

Annex C: Case study on ESS Coordination for the Samoa Weather Radar Project.- agenda 22.2

1. Background

The Samoa weather radar subproject is a major infrastructure initiative under the regional [Weather Ready Pacific \(WRP\) Programme](#), aimed at installing a state-of-the-art weather watch radar. Implemented through the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the project upgrades Samoa's early-warning capacity for severe tropical cyclones.

Installation of the new radar, in which a Samoan Met is an implementing agency (project recipient), is planned within the Samoa Airports Authority compound with an operational footprint of approximately 45 by 36 metres, within a half-acre allocation. The design has been configured to limit physical disturbance and align with aviation safety constraints: a tower height of 25 metres, use of an existing developed site; minimal new access road construction; gravel rather than sealed surfacing; and reliance on existing service corridors for power and communications where possible. These design choices also shape the expected scale of environmental and social impacts, and therefore inform the level of environmental and social safeguard (ESS) assessment that regulators will require.

2. Issue

Under Samoa's Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA) Act, the project could not be commenced until a Development Consent had been obtained. PUMA requires the project to have proper land acquisition, consult with other relevant stakeholders, such as national regulators (Civil Aviation Division, Communications and regulatory authorities, Building and Work Permitting Division) and communities, and therefore will require a stakeholder engagement plan (SEP).

3. Coordination Interventions and Results

SPREP provided both technical and coordination support to the Samoa Met Office to ensure that PUMA ESS requirements are understood and met. This created a clearer, potentially faster pathway for ESS compliance support to reach Samoa Met. SPREP committed to preparing the environmental assessment report for the project and to support project stakeholder engagement. The coordination support produced several outcomes directly relevant to WRP implementation as follows:

- A workable development-consent pathway was established.
- The likely ESS instruments and related approvals needed for the project were clarified, including the preliminary assessment, stakeholder engagement measures, climate resilience, disaster and emergency management planning, and the building permit requirement.

- SPREP was positioned as a bridging institution between Samoa Met and national regulators, reducing the risk that technical, environmental and administrative processes would proceed in isolation.
- The granting of the Development Consent by PUMA to Samoa Met for the installation of a 25-metre weather watch radar system.

Following the granting of the Development Consent (see outcome 4 above), SPREP again coordinated with the Samoa Met Office and the awarded installation contractor to ensure that Development Consent conditions were properly addressed.

4. Lessons

- The importance of proactively raising awareness of ESS requirements within national meteorological services.
- Treat ESS compliance for meteorological infrastructure as a coordinated implementation function.
- Integration of technical and ESS planning reduces implementation delay risk.
- A regional implementing partner such as SPREP can usefully play a supporting role between a national meteorological service and multiple domestic regulators, including by facilitating inter-agency engagement and, where appropriate, preparing safeguard documents itself under regulator endorsement.

In summary, for the WRP, the Samoa radar experience indicates that combining early engagement with regulators with stronger integration of technical and ESS planning can significantly reduce implementation risk for regional Met infrastructure activities.