

# REGIONAL SOLUTIONS: EXPORT MEASURES FOR PLASTIC RECYCLABLES TO REDUCE MARINE PLASTIC DEBRIS IN THE PACIFIC

Professor Jacqueline Peel, Melbourne Law School

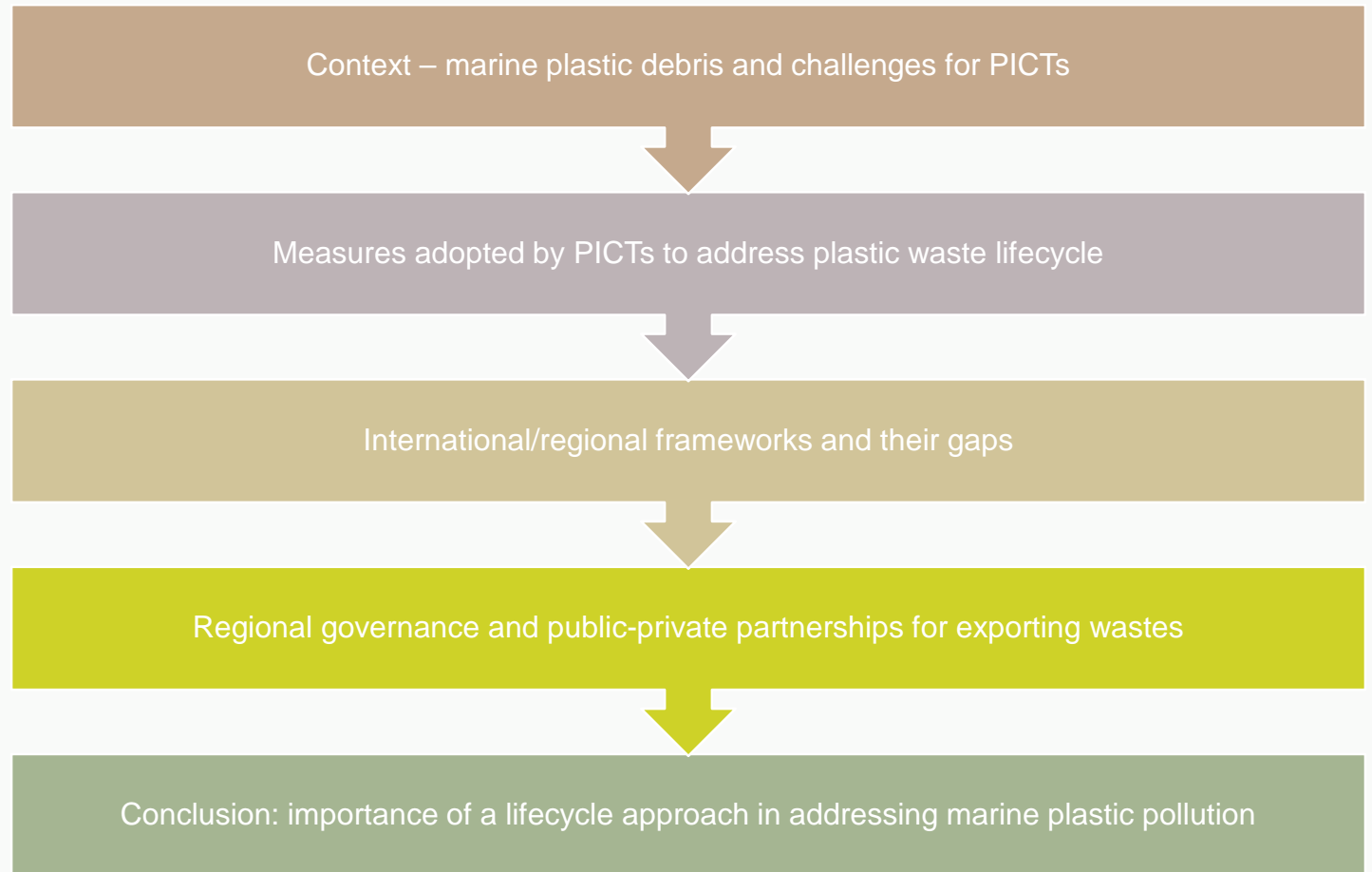
Marine Plastic Pollution Rule of Law in Asia Pacific  
Workshop

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# Overview





## **Context – a global problem with particular local impacts**

- **Marine plastic pollution issue of increasing international concern and acknowledged ‘global’ problem**
- **Poses particular issues for Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)**
- **Need for lifecycle approach to combat problem in Pacific region**
- **Link between land-based sources and marine plastic pollution**

# PICTs

- 22 countries and territories, approx. 11 million people
- Cover vast geographic region
- 98% of region is ocean, which underpins Pacific livelihoods
- Significant challenges in preventing plastics from entering oceans prior to becoming marine plastic debris/litter



# MARINE PLASTICS AND CHALLENGES FOR PICTS

- **Dependent on imports of plastic products and imported products in plastic packaging**
- **Difficulties in managing the burden of plastic waste generated in-country**
- **Opportunities for in country re-use, recycling and recovery of wastes are limited by the economies of scale required**
- **Export markets for waste are difficult to locate and costs of shipping from remote islands can be prohibitively high**
- **Plastic recyclables sent to landfill or stockpiled/dumped creating management challenges including escalating plastic waste along coastlines and in surrounding seas**
- **Also effects from waste generated by foreign vessels, brought to shores on ocean currents**



# Plastic waste regulatory lifecycle



**Point of entry**



**In-country waste management**



**Point of exit**



**Holistic approaches**



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# POINT OF ENTRY

- **Goal: prevent entry of plastics so does not become marine plastic debris**
- **Import restrictions on plastic containing products e.g. single-use takeaway containers, shopping bags, nappies etc**
- **E.g. national and state measures in FSM, Vanuatu single-use plastic ban**



# In-country

- Financial and institutional challenges to effective waste management
- Laws to incentivize collection and recycling e.g. CDLs, advance deposit levies
- E.g. Kiribati, Tuvalu



# Point of exit

- Limited space and often limited local recycling options
- High shipping costs and lack of markets
- Extended producer responsibility/product stewardship schemes to encourage 'circular economy'



# International regulatory frameworks

- **Fragmented and uneven**
- **Applicable MEAs e.g. Basel focus primarily on the permissible movement and trade in waste, rather than integrating a whole-of-life approach to wastes and plastics**
- **Limited integration of circular economy concepts**
- **Gap in 'hard law' relating to land-based sources of marine pollution**
- **Proliferation of soft law programmes could be important part of efforts to develop 'lifecycle' solutions to marine plastic debris and to address fragmentation at the global level**

# REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- **More opportunities for action at regional level in Pacific**
- **Significant activity at regional level through SPREP**
- Noumea and Waigani Conventions
- **Soft law instruments**
- Cleaner Pacific 2025, Pacific Marine Litter Regional Action Plan



# SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional  
Environment Programme

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SHOT ON MI 6  
MI DUAL CAMERA

# Regional solutions

- Lifecycle approach to preventing and managing marine plastic debris requires practical solutions for the recycling of plastics, prior to their entry into the oceans as pollutants
- Existing global and regional legal frameworks have a focus on transboundary movements of waste but significant gaps on re-use, recycling and recovery operations
- Options for developing both regional level governance and public-private partnerships to export plastics from PICTs to foreign countries equipped to recycle, recover or dispose of plastic waste in an environmentally-sound way
- Could incentivise the collection of plastic wastes and reduce the potential for marine plastic debris

# PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

- E.g. Moana Taka partnership between SPREP and Swire Shipping (CNCO)
- Other regional organisations and partners are also exploring similar arrangements
- Opportunities to scale-up options for the export of recyclables, particularly plastics, with different shipping companies providing for transportation of wastes to export markets.



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# Supplementary regional governance



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- Arrangements to support recycling hub or inter-island shipment
- Capacity-building to improve in-country waste management capacity
- Common quality standards for recycled plastics
- Engagement with global initiatives e.g. Basel Convention Partnership on Plastic Waste

## Conclusion: need for a lifecycle approach

- PICTs are leading the way with innovative national approaches and potential cross-border regional solutions to deal with waste management in a holistic way, including a lifecycle approach to marine plastic debris.
- International frameworks have largely failed to respond to the particular needs of these states
- PICTs have opportunities build on existing cross-border options for the export of recyclables, including plastics
- Action by PICTs might similarly inspire more holistic approach on marine plastic debris more generally







Q&A

