



CIRCULAR

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TO: SPREP National Focal Points

DATE: 6 March 2020

CIRCULAR: 20/15

SUBJECT: Pacific Ocean Litter Project: Report of Inception Meeting 13 -14 February 2020

Dear Focal Points,

SPREP would like to extend our sincere thanks for your participation in the Pacific Ocean Litter Project's (POLP) Inception Meeting at the Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji on Thursday 13th and Friday 14th February 2020.

The attached Inception Meeting Outcomes report provides a summary of key topics and outcomes from the meeting and next steps for the project. It also seeks to gauge your interest in further involvement in the project and in supporting a meeting with the POLP implementing team in your country to discuss how the project's methodology could be best tailored to your country's unique circumstances.

Should you have any further queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the POLP Implementation Manager, Mark Skinner at marks.ext@sprep.org or +685 764 6191.

Yours Sincerely

Roger Cornforth
Acting Director General

Enclosure:

1. POLP Inception Meeting Outcomes Report



**Enclosure 1 to CIRCULAR 20/15
Dated 05 March 2020**

Inception Meeting Outcomes Report

SPREP would like to extend the sincere thanks of the Waste Management & Pollution Control programme, the Australian Government and the project team for your participation in the Pacific Ocean Litter Project's (POLP) Inception Meeting at the Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji on Thursday 13th and Friday 14th February 2020.

The gathering took place at the end of a week already packed with meetings and we would like to offer our gratitude to all participants for their attention, contribution of views and honest engagement. We would also like to recognise the efforts of our skilled facilitator, Mr Sepesa Rasili, who seemed always able to inject energy and a sense of fun into the room just when we needed it.

This report provides a summary of key topics of discussions and outcomes from the meeting. It also seeks to gauge your interest in further involvement in the project, and flags the opportunity for project personnel to meet with representatives in each country to discuss how the project could best deliver benefit through those actions being supported by POLP under the Pacific Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter.

Project Introduction

The Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) is an Australian-funded project which seeks to achieve a reduction in single-use plastic marine litter in the coastal environments of Pacific Island Countries. It was developed in recognition of the significant threat marine litter poses to the environment, public health and economic development of the Pacific region. It will support the phase-out of specific types of single-use plastics from household and tourism sources, behaviour change in the users, consumers and producers of plastics and the introduction of alternative products.

POLP's design has its roots in the common objectives articulated by Pacific leaders, particularly as expressed in statements of Pacific Regionalism, and consistent with the Blue Pacific narrative. It also embeds, and directly contributes to, the policy objectives of Pacific Island Countries as stated through the Cleaner Pacific 2025 strategy and the Marine Litter Action Plan.

A key element of Australia's Pacific Step Up, the POLP is one among many initiatives designed by donor nations to address waste and to contribute positively to the challenges associated with moving towards more sustainable practices and a circular economy for the Pacific. Importantly, POLP has been designed to complement those initiatives, and SPREP were very pleased therefore that representatives from Japan, the European Union and the United Kingdom were in the room with us, together with representatives from the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) and the Pacific Tourism Organisation (PTO).

Inception Meeting: Key Outcomes

The POLP inception meeting was a two-day workshop-format meeting which combined the provision of information around marine litter, discussion about tools and strategies to be adopted by the project, testing the robustness and structure of the project's logic, as well as offering the opportunity for Pacific representatives to undertake a preliminary evaluation of their country's positioning against each of the four primary 'End of Project Outcomes' and how pathways to change can be built to achieve those outcomes.

Behavioral Insights



A highlight of the meeting was the presentation on **Behavioral Insights** by Mr Sebastian Jarvoll from the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE). A professional psychologist, he spoke about how powerful results can be achieved through the clear identification of a problem, the observation of people's behaviors that are creating or contributing to the problem, and enabling different behaviors to be adopted to address the problem.

Changing the behavior of consumers (including men, women, boys and girls, people living with a disability and other marginalized groups in our communities), is critical to successfully and progressively reducing our dependency on single use plastics and those plastics ending up as litter in our marine environments. A key note from the discussion was that education programs on their own had not been found to be a sufficient, sustainable solution.

Project methodology – the POLP 'theory of change'

Another highlight was the introduction to the '**Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation**' methodology provided by Mr Adam Pennington of Conservation Management, the theory of change that has been adopted by POLP to create the delivery framework for the project (<https://cmp-openstandards.org/>).

The Open Standards method provides a circular, five step adaptive management approach to addressing critical conservation issues. Under this approach, project teams and key stakeholders work collaboratively to:

- i. Conceptualize the problem – identify threats, existing efforts or plans, and potential opportunities to address those threats.
- ii. Plan actions and monitoring – identify strategies that target potential solutions or outcomes, and develop a 'pathway for change' (i.e. a roadmap), how will we measure progress?
- iii. Implement key actions and actively monitor for risks, challenges and results.
- iv. Analyze, Use, Adapt – drawing on data and results, adapt the plan as needed – revisit strategies, consider why some activities worked and others weren't as successful;
- v. Capture Shared Learning – how can we best capture the data, products and lessons learned from project delivery to share with others in the region facing similar challenges?

The methodology has been tested and refined in a diverse range of conservation-focused projects around the globe by a large number of very reputable Organisations and has been demonstrated to be a successful approach.

Marine Litter – Situational Analysis

The Open Standards presentation outlined how the project design had incorporated a detailed process of analysis, risk assessment and a threat-ranking exercise to refine its focus on common single-use plastics found in general household refuse including: takeaway food and beverage containers, plastic bags, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, polystyrene containers, plastic straws and similar single-use plastics employed in tourism enterprises.

The presentation also addressed the interrelationships between each of the following primary End of Project Outcomes, which when delivered in unison, can contribute more effectively to reduce such single-use plastic wastes ending up as litter along Pacific coastlines:

1. Legislated or voluntary single-use plastic bans, levies and other instruments are adopted/resourced/implemented.
2. Communities and tourists using less single-use plastics and more alternative products.
3. Target sectors, companies and businesses adopt plastic reduction measures.
4. Alternative products and practices are identified for adoption.

Reinforcing the key messages from the Participant's Pack distributed in advance of the meeting, the discussions around these four End of Project Outcomes highlighted that activities identified through



engagement at a national level, and support for single-use plastic reduction measures at the regional level, will need to be delivered sequentially, or in some cases concurrently.

This approach recognises that an activity or a single strategy on their own are unlikely to be successful in the long-term, but by aligning efforts under each of the four strategies – there is a greater likelihood that those activities would lead to measurable, meaningful progress. For example, prior to the introduction of a legislative measure such as a ban on a single-use plastic product, a suitable, eco-friendly and sustainable alternative product needs to have been identified, confirmed available within the local market and tested with suppliers, in conjunction with consumer and community consultations, to give the ban the best chance of success.

Participants were invited to ‘roughly’ plot the relative progress that their country had already made against each End of Project Outcome, as well as provide an indication of which of the strategies / outcomes would require priority support, and the indicative level of support each country would need to effectively implement activities.

This exercise proved interesting in terms of observing how flexibly the methodology could be applied to the differing circumstances of each country, as well as demonstrating how each strategy was linked to, and reliant upon, the others in order to achieve the desired end result.

Budget and project implementation

The project budget was discussed and an overview provided by the Project’s Implementation Manager on how the funding would be allocated to deliver measurable results and benefits for the region, as well as at a national level for the Pacific Island Countries. The Implementation Manager also re-highlighted that the current funding footprint would enable Project support at national levels in three pilot countries.

The project team were careful to point out that the Project has been designed to be scalable and that SPREP, in conjunction with its partners at Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, will be seeking to leverage additional investment by other donors to extend the scope of national level support to include additional countries.

Regional benefits

Regionally, the project is also aiming to:

- develop marine litter survey standards to support consistency in data collection across the region and assist over time to evaluate whether or not targeted plastic reduction strategies at national levels are effective;
- conduct a pilot Single Use-Plastics School Education Program supporting the installation of clean water stations in selected Samoan schools and in so doing, determine whether this results in a measurable reduction in the use of PET bottles by students (this activity is the second phase of an initial investment by the Project in the 2019 Pacific Games’ ‘Greening of the Games’ campaign);
- deliver a region wide assessment of what types of alternative products are available to replace single-use plastics, including an assessment of their feasibility, potential risks and opportunities;

as well as

- contributing to the assessment of waste and environmental legislation and the delivery of waste audits in Pacific Island Countries.

The latter three initiatives are being carried out in partnership with the UK’s Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance (CCOA) Technical Assistance Facility, the EU’s PacWaste Plus program and the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF).



What's next?

The Project's next steps involve further discussions with individual Pacific Island Country representatives, information gathering and planning. The Implementation Manager will be in touch in coming weeks to organise in-country meetings with Focal Points as well as representatives from other government agencies, community and industry groups best placed to engage with the POLP team, between April and June.

As flagged, the Project is presently finalising the development of a 'toolkit' that will assist Pacific focal points in preparing for the meetings, as well as supporting the Project team to structure our approach to the consultations and provide a framework for gathering relevant information.

The toolkit will assist in identifying, for example, whether national level waste management strategies are already in place, whether POLP objectives are relevant / of priority, what are each Pacific country's unique capacities and constraints, and where project support should be targeted to be most effective.

The product of these consultations will be the development of a detailed situational analysis outlining each country's present circumstances, challenges, opportunities and their progress towards adopting measures to reduce or remove single-use plastics from the environment.

The consultations and the information used to develop detailed country-by-country situational analysis (profile) will be drawn upon by the project:

i. to feed into a narrative for consideration by the POLP's **Project Management Group** which will determine where project investment is most likely to achieve results – i.e. which countries will be nominated for the purposes of pilot activities at a national level; and

ii. to inform the publication of a Project Prospectus – which will be the vehicle employed by SPREP and its partners to highlight opportunities for further support to Pacific Island Countries, whether through direct contributions to SPREP in support the POLP model, or via other avenues of assistance (e.g. bilateral funding).

Summary

Again, SPREP and the POLP team offer a very big thank you to all those who contributed to the success of this meeting as country representatives, presenters, observers or administrators. Your time, thoughts and generous sharing of your expertise is very much appreciated.

Please don't hesitate to contact Mark Skinner if you would like any further information about POLP. The USB we distributed at the close of the meeting contains a copy of all the presentations, those countries who were unable to attend will be provided with copies of this information separately in conjunction with the toolkits.



SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



10th Pacific Islands Conference

NATURE CONSERVATION AND PROTECTED AREAS

Nature Conservation Action for a Resilient Pacific

Noumea, New Caledonia

19-24 April 2020