COMMITTING TO

SUSTAINABLE WASTE ACTIONS IN THE PACIFIC

(SWAP)

SWAP MARINE LITTER WORKSHOP

ACTIVITY REPORT

APRIL 2022

Contents

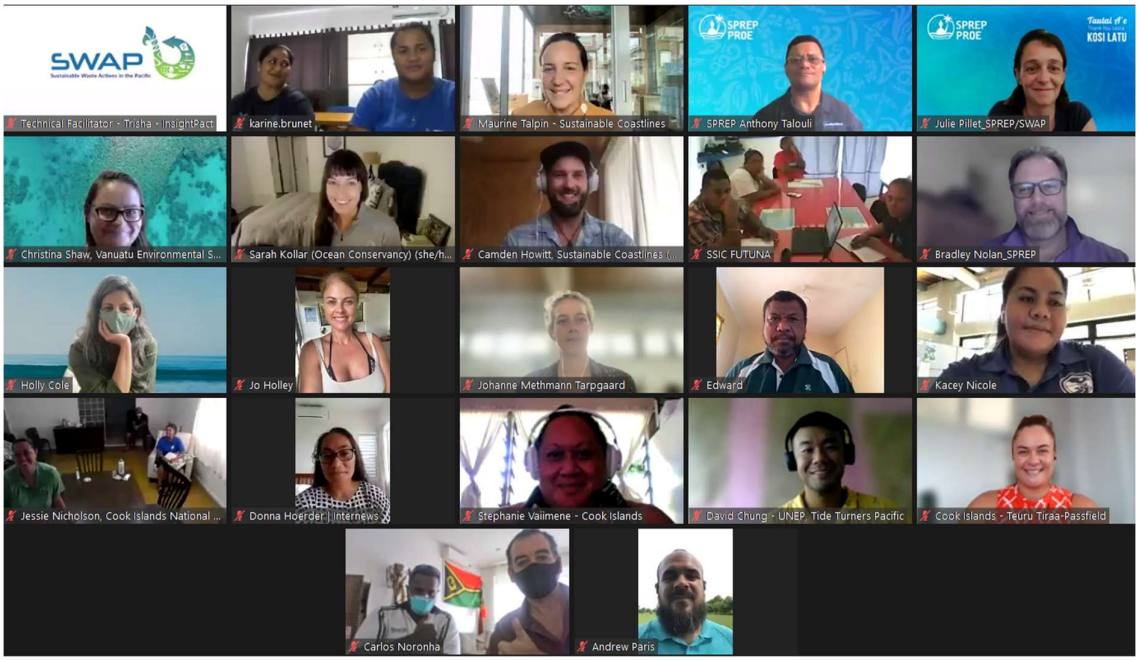
I. INTRODUCTION

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 or boats, or are unintentionally carried by winds or streams.

A report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation has revealed that there are now over 150 million tonnes of plastics in the oceans. That's about one tonne of plastics for every three tonnes of fish. If the trend continues, plastics will outweigh fish in the oceans by 2050.

Pacific islands are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of marine litter, due to the particular value and sensitivity of their coastal environments.

To discuss this issue and the tools that can be used in the struggle against this marine litter problem (awareness, clean-ups, audits, etc.), SPREP, through the SWAP project, delivered a two-hour virtual meeting on April 6, 2022.



The delivery of this workshop is part of Component 3 of SWAP – Establishment of a Community of Practice. This was also the opportunity to share and promote the actions carried out by the ten associations funded by SWAP to conduct clean-up activities and produce awareness videos during the International Coastal Clean-up Day 2021.

II. Concept Note

1.1. Objectives

The workshop was designed for the participants to:

- Understand the origins and the impacts of marine litter in order to implement and develop tools to raise awareness to address this problem;

- Get practical information on how to prepare and conduct a clean-up campaign based on shared experiences;
- Be informed about the value of conducting a statistically sound waste survey and audit.

1.2. Content

This online workshop involved four parts:

- The first part aimed to provide an **overview of the marine litter problem**: origins and sources of production of marine litter, potential impacts (financial revenues, human health, aquatic life, etc.) and how to raise awareness to address this issue;
- The second part focused on the preparation and organization of a coastal clean-up campaign with the sharing of experience from an association that has been conducting clean-ups for several years;
- The third part aimed to inform participants about the value of conducting a statistically reliable waste survey and audit during a beach clean-up using the United Nations Methodology. The objective of this session was to make the audience aware of the value of conducting this type of waste audit as a common tool for public awareness and decision making by authorities; and
- The workshop ended with a A/Q session.

1.3. Speakers

The speakers was:

- Overview of the marine litter issue (sources, environmental impacts, data, etc.): Ms. Julie Pillet, Technical Waste Project Coordinator, SWAP;
- Awareness-raising tools: Mr. Camden Howitt, Co-Founder and Programmes Director of Sustainable Coastlines;
- Preparation and organisation of a clean-up campaign and sharing experience: Ms. Sarah Kollar, Outreach Manager, International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) - Trash Free Seas® Program - Ocean Conservancy and Ms. Christina Shaw, CEO of The Vanuatu Environmental Science Society;
- Conduction of a statistically sound waste survey and audit: Mr. Camden Howitt, Co-Founder and Programmes Director of Sustainable Coastlines.

1.4. Audience

Any organisation (Ministries, NGOs, Associations, Communities, etc.) concerned with the problem of Marine Litter in the Pacific Region or beyond.

III. Virtual Marine Litter Workshop Organisation

1.1. Logistics and interpretation services

Since SWAP is a bilingual project involving French Territories and English-speaking countries, the workshop was delivered in English and interpretation was provided to French-speaking participants by OnCall, the SPREP contractor.

To assist the SWAP Project Management Unit, SWAP hired an experience and qualified consultant to handle the logistics of the workshop. Through a Request for Quote, InsightPact was recruited to provide digital services, including:

- Management of livestreaming event sessions in both English and French; and
- General support related to the management of the event.

1.2. Information to participants

Different ways were used to inform participants of the holding of the SPREP/SWAP Marine Litter Workshop:

- A flyer was drafted in French and English for dissemination on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc) – Appendix 1;
- A circular was circulated to all SPREP Focal Points in French and English – Appendix 2;
- Feature articles were published on SPREP Website:
    - In English: https://www.sprep.org/news/pacific-countries-push-back-against-frightening-marine-litter-statistics /
    - In French: https://www.sprep.org/news/grace-aux-pays-du-pacifique-les-statistiques-alarmantes-sur-les-dechets-marins-sameliorent
- A post was published on the Green Forum: https://thegreenforum.org/event/tackling-marine-litter-coastal-clean-decision-making

1.3. Agenda

SPREP/SWAP Online workshop on Marine Litter Management		
2:00pm – 2:04pm	Introduction to the logistical arrangements for the meeting	InsightPact
2:04pm – 2:07pm	Welcome	Mr Anthony Talouli WMPC, Acting Director
2:07pm – 2:10pm	Overview of the workshop (SWAP)	Mrs Julie Pillet WMPC, SWAP Project Coordinator
2:10pm – 2:15pm	Video of the International Coastal Clean-up Day	VESS video
2:15pm – 2:20pm	Photo	InsightPact
2:20pm – 2:35pm	Overview of the marine litter problem: origin, effects, etc.	Mrs Susana Telakau WMPC, Solid Waste Management Adviser
2:35pm – 2:45pm	How to raise awareness to address this problem and reduce the production of marine litter	Mr Camden Howitt Co-Founder and Programmes Director of Sustainable Coastlines

2:45pm – 3:05pm	Organisation of coastlines and beaches clean-ups	Mrs Sarah Kollar Outreach Manager, International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Trash Free Seas® Program Ocean Conservancy
3:05pm – 3:15pm	Sharing of experience in organising beach clean-ups	Mrs Christina Shaw CEO of The Vanuatu Environmental Science Society
3:15pm – 3:35pm	Waste audit	Mr Camden Howitt Co-Founder and Programmes Director of Sustainable Coastlines
3:35pm – 4:00pm	Discussion	Mrs Julie Pillet WMPC, SWAP Project Coordinator
4:00pm – 4:05pm	Workshop Assessment	InsightPact
4:05pm – 4:10pm	Session Close	Mr. Anthony Talouli WMPC, Acting Director
4:10pm – 4:15pm	Video of the International Coastal Clean-up Day	Video "Foyer socio-educatif Wallis"

1.4. Participants

According to the Post-Event Report (Appendix 5) provided by InsightPact as part of the logistics service, registration for the Workshop gathered a total of 55 responses. The contact details of the registered persons are provided in Appendix 3.

Out of the 55 registered participants, 32 (58%) were females and 23 (42%) were males, with a majority coming from Samoa, with 14 (25%) of the total registered participants. There was also a strong presence from the Cook Islands (15%), Fiji (11%), and Vanuatu (9%). The registered participants varied from being project managers and directors to journalists and researchers of civil society organizations, media networks, or government offices.

During the live virtual delivery, 45 participants joined the Workshop. And to date, the online recording of the workshop has registered 52 views.

1.5. Workshop Notes

1.5.1. Overview of the Marine Litter Problem

The overview of the Marine Litter Problem Session was based on a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution conducted by UNEP in 2021[1].

Marine Pollution Sources:

The presentation started on how Marine Pollution can be generated. The main sources are:

[1] Report, "From Pollution to Solution": https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution

- Human behaviour when waste is disposed of in the environment or discarded on the ground or directly on the sea;
- Leachates from landfill sites;
- Sludge from wastewater treatment systems;
- Run-off from agriculture;
- Shipbreaking;
- Accidental cargo losses at sea;
- Nurdles: these are a major source of microplastic pollution;
- Extreme events such as floods, storms and tsunamis.

The major source of marine pollution is related to plastics. The UNEP report states that plastics in the oceans represent between 75 to 199 million tons. The amount of plastic waste entering aquatic ecosystems could nearly triple from 9 million tons per year in 2016 to a projected 23 million tons per year by 2040. And unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic increased this situation since large amounts of plastic waste from personal protective equipment and additional packaging were discarded in the Environment.

Marine Pollution Impacts:

Marine Pollution generates different impacts on:

- Marine life, such as:
  - Lethal effects in whales, seals, turtles, birds and fish as well as corals;
  - Entanglement, starvation, drowning, laceration of internal tissues, smothering and deprivation of oxygen and light and toxicological harm;
- Climate by altering the global carbon cycle through its effect on plankton and marine ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrasses, corals, etc. And it may also reduce the adaptation and resilience of these ecosystems to climate change;
- Revenues when communities depend on polluted areas (fisheries, tourism, etc.);
- Human health: As plastics break down in the marine environment, they transfer microplastics, chemicals, metals, and micropollutants into waters, sediments, and ultimately into marine food chains. When microplastics are ingested, they can cause changes in gene and protein expression, inflammation, disruption of feeding behaviour, decreases in growth, changes in brain development, and reduced filtration and respiration rates.

1.5.2. Awareness and actions

For Sustainable Coastlines, the main action toward awareness and behaviour changes is to involve communities in clean-ups and data collection in a long-term process to allow them to understand what the problem is and inspire better decision-making, based on their insights and knowledge of their own environment. The principle is based on the idea that *People protect what they love*.

Thus, Sustainable Coastlines developed different programmes:

- The Litter Intelligence App to collect and share data. It was developed based on the UNEP/IOC Guidelines on Survey and Monitoring of Marine Litter;
- Citizen Scientist: educational program to inspire and form decision-making by getting people involved in environment protection building connections and links between Science and Communities.

Sharing success stories is also a good way to inspire others by highlighting the positive aspects of actions undertaken. This can also be a tool to inspire new actions and replicate them from the local to the international level.

Also, networking at a regional or international level is also a good way for sharing ideas and addressing challenges together.

1.5.3. Data collection for Decision-making for action

Like Sustainable Coastlines, Ocean Conservancy stresses empowering communities and citizen scientists to identify and track the problem of marine litter in their own environment. This includes Coastal clean-up campaigns. However, since they are involved in shoreline clean-up activities, Ocean Conservancy emphasizes the importance of incorporating the collection and sharing of data collected. This is primarily a tool to monitor how effective the conducted activities are but also a means of decision-making.

To do this, Sustainable Coastlines has developed a standardized data collection and sharing process to ensure the relevance of the data and to get confidence of the authorities to use the results for decision-making. To ensure the data quality, the process followed by Sustainable Coastlines is as follows:

- Preparation of Citizen Scientists for the clean-up activity:
  - Training virtually or on the ground;
  - Provision of equipment required for the survey.
- Conducting the waste survey and audit:
  - The entire beach clean-up area is not involved. The survey and audit focus on a specific area. The goal is to conduct the survey 4 times per year, as the repeatability of the activity is part of the process;
  - The survey includes removing of waste and conducting the audit in a safe place where the items can be analysed in detail;
- Then fill out the data on the online application. Once the data is recorded, Sustainable Coastlines reviews it for validity using photos and an artificial intelligence tool that can help recount items to ensure the information is relevant.

Through data collection and sharing, both Ocean Conservancy and Sustainable coastlines have shared successful results to highlight how data collected during coastal clean-ups have informed and inspired policies to prevent ocean litter, such as:

- Country-wide bans on importation of certain types of plastic and/or certain plastic products;
- Municipal laws against smoking-related litter
- Laws prohibiting mass balloon releases;
- Bans/fees on single-use plastic bags;
- Laws prohibiting the use of polystyrene (foam);
- Passage of the Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 (U.S.);
- Adoption of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78 Annex V) (U.S.);
- New-Zeeland Single-used Plastic Ban Policy;

And note that data collection is also a way to track how the single-use plastic ban policies impact the pollution plastic when they are in place.

1.5.4. Experience sharing

The main purpose of Vanuatu Environmental Science Society (VESS) is to engage with communities on environmental issues and advocate for a healthy environment. To this end, one of the activities carried out by VESS is coastal clean-up, as it is an activity that anyone can easily get involved in, without the need for specific skills or scientific background, and it is not a too time-consuming task.

For Vess, as for Sustainable Coastlines and Ocean Conservancy, data collection is the mail focus because conducting even repeated clean-up campaigns without analysis of the collected waste is not the solution. For a clean-up activity to be relevant, it needs to understand the sources and how waste is generated.

One of the major successes of VESS is that the coastal clean-up activities and the sharing of the data collected with local authorities led to the implementation of a National Policy to ban single-use plastic bags, plastic straws, and polystyrene take-away containers. Initially, this policy targeted only single-use plastic bags, but data showed the importance of banning other items such as straws and containers, which were therefore added not the scope of the regulation. Data collection during the campaigns that followed this single-use plastic ban policy highlighted the positive impact of this policy on plastic pollution, including reduction of plastic bags.

Thus, based on its experience sharing, VESS stressed:

- that it is best to carry out actions by integrating a local, regional or international network in order to benefit from support to organize and carry out activities, and to use existing tools for data collection and awareness raising;
- Even small clean-ups with messy data are important and can make a difference;
- Clean-ups without data collection are not a solution, especially in a long-term process;
- It is important to ensure that the collected waste is properly disposed of after the activity. But covering the cost may be a problem for communities. In general, funding support may be needed to cover costs (e.g., purchase of gloves, garbage bags) when the clean-ups is conducted by small communities.

1.6. Materials

1.6.1. Presentations

The five presentations are provided in Appendices 4:

- Overview of the marine litter issue (sources, environmental impacts, data, etc.): Appendix 4a;
- Awareness-raising tools: Appendix 4b;
- Preparation and organisation of a clean-up campaign and sharing experience:
    - Ocean Conservancy: Appendix 4c;
    - Vanuatu Environmental Science Society: : Appendix 4d;
- Conduction of a statistically sound waste survey and audit: : Appendix 4e.

The recording of the workshop is available on SPREP YouTube Channel/SWAP Playlist at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZ9QoZtJmw4&list=PLHKcA8pmzZqux_aQEgAEZfpTc7oGh_63C&index=13&t=3129s.

1.6.2. Additional materials

Different additional materials were provided by the speakers during the workshop:

- Report, "From Pollution to Solution": https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution
- Resources from the Ocean Conservancy:
  - Cleanup Guides: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/start-a-cleanup/
  - Supporting Materials: https://oceanconservancy.org/icc-outreach/
  - Data collection resources: Paper card (15+ languages): https://oceanconservancy.org/icc-outreach/
  - Cleanup Data for All: https://www.coastalcleanupdata.org/
  - Education & Outreach Materials:
    - materials/lessons for youth: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/outreach-education/
    - "Skip the Straw": https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/outreach-education/skip-the-straw/
    - Materials for recreational boaters and marinas: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/boating-community/boating/
    - International Trash Trap Network: https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/trash-trap-network/
- Resources from Sustainable Cities / Litter Intelligence:
  - Explore data and insights: https://insights.litterintelligence.org/
  - Read more inspiring stories of community and business action: https://litterintelligence.org/action/
  - Find out more about Beach litter data collection methodology: https://litterintelligence.org/about/beach-monitoring/
  - See media and publications featuring Litter Intelligence: https://litterintelligence.org/about/media-publications/

IV. Survey

Before the closing remarks, the attendees were requested to file an online survey to assess the SPREP/SWAP Marine Litter Workshop including format, length, content, presentations, logistics, etc. The survey was in French and English.

The questions were as follows, and the participants were given the opportunity to add comments to detail their thoughts:

- Question 1: In general, are you satisfied with the SPREP/SWAP Marine Litter Workshop?
- Question 2: Was the length of the workshop appropriate?
- Question 3: Did the agenda and content of the SPREP/SWAP Marine Litter Workshop meet your expectations?
- Question 4: Were the topics covered in sufficient detail?
- Question 5: Was the quality of the interventions satisfactory?
- Question 6: Have you encountered any difficulties in using the "translation" mode offered by the virtual workshop platform?
- Question 7: Apart from any technical issues, was the interpretation service satisfactory?
- Question 8: What improvements could be made at the next workshop (length, content, format, etc.)?

- Question 9: Would you consider participating in the upcoming training on how to conduct a coastal clean-up campaign and a statistical marine litter audit?
- Question 10: if so, what would be your expectations and needs regarding the training?

Responses were anonymized to facilitate participation in the survey. 15 participants filed the survey. Their responses are provided in Appendix 6.

In summarize, all of the participants who sent in their assessments were satisfied with the workshop. Some were left wanting in terms of the depth of the presentations, but 80% of them were very appreciative of the time allocations for each speaker. The invited speakers were very insightful and inspiring, having shared impactful work on the topic of marine litter, community organizing and data sharing. They were very mindful of their time limits and have maximized their time well in sharing as many stories as they could, while answering any lingering questions on the chat asynchronously. One area of improvement could have been to give participants more time to reflect on the sessions, share their insights or questions, and interact with speakers or each other. Indeed, the singular discussion period proved to be too short given the variety of topics covered in about 2 hours. Inclusion of breakouts, question and answer periods, and discussion sessions would improve future workshops, making them more engaging and interactive. Some participants also suggested that a longer workshop would have been better to cover all the topics in more depth and to include these discussion sessions.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Flyer
- Appendix 2 – Circular
- Appendix 3 – Contact details of registered persons
- Appendix 4
    - Appendix 4a – Overview of the marine litter issue (sources, environmental impacts, data, etc.)
    - Appendix 4b – Awareness-raising tools
    - Appendix 4c – Preparation and organisation of a clean-up campaign
    - Appendix 4d – Experience sharing
    - Appendix 4d – Conduction of a statistically sound waste survey and audit
- Appendix 5 – Post-Event report
- Appendix 5 – Survey responses

Appendix 1: Flyer

Appendix 2: Circular

Appendix 3 – Contact details of registered persons

Appendix 4a – Overview of the marine litter issue (sources, environmental impacts, data, etc.)

Appendix 4b – Awareness-raising tools

Appendix 4c – Preparation and organisation of a clean-up campaign

Appendix 4d – Experience sharing

Appendix 4d – Conduction of a statistically sound waste survey and audit

Appendix 5 – Post-Event Report

Appendix 6 – Survey responses