**Informing Australia's new International Development Policy**

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**Key Message**

Nature based solutions (NbS) are cost effective adaptation to climate change that provide benefits for biodiversity and local communities. Australia has excellence in research and implementation of NbS as well as strong international partnerships for blue carbon (e.g. CSIRO, International Partnership for Blue Carbon) and other NbS that could be an effective component in the new International Development Policy.

**Responses**

* What key trends or challenges will shape Australia's engagement in our region and globally over the next five to 10 years? What risks and opportunities does this present for Australia's development assistance?

Climate change is one of the key challenges for the region and globally. Climate change poses disproportionate risks in the coastal zone, both on biodiversity and human settlements, infrastructure and their food production systems. The biodiversity crisis increases vulnerability to climate change (e.g. coral reefs and mangroves provide coastal protection) and thus continued loss of biodiversity decreases climate resilience.

These climate and biodiversity risks can be simultaneously addressed through NbS. For example, NbS in the coastal zone can deliver climate change mitigation (blue carbon, which include market-based opportunities), climate adaptation (coastal protection), biodiversity, food security and cultural benefits. Australia has expertise in NbS that could be developed and implemented in nationally appropriate ways. Although there is investment in NbS in many nations (e.g. <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/natural-environment/oceans/blue-carbon> ), currently there is insufficient investment in research and implementation to understand the potential of NbS in Pacific island nations (Barnett et al. 2021). NbS may not be appropriate in all settings and identifying when NbS is and is not appropriate is important for ensuring success and to meet global standards (e.g. see Blue Carbon standards <https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_HC_Blue_Carbon_2022.pdf> and IUCN standards <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-020-En.pdf> ).

* What development capabilities will Australia need to respond to these challenges?

Development programs that cross-over among silo’s will increase Australia’s positive impact on global approaches to climate change mitigation and adaption. For example, NbS could be better integrated within agriculture, fisheries, conservation and infrastructure development programs. Programs that are specifically target cross-sectoral activities would be innovative and could accelerate action against multiple targets.

* How can Australia best utilise its national strengths to enhance the impact of our development program and address multidimensional vulnerabilities?

Australia has excellence in a range of science, policy and management in the coastal zone for climate change mitigation and adaption; including blue carbon (e.g. <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/natural-environment/oceans/blue-carbon>); market based approaches (<https://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/ERF/Choosing-a-project-type/Opportunities-for-the-land-sector/Vegetation-methods/tidal-restoration-of-blue-carbon-ecosystems-method>); remote sensing capacity (<https://www.globalintertidalchange.org/> ); environmental economic accounting (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/towards-national-ocean-account> ); greenhouse gas accounting (<https://bluecarbonpartnership.org/resources-2/> ), and others (mapping, monitoring to meet obligations under CBD and Ramsar conventions).

* How should the new policy reflect the Government's commitments to build stronger and more meaningful partnerships in our region, founded on mutual trust and respect and shared values of fairness and equality?

Engaging with local partners that have established trusted relationships in the region is effective and time and cost efficient. Some examples are provided through the NGOs – e.g. The Nature Conservancy program on mangrove protection by women in PNG <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/asia-pacific/asia-and-the-pacific-women-in-conservation/women-guardians-of-the-mangroves/>.

**Reference**

Barnett, J., Jarillo, S., Swearer, S.E., Lovelock, C.E., Pomeroy, A., Konlechner, T., Waters, E., Morris, R.L. and Lowe, R., 2022. Nature-based solutions for atoll habitability. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, *377*(1854), p.20210124. <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rstb.2021.0124>