

REPORT OF SECRETARIAT OF WORK PERFORMED IN THE PERIOD JULY 2010 – JUNE 2012 IN RELATION TO THE NOUMEA CONVENTION AND PROTOCOLS

Implementation of the Noumea Convention over the past two years has been carried out under SPREP's marine and coastal conservation work as part of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division and environmental impact assessment (EIA) work as part of the Environmental and Governance Division. Legal advice, as a cross-programme service is provided following requests from countries. Strong linkages are being developed to the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, and the Secretariat is an active member of the CROP Marine Sector Working Group, actively working on integrated regional marine management.

Implementation of the two Convention Protocols on Dumping and Oil Spills has been carried out by the Pollution Adviser with funding mainly from the International Maritime Organisation. There were some activities funded by the Republic of China, Taiwan. The focus is ship-based pollution.

SPREP continues to collaborate with UNEP, particularly on marine and coastal Ecosystem-based Management (EBM) planning.

In general, efforts to reinvigorate the Noumea Convention have increased, particularly during 2012. The Noumea Convention has strong linkages to priorities of the Secretariat under the current strategic plan (2011-2015), specifically in the areas of improving environmental reporting and targeted monitoring for better marine management decision making as well as assessing ecosystem conditions.

Articles 6: Pollution from Vessels

In March 2011 SPREP assisted AMSA in a joint paper to the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 62nd session to amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention). The amendments were approved at the 2012 MEPC 63, as well as associated guidelines for the development of regional reception facilities. This was done to assist countries with unique circumstances such as PICTs, in meeting obligations to provide adequate 'ships' waste reception facilities' under the convention through regional arrangements. This is an excellent achievement for the region (and globally) in preventing marine pollution from vessels, and it would not have been made possible if not for the efforts of AMSA and the support of the IMO member countries in the region. This outcome brings to an end nine years of work that began in 2003 with the recognition that PICTs had difficulties in providing adequate ships waste reception facilities and this was an impediment for ratification of the MARPOL convention.

It is hoped that these approvals by IMO to institutionalise the regional arrangement will enable more PICTs to sign up to the MARPOL Convention. Currently there are only nine Pacific Island countries that are party to the convention – Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

In 2010 Funding from IMO enabled the Secretariat, with assistance from PNG National Maritime Safety Authority (NMSA) and InterOil Napa Napa Refinery, to conduct a regional training focusing on response to oil spills. The training also covered hazardous/noxious substances preparedness, response and cooperation. The training was conducted by a number of facilitators and presenters including Mr. Rob Service from MNZ, Mr. Ben Cropley from ORCA-AMSA and Mr. Steve Raaymakers as a consultant for the PNG National Maritime Safety Authority. The training enhanced participant's knowledge on Oil Spills with emphasis on available management tools, promotion and enhancement of regional co-operation under the PACPLAN framework and promotion of implementation and ratification of International and Regional conventions including the OPRC Convention and OPRC-HNS Protocol and regional Noumea Convention Oil/HNS Protocols.

SPREP also sent delegations from the Pacific island countries to the International Oil Spill Prevention & Preparedness Conference (SPILLCON 2010) which was held in Melbourne in April 2010. SPREP and IMO also held a joint seminar with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre to bring update countries in the region on the importance of the Pacific Islands Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN and PACPOL). These plans are the regional framework and mechanism for Tier III (large spill) response in the Pacific. An essential part of the seminar was looking at international financial mechanisms available for compensation following a pollution event.

The Secretariat also with assistance from AMSA and INTERPOL conducted workshops in Kiribati, Fiji, Palau and RMI in 2010/2011 on Investigating Shipping Pollution Violations. These countries have large exclusive economic zones (EEZ) under their control and have experienced increases in oil pollution incidents from foreign fishing vessels and other vessels, prompting requests for this training. The training provided participants with enhanced awareness of vessel waste generation issues and specific techniques related to investigation of marine pollution incidents.

A series of national oil spill trainings were conducted in the RMI, Kiribati, Fiji, Palau, Cook Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. The trainings were well attended by over 300 participants from government ministries and private sector organisations. The training built on previous oil spill training that the Secretariat conducts every two to three years. The purpose of the oil spill training was to assist PICs in ratifying and implementing the Noumea Convention and Protocols as well as the International Convention on Oil Pollution Response, Preparedness and Cooperation 1990. The training helped strengthen national capacity in marine pollution planning, preparedness, and response by ensuring that countries have an updated National Marine Spill Contingency Plan that is implemented through trained specialists in marine spill response.

Foreign marine species introduced into Pacific environments through ballast water discharges and through marine fouling on the hulls of vessels represent a major threat to the integrity of Pacific waters. The Secretariat assisted Member countries to deal with this significant issue through training, and development of two model invasive species legislation. As part of the implementation of the regional strategy that addresses Shipping Related Invasive Marine Pests in the Pacific region (SRIMP-Pac), regional training was carried out in Fiji to assist countries implement the convention through the development of appropriate legislation. The training workshop was attended by 11 Pacific island countries and was followed up with national awareness raising seminars in Fiji, Tonga and Marshall Islands.

Article 13: Mining and Coastal Erosion

Through support from the Convention, SPREP has actively collaborated with SPC-SOPAC in relation to deep sea mining.

In June 2011, supported from Convention funds, SPREP participated in a workshop on deep sea minerals in the Pacific, held in Fiji. This workshop initiated the SPC-SOPAC Deep Sea Mineral Project and specifically the development of a Regional Legislative and Regulatory Framework for Deep Sea Minerals Exploration and Mining.

In December 2011, supported from Convention funds, SPREP participated in the International workshop on environmental management needs for exploration and exploitation of deep seabed minerals, held by the International Seabed Authority in Fiji. The Convention also supported attendance at the workshop of a participant from the Cook Islands National Environment Service, in light of current discussions within the Cook Islands considering the potential for deep seabed mineral mining. One specific outcome of this meeting was a request to develop a paper on the Precautionary Principle as it relates to DSM mining, for incorporation into the RLRf.

In April 2012, supported from Convention funds, contractors were engaged to assist SPREP in the development of a technical paper on the precautionary principle (WP 4.1 Attachment 1), and guidance on applying the principle in the implementation of Deep Seabed Mineral mining. This paper will be incorporated into the Regulatory Framework for Deep Sea Minerals Exploration and Mining.

Article 14: Specially Protected Areas and Protection of Wild Fauna and Flora

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division focuses both on species conservation and ecosystems management. In relation to the former: 2008 was designated Year of the Coral Reef and a Campaign was held on that theme, ending in 2009. The year 2011 was celebrated as the Pacific Year of the Dugong.

SPREP entered into a Memoranda of Cooperation with the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). Activities under this area include:

- Pacific Islands Cetacean MoU agreed upon by 13 SPREP members (with Pitcairn supportive);
- Six SPREP members are now party to CMS;
- SPREP had recently implemented dugong surveys, and a review of legislation for marine turtles in conjunction with the CMS Abu Dhabi Office;
- Placement of a CMS Pacific Officer at SPREP.

Development of a recovery plan for Oceania humpback whale was undertaken in collaboration with the SPWRC and this plan was endorsed by the SPREP Meeting in 2011;

Funding for cetaceans work has been made available from the Australian Indo-Pacific Fund for specific projects (e.g. Fiji project on establishing a long-term dataset for monitoring trends in humpback whale migration through Fijian waters);

Funding approval from NZAid will support a NZDOC/SPREP 4-year turtle project to establish turtle monitors in communities and establish eco-tourism in four countries (Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati and Solomon Islands) in collaboration with national focal contacts;

Review of the regional marine species action plans for the next 5 years (2013-2017) were completed and will be submitted to the 2012 SPREP meeting for endorsement. These will include, for the first time a regional action plan for sharks in the SPREP marine species programme.

Collaboration with CITES has improved, e.g. SPREP coordinating the CITES regional workshop on Strengthening Implementation Capacity to Ensure Sustainable Wildlife Management and Non-detrimental Trade, Nadi, Fiji, 5-7 March 2012.

In relation to coastal and marine ecosystems the Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific (CRISP), focused on enhancing institutional capacity for integrated governance of coastal and marine resources, promoting economic tools to assist the management of marine resources, supporting existing networks and initiatives such as the Global Coral Reef Monitoring and the Locally-managed Marine Area networks. This project also shared experiences and skills between the French territories and the neighbouring countries, and was completed in December 2010. Examples of successful activities included:

- Community exchange on community-based marine resource management between Wallis and Futuna and Samoa;
- Socioeconomic survey in the communities of North Efate, Vanuatu;
- Elaboration of a business plan for the financing of Marine Protected Area network in French Polynesia; and
- Support provided to the Solomon Island Government to establish mechanisms to assist community-based management in the Malaita Province.

Additional activities by SPREP with regards to marine conservation efforts include:

- Mapping Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) in Samoa and Kiribati;
- Eco-regional analysis supported in Cook Islands;
- Actively participating in the MESCAL Mangrove project, with mapping support provided to Samoa and Tonga; and
- Technical support provided to Cook Islands in government and community consultations related to initial planning, scope and process for the development of the Cook Islands Marine Park. This support is formalized in a joint MoU between the Cook Islands Government, SPREP, CI and IUCN.

Through its current MOU with the Ramsar Convention Secretariat (2009-2012), SPREP is continuing to support Pacific Island Country (PIC) Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands with the conservation and wise use of their wetland ecosystems. Wetlands as defined under the Ramsar Convention cover freshwater lakes to mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs. There are currently five PIC Parties to the Convention and six wetlands of international importance. Activities include:

- Development of the new Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013
- Assisting PIC Parties to access the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF) and to meet associated SGF reporting requirements;
- Assisting the preparation of national reports for the 11th Ramsar Conference of the Parties;
- Assisting Ramsar PIC parties to update Ramsar Site data and identify priority wetland sites for future Ramsar designation.

- Convening the Fifth Oceania Regional preparatory Meeting for Ramsar COP11 to bring together Pacific Ramsar Parties and canvass common priority issues.
- Development of a briefing document to assist Pacific Island Parties with their negotiations and deliberations at Ramsar COP11 (6-13 July 2012).
- Assistance towards the promotion and coordination of annual World Wetlands Day national celebratory activities throughout the region;
- Assistance provided to Vanuatu to initiate national preparatory activities for joining the Ramsar Convention, including a briefing for the honourable Environment Minister and development of required documentation for accession.
- A training on mangrove wetland monitoring successfully completed, with 15 Pacific Island participants trained and competent in applying monitoring techniques in the field.
- Finalisation of the Manual for Mangrove Monitoring in the Pacific Islands Region

Support provided to Kiribati, Niue and Tonga to follow up preparations for joining the Ramsar Convention. Assistance provided to the Republic of the Marshall Islands to undertake community consultations and field surveys related to the designation of their second wetland of international importance, Namdrik Atoll.

Article 15: Co-operation in Combating Pollution in Emergency Situations

Refer to Article 6 above

Article 16: Environmental Impact Assessment

SPREP has run several EIA training courses for administrators of EIA systems and introduced Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) training courses for national State of the Environment reviews of PICTs. For the period under review EIA trainings were held for Nauru and follow-ups to develop EIA guidelines were arranged for FSM and others where EIA trainings were held from July 2008-May 2010 including Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG, FSM and RMI. IEA trainings were introduced to Samoa, Cooks and Kiribati.

A critical component in the development of national (and state as in the case of FSM) EIA guidelines and IEA/SOE reviews are the coastal and marine resources including coastal strands, near-shore and offshore marines. EIA guidelines are strengthened through mainstreaming sustainable management policy, regulatory and planning measures that prevents, reduces and compensate impacts of development on the environment and as well as measures that climate proof developments against the effects of short and long term climate and climate change. Several legal assessments of EIA legislation have also been conducted.

In additional SPREP also assisted countries on specific EIA assessments on key major development projects of several PICTs. For examples are: 1) The overall EIA study for augmenting a hydro-electric scheme in Samoa, SPREP in conjunction with national government and research agencies conducted a 12-month marine quality monitoring programme. 2) The EIA policy framework and TOR for assessing and making decisions on a proposal to build an airstrip for atoll islands of Tokelau. 3) EIA on the proposal to upgrading the South Tarawa road of Kiribati. 4) EIA process for the proposed fish processing plant at Blacksands coastal area in Vanuatu.

Lastly to strengthen the national integration and coherent planning and management of environmental work in PICTs SPREP has also introduced a National Integrated Environmental Policy and Planning (NIEP) process starting with Kiribati and Cook Islands in 2011 and arrangements are underway for Samoa and others in 2012. Again in this integrated planning process that will update and replaces PICTs National Environment Management Strategies NEMS of the '90s coastal and marine resources is a key component together with climate change. Biodiversity and ecosystems, waste and pollution management and environmental governance.

See also under Article 13 above.

Articles 17: Scientific and Technical Cooperation

SPREP continues to collaborate with partners and to provide and receive technical assistance.

In November 2011, SPREP collaborated with the Secretariat of the CBD, and CSIRO, to run a regional workshop to assess Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas in the western South Pacific. Over 25 potential areas, occurring in marine areas greater than 100m, were identified and defined (WP 4.1 Attachment 2), to be forwarded to the CBD SBSTTA and COP for assessment. These areas have the potential to be used in regional marine management and planning processes at national and regional scales.

Articles 18: Technical Cooperation and Assistance

The legal web-page provides information on the Noumea Convention:

The Information Resource Centre at SPREP has recently launched a Clearing House for all Multi-lateral Environment Agreements which includes documents and links associated with the Noumea Convention.

In March 2012, partially supported from Convention funds, SPREP collaborated with PIF Secretariat in running a workshop to develop regional frameworks for reporting and streamlining of reporting and initial development of a regional framework for reporting on ecosystem condition. The outcome of the workshop was a brochure entitled 'A Vision for more effective and streamlined reporting in the Pacific.' (WP 4.1 Attachment 3).

In March 2012, partially supported from Convention funds, SPREP provided capacity building to Samoa MNRE in the development of a framework for the assessment of ecosystem condition for inclusion in State of Environment reporting. The initial product of this effort was a brochure 'Samoa 2012: developing a vision for the next 50 years' (WP 4.1 Attachment 4).

Attachments

- WP 4.1 Attachment 1 – Precautionary Principle and Deep Sea Mineral Mining
- WP 4.1 Attachment 2 – Ecological and Biological Significant Areas
- WP 4.1 Attachment 3 – Regional reporting frameworks
- WP 4.1 Attachment 4 – State of Environment reporting in Samoa