

## **Country feedback from Desk Officers**

### **Republic of the Marshall Islands –**

1. Having a SPREP Desk officer in RMI has been beneficial for the host country and SPREP. Unlike FSM, RMI did not have a desk officer for at least one year and therefore RMI are now in the process of reconnecting and re-establishing in-country networking and partnerships. The RMI desk officer has picked up a few of the SPREP in country projects since February 2017.
2. There is no doubt that without a SPREP officer based in the RMI, it would have been very difficult and costly for SPREP to accomplish its mission and/or projects. Due to the current setting of contracts, roles and relationships with the host country and most importantly recognising the human capacity challenges, this has provided opportunities for the desk officer to offer constant support and advice with the daily operations and in some cases, take the lead in partnership with the host country to progress initiatives.
3. The RMI desk officer has managed to secure a few outstanding SPREP-RMI matters and assisted with current and ongoing projects including:
  - Presented the RMI State of Environment in the recent RMI National Oceans Symposium
  - Government endorsement of RMI State of Environment Report 2016
  - Coordinated and provided feedback on the draft RMI NEMS
  - Securing outstanding funds from RMI to SPREP (5th National Report Contract)
  - Assist with SPREP in-country missions
  - Assisted with PACWASTE ULABs pilot project including the first shipment for the project
  - Coordinated PACWASTE Healthcare Waste training
4. Given the importance of the environment, the presence of SPREP enables direct assistance to RMI that continues to make an impact and can only expand on issues ranging from climate change, biodiversity, environmental governance and waste management. Having a country presence and providing direct technical advice and assistance does make a mutual difference for the benefit of both RMI and SPREP.

### **Federated States of Micronesia –**

5. The FSM Desk Officer reports very positive feedback from counterpart agency OEMM, and notes that the signing of the Host Country Agreement and SPREP support in the successful bid for the USD8m Adaptation Fund FSM project has raised partner government expectations for further SPREP engagement and project activities.
6. FSM presents a particular challenge to SPREP's regional linkage trial in that it comprises 4 separate States which require separate engagement with any SPREP project activities and an increased travel/operating budget. Until earlier this year, the Pohnpei-based Desk Officer had neither a reference in his TOR to wider SPREP liaison duties, nor operating budget. While the TOR is now added, along with a small operating budget, the Desk Officer sees a need to resource a national FSM strategy to include all 4 States in SPREP project liaison.
7. The Desk Officer is co-located with SPC in their FSM offices resulting in both cost savings and CROP coordination.

### **Sub-regional Linkages**

8. Both FSM and RMI Desk Officers have proposed a strategic plan for SPREP's engagement with the Nth Pacific sub-region. Separately Micronesian Leaders have asked SPREP to consider a North Pacific office. These suggestions should be considered in the context of the on-going discussion on country and territory action plans.

### **Issues and lessons raised by Desk Officers for consideration of the future of SPREP's regional linkages**

#### **Resourcing for the future:**

9. A number of resourcing issues were raised by core-funded Desk Officers and include:
  - On-going core funding for the Northern offices is dependent on strong core funding for the Secretariat.
  - Resourcing of actions requested over and above core-funded JD responsibilities is also dependent on sustained core funding.
  - Best impact has been when co-located in a counterpart Government agency.