



WHAT ARE POPS?

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are toxic chemicals that can travel long distances through air and water, and accumulate in the fatty tissues of humans and other animals. Large quantities of POPs are generated through the burning of rubbish and other materials each year. POPs do not degrade quickly over time, and as a consequence – potentially expose people to serious health issues including cancer, birth defects and immune system impairments.

The Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project, funded through the Global Environment Facility – Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF-PAS), aims to reduce POPs in the Pacific region through the improved management of solid and hazardous waste.

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Welcome to **Vox POPS** – the newsletter of the Pacific POPs Release Reduction project. As the year draws to a close we wanted to share with you some of the great work that has been taking place across the region to reduce the generation and release of POPs in the Pacific.

Since the project commenced in 2013, it has been pleasing to note that the issue of POPs has taken on a noticeably higher profile in the region. Part of this has been on account of concerted efforts to integrate the reduction of POPs into other strategies and mechanisms such as SPREP's new draft Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016–2025 known as [Cleaner Pacific 2025](#) and activities related to the [Waigani Convention](#).

The coming year promises further progress, with key activities such as the [Niue composting demonstration project](#) and [Kiribati healthcare waste management pilot project](#), now well underway.

We hope that you enjoy reading **Vox POPS** and we look forward to receiving your comments and feedback.

Ms Lusiana Ralogaivau

GEF uPOPs Project Coordinator
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)



PACIFIC POPS RELEASE REDUCTION PROJECT

Reducing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in the Pacific region through the improved management of solid and hazardous waste.



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme





As part of the training, participants visited waste minimisation sites and improved dumpsites in Nadi and Lautoka.

PACIFIC ISLAND WASTE WORKERS BENEFIT FROM REGIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE

In November 2015, representatives from 12 Pacific island countries graduated from a two week train the trainers programme in Suva which provided specialist instruction on solid and hazardous waste management.

The training programme is part of a four year initiative, funded through the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Regional Solid Waste Management Initiative, and the GEF Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project, to ensure the sustainable capacity building of semi-skilled waste workers in the Pacific.

Since its commencement in 2013, more than 60 individuals from 13 different countries have been trained in best practice landfill management and hazardous waste handling techniques. The training programme also teaches participants vital presentation and communication skills so they can effectively pass on useful information and skills to their colleagues.

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Mr Kevin Helps (GEF Portfolio Manager, UNEP) and Mr Tevita Tupou (General Manager of Customs and Enforcement for the Fiji Government) in Suva, Fiji. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

MILESTONE MEETING SETS THE PACIFIC POPs AGENDA FOR 2016

On 24 July 2015, representatives from 13 Pacific island countries joined staff from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to attend the second Project Steering Committee Meeting of the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project in Suva, Fiji.

Speaking at the opening of the meeting Mr Kevin Helps, GEF Portfolio Manager for UNEP, explained that the meeting was an opportunity for SPREP and UNEP – as executing and implementing agencies of the project, respectively – to hear from the countries present about what is working well with the project and what areas require further attention.

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Used oil typically contains a range of compounds that are detrimental to both human health and the environment. Photo: D.Haynes/SPREP

URGENT ACTION REQUIRED ON USED OIL IN THE PACIFIC

Recent audits of used oils accumulated across the Pacific region have revealed that alarming numbers of stockpiles of used oil pose a significant risk to Pacific islands environments and the health of local communities. The used oil surveys have been completed in 13 Pacific island countries between 2012 and 2014.

The audit results have identified an urgent need to set up a regional collection system whilst awaiting implementation of country used oil stewardship systems. A stewardship programme entails the development of institutional reform through national used oil committees that enable the collection, storage and reuse of used oil and lubricants in an environmentally sound manner.

Used oils are derived from lubricant oils and other hydraulic fluids, which are widely used across Pacific islands in cars, buses, trucks and in generators in power stations.

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The Niue composting demonstration project was formally launched in August, 2015.

MAKING WASTE USEFUL IN NIUE

In August 2015, a new initiative was launched in Niue to promote effective waste management and composting. Through the innovative new demonstration project, it is hoped that communities in Niue will take up composting as an alternative to the common practice of burning green waste.

The demonstration project, which will run over a period of three years, will engage families in the six villages of Alofi, Vaeia, Tamakautoga, Avatele, Hakupu and Liku located on the southern, more densely populated, side of Niue.

The project focuses on sharing composting knowledge, and encouraging communities to separate their waste and convert it into useful resources. As a result, it will contribute to the greater protection of the environment and the reduction of POPs.

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Recent developments in the waste management and pollution control sector have highlighted the importance of hazardous chemical management to waste interventions in the Pacific islands region.

Photo: (c) Dr Bruce Graham

WORKING TOWARDS THE IMPROVED MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS IN THE PACIFIC

The improper management of chemicals can cause great damage to the environment, and to human health. A worst-case scenario can result in explosions or contamination and can have a devastating impact on human welfare and marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

The countries and territories of the Pacific are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effect of poor chemical management due to poorly maintained storage facilities and limited resource capacity. These factors are exacerbated by the region's exposure to storm surges and tropical cyclones.

To address this issue, the Pacific POPs Release Reduction project is working with the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) at University of the South Pacific to deliver comprehensive chemical management training across the 14 Pacific island countries participating in the project.

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In October, 2015 participants from hospitals and clinics across Tarawa gathered at the Tungaru Central Hospital in Nowerewere to learn how to effectively and safely handle healthcare waste. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

A NEW MODEL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF HEALTHCARE WASTE IN KIRIBATI

An innovative new pilot project on integrated healthcare waste management in Tarawa, Kiribati will ensure that the island nation's largest hospital has the necessary capacity and resources to implement a cost-effective and self-sustaining healthcare waste management system.

The initiative is being jointly supported by the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project and the European Union funded Pacific Hazardous Waste project (PacWaste).

The Kiribati pilot scheme will focus on improved healthcare waste management through best-practice incineration techniques and will involve the provision of specialised training on waste separation and infection control procedures, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), signage, secure storage systems, a new high temperature incinerator and extra human resources.

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(Left to right), SPREP Legal Adviser Mr Clark Peteru, Mr Josevata Qalubau from Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority, and SPREP Hazardous Waste Management Adviser, Dr Frank Griffin, at the Waigani Convention Training in Suva. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS DISCUSSED AT WAIGANI CONVENTION TRAINING

Information on POPs and the management and transportation of hazardous chemicals was incorporated into a recent training programme on the Waigani Convention. The Convention, which came into force in 2001, bans the importation of hazardous and radioactive wastes. Importantly, it also restricts the production of these waste types and encourages signatories to dispose of them in an environmentally sound manner.

The four-day training programme, held in Suva in July 2015, attracted delegates from 16 Pacific island countries and territories.

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Strategic communications training, SPREP.

PACIFIC ISLANDS LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMUNICATING POPs ISSUES

In April this year, representatives from 12 Pacific island countries undertook training at SPREP to learn about how strategic communication planning can assist in raising awareness at the national level of the dangers associated with POPs. The need for capacity building in communications had been highlighted during the development stage of the Project.

The training assisted participants to develop national work plans for the communication activities related to the project. During the training, participants were provided with effective communications tips and brainstormed ideas for their national awareness-raising efforts to support improved POPs management.

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ABOUT THE PACIFIC POPs RELEASE REDUCTION PROJECT

The Pacific POPs Release Reduction project is co-funded through the Global Environment Facility – Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF-PAS) and Agence Française de Développement (AFD). It is executed by SPREP and implemented by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

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