

Twenty Third SPREP Meeting of Officials

4-6 September 2012
Noumea
New Caledonia

Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages

Purpose of the Paper

1. The purpose of the Paper is to update Members on the progress made in further studying the options for strengthening regional linkages and Members access to SPREP services and advice.

Background

2. The 21st SPREP Meeting held in Madang, Papua New Guinea, in September 2010, endorsed the concept of establishing a sub-regional presence for SPREP in the Pacific Region and called for the Secretariat to investigate options. The rationale for establishing a sub-regional presence is to further strengthen and better align SPREP Member activities with the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. The Secretariat appointed David Gowty to prepare a report on all available options which was then presented to Members at the 22nd SPREP Meeting, held at Apia in September 2011.

3. At this Meeting, the report was noted by the Meeting, and a Friends of the Chair Group was established to make a recommendation to the Meeting on a number of elements which required further elaboration (**Attachment 3**). These included a variety of possible modalities for the sub-regional presence and also identified aspects of the process which were critical in moving forward.

4. The 22nd SPREP Meeting endorsed further work consistent with the elements identified in the Report of the Friends of the Chair. Following this direction, and consistent with the elements identified in the Gowty Report (**Attachment 2**), the Secretariat prepared draft Terms of Reference for the consultant to be engaged to prepare a cost benefit analysis of the options for establishing a sub-regional presence. These were circulated for comments among all Members, and responses were received from New Caledonia, New Zealand, FSM, Australia and USA.

5. The consultancy was advertised for 7 weeks on the Secretariat's website and a tender evaluation panel was established to select a bidder. KVA Consult Limited was selected to carry out the consultancy.

6. Consistent with the elements of the Friends of the Chair Report, KVA have consulted widely among members in writing the report (**Attachment 1**), which focuses on the costs and benefits of establishing a sub-regional presence via a number of modalities.

7. The Meeting is invited to:

- **Note** the report by KVA Consult; and
- **Take** any further action as necessary.