

Fifteenth meeting of the Noumea Convention

Fifteenth ordinary meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and related protocols (Noumea Convention)

Apia, Samoa
29 August 2019

AGENDA ITEM 7.3: Review of the PACPLAN

Purpose

1. To seek endorsement of the revised *Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN 2019)*.

Background

2. The 2000 SPREP Meeting in Guam approved the *Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN)*. PACPLAN provides the framework for cooperative response to major marine spills in the Pacific islands region between government to government, including roles and responsibilities of relevant organisations, and mechanisms for accessing regional and international assistance. The second iteration, *PACPLAN 2013* was approved by the 2013 SPREP Meeting in Apia Samoa.
3. The PACPLAN co-ordination and management functions are part of the Secretariat's functions as outlined in Article 21 of the Noumea Convention and Article 9 of the Pollution Emergencies Protocol.
4. The review of the PACPLAN was carried out with funding support through Australia and New Zealand who supported three consultation workshops in September 2016, June 2018, and April 2019. As a result of the MV Solomon Trader incident in the Solomon Islands a final consultation was carried out in Vanuatu in July 2019 on the margins of an SPC organized meeting to capture the lessons and learning from MV Solomon Trader incident.

Contents of the PACPLAN

5. PACPLAN sets up a framework for regional co-operation between government to government for response to Tier 3 marine spills. Tier 3 spills are defined as large spills that are beyond the response capability of one country or have the potential to impact on more than one country.
6. PACPLAN allocates and defines the role of the Secretariat, SPREP Members and industry. It prescribes a framework for the reporting of marine spill incidents and the activation of a regional response.

7. PACPLAN outlines the structure of a response operation and provides operational guidelines for a regional response by.

- allocating primary and secondary response responsibilities for every Pacific island member;
- identifying the national and regional response capabilities within the region;
- providing for the implementation of a training and response exercise programme;
- identifying potential financial mechanisms by which regional responses are to be financed;
- prescribing a mechanism for its adoption, control and revision.

Assistance Source	Primary source of assistance for:	Secondary source of assistance for:
Australia	Nauru	Federated States of Micronesia
	Papua New Guinea	Fiji
	Solomon Islands	Guam
	Tuvalu	New Caledonia
	Vanuatu	Northern Mariana Islands
	Kiribati	Palau
		Tonga
		Marshall Islands
France	French Polynesia	Cook Islands
	New Caledonia	Niue
	Wallis & Futuna	Vanuatu
New Zealand	Cook Islands	American Samoa
	Fiji	Nauru
	Niue	Papua New Guinea
	Samoa	Solomon Islands
	Tokelau	Wallis & Futuna
	Tonga	
The United States	American Samoa	French Polynesia
	FSM	Kiribati
	Guam	Tokelau
	Marshall Islands	Tuvalu
	Northern Mariana Islands	Samoa
	Palau	

Table 1: Primary and Secondary source of assistance to PICTs

Developments since 2010

8. PACPLAN has been activated on a number of recent incidents: early 2019 for the MV Solomon Trader; 2018 for the MV Kea Trader; and 2017 for the MV Southern Phoenix. The implementation of PACPLAN and the associated provision of support provided to the PICs by the metropolitan countries has been very effective. However there have been delays in the provision of this support in some instances due to uncertainty on how PACPLAN works, particularly during the Solomon Trader incident. There are many lessons and learnings from these incidents that can be used to improve future implementation of PACPLAN.

9. PACPLAN was activated on a number of recent incidents: early 2019 for the MV Solomon Trader; 2018 for the MV Kea Trader; and 2017 for the MV Southern Phoenix. The responses to these incidents, particularly the MV Solomon Trader where the PACPLAN response was very slow and ineffective, have many lessons and learnings that can be used to improve future implementation of PACPLAN.
10. From 2010 to 2015 there were 22 PACPLAN trainings conducted with regards to coastal sensitivity mapping, MARPOL, pollution response courses (OPRC level 1, OPRC level 2/3 and HNS), with a total of 589 personnel trained with funding support from the IMO, Republic of China-Taiwan (ROCT) and kind support from Australia and New Zealand. The Maritime New Zealand have provided assistance to the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tonga through the *Pacific Maritime Safety Programme* (PMSP) which included provision for equipment. The Australia Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) Marine Pollution Officer secondment for 2 years (2013-2015), Mr. Scott Wilson, assisted in the implementation of the *Pacific Oceans Pollution Prevention Programme 2010-2015 (PACPOL)* that included PACPLAN activities.

Revised PACPLAN

11. The draft revised PACPLAN 2019 specifically:
 - a. Provides a more strategic direction rather than operational. Is less operationally focused with an emphasis on national plans as the operationalization mechanism of PACPLAN. As a strategic framework it provides guidance for countries to implement PACPLAN and improve their national arrangements over time;
 - b. Provides the drivers for PICTs to establish and maintain an independent response capability by way of national marine spill contingency plans (NATPLANs) and the activation of PACPLAN to be made through the implementation of NATPLANs;
 - c. Clarifies the purpose of PACPLAN as a mechanism for the provision of support between governments for Tier 3 (refer diagram below), rather than an operational response plan;
 - d. Provides the provision for a separate step by step approach operational document and/or guidelines for incident response such as steps to formally request assistance, inventory of equipment, contact details and trained personnel; and
 - e. Supports all parties to actively monitor and report on response capabilities to identify gaps and weaknesses across all parties (Secretariat, PICs and Metropolitan participants).

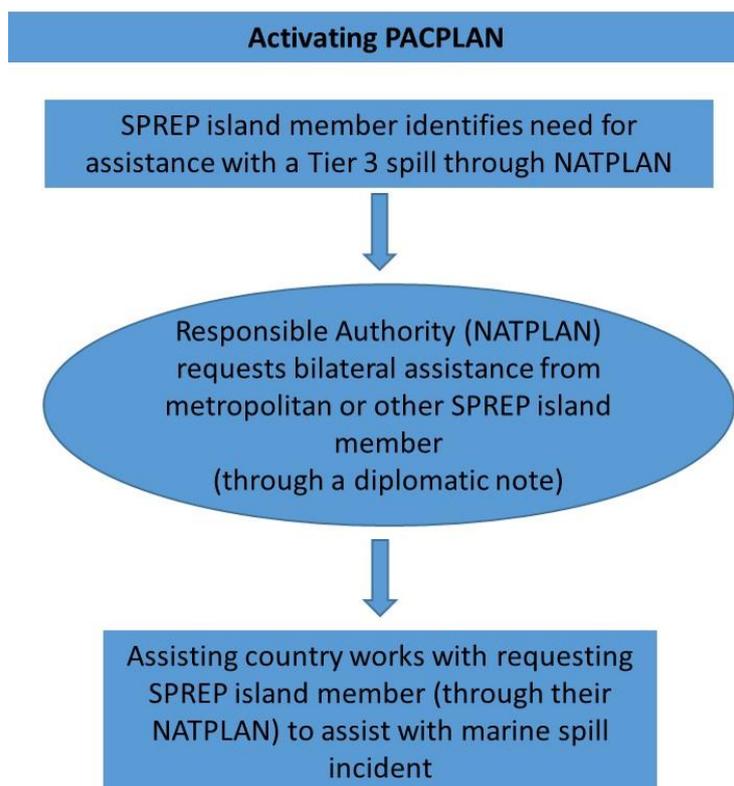


Diagram 1: Response procedures under PACPLAN

Recommendation

12. The Parties are invited to:

1. **endorse** PACPLAN 2019 as the framework for regional oil and hazardous and noxious substances spill response; and
2. **seek** members to commit to development and implementation of their NATPLANS.