

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY

NOVEMBER 2018



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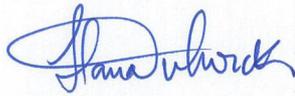
FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy (SINOP) as a strategic roadmap for integrated management and governance of our ocean. The Solomon Islands as a large ocean state has made advances in ocean resources management, including managing its tuna fisheries and policing its exclusive economic zone. However, many challenges remain including the degradation of the ocean environment, unsustainable harvesting of some marine resources, increase in competing uses and claims over the ocean, and emerging challenges such as climate change and ocean acidification. Consequently, it is paramount that an integrated and coordinated approach is undertaken to manage these challenges and ensure a healthy, resilient, secure and productive ocean that supports sustainable use and development for the benefit of the people of Solomon Islands now and into the future.

This is a timely policy that positions Solomon Islands for broader opportunities to optimise gains and empower us in partnerships for economic development and ocean environmental protection, and bring about socioeconomic advancement and recognition for Solomon Islanders as people of the ocean. This policy fills gaps in national ocean governance, and calls for integrated conversations across sectoral ministries on ocean issues and forms the basis to develop an ocean governance legislation and its supporting institutional set-up. This policy is also envisaged to complement and uphold roles of stakeholders including traditional leaders, community leaders, civil society organisations, women, youth and children, external partners and institutions, and to catalyse multi-stakeholder collaborations. The SINOP is also a framework to enable us meet national and international commitments connected with the ocean.

We invite you to join us in the mission of the SINOP which is to define and strengthen integrated ocean governance at various levels, and across sectors, to achieve national, regional and global ocean-related sustainable development goals on socio-economic development, food security, climate change resilience and adaptation, environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity, protection from natural disasters, and national security.

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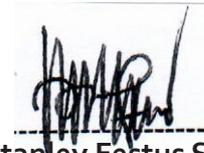
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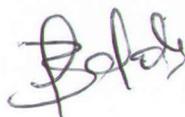
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ABBREVIATIONS

ABNJ	Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
ABS	Access Benefit Sharing
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSO	Civil society organisation
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
IOG	Integrated ocean governance
MACBIO	Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Management in Pacific Island Countries
MESV	Marine Ecosystem Service Valuation
MSG	Melanesian Spearhead Group
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PIROP	Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy
SBD	Solomon Islands' Dollar
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDCC	Solomon Islands Democratic Coalition for Change
SINOP	Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy
SINSO	Solomon Islands National Statistics Office
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
TWG	Technical working group
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WRI	World Resources Institute

DEFINITIONS

Artisanal fishing

Fishing by indigenous Solomon Islanders in the water where they are entitled by customs or law to fish where fish are taken in a manner that having regard to the vessel, the equipment and the method used, is small-scale and individually operated, and fish are taken exclusively for household consumption, barter or local market trade. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Archipelago

A group of islands, including parts of islands, inter-connecting waters and other natural features which are so closely inter-related that such islands, waters and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical entity. (Delimitation of Marine Waters Act 1978)

Archipelagic waters

The archipelagic waters of each archipelago in Solomon Islands shall comprise all areas of sea enclosed by archipelagic baselines drawn under the provisions in section 4 of the Delimitation of Marine Waters Act 1978. (Delimitation of Marine Waters Act 1978)

Biological diversity

The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexity of which they are part; this includes diversity of species, between species and of ecosystems. (CBD 2010)

Biological resources

Including genetic resources, organisms or parts thereof, populations, or any other biotic component of ecosystems with actual or potential use or value. (CBD 2010)

Blue Economy

Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health. (WorldBank 2017)

Commercial fishing

Any fishing, other than artisanal or customary fishing, resulting or intended to result in the selling or trading of any fish which may be taken during the fishing operations. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Community

Group of people living both inland and along coast lines whose livelihoods depend on marine resources for subsistence and economic benefits throughout Solomon Islands. (O12 TWG)

Conservation

The multiple actions to protect, maintain and preserve fish stocks, habitats and ecosystem functions in order to provide for a healthy sustainable ocean. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

** Definitions were sourced from existing documents as well as other international sources. These are the working definitions of the document.*

Continental shelf

The sea bed and subsoil of those submarine areas adjacent to the coasts of the islands of Solomon Islands but beyond the territorial limits of Solomon Islands, to a depth of two hundred metres below the surface of the sea, or, beyond that limit, to where the depth of the superjacent waters admits of exploitation of the natural resources of those areas. (Continental Shelf Act 1978, UNCLOS Part VI, Article 76)

Cultural values

The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation and aesthetic experience. This could include cultural heritage, traditional education, spiritual, religious or moral values, or the value of a sense of place. (CBD ABS Information Kit 2010)

Customary area

Areas within Solomon Islands that communities of indigenous Solomon Islanders control, use, or occupy according to customary practices. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Customary rights

Rights that communities of indigenous Solomon Islanders establish over customary areas by virtue of historical use and association with such areas through acknowledgement of such rights by traditional leaders. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Customary rights holder

A person or persons as may be authorised under customary law to give on behalf of the owners of customary rights permission, in respect of any area within Solomon Islands. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Development

Foreign or local investment, enterprise or undertaking, industrial or commercial operation, scheme or change in land use and includes; (a) the erection of building or structure; (b) carrying out work on, over or under land or sea, including extraction of resources, (c) the use of land, building structure or work and (d) the subdivision of land. (Environment Act 1998)

Developer

Any person who undertakes or proposes to undertake development. (Environment Act 1998)

Ecosystem

A dynamic complex of plant, animal and marine species and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. (CDB ABS Information Kit 2010)

Ecosystem services

Functions of ecosystems which benefit humans and biological systems, like provisioning services such as food and building materials; regulating services such as carbon sequestration and protection from erosion and flooding; cultural services like recreation, cultural identity, and aesthetic appreciation; and supporting services like nutrient cycling and photosynthesis¹. (MACBIO 2015)

Environmental impact

The use, development or protection of the environment, that includes: (a) a positive or adverse impact, (b) a temporary or permanent impact, (c) a past, present or future impact, (d) an impact which is cumulative over time or in combination with other impacts regardless of its scale, intensity, duration or frequency, (e) an impact of high probability; (f) an impact of low probability which has a potentially high impact. (Environment Act 1998)

Exclusive Economic Zone

All areas of sea having as their innermost limits the outermost limits of the territorial seas, and as their outermost limits a line drawn seaward from the baselines every point of which a distance of 200 nautical miles from the point of appropriate baselines. (Delimitation of Marine Waters Act 1978)

Habitat

The place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs. (CBD 2010)

High seas

Any area of seas beyond the national jurisdiction of any State. (Delimitation of Marine Waters Act 1978)

Indigenous Solomon Islander

A Solomon Islander by descent from a group, tribe or line indigenous to Solomon Islands. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Integrated ocean governance

A cross sectoral commitment to promote and implement ocean management through an integrated framework that recognizes the critical importance of goods and services provided by the ocean. (MACBIO, *Ocean12* Brief 2015)

Marine managed area

An area, within the fisheries waters, regulated to preserve its natural state, as far as possible, to protect marine life but allow for harvesting of marine resources. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Marine protected area

Any area within the fisheries waters for which protective, conservation, restorative or precautionary measures, consistent with international law, have been instituted for the purpose of protecting and conserving species, habitats, ecosystems or ecological processes of the marine environment. (Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Marine spatial plan

An output of the process of marine spatial planning that distributes human activities in marine areas within spatially and temporally defined zones to achieve identified ecological, economic, cultural and social objectives. (MACBIO Factsheet, *Ocean12* Inaugural Summit Report 2015)

Marine spatial planning

An inter-sectoral and participatory planning process and tool that seeks to balance ecological, economic, and social objectives, aiming for sustainable marine resource use and prosperous blue economies. (MACBIO Factsheet, *Ocean12* Inaugural Summit Report 2015)

Pollution

The direct or indirect alteration of the environment:

to (a) detriment or degradation; or to (b) the detriment of any beneficial use, and includes pollution as prescribed by regulations. (Environment Act 1998)

Stakeholders

Refers to any development organizations or partners, investors, industries, government ministries, provincial government and communities who have vested interest to the ocean and its resources. (Protected Areas Act 2010, Fisheries Management Act 2015)

Traditional knowledge

Refers to a living body of traditional knowledge, spiritual beliefs, innovations and practices of different tribal groups, line or communities, related to resource use and management of indigenous Solomon Islanders. (CBD ABS Information Kit 2010)

Traditional leader

An individual who is traditionally recognized, appointed or chosen according to existing customary systems and traditional regimes within tribal groups in any community to represent or act on behalf of his/her peoples' aspirations. (*Ocean12* TWG)

INTRODUCTION

Policy context

Solomon Islanders are ocean people. We are not separate to our ocean: we are part of our ocean. It is reflected in our history, our culture, our traditions and in our day-to-day lives. We not only respect the plants, animals and fish of the sea but recognise our own role in maintaining the integrity of our ocean ecosystem and its importance to economy. Our marine resources are valued at over SBD2.5 billion per year.

This national ocean policy aims to protect and increase the value of resources of ocean and also the inherent value of the marine ecosystems and species upon which that wealth relies on.

The Solomon Islands is one of the largest ocean states in the Pacific with an area of 1,589,477km². Solomon Islands has a coastline of 9,880 km (WRI 2012) and a land area of about 30,407 km². So land, in the Solomon Islands represents only 2% of the total size of Solomon Islands. The country is composed of about 1000 islands divided into nine provinces. More than 523,000 people live in the country with a population density that ranges from 4.5 people/km² in Rennell and Bellona to 42 people/km² in Central Province (SINSO 2009).

In Solomon Islands there are three levels of governance over the oceans: customary, provincial, and national. About 80% of the land is customary land which includes foreshores, reefs and land between low- and highwater marks. Solomon Islands' ocean extends from inshore water out to 200 nautical miles.

Each province differs in environment, population and culture. This makes Solomon Islanders multicultural and diverse in their relationship with the marine environment (MACBIO MESV Report 2017). In addition, the natural marine biodiversity is amongst the more diverse on the planet – being part of the globally renowned Coral Triangle.

The Solomon Islands government recognizes the economic, social and cultural importance of our country's ocean. It is committed to ensuring the ecologically sustainable development and protection of the ocean for now and the future. An integrated approach involving cross-sectoral ministries, provincial governments, private sector, academia, NGOs, development partners and the communities is needed.

This Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy (SINOP) is a governance framework to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to governing the ocean.

Development of Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy

In 2015, the Government of the Solomon Islands held an inaugural, national ocean summit to discuss existing and future management of Solomon Islands' ocean. It was recognised, at that time, that there was both a need to have an integrated, cross-ministerial approach to ocean management and that no overarching legislative or policy framework existed to facilitate such an approach. At the recommendation of this Ocean Summit, in April 2016, Solomon Islands cabinet established the "Ocean 12" (Decision (C10[2016]4)).

The *Ocean12* is the national steering committee for the Solomon Islands' integrated ocean governance efforts. The *Ocean12* is a Permanent-Secretary-level steering committee co-chaired by the Ministries of Fisheries and Marine Resources, of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology, of Foreign Affairs and External Trade and the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. In total it comprises of the twelve Ministries with the most direct influence in the use and management of the Solomon Islands' ocean; the other nine being the Ministries of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, of Lands, Housing and Survey, of Culture and Tourism, of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, of Infrastructure Development (Solomon Islands Maritime Safety Authority), of Justice and Legal Affairs, of Police, National Security & Correctional Services, of Forestry & Research and of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening. The *Ocean12* established a Technical Working Group (TWG) with technical officers as members from the same Ministries.

Eleven aspects of integrated ocean governance were identified by the *Ocean12*:

- 1) An integrated national ocean policy,
- 2) National marine spatial planning,
- 3) A legal framework to underpin aspects (1) and (2),
- 4) Capacity development,
- 5) Sustainable financing,
- 6) Decision-making systems,
- 7) Institutional arrangements,
- 8) Compliance,
- 9) Consultation and participation,
- 10) Knowledge,
- 11) Jurisdiction.

A priority aspect of integrated ocean governance was identified as an overarching legislation and policy: this policy. This policy went through various consultation with all Ministries, Provincial Secretaries and fishery officers, industry and private sector stakeholders, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and community organisations and development partners.

This policy will remain a living document to be updated as new information and new ocean activities arise in future.

Supporting achievement of national, regional and international commitments

This policy aligns with and helps implement existing national, regional and international policies and commitments.

Nationally, the Solomon Islands Democratic Coalition for Change (SIDCC) Government through its overarching Policy Statement has a defined objective to ensure sustainable use and conservation of natural resources as well as environmental protection and combatting the adverse effects of climate change. The policy commits to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include, for example, ensuring environmentally sustainable development and also conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The national ocean policy also supports enhanced achievement of sectoral aims, for example:

- *To achieve an improvement in the social and economic livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders* - National Development Strategy 2016 - 2035.
- *To ensure resilient and environmentally sustainable development with effective disaster risk management, response and recovery* - National Development Strategy 2016 - 2035.
- *To manage the flora and fauna to ensure sustainable use of these resources* - Wildlife Protection and Management Act 1998 and amendment of 2017.
- *To promote the protection of ecosystems, natural habitats and to maintain viable populations of species in natural surroundings and to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development in areas adjacent to protected areas with a view to furthering protection of the protected areas.* - Protected Area Act 2010.
- *To regulate and control mining* - Mines and Minerals Act 1996.
- *To ensure long term management, conservation, development and sustainable use of Solomon Islands fisheries and marine ecosystems for the benefit of the people of Solomon Islands.* - Fisheries Management Act 2015.
- *That people, environment and economy of the country are resilient and able to adapt to the predicted impacts of climate change* - Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy 2012.

- *To protect and conserve and promote Solomon Islands unique and endemic biological diversity through sustainable management and utilisation for better livelihood and prosperity of all Solomon Islands* - National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2009.
- *To support sustainable tourism development* - Solomon Islands National Tourism Strategy 2015.
- *To support the formalisation and sustainable management of marine and land based protected areas* – Solomon Islands National Tourism Strategy 2015.
- *To protect sovereignty, peace, and the Solomon Islands people* - Solomon Islands National Security Strategy 2018 (Draft).

Regionally, the Solomon Islands has committed to policies and made declarations, as a Pacific Island leader, to transformative ocean management – which implementation of this National Ocean Policy will bring. Regional commitments include to a Pacific Oceanscape (2011), to the Coral Triangle Initiative (2009), the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP, 2005), Pacific Island Leaders declarations at various Pacific Island for more integrated and sustainable use of the ocean (e.g. Vava'u 2007, Palau 2015), the Future of Fisheries: a regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific Fisheries (2015), the New Song for Coastal Fisheries – Pathways to change (2015), Pacific Island Framework for Action on Climate Change (2015) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group's (MSG's) Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development 2015 - 2024.

The government also states an intent to fulfil international commitments. An integrated and holistic approach to ocean management can contribute to agreements such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Furthermore, under UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), ocean management and planning also helps demonstrate sovereignty and ownership over Solomon Island's waters. The Solomon Islands has also made the development of an ocean policy a Voluntary Commitment at the UN Ocean Conference in 2017. This policy demonstrates the country's interest in harnessing the full benefits of the resources within the ocean boundaries whilst ensuring their sustainable use.

How to use this policy

Each sector will review this policy to ensure alignment of its national corporate and/or sectoral plans with the policy. They will be supported in this effort by a new, proposed ocean authority to be established as a centralised coordination body for the government. The policy will also guide the development of the overarching national ocean governance legislation, also proposed in this policy. More detailed guidance on the implementation of this policy will be forthcoming in the national ocean policy implementation plan.

VISION

A healthy, resilient, secure and productive ocean, that supports sustainable use and development for the benefit of the people of Solomon Islands now and into the future.

MISSION

The Solomon Islands national ocean policy (SINOP) aims to define and strengthen integrated ocean governance at various levels, and across sectors, to achieve national, regional and global ocean-related sustainable development goals on socio-economic development, food security, climate change resilience and adaptation, environmental protection and conservation of biodiversity, protection from natural disasters, and national security.

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

- Covers all activities and interests within and impacting on the Solomon Islands ocean.
- Covers all relevant matters related to the sustainable and integrated ocean use and governance over which Solomon Islands exercises sovereignty, sovereign rights or jurisdiction.
- Intends to provide the role of a national integrated ocean governance approach without taking away sectoral legislative scope and mandates.
- Covers all marine and coastal areas and their resources from high water mark to EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) boundary.
- Covers all areas including suprajacent airspace, water column, seabed, biodiversity and subjacent strata within the maritime boundary and ABNJ (Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction) and the continental shelf.



OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

With regard to the Solomon Islands' Ocean, this policy's objectives are to:

- Achieve sustainable use and development of the ocean and its resources through integrated ocean governance;
- Recognise the importance and value of the Solomon Islands' ocean and its resources as a basis for social, cultural, economic and environmental aspirations for all Solomon Islanders;
- Strengthen integration, coordination and harmonisation of efforts by communities, provincial and national government, and across all sectors;
- Uphold our national and international ocean commitments and obligations;
- Recognise and address competing ocean values and uses by different sectors and stakeholders;
- Ensure sustainable food and nutritional security and maximize economic benefits for the people of Solomon Islands;
- Protect Solomon Islands' interests over and the peaceful use of its ocean.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This National Ocean Policy adopts key guiding principles held within and consistent with relevant international and national conventions, treaties legislation and policies and with those set out within the Solomon Islands' Constitution.

This policy further emphasises the following principles:

- **Sustainable development:** Balancing human development with the ability of natural systems to provide now and in the future the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend.
- **Ecosystem-based management:** Achieving sustainable development through balancing ecological, economic and social priorities and objectives with a primary focus on maintaining ecosystem structure and functioning.
- **Precautionary principle:** Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, poor understanding or lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation. Planning and decision making need to include prevention and preparedness for emerging issues.
- **Integration principle:** Integration and coordination among levels and sectors of government in order to create complementary and mutually reinforcing decisions and actions.
- **Respect and acknowledge customary rights and traditional knowledge and decision-making structures:** This policy aims to uphold and reinforce traditional owners' values, knowledge and management systems.
- **Science and research:** Decision making to be supported by best available scientific evidence for proper, effective and efficient management of resources.
- **Polluter pays principle:** Those who intent to or incur harm to the ocean environment needs to be hold responsible in the full based on the calculated and intrinsic value of the ocean environment and its environmental services.
- **Transparency, public participation and public trust:** Processes in decision making shall be accountable, transparent, easily understood and shall include public participation in, and influencing over, planning and decisions as far as possible. The policy acknowledges that marine resources, including marine space, belong to the people and are held in trust by the government for its present and future generations.
- **International obligations:** Decisions in ocean governance needs to be in line and contribute to international commitments entered by the Solomon Islands' government.
- **Gender equity and inclusiveness:** Promoting gender equity to ensure equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making. Consultation and participation processes will be sensitive to the needs and will include considerations or the views of all minorities including women, youth and other minority groups.

OCEAN THEMES

1. Ocean Governance

Ocean governance forms the foundation for the implementation of the national holistic and integrated ocean regime. Effective ocean governance is considered integral as a specific policy area yet pervasive to all other specific policy areas and strategic actions that are pertinent to address the current and emerging challenges facing our ocean. In this regard, ocean governance will focus on policy, legal (national and international) and institutional frameworks (with the systems and processes) and the conduct thereof within the national waters and beyond. It also involves the participation of state actors (whole of the government) as well as non-state actors, users, people, NGOs and other stakeholders.

Policy statements

1. Develop an overarching national legal framework with an appropriate institutional body for integrated ocean governance in Solomon Islands.
2. Harmonise existing legislations to effectively implement integrated ocean governance in Solomon Islands.
3. Recognise the role of ministries by complementing their sectoral legislative scope and mandates.
4. Recognise roles and responsibilities of different forms of ocean governance by different stakeholders including traditional owners, provinces and national actors.
5. Establish a robust and efficient system that provides for integrated ocean management that delivers the objectives of this policy.
6. Promote inclusive participation, transparency and active involvement of actors (individuals, communities and sectors) to contribute to the implementation and enforcement of the national ocean policy and marine spatial plan.
7. Develop an implementation framework and marine spatial plan for joint participation of all actors.
8. Develop clear processes and mechanism to vet developments concerning the ocean.
9. Ensure effective ocean surveillance by all stakeholders.



Strategies

- Develop a National Ocean Governance Act and Regulations that provides, inter alia, for the followings:
 - a) The establishment of a national authority responsible for coordinating and overseeing effective implementation of integrated ocean governance in Solomon Islands (including UNCLOS and related conventions) powers and functions (including power to oversee processes and procedures;
 - b) The recognition of different limits of customary, provincial and national rights to use within maritime areas including jurisdiction and rights over submerged land;
 - c) The recognition of traditional marine tenure with limits and traditional management systems;
 - d) The alignment of different actors including levels of ocean governance – provinces and communities;
 - e) Data and knowledge management sharing between Ministries, provinces and communities. Form appropriate technical and scientific teams/expert groups for information exchange and outreach;
 - f) Access and benefit sharing mechanisms;
 - g) Encourage inclusive public participation and empower communities to optimise ocean management;
 - h) Strengthening and improving the coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders;
 - i) The development of dispute/conflict resolution mechanism;
 - j) Harmonising of existing national laws with the intended national ocean governance act;
 - k) Ensure cross-ministerial screening and reviewing of the processes towards (1) the issuance of the development consent, and (2) any other investment or development activity that may impact on the ocean;
 - l) Allow for the development of a national marine spatial plan.
- Ensure provincial ordinances are aligned to this policy for purposes of uniformity for implementation and enforcement.
- Ensure that new sectoral legislations and amendments of existing legislation are aligned to this policy.
- Streamline and support or strengthen existing provincial government and communities' capacities to establish processes and structures for integrated ocean management and marine spatial planning.
- Develop a national integrated ocean governance resource mobilisation plan/strategy for implementation of the SINOP.

- Ensure that all impacts of developments on marine environment are assessed, published and shared across all sectors and levels.
- Build strong coordinating mechanisms between all actors and stakeholders to carry out ocean surveillance effectively.
- Develop a marine spatial plan to ensure integrated ocean governance.

2. Ocean Environment

The country's ocean environment is a rich and diverse, yet vulnerable and fragile, ecosystem. The ocean environment includes the coastal and marine waters including the benthic environment. Ocean structure and trophic levels are an integral part of ensuring that there is a healthy and productive balance. A diversity of ecosystems and habitats provides for a variety of marine organisms. The ocean environment plays an important role in climate regulation, water cycle, ocean productivity, protection and other ecosystem services. It was assessed that the total annual value of Solomon Islands Marine Ecosystem Services is more than 2.6 billion SBD in 2014 (MESV, 2014). Temperature, ocean currents, ocean acidity and nutrients are important in determining the occurrence, distribution and survival of species in the ocean – all of which can be negatively influenced by anthropogenic factors.

Policy Statements

1. Promote understanding, awareness and recognition of the importance and value of the ocean environment as an 'interconnected, functional and dynamic system'.
2. Ensure that the integrity of the ocean environment is maintained or sustained in any planning, management and/or development activities.
3. Develop an environment impact accounting system to assess for losses and damage to the ocean environment from human uses.
4. Ensure continuous monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the state of Solomon Islands ocean environment.
5. Ensure compliance to rules and regulations to minimise adverse impacts on Solomon Islands ocean.



Strategies

- Take an active role in promoting the importance and significance of Solomon Islands' ocean environment in national, sub-regional, regional and international platforms.
- Adopt ecosystem-based approaches for protection and management of the ocean environment and its marine resources.
- Develop and implement a valuation system and financial mechanism to account for loss and damages of coastal and marine ecosystems – mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs, including pelagic and deepwater ecosystems (seamounts, canyons etc.) - for the purpose of protection, rehabilitation and/or restoration.
- Ensure restoration of damaged environments and/or habitats to near-natural state (e.g. restore damage from shipwrecks, coastal developments).
- Strengthen existing and develop new monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to assess, monitor, track and report on the status of the Solomon Islands Ocean, including the impacts of land and ocean based developments and activities.
- Establish effective cross-sectoral compliance systems to rules and regulations in integrated ocean governance.

3. Ocean People

Solomon Islanders are ocean people that are inhabitants of small islands within an interconnected system of oceanic waters. They are interconnected with the ocean such that they breathe, taste, touch, hear, source food from and see the ocean day-in, day-out. There are strong historic and cultural links between our people and the ocean. Being an ocean people is an identity shared by all in the Oceania region.

Solomon Islanders as ocean people share a common understanding on their contextual rights over ocean resources, common ocean value and appreciation of the ocean that they are part of.

The SINOP appreciates, with high regard, and recognizes that traditional knowledge, community participation and inclusive and comprehensive awareness are key elements for integrated ocean governance.



Policy statements

1. Recognize, respect and appreciate diverse cultures and distinct traditional knowledge and traditional control and access rights to the ocean across the nation.
2. Allow for the existing variety of traditional access and control rights of resources in the ocean to be reflected in partnership models across the country for transparent and accountable development of ocean resources, be they living or non- living.
3. Establish proper equitable management and use mechanisms for the sharing of coastal and marine resource benefits.
4. Develop national institutional, sectoral and professional capacity on integrated ocean governance and management.

Strategies

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of communities, traditional institutions and resource owners, provinces and other relevant stakeholders for proper engagement in ocean governance.
- Involve communities in participatory planning processes (e.g. marine spatial planning) and ensure that community knowledge is revived and maintained.
- Coordinate, collate and exchange learning from projects and programmes on oceans to enhance and promote good practices of community participation, awareness and traditional knowledge and use.
- Marine resource owners' identification process to be coordinated at the traditional and provincial level and be carried out by traditional leaders in accordance to customary norms accepted by parties, involving and recognizing the role of traditional leaders.
- Build and expand national capacity on integrated ocean governance and management.

4. Ocean Threats

Increasing population, improved technology, increased demand from a growing global market and the local need for food, income and economic development, increases demand for ocean resources and space. Pressures include industrial fishing, overharvesting of coastal and marine resources, invasive species, marine pollution, including land-based threats to the coastal and marine environment. Such unsustainable and damaging developments and uses are threats to the ocean. Emerging interest for resource extraction in petroleum, gas and minerals are also challenges.



Climate change and natural disasters add to these adverse impacts upon our fragile and vulnerable ocean environment as well as upon the people of the Solomon Islands.

These threats, in turn, impact on Solomon Islands' social and cultural values, livelihoods, economy, marine ecosystems (food webs) and food security. For example, it is estimated that, by 2050, coral reef and mangrove degradation or destruction will lead to a loss of SBD12 billion worth of ecosystem services in Solomon Islands and there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

Policy Statements

1. Establish and strengthen integrated efforts to minimise and/or mitigate risks and threats to the ocean.
2. Strengthen the resilience of people and communities to negative impacts on their ocean resources.
3. Ensure that clear coordination, protocols and/or redress mechanisms are in place to address liability, loss and damages for environmental disasters and incidents.
4. Foster greater social responsibility to reduce negative impacts upon, and enhance protection of, the ocean.
5. Promote research and studies on the impacts and responses needed to address ocean threats, including climate change and ocean acidification, to inform decision-making.

Strategies

- Establish integrated and traditional measures to address, mitigate or reduce threats to the ocean.
- Develop proper sanitation and waste management systems throughout the country's coastal catchments and shipping industry.
- Ensure relevant studies and research on the ocean environment and on impacts of developments are conducted and results are disseminated as basis for decision making to ensure minimising impacts on ocean environments.
- Ensure that all sector activities that may have an adverse impact on the ocean are in compliance with national laws, regional and international agreements.
- Develop clear redress mechanisms to effectively deal with liability issues from the impacts of pollution, wreckages and illegal activities on land and within the ocean.
- Create systems that encourage and facilitate greater individual and corporate social responsibility to reduce negative impacts upon, and enhanced protection of, the ocean.

5. Ocean Use

Solomon Islands is a large ocean state with the majority of its population living in the rural coastal areas where they heavily depend on the ocean for social, cultural, food and economic benefits. It is estimated that Solomon Islanders consume more than 33kg/year of fish. The subsistence harvest is worth an approximate net economic value of SBD 442.2 million per year (MESV, 2014). Total fisheries revenue summed up to SBD 329 million in 2017.

The ocean is a source of economic benefits through sustainable development of commercial fishing, aquaculture and deep-sea mining. Economic benefits are not only derived from extraction activities but also the ocean as a space of commerce and trade including shipping and transportation, transshipment, tourism and recreational, research and science.

With high demand upon the ocean, different users with mixed interest have resulted in conflicting uses of the ocean space. For instance, deep sea mining tenement sites are also located in fishing hotspots and high biodiversity areas which should be protected for future ocean productivity.

While ocean uses will continue to be highly demanding, with improved technology and better coordination of key actors, Solomon Islands envisages an inclusive ocean-based economy to continue maximising benefits from ecologically and economically sustainable ocean management.

Policy statements

1. Harmonise competing ocean uses while ensuring sustainable development in Solomon Islands through marine spatial planning.
2. Ensure environmentally sustainable practices in all developments that may have an impact on the ocean.
3. Ensure that ocean users maintain safety and security in their interactions with the ocean.
4. Ensure compliance to latest national and international regulatory arrangements.

Strategies

- Sustainably manage the use of suprajacent airspace and water column within the maritime boundaries.
- Sustainably manage the use of seabed, ocean-based resources (including fisheries, minerals, petroleum and genetic resources), biodiversity and subjacent strata within the maritime boundaries.

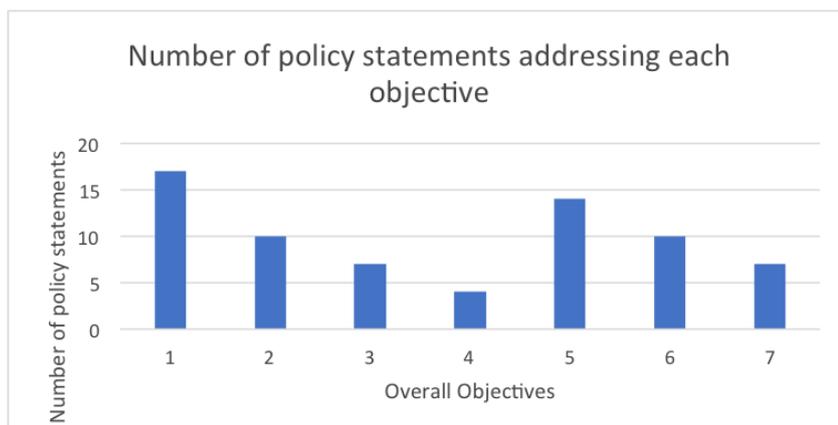
- Sustainably manage the use of seabed, ocean-based resources (including fisheries, minerals, petroleum and genetic resources), biodiversity and subjacent strata within the maritime boundaries.
- Explore and develop national policy options and/or positions on new emerging concepts such as blue economy, blue growth, blue carbon etc.
- Implement marine spatial planning to reduce conflict between competing uses.
- Encourage and ensure safety and security in all sector activities in compliance with national laws and international treaties by cross-sectoral compliance, coordination and use of remote technologies where appropriate.
- Use of co-management approach and create a feedback system on allocation of use and harvest strategies.
- Ensure periodic update on latest national and international regulatory arrangements.
- Enhance enforcement to achieve effective monitoring and compliance at all levels.
- Ensure that techniques and methodologies do not have detrimental impact on the marine environment (awareness raising, limiting uses, compliance).



APPENDIX

This matrix displays a preliminary assessment of strategies and policy statements with linkages to the overall objectives of the Solomon Islands National Ocean Policy.

Overall Objectives	Total number of policy statements addressing the objective
1 - Achieve sustainable use and development of the ocean and its resources through integrated ocean governance;	17
2 - Recognise the importance and value of the Solomon Islands ocean and its resources as a basis for social, cultural, economic and environmental aspirations for all Solomon Islanders;	10
3 - Strengthen integration, coordination and harmonisation of efforts by communities, provincial and national government, and across all sectors;	7
4 - Uphold our national and international ocean commitments and obligations	4
5 - Recognise and address competing ocean values and uses by different sectors and stakeholders;	14
6 - Ensure sustainable food and nutritional security and maximize economic benefits for the people of Solomon Islands;	10
7 - Protect Solomon Islands interests over and the peaceful use of its ocean.	7



Policy statements	linkages of policy statements to overall objectives (number of the objective that is addressed by the policy statement)	Total number of strategies addressing the policy statement
#1 Develop an overarching national legal framework with an appropriate institutional body for integrated ocean governance in Solomon Islands.	all	4
#2 Harmonise existing legislations to effectively implement integrated ocean governance in Solomon Islands.	3, all	6
#3 Recognise the role of ministries by complementing their sectoral legislative scope and mandates.	3	2
#4 Recognise roles and responsibilities of different forms of ocean governance by different stakeholders including traditional owners, provinces and national actors.	1,3	7
#5 Establish a robust and efficient system that provides for integrated ocean management that delivers the objectives of this policy.	1, 2, 3,4	9
#6 Promote inclusive participation, transparency and active involvement of actors (individuals, communities and sectors) to contribute to the implementation and enforcement of the national ocean policy and marine spatial plan.	3, 5, 6	9
#7 Develop an implementation framework and marine spatial plan for joint participation of all actors.	1, 5	7
#8 Develop clear processes and mechanism to vet developments concerning the ocean.	1, 5, 6	4
#9 Ensure effective ocean surveillance by all stakeholders.	7	4
#1 Promote understanding, awareness and recognition of the importance and value of the ocean environment as an 'interconnected, functional and dynamic system'.	2, 5	1
#2 Ensure that the integrity of the ocean environment is maintained or sustained in any planning, management and/or development activities.	2, 5	2
#3 Develop an environment impact accounting system to assess for losses and damage to the ocean environment from human uses.	5, 6	3
#4 Ensure continuous monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the state of Solomon Islands ocean environment	1, 2	1
#5 Ensure compliance to rules and regulations to minimise adverse impacts on Solomon Islands ocean	1, 2	1
#1 Recognize, respect and appreciate diverse cultures and distinct traditional knowledge and traditional control and access rights to the ocean across the nation.	5	3
#2 Allow for a variety of traditional access and control rights of resources in the ocean to be reflected in partnership models across the country for transparent and accountable development of ocean resources, be it living or non- living.	1, 5, 6	2
#3 Establish proper equitable management and use mechanisms for the sharing of coastal and marine resource benefits.	1, 5,6	1
#4 Develop national institutional, sectoral and professional capacity on integrated ocean governance and management.	1	1
#1 Establish and strengthen integrated efforts to minimise and/or mitigate risks and threats to the ocean.	1, 2, 4, 5	2
#2 Strengthen the resilience of people and communities to negative impacts on their ocean resources.	5, 6	1
#3 Ensure that clear coordination, protocols and/or redress mechanisms are in place to address liability, loss and damages for environmental disasters and incidents.	1, 5, 6	2
#4 Foster greater social responsibility to reduce negative impacts upon, and enhance protection of, the ocean.	1, 6, 7	2
#5 Promote research and studies on the impacts and responses needed to address ocean threats, including climate change and ocean acidification, to inform decision-making.	2	1
#1 Harmonise competing ocean uses while ensuring sustainable development in Solomon Islands through marine spatial planning.	1, 5, 7	4
#2 Ensure environmentally sustainable practices in all developments that may have an impact on the ocean.	1, 2	4
#3 Ensure that ocean users maintain safety and security in their interactions with the ocean.	1, 7	1
#4 Ensure compliance to latest national and international regulatory arrangements	3,7	4

Strategies	Links To policy statements (number of policy statement that is addressed by the strategy)
Develop a National Ocean Governance Act and Regulations that provides, inter alia, for the followings:	#1, #4, all
a) The establishment of a national authority responsible for coordinating and overseeing effective implementation of Integrated Ocean Governance in Solomon Islands (including UNCLOS and related conventions) powers and functions (including power to oversee processes and procedures;	#1, #4, all
b) The recognition of different limits of customary, provincial and national rights to use within maritime areas including jurisdiction and rights over submerged land;	#4, #6
c) The recognition of traditional marine tenure with limits and traditional management systems;	#4, #6
d) The alignment of different actors including levels of ocean governance – provinces and communities;	#4, #5, #6
e) Data and Knowledge management sharing between Ministries, Provinces and communities. Form appropriate technical and scientific teams/expert groups for information exchange and outreach;	#5, #7, #9
f) Access and benefit sharing mechanisms;	#5
g) Encourage inclusive public participation and empower communities to optimise ocean management;	#6
h) Strengthening and improving the coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders;	#4, #5, #6
i) The development of dispute/conflict resolution mechanism;	#4, #5, #6, #7, #8
j) Harmonising of existing national laws with the intended National Ocean Governance Act;	#2
k) Ensure cross-ministerial screening and reviewing of the processes towards (1) the issuance of the development consent, and (2) any other investment or development activity that may impact on the ocean;	#2
l) Allow for the development of a national marine spatial plan.	#6, #7
Ensure Provincial Ordinances are aligned to this policy for purposes of uniformity for implementation and enforcement.	#1
Ensure that new sectoral legislations and amendments of existing legislation are aligned to this policy.	#1, #2
Streamline and support or strengthen existing provincial government and communities' capacities to establish processes and structures for integrated ocean management and marine spatial planning.	#2, #5
Develop a national integrated ocean governance resource mobilisation plan/strategy for implementation of the SINOP.	#7
Ensure that all impacts of developments on marine environment are assessed, published and shared across all sectors and levels.	#8
Build strong coordinating mechanisms between all actors and stakeholders to carry out ocean surveillance effectively.	#5, #9
Develop a marine spatial plan to ensure integrated ocean governance.	#7
Take an active role in promoting the importance and significance of Solomon Islands ocean environment in national, sub-regional, regional and international platforms.	#1
Adopt ecosystem-based approaches for protection and management of the ocean environment and its marine resources.	#2, #3
Develop and implement a valuation system and financial mechanism to account for loss and damages of coastal and marine ecosystems – mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs, including pelagic and deepwater ecosystems (seamounts, canyons etc.) - for the purpose of protection, rehabilitation and/or restoration.	#2, #3
Ensure restoration of damaged environments and/or habitats to near-natural state (e.g. restore damage from shipwrecks, coastal developments).	#3
Strengthen existing and develop new monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to asses, monitor, track and report on the status of the Solomon Islands Ocean, including the impacts of land and ocean based developments and activities.	#4
Establish effective cross-sectoral compliance systems to rules and regulations in integrated ocean governance.	#5
Clarify roles and responsibilities of communities, traditional institutions and resource owners, provinces and other relevant stakeholders for proper engagement in ocean governance.	#1
Involve communities in participatory planning processes (e.g. marine spatial planning) and ensure that community knowledge is revived and maintained.	#1, #2
Coordinate, collate and exchange learning from projects and programmes on oceans to enhance and promote good practices of community participation, awareness and traditional knowledge and use.	#2, #3
Marine resource owners' identification process to be coordinated at the traditional and provincial level and be carried out by traditional leaders in accordance to customary norms accepted by parties, involving and recognizing the role of traditional leaders.	#1
Build and expand national institutional, sectoral and professional capacity on integrated ocean governance and management.	#4

Strategies	Links To policy statements (number of policy statement that is addressed by the strategy)
Establish integrated and traditional measures to address, mitigate or reduce threats to the ocean.	#1
Develop proper sanitation and waste management systems throughout the country's coastal catchments and shipping industry.	#1, #4
Ensure relevant studies and research on the ocean environment and on impacts of developments are conducted and results are disseminated as basis for decision making to ensure minimising impacts on ocean environments	#5
Ensure that all sector activities that may have an adverse impact on the ocean are in compliance with national laws, regional and international agreements.	#2, #3
Develop clear redress mechanisms to effectively deal with liability issues from the impacts of pollution, wreckages and illegal activities on land and within the ocean.	#3
Create systems that encourage and facilitate greater individual and corporate social responsibility to reduce negative impacts upon, and enhanced protection of, the ocean.	#4
Sustainably manage the use of suprajacent airspace and water column within the maritime boundaries.	#1
Sustainably manage the use of seabed, ocean-based resources (including fisheries, minerals, petroleum and genetic resources), biodiversity and subjacent strata within the maritime boundaries.	#1
Explore and develop national policy options and/or positions on new emerging concepts such as blue economy, blue growth, blue carbon etc.	#1, #2
Implement marine spatial planning to reduce conflict between competing uses.	#3
Encourage and ensure safety and security in all sector activities in compliance with national laws and international treaties by cross-sectoral compliance, coordination and use of remote technologies where appropriate.	#2
Use of co-management approach and create a feedback system on allocation of use and harvest strategies.	#1
Ensure periodic update on latest national and international regulatory arrangements.	#4
Enhance enforcement to achieve effective monitoring and compliance at all levels.	#2
Ensure that techniques and methodologies do not have detrimental impact on the marine environment (awareness raising, limiting uses, compliance).	#2

