



4TH INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
**Small Island
Developing States**
27-30 MAY, 2024
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

SIDS4 Conference Side Event

**Strengthening the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) and
National Environmental Portal for better Environmental
Decision**

Wednesday 29 May 2024, 10:00- 11:30am, Room 3

**Organized by: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme**

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The side event highlighted the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) as the premier platform for environmental data management in the Pacific, showcasing its benefits and features in supporting national, regional, and global reporting obligations. Developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the PEP assists Pacific member countries in managing environmental data for Regional and Global MEA reporting and monitoring purposes. Presentations from SPREP member countries and partners emphasized the portal's role and sought support from donors and development partners. The event facilitated a Pacific “talanoa” discussion on the challenges and opportunities in environmental data management in the Pacific, exploring how the PEP can further aid national sustainable development goals. Panellists were representatives from the Pacific Community, Pacific Island Forum, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)

- **Improving Data Accessibility and Sharing:** A key issue discussed was the limited storage, accessibility and sharing of environmental data in the Pacific. Fragmented data sources, inadequate digital infrastructure, and varying data management practices across nations hinder the creation of a cohesive data framework. This restricts collaborative efforts and impedes informed decision-making on environmental issues. Panel discussion emphasized the need to strengthen platforms such as the PEP where environmental data can be easily accessed and shared among Pacific nations to enhance regional cooperation and improve environmental outcomes.
- **Fostering Partnerships:** The discussion highlighted the importance of strengthening existing collaborations between Pacific nations, Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP – SPC, PIFS, SPREP, USP to name a few) and stakeholders to enhance data management practices. Current efforts are often siloed, limiting the potential for shared expertise and resources. By fostering partnerships, participants noted the potential to leverage collective expertise, standardize practices, and improve the overall quality and utility of environmental data management in the region. Enhanced collaboration is seen as crucial for addressing common challenges and achieving sustainable development goals more effectively.
- **Capacity Building:** The panel discussion addressed the critical need for continuous training and resources to improve data collection, analysis, and management skills within Pacific countries. Many island nations in the region lack the necessary technical expertise and infrastructure to effectively manage environmental data. This gap limits the ability to generate accurate and reliable data, which is essential for informed decision-making and reporting. Emphasizing capacity building, the conversation underscored the importance of investing in training programs, and resource development to enhance the data management capabilities of Pacific countries.

- **Funding and Support:** The discussion underscored the challenge of securing sustained financial and technical support from donors, developed countries, and development partners for data management initiatives in the Pacific. Panellists noted that implementing partners struggle to attract funding because data management is often not seen as immediately impactful or attractive compared to other development projects. This perception results in inadequate investment, which hinders the ability to maintain and expand crucial data management initiatives. The conversation emphasized the need to raise awareness about the fundamental role of robust data management in supporting effective environmental policies and sustainable development.
- **Integration of Data in Reporting Obligations:** The discussion highlighted the importance of accurate and comprehensive environmental data for fulfilling evidence-based reporting to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) obligations and regional frameworks. Panellists emphasized that effective data management is crucial for the Pacific nations to track progress, report on environmental commitments, and make informed policy decisions. Strengthening the integration of data management with reporting obligations ensures that Pacific countries can meet international standards and contribute meaningfully to global environmental goals.

Key recommendations for action (5-6 bullet points)

- i. **Strengthen Regional Data Sharing Platforms:** Continue to support the establishment of a centralized platforms, such as the Pacific Environment Portal (PEP) and Pacific Data Hub (PDH) to facilitate easy access and sharing of environmental data among Pacific nations. These platforms should prioritise user-friendly interfaces and robust data management tools to encourage collaboration and data exchange.
- ii. **Promote Cross-Sectoral Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between regional agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organisations to foster knowledge exchange and resource sharing. This collaboration should focus on standardizing data management practices, leveraging expertise, and pooling resources to address common environmental challenges effectively.
- iii. **Invest in Continuous Capacity Building:** Tailored programs should focus on enhancing skills in data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination to ensure the generation of accurate and reliable environmental data.
- iv. **Advocate for Sustainable Funding Mechanisms:** Advocate for sustainable funding mechanisms that prioritise long-term support for data management initiatives in the Pacific. This includes raising awareness among donors, developed countries, and development partners about the critical role of robust data management in facilitating informed decision-making and achieving sustainable development goals.

- v. **Integrate Data Management into Development Projects:** Promote the integration of data management components into broader development projects and initiatives in the Pacific. By mainstreaming data management practices into project design and implementation, stakeholders can ensure that data collection, analysis, and reporting are prioritized and adequately resourced.

- vi. **Strengthen Reporting Capacities:** Provide support to Pacific nations in enhancing their reporting capacities by integrating robust data management systems into national reporting frameworks. This includes aligning data collection methodologies with international standards, improving data quality assurance processes, and enhancing technical infrastructure to streamline reporting obligations to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and regional frameworks such as the Blue Pacific Strategy 2050.