

Thirty Second SPREP Meeting of Officials

2-4 September 2025

Sheraton Aggie Greys Hotel & Bungalows
Apia, Samoa

“Sustaining our Pacific Environment in Harmony with our Cultures”

Agenda item 9.4: Regional Goal 4 Overview: Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to best practice of environmental governance

Purpose:

1. To provide the Meeting with an overview of key priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 4 for the biennial period 2026 - 2027.

Introduction:

2. For the biennial period 2026-2027, SPREP will continue to assist Members to achieve goals on environmental governance, policy development, planning, monitoring, and reporting for sustainable environmental outcomes and to keep pace with socio-economic development. This will include strengthening and supporting political leadership on and commitment to current and emerging environmental issues in the region.

Key Areas of Work for 2026-2027

RO4.1: Strengthen national sustainable development planning and implementation systems.

3. SPREP will continue to deliver targeted awareness, training, and capacity building on Environmental and Social Impact Assessments including Strategic Environment Assessment guidelines; and provide policy advice and technical assistance on the review of existing and development of new EIA policies, legislations, and guidelines.
4. SPREP is now strengthening its role on Environmental and Social Safeguards through the implementation of the SPREP Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Policy to safeguard SPREP and member countries projects development and implementation and will continue to support countries on development of its ESS policy.
5. Continue to strengthen SPREP's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capacity through funding support from the ACP/MEA 3; New Zealand MFAT and the Emma Luke Estate funding to upgrade GIS technologies to support countries and SPREP is producing environment products such as mapping of priority conservation areas; habitat change monitoring, support for EIA and environment planning, development site suitability and other services utilising the Earth Observation services; and continue building partnerships to convert critical SPREP data into GIS data for use by PICTs.

RO4.2: Improve national capacity for good environmental governance and development of policy and legislation to support of the implementation of Member international and regional commitments.

6. SPREP will continue to support PICTs to update and develop National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) and the integration of NEMS and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) commitments into national planning processes and regional frameworks.
7. The EU ACP MEA Phase III Programme implemented through UN Environment and executed directly by SPREP is now ending in December 2025. This programme will continue the implementation of some key priorities; Regional Goal 2 on - Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilient island and ocean ecosystems; Regional Goal 3: Pacific people benefit from improved waste management and pollution control; for Regional Goal 4 specifically capacity building on MEAs and support the strengthening and implementation of the Noumea Convention.
8. SPREP will continue to provide advice to OPOC and PSIDS with the treaty on BBNJ and is seeking support from development partners and securing resources to support member countries and SPREP's coordination on implementation of key elements such Environmental Impact Assessment; Strategic Environment Assessments, Marine Spatial Planning; and Marine Genetic Resources.
9. SPREP through its Oceans Governance Framework will continue to provide support on Oceans Work through the SPREP's Oceans Coordination Group also known as the Blue Team and act as focal point for collaborative work on ocean governance priorities for SPREP, member countries and partners.

RO4.3: Strengthen environmental data collection, monitoring and analysis and reporting on results, nationally and regionally.

10. SPREP will continue to build capacity on national level environment reporting in at least 2 PICTs to support the State of Environment Report (SOE) reporting, MEAs and SDGs reporting obligations.
11. SPREP will continue to coordinate and develop the periodic State of Environment and Conservation in Oceania (SOEC) Regional Report to determine and highlight regional environmental trends in sustainable environmental management and resilient development in PICTs. The development of the next edition of the Regional Report commenced in June this year and is underway.

12. SPREP continue to progress the development of the Pacific Environmental Data (PED) Project that will enhance the Pacific Island Countries and Territories access and use of environmental data leading on from the Regional Inform Project and the support from the 12 member countries is acknowledged. SPREP will continue to implement some of the activities of the Regional Inform Project using some existing projects focusing on:
 - a) Maintaining and strengthening the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) network, update the content management systems and user interface.
 - b) Supporting the use and adoption for the Indicator Reporting Tool (IRT) in at least 2 PICs and document use for strategic reporting requirements.
 - c) Support the generation and use of climate data and information to support decision making.
 - d) Support the selected countries in advancing climate- and biodiversity-smart marine spatial planning.
 - e) Building capacity of at least 40 staff in member countries to use the environmental portal supported by e-learning platforms.

RO 4.4: Strengthen access to funding mechanisms and using funds effectively and efficiently to deliver required interventions.

13. SPREP continue to progress the development of the Pacific Environmental Data (PED) Project that will enhance the Pacific Island Countries and Territories access and use of environmental data leading on from the Regional Inform Project.
14. SPREP will continue to work with World Bank to establish a partnership to support Environmental and Social Impact Assessment in the region. The purpose of the initiative between SPREP and World Bank is to build environment and social risk management capacity in the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP) and participating countries to develop and deliver sustainable investments at country level.
15. SPREP is implementing a New Zealand MFAT funded project on Climate and Biodiversity Smart Marine Spatial Planning focused on developing Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) frameworks tailored to each country's unique ecological, cultural, and governance contexts. Furthermore, the project aims to enhance national capacities to lead marine spatial planning (MSP) and marine protection efforts that are climate-resilient, biodiversity-smart, and tailored to national priorities.

Challenges, Opportunities and Coordination

16. The main challenge in implementing Regional Goal 4 is the limited capacity of the Secretariat to meet increasing demands from PICTs for policy and technical assistance.
17. Another challenge is the EU ACP MEA Phase III, 4 years' Programme implemented through UN Environment and executed by SPREP is ending in December 2025. It has achieved a lot for SPREP like the strengthening and implementation of the Noumea Convention and SPREP as the Secretariat of the Noumea Connection. SPREP will continue to deliver some Multilateral Environment Agreements activities at a reduced level in 2026 using existing SPREP Projects.

18. Some of the opportunities that are available to support the implementation of Regional Goal 4 include:

- a) The proposed “Pacific Environmental Data (PED)” Project which 12 member countries are supporting will strengthen the provision and use of accurate and timely environmental data for decision making through; supporting the development and adoption of environmental standards; expand the use of the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) to facilitate better integration and sharing of data and information; increasing the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS); and strengthening capacity for advocacy and communication approaches.
- b) The development and effective application of key policy documents such as SoE Reports, NEMS, EIA guidelines, tools and data portals to support planning, reporting and decision making. For example, SoE Reports are useful tools to use as the basis for Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) reporting including reporting to relevant national processes including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- c) The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) through the establishment of the Emma Luke Earth Observation (EO) Unit at SPREP, will strengthen and contribute to SPREP’s ability to monitor, assess, and respond to environmental changes using the power of Earth observation technologies and geospatial science. The Emma Luke EO Centre will serve as a regional hub for environmental monitoring and geospatial innovation, offering a suite of technical and advisory services to support evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development.
- d) SPREP and SPC are working together on a Nature for Health project through the One Health Approach. One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent.
- e) SPREP is formally establishing and operationalising the Pacific Island Sustainable Development RoundTable (PIRSD), endorsed at the Fourth SPREP Environment Board (EBM) meeting in September 2024. The PIRSD is a regionally coordinated mechanism that will facilitate partnerships, coordination, sharing of knowledge and information and promoting best practice on current and emerging regional sustainable development issues.
- f) SPREP providing capacity building and training services to CROP and partners in areas such Environmental Assessments and Environmental Social Safeguards

Recommendation

19. The Meeting is invited to:

- 1) **Note** the key strategic priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 4 for the biennial period 2026 to 2027
-