



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

COOK ISLANDS

This initiative is supported by **PacWastePlus**-a 72-month project funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to **sustainably and cost effectively improve regional management of waste and pollution.**

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RECYCLABLES PROJECT

Implementing Sustainable Financing for Waste Management
(Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit)

Items are imported into the Cook Islands in growing numbers, but there are currently limited viable options for their end-of-life management and/or export. As such, most items imported are disposed of at landfills or stockpiled on vacant land. The priority for the Cook Islands is to reduce waste to landfill, and Infrastructure Cook Islands seeks to focus their PacWastePlus investment to support the implementation of an effective Sustainable Financing system (known as the Advance Recovery Deposit and Fee) to enable long-term, self-financing collection and recovery of recyclable items. The Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit (ARFD) is a mechanism to:

- provide an incentive for consumers to return recoverable items to a collection depot, and
- fund the collection and recycling of these items.

Items targeted for inclusion in the Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit project include:



Aluminium Cans



PET Plastic Bottles



Glass



Electronic Items



End-of-Life Vehicles

The Cook Islands seeks to utilise the PacWastePlus investment for the following activities:



LEGISLATION

Assistance for drafting and approval of legislation to empower the Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit system



TRAINING

Appropriate capacity building through provision of quality training for staff on use of equipment



FACILITY

Construction of Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit depot facilities in all communities



LEGACY WASTE

Collection of legacy waste from identified sites



EQUIPMENT

Purchase of equipment for the Resource Recovery Center



COMMUNICATIONS

Implementation of project education and awareness actions to identified stakeholders

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION



The Cook Islands Government has been **designing a sustainable financing system for waste management** for many years



First draft of an Advance Recovery Deposit and Fee policy developed in 2018



Stakeholder consultation ongoing since 2018



Minister support for system received in 2019



Cook Islands Waste Management Strategy - **Overall goal to achieve zero waste to landfill**



The Advance Recovery Deposit and Fee project will help achieve this goal by creating a self-funding mechanism to enable:



Long-term collection, management and recovery of recyclable materials



Diverting them away from landfill to an appropriate recycle market



Currently drafting new standalone **waste legislation, *Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill***, to provide for the coordinated management of waste



The Bill includes provisions for establishing a sustainable financing mechanism, along with other waste management goals



Including establishing a single use plastic ban, formalising waste collection services, detailing obligation under MEA Conventions, and providing for infringements and compliance.



Advance Recovery Deposit and Fee project will provide support to finalise and implement this Bill



National Sustainable Development Plan Goal 3 - **promotion of sustainable practices and effectively manage solid and hazardous waste**



The Advance Recovery Deposit and Fee project will assist the Cook Islands to achieve this goal through providing a self-financing system to enable the collection and management of recyclable items.



CURRENT STATUS / MANAGEMENT OF PRIORITY WASTE

Current Situation:

Data collection and Education and Awareness



Recyclable materials can range from **30%-50% waste to landfill**

Awareness messaging for management of recyclables - on-going as opportunities arise



(Data collection on ARFD operation, including recyclables collection and export/formal education and awareness programme through implementation of National Education and Awareness plan.)

Policy & Regulation



Existing legislation for waste governance legislation performing at a MEDIUM to MEDIUM-to-HIGH, with significant additional improvements expected through the Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill



Current legislative environment for managing waste:

Found across several laws, including environmental, infrastructure and public health



Principal model for waste management laws is the environmental EIA/licensing model, which has scope to adopt regulations for specific waste streams



Currently undergoing reform of its laws governing waste with development of a new Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill



(Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill/Advance ARFD Policy and Regulation)

On-Ground Activity



Household recyclables in Rarotonga and Aitutaki currently collected and managed at the Resource Recovery Centre

Many recyclable items still disposed at landfill due to:

- Lack of regular funding and export of items
- lack of buy-in for recycling by community
- space limitations and facility layout resulting in inefficiencies and incorrect disposal



EOL vehicles and electronic items commonly stockpiled or dumped on vacant land



With the exception of Aitutaki, 100% of household recyclables (along with all other waste) generated in the outer islands (Pa Enua) are disposed in island dumps or burnt.



(ARFD depots/equipment to enhance processing of recyclables)

Human Capacity



Capacity - STRONG ability to manage recyclable items in all areas of their treatment, which includes, Knowledge, Collection, Transport, Process/Treat and Disposal/Control



(Already capacity for recyclable management training provided for operation of ARFD new equipment)

GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL AND DISABILITY INCLUSION (GESDI) CONSIDERATIONS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT IN COOK ISLANDS



Equality in today's society requires sound waste management.

All people have the right to access waste infrastructure, participate in decision making and able to voice grievances, access information and awareness messages, and be protected from harmful effects of waste – on health, environment, culture and traditions.



Opportunities for the Cook Islands to provide for equality during the management of recyclables



Continue development of effective legislation to provide coordinated and equitable approach for waste management.



Include considerations regarding equality and inclusion in waste-related legislation and regulation



Consider additional bans and phaseouts of certain types of problematic or hazardous products



Provide for effective implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of waste-related legislation to protect vulnerable members of society



Mobilise additional resources for waste management including through an Advance Recovery Fee system



Enhance the availability and accessibility of information



Include additional Government departments, in particular labour, culture, women, and equality-related authorities and/or bodies, in waste-related decision making to identify and address potential inequalities



Provide waste management facilities for rural and outer island communities



Enhance efforts to protect waste workers

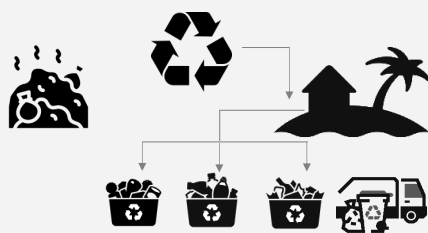


Utilise philosophy of Kaitiakitanga to enhance participation, environmental protection and stewardship

MAPPING PROJECT SUCCESS



LONG TERM OUTCOME



All recyclable items entering the Cook Islands are diverted away from landfill



MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES



ARFD system established in legislation



Pollution caused by inappropriate management of recyclable products is eliminated



Marginalised groups engaged in recyclables management to generate income



Recovery and recycling industry provides equal opportunity employment



SHORT TERM OUTCOMES



Legislative environment provides for the implementation and long-term operation of the ARFD



ARFD system in operation, including facilities and equipment, required to operate collection depots on Rarotonga and in the *Pa Enua*



Households and communities in Rarotonga and in the *Pa Enua* effectively participating in the ARFD



OUTPUTS



Finalisation, implementation, and enforcement of a Solid and Hazardous Waste (SHW) Bill



Development and implementation of an ARFD Policy and Operations Plan



Development, implementation, and enforcement of an ARFD Regulation, supported by the SHW Bill



Construction and operation of ARFD Collection Depots on Rarotonga and *Pa Enua*



Update existing Resource Recovery Centre and procurement of equipment



Implementation of effective ARFD national education and awareness program



ACTIVITIES



Facilitate inclusive consultation to finalise SHW Bill with key stakeholders and obtain political support



Construct and furnish Collection Depots



Facilitate inclusive consultation to finalise ARFD Regulation with key stakeholders and obtain political support



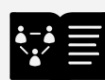
Procure and install required equipment for Resource Recovery Centre



Select operators and undertake training with staff for the operation and maintenance of equipment and facilities

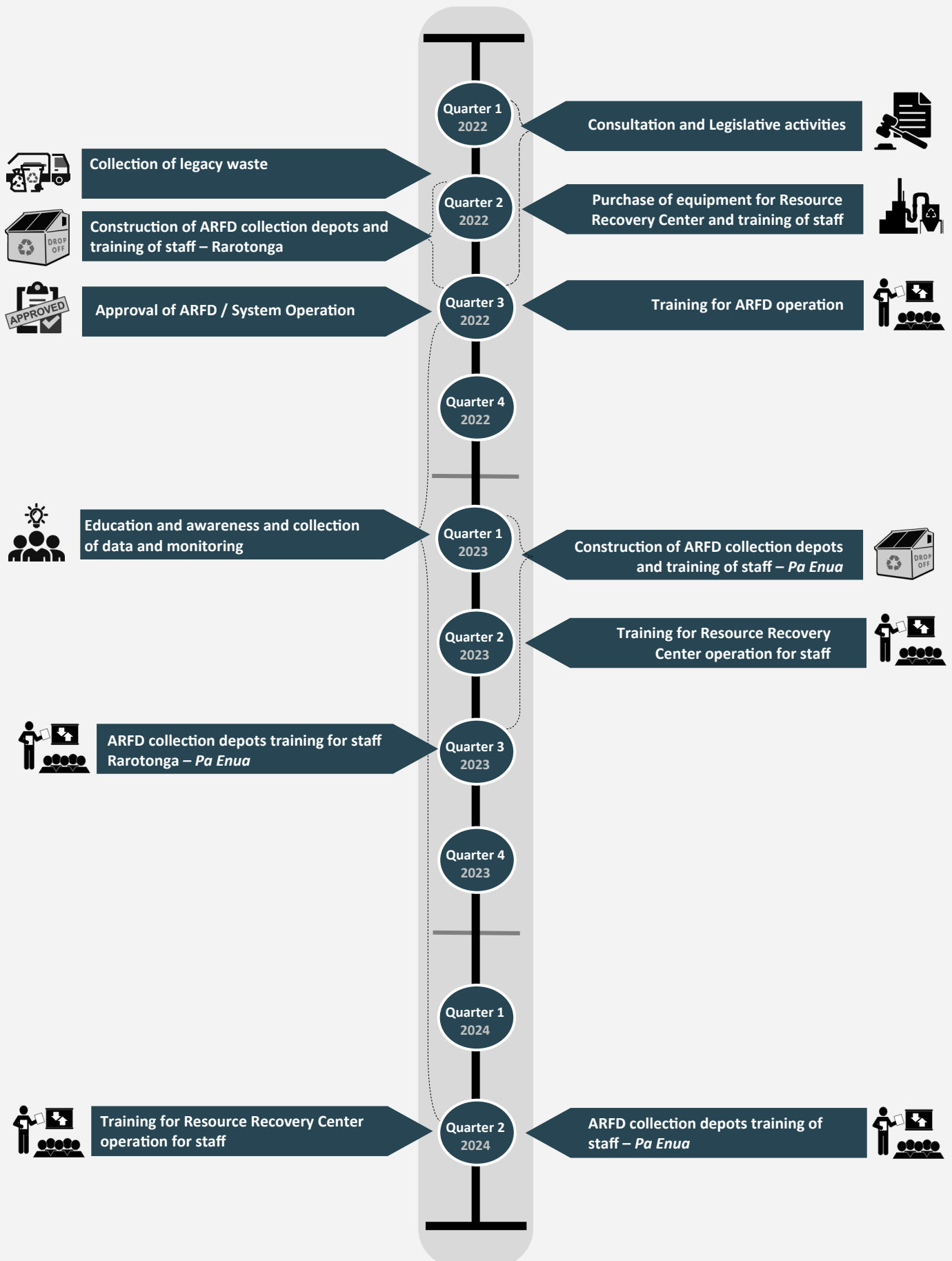


Facilitate inclusive consultation to finalise ARFD Policy and Operation Plan with key stakeholders



Develop and distribute ARFD system messaging through education and awareness materials throughout all communities in the Cook Islands

ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE



PACWASTEPLUS REGIONAL PROJECTS / ACTIVITIES AND WHAT COOK ISLANDS CAN EXPECT



Health Care Waste Management

Cook Islands will receive:

- Healthcare waste training [storage, treatment, and disposal solutions for healthcare waste]
- Assessment of the impact of the PacWaste Project healthcare waste activities
- Repair selected healthcare waste Incinerators in the region
- Work with development partners to implement a long-term plan for the sustainability of health care waste infrastructure
- Ongoing Technical Assistance



Asbestos Management

Cook Islands will receive:

- A guidance and drafting note to assist with legislative reform to ban the importation of asbestos
- Template Code of Practice to guide the safe handling and management of asbestos
- Communication resources and materials to provide information on safe handling and management of asbestos
- Learnings from other country projects focused on asbestos
- Ongoing Technical Assistance



Organics Management

Cook Islands will receive:

- Document providing technical analysis of how to compost common organic materials received in the Pacific
- Template Minimum Standard document to guide effective and safe composting
- Resources to guide organic facility design and operation
- Training on organic facility design and operation
- Ongoing Technical Assistance
- Learnings from country projects focused on organics management



ARFD / Sustainable Financing

Cook Islands will receive:

- Communication resources and materials to provide information to stakeholders on the benefits of ARFD systems
- Resources and training to assist during ARFD system design and guide decisions support
- Learnings from other country feasibility studies and projects focused on ARFD
- Ongoing Technical Assistance



Disaster Waste Management

Cook Islands will receive:

- Terms of Reference for the establishment of an Environment Sector Working Group (Cluster) within National Disaster Management Framework to ensure effective implementation of disaster Waste Management Response and Recovery
- Drafting/Guiding Notes on National and Community Disaster Waste Management Plans
- Disaster Waste Training Manual for use at both the National and Community level
- Learnings from country projects focused on disaster waste management
- Ongoing Technical Assistance



Regional Course Development

Cook Islands will receive

- Development of a sustainable capacity building program for waste management in based on country needs
- Training through the adopted training courses, both vocational and tertiary



Schools Curriculum Development

Cook Islands will receive

- School curriculum on waste management education (eight programme waste streams) incorporated in to existing school core subjects such as Maths, English and Science
- Primary school education-problem based curriculum
- Secondary school education-culturally responsive
- Tertiary school education-culturally responsive
- Training and capacity building opportunities for teachers



Bulky Waste Management

Cook Islands will receive:

- Guiding document and a Decision Support Tool to guide on how to design and implement a national ELV management programme.
- Drafting/Guiding Notes on how to draft national legislation for the management of End-of-Life vehicles
- Safe Dismantling Training Manual
- Publications and awareness materials



Behaviour Change

Cook Islands will receive

- Learnings of the community-based social marketing Pilot projects and replication of successfully implemented projects
- Ongoing Technical Assistance

ABOUT THE PACWASTEPLUS PROGRAMME

The Pacific – European Union (EU) Waste Management Programme, PacWastePlus, is a 72-month programme funded by the EU and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to improve regional management of waste and pollution sustainably and cost-effectively.

About PacWastePlus

The impact of waste and pollution is taking its toll on the health of communities, degrading natural ecosystems, threatening food security, impeding resilience to climate change, and adversely impacting social and economic development of countries in the region. The PacWastePlus programme will generate improved economic, social, health, and environmental benefits by enhancing existing activities and building capacity and sustainability into waste management practices for all participating countries.

Countries participating in the PacWastePlus programme are: *Cook Islands, Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.*

KEY OBJECTIVES

Outcomes & Key Result Areas

The overall objective of PacWastePlus is “to generate improved economic, social, health and environmental benefits arising from stronger regional economic integration and the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment”.

The specific objective is “to ensure the safe and sustainable management of waste with due regard for the conservation of biodiversity, health and wellbeing of Pacific Island communities and climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements”.

Key Result Areas

- **Improved data collection, information sharing, and education awareness**
- **Policy & Regulation** - Policies and regulatory frameworks developed and implemented.
- **Best Practices** - Enhanced private sector engagement and infrastructure development implemented
- **Human Capacity** - Enhanced human capacity



Learn more about the Cook Island Project by visiting

<https://pacwasteplus.org/country-project/cook-islands/>

For more information please contact:



The PacWastePlus team on pwp@sprep.org



Or visit - <https://www.pacwasteplus.org>

Disclaimer

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**Countries mentioned in this publication are as at November 2021*

(post project please email sprep@sprep.org)