

Agenda Item 9.2: Overview of Regional Goal 2: Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilient island and ocean ecosystems**Purpose:**

1. To provide the Meeting with an overview of the progress of implementation of Regional Goal 2.
2. To provide the Meeting with an update on the 11th Pacific Islands Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.

Background:

3. This working paper provides an overview of the implementation of activities and initiatives undertaken by SPREP in collaboration with Members and partners for the biennial period 2025 – 2026 across the Regional Objectives 2.1 to 2.4.

RO2.1: Effectively manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems

4. The Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021-2030 continues to get traction through several collaborations and partnerships that SPREP is implementing or involved in to ensure alignment and coordination at regional level. Beyond a strategic advisory role for regional initiatives (Resilient Reef Pasifika and Reef Seeding Initiative coordinated by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Pacific ReefCloud project implemented by the Australian Institute of Marine Science), SPREP is currently finalising coral reef dashboards (at regional and national levels) to ensure coral reef data are appropriately stored, shared and accessible on the Pacific Environmental Data Portal. A monitoring and evaluation framework is also being developed to progress the mid-term review and assess progress against the 8 priority areas of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan.
5. In December 2025, SPREP signed a Financing Agreement with the French Development Agency (AFD) to coordinate and implement the “Pacific Ocean Initiative - Sustainable protection and management of coastal and marine ecosystems for community resilience”. Over the period 2025-2030, the Pacific Ocean Initiative aims to strengthen the resilience of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems, through strengthening regional and local capacities for sustainable management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems, sharing expertise, knowledge and decision-support tools for the benefit of Pacific Islands countries and communities. SPC is an implementing partner with activities on Community-based fisheries management, while SPREP ensures the overall coordination and management, and will deliver the following activities: 1) Strengthening a regional community of practice for Pacific coral reef monitoring and decision-making at national and local levels; 2) Enhancing coral conservation and restoration strategies through identification of heat-adapted corals and integration of transboundary ecological connectivity; 3) Strengthening regional and transboundary cooperation on marine biodiversity conservation, including MPAs, OECMs, and populations of threatened and migratory marine species.

6. Through the EU funded Pacific Biodiversity and Sustainable Land-Seascapes (Pacific BioScapes) Programme, significant regional and national activities were implemented across its 30 project activities. Among these achievements, includes the co-hosting of the first Oceania Seabird Symposium which brought over 140 participants across the region and beyond ranging from policy makers, scientists and conservation practitioners. The symposium provided an opportunity to share knowledge, expertise and practical skills in monitoring and managing seabird populations through training. Two resources were also launched at the symposium, the Pacific Seabirds Survey and Monitoring Manual and the Pacific Seabird database. A Pacific turtle forum was also convened bringing together the Pacific countries and partners to review new research findings and agree on national and regional priorities for marine turtle conservation. Further in-country turtle monitoring training will be carried out which will also include the use of the web-based Turtle Research and Monitoring Database System (TREDs). A regional comprehensive assessment of coral reef monitoring approaches was also completed, providing an overview of the current coral reef monitoring practices, including methodologies, data platforms, and stakeholder roles, as well as identifying gaps in capacity. A range of publications and communication products were also delivered through Pacific BioScapes Programme and includes Mainstreaming Human Rights, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion in the Pacific BioScapes Programme, Pacific Sea Turtle Field Guide, Review of Traditional Knowledge of Seabirds in the Pacific Ocean, Ecosystem and Socio-Economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) Central Province, Solomon Islands and more which can be found on SPREP virtual library.
7. The German International Climate Initiative funded GIZ-SPREP-SPC *Management and Conservation of Blue Carbon ecosystems in Pacific Island Countries* (MACBLUE) successfully completed in December 2025 with the project delivering key outputs such as producing Tier 2 data for carbon stock and emission reports for Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, the development of a national Blue Carbon Policy Roadmap and Blue Carbon Policy, updated mapping of mangroves and seagrass and the development of a Blue Carbon Ecosystems Field and Training Manual. The project also successfully delivered capacity building and training for government officials equipping them with skills and tools to undertake stock data collection and sampling, seagrass monitoring and mapping and biodiversity assessments.

RO2.2: Support the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal, and terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity, consistent with regional and international commitments

Nature-based Solutions for Climate change adaptation and human well-being

8. The SPREP Kiwa Technical Assistance Programme (2020-2025) completed in January 2026. The programme achieved substantial progress in strengthening the application of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across the Pacific through regional learning, capacity building, policy engagement, and the development of practical implementation tools. Key accomplishments included the successful delivery of multiple regional and sub-regional learning events on NbS standards and best practices, coastal ecosystem restoration for climate resilience, GEDSI, community-based fisheries management. These events facilitated cross-country knowledge exchange, strengthened collaboration between practitioners and institutions, and supported the integration of NbS into sector-specific adaptation and natural resource management approaches. Additional progress was achieved through targeted [*Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion \(GEDSI\) support*](#), including needs assessments, technical guidance, safeguarding integration, and inclusive participation in regional meetings, strengthening the social outcomes of NbS implementation. Collaborations with other regional projects and initiatives, such as MFAT-funded PPIN project and DFAT-funded Climate Resilient by Nature Programme, under the

PIRT NbS working group, testifies how SPREP, SPC and IUCN as Kiwa implementing partners have been working together towards common objectives.

Protected area management

9. Protected area management capacity has improved in eight Pacific island countries and territories through SPREP's regional support programme that is currently funded under the Pacific BioScapes Programme to upgrade the Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal (PIPAP).

11th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation (PICNC)

10. SPREP is the permanent secretariat of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) and as such, through an MOU, is organizing the 11th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation (PICNC) with the Government of New Caledonia (as host) and PIRT, as the Pacific region's leading biodiversity partnership. It is scheduled for the 7-11 September 2026 in Noumea, New Caledonia. With coordination and progressive planning being undertaken on a weekly basis, the Conference is centered on innovating for Pacific-led solutions to address the triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution that provides spaces for inclusive and grounded dialogue on nature conservation, knowledge sharing, and collective learning. In addition, led through the Global Biodiversity Youth Network (GBYN) Pacific Chapter, strengthening the aspirations of our younger generations through deep cultural connection, action, and spiritual grounding will focus on youth and indigenous custodians and local communities. The youth component will have a hybrid mode that is earmarked to host national hubs, in-person component, and virtual participation.
11. The Conference will include a high-level segment and will also feature thematic areas of the working groups and cross-cutting issues which includes nature conservation financing. The thematic areas are developed in collaboration with the PIRT Working Groups and the New Caledonia Local Committee on Conference Content. Further details of the Conference and agenda is attached as **WP9.2/Att.1**.

Launching of the Pacific Islands State of Environment and Conservation Report (SOEC) 2026.

12. The SOEC report serves as the region's primary evidence base for tracking environmental status, trends, pressures and responses; supports implementation and monitoring of regional and global environmental frameworks.

Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation 2026-2030

13. The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) has been effectively coordinated, including support for implementation of the Regional Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. With funding support through the Pacific BioScapes Programme, the Framework 2021-2025 is under review and will be finalised for endorsement at the 11th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation (PICNC) to be held at Noumea, New Caledonia on the 7 –11 September 2026.

14. The new Framework provides the strategic regional direction on how global biodiversity commitments - Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) can be implemented in the Pacific context. And the Pacific region's response to the call for regional biodiversity strategies complementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs) to the CBD. The revised framework will align with the SOEC reporting process and the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**.

Ramsar priority for Oceania

15. The Oceania region has established a dedicated subgroup to develop a proposal for a Ramsar Regional Initiative (RRI). This subgroup is chaired by Australia and includes representatives from Samoa, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand. The primary objective of this proposal is to establish an RRI network or centre for the region which will focus on providing technical support to assist countries in effectively implementing the priorities and activities of the Ramsar Convention. The proposal is scheduled for submission by 4 August 2026 and will be presented for consideration at the 68th Meeting of the Standing Committee.
16. Showcasing the Pacific youth work and engagement within the wetlands were featured on SPREP's social media pages in celebration of the World Wetlands Day in February, 2026. Funding received from the Government of Australia through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) will continue to support the work of the Pacific youth wetland coordinator to work with the PIRT Coordinator funded by the EU Pacific BioScapes Programme to convene webinars to engage youth in the development of the youth program leading up to the 11th Pacific Islands Nature Conference.

RO2.3: Prevent the extinction of threatened species and support measures to sustain their conservation status

17. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme (PIRMSP) 2022 – 2026 through the EU-funded Pacific Bioscapes Programme and the recently completed Bycatch Integrated Ecosystem Management (BIEM). There is a plan to review and update the PIRMSP in 2027 building on the lessons learned from the existing plan.
18. SPREP has received USD 2.36 million from EU to implement Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme (PEUMP) Phase II to continue efforts towards managing bycatch, addressing the extinction risks to turtles and supporting Pacific Parties compliance under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
19. SPREP continues to support the Pacific Parties to CITES and Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) prepare for COPs as well as in their implementation. At the 20th COP for CITES held in December 2025, one of the areas of urgency noted for Oceania is the making of non-detrimental findings for shark species. To this end, SPREP is hosting a CITES post-COP Shark Management workshop to support governments in managing CITES-listed sharks and in making their non-detrimental findings under the convention. Furthermore, SPREP is exploring measures to support CITES Pacific Parties to implement electronic permit systems known as eCITES.

RO2.4: Significantly reduce the socio-economic and ecological impact of invasive species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate priority species

20. The invasive species team continued to scale invasive species management in the Pacific through the Guiding Framework for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific.
21. The GEF-6 Regional Invasive Project was successfully completed in 2025. The project supported the establishment of the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS) in 2019, achieving significant outcomes towards strengthening the resilience of Pacific communities. The project further strengthened invasive species management in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Niue, and Tonga through support for national policy and planning frameworks, institutional capacity building, stakeholder coordination, and the development and review of National Invasive Species Strategies and Action Plans (NISSAPs). The project also contributed to regional invasive species management efforts through support for the review of the Guiding Framework for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific.
22. The PRISMSS programmes continued to deliver significant outcomes on the ground with activities completed in 17 countries and territories, in 2025.
23. **Protect Our Islands** a regional review of the Clean Boats, Clean Ports framework guided the delivery of activities in 5 countries and territories with a greater focus on community awareness and direct support to governments on Early Detection and Rapid Response, strengthening the first line of defence against invasive species and their impacts.
24. **Predator Free Pacific** invasive mammals were removed from 24 islands. These successful operations allow ecosystems to recover, providing healthy and safe environments for Pacific communities.
25. **War On Weeds** supported 7 countries in their efforts to eradicate 12 target weeds. Eradicating low incidence weeds before they spread is key in avoiding long lasting harm to the environment communities depend on.
26. **Natural Enemies – Natural Solutions** supported the introduction of biocontrol agents in 6 countries contributing to the landscape scale control of priority weeds.
27. **Resilient Ecosystems - Resilient Communities** supported restoration efforts on 15 sites in 9 countries, creating safe havens for native biodiversity and restoring ecological function.
28. **Protect Our Marine Areas** provided support to one country to develop capacity and survey key marine areas for invasive marine species. The latest PRISMSS programme aims to support Pacific countries and territories to better understand, respond and prepare for marine invasions.
29. Overall, the PRISMSS programmes delivered meaningful, country-led, activities supporting adaptation efforts in the Pacific.

Challenges and Opportunities

30. The health of Pacific biodiversity and the ecosystems services that drive sustainable development continue to face escalating threats from climate change, deforestation, invasive species, biodiversity loss and wildlife trafficking. Coupled with the geographic complexity of the Pacific region, implementation of conservation efforts is costly and time sensitive.
31. Despite the challenges, there is growth in the region in areas of partnerships, technical and financial support at the country, regional, and international level. The Pacific offers unique opportunities for innovative, people-centred, whole-of-government and community-led conservation approaches. The 11th Pacific Nature Conference meeting to be convened in September 2026 and organised by SPREP, provides an important platform where the key stakeholders converge and showcase their efforts, share lessons and opportunities and strategize the way forward for Pacific biodiversity.
32. SPREP is committed to delivering initiatives that are robust, coordinated, and country driven and one that will make meaningful changes to our communities and Pacific people. The regional action plans such as the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan 2021 – 2030 and the Pacific Island Regional Marine Species Programme are examples of such initiatives for coherent and coordinated actions. The support from donor partners and technical agencies is crucial in delivering the support and actions required by SPREP's member countries.
33. A draft Business Plan is currently being developed for the Biodiversity Conservation Programme – *"Scaling Nature-First Investment Across the Blue Pacific"* which sets out the priority investment areas and programmes, and delivery approaches not only within the Biodiversity Conservation Programme but linkages across SPREP's work programmes on climate resilience, pollution reduction and environmental monitoring to better support Member needs and global commitments.

Recommendation:

34. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Note** and **endorse** the progress on the implementation on Regional Goal 2 activities for the biennial period of 2025 – 2026; and
 - 2) **Note** the update on the 11th Pacific Islands Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.