

# **ACTION PLAN FOR MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION**



**2005-2009**

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### **Cover concept**

Back cover depicts Pacific traditional subsistence living in the past. But now in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, living in its simplicity is no longer isolated from the world's many influences. Front cover shows 'that' global influence and the work of organisations like SPREP in fighting to preserve the environment and way of living for the peoples of the Pacific. The world has changed and the Pacific's traditional way of living has to change in order to survive. By teaching its younger generation, SPREP and other environmental stakeholders, are giving future generations a fighting chance by imparting tools, methodology, skills and knowledge to preserve today's environment for future generations to enjoy.

**ACTION PLAN** FOR MANAGING THE **ENVIRONMENT**  
OF THE  
PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION  
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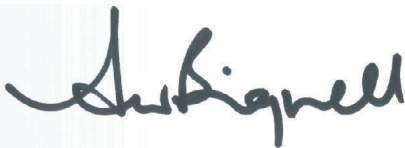
# PREFACE

This is the Action Plan of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme for the period 2005–2009.

The Action Plan is intended to represent the regional agenda for managing the environment of the Pacific islands region. It embodies the vision of SPREP Members for the long-term management of their shared environment to achieve sustainable development. It is the main planning document outlining the broad areas of focus and priorities of the region. The SPREP's Strategic Programmes and the annual Work Programme and Budget should be read in conjunction with the Action Plan.

The 14<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting acknowledged the central role of the Action Plan in setting priorities and guiding the work of SPREP Members and the Secretariat. The Meeting welcomed the review of the Action Plan 2001–2004 as well as the need to develop a new Action Plan for the period 2005–2009. This Meeting also agreed on the process to review and develop a new Action Plan. Members conducted national and community consultations and reported the results to the Secretariat. Consultations were also held between the Secretariat and a broad cross section of Members agreed to at the 14<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting as well as a regional workshop to which all SPREP Members were invited to examine and validate the findings of the review as well as the draft of a new Action Plan for approval by the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

The Action Plan was subsequently endorsed at the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in French Polynesia in September 2004. SPREP members must take responsibility for implementing this Action Plan for the benefit of the peoples of our region. I commend this Action Plan to all SPREP Members and stakeholders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A. Bignell", is positioned over a light blue rectangular background.

Mr Andrew Bignell  
Manager – International Relations, Department of Conservation  
Government of New Zealand  
**Vice-Chair of 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Action Plan of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) for the period 2005–2009. This plan is owned by the membership of SPREP and their Secretariat. The members of SPREP are: 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, the United States of America, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

SPREP was established in 1993 as an intergovernmental organisation. Under the Agreement Establishing SPREP, the purposes of SPREP are to promote co-operation in the Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. These purposes are to be achieved through an Action Plan adopted from time to time by the SPREP Meeting setting the strategies and objectives of SPREP. From these broad strategies and objectives, the Secretariat will prepare its more detailed programme strategies and annual work programmes and budget to support national, regional and global priorities and to assist members and itself achieve the objectives of the Action Plan.

This Action Plan was endorsed at the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting held in Tahiti, September, 2004. The plan is intended to be the blueprint for members and the Secretariat to guide their environmental management implementation work over the Action Plan period as well as to be a useful tool for any person, organisation or development agency involved or interested in the environment and natural resource management in the Pacific islands region.



## 2. OPERATING CONTEXT

The Pacific island countries and territories of SPREP are characterized by extremes in physical characteristics, remoteness, exposure and vulnerability. There are approximately 7 million people speaking more than 2000 different languages, living on small land masses dispersed over the large expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

Socio-economic pressures, natural and human induced hazards have exacerbated the region's vulnerabilities. The region faces a limited range of resources, dependence on imports, population growth and urbanization, threatened supplies of water, high transaction costs, costly administration and infrastructure and limited institutional capacities and domestic markets.

There are high degrees of endemism and levels of biodiversity, but relatively small numbers of species. Soils and land resources are limited in capacity and ability to accommodate development pressures. The high risks of extinction of species and degradation of ecological communities and land resources impinge on the quality of life opportunities for communities.

In the context of the Action Plan, the following main high level instruments are of particular relevance. Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (1994), National Assessments for the review of the Barbados Programme of Action (2003), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Pacific islands 14 Type II umbrella partnership initiatives, the WSSD Type II initiatives, Regional Synthesis for the review of the Barbados Programme of Action (2003), the Pacific Island Forum Leaders decisions, the SPREP Meeting Officials' and Ministerial decisions, national sustainable development strategies and plans, Pacific submissions made to the conferences of the Parties of global conventions and the Millennium Development Goals.

To deliver on SPREP's mandate, this Action Plan will focus on environmental priorities towards achieving sustainable development. This will facilitate better partnering, coordination, efficient leveraging and use of financial resources and a commitment to practical implementation.

### 3. VISION

People of the Pacific islands better able to plan, protect, manage and use their environment for sustainable development.

### 4. GOAL

To successfully achieve the outcomes of the focus areas and the cross cutting issues in the Action Plan.



## 5. FOCUS AREAS AND OUTCOMES

### 5.1 NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The sustainable management of natural resources and conservation of the terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems of the Pacific islands is an ongoing priority. This includes the conservation of the terrestrial, coastal and marine biodiversity; protection of priority threatened species and reducing the impact of alien invasive species and living modified organisms as well as enhancing capacity to meet the challenges of sustaining the ecosystems that support them. It also recognizes the links with effective management of other resources such as land, water and non-living resources.

As most land in the Pacific is communally held, the protection of critical biodiversity and the sustainable management of resources requires the involvement of resource owners and users. Lessons from the past fifty (50) years of protected area management in the region reaffirm this approach. Future ways for delivering community-targeted services will focus on capacity building and other catalytic measures where regional approaches are more cost effective. Technical and legal advice and direct interventions will be provided in specific areas including the development of resource management planning and programme implementation and ecosystems, access and benefit sharing, traditional ecological knowledge and its protection, species and threat management and monitoring. Interventions will be in response to specific country requests, involving careful participatory planning and consultation and for Parties to the associated multilateral environmental agreements consistent with the priorities of the relevant programmes of action.



## RELEVANT INSTRUMENTS

Related national legislation, plans, policies and assessment reports including National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans	SPREP/RAMSAR MOU and Joint Work Plan
Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management	The Avifauna Conservation Strategy for the Pacific Region 2000
Action Strategy for Nature Conservation 2003-2007	1997 Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States
Invasive Species Strategy for the Pacific islands region 2000	The Convention on Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region (Apia)
International Coral Reef Action Network Pacific Programme (ICRAN)	Pacific Umbrella Partnership on mainstreaming conservation and traditional knowledge
The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Conservation 2000
The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS)	Regional Action Plan 2003 – 2007 for Dugongs
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	Regional Action Plan 2003 – 2007 for Whales and Dolphins
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	Regional Action Plan 2003 – 2007 for Marine Turtles
World Heritage Convention	Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and Framework 2004
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR)	Global Programme of Action for protection of the marine environment from land-based activities
The Wetlands Action Plan 1999	

## OUTCOMES

- The sustainable management and conservation of terrestrial, marine and coastal resources, ecosystems and species improved, through the development of programmes for sustainable development.
- Significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.
- Effective implementation of the ecosystem approach to natural resource conservation.

## 5.2 POLLUTION PREVENTION

Pollution is one of the major threats to sustainable development in the Pacific islands region. The trans-boundary nature of much marine pollution requires a coordinated and comprehensive approach to both assessment and control. Without adequate measures to combat the growing sources and extent of pollution, efforts to maintain healthy societies, stimulate development and new investment and a sustainable future for its peoples may be significantly undermined.

Increasing quantities of solid waste, the lack of controls on chemicals imported into the region and the lack of capacity to manage the range of pollutants are of immediate concern for Pacific island members. In addition to land-based activities, the region's coastal and marine resources are threatened by introduced marine species, ship-wrecks, marine accidents and spills, ships waste and antifouling paints on vessels.

Pollution prevention is something that needs to be addressed mainly at national and local levels, although there are also regional and global aspects. Only a very few Pacific island countries and territories have environment acts and associated regulations and even fewer have laws and regulations dealing with specific aspects of pollution such as waste management. Considerable progress has been made to address waste management issues although much work remains to be done to turn these into active programmes that can achieve on-the-ground results. A related issue is often the lack of any clear and unified approach within government systems, with responsibilities being spread across a number of diverse and sometimes competing agencies.

## RELEVANT INSTRUMENTS

Related national legislation, plans, policies and assessment reports

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and Related Protocols, (1986) and its Dumping and Pollution Emergency Protocols

Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radio Active Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste within the South Pacific Region (1995)

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, (1972)

Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, (1989)

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as amended by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL)

The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior

Informed Consent Procedure for Certain

Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, (1998)

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, (2001)

The Strategic Action Programme for International Waters

Strategy and Workplan of the Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme

SPREP Pollution prevention: a 5-year strategy, 2004-2008

## OUTCOMES

- **Effective management of pollution due to waste and other land based human activities through the implementation of appropriate systems for waste disposal and treatment.**
- **Pacific island countries and territories capabilities to manage and respond to terrestrial, atmospheric, marine pollution, hazardous waste, solid waste, sewerage and other land-based sources of pollution enhanced.**
- **Maximized reuse, recycling and reduced waste generation.**



### 5.3 CLIMATE CHANGE, CLIMATE VARIABILITY SEA LEVEL RISE AND STRATOSPHERIC OZONE DEPLETION

Among the greatest challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are the known and potential impacts of climate change and extreme weather events. While the international community has initiated steps to stabilize greenhouse gases in the atmosphere under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, progress has been slow.

#### **SPREP MEMBERS HAVE IDENTIFIED FIVE MAIN AREAS OF WORK**

First, Pacific islands urgently need to adapt to the known and potential impacts of climate change, climate variability and sea level rise and adopt concrete adaptation measures. The development and dissemination of alternative energy technologies with the aim of giving a greater share of the energy mix to renewable energies, improving energy efficiency and greater reliance on advanced energy technologies is essential to mitigation. Coordination and assistance is needed to assess and implement feasible options and access funds for the implementation of activities.

Second, meteorological and climatological capacities of Pacific island countries and territories need to be developed and strengthened to plan and respond to climate variability and extreme weather events.

Third, more research needs to be undertaken to understand climate variability, climate change and sea level rise through information, modeling and clearinghouse mechanisms. Such research need to identify and assess vulnerabilities as well as impacts.

Fourth, technical/legal advisory services need to be provided to assist Pacific Island Parties implement the UNFCCC and to ensure consistency with other international processes such as the WSSD Type II initiatives and BPoA+10. As well linkages need to be made with the CBD and related instruments such as the Convention on Desertification.

Fifth, concrete measures need to be taken to phase out imports of ozone depleting substances through the timely implementation of the Regional Strategy to comply with the Montreal Protocol in Pacific island countries.

## RELEVANT INSTRUMENTS

Related national legislation, plans, policies and assessment reports.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change

The Pacific Island Framework on Climate Change, Climate Variability and Sea Level Rise

Strategic Action Plan for the Development of Meteorology in the Pacific Islands Region

Pacific Island Global Climate Observing System (PI-GCOS) Action Plan (2003-2008)

Pacific Islands Global Climate Observing System

Implementation Plan (2002-2008)

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, (1985)

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, (1987)

London (1990), Copenhagen (1992), Montreal (1997) and Beijing (1999), Amendments to the Montreal Protocol, 1990

The Third Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Pacific islands Energy Policy and Plan

Pacific Umbrella Partnership Initiative on Adaptation.

## OUTCOMES

- Pacific islands countries and territories (PICTs) responses to the known and potential impacts of climate change enhanced through the implementation of adaptation measures.
- Alternative energy technologies and systems that are adequate, affordable, efficient and environmentally sound, in particular renewable energy resources, developed and used.
- Meteorological and climatological capacities of PICTs developed and enhanced.
- Improved accuracy of information, modeling and clearing house mechanisms on the effects of climate change.
- Import of CFCs into PICTs banned by 2005

## 6. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

The following cross-cutting areas of action are also addressed under this Action Plan to develop further the capacity of SPREP Members to manage their environment in a sustainable manner.

### 6.1 INTEGRATED POLICY, PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Integrated policy, planning and delivery mechanisms are needed to implement sustainable development objectives by ensuring coordination at various levels of government, including integrated community planning. These systems should encourage development that takes into consideration the short and long-term effects on the natural resources base and environmental qualities. Integrated environmental law, environmental planning and environmental impact assessment is a priority as is the development of state of the environment monitoring systems at the national level to act as a prioritizing tool to guide policy direction.

Improved national planning systems that integrate environmental management considerations, must be assisted by frameworks for coordination and collaboration by stakeholders at the national and community levels.

Well coordinated regional advocacy across the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) to the international community, will assist Pacific island members in their efforts to leverage resources and adopt mechanisms for better policy coordination and integrated decision making. Partner coordination is essential to optimise on combined efforts and resources wherever possible and reduce pressure on Pacific island Members in having to deal with numerous partners on an individual basis.

Improved partnering between governments, community and international stakeholders can be facilitated through the development of the Pacific Type II Umbrella Partnership/Initiatives and other such partnerships. There are also many other benefits to be explored through effective public-private partnerships at the national level.

## OUTCOMES

- **National sustainable development strategies/frameworks developed and implemented.**
- **Integrated planning and management mechanisms and tools for sustainable development enhanced.**
- **Collaboration and coordination through national and regional partnerships improved.**

## 6.2 ENVIRONMENT MONITORING AND REPORTING

The generation of baseline data vital to effective decision making is very important. Simple but systematic reporting systems must be developed and tailored to suit key issues and indicators.

The range of tools available to Pacific island countries and territories to enable sound environmental decision making in the pursuit of sustainable development must be enhanced. Whilst improved integrated planning processes are extremely important, so too are the tools for identification of priorities and assessing relationships between sectors. Capacity development in this regard must include development-assessment tools to anticipate and address negative pressures, risks and emerging threats, and to seek out sustainable development opportunities. Tools for the promotion of integrated assessment and environmental planning in a manner that mainstreams environment as part of the development process must be developed and capacity built at the national level for effective use.

### OUTCOMES

- **Means to monitor and report on environmental performance and socio-economic pressures on the environment improved.**
- **Tools to improve the means to respond to pressures, emerging threats and opportunities developed.**
- **Integrated assessments and planning processes accessible and available.**

### 6.3 MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENT AGREEMENTS AND PROCESSES

Many Pacific islands are Parties to a range of international environment related agreements and processes. Pacific island countries will focus on implementation of these agreements through coordinated and synergetic approaches and the building of technical and legal capacity to assist in implementation.

The need to support and promote the development and implementation of appropriate policy, planning and regulatory frameworks of institutions is consistently highlighted as a national and regional priority. There will be a focus on local and institutional capacity building, legal, policy, practice and institutional strengthening, policy and legislation, regulations, advocacy, negotiation support, and mainstreaming the environment incorporated into national agendas.

#### OUTCOMES

- **Improved capacity of Pacific island countries to manage multilateral environmental agreements and relevant regional mechanisms.**
- **Pacific island countries capacity to meet the obligations under the Apia, SPREP, Waigani and other multilateral environmental agreements enhanced.**

### 6.4 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Increasing and improving training activities, and exchanging experiences between Pacific island countries and territories is central to the successful implementation of this Action Plan. Most Pacific island countries and territories need to strengthen the technical, institutional and human resources capabilities of their nationals.

#### OUTCOME

- **Pacific island countries and territories capacity to manage and develop its human resources improved**



## 6.5 PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Improving education and public awareness activities is central to the successful implementation of this Action Plan, stressing the need to engage local communities. Assistance will be sought for advocacy, awareness raising and education.

### OUTCOME

- **Pacific island countries and territories capacity to educate and raise awareness about environment and sustainable development improved.**

## 6.6 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Successful planning and implementation of environmental protection and sustainable development programmes and interventions require adequate national institutional and human capacities. A population that is well informed and aware through effective communication and access and use of appropriate technologies and information dissemination systems is critical to this.

There will be a focus on improving support to facilitate sustainable knowledge management in Pacific island countries and territories, including sharing, learning and best practice, tools and guidelines, databases and directories, geographic information systems, information dissemination, national and regional clearing houses for environmental information and knowledge base of success stories.

### OUTCOMES

- **Pacific island countries and territories capacity to manage knowledge further developed and strengthened.**
- **Relevant national and regional clearinghouse mechanisms and environmental databases established, integrated and improved.**

## **7 MEANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **7.1 SPREP STRATEGIC PROGRAMME**

The 14th SPREP Meeting in 2003 endorsed the Secretariat's move to a programme-based approach in its operations. The Strategic Programme outlines the Secretariat's long term programme of work to address the focus areas and priorities set by the Members in the Action Plan. The Strategic Programmes is a living document and as such will be reviewed and amended as necessary from time to time and particularly following the five year review of this Action Plan. Annual Work Programmes for the Secretariat will be developed on the basis of the ten year Strategic Programmes and the Action Plan.

### **7.2 COUNTRY PROFILES**

The Action Plan is a synthesis of Members' environmental and sustainable development priorities. Successful implementation depends on progress within each member country and territory. To effectively measure progress over time, Pacific island Members' profiles will be developed. The profiles provide a template for each member to indicate progress towards achieving the outcomes of the Action Plan.

### **7.3 HARMONIZED APPROACHES**

This Action Plan highlights the importance of strengthening and broadening national and regional coordination mechanisms and the links between the two, so that multi-lateral institutions, donor/recipient countries and organisation activities and efforts are complimentary and build on past efforts.

SPREP Members are Party to many international agreements that set numerous obligations and targets. The development of regional strategies, policies and plans are a way to bring international targets and goals into a regional context. In this regard a country profile against the SPREP Action Plan should, contribute significantly to assisting with national and regional reporting to the Convention on Sustainable Development and multilateral environment agreements. This country profile will reduce the reporting burden and increase capacity for implementation, in particular at the national level. Regional reporting will also assist from the donor perspective as this profile will provide an overview of where assistance is needed in the region and how that assistance will contribute to internationally agreed targets and conventions.

## 7.4 PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships to collectively implement regional positions in the Pacific need to be reflective of the unique governance systems in the region. In the Pacific region, the groundwork has been started for improved partnerships and coordination through the 14 Type II Pacific Umbrella Partnership/Initiatives that were launched by Pacific Leaders at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. These partnerships aim to provide a platform for coordination of efforts, information, resources and interests, in particular, amongst regional and international partners. This coordination should lead to improved use and delivery of assistance to Pacific island countries and territories, avoiding duplication, partner driven interest and promoting corporate knowledge amongst all partners for long term sustainable and measurable progress. At the national level these partnerships should provide a clearer picture of which donors and technical agencies involved in the region offer the resources and technical assistance needed to meet their national priorities. The SPREP Secretariat is facilitating the implementation of 5 of these Type II Umbrella Partnership/Initiatives, in line with the Action Plan, covering the areas of: Waste Management; Mainstreaming Nature Conservation; Adaptation to Climate Change; Planning for Community Lifestyles; and Sustainable Capacity Building.

## 7.5 INTRA-MEMBER COOPERATION

Cooperation among Members to address common environmental issues is very important. Shared experiences and collaboration between countries and territories and other relevant partners such as non-government organizations and the private sector is encouraged to implement the Action Plan.

## 7.6 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The active involvement of local communities in the implementation of environmental initiatives is essential, especially given the customary resource ownership and tenure systems in the region. Whilst this is largely a national issue, the Secretariat will facilitate the development of tools for community involvement, such as planning, communication and awareness tools and experiences of successful case studies of community driven projects around the region.

## 7.7 SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

To enable Pacific island countries and territories and the Secretariat to implement actions addressing the priorities and areas of focus identified in this Action Plan, adequate and accessible sources of finance are necessary. Members, the Secretariat, donors and the international community should work together to identify and facilitate access to the required resources. The Secretariat will assist Pacific island countries and territories by developing and regularly updating a general report identifying various sources of funds available from international institutions , private foundations and other non-traditional sources. In addition the Secretariat will assist Pacific island Members in accessing funding for national implementation.

Cost effective regional initiatives that pool national resources to execute projects will be promoted among Members.

## 7.8 MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

Monitoring mechanisms to assess how Members and the Secretariat are performing at the national, regional and international level are a focus of this Action Plan. This will be achieved by the Secretariat reporting annually on achievements against its annual work programme and budget at the SPREP Meeting and the continuous update of SPREP country profiles. In addition to the Secretariat's report and members updates, reports from donor members on allocation of funding towards the Action Plan on a bilateral and regional basis will be encouraged.





