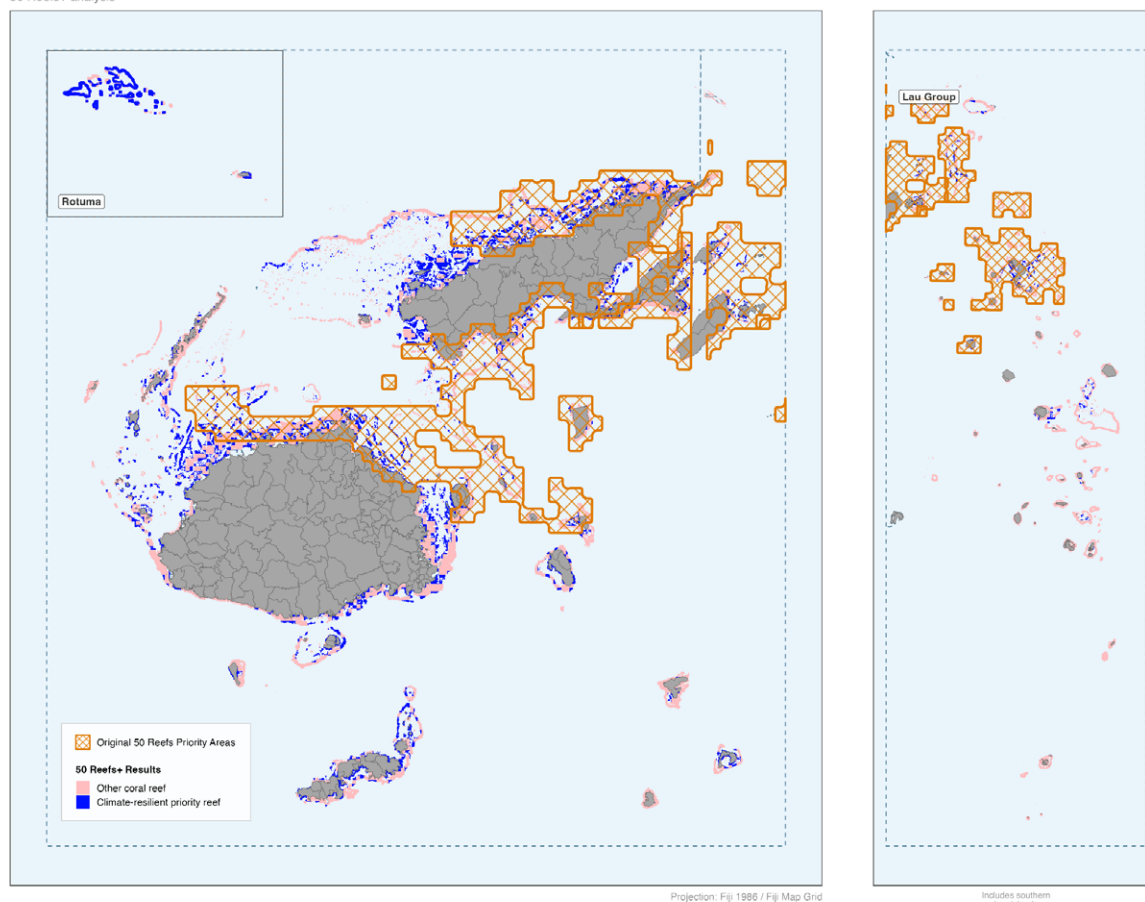


Figure A1. 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs (blue pixels) compared to the original 50 reefs BCUs (orange crosshatch).

Climate-Resilient Priority Coral Reefs — Viti Levu & Yasawa Islands

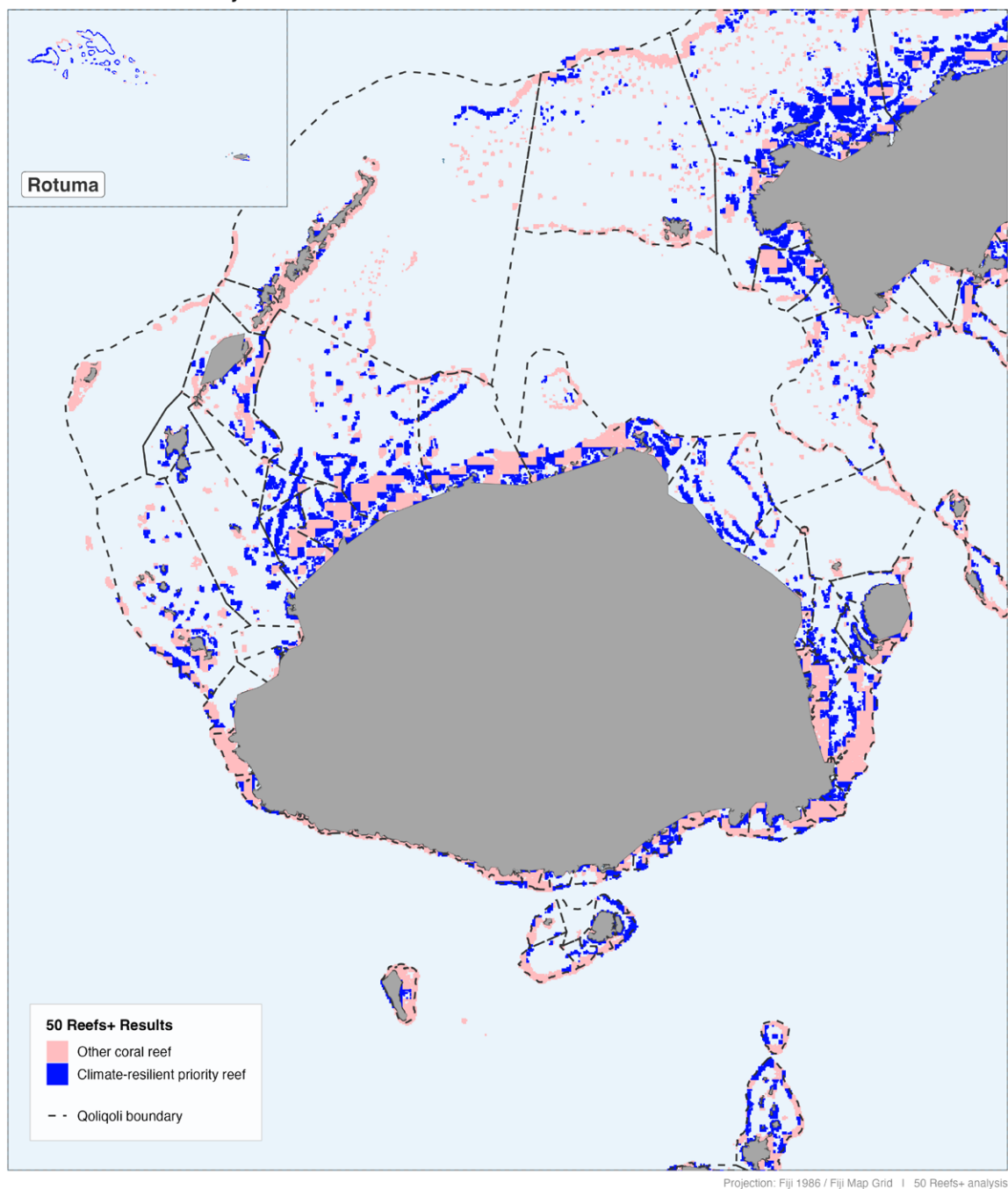


Figure A2. 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs (blue pixels) around Viti Levu and Yasawa Islands.

Climate-Resilient Priority Coral Reefs — Vanua Levu, Taveuni & Lomaiviti

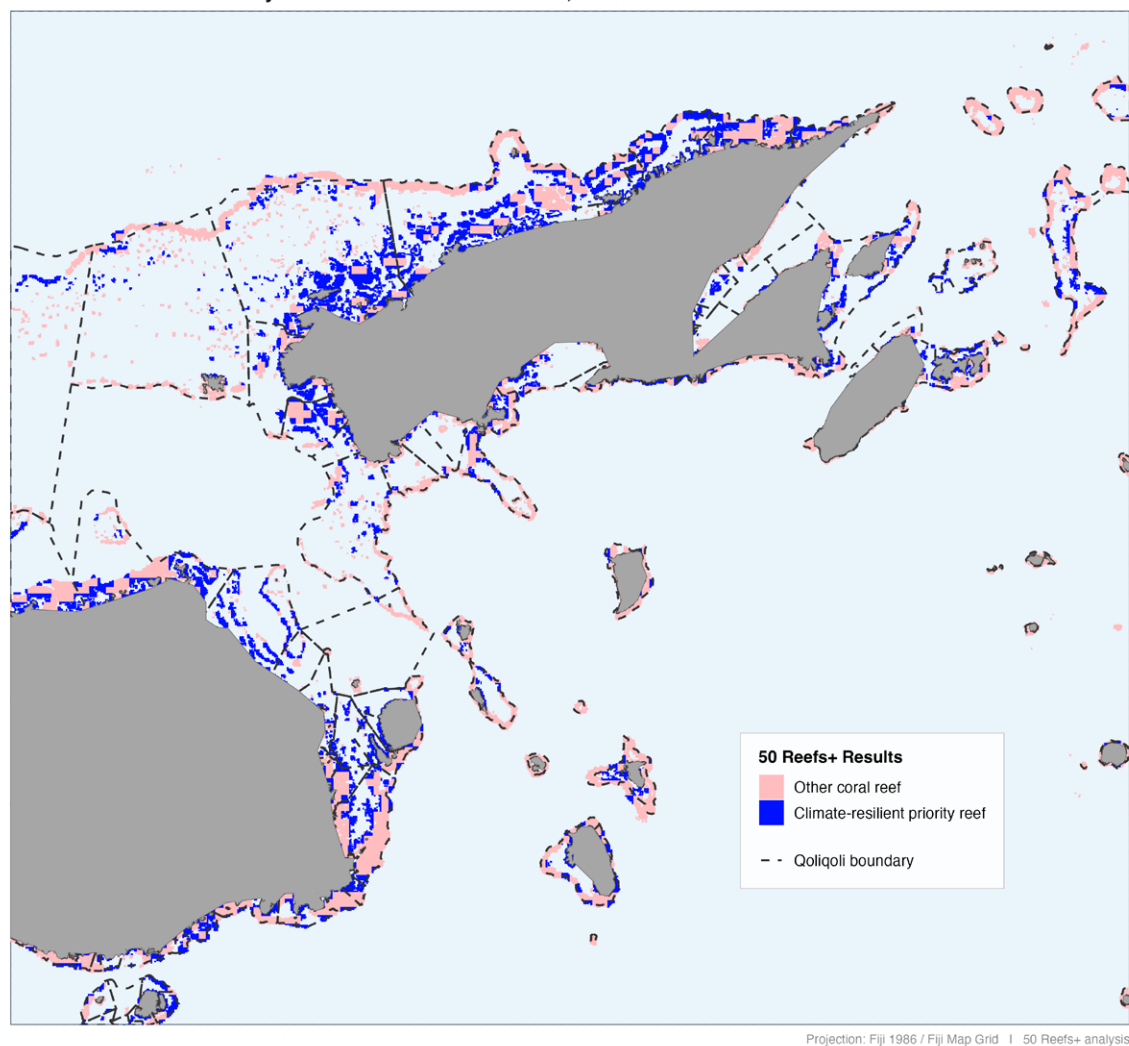


Figure A3. 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs (blue pixels) around Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Lomaiviti.

Climate-Resilient Priority Coral Reefs — Northern Lau Group

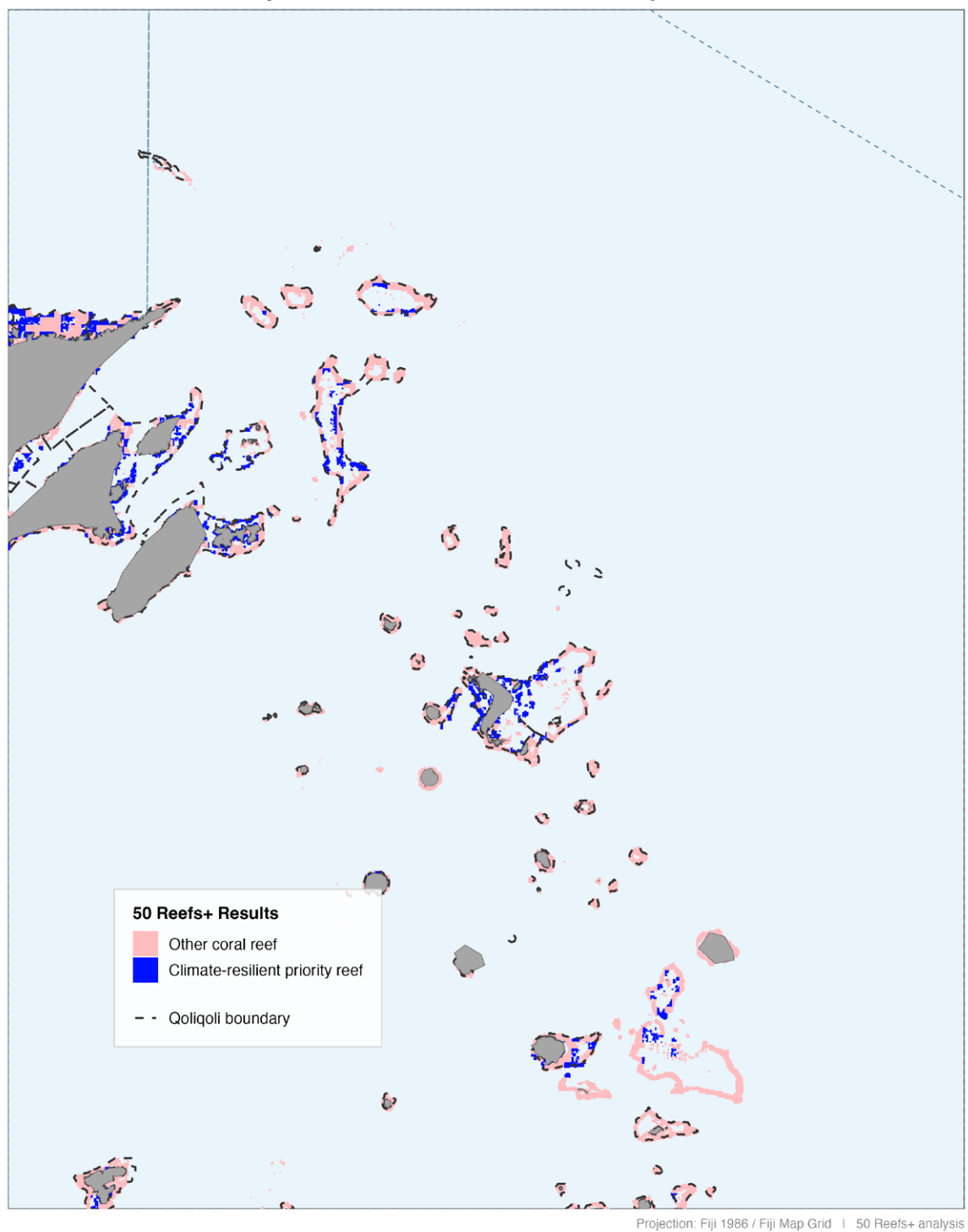


Figure A4. 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs (blue pixels) in Northern Lau Group.

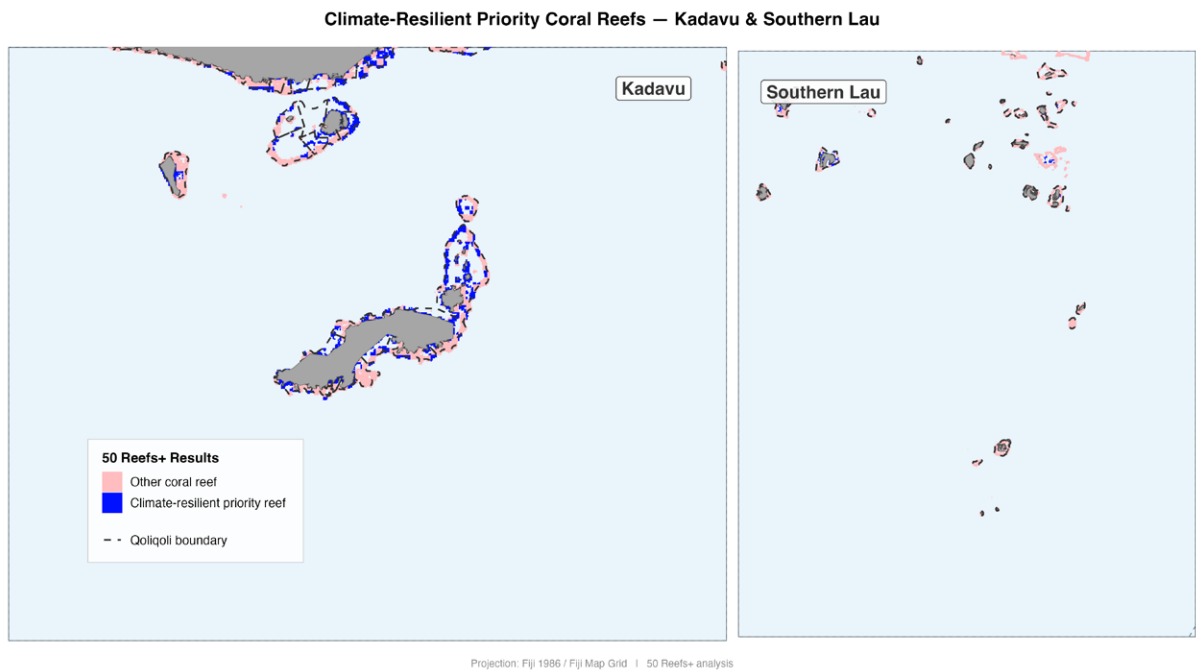


Figure A5. 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs (blue pixels) in Kadavu and Southern Lau.

Maps of Cumulative Pressures on Priority Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs

Co-occurring Pressures — Viti Levu & Yasawa Islands

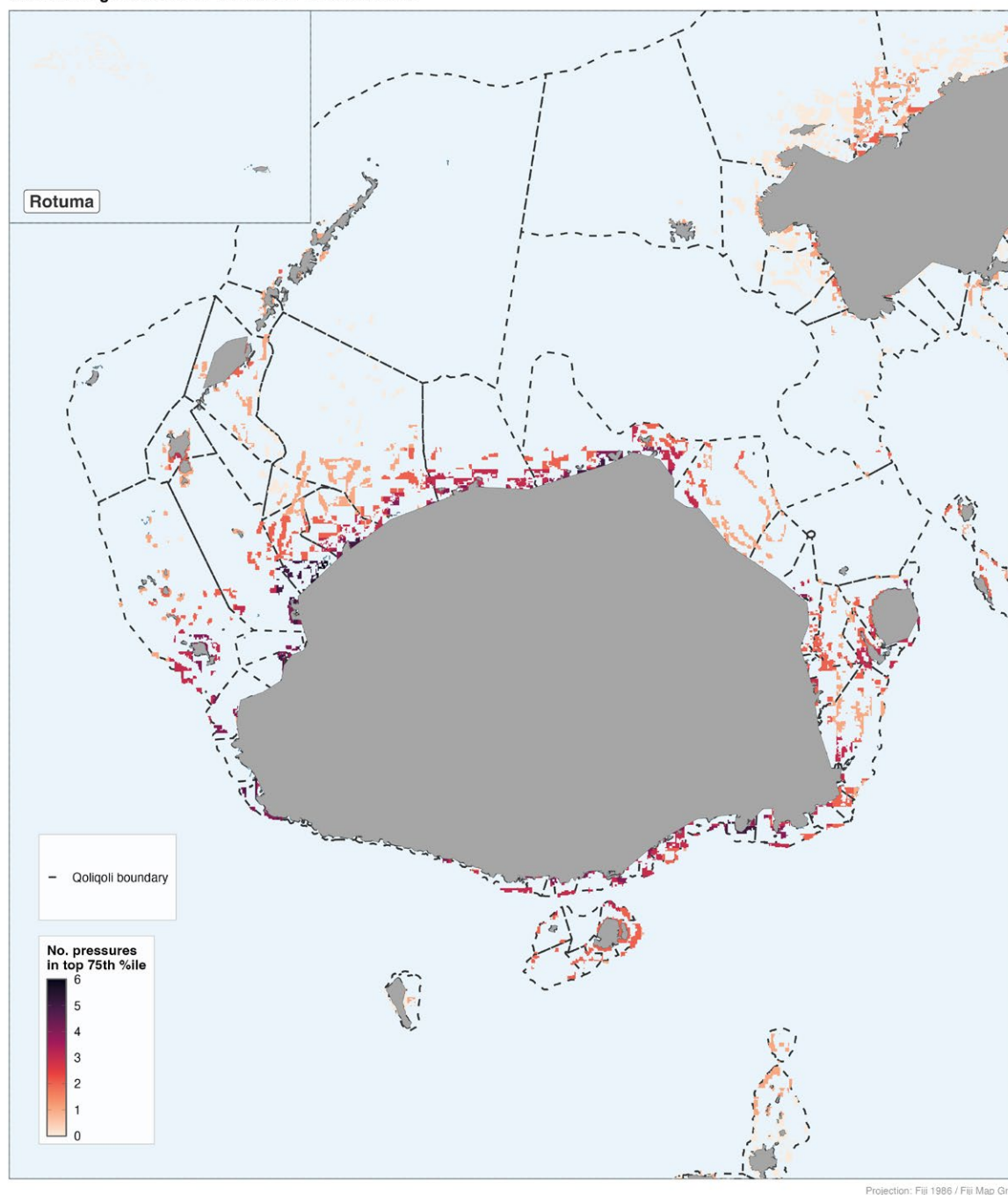


Figure A6. Cumulative Human Pressures across 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs for Viti Levu and Yasawa Islands. Areas under high pressure are shown in darker colours.

Co-occurring Pressures — Vanua Levu, Taveuni & Lomaiviti

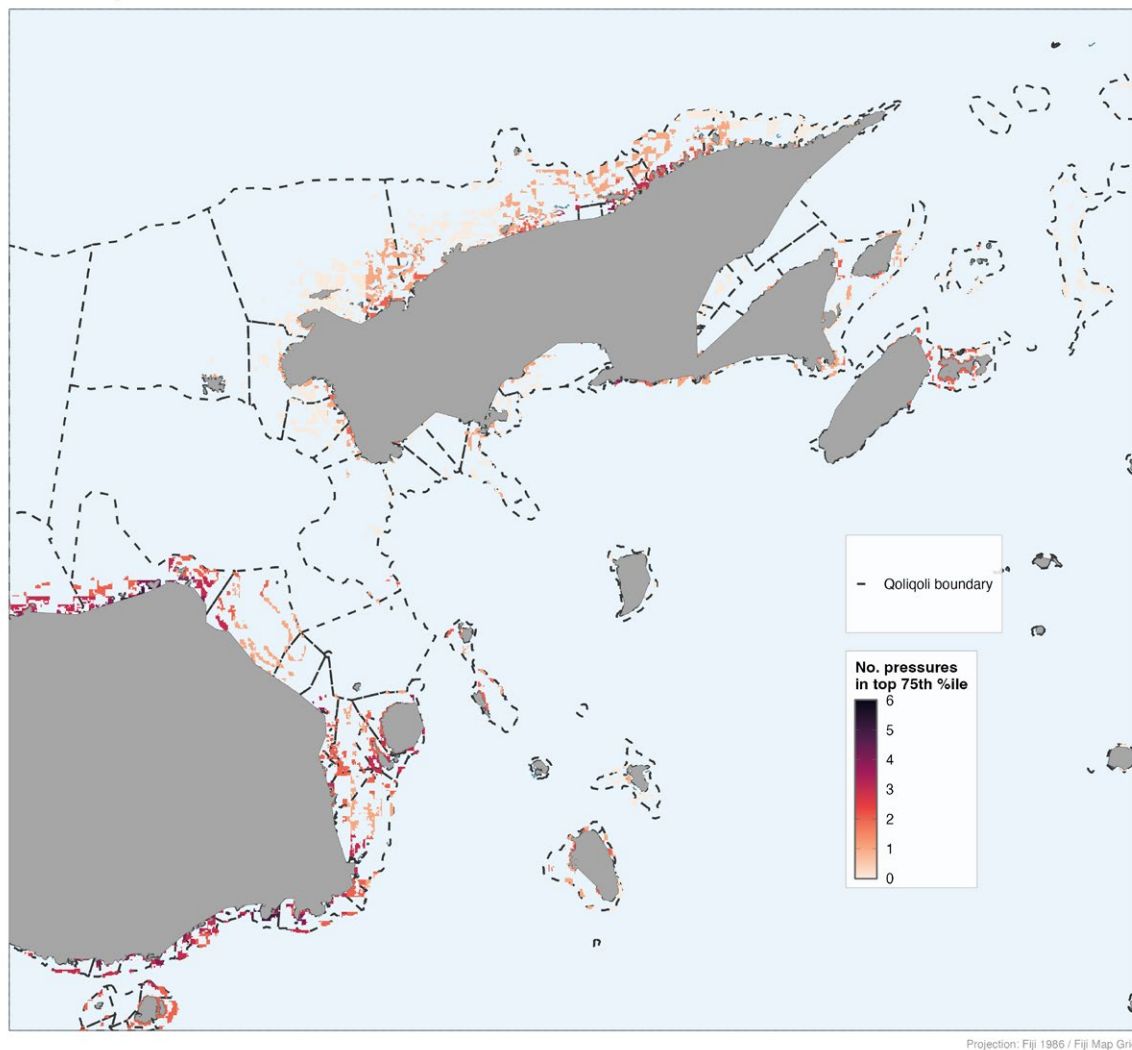


Figure A7. Cumulative Human Pressures across 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs for Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Lomaiviti. Areas under high pressure are shown in darker colours.

Co-occurring Pressures — Northern Lau

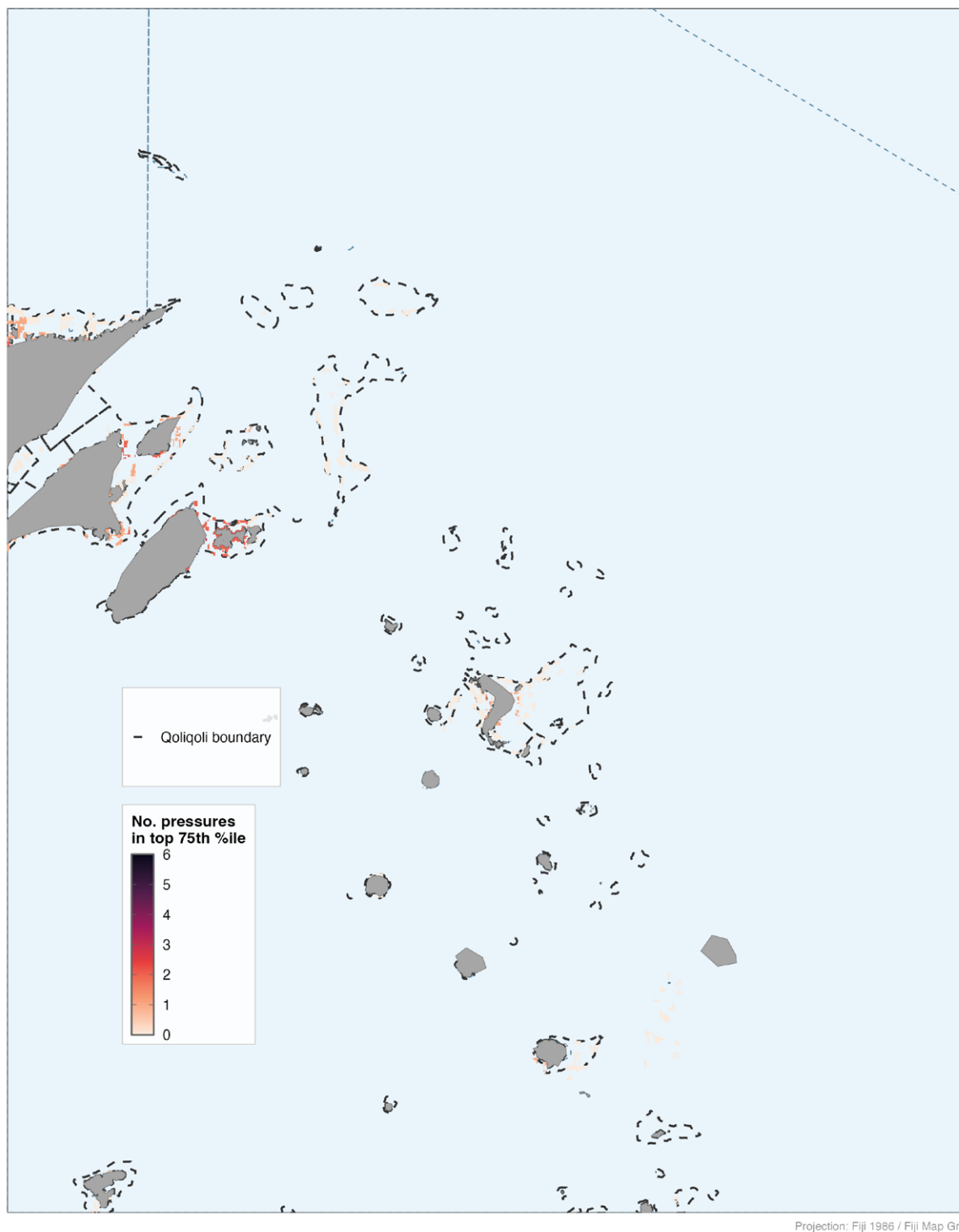


Figure A8. Cumulative Human Pressures across 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs for Northern Lau Group. Areas under high pressure are shown in darker colours.

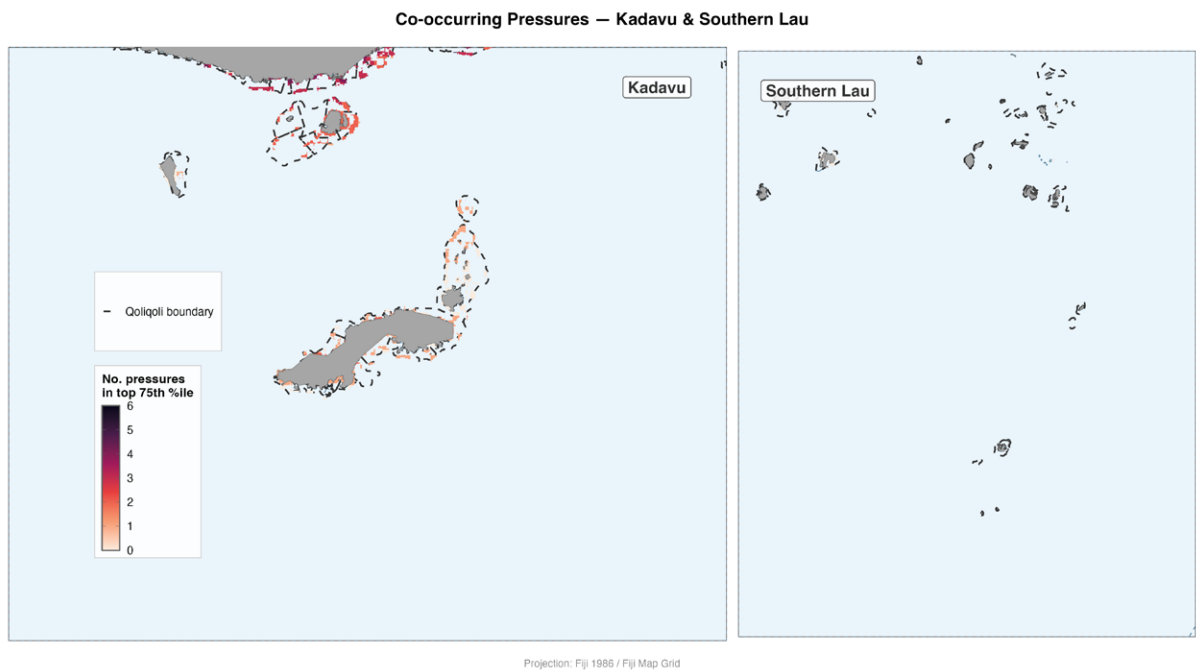


Figure A9. Cumulative Human Pressures across 50 Reefs + Priority Climate Resilient Reefs for Kadavu and Southern Lau. Areas under high pressure are shown in darker colours.

Map of Priority Areas for Mangrove Rehabilitation

Distance of Declining Mangroves to Priority Reefs — Fiji

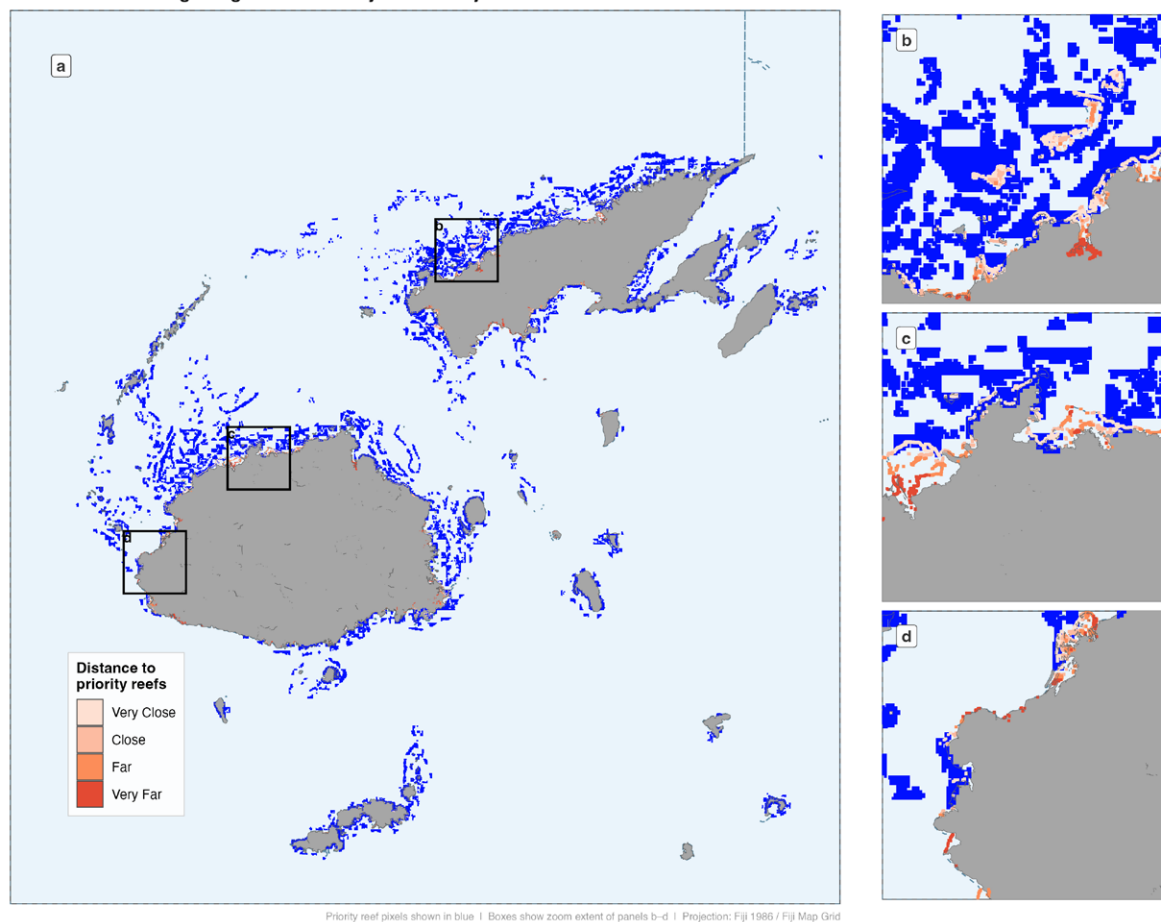


Figure A10. Potential mangrove restoration sites (orange areas) prioritised by distance to climate resilient priority reefs (blue pixels). To view the mangrove restoration sites in more detail, an interactive web app is [available here](#).

Maps Identifying Priority Degraded Catchment Restoration

Combined Restoration Potential: Proportion from Restorable Land

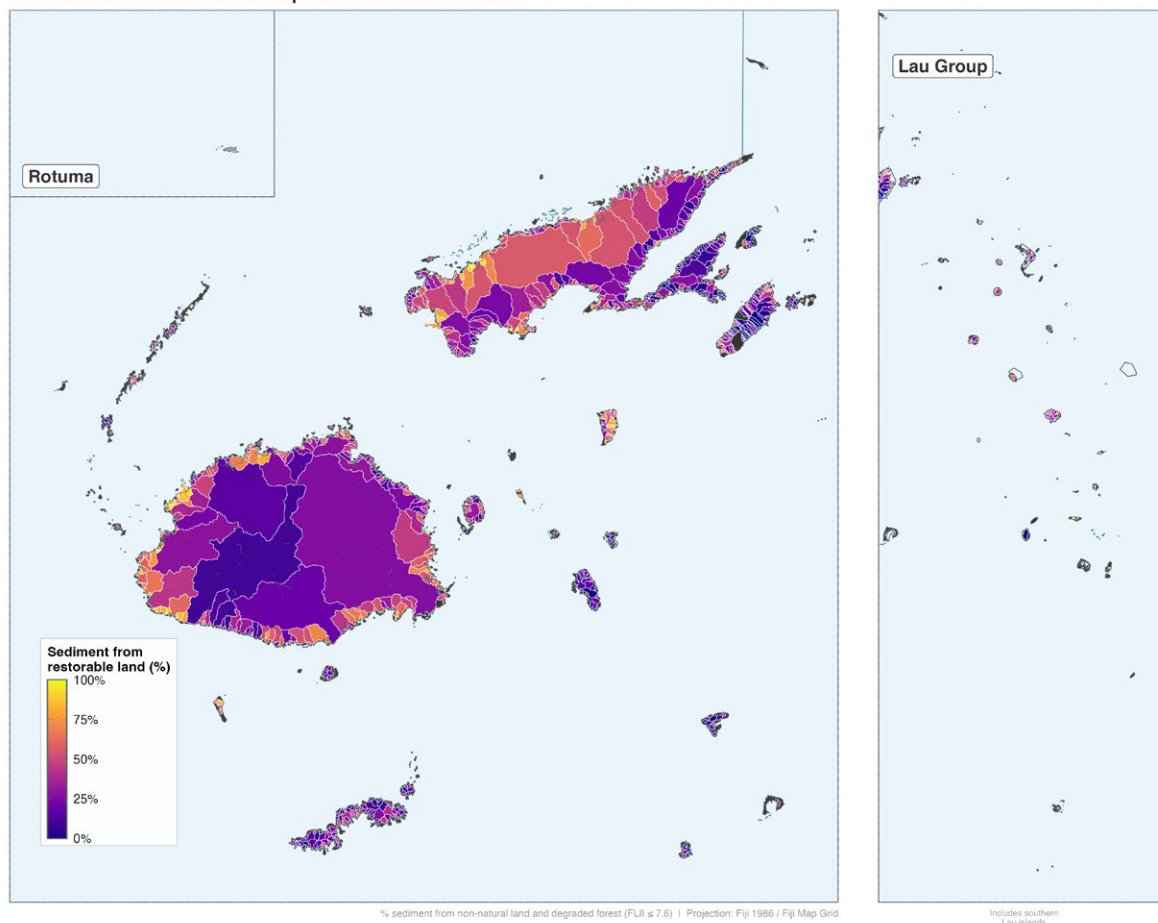


Figure A11. The proportion of sediment exported to the ocean that originates from potentially restorable land within each catchment.

Sediment Export from Restorable Land Within Contributing Watersheds

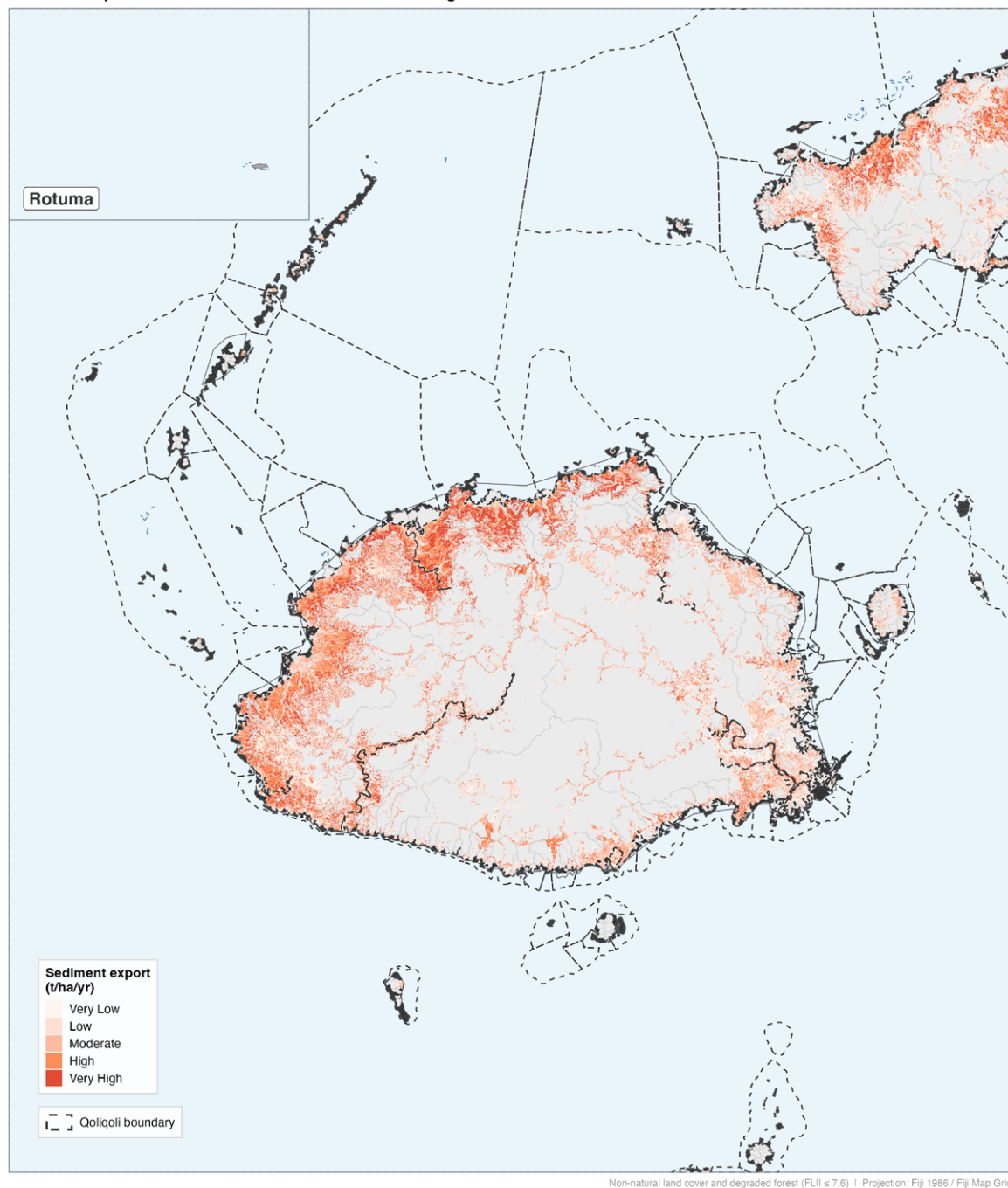


Figure A12. Priority areas for restoration to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Viti Levu. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff

Sediment Export from Restorable Land Within Contributing Watersheds

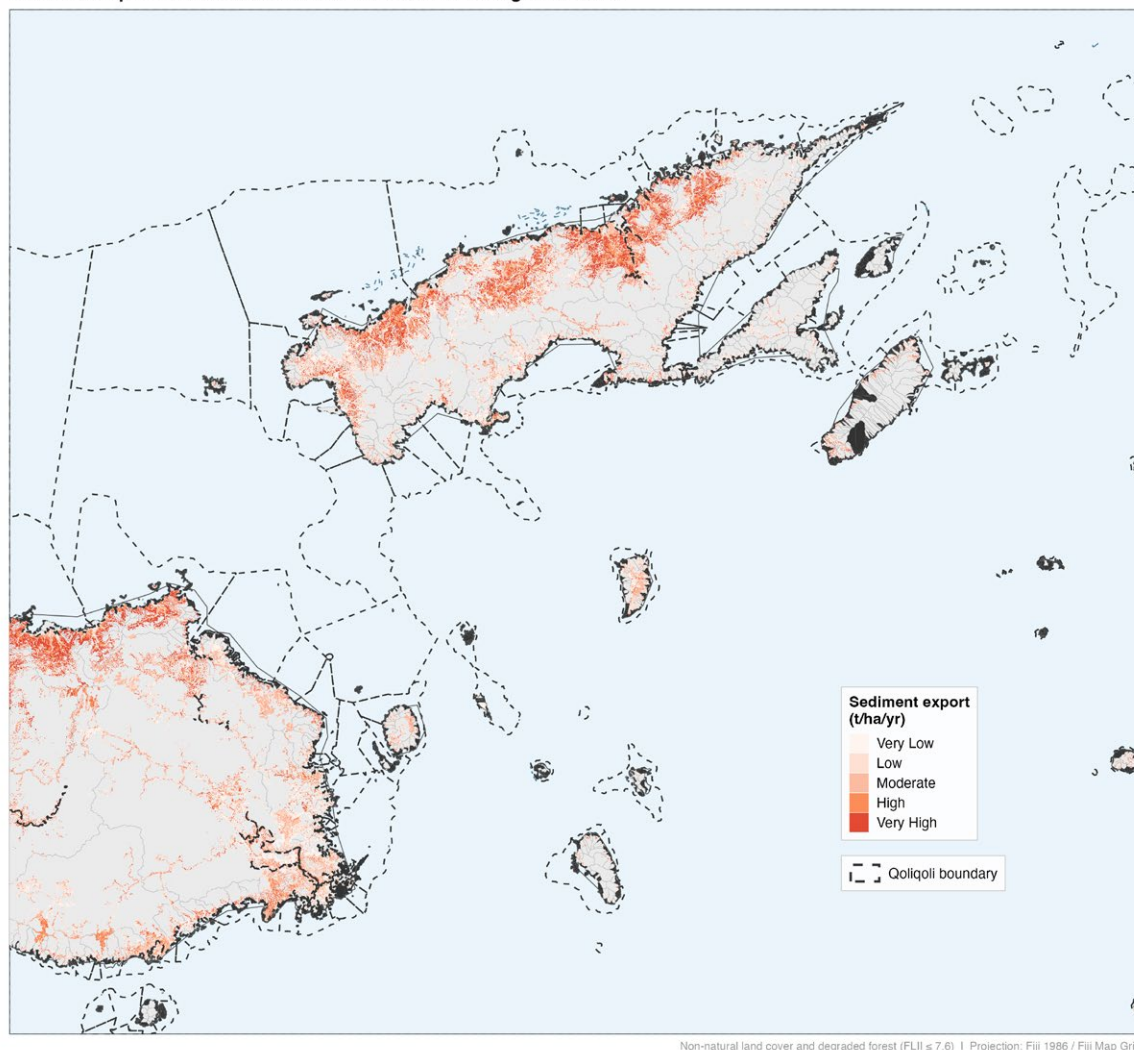


Figure A13. Priority areas for restoration to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Lomaiviti. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.

Sediment Export from Restorable Land Within Contributing Watersheds

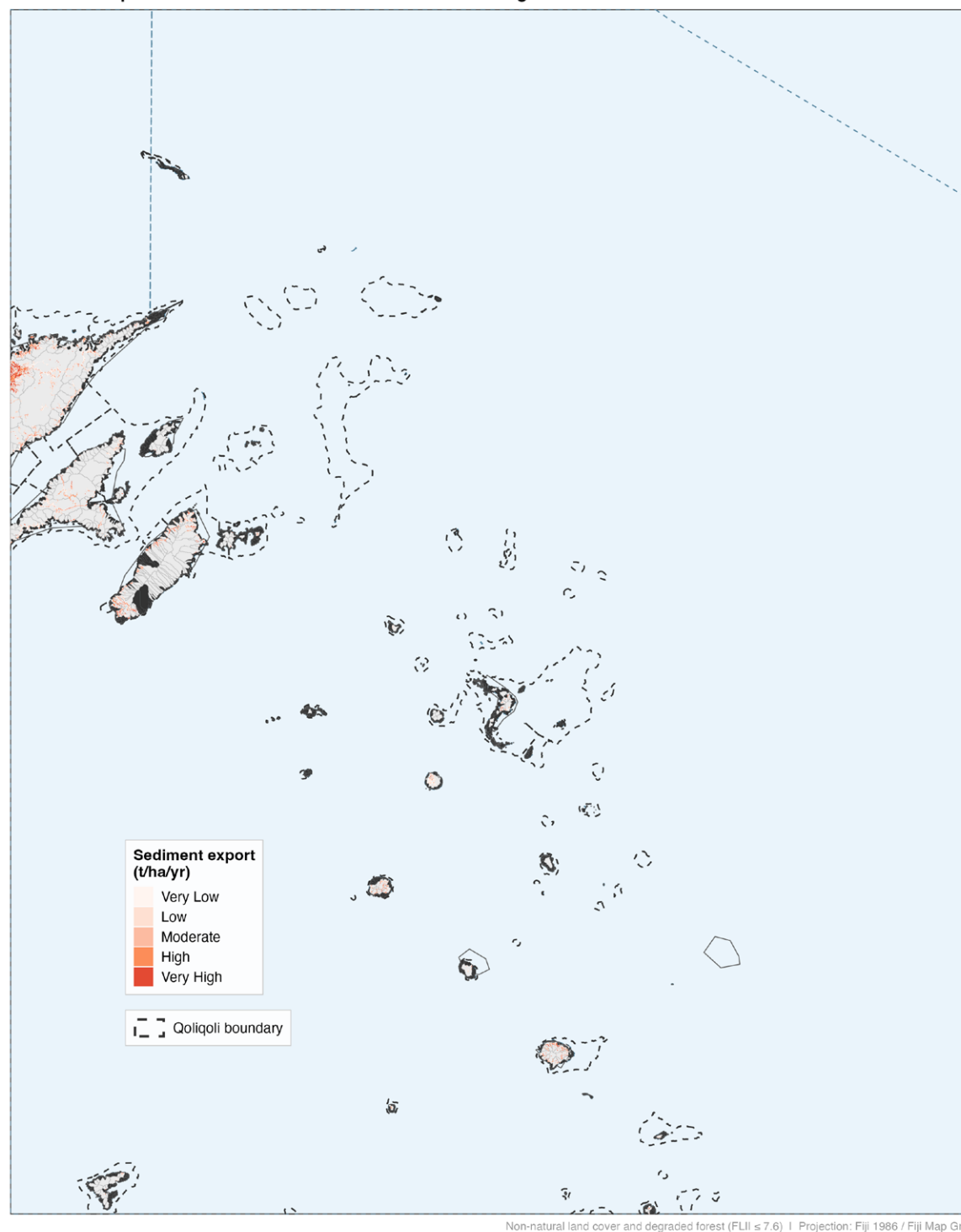


Figure A14. Priority areas for restoration to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Northern Lau. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.

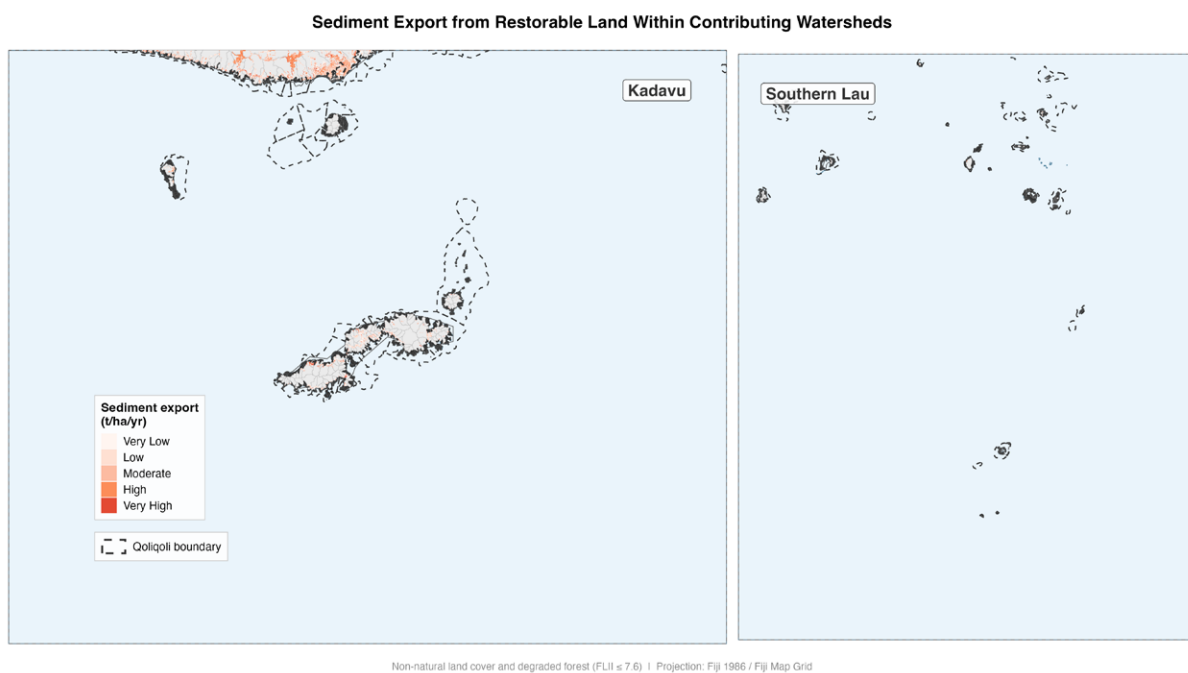


Figure A15. Priority areas for restoration to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Kadavu and Southern Lau Group. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.

Maps Identifying Priority Riparian Restoration Areas

Agriculture, Settlement & Riparian Zones in Contributing Watersheds

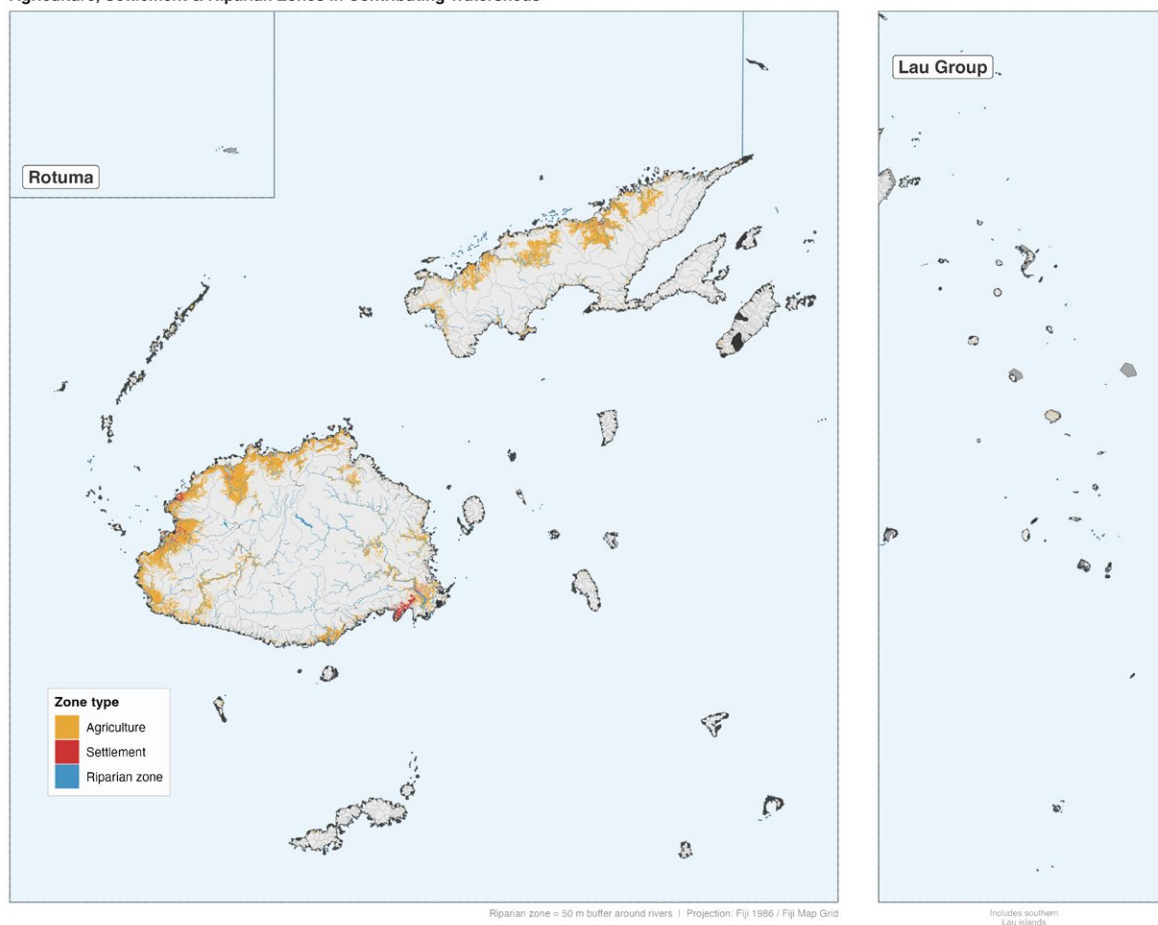


Figure A16. Agricultural areas, settlements and riparian zones that could potentially be targeted for restoration.

Riparian Planting Priority: Agriculture, Settlement & Riparian Zones

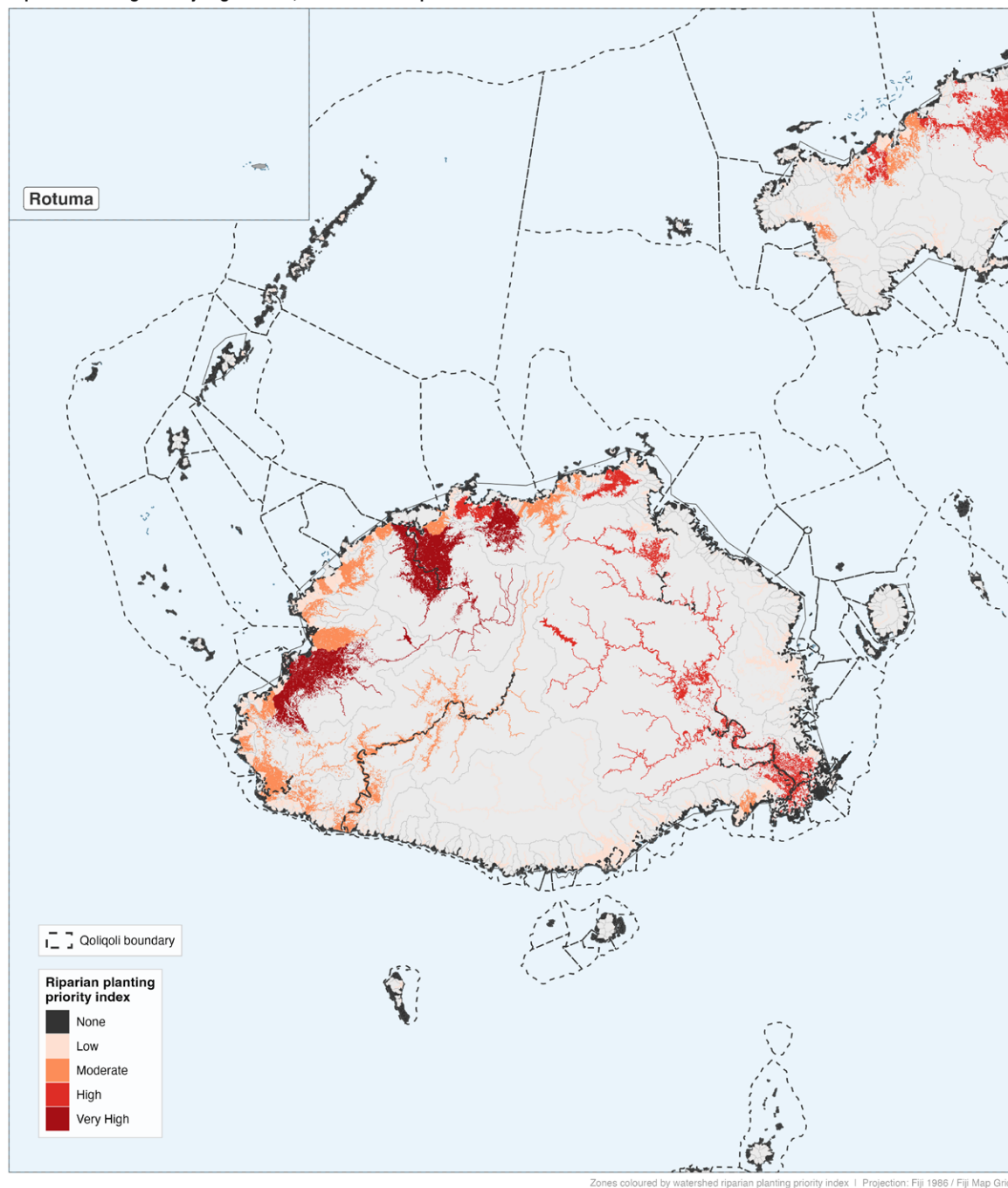


Figure A17. Priority areas for restoration in cropland and riparian zones to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Viti Levu. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.

Riparian Planting Priority: Agriculture, Settlement & Riparian Zones

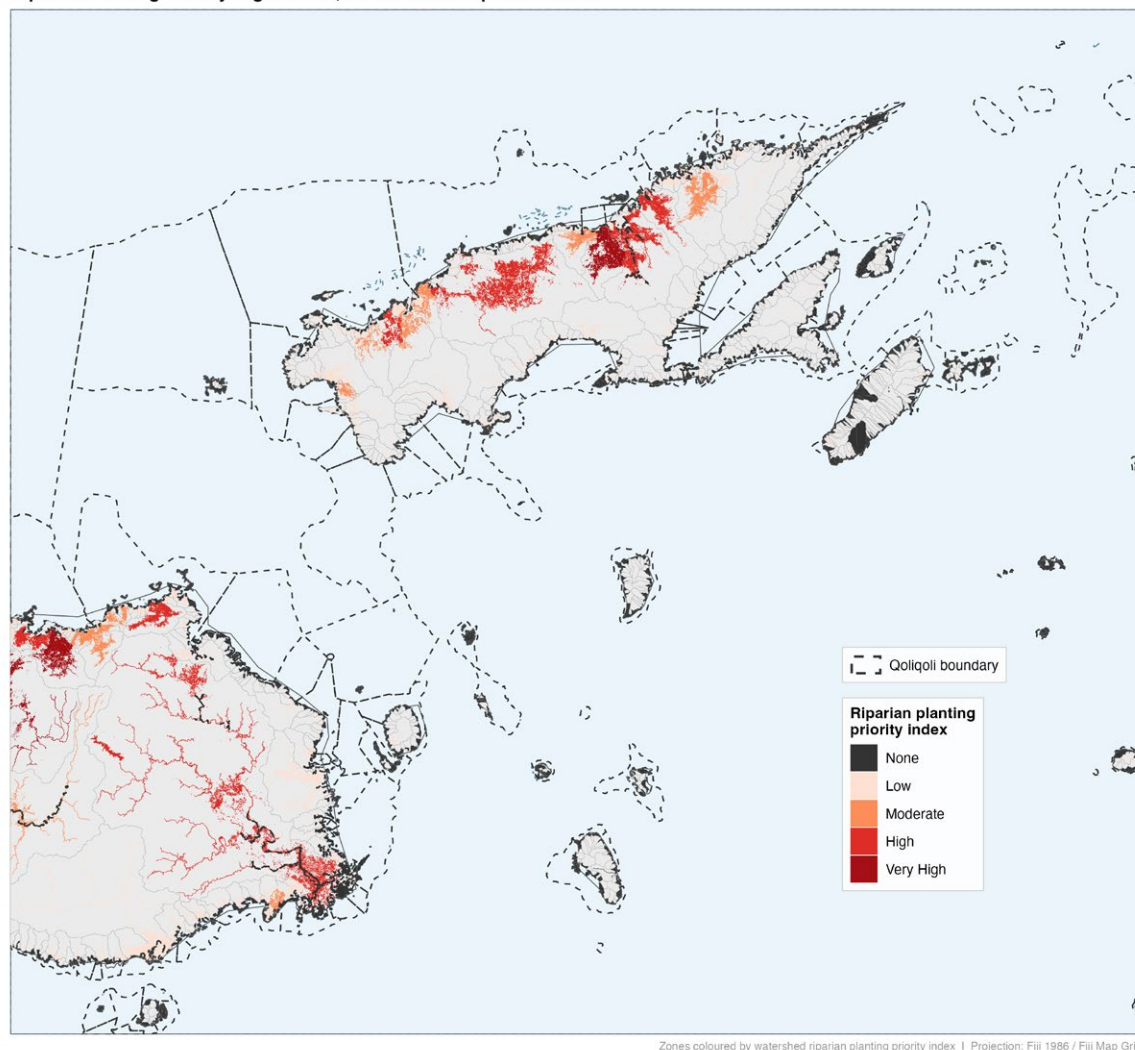


Figure A18. Priority areas for restoration in cropland and riparian zones to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Vanua levu. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff

Riparian Planting Priority: Agriculture, Settlement & Riparian Zones

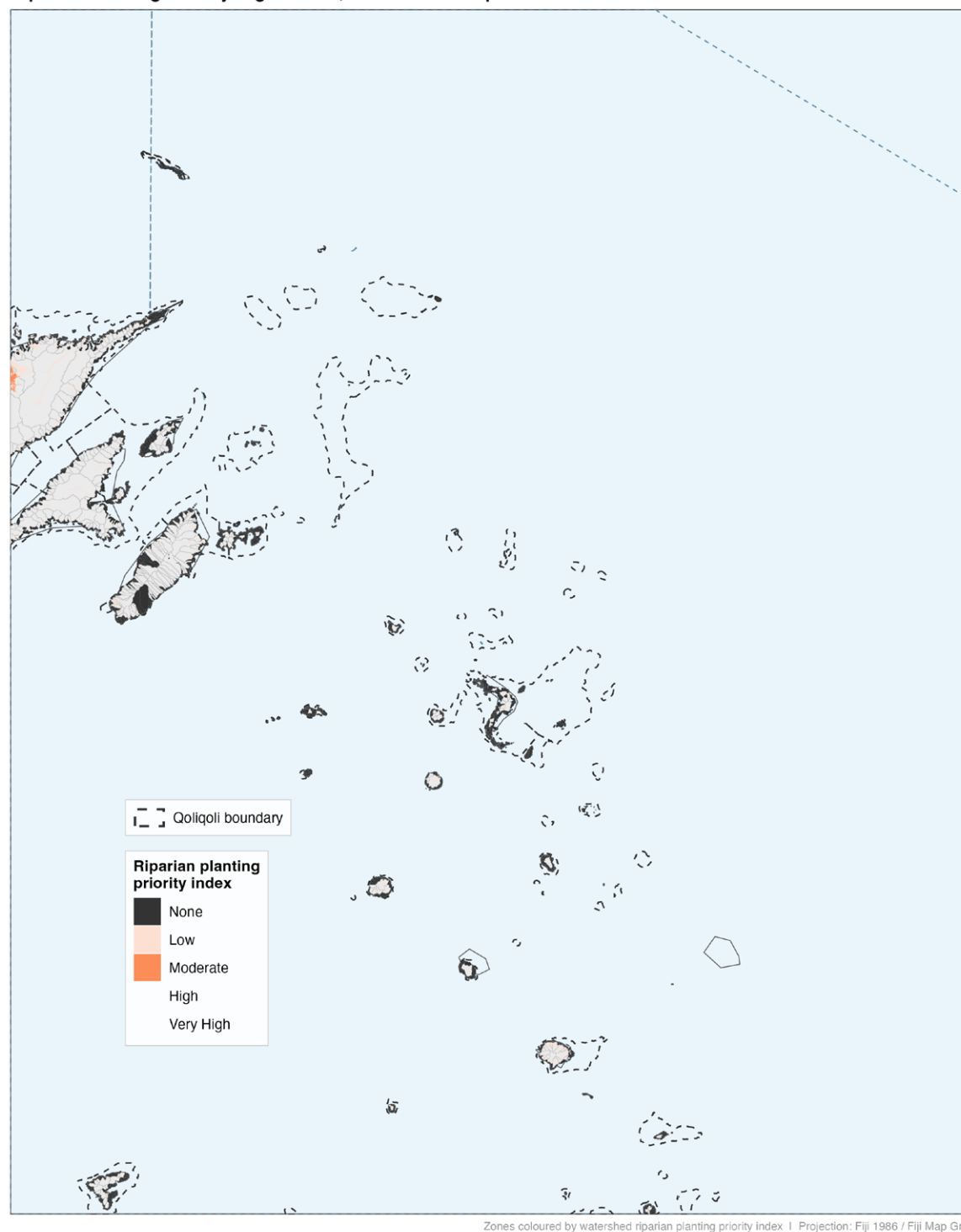


Figure A19. Priority areas for restoration in cropland and riparian zones to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Northern Lau Group. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.

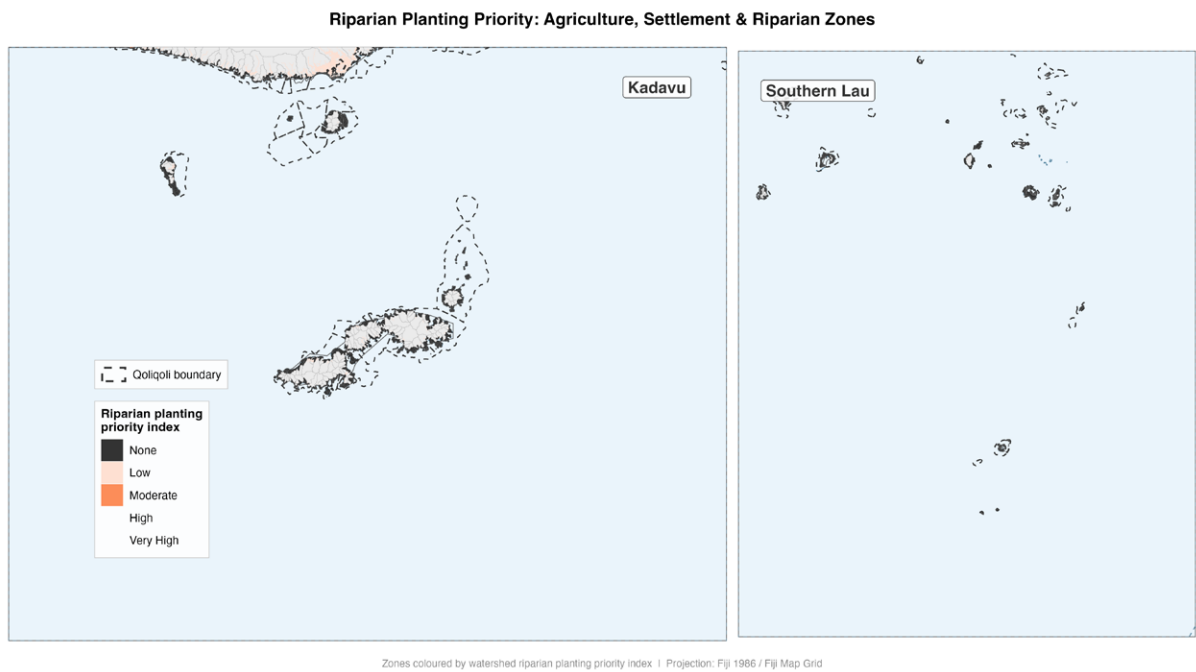


Figure A20. Priority areas for restoration in cropland and riparian zones to reduce sediment runoff to coral reefs for Kadavu and Southern Lau. Darker colours represent areas where restoration could reduce a greater amount of sediment runoff.





