



**PACWASTE  
COUNTRY  
PROFILE**

**TUVALU**

Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

PacWaste is a four year project (2014–2017) funded by the European Union and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to improve regional hazardous waste management across the Pacific in the priority areas of healthcare waste, asbestos waste, E-waste and integrated atoll waste management.

A further priority for PacWaste is to foster links between Pacific island countries and encourage information sharing on sustainable waste management through regional collaboration and twinning arrangements.

Tuvalu is one of 15 countries participating in PacWaste, with activities taking place in the project domains of healthcare waste and asbestos.

### Healthcare waste

PacWaste is working across 14 Pacific island countries and Timor-Leste to improve the management of healthcare waste. Healthcare waste is hazardous because it has the potential to be infectious or harmful to humans and the environment.

In Tuvalu, PacWaste conducted a healthcare waste management baseline survey in July 2014, through which information was collected on current waste management processes. The audit was conducted at Princess Margaret Hospital on Funafuti.

The survey identified an urgent need for healthcare waste to be correctly segregated into appropriate containers and then properly treated to reduce the risk of contamination. Given that the landfill has minimal distance to groundwater, and is often accessed by members of the local community, improperly treated healthcare waste has the potential to cause serious environmental and human harm in Funafuti.

To address these issues, PacWaste is procuring a high temperature incinerator for the hospital and will provide much needed equipment and healthcare waste management training for staff. This will include the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), signage and secure storage systems for different waste types.

### Asbestos

PacWaste is working across 13 Pacific countries to address the issue of asbestos – a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that was once commonly used in building materials and other consumer items. Asbestos is now banned from most modern products as it has been found to be a major threat to human health.

In Tuvalu, PacWaste conducted a baseline asbestos survey in August 2014 to determine the prevalence of asbestos, ascertain risks associated with the materials and identify best practice options for cost-effective and sustainable interventions.

The survey confirmed the presence of asbestos fibres, including chrysotile and amosite, at nine separate locations in Funafuti, some of which were private residences.

PacWaste will be arranging the removal, secure transport and safe disposal of around 20m<sup>2</sup> of asbestos debris from a site within the grounds of the Princess Margaret Hospital in Funafuti. Given the prevalence of asbestos containing building materials used in residential structures, Tuvalu will also benefit from inclusion in PacWaste's regional public awareness campaign about minimising asbestos exposure.

### E-waste

The rapidly increasing use of electrical and electronic equipment in the Pacific is resulting in increased volume of E-waste. Dumped E-waste can release harmful contaminants into the environment such as lead, cadmium and dioxins. The good news is that many end of life electronic items contain recoverable and valuable components such as copper, steel and gold.

Regionally, PacWaste is collecting information about current E-waste management and stockpiles across nine Pacific island countries to assist in the improved management of E-waste in the Pacific.

While Tuvalu is not participating in the E-waste component of the project at this time, assistance will be provided in developing a national E-waste strategy. PacWaste will also assist, where possible, in linking Tuvalu to a regional recycler's network.

## PacWaste Actions and Impact: Tuvalu



ACTION	LOCATION	IMPACT
<b>Healthcare waste</b>		
Healthcare waste baseline survey	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	Baseline data on the current status of healthcare waste management is publically available.
Provision and installation of high temperature healthcare waste incinerators	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	Healthcare facilities have increased capacity for the proper disposal of healthcare waste.
Incinerator operator training	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	Incinerator operators have the necessary skills to operate and maintain equipment.
Healthcare waste management training	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	Healthcare facilities can effectively and safely handle their waste from point of creation through to disposal.
Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), signage and secure storage systems.	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	Healthcare facilities have improved storage facilities for healthcare waste and an integrated system of ensuring that wastes are clearly identified.
Assistance in developing a national healthcare waste strategy	▪ National	Healthcare waste management is prioritised at the national level in accordance with best practice.
<b>Asbestos</b>		
Asbestos baseline survey	▪ Funafuti	Detailed information about the prevalence of asbestos is publically available.
Removal, transport and disposal of 20m <sup>2</sup> of asbestos debris	▪ Princess Margaret Hospital (Funafuti)	High risk asbestos is safely removed, reducing the risk of exposure to the general population.
Asbestos management training	▪ Funafuti	Asbestos can be effectively and safely removed and disposed of in accordance with international best practice.
Asbestos awareness campaign	▪ National	Residents are aware of asbestos risks and the steps that can be taken to minimise exposure.
Assistance in developing a national asbestos strategy	▪ National	Asbestos management is prioritised at the national level in accordance with best practice.
<b>E-waste</b>		
Assistance in developing a national E-waste strategy	▪ National	E-waste management is prioritised at the national level in accordance with best practice.
<b>Information sharing, regional collaboration and twinning</b>		
Connection to a developing recycler's network.	▪ Regional	Opportunities are opened up for recycling materials such as scrap steel, plastics, E-waste, and Used Lead Acid Batteries.
Provision of resources, guidance materials and participation in regional workshops and other events.	▪ Regional	Relevant national personnel have an improved understanding of best practice solutions for solid and hazardous waste management in the Pacific.

### For more information

Detailed information about PacWaste activities in Tuvalu, including baseline survey reports, are available at: [www.sprep.org/pacwaste](http://www.sprep.org/pacwaste)