



**Briefing Paper:  
National Policy Framework Assessment on  
Nature-based Solutions for Coastal Resilience  
and Forestry Sectors, Fiji**

March 2026

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### **SPREP Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

Briefing paper: national policy framework assessment on nature-based solutions for coastal resilience and forestry sectors, Fiji. Apia, Samoa: SPREP, 2026.

8 p. 29 cm.

ISBN: 978-982-04-1533-1 (print)  
978-982-04-1534-8 (e-copy)

1. Conservation of natural resources – Fiji.
  2. Forests and forestry – Management – Fiji.
  3. Coastal zone management – Government policy - Fiji
- I. Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). II. Title.

333.7209611

### **Citation**

Baya, U., & Trenorden, C. L. (2026). *Policy Brief: National Policy Framework Assessment of Nature-based Solutions for Coastal Resilience and Forestry Sectors, Fiji*. Suva: SPREP.

### **Images**

Front cover: Gau Island, Stuart Chape.

### **Disclaimer**

This report was prepared by Ulaiasi Baya for SPREP under the contract titled 'Mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions in national policy frameworks' for the SPREP component of the PPIN Project.

## Executive summary

This briefing paper summarises the key findings, recommendations and strategic implications of the Final Report of the PPIN Project: *Assessment of Fiji's Forest Policies and Coastal Resilience Frameworks with Emphasis on the Integration of Nature-based Solutions (NbS)*.

A comprehensive stock-take and alignment assessment of Fiji's national-level policies, legislation, regulations, strategies, and plans relevant to forestry and coastal protection and restoration, including cross-cutting frameworks related to climate change, biodiversity, land use, water, and disaster risk management was undertaken, informed by stakeholder inputs gathered through questionnaires and a validation workshop.

Fiji possesses a comparatively strong enabling policy environment for NbS. Fiji's emphasis on ecosystem-based adaptation, ridge-to-reef management, community-based resource governance, and Indigenous land and marine tenure provides a solid foundation for NbS mainstreaming. However, the assessment also identifies significant gaps and barriers, including structural and institutional, that limit effective NbS implementation at scale.

A comprehensive package of evidence-based recommendations to strengthen NbS integration across Fiji's forestry and coastal sectors has been developed with a roadmap for implementation. If adopted, Fiji will be well positioned to emerge as a regional leader in the application of NbS.

### Purpose

The report examines the extent to which NbS are currently reflected, enabled, and operationalised within Fiji's policy, legal, and institutional frameworks governing the forestry and coastal protection and restoration sectors. It assesses the gaps, overlaps and barriers to NbS, recommending actions for its integration.

### What are NbS?

NbS are actions that meet global standards, designed to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems in ways that address the challenges of climate change, disaster risk, food security, and livelihoods, while delivering biodiversity and well-being benefits, aligning with human rights and indigenous peoples' rights.

Internationally, NbS are now recognised as essential to achieving climate adaptation and mitigation goals, biodiversity targets, and the Sustainable Development Goals. For Fiji, NbS are not an abstract or imported concept. Forests, mangroves, reefs, watersheds, and customary land and marine systems have long been recognised as underpinning climate resilience, subsistence and commercial livelihoods, and cultural identity.

As climate impacts intensify through coastal erosion, flooding, drought, ecosystem degradation, and loss of fisheries productivity, NbS offer cost-effective, adaptive, and locally grounded responses that replace or complement engineered and regulatory measures to protect or restore forest and coastal areas in ways that are inclusive and respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent. Here is a path to integrate NbS into Fiji's policies, legislation and institutions.

### Critical analysis

Fiji possesses a comparatively strong enabling policy environment for NbS, with the Constitution, and more recent legislation and policies encouraging NbS, ecosystem-based approaches, or ridge to reef approaches, along with community participation and indigenous stewardship, but gaps and overlaps exist in legislation and policy frameworks and institutional oversight.

There is weak coordination between sector ministries and agencies, and between national government and the provincial level, less than high-level capacity universally within government institutions, and despite policy statements around inclusion and engagement a lack of recognition in practice of traditional ecosystem knowledge and inclusion of landowners in planning NbS.

Where NbS measures are recognised and encouraged in policies, legal authority may be absent, operational guidance and inclusive planning with community lacking, and financing mechanisms limited to short-term and donor/NGO-driven, making it difficult to scale NbS projects.

Also often absent are requirements for monitoring and evaluation of the NbS measure that would enable its implementation to be improved and managed accordingly; adapted to the local circumstances, along with equitable benefit-sharing and fair compensation for landowners' and rights-holders' loss of access to resources.

## The Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Global Standards (IUCN, 2nd edition, 2025)

- 1. Responsive to Social Challenges:** NbS focus on critical social challenges; evaluate their impact on human well-being to maximise direct benefits to the community.
- 2. Adaptable Design:** The design of NbS considers the interactions between economy, society and ecosystems; seeks synergies with other interventions and manages risks beyond the intervention area.
- 3. Net Benefit for Biodiversity:** NbS are guaranteed to improve biodiversity and ecosystem integrity because based on detailed assessments and continuous monitoring that promotes ecosystem connectivity.
- 4. Economic Viability:** Costs and benefits of NbS are evaluated, supporting their selection through cost-effective analysis and by considering a wide range of financial options.
- 5. Inclusive Governance:** NbS promote inclusive, transparent and empowering decision-making procedures, ensuring the equitable participation of all stakeholders and respect for indigenous rights.
- 6. Balance and Compensations:** The costs, benefits and compensations of NbS are recognised and managed equitably, ensuring that they do not compromise the project, or the rights and access to local resources.
- 7. Data-Based Adaptive Management:** The implementation of NbS is based on continuous monitoring and evaluation, allowing adaptive adjustments to improve their effectiveness over time.
- 8. Sustainability and Jurisdictional Context:** NbS are designed to be sustainable and to contribute to policy and regulatory objectives, supporting transformative changes and aligning with national and international goals of human well-being, climate change, biodiversity and human rights.

## Recommendations

Priority areas to integrate NbS into Fiji's policy and legal frameworks:

- 1. Policy and Legal Mainstreaming**  
Explicitly recognise NbS within key laws, policies, and regulations governing forestry, coastal management, land use, infrastructure, and environmental assessment.
- 2. Institutional Coordination**  
Operationalise cross-sector coordination mechanisms, particularly under the Climate Change Act, to align planning, implementation, and accountability for NbS outcomes.
- 3. Planning and Decision-Making Integration**  
Mandate that NbS options be submitted and assessed alongside engineered or extractive alternatives as part of environmental impact assessments, and for land-use planning and infrastructure development approvals.
- 4. Customary Governance, FPIC, and Benefit-Sharing**  
Strengthen and standardise consent, governance, and benefit-sharing arrangements for NbS on customary land and in qoliqoli areas.
- 5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management**  
Develop national NbS indicators and monitoring frameworks that capture ecological, climate, and social co-benefits and support evidence-based learning.
- 6. Financing and Capacity Building**  
Establish dedicated NbS financing mechanisms and invest in institutional and community capacity to design, implement, and manage NbS at scale.

## Roadmap Phases

### Phase 1 Policy & Institutional Foundations (0–12 mths)

- Establish NbS Taskforce and NbS units.
- Initiate policy and regulatory review.
- Begin capacity-building programs.

### Phase 2 Legal & Operational Integration (12–24 mths)

- Amend legislation and develop operational NbS guidelines.
- Standardise monitoring indicators.
- Mainstream pilot NbS projects nationally.

### Phase 3 Scaling & Financing (24–36 mths)

- Launch National NbS Fund.
- Incentivise NbS adoption in private and community projects.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and adaptive management frameworks.

### Phase 4 Long-Term Coherence & Adaptive Management (36 mths+)

- Continuous policy refinement based on monitoring results.
- Periodic stakeholder consultations and knowledge updates.
- Integration of NbS lessons into new sectoral strategies and plans.

## Roadmap for Action

The roadmap to integrate NbS embraces four phases (see Box), structured around six key components encompassing policy, legal, institutional, operational, financial, and social dimensions. It is set out in full in the table below.

Strategic Area	Priority Actions/Tasks	Timeline	Responsible Institutions	Required Reforms / Capacity Building	Monitoring / Adaptive Management
<b>Policy Revision &amp; Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise Forest Policy Statement (2007) and National Forest Policy (2014) to include explicit NbS principles.</li> <li>- Integrate NbS objectives into National Ocean Policy 2020–2030 and ICM Plans</li> <li>- Ensure cross-sectoral alignment with NBSAP 2020–2025 and Climate Change Policy 2018–2030.</li> </ul>	12–24 months	Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Economy	Policy review units; technical workshops on NbS; stakeholder consultations including local communities	Annual policy review reports; gap analysis; adaptive updates
<b>Legislative &amp; Regulatory Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amend Environmental Management Act, Climate Change Act, Forest Act, and EIA regulations to include NbS criteria.</li> <li>- Introduce mandatory NbS assessment in EIAs and land-use planning.</li> <li>- Establish incentives for NbS adoption (grants, tax relief, subsidies).</li> </ul>	12–36 months	Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Attorney-General's Office, Parliament	Legal drafting support; capacity-building for enforcement officers	Compliance monitoring; periodic audits; impact evaluation

Strategic Area	Priority Actions/Tasks	Timeline	Responsible Institutions	Required Reforms / Capacity Building	Monitoring / Adaptive Management
<b>Institutional Strengthening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish an inter-agency NbS Taskforce.</li> <li>- Develop a dedicated NbS unit in Ministries of Forestry and Environment.</li> <li>- Build community-level NbS technical capacity.</li> </ul>	6–18 months	Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Local Government Authorities, NGOs	Institutional reform to create NbS units; staff training on NbS concepts and monitoring	Taskforce quarterly reports; stakeholder feedback mechanisms; adaptive management meetings
<b>Monitoring, Evaluation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish NbS monitoring and evaluation framework.</li> <li>- Implement adaptive management cycles for forestry and coastal projects.</li> <li>- Use data to refine policies and regulations continuously.</li> </ul>	Continuous	Ministry of Environment & Climate Change, Ministry of Forestry, Local Government Authorities	Training for monitoring teams; data management systems	Annual M&E reports; dashboards for decision-making; policy adjustments based on lessons learned
<b>Financing &amp; Incentives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a National NbS Fund to support multi-sectoral projects.</li> <li>- Integrate NbS criteria into climate finance and donor programs.</li> <li>- Offer financial incentives for private sector and community participation.</li> </ul>	12–36 months	Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment, Development Partners	Financial mechanism design; capacity building for grant management	Fund performance audits; tracking of NbS project outcomes
<b>Public Engagement &amp; Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct NbS awareness campaigns targeting local communities, policymakers, and private sector.</li> <li>- Develop participatory platforms for local NbS planning.</li> </ul>	6–24 months	Ministry of Environment, NGOs, Community-Based Organisations	Community engagement programs; technical workshops	Feedback surveys; community participation metrics; adaptive communication strategy





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The Promoting Pacific Island Nature-based Solutions (PPIN) project is funded by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). PPIN seeks to support the development of policy and legislation for Nature-based Solutions (NbS), build regional awareness and capacity, and strengthen regional cooperation amongst Pacific Island countries on NbS. PPIN is managed by IUCN in partnership with the Pacific Community (SPC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).



ISBN 978-982-04-1533-1



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