

## 31<sup>st</sup> SPREP MEETING OF OFFICIALS

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

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

#### **Purpose of paper:**

1. To provide the Meeting with an update on implementation of Regional Goal 2 for the biennial period 2022 - 2023.

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

2. The EU funded €12 million Pacific Biodiversity and Sustainable Land-Seascapes (Pacific BioScapes) Programme agreement was signed by the EU and SPREP in December 2021 with a formal signing event held in Suva in June 2022. Regional and national activities have commenced implementation.
3. Kiwa Initiative technical assistance is provided to beneficiaries (national and local authorities, NGOs) to develop and implement nature-based solution activities for to enhance ecosystem and community resilience through tailored support and capacity development opportunities. SPREP, SPC and IUCN Oceania are key partners in the Kiwa Initiative.
4. The EU funded Pacific European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme received a no-cost extension approval from the EU in late 2022. As a result, the By-catch and Integrated Ecosystem Management Initiative (KRA5) will continue to be implemented until April 2025. The EU has confirmed it is developing the scope of PEUMP Plus, with a view to requesting existing PEUMP partners to submit proposals for work to begin following the end of PEUMP in March 2025.
5. Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan (PACRAP) has commenced implementation. A partnership with the Government of Australia and Government of France is focusing on improving access to science and knowledge to support coral reef management. A systematic, region-wide monitoring programme is being developed using ReefCloud methodology. Activities under the Pacific BioScapes Programme are also contributing to the implementation of PACRAP across the region.
6. An agreement was signed between GIZ and SPREP in 2023 to implement a 2-year blue carbon ecosystems German International Climate Initiative project in the Melanesian countries in partnership with SPC.

7. SPREP continued to provide support to Pacific islands negotiators at the 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction in New York. The final version of the text is anticipated to be agreed by States in the continuation of IGC5 in New York, July 2023.

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

8. SPREP continues to implement its component of the IUCN EU- funded Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme - Phase 2. The programme received a 2-year no-cost extension, approved by the EU in late 2022, to June 2025.
9. SPREP continues to provide secretariat support to the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT), focusing on implementation of the Pacific Framework for Nature Conservation And Protected Areas 2020-2025. This has been strengthened by supporting activities in the Pacific BioScapes Programme that commenced in 2023, including contracting a full time PIRT Coordinator.
10. SPREP will work to support Members' implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework following its adoption at CBD CoP15 in 2022. Specific action that the Secretariat will undertake has been presented in WP 8.2.
11. SPREP implemented component of the GEF IUCN implemented *Ensuring resilient ecosystems and representative protected areas in the Solomon Islands* commenced in 2022 and is currently being implemented.

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

12. Implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme (PIRMSP) is continuing through the ACPMEA3 programme and Pacific BioScapes Programme and Member endorsement of the updated Action Plans is requested in WP 9.2.1.
13. A range of activities continue to be implemented through the EU and Sweden funded PEUMP BIEM Initiative to address by-catch of threatened species in commercial fisheries in Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Species activities have also commenced under the Pacific BioScapes Programme.
14. PEUMP BIEM continues to provide significant capacity support for Pacific Parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to meet their CITES obligations to protect endangered species involved in international trade.
15. Two important PEUMP BIEM funded reports were published by SPREP in 2022 and 2023. The first is the an [Assessment of target and non-target species catch rates in the Kikori fish maw fishery and local ecological knowledge of locally threatened dolphin species](#) highlights the high extinction risk to Australian snubnose and Australian humpback dolphins as well as rare coastal shark species as a result of the fishmaw fishery. The second is the [Review of Cetacean Diversity Status and Threats in the Pacific Islands Region](#), which identified fisheries activities both industrial and artisanal as well as lost fishing gear as the greatest threat to cetaceans in the region.

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

16. Activities continue to be implemented in the GEF6 project Strengthening national and regional capacities to reduce the impact of Invasive Alien Species on globally significant biodiversity in the Pacific, EDF11 OCT PROTEGE programme and NZMFAT project Managing Invasive Species for Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific (MISCCAP): a PRISMSS-NZ collaboration for Pacific resilience. Further activities will be developed through the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service (PRISMSS).

**Challenges and Opportunities**

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

**Recommendation:**

21. The Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Note** the update on implementation on Regional Goal 2 activities for the biennial period 2024 to 2025.