

The Pacific Ocean Alliance Management Arrangements

Background

In 2009, Pacific Island Leaders called for the development of a Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape drawing on the overarching regional policy instruments for the Ocean (the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, PIROP) and for regional cooperation and integration (the Pacific Plan – replaced since 2014 by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism - FPR). Together, PIROP and its companion document *Our Sea of Islands, Our Livelihoods, Our Oceania* - the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO), outline a vision for a secure future for Pacific Island Countries and Territories, based on sustainable development, management and conservation of our Ocean. Successful implementation relies on strong leadership, regional cooperation and integrated decision making across the breadth of ocean-related interests.

The FPO addresses the need for broader coordination and implementation through Action 2B, which calls for the establishment of a mechanism to facilitate:

- effective policy coordination and implementation;
- regional cooperation for the high seas;
- support for national ocean governance and policy processes when required, including support and streamlining to achieve national commitments to international agreements; and
- the fostering of inter-regional cooperation.

To this end, the concepts of a Regional Ocean Commissioner, with a dedicated support unit, and a Regional Ocean Partnership/Alliance mechanism were endorsed by Pacific Island Forum Leaders through the FPO in 2010.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide further detail on the management arrangements for a Regional Ocean Partnership/Alliance mechanism, called the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA), as endorsed by Leaders in the FPO. It builds on decisions by Forum Leaders, and recommendations of Executives of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) and their Marine Sector Working

Group (MSWG). Further, it expands on the information contained in the [POA Charter](#) established in 2014. Specific details on the role and guiding principles of the POA are outlined in the Charter. This document provides further guidance on how the POA will be managed, and may be revised by the POC, in consultation with the CROP Executive, as necessary.

POA in the FPO Governance Framework

The FPO proposes a governance framework that promotes inclusiveness and enhances integration, accountability and resourcing to progress implementation of the region’s ocean priorities. Figure 1 illustrates the Pacific Ocean Alliance as a product of the FPO facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner. As such, partners of the POA are committing to progress implementation of the regional ocean policy frameworks.

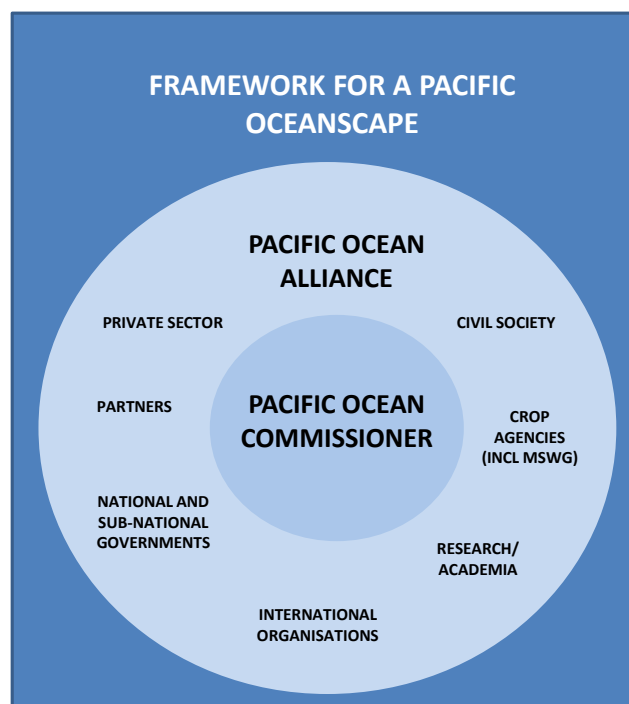


FIGURE 1: The Pacific Ocean Alliance

3.1 Pacific Ocean Commissioner (POC)

Through the FPO, Leaders called for establishment of a Regional Ocean Commissioner, with dedicated professional support, to provide the necessary high level representation and commitment urgently required to ensure dedicated advocacy and attention to ocean priorities, decisions and processes at national, regional and international levels (FPO Action 2A). This position is now referred to as the [Pacific](#)

[Ocean Commissioner](#), a role currently entrusted by Pacific Leaders to the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

The POA is facilitated by the POC, as per FPO Action 2B. In facilitating the POA, the POC will:

- Provide high level representation on ocean issues;
- Identify strategic opportunities for conveying reports and recommendations of the POA, including but not limited to: relevant meetings of Leaders and Ministers; meetings of the governing bodies of regional organisations; non-state actors; and the CROP;
- Report to CROP Executives and Pacific Leaders, as required, on the operation of the POA; and
- Set the strategic direction for the POA in accordance with the criteria listed in these arrangements and in response to decisions taken by Pacific Leaders.

3.2 Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA)

The POA is an open-ended and voluntary information-sharing and coordination partnership between stakeholders with a genuine interest in the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Pacific Ocean and its resources. The POA was established by Charter in 2014 and commits partners to work together towards achieving the Leaders' vision as set out in the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape. The POA will provide – through a combination of virtual platforms and face-to-face meetings – a space and common ground to bring together a group of stakeholders, such as national government agencies, CROP and non-CROP organisations, private sector, academia and research organisations, and civil society, who are not currently represented in a coordinated way on ocean issues.

All parties interested in helping Leaders achieve their vision of a secure future for Pacific people through the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Pacific Ocean and its resources (i.e. implementing the regional ocean policy framework, including the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape) are considered partners in the Alliance, with new partnerships forming as awareness grows and new issues arise. Representative information will be collected on partnerships to ensure adequate representation across the breadth of Pacific Ocean stakeholder interests, types and levels, including international organisations. Where representation is deemed to be lacking, the OPOC will target awareness raising to encourage and expand the scope of representation.

The POA has similar characteristics to other multi-stakeholder regional partnerships such as the Pacific Energy Advisory Group, Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network, the Roundtable for Nature Conservation or the developing Pacific Resilience Partnership for climate and disaster risk resilient development in the

Pacific. These initiatives all share similarities in their broad range of stakeholders, their focus on coordination and facilitation of policy and information sharing.

The POA is not a decision-making body, however, it may develop non-binding recommendations that relevant governments and/or POA partners may choose to progress and/or implement. The POA will not replicate the work of other organisations, but rather will provide a mechanism for inclusive consultation in the development of policy and technical advice, and implementation strategies for the region as it relates to the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Ocean.

Expectations of POA partners

Partners of the POA are expected to contribute openly and honestly to support implementation of the Leaders' Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape. It is recognized that partners may be working on issues that have overlapping mandates with other partners. The POA is a platform for these partners to work together to prevent unnecessary duplication and to ensure beneficial outcomes for Pacific Island countries and territories and their people. It is an expectation that engagement with and between POA partners will be professional and respectful.

POA Criteria

In determining the issues to be addressed by the POA, the following criteria will be applied:

- relates to one or more of the strategic priorities of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape or to a decision taken by Pacific Leaders under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and
- is cross-cutting, cross-jurisdictional and/or cross-sectoral in nature; and
- addressing these issues will have identifiable benefit for Pacific Island people, focusing on the priorities and needs of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs); and
- requires broad stakeholder engagement.

Concept notes or proposals for issues to be addressed by the POA must be submitted to the POC (c/- opoc@forumsec.org) including clear demonstration how the criteria would be met and indicative partners and resourcing. The POA branding/title will not be used unless the proposal is endorsed by the POC or an operational delegate of the POC.

POA Management Arrangements

The work of the POA will be guided by the POC in accordance with the criteria listed above. In determining the work programme and mechanism for engagement of the POA, the POC may be advised by the:

- OPOC on strategic policy and operational issues (including budget and resourcing);
- CROP Executive on scientific and technical issues; and/or
- the Pacific Islands Ocean Ambassadors/champions on ocean policy and political issues.

The FPO establishes provisions to establish a strong and well supported network of leaders drawn from local communities, districts and provinces through to national and regional special issues advocates, ocean champions and ambassadors. These are referred to as the Pacific Islands Ocean Ambassadors/Champions and are a discreet group selected by the POC to assist bring ocean and related issues to centre stage at local through to global levels. Selection of Ambassadors is based on content knowledge and political influence.

On occasion it may be determined that a small time-bound steering group is required to guide particular work programs of the POA such as organising any large meeting of the POA. This will be determined by the POC, in-consultation with relevant advisors, as appropriate. Terms of reference, financing and other issues will be considered at that stage.

POA Reporting

The OPOC will report to the POC, and to POA partners on the outcomes of different partnership dialogues as they occur. This report may include non-binding recommendations for progressing issues raised. The POC will convey the reports and recommendations of the POA, including but not limited to: relevant meetings of Leaders and Ministers; meetings of the governing bodies of regional organisations; and non-state actors. The OPOC will also report annually to the POC on the achievements, progress and governance of the POA.