

Twenty Fourth SPREP Meeting

17th -19th September 2013
Apia, Samoa

AGENDA ITEM 9.4.1: Update on Activities of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division Implemented through the Asian Caribbean Pacific Multilateral Environment Agreement (ACP MEA) Project

Purpose of Paper

1. To inform the Meeting of the activities carried out by the EMG Division since its formation and the implementation of the ACP MEA Project.
2. To seek feedback and guidance from the meeting on the work of the EMG Division.

Background

3. The Environmental Monitoring and Governance (EMG) Division was created to assist PICTs develop environmental governance and management frameworks that can facilitate sustainable development in the Pacific, in line with the SPREP Strategic Plan . EMG's focus is on improving capacity in environmental legislation, policy, planning, monitoring, reporting and access to finance. These are essential tools for ensuring sound environmental decisions are made in Pacific countries and territories. EMG's mandate cuts across all strategic priorities in SPREP, including: climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem management and waste management.
4. EMG assists members to address their national priorities and fulfil national and regional obligations under MEAs. At the global level we assist members to better engage with MEAs through regional preparation for global events like Conferences of the Parties, Rio+20 and SIDS 2014. EMG also assists in building the capacity of Members for negotiations through training and preparation of briefs.
5. EMG's main vehicle for implementing activities is through the European Union funded ACP-MEAs project. The ACP MEAs project is coordinated by UNEP with SPREP as the Pacific Hub. Other hubs are in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The project's aim is to build the capacity of the ACP members to implement and report on MEAs and to strengthen the regional hub's capacity to provide technical support. At the beginning of 2012, the Secretariat undertook an exercise to review and fully align the ACP MEAs project work plan with the EMG work programme.. The mid-term review of the project singled out SPREP as the best performed regional hub in terms of implementation of activities and sustainability.

6. The first phase of this 4 year project was to have been completed in April 2013 but will be now be completed in December 2013 because a number of partners requested extensions. Pacific hub activities were completed in May 2013 but we continue to assist UNEP with the implementation of their component of the project within the region. Partners held a terminal meeting of phase 1 of the project in Brussels in June 2013 where it was confirmed that there would be a second 4-year phase planned to start in October 2013.

7. The second phase of the ACP MEA Project will support all of the four key goals of the EMG, as outlined below regarding: (a) enabling frameworks; (b) mainstreaming; (c) building capacity; and (d) Monitoring and reporting

EMG Strategic Goal 1: Enabling Frameworks

8. Members pass environmental laws because they need legal sanctions to help address and resolve myriad environmental problems, including: littering, pesticide use, fossil fuel emissions, deforestation, wildlife exploitation, water conservation. A number of legislative reviews have been undertaken by SPREP, including in Nauru, Marshall Islands (institutional reform laws) and Samoa (waste regulations).

9. Safeguarding the quality of our natural resources and environment requires effective environmental policy and planning systems and processes. SPREP assists its members to strengthen at three levels – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) at project level, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) at sub-national or sector level and the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) at the national level. This includes the development of guidelines to assist national regulators; and facilitation of in-country EIA, SEA and IEA trainings and advisory support for addressing issues of concern (e.g. deep sea mining and climate change).

10. Many MEAs have financial mechanisms. The primary financing mechanism in the Pacific region is through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). SPREP Members continue to face challenges with access to GEF financing and SPREP assists with their national GEF prioritization process as well as formulation of national and regional proposals. SPREP has responded to a call from members to seek GEF Implementing Agency status and we are currently working towards meeting GEF requirements, as discussed in agenda item 6.2. The Secretariat has strengthened internal coordination of GEF related activities and strategic engagement through the formation of a GEF Advisory Group.

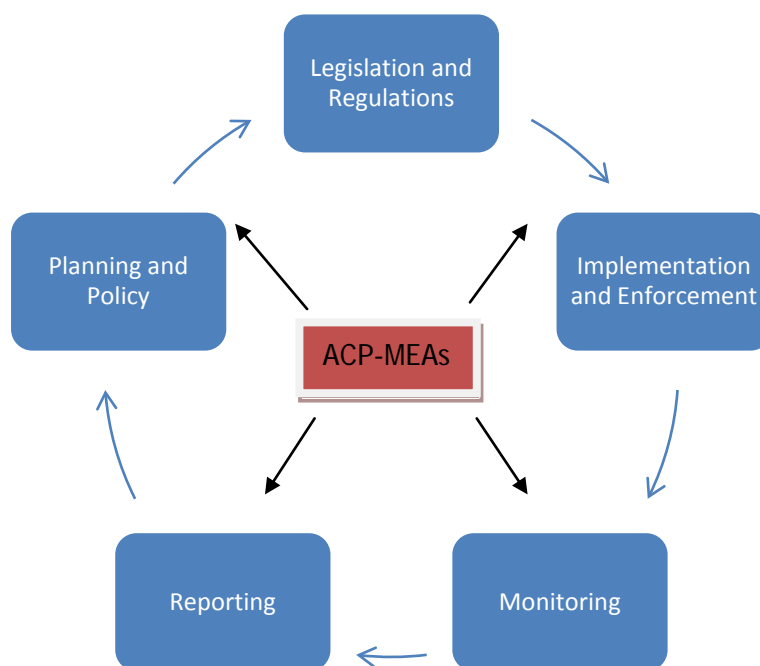
EMG Strategic Goal 2: Mainstreaming

11. The Secretariat can only effectively mainstream if first we have our own “environmental governance” house in order. Our current approach is to concentrate on revising the National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) put in place in the 1990s. This integrates the many thematic MEA plans into an overarching national environment planning document that forms the core of the environment pillar of the national development plan or national sustainable development strategy (NSDS). The NEMS also provides details of national action towards achieving the SPREP Strategic Plan. EMG has successfully completed this exercise in Kiribati and the Cook Islands and is currently working with Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu.

12. Sustainable Development efforts are coordinated through the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) that SPREP co-chairs with the Pacific Islands Forum. The SDWG coordinates support to countries for the Post Rio+20 process including the preparations for the 2014 SIDS Conference to be held in Samoa. The SDWG has a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) Partnership which also covers green growth that assists members develop their NSDS and green growth strategies. Gender issues are incorporated into all of our programmes and activities.

EMG Strategic Goal 3: Building Capacity

13. Our work is primarily carried out through in-country technical assistance and workshops and this approach allows us to build national capacity through work towards producing national products to meet MEA obligations like the legislation, NEMS and SoE.



14. A GEF Capacity Building Project proposal developed with UNEP was approved in December 2012 and an initial 18 month grant has been secured to carry out consultation with members to develop a detailed project document and work programme. This project is planned to start in late 2014.

EMG Strategic Goal 4: Monitoring and Reporting:

15. The better the quality of information, the better environmental plans, policies and legislation can protect important resources. Environmental monitoring and reporting capacity varies with smaller Members heavily reliant on external agencies whereas larger members tend to have more internal capacity. Overall environmental monitoring and reporting capacity is under-developed in pacific countries and territories and requires strengthening, both nationally and regionally.

16. National and Regional State of Environment (SoE) assessments forms the basis for a Pacific monitoring and reporting framework approved at the 23rd SPREP Meeting through: 1) the development of consistent Minimum Environmental Indicators (MEIs) that can be used over the long term to measure performance and track trends; 2) developing monitoring networks to collect relevant information for indicators and 3) the development of database and data management tools to manage these MEIs. EMG is currently piloting this approach in Fiji and Samoa to complete SoE reports for 2013. Over the next two years, EMG staff will work with several additional countries to complete a minimum of five national SoE reports and a regional report by 2015.

ACP MEA Phase 2

17. For the Phase 2 beginning in October 2013, SPREP as the Pacific Hub has been allocated 1 Million Euros over 4 years to continue with the support it has provided to countries through phase 1 of the project. The EU has requested that the focus of phase 2 be on biodiversity and waste management. Our activities will assist members to: review and reformulate their NEMS and SoE; set up environmental databases; and strengthen EIA processes. SPREP is currently negotiating with other project partners to increase support for chemical management and biodiversity planning activities in the region.

Recommendation

18. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the activities carried out by the EMG Division through Phase 1 of the ACP MEA Project;
- **note** the proposed areas of work for Phase 2; and
- **provide advice** on how the EMG Division can improve its services to members.