

## CIRCULAR

**FILE:** AP\_4/2/20 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points  
**DATE:** 4 June 2020  
**CIRCULAR:** 20/47

**SUBJECT: Update on the Pacific Learning Partnership on Environmental and Social Sustainability (PLP/ESS)**

Dear Focal Points,

The purpose of this Circular is to update you on the Pacific Learning Partnership for Environmental and Social Sustainability (or PLP-ESS) which was established in April 2019 and was subsequently endorsed by the 29<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in 2019 as one of the key activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat as part of its 2020-2021 Work Programme under Regional Goal 4.

To reiterate, the PLP-ESS is a collaboration between SPREP, University of the South Pacific, the World Bank (WB), and the Asian Development Bank that responds to the needs of Pacific Island Countries and Territories in strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Safeguards management and practice. Specifically, the PLP-ESS aims to provide targeted capacity building support through specialized training, knowledge exchange, technical expertise and other broader capacity building activities related to the application of environmental and social safeguards and standards in development activities including infrastructural development in the Pacific Region.

To assist with the coordination and delivery of capacity building and training activities of the PLP-ESS, I am pleased to inform you that a WB funded Environmental and Social Sustainability consultant (ESS consultant), Mr. Meapelo Mai'ai has been recruited and placed at SPREP, and working closely with the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme in developing and implementing capacity building and training on EIA and Safeguards management and practice.

At the beginning of this year, the PLP-ESS Steering Committee identified broad activities that constitute its work-plan for 2020 with adjustments made in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the planned activities that will be led by SPREP in collaboration with PLP-ESS partners would include:

1. **Capacity Building and Training Activities:** SPREP will continue to deliver EIA capacity building and training as per its normal assistance to Members while also incorporating elements of PLP-ESS partners' strengths in managing environmental impacts. Most of the face to face training activities are being remodelled to be delivered as virtual training through their video conference facilities.

2. **Training Needs Assessment/TNA:** As part of the WB consultant's role in strengthening EIA capacity, a *rapid* TNA will be carried out to identify a broad range of capacity gaps and training needs for strengthening EIA and Safeguards management and practise in PICTs. The TNA will build on information already collated by SPREP but with a specific focus on sectors involved in developments outside of the environment sector. The additional information from the TNA will assist SPREP and PLP-ESS in expanding the training content to include specific elements that would address some of the key gaps identified.

3. **Enhancement of SPREP's PNEA to include links for EIA and Safeguards online training:** SPREP has enhanced the Pacific Network of Environmental Assessment (PNEA) website, <https://pnea.sprep.org>, to now include an online (Talanoa) forum for registered members to share and request support from their fellow EIA counterparts in the region. The updated PNEA site was launched in April this year. PNEA site include links to multiple resources including online training for EIA and Environmental and Social Safeguards. The online training offered includes but is not limited to the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA), the New Zealand Association for Impact Assessment (NZIAIA), World Bank Online Campus modules for Environmental and Social Frameworks and others.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, our modus operandi to deliver direct support to you has been constrained. To this end, we are providing technical assistance remotely through our usual desktop support, advice, knowledge sharing using the PNEA, virtual meetings and online training, as appropriate. We have already started rolling out the first series of virtual training in Kiribati and we look forward to replicate more of this experience with other Member countries in the coming months; and building on lessons from the first series of training currently underway.

It is also envisaged that through the online virtual training, this would present opportunities for building an online (web-based) network of EIA/ESS practitioners and regulators from around the region to further strengthen EIA and Safeguards management and practice and the sharing of experience and lessons learnt.

Please contact Mr. Jope Davetanivalu [joped@sprep.org](mailto:joped@sprep.org) and copy Dr. Gregory Barbara [gregoryb@sprep.org](mailto:gregoryb@sprep.org) and Mr. Meapelo Maiai [mmaiai@worldbank.org](mailto:mmaiiai@worldbank.org) for further information and clarification.

I thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Kosi Latu  
**Director General**