



## Mid-Term Evaluation Brief /2023

**PacWaste Plus (PWP)** is a regional programme working with Pacific Island States to improve their solid waste management practices. Funded by the **European Union**, PWP is implemented by the **Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)**. Between January and August 2023, **NIRAS** conducted a mid-term evaluation of PacWaste Plus, producing a series of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to improve the programme implementation.

Tonga



### Country project focus:



**Asbestos Management**

### Local actors involved:

Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change & Communication (MEIDECC), Ministry of Infrastructure, Tapuhia Landfill.

### Main results achieved:

- A stocktake of existing waste legislation and an assessment of legislative frameworks were completed.
- An asbestos management brief was developed.
- A justification brief for leaders on Asbestos Management Policy and Regulation for Pacific Island Countries and Timor Leste was produced.
- An asbestos assessment was conducted in Tongatapu, to identify priority buildings for asbestos abatement.
- An Asbestos Code of Practice was developed for Tonga.
- A Case Study on the Asbestos Containing Material Disposal process at Tapuhia Landfill was conducted.
- The healthcare waste incinerator at Prince Ngu Hospital, on Vava'u, Tongatapu, purchased by PacWASTE, was repaired; operational training, spare parts and personal protective equipment was provided to hospital staff.



### Good practices

Tonga's choice of priority waste stream provides a clear continuation of the previous PacWASTE programme (which ran from 2014-2017 focusing only on hazardous waste) and demonstrates coherence between the interventions. PacWASTE surveyed Asbestos Containing Materials in Tongatapu and Vava'u. The Pacific Asbestos Assessment Report issued by PacWASTE recommended work on legislation to manage and ban importation of asbestos. Apart from building on previous work, PacWaste Plus recognizes the urgency of asbestos management in Tonga due to risks of exposure to asbestos-containing debris from natural disasters, such as tropical cyclones.

### Lessons learned:

- Legislation work has long-term positive consequences to the country if approved. A stronger legislative framework creates the basic conditions for behaviour change, allows better environmental control, and encourages businesses to adapt towards a desired direction.
- Supporting countries to implement bans on the importation of hazardous materials, such as asbestos, prevents waste from being generated in the first place and contributes to the regional goal of an 'asbestos-free Pacific'.



### Next steps:

- Support in drafting an asbestos ban legislation and policy.
- Implement the Tonga Asbestos Code of Practice.
- Train customs officers on Asbestos Containing Materials identification and asbestos ban legislation.
- Train and certify asbestos abatement personnel consistent with the Asbestos Code of Practice.
- Develop a strategic action plan with long-term management options for Asbestos Containing Materials.
- Remove Asbestos Containing Materials from Tongatapu.