

RESPONSE TO STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028 – FIJI

Fiji commends the review of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023, that made some recommendations for improving the Strategic Plan.

Fiji notes that the Plan 24-28 is based on the framework of UNCLOS and contributes to 12 SDGs.

It is heartening to know that the Plan highlights issues of the RRP being designed to prevent, reduce and control pollution and other hazards in the marine environment. We note that this Plan will continue some of the initiatives from the previous plan such as the Sustainable Seabed Knowledge Initiatives and Women in Deep-Sea Research, which we fully support.

The Plan reaffirms the importance of Marine Scientific Research to the responsible management of the oceans and its resources. Fiji's stated position is to strengthen Marine Scientific Research and the capacities of SIDS and LDS so that these states are well positioned to make their own decisions regarding marine management.

Fiji supports the Strategic Plan, though has five points for clarification:

1. Noting that it is the Decade of Ocean Science, how is the Authority maximizing opportunities this affords? What is the framework of the MSR that will be implemented and how will the Authority link this to the proposed outcomes stated in the plan?
2. We understand that contractors will be key in the MSR work. What is the policy framework to govern this, and how will the Authority monitor and review Contractor's MSR?
3. Activities for the different Strategic Priorities need to be clearer to avoid ambiguity which might lead to problems in the future.
4. The proposed Finance framework also needs to be communicated and further defined. What are the activities or tasks that have been set for these? Is the Authority going to develop a policy or structure for the Equitable Sharing of Benefits?
5. Appropriate consultation with stakeholders should be a key component of the work of the Authority. We consider that this aspect could be bolstered in the plan. In particular regarding the responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

Fiji supports the Strategic Plan but would seek clarifications on the above points.