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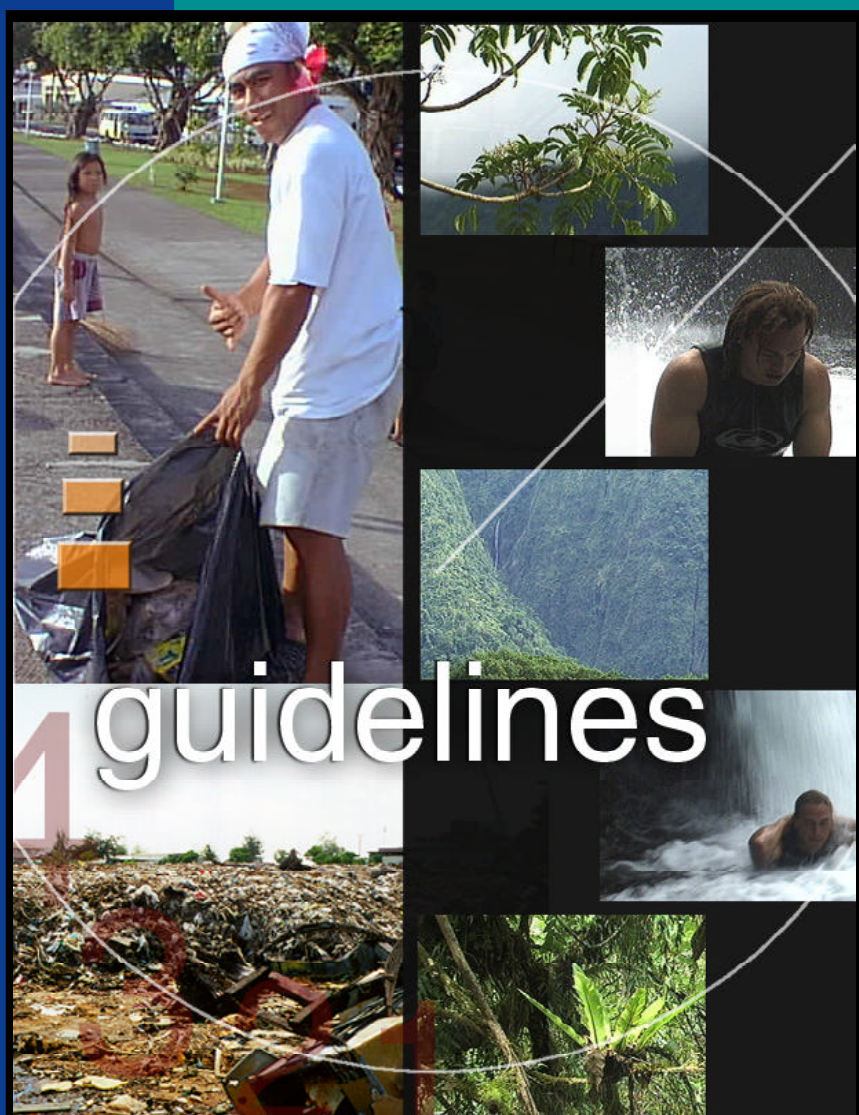
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme



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SPREP Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Guidelines for municipal solid waste
management planning in small island
developing states in the Pacific region.
– Apia, Samoa : SPREP, 1999.

ix, 74 p. : tables ; 29 cm.

ISBN: 982-04-0200-X

1.Factory and trade waste – Oceania.
2.Refuse and refuse disposal – Oceania.
I. South Pacific Regional Environment
Programme. II. Title.

363.7285

Published in June 1999 by the
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
PO Box 240
Apia, Samoa
Email: sprep@sprep.org.ws
Web site: <http://www.sprep.org.ws/>

Produced by SPREP's Waste Management, Pollution Prevention and
Emergencies Programme with assistance from UNEP

Edited and Computer layout by SPREP's Publication Unit
Cover design by SPREP's Publication Unit

Typeset in 11/13 Garamond for body text and Helvetica for titles
Printed on recycled paper 90gsm Savannah Matt Art (60%) by
Quality Print Ltd
Suva, Fiji

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Original Text: English

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Pacific Region***



Published by the
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme with
assistance from the United Nations Environment Programme



Preface

All countries of the Pacific share the problem—how to dispose of solid wastes. Pollution from industrial wastes; landfills that are poorly managed and inappropriately sited; and disposal of toxic chemicals are significant contributors to marine pollution and coastal degradation. As a result the United Nations Environment Programme and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme are assisting Pacific island countries to overcome these problems. SPREP's waste management programme area is expanding and this document is the first of what is hoped to be a series to address solid and chemicals waste management issues in Small Island Developing States in the Pacific islands region.

The majority of solid waste produced in the region is due to rapid urbanisation; this is compounded by an equally rapid rise in 'standard of living' expectations which relate to an increased demand for imported canned, plastic-wrapped and bottled goods. With limited land areas around many urban centres and with local reefs, lagoons or inshore fisheries particularly vulnerable to pollution, most of the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific have serious disposal problems. Only a very small number of disposal sites are acceptable socially, economically, or from the viewpoint of health. These problems are exacerbated in atoll countries with very limited land areas and highly vulnerable freshwater lens.

In larger towns the search for environmentally safe and socially acceptable sites for garbage dumps has become a perennial problem, and for several towns, seemingly insoluble. In some smaller settlements and coastal peri-urban situations, mangrove areas or beaches have become casual dumping grounds for all waste, ranging from derelict cars to household refuse. Various incidents involving toxins from industrial waste, effluent from abattoirs or food processing plants, biocides, and polluted effluent from sawmills and timber processing areas have been reported. Urbanisation and industrialisation expected in the future will make these problems even worse.

This document highlights the needs to both adopt a 'life-cycle' management approach, and to regard waste management as the responsibility of everyone and of all Government departments. We believe that it will be of use to Small Island Developing States and welcome feedback from those engaged in solid waste management in the region.

We particularly wish to thank the people of Yap State in the Federated States of Micronesia for allowing their island to be used as the Case Study thereby making this document specific to many of the unique features in Small Island Developing States of the Pacific.

Tamari'i Tutangata

Director

South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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Acknowledgements

The Guidelines for Municipal Solid Waste Management Planning in Small Island Developing States in the Pacific Islands Region is produced by SPREP's Waste Management, Pollution Prevention and Emergencies Programme with assistance from UNEP.

SPREP and UNEP would like to acknowledge: Mr Peter Askey of Opus International Consultants who undertook field work in Yap and developed the initial draft document; Mr C. Astbury of Opus International Consultants who reviewed the initial draft document; Mr Ed Burke of SOPAC who assisted by reviewing the initial draft document; and especially to all the people in Yap State who took time out of their schedules to provide information which has proved invaluable in the production of the Guidelines. The perspective they were able to provide on the problems and potential solutions to waste management in their State has made this document a much more useful document than it would otherwise have been.

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