



2007

Annual Report

of the Secretariat of the
Pacific Regional Environment
Programme

Conserving and managing our
Pacific environment in changing times



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Foreword

by Guam, Chair of the 18th SPREP Meeting

Our Pacific islands' environment is challenged today as never before. Global climate change, increased solid waste, marine pollution, loss of ecosystems and biodiversity, fisheries depletion, invasive species — the list goes on.

These are problems that fail to respect territorial boundaries. They are of as much concern to us in Guam as they are to our friends in Tonga, nearly 6,000 km to the south. It is critical, therefore, that the countries and territories of our region work together to arrive at common solutions to these common problems. SPREP provides the primary forum for us to do so.

Without SPREP it is hard to imagine how we could maintain a regular dialogue with our partners throughout the region, who may be geographically distant yet similar in most other respects, when it comes to environmental issues.



The benefits of this cooperation are clear. For example, as you probably know, we in Guam have quite a bit of experience in the area of invasive species. Through SPREP we can share the knowledge acquired in our attempts at brown tree snake control with, for example, the government of Samoa as they attempt to control the spread of the myna bird. Similarly, we stand to learn invaluable lessons from SPREP members on the front lines of global climate change, such as Tuvalu, in how they adapt to the rising seas.

We clearly have a common interest in developing solutions to our shared problems whether they are climate change or marine pollution. By joining our voices we can ensure we are heard in the global debate on these issues — issues where the solutions are well beyond our abilities individually to control. Alone, the rest of the world may view us as insignificant yet beautiful specks in the Pacific. Together we can be a prominent force in the global debate.

The need for a strong regional organization is self-evident. Yet, contributions of SPREP members represent only a fraction of not only our respective overall budgets, but also of our expenditure on environmental protection. We must do more to enable SPREP to assume a greater role in its area of work. At the same time, SPREP must continue to take stock of how it can make the most of the limited resources at its disposal and ensure that it adapts to best meet the needs of its members.

I am deeply proud of Guam's membership and participation in SPREP and honored to serve as chairperson of the annual meeting at such a critical time. I wholeheartedly endorse the report before you today and I look forward to working with my colleagues throughout the region to ensure that the organization adapts and is strengthened to lead us in addressing the rapidly-evolving slate of environmental issues we all face.

Lorilee Crisostomo
Director, Guam Environmental Protection Agency
Chair, 18th SPREP Meeting



Above: Chair of the 18th Meeting, Lorilee Crisostomo of Guam,
Right: Images from Guam.



“Alone, the rest of the world may view us as insignificant yet beautiful specks in the Pacific. Together we can be a prominent force in the global debate.”



Introduction

by the Director

SPREP Director Asterio Takesy visits a phosphate mine in Nauru.

It gives me great pleasure to present Members with the annual report on activities of the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme during 2007. Work during the past year focused on our key responsibilities of protecting and preserving the Pacific environment for present and future generations.

We were reminded in 2007 as never before that all environmental issues are interconnected and interrelated. The state of our region's coral reefs provides a potent example. The rapid decline in the Pacific's reefs, and indeed those throughout the world, can be traced to a combination of virtually all environmental factors, from climate change to unsustainable land-based activities. In many issue areas, such as protection of reefs, progress in addressing one cause is tempered by setbacks in our efforts to address another. The need for a holistic approach to environmental protection is clear.

We must therefore make sure that in improving administrative management and oversight that we do not compartmentalise our activities and therefore fail to properly integrate our organisational approach to reflect the cross-cutting nature of most environmental issues. Otherwise we will never succeed in our appointed task.

The planet offered dramatic evidence in 2007 that we have little time to spare in our efforts to combat threats such as climate change, pollution and loss of ecosystems. It also reminded us that virtually all aspects of environment and development are inextricably linked. We continued to refine SPREP's organisational structure to better adapt to these new realities.

SPREP strengthened its bonds with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the primary international financing mechanism for the climate convention and the environment as a whole. The presence of the GEF CEO and Chairperson at the SPREP annual meeting is indicative of the GEF's commitment to the work of SPREP and its need to stay engaged with the Pacific.

While international developments such as this were encouraging, so too were key regional initiatives, such as the results of the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas held in Alotau, Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea. The major outcome of the meeting was a revised *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation 2008–2012: Empowering local people*,

communities and Pacific institutions. In addition to the substantive outcomes, it was instrumental in enhancing the region's networking capability by bringing together those with common interests, especially communities, in protecting the region's rich, yet fragile, biodiversity.

In addition to regional meetings, SPREP continued its work within member countries. A notable example was the convening of a comprehensive environmental conference in Tokelau. Donors, environmental workers, government officials and members of the community came together to share ideas and express their concerns. It was an extremely productive method of work that resulted in new understandings by everyone involved of the full range of issues they face.

SPREP continued to forge bonds of close cooperation and collaboration with its partner agencies in the region through the CROP process. The meeting of the heads of CROP agencies held during 2007 resulted in our organisations working more closely together whilst reducing duplication of effort.

The past year saw the successful conclusion of SPREP's participation in the International Waters Project. The six-year project stands as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved in our region through constructive engagement of SPREP, member governments and the international community. With active components in waste, fisheries and freshwater, the IWP also demonstrated a new approach to addressing interconnectivity.

While the year marked the end of one landmark initiative, it saw the formation of another with many of the same participants – the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP). The dramatic rise in fossil fuel prices has reinvigorated interest in renewable energy, and PIGGAREP will serve as the centrepiece of our future work to not only protect our environment but move to a more sustainable energy future.

The year was a watershed for climate policy, not only in the Pacific but also worldwide. The historic agreement reached by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December in Bali signalled a new global commitment to address climate change. I am delighted with the outcome of this meeting and with the constructive role SPREP played in facilitating Pacific island delegations to the COP.

The strong bonds of cooperation established a year earlier with the People's Republic of China continued in 2007, with a number of new donors sponsoring SPREP programmes. These included the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Packard Foundation, Christensen Foundation, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, US Forest Service, World Conservation Union — Oceania Office and the World Health Organisation.

The issues facing the Pacific are changing as never before. SPREP needs to be nimble in order to best orient itself to address new challenges. In particular, as our understanding of climate change matters improves we must ensure this is reflected in all affected program areas.

In 2007, we embarked on a landmark independent review process designed to ensure that we are helping our members in the most appropriate manner so that they can address the critical issues they will face in coming years. This exercise is now well underway with a final report expected by the time of the 2008 annual meeting.

With this I present to you the report of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme for 2007. I am confident that the organisation is in a better position to serve its members at the end of 2007 than ever before. That, of course, is our primary responsibility, and we owe you nothing less.

Asterio Takesy
Director



Pacific Futures

Programme

Introduction

The Pacific Futures Programme focuses on three key issue areas for the long-term future of the region's environment and its peoples: Climate Change; Pollution and Waste, and Environmental Governance.

Climate Change is increasingly being seen as the key global issue of our time. The President of the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Bali in December 2007 described Climate Change as "...the defining human development challenge of the 21st Century."

For the Pacific the issue is particularly crucial, as Pacific Island states are highly vulnerable due to a combination of factors, including low-lying topography, coastal populations, fragile ecosystems and limited human capacity. Pacific leaders now recognise that climate change will affect all sectors: coastal settlements and infrastructure, health, fisheries, agriculture/food security, biodiversity, and potentially the very existence of some states.

For SPREP this means that climate change issues have high priority, with SPREP also having the mandate to take the lead on this issue amongst the Regional Agencies of the Pacific.

Pollution and waste continues to be an ongoing threat to for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). Increasing populations and the move to imported consumer goods create a situation of increasing waste needing more sophisticated management responses. SPREP is helping members to address this through regional collaboration and capacity building in solid waste management. This is supplemented by targeted campaigns focusing on specific streams of hazardous wastes and preventing marine pollution.

The Programme also addresses Environmental Governance. This encompasses a range of cross-cutting activities relating to international policy and environmental law, promoting tools for good decision-making and helping to apply resources to build capacity on the ground in the region.

Climate Change

The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report highlighted the scientific consensus that the global climate is changing, bringing particular urgency to the need for adaptation initiatives in the region.

SPREP's climate work in 2007 focused on international negotiations, adaptation, renewable energy and ozone depletion, along with support for weather and climate observation in the region.

UNFCCC negotiations

In 2007 the UNFCCC negotiations focused on seeking a consensus agreement at the Conference of Parties (COP-13) in Bali. SPREP was involved in many of the preparatory activities and workshops, including providing support to the Pacific island country delegations to the Framework Convention's subsidiary bodies and to the COP itself. In addition SPREP took advantage of an AOSIS preparatory meeting in St Kitts and Nevis in November to convene a PICT preparatory meeting and consultation on the PIFACC Action Plan.

During the negotiations at the COP, SPREP provided detailed information on activities in the region so that PICT delegations could appropriately target various agenda items. This supported the active participation by Pacific Island Countries in the COP process. The Bali COP was deemed a success, with the adoption of the Bali Roadmap that sets out the process for negotiating a longer-term agreement beyond the Kyoto Protocol's expiry date of 2012 (see sidebar).

Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC) and Action Plan

SPREP has developed and published a regional Action Plan to implement PIFACC which was adopted by Forum Leaders in 2005.

The Action Plan is designed to contribute to the implementation of the Framework through setting out actions in response to meeting the key outcomes under each of the six Framework principles: 1) implementing adaptation measures; 2) governance and decision-making; 3) improving our understanding of climate change; 4) education, training and awareness; 5) contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction; and 6) partnerships and cooperation.

The Action Plan is regional in nature, with national activities complemented by regional support. It provides an indicative menu of options for action on climate change. By clearly identifying actual existing programmes and projects within a matrix of activities, it is expected that national officials and local stakeholders, as well as interested donor countries and partner organisations, can ensure greater leverage of resources to the region for climate change work. The matrix will serve as a tool to promote coordination between different initiatives.



COP 13 in Bali. Photo courtesy IISD.

The Bali Roadmap

The UNFCCC COP-13 adopted numerous important decisions, but the Bali Roadmap stands out as perhaps the most significant. At the heart of the decision is a "shared vision for long-term cooperative action, including a long-term global goal for emission reductions, to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention..." The decision includes a clear agenda for the key issues to be negotiated up to 2009: actions for adapting to the negative consequences of climate change, such as droughts and floods; ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; ways to widely deploy climate-friendly technologies; and financing of adaptation and mitigation measures.

Concluding negotiations in 2009 will ensure that the new deal can enter into force by 2013, following the expiry of the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol. While the roadmap outlines the scope of these future negotiations, in-depth discussions are expected at the four UNFCCC sessions scheduled for 2008.



Progress on the PACC Project during 2007

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project is a multi-million dollar regional project to support adaptation activities in the Pacific Islands region. It addresses adaptation across three main sectors: coastal infrastructure, food security and water management. The Project has been in development since 2005 and was recently approved for funding through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The PACC was initially scheduled to be submitted for consideration by the GEF Council in July 2007, however it was delayed in order to bring it under the umbrella of GEF-PAS. The delay provided an opportunity for the further development of detailed activities, budgets and implementation arrangements of PACC participating countries.

SPREP staff worked with three countries during the latter half of the year (Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu and PNG) in holding workshops and coordinating visits to pilot sites. Government and NGO representatives were present during these meetings, which garnered considerable interest particularly on the different roles of various stakeholders in implementation of the project at the national and community levels.

During the Bali COP, two further countries agreed to join PACC: the Marshall Islands and Palau. This now brings the total number of countries participating in the PACC to 13 and the total funding to US \$13,125,000.

The extended time for Project preparation also allowed time for improving alignment with other regional projects and programmes. In particular, considerable effort has gone toward harmonising with the regional Integrated Water Resource Management Project. This has been achieved through close cooperation between SPREP and regional agencies: SOPAC, SPC and PIFS.

The Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP)

The Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP), is a GEF-funded project that addresses barriers to the use of renewable energy in the region. It focuses on establishing country-specific priorities on the ground through a multi-stakeholder approach.



The overall strategy for implementing the PIGGAREP is based on the fact that for the “business-as-usual” scenario to change, politicians, senior government officials, the civil society and the general public must hear, touch, see and read about sustainable renewable energy projects operating and actually reducing the consumption of fossil fuel at the project sites.

To this end, the first six months of the PIGGAREP (July – December 2007) were dedicated as its Inception Phase (IP). The IP provided an opportunity for laying a solid foundation — an enabling environment for the efficient, effective and smooth implementation of the project.

The IP culminated in a regional Inception Workshop (IW) which confirmed the project management structure and established a Project Steering Committee with equal PICT and non-PICT participants. A financial structure was agreed comprising indicative financial allocations for each PICT. A work plan for each PICT and a consolidated work plan were agreed upon to reflect responsiveness to the specific needs of the PICTs. The individual country work plans are a balanced mix of activities on the ground to be delivered through hands-on involvement of national stakeholders and experts and with the support of regional and international stakeholders and experts.

The PI-GCOS instrument plan

The Pacific Islands Global Climate Observation System Instrument Plan (PI-GCOS IP) project that began in late 2004 in Vanuatu, Niue, and Samoa was expanded to Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga, and the Cook Islands in 2007. The PI-GCOS IP assists participating meteorological services in expanding local climate observing networks through the supply and installation of low-cost and low maintenance instruments fitted with data loggers. Currently the project is supporting meteorological services with tipping bucket rain-gauges and plans to expand to other instruments such as wind anemometers and/or thermometers in 2008. These highly calibrated instruments record and store data for later downloading at the convenience of meteorological services, a feature that makes such instruments particularly relevant to remote islands and atolls where meteorological services often cannot afford the costs of regular visits for data collection.

2007 PI-GCOS progress in Tuvalu

Tuvalu is comprised of nine atolls and islands scattered across a vast ocean area. The large distances between islands presents a challenge for the Tuvalu Meteorological Service (TMS) in collecting weather and climate data. The PI-GCOS Instrument Plan project assisted the TMS with the provision of four MetOne Tipping Bucket rain-gauges in early 2007. After the initial installation and training provided by the PI-GCOS Officer in Funafuti in March, the TMS completed the installation of the remaining rain gauges on the islands of Vaitupu, Nukufetau, and Nukulaelae in October. The TMS is now collecting rainfall data from these locations and are sharing this collected data on the PI-GCOS related PACRAIN database. The project is run in partnership with the Environmental Verification and Analysis Center (EVAC) and Department of Meteorology at the University of Oklahoma.

Meteorological services



Checking a tide gauge in Apia, Samoa.

In 2007 SPREP continued to facilitate joint US NOAA-WMO fellowships for weather forecasters from throughout the region to serve with the Pacific Training Desk. Two weather forecasters from Niue and New Caledonia were provided operational forecasting training and returned to resume their services to their respective countries upon completion of the training. The training was hosted by the NOAA National Weather Service National Forecast Center in Honolulu. SPREP also facilitated a NOAA-funded RANET project designated for the Marshall Islands and the FSM, as well as facilitating a delegate from Samoa to attend the IOC ICG/XXII Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (PTWS) meeting. Samoa is slated to host the next PTWS meeting in 2009. SPREP organised the 12th Regional Meteorological Services Directors meeting hosted by the Cook Islands in Rarotonga in July. The meeting called for future joint coordination with the SOPAC Disaster Risk Management meetings and a move to a biennial meeting, a move that will enable both groups with key roles in national early warning systems to coordinate more effectively on joint national and regional activities.

In mid-2007, SPREP participated in a WMO Mission team to conduct a study of the regional roles of the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) and its Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC) function. The Mission was conducted at the invitation of the Fiji Government and stemmed from concerns about the FMS raised during the 15th WMO Congress. The mission was led by the WMO and included representatives of meteorological services from the region as well as staff of CROP agencies. It identified professional meteorologist recruitment and retention as one of the major challenges for the FMS, as shortage of these key staff from time to time places stress in the delivery of national and regional services (with the latter via the RSMC function). The mission team also welcomed the ongoing support of the Fiji Government and acknowledged the dedicated work of FMS and its professional staff in providing services to fellow PICTs in the face of increasing challenges. It identified possible solutions within the PICT members of WMO and suggested the rotation or seconding of PICT meteorologists to the FMS during the South Pacific tropical cyclone season. The mission also encouraged partner agencies in Australia, New Zealand and the United States to maintain and provide new training opportunities for meteorologists from the FMS and other PICTs. As a result of this Mission, the 2007 Small Island States Leaders Summit requested a review of the meteorological services in the region. This will be carried out during 2008 by PIFS, SPREP, SOPAC, and WMO, which will develop options in collaboration with the FMS and the Fiji Government.

Raising awareness of climate change

During 2007 SPREP's education and communications programme highlighted the role individuals and communities can play in strengthening their resilience to the effects of climate change. This included an integrated behaviour change approach through a series of on the ground non-formal activities. Through their regional implementation, SPREP continued to contribute to the region's increasing focus on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). On a global level, this focus strengthened SPREP's support to its members through greater alignment with the objectives of Article VI of the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) — the convention's key component covering public awareness, education and training.

In April, more than 30 young professionals from a range of backgrounds across the Pacific converged at the SPREP headquarters in Apia to discuss leadership attributes and develop a message for current leaders. A key focus of the Pacific Future Environment Leaders Forum was emerging issues such as climate change, which culminated in the development of adaptation plans to strengthen community resilience to its impacts. Supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) this Forum constituted one of the region's first cross-sectoral initiatives aimed at building leadership capacity of young people working in sustainable development.

In June, strengthening resilience of natural systems was the focus of a regional initiative to implement mangrove and coral reef conservation activities as part of World Environment Day. The "Strong islands, Strong future" theme of World Environment Day again highlighted the importance of broad-based cooperation in adaptation efforts to minimise the impacts of climate change.

In August, Samoa hosted the XIII South Pacific Games. SPREP capitalised on this opportunity to encourage athletes, spectators and locals alike to "Play it Clean and Green." Teaming up with UN agencies and the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), the campaign resulted in a tree-planting campaign designed to partially offset the greenhouse gas emissions created by the Games and to raise awareness about climate change.

Ozone update

The year saw ongoing progress in the implementation of the Regional Strategy in the participating Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs). While several countries have yet to implement a licensing system for ozone-depleting substances (ODS), continued progress was made through in-country training of air-conditioning and refrigeration technicians, as well as training of customs officers in all but six PICTs.

Customs training will continue in future years, as SPREP has sought to engage the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) in conducting all environment related customs and quarantine training, including that for ODS. It is expected that an agreement will be reached in 2008 to this effect.

Institutional strengthening funding has been made available to the participating PICTs from the Montreal Protocol Executive Committee. However, delays in the provision of reports for 2007 from some of the participating PICTs has delayed the disbursement of funds. It is important to note that PICTs that have put in place the necessary legislation or regulations can expect a significant increase in the level of their institutional strengthening funds.



The shores of Tuvalu: "ground zero" in the fight against sea level rise resulting from global climate change.

Climate change and biodiversity

An issue such as deforestation can be seen as contributing to climate change as well as to biodiversity loss. "Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries" (REDD) was a key issue at Bali. Parties affirmed the urgent need to take further meaningful action to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and adopted a work programme for further methodological work.

The decision also calls for support to capacity building and to undertake efforts to address the underlying causes of deforestation — critical to address the needs of local and indigenous communities who depend on forests for their livelihoods and for the conservation of biodiversity. Deforestation is likely to be an important component of any future climate change regime — in both mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Another issue relates to the production and use of biofuels. Depending on the methods of cultivation, fuel production and consumption, the net impact of biofuels on the atmosphere remains to be determined. Other concerns that have arisen include those related to the availability of arable land for food production if biofuels are expanded, as well as the impact of the methods of cultivation on biodiversity, such as large-scale monoculture plantations. On the other hand, small scale production and local consumption of biofuels in PICTs as a substitute to fossil fuel imports could have both socio-economic and environmental benefits.



Discarded air-conditioning units on Nauru.

Waste on atolls and low islands

Waste management on atolls and low islands is an enormous challenge. It has been made worse by the increases in plastic packaging, sea level rise and urbanisation. The lack of land and even soil has driven many communities to use waste as a semi-solid fill to expand their usable land onto reef flats or raise their existing land above spring tides and storm surges. Unfortunately, without engineered sea walls and inert wastes, this has often resulted in polluted lagoons and beaches rather than more usable land.

The main reason is that the organic wastes decay and the leachates pollute the sea. However, an initiative in Majuro, Marshall Islands to address the problem has set a new standard for the Pacific. The national government established a waste company with a board comprised of members from government, private sector and NGOs. This company developed a process involving simple covered sorting pad to remove as many recyclables, toxics and organics as possible, followed by a use of a semi-aerobic composting pad to extract the residual wastes.

The process differs from a conventional landfill that consumes both the land and expensive infrastructure. SPREP is now hoping to interest donors in funding trial projects with this possible breakthrough technology.

Pollution and Waste

All Pacific Island countries and territories consider waste management and the prevention of pollution as a significant challenge that needs substantial resources and support to overcome. The amounts of waste generated continue to increase as does the categories of wastes in the waste streams. Governments are continually faced with the challenge of providing adequate resources to maintain a properly operating system.

The continued absence of proper plans and associated legislative support, coupled with the lack of serious consideration of waste management as a priority development issue, means the threats wastes pose to environmental and human health may be experienced sooner rather than later. The work of the Secretariat is now evolving from a purely waste management approach to an approach that is more holistic and integrated. More proactive preventative approaches are implemented in addition to the traditional waste management ones.

Waste is also highly visible. If not managed properly it tends to deter potential investors and developers from doing business in the region and thus adversely affects economic development.

Solid waste

Solid waste in 2007 followed SPREP's vision focusing on negotiation and adoption of a regional strategy, identification of funding for implementation and assisting Members with technical resources and development of National Waste Strategies. While most Members now have national strategies, many remain in draft form and have not yet been put through governmental processes for ratification. This is an important step, because becoming a formal element of government policy increases the chances of obtaining ongoing funding. Unfortunately, there remain a number of countries that do not have any form of waste management policy or even general plans for managing their waste.

The Secretariat, in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and with financial assistance from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, was able to provide technical advice and support to Kiribati and Papua New Guinea in developing national waste management strategies.

In 2008 and beyond, as funding begins to flow into the Pacific the emphasis will move towards on-the-ground projects. The GEF-PAS, AFD Solid Waste Initiative, and EU are poised to join the more established partners like Japan, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand in providing assistance. These national projects will be regionally coordinated and will be in addition to specific bilateral assistance that countries receive through their development partners.

2008 – 2010 Priority Action Plan

All SPREP members, with the exception of Palau and the territories, met in November 2007 to review progress in the Strategy and to prioritise a new Action Plan for the 2008-2010 period. The senior managers at the Apia meeting decided that the Action Plan would remain largely the same as the previous two years — highlighting the reality that issues in solid waste are rarely “solved” but require on-going management.

Overwhelmingly the top three priorities identified were: 1) landfills; 2) financing waste; and 3) ensuring political and public support. Bulky wastes; national strategies; training and capacity building; regional integration; electronic waste; waste oil; recycling; legislation and enforcement; and organics and composting were identified as the other foci for the next two years. There are strong linkages between some issues such as financing waste and public and political support. Indeed, without progress on obtaining more political support for increased funding there can be little sustainable progress on any of the issues. SPREP will continue to try to engage senior administrative personnel to facilitate political commitment.

Capacity building

SPREP, in cooperation with WHO, held another in a series of JICA-sponsored training workshops for members in Apia during February 2007. JICA and SPREP have decided to alternate these regional workshops with the Action Planning meetings each year. More emphasis is also being placed on in-country training workshops focused on a specific national issue.

Workshops were held to draft National Waste Strategies in Kiribati and PNG, plus a national workshop in Fiji focusing on the semi-aerobic landfill model. These workshops also included training components focusing on strategic planning and waste management skills, incorporating the successful “Rubbish is a Resource” kit.

The solid waste section of the SPREP website continues to be upgraded. It now contains over 30 guidelines and technical papers to assist Members in their waste management work. A new online interactive forum is also available for waste managers to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Special projects

Many countries have expressed a desire to reduce plastics, particularly plastic shopping bags, in their countries. SPREP provided drafting assistance for the successful Samoan legislation that requires bio-degradable plastic. Some countries are also now considering a simple tax to reduce excessive usage.

The semi-aerobic landfill technology has been widely embraced with Vanuatu, Palau and FSM progressing their projects and Fiji beginning the process of replacing the current open dump at Lautoka with a Fukuoka-style facility. The CNMI and American Samoa have also shown interest in this very cost-effective and safe system.

Organic waste projects are increasing as this primary source of pollution gets more attention. Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and others have combined garden waste chipping and composting with organic gardening projects. It is hoped that these initiatives can help reduce the burgeoning costs of non-communicable diseases like obesity and diabetes and at the same time address serious waste issues.



The limited land area of many SPREP member countries and territories restricts landfill options.

Bulky waste in Kiribati

The recent price rises in virtually all commodities has created an unprecedented opportunity for the Pacific to establish recycling practices. Metal recycling has increased enormously on the back of the global resources boom and the continued growth in the costs of energy will mean that both resource scarcity as well as energy savings will drive the price of materials like aluminium for some time to come.

In one example, Kiribati exported most of its old wrecks on a passing scrap metal barge by conducting a raffle to encourage residents to put out their old cars for collection. While this is a one-off opportunity, the idea was to establish a precedent for a deposit / refund scheme along the lines of their successful container systems. If the cars can be delivered to get the refund before they need to be trucked, significant savings are possible. In Kiribati's case, the wrecks are planned to go to a used car yard that can then recover usable parts for resale, with proceeds offsetting the costs of recycling. This also keeps the existing car fleet operational by further decreasing the number of space-consuming wrecks. While sub-regional joint recycling contracts have often proven to be too difficult to coordinate, shared infrastructure like car crushers may well be a viable opportunity.



Improper bulky waste disposal can pose immediate threats to health and safety as well as to the environment.

Hazardous waste

The management of hazardous substances and waste in the region remains a priority mainly because many of the PICTs have neither the appropriate technology nor the trained personnel to deal with these substances in an environmentally sound manner at the national level. This is compounded by the lack of appropriate legislation that regulates the importation of hazardous substances or the regimes that control the exportation of the wastes that emanate from such substances.

During 2007 the Secretariat continued its assistance and support to Members in developing and improving their hazardous waste management plans and regimes to enable them to improve their management of such substances and wastes at both the national and regional levels. The efforts help the countries in the Pacific region move towards objective agreed at the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) in 2002, that, by the year 2020, chemicals, including hazardous waste chemicals, should be produced and used in ways that minimise significant adverse effects on the environment and human health.

E-waste

In recent years, the significant progress made in electronic, mobile and wireless communication technology has seen a corresponding increase in the number of electronic and electrical products flooding the Pacific region, especially mobile phones and laptop computers. All these products will one day become electronic and electrical equipment waste or "e-waste," as it is commonly called.

Many of these products contain hazardous constituents such as cadmium, lead, beryllium, CFCs, brominated flame-retardants, mercury, nickel and certain organic and organo-metallic compounds. Electrical and electronic wastes are classified under Annex I of the Waigani Convention and as Annex VIII entries A1180, A1150 and A2010 as well as under Annex IX as B1110 of the Basel Convention. Basically, e-wastes are characterised as hazardous wastes under these Conventions when they contain components such as accumulators and other batteries, mercury-switches, glass from cathode-ray tubes and other activated glass, PCB-capacitors and transformers or when contaminated with cadmium, mercury, lead or PCBs. Also, precious metal ash from incineration of printed circuit boards and glass waste from cathode-ray-tubes and other activated glasses will be characterised as hazardous wastes. Due to the lack of appropriate collection and storage systems, these e-wastes are now ending up in disposal facilities in all countries.

Problems associated with e-waste are becoming a frequent topic of discussion at the international level. There is growing concern over the escalating levels of e-wastes being generated and the tendency to export it for disposal in countries other than the country of production or use. While there is little evidence that the Pacific region has been targeted as a dumping ground to date, the region needs to recognise the danger in the future.

Vanuatu ratifies the Waigani Convention

In its November session, the Parliament of the Vanuatu Government voted to ratify the Waigani Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region. In doing so, Vanuatu becomes the 14th Party to this regional Convention regulating the transboundary movement of hazardous waste.

The Secretariat assisted Vanuatu in providing English and French versions of the text of the Convention and also provided advice on the steps involved in the ratification process.

The ratification of the Convention also paved the way for chemicals collected and packaged under the "POPs in PICs Project" to be transported to Australia for destruction. These chemicals have been stored in a shipping container in Port Vila since being collected in 2006. The waste is scheduled to be shipped out for disposal in 2008.



Vanuatu forms Task Force to deal with marine spills and sewage disposals

In July 2007, Vanuatu established a Task Force to deal with issues related to marine pollution such as oil spills and other issues such as handling of approvals for sewage disposal by marine vessels within the Vanuatu EEZ. The Task Force is made up of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Vanuatu Maritime Authority (VMA), Environment Unit, British Petroleum (BP), Pacific Petroleum Company (PPC) and other stakeholders.

The establishment of the task force also saw the adoption of a revised NATPLAN that is hoped will be endorsed by the Council of Ministers to make it legally binding.

A proactive approach is required in order to address environmental issues related to the increasing transboundary movements of these wastes, and to ensure their storage, transport, treatment, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal is conducted in a coordinated and environmentally sound manner. Through concrete and well-targeted national and regional efforts supported by the Secretariats of the Waigani and Basel Conventions, and other partners, these wastes can be managed in a manner that promotes economic, social as well as environmental objectives.

The Secretariat's efforts in assisting the region to deal with this category of waste have seen the securing of resources to implement pilot projects with comprehensive objectives in the Cook Islands, the FSM, Kiribati, PNG and Samoa. The results of the national projects will provide a situational assessment of the magnitude of the problem in the region and are planned to synthesise a regional report.



Used computers, TV screens, photocopiers and other used electronic and electrical goods are now becoming a difficult category of waste to address.

Cooperation with other institutions

It is globally accepted that hazardous substances and wastes need to be managed in a holistic and integrated manner. It is with this in mind that the Conferences of Parties of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions have begun taking appropriate measures to develop mechanisms to improve and enhance their cooperation and coordination, taking into account adoption of the Strategic Approaches to International Chemical Management (SAICM) and the on-going reform process in the United Nations.

The Secretariat is host to the Pacific Regional Centre for training and technology transfer for the joint implementation of the Basel and Waigani Conventions in the Pacific Region (PRC). As such the Secretariat has worked closely with all three global Secretariats and the SAICM Secretariat in making sure that the Parties in the Pacific region are aware of these developments and, where feasible, benefit from resources made available through the various processes.

At the Asia-Pacific regional meeting on SAICM, held in Bangkok from 21-23 May 2007, Pacific Island participants sought assistance from the SAICM secretariat and SPREP so that small island developing states in the Pacific region could engage better in the SAICM process and develop their understanding of SAICM.

SPREP, in its capacity as the host of the PRC, worked with the SAICM Secretariat to organise a sub-regional meeting to raise awareness of SAICM in the Pacific region. In addition, the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) expressed interest in the meeting as an opportunity to discuss implementation of the Convention's effectiveness evaluation in the Pacific region.

The SAICM workshop was organised with the objective of providing Pacific Island stakeholders with an introduction to SAICM and guidance on initial implementation, including through the Quick Start Programme. It was held immediately after a regional priority-setting workshop on solid waste management organised by SPREP and JICA, and in parallel with a workshop on Health Care Waste Management organised by the World Health Organization and SPREP. These workshops and the integration of sessions relating to the Stockholm Convention are aimed to encourage a synergistic approach to chemicals management by Pacific island government officials and other stakeholders.

Marine pollution

In 2007 SPREP continued its Marine Pollution work through its Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Program (PACPOL) implementation in partnership with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Part of this work involved carrying out national marine pollution workshops in seven PICTs: Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Niue, PNG, Tonga, Kiribati and RMI. Total participant numbers reached 179, including 13 women. The workshops were adapted from the IMO Level 2 Oil Spill Training Courses. The workshops involved formal classroom training and practical training. The practical sessions involved inspection works and the deploying of the oil spill equipment whilst the classroom sessions covered the reviewing of draft national oil spill plans (NATPLAN) and a review of the Marine Pollution Prevention Legislation.

The topics covered included: international legal instruments; marine spill preparedness; regional equipment strategy; invasive marine species; liability and compensation; oil spill response issues; fate and behaviour of oil spills, covering various response strategies; and the role of the media during an oil spill incident.

Waste laws

Although a number of PICTs are currently developing appropriate environmental legislation, very few have appropriate policies, legislation, regulations and sound implementation strategies to address waste management from an environmental management perspective. Some laws that address waste originate from outdated and fairly generic legislation, such as Public Health Acts, WHO guidelines and legislation modelled on developed country laws. The regulation of waste is typically spread among a number of agencies whose jurisdictions, roles and responsibilities are ill-defined.

The lack of a consolidated regulatory approach to waste management results in regulation on an ad hoc, sectoral basis. Some of the existing waste related legislation needs to be reviewed due to a lack of clear and concise mandates. Currently, waste related cases that come before the courts are not effectively dealt with because the penalties are insufficient to act as effective deterrents. There is also a lack of clear procedures for sampling and instituting legal proceedings. As a result, those responsible for enforcement are often reluctant to commit the time and expense of instituting legal proceedings against offenders. Moreover, prosecution is made difficult because such cases have to compete with criminal cases for the court's time. This problem is exacerbated in those PICTs that are spread out over vast distances and have inadequate transportation and communications systems.

As part of the Secretariat's effort in assisting members to improve the waste management legislation, it assisted Samoa in organising a national workshop to develop waste regulations at the national, regional and international levels. A key recommendation of the workshop was the drafting of a comprehensive waste law for the country. In addition, the Secretariat worked closely with Samoa in the finalisation of its Marine Pollution Prevention Bill, passed by its Parliament in late 2007. Most other Pacific island countries and territories have similar draft legislation pending.

At the end of November a marine pollution workshop was held in the Marshall Islands. In addition to hands-on technical training components, sessions were conducted on the various aspects of the three Protocols (dumping, oil spills, hazardous and noxious substances spills) under the Noumea Convention.

Oil spill preparation exercise, Majuro Lagoon, Republic of the Marshall Islands.



Tonga National Marine Pollution Committee adopts the NATPLAN

In October 2007, after successful National Oil Spill training, the Tonga National Marine Pollution Committee adopted the revised Tonga NATPLAN. The NATPLAN has been developed to reflect the essential steps to initiate conduct and terminate an emergency marine spill response in Tonga. The NATPLAN will need to be presented to the cabinet for endorsement before it becomes a legal document. Tonga's Parliament recently passed the Marine Pollution Prevention Act, of which the NATPLAN is part. This will help strengthen other planned activities, such as forming regulations like the POLFUND to provide sustainable financing for marine pollution activities and providing a source of revenue for a quick response to marine pollution incidents.

Environmental Governance

NSDS and mainstreaming

SPREP continues to take a leading role on sustainable development issues in the Pacific, assisting Pacific island countries and territories in developing, strengthening and implementing their National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) and as well as mainstreaming environmental concerns into their national development planning and decision-making processes. Integrated mainstreaming and NSDS strengthening are necessary conditions for achieving sustainable development as well as realising various regional and international commitments made by leaders under the MEAs and regional policy frameworks and action plans. Principles included in these commitments include sustainable development, environmental and good governance, and stakeholder-based decision-making processes.

SPREP has, through the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group, developed common and coordinated approaches among CROP agencies in the provision of technical support to member countries in their mainstreaming endeavours. For example, SOPAC has coordinated a partnership to assist countries in the mainstreaming of disaster risk management (DRM) beginning with Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands. The partnership network, which comprises representatives from SOPAC, UNDP, PIFS, SPREP, SPC, World Bank and others, assists countries to develop prioritised National Action Plans for mainstreaming DRM linked to the NSDS and sector and budgetary processes. SPREP has taken an active role in this DRM partnership network particularly since it represents an opportunity to incorporate climate change adaptation elements.

Commission on Sustainable Development

The 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) was held in May 2006 and provided a focal point for evaluating progress in implementing Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the JPOI, and the Millennium Declaration. Building on the outcomes of CSD-14, CSD-15 focused on policies and options to expedite implementation of commitments in the thematic clusters of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution, and climate change.

The Pacific Islands Group of Ambassadors based in New York, along with country delegates from the Pacific, were supported by the CROP representatives from SOPAC, the Forum Secretariat and SPREP. The assistance included policy advice, technical support, and other backstopping services to PICTs in the various activities undertaken and engagements during CSD-15. SPREP also made a presentation on the PIFACC, PIGGAREP and PACC at a side event organised by the Forum Ambassadors Group.

Environmental legal issues

SPREP provides support to member countries on environmental law, covering legal implications of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including compliance, as well as domestic environmental laws and regulations.

A key theme during 2007 involved the interlinked topics of access and benefit sharing (ABS) and intellectual property rights (IPR) (i.e., legal ownership over certain forms of knowledge) and their impact on traditional knowledge.

Biologically-rich countries, such as those of the Pacific, have been explored for useful biochemicals or genes, primarily those which are found in plants used in traditional healing. While access to the plant is necessary, the associated traditional knowledge on how it is used allows researchers to refine their search for substances possessing the desired curative property. Once the substance is identified and isolated, intellectual property rights laws, such as patents, are applied for in order to claim ownership over the substance. Compensation given by researchers using traditional knowledge and plant samples is frequently inadequate and has often resulted in bitter disputes with the resource owners.

The most vulnerable group are indigenous peoples. Worldwide, indigenous peoples inhabit some of the areas of richest biodiversity and often play a stewardship role in the conservation of these resources. In some countries they are often at odds with their own governments and their lands are frequently threatened by development. In other countries they are well represented in government and so are able to deal with outside interests in a manner which maximises their benefits from the resource. Accordingly, "access to the resource," "use of associated traditional knowledge," and "sharing of benefits derived from the exploitation of the resource" are all terms that require careful negotiation.

In January, an international expert group meeting on the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) international regime on access and benefit-sharing and indigenous peoples' rights took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Workshop was jointly sponsored by the CBD Secretariat and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). The wide range of participants (NGOs, government, Secretariats, consultants) allowed for comprehensive discussions. The level of expertise present also enabled attention to some of the lesser-explored aspects of ABS, such as human rights, sovereignty, and customary law.

In June, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) held a series of three workshops to consider 1) a regional IPR institution; 2) ABS (and IPR) as topics for economic partnership agreement (EPA) negotiations with the European Union; the regional Model Law on culture and IPR.

The 8th Regional Conference on Protected Areas and Nature Conservation meeting in Alotau, PNG in August saw a side-event on ABS and the launching by the United Nations University and SPREP of a database of bioprospecting activities in the Pacific region. This information will help countries keep tabs on who is doing what in which country and what arrangements have been agreed to. The web site can be accessed at www.bioprospector.org/bioprospector/pacific/home.

Other notable activities that occurred during the year included the drafting of a range of environmental laws for Tuvalu including a main environment protection law (covering EIAs climate change, biodiversity and pollution) and laws on ozone depletion and biosafety.

In December, SPREP participated in the Pacific Islands Law Officers Network (PILON) meeting to map out a strategic plan for future activities. Consisting of senior legal officials from Pacific island countries, as well as CROP and other institutional legal advisors, the network promises to offer an organised response to legal issues in the region.

Integrated monitoring, assessment and reporting on the state of the environment

A systematic, consistent, adequately-resourced and universally-supported regular process of integrated monitoring, assessment and reporting on the state of the environment – which may be collectively termed “State of the Environment” (SoE) – can help perfect long-term knowledge of the changes the environment is undergoing, the causes and effects of those changes and how best to engage or respond to those changes in more sound and sustainable ways. The 17th SPREP meeting emphasised the need to put priority on reviewing the status of SoE in the region, and to identify and develop new measures to improve the capacities of SPREP members in implementing this highly valuable long-term planning and assessment tool.

The review of approaches to SoE was conducted in the latter half of the year. The preliminary findings of the review were presented to a warm reception at side events during the 18th SPREP Meeting in September and the 8th Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in October. The review found that 1) global frameworks and processes for environmental management have driven and provided the resources for implementing SoE monitoring, assessment and reporting in the region; 2) the progress of these activities has slowed down in recent years, and 3) implementation of national environmental management frameworks and that the increasing pressures on and concerns about the region’s environment and potential development call for a wider commitment within the region for more systematic and widely-participated development of SoE activities.

Parallel to this exercise was SPREP’s engagement in several key initiatives aimed at furthering the development of SoE capabilities in the region. First, there was the training of trainers on a new Resource Book for Implementing the Global Environment Outlook Integrated Environment Assessment Process and the launching of the Fourth Report of the Global Environment Outlook developed by the UNEP. Second, the development of a single harmonised national reporting template for Pacific island countries coordinated by the Australia’s Department of the Environment, Water Resources, Heritage and the Arts (AUS-DEWHA) helped these countries to meet their reporting obligations under all biodiversity-related Multilateral Agreements.

Environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strategic environment assessments (SEA)

Short- to medium-term economic and social infrastructure projects will always have some form of impact on the environment – both natural and human. Previous SPREP meetings have repeatedly emphasised the need to increase actions to improve the use of key planning tools – environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strategic environment assessments (SEA) – for assessing and addressing these impacts in the region.

There was a need to first review and update regional knowledge on the current state in the development of these tools in the Pacific and to identify the priorities and potential opportunities for initiating further improvement measures. Before the end of the year, terms of reference and recruitment processes were implemented to acquire the services of a suitable consultant to implement this review. The review was implemented in the first half of 2008, with the report and its recommendations to be submitted to the 19th SPREP Meeting for consideration.

Parallel to the review are efforts by SPREP and AUS-DEWHA to enable the participation of PICT representatives involved in national EIA/SEA developments in the 28th Meeting of the International Association of Impact Assessment held in Australia in May 2008. This development, in addition

to other EIA training and report review exchanges between SPREP and its members, has the potential to strengthen the networking and collaboration of national and regional experts and practitioners.

MEA capacity building

SPREP continues to assume a leadership role in facilitating regional participation in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These international agreements (such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biodiversity) continue to set the global agenda for many environmental issues. In its efforts to strengthen its role and capability to deliver capacity development services to member countries relating to MEA implementation, SPREP has supported and actively participated in negotiations for an upcoming major European Commission initiative on capacity building.

A more detailed capacity needs assessment will be undertaken during the inception phase of the project. This will provide the scope, detailed work program and budget for the project. It is envisaged that a project management unit will be established within SPREP, headed by a Project Coordinator, to oversee project implementation.

Global Environment Facility (GEF) relations

SPREP continued its coordinating work with regard to GEF matters throughout 2007. A dedicated GEF officer was appointed within SPREP early in the year, made possible through funding from AusAID and NZAID. The position was created specifically to improve access to GEF resources by Pacific Small Island Developing States that qualify for such assistance.

SPREP worked closely throughout the year with the GEF Secretariat, the World Bank, and SPREP member countries in the development of the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability Program Framework. This work involved close coordination with and dissemination of related information to SPREP member countries as well as other parties including the Pacific Islands Forum Group of Ambassadors in New York, CROP Agencies, NGOs and GEF Implementing Agencies.

SPREP's dedicated GEF Adviser provides a GEF focal point within the organisation and among CROP Agencies as well as provides links to other GEF players. SPREP specialist staff continue to add value to country initiatives and priorities by working closely with their respective country counterparts and others on GEF-related matters.

The GEF-PAS umbrella programme has the potential to materially increase the levels of GEF financial resources disbursed to Pacific SIDS. Simultaneously, it can also be the mechanism that facilitates a longer-term approach to enhancing the quality of programming environmental and conservation investment in the Pacific region. The GEF-PAS programme framework was submitted to the GEF Council for approval in April 2008.



Mme. Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson of GEF, addresses the 18th SPREP Meeting.



Island Ecosystems

Programme

Introduction

During 2007 the Island Ecosystems Programme continued to support Members across a wide range of initiatives aimed at conserving and managing Pacific terrestrial and marine ecosystems and species.

On biodiversity issues, the programme assisted Members at the global, regional and national levels through ongoing support for participation in and implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This included support at SBSTTA 12 negotiations, convening a special workshop for Pacific LDC states, and undertaking a regional review of the implementation of NBSAPs with financial assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Notable was the inclusion of sustainable conservation financing on the agenda of the annual Forum Leaders Meeting, an indication of the growing awareness of the importance of conservation at the highest policy and decision-making level in the region. However, the highlight of the year was the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas held in Alotau, Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea. The conference and SPREP were privileged to have the meeting opened by the Honourable Sir Paulias Matane, Governor-General, and closed by the Honourable Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of PNG – further emphasising the recognition, at the highest levels, of the importance of conservation linked to sustainable development.

The conservation agenda for key marine species was progressed with the revision and endorsement of regional species action plans, and work on whales, turtles and continued implementation of the regional CMS MoU. Members will be pleased to note that the SPREP component of the Coral Reef Initiative of the South Pacific commenced in 2007 with project activities in the French territories. Another highlight of the year was SPREP's award for 'Outstanding Policy Coordination' from the US Coral Reef Task Force. Programme work on invasive species was also strengthened last year and SPREP continued its support to the multi-stakeholder Pacific Invasives Learning Network pilot project.

Conservation partnerships continued to be strengthened in 2007 with the signing of collaborative agreements between SPREP and IUCN, and with BirdLife International. Working in partnership for the benefit of Pacific island countries and territories is essential for SPREP as we collectively address the critical environmental management and development issues of the region. These new partnerships will complement existing partner arrangements, such as those with the Ramsar Convention, UNEP and Conservation International.

Conserving Pacific Biodiversity

Biodiversity “toktok” in Alotau, PNG — The Pacific’s largest conservation conference

The 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas was held from 22-26 October in Alotau, Papua New Guinea — a country rich in biodiversity. The Government of PNG hosted the successful conference and contributed one million kina toward organising the meeting. SPREP coordinated the conference along with the PNG Department of Environment and Conservation, with local assistance provided from the Milne Bay Provincial Government. An intern from PNG was also employed for a year as Conference Coordinator with the SPREP Secretariat.

More than 400 people came together at the conference, which had the theme of “Conservation serving communities in a rapidly changing world.” Participants attended from around the world as well as many from communities throughout Papua New Guinea. Some of these participants travelled for days to get to attend the conference. The distinctive poster for the conference can still be seen around the Pacific.

A primary objective of the conference was to review the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003-2007 and to draft the new strategy for 2008-2012. The conference agreed on four main objectives in the new action strategy:

- to ensure livelihoods and community development are ecologically and economically sustainable and achieve community needs and aspirations;
- to identify, conserve and sustainably manage priority sites, habitats and ecosystems;
- to protect and recover threatened species or species of ecological, cultural and economic significance; and
- to manage threats to biodiversity, especially climate change impacts and invasive species.

During the opening ceremony the Governor General of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Sir Paulias Matane told participants he believes environment and conservation are the two most important issues for all nations in the world. He stated, “We must put the conservation and protection of our environment into action, the biggest problem in the world is that what people do not understand, they will not support. Substantial awareness is needed so people can understand and support conservation.” The PNG Minister of Environment, Mr Benny Allen, also reaffirmed this message. The keynote speech, focusing on the conference theme, was delivered by Willy Kostka of the Micronesia Conservation Trust.

The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, officially closed the meeting with words of encouragement and a challenge to participants to appreciate “the real value of oceans.” The primary message emanating from the conference was that everyone working in conservation in the region must focus on empowering Pacific island peoples and communities to drive the conservation agenda. In the Pacific, conservation objectives cannot be achieved without recognising the close connection between biodiversity and livelihoods.

The next conference will be held in 2012 in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.



H.E. Sir Michael Somare, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, arrives at the Alotau Conference.





The IUCN Red List protects endangered and threatened species throughout the world, such as the endangered Caroline fruit bat (Pteropus mariannus) pictured here.

Alotau Meeting for National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Coordinators

Prior to the Alotau Conference, a one-day workshop for National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) Coordinators was held by SPREP and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. NBSAPs are important for coordinating and prioritising actions to achieve conservation related objectives. These have been developed in all but three of SPREP member countries, with others in preparation. Tuvalu, Nauru and the Solomon Islands are currently completing their NBSAPs with assistance from SPREP. The plans guide biodiversity initiatives within each signatory country to the CBD. The objective of the meeting was to find themes to further the NBSAP process. Progress will be reviewed at a future regional NBSAP workshop to be held next year.

NBSAPs provide direction for all stakeholders to address biodiversity conservation issues collectively. They also serve as the foundation of the new regional Action Strategy for Nature Conservation.

Over 30 side meetings were held during the Alotau Conference, providing organisations with the opportunity to share information on their projects and fields of expertise with participants. These side events helped raise awareness of the various issues being discussed and furthered the main Conference theme of “conservation serving communities in a rapidly changing world.”

Sessions were hosted by both international and regional environment organisations, including Conservation International (CI), the International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMOSEB), and community initiatives such as the Locally Managed Marine Areas Network. SPREP organised or contributed to side events on invasive species, marine managed areas, biodiversity monitoring, climate change and biodiversity, the IUCN Red List process, the ecosystem approach, community conservation and the law, the SEM Pasifika Guidelines launch, the launch of UNEP’s Global Environment Outlook and the the launch of the 2008 Pacific Year of the Reef.



IUCN and SPREP sign MOU

IUCN and SPREP signed a memorandum of understanding under which IUCN and SPREP undertake to collaborate closely on a range of issues, including development of a joint work plan each year. IUCN hopes to support SPREP’s work with Pacific island countries in the region through application of their global network of expertise.

Through its joint programme of work, the MOU focuses on: promoting the development and implementation of environmental law; working together to develop a resource valuation network in the Pacific; ecosystem management; increasing protected area management capacity; species management; updating the IUCN Red List of threatened species for the Pacific; climate change; conservation partnership; and collaborating on the Roundtable for Nature Conservation, PILN and the Coral Reef Initiatives in the Pacific (CRISP) programme.

The Micronesia Challenge Support Team



SPREP is a member of the Micronesia Challenge Support Team, which is the group of organisations working together to support the countries and territories involved as they implement the challenge. The Micronesia Challenge Support Team also includes the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), RARE, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), the Community Conservation Network (CCN), the Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Network, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Conservation International (CI) and the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

As part of an effort to improve new and ongoing activities, SPREP has worked to disseminate lessons learnt from these initiatives.



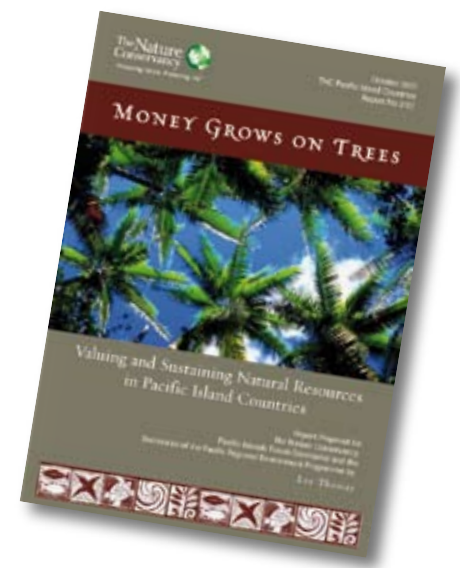
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Long term funding for conservation

SPREP, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Forum Secretariat contributed to the production of case studies on sustainable financing for conservation in the region. The subsequent report, *Money Grows on Trees*, was presented to the 2007 Forum Leaders Meeting and contributed to the leaders' discussions on how to progress this important agenda in the region. The resulting Forum Communiqué (Vavau Decisions on the Pacific Plan) gave clear guidance on follow up work to be undertaken on these critical issues. The island leaders reaffirmed their governments' commitments to environmental conservation and requested assistance with:

- mainstreaming conservation issues into NSDS-based national planning and budgetary processes;
- adopting stakeholder-based planning, establishment and management of conservation areas, supported by a strong understanding of economic, social and environmental benefits deriving from effective conservation;
- identifying and obtaining financial resources and undertaking financial planning required for the development and management of conservation areas from different sources, including national budgets, private sources and development partners;
- identifying alternative international, regional and/or national level financing options for conservation, utilising lessons learnt from different financing arrangements including conservation trust funds and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

This now forms a new Pacific Plan initiative on financing for conservation to be coordinated by SPREP.



Meetings of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI-2)

SPREP attended SBSTTA 12 to support representatives from Palau, Kiribati, FSM and the Cook Islands. With the assistance of the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD), SPREP provided a brief on agenda items for the meeting.

The main issues for the Pacific on the SBSTTA 12 agenda were biodiversity and climate change, liquid biofuels and the ecosystem approach. With respect to biodiversity and climate change, the Pacific on behalf of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), recommended that the Conference of the Parties agree to convene a SIDS workshop to explore the adverse impacts of climate change on island biodiversity. On the agenda item relating to the ecosystem approach, FSM, on behalf of the PICTs, highlighted the fundamental importance of regional workshops and co-operative programmes in strengthening the application of the ecosystem approach as a framework for action across national terrestrial and marine borders in Pacific island nations. The issue of liquid biofuels was expanded to include all biofuels and will be forwarded to COP 9.

WGRI 2 focused on an in-depth review of the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan, finance, and other substantive matters. Delegates adopted five recommendations on: the implementation of Goals 2 and 3 of the Strategic Plan, namely national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and capacity building, access to and transfer of technology and technology cooperation; options and a draft strategy for resource mobilisation; opportunities for streamlining guidance provided to the Global Environment Facility (GEF); preparation of GBO 3; and operations of the Convention.

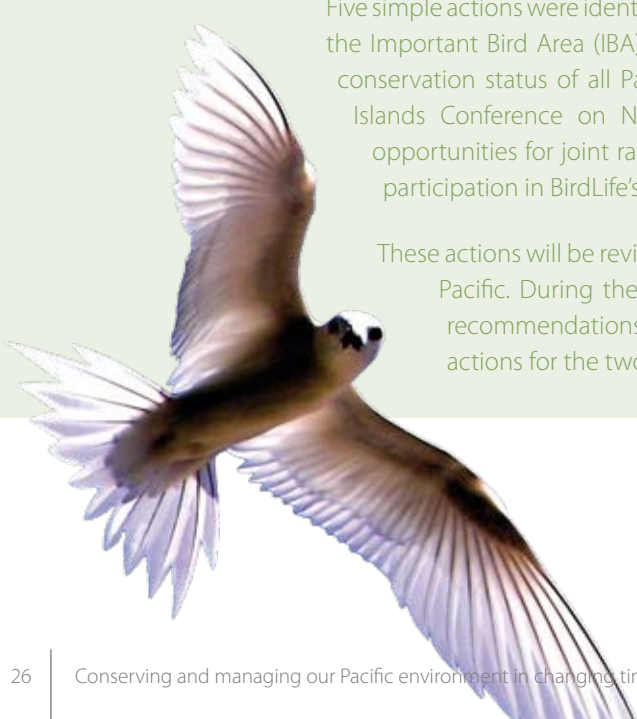


MOU between BirdLife International and SPREP

In February 2007 the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BirdLife International Pacific for joint action by the two organisations.

Five simple actions were identified for 2007, all of which were carried out. They included promoting the Important Bird Area (IBA) approach in non-BirdLife Partner countries; jointly reviewing the conservation status of all Pacific birds; convening a one-day bird meeting before the Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas; actively investigating opportunities for joint rat eradication projects in non-BirdLife partner countries; and SPREP participation in BirdLife's fifth Pacific Partnership Meeting in May 2007.

These actions will be reviewed and assessed in early 2008 by SPREP and BirdLife International Pacific. During the review, new actions will also be determined for 2008/2009. The recommendations from the one-day bird meeting will form the basis of new joint actions for the two Parties in 2008/2009.



Pacific LDCs workshop to strengthen delegation negotiating skills for CBD COP9

In May 2007, UNEP and SPREP, in collaboration with the Government of Samoa, held the Pacific LDCs Workshop to Strengthen Capacity for CBD Negotiations in preparation for CBD COP9. The main aim of the workshop was to develop capacities in CBD negotiations and implementation in the five LDCs in the region; namely Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The workshop was held because the countries in the region, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs), have highlighted their need for stronger capacity to participate significantly in the meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). A key limitation of the negotiations at these meetings is the lack of a level playing field among delegations, both North-South, and South-South. This is for a number of reasons, including small delegation sizes and lack of negotiation skills. It is also acknowledged that there is a need for technical support on key priority issues under the CBD, as well as guidance on accessing funding for implementing CBD and biodiversity-related projects.

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) review and implementation

SPREP, through support of the Commonwealth Secretariat, recruited a Biodiversity Strategy and Planning Advisor for a six-month assignment in 2007 to review the status of NBSAPs in the region and provide support to national NBSAP Coordinators. This support was primarily in terms of enhancing capacity and identifying key areas to address in planning and implementing NBSAPs.

As a result of this position, a regional review on the current status of NBSAP production, development and implementation has been completed. This review examines the current status of NBSAP development across 14 South Pacific member nations, and assesses the scales of actionable planning and monitoring and evaluation protocols existing within these plans. The report can be downloaded at http://www.sprep.org/publication/pub_detail.asp?id=582.

As well as the regional NBSAP review, case studies on developing and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans from Samoa and the Solomon Islands were also produced. They can be downloaded at http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000583_FinalRpt_FocalCaseStudies.pdf.



Sustainable harvesting of coconut crabs is permitted in the Tetepare Island community-conserved area, Solomon Islands.

Pacific Islands Community Based Conservation Course

The Pacific Islands Community-Based Conservation Course (PICCC), which is held every two years at the University of the South Pacific (USP), attracted 12 participants from eight Pacific island countries in 2007.

The course is a collaborative partnership between the International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL), SPREP and the University of the South Pacific (through the Pacific Center for Environment and Sustainable Development and Institute for Applied Sciences). It was established to support both the Pacific islands people and the biodiversity of the region by providing training for conservation professionals in the latest approaches to community-based conservation and sustainable development.

The PICCC provides intensive face-to-face training spanning seven weeks combined with over five months of project work at the home site. The emphasis of PICCC is on learning new conservation tools, group learning and developing professional skills.

Ms. Deyna Marsh, Environment Officer with the National Environment Service in the Cook Islands, was one of the graduates. She reported that the course provided her with an opportunity to share and learn more skills and techniques in applying community-based conservation and helped her in identifying donors and with writing project proposals.

Another 2007 graduate is Mr. Marciano Imar from Pohnpei, FSM. Marciano works as the Terrestrial Program Assistant Manager with the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP). The course has helped him to prepare and implement a management plan with a local community seeking to protect their mangroves. Feedback from other past students of the course has been equally positive.

SPREP provided support for seven participants to attend the 2007 PICCC. To date, PICCC has trained approximately 50 conservationists in the region with SPREP securing financial assistance from various donors to support many of these trainees attending the course. (Adapted from *Oceanic Waves*, Vol 9, Issues 2 & 3, June-December 2007).



Samoan schoolchildren at a YOST "Bring Your Own Bag" event during 2007.

Successful Conclusion of the Pacific Year of the Sea Turtle 2006-2007 Campaign

March 2006 to March 2007 was designated the Pacific Year of the Sea Turtle (YOST), a yearlong campaign aimed at increasing conservation of these Pacific voyagers. YOST was a regional initiative by SPREP and its members to promote community, national and regional collaboration in turtle conservation efforts.

The Year of the Sea Turtle had three key aims: 1) promote community conservation of turtle foraging and nesting sites; 2) strengthen national legislation and policies to encourage sustainable management; and 3) facilitate long-term partnerships for turtle conservation

This regional campaign was coordinated by SPREP with its key partners including national governments, intergovernmental organisations, local communities, the fishing industry, fisheries and tourism authorities, donors, and NGOs.

As a shared resource, turtle conservation is a shared responsibility. The participation of partners was a crucial element of the campaign's success.

Coral Reef Conservation

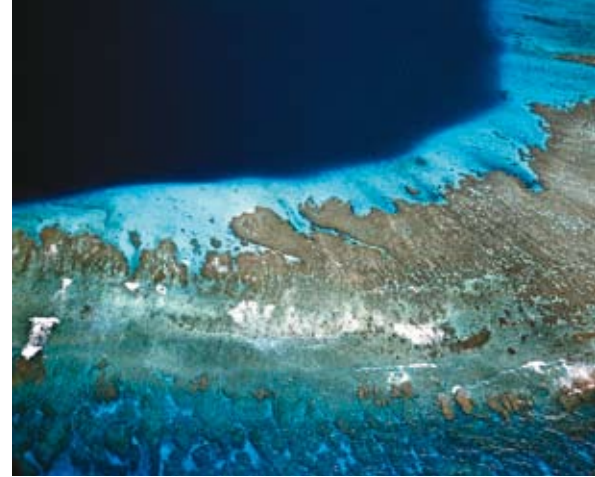
US Coral Reef Task Force Award for Outstanding Policy Coordination

In 2007, SPREP was recognised with an award for 'Outstanding Policy Coordination' from the US Coral Reef Task Force. The Director received the award on behalf of SPREP at a ceremony held last year in American Samoa during the biannual meeting of the Task Force.

"The award gives us further encouragement that the value of the role that SPREP is playing is indeed worthwhile," said SPREP's Director, Asterio Takesy. "We must resolve to continue the good work with our members and partners, especially the US Coral Reef Task Force, to achieve a sustainable future for the Pacific region."

This award recognises SPREP's contribution as a member of the Regional Support Team established in 2006 to support the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau in achieving the goals set forth in the Micronesia Challenge: to effectively conserve at least 30% of their near-shore marine resources and at least 20% of their terrestrial resources by 2020.

The US Coral Reef Task Force was established by Executive Order in 1998 to lead, coordinate, and strengthen U.S. government actions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Departments of Commerce and of the Interior, and includes leaders of 12 federal agencies, seven U.S. states and territories, and three freely associated states.



Coral reef from the air, Fiji.

Marine survey of reefs of the northwest coast of New Caledonia ■ ■

From November to December 2007 coral reefs were surveyed in New Caledonia, off the northwest coast of the Northern Province, from Yandé to Koumac. The team of international scientists evaluated the biodiversity of commercially important species and the health of 61 different reef sites. This work was funded by the Coral Reef Initiatives in the Pacific (CRISP) programme and carried out as a partnership between SPREP, Conservation International and the Northern Province of New Caledonia, with in-kind assistance provided by the New Zealand Department of Conservation.



Map of the study area depicting site locations, northwest coast of New Caledonia.

Coral diversity

Initial analysis indicates that a total number of 310 coral species were recorded during the survey. This finding confirms a review of all previous coral taxonomic work. Of these, 45 coral species were found that had not previously been reported from New Caledonia. Most of these represented extensions of existing reported ranges. One species had previously only been described from the Red Sea, and reported only from the Red Sea and Indian Oceans, and possibly in Fiji.

Reef fish diversity

A total of 500 fish species were observed during the course of the survey, representing approximately one-third of New Caledonia's known reef fish diversity. The most diverse sites for coral reef fish diversity produced between 150 to 180 species.

Preliminary findings suggest that the greatest diversity of coral reef fishes could be found in the back reef habitat of the outer barrier reefs. Lowest fish diversity was observed at the inner lagoon sites, although this may in part be due to low visibility which limited visual identification. Several possible species range extensions were found during the survey. These reports are currently being analysed by taxonomic specialists.

Macro-invertebrates

In all, 28 sites off the coastline of Koumac commune (southern portion of the survey area) were assessed for population density and diversity of sea cucumbers and giant clams. The presence and population density of trochus were also recorded.

Preliminary results indicate that population densities were low for sea cucumbers, giant clams and trochus, suggesting over-extraction of these resources in the survey area. Few to no individuals of *Trochus niloticus* were seen in the lagoon sites close to shore.

A total of 13 species of sea cucumbers were recorded. For giant clams, only four species were observed: *Tridacna crocea*, *T. derasa*, *T. maxima* and *T. squamous*. No individuals of the species *Tridacna gigas* or *Hippopus hippopus* were noted.

The state of New Caledonia's reefs

In general, the reef sites assessed that were located farther offshore and in the more northern part of the survey area appear to be less impacted by anthropogenic influences than the reef sites in the southern area of the survey.

The most frequently observed stress was from sedimentation. This was more pronounced inshore and decreased in intensity with increasing distance from the coast. This finding is not surprising due to the poor state of the watershed. Mining activities on the coast of Grande Terre (especially in the Koumac region) have compromised the watershed and left un-vegetated scars on the land.

No population outbreaks or mass feeding aggregations of the crown of thorns starfish were noted, nor was there indication of widespread bleaching.



Training on socio-economic monitoring of reefs in Papua New Guinea

Sunalilalai is a small island on the Southeast of the Sariba Island group in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. Sunalilalai was one of the three sites included in the field component of a training-of-trainers workshop for socioeconomic monitoring of the Pacific region (SEM-Pasifika) held in Galahi, co-funded by NOAA and SPREP through the CRISP programme. People from the local communities also participated in the workshop.

The village is located on a short strand partly surrounded by mangroves. There are hills and forests behind the village containing vegetable gardens. Seagrass beds and coral reefs are common in the area. In the past, there used to be much logging in Sunalilalai as there was a sawmill company in the neighbourhood that would buy the resulting forest products. The company was closed down over a decade ago and most people are now engaged in fishing and crop farming activities.

The objectives of the assessment were to 1) allow the participants of the SEM-Pasifika workshop to have field opportunities to use the first draft of the SEM-Pasifika socio-economic monitoring manual; 2) to conduct a preliminary socio-economic assessment; and 3) to increase understanding of local marine resource use patterns of the Sunalilalai community by providing some preliminary socio-economic information. It is hoped that results of the brief assessment conducted in the workshop could serve as a basis for future socio-economic monitoring.

There were 72 people in the 11 surveyed households: 45 male and 27 female, 41 adults and 31 children. Of the surveyed households, 80% of the adults were engaged in farming activities and 78% in fisheries. Among the interviewed households, 64% reported betel nuts as being the most important primary source of income; 55% mentioned copra as the most important secondary source. According to the key informants, marine and coastal products included fish, shellfish (such as crabs, mangrove snails, trochus and clams), and bêche-de-mer. Household respondents were asked to rate coastal and marine resources on a scale of 1 (= very bad) to 5 (= very good). The average scores among all the surveyed households for all resources were "3" or above.

In terms of local practices related to coastal and marine management, there has been a marine tenure arrangement whereby areas belong to clans, and area 'blocks' are allocated/owned by individual families within those clans. However, people can harvest fish from anywhere but need permission from the family or clan elders if they want to collect bêche-de-mer, mangrove snails, or sedentary commercial resources. However, fishing by large boats is restricted in the area. Traditionally when someone dies from a sea-related incident, fishing grounds surrounding that area are always closed off for a certain period. When the mourning period ends, the closed area will be fished and the fish caught will be eaten in a special feast to end the mourning period.

While this brief assessment was able to provide limited information about the socioeconomic condition of Sunalilalai, a more comprehensive assessment needs to be conducted. Future indicators might include resource use for household subsistence, changes of occupation or livelihood activities, markets for coastal and marine resources, non-market and non-use values, formal use rights and rules governing different resources, and the impact of management tools, compliance, stakeholder groups and participation.

The workshop benefited both the participants and the communities. Participants have been trained in designing and implementing a socio-economic survey, analysing and presenting the results and training a survey team. The communities of Sariba Islands obtained information on their socio-economic status to use as a basis for more in-depth studies or management plans.¹



A participant completes her socio-economic monitoring survey.



Group discussion among members of the workshop's focus group.

¹ Produced with assistance from Supin Wongbusarakum, East-West Center and Wendy Tan, Locally-Managed Marine Area Network.



Regional Marine Species Programme

Regional Marine Species Programme Action Plans revised and endorsed

SPREP began work with other CROP agencies in developing a Regional Action Plan for Sharks.

The regional marine species programme framework includes five-year Action Plans for three groups of marine species of special interest in the Pacific: Dugongs, Marine Turtles, and Whales/Dolphins. Certain species from these groups continue to be listed in Appendix I² of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Appendices I³ and II⁴ of the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals.

In March 2007, SPREP, its Members and collaborating partners reviewed regional Marine Species Programme Action Plans for the period 2008-2012. Focus areas to guide conservation work and sets of priority actions were identified. The draft Action Plans from the meeting were subsequently reviewed by members and collaborating partners and endorsed by members at the 18th SPREP Meeting.

Members also approved the inclusion of sharks as a species of special interest in the regional Marine Species Programme Framework for 2008-2012. They directed the Secretariat to collaborate with other relevant regional organisations, in particular, WCPFC, SPC, and FFA, in progressing an appropriate approach in developing a Regional Action Plan for Sharks, noting the decision by the Third Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC): Conservation and Management Measures for Sharks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2006-05.

Marine turtles

The SPREP regional Marine Turtle Action Plan 2003-2007 highlighted the lack of data and information in the region on turtles and other marine species of special interest largely the result of insufficient surveys. In an effort to improve this situation, turtle nesting monitoring programmes were initiated and maintained during the year in three member countries: Kiribati, Tonga and Tuvalu. The assistance included:

- Training on turtle monitoring including surveys, turtle tagging, taking measurements and tissue sampling;
- Initial monitoring activities of the programme; and
- Turtle satellite tagging when a nesting turtle was caught.

Apart from the initiation of turtle nesting monitoring programmes, assistance was also provided to on-going turtle nesting monitoring in two main turtle nesting sites in Vanuatu involving local communities. This assistance was provided by the turtle monitoring programme of Wan Smolbag. Satellite tagging was possible on a nesting hawksbill turtle in one of these sites, Moso Island. In addition to Wan Smolbag, this



Carrying a hawksbill turtle for release after attaching a satellite tag, Tassiriki Village, Moso Island, Vanuatu.

activity was conducted in collaboration with the Marine Turtle Research Program, NOAA, Hawaii, and the Tassiriki village turtle monitors on Moso Island.

MoU for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region

Since 2003 SPREP has collaborated with CMS in developing the MoU for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region. The MoU was eventually opened for signing during the 17th SPREP Meeting in Noumea, Caledonia, 2006. Nine SPREP members and four collaborating organisations signed the MoU at that time.

The First Meeting of Signatories to the CMS Cetacean MoU was held on 6 March 2007, Apia, Samoa. During that meeting, two additional SPREP members and one collaborating organisation (WWF South Pacific) also signed the MoU. The current national signatories are Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Collaborating organisation signatories are the SPREP, CMS, IFAW, WDCS and WWF South Pacific.

Study on the impacts of whale watching in Tonga 🇹🇴

The regional SPREP Whales and Dolphins Action Plan 2003-2007, endorsed by member countries and territories, highlighted whale watching as one of its priority areas. The meeting to revise the regional SPREP Whales and Dolphins Action Plan for the 2008-2012 period recommended an objective to “Ensure the best practice management of the whale and dolphin watching industry in the Pacific Islands region.” One of the actions recommended is to “assess any potential impacts of whale and dolphin watching activities on the animals, e.g. spinner dolphin watching, swim-with whales programs and vessel interactions.”

SPREP provided assistance to enable the first phase of the project, “Assessing the Potential Effects of ‘Swim-with Whales’ Activities on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) wintering in Vava’u, Tonga.” The principal objectives of this study are to describe the level of exposure of humpback whales to boats and swimmers in Vava’u and to assess the behaviour of whales in the presence and absence of boats and swimmers.

The first phase carried out in October 2007 involved selecting a location for the land-based station as well as assessing other practical issues involved in the study “Regional Arrangement for Conservation of Marine Species under the Auspices of the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).”



Photo © Bent Christensen

MoU for the conservation of dugongs

Dugongs occur in only six countries and territories in the SPREP region. These are Australia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Palau, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Given the limited number of SPREP dugong range members, a separate MoU for the Pacific Islands region was considered unwarranted. However, SPREP has been encouraging participation of SPREP dugong range states in the global MoU on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range. SPREP attended a technical workshop and meeting to sign this global MoU held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 28–31 October 2007.

Ship-strikes are a constant threat to marine mammals, as with this humpback calf off the coast of Hawai'i.





Regional Support for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands



Mangroves, Saanapu, Upolu, Samoa.

SPREP continued its support for Pacific island Parties to the Ramsar Convention and to assist Pacific island countries and territories with conservation of their wetland ecosystems. Wetlands, as defined under the Ramsar Convention, cover everything from freshwater lakes and mangroves to seagrass beds and coral reefs. There are currently five Pacific Island Ramsar Parties to the convention, with six Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites) listed from the region. SPREP also provided support in progressing moves towards accession for a number of other Pacific Island countries that have shown interest in joining the convention. SPREP will continue to assist Pacific Island Ramsar parties to implement the Convention and promote the wise use of wetlands in the Pacific Islands region.

Highlights of wetlands-related activities for 2007 included:

- Development of a draft mangrove-monitoring manual for the Pacific Islands region in collaboration with the University of Tasmania;
- Coordination and support for World Wetlands Day 2007 celebrations throughout the region;
- Assistance for Kiribati and Fiji to access financial resources for wetlands conservation from the Ramsar Convention's Small Grants Fund (SGF);
- Financial resources secured to carry out an update of part of the *Oceania Wetlands Directory*, first published in 1993;
- Facilitation of country attachments for exchange of experiences on mangrove restoration between the Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa and Samoa;
- Assistance for non-parties Kiribati and Nauru with preparations for accession to the Ramsar Convention;
- Support for a national community-based protected areas workshop in the Marshall Islands;
- Collaboration with PBIF, SOPAC and other regional partners on progressing strengthening of marine biodiversity information for the region;
- Collaboration with IUCN Oceania on the development of a regional mangrove initiative for the Pacific Islands region;
- Support for regional representatives on Ramsar Convention bodies.

*Learning more about wetlands, Jaluit Atoll
Ramsar Site in the Marshall Islands.*



Helping the Solomon Islands develop its World Heritage Convention Tentative List Submission to UNESCO

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, or "World Heritage Convention," currently lists 660 cultural properties, 166 natural and 25 mixed sites in 141 member countries. In the SPREP region, however, only one Pacific island country, the Solomon Islands, currently has a World Heritage Site: East Rennell. The World Heritage Convention requires countries to submit a Tentative List (TL) of potential sites, which is updated periodically. Although the Solomon Islands has one World Heritage Site, it had not previously developed a formal TL.

At the request of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, SPREP worked with a UNESCO consultant to assist the Solomon Islands Government and UNESCO National Commission to develop the country's first TL in 2007. Workshops were held in Honiara with government departments and local and international NGOs to assess potential sites for inclusion on the TL, reviewing existing biophysical knowledge and using a preliminary list that had been developed at a workshop held in Marovo Lagoon in 2006. Following the workshops, fieldwork was carried out on Tetepare Island in Western Province — the largest uninhabited island in the South Pacific — and a reconnaissance flight was made over the Bauro Highlands of Makira-Ulawa Province. A literature review was then undertaken to assess scientific knowledge of potential areas.

The resulting draft Tentative List submitted to the Solomon Islands UNESCO National Commission included significant areas of the country's remaining natural heritage, with associated cultural values, as two large proposed sites. The first is the Marovo-Tetepare Complex, a huge mixed natural and cultural site encompassing the double barrier islands and marine areas of the Marovo Lagoon. Others include selected terrestrial areas of Vangunu and Gatokae Islands, the uninhabited island of Tetepare and its associated coastal marine areas, the marine and coastal areas of the southern tip and southwest coast of Rendova Island and the uninhabited barrier islands of Hele – 1,600 km² of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The Marovo Lagoon is the largest saltwater lagoon in the world and the area is an exceptional part of the Coral Triangle with high coral and fish diversity comparable only to Raja Ampat in Indonesia. Tetepare Island is a complete lowland rainforest ecosystem, covered in primary forest and uninhabited for more than 150 years. It contains some of the last remaining intact lowland rainforest areas in the Solomon Islands and the Pacific.

The second site is a complex of the Solomon Islands remaining outstanding forest areas, proposed as a geographically disbursed serial site, which is permitted under the Convention, called the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Solomon Islands. The proposed area includes: the Bauro Highlands of Makira-Ulawa Province, the central caldera volcanic skirt of Kolombangara in Western Province, the Mt. Maetambe area of Choiseul Province and the Mt. Popomanaseu area of Guadalcanal Province — the four sites together cover over approximately 1500 km². Of the 163 land birds that breed in the Solomon Islands, an astonishing 72 species (44% of Solomon Islands land birds) are found nowhere else in the world, while another 62 (38%) are considered unique subspecies. This represents the highest degree of avian endemism on an area basis on Earth. In addition to this rich avian endemism, the Solomon Islands rainforests also support numerous endemic amphibians, reptiles, molluscs, insects and several endemic plant groups reflecting unique patterns of speciation, isolation and dispersal.



The Bauro Highlands of Makira-Ulawa Province, one of the areas in the Solomon Islands recommended for the country's World Heritage Tentative List.

Lowland rainforest, Tetepare Island, Solomon Islands.



Progressing the invasive species agenda

The post of Invasive Species Officer was filled in July. In the first half of the year, a consultant carried out preliminary review work for a revision of the Draft Regional Invasive Species Strategy, produced by SPREP in 2000, as requested by Members at 16th SPREP Meeting. During the second half of the year a draft was produced, incorporating input obtained at the 2006 and 2007 PILN annual meetings. The revision process should be complete in time for presentation of a final document to the 19th SPREP Meeting. Input to the invasives strategy was also received at the Alotau Conference, where a side event on invasive species and climate change was organised by PILN and PII.

Strategic fund-raising for invasive species in the region included providing assistance to Members in preparing a new Invasive Species Project within the framework of the GEF-PAS programme. The new project reflects the structure of the draft regional invasives strategy.

Several invasive species training courses were organised, facilitated or initiated, including training for MPA managers, social marketing, weed planning and management, and biological control. Technical support was provided to at least nine projects in five Member countries and territories, including work on management of rats, mynas, macaques and invasive forest trees, while assistance to invasive species action planning was provided to five Members.

Work began on developing a Pacific Weed Risk Assessment System and on adapting a weed management cost and feasibility estimation tool for use in the region.



SPREP continued its support to the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN), which was very active over 2007. The network expanded from six teams at its founding to 14 total, after eight countries and territories requested membership. Requests for membership have since been received from four additional countries.

PILN's main focus over 2007 was to fulfil commitments made at the 2006 launch in Palau, specifically to build capacity in strategic action planning, marine invasive species and social marketing. Assistance has been given to the drafting of strategic action plans with four PICTs, two workshops have been held on marine invasive species and one on social marketing. Technical support has also been given to PILN teams on a range of issues through a programme of country visits. The network annual meeting was held in September 2007, hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of French Polynesia, 65 participants from 13 PILN teams participated in the five-day workshop.

At the annual meeting priority actions and specific capacity building activities were identified in four main technical areas: marine invasive species, biosecurity, weed management and rat management. In addition, shorter discussions were held on the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme, monitoring, evaluation & data management, and invasive birds, specifically myna birds. Priorities for action were identified, together with opportunities for skill-sharing and capacity building, and input was given to the revision of the Regional Invasive Species Strategy. Network benefits for participants were evaluated in December 2007 by questionnaire. 83% of responders felt that they had benefited from the network and 77% felt that it was doing enough, while 64% scored a high level of satisfaction. The 2-year pilot programme for PILN ends in May 2008.



The Jungle myna (Acridotheres fuscus) and the African tulip tree (Spathodea campanulata) pictured here are two of the most widespread invasive species in the Pacific islands.

Strengthening partnerships and developing capacity for sustainable land management in the Pacific

Twelve SPREP Member Countries that are Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will soon access up to US \$500,000 each from the GEF through UNDP to develop national capacity for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). Niue and Samoa began accessing this funding in 2007. For members, it is a significant achievement in resource mobilisation and capacity development, as many national stakeholders were involved in identifying land degradation issues, designing appropriate interventions, assigning budget allocations and developing proposals through a team approach.

SPREP is the CROP agency accredited to the UNCCD and plays a leading role in assisting Members on Convention matters. This has included support for participation and negotiations at the Conference of the Parties, and development of national action plans and reports. Assistance has extended to include support for development of GEF medium-sized project proposals. Funding for medium-size projects to address SLM was made available by the GEF through a portfolio project approach for SIDS and LDCs. A global support unit (GSU) was established to coordinate project proposal development across the main areas of the UNCCD. The GSU engaged SPREP to organise regional training workshops and coordinate cooperation amongst regional institutions in support to countries in completing their project proposals. During 2007 this included:

- Organising and implementing a regional training workshop, which enabled representatives from members to obtain assistance and guidance from relevant resource persons from regional institutions to help in completing their project proposals.
- Initiating re-establishment of the CROP Land Resources Working Group, including membership from the UNDP, Foundation of the South Pacific – International (FSPi), and Pacific Islands Association of Non Government Organisations (PIANGO). The Land Resources Working Group also supported countries with project co-financing and identified project activities they are prepared to support during the implementation phase.
- Supporting some countries (FSM, Kiribati, RMI) in developing project proposals and liaising with UNDP to ensure project documents meet UNDP and GEF requirements.
- Supporting project inception activities in Samoa and Niue.
- Training in project cycle management for the country team and SLM National Coordinator in Niue enabling the team to plan and prepare for evaluation.

Hard work and cooperation is reaping benefits. During 2008 all 14 PICTs will obtain GEF funding that will enable them to develop and strengthen technical skills to address SLM, establish demonstration activities to promote best practice in SLM, mainstream SLM into national planning and policy development processes, develop resource mobilisation strategies to support on-going SLM work and develop National Action Programmes to combat land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. National multi-stakeholder teams and local consultants are now more familiar with the processes in developing GEF medium-sized proposals, and regional institutions now have a mechanism to coordinate support for countries with on-going work in the area of SLM and related challenges.



Land degradation is an increasingly important issue throughout the Pacific.



SPREP staff at the 18th Annual Meeting.

Support

Introduction

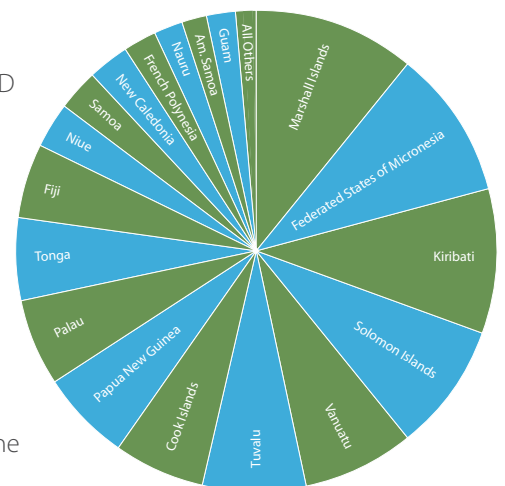
The Executive and Corporate Support strive to ensure that effective policies and services are in place to ensure the delivery of the Secretariat’s strategic programmes, resulting in an efficient and effective organisation.

The year culminated in the resounding success of the 18th SPREP Meeting held in September in Apia, Samoa. During the course of the year, many of the recommendations of the 2006 internal review of the Secretariat were carried out in order to optimise the Secretariat’s service to Pacific Island members and stakeholders. Following the implementation of the review’s recommendations and successful engagement with NZAID, a funding agreement was signed between NZAID and the Secretariat to align NZ’s funding support with the programmatic structure adopted by the Secretariat and the SPREP Meeting.

Budget and audit

The 18th SPREP meeting approved the Secretariat’s budget of USD \$7.74 million for the year 2007. Of the total approved budget expenditure, approximately 26% was allocated to Executive, Corporate and Programme support while 74% was allocated to programmes implementation.

On the Income side, only 13% or \$935,572 was to be financed from membership contribution, 15% from other sources while 72% or \$5,151,339 was to be raised through donor support. In terms of actual budget performance at the end of the year, SPREP was able to raise funds and Implement programmes to 94% of the approved work programme and budget.



Share of direct SPREP assistance during 2007 by recipient country/territory

In terms of the audit for the 2007 accounts the Secretariat once again is pleased to advise that, as in past years, the Auditors Lesa and Penn provided an unqualified audit opinion on the Secretariat's operations.

Human resources

The recruitment of the Senior Administration Officer and the Personnel Officer at the beginning of the year made enabled great strides to be made towards strengthening and raising the profile of human resource management in the organisation. An HR Working Group was established to work with the Human Resources section in carrying out consultations with the staff on major HR policies such as recruitment and selection and the performance management system, as revised by the HR section. Drafts of these policies were submitted to the Executive for consideration and endorsement towards the end of the year.

Staff working conditions were continually reviewed and monitored, including revisions to the Staff Medical Scheme, which came into effect in April 2007. Policies on other staff entitlements such as leave (home, annual, sick, maternity, family, special leave and examination) and other staff conditions such as allowances for extra duties and education, and interpretation of dependants were revised and submitted for Executive consideration and approval. Ongoing assessment of the needs of the organisation led to a trimming of some areas, particularly in Corporate Services where focus was placed on optimum utilisation of available and qualified resources in the provision of efficient services.

In respect of the staff establishment, SPREP had a total number of 64 occupied positions during the year – 63% at the professional level and 37% at the support services level. At the end of the year, 96% of the positions were filled and the remaining vacancies were under recruitment. A total of 15 new staff joined SPREP, including a short-term intern to coordinate the 8th Pacific Nature Conservation Conference and a JICA volunteer attached to the Publications and Communications section. Ten staff left the organisation during 2007, some resigning to take up better employment opportunities elsewhere, for personal reasons, or after completing their terms.

Of the total occupied professional staff positions, 66% were Pacific islanders and 34% were from other Member countries; 34% by females and 66% by males. Of the total work force (both professional and support staff), there was an equal distribution of males and females.

SPREP continued to strengthen its human resource management policies and processes through the adoption of Improved procedures as well as contemporary best practices. Emphasis was placed on the wider involvement of staff through consultations for ownership purposes. Transparent and accountable decisions and procedures on staffing matters are also being encouraged and strengthened.

The organisation's General Records section was improved, including strengthening the archival system. The management and maintenance of the Secretariat's properties continued to be a major focus of the Administration section, despite limited available funding.

Information and communications

Information Resource Centre (IRC) and Library

The year saw a change in style and focus of the Information Resource Centre (IRC) and Library, with greater emphasis placed on electronic and online access to information. Significant upgrades and

redevelopment of the IRC database and web site ushered in a new era of access to full text online environment materials.

During 2007 the IRC and Library also expanded and strengthened its links with national and tertiary libraries across the region, thereby renewing its commitment to provide easy access to SPREP materials and critical environment information to Pacific communities, both online and in traditional formats.

Pacific Environment Information Network (PEIN)

Development and coordination of the Pacific Environment Information Network (PEIN) again proved to be a challenging and rewarding focus for the SPREP Information Resource Centre IRC. Hardware and software installations, database development, in-country assistance and regional training attachments featured prominently throughout the year. IRC and library staff continued to identify, acquire and catalogue critical Pacific environment information and supported numerous reference and research requests from throughout the region in addition to filling requests for SPREP publications and information.

Information technologies (IT)

During the year also, the IT Team rolled out a new Intranet using the Sharepoint Portal software. Maintaining the Intranet is only one of the software's many functions. Further training will be conducted to realise its full potential.

In assisting Programme Officers' communication needs, the IT team created a 'web forum' that will enable officers and their country associates to communicate and share ideas quickly and efficiently via the web. In other respects, the SPREP web site continued a gradual evolution.

The IT department also made many improvements in data security by updating its outdated firewall and web content blocker software as well as re-structuring the network for better audit of Internet usage.

The department maintains its assistance to member countries by way of IT training offered to PEIN attachments and assistance in procurements of IT equipment when needed.

Publications

For the second year, the SPREP Annual Report was produced to a high standard reflecting the same general design as its predecessor, which has been warmly-received and viewed as a model for other CROP agencies. The reports of the 18th SPREP Meeting and the Environment Ministers' Meeting, and Conferences of Parties and Plenipotentiaries to Conventions, were also produced in a timely fashion. The remainder of the International Waters Project (IWP) contractor reports under the IWP-Pacific Technical Report series were successfully released in print and electronic form on the SPREP web site.

A range of formal and informal publications were produced to support SPREP's activities in the areas of biodiversity, solid waste management, climate change and the Year of the Sea Turtle campaign.

The year also saw the continued transition from printed to electronic publications. High printing costs required reevaluation of the method of distribution for SPREP's quarterly newsletter, SPREP-

tok. As a result, SPREP-tok became an annual print publication supplemented by a monthly e-mail newsletter, SPREP Highlights.

SPREP continued to improve its media relations and visibility. Specific media workshops were held in conjunction with major initiatives by SPREP and other organisations. The quality and quantity of SPREP's media releases were enhanced during the year, with a greater emphasis placed on ensuring relevant news about the organisation reached potentially interested parties in the region and internationally on a more timely basis.

Regional and International Cooperation

As a regional Intergovernmental organisation established by the governments and administrations of the Pacific islands together with developed countries with Interests in the region, to care for the environment, SPREP has been and continues to be an active and key member of the Council of Regional Organisations In the Pacific (CROP).

The Secretariat has made optimal use of the CROP mechanism through its annual meetings of Chief Executives, working groups and regional roundtables to enhance the delivery to Pacific Island countries and territories of its environment-related services through better coordination, minimisation or elimination of overlaps and competition, and building synergies with partners. Through this process, SPREP has contributed to regional and national activities and policy development related to sustainable development and environmental resources management.

Within the context of the region and CROP, SPREP is a key delivery vehicle and lead agency in a number of initiatives of the Pacific Plan, such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, waste management, sustainable financing, renewable energy and energy efficiency under the Sustainable Development sector of the Plan. SPREP is also a member of the Task Force on the Regional Institutional Framework review and of the Pacific Plan Action Committee.

Internationally, the Secretariat continued to maintain the high profile of the region in key international fora through both its own high-level participation, and its policy and technical advisory support to Pacific Island delegations to international conferences and technical bodies of multilateral environment agreements of priority concern to the region.

As a Secretariat that relies heavily on donor and international development institutions for support to its programmes for the Pacific islands region, SPREP maintained its active and positive engagement with a host of international development agencies, bilateral donors, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders to address priority needs of the Pacific island countries and territories, by combining SPREP's technical expertise and regional knowledge with international resources.

To formalise and facilitate this mutually beneficial relationship SPREP has entered into, and renewed, agreements and memoranda of understanding with many of its partners evidenced in the Programmes sections of the Annual Report, and aim to continue to improve relations with current partners while seeking to engage new ones.

SPREP has had, and maintains, a good reputation with donors, regional and international agencies. It is committed to build on and improve this reputation and relationship by improving communications with partners and delivering SPREP's responsibilities with excellence and competence.

Finance 2007

Donor Funds and Member Contributions (US\$)

	Balance at 1-Jan-07	Income	Expenses	Other Adjustments	Balance at 31-Dec-07
Asian Development Bank	-4,508				-4,508
AusAID Extra Budget	267,696	921,445	-1,105,315	2,000	85,826
AusAID Extra Extra Budget	13,317	205,118	-125,905		92,530
Commonwealth Secretariat	8,932	20,225	-15,112		14,045
Conservation International Development	-6,776	40,000	-16,208		17,016
Department of International Development	8,136		-6,749		1,387
European Union	33,116	92,381	-68,981		56,516
Government of France	244,869	74,643	-122,245	-146	197,121
Government of Japan	12,332	153,100	-153,810		11,622
Government of the United Kingdom	8,806				8,806
International Maritime Organization	3,540	40,332	-44,238		-366
John D & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation	37,538		-18,293		19,245
Multiple Donors	-18,884	87,869	-702,638	146	-633,507
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	0	80,000	-81,106		-1,106
Netherlands Red Cross Society	7,746		-1,828		5,918
NZAID Pacific Initiative for the Environment	13,176		-2,955		10,221
NZAID Extra Budget	122,669	600,085	-732,796		-10,042
NZAID Extra Extra Budget	189,585	358,473	-482,999		65,059
Pacific Development & Conservation Trust	6,869	42,509	-48,099		1,279
Packard Foundation	0	40,000	-40,209		-209
People's Republic of China	160,000	80,000			240,000
Other Funds (includes core funds)	815,877	1,831,914	-1,466,300		1,181,491
Ramsar Secretariat	13,070	84,236	-88,692		8,614
The Christensen Foundation	0	50,000	-21,630		28,370
The Nature Conservancy	-7,146	59,900	-36,524		16,230
UN Convention to Combat Desertification	1,592				1,592
UN Development Program	295,704	168,338	-354,401		109,641
UN Environment Program	72,776	555,039	-473,677	-2,000	152,138
UN Institute of Training and Research	0	59,819	-20,904		38,915
UN Tech Co-Op Activities (part of UNDESA)	-20,668	20,668			0
UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific (UNESCAP)	6,646				6,646
UN Office of Project Services	6,091	101,262	-109,739		-2,386
US Additional Member Contributions	2,577				2,577
US Department of Energy/Los Alamos University	4,801				4,801
US Fish & Wildlife Service	14,625				14,625
US Forest Service	0	10,000			10,000
US National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration	27,633	177,627	-179,902		25,358
US Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council	37,778	80,000	-105,060		12,718
World Conservation Union (IUCN) Regional Office for Oceania	0	29,838	-28,584		1,254
World Health Organization	0	20,000	-17,544		2,456
Total	2,379,515	6,084,821	-6,672,443	-	1,791,892

Member Contributions (US\$)

American Samoa	7,638
Australia	185,106
Cook Islands	10,184
Federated States of Micronesia	8,335
Fiji	9,214
France	134,202
French Polynesia	20,360
Guam	20,360
Kiribati	10,214
Marshall Islands	0
Nauru	0
New Caledonia	18,854
New Zealand	134,202
Niue	10,165
Northern Marianas	0
Palau	0
Papua New Guinea	61,776
Samoa	20,360
Solomon Islands	0
Tokelau	10,184
Tonga	10,184
Tuvalu	10,031
United States of America	188,000
Vanuatu	20,398
Wallis and Futuna	27,729
Total	917,496

Parties Contributions (US\$)

Parties to the Apia Convention	
Cook Islands	2,813
Total	2,813
Parties to the Noumea Convention	
Australia	5,358
Cook Islands	2,212
Fiji	671
Solomon Islands	2,212
United States of America	7,000
Total	17,453
Parties to the Waigani Convention	
Australia	3,595
Federated States of Micronesia	2,090
Fiji	38
Niue	801
Solomon Islands	2,090
Total	8,614

The income received shown above can be located in the Donor Funds and Members' Contributions schedule in the row titled "Multiple Donors."

Income and Expenditure (US\$)

Actual 2007	
Income	
Members Contributions	917,496
Program Management Charge	455,451
Interest	362,875
Exchange Gain	17,138
Other Income	35,364
Donor Funds	4,296,497
Total Income	6,084,821
Expenditure	
Programme Implementation	4,709,749
Executive Management & Corporate Support	1,962,694
Total Expenditure	6,672,443

Auditors' Report



Lesā ma Penn
Certified Public Accountants

Lesā ma Penn Compound
Fagales Street by the lridge
Fagales
PO Box 1399
Apia, Samoa

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(685) 20322
Fax: (685) 23722
(685) 21335
Email: les@pm.a.samo

AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SPREP)

We have audited the financial statements of SPREP as set out on pages 3 to 11, for the year ended 31 December 2007. The financial statements provide information on the financial performance of the organisation, and its financial position as at 31 December 2007.

Management responsibilities

The management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements that comply with generally accepted accounting practice, and that gives a true and fair view of the financial position of SPREP as at 31 December 2007, and its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date.

Audit responsibility

It is our responsibility to express an independent opinion on the financial statements presented by management, and to report our opinion to you.

Basis of Opinion

An audit includes examining on a test basis, evidence relevant to the amounts, and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes assessing:

- The significant estimates and judgments made by management in the preparation of the financial statements; and
- Whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the circumstances of the organisation, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations, which we considered necessary to provide us with sufficient evidence, to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements, whether caused by fraud and error. In forming our opinion, we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Lesā ma Penn



Specific reporting requirements
In accordance with the specific audit reporting requirements of SPREP's Financial Regulation 32 (a) to (f), we report as follows:

- (a) extent and character of examination is as explained in the section above under the heading "Basis of Opinion"
- (b) matters affecting the completeness and accuracy of the accounts, refer to our report to management, which is attached, titled Management report.
- (c) the accuracy or otherwise of the supplies and equipment records as determined by stocktaking and examination of the records. The fixed assets register has been completed following the physical count of all SPREP assets carried out in December 2007.
- (d) the Draft Financial Rules and Procedures Manual (DFPRM) has been finalized and approved by Management in 2007.
- (e) the adequacy of insurance cover for the buildings, stores, furniture, equipment and other property of SPREP. Insurance cover for buildings, furniture, equipment and other property is adequate.
- (f) Other matters, the matters raised in our report to management have been addressed.

We also examined on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts of funds received by the Organisation from NZAID and AUSAID. We confirm that funds were spent in accordance with the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) signed between the respective parties.

Unqualified Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as of 31 December 2007, and of the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and in accordance with the SPREP Financial Regulations as amended.

Our audit was completed on 11 April 2007 and our opinion is expressed as at that date.

Apia, Samoa

Certified Public Accountants

Staff List as at 31 December 2007

NAME	DESIGNATION	COUNTRY	CONTRACT EXPIRY DATE
Executive			
Asterio TAKESY	Director	Federated States of Micronesia	21 Januar 2009
F. Vitolio LUI	Deputy Director	Samoa	21 April 2008
Ruta TUPUA-COUPER	Personal Assistant to Director	Samoa	31 December 2010
Apiseta ETI	Personal Assistant Deputy Director	Samoa	31 December 2009
Island Ecosystems Programme			
Stuart CHAPE	Programme Manager, Island Ecosystems	Australia	5 August 2008
Makerita ATIGA	Secretary to Programme Manager	Samoa	2 August 2008
Dominique BENZAKEN	Coastal Management Adviser	Australia	2 January 2008
Lui BELL	Marine Species Officer	Samoa	2 October 2008
Caroline VIEUX	Coral Reef Management Officer	France	2 January 2010
Anne Patricia TREVOR	Associate Turtles Database Officer	Samoa	29 February 2008
Seiuli Vainuupo JUNGBLUT	Associate Ramsar Officer	Samoa	22 February 2009
Kate BROWN-VITOLIO	Action Strategy Adviser	Australia	24 November 2009
Anna TIRAA	Islands Biodiversity Officer	Cook Islands	14 August 2009
Dr Alan TYE	Invasive Species Officer	United Kingdom	29 June 2010
Dr Jill KEY	Coordinator, PILN	United Kingdom	31 May 2008
Frank WICKHAM	Human Resource Dev./Training Officer	Solomon Islands	7 September 2010
Tamara LOGAN	Education & Social Communications Officer	Australia	30 September 2010
Ruth PUNE	8th Pacific Nature Conservation Conference Coordinator	Papua New Guinea	30 January 2008
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Marine Conservation Analyst</i>		
Theresa FRUEAN	Programme Assistant	Samoa	31 December 2009
Pacific Futures Programme			
Bruce CHAPMAN	Programme Manager, Pacific Futures	New Zealand	28 August 2008
Phaedra MOORS	Secretary to Programme Manager	Samoa	15 August 2008
Dr Frank GRIFFIN	Pollution Prevention & Waste Management Adviser	Papua New Guinea	22 March 2009
Anthony TALOULI	Marine Pollution Adviser	Fiji	20 April 2010
Hiromi HIRONAKA	Project Officer - Solid Waste & Landfill Management	Japan	May 2008
Mark RICKETTS	Solid Waste Officer	Australia	4 September 2008
Espen RONNEBERG	Climate Change Adviser	Marshall Islands	30 October 2009
Taito NAKALEVU	Climate Change Adaptation Officer	Fiji	31 March 2008
Dean SOLOFA	Pacific Islands - Global Climate Observing System Officer	Samoa	16 October 2008
Clark PETERU	Environmental Legal Adviser	Samoa	12 August 2009
Nirupa RAM	Associate Ozone Depleting Substances Officer	Fiji	31 December 2007
Solomone FIFITA	Project Manager - Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP)	Tonga	7 July 2010
Joseph STANLEY	GEF Support Adviser	Samoa	18 March 2010
Seve PAENIU	Sustainable Development Adviser	Tuvalu	4 March 2010
Tepa SUAESI	Environmental Officer	Samoa	27 May 2010
Saunoa MATA'U	Programme Assistant	Samoa	20 June 2009

NAME	DESIGNATION	COUNTRY	CONTRACT EXPIRY DATE
Corporate Services			
Taito John ROACHE	Corporate Service Manager (CSM)	Samoa	29 May 2008
Rosanna GALUVAO	Secretary to CSM	Samoa	14 September 2009
Information, Communication & Publication			
Kapeni MATATIA	IT Manager	Samoa	11 September 2008
Allitasi UESELE-PETAIA	IT Network Officer	Samoa	7 January 2010
Christian SLAVEN	Database & Systems Administrator	Samoa	9 April 2009
Kemueli QOROYA	Information Technology Officer	Fiji	4 June 2010
Hideaki FUJII	JOCV IT Volunteer	Japan	March 2008
Peter MURGATROYD	Information Resource Centre Manager	New Zealand	3 January 2010
Miraneta WILLIAMS	Assistant Librarian	Samoa	31 December 2007
Lance LAACK	Editor and Publications Officer	United States	31 December 2010
Nanette WOONTON	Assistant Media & Publications Officer	Cook Islands	15 June 2010
Kenichi KASHO	JOCV Audio/Visual Technician	Japan	October 2009
Finance			
Alofa TU'UAU	Finance Manager	Samoa	23 July 2008
Makereta KAURASI-MANUELI	Project Accountant	Fiji	14 April 2009
Joanna MATTHES	Assistant Accountant	Samoa	6 December 2008
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Finance Officer</i>		
Seleisa AMERIKA	Finance Officer	Samoa	19 September 2010
Linda ALAPAE	Finance Officer	Samoa	6 December 2008
Pauline FRUEAN	Conference/Travels Officer	Samoa	8 February 2010
Administration			
Simeamativa LEOTA-VAAI	Senior Administration Officer	Samoa	7 January 2010
Litia BRIGHOUSE	Personnel Officer	Samoa	18 February 2010
Lupe SILULU	Registry Supervisor	Samoa	31 December 2009
Helen TUILAGI-AH KUOI	Registry Management Assistant	Samoa	28 April 2009
Filifilia TUULUA	Records Clerk	Samoa	3 February 2010
Monica TUPAI	Receptionist/Fax Operator	Samoa	31 December 2009
Tuputa ULIATE	Property Services Officer	Samoa	22 July 2010
Faamanatu SITITI	Driver/Clerk	Samoa	5 December 2008
Silupe GAFA	Gardener/Groundskeeper	Samoa	31 March 2011
Tologauvale LEAULA	Cleaner/Teaperson/Clerical Assistant	Samoa	31 December 2009
Amosa TOOTOO	Cleaner/Teaperson	Samoa	31 December 2007
Sione LEVU	Cleaner	Samoa	6 April 2010
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Handyman/Relief Driver</i>		

SPREP Publications 2007

All publications are available as pdf files from the SPREP website, <http://www.sprep.org>. Most publications are also available in print form, while stocks last, from the Information Resource Centre: irc@sprep.org.

PUBLICATION TITLE	PAGES	ISBN
Lady Vini's Big Pacific Adventure	24 p.	978-982-04-0377-2
Pacific Sea Turtle Education kit	54 p.	978-982-04-0359-8
Report on the 18th SPREP Meeting of Officials, 11-14 September 2007	ii + 66 p.	978-982-04-0382-6
Rapport de la 18e Conférence des représentants officiels du PROE, 11-14 septembre 2007	ii + 66 p.	978-982-04-0382-6
Report of the Eleventh Meeting of Regional Meteorological Service Directors (RMSD)	53 p.	978-982-04-0360-4
The Pacific Islands International Waters Project: strengthening community-based environmental Management in the Pacific islands	48 p.	13 978-982-04-0328-4
Series		
2006 Annual Report of SPREP: "Sustainable development in a changing Pacific environment"	48 p.	ISSN 1562-675X
2006 Report annuel du Secrétariat du PROE: "Le développement durable dans un environnement océanien en mutation"	48 p.	ISSN 1990-3561
<i>IWP-Pacific Technical Reports (International Waters Programme), 2007</i>		
38. Niue sustainable coastal fisheries pilot project: Literature review and pilot baseline survey	iv + 55 p.	978-982-04-0361-1
39. Niue sustainable coastal fisheries pilot project: Marine baseline survey	vi + 78 p.	978-982-04-0362-8
40. Niue sustainable coastal fisheries pilot project: Community-based monitoring	vi + 64 p.	978-982-04-0363-5
41. Social and economic context of marine resource depletion in Gagil and Maap, Yap State, FSM	vi + 46 p.	978-982-04-0364-2
42. Ecological assessment and community monitoring plan for marine protected areas in Yap State, FSM	iv + 34p.	978-982-04-0365-9
43. Strengthening Yap State government services in coastal resource management	vi + 43 p.	978-982-04-0366-6
44. Lessons for Pacific Islands environmental initiatives: Experiences from IWP National Coordinators	vi + 12 p.	978-982-04-0367-3
45. Marine ecological baseline report for Amal/Crab Bay Tabu Eria, Malekula Island, Vanuatu	vi + 133 p.	978-982-04-0368-0
46. Socioeconomic study of the Crab Bay villages of Central Malekula, Vanuatu, Volume 1: Overview	iv + 20 p.	978-982-04-0369-7
47. Socioeconomic study of the Crab Bay villages of Central Malekula, Vanuatu, Volume II: Detailed findings	vi + 106 p.	978-982-04-0370-3
48. Fiji national liquid waste management strategy and action plan	viii + 59 p.	978-982-04-0371-0
49. Vanuatu fishery resource profiles	viii + 195 p.	978-982-04-0372-7
50. Practical training in sustainable sanitation for Tuvalu	vi + 41 p.	978-982-04-0373-4
51. Review of environment-related legislation in Niue	vi + 33 p.	978-982-04-0374-1
52. Sustainable sanitation manual and construction guidelines for a waterless composting toilet	vi + 31 p.	978-982-04-0375-8
53. Analysis of environment-related legislation in Niue	iv + 20 p.	978-982-04-0376-5
54. Household survey and waste characterisation for Nukuhetulu, Tonga	vi + 30 p.	978-982-04-0378-9
55. Refinement and analysis of coastal fishery problems facing Makefu and Alofi North villages, Niue, with associated recommendations	vi + 19 p.	978-982-04-0379-6
56. Participatory project design and development in Vunisinu and Nalase villages, Fiji: trainers' report	iv + 103 p.	978-982-04-0380-2
57. Economics of rural waste management in the Rewa Province and development of a rural solid waste management policy for Fiji	vi + 24 p.	978-982-04-0381-9

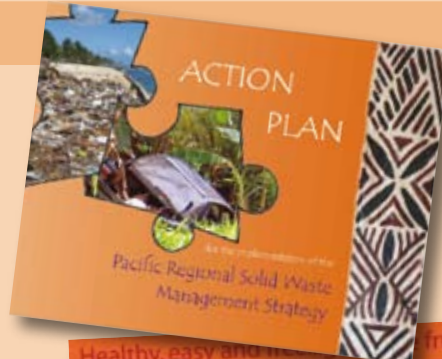
PUBLICATION TITLE

Articles and newsletters

Monthly "Director Column" in *Island Business* magazine
SPREP-tok 3 & Highlights / PROE-tok 3 & La Chronique du PROE
Turtle-talk 4 and 5; Parole aux tortues 5
SPREP Waste Update

Other publicity materials

Many items in local, regional and international news media.
"Strong Islands, Strong Future" (A2 Poster)
"Bring your own bag" (DVD)
"Waste world" (DVD-reproduced)
World Environment Day Infokit
Pacific Environment Information Network (PEIN) Country Profiles Directory
PEIN Regional Frameworks and Strategies Directory
PEIN Digest
PEIN YouTube Environmental videos directory
What's New @ your Library / Information Resource Centre (IRC)
SPREP-tok 3 & Highlights / PROE-tok 3 & La Chronique du PROE
Turtle-talk 4 and 5; Parole aux tortues 5
SPREP Waste Update



Acronyms Used

ABS	Access and benefit-sharing	NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
AFD	French Development Agency	OCO	Oceania Customs Organization
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development	ODS	Ozone-depleting substances
AUS-DEWHA	Australia Department of the Environment, Water Resources, Heritage and the Arts	PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
BP	British Petroleum	PACPOL	Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	PACRAIN	Pacific Rainfall Database
CCN	Community Conservation Network	PBIF	Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism, Kyoto Protocol	PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyl
CFC	Chlorofluorocarbon	PEIN	Pacific Environment Information Network
CI	Conservation International	PICCC	Pacific Islands Community-Based Conservation Course
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species	PICs	Pacific island countries
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals	PICTs	Pacific island countries and territories
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands	PIFACC	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change
COP	Conference of the Parties	PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
CRISP	Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific	PI-GCOS	Pacific Islands-Global Climate Observing System
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific	PIGGAREP	Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development	PII	Pacific Invasives Initiative
CSP	Conservation Society of Pohnpei	PILN	Pacific Invasives Learning Network
DRM	Disaster risk management	PILON	Pacific Islands Law Officers Network
DVD	Digital Video Disk	PNG	Papua New Guinea
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone	POLFUND	Pollution fund
EIA	Environmental impact assessment	POP	Persistent organic pollutant
EPA	Economic partnership agreement	PPC	Pacific Petroleum Company
ESD	Education for sustainable development	PRC	Pacific Regional Centre [for Training and Technology Transfer for the Joint Implementation of the Basel and Waigani Conventions]
EU	European Union	PTWS	Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System
EVAC	Environmental Verification and Analysis Center (University of Oklahoma)	Ramsar	Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat [not an acronym: Place in Iran]
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency	RANET	Radio Internet
FIELD	Foundation for International Environment Law and Development	REDD	Reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries
FMS	Fiji Meteorological Service	RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia	RSMC	Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre
GBO	Global Biodiversity Outlook	SEA	Strategic environment assessment
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SEM-Pasifika	Socio-economic Monitoring of the Pacific Region
GEF-PAS	Global Environment Facility Pacific Alliance for Sustainability Programme	SAICM	Strategic Approaches to International Chemical Management
IBA	Important Bird Area (BirdLife International)	SGF	Small Grants Fund
ICPL	International Centre for Protected Landscapes	SIDS	Small island developing states
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare	SLM	Sustainable Land Management
IMO	International Maritime Organization	SoE	State of the environment
IMOSEB	International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity	SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
IP	Inception phase; Instrument plan	SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Programme; or: Secretariat of the ...
IPR	Intellectual property rights	TL	Tentative list
IRC	Information Resource Centre (SPREP)	TMS	Tuvalu Meteorological Service
IT	Information technology	TNC	The Nature Conservancy
IUCN	The World Conservation Union	UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
IWP	International Waters Project	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (WSSD)	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
LDC	Least Developed Country	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LMMA	Locally managed marine area	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation	UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
MCT	Micronesian Conservation Trust	USA	United States of America
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement	USP	University of the South Pacific
MNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Samoa)	VMA	Vanuatu Maritime Authority
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
MPA	Marine Protected Area	WDCS	Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
NATPLAN	National Plan	WHO	World Health Organization
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan	WMO	World Meteorological Organization
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office (Vanuatu)	WSSD	World Summit on Social Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation	WWF	Worldwide Fund for Wildlife
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (USA)	YOST	Year of the Sea Turtle (2006)
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy		

An extensive listing of Pacific environmental acronyms is available from the SPREP web site at <http://www.sprep.org/PEAs2007.pdf>.



The Pacific islands region

SPREP Members comprise 21 Pacific island countries and territories, and four developed countries* with direct interests in the region:

American Samoa | Australia* | Cook Islands | Federated States of Micronesia | Fiji | France* | French Polynesia | Guam | Kiribati | Marshall Islands | Nauru | New Caledonia | New Zealand* | Niue | Northern Mariana Islands | Palau | Papua New Guinea | Samoa | Solomon Islands | Tokelau | Tonga | Tuvalu | United States of America* | Vanuatu | Wallis and Futuna |

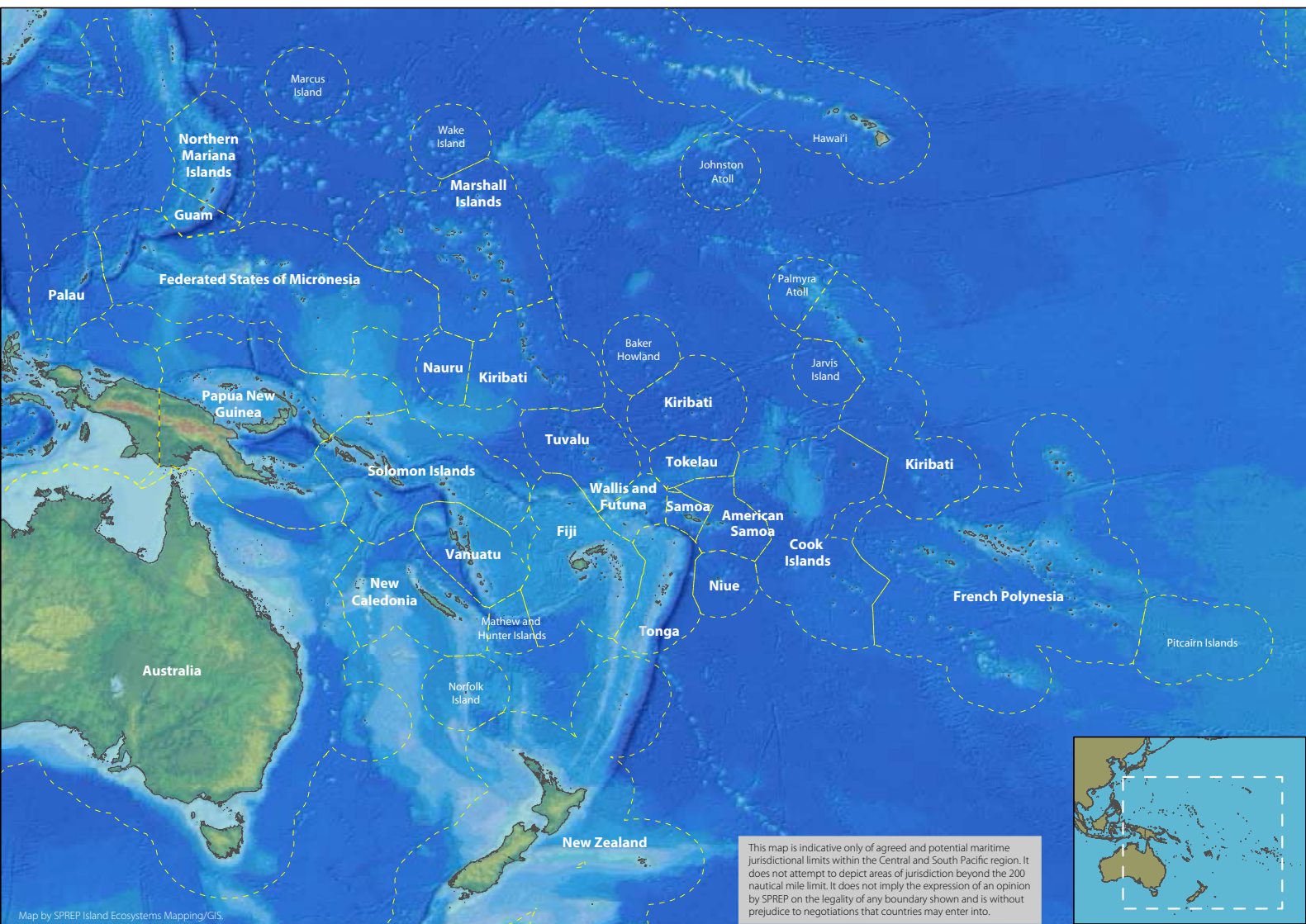


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2007 Annual Report

of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Conserving and managing our
Pacific environment in changing times

The Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an intergovernmental organisation charged with promoting cooperation, supporting protection and improvement of the Pacific islands environment, and ensuring its sustainable development.

The Secretariat runs two programmes. Island Ecosystems works to assist Pacific island countries and territories to manage island resources and ocean ecosystems, so they can support life and livelihoods. Pacific Futures works to assist Pacific island countries and territories to plan and respond to threats and pressures on island and ocean systems.

Staff are drawn from within the Pacific basin and operate in fields such as:

- Terrestrial island ecosystems;
- Coastal and marine ecosystems;
- Species of special interest;
- People and institutions;
- Multilateral agreements and regional mechanisms;
- Environment monitoring and reporting;
- Climate change and atmosphere;
- Pollution prevention and waste management;
- Knowledge management.

For a map and listing of SPREP Member countries and territories, refer inside back cover.

