

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 2/17/3 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
DATE: 24 March 2021
CIRCULAR: 21/21
SUBJECT: **Meeting of Signatories to the Pacific Cetacean MOU 5th & 6th August 2021**

Dear National Focal Points,

The Blue Continent of the Pacific Islands region covers over 10% of the world's oceans, and is home to a range of migratory marine species. Turtles, whales, dolphins, sharks and seabirds are central totems of many cultures, and move as freely as people between the jurisdictions of SPREP Members. However, many of these species have been greatly reduced in abundance and are now threatened or endangered, especially in the light of a rapidly growing human population and the impacts of climate change, pollution, fishing and habitat loss.

The conservation of threatened whales and dolphins has always been at the core of SPREP's mission, and there have been some notable successes – such as the recovery of humpback whale populations on their Pacific islands breeding grounds. SPREP was proud to support the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in the development of the MoU on the Conservation of Pacific Islands Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region, which came into effect in 2006 and has been signed by 15 States and Territories (all members of SPREP) and six Collaborating Organisations, including CMS and SPREP.

There has not been a Meeting of Signatories (MOS) since MOS 3 in 2012 and a further meeting is long overdue. The next MOS will need to adopt a new Action Plan to reflect important developments during the past decade. The Action Plan for the MoU is based on the most recent Whale and Dolphin Action Plan, which is one of a suite of five Action Plans that have been drafted by SPREP to cover the period 2022-2026. These Action Plans will be reviewed by SPREP members in a week-long virtual meeting in August, preceding the MOS 4, further details for which will follow soon. This Circular is to advise all SPREP Focal Points that the SPREP and CMS Secretariats will jointly convene MOS 4 of the MoU on the Conservation of Pacific Islands Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region on **5-6 August, 2021**.

Please advise nomination of MOU Contact Points and Non-Signatory Contact Points if relevant. Also please advise NGOs and other stakeholders in your countries to save the date for this important meeting, which will provide an opportunity to chart a way forward for the conservation of Pacific whales and dolphins.

The Action Plan for the MoU, which I hope will be endorsed at this meeting, should focus on the key actions that are urgently needed to enable these species to thrive for the enjoyment of future generations and help identify funding sources to support the necessary actions.

I commend MOS 4 to all Member governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders as a framework for increased collaboration to protect the Pacific's iconic cetaceans at this critical time. A table listing signatories and non-signatories is appended.

Yours sincerely,

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

Kosi Latu
Director General

Att.: Signatories to the Pacific Cetacean MoU

Signatories to the Pacific Cetacean MOU:

Country/Territory	Signatory/non-signatory
Australia	signatory
American Samoa	see USA
Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands	see USA
Cook Islands	signatory
Federated States of Micronesia	signatory
Fiji	signatory
France	signatory
French Polynesia	see France
Guam	see USA
Kiribati	non-signatory
Marshall Islands	non-signatory
Nauru	non-signatory
New Caledonia	see France
New Zealand	signatory
Niue	signatory
Palau	non-signatory
Papua New Guinea	signatory
Samoa	signatory
Solomon Islands	signatory
Tonga	signatory
Tokelau	non-signatory
Tuvalu	signatory
United Kingdom (for Pitcairn)	signatory
United States of America	signatory
Vanuatu	signatory
Wallis and Futuna	see France