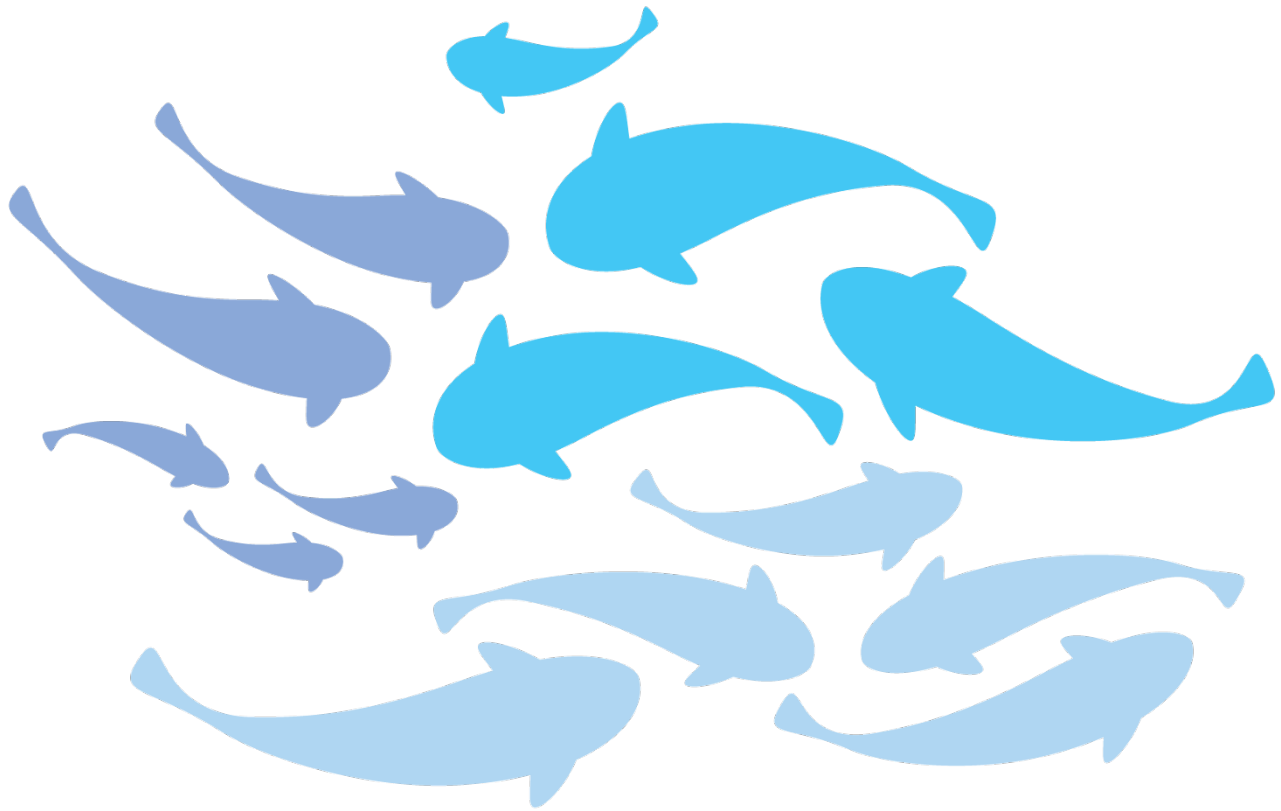




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Pacific Islands Region Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan



About This Report

The Pacific Islands Region Equity and Environmental Justice Implementation Plan represents the efforts by NOAA Fisheries to improve the ways in which we serve our Pacific Island communities. The Pacific Islands Regional Office and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center recognize the importance of integrating environmental equity and justice (EEJ) into our work and the success of this plan is contingent on leadership support, staff commitment to EEJ, and resource availability. We know that it will take time to achieve this implementation plan and are committed to making progress toward it.

This plan is a **living document** that will be updated to ensure it addresses evolving Pacific Islands region community needs. We welcome feedback and suggestions at any time.

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Executive Summary

NOAA Fisheries' Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) and Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) endeavor to equitably serve all people of Hawai'i, American Sāmoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in our stewardship of marine and anadromous fisheries, protected resources, habitats, and aquaculture. The Pacific Islands Region EEJ Implementation Plan outlines our regional strategy to advance and prioritize equity and environmental justice (EEJ) in the work of NOAA Fisheries, using guidance set forth in NOAA Fisheries National Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy.

Consisting of the Hawaiian Archipelago in the north, American Sāmoa and U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas in the south, and the Mariana Archipelago in the west, the Pacific Islands region encompasses the largest geographical area within NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction. Each island area is home to diverse communities with specific needs and challenges. Marine resources, peoples and culture, and economic vitality are inexorably linked within the islands that make up our unique region.

The plan was developed with input from people across the Pacific Islands region, PIFSC and PIRO staff, and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council to ensure it is reflective of and responsive to regional priorities and interests. The plan is a living document that will be updated to respond to the evolving needs of Pacific Island communities. We welcome feedback and suggestions at any time.

This plan is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

Introduction

NOAA Fisheries' Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) and Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) work together to conduct vital research and implement management initiatives in the waters surrounding the U.S. Pacific Islands. Consisting of the Hawaiian Archipelago in the north, American Sāmoa and U.S. Pacific Remote Island Areas in the south, and the Mariana Archipelago in the west, the Pacific Islands region encompasses the largest geographical area within NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction. Each island area is home to diverse communities with specific needs and challenges. Marine resources, peoples and culture, and economic vitality are inexorably linked within the islands that make up our unique region.

The Pacific Islands Region EEJ Implementation Plan outlines our regional strategy to advance and prioritize equity and environmental justice (EEJ) in the work of NOAA Fisheries. This includes recognizing and addressing structural inequalities in how we conduct federal fisheries science and management, enhancing our engagement and collaboration with impacted communities and partners, developing a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, and mitigating impacts of science and management actions on underserved communities¹ in the Pacific Islands region².

The plan was developed with input from people across the Pacific Islands region, PIFSC and PIRO staff, and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council to ensure it is reflective of and responsive to regional priorities and interests. This strategy must be implemented consistent with applicable laws and subject to the availability of appropriations. Further, the EEJ strategy is not intended to, and does not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

¹ The plan uses the term “underserved communities” as used and defined in the NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy. There are many different terms used in different contexts (e.g., historically marginalized, communities with environmental justice concerns, frontline communities), but the NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy selected “underserved communities” for a number of reasons: 1) to match the language in EO 13985, 2) to emphasize the concept of “service” in the National Marine Fisheries Service, 3) to center the communities we serve, and 4) to lay the burden of change on NOAA Fisheries. There is no perfect term, and the language is rapidly evolving. We will revise this term as better or more regionally relevant terms are developed and shared.

² This plan adopts the definition of underserved communities from the NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy (also see the next section for the full definition and its relevance to the Pacific Island Region).

NOAA Fisheries National EEJ Strategy

In May 2023, NOAA Fisheries released the [National Equity and Environmental Justice \(EEJ\) Strategy](#) intended to guide the agency on serving all communities more equitably and effectively³. Regions and program offices were directed to develop implementation strategies outlining the actions each office would take to advance EEJ in each region or program area.

The national EEJ Strategy identified three overarching goals for the agency:

1. Prioritize identification, equitable treatment, and meaningful involvement of underserved communities;
2. Provide equitable delivery of services; and
3. Prioritize EEJ in our mission work with demonstrable progress.

To reach these goals, NOAA Fisheries also identified six core areas where we can improve (see Figure 1). The regional plan identifies region-specific priorities and actions around each core area.

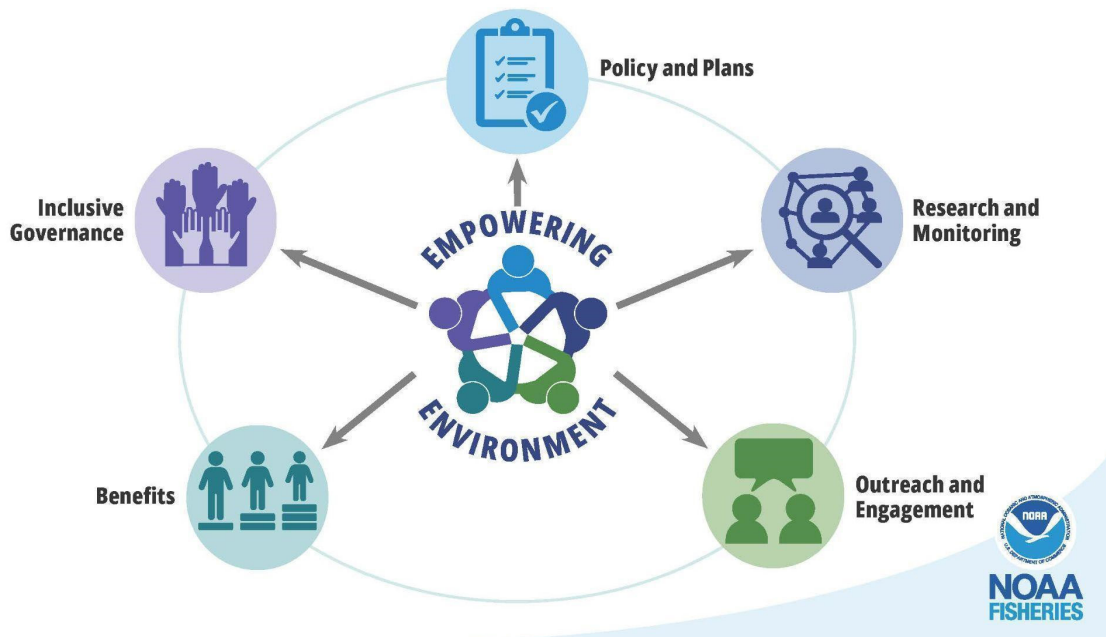


Figure 1. The six core EEJ areas identified in the NOAA Fisheries national EEJ strategy.

The identification of underserved communities in the Pacific Islands region will be an ongoing task and requires nuances of context and scale for each specific application. However, the definition of underserved communities in the national EEJ Strategy includes groups that are particularly relevant or specific to our regions such as American Sāmoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, subsistence fishery participants, and fish processor and distribution workers.

³ The national EEJ Strategy identified several policy mandates for EEJ including Executive Orders 14096, 14091, 13985, 14008, and 12989, Department of Commerce (DOC) Equity Action Plan (2022), and DOC Environmental Justice Strategy (2012). See the national EEJ Strategy for more information regarding policy mandates.

Alignment with Other Strategic Plans

The plan aligns with ongoing strategic planning efforts focused on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion of the NOAA Fisheries workforce; creating pathways for communities in fisheries work; and our organization-wide initiatives to advance science and management through an ecosystem-based fisheries management and climate lens, to meet ecosystem objectives in a changing environment.

Relevant planning documents include:

- NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Geographic Strategic Plan for 2024–2027
- PIFSC Strategic Implementation Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for FY 2022–2026
- PIRO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan
- Pacific Islands Regional Action Plan to Implement the NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy Through 2024

Initial Engagement Methods for Developing the Plan

To develop the plan, PIRO and PIFSC conducted external engagement with communities from across the Pacific Islands region and internal engagement with staff to better understand the link between the work of NOAA Fisheries and Pacific Island communities. The plan was developed using direct feedback from communities across the region.

In 2022, the Pacific Islands region EEJ working group (EEJ WG) was formed to better understand how to support the communities we serve. The group convened in-person meetings and listening sessions with communities across the Pacific Islands region to create dialogue and listen to people’s unique stories, needs, and concerns. In-person meetings were organized in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI—Saipan, Tinian, Rota), and American Sāmoa, and virtually in Hawai‘i. The feedback from these meetings helped inform the national EEJ Strategy and the plan. Feedback for the plan was also collected in 2023 through more targeted engagements, including with a joint workshop between the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), PIFSC, and PIRO on EEJ, meetings with key government and community partners around protected resources in Guam and CNMI, Council meetings, and meetings with other partners.

In addition to external community engagement, the regional EEJ WG also invested in internal staff engagement and capacity building. To truly integrate EEJ in our work, NOAA Fisheries staff need a strong foundational understanding of EEJ and how their work impacts constituents throughout the region. Additionally, staff need the support, guidance, and training to apply EEJ in their daily operations, strategic planning, and other aspects of their work. To achieve this, the regional EEJ WG hosted several joint workshops:

- One leadership workshop for the PIFSC Board of Directors and PIRO Executive Committee focused on creating a vision and setting expectations; and
- Five divisional workshops paired with similar programs (for example, PIFSC Protected Species Division and PIRO Protected Resources Division). Divisional workshops focused on learning and

making connections between program, staff work, and EEJ, and identifying key actions and activities to include in this implementation plan.

Together, the external and internal engagement efforts helped inform and shape this plan to be reflective of Pacific Island region community needs and representative of informed program priorities relevant to EEJ.

Key EEJ Action Areas

To contextualize the NOAA Fisheries EEJ strategy to the Pacific Islands region, PIRO and PIFSC incorporated community input and identified the following key action areas to advance EEJ in the Pacific Islands region. These action areas focus on the six core areas identified by the EEJ Strategy. Discrete EEJ actions at the divisional level are outlined in the Appendix.

1. Empowering Environment

Provides the institutional support—including training and resources—needed to implement multiple EEJ approaches at NOAA Fisheries. NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands region leadership will identify EEJ as a priority and encourage staff to integrate EEJ in each area of their work. Action areas include:

- 1A. Leadership champions EEJ;
- 1B. Integrate EEJ into everyday work through internal capacity building and implementation of actions;
- 1C. Build a workforce with higher capacity and expertise for EEJ implementation; and
- 1D. Improve coordination to reduce burden on communities.

Ensures that our policies promote equal opportunities for all and do not create unintended inequities or unequal burdens for underserved communities, to the extent possible within the law. Action areas include:

2. Policy and Plans

- 2A. Re-evaluate interpretation of internal and external policies, legal mandates, and regulations, and innovate within legal boundaries to identify opportunities for better EEJ incorporation.

3. Research and Monitoring

Identifies underserved communities and their needs, conducts collaborative research, and assesses impacts of management decisions. Action areas include:

- 3A. Establish and build relationships with these communities to improve incorporation of EEJ in research and monitoring;
- 3B. Identify and apply best practices to co-develop, co-create, and share research that is meaningful to underserved communities;

3C. Use social science to diversify how we define impacted communities and marine benefits to communities and use it to improve integration into analyses relevant to human dimension, environmental justice, and climate change;

3D. Improve research by including [Indigenous and local ecological and cultural knowledge](#) into our science and science products.

4. Outreach and Engagement

Build and strengthen relationships with underserved communities to better understand their engagement preferences and improve information sharing with all communities. Action areas include:

4A. Develop best practices for communication and engagement;

4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are);

4C. Improve access to education and technical training programs for underserved communities.

5. Benefits

Distribute benefits equitably among communities by increasing the access to opportunities for underserved communities. Action areas include:

5A. Improve access and remove barriers to federal government resources.

6. Inclusive Governance

Enables the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making processes, to the extent consistent with applicable law. Action areas include:

6A. Establish and build relationships to improve inclusive decision-making;

6B. Improve opportunities for inclusive governance⁴ in public processes.

Reporting and Accountability

PIRO and PIFSC will report periodically on progress made towards the implementation of the plan, recognizing that many actions have long timeframes and may be constrained by available resources. We will continue engaging with communities throughout the region on our efforts and will share with partners the progress made to the plan and updates on future iterations. The plan is a living document that will be updated to respond to the evolving needs of Pacific Island communities.

⁴ NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy defines inclusive governance as: Enable the meaningful involvement of underserved communities in decision-making processes.

Alignment of EEJ Actions with Community Feedback

In this section, we summarize some of the major themes from meetings with community members and partners in 2022 and 2023. These are not intended to be comprehensive of all community interests, but rather a high-level summary of the discussions thus far within the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands region. In Table 1, we list the EEJ actions identified from community feedback and link them to the Pacific Islands region EEJ action areas that were developed in response. While much of the community feedback was used to shape the plan, some requests or feedback could not be addressed due to the limited scope of NOAA Fisheries jurisdiction, statutes and laws, comments outside the scope of this plan, etc.

While each of the island groups have unique needs, there were some common themes from across the region. Perhaps the most obvious commonality is the isolation of the Pacific Islands region population from the continental United States. Resources can cost more and take longer to obtain, and challenges can be further exacerbated by U.S. regulations such as the Jones Act and other cabotage laws that govern the transportation of goods between ports. Additionally, American Sāmoa, CNMI, and Hawai'i have multiple inhabited islands, which can increase these issues of access and expense for these island populations (for example Tinian, Ofu, or Kaua'i).

Many of these islands have comparably smaller populations with smaller economies, and so can be overlooked when establishing national priorities. Each of the island groups have Indigenous Pacific Islanders, but there are no federally recognized tribes. Finally, the territorial or commonwealth status of American Sāmoa, CNMI, and Guam create issues of unequal representation in the U.S. federal political system, and in the case of people born in American Sāmoa, they are U.S. Nationals, not U.S. Citizens.

These issues can have an impact on the services NOAA Fisheries provides to the Pacific Islands region, and to each island group. For example, PIRO and PIFSC have a limited number of staff living in American Sāmoa, Guam, and CNMI, which can make it difficult to build and maintain lines of communication with communities and partners. The cost of travel can also limit the number of in-person meetings.

Table 1. Linking community feedback to environmental equity and justice actions

EEJ Core Area	Community Feedback	PIR EEJ Action Area(s) that address this feedback
Empowering Environment	Improve cultural knowledge of NOAA Fisheries staff.	1A. Leadership champions EEJ. 1B. Integrate EEJ into everyday work. 1C. Build a workforce with higher capacity and expertise for EEJ.
	Improve relationship building by addressing high turnover rates of staff based in, or interacting with, territorial communities.	1C. Build a workforce with higher capacity and expertise for EEJ. 1D. Improve coordination to reduce burden on communities.
	Create local job opportunities, including leadership opportunities. This could include liaisons to the community.	1A. Leadership champions EEJ. 1C. Build a workforce with higher capacity and expertise for EEJ.
	Improve internal federal coordination to avoid community burden through over-engagement.	1D. Improve coordination to reduce burden on communities.
	Improve communication and follow-through by federal actors.	1A. Leadership champions EEJ. 1B. Integrate EEJ into everyday work. 1C. Build a workforce with higher capacity and expertise for EEJ. 1D. Improve coordination to reduce burden on communities.
Policy and Plans	Address distrust of federal regulations due to cumulative burdens (e.g., restrictions on fishing access from multiple federal agencies, burden of the permit process, and the impact on species availability).	2A. Re-evaluate interpretation of internal and external policies, legal mandates, and regulations and innovate within legal boundaries to identify opportunities for better EEJ incorporation. 1D. Improve coordination to reduce burden on communities
Research and Monitoring	Include local people in research projects and management decisions, including locally relevant reciprocity protocols.	3A. Establish and build relationships to improve incorporation of EEJ in research and monitoring. 3B. Identify and apply best practices to co-develop, co-create, and share research that is meaningful to communities.

EEJ Core Area	Community Feedback	PIR EEJ Action Area(s) that address this feedback
	Support human dimensions research, particularly the impact of fisheries management and federal entities on fishing communities.	3C. Use social science to diversify how we define impacted communities and marine benefits to communities and use it to improve integration of analyses relevant to human dimensions, environmental justice, and climate change.
	Bring Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into research.	3D. Improve research by including Indigenous and local ecological and cultural knowledge into our science and science products.
Outreach and Engagement	Identify pathways of engagement with Indigenous and immigrant communities.	4A. Develop best practices for communication and engagement. 4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are).
	Improve communication, knowledge sharing and engagement with communities and partners, and consider what the benefits of engagement are to the target communities.	4A. Develop best practices for communication and engagement. 4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are). 4C. Improve access to education and technical training programs for underserved communities
	Host in-person culturally appropriate meetings to have inclusive conversations with communities on all inhabited geographic islands	4A. Develop best practices for communication and engagement. 4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are).
	Provide information in accessible language including plain language (508 compliant), and translation and interpretation (services and translated materials).	4A. Develop best practices for communication and engagement. 4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are).
	Support easily accessible sources of information (e.g., websites, radio stations, social media).	4B. Apply best practices for communication and engagement (meet communities where they are).
	Provide education and internship opportunities for students from underserved communities for more access to hiring pathways.	4C. Improve access to education and technical training programs for underserved communities.

EEJ Core Area	Community Feedback	PIR EEJ Action Area(s) that address this feedback
	Provide training on navigating the federal application processes.	4C. Improve access to education and technical training programs for underserved communities.
Benefits	Equitably distribute benefits by considering the barriers faced by island communities.	5A. Improve access and remove barriers to federal government resources.
Inclusive Governance	Improve management through relationship building.	6A. Establish and build relationships to improve inclusive decision making.
	Support the autonomy of local resource agencies.	6B. Improve opportunities for inclusive governance in public process.
	Create opportunities for more meaningful engagement in management and decision-making.	6A. Establish and build relationships to improve inclusive decision-making. 6B. Improve opportunities for inclusive governance in public process.

Appendix

Table A1. List of acronyms for Appendix tables.

Name	Acronym
Indigenous knowledge	IK
PIFSC Board of Directors	BOD
PIRO Directorate	DIR
PIFSC Director’s Office	DO
Pacific Islands Regional Office Executive Committee	PIEC
Pacific Islands region Environmental Equity and Justice working group	EEJ WG
PIRO/PIFSC Operations, Management, and Information Division	OMI
PIFSC Fisheries Research and Monitoring Division	FRMD
PIRO Sustainable Fisheries Division	SFD
Pacific Islands Regional Action Plan	PIRAP
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act	MSA
Best Scientific Information Available	BSIA
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
National Standard 8	NS8
Paper Reduction Act	PRA
National Coral Reef Monitoring Program	NCRMP
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument	PMNM
Stock assessment and fishery evaluation	SAFE
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission	WCPFC
Western Pacific stock assessment review	WPSAR
Regional fisheries management organization	RFMO
NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program	NCRCP

1. Empowering Environment

1A. Leadership Champions EEJ

Division	EEJ Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
BOD/PIEC/DO/DIR	1. Prioritize EEJ activities in planning and budgeting processes.	EEJ embedded from the beginning.	Number of actions implemented from the plan.	Annually
BOD/PIEC	2. Uplift community voices and priorities from the Pacific Islands region to the national level.	Underserved communities of the Pacific Islands region are considered in national discussions and decision-making. Broader recognition of Pacific Islands region community priorities at the national level.	Number of briefings at the national level that include Pacific Islands region community concerns.	Ongoing
DO/DIR	3. Leadership supports PIRO and PIFSC representation on the national EEJ working group.	Regional and national EEJ efforts linked.	Consistent representation of PIRO and PIFSC on national EEJ working group.	Ongoing
DO/DIR	4. Leadership create and support an ongoing regional EEJ WG with representatives from PIRO and PIFSC that are empowered to serve as a resource for implementing Pacific Islands region EEJ actions.	Supports cross office coordination for EEJ implementation and accountability.	Pacific Islands region EEJ working group has equitable representation across divisions and geographies, as practicable, within NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands region.	Ongoing

1B. Integrate EEJ into Everyday Work Through Internal Capacity Building and Implementation of Actions

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Develop and include EEJ metrics in staff performance plans.	All staff are held accountable for advancing EEJ.	Percentage of performance plans that have EEJ implementation plan actions specific to staff roles.	Annually
ALL	2. Make EEJ a priority discussion during quarterly leadership and division meetings.	Ensure that steps are being taken to implement EEJ actions.	Percentage of quarterly meetings with EEJ on the agenda.	Ongoing
PIR EEJ WG	3. Develop organization-wide resources to support community engagement activities, including guides for staff visiting island areas, cultural competency training, etc.	Supports capacity for regional relationship building. Supports effective and inclusive research, outreach, and governance.	Number of resources created. Number of staff that consult and/or have found each resource useful.	1–3 years
PIR EEJ WG	4. Coordinate and maintain annual reports on EEJ implementation progress on metrics.	Supports accountability and linking regional and national EEJ efforts.	Number of completed progress reports.	Annually
PIR EEJ WG	5. Provide EEJ training opportunities for all staff, including capacity building workshops and cultural competency support.	Increases staff capacity for EEJ. Supports relationship building and effective and inclusive research, outreach, and governance.	Number of EEJ training opportunities provided. Percentage of staff trained in skills supportive of EEJ. Measurable increase in understanding through before-and-after surveys of staff.	Every 1–3 years

1C. Build a Workforce with Higher Capacity and Expertise for EEJ Implementation

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
BOD/PIEC	1. Develop a plan to increase staff capacity for EEJ through hiring, training, and/or refocusing positions with expertise and experience for EEJ implementation.	Supports job opportunities for underserved communities. Supports human capital for long-term relationship building. Supports cross office coordination for EEJ implementation and accountability. Provides cultural and language expertise needed to support effective and place-based research, outreach, and inclusive governance.	Increase in percentage of staff with positions and experience that support EEJ implementation, such as social science and place-based cultural knowledge. Create and sustain NOAA Fisheries presence in CNMI, Guam, American Sāmoa, and non-Oahu Hawaiian Islands.	1–7 years
OMI/OMI/Hiring Managers	2. Increase opportunities for underserved communities to apply for jobs in the Pacific Islands region. Review position descriptions, minimum qualifications, and bands/ladders to target individuals with expertise identified for EEJ implementation (e.g., IK and cultural awareness).	Supports action 1.C.1. Supports job opportunities for underserved communities, and for areas of expertise to support EEJ implementation inclusive of research, outreach, and governance.	Increase in percentage of staff with positions and skills that support EEJ implementation.	Ongoing
SFD	2a. Increase opportunities for underserved communities to access marine fisheries observer jobs by advertising jobs in more accessible ways, reinstating the PIR Native Fishery Observer Program, and identifying opportunities to recognize required skills to be eligible for observer training through a NOAA Fisheries- authorized alternative training program.	Supports action 1.C.2. Supports job opportunities for underserved communities.	Increase in percentage of fisheries observers from underserved communities. PIR Native Fishery Observer Program reinstated.	3–7 years

1D. Improve Coordination to Reduce Burden on Communities

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
BOD/PIEC DO/DIR	1. Improve federal EEJ coordination between PIRO and PIFSC, across NOAA Fisheries and NOAA, and with the Council and other federal agencies.	NOAA line office EEJ efforts linked through Pacific Region Executive Board, Honolulu Federal Executive Board, and other outreach efforts. Increases internal coordination and capacity to reduce community burden.	Number of intra- and inter-agency EEJ coordination meetings.	Ongoing
DO/DIR	2. At least an annual in-person strategic communications meeting with each of our regional areas.	Supports updating of best practices for outreach efforts.	Number of strategic communication meetings.	1–3 years
ALL	3. Improve coordination with nationally based federal agency partners to increase awareness of Pacific Islands region community concerns and prioritize locally based relationships.	Underserved communities of the Pacific Islands region are considered in national discussions and decision-making.	Broader recognition of the Pacific Islands region community priorities at the national level.	Ongoing
ALL	4. Increase collaboration and communication across staff members to achieve EEJ and project goals. Share best practices for effective communication, understanding of local priorities and needs, and leveraging existing relationships with local communities and partners.	Increases internal coordination to reduce community burden and confusion of projects working in silos or at cross purposes and increase communication regarding EEJ issues.	Increase in the percentage of projects that include internal debrief in the project cycle. Percentage of place-based projects that engage and inform local staff.	Ongoing
EEJ WG	5. Create a system to track and coordinate travel activities. Host internal meetings for program sharing regarding EEJ information.	Increases internal coordination to reduce community burden and confusion of projects working in silos or at cross purposes.	Number of internal program coordination meetings held. Percentage of travel-related projects and/or divisions represented at coordination meetings. Number of tools created. Activities monitored and updated.	1 year and ongoing

2. Policy and Plans

2A. Re-evaluate Interpretation of Internal and External Policies, Legal Mandates, and Regulations and Innovate within Legal Boundaries to Identify Opportunities for Better EEJ Incorporation

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Identify synergies and engage with PIRAP for climate science project lead to facilitate the incorporation of EEJ into existing PIRAP projects.	Links EEJ with climate change.	Percentage of PIRAP projects that include EEJ considerations.	2 years and ongoing
ALL	2. Identify policies and plans for opportunities to integrate EEJ.	Integrate EEJ in policy and plans.	Number of policies and plans updated.	3 years and ongoing
OMI/OMI DO/DIR	2a. Establish a regional policy for MSA 305J to implement the Marine Education and Training Mini-Grants Program. Update regionally-based needs/gaps assessment of MSA 305J.	Supports 2.A.2.	Regional policy created. Number of projects supported.	1–7 years
HCD	2b. Include targeted actions in all Monument management plans being developed that allow for Indigenous perspective input in addition to western science.	Supports 2.A.2. IK into management plans.	Number of target actions with IK included in monument management plans.	Ongoing
FRMD	2c. Codify EEJ activity into internal administrative and programmatic policies and procedures such as stock assessment BSIA processes.	Supports 2.A.2. Embeds EEJ into internal policy.	Number of policies and procedures updated.	Ongoing
ALL	2d. Enhance EEJ analysis in impact assessments such as NEPA cumulative impact assessments and other management products.	Impact of management on underserved communities is better included in management decisions. Further supported by 3.C.1.	Number of NEPA analyses that include EEJ considerations.	Ongoing
SFD	3. Promote meaningful engagement and participation of Pacific Islands region communities in the ongoing process to update NS8 provisions related to “fishing communities.”	Strive to make MSA implementation better reflect the needs of PIR communities.	Number of engagements with Pacific Islands region communities. Number of changes made to NS8 directly related to Pacific Islands region community feedback.	Ongoing

3. Research and Monitoring

3A. Establish and Build Relationships to Improve Incorporation of EEJ in Research and Monitoring

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ESD/PSD/F RMD	1. Develop pathways and protocols for meaningful and culturally appropriate opportunities for underserved community members to participate in NOAA research cruises and other research activities, to the extent consistent with applicable laws.	Capacity and relationship building for jurisdictional agencies. Supports job and training opportunities for underserved communities.	Number of community participants on research cruises and other research activities.	3–5 years
FRMD	2. Use existing local engagement structures such as fishing tournaments and fishing club meetings as an opportunity for data collection (to the extent possible by the law), science processes (e.g., life history, stock assessment).	Relationship building and incorporation of local knowledge into research.	Number of fishing tournaments/fishing clubs attended.	Ongoing
FRMD	3. Provide training and convene workshops that enable state and jurisdictional fishery agency scientists to collect and analyze fishery-dependent data. Identify the most effective means of collecting data specific to the situation in each island area.	Relationship building and incorporation of local knowledge into research.	Number and subject areas of workshops held.	Ongoing
FRMD	4. Conduct stock assessment workshops (i.e., data workshops) and incorporate local, Indigenous, traditional knowledge into the assessment process.	Relationship building and incorporation of local knowledge into research.	Participant insights gained that impact stock assessment processes or refine other research priorities.	Ongoing

3B. Identify and Apply Best Practices to Co-Develop, Co-Create, and Share Research that is Meaningful to Communities

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ESD/FRMD/PSD	1. Identify opportunities to co-design research. This includes seeking interested communities and incorporating their input at every stage of the research; developing, collection, analysis, interpretation, co-authoring, writing, and sharing results.	Making research more responsive to community needs and relationship building. Research process reflects best practices for equity and inclusivity.	Number of research projects that align community interests and NOAA Fisheries mission.	Ongoing
PRD/PSD	1a. Coordinate with community experts before starting new research projects and have discussions at key junctures during the projects, including planning and results-sharing phases.	Making research and management more responsive to community needs and relationship building.	Proportion of projects adopting this approach. Number of community participants/organizations included in discussions/meetings. Number of community meetings held.	Ongoing
EEJ WG	2. Establish a PRA-approved question bank to allow Pacific Islands region partners and communities, including underserved communities, to provide feedback on NOAA Fisheries performance (e.g., at data workshops, public hearings, staff performance over a period of years).	Provides EEJ output metric monitoring availability.	Number of NOAA line offices and NOAA Fisheries divisions consulted in refinement of question bank. Status of PRA application.	1–3 years
ALL	3. Share scientific and resource information with Pacific Islands region partners and communities, including underserved communities, including surveys and cruises in a format that is accessible and culturally appropriate.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Number of science products shared with communities that reach target audience.	Ongoing
ESD	3a. Increase engagement with Native Hawaiian communities to share knowledge, information, data, for our NCRMP surveys in PMNM.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Increase in number of engagements with Native Hawaiian communities.	Ongoing

3C. Use Social Science to Diversify How We Define Impacted Communities and Fisheries Benefits to Communities, and Use It to Improve Integration into Analyses Relevant to Human Dimension, Environmental Justice, and Climate Change

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Develop and improve social science and EEJ section of impact assessments and other applied science products, such as SAFE reports and fishery ecosystem plans.	Impact of management on underserved communities is better included in management decisions. Supports 2.A.2d.	Number of EEJ sections or embedded references to community impacts in science and management products. Number of management products that incorporate non-economic fisheries benefits research.	1–3 years and ongoing
ESD	1a. Identify and quantify the non-economic benefits of fisheries and characterize all people impacted by fisheries management (i.e., not just fishers).	Supports 3.C.1. Integrates benefits of fishing to underserved communities and a more complete understanding of participants, so equity considerations can be included in management.	Number of human dimensions social science products on these topics	1–5 years and ongoing
ESD	1b. Develop criteria and methods for defining or identifying underserved communities in the Pacific Islands region.	Supports 3.C.1. and all EEJ analysis.	Report or manuscript published.	1–2 years

3D. Improve Research by Including Indigenous and Local Ecological and Cultural Knowledge into our Science and Science Products

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ESD	1. Adapt NOAA guidance on incorporating IK and local knowledge to be regionally specific for the Pacific Islands region. Include considerations of dominant approaches and how to bridge worldviews and improve dialogue.	Identifies regionally specific IK and local knowledge approaches.	Guidance adapted to the Pacific Islands region.	Ongoing
ALL	2. Integrate IK and local knowledge into science products and management decisions and document analyses (e.g., NEPA) and discuss ways to get community input for management ideas and feedback.	Guided by 3.D.1. Brings IK and local knowledge into science. Research and management process is more inclusive.	Number of identified pathways to integrate IK and local knowledge into management decisions. Number of scientific products that integrate Indigenous, traditional, ecological knowledge.	Ongoing
ESD	2a. Engage with the local fishing communities to better understand stock structure and reproductive ecology of managed species and include in species reports. For example, engage the Hawai'i fishing community to better understand <i>Aprion virescens</i> (uku, green jobfish) stock structure and reproductive ecology.	Supports 3.D.2. Brings IK and local ecological knowledge into science.	IK and local ecological knowledge section in species report.	Ongoing
PRD/PSD	2b. Practice more inclusive use and incorporation of IK in NOAA Fisheries' supporting scientific and management documents (e.g., species status reviews, biological reports, five-year reviews, recovery plans) related to protected species management.	Supports 3.D.2. Brings IK into science and management.	Number of supporting documents that include IK.	Ongoing

4. Outreach and Engagement

4A. Develop Best Practices for Communication and Engagement

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Uphold commitment to be responsive to correspondence and requests from the community.	Improve federal follow-through with the community as requested.	Reported increase of responsiveness by NOAA Fisheries from community.	Ongoing
BOD/PIEC	2. Coordinate outreach and engagement from the region to preserve and protect community relationships.	Build and enhance relationships and trust.	Percentage of outreach and engagement efforts by national offices that are coordinated through the regional offices.	Ongoing
PIR EEJ WG	3. Identify culturally appropriate language access needs of Pacific Islands region communities.	Best practice resources developed to enhance EEJ implementation.	Best practices created for language access.	1–2 years

4B. Apply Best Practices for Communication and Engagement (Meet Communities Where They Are)

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Increase strategic and coordinated in-person engagements with people in American Sāmoa, Hawai'i (esp. islands other than O'ahu), Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands affected by NOAA Fisheries research and management.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them.	Number of in-person engagements with communities affected by NOAA Fisheries research and management. Number of participants.	Ongoing
ALL	1a. Enhance audio-visual technology capabilities to conduct fishing community engagement, meetings, workshops, and outreach in the Pacific Island jurisdictions by stationing cross-programmatic audio-visual equipment in each jurisdiction.	Supports 4.B.1. Underserved communities have better access to science and management by enabling NOAA Fisheries' engagement through more diverse, culturally appropriate venues or forums.	Types of audio-visual technology available for NOAA Fisheries in-person engagement in each jurisdiction.	1-2 years
ALL	1b. Create informal engagement opportunities for scientists and managers to build trust directly with affected communities and partners over time and, preferably, not in a time of conflict or crisis. Focus on building lines of communication with groups (e.g., immigrant communities) that have not historically been included in research.	Supports 4.B.1 Relationship building with communities and partners including regulated and/or underserved communities.	Reported improved relationship between scientists, managers, and communities.	Ongoing
ALL	1c. Utilize more culturally appropriate spaces for meetings and workshops. Reach out to the village mayors' offices or other small businesses to identify potential meeting locations, to the extent consistent with federal travel requirements.	Supports 4.B.1.	Percentage of events at culturally appropriate locations.	Ongoing
ALL	2. Utilize more accessible and culturally appropriate engagement opportunities and communication channels aside from the Federal Register like radio ads, social media, local printed media for formal and informal processes.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them	% of Federal Register notices that also utilize more accessible and culturally appropriate communication channels.	Ongoing

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
PRD/PS D	2b. Explore and implement additional opportunities for PRD and PSD to expand outreach and education to underserved communities in the PIR	Supports 4.B.3.	Number of engagement activities with underserved communities. Number of attendees in each engagement. Number of underserved communities represented at each engagement.	1–2 years and ongoing
ESD	2c. Incorporate funding for STEAM events in projects (e.g., community murals, or other requested projects by community leaders).	Supports 4.B.3.	Number of projects that incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM).	Ongoing
SFD	2d. Leverage Pier 38 office to enhance engagement with fishing community.	Supports 4.B.3. Improve opportunities for underserved communities to provide feedback on how NOAA Fisheries science and management can affect them.	Number of interactions, meetings, and workshops with members of the fishing community at the Pier 38 office or in the vicinity.	Ongoing
SFD	2e. Increase early outreach efforts to provide information sharing with the fishing community in accessible and culturally appropriate formats on rules and regulations. This includes translations for two-pager, attending fishing tournaments, etc.	Supports 4.B.3.	Number of engagement activities to share fishing rules and regulations with fishing community. Number of locations where accessible materials are available for fishing community. Number of resources translated.	Ongoing
ALL	3. Provide plain language and translation and interpretation of materials and presentations where needed and appropriate.	Supports 4.A.3. Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Culturally and linguistically appropriate services provided to Pacific Islands region communities.	Ongoing
SFD	3a. Develop language-accessible protected species interaction training for longline fishing crew that includes translations, interpretation, and accessible resources.	Supports 4.B.4. Provides for increased understanding of federal requirements by fishers, including foreign language speaking participants in the fishery.	Number of crew with limited English proficiency reached. Number of trainings held with language access. Number of resources and materials translated.	1–2 years

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ESD/ FRMD/ SFD	4. Support the development of Marine Resources and Education Program (MREP) in the Pacific Islands region.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage. IK is included.	Number of trainings and activities supported for MREP.	1–3 years and ongoing

4C. Improve Access to Education and Technical Training Programs for Underserved Communities

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
OMI/OMI DIR/DO	1. Provide training for communities on how to navigate federal application systems, including grant and NEPA training.	Increase access to federal applications systems to underserved communities.	Number of people trained from underserved communities.	Ongoing
OMI/OMI	2. Establish a targeted recruitment plan for students with language and cultural expertise from across the Pacific Islands region, including expanding existing internship and fellowship program opportunities across the Pacific Islands region.	Removal of barriers for underserved community members to apply and participate in internship and fellowship programs.	Increased representation of students with expertise in Pacific Islands regional languages and cultures in internships and fellowship programs. Number of new recruitment strategies deployed for underrepresented students.	3–7 years
ALL	2a. Actively maintain a list of shovel-ready projects for potential future interns, especially from the Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI).	Supports 4.C.2.	Increase in number of students from underserved communities participating in internships and projects.	Ongoing
ALL	2b. Expand student internships and project opportunities to a) smaller and resource-limited institutions, both in Hawai'i and across the jurisdictions, and b) allow part-time and remote options. Have a physical presence at these institutions when advertising positions to have in-person interaction with students and faculty.	Supports 4.C.2. This would potentially allow students in the territories to remain there, and would allow interns who are already working to keep their jobs (and their associated benefits, seniority, income, etc.).	Increase in number of students from underserved communities participating in internships and projects.	1–2 years and ongoing
ALL	2c. Find ways to promote NOAA as a career opportunity for students with local cultural knowledge, including formal internship programs or partnerships with secondary schools, community colleges, and universities.	Supports 4.C.2.	Increase in number of students from underserved communities participating in internships and projects.	Ongoing

5. Benefits

5A. Improve Access and Remove Barriers to Federal Government Resources

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Incorporate EEJ considerations into resource allocation decision-making to improve equitable distribution, to the extent consistent with applicable law.	Increase equity in distribution of benefits.	More equitable distribution of resource allocation.	1–2 years and ongoing
OMI/OMI PIR EEJ WG	1a. Develop a tracking system and report benefit distribution by island area.	Create an accountability system for tracking equitable distribution of resources.	Tracking system and report developed.	3–5 years
DIR/DO/ OMI/OMI	2. Develop a mechanism to remove barriers for underserved community members to participate in federal meetings and programs.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Percentage of meetings held that include culturally appropriate incentives.	1–2 years
DO/DIR/ OMI/OMI	3. Identify flexibilities and opportunities, where possible, to contract with local businesses and community members for their services, including for printed materials, invited speakers, culturally appropriate trainings, and meetings (where possible and consistent with federal requirements). Work through NOAA Acquisition and Grants Office to collaborate with the Department of Commerce/NOAA Small Business Team.	Supports small local businesses and economies. Supports relationships between NOAA Fisheries and communities.	Contracting vehicle created.	1–2 years
OMI/OMI	4. Identify flexibilities and solutions, where possible, to increase purchase card actions with local vendors, small businesses, and businesses from underserved communities.	Procurement contracts available to local business and community members.	Increased number of procurement actions with local vendors, small businesses, and businesses from underserved communities.	1–3 years
OMI/OMI	5. Identify underserved communities, biases, and limitations in the federal financial assistance program and develop processes to remove barriers to access.	Increase accessibility of financial assistance program to underserved communities.	Increase number of successful applicants from underserved communities in the federal financial assistance program.	1–3 years

6. Inclusive Governance

6A. Establish and Build Relationships to Improve Inclusive Decision-Making

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
ALL	1. Support and facilitate PIR representation on regional, national, and international advisory bodies	Increase representation of PIR fishing communities in decision-making.	Increase % of PIR representatives on regional, national, and international advisory bodies.	Ongoing
IFD	1a. Increase outreach and engagement with representatives in the U.S. Pacific territories and Hawai'i to maintain a diversity of backgrounds and opinions on the WCPFC Permanent Advisory Committee, to the extent consistent with the WCPFCIA, 16 U.S.C. 6902.	Bring diverse outside voices and opinions into the room and build relationships.	Equitable representation on WCPFC Permanent Advisory Committee.	Ongoing
PRD/SFD/ HCD	2. Meaningfully involve state and jurisdictional governments in regulatory processes, especially early in the preparation process, to the extent possible within the law.	Reduce or eliminate the appearance of arbitrary and non-inclusive decisions.	Percentage of regulatory processes that include early engagement with state and jurisdictional governments and partner agencies.	Ongoing
HCD	2a. Promote a high level of engagement with jurisdictional governments in the marine national monuments, consistent with the Presidential Proclamations.	Reduce or eliminate the appearance of arbitrary and non-inclusive decisions.	Community reports meaningful engagement in monument processes.	Ongoing
SFD/PRD	3. Encourage a feedback loop between NOAA Fisheries protected species workshops and longline fleet to enhance participation and input in NOAA Fisheries decision-making and program effectiveness evaluations to the extent possible within the law.	Bring diverse outside voices and opinions into the room and build a relationship based on feedback and compliance instead of regulation and enforcement. Comments from industry regarding program effectiveness or needs related to SFD programs (PSW, observer, regulatory).	Changes or actions taken based on captain/crew/owner comments or anecdotal data from fishery participants and other affected individuals.	Ongoing

6B. Improve Opportunities for Inclusive Governance in Public Processes

Division	Actions	EEJ Impact	Metric	Timeframe
EEJ WG	1. Develop a plan to make public meetings and hearings more accessible. This includes creating space for informal engagement and accessible locations and platforms for local translations.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Plan developed and utilized for public meetings and hearings.	1–3 years
FRMD/ SFD	1a. Hold WPSAR meetings in the applicable state or territory with ample time for public comments. Could also hold meetings on islands other than O’ahu when in Hawai’i.	Supports 6.B.1. Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them.	Increase in-person meetings with underserved communities.	Ongoing
SFD/PRD/ HCD	2. Improve accessibility and equity in rules and regulations by: Seeking and considering views and input from affected communities in rulemaking, to the extent possible within the law. Increasing opportunities for the underserved communities to provide comments on rulemaking packages. Creating two-pager summary guides for proposed rules with regulatory changes and providing translated materials as appropriate.	Underserved communities have better access to and awareness of agency activities that affect them and are better able to engage.	Percentage of rule and regulation packages that incorporate EEJ considerations.	Ongoing
IFD	3. In coordination with U.S. State Department, engage with multilateral partners in the Pacific, including Secretariat of the Pacific Community, South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, Forum Fisheries Agency, Parties to the Nauru Agreement, and others.	Ensure the consistent and equitable management of fisheries in the Pacific.	Number of engagements with identified groups.	Ongoing
IFD	4. Engage with jurisdictions early and often to ensure jurisdictional priorities are represented in the development of U.S. positions for IFD’s international engagements, including travel to jurisdictions; international workshops, on the margins of existing meetings including with the Council, RFMOs, Treaties, and The Pacific Community. This could include development of a formalized process or agreement for engagement efforts.	Supports 6.A.2. Ensures jurisdictions are part of decision-making.	Partners report meaningful engagement in international forums.	Ongoing
HCD	5. Identify local targets for place-based staff integration of EEJ into the NCRCP (includes watershed, reef restoration, fisheries, and climate issues/projects in the territories).	Integrates EEJ into ongoing NCRCP efforts.	Number of actions under NCRCP that includes EEJ considerations	Ongoing