



# RESCCUE

## SETTING UP AND MANAGING PROTECTED AREAS

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Setting up and managing protected areas was part of RESCCUE's strategy to strengthen integrated coastal management and climate-change resilience.
- ✓ The project helped set up two new land and marine protected areas in Fiji and New Caledonia covering a total of over 1,300 sq. km.
- ✓ RESCCUE also strengthened management of several dozen provincial and local protected areas enjoying official or community status across all the pilot sites. It assisted with strengthening a network of 13 protected areas in the Great South of New Caledonia.
- ✓ The project examined six types of funding mechanisms for protected areas, two of which were implemented: the North Efate conservation fund in Vanuatu, which is funding locally managed marine areas, and a marine conservation agreement for the Vatu-i-Ra Marine Conservation Park in Fiji.



GREAT SOUTH, NEW CALEDONIA

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## WHY SUPPORT PROTECTED AREAS<sup>1</sup> UNDER RESCCUE?

### *Summary of project objectives*

The overall goal of RESCCUE was to contribute increasing the resilience of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). To this end, RESCCUE supported adaptation to climate change through integrated coastal management (ICM), resorting especially to economic analysis and economic and financial mechanisms.



KADAVU, FIJI

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Running alongside this overall regional objective were specific objectives for the various pilot sites:

- Develop integrated coastal management planning and implementation;
- Strengthen the use of economic analysis for integrated coastal management;
- Ensure economic and financial sustainability of integrated coastal management;
- Facilitate learning, dissemination and replication of experiences gained from pilot sites.

Setting up and managing protected areas were among RESCCUE's key strategic initiatives for achieving these objectives.

<sup>1</sup> The IUCN definition of a protected area is used here, i.e. a “clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”. The definition covers various designations such as national, provincial and regional parks, nature reserves, community conservation areas and locally managed areas.



## *Protected areas in ICM*

The main issues covered by ICM are either connected to the impacts of human activities on the coastal environment, or to the impacts of human activities on one another with the coastal environment as the physical link. Protected areas play a pivotal role in containing and better managing such impacts, as they bridge the gap between biodiversity and ecosystem protection and sustainable economic activity by better regulating them and managing use conflicts.



NORTH EFATE, VANUATU

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## *Protected areas for boosting resilience to climate change*

Protected areas are also an integral part of nature-based solutions for adapting to climate change. By protecting ecosystems from non-climate stressors, such as natural-resource overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and habitat destruction, protected areas help them build up their resilience to climate-change and, in so doing, that of the communities that depend on them economically, socially and culturally.



MANGROVE SEEDLING, NEW CALEDONIA

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RESCCUE placed particular emphasis on nature-based solutions for several reasons. Firstly, people very often know how to implement them and they are already tested. Secondly, they have many co-benefits and are “no-regret” solutions. They are beneficial in any climate scenario, even if their efficiency decreases in high-emission scenarios.

## WHAT HAS RESCCUE CONTRIBUTED TO PROTECTED AREAS ?

The project’s contributions covered four areas, namely strengthening the management of existing protected areas, establishing networks of protected areas, setting up new protected areas and developing funding mechanisms.



MOOREA, FRENCH POLYNESIA

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### *Strengthening the management of protected areas*

In [French Polynesia](#), the project provided support for reviewing the Moorea Marine Area Management Plan (PGEM), a planning tool from the Land-Use Code. The PGEM regulates uses of the whole Moorea lagoon, listed under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance. The management plan covers 49 sq. km of reefs and lagoon. The revised PGEM proposal, comprising draft legislation, maps and objectives, was endorsed in November 2017 by the Land-Use Planning Committee and submitted to a public hearing from 25 February to 27 April 2019 by the Minister of Housing and Land-Use Planning.

In [New Caledonia’s Southern Province](#), at the behest of the Department of the Environment the project carried out [an ecological diagnosis](#) of the 13 terrestrial and coastal protected areas of the Great South, followed up by a [management costs and funding needs assessment](#).



In [Fiji](#) and [Vanuatu](#), the project strengthened locally managed marine areas in collaboration with the Fisheries Departments.

In North Efate, Vanuatu, the project jointly developed tools with the communities for evaluating and efficiently managing their marine resources, including a [Community Marine Monitoring Toolkit](#) and a [tabu area management guide](#). The existing tabu areas were also mapped and their boundaries reviewed and formally recognised whenever necessary.



MARINE RESOURCES MONITORING, NORTH EFATE, VANUATU

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In Fiji's Ra and Kadavu Provinces, protected-area management training was provided, including two practical workshops in Kadavu on biological resource monitoring in locally managed marine areas.

In Ra, the project reviewed [the costs and benefits](#) associated with setting up community protected areas in watersheds and supported community forestry-reserve management on mountain plateaux through watershed reforestation activities.

### *Networks of protected areas*

The inclusion of protected areas in ecologically representative and well-connected networks, beyond the imperative of effective and equitable individual management, is essential to achieving their conservation objectives.

In the Southern Province of New Caledonia, RESCCUE has developed a green and blue corridors framework to characterize and map ecological connectivity and continuity, and then developed a [strategy](#) allowing the province to set up a more ecologically efficient protected areas network by 2025 for the Great South and the Côte Oubliée.

### *Setting up new protected areas*

This strategy for a protected areas network allowed the Southern Province to create a [provincial park on the Côte Oubliée](#) in early 2019. With its 93,000 ha of land, 29,000 ha of sea and 90 km of coastline, it has doubled the land area protected in the province.



PROVINCIAL PARK OF CÔTE OUBLIÉE, NEW CALEDONIA  
SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF NEW CALEDONIA, S.E.R.A.I.L., SOUTH PROVINCE

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In Fiji, RESCCUE helped set up [the country's largest marine park in Vatu-i-Ra](#) in May 2018 in partnership with the local communities, tourist industry and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Spanning 110.5 sq. km, it now has a [management plan](#), which has been adopted by the local communities and provincial and national authorities, and a dedicated funding mechanism (cf. below).



VATU-I-RA, FIJI

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The project also helped set up three freshwater-aquaculture tabu areas in Ra and began a series of consultations for protecting Mount Uluinabukelevu (or Mount Washington) in Kadavu.



RAPID BIODIVERSITY SURVEY TEAM FOR THE ELMA PROJECT, VANUATU

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In Vanuatu, RESCCUE supported a project from the Shefa Province for setting up a major protected land area in the centre of Efate Island known as the Efate Land Management Area (ELMA) by carrying out [a rapid biodiversity assessment](#) combining scientific inventories and traditional knowledge. The ELMA project is still ongoing in 2019.

### *Developing funding mechanisms for protected areas*

Along with all these efforts, the project examined the feasibility of [funding mechanisms](#) for protected areas, including entrance fees, tourist-industry contributions, sponsorships and payments for ecosystem services (PES). Two mechanisms were implemented in Fiji and Vanuatu, namely:

- a [marine conservation agreement](#) to fund management of the Vatu-i-Ra Marine Conservation Park along with education grants through a voluntary tourist-industry contribution generating EUR 6,000 to 12,000 per annum paid into a local trust fund; and
- a [conservation fund on North Efate](#) supplied by a voluntary contribution based on 10% of turnover from community tourist accommodation and activities amounting to approximately EUR 9,000 per annum, part of which will be allocated to tabu area management.

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## **EDITION**

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