



### 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 – and thanks to all those who provided such positive feedback on our first issue. In the six months that have passed since then, the project has reached its mid-way point and achieved a number of important outcomes which you can read about in detail in the following pages.



As I write, preparations are well underway for the inaugural Clean Pacific Roundtable in Suva. The roundtable is an important mechanism for the implementation of the [Pacific Regional Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy 2016–2025](#), which identifies the management of chemicals, including POPs, as crucial to the vision of achieving a cleaner Pacific.

I hope that I have the opportunity to see some of you at this historic event where we will be highlighting the importance of improved waste oil management in our efforts to reduce the release of POPs in the Pacific. In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy reading **Vox POPS** and, as always, 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.





Participants at the third Steering Committee Meeting of the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

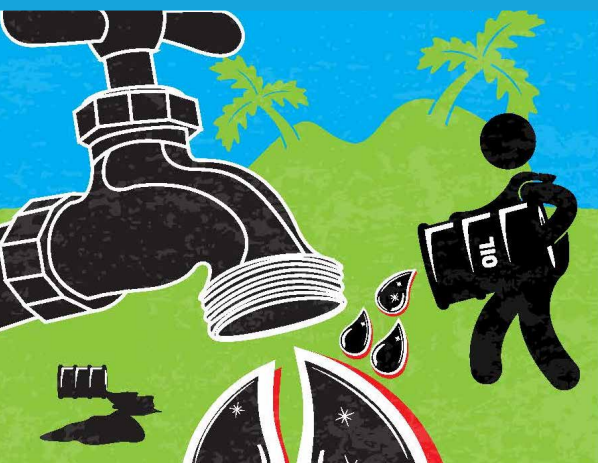
### PACIFIC POPS RELEASE REDUCTION PROJECT REACHES MID-TERM MILESTONE

From 11–12 April, 2016 representatives from 13 Pacific island countries joined staff from SPREP and UNEP at the third Steering Committee Meeting of the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project in Suva, Fiji.

By the close of the mid-term meeting, a number of recommendations were agreed on to improve project outcomes, communication, and responsiveness.

Some strategic gaps identified during the meeting, included the incomplete coverage of issues relating to POPs in existing legislation and low levels of monitoring and enforcement of existing laws. Another identified gap was the inadequate attention paid to occupational exposure of POPs, particularly women who, in the Pacific, tend to have a high level of exposure to smoke as a result of cooking over open fires.

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If you dump it, we all drink it. When used oil is dumped, it can have a devastating impact on the environment.

### WORLD FIRST STUDY INTO THE USE OF USED OIL AS A DIESEL EXTENDER

With stockpiles of used oil reaching critical volume in some locations, UNEP and SPREP have been exploring the possibility of using used oil as a supplementary fuel source for electrical generation in the short-medium term.

A used oil diesel extender study, commissioned by the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project and undertaken by the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia explores the feasibility of mixing small quantities of used oil into diesel fuel as an extender.

Preliminary findings from the study have shown that the addition of used oil appears to have no impact on emissions of dioxins and furans, and in instances where both used oil and coconut oil are added, emissions may in fact be reduced.

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The PCB training, conducted by Mr Daniel Todd of GHD Consulting, covered best practice methods for the field testing of disused and offline transformers, online transformers, capacitors and PCB containing equipment. Photo: Jessica Zebedee/EPA

### WORKING TO ACHIEVE A PCB-FREE RMI

A new initiative in Republic of the Marshall Islands aims to rid the island nation of a dangerous class of toxic chemicals known as PCBs. Funded through the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project, the ambitious pilot programme aims to make Republic of the Marshall Islands 'PCB-free' by the year 2020.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are industrial products or chemicals that were once widely used as an insulating material for electrical equipment, such as transformers and capacitors, and also in heat transfer fluids and lubricants.

From 4–6 May, 2016 the initiative commenced with a three day training workshop on PCB management held in Majuro. At the training, participants from the Environmental Protection Authority in Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mobil Oil Micronesia, Majuro Energy Company and Majuro Atoll Waste Company learned about best practice methods for the field testing of disused and offline transformers, online transformers, capacitors and PCB containing equipment.

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Pictured above: Participants at the Best Practice Chemical Management Training in Kiribati undertake an inventory exercise. Photo: Steven Sutcliffe/USP

## CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING HELPS SMALL ISLANDS TACKLE BIG PROBLEMS

Specialised training in the best-practice management of hazardous chemicals is helping island countries to protect the health of communities and the environment. The Best Practice Chemical Management Training, developed in collaboration by SPREP and the University of the South Pacific (USP), is teaching laboratory workers, science teachers, and others how to safely store, handle, use and dispose of dangerous chemicals.

As well as protecting human health and the environment, the training addresses an important capacity gap that has prevented Pacific island countries from fulfilling their obligations under the Stockholm Convention. To date, the Best Practice Chemical Management Training has been successfully run in Vanuatu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia, with training to a further eight island countries scheduled for later this year.

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Participants at the July 2016 vocational training session in Suva, Fiji. Photo: M.Guinto/SPREP

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WASTE WORKERS UNDERWAY IN SUVA

An accredited course for practitioners and policy implementers in the waste management sector is providing a sustainable pathway for professional development in waste management. In Suva this month, representatives from 11 Pacific island countries are attending a two week train the trainers programme which provides 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 Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project, to ensure the sustainable capacity building of semi-skilled waste workers in the Pacific. The regional training programme is being hosted by the Fiji National University (FNU) School of Medicine, with delivery assistance provided by Australia's Griffith University.

## TACKLING THE MENACE OF USED PESTICIDE CONTAINERS IN THE PACIFIC

Every year, thousands of kilograms of pesticide products are imported into the Pacific islands region for use in agriculture and pest control.

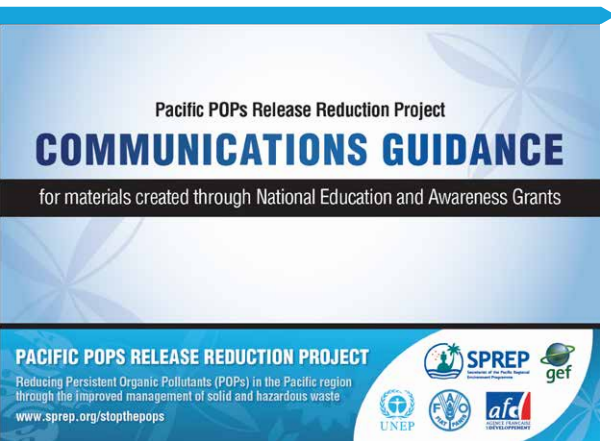
Pesticides require careful handling as many pose an unacceptable risk to human health, animal health or the environment. In fact, according to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), nine of the twelve most dangerous and persistent chemicals on the planet are types of pesticides.

One of the key priorities in reducing the risks of pesticides to human and environmental health in the Pacific islands is the effective management of used pesticide containers. An upcoming initiative, implemented by the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project, promises to tackle this issue by establishing best practice management guidelines for used pesticide containers and assisting Pacific island countries to implement them.

[Read more...](#)



The improper management of pesticide containers can cause great damage to the environment, and to human health. Photo: F.Griffin/SPREP



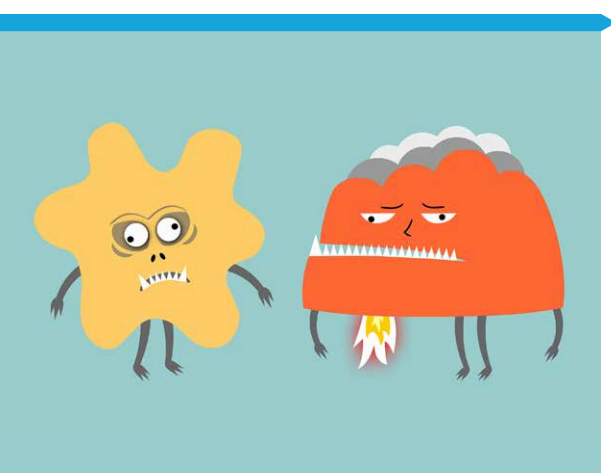
The new guidance document contains important information about branding and approval processes for activities funded through the Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project.

## NEW RESOURCE AVAILABLE TO GUIDE NATIONAL POPS AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

The Pacific POPs Release Reduction Project has published and distributed a newly created set of branding guidelines for national level activities funded through the project.

The guidelines were created to streamline branding and approval processes in preparation for the implementation of National Education and Awareness Activities on the topic of POPs reduction.

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the Guidelines or contact [amperc@sprep.org](mailto:amperc@sprep.org) if you would like further information.



The Stop the POPs animation features monster-like representation of dioxins and furans to help raise awareness of the dangers associated with open burning.

## COMMENCING COUNTDOWN TO STOP THE POPS

Stop the POPs is a Pacific region-wide campaign coordinated by SPREP as part of the Pacific POPs Release Reduction project. Scheduled to be launched later this year, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the negative health and environmental impacts of open burning, promote the composting of green waste and encourage households to separate waste at the point of generation to reduce the total volume of waste that is burned.

The centrepiece of the campaign will be a short animation which is currently in production. The animation, targeted at school age Pacific island children, features a set of 'monster like' characters to represent the dioxins and furans generated through burning.

The animation will be available for online viewing and download and the characters and artwork developed for the animation will be incorporated into the other campaign products. Stay tuned for further information about this exciting campaign.

## 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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