

Agenda Item 7.2: Consideration of SPREP Accreditation as a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Implementing Agency**Purpose:**

1. To inform Members of the recent 71st Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council Meeting decision on Agency Expansion under GEF-9.
2. To provide Members with an overview of the opportunities, strategic benefits, resource implications and next steps associated with becoming a GEF Implementing Agency.
3. To seek Members' support for the Secretariat to re-commence the process for it to be an accredited GEF Agency under the newly approved GEF Implementing Agency Expansion Procedure.

Background:

4. SPREP Members have long supported strengthening Pacific access to multilateral environmental and climate finance mechanisms. At the direction of Members, SPREP:
 - 4.1 Had successfully secured accreditation as a Regional Implementing Entity of the Adaptation Fund in 2013 and as an Accredited Entity of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2015 (with subsequent reaccreditation to both funds respectively in 2026 and 2021); and
 - 4.2 Had commenced in 2011 the process for becoming an accredited GEF Implementing Agency as directed by the Twenty-third SPREP Meeting in 2011 which included a comprehensive accreditation application process and the undertaking of a GEF Medium Sized Project which supported the strengthening of SPREP's institutional capacity required to be a GEF Implementing Agency particularly on key governance, accountability, and safeguard policies.
5. In 2016, the GEF Council decided to defer a decision on the future of its accreditation pilot towards the end of the GEF-6 cycle. Notwithstanding the decision of the GEF Council, the Secretariat continued its institutional strengthening efforts to meet the accreditation standards of the GEF. These investments have also strengthened SPREP's institutional capacity and its ability to manage and deliver international financing, including its accreditation to the GCF and Adaptation Fund.
6. The Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting in 2016 noted the GEF Council's decision on future of the GEF accreditation and directed the Secretariat to continue to follow up and prepare its application in due time.
7. At its 71st meeting in June 2026, the GEF Council approved a new Agency Expansion Procedure under GEF-9. The decision seeks to strengthen access to GEF resources particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) through the addition of new complementary Agencies and includes a fast-track assessment pathway for entities accredited to both the GCF and Adaptation Fund. Refer details in WP7.2 Att.1.

Strategic Benefits

8. The GEF Council's decision presents a timely opportunity for SPREP to advance a long-standing objective of Members (dated back to 2011) to strengthen Pacific access to GEF resources. As the Pacific region's mandated intergovernmental environmental organisation, SPREP has extensive experience supporting Members with environmental programming, project development, implementation and access to international finance, including through its accredited entity roles with the GCF and Adaptation Fund.
9. Accreditation as a GEF Implementing Agency would expand the implementation options available to Pacific SIDS, strengthen support to Operational Focal Points and enable SPREP to play a greater role in supporting Member priorities under the GEF. It would also be strongly complemented by SPREP's existing implementing agency role across other multilateral financing mechanisms, and contribute to a more coordinated and responsive regional financing architecture.

Institutional Considerations and Next Steps

10. The Secretariat will retain the function to continue to serve as an Executing Agency, where this is the most strategic and effective delivery modality. Any decision to undertake an Implementing Agency role would be strategically considered based on areas of clear added value to Members, strategic alignment with regional and national priorities, improved access to GEF resources, and complementarity with GCF, AF and relevant multilateral funding mechanisms.
11. Attaining GEF Implementing Agency role may require additional institutional capacity to undertake agency-level responsibilities, including quality assurance, safeguards oversight, portfolio supervision and compliance functions. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the GEF Secretariat on the process for SPREP to be an accredited GEF Implementing Agency including any key assessments and seeking assistance to ensure SPREP meet the standards and requirements to be a GEF Implementing Agency.
12. The Secretariat will also continue discussions with development partners (including key bilateral partners who have supported the call for SPREP consideration in the next GEF Agency expansion, at GEF Council level) regarding support for any necessary institutional strengthening.

Recommendation:

13. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Note** the GEF Council decision on Agency Expansion under GEF-9;
 - 2) **Support** the Secretariat's efforts to undertake the necessary institutional readiness and resource mobilisation activities to progress accreditation; and
 - 3) **Endorse** the Secretariat pursuing accreditation as a GEF Agency under the approved Agency Expansion Procedure.