

First Executive Board Meeting

Apia, Samoa
10-11 September 2018

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AGENDA ITEM 6.4: Strengthening Regional Linkages Update

Purpose:

1. To update Members on work to strengthen the regional presence and linkages of SPREP.

Background

2. SPREP's regional office presence in 2017 was enabled by two different approaches:
 - Project-funded positions in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands
 - Core funded technical desk officers in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI)
3. Following the 2017 Micronesian Presidents' Summit, the Leaders directed SPREP to open a sub-regional office in RMI to support Micronesian Members in achieving their priorities. SM28 considered this request and endorsed investigations by the Secretariat including developing a business case and budget. Members agreed, however, that the funding to the office was limited to the allocated 2017 core budget for the FSM and RMI technical desk officer positions. In 2018 the Micronesian Presidents' Summit restated their decision, and the current list of Members wishing to be serviced through the new sub-regional office now includes FSM, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Northern Marianas, Palau, and RMI.

Progress to date:

Vanuatu

4. With implementation of the GCF Vanuatu Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Project, the Vanuatu office has grown with three additional SPREP staff as well as the existing Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) Vanuatu Country Manager, Vanuatu Project Officer and volunteer. Further staff from other projects are expected to be recruited in the near future and a larger office space has been leased. SPREP is currently waiting on final approval from the German Ministry for Environment International Climate Initiative (BMU IKI) for a Blue Carbon ecosystems focused project in partnership with GIZ, which will also base two staff in Vanuatu. Additionally, it is also planned to base the Melanesian sub-region EU EDF-11 funded PacWaste Plus officer in Vanuatu.

Fiji

5. The PEBACC project will continue to 2020 providing overall project management and implementation for Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. A project sub-office has also been opened on Taveuni island to support implementation activities. The BMU IKI Blue Carbon ecosystems project will be headquartered in Fiji, with three project staff based in Suva. It is also possible that the EDF-11 PEUMP SPREP By-catch and Integrated Ecosystem Management project may be based in Fiji along with a Regional Technical Officer from PacWaste Plus.

Northern sub-regional office

6. Negotiations are underway for funding support from Northern Members wishing to benefit from the establishment of this office, as well as from current SPREP projects, or projects soon to begin operating in the North Pacific.
7. An indicative office budget has been prepared and shared with Northern Members (Annex 1).
8. As directed by SM28, only the annual US \$100,000 of SPREP core budget initially allocated to support the office in FSM and RMI will be available from SPREP. RMI has pledged US \$20,000 per annum, leaving a funding gap of US \$103,000 per annum.
9. It was the view of Members at SM28, that in order to raise funding for the office from external sources, Members seeking to derive benefit from the operations of the office will need to provide some level of funding support. An equal share by FSM, Palau, Nauru, Guam, CNMI, and Kiribati of the funding gap equates to US\$17,000 annually each. PacWaste Plus will position a Regional Technical Officer in Micronesia.

Recommendations:

10. The Executive Board is invited to:
 - **note** the Vanuatu SPREP country office is providing strengthened project and liaison support to Vanuatu for the GCF Vanuatu Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Project and the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change Project in Vanuatu, with anticipated additional staff from other projects;
 - **note** the Fiji office will continue to be supported by the existing PEBACC and forthcoming projects and continues to provide strengthened project and liaison support to Fiji and partner agencies of SPREP located in Suva, with anticipated additional staff from other projects;
 - **note** that the establishment and operation of a Northern sub-regional SPREP office represents a major financial and logistical undertaking for the Secretariat, and that a decision needs to be made to enable the Secretariat to sustain a viable presence; and
 - **urge** Members seeking to benefit from the office to provide appropriate financial commitment to its operation.