



# Shaping a Sustainable Future in the Pacific

Strategic Priorities for the Oceania Region



2008 - 2012

IUCN Oceania





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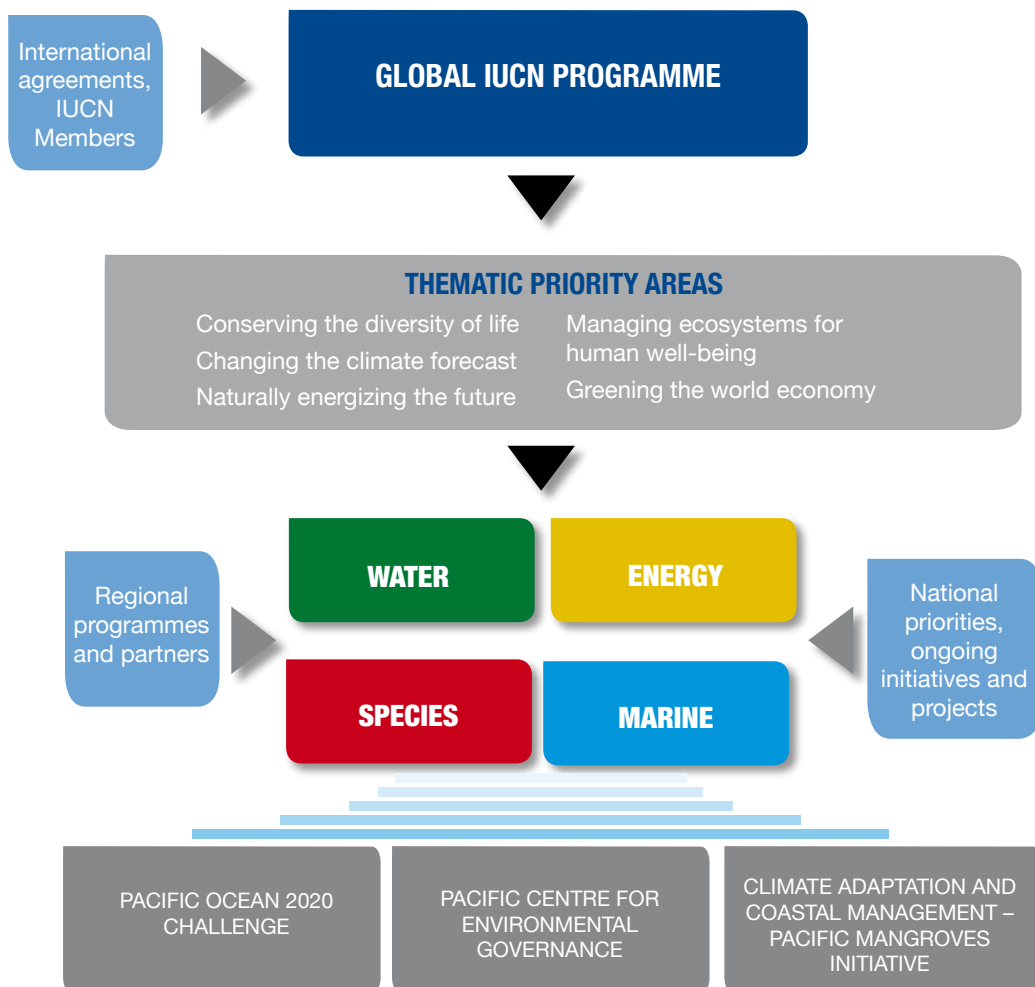
## OUR VISION

A JUST WORLD THAT VALUES AND  
CONSERVES NATURE

## OUR MISSION

TO INFLUENCE, ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST SOCIETIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO CONSERVE THE INTEGRITY AND DIVERSITY OF NATURE AND TO ENSURE THAT ANY USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IS EQUITABLE AND ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE

# IUCN Oceania Programme at a Glance



## A UNIQUE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Founded in 1948, IUCN is the world’s largest environment network. IUCN brings together 83 States, 110 government agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

IUCN supports and develops cutting-edge conservation science; implements this research in field projects around the world; and then links both research and results to local, national, regional and global policy by convening dialogues between governments, civil society and the private sector. A priority of IUCN is to build recognition of the many ways in which human lives and livelihoods, especially of the poor, depend on the sustainable management of natural resources.

In its projects, IUCN applies sound ecosystem management to conserve biodiversity and build sustainable livelihoods for those directly dependent on natural resources. It is actively engaged in managing and restoring ecosystems and improving people’s lives, economies and societies.

## DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



*...a region historically associated with sunshine, beaches, majestic mountains, crystal clear waters and unique biodiversity*

In early 2007, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) established its regional programme office for Oceania in Suva, Fiji Islands. This document, IUCN Strategic Priorities for the Oceania Region 2008-2012, has been developed to provide a framework for a regional programme dealing with the incredible natural and cultural diversity of a region spread across 10% of the planet.

Oceania – the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand, linked by the Pacific Ocean – is a region historically associated with sunshine, beaches, majestic mountains, crystal clear waters and unique biodiversity. However, it is all too clear that these natural treasures are under threat. We are losing the war in terms of sustainable use of natural resources. Fisheries stocks are declining rapidly; coral reefs are dying; and we are losing species, both terrestrial and marine, due to rapid development and the impacts of globalisation.

It is not too late to address and hopefully reverse these trends by individual and collective actions at all levels. With our

regional and global partners, IUCN will focus attention on supporting Pacific island countries, and strengthening IUCN's role in Australia and New Zealand through active member engagement, as well as new partnerships with the Pacific.

Climate change has raised the global profile of our environment and we are only beginning to understand its impacts on our region. Vulnerability of Pacific Island communities to rising sea levels and natural disasters is a fact and demands strong adaptation measures to ensure the survival of communities and effective resilience measures for biodiversity.

This statement of strategic priorities emphasises the importance of innovative partnerships across all sectors – private enterprise, civil society, churches, communities, governments and regional institutions. Enhanced coordination and complementarity between conservation organisations and partners at national and regional levels is identified as a key priority. Furthermore, we hope to promote a culture of effective environmental

governance, underpinned by sound environmental information for decision makers and supported by strong regulatory frameworks at all levels. Recognising that this is a new regional initiative, the intention is that this will be a living document.

I commend the IUCN Strategic Priorities for the Oceania Region 2008-2012 to you for your consideration and support.

Malo Aupito,  
Taholo Kami  
Regional Director



*NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN*

*SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN*

China

Korea

Japan

Taiwan

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Guam

Vietnam

Philippines

Malaysia

Federated States of Micronesia

Brunei

Indonesia

New Guinea

Nauru

Tuvalu

Kiribati

Solomon Islands

Tokelau

Timor-Leste

Wallis & Futuna

American Samoa

French Polynesia

Ecuador

Vanuatu

Fiji

Tonga

Niue

Cook Islands

Pitcairn Island

Peru



Australia

New Caledonia

New Zealand

Easter Island

Chile

## WHERE WE WORK - IUCN IN OCEANIA



Oceania is a vast region, covering more than 50 million square kilometres of the planet and encompassing a total of twenty-four states and territories, including Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands.

The terrestrial and marine environments of the region support enormous biological diversity, including large numbers of endemic and endangered species. The diverse ecosystems of the region play a vital role in meeting basic human needs, supporting sustainable livelihoods and contributing to national economic development. For centuries, traditional systems have successfully regulated individual and communal resource use. However, in recent decades, rapid population growth and economic development have placed considerable pressure on natural ecosystems.

Oceania may be portrayed as two sub-regions: developed territories, Australia and New Zealand on the one hand; and developing Pacific island countries on the other. Pacific island countries face enormous development challenges – small physical size, extreme remoteness

and high population growth make the environment and economies of these countries particularly vulnerable to external pressures. Furthermore, these small countries largely lack the resources and capacity to adequately respond to these challenges.

IUCN has been active in the Oceania region for many years through the work of its Members, Committees and expert Commissions.

### **Membership**

IUCN membership in Oceania is diverse, drawing together more than 40 members; including Australia and New Zealand as States, government agencies and non-government organisations. IUCN's Commissions are strongly represented in the region, with more than 500 expert volunteers across the region. Currently, IUCN Oceania membership is uneven, with the majority of its members based in Australia and New Zealand.

The establishment of the IUCN Regional Office for Oceania provides an opportunity to deliver greater value to members in the region through more effective resource

mobilisation and expanded collaboration with national and regional partners. At the time of printing, the government of Fiji had just announced its intention to become an IUCN member. Efforts will continue to encourage membership

A full list of current members is provided at the back of this document.

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## HOW WE WORK



IUCN provides a natural link between civil society and non-government organisations, regional organisations and governments. Consistent with the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, IUCN is strongly committed to working with national governments, aligning its programme with existing regional priorities and strategies and managing its projects and programmes to achieve results in collaboration with others working on similar issues with Pacific island countries.

IUCN Oceania is committed to supporting the effective implementation of the Pacific Islands Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and will work with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to support coordination of regional and national partners. Following an extensive consultation process, IUCN is entering into memoranda of understanding with partners in the region, including SPREP, the Secretariat of the Pacific Applied GeoScience Commission (SOPAC) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) and this will continue with other

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key organisations. In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that regional cooperation is well-established in the Pacific islands region and is currently underpinned by the Pacific Plan, a regional instrument adopted by the leaders of all independent Pacific island states together with Australia and New Zealand. The Pacific Plan aims, inter alia, to:

“strengthen support for current programmes, develop new initiatives and advocate for the needs of the Smaller Island States, particularly given their limited capacity and fragile and vulnerable environment, including to climate change; [and] build strong partnerships between Member countries, Pacific territories, regional and international organisations and non-state organisations.”

Intergovernmental organisations and the strategies that they have helped to develop for the region play a key role in all aspects of development in the region, including conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development.

Throughout the region countries have commenced or completed the preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and sustainable development strategies. IUCN will seek to integrate its work with the strategic priorities of each country in which it plans to work, and seek to ensure an effective complementarity with work carried out by other organisations in each country, whether intergovernmental or non-governmental.



## IUCN'S VALUE PROPOSITION

The strength and uniqueness of IUCN lies in its dedicated networks of members and volunteer experts, its constituency of both government and non-government organisations and its highly motivated world-wide Secretariat. With its UN Observer status, IUCN is thus in a unique position to build global partnerships and bring about the changes necessary for a sustainable world. In particular, the Union is best known and respected for the following strengths:

### **IUCN provides credible, trusted knowledge and strong technical capacities**

IUCN is known for its sound scientific base in conservation and sustainable resource management, particularly in the fields of ecosystem management; marine, forest, water, and species conservation; protected area management; sustainable development linked to poverty reduction; and natural resource management and decision-making tools. IUCN derives its value as a trusted source of knowledge from its expert commission networks, its members, and its highly competent and committed staff.

### **IUCN builds consensus and partnerships for action**

Its unique structure and credibility allow IUCN to convene a range of stakeholders to address the most important conservation issues. The Union can bring divergent views together, build consensus and promote joint actions and solutions. That ability has been demonstrated in areas such as forestry, mining, oil and gas, and water management. Increasingly, its reputation as a 'neutral broker' allows it to also involve the private sector and encourage the application of their knowledge and expertise for sustainable development.

### **IUCN has a global and strategic reach**

IUCN members value the Union's global reach and spread, and the potential to share resources across political and cultural boundaries. Its essence is to connect governments, civil society, NGOs, science and the business communities to improve conservation policy and action. It connects the actions of its various networks in the field with global policy work. And it connects the conservation issues and achievements to wider societal objectives such as security and poverty at the national and international level. That connectivity needs to be improved so that members, partners and Commissions receive increased benefits from their membership. IUCN also needs to extend its reach to new areas of work, new partners and new innovations to increase the influence and impact of the Union.

### **IUCN is nature's representative at the United Nations**

IUCN is the only environmental organisation with a seat at the UN General Assembly. This provides IUCN members with an important and unique entry into the significant world of international debate on environment and development. Its UN Observer Status is a powerful conduit for the concerns of its members at the international level.

## WHAT WE DO - STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

This statement of strategic priority areas complements the IUCN Regional Programme for Oceania 2008-2012. The regional programme is the result of several years of negotiations and consultations with IUCN members and other key stakeholders in Oceania. It aims to add value to the existing initiatives in the region while also aligning closely with the global IUCN Programme 2009-2012. The IUCN Programme 2009-2012 strengthens IUCN's heartland work on conserving the diversity of life, while developing more effective and strategic interventions linked to the global agenda for sustainable development in the areas of climate change, energy, poverty and security, and economy and markets. In particular, the global programme identifies five thematic priority areas:

■ **Conserving the diversity of life** - ensuring sustainable and equitable management of biodiversity from local to global levels

■ **Changing the climate forecast** - integrating biodiversity considerations and opportunities into climate change policy and practice



■ **Naturally energizing the future** - implementing ecologically sustainable, equitable and efficient energy systems

■ **Managing ecosystems for human well-being** - improving livelihoods, reducing poverty and vulnerability, and enhancing environmental and human security through sustainable ecosystem management

■ **Greening the world economy** - integrating ecosystem conservation values in economic policy, finance and markets.

The IUCN Regional Office for Oceania has developed four key programme areas – species, marine, water and energy – and three innovative initiatives – the Pacific Mangroves Initiative,

the Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance and the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge – through which it will deliver on the globally defined thematic priority areas while addressing regional and national needs in Oceania. Projects and activities undertaken within each programme or initiative will complement existing national and regional initiatives. Initial concept papers have been prepared within each programme area and for each initiative, to inform consultation with partners, especially key donors and beneficiaries. Detailed results for each programme and initiative are being progressively developed in consultation with national and regional partners.



# REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

The Oceania Regional Office has established four core regional programmes – species, marine, water and energy – which address some of the region’s priorities in conservation and sustainable livelihood development.



## SPECIES PROGRAMME

**Conserving endangered and endemic species, managing wildlife trade and controlling invasive species.**

A sound knowledge of the species found in the region and information on their

conservation status and distribution is needed to provide the foundation for making informed decisions on biodiversity conservation at local, regional and global levels. However, limited resources and capacity has resulted in many gaps in knowledge of species in the Pacific Islands region. This makes it difficult for countries to identify priorities for initiatives such as development of protected area networks and for implementing laws and regulations for protection of rare, endangered or endemic species.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is widely recognised as the most comprehensive, apolitical approach for evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species, and there is strong support in the region for updating and improving the information in the Red List as a foundation for conservation work. IUCN has developed guidelines for using Red List criteria at the regional level and is establishing a regional partnership of key biodiversity-focused organisations to develop a regional Red List for Oceania and to support Pacific island countries and territories in using this information effectively.

The regional Species Programme will also provide support, resources and advice on wildlife trade issues for the Pacific Island countries that have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The IUCN Regional Office for Oceania is a member of the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), and is committed to supporting regional collaboration on addressing threats from invasive species, in conjunction with the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG). IUCN intends to work with SPREP and ISSG to support regional cooperation and action on marine invasive species.



## MARINE PROGRAMME

**Conserving marine species and ecosystems and promoting sustainable fisheries management.**

Marine conservation has emerged as a key priority during consultations, both for biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods. The initial activities of the marine programme will focus on sustainable management of fisheries at a local, national and regional level, with a view to progressively developing a broad programme of work for the conservation of marine species and ecosystems in the Pacific islands region. Examples of proposed marine conservation activities include: development of management principles for sea mounts; legal support for locally managed marine areas; technical assistance for deep and high seas marine protected areas; and, technical advice on sustainable management of fisheries at a local, national and regional level.



## WATER PROGRAMME

**Promoting integrated management of water resources, valuation of freshwater ecosystem services and conservation of freshwater species and ecosystems.**

Freshwater and wetland ecosystems occur in all biomes, take many forms, and are influenced by many land-based and other activities, therefore requiring integrated planning and management approaches to safeguard their many ecosystem benefits and services. IUCN's Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) is a global programme of capacity building

activities and demonstration projects to model sustainable water management practices. The first phase of WANI (2001-2007) focused on developing practical approaches for the implementation of integrated water resource management (IWRM). In this it emphasised the need to incorporate the needs of downstream ecosystems in water allocations. It also promoted the notion of incorporating ecosystem services in the planning and management of water resources in over 30 countries and 12 river basins, addressing practical aspects of integrated water management issues on the ground as well as supporting national level reforms. A major focus is on building the capacity of the water sector to take these reform processes forward.

In the context of climate change and sustainable development, integrated management of water resources is a key challenge for the Pacific islands, as identified by the Pacific Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management. The IUCN Regional Office for Oceania has committed to working with the global IUCN Water Programme to implement the second phase of WANI in the Pacific

islands region. The initiative will focus on four main themes: ecosystems and security; governance, democracy and participation; economics and finance; and learning and leadership.

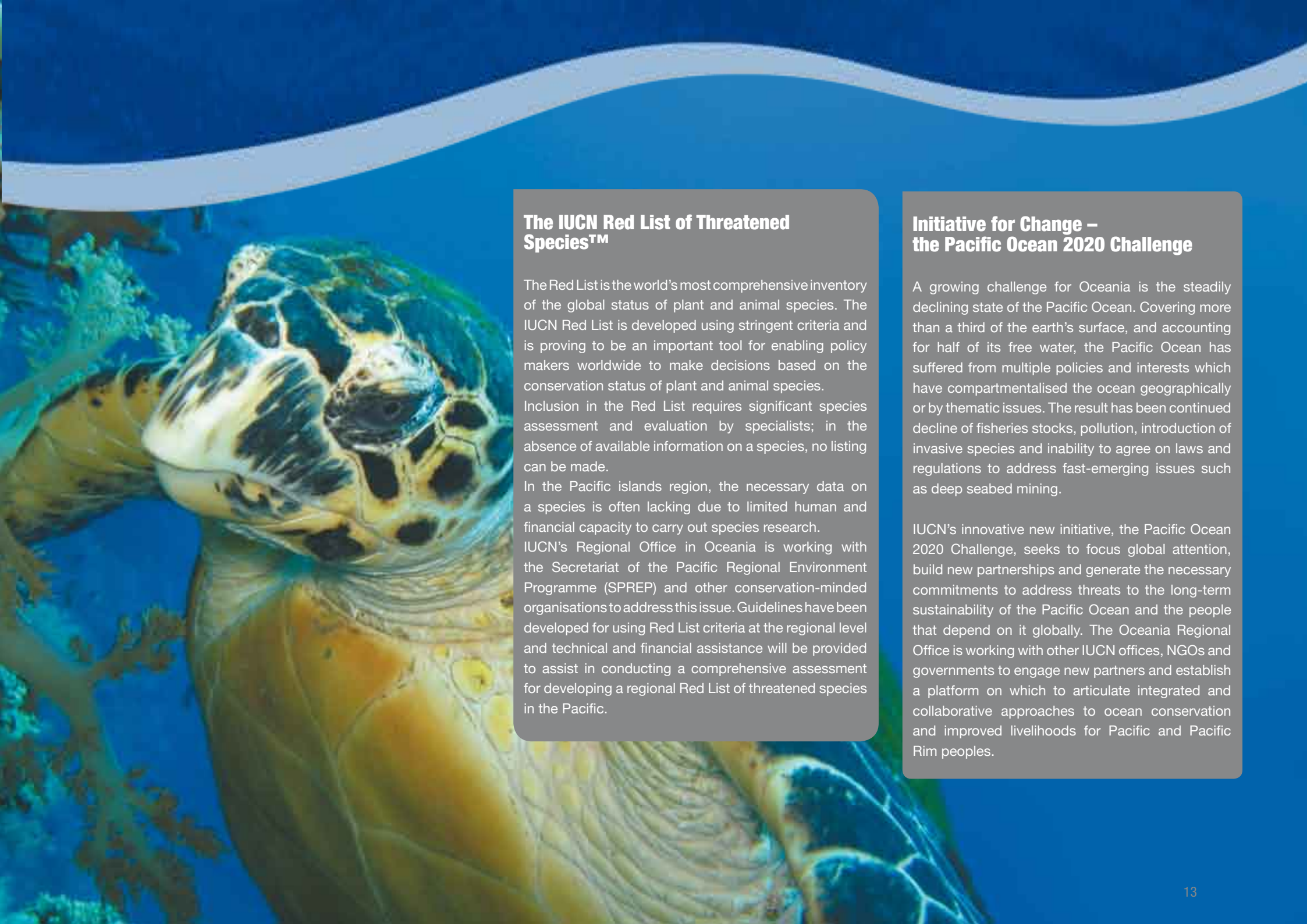
## ENERGY PROGRAMME

**Promoting sustainable energy policies and implementing sustainable energy projects, including renewable energy and energy efficiency programs.**

IUCN's regional energy project, the Energy, Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (EESLI), is designed to assist the countries of the Pacific region to accelerate the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency systems that are ecologically efficient, sustainable and socially equitable. The Pacific EESLI project will be implemented over three years in a number of Pacific countries and is supported by the governments of Italy and Austria. EESLI will support Pacific countries in developing and implementing environmentally sustainable energy policies and a number of renewable energy pilot projects focusing on ecosystem conservation and livelihood enhancement.

These will be achieved through installation of renewable energy pilot projects; provision of management tools for the projects and assistance in the development of sustainable energy policies. Countries will also have opportunity to network with other small island states in the Pacific and globally to share lessons learned, skills, and technology.





### **The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™**

The Red List is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global status of plant and animal species. The IUCN Red List is developed using stringent criteria and is proving to be an important tool for enabling policy makers worldwide to make decisions based on the conservation status of plant and animal species.

Inclusion in the Red List requires significant species assessment and evaluation by specialists; in the absence of available information on a species, no listing can be made.

In the Pacific islands region, the necessary data on a species is often lacking due to limited human and financial capacity to carry out species research.

IUCN's Regional Office in Oceania is working with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and other conservation-minded organisations to address this issue. Guidelines have been developed for using Red List criteria at the regional level and technical and financial assistance will be provided to assist in conducting a comprehensive assessment for developing a regional Red List of threatened species in the Pacific.

### **Initiative for Change – the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge**

A growing challenge for Oceania is the steadily declining state of the Pacific Ocean. Covering more than a third of the earth's surface, and accounting for half of its free water, the Pacific Ocean has suffered from multiple policies and interests which have compartmentalised the ocean geographically or by thematic issues. The result has been continued decline of fisheries stocks, pollution, introduction of invasive species and inability to agree on laws and regulations to address fast-emerging issues such as deep seabed mining.

IUCN's innovative new initiative, the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge, seeks to focus global attention, build new partnerships and generate the necessary commitments to address threats to the long-term sustainability of the Pacific Ocean and the people that depend on it globally. The Oceania Regional Office is working with other IUCN offices, NGOs and governments to engage new partners and establish a platform on which to articulate integrated and collaborative approaches to ocean conservation and improved livelihoods for Pacific and Pacific Rim peoples.

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES



The four thematic programmes described above will be complemented by three cross-cutting initiatives – the Pacific Mangroves Initiative, the Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance and the Pacific Ocean Challenge 2020.

### PACIFIC CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

**Promoting and supporting effective environmental governance through technical assistance and capacity-building.**

IUCN Oceania is establishing the Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance, a regional centre of excellence in environmental governance, which will

provide technical assistance and capacity building support to national governments and non-government organisations in the Pacific islands.

The IUCN Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance will play a leading role in promoting and supporting effective environmental governance in the Pacific islands. Initially, the Centre proposes to pursue three key thematic programmatic foci:

- Environmental Law
- Environmental Economics and Policy
- Environmental Leadership

The Centre will provide cost effective access to expertise in environmental governance and play a leadership role in the development and delivery of environmental governance programs in the region.

### PACIFIC OCEAN 2020 CHALLENGE

**Mobilising global action to conserve the world's largest natural resource, the Pacific Ocean.**

The IUCN Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge seeks to focus global attention, build new partnerships and generate the necessary

commitments to address threats to the world's largest natural resource – the Pacific Ocean – by 2020.

Key elements of the initiative include: releasing a scientific consensus statement on key threats to the Pacific Ocean; preparing a Pacific Ocean Report to raise awareness of the enormous value of Pacific Ocean resources to coastal communities and countries in and around the Pacific Ocean, and the global economy; to highlight the consequences of inaction; and to recommend priorities for action;

establishing a multi-stakeholder partnership to develop and implement a Pacific Ocean 2020 Strategy, taking into consideration the findings of the Pacific Ocean Report and relevant policy instruments, including the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy; establishing a Pacific Ocean Trust Fund; and launching a biennial Pacific Ocean Summit to ensure that ongoing attention is given to the Pacific Ocean by building ownership and an integrated strategic approach across all stakeholders.

### CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND COASTAL MANAGEMENT - PACIFIC MANGROVES INITIATIVE

**Managing coastal ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and resilience to disasters and climate change.**

Risk management in the context of climate change has become a key priority for coastal populations. The large majority of Pacific islanders live by the sea and are highly dependent on coastal ecosystems, including mangroves and coral reefs. The Pacific Mangrove Initiative will promote sustainable management of mangroves and coastal ecosystems and raise awareness of the value of coastal ecosystem goods and services, including enhanced resilience to climate change and natural disasters (including tsunami and cyclones). This initiative will work with existing initiatives, such as WANI and the Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific (CRISP), to promote a 'ridge to reef' approach to catchment management.

## IUCN MEMBERS IN OCEANIA

IUCN membership in the Oceania region is diverse, drawing together States, government agencies and non-government organisations. A number of international IUCN members, such as WWF, Conservation International and the Nature Conservancy, are also active in the region.

### STATE MEMBERS

Australia

New Zealand

### GOVERNMENT AGENCY MEMBERS

Department of Conservation, New Zealand  
Department for Environment and Heritage, SA  
Department of Conservation and Land Management, WA  
Department of Primary Industries, NSW  
Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria  
Dept. of Environment and Water Resources, Australia

Department of Environment and Conservation, NSW  
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australia  
New Zealand Conservation Authority, Australia  
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service  
Wet Tropics Management Authority, Australia

### NON-GOVERNMENT MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES

Association pour la Sauvegarde de la Nature Néo-Calédonienne, New Caledonia  
Australian Centre for Environmental Law  
Australian Conservation Foundation  
Australian Marine Conservation Society  
Australian Rainforest Conservation Society  
Conservation Volunteers Australia  
Environment and Conservation Organizations, NZ  
Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand  
Institute of Foresters of Australia  
International Federation of Landscape Architects  
Macquarie University Centre for Environmental Law  
Lincoln University, Environmental Management Division  
National Parks Association, New South Wales  
National Environmental Law Association  
National Parks Australia Council  
National Trust of Fiji Islands  
New Zealand Ecological Society

National Parks Association, Queensland  
Project Jonah, Australia  
Nature Conservation Council, NSW  
Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, NZ  
Parks and Wildlife Commission, Northern Territory  
The Wilderness Society, Australia  
Queensland Conservation Council  
The Environment Centre, Northern Territory  
University of Canberra, School of Environmental Sciences  
University of the South Pacific  
World Wide Fund for Nature, Australia  
World Wide Fund for Nature, New Zealand

For more information on membership, please go to [www.iucn.org/members](http://www.iucn.org/members) or Contact us at [oceania@iucn.org](mailto:oceania@iucn.org)

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