

## **Agenda Item 8.4: Enhancing Pacific Island Countries and Territories access and use of environmental data**

### **Purpose of paper**

1. Update Members on the progress of developing the Pacific Environmental Data project following the successful implementation of the Inform Project;
2. Seek Members support to continue to promote and use the national environmental data portals and other national processes established over the past 4 years; and
3. Request Members endorsement to contribute a portion of their national GEF 8 STAR allocation to support the implementation of the proposed Pacific Environmental Data Project.

### **Background**

4. One of the priorities of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 is for SPREP to strengthen information, knowledge, and communications systems that get the right information to the right people at the right time and influence positive organizational, behavioural, and environmental change.
5. SPREP through the Inform project developed the Pacific Environmental Portal Network connecting countries and territories to the regional hub and has worked with the 14 Pacific Island nations to increase the use and availability of data to assist in decision making and reporting.
6. Since its inception, the Inform project has produced/established supporting guidebooks, e-learning platforms, and strengthened data analysis and reporting frameworks, data portals, as well as planning frameworks. The data portals have played a crucial role in providing data and information used to produce national State of Environment (SOE) reports and National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS). It has also been used to produce national reports to Multilateral Environment Agreements and reports required under national legislations. The network of data portals has increased the exchange and availability of information between data providers and users.
7. The Inform project is ending in December 2022, and the Secretariat is now developing a scaled up Pacific Environmental Data project following the decision of the 30th SPREP meeting. The Secretariat acknowledges the guidance provided by Members on the current project concept. Refer WP.8.4/Att.1

8. The Secretariat is recruiting an Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Advisor to continue key environmental monitoring and reporting services which were delivered by the Inform Project. This will complement the Pacific Environmental Data project which is being developed.
9. The Secretariat is also investigating interim support from the African/Caribbean/Pacific Multilateral Environmental Programme Phase 3 (ACP/MEA 3) to continue some activities of the Inform Project from 2023 such as the development of State of Environment reports; training on GIS; Indicator Reporting tool and Pacific Environment Portal Database.
10. Unfortunately, the GEF global funding window for capacity building that was used to fund Inform Project no longer exists. This would mean finding other potential avenues including through national GEF STAR allocation which seems to be the most feasible option.
11. The proposed full size Pacific Environment Data project will require a contribution from programming Member countries' GEF STAR allocation between 200 to 400 thousand US Dollars from each of the 14 Pacific island countries which would give a total of between 2.8m and 5.5 million to implement the project over four years.
12. The proposed project will allow the Secretariat and Member countries to build on the groundwork established by the Inform project with a specific focus on key critical areas that countries have identified such as environmental standards, field data collection methodology, expanding environmental data management to wider sectors, enhanced GIS use and application, and data advocacy. This proposed full-size project will also further enhance environmental outcomes, streamline reporting to MEAs and SDGs while increasing data availability for both environmental and climate change adaptation planning.
13. Without credible and up to date information and data, it will be difficult to make well informed decisions. Thus, the country GEF 8 STAR financial contribution to the proposed Pacific Environment project is vital as the Pacific Environmental Data portal serves as the main access point to the collection of environmental data and information for the Pacific island region which encompasses the SPREP's key programme areas on oceans, islands and ecosystem services, environmental governance, climate change resilience, and waste management and pollution control.

## Recommendation

14. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Support** the proposed Pacific Environmental Data project concept that will scale up the outcomes and results of the Inform Project
  - 2) **Urge** Members to continue to promote and use the national environmental data portals and national processes established over the past four years; and
  - 3) **Endorse** the contribution of a portion of Member countries' national GEF 8 STAR allocation to support the implementation of the proposed Pacific Environmental Data Project.

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22 June 2022