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New Project

A Sea of Connections: Valuing Reef Passages in the South Pacific Region (SOCPacific2R)

Annette Breckwoldt¹, Elodie Fache² & Amanda Ford³

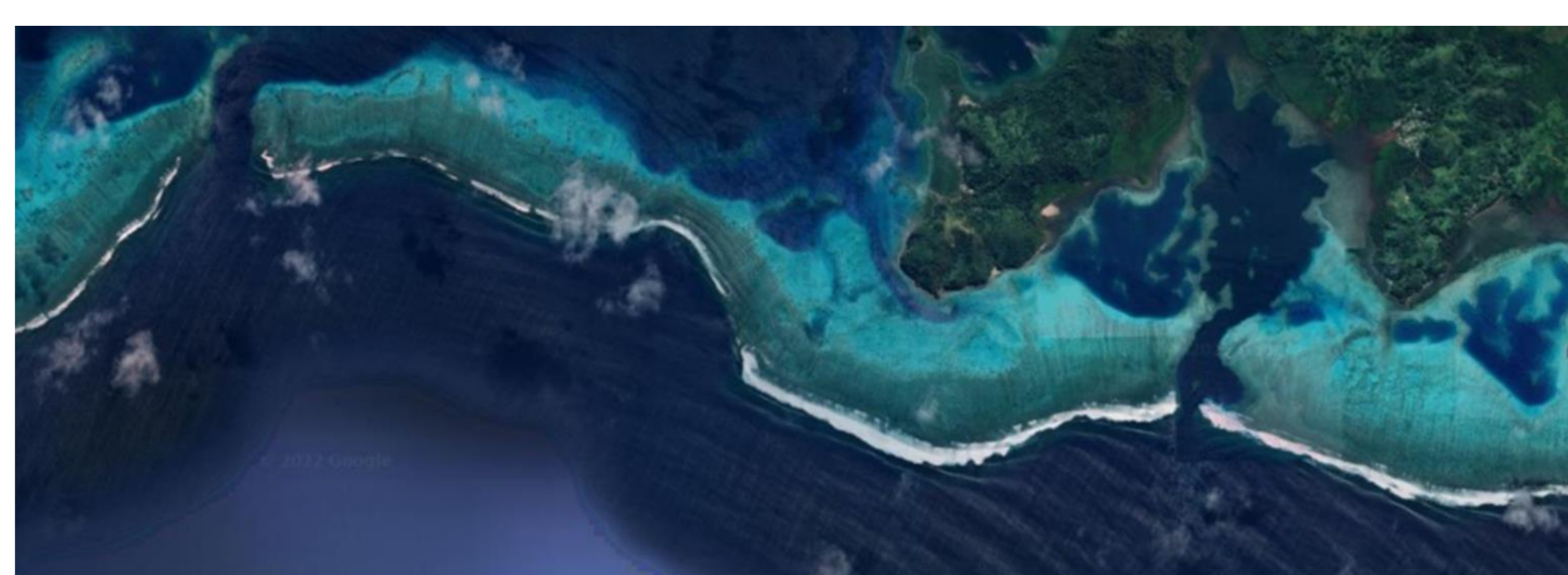
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- 3) School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS), The University of the South Pacific (USP), Suva, Fiji



Introduction

SOCPacific2R will start in September 2024 for 3-4 years. This project is a follow-up project of “A Sea of Connections: contextualizing Fisheries in the South Pacific Region” (SOCPacific.net) and got selected for funding as one out of 13 proposals selected in this year’s ANR/DFG binational call in their joint Social Sciences and Humanities Programme. Based once again on a partnership between The University of the South Pacific (USP), the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement

(IRD) and ZMT, it also involves a larger consortium of external partners. The reef passages connecting coastal waters and the open ocean are known as outstanding hotspots of biodiversity and productivity. Hence, they are of multifaceted significance for the overall health of coral reef ecosystems and for Oceanians. SOCPacific2R explores these **social-ecological ‘keystone places’** and ‘communication zones’ that have hardly been investigated by natural and social sciences.

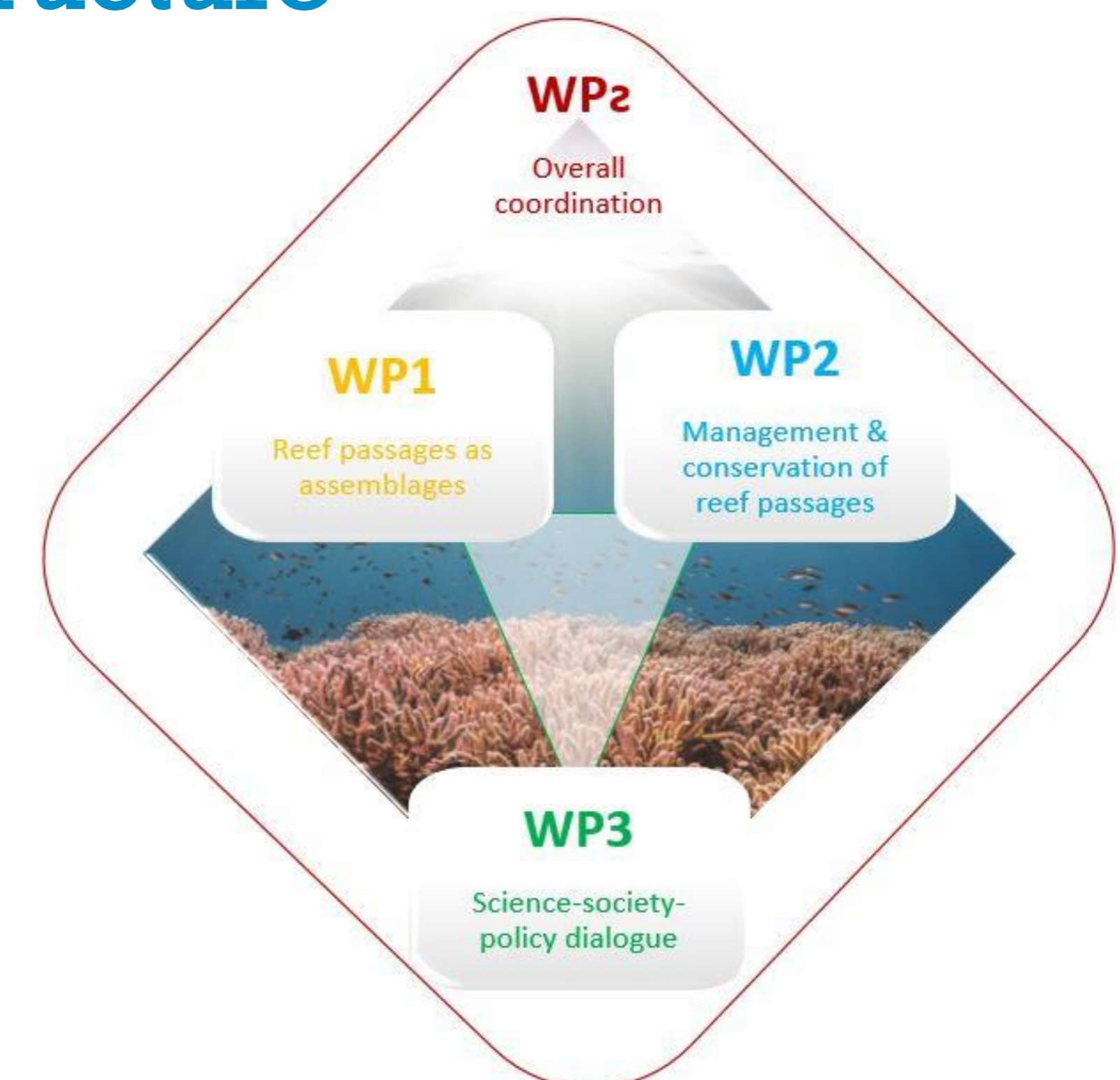


Photos: Google Earth (South Kadavu, Fiji) & E. Fache (Kadavu, Fiji)

3 Teams, many disciplines

French Team	Background	Fiji Team	Background	German Team	Background
Elodie Fache (PI)	Anthropology	Amanda Ford (PI)	Marine Studies	Annette Breckwoldt (PI)	Marine Ecology & Social Sciences
Stéphanie Carrière	Ethnoecology	Jascha Dehm	Marine Studies (ECR)	Sebastian Ferse	Reef Ecology
Chantall Crenn	Anthropology	Simon Harding	Marine Ecology	Marion Glaser	Sociology
Pierre-Yves LeMeur	Anthropology	Elisabeth Holland	Ocean & Climate Change	Rebecca Lahl	Science Management & Science-policy Interface
Estienne Rodary	Geography	Stuart Kininmonth	Reef Ecology	Nils Moosdorf	Geology & Biogeochemistry
Catherine Sabinot	Anthropology & Ethnoecology	Salanieta Kitolelei	Marine Studies (ECR)	Alexandra Nozic	Geospatial Analysis
Dominique Pelletier	Marine Biodiversity Conservation	Isoa Korovulavula	Marine Sciences & Resource Economics	Arno Pascht	Anthropology
Auréa Pottier	Geospatial Analysis	Susanna Piovano	Marine Studies	Patrick Christie (Mercator Fellow)	Environmental Anthropology & Conservation
		Brian Stockwell	Marine Studies		

Structure



3 Objectives

With its empirical focus on **New Caledonia and Fiji**, and based on a trusted and interdisciplinary Pacific-French-German partnership, SOCPacific2R aims to:

1. Conduct a **transdisciplinary study of reef passages** as under-researched features of social-ecological coral reef systems that constitute complex, interconnected, and dynamic assemblages of living and non-living, dwelling and transiting, entities that interact with each other;
2. Document both **area-based and other management and conservation arrangements** applied to reef passages, including pros and cons that local stakeholder groups identify;
3. Establish a **participatory science-society-policy dialogue** informed by social-ecological studies, Oceanian socio-cosmologies and sovereignties, and governance norms in/for the management and conservation of reef passages.

Through interrelated objectives and components, SOCPacific2R will both embrace and feed the vision of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and will facilitate the integration of reef passages in future marine/ocean policy and practice. It will include a **significant capacity-building component**, mainly for Pacific students based in Fiji and New Caledonia. SOCPacific2R will directly and actively engage various stakeholder groups throughout the research process. It will provide holders of customary rights, policy-makers and other stakeholders with evidence-based research and exchange fora to empower them for the joint management and conservation of reef passages.

Initial Publications

Breckwoldt, A., Nozik, A., Moosdorf, N., Bierwirth, J., Fache, E., Ferse, S., Ford, A. K., Mangubhai, S., Pelletier, D. and Piovano, S. 2022a. A Typology for Reef Passages. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 9: 786125. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2022.786125>

Breckwoldt, A., Dombal, Y., Sabinot, C., David, G., Riera, L., Ferse, S. and Fache, E. 2022b. A Social-Ecological Engagement with Reef Passages in New Caledonia: Connectors between Coastal and Oceanic Spaces and Species. *Ambio* 51: 2401-2413. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-022-01762-8>