

Twenty Eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa
19 – 21st September 2017

Agenda Item 12.4.1: Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region

Purpose

1. To seek endorsement of the Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region (EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development).

Background

2. The preparation of EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development was endorsed at the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and the Environment of the South Pacific Region (Noumea Convention), held on 20th August 2012 in Noumea, New Caledonia, with Parties noting the Guidelines' relevance to the following Noumea Convention articles:
 - a. Article 7: Pollution from land-based sources;
 - b. Article 13: Mining and coastal erosion;
 - c. Article 14: Specially protected areas and protection of wild flora and fauna; and
 - d. Article 16: Environmental impact assessment.
3. The EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development will be tabled for endorsement at the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention, on the 14th September 2017.
4. The EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development address Objective 4.1 in SPREP's Strategic Plan 2017-2026, to *"Strengthen national sustainable development planning and implementation systems including through use of Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, and spatial planning"*.
5. Prior to preparing EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development, SPREP first developed new Regional EIA Guidelines, to update and build on SPREP's first Regional EIA Guidelines published in 1993 and to provide an over-arching framework for sector-specific EIA guidelines. The Regional EIA Guidelines were endorsed at the 26th SPREP Meeting in Samoa and officially launched at the 27th SPREP Meeting in Niue.
6. Parallel to drafting the Regional EIA Guidelines, SPREP undertook consultation activities in Fiji, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to support the preparation of the EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development. Input was also provided by Member countries through the South Pacific Tourism Organisation's (SPTO's) "Tourism and Environment" workshop held in Tonga in 2014.

7. The EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development have been developed in partnership with the SPTO, and will be submitted to the SPTO Board Meeting for endorsement in October 2017. SPTO recognises the importance of EIA for responsible development and management of tourism, to help ensure the sector makes a positive contribution to the Pacific region.

Overview of the EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development

8. The EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development (refer to Annex 1) aim to:
 1. increase awareness and understanding of the EIA process across the Pacific region's tourism sector;
 2. promote best practice EIA for coastal tourism development;
 3. encourage government agencies and tourism developers to comply with national EIA regulatory frameworks, and in the absence of these, to follow regional EIA guidelines; and
 4. support sustainable and resilient development that protects the environmental, social and cultural assets of coastal environments, which provide a foundation for tourism.
9. The Guidelines will be a useful manual for SPREP and SPTO members; government officers who are responsible for managing or providing input into the EIA process; tourism developers, businesses and operators; national tourism associations; customary and private land and resource owners; and members of civil society organisations and local community groups who take an interest in tourism development.
10. The EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development have been developed as a practical, user-friendly document that:
 1. provides an overview of tourism in the Pacific region;
 2. identifies environmental considerations for coastal tourism development;
 3. outlines key aspects of the EIA process, with reference to SPREP's Regional EIA Guidelines;
 4. emphasises the benefits of EIA for coastal tourism development; and
 5. includes an EIA terms of reference template specific to coastal tourism development.
11. Use of the EIA Guidelines will be jointly promoted across the Pacific region by SPREP and SPTO, through in-country and regional workshops.
12. The Guidelines will be registered as a Pacific contribution to the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (IY2017), as designated by the United Nations 70th General Assembly.

Recommendation

13. The Meeting is invited to:
 - **endorse** the publication of the EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development.

