



# About SWAP

## Marine Litter Activities

Pacific island countries and territories offer rich ecosystems threatened by population and urbanisation growth and changing consumption patterns, leading to increased waste generation. Healthy Pacific ecosystems are essential for economic development of communities in Pacific island countries and territories, however due to their social, economic and ecological features, these Pacific islands face their own challenges.

The **Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP)** project, funded by **Agence française de Développement (AFD)** and implemented by the **Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)** aims to improve waste infrastructure, building capacity, and fostering regional collaboration of several Pacific Island Countries and French Territories.



The SWAP benefits 7 Pacific island countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, as well as 2 French overseas territories: French Polynesia and Wallis-and-Futuna.

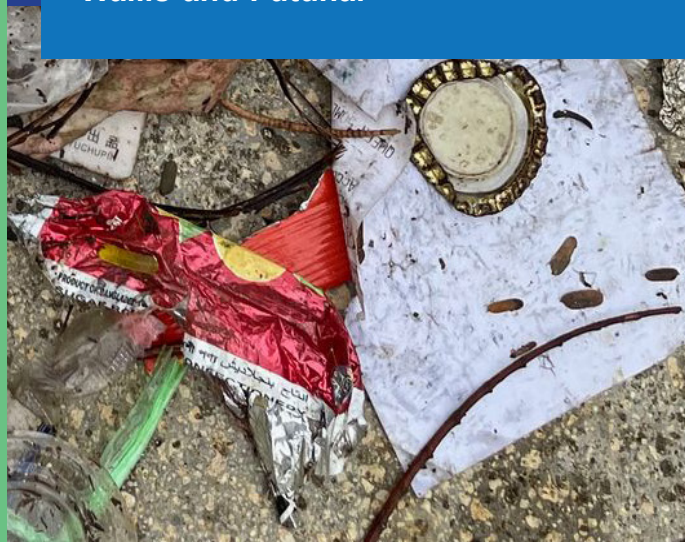
## SWAP Marine Litter Activities

Marine litter is a primary focus of the SWAP project. This component includes the following activities:

**Marine Litter Awareness:** Engaged communities in marine litter reduction campaigns and clean-up efforts across the Pacific.

**Waste Audits and Surveys:** Conducted beach surveys and waste audits to track marine litter trends and inform regional waste management strategies.

**Pilot Projects:** Launched initiatives focused on waste management and pollution reduction in several Pacific nations.



# Why Marine Litter is a Problem?



Marine pollution is the result of harmful chemicals entering the ocean, polluted wastewaters, industrial, agricultural and residential waste, garbage from ships, and the spread of invasive organisms. A major source of marine pollution is related to plastics intentionally thrown from shore, boats, or are unintentionally carried by winds or streams.

Marine litter is an escalating environmental issue in the Pacific, heavily reliant on its marine environment for food, tourism, and commerce. It poses significant threats to marine biodiversity, ecosystems, and human health. Plastics, which are highly persistent, degrade slowly, causing long-term damage to marine habitats. Managing marine litter in the Pacific is crucial for preserving its blue economy, valued at USD 3.3 billion annually.

## Key facts on marine litter include:



80% of marine litter comes from land-based sources, including improper waste disposal and littering.



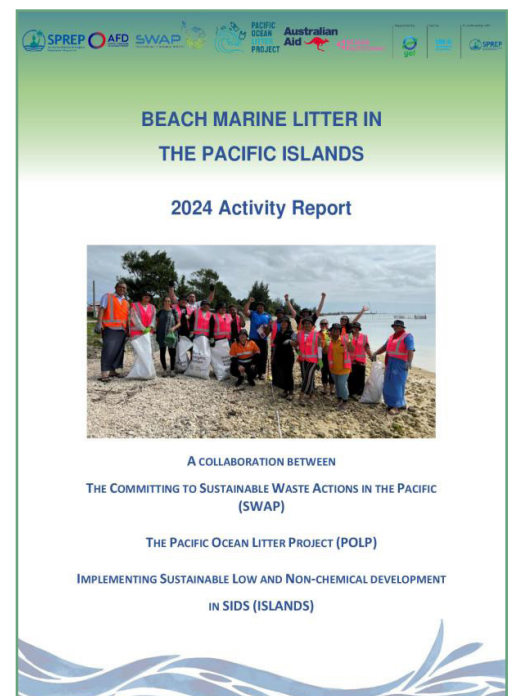
Plastic waste is the dominant type of litter found, ranging from bottle caps to food wrappers and fragments of hard or soft plastics.

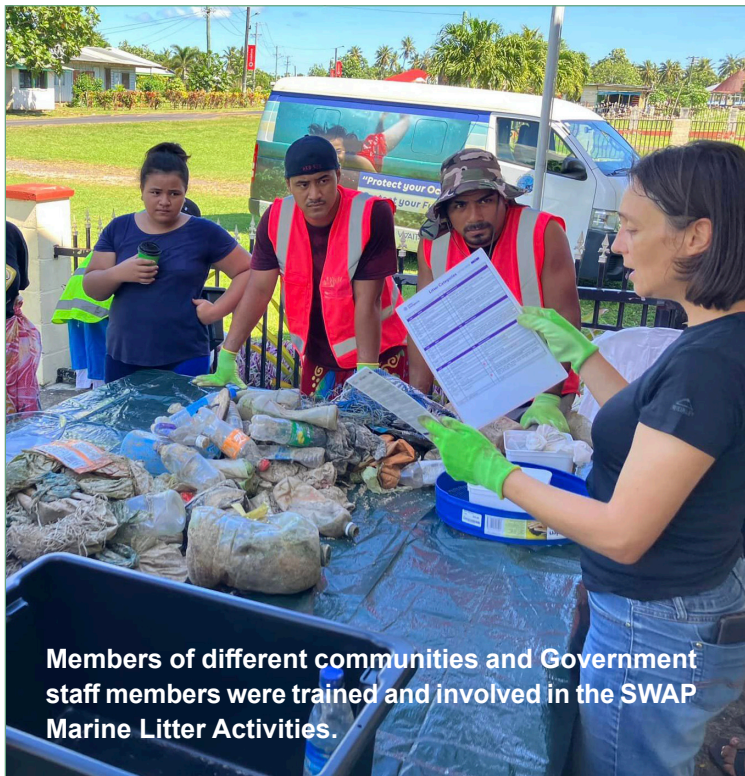


Extreme weather events exacerbate pollution by increasing runoff and debris washed into the ocean.

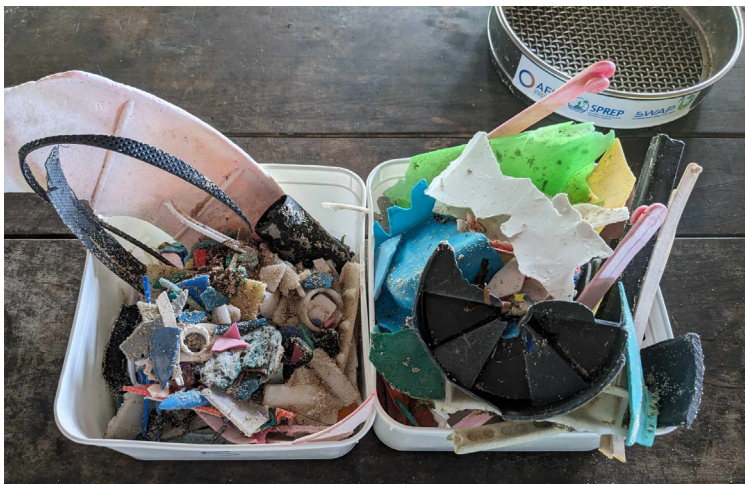
## Objective of the SWAP Marine Litter Study

The main goal of the SWAP Marine Litter Study was to collect detailed data on the distribution, composition, and density of marine litter across the Pacific region. Between 2019 and 2024, beach surveys and waste audits were conducted in six Pacific countries and territories: Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Wallis & Futuna. This data is also contributing to the Global Plastics Treaty discussions, which aim to address plastic pollution globally by focusing on the entire plastic lifecycle — from production to disposal. More data on Marine Litter will be collected throughout the second phase of the SWAP from 2025 – 2028 in the six countries and territories mentioned above to which will be added French Polynesia, Kiribati and Tuvalu.





# SWAP Marine Litter Activities



Notable items found included bottle caps, food wrappers, foam plastics, and plastic fragments all indicators of high plastic pollution.

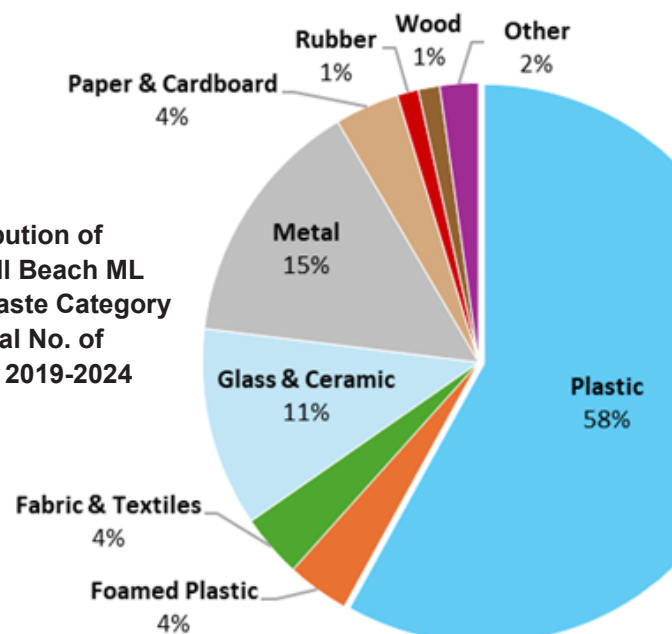


Awareness materials were developed.

## Main Results

- **76,869 litter** items were collected, weighing a total of **4,492 kg**
- **2,649 volunteers** took part of the Marine Litter Activities, gathering in total **45 communities**
- Plastics made up the majority of the litter, with over **44,000 plastic items** identified.

Distribution of Overall Beach ML Per Waste Category by Total No. of Items, 2019-2024





## Key partners

The Marine Litter Study in the Pacific has involved various stakeholders:

SPREP

Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

SWAP Project

Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP)

GEF ISLANDS Project

Sustainable Coastlines, New Zealand

University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Ocean Litter Youth Project, Fiji

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and the Division of Waste Management and Pollution Control (WMPC), Samoa

Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology (MECDM); Environment & Conservation Division (ECD), Solomon Islands

Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), Department of Environment, Tonga

Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology & Geohazard, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management, Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu

University of Newcastle, Australia

Local communities

## Turn the Tide!

Join the fight for a plastic-free Pacific Ocean!



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