

SPREP Director General's report to the 2014 SPREP Meeting

It is my pleasure to report on progress over the last year. Our achievements are detailed in the 2013 Annual Report which will be tabled at the 2014 SPREP Meeting and in the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) which will also be discussed at this meeting. As you can see, we have had a busy year working in support of SPREP Members.

I have outlined our change management process to previous SPREP meetings. This is an adaptive management process that aims to make SPREP a more relevant, effective and focused organisation responding to Member priorities. As part of our learning culture, SPREP's change management process was reviewed and assessed by an independent company, Sigmoid Curve Consulting Group www.sigmoidcurve.com and their key findings are captured in a Case Study report. The lessons learnt from this Case Study will be applied within SPREP as we move forward and we have shared because they are also relevant to other organisations undertaking change management. The Case Study is attached as Annex A.

SPREP has also been under this microscope this year with the implementation of the Independent Corporate Review (ICR) and the findings and recommendations of this review will be presented to the 2014 SPREP Meeting. This process also includes a mid-term review of the SPREP Strategic Plan that allows us to take stock of "where we are at" and make changes to ensure we are able to achieve our objectives.

The major outcome from SPREP's work over the last two years in implementing our Strategic Plan has been a major increase in the level of support to Pacific Island countries and territories to assist in addressing environmental and sustainable development priorities. In particular, financial and technical support from SPREP to Pacific Island countries and territories has more than doubled over the last 4 years. This is clearly shown in Annex B of this Director General's report which outlines all projects implemented in Pacific Island Member countries and territories in 2013 and compares this with support in the period from 2010.

I am pleased to report that the direct financial support provided by SPREP to Pacific countries and territories has increased from US \$9.2 million in 2010 to US \$17.8 million in 2013.

SPREP's budget has increased from US\$7 million in 2008 to US\$22 million in 2014. The increasing budget has been allocated to practical programmes in Pacific Island countries and territories. It is not going towards building up a "SPREP empire" in Samoa: in fact, salary costs as a percentage of the total SPREP budget have dropped, from 44% in 2008 to 27% in 2013, reflecting the fact that extra funding for SPREP is going directly to programmes in Pacific member countries.

The increase in SPREP's budget reflects the increasing confidence of donors and partners in our work. SPREP values this trust and commits to working hard to ensure we deserve and strengthen it. The landmark decisions by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand to support SPREP through multi-year rather than annual funding significantly increases the ability of SPREP to plan and implement long term programmes in SPREP's Pacific Members. This multi-year support is acknowledged with appreciation and it is hoped that it continues and that other "Metropolitan" Members of SPREP will also consider shifting their support to SPREP to a multi-year basis.

SPREP's convening power was clearly demonstrated in 2013 with the implementation of two major conferences. First, the integrated series of meetings of the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable, the Disaster Roundtable and the Pacific Meteorological Council, working together towards an Integrated Strategy in the Pacific Region for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, which will come into force from 2016. Second, was the 9th Nature Conservation and Protected Areas Conference which brought together 800 experts from the Pacific region and internationally to address biodiversity issues and develop the Regional Framework for Nature Conservation.

SPREP significantly strengthened its governance in 2013 and 2014 with major reforms and improvements in the areas of executive governance, financial management, coordination between divisions and human resource management to improve effectiveness and accountability. We are pleased that capacity has been strengthened in these areas, enabling SPREP to better deliver on its mandate for Pacific island members. SPREP's senior management processes are effective, open and based on consultation. We regularly meet as a full Secretariat and our Senior Management Team is reporting regularly to staff in an open and transparent manner. SPREP's new structure, reflecting the priority areas in SPREP's Strategic Plan, is working well. Both the Strategic Plan and the governance and structure of SPREP were reviewed over the last year or so and the results will be presented to this year's SPREP Meeting.

SPREP's accreditation as a Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) under the Adaptation Fund of the UNFCCC (AF) provided a clear measure of SPREP's improved governance in 2013. This landmark decision means that SPREP is one of only three RIEs in the world, with the other two located in Africa. This is important for our region in providing an additional source of climate finance for adaptation projects and also as SPREP is fully owned and accountable to Pacific Members. SPREP is also documenting lessons from the RIE application process for use by Pacific countries, such as the Cook Islands, which are considering applying to become National Implementing Entities under the AF.

SPREP is now, for the first time in its history, invested in training and capacity building of SPREP staff, with leadership training and capacity building implemented in 2013 for SMT, middle management, and for all staff, including through the SPREP Advance. Our aim is to attract and retain the highest calibre of staff and I am pleased to report that staff retention rates have increased from 76% in 2008 to 94% in 2013. Our accountability has been enhanced through recruitment of an Internal Auditor and establishment of an independent Audit Committee. We are the first CROP agency in the Pacific region to have this function.

The "bottom line" from improved governance is that SPREP is better able to support our Pacific Island members in addressing their pressing environmental and sustainable development challenges.

We have increased our technical support and advice to Pacific Members and there have been many visits by SPREP staff to Pacific countries and territories over the last year. It has been my pleasure to have visited 25 SPREP Member countries and territories since starting at SPREP 5 years ago, including 20 of the 21 Pacific island Members of SPREP. I would like to thank all involved most sincerely for your warm hospitality. These visits have provided me with the opportunity to see at first hand the many environmental challenges faced in Pacific Island countries and territories and to discuss how SPREP can best assist.

The ever increasing challenge of waste and pollution poses major environmental, health, and social concerns for Pacific islands and is a major barrier to sustainable development in the Pacific. Recent SPREP Meetings have directed the Secretariat to increase attention to waste management and pollution. SPREP's continuing 2013 Campaign Theme of "Clean Pacific" underlined the challenges of waste and pollution, and raised awareness through a range of community based activities in many Pacific countries and emphasised that "every action counts". SPREP has significantly increased resources at SPREP to this area and have joined forces with the Governments of Japan and France, and the European Union, amongst many others, to help Pacific Island countries and territories better address waste and pollution.

SPREP accelerated its efforts during 2013 and 2014 to support Pacific countries with the management of solid waste through the innovative J-PRISM project, implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in collaboration with SPREP. Capacity for waste management was also strengthened in Pacific countries through support from the Government of France. SPREP has also accelerated efforts to help Pacific Island countries and territories better manage hazardous waste, including waste oil, electronic waste (e-waste) and asbestos through the PacWaste project with support from the EU, and the uPOPs Project funded by GEF, which focuses on improving management of chemicals in the Pacific region. Efforts on marine pollution were also accelerated through various activities associated with the review of the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN).

Climate change remains the major challenge in our region, with enormous impact on the way of life and livelihoods of Pacific peoples. SPREP has worked closely with partners, particularly the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, in developing the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) approach to ensure climate change and disaster risk management considerations are mainstreamed into national, sectoral and community development processes. SPREP played a key role in convening the Joint Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change in Fiji in 2013, jointly with SPC and the UNISDR¹. This meeting was a "world first" and has set a clear path and direction towards an Integrated Strategy for climate and resilient development in the Pacific (SRDP) from 2016.

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project, a joint initiative between SPREP and UNDP, funded by GEF and the Government of Australia, shifted gears in 2013 and 2014, with increasing emphasis on delivering practical on ground climate adaptation projects in SPREP Member countries and territories, in key sectors including water, agriculture and coastal infrastructure. PACC is also showcasing the application of gender based principles to climate change adaptation.

Protecting and using ecosystem protection is proving to be an effective frontline response to climate change, as we have seen in the Choiseul Province in Solomon Islands and Abaianga in Kiribati where many partners are coming together to support communities to adapt to climate change. In Choiseul in 2013, SPREP and many partners, including USAID, GIZ and SPC, continued their collaboration on provincial scale community-based vulnerability and adaptation assessment and the development of an integrated climate change adaptation strategy for the province. SPREP's focus on ecosystem-based adaptation, including coastal protection and ridge-to-reef management planning, aims to support sustainable livelihoods by maintaining intact ecosystems and the services they provide.

¹ UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

SPREP has moved quickly to support implementation of the Pacific Islands Meteorology Strategy (PIMS 2012-2021), following directions from SPREP Members, and have strengthened our capacity to support Pacific National Meteorological Services in managing and disseminating weather and climate information. Progress with these areas was assessed at the second Pacific Meteorological Council Meeting in Fiji in 2013. A major programme of support for Meteorological Services in the Pacific with support from the Government of Finland, (FINPAC), is strengthening the capacity of National Meteorological Services in the Pacific. In these areas we work closely and effectively with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and have greatly appreciated their support and partnership as we look at programmes that could strengthen climate services in the region under the WMO Global Framework for Climate Services. In 2015 the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) will hold a first meeting of Ministers responsible for Meteorology and Climate Services. We look forward to strengthen political support on Meteorology and Climate Services and their roles in reducing vulnerability in the region.

Work also continued on our renewable energy project, PIGGAREP, which supports countries in achieving their national renewable energy targets. SPREP's work on renewable energy will be strengthened by the decision to locate the SIDS Dock Regional Centre for the Pacific at SPREP.

Despite excellent efforts by SPREP Members the loss of biodiversity represents a regional crisis with long term implications for the peoples and environment of the Pacific. Conserving our unique biodiversity and fragile ecosystems has been a major focus of SPREP's work in 2012 and 2013. These issues were "put under the microscope" at the 9th Nature Conservation and Protected Areas Conference held in Fiji in December 2013. This landmark conference brought together 800 people from throughout the region, and internationally, to address the issues facing Pacific biodiversity. The conference adopted: a new Regional Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2014-2020; 10 Key High Level Actions; and the Laucala Declaration on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas to guide action to conserve biodiversity, including achievement of the CBD Aichi Targets, in the Pacific region for the next six years.

One of our main areas of work is the conservation of threatened and migratory species. In 2013 and 2014 we continued work on the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme, incorporating marine species action plans for whales, dugongs, dolphins and marine turtles. SPREP was delighted to launch the Lui Bell Memorial Scholarship for young marine species scientists in 2013 to ensure that Lui's enormous legacy is carried on for the benefit of the marine species and people of the Pacific region.

During the year SPREP increased its support for a wide range of environmental monitoring and governance activities in our Pacific members. These were carried out primarily through the EU funded ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) MEA project. The mid-term review of this singled out SPREP as the best performer amongst the three participating regions, in terms of capacity built and long term sustainability of approach. SPREP supported the development of new legislation in a number of countries, including drafting new meteorology legislation for Vanuatu. The first phase of this project ended in 2013 with SPREP the only partner completing its activities as planned, on time and to budget. This success led to a second phase which started in 2014.

A major area of work is the formulation of National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) and State of Environment (SOE) Reports, the first since the early 1990s – a period of 20 years. We developed and piloted a consultative process of National Environment Management Strategies

formulation for Kiribati and the Cook Islands. This process allowed us to not only consolidate the various MEA action plans (such as the NBSAP's, NAP's, NIP's and NAPA's) into an Integrated National Environment Plan but as importantly allowed the environment pillar to consolidate its position and to be more effectively included in National Sustainable Development Strategies.

State of Environment reports are still the primary method for measuring success of interventions and activities. We agreed a regional framework and developed a national SOE template. This approach and template was successfully piloted in Samoa and Fiji. We are also working on long term continued SOE reporting through the development of indicators and design of a national environment database, monitoring processes and data sharing arrangements.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines were further developed and applied during the year, including in the Federated States of Micronesia and Tokelau. We started work in partnership with SPC in developing EIA Guidelines for the emerging area of Deep Sea Minerals. We completed in 2013 the development of regional guidance documents for international negotiations and delivered training to all Pacific island country members.

SPREP also strengthened its Global Environment Facility (GEF) support to members. We supported national GEF prioritization activities, ran GEF process familiarization training, supported national and regional project formulation and also provided technical advice and support at GEF Meetings. SPREP strengthened our internal processes by establishing a GEF Advisory Group to coordinate between divisions and ensure an integrated "all of SPREP" approach to GEF.

The challenges facing the Pacific are vast and require better cooperation between SPREP and its partners and donors. We recognize the critical role of partnerships to SPREP's work.

Over the last year relations were strengthened with a number of key partners. In particular SPREP was delighted by the decision by UNEP to expand its Pacific regional presence and to base this office at SPREP. We also strengthened cooperation with line agencies and ministries with SPREP's Metropolitan Members and during the past year have welcomed secondments supported by the Governments of France and Australia. Better partnerships such as these are dramatically improving SPREP's efforts to support efforts in Pacific Island countries and territories on environmental management and sustainable development.

I would also like to thank the staff of SPREP for their dedication and hard work over the last year and also thanks SPREP's host, the Government of Samoa, for its strong, generous and most welcome support. SPREP would like to thank all donors and partners for supporting and working with SPREP to make the Pacific environment a healthy and sustainable one. We value your support and increasing trust in our organisation. We will work hard to ensure that we have earned your trust and confidence. Thank you to SPREP Members who we as a Secretariat have worked hard to support. We appreciate your wise guidance and your partnership.

In conclusion, SPREP has made considerable progress over the last year in supporting our Pacific island members and implementing our Strategic Plan. We have achieved many practical on ground outcomes for the environment and for sustainable development in the Pacific region but many challenges remain. We will continue our efforts to make SPREP a more efficient and effective organizations that can better serve the needs and priorities of our Member countries and territories.

Annex B - List of all projects implemented in SPREP Member countries and territories in 2013, 2012, 2011, and 2010