

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP_6/9/14 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points and Partners, Maritime Focal Points, Noumea Conventions

DATE: 13 March 2025

CIRCULAR: 25/11

SUBJECT: **PacPlan Consultation with Noumea Convention, Operational Contacts and Heads of Pacific Maritime Agencies**

Dear Members,

The Secretariat has developed a proposal (Concept of Operations) for the delivery of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PacPlan) administration and technical services and are seeking commentary and critique on a proposed concept of operations to update and make more sustainable delivery of SPREP's support to PacPlan.

The Concept is primarily focusing on how SPREP can better support members, improved delivery, and confirmation of required funding. Please note, the concept does not revisit the current PacPlan document or its operation, nor does it address where funding will be sourced.

Once feedback is consolidated, SPREP will present a proposal to the 2025 Noumea Convention Conference of the Parties (COP) for endorsement and mandate to find the support and funding to build a new and sustainable PacPlan capability in SPREP.

Context

The PacPlan (2019) is the latest iteration of a 25-year-old regional mechanism to promote and implement regional cooperation in maritime emergency and marine spill prevention, planning, response and recovery (PPRR). PacPlan is intended to build capability and facilitate regional and international assistance for pollution incidents. However, it is now facing even greater challenges.

PacPlan has three components that need to be properly resourced and funded to work in tandem to deliver the greatest benefit to members: the 14 national country and 7 territory members; the 4 operational metropolitan members; and SPREP, as the central and core administrator and technical adviser. Members and metropolitan countries are grouped (zoned) to reflect their geopolitical connections and interests; and so, their ability to provide primary response capability within their geographical zones.

Metropolitan Member	Primary responder for country Member	Primary responder for Territory Member
Australia	Nauru; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; Kiribati	
New Zealand	Cook Islands; Fiji; Niue; Samoa; Tonga	Tokelau
United States of America	Micronesia; Marshall Islands; Palau	Northern Mariana Islands; Guam; American Samoa
France		French Polynesia; New Caledonia; Wallis and Futuna

Members (countries and territories) work with the metropolitan countries to develop their own spill preparedness and response capacity and capability. These include bilateral and multilateral funding and other technical programmes supplied as part of development support. This support can include assistance with planning, training, exercising, equipment and services provision. Often, these are targeted by the metropolitan members at the countries (and territories) for which they have primary response responsibility, to make the metropolitan response capability (when activated) more transparent, efficient, and effective. These contributions rarely have wider regional benefits, and can lead to inconsistency across the region, between zones.

SPREP has conducted an analysis of PacPlan's challenges and shortcomings. It has presented these to various Pacific and maritime forums over the past two years for comment. SPREP has sought a mandate from Noumea Convention members to develop options on how to overcome these challenges, and become the PacPlan centre of expertise and excellence the framework requires. The proposals build from basic administration to more sophisticated technical delivery.

A future more capable SPREP

In proposing Concept of Operations, SPREP believes that it needs adequate funding (and/or technical support) to deliver its expected administration and regional technical functions. An increased SPREP capability can be used to increase regional capability. SPREP can support members directly, and arrange that response services can be supplied regionally, rather than trying to replicate these in every member country.

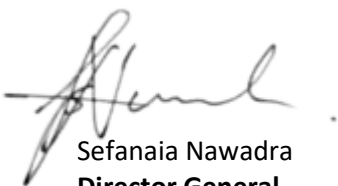
Please note, a key assumption of these options is sufficient resourcing (funding) for delivery. However, the actual source(s) of this funding is not addressed here, only estimated levels.

Therefore, in addressing and critiquing this proposed Concept of Operations, we ask members consider both what it would mean for them as members and for the wider region, for SPREP to have enhanced capability to undertake its functions and roles. Each level of the proposal has implications, not only for regional delivery, but also for SPREP ability to service individual support to members, beyond that currently (or potentially) supplied by their metropolitan partners.

Consultation

SPREP welcomes responses on the proposed Concept of Operations, including addressing intent, content, structure, and outcomes, sent to Paul Irving (pauli@sprep.org) and Mohammed Zullah (zullahm@sprep.org) by Friday 18 April 2025. SPREP will review and assess all responses, and use these to amend any final proposal put to the Noumea Convention 2025 COP.

Yours sincerely,



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BN/PI/dt