

Pacific Islands Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Climate Change Adaptation: building on nature's resilience

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Project Objectives The people of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories have a long history of living in highly varied climatic conditions. Cyclones, storms and even droughts have challenged lives and livelihoods, but the traditional systems of the Pacific Island people have historically offered a high degree of resilience to these events. Now, as changes to the intensity, frequency and distribution of these extreme events combine with other aspects of [climate change](#) such as more subtle shifts in temperature and precipitation patterns, [ocean acidification](#) and sea level rise, the people of the Pacific Islands are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of [climate change](#). The biodiversity of the Pacific continues to attract many visitors because of its beauty and its uniqueness. However, it is the conditions that have created this distinctive and diverse biodiversity that make the terrestrial, freshwater and marine life particularly vulnerable to [climate change](#). For example, geographic isolation, and often limited scope for upward shifts in altitude by mountain species makes species migration to more suitable areas particularly challenging. The relationship between the people of the Pacific and their [environment](#) has always been very strong - with a high dependency on the services that the local ecosystems provide, such as food and freshwater. Over time, [climate change](#) will undermine the capacities of many ecosystems to continue to provide these services. Furthermore, it is not just [climate change](#) that threatens the productive ecosystems of the Pacific; environmental degradation associated with poor natural resource management continues to limit the options for future generations of Pacific Islanders. In responding to [climate change](#), governments across the world will need to make the best use of the full range of their social, political, [technological](#), economic and environmental resources to provide the greatest opportunities for current and future generations. In the Pacific, the dominant [adaptation](#) responses to [climate change](#) have focused heavily on [infrastructure](#) and community-based approaches. This report calls for a third approach, which requires us to better harness the significant contributions that ecosystems can make in improving the resilience of the people of the Pacific to [climate change](#) - in the form of 'environmental infrastructure'. The report and its associated products will support decision-makers in their efforts to better view biodiversity conservation and ecosystem service values through the lens of [climate change](#), and to identify practical actions that can be an integral part of the solution to this very complex problem.

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