CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 6/4 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
DATE: 22 October 2026
CIRCULAR: 26/97

SUBJECT: Update on the Circular Pacific via Regional Recycling Network (CP-RRN) Project

Dear Focal Points,

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) wish to provide an update on the Circular Pacific via Regional Recycling Network (Circular Pacific Project)* project following the regional consultation held from 16–18 September 2026 in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The Circular Pacific Project has advanced in direct response to the strong regional direction set at the 2026 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, where Leaders called for the development of a Regional Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework tailored to Pacific import-dependent economies. This regional mandate also aligns with the latest negotiating text for a global plastics agreement which proposes Parties take measures to establish or promote EPR, product circularity, or similar economic instruments.

The Circular Pacific Project aims to deliver on these commitments as a way to sustainably address growing solid waste management challenges across the region, and support improved collection, processing, and export of targeted waste streams through the establishment of a regional recycling network supported by hub facilities and regional agreements.

EPR is increasingly recognised worldwide as one of the most effective ways to strengthen recycling systems, by ensuring producers are responsible for the goods they place on the market. The Circular Pacific Project seeks to explore how this approach can be adapted to Pacific realities and establish a regional framework.

Regional Consultation – Port Vila, Vanuatu

The first regional event for the Circular Pacific project was held over three days in Port Vila. Seventy-six participants attended, including 29 government representatives from 14 Pacific countries, 22 private-sector representing producers and importers, recyclers and waste operators, and development partners and the project team.

** Note: This project has also been referred to in SPREP Circulars 26/37, 26/52, 26/65, and 26/66.*

Participants confirmed a long-term vision for the project:

> *Pacific island nations have a coordinated, regionally supported recycling system that enables target waste streams to be collected, reused, pre-processed and recycled at commercially viable scale.*
>
> *National policies and programs are aligned under common policy principles, with shared standards, safeguards, systems and infrastructure, reducing fragmentation and creating the conditions for sustained public and private investment.*

The minutes are available on the SPREP website: https://www.sprep.org/circular-pacific.

Early Regional Findings

Initial assessments confirm that potentially recyclable materials are not being recovered in the region due to small national volumes, limited processing capacity, high shipping costs, and uncertain access to end markets. Waste streams currently under consideration for the Circular Pacific Project include PET bottles, cardboard, used oil, end of life vehicles, tyres, e-waste and lithium ion batteries.

Next Steps

The project team is continuing detailed assessments on priority materials - considering collection and processing options, transport and logistics pathways, suitable markets and technologies, financing mechanisms, EPR Regional Framework, and other policy and partnership arrangements required to support a regional recycling network.

The Circular Pacific Project will continue developing regional options and will engage with countries to align national priorities with regional coordination. Further updates will be shared through SPREP Circulars, the SPREP Circular Pacific Website, and direct communication with participants of the regional event.

Yours sincerely,



Easter Chu Shing
Acting Director General

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