



PO Box 240, Apia, Samoa
E: sprep@sprep.org
T: +685 21929
F: +685 20231
W: www.sprep.org



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

Thirteenth Meeting of the Noumea Convention

Thirtieth Ordinary meeting the Contracting of Parties (COP) to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and related Protocols (Noumea Convention)

Apia, Samoa
Thursday 17 September 2015

Agenda Item 4.1: Report of the Secretariat on work performed during the period July 2014 to July 2015 (Noumea Convention and Protocols)

Background:

The Noumea Convention has two sources of funding: (i) contributions from Parties (which support the biennial Conference of the Parties); and (ii) an operating budget for activities under the Convention (which largely consists of an annual contribution to the Convention to the Secretariat from the United States of America). This Report details expenditure from the Noumea Convention operating account during 2014-2015. It also provides a summary of actions taken on the Decision Items from CoP12 in Majuro.

Summary:

At the 12th Noumea Convention COP, held in Majuro, September 2014, the Parties directed the Secretariat to develop a list of outputs for prioritization by Parties, to be carried out using the operating funds of the Convention. A list of activities was developed by the Secretariat, circulated for comment and a final list of activities to be funded during the 2015-2017 term of the Convention was identified, through consensus (Annex 1).

The following is a brief update on activities prioritised for action by the Noumea Convention COP12 meeting. These activities will be continued under the remaining 2015-2017 term of the Convention:

Support to expand the BioRAP surveys in Vavau to inform decision makers

The Vava'u BIORAP was largely completed this year, but Noumea Convention funds have enabled SPREP and Tonga to use the results of the BIORAP to immediately propose expanded marine conservation areas and conduct a community based 3-D model of Vava'u catchments and coastal systems for designing integrated coastal and marine management plans. The 3-D model training and community consultation activities in Vava'u were planned for August 2015 but delayed to September to accommodate Cabinet approval processes into the work.

Assessment of Riverine and Marine Debris reduction strategies

This activity has been targeted towards improving integrated waste management in the Pacific. It includes the review of regional and national legislation, Port State measures, port gear reception/and recycling schemes, with recommendation for future action. This year involved taking the strategies, results and lessons learnt from the SIDS Samoa Marine Debris Demonstration Project and replicating it in other Pacific Island countries. Based on a regional risk assessment for marine litter and waste management, initial work has commenced in the Matanikau River, Honiara, Solomon Islands. The Secretariat consolidated the data from a recent comprehensive global study, *'Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean,'* in the journal *Science*, to inform project priorities on integrated waste management and marine litter in Pacific Island countries.

Marine litter booms have been installed at the Matanikau River. Local stakeholders with Honiara City Council and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology have identified areas and actions for waste management improvement along the river; boom cleanup; data collection by local groups; school presentations (raising awareness); local media stories; study on sources, distribution and accumulation areas with the CSIRO guidance.

The Secretariat is also undertaking a regional investigation into sources and impacts of Abandoned, Lost, or Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG) in the region. A recent study of fishery observer data on marine debris and pollution in the Pacific Purse Seine fishery identified a far greater potential marine litter problem than was previously understood. This has led to a call for permissions to access further regional fisheries observer form GEN-6 data for analysis is discussed (see working paper 7.2).

Development of a coordinated multi-sector and multi-agency approach for marine invasives

Marine invasives remain a key threat to food security and economic development in SPREP member countries. It is recognised that the issue of invasive species cuts across many sectors and that significant results can often only be achieved through a strong cross-sectoral response. On this premise, and with funding support from the Noumea Convention, SPREP identified two Noumea Convention countries, Tuvalu and Cook Islands, as candidates for establishing cross-sectoral and multi-agency teams to coordinate actions on invasive species. From 5-7th August 2015, the first workshop was held in Funafuti, Tuvalu attended by 18 participants from Marine, Environment, Customs, Quarantine, Agriculture, Ports and civil-society to discuss invasive species through the ballast water management convention. This training focused on helping Tuvalu understand the ballast water management convention and some of the key steps that could be taken to develop national instruments for the protection of Tuvalu's marine environment. The formation of a cross-sector and multi-agency team continues to be developed through further engagement of other stakeholders. A visit to the Cook Islands by the SPREP Invasive Species team will occur between late 2015 and early 2016.

Technical support for the sister sites: Cook Islands MPA and New Caledonia Nature Park

The Noumea Convention funds (USD20K) for this work leveraged secure co-funding from French Fonds Pacifique (38.5€). The first in-country assistance to the Cook Islands by the New Caledonia delegation occurred in March 2015. This exchange inspired further plans for a political level meeting between the two countries to give the project stronger political support. With the creation of a MPA steering committee in New Caledonia, activities with Cook Islands will also be used to strengthen transboundary MPA management exchanges with other New Caledonia neighboring countries. The Cook Islands – New Caledonia Sister Parks working Plan is currently being refined for 2016 activities. This will include a scientific mission by the Cook Islands MPA delegation to New Caledonia in

December and the second Sister Parks technical meeting alongside the New Caledonia MPA steering committee. This will also further clarify the respective areas of expertise that exists for sharing between Cook Islands and New Caledonia.

Update 1993 wetland inventories for up to 3 Pacific Island Countries

Funding was secured under the Noumea Convention for the 2014-2015 period to update national wetland inventories for up to two countries. This activity is a priority highlighted by SPREP members in the Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands, under the Ramsar Convention. The funding received (USD\$20,000) was used to leverage 17,000 Euros from the French Pacific Fund (Fonds Pacifique) to enable a more comprehensive wetland inventory for Wallis and Futuna as well as Nauru, plus identification of potential Ramsar Sites and documentation for Nauru. Despite delays in receiving the funds from the Fonds Pacifique, plus interruptions to government processes in Nauru, the necessary administrative arrangements have progressed to facilitate the implementation of these two activities, which are expected to be completed by mid-2016.

Other Key achievements following the Decision Items of COP12

Key features of work carried out by the Secretariat towards the COP12 Decision Items include:

Deep Sea Mining – Guidelines for DSM

SPREP's involvement with deep sea mining issues has included:

- Provision of input into the mid-term evaluation of the SPC-EU Deep Sea Minerals (DSM) Project;
- Participation in the regional workshop on deep sea minerals policy and legislative drafting, organised by the SPC-EU DSM Project;
- Review of the *Pacific Regional Environmental Management Framework for Deep Sea Minerals Exploration and Exploitation* developed by the SPC-EU DSM Project;
- Provision of a submission to the International Seabed Authority on its draft document, *Developing a Regulatory Framework for Mineral Exploitation in the Area*;
- Participation in deep sea mining discussions during the Pacific Ocean Alliance Meeting, *High Hopes for High Seas*;
- Engagement with the Deep Sea Mining Transparency Group; and
- Preparation of a SPREP Position Paper on deep sea mining.

Pacific Oceanscape Framework

The past year has seen a focus on issues related to Areas and Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, led by SPREP and PIFS, both of which were observers at the negotiations on BBNJ at the UNGA in January 2015. The Marine Sector Working Group (MSWG) proposed for the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, with support from SPREP, other CROP agencies and Conservation International, to organise a three-day regional workshop "*High Hopes for High Seas*" in Suva (26-28 May 2015). This meeting and subsequent technical working group developed a regional understanding of key Pacific issues related to ABNJ and BBNJ. These outcomes are being used for Pacific Leaders to develop a coordinated position for Pacific Island countries for input to the upcoming UN negotiations to develop an international implementing framework for BBNJ.

SPREP and MSWG members also provided regional input to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and indicators, in particular for i) the new SDG 14 on Oceans and ii) assisting Pacific SIDS input to the broader G77 countries responses on SDGs.

SPREP and partners have been taking a staged approach to enhancing capacity for marine spatial planning (MSP) with Pacific Island countries and Territories. The PACIOCEA regional scale MSP project has produced a series of key regional issues plus recommendations for how EEZ scale planning can better contribute to regional scale outcomes. The MACBIO project partners (IUCN) have completed marine ecosystem services valuations for the 5 MACBIO countries, and commenced next steps in EEZ scale marine zone planning. The Enhancing Pacific Ocean Governance (EPOG) project has recently developed spatial data platforms (on open source software) for use by countries in marine spatial planning.

Ocean Acidification

A very successful Ocean Acidification (OA) workshop was organized by SPREP in cooperation with the US and New Zealand Governments in August 2014, as an official side-event at the 3rd UN SIDS conference. SPREP has since developed a new OA project in association with the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for a NZ\$1.8 million, four-year project that will be implemented by SPREP in partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The project aim is to commence a Pacific OA monitoring programme and build the resilience of Pacific islands countries and territories to Ocean Acidification.

The project will increase ecosystem resilience to Ocean Acidification; develop a knowledge base for improved policy and planning; improve the monitoring of Ocean Acidification; and develop a Framework of Action for adapting to Ocean Acidification at the local level through practical measures that empower people to take informed actions.

In addition to support from NZ, SPREP is now a member of the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON), and has signed a Practical Arrangement agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who are the host of the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre (OA-ICC).

Regional Reception Facilities Plan

At the Noumea COP12, Parties endorsed the Regional Reception Facilities Plan (RRFP). Subsequently in May 2015, with assistance from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) the RRFP paper co-sponsored by Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu and SPREP was submitted to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 68th Meeting. The IMO MEPC68 further endorsed the RRFP making it the first in the world. This enables all SPREP PICTS to meet MARPOL requirements for port waste reception facility adequacy which was a barrier for PICTS to accede and meet obligations under the MARPOL Convention. All PICTS who aren't parties to the Convention are encouraged to accede to the Convention.

PACPLAN Preparedness

Maritime New Zealand and SPREP assisted Fiji's Maritime Safety Authority (MSAF) complete a Marine Spill Risk Assessment. This risk assessment identified the potential spill risks, resources at risk and spill response capability that enabled the determination of the gaps such as equipment to procure, strategic locations for storage, resource capacity needs and training.

SPREP also provided technical assistance and support by updating and disseminating shipping pattern information to all PICTs focusing on container vessels, oil tankers, cruise liners, pleasure vessels as well as fishing vessels.

PACPOL Strategy Review

SPREP completed the review and development of the Pacific Oceans Pollution Prevention Programme (PACPOL) Strategy 2015-2020. The review workshop was attended by 20 participants from 14 PICTs. The PACPOL Strategy 2015-2020 is a regional strategic document that aims to reduce the environmental impacts of shipping, and address related environmental concerns in the region. This will allow the shipping industry to develop further to serve the economic and social aspirations of Pacific island peoples, without degrading their Ocean and coasts. The PACPOL Strategy has 15 strategic workplans. The PACPOL workshop identified the Country Maritime Profiles (CMP) as the highest priority for countries to complete. Completed CMP's enables IMO to identify the real technical cooperation needs of IMO Members and to target resources accordingly. Completion of the CMP need not be onerous and should be considered an essential precursor to assistance with the remaining PACPOL workplan items and undertaken as a priority. This task needs to be completed by national governments with SPREP (and SPC) assistance as required. One of the priority actions is to address derelict vessels and wrecks which will include the development of *guidelines for disposal of Wrecks & Derelict Vessels*.

MarPOL Annex 6 workshops completed in Samoa

SPREP with funding from the IMO and technical assistance from AMSA completed the first training in the region covering MARPOL Annex VI GHG Emissions. The workshop was attended by 23 participants from 15 PICTs.

Updated Regional Guidelines

SPREP updated and disseminated IMO marine pollution legislation booklet that included the IMO Guidelines for the disposal of waste at sea.

Updated Regional Model Marine Pollution Prevention Legislation

SPREP updated and disseminated the Marine Pollution Prevention Legislation that incorporates all IMO marine pollution related conventions to include the new MARPOL provisions.

SIDS Conference – Greening of the Conference

SPREP provided support for ‘greening’ of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa. This included provision of improved waste management infrastructure and planning advice to the national government of Samoa and to the tourism industry and assistance with marine pollution response equipment and training in the following specific activities:

- a. implementation of the Marine Debris Demonstration Project in Samoa (procurement of 120m litter booms, installation of 40 community trash stands and several riverine and coastal cleanups);
- b. completion of waste audits of conference venue, accommodation sites, all ports of entry;
- c. completion of the Apia Port for the Pacific Jewel gap waste reception facility assessment by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA);
- d. waste training for all accommodation sites and distribution of trash bins;
- e. arrangement for oil spill response equipment from Australian Maritime Safety Authority and deployment for the Pacific Jewel; and
- f. completion of oil spill response training.

ANNEX 1. PRIORITISED ACTIVITIES FOR NOUMEA CONVENTION OPERATING FUNDS 2015-2017

	Activity	Justification	Cost
Activity 3	Support to initiate, establish and expand protected areas in the Pacific Islands region. Following the completion of the BioRAP surveys in Vavau, Tonga, it is imperative to raise awareness and disseminate findings and outcomes of the survey to inform key national and local stakeholders and decision makers and establish a process for setting up protected areas in Vavau. Outcomes of this intervention will be widely shared and disseminated in the region.	Art. 14: Protection of Flora and Fauna Art. 17: Technical and other assistance	\$30,000
Activity 5	Assessment of riverine and marine debris reduction strategies through improved integrated waste management. Review of regional and national legislation, Port State measures, port gear reception/ and recycling schemes, with recommendations for future action.	Art.6: Pollution from Vessels Art. 7: Land based sources Art.14: Protection of Flora and Fauna Art.16: Environmental impact Assessment	\$30,000
Activity 7	Development of a coordinated multi-sector and multi-agency replicable approach to enhance the protection of marine species and habitats, through engaging and raising awareness on the threat and impact of marine invasive species in three Convention member countries.	Art.6: Pollution from Vessels Art.14: Protection of Flora and Fauna	\$20,000
Activity 8	Technical support for the sister sites: Cook Island MPA and New Caledonia Nature Park of the Coral to facilitate technical cooperation between the two Pacific marine protected areas through development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desk-top technical information; - needs' survey and propositions; - bilateral meeting on technical interests; and - cooperation project with action plan and technical recommendations. 	Art. 14: Protection of Flora and Fauna	\$20,000
Activity 11	Update 1993 wetland inventories for up to 2 Pacific Island Countries (Ramsar Convention)	Art.14: Protection of Flora and Fauna	\$20,000
		Total	\$120,000