# [***Teaming up with Google to tackle climate change in the Indo-Pacific region***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66VK-YFR1-F0YC-N4XS-00000-00&context=1516831)

Impact News Service

November 12, 2022 Saturday

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**Length:** 702 words

**Body**

Canberra: Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources has issued the following news release:

The Australian Government and CSIRO will commence a partnership with Google to combine world-leading artificial intelligence and digital science with cutting-edge climate science to respond to the climate change crisis in the Indo-Pacific.

In collaboration with Australia ’ s development program in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, CSIRO has partnered with Google to better understand and utilise ***blue carbon*** ecosystems in Indo-Pacific and Australian coastlines.

***Blue carbon*** refers to natural carbon sinks, which can play a role in mitigating the increase of greenhouse gases caused by human activity.

The research will investigate new ways to accurately monitor, map and report on seagrass and associated biodiversity indicators.

Field work has started in in Fiji ’ s Lau Islands and Labuan Bajo in Indonesia.

Minister for Industry and Science, Ed Husic, said the collaboration is a great example of CSIRO ’ s work with industry to support the capacity of Australia and our region to respond to climate change.

“In many countries, the most vulnerable communities rely on coastal ecosystems for their livelihoods and resilience,” Minister Husic said.

“Australian, Fijian and Indonesian researchers will work together to develop sophisticated techniques for gathering data about biodiversity and habitats.

“The information can then be used to inform national policies and climate change action. ”

Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy, said Australia recognised the importance of protecting biodiversity to mitigate and build resilience to climate change.

“***Mangrove***, saltmarsh and seagrass are ***blue carbon*** ecosystems, which provide long-term carbon storage,” Minister Conroy said.

“They are also among the most extensive and valuable coastal ecosystems across the Indo-Pacific, providing benefits directly linked to sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience and adaptation.

“This collaboration highlights the Australian Government ’ s commitment to working with our Indo-Pacific partners on important issues, including climate change. ”

CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Larry Marshall said the initiative will support climate-smart decisions that strengthen climate resilience and economic growth.

“The combination of Google's world-leading AI and platform technology, CSIRO's deep climate, digital and AI expertise, DFAT's experience delivering high-quality development programs, and skills of our in-country partners, will help create tailored and cutting-edge solutions for Australia and the Indo-Pacific,” Dr Marshall said.

Mel Silva, Managing Director, Google Australia and New Zealand, said that the partnership had been made possible by the Digital Future Initiative.

“The Digital Future Initiative is an investment in the extraordinary talent and creativity of Australians and will allow us to continue working with CSIRO to harness machine learning tools to protect marine fauna and endangered species, and the future of our nation ’ s coastline,” Ms Silva said.

“Our shared goal is to support long-term climate resilience and improve access to technology for developing nations in the Indo-Pacific region. ”

This partnership will be delivered through Australia ’ s Science and Technology for Climate Partnership (SciTech4Climate) program. It is a $2.7 million investment through DFAT and Google ’ s Digital Future Initiative, including in-kind and funding contributions.

BACKGROUND on ***blue carbon***: In August, Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek released the first National Ocean Ecosystem Account, which collects information on carbon storage and coastal protection benefits of Australia ’ s ***mangroves*** and seagrass, known as ***blue carbon*** ecosystems.

In June, the Government announced increased support for ***blue carbon*** ecosystems by investing $9.5 million to support five new practical restoration projects and endorsed the Joint Declaration on the Creation of a Global Coalition for ***Blue Carbon***.

***Blue carbon*** facts:

• Australia and our oceans are home to 12% of the world ’ s ***blue carbon*** ecosystems.

• ***Blue carbon*** ecosystems absorb up to five times the carbon dioxide as terrestrial forests.

**Classification**

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newswire

**Journal Code:** INS

**Subject:** COMMERCE DEPARTMENTS (91%); BIODIVERSITY (90%); BLUE ECONOMY (90%); CLIMATE ACTION (90%); CLIMATE CHANGE (90%); CLIMATOLOGY (90%); INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & NATIONAL SECURITY (90%); RESEARCH INSTITUTES (90%); ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (89%); CARBON CAPTURE & STORAGE (89%); COASTAL AREAS (89%); ECOSYSTEMS & HABITATS (89%); INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (89%); SALTWATER ECOSYSTEMS (89%); ALLIANCES & PARTNERSHIPS (78%); BIOLOGY (78%); EARTH & ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE (78%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (78%); PUBLIC POLICY (78%); NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS (77%); NEGATIVE NEWS (77%); ENDANGERED SPECIES (76%); INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE (76%); BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION (75%); ECONOMIC GROWTH (74%); EMERGING MARKETS (73%); TEACHING MATERIALS & MEDIA (73%); GREENHOUSE GASES (72%); MACHINE LEARNING (72%); FOREIGN POLICY (71%); STATE DEPARTMENTS & FOREIGN SERVICES (71%); ANIMALS (69%); QUALITY CONTROL (69%); MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS (64%); EXECUTIVES (61%)

**Industry:** BLUE ECONOMY (90%); ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (89%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (78%); MACHINE LEARNING (72%)

**Geographic:** CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA (79%); AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (79%); AUSTRALIA (98%); FIJI (92%); INDONESIA (92%); AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (79%); NEW ZEALAND (79%)

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2022

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