

Operationalizing the Blue Economy For a Resilient and Sustainable Economic Transition in PSIDs. The case of Fiji and Deep Sea Mining

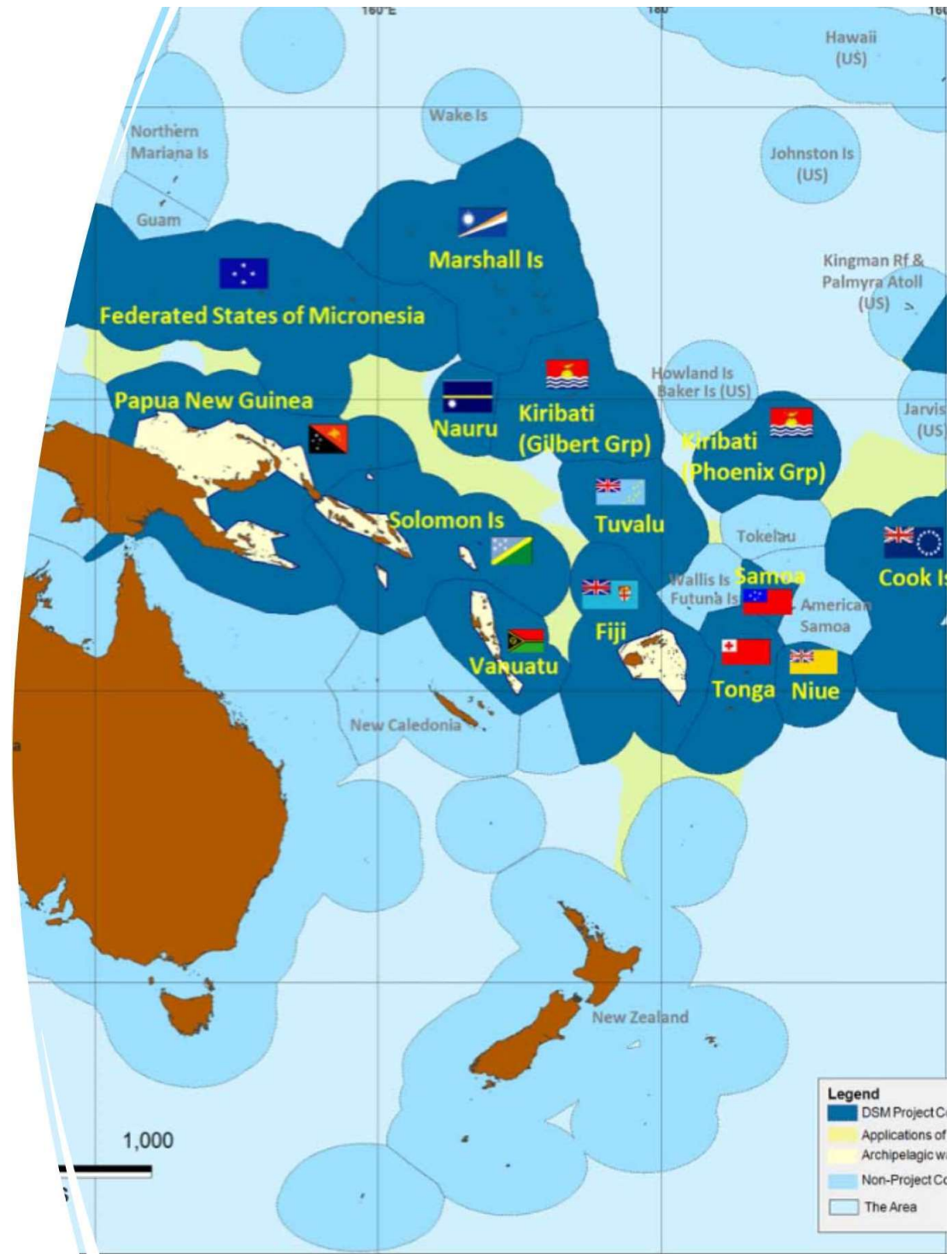
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Pacific Update 2023 Panel 3b: Climate change and environment

- A green recovery (GR) trajectory is a developing concept in the rebuild post the pandemic (Foley, et al, 2022).
- Nevertheless, despite the buoyancy related with GR, little is identified on in what manner it will be realized in different places, and how governments and policies form the recovery efforts in different countries (Kasanawaqa, 2022)

[Source : SPC-EU Deep Sea Minerals Project - Home](#)



Research

Addresses :

- The Blue Economy has been identified as key determinant of a resilient and sustainable economic development for SIDS,
- there are concerns about including Deep Sea Mining as a method of operationalizing the BE
- socio-economic and environmental effects of such activities, which have the potential to further exclude local communities from development.
- The purpose of this study is to explore the proposition that DSM can be seen as a new type of neo-post-colonial activity that exploits local resources to benefit outside actors rather than fostering resilient and sustainable local economic development.
- What is happening with PSIDs in the area of BE and DSM?
- What is happening with Fiji in the area of BE and DSM?
- What is happening in terms of informing Communities of BE and DSM?

Photo Credit: Nat Lowrey



Methodology

The PRISMA method was employed to look at what is happening with PSIDs in the area of BE and DSM. The research looked at the evolution of development, definitions and concepts around the BE, neo colonial definitions and what the BE means for SIDs and the Pacific.

The research undertook qualitative analysis on looking at what is happening with Fiji in the area of BE and DSM. This is undertaken by looking at the various national policies, laws and national development strategies., namely the Climate Change Policy, National Development Plan, Risk Reduction Policy, Low Emission Strategy Adaptation Policy and Seabed Minerals Decree, and to look at the positives and negatives of the policies.

Thematic analysis (TA) is the method employed to analyse what is happening in terms of informing communities of BE and DSM. This was done utilizing the NVIVO computer-based means. TA allowed the investigation to look at and make sense of joint or shared significances and practices by converging on themes within a data set. A thematic framework of positives, negative and emerging issues that relate to the subject of interest guided the process.

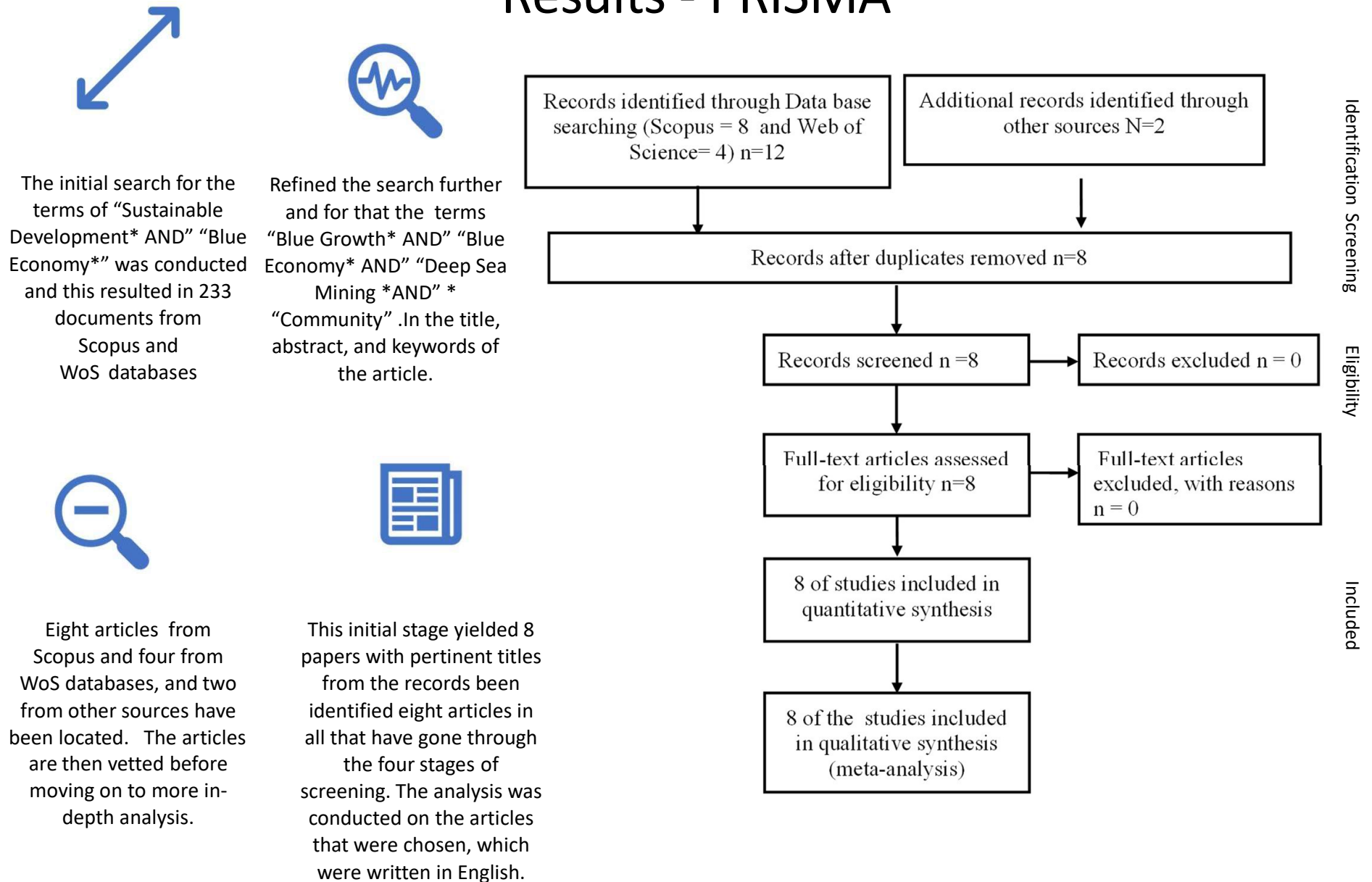
Limitation of Research

Time limited the research methodology, not allowing for Quantitative Analysis and regional, national and site surveys and interviews of Key PSIDs Representatives.

The research did exclude reports coming from organizations such as the Pacific Community (SPC), the International Seabed Authority that were unpublished, and that were not found in the two databases.

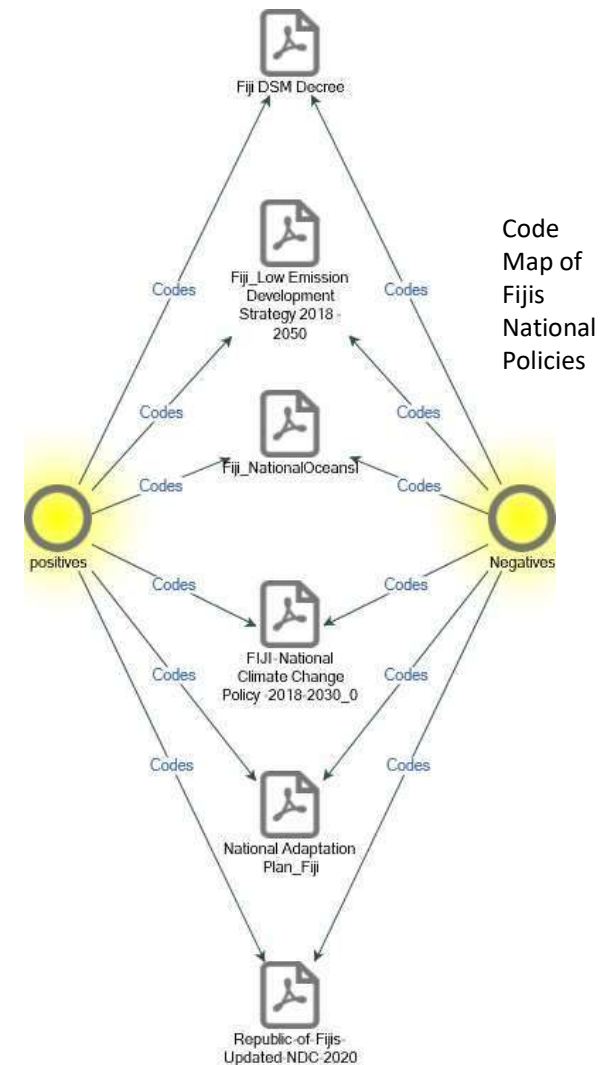
The Fiji National Energy Policy was also not included as the Policy has undergone review and now in its final stage for approval by Government, the plan articulates 100% Renewable Energy targets by 2030 for the government with the proponents of DSM identifying the nodules as a needed resource to spur growth in green technologies in the energy sector.

Results - PRISMA



Results Continued

- A data extraction summary of the articles illustrates that DSM is an emerging topic of research in BE concept for SIDs and their coastal communities.
- The results in dating the articles see a lack publication during the year searched. Notably as the industry is in its exploration stage, research has not been mainstreamed.
- As identified that a PSIDs DSM pilot was earmarked in the country of PNG but the company encountered several issues including lack of community engagement that saw intervention from civil society groups preventing any progress on the ground.
- This study illustrates that there are a few articles that discuss about the BE and DSM. However, there is limited research and papers that tried to link the potential impacts of what such an extractive industry will have on local coastal indigenous communities and their aspiration to development and self-determination.
- As a new industry, the extent to which DSM can deliver similar (or any) economic benefits is yet to be determined. As seen in the case of onshore mining, economic benefits usually flow to government in the form of taxes and royalties paid at a local and national level
- .The ability of DSM, a young business, to provide comparable (or any) economic benefits has yet to be established or evaluated.
- Fiji Policies looks at interlinking of the preservation of carbon sinks and ecosystems but fall short to connecting to the DSM decree of 2013. Despite calling for a moratorium on DSM at the UN Ocean Conference , the 2013 decree is not repealed



Word Frequency Fijis National Policies

Conclusion

- Ecosystem and integrated resource management approaches must be taken into consideration, with a focus on moving toward ecosystem-based management. These demands are interconnected on the ecological, economic, social, cultural, and other levels in SIDs.
- All decision-making procedures should be viewed through a strong human rights and gender-responsive lens, particularly through the meaningful and knowledgeable engagement of stakeholders and in respect to the universal right to a healthy environment. Equity must be at the heart of the Blue Economy.
- What has not been extensively discussed is the opportunity cost consideration. The incorporation of such economic activities is often absent from marine conservation planning literature and even in the current debate.
- It is crucial that the communities take part in information exchange and are given priority when framing solutions. This may result in managerial decisions that are sensitive to cultural differences and supported locally, which may counterbalance or even oppose top-down beliefs.
- The culture of "extractivism," a nonreciprocal method where resources are taken and used without care or regard for consequences, has left many in much more precarious situations and made them more dependent on outside income rather than bringing long-term benefits to the population or the environment.
- Lack of consultation with local communities and Indigenous people is another problem with DSM in the Pacific. Many Pacific nations, particularly Fiji, supported DSM because they saw it to become independent of Western development aid.
- A regional integrated and holistic approach for tackling the issues of DSM that would incorporate advancements, participatory planning, the inclusion of all stakeholders, and the encouragement of partnerships.
- The comprehensive methodology ought to be considered as continuously adjusting with the diversity of socio-ecological elements, the application of seabed resource management ought to be progressive and flexible.
- Most Pacific customs are founded on the idea of established reciprocity with respect to the ocean and its many inclusive entities, making it crucial to promote positive learning and sharing of marine ecosystems, particularly those related to deep sea resource management and traditional dimensions at a regional level. This thorough method should be used for incorporating deep sea ecosystem functioning, seabed resource management, and traditional practices into Marine Special Planning and management if DSM projects are pursued in various maritime locations of the world.

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Vinaka!

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