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The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

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Regional Initiatives – SPREP Tools and Approaches to strengthen the integration/implementation of the environment-related SDGs (in particular, SDGs 12, 14 and 15)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) was established in 1993 and charged with supporting the work of its Members to address the region's environmental management challenges
- 1.2 SPREP's mandate is to promote co-operation in the Pacific region and provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.
- 1.3 SPREP is a partnership of 21 Pacific island countries and territories and 5 metropolitan Members to help achieve the vision of *a resilient Pacific*. Its work is to provide Members with technical advice and support for capacity building for the region's environmental and development priorities. It also promotes sustainable development and cooperation in the region.
- 1.4 SPREP is a Member of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) and works with its peer CROP agencies to serve the people and governments of the region.
- 1.5 The Vision of SPREP: 'A resilient Pacific environment sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.'

2.0 SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 – The Key Concerns

- 2.1 The 2017–2026 SPREP Strategic Plan four regional goals are closely interrelated.
 - Regional goal 1: Pacific people benefit from strengthened resilience to climate change.
 - Regional goal 2: Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilient island and ocean ecosystems
 - Regional Goal 3: Pacific people benefit from improved waste management and pollution control
 - Regional Goal 4: Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to and best practice of environmental governance
- 2.2 The above revealed the commitment SPREP and its members have on the SDG Agenda 2030 and specifically on the related environment SDGs 12, 14, and 15.
- 2.3 Each of the four goal specifies a number of key objectives. While each goal is a key focus Pacific island leaders recognize climate change as the biggest threat facing the region, with serious implications for sustainable development and the environment.

- 2.4 SPREP Members are Large Ocean Island States and SPREP provided assistance to members to address the multiple pressures on oceans coastal and marine resources that impact on their sustainable development and biodiversity.
- 2.5 These include marine protected areas; protection of threatened and migratory species; marine pollution; marine debris; marine spatial planning; environmental impact assessment; the protection of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ); and integrated island and ocean management in areas in which SPREP has the acknowledged lead.

3.0 **SPREP Regional Goals Specific Tools/Approaches – Addressing Environment SDGs.**

- 3.1 The SPREP SP Regional goal 2 is aligned to the SDG 14 on Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and SDG 15 on protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- 3.2 [Note: Regional Goal 3 and the work of WMPC Programme relates to, and address aspects of SDG12 in particular 12.4 (chemicals) and 12.5 (waste)]
- 3.3 Examples of approaches and tools SPREP is supporting its member countries with in order to address SDG 14 and 15.
- 3.4 (SDG12 – it would be good to mention the Clean Pacific Strategy as a policy instrument to address the issues of chemical, hazardous waste etc)

I. Policy instruments and frameworks

Examples

1. Refer to regional environmental agreements – Waigani and Noumea Conventions (2,3,4)
2. Regional strategic frameworks: SDG12 – Clean Pacific Strategy (2.3.1, 2.3.3); SDG14: Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas; and SDG15 – Oceanscape Framework
3. Support to implementation of MEAs SDG12 (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions); SDG14 and 15 (CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar)
4. National level policies – NEMS, NBSAPs, EIA etc

II. Information and knowledge management tools

Examples:

1. PNEA
2. PIPAP
3. Climate change portal
4. PEIN

III. Coordination mechanisms and networks

Examples:

1. PIRT (SDGs 14 and 15)
2. Clean Pacific roundtable (SDG12)

3. SD Working Group (SPREP is a Member) plus the SDGs Task Force (developed the Roadmap etc)
4. Marine Working Group (CROP mechanism which SPREP is part of)

3.4.1 *National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP)*

- a. SPREP provides support on development of national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It integrates the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.
- b. It provides support in translating the Strategic Plan into national targets and commitments and at the same time integrating biodiversity into relevant national and local planning processes.
- c. SPREP provides support and advise on the review of national NBSAP and also support to National NBSAP coordinators in terms of awareness and enhancing capacity and identifying key areas to addressing in planning and implementing NBSAPs.
- d. Provide advice on translation of the NBSAP into national targets and commitments.

2.3.2. *The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT)*

- a. PIRT is a coalition of nature conservation and development organizations, governments, inter-governments, donor agencies and community groups created to increase effective conservation action in the Pacific Islands Region.
- b. The forum enables those organizations working on nature conservation in the Pacific to improve their collaboration and coordination towards effective conservation action.
- c. It is the key coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Island region 2014-2020.
- d. SPREP is the secretariat for PIRT and partners with IUCN in coordinating annual PIRT Forums.

2.3.3. *Management of Marine Debris*

- a. Pacific countries are heavily impacted by waste from local and global sources, with high dependence on imported products and with small-scale local markets far from overseas recycling centers.
- b. Through continuous awareness by SPREP on the impact of plastic pollution, in 2017, Pacific leaders stated the intention to ban the import and re-use of asbestos and to take measures to ban plastic microbeads, a subset of the micro-plastics problem. Leaders are moving to ban or levy key materials.
- c. SPREP in Partnership with the UN Environment, connect countries, partners, and donors to measure, manage, and reduce waste for healthy environments.
- d. Some PICs are putting through a conservation management measure to address pollution MARPOL violations from fishing vessels

2.3.4 *The Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (Noumea Convention).*

- a. The Convention is a comprehensive umbrella agreement for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the South Pacific Region. SPRE is the secretariat to the convention.
- b. In order to protect the environment in the Pacific region, through the Noumea Convention the Parties agree to take all appropriate measures in conformity with international law to prevent, reduce and control pollution in the Convention Area from any source, and to ensure sound environmental management and development of natural resources.
- c. The adoption of appropriate measures includes: the establishment of laws and regulations for the effective discharge of the obligations of the Convention, and the co-operation between countries in order to undertake activities that prevent, reduce and control pollution.
- d. Eight Pacific Island Countries are member of the Noumea Convention.

2.3.5 *Support Countries in Signing to the Convention of Migratory Species.*

- a. SPREP has had a long and close relationship with CMS with the location of a CMS Pacific Officer at SPREP.
- b. SPREP has been collaborating with the CMS Dugong Secretariat on a dugong/seagrass conservation programme in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- c. SPREP provides technical support to its Members who are CMS Parties – for example, assistance was given to Fiji in preparing the proposal to list nine species of mobula rays on Appendix II and for their inclusion in the MoU on Migratory Sharks.
- d. Support has also been provided to Samoa to prepare their proposal at COP 12 to list blue sharks on Appendix II.
- e. SPREP’s Marine Species Programme contains Action Plans is to guide its members in the development and implementation of strategies for the conservation of threatened migratory species.
- f. These plans are developed for a 5-year period and have traditionally covered Whales and Dolphins, Dugong and Turtles. For the period 2018–2022, a new Action Plan will be added for Sharks and Rays.

2.3 ***SPREP Regional Goal 3:*** is aligned to SDG 12; Ensure sustainable consumption and production. Examples of approaches and tool SPREP is supporting its member countries in order to achieve the sound management of chemicals and all waste throughout their life cycle.

2.3.1 *CLEANER PACIFIC 2025 Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016–2025*

- a. Waste management and pollution control remains one of the most pressing environmental issues facing the Pacific region..
- b. Pleasingly, there have already been a growing number of local initiatives introduced within the region, including Container Deposit Programmes, pre-paid waste collection bag systems, and the introduction of waste tipping fees, which are assisting Pacific island countries and territories to finance the disposal of their own wastes. These successful initiatives are being driven

- through public education and awareness activities, such as the 3Rs+Return, eco-bags and the Clean Schools programmes.
- c. There has also been significant progress in the way waste dumps are managed in the last ten years since the first publication of the Pacific Regional Solid Waste Management Strategy 2010–2015 (SPREP 2010).
 - d. The Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016–2025 is a comprehensive blueprint to help improve the management of waste and pollution over the next ten years.
 - e. The Cleaner Pacific 2025 strategy will provide a focus on strengthening institutional capacity (regional data collection and policy/regulation development), promotion of public-private partnerships, implementation of sustainable best practices, development of human capacity, dissemination of outcomes and experiences, and promotion of regional and national cooperation. These approaches are believed to be effective in achieving the four common regional strategic goals: prevention of the generation of wastes and pollution, recovery of resources, improvement of residuals, and monitoring of the receiving environment.
- 2.4 ***SPREP Regional Goal 4:*** Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to and best practice of environmental governance is aligned to SDG 12, 14, 15. Examples of an approaches and tools.

2.4.1 National Environment Management Strategies

- a. SPREP has been assisting member countries in the development of their National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) which sets a solid policy platform for long term planning and action to respond to priority environmental issues.
- b. The NEMS will enhance the government’s efforts to mainstream the environment into national development planning, as well as provide a framework to assist government commitments to the “SAMOA Pathway”, the Sustainable Development Goals and targets under the Rio+20 and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEA).
- c. The NEMS will set the pace and the direction for the members to work in a systematic way – in collaboration with local, regional and international partners – to address these challenges.

2.4.2 Environment Impact Assessment Training.

- a. Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the primary instrument for planning, assessing and managing development projects, to support sustainable and resilient development goals.
- b. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) has a long history of leading EIA capacity-building across the Pacific region. For more than twenty five years SPREP has supported EIA awareness-raising and training programmes in member countries, and the publication of EIA guidelines and manuals.
- c. As the pace of development and urbanization intensifies in our islands, the need for effective EIA processes becomes more urgent.

4.0 The Challenges

- 4.1 Enforcement and compliance (limited) to the laws and polices developed for member countries. Due to limited capacities and resources, some of the environment laws and polices take time to be enforced and implemented
- 4.2 The region's scarce technical, financial and human resources. Some of the approaches are well received by governments but, these are the national challenges they are faced with in order for these approaches to be sustainably to its implemented.
- 4.3 Serving in a Region rich with different cultures and languages and geographically isolated from the rest of the world with a wide ocean – Administrative challenges in implementing activities in the region due to high Costs, Travelling time, communications limitations etc.
- 4.4 Monitoring and evaluation systems and processes (weak due to capacity and resource constraints) of strategies, plans and polices. This is overlooked by most PICs and in addition to this, there is lack of proper data management and storage on environment programs.
- 4.5 Lack of proper environment data to support monitoring and reporting and formulation of national environment indicators that will support planning and decision making processes.
- 4.6 Coordination and integration within National Government among sectors, business communities and local communities.
- 4.7 In terms of waste, the effects of climate change could have significant impacts on efforts to manage waste, chemicals and pollution in the Pacific region. Coastal inundation and floods could damage waste management infrastructure and release harmful chemicals and leachate that pollute the land and groundwater, and intensified tropical cyclones could generate increased volumes of disaster debris and waste that overwhelm existing management capacities.
- 4.8 Frequent natural disasters, rapid development, and increase of population in urban centers. This has outpaced capacity to deal with waste management.
- 4.9 Majority of pacific islands municipal waste collection focused only in urban areas where rural areas does not have waste collection system in place. In the Pacific, seven Pacific island countries and territories (American Samoa, Guam, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, and Wallis and Futuna) have complete national coverage (i.e. 100 per cent of the population).
- 4.10 The regional assessment on healthcare waste management practices revealed that there is lack of documented waste management planning system and there is sub-standard healthcare waste segregation and, containment practices; inadequate facilities for storage of healthcare waste before treatment.
- 4.11 On used oil, it identified unsafe used oil disposal practices such as line marking of sporting fields, use as a wood preservative, disposal to storm water drains and water bodies, and disposal on the ground; inadequate and unsafe storage sites not contained/bunded) and lack of proper collection systems (including on outer islands) for small generators of used oil; little attention paid to management of oil contaminated waste.

