

## Twenty-Fourth SPREP Meeting

17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> September 2013  
Apia, Samoa

### **AGENDA ITEM 9.1.3: Ecosystem based Adaptation as a core approach linking protection of ecosystem services, enhanced resilience, improved adaptation and sustainability**

#### **Purpose of Paper**

1. To seek approval of the Secretariat pursuing further Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) opportunities and to encourage Members to incorporate natural solutions in their climate change programmes.

#### **Background**

2. Ecosystem based adaptation integrates the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. EbA also addresses current land and sea resource management challenges that weaken the resilience of intact ecosystems. Whilst EbA activities are reasonably well represented in National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) in the Pacific, there are many challenges for implementing EbA in the region including the limited capacity for assessing benefits of EbA versus conventional adaptation alternatives.. Climate change adaptation (CCA) often uses engineering solutions that can be costly, have high environmental impact, and can adversely affect ecological services.

3. SPREP is currently implementing EbA projects in Choiseul Province, Solomon Islands (USAID funded), Lami Town, Fiji with the assistance of UNEP, and in Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu (AusAID ICCAI funding). These projects have applied a wide variety of approaches to EbA, which in turn has increased our experience and knowledge of this approach. These projects, as well as those of other organisations, have generated increased interest in pursuing adaptation approaches based on natural solutions in the Pacific Region.

4. UN--Habitat is supporting some Pacific Island urban centres in the development of climate change vulnerability assessments which focus on the urban poor (identified as being the most vulnerable communities) as well as urban infrastructure and broader urban systems. Whilst all cities recognize the importance of ecosystems to build urban resilience, so far cities have not fully embraced the concept of ecosystem-based adaptation as a key response to climate change. A project is therefore proposed to focus on incorporating ecosystem based adaptation components into urban adaptation programmes. This would build on the adaptation processes applied in Apia, Honiara, Port Moresby, Port Vila, Nadi and Lautoka.

5. Another project is also proposed to address these challenges by identifying and implementing EbA actions in different island ecosystems and livelihood situations. It will support government, communities and partners in Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands. Tools will be designed for EbA-relevant policy, planning and decision-making. The project will: integrate EbA with wider adaptation strategies; build capacity, including in addressing non-climate stresses; involve local communities; apply a multi-partner approach; build on existing good practices in NRM; and ensure effective communication and education.

6. EbA projects also provide an opportunity for better integration and cooperation between SPREPs divisions and also between multiple government sectors. It can also be an important component of an integrated adaptation approach that links disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.

#### **Recommendation**

7. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** current project proposals which implement Ecosystem based adaptation projects within PICTs;
- **direct** the Secretariat to pursue more EbA opportunities for PICTs and to work collaboratively across divisions to incorporate ecosystem adaptation options in conjunction with wider adaptation approaches; and
- **encourage** Members to pursue adaptation initiatives that incorporate natural solutions to adaptation.