

Agenda Item 9.4: Regional Goal 4 Overview: Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to best practice of environmental governance (EG)**Purpose:**

1. To provide the Meeting with an update of the implementation of Regional Goal 4 for the biennial period 2026-2027

Background:

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: Strengthened national sustainable development planning and implementation systems.**

3. Continue to provide training on environmental assessment and planning and capacity building on Environmental and Social Impact Assessments including SPREP's Strategic Environment Assessment guidelines; and provide policy advice and technical assistance on the review of existing and development of new EIA policies, legislation, and guidelines in the Pacific region.
4. SPREP is now strengthening its work and capacity on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Earth Observation through funding support from New Zealand MFAT and the Emma Luke Estate delivering targeted training for member countries ; and is working with all the SPREP Programmes to develop mapping products such as the Pacific Climate Watch on Extreme Events; oceans conservation priority areas; and provides services on use of Earth Observation Data to produce maps for member countries and SPREP.
5. Continue to strengthen the application of Environment and Social Management through the review and implementation of the SPREP Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) policy with the establishment of the Environment and Social Screening Committee to safeguard SPREP and member countries projects development and implementation.
6. Continue to establish and maintain strong partnerships with CROP Agencies, Tertiary Institutions, regional and international organizations in strengthening environment governance, assessment and planning such as the Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand and the New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment.

RO4.2: Improve national capacity for good environmental governance supported by technical assistance for the development of policy and legislation, and in support of the implementation of Member international and regional commitments.

7. 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 including the Country and Territory Strategic Partnership Framework (CTSPF).
8. Continue to work closely with and provide advice to OPOC, CROP and PSIDS on the treaty on BBNJ and actively seeking support from development partners and securing resources to support member countries and SPREP's coordination on implementation of key elements of the BBNJ such as Environmental Impact Assessment; Strategic Environment Assessments, Marine Spatial Planning; and Marine Genetic Resources.
9. Through the SPREP Oceans Coordination Group/Blue Team, continue to implement the SPREP Ocean Governance Framework by coordinating the Oceans work within SPREP and with its external partners such as OPOC, member countries and development partners.

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

10. Continue to support countries and build their capacities on their national reporting to MEAs, SDGs and Regional Frameworks through the development of national State of Environment (SOE) Reports.
11. SPREP is currently working with Cook Islands, Fiji and Palau to develop their national State of Environment Reports. The findings and recommendations of the SoE report serve as a foundation for informing sustainable environmental management and for implementing national strategies that balance economic development with environmental sustainability
12. Continue to work with countries in strengthening their National Environment Data Portals and the Pacific Environment Data portal. The GEF8 PIF on Enhancing Pacific Island Countries access and use of environmental data – Pacific Environmental Data (PED) Project was approved by GEF and SPREP is now planning the PPG development consultation with the GEF Secretariat to be later in the year. Total Project value: USD3.6 million (4-5 years). Acknowledging the support of the 10 PICs (Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu) in supporting the Enhancing Pacific Island Countries access and use of environmental data – Pacific Environmental Data (PED) Project through the GEF 8 STAR Allocation.

RO4.4: Strengthen access to funding mechanisms and use funds effectively and efficiently to deliver required interventions.

13. GEF exceptionally approved the PIF for the Pacific Environmental Data Project as a second phase to SPREP's successful flagship "Inform" project. (USD 3.6 Million – 4-5 years).
14. Secured funding from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) (EUR 30,000) to support the development of the official Pacific Seabirds colony datasets.

15. Additional funding secured from NZ MFAT (NZD 460,000) under the Climate and Biodiversity Smart Marine Spatial Planning (CaB-Smart MSP) programme to support national and regional capacity building and knowledge exchange on Marine Spatial Planning.
16. SPREP has been selected by the Steering Committee of Nature 4 Health to be part of Phase II of the initiative to implement systemic, preventative One Health approaches in the Pacific Region. Scoping the project focus will be rolled out in September this year with the support of UNEP and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Challenges

17. Securing sustainable funding to support capacity building in Environmental Assessments (EAs) remains a challenge.
18. While GIS and spatial planning are gaining momentum in terms of training for Member countries, the Environmental Governance Programme is seeking financial and technical support from donors and development partners to sustain this important work in the medium to long term.

Opportunities

19. Growing recognition among Members and donors on the importance of environmental and social safeguards in ensuring sustainable development. Leveraging partnerships with key regional and international organizations to enhance SPREP's capacity to support member countries in implementing these safeguards remains a priority.
20. The Secretariat is exploring access to and effective use of Earth observation technologies and products for environmental monitoring, planning, and management purposes to support Member countries.
21. Mainstreaming of the One Health Approach into SPREP Programme provides an excellent opportunity for strengthening the recognition of the interconnectedness of biodiversity conservation, environment governance, ocean and climate change, and waste in the Health and Animal Sector of the Region.

Recommendation:

22. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Note** and **endorse** progress in the implementation of Regional Goal 4 activities for the biennial period 2026-2027.