

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

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

### Agenda item 9.3.2: Circular Economy: Unlocking Waste as a Resource

#### Purpose of paper:

1. To inform Members of the:
  - a. opportunities a Circular Economy approach can have for waste management, resource efficiency, and greener growth opportunities in Pacific Island Countries and Territories
  - b. opportunities available for Pacific Island Countries and Territories to incorporate Circular Economy into waste management decision making and legislation.
2. Seek support and endorsement for:
  - c. SPREP to develop a Regional Circular Economy Policy Framework and Regional Circular Economy Network.

#### Background:

3. A Circular Economy approach advocates a change to the way items are developed and manufactured to “design out waste” by ensuring products can be reused, remanufactured, recycled, or recovered.
4. A Circular Economy approach seeks to replace the current “take-make-waste” linear model of production, consumption, and disposal which is a significant contributor to overflowing landfills, marine and terrestrial pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss and overconsumption of natural resources. The effects of the adoption of this linear model are particularly apparent for Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
5. Project activities being implemented by the Waste Management and Pollution Control Programme that support Circular Economy initiatives include:
  - a. Pacific Ocean Litter Project – Australian Government Funded project supporting single use plastic importation bans, and support for traditional materials to provide alternatives to single use plastic.
  - b. PacWastePlus – European Union funded programme assisting countries to improve organics management and generate local and community level circular economies; and working directly with countries to implement National sustainable financing systems to create a circular economy for plastics, e-waste, and tyres. Beneficiary countries are Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

- c. ISLANDS – GEF funded project addressing hazardous waste management and providing assistance to circular economy systems for e-waste.

SWAP – AFD funded project supporting design and -implementation of Sustainable Finance “deposit/return” schemes.

- 6. Opportunities currently available for Pacific Island Countries and Territories to incorporate a Circular Economy approach into waste management decision making and legislation include:
  - a. Implementing **importation bans** (e.g., on single use plastic) - to provide an enabling environment for local business and initiatives to develop replacement or alternative items using a Circular Economy approach (e.g., bags made locally from waste material can replace single use plastic bags, plates made locally from local vegetation can replace single use plastic plates, a diaper washing service to replace single use diapers, etc.)
  - b. Implementing **importation quality restrictions / controls** (e.g. vehicles to be <10 years, quality standards for whiteware and televisions, etc.) - to ensure materials meet minimum quality and “repairability” standards to implement the principle of ‘right of repair’ and keep products in circulation for longer.
  - c. Implementing **sustainable finance “deposit/return” schemes** (e.g. Container Deposit, Advanced Recovery Fee and Disposal, Import Levy, Product Stewardship) - to provide long-term sustainable financing for materials recovery and local reuse, recycling, or export to foreign recycling markets.
  - d. Support for, or incentivising, **organics / composting programmes** – to provide for organic materials to follow a circular model through reintroduction into the agroecosystems, instead of disposal to landfill.
  - e. Support for, or incentivising, businesses or enterprises achieving “Circular Economy” principles – such as **local repair, re-manufacture, or service industries** (including use of traditional knowledge to make items (bags, plates etc), and services such as diaper washing service.
  - f. Establishing **recycling collection and processing infrastructure**.
  - g. Supporting national small scale technology opportunities to **provide for materials re-manufacture or re-processing**.
  - h. Supporting the intended outcomes of the current development of a Internationally Legally Binding Instrument to end Plastic Pollution. The Treaty currently being negotiated is focussing heavily on de-toxifying plastic materials, and incentivising (and requiring) sustainable and circular design and embedding circularity into plastic systems globally.
  - i. Generate local jobs supporting green business through creation of jobs to: manage waste collection and separation, repair of damaged or discarded items, development of local alternatives to commonly wasted items, etc.

7. The Secretariat seeks to support the Pacific Island Countries and Territories to adopt a Circular Economy approach through the development of:
  - a. a Regional Circular Economy Policy Framework for members to use to incorporate Circular Economy policies into waste management decision making and legislation.
  - b. a Regional Circular Economy Network (incorporating National Recycling Associations) to support member countries to incorporate Circular Economy into waste management decision making and legislation.

**Recommendation:**

8. The Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Endorse** the development of a Regional Circular Economy Policy Framework and Regional Circular Economy Network; and
  - 2) **Encourage** members to support the Secretariat to seek funds to implement circular economy project opportunities as provided by the various donor initiatives.

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9 June 2023