



Blue Prosperity Micronesia

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BRIEFING NOTE

Date: April 2021

SUMMARY

In September of 2019, His Excellency David W. Panuelo launched Blue Prosperity Micronesia (BPM) as a nation-wide program through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Blue Prosperity Coalition. Over the last year, BPM built the necessary capacity and governance structure to implement work plan activities and achieve program goals. This included the hiring of a Program Coordinator, the establishment of a National Task Force and three technical working groups, and contracts for local MSP and Science advisors. BPM partners also conducted assessments to inform implementation pathways for the FSM's blue economy, sustainable fisheries, marine spatial planning and legal reform. To increase program awareness, the team developed social media channels, participated in events at the Virtual Island Summit, and recently helped facilitate the first Micronesian and youngest woman ever to participate in an expedition to the Challenger Deep.

Important activities for the next months include the following:

- Program awareness campaign with World Ocean Day activities (still seeking permission for Pohnpei)
- Selection of a blue economy narrative
- Discussion and workshops to determine policy pathways for marine spatial planning
- Development of principles, goals & objectives for the offshore marine spatial plan
- Discussion with states to plan and roll out nearshore marine spatial plans
- Surveys to gather data on ocean use and coastal habitats for nearshore marine spatial plans
- Hiring a Program Assistant and contracting support staff in the states

PROGRAM GOALS

- **Support and develop marine industries** to diversify national revenue for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs.
- **Optimize ocean-based activities** to balance economic growth and resource protection through Marine Spatial Planning.
- **Strengthen fisheries management** and monitoring to ensure long-term sustainability of fish stocks.
- **Protect 30% of FSM waters** as no-take fisheries replenishment zones to safeguard ecosystem health and food security.

GOVERNANCE & PROGRAM MANAGEMENT



The National Task Force on BPM, chaired by Acting Secretary Elina Akinga, approved Terms of Reference for the Task Force, the Marine Spatial Planning Working Group, the Sustainable Fisheries Working Group, and the Blue Economy Working Group. In February, the Program Management Unit (PMU) held introductory meetings with state representatives and key NGOs from Kosrae, Yap, and Chuuk. Pohnpei is expected to be briefed through a State Leadership Meeting.

BPM expanded capacity to implement program activities through contracts with Liz Terk from TNC Micronesia to serve as Marine Spatial Planning Advisor, and with Dr. Peter Houk from the University of Guam Marine Lab to serve as BPM Science Advisor. Further, the Waitt Institute hired Dr. Pablo Granados as Sustainable Fisheries Director, and John Weber as Marine Spatial Planning Program Director.

Next steps: Appointments for technical working groups. Hire a BPM Program Assistant and support staff in the states

BLUE ECONOMY



In 2020 and early 2021, BPC partners from the University of California Los Angeles conducted virtual consultations with over 30 organizations from national government, states, the private sector, and non-profit and multilateral organizations. Consultation findings have undergone preliminary peer review and are used to develop *blue economy narratives* that will lay out strategic pathways to support economic development in the FSM.

Next steps: Consultation findings and narratives will be presented to stakeholders. After input has been solicited, the revised narratives will be presented to the National Task Force for review, discussion and final narrative selection. Once a final narrative is chosen, the BPC partners will conduct further analysis and develop an implementation plan.

MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING



The Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Working Group has completed a series of introductory meetings about MSP tools and processes in March and April. The Working Group is currently developing a set of principles, goals & objectives for the offshore MSP that will build on existing plans/policies, and best available knowledge.

BPC partners signed data sharing agreements with DECEM, Norma, R&D and SPC. DECEM has provided data that is being uploaded to the geodatabase *fsm.seasketch.org* to enable science-based planning. Still outstanding are data from NORMA, R&D and SPC.

Next steps offshore planning: Present draft principles, goals and objectives along with a consultation strategy for the offshore MSP to the National Task Force. Obtain data from NORMA, R&D and SPC. The data and MSP objectives will serve as inputs to prioritization modeling, which the Working Group will use to draft MSP scenarios and present a draft offshore MSP to the National Task Force.

Next steps nearshore planning: Discuss MSP process with states, and plan Ocean Use Survey to gather spatial information on the human uses of coastal waters (0-12nm).

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES



BPC partners from emLab conducted a *Characterization of FSM Fisheries* using peer-reviewed research, technical reports and publicly available data to provide an overview of FSM's offshore and nearshore fisheries. emLab has also conducted a literature review of existing goals and objectives related to FSM fisheries to support the identification of strategic work priorities under BPM.

Next steps: The Sustainable Fisheries Working Group Working will review the *Characterization of FSM Fisheries*, and BPM will host a public webinar to solicit further input. The Working Group will discuss and recommend sustainable fisheries goals and objectives for BPM, that will be shared with the National Task Force for endorsement. Once goals and objectives are chosen, the Working Group will develop a roadmap that will propose activities for implementation in subsequent years.

LEGAL



BPC partners and the local law firm Ramp & Mida are in the final stages of producing a legal assessment to explore how existing legal authorities contribute to ocean management in the FSM. The legal team has completed desk research and ground-truthing interviews with national government and states.

Next steps: Share draft assessment for review and input with those who have not responded to interview requests. Once final, the BPC legal team will engage legal experts and the National Task Force in discussion and workshops to identify policy pathways and legal drafting approaches for marine spatial planning and other areas of work.

EXPEDITIONS



In collaboration with Dr. Pete Houk, the BPC science team is scoping an expedition to collect coastal habitat data in conjunction with the FSM's Coastal Resource Management teams. These data would support nearshore MSP efforts.

The BPC science team continues to explore logistics for a nation-wide expedition with Waitt Institute and National Geographic Pristine Seas that will collect scientific data, capture media for a documentary film, and undertake community visits. Format and timing remain to be determined in light of the pandemic.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH



The communications plan is fully developed and concentrated on virtual engagement through Facebook. A webpage and social media channels were also created. The BPM team held a successful Talk Story event with President Panuelo and Nicole Yamase to celebrate the historic trip to the Marianas Trench. BPM is in the process of planning an Awareness Campaign to inform communities about BPM.

Next Steps: Contract state NGOs and hold Awareness Campaign planning workshops. Implement campaign May-approximately August. Conduct outreach related to research, marine spatial planning, and other programmatic work.