

NATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY

Aim of the Policy

This National Fisheries Policy aims to provide a clear guide for national, regional and international stakeholders about the high-level policy direction and associated activities being undertaken by Government to sustainably manage the nation's offshore fisheries, coastal and inland fisheries, and aquaculture sectors.

The National Fisheries Policy drives Fiji Fisheries approach to sustainable fisheries management and development and will help the Ministry to make progress in areas where Government sees opportunities for growth, and to play our part in strengthening the economy and providing benefits for all Fijians.

Development of the Policy

The development of the National Fisheries Policy involved a review of the Fiji Government's overarching policies, and the Ministry of Fisheries' Strategic Plan and Operational Plan. In 2015 when a national policy was first envisioned the policy development process involved extensive consultation. This included four stakeholder consultation workshops involving representatives from the offshore fishing industry, coastal fisheries, and aquaculture sectors, as well as line agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), and other interested parties. A key focus of all policy discussions will continue to be about how the Ministry ensure an inclusive approach to gender equality and youth participation in all fisheries sectors in the future.

The first National Fisheries Policy was developed with the support of a group of preeminent regional fisheries consultants, and since 2016 it has guided the work of the Ministry. But a lot has happened since then. The Honourable Semi Tuleca Koroilavesau was appointed Minister for Fisheries in September 2016; the Ministry of Fisheries is now a stand-alone Ministry after its split from Forestry in 2018; a new division to focus on coastal fisheries was established in 2018; a new Permanent Secretary, Mr. Craig Strong was appointed in early 2019; and a new Strategic Development Plan was launched in November 2019 with a new vision and mission.

Ministry's Vision: To have the best fisheries in the Pacific region.

Ministry's Mission: To sustain, to manage, and to protect Fiji's fisheries.

The National Fisheries Policy prepared in 2015 has now been reviewed to reflect these changes and the Government's current priorities. The policy is structured into four parts. Each part addresses issues and challenges raised by stakeholders and staff.

In delivering the policy the Ministry will strive to provide strong, effective and mission-minded leadership. With a collaborative approach, the Ministry will work with relevant stakeholders to achieve its policy goals, and will deliver results for Government.

The Ministry's key stakeholder engagement strategy will involve three advisory councils to advise the Minister, and to advise and support the Ministry.

Consultative and Advisory Framework

Consultative Body	Advisory Role
Offshore Fisheries Advisory Council	Fisheries policy, planning, conservation, management, development, research, and sustainable use.

Coastal Fisheries Advisory Council	Fisheries policy, planning, conservation, management, development, research, and sustainable use.
Aquaculture Advisory Council	Aquaculture policy, legislation, administration, development, planning, growth, biosecurity and fish health protocols, research, hatcheries, and infrastructure.

The National Fisheries Policy has a focus on the critical success factors of the 2019 to 2029 Strategic Development Plan.

Critical Success Factors.

1. Vibrant private sector.
 - Partner with private sector to increase fisheries contribution to GDP.
2. Legislative and regulatory framework.
 - Develop a fit for purpose legislative and regulatory framework to enable and support sustainable fisheries.
3. Policy framework.
 - SMART and appropriate policies to underpin strategic objectives.
4. Research and development.
 - Applying science, data management and research.
5. Management of species.
 - Manage species to maximise food security and protect species under pressure
6. Compliance.
 - Enforcing compliance with rules and restrictions.
7. Strong and effective leadership.
 - Build on capacity, capability, and being mission minded.
8. Consultation, coordination, and cooperation.
 - Engaging and communicating with communities, industry, and NGOs, to generate national alignment.
9. Economic value.
 - Maximization of economic value from fisheries.

These critical success factors are underpinned by the ten (10) policy goals.

Policy Goals

1. **Sustainable fisheries resources.**
 - Manage all fisheries sustainably under management plans or other arrangements.
 - Expand and improve community-based fishery management.
 - Protect vulnerable and overfished species.
 - Implement large scale marine protected areas.
 - Provide support to agencies with responsibility for ensuring healthy ecosystems.

2. **Innovative fisheries development programs.**
 - Add value to existing fisheries.
 - Target underused resources.
3. **Efficient and effective stakeholder engagement and service delivery.**
 - Highly effective consultation, communication, and outreach.
 - Quality collaborative and cooperative engagement, partnerships, co-management, and capacity development with the private sector.
 - Effective private-public partnerships that help to achieve our goals.
4. **Fit for purpose legal and policy frameworks.**
 - Regular reviews of acts and regulations.
 - High levels of compliance with fisheries laws.
 - Efficient, transparent, and fair fisheries administration.
5. **Effective research and data programs that support decision making.**
 - Quality information to support decision making, including catch, effort and economic data.
 - Focused research that informs adaptive fisheries development and management.
6. **Robust aquaculture sector.**
 - Sector planning, research, development, and hatchery support to create industry growth.
 - Zone based land use planning.
 - Effective policy and legislation.
 - Strong biosecurity and fish health protocols.
7. **Strong export industries.**
 - Policy and legislation that supports and grows fisheries export industries.
8. **Encourage appropriate foreign investment.**
 - Clearly documented foreign investment policies.
9. **Engagement in oceans and fisheries diplomacy.**
 - Active participation and contribution to regional and international initiatives.
 - Compliance with bilateral, regional, and international agreements and measures.
10. Partner in supporting national and regional climate change and disaster recovery planning and programs.

The Critical Success Factors and the policy goals provide the drivers to maximise the economic value of Fiji's fisheries, to increase the contribution, to contribute to national food security, to contribute to poverty alleviation, to substitute imports with our fish, and to create employment.

The National Fisheries Policy is presented in four groups of policies:

- A. approach to offshore fisheries.
- B. approach to coastal fisheries.
- C. approach to aquaculture.
- D. Sectoral cross cutting issues.

Each of the four policy parts is broken down into five topic areas:

- (i) Fisheries management and policy.
- (ii) Legislation, compliance, and administration.
- (iii) Industry support, development, and investment.
- (iv) Strategic research focus.
- (v) Stakeholder engagement.

The Policies goals are presented in a series of tables illustrating the issue identified, and the strategic policy response.

A) Our approach to offshore fisheries

(i) Fisheries management and policy.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Development of fisheries management plans and measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure fisheries management plans are reviewed and up to date, taking a long-term view, and factoring in scientific, social, and economic considerations. ● Provide for adaptive management that can respond to emerging issues and new initiatives in real time. ● Develop new fisheries management plans and fisheries development plans as necessary to support new fisheries.
Access to fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strictly maintain license limits in the absence of strong bio-economic evidence that a fishery can sustain increased effort and industry can still remain viable. ● Aim to review bio-economic analysis at five-year intervals.
WCPFC engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate regional leadership. ● Continue to drive discussion for decisions on new measures and their implementation.
Management of incidental catch and species of special interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop, adopt, and implement national plans of action to minimise interaction with, for example, turtles, cetaceans, sharks, rays and seabirds. ● Ensure compliance with treaties on trade and management of incidental catches and species of special interest. ● Develop and implement harvest and utilization strategies to minimize incidental catch and develop by-products where sustainable and appropriate.
Emerging technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce emerging and innovative technologies that can support sustainable fisheries management where there are clear net-benefits demonstrated through a business case.
Regional and international initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify initiatives that have potential implications for Fiji, within and beyond national jurisdiction. ● Prepare a national response that reflects national interests through participatory approaches. ● Maintain Fiji's leadership position through strengthening of the Ministry's capacity to negotiate, develop and represent, Fiji's foreign policy. ● Maintain a strong collaborative relationship with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and its members to further national and regional interests in fisheries management.
Recreational and game fishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support recreational and game fishing in Fiji's fisheries waters with an appropriate regulatory framework.

(ii) Legislation, compliance, and administration.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Fit for purpose legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012 is periodically reviewed and updated to meet resource management and stakeholder needs, and industry, and meets international obligations.
Meeting Fiji's international and regional obligations - including WCPFC CMMs, IPOAs, CITES, port state, and flag state measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a register of international and regional fisheries obligations. ● Effectively implement international and regional arrangements (e.g. CMMs). ● Ensure compliance with and reporting for international agreements and obligations. ● Annually assess current implementation status. ● Annually assess capacity and resources required for implementation.
Vessel licensing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure licensing and permitting is undertaken efficiently in accordance with approved procedures. ● Ensure the licensing framework provides industry with security to encourage investment and good fishing practice. ● Provide public access to licensing metadata (not personal information).
Ensuring compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement an annual operational compliance strategy to ensure effectively targeted compliance programs. ● Undertake operational planning to implement advisory, education, warning, administrative penalty, and prosecution activities. ● Ensure development and implementation of compliance SOPs, such as for port state measures, dockside boarding, and other inspections. ● Support effective national and regional collaboration on surveillance and enforcement operations. ● Encourage and support communities to act as a source of information on possible fisheries offences. ● Coordinate planning processes of the Ministry with those of other agencies, regional and international organisations, and donors.

(iii) Industry support, development and investment

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Industry operational information and economic data for decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to enhance current data collection programme (such as bio-economic surveys). ● Develop methods to improve economic information, such as establishing an overall fisheries database linked with line ministries that can provide access to or generate reports. ● Publish relevant fisheries reports on Ministry of Fisheries website.
Development of new offshore fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify species that show potential for a focus on development (e.g. mahi-mahi, swordfish, skipjack, giant squid)
FADs for small-scale coastal fishers. Trade access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote the use of offshore FADs and deepwater snapper fishing by small-scale fishers. ● Support competent authority to meet market requirements and food safety regulations. ● Support the uptake of high standard certification schemes to maximise value of catch. ● Actively promote the development of trade connections to improve international market access for local industry, and engage industry in negotiations as appropriate.
Fisheries contribution to GDP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an agreed valuation methodology for GDP of fisheries. ● Identify and assist industries to establish new fisheries and new markets.
Training and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with industry to maximise value of catch and exports. ● Support training institutions in reviewing curriculum and course content. ● Collaborate with training institutions and other agencies on training on, and implementation of, international maritime treaties and obligations.

(iv) Strategic research focus

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Science and data to support decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement offshore fisheries research strategy aiming to ensure advice is available to support fisheries management decision making, and the establishment of new fisheries. ● Review data collection programs in terms of scope and methodology every five years for relevance and effectiveness.
Status of stocks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a strong collaborative relationship with the Pacific Community (SPC) to further national and regional interests in fisheries science, especially tuna fisheries stock assessments and related science programs. ● Provide logbook, observer program, and electronic monitoring data. ● Collate and provide baseline information to support assessments for potential new fisheries.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Emerging issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor impacts of climate change on fisheries and industries. ● Give effect to Leaders' 2019 commitments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To build a strong Blue Pacific continent for our people within the spirit of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. ● A call for urgent, transformational global climate change action.

(v) Stakeholder engagement.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Stakeholder communication and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the Offshore Fisheries Advisory Council is operational and effectively representing the interests of industry. ● Ensure consistency of effective engagement and communication with vessel license holders, other industry sectors, and industry associations.
Broad community understanding of the benefits of offshore tuna fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make effective use of the Ministry's website to provide up to date information, and to provide accurate and relevant information to the media about offshore tuna fisheries.

B) Our approach to coastal and inland fisheries.

(i) Fisheries management and policy.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Development of fisheries management plans and measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop priority fisheries management plans. ● Use regional strategies for coastal fisheries management. ● Develop recovery plans for depleted species. ● Progressively place limits on numbers of commercial fishing licenses issued, and introduce additional conservation and management measures where appropriate. ● Ensure data on fisheries is readily available for decision makers and is used to support decisions about the number of licenses that operate in any given area.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote applied research, and management interventions that work to protect, restore and rehabilitate the coastal habitats that support sustainable fisheries.
Community based fishery management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and support the application of community based fishery management. Coordinate the roles of NGOs in community based fisheries management.
International and regional obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with other agencies to enable the effective implementation of fisheries related obligations. Support for CITES related licensing systems for “import, export, re-export and introduction from the sea of species covered by the Convention” including assessments to support non-detrimental findings for export of CITES Appendix II listed species.
Emerging technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise emerging technologies that support sustainable fisheries management and development when supported by business case.
Impacts from coastal development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake fisheries impact assessment studies on proposed coastal foreshore lease development. Provide technical advice on the impacts of development applications. Partner with regional and technical organisations to support impact assessments.
Subsistence fishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take into account the needs, traditional knowledge, and available data of subsistence fishers when developing appropriate and supporting fishery management arrangements.
Recreational fishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support recreational fishing in Fiji’s fisheries waters with an appropriate regulatory framework.

(ii) Legislation, compliance, and administration.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Fit for purpose legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure legislation is periodically reviewed and updated to meet resource management, industry, and broader stakeholder needs, and to meet international obligations.
Fisher licensing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure licensing and permitting is undertaken efficiently in accordance with approved procedures. Ensure the licensing framework provides industry with security to encourage investment and good fishing practice. Provide public access to licensing metadata (not personal data).
Ensuring coastal fisheries compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of operational compliance strategy to ensure effectively targeted compliance programs.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Operational planning to implement advisory, education, warning, administrative penalty, and prosecution activities. ● Encourage buyers and consumers to respect size limits and seasonal bans. ● Strengthened engagement with partner enforcement agencies including development of operational agreements with appropriate enforcement partners for collaborative enforcement (e.g. Ministry of Defense, Navy, Police). ● Develop appropriate working relationships with the judiciary including the provision of supporting material for prosecutions. ● Enhance the fish warden program in the geographic divisions. ● Effective national and regional collaboration on surveillance and enforcement operations. ● Encourage and support communities to act as a source of information on possible fisheries offences. ● Coordinate compliance planning processes of the Ministry with those of other agencies, regional and international organizations, and donors.

(iii) Industry support, development, and investment

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Fishery value adding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify value adding opportunities through value chain analysis, with a focus on low grade and low value commodities. ● Target full utilisation of fish catch waste.
Connections between communities and markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen existing markets and promote access to these markets. ● Identify and establish marketing strategies to connect community fishers to existing and emerging markets. ● Support responsible fisheries supply through fisheries associations.
Training and employment creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide or facilitate training in seafood processing, value adding, product development, improving product quality, food safety, small boat sea safety, and business management to enhance employment opportunities for rural communities.
Fish toxins and spoiling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support implementation of food safety provisions of relevant legislation. ● Support to identify biotoxin hotspot issues through research.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with agencies, authorities, and academic institutions, in addressing, mitigating, and reducing or spoiled fish consumption. ● Support the development and dissemination of best practice information on fish handling, spoilage and toxicity for fishers and communities.

(iv) Strategic research focus

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Science and data to support decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement a coastal fisheries research strategy aiming to ensure advice is available to support fisheries management decision making. ● Review data collection programs in terms of scope and methodology every five years for relevance and effectiveness. ● Implement a robust fisheries statistical data monitoring program with a specific focus on market surveys, coastal fisheries catch returns, export and trade data, and creel surveys. ● Co-operate with agencies in data collection for subsistence, artisanal, commercial fisheries and aquaculture, and in the national census. ● Develop data collection and analysis capacity to ensure reports are readily available for management decisions, and to contribute to annual reporting. ● Develop data sharing agreements for external stakeholders to contribute fisheries data to inform management. ● Collaborate with SPC and other partners to conduct economic and ecological sustainability analysis, and cost benefit assessments, to support coastal fisheries development proposals and opportunities.
Status of stocks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with SPC and other partners to develop coastal species stock assessment techniques to ascertain exploitable biomass and other key population parameters.

(v) Stakeholder engagement.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish a Coastal Fisheries Advisory Council that effectively represents the interests of industry. ● Develop and disseminate awareness and educational material.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote greater engagement and participation of communities in the development, implementation review of management plans with the Ministry.
Broader community understanding of the benefits of coastal fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make effective use of the Ministry's website to provide up to date information.

C) Our approach to aquaculture.

(i) Fisheries Management and policy.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Government support for aquaculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate and implement commodity specific aquaculture development plans to focus and guide activities for sustainable aquaculture development for species identified as high priority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key species such as new strains of tilapia, shrimp, prawns, sandfish, seaweed, carp, and local species (coral reef fish and invertebrates). Identify new production systems for the key focus commodities to improve survival on both hatchery and growout. Promote land use and land planning, including use of aquaculture park or zone concept. Focus on species production that can reduce imports. Support the development and improvement of specialised infrastructure and equipment to support quality feed and seed production.
Environment friendly and sustainable aquaculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen biosecurity procedures through a framework to strengthen capacity to assess and avoid or remedy risks associated with aquatic species introductions, ensure biosecurity compliance, and avoid illegal or unintentional species and aquatic disease introduction. Establish quality controls and best aquaculture practice on aquaculture feed, chemicals, antibiotics, hatchery equipment, cultured species, and fish products. Ensure environmental impact assessments are conducted for designated aquaculture projects.
Adequate and relevant information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an aquaculture information management system. Improve capacity to undertake economic, environmental, and social appraisals of aquaculture projects.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement a comprehensive data collection strategy for aquaculture production. ● Monitor aquaculture developments to ensure they meet production targets and comply with measures to mitigate environmental impacts. ● Foster consultative processes that seek private sector and community input into research prioritisation for aquaculture.
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(ii) Legislation, compliance, and administration.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Aquaculture legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalise and implement an enabling legislative framework for development and management of sustainable aquaculture that supports business investment opportunities while safeguarding the public interest in aquatic resources.
Aquaculture compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an operational compliance strategy and associated standard operating procedures to ensure monitoring and compliance of legal framework. ● Establish an accountability and monitoring programme including mandatory annual reporting requirements for the aquaculture industry.
Aquaculture licences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure legislation provides an effective permit and licensing system for the administration and control of the aquaculture industry, and that provides secure tenure. ● Promote terms and conditions of aquaculture approvals that enable aquaculture businesses to operate both sustainably and profitably
Meeting Fiji's international, regional, and bilateral obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen collaboration with line agencies. ● Increase capacity to implement policies and procedures required for meeting international, regional and bilateral obligations in aquaculture. ● Ensure that regional and international agreements are addressed at the national level.

(iii) Industry support, development, and investment

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Private sector and academia investment and involvement in aquaculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase collaborative research and development initiatives, including bilateral cooperation. ● Promote public-private partnerships in collaborative projects to encourage private sector investment in aquaculture and reduce the risks of pioneer investment. ● Facilitate an increase in availability of technical support services from the private and non-government sectors,
Promoting aquaculture.	<p>including regional agencies and development partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of associations and clusters as information centres and to drive sector growth. ● Provide support to help establish small-scale household-level and community-based aquaculture farms for food security and improved nutrition and livelihood. ● Continually upgrade existing Government aquaculture and hatchery facilities targeted at highest impact
Training and capacity development.	<p>industry support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide priority training and extension for fish farmers in best aquaculture practices, increased aquaculture production, quality, and food safety. ● Strengthen participation in regional and international workshops, training courses, attachments, and conferences on new innovations and emerging issues.
Value adding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide value chain analysis and market access studies for aquaculture commodities.
New aquaculture opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and promote viable value-added opportunities for aquaculture commodities. ● Support the evaluation of new aquaculture sites including in water supply and hydro-electricity dams, and coastal and offshore waters. ● Explore options for greater use of species expected to perform well under the projected changes to local conditions from climate change.

(iv) Strategic research focus

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Science and data to support decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and implement aquaculture fisheries research strategy aiming to ensure advice is available to support investment decision making.
Key species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with SPC and other partners to ensure research is focused on key aquaculture species.
Aquaculture feed. Environmental impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore better feed options from suitable sources, including for larval rearing and grow-out. ● Undertake research to fully understand environmental impacts and to support their mitigation.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Fish health in hatcheries and aquaculture farms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop surveillance and monitoring strategy for fish health for hatcheries, farms, and imports and exports of live fish. ● Enhance capacity to undertake aquatic animal disease and monitoring. ● Develop guidelines and emergency response procedures for aquatic health emergencies. ● Investigate risks of increased incidence of pathogens for important aquaculture species such as pearl oysters, shrimp, fish and seaweed resulting from climate change. ● Encourage the development of aquaculture veterinary capacity. ● Develop domestic quarantine protocols for import and export of aquaculture commodities.
Spatial information systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate with partner agencies to develop capacity in mapping and data base development and management. ● Use technology to create an inventory of potential sites for aquaculture development (GIS mapping/zoning).

(v) Stakeholder engagement.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Communication and collaboration with stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish the Aquaculture Advisory Council. ● Promote active participation, engagement and involvement of women and youth in all aspects of the aquaculture industry. ● Provide mechanisms for consultation with the aquaculture private sector and communities.
Public awareness of aquaculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a communications strategy to ensure awareness of the aquaculture industry through knowledge-products and communication material. ● Support and use clusters and networks nationally, regionally, and internationally, to assist and disseminate information and farming knowledge.

D) Our approach to cross sectoral and cross cutting issues.

(i) Fisheries management and policy.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Marine spatial management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use marine spatial management for biodiversity protection and to support maintenance of ecosystem health. ● Undertake a broad consultative process, and work with the Marine Protected Area Technical Advisory Committee, to reach Fiji's target for establishment of 30 percent multiple use MPAs in coastal and offshore areas. ● Ensure MPAs allow for multiple use activities as well as protected areas, with the aim of substituting income from harvest with income gained from initiatives such as aquaculture and eco-tourism. ● Support and promote economically viable and sustainable alternative livelihoods within MPAs, especially where they support food security for coastal communities. ● Promote the management of coastal areas by supporting community-based management in collaboration with partners. ● Promote a collaborative and integrated approach to oceans policy to guide the management and development of marine sector uses, by all sectors and agencies.
Gender and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote an inclusive approach to gender equality and youth participation in offshore fisheries, coastal fisheries, and aquaculture.
Conflicting environmental policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a lead role and promote a process to develop consistent whole-of-government environmental policies where they relate to fisheries, and the fisheries environment.
Policy environment for fisheries investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support an enabling environment for fisheries and related investment, across Government.
External challenges and threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the risks of external impacts on fisheries, for example from habitat damage and destruction, pollution, siltation, bio-security, climate change, and natural disasters, are considered in coastal, offshore and aquaculture development planning processes. ● Support legislative reform that provides greater levels of protection for fisheries habitats. ● Coordinate with relevant Government agencies and stakeholders.
Maritime and shipping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepare for disaster response and recovery. ● Foster stronger collaborative efforts with Maritime Safety Authority and Department of Environment, to mitigate risks of impact on the marine environment, including shipwrecks, oil spillage, invasive species, and marine pollution.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure welfare of fishing vessel crew through implementation of labour and safety standards.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize the development potential associated with tourism and eco-tourism (diving, charter fishing, supply of fishing products) and ensure any impacts on or from these are considered in all fisheries planning activity.

(ii) Legislation, compliance, and administration.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Fees and charges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a sustainable funding strategy including a fee for service program for Ministry services that reflects the cost of delivery.
Penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically review fees and charges. Ensure penalties for fisheries offences reflect the severity of the offence, and environmental or stock damage, and the potential and actual financial benefits of the crime.

(iii) Industry support, development, and investment

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Public-private partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an enabling environment for private sector growth through facilitation and enabling partnerships, in preference to direct participation by Government in commercial activities.
Infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnership with local, regional, and international partners, including industries, to support the development of fisheries infrastructure, including aquaculture infrastructure, including hatchery capacity,
Support for industry subsidy schemes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> technology, and production systems. Support fishing industry sectors to review program of incentives, concessions, and subsidies for the consideration of Government.
Subsidies scheme conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop proposal for a subsidy scheme to support fledgling aquaculture industries. Ensure that any subsidy scheme is transparent, time bound, broadly available, and targeted at specific constraints. Base proposals for Government financial support for fisheries and aquaculture on economic analysis (including cost-benefit analysis), and resource impact assessments. Provide transparency by ensuring industry subsidies and benefits are published.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop exit plans or help to identify alternative funding sources for longer-term subsidies. Ensure that subsidy programs do not encourage overexploitation or illegal fishing.

(iv) Strategic research focus

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Marine Genetic Resources (MGR).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop regime for management of access to and benefit sharing of MGRs taken through marine scientific research, bioprospecting, exploratory fishing, etc. from Fiji fisheries waters. ● Investigate the development of public/private partnerships for MGR research.
Impacts on gene pool of translocation, aquaculture, and overfishing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop protocol for translocation of marine species. ● Investigate population genetic structures as appropriate to minimise genetic risks of translocation of species. ● Ensure all hatchery activities include a genetic diversity management plan to reduce risk of genetic bottlenecks. ● Adopt a precautionary approach to minimise impacts to genetic populations, including the introduction or translocation of diseases.
Collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with partners on an annual basis to develop agreements that ensure alignment with work programs and national priorities, and to avoid overlap and duplication. ● Establish guidelines to support research and monitoring by partners to support their activities aligning with this National Fisheries Policy.

(v) Stakeholder engagement.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Awareness and communication of Ministry activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a Ministry wide communications strategy to include: ● Focus engagement with recognised industry bodies and groups. ● Develop gender and youth sensitive communications and campaign strategies for the Ministry of Fisheries to promote and increase awareness on current and future fisheries issues. ● Develop innovative media pathways and use social media and website for wider outreach. ● Strengthen partnerships with NGOs and identify role models (community champions) to develop and disseminate appropriate awareness material and outreach programs. ● Produce awareness materials in languages that reach broader Fijian communities and the public. ● Build awareness of the importance of critical habitats within Government and in the community. ● Develop an infraction hotline for reporting infringements.

Issue	Strategic policy response - our policy is to:
Support for fisheries related import and export industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen coordination with partner agencies to support vetting processes. • Work with industry groups to establish appropriate export quality standards. ● Streamline inter agency processes for imports and exports. ● Ongoing support for the Fisheries Project Appraisal Committee

Appendix 1 – Definitions, acronyms and abbreviations.

CITES Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species.
CMM Conservation and Management Measure.

FAD	Fish Aggregating Device.
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency.
Fisheries	Includes all harvest fisheries and aquaculture. One or more stocks of fish or any fishing operation based on such stocks which can be treated as a unit for conservation and management purposes, taking into account geographical, scientific, social, technical, recreational, economic, and other relevant characteristics.
Fisheries waters	The internal waters, the archipelagic waters, the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone and any other waters over which Fiji exercises its sovereignty or sovereign rights.
GDP	Gross Domestic Profit.
MGR	Marine Genetic Resource.
MPA	Marine Protected Area.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
SOP	Standard operating procedure.
SPC	Pacific Community.
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.