



# SCRAP

## The Pacific Region Scrap Metal and Plastic Recycling Program

### Background & Project Description

Waste disposal and management is a major problem faced by small island nations in the Pacific because of limited space to dispose of waste and the high dependency on imported packaged goods. The accumulation of plastic and solid metal waste - from scrap vehicles and white goods, to heavy machinery and partially submerged vessels - has become unsustainable, and few Pacific island nations had any form of plastic or metal waste removal or recycling in place prior to this project. The accumulation of car bodies is of particular concern, due to increasing importation of vehicles, the taxation of which is a source of revenue for national governments, and relatively short life spans thanks to the salt environment.

For many islands it is not economically feasible to recycle, as the costs of bailing, shipping, cutting, and storing recyclable metals, combined with low resale value and low volumes (from a commercial point of view), are prohibitive for any one country to pay for. Creative means are required to remove low volumes of recyclable wastes

#### Participants and Roles

French Polynesia: *recipient*

Easter Island: *recipient*

Niue: *recipient*

Tuvalu: *recipient*

Other Pacific SIDS: *recipient*

Australia: Pacific Aid Australia (PAA) - *implementer*; private sector and NGOs - *support*

New Zealand: private sector and NGOs - *support*

France: French Development Agency - *support*

Tahiti: Air Tahiti Nui and Societe Environnement Polynisien - *support*

Germany: Internationaler Hilfsfonds - *support*

USA: Easter Island Foundation - *support*

Chile: LAN Airlines - *support*

Samoa: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program - *support*

The SCRAP Program began as a Pacific Aid Australia (PAA) pilot project to remove scrap metal and plastic from Pacific Islands, create jobs, and work towards sustainability, and has evolved into a tailored island-by-island approach. The program developed systems to help islanders collect, sort and process scrap metal off-island, and documented the processes in a series of short films that were then shared between islands in order to promote the work.

### South-South Cooperation Components

**Field visits/information gathering** – PAA met with Pacific Island waste management departments and environment departments, to understand how islands were dealing with this issue, what was already in place, and what island wanted as a priority out of a scrap metal and plastic recycling program.

**Technology transfer** – Technology being used in Tahiti was used as a model for other islands. It has been important to ensure the use of high quality and appropriate technology that is compatible with local power supplies, for which parts are available, and will survive in a salty environment.

**Knowledge transfer** – Over the course of the projects PAA produced three instructional videos - "How to Process Plastic on your Island," "How to Process Scrap Metal on your Island," and "Niue Scrap Metal Pilot" – that were then distributed to



other island nations. These films demonstrated waste management techniques and highlighted associated Work Health and Safety Issues. PAA also partnered with specialists to conduct on-site training on a number of different islands.

**Expert exchange/interaction** – Tahitian and Australian waste management experts visited Easter Island, Niue, and Tuvalu to consult with local governments and produced comprehensive solid waste management and scrap metal management reports.

**Training sessions** – The Secretariat for the Pacific Region Environment Program in Samoa hosted a weeklong conference on solid waste management that was attended by waste management departments from a number of other Pacific island states.

## Lessons Learned

**Success Factors:** In choosing where to mount pilot projects PAA selected islands that were most likely to succeed. Key selection criteria included: volumes of various waste streams, availability of direct shipping routes, and the availability of potential partners.

**Partners:** American-influenced Pacific islands proved to be more challenge due shipping and airline monopolies that were less interested in partnering in waste management programs. Tahitian and French organizations were generous and enthusiastic about participating in capacity building, even in non-Francophone locations, as were New Zealand and Australian organizations and institutions.

**Technology:** Harmonizing technology across different islands reduces the cost of maintenance and disposal and increases the availability of spare parts. Harmonization is also important for organizations like PAA because it enables more effective distribution of information and services.

**Local Conditions:** PAA also learned that it is important to understand the local conditions that drive demand. For example, local weather conditions often meant that successful plastic bag reduction needed to include a mixed model of calico, woven polypropylene and strong reusable recyclable plastic bags.

**Integrated Support:** Island to island support at all levels - governmental, private business, civil society, NGO - has been key to the success of this program. Efforts should be made to convince stakeholders at all levels to take ownership of promoting regional sustainability.

**Regional Forums:** Organizations such as SPREP play a crucial role in sharing knowledge, resources, latest practices, and facilitating regional cooperation.

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### More information:

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