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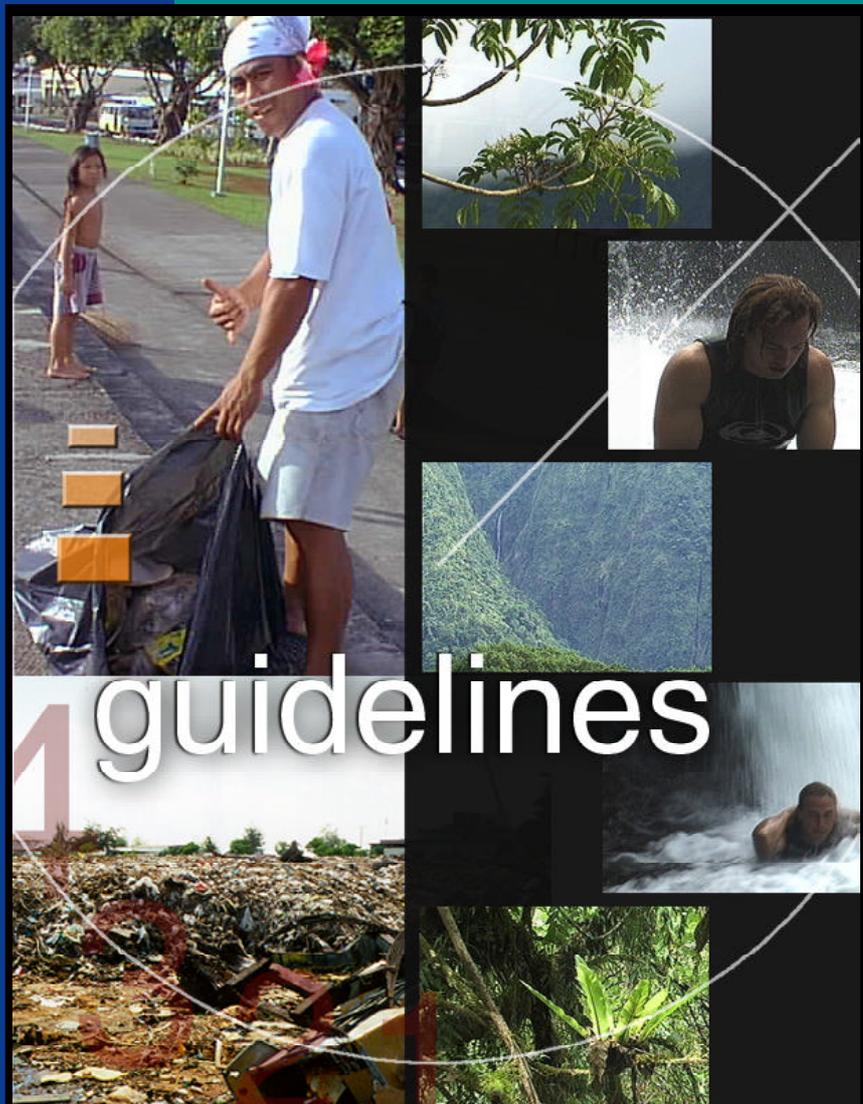
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## Preface

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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