



**FFA**

**Pacific Islands  
Forum Fisheries Agency**

**Strategic Plan 2014 – 2020**





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# Foreword

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) was established in 1979 when Pacific leaders signed the FFA Convention. At the time, the international legal framework for oceanic fisheries was undergoing dramatic change. In particular, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) secured for coastal states the sovereign right to manage the living resources within a 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Founding Members envisioned an agency with the mandate to strengthen national capacity and regional solidarity for the sustainable management, control and development of offshore fisheries. Since then the membership of the FFA has increased from ten to seventeen.

FFA consists of the Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) as the governing body comprising a representative from each member country and territory; and the FFA Secretariat which is based in Honiara, Solomon Islands. A Council of Ministers meets annually to provide strategic oversight of regional fisheries matters.

After 35 years of existence, the Secretariat and Members have a proud record of achievement having actively pursued a range of activities to support its Members, including:

- Building capacity at the national and regional level to manage and develop fisheries;
- Developing harmonised minimum terms and conditions for access, licensing and fisheries management;
- Implementing a regional vessel register, with supporting centralised Vessel Monitoring System and associated electronic surveillance tools that are available regionally and nationally;

- Ongoing sharing of data and information throughout the region to inform fisheries management and facilitate cooperative surveillance and enforcement;
- Achieving substantial increases in the benefits accrued from fisheries resources as measured by a range of economic indicators; and
- Leading the development and operation of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The management of offshore fisheries is increasingly complex and important to FFA Members in terms of government revenue, contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment, local and global food security and on shore fisheries development.

Fisheries management interacts with a range of other issues and sectors including broader oceans management, climate change adaptation and response, marine spatial planning and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) issues. Consequently, FFA Members now operate within a far more complex environment, requiring a balance of technical, scientific, regulatory and political skills.



The global focus on sustainability, eco-labelling, catch certification and traceability places an onus on all stakeholders to ensure that accurate, timely and robust data is collected from the value chain to inform decision-making.

Decision-making on regional fisheries issues has evolved under global international law towards inclusiveness, cooperation and consensus between multiple parties. While this brings substantial benefits in terms of transparency and inclusiveness, it also creates the potential for opposition between coastal States and distant water fishing nations (DWFNs). FFA Members participate in such cooperative processes with a high degree of success, but also at some risk. Management at this level introduces the strong potential for coastal SIDS to carry a disproportionate burden of conservation action, as each group of stakeholders seeks to influence management in a way that benefits them, while transferring costs to others. There are specific protections against this under international law but, in the past, they have been difficult to operationalise. Disproportionate burden is inconsistent with FFA Members' aspirations and with international law as it prevents the realisation of development opportunities.

FFA Members seek to design and implement management measures that will not only result in sustainable fish stocks and marine ecosystems, but that will also create maximum opportunities for social and economic development. More and more, the concept of Rights Based Management (RBM) is becoming fundamental to the FFA approach to fisheries

issues. Exercising their rights under internal law as coastal States, FFA Members seek to control fishing opportunities in respect of their EEZs to create sustainability, increase access prices and encourage downstream investment. Through agreed management measures, successful RBM also reduces the potential for disproportionate burdens on SIDS.

This Strategic Plan builds on previous successes and sets a course for further sustainable development in the Pacific through enhanced cooperation amongst FFA Members. This echoes the recommendations from the recent review of the Pacific Plan. It also creates opportunities for RBM approaches that allow FFA Members to increase their influence on, and benefits from, sustainable fisheries management.



***Honourable Kuresa Nasau***

***Ulu o Tokelau***

***Chair, 10th Annual Ministerial FFC Meeting***







## Vision

Our people will enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits through the sustainable use of our offshore fisheries resources.

## Mission

To drive regional cooperation to create and enable the maximum long term social and economic benefit from the sustainable use of our shared offshore fishery resources.

## Values

1. **Respect** – FFA approaches all fishery stakeholders with respect. This includes transparent and open interactions between Members and all other stakeholders.
2. **Regional Cooperation** – the work of FFA is predicated on the principle that collective regional action provides the most effective mechanism for securing the long-term sustainable use of the region's common pool fisheries resources.
3. **Ethical behaviour** – FFA will operate with honesty, integrity and professionalism in an open and transparent environment that respects national requirements and priorities of FFA Members.

## Principles

1. **Sustainability** – Sustainable economic and social development, based on appropriate long-term conservation and management of resources, is implicit within all FFA work.
2. **National focus** – national priorities inform the work of FFA and set the basis for regional aspirations. FFA is also committed to producing national level outcomes that reflect national aspirations within the fisheries sector.
3. **Rights based management** – FFA is committed to zonal rights based management, which is fundamental to creating and sustaining the value of the region's fisheries and securing their ownership by Members.
4. **Social equity and accountability** – FFA is committed to ensuring that sustainable development of fishery industries includes steps to ensure the promotion of gender issues, fair working conditions and equitable access to fisheries resources by local communities including for food security.
5. **Responsiveness** – FFA planning will be proactive and strategic to anticipate and respond to long-term changes in the fishery, such as climate change, the global focus on ocean management and the special interests of SIDS.







# STRATEGIC DIRECTION



## Background

The origin of FFA goes back to the *Declaration on the Law of the Sea and a Regional Fisheries Agency* made by the eighth meeting of the South Pacific Forum in 1977. The declaration recognised the changing face of fisheries at that time and called for the establishment of an Agency to provide a forum for cooperation in

fisheries management and create a Secretariat to offer a range of technical and capacity building activities.

*The South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency Convention* provides for the establishment and operation of the Agency, including its Governing Council and the Secretariat.

## Future Direction

FFA was specifically created to provide strategic fisheries policy advice directly to Pacific Leaders. In the recent past, Fisheries Ministers have provided an annual communiqué to the annual meeting of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders. Under this Strategic Plan, the direct linkage between Fisheries Ministers and Leaders (in their various fora) and between FFA and Leaders will be strengthened to better align with the importance of fisheries resources to the region.

This Strategic Plan recognises that regional cooperation and collective action are the best mechanisms for securing the long-term sustainable use of the region's common pool fisheries resources. This will be actioned through the development and strengthening of Rights Based Management (RBM) approaches.

FFA Members acknowledge that committing to greater collective management involves some trade-offs in terms of independence of action. They agree to engage in ongoing strategic dialogue at the highest political levels to identify and take up opportunities where the trade-offs of coordinated and integrated action are of overall benefit.

With the support of its Members, and in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional bodies, FFA will strive to deliver collective regional solutions within the fisheries sector.

This work will include:

- Investing the development of necessary legal and institutional frameworks to take up identified opportunities for collective regional action;
- Promoting strong collective advocacy to ensure that FFA Members play a leadership role with a range of strategic partners as identified below; and
- Sustained support to national administrations in the delivery of effective and professional national fisheries administrations across the region.







# FFA Governance

The FFA Convention describes its membership and lays out its functions.

More specifically, the FFA Strategic Governance structure has the following key elements:

- A Governing Council that meets at two levels annually:
  - o The Ministerial Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC Min) meeting is the paramount decision-making organ within the Forum Fisheries Committee and is the conduit for reporting and exchange of information between FFA and Forum Leaders. Forum Fisheries Ministers are responsible for all high-level matters and are directly accountable to Forum Leaders on the implementation of the regional fisheries commitments and other decisions made by Leaders; and
  - o The Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) meets annually and is the decision-making organ responsible for providing detailed policy guidance to the Secretariat and most of the operational and administrative activity of the FFC. Fisheries Officials may be tasked with specific issues by the FFC Min.
- FFC also meets in several “special sessions” each year where formal decision-making is required to enhance regional solidarity and ensure outcomes. The most common example is preparing positions and proposals for meetings of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Control and Surveillance (MCS) Working Group, the Sub-Committee on South Pacific Tuna and Billfish, and the Audit Committee. These are under continual review.

- A Secretariat responsible to the FFC through the FFA Director-General. The Secretariat’s executive management team reports to the FFC on matters relating to tuna resource management and development and Secretariat administration. To facilitate the best possible delivery of technical services, the Secretariat seeks best practice in governance and administration, including fostering FFA’s key assets: human resources, information, and member and donor funding.

Staff Regulations, Financial Regulations and other corporate policy documents are prepared and administered at the discretion of the Director-General. Independent external audits and internal control audits are conducted routinely to ensure financial and management accountability to Members and donors.

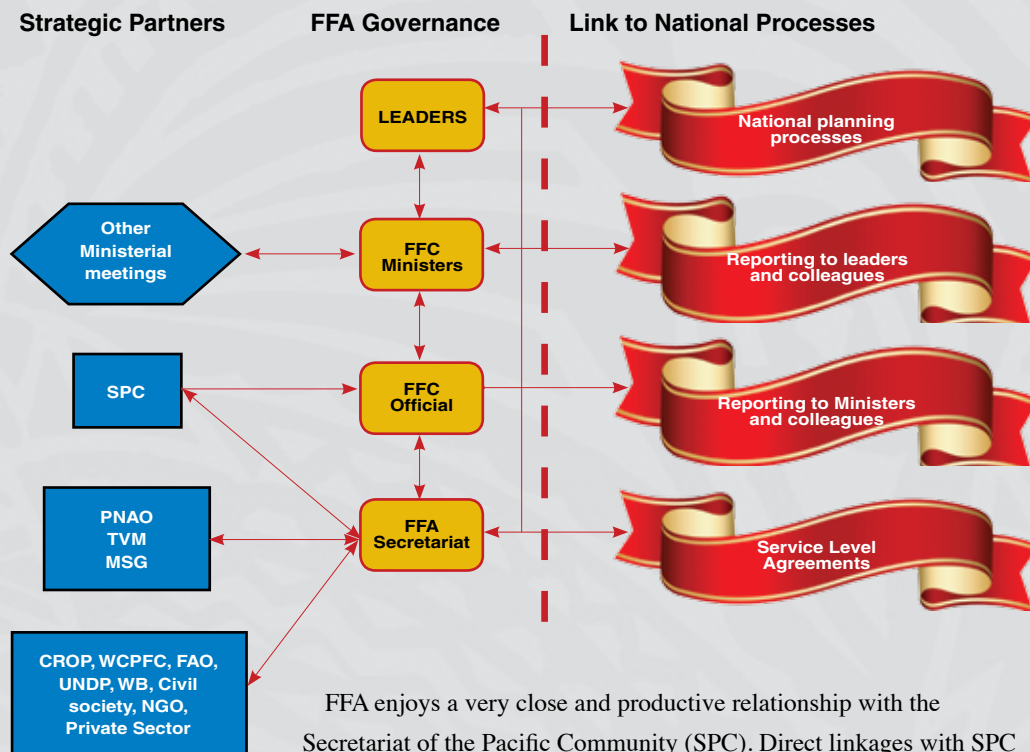
- FFC has the ability to create sub-committees, such as the Monitoring,

## Strategic Partners

FFA Members are party to numerous other international legal instruments that have a bearing on fisheries, most notably, but not limited to UNCLOS, United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and the WCPFC Convention. This reflects the truly multilateral nature of managing offshore fisheries resources and necessitates a high degree of cooperation with a range of other government and non-government actors. FFA engages with those States that are also party to, or cooperating with, these international instruments in an open manner as described in the Values above. FFA calls on those States to embrace the pro-development aspects of these instruments and to actively seek opportunities through WCPFC to agree to and implement management measures that will provide tangible and direct development benefits to FFA Members as SIDS. There is significant potential to forge stronger links with coastal States in other regions to encourage the adoption of similar regimes and arrangements to those in the Pacific in order to provide greater support at the global level.

FFA also cooperates with intergovernmental partners such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), The University of the South Pacific (USP), the WCPFC Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank (WB) Group.





FFA enjoys a very close and productive relationship with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Direct linkages with SPC across most aspects of FFA's work are actively managed to ensure that activities complement each organisation, while avoiding duplication.

FFA also has a unique relationship with the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) Office, the Te Vaka Moana (TVM) coordinator function and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, each of which provide fisheries related policy support to a sub-set of FFA Members. Policy coordination and mutual assistance ensure that FFA is able to deliver services to all members.

FFA has a close working relationship with many regional and bilateral donor partners. These partnerships are highly valued by the region and have contributed substantially to the successes enjoyed by FFA Members in support of the Vision in this Strategic Plan.

## Outcomes

By the year 2020, in support of the Vision and Mission and in accordance with guidance provided by Forum Leaders, FFA will strive to achieve the following outcomes at both national and regional levels:

### Outcome 1 – Regional solidarity is enhanced

#### Modalities

1. FFA provides strategic advice and influences regional decision-making at the highest level on fisheries issues.
2. FFC remains the forum for integrating specific interests into whole-of-region positions, proposals and standards, while sub-regionalism amongst Members is embraced as an opportunity for a strengthened focus on issues of specific interest,
3. FFA is the primary provider of regionally focused, cost-effective oceanic fisheries management, development and MCS advice to all Members at the national level.
4. The complexity of modern commercial fisheries is reflected in whole-of-government and all-stakeholder approaches at national and regional levels.
5. FFA will identify and embrace opportunities for high-level decision-makers to engage in strategic discussions about the opportunities to maximise benefits flowing from sustainable fisheries.





## **Outcome 2 – Effective management regimes in place, developed and supported by member governments, taking account of the views of industry and other stakeholders**

### **Modalities**

1. FFA Members will develop and strengthen opportunities to cooperate and achieve sustainability and development outcomes through the design of zonal rights-based management approaches and associated systems and processes to manage them.
2. Members will implement the subregional, regional or international measures that they have developed and agreed upon, through legislative, non-legislative or policy (e.g. licensing) measures as appropriate.
3. FFA will involve industry in the development of fishery management measures, and compliance in their implementation.
4. FFA Members will lead WCPFC to strengthen the management of high seas fisheries. WCPFC outcomes will respect and assist in meeting the special requirements of SIDS and reflect FFA Member interests.
5. FFA Members will ensure that growth in complexity of management measures and issues is matched by increased technical capacity across fisheries administrations in the region.
6. Management measures will be developed and advocated to ensure tuna resources are harvested within agreed sustainable biological reference points, and to achieve economic targets.
7. Adverse environmental impacts of fishing will be identified and responsibly addressed.
8. FFA Members will work together to influence the evolution of international law and practice so that such instruments support the management and development aspirations of the Pacific.

## **Outcome 3 – Benefits to FFA Members from fisheries are reinforced by robust Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) in support of fisheries management frameworks**

### **Modalities**

1. MCS systems, procedures, policies and practices will be further developed and implemented to support management at the national and regional level.
2. Estimates of the level and impact of Illegal Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing will be refined and improved, and are expected to show incremental reduction in the economic/ environmental cost through appropriate investment and effective action in deterrence.
3. Regional cooperation will be continually enhanced through activities such as information and intelligence sharing, cross-authorisation of assets and personnel and sharing of expertise in enforcement and prosecution, particularly through the *Agreement under the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region 1993*.
4. Members' ability and capacity to develop and actively enforce (including through robust prosecution of alleged offences) national and regional MCS measures is enhanced.



## **Outcome 4 – Tuna fisheries are developed to maximise social and economic benefits to Members from the sustainable use of our shared fisheries resources**

### **Modalities**

1. Foreign and domestic investment will be sustained and diversified in support of increased employment, revenue and exports leading to economic growth through robust investment analysis and facilitation based on the overall strategic direction described above.
2. Preferential access for fisheries products from Pacific island countries will be negotiated for key markets; and programs implemented to meet all market access requirements.
3. FFA Members recognise the role and importance of artisanal fisheries to food security and livelihoods and will implement measures to increase the contribution of tuna fisheries to food security in the Pacific.
4. Offshore fisheries will deliver appropriate and sustainable levels of government revenue, particularly in the case of fishing operations that do not provide other economic benefits to Members.
5. Appropriate fisheries development and investment plans will be implemented that are coherent with national development strategies and lessons learned.
6. Benefits of oceanic fisheries development will be effectively monitored through collection of data on licence fees, employment, export values and contribution to economic growth.
7. Operational competitiveness and net economic return to Pacific island countries will be promoted and monitored to better ensure long-term sustainability of national and regional benefits, including ensuring a clear linkage between management measures and development opportunities.

## **Outcome 5 – FFA governance and administration is continually strengthened**

### **Modalities**

1. Management and administration of the FFA Secretariat are efficient, cost-effective and based on best practice.
2. Members and donors will continue to support FFA based on their confidence and expectation that such investment contributes strongly to the outcomes described above.
3. Governance systems and procedures will be continually reviewed as the nature of management measures in the Pacific changes, and the roles of FFA and the Secretariat adapt to that evolution.





## ROLE OF FFA MEMBERS

FFA Members are the owners of FFA, (being the activities of the Secretariat and the processes and outcomes of cooperation between Members). Members will discharge their duties as owners of the organisation in a manner consistent with the Values above. The primary role of Members is to engage constructively (at all levels) to provide direction and impetus to FFA. In addition, Members renew their commitment to actively support the strategic and day-to-day operation of FFA including:

- Securing the resources necessary for the effective operation of the Agency;
- Appropriately valuing services provided by the Secretariat as described below;
- Engaging in constructive dialogue, including securing appropriate domestic mandate prior to such dialogue, on the opportunities for greater collective management; and
- Supporting the operation of the agency in general such as through responding to requests and sharing information.

## ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT

The role of the Secretariat is a dynamic one and is driven by the needs and priorities of Members. The Secretariat's role is to serve Members' interests in pursuing the Vision and Mission. The Values above will drive the way in which the Secretariat does business.

In all aspects of the Secretariat's work there is the ongoing need to determine where services and activities are best directed at the national level to build individual capacity and where regional services are more appropriate to deliver the needs of Members in a more holistic or efficient manner. As opportunities for such collective management or delivery of regional services are identified, the work undertaken by the Secretariat may change, including undertaking services and activities not previously delivered. FFC will play an active oversight role to avoid and manage competing objectives and to ensure that the Values described above are evident in aspects of FFA's work.

The work of the Secretariat is described in brief below, aligned broadly with the current corporate structure of the Secretariat. Greater operational detail is provided in other documents such as the Statement of Intent (SOI) and Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) as described below.

### Program 1 Governance and Corporate Administration

This program will include FFA's Executive Management, oversight of technical activities, administration and relationship management.

#### Goals

1. Provide high-level visibility to the importance of fisheries and the activities of the Secretariat and Members to ensure sustainable management, responsible development and appropriate enforcement.
2. Lead the two-way communication with Leaders on strategic fisheries issues.
3. Ensure the efficient rollout of policy advice and services under programs 2 to 4.
4. Enhance and maintain relationships in the region and internationally.
5. Deliver best practice administration and management of the Secretariat in order to lead provision of technical services and enhance member and donor confidence in FFA.



## Program 2 Fisheries Management

This program will assist FFA Members to refine and maintain effective policy and legal frameworks for the sustainable management of their tuna fisheries resources. Appropriate technical services will be provided under this program to support regional and sub-regional fishery management.

### Goals

1. Develop model management and legal frameworks and assist Members to develop and implement arrangements that allow Members to assure themselves that;
  - i) their tuna resources are being harvested sustainably;
  - ii) maximum economic returns from the fishery can be realised; and
  - iii) international obligations are met.
2. Establish and maintain mutually effective and beneficial relationships with subregional, regional and international bodies, with a clear focus on FFA Member performance in WCPFC.

## Program 3 Fisheries Operations

This program will assist FFA Members to develop and implement MCS activities in support of fisheries management and development initiatives.

### Goals

1. Develop the capacity of Members to manage and implement MCS tools that ensure the integrity of national, subregional and regional management measures, including through driving the development and adoption of technology.
2. Determine where and how regional and subregional services can be developed and implemented by the Secretariat to provide cost efficiency, increased scope or other benefits to national MCS efforts.
3. Where such benefits exist, implement sustainable regional mechanisms to meet these needs that are in the best interests of Members, particularly in respect of information sharing and analysis.

## Program 4 Fisheries Development

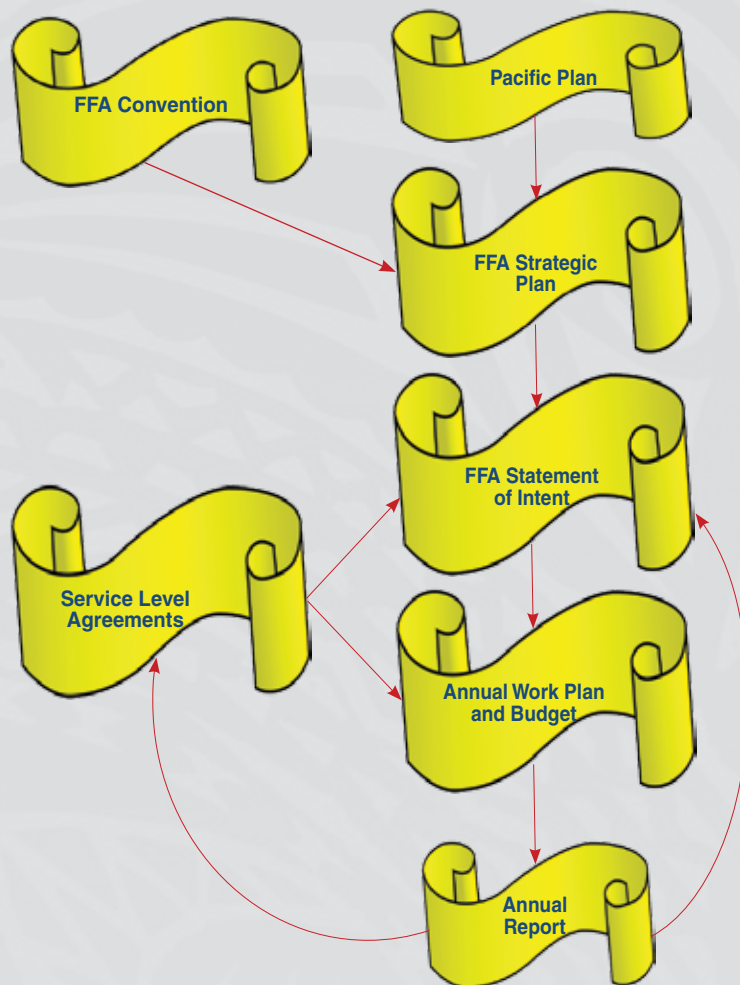
This program will assist FFA Members with social, economic and development planning; market access; and investment facilitation for the fisheries sector in response to the Forum Leaders' call to identify ways to ensure greater returns from the sustainable use of fisheries resources.

### Goals

1. Develop the capacity of Members to plan the sustainable harvest, processing and marketing of their tuna resources.
2. Assist Members to meet market access requirements for the export of their fisheries products.
3. Support Members in their efforts to secure appropriate investment in fisheries, processing and supporting infrastructure.
4. Inform Members of developments in trade in fisheries products, and provide high quality economic analysis to guide decision-making and negotiations.







## IMPLEMENTATION

FFA's programs will be implemented through a detailed business-planning framework, with clear goals, outcomes and outputs, together with performance measures.

The Secretariat will prepare planning and implementation documentation at three levels covering different time-frames, each of which supports the other:

### Planning Documents

#### The Pacific Plan – Framework for Regionalism

While the Pacific Plan is not an FFA planning instrument per se, it is a regional framework agreed to at the highest political levels. The revised Pacific Plan lays out a number of principles and guidelines to determine where high-level political attention should be focussed in pursuing regional cooperation and collective action across all sectors. This Framework informs and facilitates the high-level dialogues between the FFA Secretariat, FFC, FFC Ministers and Leaders that underpins this Strategic Plan.

#### Strategic Plan 2020

This Strategic Plan is a long-term (6-year) strategic framework approved by FFC Min. The Strategic Plan sets out the vision, mission, values and principles, intended outcomes and strategic direction for FFA as well as explaining in broad detail the programs of the Secretariat. In response to the dynamic fisheries environment, the Strategic Plan will be reviewed as required by the FFC. In the meantime, there is a need for an ongoing strategic dialogue using the basis of this plan to inform the shorter-term instruments below.



### **Statement of Intent (SOI)**

The SOI is a medium term planning instrument that is prepared by the Executive Management Team and presented to FFC for noting each year. The SOI is a three-year rolling plan updated annually which provides further detail on the Key Result Areas (KRAs) that FFA seeks to achieve. These KRAs are built from the Outcomes and Modalities and the Goals of the Secretariat's programs outlined above. The KRAs are therefore consistent with, and measure the achievement of, this Strategic Plan.

### **Annual Work Program and Budget (AWPB)**

The AWPB provides the scope and cost of activities to be carried out on an annual basis that is approved by the FFC. The AWPB is matched to forecast revenue and is generally revised mid-way through each financial year to reflect changes in circumstance and revenue.

While the AWPB includes forward projections for two years, its focus is on the current financial year. The Secretariat relies on the AWPB for detailed description of the activities it will implement each year, and this forms the basis of divisional and individual work plans.

### **Service Level Agreements (SLAs)**

As a result of the independent review of FFA in 2010, FFA developed SLAs with Members. Each SLA is a non-binding instrument intended to provide the delivery of FFA Secretariat services for each member. SLAs are two-way instruments that also set out the expectations of each member in respect of priorities. The SLAs are a powerful driver of specific priorities in the SOI and AWPB.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

M&E is an essential component of the governance and implementation of FFA. It is essential that positive outcomes can be demonstrated as a result of investment by donors, Members and the Secretariat.

The FFA annual report is the primary reporting tool for FFA and is used to provide a comprehensive assessment of the performance of the Secretariat and Members against the provisions and intentions of the Strategic Plan, SOI and AWPB. This includes self-assessment of performance against KRAs, empirical information, such as trends for various indicators of development success, and independent advice such as external audits.

FFC initiates independent reviews of the Secretariat from time to time and the performance of the Director-General is also assessed routinely.









**FFA**

**Pacific Islands  
Forum Fisheries Agency**

**1 FFA Road P.O. Box 629 Honiara, Solomon Islands  
T. (677) 21124 F. (677) 23995 [www.ffa.int](http://www.ffa.int)**