

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP_4/12/17 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
Pacific Island Countries & Territories

DATE: 16 October 2018

CIRCULAR: 18/59

SUBJECT: **Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines**

Dear Focal Points,

Greetings from SPREP.

I am writing to inform you of the development of a regional Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Guidelines for SPREP member countries.

As you know, SPREP plays a key role in assisting countries to develop capacities in environmental governance which includes capacity on environment impact assessment. This is in line with the regional goal 4 of SPREP's Strategic Plan on Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to and best practice of environmental governance. One of the objectives under this regional goal is for SPREP to strengthen national sustainable development planning and implementation systems including through use of Strategic Environmental Assessments.

As you may recall, the 27th Annual SPREP Meeting in 2016 endorsed the regional EIA Guidelines titled "Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Pacific Island Countries and Territories." The 2016 regional EIA Guidelines provided a brief introduction to the SEA process to promote a general awareness of the SEA tools amongst SPREP member countries noting that there are no existing regional SEA guidelines to support and progress this part of the work.

With funding support from the European Union initiated capacity building project titled "Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries", implemented by UNEP, SPREP has engaged the services of a consultant Mr. Tim Strange, a Certified Environment Practitioner, on a short term consultancy to assist in developing the first draft of regional SEA guidelines for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories. As a first step in this process, an overview of the SEA principles and key concepts were introduced to country representatives attending the Joint Regional ACPMEA2 and Inform Project Meeting held in Apia from 17th -21st September 2018.

This is the start of the SEA Guidelines formulation process with additional work to be carried out in consultation with SPREP Members, partners and key stakeholders. Mr. Strange will be working closely under the guidance of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme (EMG) of SPREP.

To ensure the SEA Guidelines respond to, and address your specific needs and context, your kind support and cooperation is sought to provide key information, input and advice in the formulation of the SEA Guidelines especially on how the guidelines could be effectively used as tool to support national and sectoral planning processes. In this regard, the SPREP EMG team will be contacting you in due course with a view of gathering key information to support the SEA formulation process.

For further information on the process and drafting of the Regional SEA guidelines, please contact Ms. Easter Galuvao, Director of EMG Programme easterg@sprep.org Mr. Jope Davetanivalu, Environmental Planning Adviser joped@sprep.org and Mr. Gregory Barbara, Environmental Assessment and Planning Officer gregoryb@sprep.org

I thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kosi Latu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kosi Latu
Director General