

Agenda item 9.2 : Overview of Regional Goal 2 - Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilient island and ocean ecosystems

Purpose:

1. To provide the Meeting with a further update on implementation of Regional Goal 2 for the biennial period 2024 - 2025.

RO2.1: Effectively manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems

2. Regional and national activities EU funded €12 million Pacific Biodiversity and Sustainable Land-Seascapes (Pacific BioScapes) Programme commenced implementation in 2023.
3. Kiwa Initiative technical assistance is provided to beneficiaries (national and local authorities, NGOs) to develop and implement nature-based solution activities for to enhance ecosystem and community resilience through tailored support and capacity development opportunities. SPREP, SPC and IUCN Oceania are key partners in the Kiwa Initiative.
4. The EU funded Pacific European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme received a no-cost extension approval from the EU in late 2022. As a result, the By-catch and Integrated Ecosystem Management Initiative (KRA5) will continue to be implemented until April 2025. Discussions are ongoing with the EU and PEUMP on the scope of a second phase of PEUMP to begin following the end of the current PEUMP in 2025.
5. As part of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan (PACRAP) implementation, SPREP in partnership with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa successfully completed a pilot Pacific ReefCloud monitoring project. The project strengthened monitoring capacities through training, stakeholder collaboration, data and information sharing on coral reef status and trends, and improved data management strategies informed by scientific understanding and traditional knowledge. The partnership with AIMS is continuing. Further work to support the implementation of the PACRAP are underway through projects in development with partners including the Great Barrier Reef Foundation on the Resilient Reef Initiative – Era 2, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) on a Pacific Ocean Initiative and through a UNDP-GEF (International Water Programme) proposal on “Enabling blended finance and market-based solutions for enhanced conservation and management of coral reef ecosystems in Polynesian SIDS”. This project builds on and expands on the recent GFCR’s work in the Pacific for Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Micronesia Coral Reefs, and will upscale it to the 5 GEF-eligible Polynesia countries, the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.

6. The Government of Australia has funded a Pacific Youth Wetlands Coordinator to be based at SPREP for 12 months to support a youth network that mobilises youth engaged in wetlands in the Pacific, with links to the Ramsar Convention. The recruitment of the youth wetland coordinator has been completed. The wetlands coordinator will also work closely with the Pacific BioScapes funded PIRT Youth Coordinator to strengthen Pacific youth engagement in both the biodiversity and wetland forums.
7. The German International Climate Initiative funded GIZ-SPREP-SPC *Management and Conservation of Blue Carbon ecosystems in Pacific Island Countries* (MACBLUE) project commenced in 2023 and implementation is underway.

RO2.2: Support the conservation and sustainable use of marine, coastal, and terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity, consistent with regional and international commitments

8. The Secretariat continues to support Pacific island Member engagement in the Convention on Biological Diversity. A Pacific Preparatory Meeting will be convened in Samoa for Pacific Parties in September 2024 to prepare for COP-16 to be held in Colombia.
9. The Secretariat has engaged in processes to support implementation and achievement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted at CBD COP15. SPREP is represented on the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal GBF, Informal Advisory Group for Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas, Global Partnership for the implementation of Target 3, and has joined the NBSAP Accelerator Initiative.
10. SPREP continues to implement its component of the IUCN EU- funded Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme - Phase 2. The programme received a 2-year no-cost extension, approved by the EU in late 2022, to June 2025.
11. SPREP continues to provide secretariat support to the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT), focusing on implementation of the Pacific Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2020-2025.

RO2.3: Prevent the extinction of threatened species and support measures to sustain their conservation status

12. The revised Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme (PIRMSP) was completed in 2022 and endorsed at the 2023 SPREP Meeting by Members. SPREP with assistance from the EU funded Pacific BioScapes Programme is undertaking a variety of national and regional activities to implement objectives in the Action Plans in the Programme, to improve management and conservation of threatened marine species. The Pacific Island Regional Marine Species Programme 2022-2026 can be [downloaded](#) in English or French. A range of activities continue to be implemented through the EU and Sweden funded PEUMP BIEM Initiative to address by-catch of threatened species in commercial fisheries in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Species activities have also commenced under the Pacific BioScapes Programme.

13. PEUMP BIEM continues to provide significant capacity support for Pacific Parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to meet their CITES obligations to protect endangered species involved in international trade.

RO2.4: Significantly reduce the socio-economic and ecological impact of invasive species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate priority species

14. SPREP is providing significant support to its member countries and territories to reduce the impact of invasive species. Activities continue to be implemented in the GEF6 project Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific, and the EDF11 OCT PROTEGE programme. 105 islands in the Pacific are now rat-free, with the delivery of an additional 28 rat eradication operations in the islands of Wallis and Futuna, Tonga, RMI, Tuvalu, and French Polynesia. 5 feasibility studies were completed for the removal of invasive vertebrates from islands in RMI, Samoa and from whole countries and territories such as Niue and Tokelau. Active biological control of invasive plants is evident in 15 member countries and territories. Restoration plans are being implemented in 9 priority ecological sites to ensure biodiversity protection and restoration of ecosystem function.
15. The Pacific Regional Invasive Management Species Support Service programme has been greatly supported in enabling effective assistance to SPREP members, including the additional funding provided by the Government of New Zealand for the PRISMSS Restoring Island Resilience Project, which addresses the combined threats of climate change and invasive species. This will fund a further 23 islands for rat eradication and will progress the continuity of support and extension of PRISMSS programmes into new countries and territories.

Challenges and Opportunities

16. Pressures on Pacific biodiversity and ecosystems and the services they provide that support development in the region continue to increase. This includes the combined challenges of climate change, deforestation, invasive species, biodiversity loss and degradation of coastal ecosystems that are critical for marine health and community food security.
17. Nevertheless, increasing national and international commitments to the region provide opportunities to increase the pace of positive change and SPREP is working with its partners, donor countries and national governments to ensure that these commitments have impact.
18. Current initiatives and those in development will have a positive impact on meeting the challenges we face. These include PEUMP and its next phase that will focus on ocean governance, Pacific BioScapes, increased support from New Zealand for invasive species management, Kiwa Initiative projects, blue carbon ecosystems, among others. Another example is the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan that provides an opportunity to form a cooperative regional programme to support countries to meet the challenges. Many actors can deliver projects to assist Members and SPREP can provide a coordination role to attract major investment and to improve access to the latest science and technology to blended with traditional knowledge.

19. The Global Biodiversity Framework provides both a challenge and multiple opportunities to strengthen existing commitments and achieve GBF targets by working with our partners and existing mechanisms. The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation partnership can play a key role in implementing the GBF in the region.

Recommendation:

20. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:

- 1) **Note** the update on implementation on Regional Goal 2 activities for the biennial period 2024 to 2025.
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