

Statement by the Deputy Director General of SPREP, Easter Chu Shing, Tiaki Moana OECM Summit and Workshop, 24-27 March 2025, French Polynesia

Honourable Moetai Brotherson, President of French Polynesia. Esteemed delegates and participants. Ladies and gentlemen.

Ia orana! Bonjour! Talofa Lava and Warm Pacific Greetings!

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of French Polynesia for the warm welcome, and for graciously hosting us in your beautiful country.

I would also like to thank the Blue Cradle Foundation and collaborating partners for organising the Tiaki Moana Summit and Workshop on 'Other Effective Area based Conservation Measures (OECM).

SPREP is honoured to be part of this important event.

1. This Summit and Workshop provides an excellent platform for conservation practitioners, local communities, government officials, NGOs, regional and international organisations including the young professional leaders to have a 'talanoa' on OECM – sharing views, knowledge, and experiences on OECM and its practical application relevant to the context of our Blue Pacific continent.
2. To fully understand what OECM mean in the Pacific, we need to unpack it and break it down in ways that align with local governance systems, cultural values, and conservation realities. It is always good to keep reminding ourselves that 'One size does not fit all!' Each Pacific island country has its own unique ecological, social, cultural, and political contexts that must be carefully mapped to ensure OECM complement existing conservation efforts.
3. For centuries, Pacific peoples have successfully managed and conserved biodiversity through traditional conservation systems such as tapu, tabu, ra'ui, rāhui, kapu, mo, bul, sa, fa'asao and others. In the Pacific, the Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) approach has been effectively adopted across the Pacific and has been highly recognised globally. These systems and approaches reflect a deep-rooted understanding of nature and have been instrumental in sustaining both biodiversity and the livelihoods of Pacific communities. Thus, I encourage you to actively engage in the OECM summit and workshop this week to chart a way forward that is uniquely Pacific.
4. SPREP as your regional environmental organisation, look forward to the outcomes of this Summit to guide the next steps and way forward on OECM for our Blue Pacific continent.
5. On that note, I wish you a successful and productive OECM summit and workshop.

Mauuruuru! Merci beaucoup! Thank You !