

WWF-Pacific Terms of Reference

Position Title: *Consultant - Marine Turtle Priority Mapping*

Project: Safeguarding Nesting Populations of Sea Turtles in Fiji

Reporting: Programme Manager, Sustainable Fisheries & Seafood Programme or delegatee.

Date: 03rd November 2025 – 28th November 2025 (20 days)

Location: Suva, Fiji

1. Background

Five of the seven known species of sea turtles are found in Fiji waters – these are the green (endangered); hawksbill (critically endangered); olive ridley (vulnerable); leatherback (critically endangered in the Pacific) and the loggerhead turtles (vulnerable). The most common occurring in Fiji are green and hawksbill turtles which also nest on Fiji's beaches.

Marine turtles play a vital role in the health of marine ecosystems, including coral reefs, seagrass beds, and sandy beaches. Fiji is a critical habitat for several species of marine turtles, including the endangered Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the critically endangered Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). Given the importance of these species to both marine biodiversity and local communities, there is a need to prioritize conservation efforts to safeguard their populations.

The development of a National Marine Turtle Priority Map will support evidence-based conservation planning, provide insights for effective management, and guide future protection efforts across the nation's marine and coastal ecosystems. Having a map of turtle nesting and foraging grounds is essential for informed, science-based conservation strategies. It helps identify and protect critical habitats, guides research, supports policy development, and enables targeted conservation actions, all of which are vital for ensuring the long-term survival of marine turtle populations.

Marine turtles face a range of threats including harvest for meat; illegal capture for trade; accidental entanglement or capture as by-catch during fishing and 'ghost gear' capture; injury or death from boat collision; collection and predation of turtle eggs; disturbance, erosion and loss of nesting beaches from sea level rise and infrastructural development; loss of seagrass beds and other foraging grounds; artificial light and disorientation of hatchlings towards roads; lack of awareness regarding their vulnerability and potential extinction but more recently impact from climate change (e.g. skewed sex ratio of hatchlings).

WWF-Fiji is part of the Fiji Sea Turtle Steering Committee (FSTSC) under the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries (MoF), and which oversees the Fiji Sea Turtle Recovery Plan (FSTRP). WWF supports the objectives and delivery of the FSTRP including (i) capacity assessment and training of conservation officers, (ii) establishing community led turtle conservation – protection and monitoring; and (iii) working with MoF on by-catch mitigation and advocating for on-board observer programmes. Members of the FSTSC have collected, collated and published relevant marine turtle data over the last 10-15 years. This data will be the basis for developing the map. There is a need to develop appropriate locally applicable tools to support marine turtle population monitoring considering key challenges including logistical issues (e.g., remote locations), weather challenges, and capacity limitations of local communities.

2. Objectives and Aims of the Consultancy

The objective and aim of this consultancy are to develop a national marine turtle priority map for Fiji using publicly available and reliable turtle nesting data from WWF, relevant partners & stakeholders and secondary sources (i.e. research, reports etc.) to update the existing 2020 map on priority nesting sites for all recorded sea turtle species in Fiji.

The map is expected to highlight critical habitats for marine turtles, including nesting sites, foraging areas, migration corridors, and other important habitats. The priority map will serve as a key tool for government agencies, NGOs, local communities, and conservation organizations in their marine turtle conservation efforts including targeted awareness and conservation planning.

Deliverables are outlined below (Table 1).

3. Scope of Work

The consultant will undertake the following tasks to develop the National Marine Turtle Priority Map for Fiji:

i. Review of Recent Information and Data

- Conduct a review of existing data on marine turtles in Fiji from various sources and stakeholders including members of the FSTSC and in collaboration with MoF, focusing on information and studies conducted over the last 10 to 15 years that was not incorporated in the 2020 priority map.
- Review relevant reports, research studies, conservation action plans, and publications from governmental bodies, NGOs, and academic institutions that have conducted marine turtle monitoring or research in Fiji during this period.

ii. Development of the Marine Turtle Priority Map

- Based on the data collected and analysed, develop a comprehensive GIS-based map that identifies priority marine turtle habitats across Fiji.
- The map should include critical nesting sites, foraging areas, migration corridors, and other areas that are significant for turtle populations, with updated data reflecting the last 10-15 years of research and monitoring.
- Ensure that the map is accessible, user-friendly, and visually clear and can be converted for use by various stakeholders, including policymakers, conservationists, and local communities.

iii. Stakeholder Feedback

- Present the National Marine Turtle Priority Map and the findings of the report to key stakeholders. Gather feedback from stakeholders on the map and recommendations, incorporating their input to refine and finalize the map.

iv. Final Report and Recommendations

- Prepare a summary report that outlines the methodology, results, and key findings from the data collection and analysis process.
- Provide recommendations for marine turtle conservation and management based on the mapped priority areas.
- An analysis of the identified priority areas for conservation based on current and historical data.

- Practical recommendations for conservation, habitat protection, and future research based on the updated map.

4. Deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following outputs:

a) Workplan

Document with proposed methodology, work plan, and timeline for the consultancy, to be submitted within one week of contract initiation.

b) Draft GIS-Based National Marine Turtle Priority Map

A detailed and comprehensive map that identifies priority marine turtle habitats across Fiji, including nesting, foraging, and migration sites.

c) Stakeholder Feedback

Present the National Marine Turtle Priority Map to key stakeholders. Gather feedback from stakeholders on the map and recommendations, incorporating their input to refine and finalize the map.

d) Final Report and Map

A comprehensive final report that includes:

- The final detailed and comprehensive GIS-based marine turtle priority map that identifies priority marine turtle habitats across Fiji, including nesting, foraging, and migration sites with feedback from stakeholders.
- A detailed description of the methodology used in data collection and map development.
- An analysis of the priority areas for marine turtle conservation.
- Recommendations for future conservation actions and research needs.

5. Qualification and Experience

The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- Educational Qualifications:
 - A degree or higher in GIS, marine biology, environmental science, conservation biology, or a related field.
- Experience:
 - Proven experience in GIS data analysis and the development of conservation maps.
 - Familiarity with the marine environment of Fiji or similar Pacific Island regions, including marine turtle species and habitats.
 - Experience working with local communities, government agencies, and conservation organizations in a consultative and collaborative manner.
- Skills:
 - Proficiency in GIS tools (ArcGIS, QGIS, or similar).
 - Strong analytical and report-writing skills.
 - Excellent communication skills.

6. Duration

The duration of this consultancy is **20 days** over the period **03rd November 2025 – 28th November 2025**

(a) Compensation

The consultant will be paid at a mutually agreed rate. Payment will be made according to an agreed schedule for submission of deliverables as provided in Table 1. Applicants are required to send an indicative budget.

Table 1. Outputs Delivery

03 November 2025 – 28 November 2025

Output Details	Due Date
1. Workplan Document	Nov 4th 2025
2. Draft GIS-Based National Marine Turtle Priority Map	Nov 18th 2025
3. Stakeholder Meetings & Feedback	Nov 21st, 2025
4. Final Report and Map	Nov 28th, 2025