



EUROPEAN UNION



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
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PacWastePlus
PACIFIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

This initiative is supported by **PacWastePlus**-a 85-month project funded by the European Union (**EU**) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (**SPREP**) to **sustainably and cost effectively improve regional management of waste and pollution.**

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SAMOA

Waste Data Profile

June 2025



Samoa and PacWastePlus

Samoa is one of fifteen countries to participate in the SPREP implemented and European Union's Delegation to the Pacific funded PacWastePlus Programme. The PacWaste Plus Programme aimed to improve waste management activities across the islands and strengthen the capacity of governments, industries, and communities to manage waste and protect human health and the environment.

About Samoa

Samoa is an archipelago in the central South Pacific Ocean approximately halfway between New Zealand and Hawaii. With a population of 205,557 (2021 census), Samoa is home to the world's second largest Polynesian group (after the Maori). More than 80% of land in Samoa is held under customary ownership and is a key source of identity and security.

Samoa's economic growth is driven by tourism, agriculture, fisheries and trade, which is supported largely through private remittances from overseas (25% of GDP) and development assistance (10% of GDP). Services provide 88% of paid employment, including public administration, wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and restaurants.

Government, Policies, Strategies, and Responsibilities

Samoa is a parliamentary republic with two levels of government: the national government, based on a modern state system and the village local government, based on traditional structures.

The *Waste Management Act 2010* and the National Waste Management Strategy 2019–2023 guide waste management activities in Samoa. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) is the lead agency, responsible for policy, regulation, facility management, and enforcement.

The *Waste Management Act 2010* covers all aspects of waste, including collection, disposal, hazardous waste, landfill operation, licensing, and enforcement. It mandates the MNRE to implement strategies, regulate operators, and ensure environmental safeguards.

Samoa's waste management system is built on robust legislation, a national strategy prioritizing the 3Rs and community involvement, free household collection, improved landfill management, and targeted bans on problematic plastics. Challenges remain in enforcement and financing, but ongoing reforms and public engagement are driving continued improvement.

Waste Practices

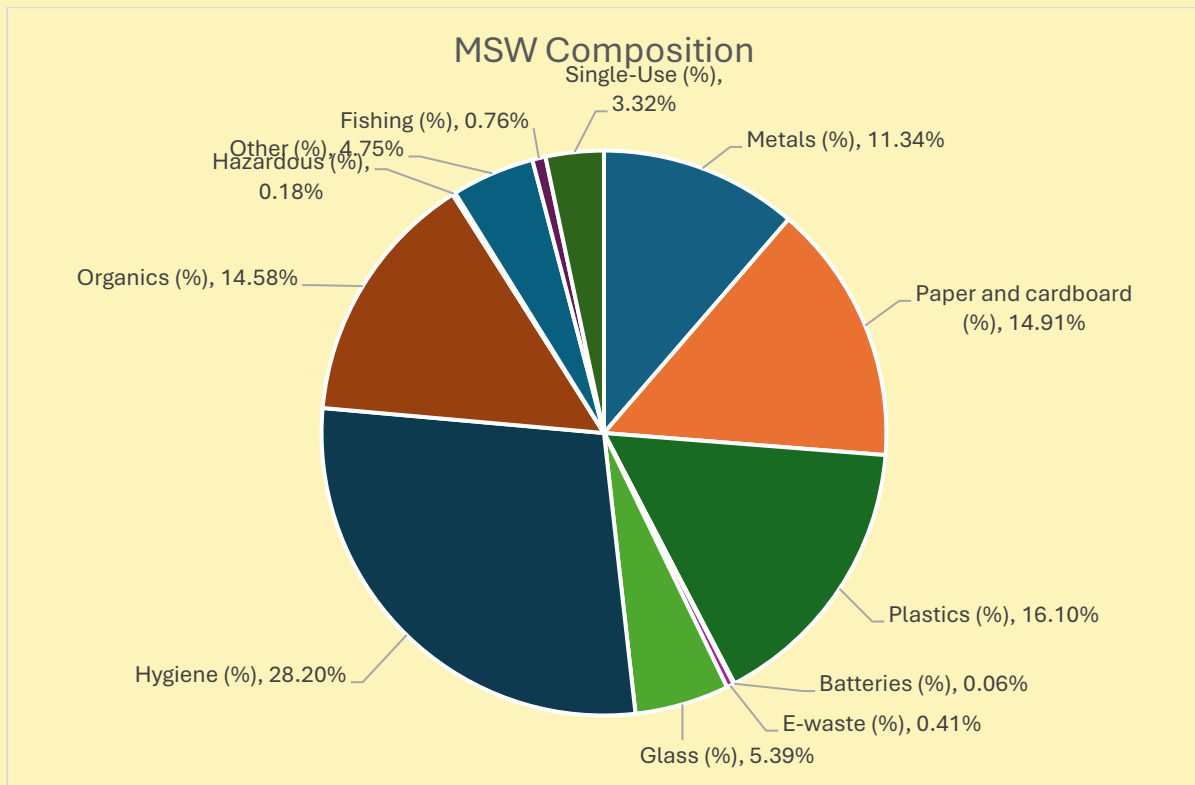
Samoa's strategy emphasizes the "3Rs" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Return), polluter pays principle, public participation, and public-private partnerships. Priority activities include public awareness, operational planning, data collection, landfill management, and enforcing bans on single-use plastics.

Basic waste collection and disposal services are provided free to all households, operationalised through contractors⁵. Samoa operates the Tafaigata and Vaiaata landfills, with ongoing efforts to improve capacity, daily monitoring, and environmental controls such as leachate management.

The government has enforced a ban on single-use plastics and is developing product stewardship schemes, including levies on beverage containers to encourage recycling and proper disposal. Public education and awareness campaigns are central, aiming to reduce littering, increase recycling, and promote responsible waste handling at the household and community levels. Designated officers (MNRE, police, health, and local authorities) have powers to inspect, issue fines, and prosecute violations. All landfill and waste operators must be licensed, and breaches can result in penalties.

Core KPIs	Result
1. Count / capacity of modern waste facilities	0/Unknown
2. Count / capacity of unregulated waste facilities	6/Unknown
3. National recovery rate (%)	24%
4. Per capita waste generation rate (kg/capita/year)	96
5. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) composition (%)	Error! Reference source not found. Next Page
6. Household waste capture rate (%)	99%
7. Household collection service coverage (%)	99%
8. Fulfilment of MEA reporting requirements (%)	52%

Supplementary KPIs	Result
1. Cost of disposal to landfill (\$/tonne/annum)	28.53
2. Weight of waste disposed (tonnes per annum)	18,967
3. Weight of waste recovered (tonnes per annum)	1,514
4. Volume and type of stockpiled hazardous waste (m3)	Stockpiled hazardous waste: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-waste: 3 m³ • Used oil: 264 m³ • Used tyres: 139 m³
5. Marine plastic pollution potential (tonnes per annum)	22.2
6. Awareness and support of waste management services (%)	93%
7. Proportion of strategic waste management initiatives implemented (%)	84%
8. Commercial waste capture rate (%)	Insufficient data
9. Commercial collection service coverage (%)	100%
10. Total weight of disaster waste disposed (tonnes per annum)	0



National Waste Analysis Snapshot

About the Data

The data used to inform the KPIs include the Samoa 2021 National Census, the APWC 2021 waste audits and surveys through the World Bank and IUCN projects, and Eunomia 2025 Waste Facility Register surveys. The APWC audits undertaken include a compositional waste audit of 207 household and 37 commercial samples and qualitative surveys involving 155 household and 41 commercial samples covering Savaii, Apia, Lefaga, and Upolu.

Data Collection Challenges

- Absence of modern data recording system at most waste facilities to accurately record, analyse and report data. It questions the accuracy of the provided data for some waste facilities.
- Proper data collection system for some waste facilities are expensive to operate and maintain. The Tafaigata Weighing Bridge was out of service for years and could not be repaired due to the high cost involved. Installing a similar system for the Vaiaata Landfill is not practical at the moment.
- Absence of data reporting obligation for waste management facilities to the government as part of their businesses license or permits.
- Absence of monthly reporting requirements for the available key national waste disposal facilities, reduces effort and emphasis in maintaining good data recording, monitoring and reporting.

Highlights

A Division of Waste and Pollution Management was established in 2022 under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. Waste and Pollution Management responsibilities were previously handled under the Division of Environment. The new waste division enhances the capacity of the government to enforce, monitor and implement waste and pollution management responsibilities under the Waste Management Act 2010, including collaboration with development partners.

The second Waste Recycling Association was established in Samoa in 2021. It enhances the support from other businesses and organizations to waste management.

Emerging Issues

Some data from the most recent waste audit implemented in 2020 (reported in 2021) due to budget changes and other aspects are outdated. It is an opportunity for conducting another waste audit for updated data online with the DCMRD set timelines. It is also an opportunity to consider incorporating waste management data surveys in the next Population, Households and Businesses Census in 2026, which provides better coverage for collection coverage, waste disposal practices and awareness.

Absence of permit for waste management related developments including waste facilities, which could be put in place to allow compliance to environmental controls.

Samoa has an opportunity to include a waste management and pollution permit for all waste management related businesses and facilities. Regular reporting of waste data must be part of the permit.



Waste Management Practices and KPI Narrative

Waste Facilities and Waste Handled Each Year	<p>In Samoa there is no modern facility and 6 unregulated waste facilities (disposal, recycling, incineration and storage) with unknown processing capacity as these are not recorded in most facilities. Approximately, 18,967 tonnes of waste is disposed of annually, and an estimated 1,514 tonnes of waste is recovered each year. The cost spent on disposal to landfill is estimated at \$28.53. The landfills still have remaining capacity.</p>	Hazardous Waste Stockpiles	<p>E-waste, used oil, and used tyres are hazardous wastes stockpiled in the waste facilities.</p>
Household per Capita Waste Generation	<p>The per capita waste generation rate is 96 kilograms per person per year.</p>	Disaster Waste	<p>Although usually stricken by cyclones, Samoa does not have any recent disasters, so no data was recorded.</p>
Household Waste Statistics	<p>The awareness and support of waste management services is high at 93%. The top three waste categories identified in household municipal waste are hygiene, plastics, and paper and cardboard. The household waste capture rate is 99%, and the household collection service has a coverage of 99%.</p>	Marine Waste	<p>The marine plastic pollution potential was identified as 22 tonnes per year.</p>
Commercial Waste Statistics	<p>There was insufficient data to calculate a commercial waste capture rate and the commercial collection service coverage of 100% is recorded mainly in Upolu.</p>	Strategic Initiatives and MEA Reporting	<p>Although usually stricken by cyclones, Samoa does not have any recent disasters, so no data was recorded.</p>