

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PACIFIC ISLANDS ROUNDTABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (PIRSD)

1. Background

As the lead regional organisation charged with the protection and sustainable development of the region's environment, The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) continues to lead efforts to respond to and manage environmental sustainability and sustainable development issues facing the region. Environmental governance plays a critical role in these efforts and is at the core of the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to address the triple planetary crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution.

Regional Goal 4 of SPREP's Strategic Plan 2017-2026 focuses on 'Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to and best practice of environmental governance'. To implement Regional Goal 4, the Secretariat assists Members and the region in providing policy advice, technical assistance, capacity building and training, facilitating knowledge sharing, supporting engagement at relevant international processes, and forging partnerships on environmental governance and sustainable development issues through its Environmental Governance (EMG) Programme. At its fourth meeting in September 2024, the SPREP Executive Board endorsed the establishment of a Pacific Island Roundtable for Sustainable Development (PIRSD) before the end of 2025 as a SPREP-led regional coordination mechanism.

2. Overarching Objective

To facilitate meaningful dialogue, greater coordination and collaboration across a wide range of stakeholders and partners in the Pacific Islands' region on current and emerging environmental governance and sustainable development issues. It will provide a useful forum for sharing information and lessons learned to facilitate collaboration and partnerships to support effective sustainable development practices. Furthermore, the proposed mechanism will further strengthen SPREP's mandate and lead in the region on Environmental Governance and Sustainability issues.

3. Specific Objectives

- a) To facilitate the sharing of knowledge, lessons learnt and scaling up of best practice on environmental governance and sustainable development issues for the Pacific Islands region.
- b) To facilitate and maintain effective partnerships for enabling and enhancing access to sustainable financing, technical support, capacity building opportunities and expertise for addressing environmental governance and sustainable development issues in the region.
- c) To embed and retain learnings and achievements of environmental governance and sustainable development initiatives for the Pacific Islands region.
- d) To harmonise and maximise efforts and support of SPREPs technical partners for SPREP Members.

4. Thematic Areas of the Roundtable

The Roundtable will focus its work around the following four themes:

1. Sustainable Development
2. Environmental Impact Assessment/Environmental and Social Safeguards
3. Environmental Data for monitoring and reporting
4. Blue Economy and Oceans.

5. Alignment with Key regional Frameworks

Given that the focus of the Roundtable is on the cross-cutting issues of environmental governance and sustainable development, it aligns well with and will contribute to the key regional frameworks. These include, but are not limited to:

- The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent
- The Cleaner Pacific Strategy 2025
- The Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands Region 2021-2025
- The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017-2030

6. Target Stakeholders

1. The Roundtable will bring together and engage the governments of SPREP Member countries and territories, policy makers, regional partners, donor agencies and development partners, practitioners and regulators, national, regional and international experts, NGO's, the private sector, academia and research institutions and other key stakeholders.
2. Donors and development partners will be invited to actively engage and support the Roundtable and use it as an opportunity to further understand regional context regarding environmental governance and sustainable development implementation, coordinate targeted interventions and actions, share success stories and knowledge, as well as identifying opportunities to accelerate actions to enhance sustainable development and mobilising technical and financial resources.

7. Operational Structure of the Roundtable

The PIRSD Roundtable will establish the following:

- A dedicated Steering Committee which will provide oversight and guidance to the governance of the Roundtable. (Refer Annex for Terms of Reference)
- Technical Working Groups (TWGs) related to the four identified thematic areas of the Roundtable. The TWGs will exchange information, promote and advocate best practice, and collaborate and seek synergies in their respective activities.

8. Membership Arrangement

1. The PIRSD is a membership-based Roundtable. Furthermore, membership will be on a voluntary basis.
2. Membership of the governments of Pacific Island countries and territories will be sought via SPREPs normal notification procedures (ie – official circular).
3. Membership of other stakeholders mentioned in section 6 above will be invited and facilitated through a membership agreement to be elaborated between the interested Party and the Secretariat of the Roundtable (SPREP).

9. Frequency of Meetings of the Roundtable

The Roundtable shall be convened once every four (4) years.