Improving energy efficiency offers the Pacific region multiple benefits, including reduced dependence on imported petroleum fuels, increased energy security, lower energy bills and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. For this reason, efficient lighting has been identified as one of the main ‘accelerators’ to achieve the sustainable energy for all (SE4All) objectives.

To support the efforts of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to establish energy efficiency standards, SPC’s Energy Programme, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) en.lighten initiative, supported by the Government of Australia, convened the inception workshop of the Pacific Regional Efficient Lighting Strategy (PELS) project this week (22–23 September) in Nadi, Fiji.

The main objective of the workshop is to determine key priorities and action areas to be included in the regional efficient lighting strategy document. The regional strategy will be further developed through a consultative approach and is expected be completed by the second quarter of 2015 for PICTs' endorsement.

The workshop is an outcome of commitments made at the Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting in April this year, when the ministers endorsed a partnership between SPC and UNEP to jointly develop a detailed regional strategy for the transition to efficient lighting in PICTs. This is part of a further commitment from ministers to support energy efficiency and conservation efforts in the Pacific by encouraging development partners to mobilise additional investments for energy efficiency and conservation. This will allow a more balanced investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy.
In his opening statement at the inception workshop, Solomone Fifita, head of SPC’s Energy Programme, highlighted the fact that there is a new regionalism framework at play now.

‘Phasing out inefficient lights from the region fits perfectly with this new framework,’ said Mr Fifita.

To address the energy efficiency challenges of PICTs, genuine and durable partnerships are needed, echoing the theme of the recent meeting of United Nations Third SIDS Conference in Samoa.

Mr Peter Anjain, representative from Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and currently participating in this workshop, said, ‘The development of a regional efficient lighting strategy is in line with RMI’s National Strategic Plan 2015–2017. Our energy priority is to improve efficiency of energy use in 50% of households and businesses, and 75% of government buildings by 2020. ‘This regional efficient lighting strategy will assist us in phasing out inefficient lighting and implementing cost-effective, energy-efficient policies at national level,’ he added.

Delegates at the inception workshop reviewed the draft regional status report on efficient lighting to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data. In addition, the participants discussed the key issues relating to the regional transition to energy efficient lighting: the need for an integrated policy approach; minimum energy performance standards; monitoring, verification and enforcement; environmentally sound management; and supporting policies.

The workshop is attended by more than 30 participants, including national PELS coordinators from PICTs and representatives from regional and international organisations, power utilities, and the governments of Australia and the United States of America. PELS will build on the current work of the Pacific Appliance Labelling and Standards Programme, which focuses on developing legislation for labelling and standards of electrical appliances, such as lights, refrigerators, freezers and air conditioning units.

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Photo caption 1: One of the energy efficient lights (light emitting diode – LED) discussed during the workshop.

Photo caption 2: Participants at the Pacific Regional Efficient Lighting Strategy Inception Workshop in Nadi, Fiji (22 September 2014).