

THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the 17 SDGs, is an important driving force in global development efforts. Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have embraced the goals to guide and measure their work through their National Development Plans. The Pacific Community (SPC) increasingly relies on these plans to develop its own work programmes with members.

SPC's Strategic Plan has three development goals:

Goal 1: Pacific people benefit from sustainable economic development

Goal 2: Pacific communities are empowered and resilient

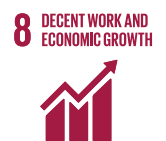
Goal 3: Pacific people reach their potential and live long and healthy lives

Our development goals and objectives align very closely to the SDGs, particularly in the areas of management of natural resources, oceans, climate, disaster resilience, energy, transport, economic growth, human rights, education and well-being.

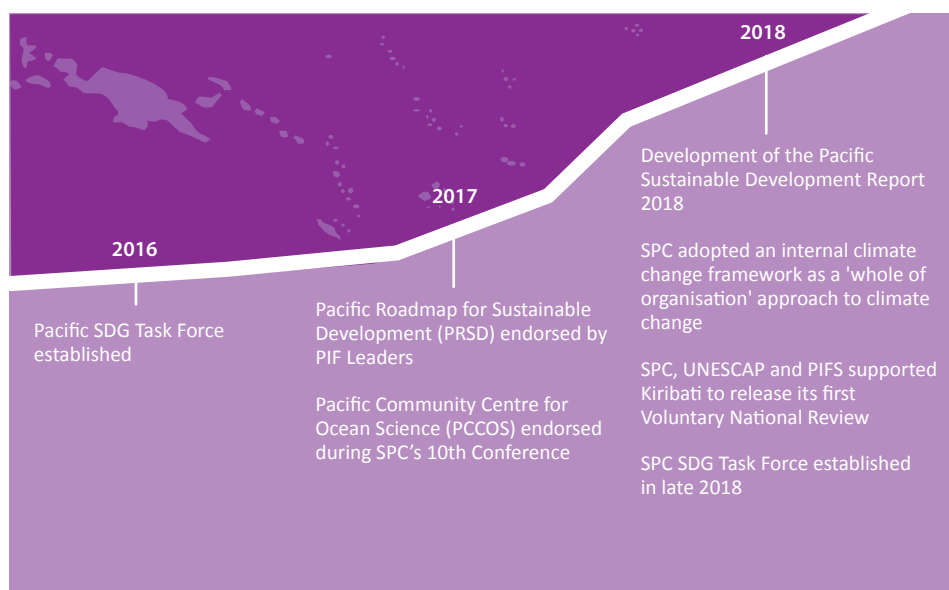
In 2018, SPC made important contributions to support our members efforts towards achieving the SDGs, as outlined on the following pages.



The SDG progress wheel enables member countries and development partners to visualise and track progress towards the 132 Pacific SDG indicators



Supporting thought leadership and coordination on the SDGs in the region



The SDG targets and indicators enable PICTs to use a common framework for measuring their progress both individually and regionally. Much work was needed to contextualise global commitments to regional and national priorities, and to enhance PICT capacity to collect data and report on national, regional and global development commitments.

In 2016, a **Pacific SDG Task Force** was established under the leadership of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). SPC provided critical inputs on all aspects of the Task Force's mandate, with emphasis on identifying Pacific SDG indicators.

With guidance from SPC, the SDG Task Force developed **the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD)**, which was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2017. The roadmap contains a regional set of 132 Pacific SDG indicators. In 2018, SPC, as the organisation responsible for data collection and compilation against the Pacific indicators, provided data sheets, sector briefs and analysis **towards the development of the Pacific Sustainable Development Report 2018**.

At their 2018 Apia meeting, small island developing states (SIDS) recommitted to key priority areas including climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and the sustainable management of oceans. To support members' efforts to build a more resilient Pacific, SPC, alongside the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) and other regional organisations, is playing a key leadership role in advancing sustainable development in the areas of climate change and disaster risk reduction, energy, and ocean management.



SPC was instrumental in developing the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, providing PICTs with high-level strategic guidance, through a set of priority actions, to support the use of integrated approaches for coping with and managing climate change and disaster risks, contributing towards achievement of **SDG 13 (Climate action)**.



Through the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE), SPC is providing regional leadership on **SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy)** and sustainable energy solutions. New funding was secured in 2018 for PCREEE's operations through a contribution from the Government of Norway.



SPC has provided high-level support, advice and thought leadership to members who are participating in negotiations to develop a new legal instrument that will guide the sustainable use and conservation of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The management and traceability of benefits from marine fisheries and other resources in the high seas beyond their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) is of critical interest to PICTs.

The Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS)



which was endorsed during SPC's 10th Conference in 2017, provides a science information and data platform for ocean science, management and governance. It was established in response to SPC members' adoption of national ocean policies to better manage the Pacific and its resources. SPC will use the PCCOS framework to focus its scientific and technical assistance on providing solutions that will build, sustain, and drive blue economies in PICTs, and support the achievement of **SDG 14 (Life below water)**.



SPC adopted an internal climate change framework as a 'whole of organisation' approach to climate change, with the combined capabilities of SPC's divisions and programmes pulled

together to respond to climate change challenges of members at local, national, regional and international level, thus contributing to **SDG 13 (climate action)** achievement.

Internally, SPC has been exploring ways of strengthening coordination between programmes to assess and monitor our contribution to achieving sustainable development in the Pacific region. An SPC SDG Task Force, established in late 2018, will promote a coherent, integrated approach towards sustainable development for and with PICTs. It will also enable SPC to demonstrate more visibly how it supports members by delivering programmes that support their own work towards sustainable development, as measured by the SDG targets and indicators.

Contributing to the measurement and reporting of the SDGs

In 2018, SPC played an essential role in supporting PICTs to bring the SDGs to life. When the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development was agreed, most PICTs were only able to collect data on a small proportion of the Roadmap's indicators, and data that was collected did not follow consistent standards across countries.

To address these issues, SPC assisted 16 National Statistics Offices (NSOs) in the Pacific to identify sources for data collection, and six PICTs to align the 2030 Agenda to their national development priorities. The 2030 Agenda encourages member states to 'conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels', to assess progress in implementing the agenda. With support from SPC, UNESCAP and PIFS, Kiribati released its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2018, committing to realign its national goals and indicators to those of the 2030 Agenda. Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu have committed to the VNR process in 2019. Solomon Islands' VNR is scheduled for 2020.

"As the Kiribati Development Plan (KDP) broadly aligns to the 2030 Agenda, the integration of the mid-term review of the KDP with the Voluntary National Review (VNR) aims to assess national goals alongside international and regional commitments in a single report."

Kiribati Voluntary National Review 2018.



SPC also led efforts to improve access to Pacific SDG data and usability. These efforts included the establishment of a Pacific SDG database and dashboard within SPC's Pacific Data Hub. The Hub features the **SDG progress wheel**.¹¹

The aim of the SDG database and dashboard is to centralise and store data on the SDG indicators and other development indicators, and their analysis, and to improve data access for PICTs and interested parties.

SPC is also supporting the development of SDG monitoring and reporting toolkits and participated in the co-creation of a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) handbook for **SDG14 (Life below water)** at a workshop in Dakar, Senegal, in November. The workshop brought together international expertise in MEL, fisheries, oceans, marine science, SDGs, national governments and UN systems.

In 2018, SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) gained recognition of its technical capacity to independently manage large-scale educational assessment processes. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) now recognises the Year 6 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), administered by SPC in 15 PICTs in 2018, as a measure of **SDG indicator 4.1.1**, which relates to students' level of proficiency in maths and reading at the end of primary and lower secondary schooling.

SPC's new country programming incorporates reporting against both SDG and national indicators for the strategic priorities specified in each programme.

Direct contributions to achieving the SDGs

SPC is reviewing the current alignment of its objectives and key results areas with the SDGs at goal and target level, with the aim of realigning them where necessary to support member countries' own SDG reporting. Below are some examples of achievements that directly contributed to the SDGs in 2018.

Readiness for El Niño

Under the three-year (2017–2020) Readiness for El Niño (RENI) project, communities in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Marshall Islands and Palau work together to secure food and water resources ahead of drought. RENI works at the intersection of several SDGs, including **SDG 2 (Zero hunger)**, **SDG 3 (Good health and well-being)**, **SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation)**, **SDG 13 (Climate action)**, while promoting gender equity and human rights (**SDG 5** and **SDG 16**).

RENI aims to mitigate potential shocks and insecurities from future El Niño related droughts by building community resilience, including by improving food and water security. At the heart of RENI's approach is giving a voice to local communities, in particular women and marginalised groups, to ensure the project addresses their specific needs.

RENI interventions, based on community consultations, include conducting disaster risk and sectoral assessments and supporting revision of disaster risk management plans or related legislation and policies to ensure resilience is part of planning. RENI also financially supports 'resilience measures', that is, projects designed and implemented by community members, including women's groups, e.g. community-led assessments of the impact of pests on food crops in the northern atolls of Marshall Islands, and implementation of water conservation measures in Federated States of Micronesia, which will improve water access for over 1200 people.



Empowering women's groups in community-based climate resilience

¹¹ see pacificdata.org

Working towards implementation of human rights treaties



With technical support from SPC and other partners, SPC member countries are increasing their capacity to meet international human rights commitments and making headway towards achieving **SDG 5 (Gender equality)** and **SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)**. Fiji and Marshall Islands ratified key UN human rights treaties in 2018 and submitted national reports to the UN treaty bodies on time. As testimony to their increasing capacity and confidence in human rights matters, PICTs are requiring less external technical support. Governments are also moving towards a coordinated approach to implementing the UPR (Universal Periodic

Review) process and UN treaty recommendations. At the start of 2018, five Pacific countries had implementation plans in place – Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. During the year and with SPC's support, Nauru completed its plans for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and Kiribati and Solomon Islands began implementation planning for UPR. UN treaty implementation planning brings us another step closer to the promotion and fulfilment of human rights.

Contributing to accelerated action to end domestic violence



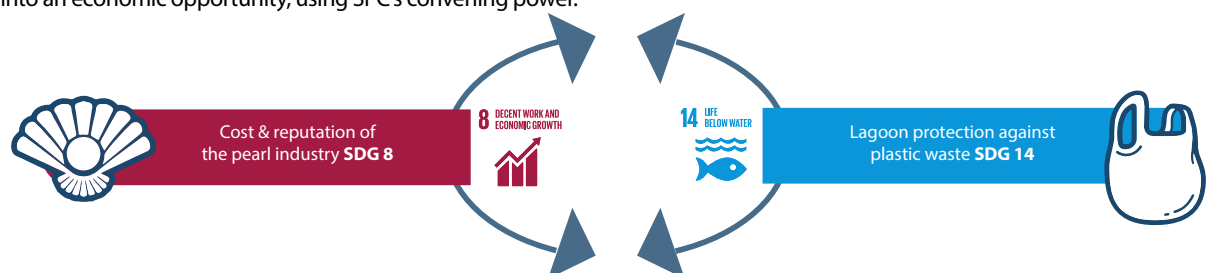
Key targets for **SDG 5 (Gender equality)** and **SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)** centre on supporting development and enactment of legislation on domestic violence and family protection. For many years, SPC has supported PICTs in developing domestic violence legislation. However, despite successes in the adoption of legislation, resource and capacity constraints, combined with entrenched attitudes and social norms condoning domestic violence, have limited the effective implementation of these laws. In late 2018, SPC's efforts to support PICTs in this area culminated in a regional consultation at which 11 PICTs agreed to establish a regional working group on the implementation of domestic violence legislation.

SPC has established two pilot 'access to justice' projects in Tonga and Solomon Islands to strengthen the judiciaries' capacity to apply the legislation and protect survivors of domestic violence. This year in the Solomon Islands, following training under the SPC project, 10 interim protection orders were issued, the first orders since the Family Protection Act was enacted in 2014. The Tonga Family Protection Legal Aid Centre, less than one year after opening, has provided services to 227 clients, sensitised over 700 individuals on their rights, and supported 65 protection orders. The Tongan government is planning to integrate the centre as a division of the Ministry of Justice in the near future.

Pearl farming in French Polynesia

The RESCCUE project (Restoration of ecosystem services and adaptation to climate change), implemented by SPC, turned a trade-off situation between **SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)** and **SDG 14 (Life below water)** into an economic opportunity, using SPC's convening power.

Pearl farming is an important export industry in French Polynesia, but waste, particularly plastic waste, is a significant issue. There was therefore a trade-off between economic growth and conservation of biodiversity.



Between 2016 and 2018, SPC created opportunities for dialogue between many stakeholders – the French Polynesian government, local authorities, academia, the private sector, and professional associations – on the delicate question of plastic waste in lagoons where pearl farming is located. Gambier Islands was nominated as a pilot site. Technical expertise was provided to assess existing waste from pearl farming in the Gambier lagoon and to demonstrate the economic viability of recycling high-density plastic waste locally.

The local plastics industry expressed interest in launching new product lines (buoys, pallets), paving the way towards a circular economy for the industry in French Polynesia. Pearl farmers' professional associations are now updating their commercial narrative to include sustainability and quality certification.



MANA dashboard presentation at Pacific Heads of Health Meeting 2018

Looking to 2019

Strong collaboration with partners and clarity of roles have resulted in less duplication and improved planning of work. The results are evident in the development of a comprehensive set of Pacific SDG indicators relevant to Pacific priorities, and PICTs' focus on strengthening their capacity to both collect these indicators and align them with national planning. Overall, there is now better access to Pacific SDG data. PICTs have shown genuine willingness to engage with SPC and the SDG process, and many are actively integrating SDG targets and priorities into their national development plans and conducting voluntary national reviewing processes, which SPC will continue to support with other major partners.

SPC's work touches on each of the SDGs either directly or indirectly. Highlighting these connections and their potential to strengthen SPC's regional and international partnerships will be an important part of our work in 2019.