

**WWF-Pacific
Terms of Reference**

Position Title: *Consultancy to Develop a Marine Turtle Monitoring Protocol*

Project: Safeguarding Nesting Populations of Sea Turtles in Fiji

Reporting: Programme Manager, Sustainable Fisheries & Seafood Programme or Delegee

Date: 03rd November 2025 – 15th December 2025

Location: Suva, Fiji

1. Summary

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.

A requirement of effective marine turtle management is the need for consistent, reliable and accurate data collection to support the management, conservation and protection of sea turtles. There is a need to ensure that standardised data collection protocols are developed and adopted to ensure consistency across research sites. Standardized data collection protocols ensure that data is collected in a uniform manner across different nesting sites, regardless of the location or the team conducting the monitoring. This consistency allows for comparisons and broader analyses across regions. By following standardized methods, the quality and reliability of data collected are improved. This helps researchers and conservationists to make better-informed decisions regarding the protection of turtle populations, habitat management, and the success of conservation programs.

Monitoring turtle nesting sites over time with consistent methods allows for the identification of trends in population size, reproductive success, and the health of turtle populations. This data is critical in evaluating the effectiveness of conservation efforts. Reliable, standardized data provides the foundation for adaptive management strategies. It helps in identifying critical nesting sites, understanding threats (e.g., climate change, human development, predation), and creating targeted conservation interventions. A standardized approach makes it easier for different organizations, governments, and researchers to collaborate. It ensures that all parties involved in turtle conservation are using the same methods, which is vital for shared goals and transparent reporting.

Reliable data from standardized monitoring programs can provide the scientific basis needed for policy changes or legal protection measures, such as the establishment of protected nesting beaches or regulations to mitigate human impact on nesting turtles. Overall, a standardized protocol is key to improving the effectiveness of turtle conservation programs, ensuring the long-term survival of sea turtles.

The purpose of this consultancy is to support WWF-Fiji develop a standardized protocol for conducting sea turtle nesting surveys in Fiji. The protocol will ensure consistent, accurate, and scientifically sound data collection and reporting, enabling stakeholders—including local communities, NGOs, governmental agencies, and researchers—to effectively monitor and conserve sea turtle populations across the country.

2. 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 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. 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.

3. Objectives and Aims of the Consultancy

The consultant will develop a standardized protocol for conducting sea turtle nesting surveys in Fiji. The protocol will ensure consistent, accurate, and scientifically sound data collection and reporting, enabling stakeholders—including local communities, NGOs, governmental agencies, and researchers—to effectively monitor and conserve sea turtle populations across the country.

Deliverables are outlined below (Table 1).

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

Research and Desktop Review of Existing Protocols

- Review existing sea turtle nesting survey protocols used in Fiji and globally.
- Identify best practices, areas for improvement, and any region-specific challenges that need to be considered for local adaptation.

Stakeholder Consultation

- In agreement with WWF, consult key stakeholders, including select local communities, NGOs with active or recent turtle monitoring programmes in Fiji Ministry of Fisheries, NGOs, relevant regional and local conservation organizations, and academic institutions and researchers to gather input on current survey practices, gaps, challenges and their needs and recommendations for the protocol design. WWF will assist with arranging meetings with specific stakeholders as part of this consultancy.



- Incorporate feedback on the types of methods being used, gaps and inconsistencies between the various stakeholders, data needed, monitoring gaps, and any practical considerations in field implementation.

Development of the Standardized Protocol

- Based on the desktop review and feedback from the stakeholder consultations, develop a detailed and standardized protocol that outlines the following components:
 - **Survey Design:** Best practices for selecting nesting sites and determining survey frequency (daily, weekly, seasonal).
 - **Field Data Collection:** Procedures for documenting nesting events, including:
 - Turtle species identification
 - Nest locations (GPS coordinates, mapping)
 - Nesting behaviour (e.g., digging, egg deposition)
 - Nest characteristics (e.g., size, depth)
 - Environmental conditions (e.g., tide, moon phase, temperature, weather)
 - Turtle tracks and other indicators
 - **Handling and Tagging:** Guidelines on how to handle sea turtles safely, including appropriate techniques for tagging (if necessary) and minimizing disturbance to the turtles.
 - **Data Recording and Reporting:** Standardized data sheets, digital tools, and formats for recording information. Establish protocols for data quality assurance, error-checking, and consistency.
 - **Ethical Considerations and Legal Compliance:** Ensure that the protocol adheres to ethical guidelines and local legislation regarding sea turtle protection and conservation.
 - **Data Management:** Suggest systems for storing, analysing, and sharing data, including recommendations for a central database or repository, and define how stakeholders can access the data.

Presentation and Workshop of Draft Protocol

- **Presentation of Draft Protocol:** Present the draft standardized protocol to WWF and key turtle stakeholders. The presentation will outline the protocol's components, goals, and practical applications.
- **Workshop Sessions:** Prepare (i.e. develop workshop programme and approach, identify and help secure participants) and facilitate an interactive one-day workshop (in consultation and with support from WWF) aimed at gathering feedback and finalising the protocol. The workshops should:
 - Encourage stakeholders to share their insights, concerns, and recommendations for refining the protocol.
 - Allow participants to provide real-world perspectives on the practicality and feasibility of the proposed protocol.
 - Address any questions or challenges regarding protocol implementation and field data collection.
 - Identify a process for ensuring the protocol is accepted as a national standard
- **Incorporate Feedback:** Revise and adjust the draft protocol based on input gathered during the workshops, ensuring the final protocol is adaptable and effective for various stakeholders across Fiji.

Final Documentation

Prepare a final report that includes:

- The finalized standardized protocol, including all steps, tools, and techniques.

5. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the assignment:

1. **Workplan:** outlining timeline, stakeholder engagement plan and key milestones.
2. **Draft Protocol Document:** A detailed draft of the standardized survey protocol, including proposed tools, techniques, and protocols.
3. **Stakeholder Consultation Summary:** A report summarizing the feedback and recommendations from stakeholder consultations.
4. **Workshop preparation and facilitation:** Prepare and facilitate a one-day workshop (in consultation and with support from WWF), gather feedback and incorporate into the draft protocol to finalise document.
5. **Final Protocol Document:** Document with standardized sea turtle nesting survey protocol.

6. Qualification and Experience

The ideal consultant should have:

- Expertise in Sea Turtle Conservation: Proven experience in sea turtle research, specifically in nesting surveys.
- Field Survey Experience: In-depth knowledge of field methodologies for sea turtle nesting surveys and data collection techniques.
- Stakeholder Engagement Skills: Experience working with local communities, government entities, and NGOs in a collaborative setting.
- Strong Facilitation and Communication Skills: Ability to present and facilitate workshops effectively, engaging a diverse group of stakeholders.
- Strong Writing and Reporting Skills: Ability to produce clear, concise documentation and training materials.
- Familiarity with Local Context: Knowledge of the marine ecology and conservation issues in Fiji or the Pacific region.

7. Duration

The duration of this consultancy is **31 days** over the period **03rd November 2025 – 15th December 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 – 15 December 2025 (31 Day Consultancy)

Output Details	Due Date
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1. Workplan Document	3 Nov 2025
2. Draft Protocol Document	17 Nov 2025
3. Stakeholder Consultation Summary Report	24 Nov 2025
4. Workshop Preparation and Facilitation	01 Dec 2025
5. Final Protocol Document	15 Dec 2025