

**Twelve Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and the Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention)**

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2023, Apia, Samoa**

**Agenda item 10: Regional Recycling and increased transboundary movement of wastes**

**Purpose of paper:**

1. To inform Parties 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. work to establish the Regional Recycling Hub in Fiji to facilitate an efficient and effective transboundary movement of waste for recycling and proper disposal in an environmentally sound manner.
2. Seek support for:
  - a. a quick turnaround for Prior-Informed Consent from Parties to support the transboundary movement of wastes for proper processing and disposal that will also support the Regional Recycling Network operation.

**Background:**

1. A Safe and Sustainable Circular Economy approach advocates a change to the way items are developed and manufactured to “design out waste” by ensuring products can be reused, re-manufactured, recycled, or recovered.
2. 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 over-consumption of natural resources. The effects of the adoption of this linear model are particularly apparent for Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
3. 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 is addressing single-use macro-plastics from land-based sources occurring in the near-shore Pacific coastal environments. The project is: addressing legislation, policy and planning, increasing consumer awareness and changing behaviour, working closely with industry groups and small businesses and by identifying and providing information about sustainable alternative products and practices. POLP is working in 14 Pacific Island countries, comprised of 8 pilot countries with countries deriving benefit either

by direct support for domestic single-use plastic reduction activities or through regional POLP initiatives.

- b. PacWastePlus – European Union funded programme assisting countries to address the cost effective and sustainable management of waste and pollution, as well as the broader impacts, such as human health and wellbeing, climate change, disaster management, biodiversity conservation and resource recovery. PacWastePlus is assisting countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) to implement national circular economy programmes, including sustainable financing systems to support the safe and sustainable management of organics, plastics, e-waste, end-of-life vehicles, and end-of-life tyres.
  - c. ISLANDS – GEF funded project addressing hazardous waste management and providing assistance to circular economy systems for e-waste.
  - d. SWAP – AFD funded project supporting design and implementation of Sustainable Finance “deposit/return” schemes.
4. The movement towards Safe and Sustainable Circular Economy will increase the transboundary movements of wastes within the Pacific Region. It is vital to have an efficient and effective transboundary movement of wastes within the Pacific Region to support the smooth implementation of the Circular Economy in the Pacific.
  5. A Pre-Feasibility Study for the Regional Recycling Network Scoping Study<sup>1</sup> was conducted by the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility (PRIF) in March 2023. The report assesses the potential for a regional recycling network and assess the feasibility of establishing a sustainable resource circulation system.
  6. The report identified two potential countries, Fiji, and PNG to host the Regional Recycling Hub. The high-value recyclables (aluminium cans, ULAB, PET, paper/cardboard, and plastics) will be generated in Fiji and PNG through national compounding efforts, while lower-value recyclables (such as ULABs, scrap steel and glass bottles) will be generated in all source countries through national collection and compaction efforts. The establishment of the Regional Recycling Hub will commence first in Fiji.
  7. The Regional Recycling Centre (RRC) has the potential to bring about a range of environmental and social benefits across the PICs. Major environmental benefits include increasing landfill lifetimes by waste diversion, reuse, and recycling. Natural resources are conserved through the reuse of existing materials, especially in the case where organic materials, which can contribute significantly to low carbon levels which are common in the Pacific, replace expensive imported soil ameliorants. Several social benefits, from improving community health and wellbeing to job creation, accompany the implementation of this RRC.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.theprif.org/sites/default/files/documents/Regional%20Recycling%20Network%20PFS%20Main%20Report%20%281%29%200.pdf>

8. The works to establish a Regional Recycling Hub in Fiji will bring about environmental and social benefit across the Pacific Region and to establish a sustainable resource circulation system to support recycling activities for the Pacific Countries. This will also support the works implemented under the Waigani Convention on the transboundary movements and management of hazardous wastes.

**Recommendation:**

9. The Parties are invited to:
  - 1) **note** the opportunities a Circular Economy have for the Pacific Region;
  - 2) **note** the upcoming work towards establishing of a Regional Recycling Hub in Fiji; and
  - 3) **encourage members to support** an effective and efficient transboundary movement of wastes in the Pacific Region through an improved turnaround of responses for the Prior-Informed Consent requested by Parties.

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13 March 2023