

31st SPREP MEETING OF OFFICIALS

5, 6, and 7 September 2023, Apia, Samoa

Agenda item 9.2.3: Host country for 11th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in 2025.

Purpose of paper:

1. To seek Member interest in hosting the 11th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in 2025.

Background:

2. For more than 45 years since the first conference was held in 1975, the Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in its various forms has been a significant event that brings together a diversity of stakeholders from the Pacific island governments, communities, non-government organisations, donors, partners, youth groups, academics and more. It has become the principal conference setting a Pacific initiated conservation agenda over a period of five to six years.
3. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas hosted by the Government of New Caledonia was held virtually in November 2020. This event was very successful with more than 1,800 registered participants from across 50 countries joining the conference.
4. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 -2025 which was also endorsed at the 30th SPREP Meeting. A High-level Segment hosted by the Government of New Caledonia endorsed the Vemööre Declaration including commitments to nature conservation action in the Pacific islands region.
5. The Pacific Islands Environment Leadership Awards (PIELA) are also hosted as part of the Nature Conference, and this will mark the 3rd PIELA.
6. SPREP has recently disseminated a Circular 23/49 Calling for Expressions of Interest to host the Conference.
7. SPREP and the host country work together to fund raise and host this event. An example MOU (Attachment 1) provides guidance on what is expected from the host country.

8. An Advisory Committee will be established to help guide the selection of the Conference theme, agenda and broad focus of the programme. The Advisory Committee comprises the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) Chair, key regional organisations, the Chairs of PIRT Working Groups and the host government.
9. SPREP leads fund raising for this event, including through the development of a sponsorship package and project funding concepts.
10. To date, the event has received generous support from PIRT member organisations, working groups and coordination team; donors and SPREP Member countries.
11. The 11th Conference for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas provides an outstanding opportunity for a Pacific islands country to host this event, with support of SPREP and our partners, and to showcase their conservation leadership both regionally and globally.

Recommendation:

12. The SPREP Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Note** convening of the 11th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, including the 3rd Pacific Islands Environment Leadership Awards in 2025; and
 - 2) **Submit** interest in hosting the 11th Conference and work with the Secretariat in planning for the event.

13 March 2023