

Melanesia's Ocean Worth Half a Trillion USD but Under Pressure

Suva, Fiji –A major new report, *Reviving Melanesia's Ocean Economy: The Case for Action*, launched today, has revealed that the ocean is a much larger part of Melanesia's* economy and future prosperity than previously understood.

The report maps the contribution of the ocean to the region in new ways and finds that the overall value of the ocean and coastlines in Melanesia is at least US\$548 billion. The report describes the ocean's major role in food production, livelihoods and economic activity, and shows that the annual economic output of the ocean in Melanesia is at least US\$5.4 billion, making the 'ocean economy' larger than most of the region's national economies.

If the ocean in Melanesia were its own economy, the new analysis finds that it would be the third largest in the region, generating about as much annual economic output as Fiji and Solomon Islands combined. The report also describes the mounting pressures on the region's ocean assets from resource exploitation and climate change, and the serious consequences of degradation, including challenges in providing sufficient food and livelihoods for rapidly-growing populations.

WWF's Pacific Representative, Kesaia Tabunakawai, said, "This new analysis adds considerable weight to the case for ocean conservation to be an even higher priority for Melanesian leaders. We have seen good commitments in the past but the objective analysis shows that we are running out of time and need action at a much greater scale and urgency if Melanesia is to have a healthy and prosperous future."

The report shows that marine fisheries represent more than half of the annual ocean-based economic output of Melanesia, and 70 per cent of all coastal fisheries production in the Pacific islands is for subsistence use. With current population growth projections, 60 per cent more fish will be needed to feed local populations by 2030.

Prof. Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, from the Global Change Institute, University of Queensland, and lead author of the report, said, "We can now see in no uncertain terms just how much the people of Melanesia rely on the ocean. There is no doubt the ocean has delivered the majority of food, livelihoods and economic activity for Melanesia for a very long time. Given some of the troubling trends in the status of the ecosystems that generate these benefits, however, the question is now: how long will these benefits last?"

The report sets out a clear set of measures that Pacific leaders and international partners can adopt to translate commitments into scaled-up action to protect the region's natural coastal and ocean assets, and secure food, livelihoods and the regional economy.

BCG Partner and Managing Director, Marty Smits, said, "With this analysis, no one can be in any doubt about the importance of carefully managing the ocean assets that underpin so much of the Melanesian economy. A prudent economic approach would see strong conservation actions rolled out across Melanesia to secure its natural assets, otherwise the region's economic foundations could seriously be threatened."



for a living planet[®]

Global Oceans leader for WWF, John Tanzer, said, "While we see ocean ecosystems like coral reefs, mangroves and fisheries coming under immense pressure around the world and in important regions like Melanesia, we also see unprecedented focus on the ocean. Leaders in Melanesia and beyond can seize this moment to make good on commitments including around the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the global climate agreement of 2015. There is no time to lose."

***Melanesia** is a large sub-region in the Pacific that extends from the western end of the Pacific Ocean to the Arafura Sea, and eastward to Fiji. The region includes **Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.**

--- ends ---

The report, summary (also in French) and methodology are available at: ocean.panda.org

Photographs from the report for use with credits are available at: <http://bit.ly/2eiC5ft>

CONTACTS:

<p>Tui Marseu A/Communications Manager WWF-Pacific (Fiji) email: tmarseu@wwfpacific.org phone: +679 971 5613</p> <p>David Hirsch Head, Media Relations WWF International (Switzerland) email: dhirsch@wwfint.org phone: +41 22 364 9554</p>	<p>Rachael Hazell Communications and Engagement Officer, Global Change Institute, The University of Queensland (Australia) email: r.hazell@uq.edu.au phone: +61(0)415 814 529</p>	<p>David Fondiller Director, Public Relations and Communications, North America The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (New York) email: Fondiller.David@bcg.com phone: +1 212 446 3257</p>
---	--	--



for a living planet®

The report was produced by WWF in association with The Global Change Institute at the University of Queensland and The Boston Consulting Group.

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. www.panda.org/news for latest news and media resources.

About The Global Change Institute

The [Global Change Institute](#) at The University of Queensland, is an independent source of game-changing research, ideas and advice for addressing the challenges of global change. GCI advances discovery, creates solutions and advocates responses that meet the challenges presented by climate change, technological innovation and population change. UQ is one of Australia's premier learning and research institutions. Measured through a combination of four key global university rankings, UQ is currently ranked in the top 100 of all universities worldwide. It is also a founding member of the national Group of Eight universities.

About The Boston Consulting Group

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is a global management consulting firm and the world's leading advisor on business strategy. We partner with clients from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors in all regions to identify their highest-value opportunities, address their most critical challenges, and transform their enterprises. Our customized approach combines deep insight into the dynamics of companies and markets with close collaboration at all levels of the client organization. This ensures that our clients achieve sustainable competitive advantage, build more capable organizations, and secure lasting results. Founded in 1963, BCG is a private company with 85 offices in 48 countries.

SUSTAIN OUR SEAS 