

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (SCP) IN THE PACIFIC



KEY POINTS

- Pacific environments require global commitments to sustainable consumption and production because [waste and pollution](#) produced elsewhere is transported into and impacts the Pacific region.
- The concepts of waste levy through extended producer responsibility, container deposits, or advanced recycling schemes can be used to support the cost of waste management in remote, resource-limited locations.
- Sustainable development relies on ecosystem health. Consumption and production practices affect Pacific environments and species directly and indirectly.
- SCP is a key component of [climate change](#) mitigation. SCP practices can increase the resilience of environments and human communities.

HOW ISSUE LINKS TO/IMPACTS SDGs BEYOND **SDG14 LIFE BELOW WATER**

- SDG2: sustainable management of our marine resources, and mitigation of the pollution that impacts them, is vital to achieve food security in the Pacific.
- SDG8: (8.4) Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple [economic growth](#) from environmental degradation
- SDG12: responsible consumption and production
- SDG1, 2, 3, 6: Poverty reduction, food security and health in the Pacific depend on local environments, which are threatened by global and local consumption and production practices.
- SDG5, 9, 10, 11: The impacts of unsustainable consumption and production are uneven across gender and location, with impacts more strongly felt by developing nations. SCP supports ecosystem health, which is the foundation of Pacific community resilience.
- SDG7, 12, 13, 14, 15: Responsible consumption and production, including clean energy and avoidance of degradation of biodiversity, rely on and are part of climate action.

BACKGROUND

1. **Sustainable consumption and production are vital for Pacific marine environmental health.** On small, land-limited islands, the connections between terrestrial and marine ecosystems are impossible to ignore. Equally visible are the direct links between consumption and the status of marine litter and pollution. The pressure to produce from sensitive ecosystems combines with the pressure to dispose of waste on limited land. In some islands, there is pressure to convert lagoon space into landfill, despite the known risks to minimal freshwater resources, as well as the risks from leachate and plastic waste impacting marine and coastal life, including human food sources.¹
2. **Sustainable consumption and production are vital for Pacific economies.** The cost of damage to environmental services can be catastrophic. The cost of waste management is high in the Pacific islands, with economies of scale often discouraging recycling programmes. The expense of shipping recyclable materials away to a recycling centre is a barrier. In contrast, sustainable methods and products in line with traditional practices add value to Pacific products and tourism industry, supporting Pacific livelihoods.
3. **Sustainable branding can support species and economies simultaneously.** For example, the Marine Stewardship Council approved a Pacific free-school purse-seined skipjack fishery in 2016. This fishery does not use fish-aggregating devices, reducing the amount of bycatch. In 2016, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement ([PNA](#)) region delivered over 90% of MSC-certified tuna traded globally, with demand potentially doubling in 2017.
4. **SCP considers both products and practices.**



5. **Pacific environments require global commitments to sustainable consumption and production.** Pacific Ocean currents bring waste from other regions. Global greenhouse gas emissions have affected Pacific ecosystems out of proportion to minor Pacific emissions. Fishing vessels from other nations dump waste in the Pacific, in violation of MARPOL.² SCP for the Pacific region relies on whole of life cycle considerations for every product, from food packaging to derelict vessels and wrecks, including WWII wrecks.
6. **Effective waste management, beginning with waste reduction, is a key component of sustainable sourcing and supports sustainable development.** The use of renewable and biodegradable alternatives protects [Pacific biodiversity](#), supporting Pacific livelihoods.
7. **Reduction of waste generation is the most cost-effective form of waste management.** Sustainable sourcing that does not damage Pacific or global marine ecosystem services will support long-term development; preventing 'problem wastes' from entering Pacific countries is more cost-effective than having to manage them. The Republic of the Marshall Islands is the first Pacific country to ban Styrofoam cups and plates, and plastic cups and plates, with the ban coming into effect on 18 February 2017. The Marshall Islands has also banned the use of plastic shopping bags, following Samoa and American Samoa. This leadership can significantly reduce marine litter and support Pacific species.
8. **There is opportunity for the Pacific to lead in practice and research regarding SCP approaches and waste impacts.** Pacific implementation of SCP systems will produce globally relevant case studies. In support of the governance measures, the required research would also provide findings of global importance regarding Pacific species and ecology, environmental impacts of plastics, and more. The current Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy (Cleaner Pacific 2025) supports [research-driven](#) waste and pollution management.

1 E.g., Gandara e Silva et al. 2016. [Leachate from microplastics impairs larval development in brown mussels](#). *Water Research* 106:364–370

2 Richardson et al. 2016. [Marine pollution originating from purse seine and longline fishing vessel operations in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2003–2015](#). *Ambio* 45