

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP_4/14 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
DATE: 29 September 2021
CIRCULAR: 21/119
SUBJECT: **Development of Regional EIA Indicators**

Dear Members,

As part of the Secretariat's commitment to environmental monitoring (SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026), the development of environmental datasets and indicators is one of the exciting priorities for the organization in the next five (5) years. Collection of environmental data is often costly, and the Secretariat is seeking to increase support for Pacific Island countries by finding synergistic ways to capitalising on collection events and streamline environmental reporting. One such opportunity comes from tracking the performance and improvement in environmental impact assessment (EIA) application and enforcement in the region, along with to storing of the data from EIAs in government databases.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the primary instrument, for proactive decision-making process and planning tool available for sustainable development and management individual projects. EIA is used to identify, predict, and assess the impacts associated with individual development projects before implementation and design specific mitigation and environmental performance monitoring for the project. Effective EIA focuses on addressing both the negative and enhancing positive impacts likely to arise from a proposed development while designing mitigation measures to enhance the positive and to avoid, minimise, rehabilitate, or compensate for the negative impacts. Its application is supported and legislated in most Pacific Island Countries.

Many of the Members already track their EIA performance in various forms and metrics. The Secretariat is proposing to collect the tracking information from Members on their EIA applications and approvals in the last few years which will support the development of National (and regional) Environmental indicators. This will not only contribute to tracking the state of environment reporting but also highlight how environmental and social safeguards contribute to economic and social well-being in the region. Once indicators have been developed the Secretariat will store the information in the Regional Environment Portal (Inform) and National Environment Portals for each country for their use in environmental reporting.



The Secretariat would like to engage and request Member countries for assistance with the specific details and information required to develop the proposed EIA indicators.

Some specific details sought are:

1. Number of development applications received in each of the last 10 years
2. Number of development applications screened.
3. Number of EIAs declined.
4. Number of probationary notices/revoked approvals
5. Case studies or narratives on how enforcement of notices resulted in better environment/project outcomes would also be ideal.

The Secretariat seeks to work closely with national focal points to create regional indicators, and the resulting table, graphs, dashboards, on the indicators will be shared with countries for guidance. Please contact our Secretariat Mr. Jope Davetanivalu, Acting Director of the Environment Monitoring and Governance program or Dr. Gregory Barbara, the Environmental Assessment and Planning Officer.

Thank you for your usual co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kosi Latu".

Kosi Latu

Director General