

Fifth SPREP Executive Board Meeting
12 – 13 August 2026**Agenda Item 7.1 : Implementing the Pacific Leaders Agenda Update on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent implementation****Purpose:**

1. To provide an update on the Pacific Leaders Agenda including on the 2050 Strategy implementation, review of the regional architecture, CROP strategic priorities and regional Initiatives and SIS priorities for SPREP.

Background:

2. The Director General attended the 54th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 8 – 12 September 2025. The key decisions from the communique for discussion by Members as follows:
 - a. **Leaders reaffirmed the 2050 Strategy as the region's collective vision.** Its Implementation Plan sets the framework for collective action, ensuring that national priorities are advanced regionally, where necessary, to deliver the greatest impact
 - b. **Priorities of the Smaller Island States (SIS) Members:** Leaders welcomed and endorsed the mainstreaming of the SIS Leaders priorities across all CROP agencies including enhancing access to climate finance. Leaders noted the call by the SIS Members for the provision of adequate and dedicated support on the implementation and management of SIS matters.
 - c. **Review of the Regional Architecture (RRA):** Leaders commended and welcomed the work of the High-Level Persons Group on the development of the Report on the High-Level Political Talanoa on Deepened Regionalism and the Regional Architecture to support the 2050 Strategy. Leaders engaged in a robust exchange on the issues and agreed to progress the recommendations.

Review of the Regional Architecture:

3. The key recommendations that the Leaders endorsed from the High-Level Persons Talanoa Report are highlighted below for further discussion by Members:

Rationalization of the Regional Architecture

- d. **Recommendation 6:** Transition to the three-pillared institutional arrangement:

6a: The three-pillared regional institutional framework would be framed around: (i) Political, Policy, Economics and Trade Pillar; (ii) Technical and Scientific Pillar; and (iii) Academic Pillar.

6b: Under the three-pillar structure, a reduction from nine to five standalone CROP agencies as follows:

- i. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) comprises the Political, Policy, Economics and Trade pillar;
- ii. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) make up the Scientific and Technical pillar, and
- iii. The University of the South Pacific (USP) linking with all national universities and other regional institutions of higher learning makes up the Academia pillar.

- e. **Recommendation 7: Transition to a unified regional governance mechanism for Pacific regionalism** with the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders at the apex of the regional governance structure and all regional priorities and policy initiatives being progressed by regional agencies be overseen through the 2050 Strategy Thematic Areas and its related institutional reporting mechanisms.
 - f. **7c: Demarcate Policy and Operational oversight through the transition to a unified regional policy development process** with clear milestone thresholds and consultation points to be conveyed and supported by the relevant governing councils of the CROP agencies in the Pacific.
 - g. **7e: Undertake a review of the ministerial forums within each of the 2050 Strategy Thematic Areas** to clarify mandates, eliminate overlaps and ensure that each Thematic Area is anchored by an appropriately mandated and resourced ministerial body, noting also the opportunities of joint ministerial engagements. This exercise should provide direction for those Thematic Areas without a clear ministerial lead: including People Centered Development, Peace and Security, Climate Change and Disasters and Ocean and Natural Environment.
 - h. **7f: Establish a centralised coordination mechanism for Partnerships and Development Cooperations across the CROP agencies through which all external resourcing for regional initiatives and priorities will be considered and approved.** The centralised coordination mechanism will be chaired by the Secretary General or its nominated representative and will report to a Member-led oversight committee.
4. While most recommendations were endorsed a number were deferred for further consultation, namely **Recommendations 6** on the transition to a three-pillared institutional arrangement, as well as **7c** and **7f** which are noted above. In respect of transition arrangements under the HLPT Report the following CROP agencies were recommended to no longer be standalone: Pacific Aviation Safety Organisation (PASO), Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), Pacific Power Association (PPA), and Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP). Furthermore, PASO and SPTO recommended to merge with PIFS, PPA with SPC and the PIDP governance mechanism of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders to be considered under the Pacific Islands Forum Partnership and Engagement Mechanism.

5. To support the continued consultation process and to provide further analysis for Forum Members a Review Committee was established and appointed by the Forum Troika. It consists of KPMG and advisor, Sir Dr Jimmie Rodgers of Solomon Islands, also a member of the High-Level Persons Talanoa. The Review Committee will report to the Forum Troika and the draft findings to be completed no later than the week of 27 July 2026. The Director General met virtually with the Review Committee on 28 May 2026. At the time of writing, the Review Committee was still undertaking consultations with Pacific Islands Forum Members and CROP.

2050 Strategy Implementation Plan 2023 - 2030

6. The Secretariat supports implementation of the 2050 Strategy through its strategic priorities, as demonstrated across the Executive Board Meeting agenda including but not limited to the Performance Implementation Plan under Agenda Item 5.2 which outlines the various work of SPREP across the thematic areas of Climate Change and Disasters, as well as Ocean and Environment. The Secretariat also provided input into the Blue Pacific Continent Report 2026 which includes the High-Level Summary that will be presented to the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau in September 2026.
7. On CROP coordination SPREP plays a pivotal role in the respective CROP mechanisms that includes but is not limited to the CROP Heads; CROP Deputies Working Group; CROP Harmonisation Working Group; and One CROP, which provides coordinated technical support to Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) for the UNFCCC negotiations. For all the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEA) which SPREP is leading on, it coordinates with CROP agencies to ensure there is coordinated technical support to Pacific delegations including for the negotiations for a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution made possible with funding support from Australia.
8. A key challenge for the Secretariat in maintaining implementation of the 2050 Strategy is the additional financial resources required to ensure SPREP is able to consistently support Members address the priorities. One example is '***Regional Collective Action 78: Develop a regional approach for addressing the removal of hazardous wastes, including nuclear contamination, such as the Runit dome, WWII wrecks, UXO and wartime debris***'. Legacy waste as one example in respect of WWII wrecks, UXO and wartime debris, the WMPC highlighted the massive gap that exists for actual oil removal, with estimated costs ranging from USD 5.7 to 9.9 million per wreck. There is also a lack of specialised local oil disposal infrastructure and multi-year financing for long-term monitoring and maintenance. This is highlighted as one of the many challenges in much needed resourcing to implement the 2050 Strategy across the vast regional collective actions.

Pacific Small Island States Reporting

9. Noting the direction of Leaders to mainstream SIS Leaders priorities across all of CROP agencies, including on enhancing access to climate finance which SPREP is an accredited entity for the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. The Secretariat has commenced reporting in December 2025 with its first quarterly reporting, which was disseminated under [Circular# 25/116](#). It highlighted the key initiatives, progress, and outcomes across all programmes and reflected SPREP's continued commitment to supporting SIS Members in achieving environmental and sustainable development priorities. The Leaders decision also called upon all CROP agencies to provide adequate and dedicated support on the implementation and management of SIS matters, which the Secretariat remains committed to providing, where technical resources and funding permit.

For discussion:

10. Recalling the key decisions of the 4th SPREP Executive Board Meeting in 2024 and the 32nd SPREP Meeting in 2025 on Implementing the Leaders Agenda, which *'confirmed that SPREP is an independent intergovernmental organisation established under the SPREP Agreement and the SPREP Meeting is the plenary body responsible for its governance'*. It is an important and timely opportunity for Members to consider and discuss the earlier decisions of the SPREP Meeting and the vision of Pacific Leaders under the new arrangements, particularly for a regional architecture that is fit for purpose to implement the 2050 Strategy and what that means for the future of SPREP, in how it is governed, operates and reports, as well as engages with its Members and development partners, particularly in the context of the new Strategic Plan.

Recommendation:

11. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:

- 1) **Note** the progress on the 2050 Strategy implementation;
 - 2) **Note** the progress on the Pacific Small Island States reporting;
 - 3) **Note** and discuss the update on the Review of the Regional Architecture and the Report of the Review Committee that will be presented to and considered by the 55th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Palau; and
 - 4) **Request** the SPREP Troika and the Director General work closely together on any issues concerning the Review of the Regional Architecture.
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