

REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE

Please complete each section below.

1. Contact Details

Please provide the following contact details:

Name of individual or group submitting initiative	Submitted by ESCAP/UNDP on behalf of the UNCT.
Name and position of primary contact	<i>Iosefa Maiava, Head, Pacific Office UNESCAP Peter Bachelor, Manager, UNDP Pacific Center</i>
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2. Name of Initiative

Regional consultations to develop a Pacific response or approach to the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

3. Background and Rationale

You may consider: What is the issue being addressed by this initiative? What are the causes of this issue? Are there relevant studies that have been carried out to support the issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

This year offers an exciting opportunity for the Pacific leaders to showcase their commitment to sustainable development as they, together with the other world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September, usher in the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). It will be great indeed if the Pacific was to go to New York in September with a decision on how it will respond to or approach the implementation of the SDGs.

This regional initiative proposed here is also a response to the calls of Pacific member states for an identifiable Pacific slant to the post-2015 development agenda. During the inter-governmental negotiations on the SDGs, the Pacific member states have supported the calls for the contextualization/localization of the SDGs and have emphasised the need for such efforts and any follow-up and review functions to: (a) make use of Pacific regional organizations and processes (Palau on behalf of PIF); (b) incorporate the Samoa Pathway (outcome of the Third International Conference on SIDS held in Samoa in 2014) in/through the contextualization and implementation of SDGs in the Pacific (Tonga on behalf of Pacific SIDS); and (c) include the convening of consultations in the Pacific to discuss/agree on appropriate indicators for monitoring and reporting on SDGs (Samoa and Fiji).

Furthermore, it's an initiative which fits well with the sustainable development focus (i.e., the 'principal objectives') of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and it satisfies the important criterion of establishing a common position on or approach to a global agenda. The initiative is premised on the need for improved regional coordination, which the Framework prioritises by calling "for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond".

Assessments undertaken in preparation for the Samoa SIDS conference also highlighted the lack of coordination and integration as a key failure of the previous 20 years and this led the Pacific to adopt the theme "accelerating integrated approaches" in their preparations for the Samoa conference, which itself adopted the theme "genuine and durable partnerships". This is a theme that is also reflected in the way the SDGs are seen as "a set of integrated and indivisible goals which balance three crucial dimensions: the economic, the social and the environmental" (Zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda).

The other key lesson from the past 20 years is the critical need of strong political leadership to break up the silo mentality which stands in the way of a more integrated approach and effective coordination. The importance of political leadership in the SDG follow-up process is being reflected at the international level through the establishment of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) to oversee implementation. The proposed post-2015 development agenda also includes proposals for strengthening country oversight by national leaders, parliaments, and whole-of-governments bodies.

There is a role for regional organizations in the proposed follow-up and review framework for SDGs and this is also recognised in the HLPF process. The Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) has been established under the auspices of the HLPF to help coordinate wider regional inputs. The outcome of the last two meetings of the APFSD recognises the need for the Pacific to hold consultations and coordinate its various inputs into the HLPF global and wider regional processes as well.

The proposed initiative therefore aims to work with the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the Post-2015 Development Agenda process to provide the necessary link between the SDGs and the Samoa Pathway (international goals and policies), the Asia-Pacific process, the Pacific regional policies and processes, and the national goals and policies.

4. Description

Please provide a brief overview of this initiative. Try to address the following: Does this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region? What makes this initiative of importance to the Pacific region as a whole? Who would implement this initiative? Who are the main beneficiaries? Are regulatory or legislative changes required at the national level to implement this initiative? How would the initiative be funded? Has this initiative been carried out previously? What are the key risks in implementing this initiative? Are there any complementary projects and programmes currently active? What is the proposed timeframe for this initiative? How would the initiative be sustained over the proposed timeframe?

Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.

The proposal is for the Forum leaders to charge the Pacific regional organizations with the responsibility of working with those other organizations in the Pacific of the UN etc., which are mandated to coordinate SDGs follow-up and review at regional and national levels to: (a) convene Pacific consultations after September 2015 and before 2016 to discuss and agree on the Pacific response and approach to the implementation, follow-up and review of the SDGs; and (b) report back at the 2016 Forum Leaders meeting on progress made. It may be necessary to consider additional approval requirements once a decision is taken to mandate the Pacific consultations and its purpose.

The main positive change expected from the initiative is that, unlike in the case of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), the Pacific will be taking a proactive approach in seeking to implement the SDGs within the Pacific's context, thus enhancing its sense of ownership and commitment. There has been no Pacific consultation on the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and this initiative provides the opportunity to do so in a way that synergies the implementation of all three—Framework for Pacific Regionalism, Samoa Pathway and the SDGs. The advantage of this convergence approach is that the SDGs are internationally agreed goals and targets which, when and if properly contextualised, provides practical tools for measuring the progress of our sustainable efforts ranging from the national sustainable development plans and regional policies and processes to global agendas.

The other important benefit, particularly to member states and service providers (regional and international organizations) is that a coordinated approach should lead to less duplication and inconsistency and result in greater effectiveness of interventions. As noted above, the lack of effective coordination and integrated approaches has been and continues to be a major stumbling block against sustainable development. The existence of the Framework itself is evidence of the need to seriously address this challenge.

There have been important initiatives in the past to improve coordination and integration in the Pacific. Those relating to internationally agreed goals include the production of the Pacific MDG Tracking Report under PIFS with inputs from other organizations in the Pacific; joint efforts to report on the MDGs in the Asia-Pacific (ADB, ESCAP and UNDP) which has involved inputs from and some consultations in the Pacific; periodic reviews, assessments and reports on the MSI; and preparations for international conferences on sustainable development (i.e., Rio+20, Samoa SIDS Conference, and SDGs negotiations).

The CROP Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) which includes UN organizations and others was established to coordinate sustainable development issues including support to Pacific member States in the UN sustainable development process. Under the SDWG, a partnership including regional organizations and UN agencies was developed to coordinate the provision of support to any member country requesting support with its national sustainable development process. The partnership was registered under the Samoa conference partnership platform and is currently operating as the NSDS Partnership Group (NSDSPG). It is currently assisting Kiribati and Tuvalu and considering ways of responding to requests from Nauru, PNG and RMI. The NSDSPG is supportive of the need for a strong mandate for a regional consultation and coordination on the implementation of the SDGs.

Indeed, while there has been good success with previous and current regional coordination initiatives, the key lesson which remains is that strong leadership oversight is needed to break the silo mentality and the dominant influence of “bureaucratic and institutional interests” (Pacific Plan Review 2013). Similar concerns are reflected in the call for institutional reforms and the need for ‘fit-for-purpose’ institutions and processes expressed in the post-2015 development agenda proposal. The biggest risk in this proposed initiative going ahead without a strong Pacific mandate and ongoing political oversight under the Framework, is that the organizations involved in the implementation of SDGs and the Samoa Pathway won’t necessarily move away from their own parochial interests to be able to coordinate in the manner, and to the degree, that is called for in the Framework, in the Samoa Pathway and in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Those organizations mandated to coordinate the follow-up and review of SDGs will take primary responsibility for implementation and some funding is available for the Pacific consultation post September. The outcome of the consultation, whether it’s in the form of an action plan or roadmap, will include implementation schedule as well. It is relevant to note however that the NSDSPG currently operates on self-funding basis (i.e., participating partners pay for their inputs).

5. Alignment to Regional Vision, Values and Objectives

Briefly describe how your initiative supports the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. These can be found in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism document or in the submissions guideline document.

Please limit your response to no more than 500 words

The vision, values and objectives of the Framework are the same as those for SDGs and the Samoa Pathway. Importantly, SDGs, when and if properly contextualized/localised in the Pacific including with the Samoa Pathway, which is a key aim of this proposed regional initiative, will provide the necessary goals, targets and indicators with which to focus the implementation of ‘principal objectives’ of the Framework.

Indeed, all of the issues highlighted in the Framework are covered by one or more of the 17 SDGs. The valuing of the ocean and island resources in the Framework is specifically covered by SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) a goal whose inclusion in the SDGs owes much to the persistence of the Pacific member states during the Open Working Group negotiations. While climate change, another goal (SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) prioritised by the Pacific member states in the post-2015 development agenda talks, is not specifically mentioned in the Framework, the reference to the need for ‘environment sustainability’ and ‘safe human, environmental and political conditions for all’ is in full agreement with the objectives of climate action.

There is good alignment as well on the importance of peace and security, good governance and the need for 'accountable and inclusive institutions' (SDG 16). The Framework speaks of the need to strengthen governance, legal, financial and administrative systems as one of the principal objectives and identifies as a value the need to "strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, and beyond". While this proposed initiative recognises the synergy, complementarity and potential for economies of scale that exist between the SDGs (the Samoa Pathway) and the Framework, the need for a political mandate and leadership oversight recognises that while we aspire to more transparent and inclusive relationships, the reality remains that of strong and often competing "bureaucratic and institutional interests" (Pacific Plan Review). It's for this reason that we believe the proposal satisfies the 'political oversight' test of the Framework. Comments on how the proposal measures up to the other 'tests for regional action' are under section 6 below.

6. Additional Information

Please provide or attach additional information in support of this initiative.

Please limit your response to no more than 5 pages.

With regards to the Framework 'tests for regional action', it is suggested that what is proposed here is:

- A public-good service best delivered by public institutions (Market test);
- An initiative which seeks to enhance national sovereignty over the SDGs by proposing leadership oversight and by focusing regional assistance on the support for national sustainable development strategies and processes (Sovereignty test);
- An initiative: (a) delivering a regional public good (regional coordination and assistance); (b) establishing a common position and approach on the implementation of SDGs; (c) strengthening a shared norm and standard (transparency and inclusiveness); and (d) reinforcing the inter-linkage between peace and security one hand and inclusive and sustainable development on the other (Regionalism test)
- An initiative that is: (a) demand-driven with an expectation that most of it will come from smaller islands states with major capacity constraints; and (b) champions inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder participation which it uses as a key criteria for assessing the success or otherwise of its interventions (Benefits test)
- An initiative requiring political/leadership oversight because of: (a) experience, which suggests the critical need for political leadership in the sustainable development processes; (b) the approach taken thus far re the SDGs with the High Level Political Forum and the proposal for stronger leadership and whole-of-government oversight at national level; and (c) the strong influence of "bureaucratic and institutional interests" at the regional (and international) levels
- A response to the demand for greater coordination re SDGs and for regional assistance as demonstrated by the NSDS Partnership Group, whose membership has already shown the willingness to coordinate and to fund their own involvement. There is some funding available for the Pacific consultations and the outcome of the consultation will address the implementation requirements of what it proposes (Risk and sustainability test)
- Re the coordination of the implementation of the SDGs, is not being undertaken by any other project or initiative although the NSDSPG and the CROP SDWG are expected to play a key role and get strengthened by it. As noted the idea of convening a regional consultation and coordinating regional support on SDGs is supported by the NSDS PG (Duplication test)

Attachment A is also included to depict the synergies existing between the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the Samoa Pathway and the SDGs. These are shown around national capacity building (and the role of regionalism), regional cooperation and integration (and the roles of organizations operating at regional levels) and monitoring/reporting (and the link between the Framework and the SDGs). The synergies are based around the commitment to pursue sustainable development in a manner that is much more coordinated and integrated than it has been the practice.

Attachment A:

Framework for Pacific Regionalism, Samoa Pathway and Post-2015 Development Agenda (SDGs): Synergies re capacity building, regional cooperation and integration, and monitoring

<i>Framework for Pacific Regionalism</i>	<i>SAMOA Pathway</i>	<i>Post 2015 Development Agenda (SDGs)</i>
<p>Capacity Building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>overcome national capacity constraints; and</i> • <i>complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law</i> <p>Principal Objectives: i/ Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably; ii/ Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable; iii/ Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and iv/ Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all</p>	<p>Capacity Building:</p> <p>Para 109. In this regard, we strongly support SIDS efforts to: a) Improve existing mechanisms and resources to provide coordinated and coherent UN system-wide capacity building programs for SIDS through UN Country Teams in collaboration with national agencies, regional commissions and intergovernmental organizations [i.e., PIFS, CARICOM, SPC etc.] to enhance national capacities and institutions, building on the lessons and successes of Capacity 2015.</p>	<p>Capacity Building:</p> <p>SDG 17.10 develop and implement effective and targeted capacity building programmes in developing countries in support of national plans for implementing all sustainable development goals</p>
<p>Regional Cooperation and Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>establish a shared norm or standard;</i> • <i>establish a common position on an issue;</i> • <i>deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope;</i> • <i>realise economies of scale; and</i> • <i>facilitate economic or political integration</i> <p>Principal Objectives: i/ <u>Sustainable development</u> that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably; ii/ Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable; iii/ Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and</p>	<p>Regional Cooperation and Integration:</p> <p>Para 116. We call on the United Nations system... support SIDS...implement national sustainable development strategies and programs, by incorporating SIDS priorities and activities into their relevant strategic and programmatic frameworks, including through the UNDAF, at both national and regional levels in line with their mandates¹ and overall priorities. Para 117 In this regard we call on the UN system to support to...continue to enhance, through national and regional initiatives, the voice and participation of SIDS in the decision making and norm setting processes of IFIs; c) Improve inter- and intra-regional cooperation and collaboration among</p>	<p>Regional Cooperation and Integration</p> <p>Trade SDG 17.2 improve market access for exports of developing countries, in particular Least Developed Countries, African countries, LLDCs and SIDS with a view to significantly increasing their share in global exports, including doubling the LDC share by 2020</p> <p>Finance SDG 17.4 developed countries implement fully ODA commitments to provide 0.7% of GNI in ODA to developing countries of which 0.15-0.20% to least-developed countries on an agreed timeline</p> <p>SDG 17.5 strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to improve domestic capacity for tax</p>

¹ The regional and sub-regional mandates of the UN are documented in The Future We Want (Rio+20 Outcome) para 100; GA resolution A/67/L.72 paras 7 (f) and 13 on the processes related to the High Level Political Forum; GA resolution A/Res/67/226 on UN coordination (paras under ‘Regional dimensions’ section).

<p>administrative systems; and iv/ Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all</p>	<p>SIDS, including, where required, through institutional mechanisms and capacity building; d) Ensure that SIDS issues are adequately addressed by the GA and ECOSOC, and the HLPF under their auspices².</p> <p>Means of Implementation: Para 66 – <i>sustainable transport linked to social equity, health, resilience, affordability, maintenance and environmental impacts;</i> Para 107 – <i>trade – recognising unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS, small size, remoteness and the need for special and differential treatment (SDT);</i> Para 111 – <i>connectivity ICT to be SIDS-appropriate, reliable, affordable and environmentally sound.</i></p>	<p>collection, and mobilize additional international financial resources from multiple sources</p> <p>Technology SDG 17.8 promote transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies to developing countries, and encourage the full use of TRIPS Flexibilities; SDG 17.7 promote North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international collaboration on and access to science, technology and innovation, and</p>
<p>Progress will be monitored by: <i>PIFS work with other CROP agencies to develop a high level monitoring framework, lining regional work across key areas to the pursuit of higher-order objectives for regionalism and the fulfilment of <u>SDGs/post-2015 development goals</u></i></p> <p>Principal Objectives: i/ Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably; ii/ Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable; iii/ Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and iv/ Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all</p>	<p>Monitoring and Accountability: Para 122. To ensure the realization of a transformational strategy for the sustainable development of SIDS, we call on United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies to monitor the full implementation of the BPOA, MSI and SAMOA Pathway, including through monitoring frameworks by Regional Commissions for SIDS³</p> <p>Para123. We recall that the GA and ECOSOC, and the HLPF under their auspices, will devote adequate time to discuss sustainable development challenges facing SIDS in order to enhance engagement and implement commitments⁴.</p>	<p>Data, monitoring and accountability: SDG 17.15 by 2020, increase significantly the availability of high-quality and timely data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, with capacity building support to developing countries, especially LDCs; 17.16 undertake regular voluntary monitoring and reporting of progress on SDGs⁵, led by governments, within a shared accountability framework, including means of implementation, the global partnership among Member States and multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships; 17.17 by 2030 develop and progressively introduce a broader system of national accounting including natural, social and human capital and measures of progress beyond GDP, with supportive statistical capacity building in developing countries.</p>

² GA resolution A/67/L.72 paras 7 (f) and 13 explains the HLPF process.

³ Ref footnote 2

⁴ Ref footnote 2

⁵ Ref footnote 2