

## Community Engagement Policy

The objective of the policy is to prevent and mitigate undue harm to people and the environment through OceansWatch programs.

### **Initial engagement**

OceansWatch will only work where it has received a written request from the community. This needs to be signed by the chief and a local government representative.

The first visit that OceansWatch makes to a community will be to assess the level of interest and likely participation by the whole of that community. We do this objectively through Socio Economic Surveys, following SEM Pacifika guidelines.

Initial meetings will be held in a location that is accessible to all members of the community including women, those with disabilities and all ages.

Once it is established that the whole community (or those of significance and majority) is open to engaging with OceansWatch a Memorandum of Understanding will be drawn up detailing the expectations of both parties of the participation.

OceansWatch will identify or recommend the formation of a conservation committee made up of all stakeholders and interested parties.

The conservation committee will then be responsible for creating a management plan for managing the conservation area with the scientific input from OceansWatch but incorporating local traditional ecosystem knowledge.

Guardians of the conservation area will be selected by the conservation committee and will be trained by OceansWatch in Eco-system based resource management methods, monitoring techniques and enforcement and compliance methodology.

OceansWatch will conduct socio-economic monitoring of a statistically significant sample of the population to enable a wider understanding of whole community awareness of OceansWatch's engagement and to assess the most significant problems faced by the community.

OceansWatch will feed back all findings to the community to further assess their validity.

If it is within OceansWatch's mission we will take on other projects in the community to mitigate identified problems.

Solutions and assistance to problems may include:

Assistance with:

- water provision
- increasing food resources
- health issues
- erosion
- livelihoods
- renewable energy resources
- mitigation and adaptation to climate change issues

Further engagement with the community may involve OceansWatch identifying qualified personnel who can assist in the setting up of projects addressing these issues.

OceansWatch will commit in the initial MOU with a community how long we will engage with them. We have a minimum engagement period of five years.

During our engagement we will:

Show regular films about conservation and climate change issues

Provide engagement with kindergarten children describing their underwater world and forest environment.

Provide education in the schools to increase understanding of their coral reef and tropical forest eco-systems

Assist the conservation committee to create and implement an ecosystem based management plan

Implement any no-take protected areas

Train Reef Guardians and Forest Guardians to monitor their ecosystem using both quantitative and qualitative methodology.

Offer a Environmental science diploma to interested individuals to ensure there are educated people in the community to take over the role that OceansWatch provides after our term of engagement has finished (when this program becomes available).

Carry out Reef Check or similar monitoring by conducting tri-replicate surveys both inside and outside all MPAs to observe any indications of changes in reef health and biodiversity.

Complete any other projects that OceansWatch has initiated so that the benefits of these projects are continued after our engagement has ceased.

OceansWatch will use other sailing yachts to visit communities to conduct evaluation reports and carry out further Reef Check monitoring into the future.

OceansWatch will maintain its engagement with communities through text and email to ensure continued conservation effort.

When working with communities all attempts will be made to respect customs and traditions..

OceansWatch will endeavour to always provide all its own resources during its time in the communities so that it is not a burden on the people.

OceansWatch will primarily work from yachts adjacent to the communities rather than staying ashore in the communities to prevent jealousies between families and tribes.

OceansWatch recognises that increased cash in communities is the source of many of the community's problems and as such does not give out cash.

OceansWatch follows a bottom-up principal. Its first loyalty is to the people in the villages. It does however inform the local government of its arrival in the country and what it will be doing and it provides a verbal presentation at the end of the project and a written report.

OceansWatch works at a National level with an MOU with the relevant government department.

OceansWatch always enters and leaves the countries it works in legally and abides by local laws.