

REGIONAL INITIATIVE

PACIFIC ISLANDS

AIM OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

1. Implementation of the Ramsar approach

1.1 Describe briefly how your initiative is promoting the objectives of the Convention and how it is implementing the Ramsar Strategic Plan through cooperation in your region:

The Pacific Island Ramsar/Wetlands Initiative was endorsed at Ramsar COP9 in 2005. The Initiative has been promoting the objectives of the convention and its current Strategic Plan through the following:

- Enhancing the conservation and wise use of the wetlands of the Pacific, especially its coral reefs, mangroves and small and unique freshwater wetlands
- Promoting the wise use principles of the Ramsar Convention, including through Ramsar listing, as appropriate, of internationally significant wetlands within SPREP member countries
- Facilitating/enhancing the protection, management and wise use of wetlands of international and national significance in SPREP signatory member countries and more broadly across the region
- Integrating the protection and wise use of wetlands principles in key regional and national strategies, such as National Sustainable Development strategies, the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Strategy, and the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation for the Pacific Islands region.

SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

2. Complete regional adherence and bottom-up approach

2.1. Describe briefly if your initiative is based on a bottom-up approach:

The activities under the Initiative are progressed through working closely with the Governments of participating Pacific Island Countries, which are the primary focal points for the Initiative in-country. At the national level, the Initiative supports National Ramsar Committees in contracting parties, which have broad stakeholder representation. In most Pacific Island parties, related national committees such as NBSAP steering committees are also addressing wetlands issues. The Initiative has continued to support contracting parties as well as to urge the participation of non-contracting parties in regional activities such as training, information sharing on Ramsar wise use principles, WWD, wetland management and assistance with accession to the Convention when appropriate. At the regional level, the Initiative is continuing to facilitate the engagement/representation/input from those bodies, as relevant, and existing regional frameworks such as the action strategy for nature conservation and forging regional partnerships.

2.2 List the countries in the region, which your initiative covers:

The Pacific Islands Wetland initiative covers all 5 Pacific Island Ramsar contracting parties (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa) Australia and New Zealand and non-parties Kiribati & Nauru that are nearing accession. Countries & Territories that are involved in the initiative to a lesser extent are the Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa and Tonga.

2.3 Specify those countries in your region who do not participate in the initiative (if so):

Those Pacific Island Countries and Territories that are not yet involved in the initiative are the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), Guam, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Niue, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna, French Polynesia and New Caledonia.

3. Active involvement of all relevant stakeholders

3.1 List the participants in your initiative and their affiliation:

Ramsar International Organization Partners:

- IUCN Oceania, Wetlands International Oceania, WWF South Pacific Programme

Academic Institutions:

- University of Tasmania, University of the South Pacific

Ramsar Administrative Authorities:

- Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa

Regional NGOs:

- Foundation of the peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI)

National NGOs:

- Conservation Society of Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia), Palau Conservation Society, Live and Learn Fiji, WWF PNG

3.2. Indicate if only Ramsar administrative authorities at national level, or also other relevant stakeholders (including ministries, intergovernmental bodies, NGOs, academia and economic actors) are actively involved:

It is mostly the Ramsar Administrative Authorities in each party that are actively involved. Other key stakeholders are engaged through their participation in national wetland steering committees/National Ramsar Committees.

4. Development of collaboration based on commonly agreed terms

4.1. Describe briefly how your regional network or centre is operating:

The Initiative builds on existing networks involving Administrative Authorities and relevant stakeholders in the region and those existing mechanisms within SPREP such as:

- The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network,
- The Locally Managed Marine Area network,
- The Council of the Regional Organization of the Pacific (CROP) (ie Marine Sector Working Group)
- The Roundtable on the Action Strategy for Mainstreaming nature conservation
- SPREP focal points for wetland-related issues in the ODTs, national focal points and the International Waters Programme national focal points

The work of the Pacific Island Wetlands Initiative is guided primarily by the following:

- Pacific Island wetland conservation priorities as reflected in National Biodiversity Strategies & Action Plans (NBSAPs), national biodiversity policies etc...
- Ramsar-SPREP Memorandum of Cooperation (2006)
- Regional Wetlands Action Plan for Pacific Island Countries

Att. Attach the terms of reference (or other agreements) elaborated to guide its activities as separate documents:

5. Involvement of other regional partners

5.1 List relevant intergovernmental or international organisations operating in your region:

IUCN Oceania, Birdlife International, Wetlands International Oceania, Conservation, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, International, Wildlife Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy, WWF South Pacific, Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), UNDP, FAO, UNESCO.

5.2 List those of them with whom you established common activities:

- IUCN Oceania
- SOPAC
- Wetlands International Oceania

5.3 List your activities in common:

- Development of a regional mangrove initiative and seeking of donor support (with IUCN Oceania)
- Mangrove monitoring for the Pacific Islands (with University of Tasmania)
- Strengthening the sharing of marine biodiversity information within the Pacific Islands region (with SOPAC)
- Planning for marine habitat mapping needs in the Pacific Islands region (with SOPAC)
- Joint assistance for Ramsar site nominations (with Wetlands International Oceania and IUCN Oceania)
- Update of Part of the Oceania Wetlands Directory 1993 (with University of Tasmania, IUCN Oceania and Wetlands International Oceania)

6. Scientific and technical backing

6.1 List the scientific and technical partners that provide a solid backing to your initiative:

- Wetlands International Oceania
- IUCN Oceania
- University of Tasmania
- Blue Ocean Institute

7. Targets of the initiative and their links with Ramsar

7.1 List your initiative's strategic and operational targets for the period 2009-2011:

- Continue raising the profile of, and commitment to, wetland conservation and management in government decision-making in Oceania, especially in Pacific Island Parties.
- Continue to strengthen the knowledge base of the status of wetlands and their ecosystem services in Oceania, especially Pacific Island Parties, to guide decision-making.
- Continue to empower local communities to use scientific and traditional knowledge systems for local-level management of wetlands.
- Continue to promote greater recognition for the policy and institutional frameworks for biodiversity and natural resource management (including wetlands).

7.2 Specify the relations of your targets with the objectives of the Ramsar Strategic Plan:

The targets of the Initiative are based on priorities for wetland conservation agreed to by Pacific Island Ramsar Parties and aim to implement the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

(Attach your work plan for 2009-2011, or for 2009, where it exists)

- See proposed workplan for 2009 at Annex 1

8. Raising awareness of Ramsar objectives

8.1 Describe briefly your activities in the fields of communication, education, and participatory processes with relevant stakeholders:

- Assistance provided to planning and execution of national celebratory activities for World Wetlands Day 2006 and 2007 in all five PIC contracting parties. Assisted both Ramsar Administrative Authorities and active local NGOs with planning of activities.
- Facilitated wetland practitioner country exchanges between five Pacific Island countries
- Specific in-country assistance – printing and distribution of mangrove awareness booklet for Samoa; launching and promotion of Samoa educational mangrove kit for schools.
- Running of a community based protected areas workshop for the Marshall Islands.
- Assisted with the organization, and took part in mangrove replanting activities for Samoa in collaboration with the UNDP as part of World Environment Day celebrations 2007 (June 5).

8.2 Describe briefly the increased support for Ramsar objectives resulting from these activities. (This information may be used by Ramsar's CEPA Oversight Panel, according to Standing Committee Decision 35-14):

- Growing community interest in the nomination of further Ramsar sites
- Strengthened community awareness and appreciation of the value of wetlands and the need for their wise use
- Sharing of wetland management experiences and participatory learning and action at the community level
- Increasing inclusion of wetlands in national planning and development processes

FINANCIAL AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

9. Who provides political and financial support?

9.1 List all your sources and the amounts of financial support for the triennium 2009-2011:

- No financial support secured so far

9.2 List your sources and amounts of financial support for the year 2009:

- No financial support secured so far

9.3 List concisely (according to main budget lines) your expenditures planned for 2009. Specify the amounts which are already confirmed.

- No financial support secured so far

10. Financial planning

10.1 Summarize your remaining funding needs that are not yet covered by confirmed donations, according to the main budget lines used above:

- Please see Annex 1

10.2 Provide information about your fundraising plan to cover such outstanding needs:

11. Request for Ramsar core budget support

11.1 If you request a financial contribution from the Ramsar core budget, specify the amount for 2009, and for the triennium 2009-2011:

- Total funding requested is CHF99,000 (refer to Annex 1 for details of 2009 request)
- Total funding requested for Triennium (estimate): CHF 180,000

GOVERNANCE OF THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

12. Governance mechanisms in place

12.1 Describe the governance and advisory mechanisms and structures (e.g. committees) established to provide guidance and insight to your initiative:

The following provide the main guiding mechanism for the initiative:

- Feedback and joint planning with regional partners (including the Ramsar Secretariat) and national Ramsar Administrative Authorities, through their national Ramsar/wetlands committees
- The Annual SPREP Meeting of Officials

Att. Attach terms of references, rules of procedures, or operational guidelines, where existing:

13. Coordination with the Ramsar Secretariat

13.1 Specify the operational arrangements between the governance structures of your initiative and the Ramsar Secretariat:

National Ramsar/Wetlands Committees in each of the PIC Parties is chaired by the National Ramsar Administrative Authorities whom provide feedback to the Initiative through the Associate Ramsar Officer based at SPREP.

13.2 List the full name, telephone and e-mail contact of the main focal point of your initiative:

Vainuupo JUNGBLUT (Mr.)
 Associate Ramsar Officer
 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
 PO Box 240
 Apia, Samoa
 Ph: (685) 21929 ext. 282
 Fax: (685) 20231

Annex 1

Work Plan & funding requested for 2009 from Ramsar core budget

Components	Verifiable indicator(s)	Timeframe	Activity	Estimated Cost (USD)
<i>Update of Oceania wetlands directory information</i>	Country wetland information updated in existing database ¹	Feb – April 2009	Conduct a further update of country information on priority wetlands as contained in the 1993 Oceania Directory for 4 Pacific Island Countries	30,000
<i>Ramsar processes</i>	Workshop carried out, and PIC NAAs better able to apply Ramsar principles at the national level	June 2009	Conduct a regional training workshop for Pacific Island parties on processes of the Convention	60,000
SPREP Programme support charge (10%)				9,000
	Total forecasted request to Ramsar Core budget for 2009 (USD)			99,000

¹ Database produced during update of directory information for Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia and Samoa.

