



BIOPAMA



Sustaining the Governance and Management of the Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park in Fiji

Type of priority area

Marine Managed Area

Terrestrial Protected Area

Indigenous and Community
Conserved Area (ICCA)

Primary objective

Governance

Management Effectiveness

Target groups

Indigenous Peoples

Women

Harvesters

Main activity focus

Management Plan

Enforcement

Awareness & Education



Duration
05.07.2020 – 04.07.2021



Type of grant & budget
Rapid Response Grant | 32,654\$



Location
Fiji, Pacific



Protected & Conserved Areas
Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park



BIOPAMA RRIS Link
<https://rris.biopama.org/ct/country/fj>



Key Conservation Landscape
Conservation Area

Project Lead

Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park

Description of the project:

The Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park (VIRCP) lies in the northern section of the Vatu-i-Ra passage between the two main islands of Fiji. The Park objectives are to protect the unique biodiversity of Vatu Island and the surrounding reefs, the cultural history of the area, and critical breeding grounds for fish (so that the 'spillover' from this Park supports fisheries in the adjacent fishing grounds), as well as to establish a voluntary mechanism through locally-based tourism that will ensure the sustainable financing of the Park, while also supporting the sustainable development of resource owners.

The project also aims to support the governance and management of the VIRCP, Fiji's largest Indigenous declared managed area to protect nationally significant marine biodiversity and seabird populations, while sustainable financing is in abeyance due to COVID-19-related border closures that impacted international tourism (user fees are the only source of funding for park management). The funding for this project will support:

1. Awareness to maintain the commitment of communities and fishers to the Park;
2. Monitoring and surveillance to control poaching and the degradation of marine resources; and
3. Trainings to help build and strengthen the capacity of the Management Committee to oversee the management of the park.





The BIOPAMA AC Objective(s) Addressed

Enhance the management and governance of priority protected areas by addressing existing limitations.



Priority Need Addressed

COVID-19 had a large impact on the sustainable financing of the Vatu-i-Ra Conservation Park. The Park is funded through a voluntary fee, which is largely generated from international visitors and when Fiji's borders closed in March 2020, there was no income generated in 2020 to help support the preservation and operation of the park.



The change the project implementation will bring for the protected areas

There are four primary changes the project will be able to contribute towards:

1. Awareness raising activities with communities with customary rights to the Park to build their understanding of: the conservation objectives of the Park; how the Park is managed and benefits for communities; how funds are generated through a partnership with the tourism sector; and how funds are used for park management and to support an education fund for secondary and tertiary students from Nakorotubu District.
2. Education and awareness raising activities with fishers from within and outside of Nakorotubu District on the VIRCP, to build understanding of the benefits of the Park, how the Park is governed and managed, as well as the management rules that apply. This will hopefully contribute to less poaching within the Park boundaries.
3. Patrolling and monitoring of the VIRCP to ensure there is compliance with the Park rules, and to address poaching concerns. This includes building the capacity of the recently appointed fish wardens to undertake monitoring and surveillance in close coordination with the Management Committee and the Ministry of Fisheries.
4. Improve the capacity of the Management Committee to oversee and manage the Park, by providing focused training, assisting with the development of standard operating procedures, as well as opportunities to further implement Park management activities.

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BIOPAMA assists the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to address their priorities for improved management and governance of biodiversity and natural resources. BIOPAMA provides a variety of tools, services and funding to conservation actors in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The BIOPAMA grant-making facility is managed by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and supports projects on the ground to strengthen the management and governance of protected and conserved areas, with a total budget of 21 million Euros.

