



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



10th Pacific Islands Conference

**NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PROTECTED AREAS**

Nature Conservation Action for a Resilient Pacific

AP 2/17/1

1 September 2020

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Between

Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA)

And

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

(together, "the Parties")

Vava'u Environmental Protection Association (VEPA) The Vava'u Environmental Protection Association in Tonga, was started in May 2009 by a group of local leaders concerned with the pressing environmental conservation issues facing the islands of Vava'u. VEPA has four focus areas aimed at ensuring biodiversity and conservation, increasing knowledge exchange, securing sustainable livelihoods and supporting national and regional frameworks.

VEPA works on conservation projects in a range of environmental habitats including coral reefs, mangroves, and forest areas. They work to protect and restore natural resources for the benefit of Vava'u and the world around them. In doing so, they hope to ensure that Vava'u maintains its unique biological diversity.

VEPA works closely with the Department of Environment (MEIDECC), Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Governor's office in Vava'u on all their projects. All of VEPA's projects follow the current legislation under the Kingdom of Tonga. VEPA collect independent, accurate data, using recognised methodology on Vava'u's environment, which can be used in helping to develop effective environmental legislation.

VEPA has a board of seven members.

SPREP is a regional, intergovernmental organisation comprising 26 members consisting of 21 Pacific Island Countries and Territories and five developed countries with direct interests in the Pacific region. The purposes of SPREP are to promote co-operation in the Pacific region



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and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

Whereas SPREP and Vava'u Environmental Protection Association have mutual interests in relation to the protection of the environment and developing and strengthening systems, institutions, organisations and individuals concerned with environmental protection in the Pacific region, and specifically in Tonga.

The Parties have reached the following understandings:

1. Objectives

1. The main objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to provide a framework of co-operation between SPREP and Vava'u Environmental Protection Association.
2. Within this framework the Parties will consult in an effort to collaborate on the activities they identify as requiring implementation.

2. Collaborative Activities

The Parties agree, to the extent possible, but without limitation, to:

1. Consult each other on policy matters of mutual concern.
2. Exchange information on developments and current activities in relation to the environment.
3. Extend to each other standing invitations to be represented by observers at appropriate meetings, including the annual SPREP Meeting and to co-sponsor relevant meetings to the extent possible.
4. Collaborate and support awareness-raising efforts in relation to the environment.
5. Collaborate on the implementation of global, regional and national priorities in relation to the environment.
6. Collaborate and support capacity-building initiatives in relation to the environment.
7. Keep respective memberships informed of co-operative activities undertaken pursuant to this MOU.

3. Operational Provisions

1. This MOU constitutes an expression of a shared intention of the Parties to endeavour to develop foundations for achieving their shared objectives relating to the protection of the environment and developing and strengthening systems, institutions, organisations and individuals concerned with environmental protection in the Pacific region.



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2. Each Party's actions under this MOU shall be considered to be that Party's sole and separate action for all purposes, including liability, and neither Party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for, the other Party to this MOU.
3. Each Party will name and keep updated focal points to co-ordinate the cooperation called for in this MOU.
4. In executing this MOU, neither Party necessarily commits to any financial obligation in relation to activities to be carried out under this MOU.

4. Annexes

1. Specific work once agreed to may be attached as an Annex to this MOU.
2. Such Annex shall form an integral part of this MOU and, unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to this MOU includes a reference to any such Annex.

5. Duration, entry into force, amendments and termination

1. The duration of this MOU shall be five years, renewable for such further period and as may be agreed between the Parties.
2. This MOU shall enter into force on the date the last Party signs.
3. This MOU may be amended by agreement in writing between the Parties.
4. Either Party may terminate this MOU by giving three months written notice to the other.


Kosi Latu
Director General, SPREP

Date: 8/9/2020


Karen Stone
Vava'u Environmental
Protection Association

Date: 8/9/2020



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Annex

The following are activities for potential collaboration between SPREP and VEPA:

1. Projects relating to the implementation of the Regional Marine Species Programme.
2. Projects relating to humpback whales to promote best international practice for whale watching in Vava'u, and to encourage community engagement in the conservation of humpback whales.
3. Projects relating to surveys of biodiversity such as BIORAPs
4. Integrated ecosystem based and climate change adaption projects
5. Projects and/ or activities related to the management of invasive species
6. Projects and/ or activities related to management, sharing and use of biodiversity data
7. Environmental education and awareness raising;
8. Initiatives for improvement of waste management;
9. Marine conservation planning.
10. Building the capacity of Tongan scientists, government officials and civil society working in conservation and environmental protection;
11. Collaboration on funding opportunities to assist in the Post-COVID-19 response to assist communities with protection and management of their wildlife populations;
12. Coordination and engagement with relevant Government Departments, non-government organisations and local communities to initiate and implement activities 1 – 12.

Focal Points:

For SPREP: Karen Baird

For VEPA: Karen Stone