



Role of the recycling association in the Pacific, Examples of 3R+Return good practices for promoting recycling activities by private sector

KEY WORDS

3R+Return/
association/
recycling
Public-Private
Partnership/
Instruments/
Deposit System

Recycling
Regional
network/
Economic
Container



Samoa



Vanuatu



Solomon Islands



Papua New Guinea



Tonga

Type of Document

Good practice sheet

Target Audience

Officials of PICs, Recyclers,
Collectors, Private Sector,
Donors

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Leading Agency(s)

Samoa: Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association

Vanuatu: Vanuatu Recyclers and Waste Management Association

Solomon: Solomon Islands Recycling and Waste Management Association

Papua New Guinea: PNG Waste Management & Recyclers Association

Tonga: Tonga Recycling Association

Location/ Geographical Coverage

Samoa: Apia

Vanuatu: Port Villa

Solomon: Honiara

Papua New Guinea: Port Moresby

Tonga: Tongatapu



Measures/ Approach

Recycling activities are imperative to waste management in the Pacific Island Countries in addressing some waste issues from the combined rising populations, lifestyle changes and improving economic developments. The shipment of containers of waste from the countries for overseas recycling facilities reduces the pressure on limited government waste collection and disposal services, lack of expertise to upcycle waste and insufficient resources to manage generated waste in a sound manner.

However, recycling is largely driven by local private businesses, who mostly focus on valuable scrap metals. There are only one to ten private recycling companies in each Pacific Island Country with most of them having inadequate capacity in terms of appropriate equipment, facilities and other resources. The collaboration among the local recyclers is limited, as they mostly compete for the same targeted valuable metals, making information sharing and business alliances on exporting recyclable materials difficult.

J-PRISM recognized the importance of private recycling companies in improving waste management in the region through the good impact of their ongoing recovery of scrap metals and shipment overseas. JPRISM identified the needed improvement for supporting these private recycling operations – improvement of the recycling technology, facilities and equipment. However, this is impossible in line with JICA technical cooperation project implementation rule, to support directly in private companies.

One of the approaches considered by J-PRISM II was for the private recycling companies to voluntarily create an association (NPO), where JICA supports can be channelled to support the members activities for the organization.

Based on the above background, the establishment of recycling associations in the Pacific was based on the objectives as follows:

1. To improve recognition and support by governments of recyclers operations.
2. To represent the voice of Waste Management and Recycling advocates as a Nonprofit organization
3. To strengthen Appropriate Waste Management and Recycling capacity in each country
4. To develop projects and initiatives to pilot different recycling approaches in collaboration with Government and development partners
5. To strengthen network with each recycling association in the Pacific and enhance appropriate waste management and recycling capacity in the region

When J-PRISM II commenced, the above objectives and approach were discussed with recyclers from various countries since 2017, and as a result, the

Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association (Hereinafter referred to as SRWMA) was established in 2018 as the first recycling association in the Pacific.

SRWMA followed the path of activities such as recruiting members, holding establishment ceremony and donor dialogue, formulating a 10-year strategic plan, in collaboration with the relevant government officials, private companies, and donors.

As the methodology for implementing association setup was developed through SRWMA's activities, J-PRISM II used the experiences and lessons learnt to establish recycling associations in Vanuatu and Solomon in 2019, and in PNG and Tonga in 2021.

Stakeholders/ Actors

Recycling Association is a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) consisting of private recyclers, manufacturers, retailers and environmental NPO groups etc. Having key government agencies involved as affiliated or observer members is critical for the needed collaboration at the national and local levels to the associations' activities. For instance, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment for Samoa, Department of Environment Protection and Conservation and Port Vila City Council for Vanuatu, and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management and Honiara City Council for the Solomon Islands.

The organization structure of the existing associations in line with their constitutions has the designated voluntary positions for the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Executive Committee to manage the associations affairs. Samoa has a patronage, which is currently designated to the Samoa Prime Minister, but without any specific roles to play. This is not a national legal requirement for an association but is an initiative of Samoa to get some support from the government of the day on their pressing issues. This works well in Samoa as the former PM during the SIDS meeting in Samoa in 2018, provided a positive response to the request by SRWMA for Samoa. The situation can be different from country to country, but political support is needed for many pressing issues, the recycling industry have in the region. Although the private sector is the main actor for recycling in PICs, without the cooperation of the government sector, the recycling association cannot function efficiently to cover most of the problematic waste streams.



Launching ceremony of the Vanuatu Recyclers Association (VRWMA), held on November 25, 2019 in Port Villa, Vanuatu. Honorable Charlot Salwai former Prime Minister, attended and congratulated the Association set-up.

Results/ Outputs

Based on the highlighted key objectives of JPRISM II Association Support, the following results have been noted:

Objective 1: To Improve recognition and support by governments of recyclers operations

One of the objectives of establishing associations is to improve recognition and support from governments of recycling operations driven by private companies to address the issues affecting their operations for supporting arrangements and policies:

Samoa

The government of Samoa recognized the importance of the roles of recycling firms by:

- Providing government lands within the designated waste disposal site land area under special long term and renewable lease arrangements to SRWMA and its members to support their recycling activities. Arrangements have also been made by government to allow the members to recover potential recyclable waste that are disposed at the waste landfill area.
- Recognition of SRWMA members under the government annual national awards for the past 2 years 2019 and 2021.
- Acceptance by the government of the request by SRWMA to introduce a CDL. The former PM indicated publicly his support of introducing CDL and follow up arrangements were made with the appropriate government agencies.

Objective 2: To represent the voice of Waste Management and Recycling advocates as a Nonprofit organization

The recognition of recyclers and waste management advocates voice in national laws, policies and plans development is another important objective of setting up associations. The progress is encouraging with the inclusion of associations in any waste and environmental related developments and projects for their inputs:

Vanuatu 🇻🇺

- Vanuatu Recyclers and Waste Management Association (Hereinafter referred to as VRWMA) members have been invited by the government through the Department of Environment Protection and Conservation (DEPC) in a special working group established for the development of a Container Deposit System. The members have been actively engaged in ongoing meetings of the group since 2019.
- DEPC has also invited VRWMA to public consultations on other waste management projects, which enable VRWMA to contribute with emphasis on waste recycling aspects.



Solomon 🇸🇧

- Solomon Islands Recycling and Waste Management Association (Hereinafter referred to as SIRWMA) has been invited meetings by the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Management (MEDCM) to involve in the waste and environment related projects consultation, development and planning stages such as ADB Roadmap for Waste Management etc.

Samoa 🇸🇲

- SRWMA was able to create a platform that connect other companies in the same industry and convey its voice on waste management and recycling to

the government, donors and societies.



SRWMA celebrated Global recycling day on 18th March 2021 in collaboration with MNRE, Schools, SPREP, and Donors.

Objective 3: To strengthen Appropriate Waste Management and Recycling capacity in each country

As one of the objectives of association support by J-PRISM II, there has been good progress made in the enhanced capacity of associations through the available support they are now able to access and receive from donor development partners. This was not possible in the past due to the strict rules of the donors like JICA, where supporting private business operations are not allowed. The established associations as non-profit NGOs are now qualified under many donors support for collaboration as discussed below:

Samoa

SRWMA has received the following supports from a numbers of development partners, which improve its capacity:

- SRWMA was given a grant of SAT\$477,097 (USD 190,123) in March 2021 provided to them under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (GGP) by the Embassy of Japan to construct the recycling facility for Plastics recycle.



SRWMA Recycling Facility Construction Project's Handing over ceremony was held on November 25, 2021

- Funding support received from UNDP, British High Commission, US Embassy on Grass recycling, and from Coca-Cola Foundation for public relations for promoting recycling on bottle containers.
- Creating an employment opportunity for people with disabilities in the field of waste management and recycling, which supports them with the manual sorting and processing of waste.



Objective 4: To develop projects and initiatives to pilot different recycling approaches in collaboration with Government and development partners

Another objective of the association support work by J-PRISM II is to develop projects and initiatives to pilot recycling approaches in collaboration with governments and other development partners. The progress made is summarized below:

SRWMA/J-PRISM II Pilot Project

SRWMA Pilot Project on recycling promotion has been conducted together with J-PRISM II since 2020.

- Target wastes are waste oil and plastics (PET bottles, Indoor units of Air Conditioner). To verify economic efficiency and operational issues, we collect and process the target wastes for 6 months in 2021-2022.
- Procuring the machinery (Crushing machine, Extruder) from Japan to process PET bottles and Indoor unit of Air Conditioners.
- Planning the future collaboration with other development partners to proceed the collection of waste oil, recycling on PET bottles and Indoor units of Air Conditioner.



Waste oil collection and storage PP has been implemented for 1 month to verify SRWMA's current collection and storage capacity



Machines (Crushing machine and Extruder) have arrived in SRWMA for use in plastics recycling pilot project in January, 2022

PET Bottle to Bottle recycling initiative in Vanuatu, Samoa and Solomon

For used PET bottles, which had low economic value and were difficult to recycle, were exported to a recycler in Australia through VRWMA, SRWMA in collaboration with IUCN's Plastic Waste Free Islands project and other development partner's collaboration. BJS, a member of SIRWMA in Solomon, exported collected PET bottles to Australian recycler as part of its trial:

- In Vanuatu, the first container of PET bottles was exported from Vanuatu to Australia in July 2021 for bottle-to-bottle recycling. This was a collaboration of many actors including IUNC, World Vision, the ANZ Bank, the Plastic Waste Free islands project, Swire Shipping (through the Moana Taka initiative), Ifira Stevedoring. This initiative was driven by several of the VRWMA members – RecycleCorp, VESS and Vanuatu Beverages.
- In Samoa, a full SRWMA 20ft container of baled PET bottles was also shipped to Australia in collaboration with IUCN, Swire Shipping (through the Moana Taka initiative) in October 2021 for bottle-to-bottle recycling.
- In Solomon Islands, BJS a member of SIRWMA funded the shipping and logistics support to send a 20ft full container of baled PET bottles to Australia as a trial for their planned PET recycling operations. The PET bottles were from

the baled PET stockpiles at Honiara City Council's Waste Educational Center funded by LEAF (a past JICA Project). The facility is now a property of HCC including a plastic baler which was made available to BJS for its use by HCC, under a SIRWMA-HCC and J-PRISM II collaboration.



Vanuatu Plastic export to Australia for Bottle-to-Bottle recycling in July 2021

Success Factors

Good Governance

VRWMA has shown good practices of good governance in running the association and its activities. Right from the start of the association existence, the association has shown great effort in keeping with the following good practices in keeping the association functions well:

- Conduct of monthly meetings to discuss their activities and matters pertaining to the association.
- Meeting minutes are well documented and circulated to all the members with follow up actions highlighted to remind the members.
- Final decisions on any subject or matter are debated before putting into a vote to make a final decision.
- Financial Statements prepared by the Treasurer are included in the circulated monthly meetings minutes.
- The conduct of monthly meetings, follow the usual procedures of formal meetings from opening, discussions and closing.
- All registered members pay their registration fees and annual membership fees every year.
- Annual General Meetings have also been conducted since the existence of VRWMA, where VRWMA positions are re-elected. All the reports are presented by the President, Secretary and Treasurer based on their obligations in the constitution.
- The President, Secretary, Treasurer and assigned committee members are all actively involved in the performance of their tasks despite their own busy schedules in their different businesses.

Nomination of Appropriate Person for Executive Members – Leadership & Management Qualities and Experience

Selecting members to key associations positions should be based on the leadership and management personalities and experiences of the members. The success of VRWMA as an organization operating in line with good governance and management principles is largely due to the great leadership and management skills of the association President, Secretary, Treasurer and other executive committee members. All the members occupying these positions of VRWMA manage their own private businesses and have good academic backgrounds and past working experiences in management and leadership positions. They bring with them the wealth of experiences and skills to makings VRWMA's progress in a professional manner.

Government and Development Partners Support

The highlighted good progress made by established association have been successful with the great support from donors and the government, especially for the SRWMA in Samoa. The support for lands by the government of Samoa, as well as technical backup by donors like J-PRISM II etc., contribute to the good progress made so far. It proves the importance of the collaboration and partnership among the recyclers, government and donors for any good progress made to recycling in PICs.

Constraints

Small Number of Recycling Companies

It can be a challenge to set up a Recycling Association in some countries if having one or few recycling company. In Vanuatu, it was difficult to promote the establishment of VRWMA during initial visits and discussions in 2017. Vanuatu has only one recycler and the recycler did not want to be involved due to its own busy daily commitment. One solution that was considered was the inclusion of waste management to the proposed association to include other related waste management areas - waste reduction, reuse and environmental cleaning up for keeping Vanuatu's environment clean. At present, the current members of VRWMA consists of one recycler, three environmental and waste management consulting firms, three waste and environmental NGOs, and seven importers and manufacturers of beverage products with interest to manage their generated waste. VRWMA now has the highest number of registered main members at 14, not including affiliated members.

Limited Control by Recycling and Waste Business Members If Dominated by Other Members with Different Interests

It can be difficult for an association to maintain its recycling and waste management purpose and goal if there are few recyclers and waste businesses in an association. There is a risk of other non-recycling and waste management members controlling the decision of the association and can affect the

direction of the association and its original purpose of establishment. A solution JPRISM II used in some cases is a clear presentation made during the interim meetings to explain the purpose of setting up associations to support the works of existing recyclers in solving their issues and challenges, with strong recommendation for associations to be led by recyclers who have the full knowledge of the complexities associated with recycling and areas for improvement. This is in line with the overall purpose of establishing associations. In some cases, some recyclers may not want to take the leadership roles for their own personal reasons. This can affect the good influence associations have to recycling operations without the leadership of recyclers to guide the associations directions. Leading by non-recyclers may also work, but lessons learnt from existing associations suggest some challenges and difficulties to make positive impacts to actual existing recycling operations.

Lack of Leadership, Management and Commitment from the Members

Setting up of an association is a short-term task but running an association in the long run requires members that are committed to lead an association in achieving its set goal and objectives in line with its Constitution and Strategic Plan, which guide the works of the association. The VRWMA highlighted examples above suggest a good example of an association that it is led and managed well by its management team in line with its constitution and strategic plan. The members are committed to make them available to support the association's activities including monthly meetings and follow up tasks, regardless of their own businesses' commitments.

If there are leadership and management issues due to the lack of commitment from executive team members to lead the association in the implementation of that role under the Constitution, the strategic actions will be impractical. With the poor leadership and management in place, it affects the active participation from the association members who joined the association for a reason.

Strategic Plan Implementation and Monitoring

A number of established associations seems to struggle in following the directions and planned activities in line with their developed strategic plans. This can link to some factors as highlighted above on project management and good governance. A strong part of some associations is their engagement on implementing of recycling and public awareness activities as part of their strategic plans. Improving other organizational aspects could be beneficial for the operation of the association in line with its capacity and available limited resources.

Membership Fee Setting and Collection

VRWMA and SRWMA has shown confirmation and evidence of the registered

members making their registration and annual membership fee payments which is the main source of funding support to their activities.

Although the collection of membership fees is the one of the highest priorities for the operation of the organization, if there is the lack of leadership and governance mentioned above makes it impossible to collect or revise the membership fees, and the activities of the organization will not be carried out as planned.

Market Conditions for Recyclable Resources Are Constantly Changing

When Recycling associations plan to export plastics, metals, batteries, waste oil etc., due to social and economic factors, the volume, amount, and export destinations are always subject to major changes. Based on that, the activity and business operation of the recycling association tend to get the increased cost burden on the business environment, and the damage to profit sources.

The Recycling Association is not an organization operated for the purpose of running the recycle business as a private business, but the recycling associations of each country carry out voluntary activities to circulate low-economic value wastes that cannot be handled by each private recycling company in the PICs. It is a Non-Profit Organization operated for the purpose of achieving it while receiving technical and financial support from donors. Recycling associations in each country need to share with all stakeholders that these constraints are premised.

Sustainability

Securing Activity Fees through Collection of Registration Fees and Membership Fees

SRWMA, SIRWMA and VRWMA all have strategic plans with proposed strategic measures for the sustainable operations of the association activities, which include the following charging systems. The cost setting is based on the nature of activities the associations are engaged to. To secure the activity fees is one of the highest priority roles for executive members to conduct their planned activities based on the association's regular meeting results.

- Registration Fee for all members.
- Annual membership fees for all members

Plan and Review of Income and Expenditure Plan

With limited revenue support for Associations, they must carefully plan and review their incomes, received funding support and expenditure plan regularly to understand their financial capacity from time to time. This ensures that the association activities are smoothly progressed and more importantly avoid any adverse impacts and pressure to the individual members recycling business operations. It is beneficial for the association activities to contribute to their recycling businesses success, but not the opposite. Some good suggestions

include:

- Make sure the association financial basement is sustainable and don't waste money – question the value for money aspect of any proposed activity.
- Consider the Business Case of any Project before committing to it (Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Technical aspects). Any project the association will commit will cost the association in terms of time and spent money.

Securing Activity Fees through Government and Donors Support

Based on the implementation results of J-PRISM II, we can confirm that the importance of the collaboration and partnership among the recyclers, government and donors to proceed any recycling activities in PICs.

Recycling Associations need to actively report on its activities and share information with the Government and Donors, which greatly affects the sustainability of the association.

Replicability and/or Up-scaling

It is possible to replicate the establishment of a recycling association in a country where there are local recycling companies in the country and they themselves recognize that it is necessary to establish a recycling association in order to develop a regional recycling network and get technical and financial backup from the Government and Donors.

Lessons Learnt

Importance of Connecting the Private Sector, which is the Recycling Practitioner

Private recycler companies already have a network to export recyclable resources and are the practitioners who know the most about the processing practices for recycling. It can be said that the social significance of creating an organization in cooperation with manufacturers, universities, environmental NPOs, etc., and creating a working place where they can work together as a recycling association member is great.

Overall Good Impact to Recycling and Waste Management

The establishment of associations has an overall good impact to waste management in countries with associations. Scrap metals has always been the main focus of recyclers in PICs in the past. In recent days in countries with associations, there is a rising interest of recyclers to expand their operations to other waste streams. In addition, there is a similar interest from non-recycling businesses to engage in providing solutions to their own generated businesses waste. While it may not good for existing recyclers, the overall impact is good for the countries and the environment to have competition, especially for other waste streams with low economy value. It is also a positive sign for some local businesses who are committed to take actions in managing

their own waste as part of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) principle.

Conclusion

Recycling Associations in the Pacific Island Countries Are Halfway Down the Road to Great Success

It was possible to establish a number of recycling associations in a relatively short period of time under J-PRISM II during the past five years. However, more works are needed to support these established associations in order to operate sustainably in the medium to long term, as well as to extend this initiative to other Pacific Island Countries.

The establishment and activities of the Recycling Association is expected to be a great driving force for building a regional recycling network in the Pacific.



Contributions to SDGs

This recycling association setting contributes to the **Target 12.5 By 2030**, *substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse* of the **Goal 12 Responsible consumption and production**.

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Publisher

J-PRISM: The Project for Promotion of Regional
Initiative on Solid Waste Management, JICA: Japan
International Cooperation Agency

Relevant Websites/ Resources

SRWMA
[\(1\) Samoa Recycling & Waste Management Association - SRWMA | Facebook](#)

VRWMA
[https://vanuaturecyclingandwaste.org/Vanuatu Recyclers and Waste Management Association - Posts](https://vanuaturecyclingandwaste.org/Vanuatu_Recyclers_and_Waste_Management_Association_Posts) | Facebook

SIRWMA
[\(1\) Solomon Islands Recyclers and Waste Management Association | Facebook](#)

Acknowledgements

SPREP: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
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