



**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

**COUNCIL OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PACIFIC  
FORTY-SECOND MEETING**

FFA Headquarters  
Honiara, Solomon Islands  
13 February 2017

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Opening and Welcoming Remarks**

1. The CROP Executives 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting was convened at the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) Headquarters in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The meeting was chaired by the Secretary General PIFS and attended by the: Director General FFA, General Manager PASO, Director PPA and Deputy; Deputy Secretary General PIFS; Director-General SPC and staff; Director-General SPREP and Deputy; Finance Manager SPTO; Vice-Chancellor and President USP and staff; and FFA and PIFS staff. The Senior Technical Adviser for the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) to the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund also attended. Mr Garry Wiseman was invited to the meeting in his capacity as facilitator for the review of the CROP Charter, currently underway.
2. DG FFA welcomed CROP Executives to FFA and Honiara and noted that hosting the meeting in Honiara would highlight the development challenges of the Solomon Islands and the work of regional organisations in supporting members to address such challenges. CROP Heads expressed appreciation for FFA's hospitality.
3. The Chair welcomed CROP Executives, CROP representatives and accompanying colleagues to the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP meeting, and invited comments on the agenda, which was then confirmed.

**Summary of key discussion outcomes from the CROP Heads Retreat**

4. The Chair thanked CROP Executives for a productive Retreat on Sunday 12 February, 2017, and invited Garry Wiseman, as Retreat facilitator, to present the main themes of the discussion. This included:

***CROP and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism***

- The ongoing need for clarity regarding the role of CROP agencies in supporting the implementation of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* processes and Forum Leaders' priorities. Alignment across governing councils is central to this.
- Recognition that responsibility for the implementation of Leaders' initiatives sits also with national governments and other stakeholders, where relevant.

- As CROP agencies are also responsible for regional activities beyond the Leaders' priorities, CROP can play an enabling role where implementation may be undertaken by other parties.
- CROP shared views on the implementation of the *Framework* and a planned 2018 review of the process.

### ***Resourcing CROP coordination***

- Generally, CROP competition for resources is reducing with the strong example of the good coordination in support of the oceans work for the region.
- CROP's ability to respond to Leaders' priorities, given existing work programmes and functions, will require additional resources. In this regard, there was reaffirmation of the importance of collaboration between CROP agencies, particularly in sharing resources.
- Executives also discussed the importance of ensuring coordination occurs at all levels within institutions, and amongst government officials at the national level, to underscore CROP coordination.
- A specific and immediate opportunity to share resources is in the development of a joint CROP communication strategy to provide weekly CROP updates publically. In particular, the value of a CROP communications strategy on the UN Oceans Summit process, which should commence immediately. Executives agreed to also provide regular communication to Leaders, through the CROP Chair, on the topic of the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)* and other matters.
- "One CROP" approach as a driver of CROP coordination in 2017, in particular in preparing for the UN Oceans Summit, as well as in coordinating support for the Pacific at COP23 and in preparation for the APEC 2018 meeting and SDGs Roadmap.

### ***CROP Reporting to Forum Leaders***

- CROP welcomed the opportunity for a meeting with Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in September 2017, to report on progress against Leaders' decisions, as well as to be proactive in bringing emerging regional issues to the table.
- Recognition that the non-state actors' regular dialogue with Leaders is also a valuable platform for offering an independent perspective on regional priorities.
- Noting the broader issues on resourcing for CROP network, expectations of CROP delivery on the regional agenda are not commensurate with the regional financing reality. Executives encouraged a CROP conversation with Leaders about resources and resourcing. The CROP Chair **tasked** PIFS to explore the feasibility of expanding a paper on sustainable financing for PIFS to include CROP agencies.

### ***Other regional matters***

- Recognising the implications on the programme and policy work of CROP agencies, CROP discussed how best to manage relations with other regional agencies and non-state actors, and shared the different approaches adopted by some agencies, including MOUs to enable greater alignment and better understanding of the differing agency mandates.
- Discussion of the merits of developing a regional development strategy for the region, building on the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* and incorporating, national priorities.

5. Executives welcomed the opportunity to participate in a retreat to deliberate a way forward for a strengthened role of CROP agencies in the implementation of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and agreed the importance of having a tightly structured CROP system that efficiently and effectively delivers on the regional agenda. Executives **agreed** to provide a paper to FOC outlining the proposed agenda and discussion with Leaders in 2017 and to also table a horizon scanning paper via official process for Forum Leaders identifying 2-3 issues of emerging concern/priority for consideration by Forum Members. They **tasked** PIFS to provide advice to CROP out of session regarding how to proceed.

### **Review of the CROP Charter**

6. Garry Wiseman presented the key findings and draft recommendations of the CROP Charter review. CROP Executives acknowledged the considerable consultation and analysis contained in the review and discussed and considered the feasibility of the draft recommendations of the CROP Charter review, for reflection in the final report. They discussed the importance of a revised Charter that helps achieve the purpose of CROP and which strengthens a whole-of-region approach in the context of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*. Executives emphasised the need for coherence and a whole-of-country approach from countries to support a ‘one CROP’ approach, acknowledging that if countries have a stronger relationship with CROP, this in turn strengthens the ultimate authority of CROP when engaging with partners. Executives considered options for more inclusive or restrictive membership requirements, noting the potential impacts on existing membership arrangements. They sought further clarity on the proposed streamlined CROP coordination mechanisms.

7. The Executives **tasked** Garry Wiseman to further revise the CROP Charter recommendations, working with the CROP Review team, taking on board the issues discussed, to be shared out of session for consideration. They noted PIFS’ advice that final endorsement of a revised CROP Charter would be at the Leaders’-level, and **agreed** with the importance of socialising revisions and recommendations with countries in advance of the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.

### **Progress of Actions from 41<sup>st</sup> CROP**

8. The CROP Deputies presented a summary of their discussions on 12 February, 2017 regarding progress of actions from the 41<sup>st</sup> CROP ([Annex 1](#)). The Deputies reassured Executives of the clear allocation of CROP agency roles and responsibilities in implementing the 47<sup>th</sup> PIF decisions and the importance of providing regular communication to countries about CROP’s role. The Executives **endorsed** the 2017 CROP Action Plan and committed to providing a 6-month progress update to countries in preparation for reporting to the 48<sup>th</sup> PIF Leaders meeting (see [Annex 3](#)). The Executives also **agreed** that there would be a standing item at each CROP Council meeting following up on action taken on previous meeting decisions.

### **Standing Agenda Item: Progress Update on the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund**

9. Executives welcomed an update from the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) and discussed recent communication from the EU Delegation which advised of an EU aid effectiveness mission to the region from February to April 2017, as well as the conduct of a limited mid-term review of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF-Pacific Regional Indicative Program (PRIP). The RAO noted that overall

the working relationship with the EU Delegation is now good, and that in the last quarter of 2016, the Support to the RAO (SP2RAO) had been able to use its own resources to support training courses in Budgetary Support and Blending that had benefitted all of the NAO's of the Pacific ACP (PACP) countries in the region. He further noted that under the 2017 RAO work plan, resources will be used to support international meetings where ensuring a Pacific regional presence will be crucial. These include meetings on the SDGs, preparation for the Oceans conference in June, attendance at the forthcoming IMO conference in June/ July and one of the three key meetings on Disaster Mitigation and Resilience. In addition, he was very much of the view that the region was now on the "last lap" for getting EU programmes, through the Quality Support Group (QSG) 2 step and ready for financing. This particularly applied to the Fisheries Project, which is of major concern to the meetings hosts- the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). He also reminded the meeting of the EU commitment to get all EDF11 PRIP programmes through the QSG2 step before the end of April, 2017.

10. However, on the 10<sup>th</sup> February, the EU Delegation had called an Extraordinary meeting of the Working Group to monitor progress on the programming and implementation of EDF11. At the meeting, they proposed a rebalancing of the EDF11 funding based on recent programming experience and feedback from their headquarters in Brussels. They suggested that €15 million be taken from the €50 million, Priority Area 1 'Regional Economic Integration (REI)' and that an additional €6 million be given to 3.1 Public Financial Management and €6 million to 3.2 'Gender and Human Rights, with a final €3 million being given to continue the EDF10, Non State Actors (NSA's) Programme which, at the moment is due to come to an end in late 2018. The overall impact would be to reduce the overall allocation for REI to €35 million. This was all set out in a letter from the EUD dated the 10<sup>th</sup> February, in which they also mentioned additional funds would be coming in for REI and the Private Sector, via an additional input of €20 million from Intra-ACP funding.

11. Executives expressed their frustration with the programming of the EDF11 funds to date. They discussed the implications of the letter and a rebalancing of project allocations and **agreed** that this would need to be referred to Member States via the Regional Steering Committee for their consideration, before a formal response could be given. However, the EU had asked for a response by February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 as it would be important to notify the various TA teams coming in to finalise Priority Area 1 (REI) and 3.2 Gender, as well as the working group involved in 3.1 PFM, so that they would know the final allocations in preparing Action Documents (AD's) for QSG2. Executives therefore **tasked** PIFS to correspond with members immediately regarding the EU's proposed reallocation.

12. The TA to the RAO also tabled a communication received on 7 February 2017 from the EUD regarding the Mid-Term Review of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF. With regard the aid effectiveness mission, there would be consultation visits to Tonga, Nauru, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Fiji and New Caledonia from 6 February – 28 April. It is likely that a stakeholder conference will follow in September 2017. Executives expressed concern as to the value of a Mid-Term review at this time, given that not one euro had been disbursed. Executives **requested** the CROP Chair and RAO to convey these concerns to the EU as part of the requested two-page summary of the region's strategic objectives for 2018-2020. They also noted that the Secretary General of PIFS would have an opportunity to discuss this and other matters with the EU Director General of Development Cooperation, Mr. Manserviri at a meeting scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017.

## **CROP Communications**

13. The Executives noted the CROP Deputies' recommendations regarding options to improve CROP communication, engagement and visibility. They **agreed** that the CROP Secretariat coordinate the development of a CROP communication plan and for all minutes of CROP and working groups to be made available online to improve CROP's transparency. They **agreed** to make available agency resources, where feasible, to support the CROP Secretariat in developing and implementing a CROP communication and engagement strategy.

### **Analysis of Governance and Financing Options for the Pursuit of Pacific Regionalism**

14. The Forum Secretariat thanked CROP agencies for the assistance with validating financial data for the study and provided a progress update on expenditure analysis through CROP agencies. Executives considered the Secretariat's discussion paper regarding regional financing through CROP agencies. They identified possible implications for CROP arrangements, that would need to be addressed through further and wider discussion with respective memberships, including i the need for additional resourcing to implement Forum Leaders' initiatives; sustainable financing; addressing the common misconception that CROP agencies capture a disproportionate share of total regional Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Executives **agreed** to develop a CROP-wide cost recovery policy and a broader conversation with countries. Executives thanked PIFS for the consultation and analysis to date and **agreed** to further engage the CROP Governing Council Chairs in 2017 through the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for the analysis of governance and finance options for Pacific regionalism, to discuss future regional governance options.

### **Other Business**

15. SPREP raised the issue of climate change mandates. Executives discussed the importance of recognising the technical and political aspects of climate change, requiring the participation of several agencies on this cross-cutting regional issue. Executives **tasked** Deputies to convene a meeting to discuss this matter in more detail.

16. The Chair reiterated the importance of coordinated CROP support to the Pacific Ambassadors in New York, in support of the UN High-Level Conference on Oceans to be held in New York in June 2017, as well as other key events at the UN during the year. PIFS **confirmed** it would advise the Forum Chair representative in New York – the Federated States of Micronesia – of CROP coordination efforts.

### **Closing remarks**

17. The Executives thanked FFA for hosting the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP and Garry Wiseman for facilitating the CROP Retreat. The actions arising from the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP are at [Annex 2](#). The Executives agreed to have three meetings in 2017 and agreed to explore opportunities to meet in the margins of other regional meetings, as appropriate. The FFA DG expressed appreciation to Executives for travelling to Honiara.

**Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat**  
**13 February 2017**  
**Suva, Fiji**

## ANNEX 1

### Progress of Actions Arising from 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> CROP meetings

All agreed actions arising from the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> CROP meetings have been completed, save for the following carryover actions relating to the 40<sup>th</sup> CROP of August 2016.

Relevant Paragraph	Action	Timeframe	Lead CROP Agency	Progress as at 13 February 2017
<b>Carryover Actions from the 40<sup>th</sup> CROP</b>				
<b>5 - Progress Update: 11<sup>th</sup> EDF</b>	a) RAO to provide an out-of-session update to CROP regarding the implications of Brexit on the future drawdown of the 11 <sup>th</sup> EDF	Final quarter of 2016	a) RAO	a) IN PROGRESS
<b>13 – Other Business (a) CROP Agency Mandates</b>	a) Executives agreed to update the 2012 document on regional climate change stakeholders, and tasked the Technical Working Group to work on an abbreviated version to climate change and finance roles and responsibilities.	Final quarter of 2016 – Revised deadline to be after CROP Deputies have met to discuss climate change mandate (first quarter of 2017)	a) WARD	a) Contributions to an updated document requested several times by PIFS since August 2016, with no feedback received. Meeting of the Pacific Resilience Partnership from 6-8 February, 2017 developed governance arrangements and stakeholder mapping in support of the FRDP. The CROP Sub-Committee on Climate Change is likely to be absorbed in this structure

## ANNEX 2

### Actions Arising from the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP

Relevant Paragraph	Action	Timeframe	Lead CROP Agency
5 – CROP paper to Forum Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Executives <b>agreed</b> to provide a paper to FOC outlining the proposed agenda and discussion with Leaders in 2017 and to also table a horizon scanning paper via official process for Forum Leaders identifying 2-3 issues of emerging concern/priority for consideration by Forum Members.</li> <li>b) They <b>tasked</b> PIFS to provide advice to CROP out of session regarding how to proceed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) By end June 2017 (for submission to the pre-Forum FOC)</li> <li>b) By end March 2017</li> </ul>	CROP Secretariat/PIFS
7 – Review of the CROP Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Executives <b>tasked</b> Garry Wiseman to further revise the CROP Charter recommendations, working with the CROP Review team, to be shared out of session for consideration.</li> <li>b) They noted PIFS advice that final endorsement of a revised CROP Charter would be at the Leaders’ level, and <b>agreed</b> with the importance of socialising revisions and recommendations with countries in advance of the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) By mid-March 2017 (in preparation for discussion with Joint Steering Committee of the Analysis of Regional Governance and Financing)</li> <li>b) March – August 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) PIFS to facilitate revisions by Garry Wiseman in consultation with the CROP Review Team (FFA, PIFS, SPC, SPREP and USP)</li> <li>b) All CROP agencies</li> </ul>
8 – Progress of Actions from the 41 <sup>st</sup> CROP	The Executives <b>endorsed</b> the 2017 CROP Action Plan and committed to providing a 6-month progress update to countries in preparation for reporting to the 48 <sup>th</sup> PIF Leaders meeting (see <a href="#">Annex 3</a> ).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By end March (6-month progress report)</li> <li>By end June (progress report through pre-Forum FOC)</li> </ul>	CROP Secretariat/PIFS to coordinate
11, 12 – Progress Update: 11 <sup>th</sup> EDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Executives .. discussed the implications of ... a rebalancing of project allocations and <b>agreed</b> that this would need to be referred to Member</li> </ul>	Correspondence to be provided within a week of the 42 <sup>nd</sup> CROP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) PIFS/RAO</li> <li>b) PIFS/RAO</li> </ul>

	<p>States via the Regional Steering Committee for their consideration, before a formal response could be given. Executives therefore <b>tasked</b> PIFS to correspond with members immediately regarding the EU's proposed reallocation.</p> <p>b) Executives <b>requested</b> the CROP Chair and RAO to convey their concerns regarding the value of a mid-term review of 11<sup>th</sup> EDF at this time to the EU as part of the requested two-page summary of the region's strategic objectives for 2018-2020.</p>		
13 – CROP Communications	<p>Executives:</p> <p>a) <b>agreed</b> that the CROP Secretariat coordinate the development of a CROP communication plan and for all minutes of CROP and working groups to be made available online to improve CROP's transparency.</p> <p>b) <b>agreed</b> to make available agency resources, where feasible, to support the CROP Secretariat in developing and implementing a CROP communication and engagement strategy.</p>	By June 2017	<p>a) PIFS to coordinate through informal network of CROP communications units</p> <p>b) All agencies</p>
14 – Progress Update: Analysis of Governance and Financing	<p>Executives:</p> <p>a) <b>agreed</b> to further engaging the CROP Governing Council Chairs in 2017 through the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for the analysis of governance and finance options for Pacific regionalism, to discuss future regional governance options.</p> <p>b) <b>agreed</b> to develop a CROP-wide cost recovery policy and a broader conversation with countries.</p>	<p>a) By April 2017 (tentative, subject to country feedback on timing of JSC meeting)</p> <p>b) Throughout 2017</p>	<p>a) PIFS to convene, in consultation with CROP</p> <p>b) CROP Harmonisation group to progress work on a cost recovery policy</p>
15, 16 – Other Business	Executives:	a) By end March 2017	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>tasked</b> Deputies to convene a meeting to discuss climate change mandates in more detail.</li> <li>b) PIFS <b>confirmed</b> it would advise the Forum Chair representative in New York – the Federated States of Micronesia – of CROP coordination efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Within a week of 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) All Deputies (through the WARD)</li> <li>b) PIFS to coordinate input from CROP and advice to New York</li> </ul>
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