

Ridge2Reef

Given the close inter-connections between land, water and coastal systems in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the integration of freshwater watershed management with coastal area management is considered essential to foster effective cross-sectoral coordination in the planning and management of land, water and coastal uses. In Pacific SIDS, such integrated approaches to freshwater and coastal area management have been termed 'Ridge to Reef' to emphasise the inter-connections between the natural and social systems from the mountain 'ridges' of volcanic islands, through coastal watersheds and habitats, and across coastal lagoons to the fringing 'reef' environments associated with most Pacific SIDS.



The Fiji Ridge to Reef Project aims to preserve biodiversity, ecosystem services, sequester carbon, improve climate resilience and sustain livelihoods through a ridge to reef management of priority water catchments on the two main islands of Fiji. The approach addresses key environmental issues in an integrated manner. It will bolster Fiji's national system of marine protected areas through an enhanced, representative and sustainable system of Locally Managed Marine Areas including greater protection of threatened marine species. Negative impacts of land-based activities on these Marine Protected Areas will be reduced through development and implementation of integrated catchment management plans, including mangrove protection, the adoption of appropriate sustainable land use practices and riparian restoration in adjoining upstream watersheds as well as terrestrial protected areas, restored and rehabilitated forests.

The selected priority catchments are Ba River, Tuva River and Waidina River/Rewa Delta on Viti Levu and Labasa River, Vunivia River and Tunuloa district on Vanua Levu.

These catchments encompass a diverse and geographically dispersed group with different environments and scales, intensities of land use and degradation, challenges and opportunities and provide an ideal suite of learning environments for biodiversity conservation, forest carbon stock protection and increase, and integrated natural resources management.

The knowledge management component of the project is ensuring that experiences and results are well captured and disseminated, and contribute to data and information systems on biodiversity, forests, climate change, and land/coastal/marine management in Fiji.

Want to know more about the initiation of this project?

<https://www.thegef.org/news/novel-ridge-reef-project-launched-fiji>

This initiative encourages a holistic approach, considering features such as:

- Freshwater use
- Sanitation
- Wastewater treatment
- pollution control
- sustainable land use
- forestry practices
- balancing coastal livelihoods
- Biodiversity
- Conservation
- hazard risk reduction
- climate variability and change.

Similarly, the integration of communities, stakeholders, and national governments within such a cross-sectoral planning framework is described by Pacific SIDS as a '**Community to Cabinet**' approach. **R2R stakeholders:**

- Fiji Meteorological Services
- Public Works Department
- Min of Agriculture (Land & Water Resource Management Division)
- Department of Town Country Planning
- Lands & Mineral Resources
- National Disaster Management Office
- Department of Environment
- Ministry of Health
- Solicitor General Office
- Ministry of Tourism
- Department of Forestry
- Department of Fisheries
- Ministry of I Taukei Affairs
- USP
- FSPI
- I Taukei Land Trust Board
- Nadi Town Council
- Live and Learn Environment Education
- Mamanuca Environment Society
- World Wide Fund for Nature
- IUCN
- Taiwan Technical Mission
- Airports Fiji Ltd
- Fiji Sugar Cooperation
- Nadi Chamber of Commerce
- Vodafone ATH Fiji Foundation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hamZ5mpkE4> - Votua village R2R success story