

**Independent Corporate Review
of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)**



Final Report

Submitted to the SPREP Council

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June 22, 2008

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June 22, 2008

Ms Lorilee L. Crisostomo
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Dear Ms Crisostomo:

Independent Corporate Review of SPREP

On behalf of the six person Review Team, I have much pleasure in providing you with a copy of our report. The report addresses the tasks we were to undertake, as specified in the Terms of Reference developed and approved by the SPREP Council. We have provided the SPREP Secretariat with a copy of our report, for translation and distribution to SPREP Members and other relevant parties. We understand the report will be discussed at the next meeting of the SPREP Council, to be held in Pohnpei in September, 2008.

While not included as a formal recommendation, we suggest that specific steps be taken to help ensure that Members and other national stakeholders are fully aware of the results of the Review, and of our recommendations. This would assist them to come to the 2008 SPREP Meeting fully informed, and hence well prepared to engage in robust debate on the report's findings and recommendations. One suggestion is that arrangements be made for the three sub-regional members of the Review Team to visit each of the member countries and territories in their respective sub-regions prior to the SPREP Meeting. If accepted, this would require an early decision and follow-up action by you as Chair of the SPREP Council. We do make several other suggestions that would also help ensure that the report's recommendations, and their possible implementation, are given careful consideration at the next SPREP Meeting.

I look forward to presenting the report to Members at the SPREP Meeting in September, and responding to questions and comments.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Team can be of further assistance.

On behalf of the Team,



John E. Hay
Team Leader

Executive Summary

1. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme¹ (SPREP)² was established in the 1970s, first as a programme and then in 1982 as a Unit, within the South Pacific Commission³. When SPREP became an intergovernmental entity in 1995 the region needed an environmental champion - there was a need for increased awareness of environmental issues, and for a source of advice on appropriate national⁴ and regional environment-related policies. The Pacific also needed support in developing, and effectively presenting, the region's needs at international fora.

2. Much has changed since that time. Environment is now everybody's business. Many SPREP Members have their own Ministries or Departments of the Environment. There is increasing recognition of the need to mainstream environmental considerations across all sectors of the economy and within society. There is now a large number of international NGOs, multilateral organizations and donors all anxious to collaborate and provide assistance to the Pacific in relation to managing the region's environment and natural resources. This Corporate Review has also been undertaken at a time when there is significant discussion regarding a Regional Institutional Framework.

3. The Review Team believes that given these discussions, as well as the significant changes since SPREP was established, it is now a critical time to resolve fundamental issues for the region's environmental agency. In response to the above changes, the SPREP Secretariat has also undergone a process of change, but this has not always been well considered or well guided by the SPREP membership. Importantly, the vast majority of Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) consider there is still value in having a regional environmental agency.

4. The Review Team was struck by the fact that many of its findings and recommendations were clearly identified in the Corporate Review of 2000⁵. A major question is why previous review findings and recommendations have yet to be actively addressed by the Organization. As a result, the current Review did not focus on the Secretariat⁶. The Team considered this would add little value to resolving the many and substantial challenges facing SPREP.

5. Our consultations identified consistent issues that SPREP, the Organization, needs to address as a matter of urgency. The major issues are the lack of clarity regarding the respective roles of Member Governments and their regional environmental agency, and how the latter governed.

6. First and foremost, the region needs to clarify and agree on the core role of 'their' regional environmental organization; what that means in terms of skills and resources; then, importantly, how it is to be funded and governed. SPREP needs to focus and prioritize its activities in response to clear signals from its Island Members. SPREP

¹ Now the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

² In this report "SPREP" refers to the Organization. "The Secretariat" refers to the Apia-based Secretariat of SPREP.

³ Now the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

⁴ Where the context makes it clear, the terms "national" and "country" also refer to territories.

⁵ Many of these are also issues of concern for other Pacific Regional Organizations (PROs).

⁶ The last Corporate Review of SPREP, conducted in 2000, focused on the Secretariat.

currently provides a very broad range of valued services, with the staff of the Secretariat being generally well regarded. However SPREP cannot do everything that falls under the environment “umbrella”, particularly given its limited resources. The Review Team recommends that SPREP focus on a programme of core activities, as opposed to addressing issues it tries to “own”. It must perform its role with excellence, making it a key player at the regional level.

7. Through the review process several other major conclusions were reached. While the operating environment for SPREP has changed enormously, the formal purpose or mandate for SPREP has remained unchanged. While still relevant, the very broad mandate has not provided a clear focus for the Secretariat. As a result, the Secretariat has tried to provide a very comprehensive range of services, despite limited funding and direction from its Members. In effect, the Secretariat has an impossible job. Not surprisingly, the level of satisfaction from the membership is not high. A more focused work programme for the Secretariat, and improved performance and accountability by senior management, will go a long way toward ensuring the Secretariat delivers quality services that produce the tangible outcomes required by the Members.

8. Thus the broad mandate of SPREP is in itself not a problem; the problem is the Secretariat’s lack of ability to prioritize, based on Members’ needs. The absence of substantive debate on needs and priorities within the Organisation results in the Secretariat’s activities being largely driven by donors, projects, or by individual Secretariat staff, including those in senior management. Rather, the Secretariat should be ensuring its activities are aligned with the strategic programme, priorities are set, and activities are costed and then managed for results. The Secretariat must therefore be strengthened in strategic planning, prioritization and adaptive management, especially at its highest levels.

9. The governance structure remains largely as developed in the 1950s, when the emphasis was on establishing broad ‘cooperation’, and an understanding of the need for such cooperation. The world has changed, as has the Pacific, as has technology. The current cumbersome bureaucracy and governance mechanisms do not provide effective modern day management. Decisions on the work of SPREP, and its budget, are determined by consensus. However, the Pacific culture does not favour ‘tough talk’ and rigorous accountability in open public fora. The region can no longer afford resource-intensive processes for basic information exchange and decision making.

10. SPREP’s Members need to decide what constitutes the Secretariat’s core business and how it should be held accountable for delivering the related core services. The Secretariat cannot of itself resolve these fundamental issues. The “owners” of the Secretariat, namely SPREP’s Members, need to invest time and resources in determining what their Secretariat does, as well as in making it happen.

11. The Review Team proposes that the Secretariat focus its delivery of services to Island Members on:

- i) enhancing Island Members’ strategic capacities to mainstream environmental considerations in development planning and processes;
- ii) coordinating the environment-related efforts of donors and NGOs at regional level; and
- iii) supporting compliance, negotiations and advocacy in relation to existing and emerging multilateral environmental agreements and other modalities.

12. In doing so, the Secretariat should separate its roles and related activities into:
i) core business activities which are fully costed; and
ii) project-related activities that contribute to the core by way of both a project management fee and the growth of knowledge and expertise within the Secretariat and its Members.

13. To further increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat's delivery of core services, emphasis should be on:

i) facilitating, advising on and coordinating technical and policy advice and assistance to its Island Members;
ii) facilitating and coordinating training, institutional strengthening and information sharing for its Island Members; and
iii) improving organization management, covering such areas as performance management, strategic planning and prioritizing - performance monitoring and evaluation would allow the Organization to learn; it should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization, including but not limited to individual staff, senior management, programmes and projects, the annual work programme and the SPREP Meeting.

14. In order to increase ownership of SPREP by its Members, and accountability to them, a substantial portion of the core business activities of SPREP should be funded by the Members; if this is not acceptable to the Members, serious consideration should be given to winding up the Organization. In addition, the Secretariat should make a more targeted effort to engage with SPREP's large (both current and potential) donor countries and organizations, to explore ways to achieve longer-term programmatic funding to bridge any gap between Member contributions and the cost of the Secretariat's agreed core business.

15. In determining how SPREP operates, more consideration also needs to be given to the diversity amongst the membership. The diversity, which presents both opportunities and constraints, requires the Secretariat to be doubly attentive to this matter. Diversity arises from such sources as there being two official languages, differences in island forms, constitutional statutes, levels of development, standards of living and the distance between the Secretariat and its Members.

16. For example, large distances from the Secretariat increase costs and are a deterrent to full participation. Language barriers make it difficult for staff to establish consistently effective working relationships with their counterparts in the French speaking territories. All the territories are disadvantaged by being ineligible for funding through the United Nations and other international agencies such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Secretariat needs to improve its donor liaison role with the territories. It can also add value to its services, and address diversity amongst the membership, through improvements in networking and in the sharing of learning experiences. The Secretariat should facilitate the involvement of all its Island Members in regional projects, even when the donor-defined region is only a sub-set of the SPREP membership⁷. Exploration of options for bringing additional resources to allow full engagement of all Island Members would also be valuable.

⁷ Costs would have to be borne by the formally ineligible members and/or by their development assistance partners.

17. The Secretariat must have access to clear statements of the needs and priorities of its Members. National development strategies are an important basis for the work programmes of SPREP and its Members. Country⁸ profiles are also a tool that could help ensure SPREP addresses the needs of Island Members. To date the use of such a tool has not been effective. The Secretariat needs to be more proactive in interacting and engaging with Island Members - it should no longer argue that it must await direction from these Members. Designated staff in the Secretariat should be responsible for preparing and updating a country profile and for acting as a focal point for a PICT or small group of PICTs. The profiles will assist in developing the work programmes for Island Members. These need to be both substantive and practical, including agreement on the assistance to be provided by the Secretariat, and the actions to be taken by the Members themselves.

18. The current system of SPREP Focal Points does not foster effective working relationships, or two-way knowledge transfer. The Review noted that there are no agreed terms of reference, or guidance, as to how Focal Points might operate when fulfilling responsibilities to their own stakeholders as well as to the Secretariat and to SPREP as a whole. Members should be encouraged to consider, agree and implement a relationships management system that allows for more flexibility, diversity, and effectiveness in the interactions between the Secretariat and its stakeholders.

19. In order to achieve much needed improvements in accountability and effectiveness, performance monitoring and evaluation should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization, including but not limited to individual staff, senior management, programmes and projects, the annual work programme and, importantly, to the SPREP Meeting itself. Currently reporting is based more on compliance monitoring and evaluation, on a project by project basis. There appears to be no substantive monitoring and evaluation system for staff or management. As a learning organization, the Secretariat should provide staff development opportunities to the entire staff, and not just those with "permanent" appointments.

20. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation should also allow the Organization to learn, based on identification and sharing of lessons, success factors and success stories. The Secretariat must strengthen its systems for learning from its experiences, and sharing lessons and best practices within the Secretariat, as well as with its Members and other stakeholders. It should be building upon experience, not undertaking disjointed, incremental, new initiatives.

21. Importantly, greater transparency, accountability and sensitivity, including to gender equity, is required in Secretariat processes such as recruitment, contract renewal or termination, awarding salary increments to individual staff and funding/support decisions. All appointments, including those to the Executive, should be merit based. Currently the Secretariat is not operating in ways that are consistent with good practice in organizational management. This is having a negative impact on staff morale and productivity. More French speaking staff should be recruited, including within senior management. Currently there is only one Francophone in the entire Secretariat.

22. The region still wants an inter-governmental organization that provides leadership on the environment, but not one which claims exclusive responsibility to address

⁸ Includes territories.

environmental issues such as climate change and loss of biodiversity. Rather, the region wishes to have an organization that works collaboratively and cooperatively and plays a major coordination role, reflecting the fact that environmental considerations must be taken into account by all levels and components of government, as well as by civil society and the private sector. Therefore, the core business of SPREP is not about identifying and addressing the environmental issues which it, rather than the other regional organizations, should address.

23. The Secretariat is well placed to play the key coordination role at the regional level in relation to issues such as climate change and biodiversity, considering both the technical and political dimensions. However, to do so it needs to build more effective partnerships and also operate according to a tight core business model that has been agreed to, and is largely funded by, its Members. This includes substantially improved performance by senior management, with increased accountability to Members through a SPREP Board.

24. In turn, donors will need to support SPREP to undertake this strengthened and more strategic role, rather than undermine it with parallel initiatives or overburden the Secretariat with new, standalone projects.

Recommendations⁹

31. SPREP Members reaffirm the need for a regional environmental agency and also their commitment to adequately manage and fund the agency, consistent with their common but differentiated responsibilities and capacities.

38. SPREP Members and the Secretariat commit to working together to address the fundamental causes of the low morale of Secretariat staff, the associated problems of staff recruitment and retention, and an overall decline in the quality and relevance of services provided to SPREP's Island Members, relative to their needs.

59. The Secretariat focus its delivery of services to member countries and territories on:
i) enhancing the strategic capacity of its Island Members to mainstream environmental considerations in development planning and processes;
ii) coordinating the environment-related efforts of donors and NGOs at regional level;
and
iii) supporting compliance, negotiations and advocacy in relation to existing and emerging multilateral environmental agreements and other modalities.

60. SPREP should separate its roles and related activities into:
i) core business activities which are fully costed; and
ii) project-related activities that contribute to the core by way of both a project management fee and the growth of knowledge and expertise within the Secretariat and its Members.

61. Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat by:
i) giving more attention to facilitating, advising on and coordinating technical and policy advice and assistance;

⁹ The number of each recommendation is the same as its paragraph number in the body of this report.

ii) *facilitating and coordinating training, institutional strengthening and information sharing;*
iii) *showing leadership by playing a coordination role and working collaboratively and cooperatively with relevant partners, rather than my claiming exclusive ownership of specific environmental issues such as climate change; and*
iv) *improving organizational management in such areas as performance management, strategic planning and prioritizing - performance monitoring and evaluation should allow the Organization to learn and should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization, including but not limited to individual staff, senior management, programmes and projects, the annual work programme and the SPREP Meeting.*

62. *SPREP must give more consideration to the diversity amongst its membership and be proactive in ensuring how it operates promotes greater equity in the way the Secretariat interacts with, and provides services to, the member countries and territories.*

72. *In order to increase ownership of SPREP by its Members, and accountability to them, SPREP should prepare and implement a strategy for all its core business activities to be funded by its Members through assessed contributions as well as by programmatic funding from some Members and other donor partners; if this is not acceptable to the Members, serious consideration should be given to winding up the Organization.*

73. *The Secretariat should make a more targeted effort to engage with SPREP's large (both current and potential) donor countries and organizations, to explore ways to achieve longer-term programmatic funding to address any gap between Member contributions and the cost of the Secretariat's agreed Core business.*

79. *The SPREP Meeting consider establishing a SPREP Board, similar to a Corporation, to which the Secretariat reports and is accountable; the Board is in turn accountable to SPREP Members, through the SPREP Council.*

80. *Increase the ongoing interaction between Secretariat staff and representatives of Island Members so that the draft strategic plan and work programme which are presented at the SPREP Meeting are based on a clear understanding of Island Members' needs and priority areas for assistance, as well as on the capacity of the Secretariat to address them.*

81. *During the SPREP Meeting informal, more technical and policy-focussed discussions should be held between individual Island Members and the Secretariat.*

98. *The Secretariat should strengthen its systems for learning from its experiences, and sharing lessons and best practices within the Secretariat as well as with its Members and other stakeholders, including establishing more effective person-to-person interactions with environmental stakeholders in the region.*

99. *As a learning organization, SPREP should ensure that all of the Secretariat's staff have opportunities to enhance their performance through professional development and related activities, not just those with "permanent" appointments.*

100. *Designated staff in the Secretariat should be responsible for preparing and updating a revised form of the country profile and acting as a focal point for a PICT or for a small group of PICTs.*

101. *Island Members should be encouraged to consider, agree on and implement a relationships management system that addresses the shortcomings in the current system of Focal Points and allows for more flexibility, diversity, and effectiveness in the interactions between the Secretariat and its national stakeholders. In addition, and primarily because in many cases NGOs are not receiving information via the SPREP Focal Point, SPREP's NGO focal point list should be re-established.*

102. *Greater transparency, accountability and sensitivity, including to gender equity, are required in Secretariat processes such as recruitment, contract renewal or termination, awarding salary increments to individual staff and funding/support decisions. As a technically-based organization, it is important that future appointees to SPREP's Executive positions have technical competence relevant to the work of the Organization, in addition to strong managerial skills. The Review recommends that all recruitment within SPREP is merit based, including appointment of individuals to Executive positions within the Secretariat.*

103. *Within the limits imposed by logistical, space and other constraints, the Secretariat should actively encourage relevant organizations and initiatives to locate within the Secretariat's facilities, while at the same time ensuring that the functions and operations of the agencies are readily distinguished from SPREP's core business activities and are not part of the Secretariat's organizational structure.*

112. *The Secretariat should place greater emphasis on developing and implementing joint programming with other PROs, at both regional and country/territory levels.*

113. *SPREP should consider decentralising some Secretariat activities by locating selected staff at strategic sub-regional locations, in order to service a group of PICTs that require extensive support.*

114. *Before the RIF-related decisions are finalised and implemented, SPREP Members and other relevant stakeholders should clearly define the role of the region's environmental agency, and commit to funding and governing it effectively.*

Acknowledgements

The Team which undertook the Independent Corporate Review of SPREP wish to acknowledge the assistance of the many people who contributed in many different ways to the successful completion of the Review.

Special thanks are offered to the Director and staff of the SPREP Secretariat, for ensuring that reports and other documents needed for our review were made available in a timely manner. They also provided valuable commentary and information on the activities of the Secretariat. These greatly enriched our understanding of the work of the Secretariat. The Director ensured that the Review Team was provided with high quality meeting and associated facilities and support during its inception meeting in Apia. This allowed the Team to commence its work under very favourable circumstances, The SPREP Travel Officer and staff of the Finance Division were called upon on several occasions to make late changes to our travel plans, which they did with efficiency and professionalism.

We also wish to thank the many Government officials, NGO representatives, community groups, staff of regional organizations, representatives of the United Nations and other international agencies, donor countries and organizations, the private sector and individuals who generously gave of their time to meet with us and to provide their views on the issues raised during the Review. We trust this report provides a fair assessment of your contributions.

We acknowledge the willingness of the Governments of Kiribati, French Polynesia and Vanuatu to each second a staff member to the Review Team. We also acknowledge the generosity of the donors who funded the Review, namely Australia, New Zealand, France, the Northern Province of New Caledonia, and French Polynesia. The Government of French Polynesia also funded the travel and related costs of the consultations undertaken by the representative of the Polynesian sub-region on the Review Team.

The timely and quality translation services provided by the Translation Department of French Polynesia and by the official SPREP translation company (French Language Solutions) are acknowledge with thanks.

Pacific Environmental Consultants Limited of Apia provided excellent working facilities and related services during the week leading up to the submission of the Final Report.

Last but not least, we are pleased to thank the SPREP Focal Points and others in the countries and territories visited for their help in arranging appointments and meetings with relevant officials. Your assistance and support made our work much easier than it would otherwise have been.

Thank you.

Abbreviations

AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF PAS	GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICR	Independent Corporate Review
KRAs	Key Result Areas
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEMS	National Environment Management Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NZAID	New Zealand Assistance for International Development
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PICTs	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
PILN	Pacific Invasives Learning Network
PMER	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PRO	Pacific Regional Organization
RIF	Regional Institutional Framework
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Programme ¹⁰
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

¹⁰ SPREP also refers to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, but in this report “SPREP” refers to the Organization only.

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1. Setting the scene

Introduction to the report

1. This report presents the findings of the Review Team charged with undertaking an independent corporate review (ICR) of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)¹¹. The report represents the wide range of views and opinions expressed by numerous stakeholders during extensive consultations with hundreds of government officials, representatives of local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, donor agencies and organizations, and regional and international inter-governmental agencies and institutions. The consultations were undertaken in most SPREP member countries and territories. The report also represents the collective views of the six person Review Team¹².

2. The report is structured and presented in a way that not only meets the specific requirements of the terms of reference (TOR). Equally importantly, the report brings out the many key issues that emerged from the consultations with the stakeholders.

3. The last Corporate Review of SPREP, carried out in 2000, focused largely on the Secretariat. The terms of reference for the current Review also required the Review Team to consider:

- a. the current and immediate past (5 years) mandate/focal areas and work programmes of the Secretariat and note any significant changes based on an analysis of relevant documents;
- b. the Secretariat's performance over the last five years against stated objectives; and
- c. to the extent possible, the realistic level of resources (financial and technical) that the Secretariat needs to service its members.

4. While the Review Team appreciates the importance of the issues identified above, we believe that the issues affecting SPREP require a broader analysis than simply focusing on the Secretariat. The Review and the resulting report identify a much broader range of issues that require urgent resolution. This would not have been achieved had we limited ourselves to assessing the Secretariat's performance and work programmes. We also note that the 2006 Internal Organizational Review by the Secretariat presents a much more comprehensive analysis of the Secretariat's work programme and performance than the Team could have accomplished, given the broader nature of the review we undertook.

5. Under its 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with AusAID regarding the provision of programmatic funding for 2006 - 2008, the SPREP Secretariat was required to carry out an ICR of SPREP. The SPREP Council built on this opportunity, developed the TOR and requested an ICR be carried out in 2007. However, funding constraints resulted in the postponement of the Review to 2008.

Purpose of the Review

¹¹ In this report "SPREP" refers to the Organization. "The Secretariat" refers to the Apia-based Secretariat of the Organization.

¹² The Review Team comprised John Hay (Team Leader), Tererei Abete-Reema (Micronesian Representative), Catherine Bennett (AusAID/NZAID Representative), Russell Nari (Melanesian Representative), Bruno Peaucellier (Polynesian Representative) and Joe Reti (Consultant).

6. The purpose of the ICR is to make recommendations to the SPREP Council on steps to enhance the Secretariat's performance, based on SPREP Members' feedback on the effectiveness of the Secretariat's services and the relevance of its priorities. The ICR is seen as an opportunity to better engage member countries and territories in guiding the work of the Organization and advising on how it can better perform in the future.

7. In addition to a consideration of the Secretariat's performance, the Review was also required to assess Members' perceptions of change in regional priorities and the implications for strategic directions and programming of SPREP. On the basis of such an assessment, the Review Team was required to identify any gaps in the Secretariat's activities that could provide opportunities for new SPREP initiatives as well as those areas where the level of services could be reduced or strengthened taking into account available resources, changing needs of the Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) and the role of other organizations working in the region. These latter requirements imply that the current Review should be more 'forward looking', focusing more on how SPREP services could be improved in future rather than being critical of what was not done right in the past.

8. The terms of reference for the ICR are presented in Annex 1.

The review process and personnel

9. The TOR for the ICR requires the Team to consult with all Members, particularly PICTs and key stakeholders, by visiting and consulting in person with as many PICTs as is practicable and feasible within financial and time limits. The remaining stakeholders could be consulted through questionnaires or by telephone and email. PICTs visited should form a representative sample of Island Members – Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, large and high islands, small and atoll islands, states and territories, and Anglophone and Francophone speaking.

10. In accordance with the TOR, and in consultation with the Secretariat, a comprehensive programme of country visits was prepared and undertaken. The six person ICR Team was divided into three groups of two persons, to cover the three sub-regions, namely Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Three members of the team were Government officials selected from the three sub-regions, to facilitate the sub-regional consultations. An appropriate mix of large and high islands, small and atoll islands, states and territories, and Anglophone and Francophone countries and territories was achieved for the visits. It was not possible to visit all member countries and territories, due to flight schedules and costs. Consultations were held in person in the capitals of New Zealand and Australia. This was not possible for France and the United States of America, due to financial and time constraints. Feedback from these Members, as well as other PICTs that were not visited by the Team, was sought by way of questionnaires and through telephone and email contacts.

11. In-country consultations involved a wide variety of stakeholders including relevant government agencies, local NGO groups and communities, private sector, regional agencies and learning institutions, international NGOs, United Nations agencies, international inter-governmental organizations and donor agencies. Meetings were also held with the Secretariat on two separate occasions. Annex 2 provides additional details on the consultations.

12. The Team reviewed a large number of reports and other documents, including those provided by the Secretariat at the start of the Review and after receipt of specific requests later in the review process.

Scope of the Review

13. This Corporate Review went well beyond a focus on the Secretariat. The last Corporate Review of SPREP was conducted in 2000 and did largely focus on the Secretariat. The Team considered such a focus would add little value to addressing the major challenges SPREP, the organisation, is facing. Many of the issues facing the Secretariat were identified in 2000. A major question is why previous review findings and recommendations have yet to be adequately addressed by the Organisation.

14. This Review therefore adopted a broader approach to the consideration of the issues affecting SPREP than is envisioned in the TOR. This is because the key issues affecting the Organization are in many cases, beyond the ability of the Secretariat to resolve by itself. They are issues that SPREP, the Organization, rather than the Secretariat, needs to address. High on the list is the need to reach agreement on the role the membership want the Secretariat to play, and how the Secretariat is to be funded and governed in order to achieve that role. Put simply, the real issues affecting SPREP pertain to the lack of guidance, support and governance by its membership. Hence, unless these issues are resolved by the Organization itself, it is unrealistic to expect the Secretariat to do much more than deliver 'more of the same'.

15. During the consultations it became clear that there was significant confusion about SPREP, the Organization, and SPREP, the Secretariat. Often people talked about SPREP the Organization and the Secretariat as though they are one and the same thing. As a result, the Secretariat has often been unfairly criticised for inaction when the true reasons include a lack of direction from, and accountability to, its Members, and a lack of clarity on the relative roles and responsibilities of Member Governments and the Secretariat. SPREP, the Organization, is the regional intergovernmental forum for environmental affairs in the Pacific islands. It serves 21 Pacific island countries and territories¹³ and four metropolitan countries: Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America.

16. The purposes of SPREP as defined in Article 2 of the Agreement Establishing SPREP (the SPREP Agreement) are "to promote co-operation in the South Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for the present and future generations". SPREP was to achieve these purposes through the joint implementation by the SPREP Secretariat and SPREP Members of the Action Plan adopted from time to time by the Organization's plenary body - the SPREP Meeting.

17. The SPREP Corporate Plan, now largely inoperative, defines the business functions and vision of the Secretariat that are closely linked to the purposes of the Organization as embodied in the Action Plan. The Action Plan, which is reviewed and revised every four years, is intended to provide a guide to members and the Secretariat in implementing their environmental management work. Country profiles were to be

¹³ The SPREP's Pacific island members are: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna.

developed to enable each Member to indicate progress towards achieving outcomes of the Action Plan.

18. The Secretariat is a key organ of SPREP, the Organization. Its structure and performance are determined by the mandate, priority needs and expectations of the Organization's membership and partners and the resources available to implement its work programmes. The work programmes of the Secretariat are a means of presenting the activities to be undertaken by the Secretariat, in collaboration with the membership of the Organization, and are approved with a corresponding budget at the annual SPREP Meetings.

2. Is there still a need for a regional environmental agency?

Situation Analysis¹⁴

19. From its origins in the 1970s as a small project and subsequently a programme attached to the then South Pacific Commission, SPREP grew into a treaty-based Organization widely recognized as the Pacific region's major intergovernmental organisation charged with protecting and managing the environment and natural resources. The 1993 agreement (the "SPREP Agreement") came into force in 1995. It established SPREP as an autonomous body operating in accordance with the traditions of cooperation in the region. SPREP's mandate for environmental protection and improvement, and for ensuring ecologically sustainable development, is just as relevant to the region today, as it was in 1993 – and perhaps even more so.

20. In the 1980s and early 1990s the region needed an environmental champion. PICTs looked to SPREP to help raise awareness of environmental issues and concerns, to act as a source of advice on national and regional policies and interventions designed to address these issues and to support their efforts to assess the region's environmental status, needs and concerns and to highlight these at international fora.

21. Since then much has changed – nationally, regionally and globally. Most PICTs now have their own environment Ministries or Departments, and many have developed substantial in-house capacity for environmental management, albeit mostly project funded. They are thus capable of undertaking many of the roles formerly played almost entirely by SPREP. In addition, there is now a large number of national, regional and international NGOs, other intergovernmental organizations and donors anxious to partner with and provide assistance to PICTs. In part they are motivated by the relatively recent recognition of the global importance of the Pacific in terms of biodiversity and climate variability. Thus the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources of the Pacific has shifted from being a national and regional matter to one of global significance.

22. Another important change is from the environment being considered and managed in relative isolation to environmental protection and conservation being an integral part of sustainable development. Indeed, environment is now everybody's business. For example, today climate change is seen as a development issue, with major implications for both economies and societies. The Pacific is experiencing continuing environmental degradation and unsustainable use of natural resources, despite the efforts of organizations such as SPREP and its national counterparts. Population growth and redistribution as well as globalization typically overwhelm the efforts of environmental agencies and their partners. Development efforts are, in turn,

¹⁴ Additional information is in Annex 3.

rendered less effective. Improved understanding of such interactions has resulted in recognition of the need to mainstream environmental considerations in development planning and processes, at all scales from community level to international initiatives. Consistent with this broader understanding, the Pacific Plan includes improved natural resource and environmental management as one of the 11 objectives under the sustainable development pillar.

23. Within the region, consideration has also been given to creation of a Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) to facilitate further development, implementation and monitoring of the Pacific Plan. Discussions ranged between SPREP being incorporated into a single intergovernmental regional institution to SPREP subsuming some of the responsibilities of at least one other regional organization. In 2007 the Forum Leaders decided that part of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) should be incorporated into SPREP.

24. Given all of these changes over the last few decades, this Review considered it important to ask the question: “Is there still a need for an independent regional environmental agency?” We found a consistent positive response, not simply because maintaining the status quo appealed, but because SPREP’s mandate is still seen as highly relevant, despite the many changes summarized above. However, respondents usually went on to say that SPREP has not responded effectively to the changed circumstances under which it now operates – while many considered it was a highly relevant, productive and effective Organization in its early years, many of SPREP’s stakeholders now see it as “largely irrelevant and marginalized”. They have “lost confidence in SPREP”.

25. However, it is important to highlight that such comments do not apply to the entire Organization. There are important exceptions, especially related to the technical and policy-relevant advice and other assistance provided by some staff within the Secretariat. SPREP has served as a valuable forum for regional issues, collective action and responses, and exchange of views and expertise. There are instances where SPREP has had a significant impact on the environment of the Pacific. The preparation of the National Environmental Management Strategies laid the foundation for follow up initiatives, the beneficial impacts of which are still being realized today.

26. The Secretariat has, over the years, provided standard secretariat functions: convening supporting meetings, maintaining records, providing secretariat services and expertise to member countries and territories of the Organization and to regional treaties to which members are Parties, facilitating in-country work, coordinating policy development on behalf of its Members and conducting and facilitating projects on behalf of the Organization and its Members. Coordination of regional input to international initiatives has been a major and important role for SPREP - without SPREP many Pacific island countries (PICs)¹⁵ would not have been able to access GEF and other donor funding. SPREP has convened important meetings such as the Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, the Meeting of Pacific Heads of Meteorological Services, and the Roundtable on Nature Conservation. These all allow for regional discussions and planning for environment and conservation activities that support member countries and territories, and the region as a whole.

27. By virtue of its mandate, and the importance of the environment and natural resources to PICTs, SPREP is an important partner for agencies providing development

¹⁵ Territories are not eligible to access GEF funds directly.

assistance to the Pacific. This includes working in areas of policy development and negotiations related to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Through regional leadership and coordination, SPREP adds value at a regional level, facilitating PICTs to come together and share expertise. It also helps the region address transboundary issues and adds value to national activities, especially by being a source or broker of expertise, as well as being a technical and policy advisor.

28. The coordinating mechanism provided by SPREP encourages donors to be responsive to countries needs rather than own agendas. SPREP is also a mechanism for partnering and cooperation. SPREP has also developed regional strategies that PICT leaders have signed off. However, SPREP does not necessarily exploit this to its fullest advantage – there are still all too many situations where major donors do not align with national/regional priorities. Also, the regional strategies developed by SPREP have tended to be top down rather than bottom up. In addition, the regional strategies often end up simply as statements of good practice – a default outcome. There has been no substantive discussion on the purpose of regional environmental strategies.

29. Overall, the successes and important roles described above provide tangible reasons why the region's environmental agency must be retained and strengthened. It is perhaps unwise to identify specific examples of success within the Secretariat's operations, but the following examples will hopefully inspire the strengthening process. We found the common factor behind the successes was the dedication and professionalism of the individuals involved.

- The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation, a forum that brings together all organizations and donors active in nature conservation in the PICTs to help implement the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands region. The Roundtable is a novel method of collaboration pioneered by SPREP and The Nature Conservancy in 1998.
- Coordination of regional campaigns to raise public awareness and increase action for the protection and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. The Year of Action Against Waste, the Year of the Sea Turtle and the Year of the Coral Reef campaigns all involved Governments, NGOs, communities and the private sector, reinforcing once again the need for the establishment of effective partnerships with these groups to ensure success of regional programmes and projects.
- An excellent early track record in providing technical assistance to PICs leading up to and during international meetings and negotiations, in particular the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). SPREP can be rightly proud of the quality and amount of assistance it has provided Pacific island Parties to facilitate their compliance with MEAs.
- Initiation of the "POPs in PICs" project, which involved the reconnaissance assessment, collection and packaging of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) material for shipment to Australia for destruction. This innovative solution was particularly important given the limited land areas and capacity of many PICs to dispose of such hazardous materials.
- Development of regional and national waste management strategies coupled with piloted local solutions such as composting organic and pig wastes, user-pay rubbish collection, local landfill management and disposal. The Tafaigata landfill in Samoa, the Green-bag Scheme in Kiribati, and the community waste management project in

Tonga were high profile projects for SPREP that provided best practices for other nations and communities to emulate.

- Support for the preparation National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) was the catalyst for the development of national plans and strategies at a time when PICTs were just recognizing the need for immediate action to enable the sustainable management of their own and the region's environment and natural resources.
- Initiating and coordinating a joint visit with other regional and United Nations agencies to Tokelau to learn and to discuss their priorities and concerns and to plan how the visiting agencies and organizations might be able to help. The visit was hailed as a great success both by the government of Tokelau and by the organizations and agencies involved. The visit and especially the involvement of top management personnel from the agencies and organizations concerned helped put the environment high on the country's political agenda and further increased public awareness and support for national and local efforts to protect the environment of the atoll nation. The visit also reaffirms the importance of creating effective partnerships with other organizations and agencies to help PICTs better manage their environment.
- Building capacity of PICTs to better manage their environment and natural resources. Although there are common constraints, such as small staff numbers, high staff turnover and limited resources, there is general agreement that PICT capacity has been greatly enhanced through the activities of SPREP.
- Raising the awareness of political leaders to the importance of the environment and assisted in accessing funding for environment and conservation activities in PICTs.
- Writing proposals to GEF and other donor organizations.
- The Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN), a novel initiative in the Pacific region. PILN was established in 2005 when The Nature Conservancy joined with SPREP, the Cooperative Island Initiative on Invasive Species, IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group, National Park of American Samoa, CI, the Palau Office of Environmental Response and Coordination, USP, US Forest Service, and SPC. PILN's activities and agenda are determined by the individual and shared needs of the participants.

Implications

30. Our consultations showed a wide consensus that there is a need for an independent regional environmental agency. However, with some notable exceptions, SPREP has not responded to the role many consider such an agency should now be playing. Other organizations are, by default or design, filling the resulting and ever increasing gap. We are of the strong opinion that a more concerted and strategic strengthening of the Organization is essential if it is to regain its relevance, as well as the confidence of all its stakeholders. There has to be a whole-of-Organization agreement to make the necessary fundamental and far reaching changes that are urgently required, as well as a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of these changes are sustained through the longer term.

Recommendation

31. *SPREP Members reaffirm the need for a regional environmental agency and also their commitment to adequately manage and fund the agency, consistent with their common but differentiated responsibilities and capacities.*

3. Has SPREP responded appropriately to changes in regional, national and territorial needs and in its external operating environment, and to calls for improved management within the Secretariat?

Situation Analysis¹⁶

32. As a result of both internal and external processes, SPREP has received extensive and frequent advice on the need for change, and how the change process might best be managed. The last Corporate Review of SPREP was undertaken by AusAID in 2000. It identified a range of issues that remain highly relevant and in reality have not been addressed by the Organisation. The current Review Team was struck by the fact that many of the findings of the current Review, and the recommendations that arise, were also clearly identified and recommended for attention in 2000. In 2005 AusAID conducted a review of the programme funding approach which also considered the relationships and expectations of all the CROP agencies receiving funding from Australia and New Zealand. In 2003 a Joint Task Force on SPREP Core Functions and Budget provided guidance and recommendations to SPREP. An internal self assessment was also conducted in 2003. As required by the programmatic funding agreement with AusAID, an internal organizational review was undertaken in 2006. A review of the 2006 work programme activities was also conducted in 2006. This was carried out by the SPREP programme managers and a change management consultant. In addition, Secretariat staff retreats were held in 2003 and 2006. These provided an opportunity for staff to discuss and make recommendations on wide-ranging structural, operational and other organizational issues.

33. These reviews and related activities produced many messages of fundamental importance to the future of SPREP as an Organization, including:

- By reforming the SPREP Meeting and other mechanisms, members should improve the guidance provided to the Secretariat on their expectations for the work programme, and ensure that there is improved harmonization of the SPREP work programme with national strategies and development plans;
- The level of programmatic funding for SPREP's core service functions is inadequate, resulting in too much emphasis being placed on securing and implementing projects, many of which might not address the basic needs of its members;
- There should be greater emphasis placed on joint programming, principally with other CROP agencies but also, where appropriate, with non-governmental and other development partners;
- The system of National Focal Points does not foster effective working relationships and knowledge transfer between the Secretariat and the national government and non-governmental agencies where environmental considerations should be given greater attention;
- SPREP should give more attention to facilitating, advising on and coordinating technical and policy advice and assistance to its members and partners, with an emphasis on addressing environmental and ecologically sustainable development concerns within the mainstream of Pacific island economies and societies;
- Facilitating and coordinating training, institutional strengthening and information sharing should also be priorities for SPREP;

¹⁶ Additional information is in Annex 4.

- SPREP should strengthen its systems for learning from its experiences, and sharing lessons and best practices within the Secretariat as well as with its members and other stakeholders;
- There is a need for standard processes related to such activities as quality control, project design and peer review;
- Requested by Members and reviews to focus more, and report on, outcomes as opposed to inputs and numbers;
- As a learning organization, the Secretariat should provide staff development opportunities to all its staff, not just those with “permanent” appointments;
- SPREP needs to strengthen its abilities in strategic planning, prioritization and adaptive management, especially at the highest levels of the Organization;
- In order to achieve much needed improvements in accountability and effectiveness, performance monitoring and evaluation should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization, including but not limited to individual staff, senior management, programmes and projects, the annual work programme and the SPREP meeting; and
- Greater transparency, accountability and sensitivity are required in Secretariat processes such as recruitment, contract renewal, awarding salary increments to individual staff and funding/support decisions.

34. The Secretariat has made some attempts to address these messages and thereby better align the Organization with its Members’ needs and its operating environment and also ensure good practice in organizational management. However, from our assessment, few of the suggested changes have been implemented, at least in ways which will achieve the desired outcomes and the delivery of tangible and enduring benefits. Overall, and importantly, the limited outcomes have not enabled the Organization to keep pace with the ongoing, rapid changes in regional, national and territorial needs, as well as in the Organization’s operating environment. Neither is the Secretariat operating in ways that are consistent with good practice in organizational management.

Implications

35. Three of the major implications of the shortcomings noted above are: i) the disturbingly low morale of Secretariat staff, with adverse impacts on their productivity; ii) problems with staff recruitment and retention; and iii) an overall decline in the quality and relevance of services provided to SPREP’s member countries and territories relative to the needs of the Members. With only few exceptions, both Secretariat staff and staff in PICT government agencies, expressed dissatisfaction with and disappointment in SPREP.

36. It is important to note that the situation would be far worse were it not for the dedication, passion and competency of most SPREP staff, and especially those directly responsible for the delivery of services to Members. The fact that the Secretariat is functioning as well as it is can be attributed largely to the goodwill and professionalism of its programme, project and support staff. This is not a sustainable situation.

37. Despite SPREP having a mandate based on an international treaty, it does not have exclusive responsibility to assist countries to protect and improve the region’s environment and ensure sustainable development for the present and future generations. SPREP did have a comparative advantage in providing this and related assistance, but it is weakening rapidly. Moreover, SPREP’s professional staff have expertise which is in

high and growing demand, nationally, regionally and internationally. Most decided to work for SPREP because its mandate and programmes appealed. Importantly, the numerous vacancies in SPREP provide a worrying signal that commitment and passion are only part of the reason for commencing or continuing to work for an organization. SPREP should look at new and positive ways of addressing environmental concerns, e.g. wastes as a social and economic issue not simply an environmental concern.

Recommendation

38. *SPREP Members and the Secretariat commit to working together to address the fundamental causes of the low morale of Secretariat staff, the associated problems of staff recruitment and retention, and an overall decline in the quality and relevance of services provided to SPREP's Island Members, relative to their needs.*

4. What core services should SPREP provide to its Members?

39. SPREP suffers three major challenges: i) almost without exception, SPREP's programme and project staff are highly competent, motivated and committed - but they are too few in number relative to the size and scope of services which are required or being sought by island Members; ii) available funding is also extremely small relative to cost of services which are being sought; and iii) currently in the Pacific there is relatively low national buy in to the environment (i.e. there are differences between the rhetoric and reality when it comes to devoting resources and giving priority), making the environment a difficult area to be working in, relative to sectors such as health and education.

40. Thus it is important that the Secretariat focus on providing a realistic set of core services to its members, and on improving the way in which it delivers those services. Our consultations suggest that SPREP should focus on providing the following core services.

i) Enhance the Strategic Capacity of Governments to Mainstream Environmental Considerations

41. If SPREP is to invest significant resources in coordinating donor and NGO assistance at the regional level, a similar investment needs to be made at country and territory levels. This should focus on strengthening the capacity of all parts of Government where consideration needs to be given to environment-related opportunities, constraints and repercussions. In addition, the Secretariat should work to ensure that the key staff in the environment agencies of its Island Members have the strategic thinking and coordinating skills to identify, prioritize and oversee the environment-related assistance provided by donors, NGOs and other development partners.

42. This will require Secretariat staff to proactively engage with countries and territories to determine their specific needs for capacity enhancement and to then facilitate, advise on, coordinate and evaluate the specific activities designed to address these needs. The Secretariat should not deliver the specific capacity enhancement services themselves. These should be provided by those in-country and regional institutions and organizations with the comparative advantage in delivering capacity enhancement services in the Pacific.

ii) Coordinating the Environment-related Efforts of Donors and NGOs

43. An informal estimate suggests that over the next five years donors will provide in excess of \$US500 million for environmental initiatives in the Pacific islands region. Even under the current, more modest, levels of funding there are major issues of donor

coordination and harmonization. Unless urgent action is taken these will become even more serious as a result of the anticipated escalation in donor assistance.

44. A number of respondents considered SPREP staff spend too much time attempting to secure funding for the agency. Others suggested they miss significant opportunities. Given the level of funding potentially available for the region, relative to the attempts by SPREP to secure support, fund raising does not appear to be a very strategic use of the limited technical and managerial resources of a regional agency.

45. The Secretariat should play a highly proactive role by negotiating with at least the large donors to ensure that their proposed assistance aligns with both regional environmental and related strategies and, where appropriate, with national and territorial needs and priorities. There is little evidence that the Secretariat has engaged effectively with major environmental donors, such as the European Union, over the past 10 years or so. This appears to be a major opportunity lost. The Secretariat should give appropriate attention to its fund raising role, including how it is done, and the priority placed on it. The TOR for the Deputy Director's position clearly defines functions related to fund raising and donor relations. However, these have not been given adequate attention in recent years.

46. The need to increase the coordination and accountability of NGOs working at regional and/or national levels is highlighted in a recent study of the history and current situation of biodiversity conservation in Fiji.¹⁷ It found that the arrival of most of the 18 international organizations working on conservation in Fiji in the past ten years has not resulted in a commensurate increase in conservation success at the national level. Moreover, the study found that while NGOs invest substantial resources engaging with communities or otherwise implementing projects, they are essentially unaccountable for their priorities, their methodology and their budgets, except back to their own international offices and to donors. Few projects deliver benefits which continue after the project is completed.

47. The lessons learned in Fiji are transferable to every SPREP member country and territory. No one agency can resolve these problems, but SPREP can again play a significant role by helping to ensure that the efforts of NGOs are in line with Pacific needs. In the Pacific NGOs are increasingly fulfilling a gap created because most Governments have failed to provide the funding and other assistance needed to manage the environment and natural resources in an adequate manner. In contrast, many NGOs have the resources and are good at applied research, implement some worthwhile conservation activities, and give communities a voice in the policy debate. But if these efforts are not carefully aligned to national priorities the NGO projects also suffer the same fate as donor projects conducted in isolation – the outcomes and benefits cannot be sustained.

48. SPREP can assist PICTs to develop, individually and jointly, strong and coherent positions on donor and NGO assistance for environmental and related initiatives and then negotiate with these partners with the aim of improving coordination, harmonization, and accountability to countries and territories.

¹⁷ Austral Foundation, 2007: Review and Analysis of Fiji's Conservation Sector. Austral Foundation, Auckland, 82pp,

iii) Existing and Emerging Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Other Modalities – Supporting Compliance, Negotiations and Advocacy

49. SPREP is the Secretariat for three regional conventions:

- the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (the ‘Apia Convention’) - adopted 1976; entered into force in 1990; suspended in 2006;
- the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (the ‘SPREP, or Noumea, Convention’) and its Related Protocols – adopted 1986; entered into force in 1990; and
- the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Waste and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Waste within the South Pacific Region (the “Waigani Convention”) - adopted 1995; entered into force in 2001.

50. The Secretariat assists the Contracting Parties to meet their obligations at national level and manages the conventions in a regional context. This involves specific technical support, including capacity building, as well as the convening of periodic meetings of the Parties to review progress and amend the agreements, as required.

51. SPREP also has an excellent track record in supporting PICTs¹⁸ to actively engage in negotiating MEAs such as those related to climate change and biodiversity. However, in recent years the Secretariat’s support to the negotiating processes has declined, in terms of both the quantity and quality of the assistance, though an exception is support for biodiversity-related MEAs. This decline has left a gap which has been filled principally by the major international NGOs, and to an extent by other multilateral organisations. This outcome is not always in the interests of the PICTs, as their negotiating positions do not necessarily align with those of the NGOs and multilaterals. Thus there is a need for SPREP to reassert itself and improve its support to PICTs to ensure that their negotiators are well informed on the matters under consideration and have the appropriate negotiating skills. SPREP should also work to ensure that the MEAs result in substantial environmental improvements, both regionally and nationally, rather than all the effort going into supporting the negotiations themselves.

52. Similarly, SPREP can be rightly proud of the quality and amount of assistance it has provided to Pacific Parties to facilitate their compliance with MEAs. This effort should continue, but in ways that reflect the changing needs of the PICTs as their capacities and levels of compliance improve. SPREP also has an important advocacy role to play. For example, it can work with the PICTs in ways that will help ensure that both their needs and achievements are well understood by the international community.

53. The assistance SPREP should provide to PICTs to support their engagement in MEAs has many dimensions. The overriding priority should be to ensure that Pacific Parties to such agreements are working in ways that are consistent with national and regional priorities rather than their participation being driven by other considerations. SPREP should also have a greater focus on policy knowledge, bringing into the region the current international thinking related to MEAs and other matters.

54. In determining how SPREP operates, more consideration needs to be given to the diversity amongst the membership. The diversity, which presents both opportunities and constraints, requires the Secretariat to be doubly attentive to this matter. Diversity arises

¹⁸ Many territories are unable to become Parties to most MEAs.

from such sources as there being two official languages and differences in island forms, constitutional statutes, levels of development, gender imbalances, standards of living, and the distance between the Secretariat and the PICTs.

55. For example, large distances from the Secretariat increases costs and is a deterrent to full participation. Language barriers make it difficult for staff to establish consistently effective working relationships with their counterparts in the French speaking territories. All the territories are disadvantaged by being ineligible for funding through the United Nations and other international agencies such as the ADB. The Secretariat needs to improve its donor liaison role with the territories. It can also add value to its services, and address diversity amongst the membership, through improvements in networking and in the sharing of learning experiences. The Secretariat should facilitate the involvement of all its Island Members in regional projects, even when the donor-defined region is only a sub-set of the SPREP membership¹⁹. Exploration of options for bringing additional resources to allow full engagement of all Island Members would also be valuable.

56. The Secretariat is not doing nearly enough to comply with the status of SPREP as a bilingual Organization. We acknowledge that the costs and expertise required to produce all documents in both French and English would far exceed the available resources. Even though only a small percentage of SPREP's publications are translated currently, a significant portion of its overall budget is already spent on translation.

57. More French-speaking staff should be recruited into the Secretariat (currently there is only one), including within senior management. Skilled professionals in French language communications would help improve programme-related interactions with Francophone Members. However, to achieve full language parity SPREP would require a full-time professional translator as well as a separate French editor or editorial team permanently attached to the Secretariat. In addition, it may be necessary to retain French-language specialists in other key areas of public interaction, such as education and training. This would have major budgetary implications. Examination of the current practices of other CROP agencies and multilingual intergovernmental agencies would likely provide useful guidance to the Secretariat. Realistically, the resources required to adopt a similar approach may not be available to the Secretariat. In such a case it will be necessary to acknowledge that the bilingual policy falls short of equal treatment of both languages.

58. While the immediate solution might seem to be to request additional funding from Francophone members to support enhanced dual-language capability, this is obviously not fair to these countries. However, provision of trained language volunteers might be a concrete way in which these countries could help SPREP reach its goals in this regard.

Recommendations

59. *The Secretariat focus its delivery of services to member countries and territories on:*

- i) enhancing the strategic capacity of its Island Members to mainstream environmental considerations in development planning and processes;*
 - ii) coordinating the environment-related efforts of donors and NGOs at regional level;*
- and*

¹⁹ Costs would have to be borne by the formally ineligible members or their development assistance partners.

iii) supporting compliance, negotiations and advocacy in relation to existing and emerging multilateral environmental agreements and other modalities.

60. *SPREP should separate its roles and related activities into:*

- i) core business activities which are fully costed; and*
- ii) project-related activities that contribute to the core by way of both a project management fee and the growth of knowledge and expertise within the Secretariat and its Members.*

61. *Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat by:*

- i) giving more attention to facilitating, advising on and coordinating technical and policy advice and assistance;*
- ii) facilitating and coordinating training, institutional strengthening and information sharing;*
- iii) showing leadership by playing a coordination role and working collaboratively and cooperatively with relevant partners, rather than my claiming exclusive ownership of specific environmental issues such as climate change; and*
- iv) improving organizational management in such areas as performance management, strategic planning and prioritizing - performance monitoring and evaluation should allow the Organization to learn and should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization, including but not limited to individual staff, senior management, programmes and projects, the annual work programme and the SPREP Meeting.*

62. *SPREP must give more consideration to the diversity amongst its membership and be proactive in ensuring how it operates promotes greater equity in the way the Secretariat interacts with, and provides services to, the member countries and territories.*

5. How should the Organization be funded?

Situation Analysis

63. An internal SPREP report prepared in 2003 noted that “an inadequate core budget has been a perennial problem for SPREP”. The result is a disconnect between core-funded programmes and donor-funded project, which has created an over-reliance on donor funding not only to support, but also to at times direct, the work of the Secretariat. Another consequence is the re-allocation of funds to cover other responsibilities, such as project funding being diverted to core-functions. The situation has improved somewhat since 2003. In 2006 donors met 75% of the annual operating costs, down from 77% the year before and significantly lower than the 88% in 2000. In 2006, Members’ contributions met only 12% of operating costs. As a result, almost all programme staff, including the two programme managers, are funded from AusAID and NZAID extra-budgetary allocations. This makes the management of the Organization, and support to island Members, highly vulnerable to a decline in donor funds.

64. Since 2003 Australia has funded SPREP and other Pacific Regional Organizations (PROs) through a programme funding approach that includes the assessed Member contribution and a programme funding contribution towards implementing Member-endorsed strategic programmes. On the basis of a 2005 review of this approach to funding all PROs, Australia agreed to continue programme funding of SPREP for a three year period (2006 – 08) through a Memorandum of Understanding.

65. Currently New Zealand funds SPREP through a mutually agreed annual funding arrangement. This involves a mix of modalities including membership contributions as well as programme, tagged, project and extra budgetary funding.

66. A joint triennial review of Australia and New Zealand approaches to supporting SPREP and other PROs will be undertaken in the second half of 2008. The review will inform Australia's Regional Aid Strategy for the post 2009 period and implementation of NZAID's Pacific Regional Strategy. The review will form the basis of an Australian submission to Government covering Australia's funding approach to PROs and subsequently new funding arrangements with regional organizations post 2008. New Zealand will use the review as the basis for a framework for engagement with SPREP and other PROs.

Discussion

67. The joint triennial review of Australia and New Zealand approaches to PROs might well result in a continuation of Australia's multi-year programme funding contribution to SPREP and the start of a similar funding approach by New Zealand. If this is indeed the case, it is highly likely that both funding agreements will be tied to specification and application of a robust system of performance indicators, monitoring and financial management arrangements, and strong demand for a more genuine move to capture the anticipated benefits of programme funding. In itself, the AusAID and NZAID programme funding is too small to direct SPREP towards a programmatic approach. The \$100 million from GEF for the region could have been potentially more influential, but is now an opportunity lost, due to circumstances which were not entirely outside the Secretariat's influence. However, improvements in SPREP's budgeting processes and operational performance might well encourage several other donor countries to follow Australia and New Zealand, and provide programmatic funding.

68. A worrying finding from our consultation with SPREP's major funding partners (current and potential) was that the Secretariat had made little meaningful effort to engage with them in-country, in order to explore the ways in which moves to formalize and secure longer-term programmatic funding could be accelerated. The same comments were made in reference to increasing the levels of such funding.

69. However, improvements in the extent, certainty and magnitude of programmatic funding should certainly not be seen as a panacea for SPREP. One reason is that the sizes of Island Members' contributions are such that these countries and territories have little sense of ownership of SPREP – of being "shareholders". For 2008, assessed contributions from Island Members are either \$US10,184 or \$US20,360. In general these are small amounts relative to the direct and indirect benefits of membership. This weak sense of ownership by many PICTs manifests in a number of ways. As will be discussed later in this report, weak governance is one of the main consequences.

70. Until PICTs see SPREP as being highly relevant to the effective management of their environments and natural resources, they will have little enthusiasm to play a greater role in governing and funding SPREP. This is a "catch 22" situation – weak governance and significant funding constraints mean that services to Members have little impact or appreciation, in turn providing Members with little incentive to engage in processes that will improve SPREP's performance. Similarly, traditional donors are reluctant to increase funding and potential donors are unlikely to come forward and provide funding under such circumstances.

71. In terms of funding its activities, SPREP should separate its roles and related activities into: i) core programmes, with these being costed so that donors know what they are funding; and ii) project-related activities that contribute to the core by way of both a project management fee and the growth of knowledge and expertise within SPREP and its Members. The costed programmes should be presented to Members, with choices identified, so they can make tradeoffs. Unfortunately, external project-based funding complicates this approach.

Recommendations

72. *In order to increase ownership of SPREP by its Members, and accountability to them, SPREP should prepare and implement a strategy for all its core business activities to be funded by its Members through assessed contributions as well as by programmatic funding from some Members and other donor partners; if this is not acceptable to the Members, serious consideration should be given to winding up the Organization.*

73. *The Secretariat should make a more targeted effort to engage with SPREP's large (both current and potential) donor countries and organizations, to explore ways to achieve longer-term programmatic funding to address any gap between Member contributions and the cost of the Secretariat's agreed Core business.*

6. How should the Organization be governed?

Situation Analysis

74. The SPREP Meeting is the plenary body. Currently it meets annually, but between 1996 and 1999 the meeting was held biennially. The following are amongst its key roles: i) review and approve the SPREP Action Plan; ii) adopt the SPREP work programme, and give directions to the Director and review progress regarding its implementation; and iii) adopt the budget estimates.

75. These actions are critically important to the successful operation of SPREP. This is reflected in the considerable amount of time and other resources the Secretariat invests in ensuring that Members are provided with all the information needed to undertake these and related tasks²⁰. Despite these and other initiatives, there was a general feeling amongst the stakeholders we consulted that Members are not providing the Secretariat with the quality of advice it should be receiving in order to ensure that its activities are fully aligned with the needs, capacities and priorities of its Members, and particularly its Island Members. Largely missing from SPREP is debate on regional, national and territorial strategies and programming. A strategic focus is lacking in SPREP. Several reasons have been suggested to the Review Team, including:

- at the SPREP Meeting there is little opportunity for an in-depth discussion or debate of the plan and programme;
- the impression that the plan and programme under discussion were in their final form, and any changes would be difficult to make, in part due to translation implications;
- delegates are not always well informed on, or comfortable articulating, their national and territorial priorities;
- Secretariat staff are not always fully aware of the needs and priorities of the Island Members;

²⁰ Indeed, the Review Team was concerned that the significant level of resources devoted to preparations for the Council meetings effectively reduced the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver services to the region.

- there is difficulty understanding the interrelationships between the regional environment priorities of the Action Plan at the higher level, the Secretariat's mid to long term Strategic Programmes and the annual work and budget plans;
- the difficulty of merging the needs and priorities of countries and territories into a regional action plan and work programme;
- failure of some Island Members to recognize their role in ensuring harmonization between the action plans and work programmes at country and territory level with those being prepared and implemented by SPREP;
- the need to think and discuss at a strategic level and reach a consensus;
- the Pacific culture does not favour 'tough talk' and rigorous accountability in open public fora; and
- the culture of the SPREP Meeting has become a public presentation style, where active discussion of issues or concerns has not been encouraged by the Secretariat nor demanded by the Members.

Discussion

76. SPREP's principal role is to serve the needs and interests of its Members. The available evidence suggests that the present system of ensuring these are reflected in the action plan and work programme is not effective. During the consultations there were lengthy discussions as to how governance of SPREP might be improved. A high priority was for governance processes to engender a greater sense of ownership and opportunity for input to SPREP by Island Members. Work programmes should not only reflect national needs but national needs should be the basis for them – i.e., work programmes need to be built from the bottom up.

77. Examples of how this might be achieved include: i) increased interaction between Secretariat staff and representatives of Island Members between SPREP Meetings, so that the draft strategic plan and work programme are a better reflection of Members' needs and priority areas for assistance, as well as the capacity of the Secretariat to address them; and ii) during the SPREP Meeting informal, more technical and policy-focussed discussions should be held between individual Island Members and staff of the Secretariat. The SPREP Meeting needs to be tighter focused on issues and outcomes, rather than a broad, public style presentation of the Secretariat's good news stories.

78. The Review Team also suggests that the SPREP Council consider establishing a SPREP Board, similar to a Corporation, to which the Secretariat reports and is accountable. In turn, the Board would be accountable to SPREP Members, through the SPREP Council. The rationale for this proposal is the need for a more continuous flow of high quality advice to the Director and to increase the accountability of the Director to the membership. The functions fulfilled by the Board would also allow the frequency of the SPREP Meeting to be reduced, perhaps to once every two years, thus incurring considerable cost savings. Such a change should also significantly reduce the considerable time the Secretariat spends preparing for a SPREP Meeting. Annex 5 provides more details on how such a Board might be constituted and operate.

Recommendations

79. *The SPREP Meeting consider establishing a SPREP Board, similar to a Corporation, to which the Secretariat reports and is accountable; the Board is in turn accountable to SPREP Members, through the SPREP Council.*

80. *Increase the ongoing interaction between Secretariat staff and representatives of Island Members so that the draft strategic plan and work programme which are presented at the SPREP Meeting are based on a clear understanding of Island Members' needs and priority areas for assistance, as well as on the capacity of the Secretariat to address them.*

81. *During the SPREP Meeting informal, more technical and policy-focussed discussions should be held between individual Island Members and the Secretariat.*

7. How should the Secretariat operate?²¹

Situation Analysis

82. Expectations people have of the Secretariat are very high, especially relative to its capacity. Moreover, as noted earlier, the Secretariat faces enormous challenges, in part as a consequence of the breadth of its mandate - to assist its 21 Island Members meet their many and diverse requirements related to sound environmental management and to ecologically sustainable development. The small size and operating budget of the Secretariat, relative to the enormity of these needs, further challenges the Secretariat. A major issue is whether SPREP should have national and territorial work programmes, or operate under a regional one-size-fits-all approach.

83. SPREP's very broad purpose and mandate have not provided a clear direction or focus for the Organization, or for the Secretariat in particular. This has led to the Secretariat trying to provide a very comprehensive range of services, despite very limited funding or direction from its Members. In effect, it has an impossible job, given the limited resources and direction. Not surprisingly, the level of satisfaction from the Organization's membership is not high.

84. The broad mandate of SPREP is in itself not necessarily a problem – the real problem is a lack of ability to prioritize, based on the needs of its Members. Within the Organization there is no substantive debate on needs and priorities, so often the end result is SPREP being donor driven, project driven and individual Secretariat staff driven, including by those in senior management. Rather, the Secretariat should be ensuring activities are aligned with the strategic programme, setting priorities, costing activities, and managing for results. The development strategies of Members are an important vehicle for linking the work programmes of SPREP and its Members.

85. We have already highlighted the need for the Secretariat to focus its efforts, based on a clearer understanding of SPREP's mandate, and specifically its role and how it should be filled. Other solutions include access to clear statements of the needs and priorities of its Members and improved organizational management covering such areas as performance and prioritizing.

Discussion

86. Increased focus by the Secretariat will help ensure the delivery of quality services that produce tangible outcomes. Giving more attention to facilitating, advising on and coordinating technical and policy advice and assistance will also help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat. Facilitating and coordinating training, institutional strengthening and information sharing should also be priorities. SPREP should strengthen its systems for learning from its experiences, and sharing lessons and best practices within the Secretariat as well as with its members and other stakeholders.

²¹ Additional information is in Annex 6 and 7.

It should be building upon experience, not undertaking disjointed, incremental, new initiatives. Wherever possible the Secretariat should avoid undertaking project-based activities at country or territory level.

87. There is a need for a standard, transparent system of staff performance assessment and enhancement – for all staff, from the Director down, with performance indicators based on the work plans and deliverables of individuals. These should be linked, in turn, to the Organization's work plans and strategies. The Secretariat needs to develop performance assessment procedures and ensure these are implemented across all staff, including senior management. Linking individual performance assessment to progress against the Secretariat's work plans and programme objectives will provide objective substance to assessment of individuals, and the subsequent decisions regarding contract renewal and salary increments.

88. Areas where enhancement of staff capabilities is identified should be addressed by the Secretariat, through training, mentoring or general capacity building. Previous reviews have recommended staff development opportunities be provided to non-permanent staff. While recruitment should ensure placement of best candidates, the reality is that professional development is never 'complete' – it is ongoing. This is particularly so if an organisation is to remain dynamic and relevant in a changing context, such as is occurring with environmental management and sustainable development. Technically competent personnel may need further training in monitoring and evaluation, for example. Thus, as part of a learning organization, the Secretariat should provide staff development opportunities to its entire staff, not just those with "permanent" appointments. It is important to note that we are not recommending long-term formal training.

89. SPREP needs to strengthen its abilities in strategic planning, prioritization and adaptive management, especially at the highest levels of the Organization. It is important that, collectively, the Secretariat's Executive has strong technical as well as managerial competence.

90. In order to achieve much needed improvements in accountability and effectiveness, performance monitoring and evaluation should be implemented and strengthened across the entire Organization. Organization-wide systems are needed to monitor and evaluate performance. Importantly, the opportunities for improvement that are identified should be incorporated in both activities and programmes within the Organisation and in how personnel are managed. We note and support the current efforts in the Secretariat to develop performance indicators across the strategic programmes. However this monitoring and evaluation tool needs to be taken up and used meaningfully, especially by senior management, rather than being seen simply as an initiative to appease donors. The tool can be used to measure performance of programmes, determine allocation of resources, and also to measure the performance of both senior management and individual staff.

91. The Secretariat needs to adopt a system of quality controls and performance assessments that are linked to the annual work program and used in reporting to the SPREP Meeting. Currently reporting is based more on compliance monitoring and evaluation on a project by project basis based on requirements of the funding source. There is a need for monitoring and evaluation that allows the Organization to learn – based on identifying lessons, success factors and success stories.

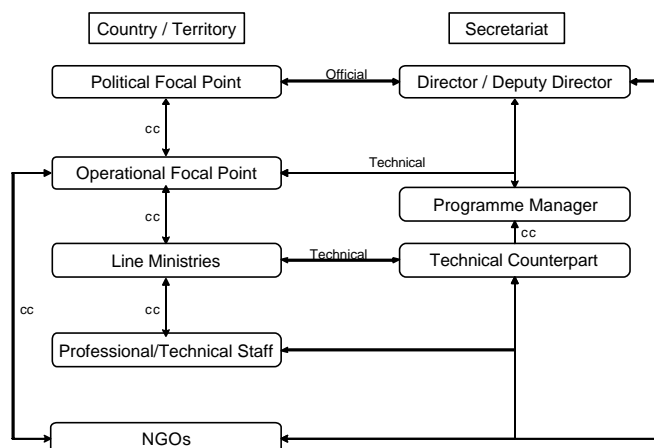
92. Greater transparency, accountability and sensitivity are required in Secretariat processes such as recruitment, contract renewal, awarding salary increments to

individual staff and funding/support decisions. Recruitment procedures should pay more attention to gender equity, language capabilities and the technical competence of the candidates, The choice of Director is a strategic issue for SPREP and must therefore be addressed carefully by its Members. The Review team considers that appointment to any post in the Secretariat should be merit based.

93. Country²² profiles have the potential to be a mechanism that will help ensure that SPREP addresses the needs of its Island Members both effectively and efficiently. However they need to be made effective and regularly updated. Designated staff in the Secretariat should be responsible for preparing and updating an improved country profile and acting as a focal point for a PICT or small group of PICTs. The profiles can assist in developing the country work programmes. These need to be both substantive and practical, helping the Secretariat to agree with its Members as to what assistance it will provide, and what actions will be taken by the Members themselves. The country focal points in the Secretariat should travel to their allocated countries and territories for discussions on needs, capacities and other matters. This, and similar measures, will help the Secretariat to ensure it consults regularly with all its Members and not just with those with which it has formal annual consultation agreements.

94. The current system of National Focal Points does not foster effective working relationships and two-way knowledge transfer between the Secretariat and Government and non-governmental agencies. This is especially the case for line ministries where environmental considerations do not receive much attention currently. Thus the current system is isolating certain agencies and individuals from fully participating in environmental activities supported by SPREP. This might be overcome, in part, by re-establishing SPREP's NGO focal point list as many NGOs are not receiving relevant information via the SPREP Focal Point.

95. The Review noted that there does not appear to be an agreed terms of reference, or guidance, as to how Focal Points might operate when fulfilling their responsibilities to both stakeholders in their countries and to the Secretariat. How the Focal Points operate and manage their relationships varies considerably between Members. Our consultations suggest that Island Members should be encouraged to consider, agree on and implement an appropriate variant of the relationships management system shown below.



²² Includes territories.

96. The Secretariat should do more to facilitate the involvement of all its Island Members in regional projects, even when the donor-defined region is only a sub-set. Costs would have to be borne by the formally ineligible members. A valuable service by the Secretariat would be to explore options for bringing additional resources to bear to allow for full engagement of all Island Members.

97. The Review Team noted that several attempts to accommodate representatives of international organizations and of NGOs within the Secretariat's facilities had been less than successful. It is also noted a worrying trend for the Secretariat to be bypassed, such as the location of choice for such initiatives and positions as the United Nations' regional climate centre, the United Nations' environment hub and the United States of America's regional environment advisor. The Team sees great value in having relevant organizations and initiatives located in the Secretariat. However, such opportunities need to be carefully evaluated and prioritized, if only because of the logistical and space constraints. Moreover, the functions and operations of co-located agencies must be readily distinguished from SPREP's core business activities and from the Secretariat's organizational structure.

Recommendations

98. *The Secretariat should strengthen its systems for learning from its experiences, and sharing lessons and best practices within the Secretariat as well as with its Members and other stakeholders, including establishing more effective person-to-person interactions with environmental stakeholders in the region.*

99. *As a learning organization, SPREP should ensure that all of the Secretariat's staff have opportunities to enhance their performance through professional development and related activities, not just those with "permanent" appointments.*

100. *Designated staff in the Secretariat should be responsible for preparing and updating a revised form of the country profile and acting as a focal point for a PICT or for a small group of PICTs.*

101. *Island Members should be encouraged to consider, agree on and implement a relationships management system that addresses the shortcomings in the current system of Focal Points and allows for more flexibility, diversity, and effectiveness in the interactions between the Secretariat and its national stakeholders. In addition, and primarily because in many cases NGOs are not receiving information via the SPREP Focal Point, SPREP's NGO focal point list should be re-established.*

102. *Greater transparency, accountability and sensitivity, including to gender equity, are required in Secretariat processes such as recruitment, contract renewal or termination, awarding salary increments to individual staff and funding/support decisions. As a technically-based organization, it is important that future appointees to SPREP's Executive positions have technical competence relevant to the work of the Organization, in addition to strong managerial skills. The Review recommends that all recruitment within SPREP is merit based, including appointment of individuals to Executive positions within the Secretariat.*

103. *Within the limits imposed by logistical, space and other constraints, the Secretariat should actively encourage relevant organizations and initiatives to locate within the Secretariat's facilities, while at the same time ensuring that the functions and operations of the agencies are readily distinguished from SPREP's core business activities and are not part of the Secretariat's organizational structure.*

8. How should a strengthened SPREP position itself relative to its existing and potential partners?

Situation Analysis

104. There are two important considerations in the context of SPREP's relationships with other organizations. One is at an operational level, and concerns SPREP's ongoing working relationships with Governments and with both governmental and non-governmental PROs. The second concerns the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) Review, including the decisions by Forum Island Leaders on the regional institutional structure, and particularly the absorption of part of SOPAC into SPREP.

Ongoing Working Relationships at an Operational Level²³

105. Since its establishment SPREP's corporate philosophy has evolved, and so has its operating environment. As noted above, in its early years SPREP operated in a world and region where environmental concerns were addressed in isolation and generally accorded low priority in terms of allocation of Government resources. The current operating environment is one where environmental concerns have a high profile and are increasingly seen as a whole-of-Government and, indeed, a whole-of-country/territory responsibility. Changes within SPREP have not always been in line with these changes in external conditions. Initially SPREP's role was one of regional environmental advocate. There were few other voices expressing concerns about environmental degradation. As environmental awareness increased at all levels, SPREP grew rapidly. Its comparative advantage as the region's environmental agency went from strength to strength. Its dominance also grew, helped by the practice, if not the policy, of pursuing and implementing projects which had little if anything to do with the immediate priorities of the PICTs.

106. To sustain its operations SPREP adopted a somewhat competitive approach to securing projects - often it seemed simply as a way to retain its staff. This attitude is still alive and well in some parts of the Secretariat, under some circumstances. It manifests as a belief that SPREP has the right to be the only PRO that provides environmental support services to the region. Unfortunately it also often manifests as poorly executed projects, in large part because the Secretariat lacks the capacity to deliver quality outputs and outcomes.

107. SPREP is slowly embracing a more cooperative approach to fulfilling its mandate, considering other Governmental and non-governmental regional organization as partners rather than competitors. This change is being expedited by such instruments as the Pacific Plan and by institutional arrangements such as the CROP working groups. The success of these and other initiatives will hopefully mean that SPREP will place increasing emphasis on joint programming, principally with other CROP agencies but also, where appropriate, with non-governmental and other development partners.

108. SPREP Members may well find value in considering and implementing a strategy of decentralising Secretariat activities within the region, in order to improve its effectiveness at the operational level. Seldom does the current "fly-in, fly out" approach allow sufficient time for both Government staff in the relevant PICT, and Secretariat personnel, to achieve the planned outcomes. Placement of Secretariat staff in countries/territories that require extensive support would allow more time to discuss, implement and achieve the intended results. Servicing PICTs from any one location,

²³ See Annexes 6 and 7 for additional information.

such as Apia, will be increasingly difficult and expensive, in part due to the escalating cost of aviation fuel. This will further compromise the capacity of the Secretariat to respond effectively to the needs of its Members.

109. Some other CROP agencies have already placed staff at strategic sub-regional locations, in order to service a group of PICTs. Overall this has achieved good results. SPREP might consider doing the same, perhaps by co-locating staff with other CROP agencies or with other stakeholders such as the Centres of the University of the South Pacific. The cost of such an arrangement is not expected to be any different to supporting an officer in Samoa, but could result in higher visibility and productivity for SPREP. However, effective communication and management systems would be required, to ensure that staff working away from Apia continue to operate as an integral part of the Secretariat.

Regional Institutional Framework Review

110. We are fully aware of the decision by Forum Island Leaders that part of SOPAC be absorbed into SPREP. Political matters pertaining to the implementation or revision of this decision are outside the purview of this Review. However, at a technical and operational level there are important points to be made, arising from our discussions with stakeholders in SPREP as well as in the future of the region's environment and natural resources.

111. Regardless of the final structure for the PROs, the region as a whole needs to reconsider the role of its environmental agency, especially whether there is a commitment to funding and governing it effectively. The Review Team highlights the need to address these matters urgently, and certainly before RIF-related decisions are finalised and implemented. We also note that depending on the way the RIF is implemented, SPREP's job may be made easier, especially by helping it to identify specialized priority areas as well as by expediting the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in regional and national development plans and activities.

Recommendations

112. *The Secretariat should place greater emphasis on developing and implementing joint programming with other PROs, at both regional and country/territory levels.*

113. *SPREP should consider decentralising some Secretariat activities by locating selected staff at strategic sub-regional locations, in order to service a group of PICTs that require extensive support.*

114. *Before the RIF-related decisions are finalised and implemented, SPREP Members and other relevant stakeholders should clearly define the role of the region's environmental agency, and commit to funding and governing it effectively.*

9. How might the recommendations be implemented?

115. The Review Team recognises that the recommendations arising from past reviews have not always resulted in the intended improvements to SPREP and particularly the Secretariat. We are also aware that the current Review has generated a large number of recommendations, many of which are strikingly similar to those made in recent years. Careful thought and considered action are therefore needed if the current Review is to bring about the improvements in SPREP which the Organization's many stakeholders wish to see.

116. The following suggestions are based on the assumption that a majority, though not necessarily all of the recommendations will be approved at the 2008 SPREP Meeting.

Moreover, some of the following suggestions provide an opportunity for the Secretariat to rise to the challenge of being more proactive.

117. The Director should convene a meeting of all available Secretariat staff as soon as is practicable, to discuss and identify how the recommendations might best be implemented, and to select members of a working group to be led by the recently appointed Deputy Director. Tasks include:

- Preparation of an implementation plan, including individuals or organizations responsible for designated actions, identification of costs and possible sources of funding, and the timing of specific actions and milestones; particular attention should be given to those recommendations which could be implemented by the Secretariat without delay, and without prejudicing decisions to be made at the SPREP Meeting; and
- Have the implementation plan ready for presentation at the 2008 SPREP Meeting as a working paper; the plan presented at the Meeting should reflect the decisions made by Members earlier in the Meeting.

118. The Review Team also suggests that some or all of the following be undertaken:

- Prior to the 2008 SPREP Meeting the three sub-regional members of the Review Team visit each of the member countries and territories in their respective sub-regions and conduct meetings and other activities that will help ensure SPREP Members and other national stakeholders are fully aware of the results of the Review, and of its recommendations. The aim is to assist them to come to the Meeting fully informed and prepared to debate the report's findings and recommendations. The visits would also provide an opportunity for Members to be made aware of the views of others in their sub-region, and beyond;
- An informal meeting be held immediately prior to the 2008 SPREP Meeting, namely on Sunday, September 7, to provide an opportunity for wide ranging and frank discussion of this Report's findings and recommendations, and to prepare guidance to the SPREP Meeting as to how it might respond to this Report; and
- Adequate time be allowed within the formal agenda of the 2008 SPREP meeting, to ensure there is ample opportunity for Members to discuss the Report's findings and recommendations, and to agree on follow-up actions.

119. The Review Team further suggests that a report on implementation of the recommendations of the ICR be prepared for, and discussed at the 2009 SPREP Meeting.

Annex 1
Terms of Reference
Corporate Review of the
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Objective

To make recommendations to the SPREP Council on steps to enhance Secretariat performance based on SPREP Member feedback on the effectiveness of SPREP Secretariat services and the relevance of its priorities.

General

1. Summarise the current and the immediate past (5 years) mandate/focal areas and work programmes of the Secretariat and note any significant changes based on an analysis of relevant documents (eg. SPREP Action Plan, Strategic Programmes, Annual Budgets, Annual Reports).
2. Review and document the implementation status of the various recommendations of the previous corporate review (AusAID 2000).

Effectiveness of Services

3. Review the Secretariat's performance over the last five years against stated objectives. Specifically review a sample of SPREP's outputs (i.e. results that the Secretariat is largely responsible for) and of outcomes and impact of SPREP activities.
4. Solicit feedback from island members and key stakeholders of the quality of services provided in terms of timeliness, quality of technical content, appropriateness and with regard to the SPREP main functions of capacity building and augmentation and technical and policy advisory role.
5. Assess, to the extent possible, the realistic level of resources (financial and technical) that the Secretariat needs to service its members.
6. Consider the extent to which SPREP plans for and achieves sustainable environmental outcomes/development and integrates this into its work programme and contributes to national and regional development.

Direction

7. Assess Members' perceptions of changes, if any, in regional environmental priorities and their implications for strategic directions and programming of SPREP. On the basis of this assessment, review and comment on the continuing relevance of the priorities and programmes/activities the Secretariat is currently working on with Pacific islands members. Highlight any current gaps in the Secretariat's activities that could provide opportunities for new SPREP initiatives as well as those areas where the level of services could be reduced or strengthened taking into account available resources, changing needs of PICTs and the roles of other organizations working in the region.
8. Review and comment on the general relevance of SPREP's main functions (capacity building and augmentation and technical and policy advisory role) and any changes to the relative importance of its technical and policy roles.

9. Review related current regional initiatives and analyse likely implications for the role of SPREP in the Pacific islands region including its role as a member of the CROP mechanism.

Corporate Review Team

- **Team Leader**
- **Private Sector/Consultant**
- Melanesian representative
- Micronesian representative
- Polynesian representative
- AusAID/NZAID representative

Methodology

Consult with all members particularly PICTs and key stakeholders. Visit and consult in person with as many as is practicable/feasible within financial limits, the rest perhaps by questionnaire or teleconference/telephone. If personal visits to all are not practicable then those visited form a representative sample of islands members – Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, large/high island, small/atoll islands, states and territories, Anglophone/francophone.

Outputs

The Review Team report will be presented to the 19th SPREP Meeting in 2008 and should cover its terms of reference. The SPREP Council will then make decisions on which recommendations to accept or decline, and the steps required to implement those recommendations. The Report should in addition to presenting its findings and recommendations should also provide an Executive Summary with its key recommendations.

To allow for circulation to SPREP Members in accordance with the Rules of Procedures, the final report should be received by the Secretariat by **22 June 2008**

Duration

Maximum 8 weeks.

Annex 2

List of Countries, Territories and Organizations Consulted during the Review

- A. Countries, Territories & Organizations covered by site visits
1. Countries and Territories
Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tokelau²⁴, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis & Futuna.
 2. Organizations
AusAID, NZAID, UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, EU, USP, SOPAC, World Meteorological Organization, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, UNEP, SPC, University of the South Pacific, Birdlife International, The Nature Conservancy, IUCN, JICA, Conservation International, Live and Learn, Wetlands International, Communities and Coasts Programme, plus many national NGOs
- B. Countries, Territories and Organizations Consulted via Questionnaire
1. Countries and Territories
American Samoa, France, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia²⁵, People's Republic of China, United States of America.
 2. Organizations
CIDA, SPC, Agence Française de Développement – French Development Agency, AusAID and NZAID

²⁴ Through the Tokelau Affairs Office in Apia

²⁵ Included in programme of visits, but Team members were unable to conduct the consultations due to airport closure.

Annex 3

Current Direction and Relevance of SPREP

1. SPREP has served the Pacific well, especially since it became an autonomous body in 1995. It played a pivotal role in raising awareness about the importance of managing the environment and natural resources of the region in a sound manner and has facilitated cooperation among its Members to address environmental issues of common concern to the region. Equally importantly, SPREP has assisted Island Members to voice their concerns at various international fora dealing with global environment and sustainable development issues and has been instrumental in securing significant amounts of funding in support of environmental management in the Pacific. By and large, resources for regional projects and programmes on the environment have been effectively managed and activities reasonably coordinated, usually in partnership with other regional and / or international organizations.

2. SPREP has assisted PICs meet their obligations under the SPREP and Waigani Conventions and supported eligible member countries to become members of several regional and international environmental agreements and agendas, including the UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD, Basel Convention, GEF, Agenda 21 and the BPoA. The Secretariat has signed a significant number of MoUs with several donor governments, agencies, organizations as well as its own Members, for the joint implementation of various projects and activities in the region.

3. There is general agreement throughout SPREP's membership that the Organization had made a positive contribution to the quality of life and to the protection of the environment of the region and that the programmes and projects it supported have had some positive impacts. SPREP still provides an important forum for regional engagement, a pool of resident expertise, and a coordinating function that has facilitated the delivery of regional and national projects which have overall delivered on-the-ground benefits. Some donor governments and agencies, because of the absence of their own missions/offices in the Pacific region, have relied on SPREP to advance their own development objectives and have channelled funding for activities in the region through SPREP.

5. There is strong belief that SPREP-supported initiatives have made the environment more visible to the public, including at the political level. For example, the Waste Landfill project at Tafaigata in Samoa is largely seen as a "flagship project" for Samoa and is widely acknowledged as a SPREP-supported project. Similar sentiments were expressed about the 'Green-bag' project in Kiribati, and the waste management projects in Tuvalu, Tonga and Marshall Islands. The NEMS and other early initiatives of SPREP helped guide the development of several national plans and strategies for the effective management and conservation of the environment and natural resources in many PICs. In remote Tokelau, environmental awareness increased significantly through a SPREP-coordinated visit by a number of regional and international agencies. At the regional level, SPREP is a member of the CROP and a number of regional working groups that assist with the planning and coordination of regional efforts to manage the resources of the Pacific region.

6. As an inter-governmental organization, SPREP is one of only two regional organizations (the other is SPC) whose membership comprise both the independent

nations of the region as well as the US and French territories. SPREP is considered by some to perhaps be more open to NGO participation compared to other inter-governmental organizations in the Pacific. SPREP is also better placed to promote greater integration of culture and the environment in the Pacific compared to other agencies and has a reasonable degree of acceptance as a “Pacific” institution that is sympathetic to island perspectives and “in touch” with Pacific sensibilities. This would make any attempts to marginalise the Organization difficult to realise. Sadly, SPREP has of late, not taken full advantage of the strengths and advantages that it has and as a result other organizations and NGOs are beginning to fill the gap. This is not necessarily a bad thing for the region, although it might have some serious implications for the future of SPREP.

7. While support for the continuation of SPREP is strong throughout its membership, at least at the present time, a change to its structure and mandate could also be supported provided such changes would make the Organization more efficient and effective in responding to the needs of the membership. Feedback from the consultations suggest that SPREP is not as proactive as the members would like it to be in raising general awareness about the environment, seeking funding for the environment and in promoting the sustainable development goals of PICTs, especially at international events. It has not reached out equitably to all its Members, especially the small islands and territories, and there has been a lack of dialogue at management level with member governments and administrations. These weaknesses need to be addressed sooner rather than later as there is a real danger of Members’ support drifting away from the Organization.

8. Linking SPREP-supported activities to national environment and natural resource management priorities, as espoused through national strategies and plans of Pacific island countries, requires further strategic thinking on the part of the SPREP management. There is concern that SPREP is focusing too much on regional frameworks, strategies and action plans at the expense of specific in-country initiatives that can make a real difference for the countries concerned. There are strong feelings that SPREP is placing too much emphasis on environment as a standalone issue, rather than broadening its position as the leading environmental organization by playing more of a coordinating role. By and large it is still targeting the same audience as it did decades ago, while distancing itself from those with different perspectives on the role of the environment in development. It has been suggested that SPREP should play a more significant role in addressing such issues as poverty alleviation and sustainable management of land and marine resources as these are often the root causes of the many environmental problems facing the region. Moreover, SPREP should provide a framework for learning, be an important Pacific voice in international fora, and show leadership in the region. Attention to these key areas will increase visibility for SPREP and hence demonstrate its continued relevance to the region.

9. Another area of concern is the apparent lack of ties between the SPREP work programme activities and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Except for a vague reference in the 2006 Work Programme Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER), SPREP appears to be content as a passive observer to this global goal-setting strategy, while other PROs such as SPC are actively involved. Additionally, it is still unclear at this time what role, if any, SPREP will play in the implementation of the Micronesia Challenge as there seems to be a ‘wait and see’ attitude on the part of the Organization at this point. Strengthening ties with these and other similar regional and

international initiatives would significantly increase support for the continuation of SPREP.

10. The inability of SPREP to think and plan ahead has given rise to concerns by its membership that the Organization is static and is not moving with the times. It is still doing 'more of the same'. Meanwhile, other regions have learned from the early experience of SPREP and have moved on. SPREP needs to once again portray itself as the environmental champion for the region. It needs to lead in the environment crusade, developed in collaboration with the membership, advocate the Pacific islands' positions, provide value and knowledge back to the region and engage more at the national level. It needs to be more proactive and invest more effort to provide rigorous assessments of options to take to the SPREP Meetings, to make them more productive and useful.

12. Because the environment cuts across a broad range of sectors (coastal and oceanic fisheries, forestry, mining, agriculture, meteorology, water, waste, etc), SPREP is in an ideal position to influence a substantial number of decision-makers (e.g. politicians and executives) at the national level. The current Focal Point system does not help in this regard and needs to be reviewed. SPREP could help identify PICT capacity and find ways to mobilize such capacity for the effective planning and management of environmental activities of the countries and territories concerned.

13. Despite the shortcomings identified above, there has been a consistent positive response about the need to retain the Organization which has served for many years as a valuable forum for regional issues, collective action and responses, and exchange of views and expertise. The Secretariat has over the years provided standard secretariat functions: convening meetings, maintaining records, providing secretariat services and expertise to member countries and territories of the Organization and to regional treaties to which members are parties, and facilitated in-country projects on behalf of the Organization and its members.

14. These successes provide tangible reasons why the region's environmental agency, SPREP, must be retained and strengthened. Therefore, the membership must show greater commitment to the Organization, by providing adequate resources and strong leadership. Only this will enable SPREP to be more efficient and effective in responding to the needs of the membership.

Annex 4

Review of Past and Current Work Programmes

1. Although there has been no change in SPREP's purpose over the past five years, there have been changes in the way the SPREP has presented its strategies and work programmes and reported upon them.

2. During the 2003 SPREP Meeting it was agreed that the Secretariat would move from a project-based organization, to a programmatic way of working. During the 2003 Meeting members also requested that in future the Secretariat present more detailed discussions of programme outcomes, achievements, challenges and lessons learned as well as long term visions and objectives for the future.

3. Therefore, from 2003 the Secretariat's work planning, priority setting and reporting underwent a period of transition in moving to what was considered to be a more strategic programming approach. The Secretariat developed Strategic Programmes for the period 2004-2013. The Action Plan of 2005-2009 reflected the priorities under these Strategic Programmes and new formats were developed for the Annual Work Programme and Budget.

"...the new programme-based approach...has been developed for the SPREP Secretariat. This new approach to regional delivery is both more innovative and strategic than the project-based approach previously practiced. It provides clear, measurable indicators of the progress and impact of the Secretariat's work in the region. This is an important element of the Secretariat's efforts to encourage long-term collaboration with existing and new partners." (SPREP Strategic Programme 2004-2013)

4. Under the Strategic Programming Approach, SPREP now presents its work under two Programmes, the Island Ecosystems Programme and the Pacific Futures Programme. The goal of the Island Ecosystems Programme is for PICTs to be able to manage island resources and ocean ecosystems in a sustainable manner that supports life and livelihoods. This is to be achieved through developing capacities to manage and conserve ecosystems and resources, by providing advice, technical assistance, information and support to island capacities to address issues and needs.

6. The goal of the Pacific Futures Programme is for PICTs to be able to plan and respond to the threats and pressures on islands and ocean systems. The programme has two broad areas, firstly addressing key medium / long term threats and pressures on the Pacific environment; climate change and pollution / waste management. The second major area of focus involves supporting members to improve environmental governance through: building institutional capacity for environmental assessments; developing means for environmental monitoring; reporting and priority setting; and supporting environmental aspects of sustainable development.

7. It could be reasonably argued that the move to the strategic programme approach was largely donor driven, although it was agreed to by the Governing Council and Secretariat. The SPREP documentation also indicates an understanding and support for the rationale of moving to such an approach.

“The programmatic approach is based on broad goals that relate directly to the mandate and the Action Plan. Phased implementation of programmatic components will be designed to achieve the longer-term objectives and goal of the programmes. Outcomes from shorter-term projects influence and contribute to the development of subsequent projects designed to achieve the longer-term objectives. Within a programme, a particular area of focus is expected to change over time, with lower level outputs delivered and goals achieved as projects are completed. Projects have finite time spans. They begin and end, and if successful accomplish a series of clearly defined objectives contributing to an overall goal. The outputs of the projects form the basis of identifiable indicators that verify the progress and impact of the immediate work towards programme goals.

8. The Strategic Programme (2004-2013) is a document that largely sets out what SPREP will attempt to achieve.

9. However, a review of the SPREP Work Programme and Budget suggests that the majority of SPREP activities are still largely project based. There does not appear to be evidence of the particular focus within the programme changing over time as lessons are learnt, outcomes achieved or in response to changing priorities and circumstances. Further, the level of monitoring and evaluation varies according to the funding source. The extent to which SPREP, the Organization, is building on lessons cannot be accurately determined, but appears to be quite limited at the strategic level.

11. The SPREP 2003 Annual Report suggests: *This new approach.... Straight off the bat it will supply clear, measurable indicators of the progress and the impact of our work.* However, merely presenting activities under work ‘programmes’ rather than KRA’s is not, in itself, sufficient to provide clear measurable indicators of progress. At this time it is reasonable to argue that most of the statements regarding clear quantifiable indicators, building on lessons learnt and having flexibility to respond to changing needs and priorities are still largely ‘work in progress’.

13. The majority of the Means of Verification identified to measure progress and impact of SPREP’s work have largely been, and still remain, just ‘numbers’ i.e. numbers of workshops, numbers of guidelines, numbers of PICs developing or signing onto various agreements, etc. There are limited qualitative indicators or qualitative monitoring and evaluation tools evident across SPREP programmes.

14. The Secretariat is aware of the current limitations in absorption and building upon lessons learned in its programmes and project work. This issue was raised by the Secretariat’s own Internal Review 2006, but it is difficult to gauge at this time how effective SPREP has been at addressing this issue. The level of programmatic funding remains very limited compared to the large level of project funding. SPREP capacity to respond to the changing priorities is hence limited given the current practices of donors, SPREP members and the Secretariat. The Annual Work Programmes remain a listing of proposed and completed ‘activities’ that are in the main ‘projects’. The range of activities is considerable and may be considered by some to be overly ambitious. It is unclear whether availability of project funds or responses to members needs determine the work priorities.

15. In consultations around the region, few seemed to have provided direct input to, or had a clear understanding of, how these plans and programmes were developed.

Some suggested their very broad and general nature lead to general endorsement with only limited discussions. How they fitted within national programmes, and integrated with or responded to the national needs is unknown. By their general nature they can fit within all regional needs.

16. To provide an indication of the wide range of activities undertaken by SPREP the work programme includes:

- Specific **Projects** such as: Pacific Environment Information Network, POPs in PICs, International Waters Programme, Invasive Species training courses, turtle conservation projects,
- Support to members to implement relevant **conventions**,
- Participation in **international and regional forums** (World Parks Congress, Durban, High Seas Biodiversity Governance, Ecotourism)
- Conducting a wide range of **Workshops** across the region: to build capacity to prepare for and negotiate multilateral environmental agreements, train the trainer in project monitoring, resource monitoring, to raise awareness of specific issues, etc.
- Other **capacity building** includes support to national HRD strategies for Environment Departments,
- **Information management** includes developing websites, libraries, dissemination of information of results of workshops, development of kits and guidelines.

17. The Work Programmes therefore are a new means of presentation of the activities undertaken. However, it appears that previous activities and new activities are now simply 'placed' under one of the two programmes, with little integration or collaboration across programmes or even across activities within programmes. The division of the SPREP work programme into Island Ecosystems and Pacific Future is very confusing as there is no clear basis for the placement of activities under these divisions. Especially for cross-cutting issues the division seems to be arbitrarily based on where project staff are housed within the Secretariat, rather than on any inter-connectedness between projects. There is no serious analysis of how mainstreaming can be achieved, incorporation of lessons learned, and limited evidence of completed activities being seen as a means to build experience and expertise. Rather programmes appear to be a list of current and new stand alone 'projects'.

18. The Action Plan 2005-2009 is intended to provide a guide to members and the Secretariat in implementing their environmental management work. Country profiles were to be developed to enable each Member to indicate progress towards achieving outcomes of the Action Plan. The profiles have not been developed. As a result it is difficult to measure in any quantifiable way the extent of progress against the Action Plans, SPREP Strategic Programmes or indeed the SPREP work plans. In addition, there does not appear to be a clear articulation of the relative roles of Members vis a vis the Secretariat in implementing the Action Plans. Ensuring that Members report on

national implementation of the SPREP Action Plan has been a major hurdle for the Secretariat over the years.

19. In 2005, AusAID undertook a Review of Programme Funding to the PROs. The review identified some confusion regarding the relationship and interaction between the various Action Plans, Programme Strategies and Work Plans of SPREP. The Action Plan requires endorsement by the region, through the SPREP Council process. However, the status and logic of the Strategic Programmes and how they relate to the Action Plan still remains unclear. In addition, there is lack of clarity as to who is responsible for various elements of implementing the Action Plans, and how progress by SPREP members and the SPREP Secretariat is being monitored and assessed.

20. Previous reviews (2000, 2003, 2005, 2006) and related activities concurred that “the level of programmatic funding for SPREP’s core functions is inadequate, resulting in too much emphasis being placed on securing and implementing projects many of which might not address the basic needs of members”. Despite the slightly improved situation with Australia and New Zealand now providing programmatic funding, the situation is unlikely to change significantly without similar commitments by the membership and other partners of SPREP.

Annex 5

The SPREP Board: A Concept

The SPREP Secretariat will be responsible, through a SPREP Board, to the SPREP Members for the implementation of the SPREP Action Plan.

Responsibilities of the Board:

The SPREP Board shall meet twice annually, in Apia, to:

1. Review progress and provide guidance to the Secretariat and PICTs regarding the implementation of the SPREP Action Plan.
2. Review progress and provide advice to the Director regarding implementation of recommendations of SPREP Meetings.
3. Review the results of the performance monitoring and evaluation conducted by the Secretariat and identify and oversee implementation of appropriate follow-up actions.
4. Review and comment on issues for consideration by the SPREP Meeting.
5. Oversee selection of members of the Secretariat's Executive, for approval by the SPREP Meeting.
6. Review and endorse the annual work programmes and budgets of the Secretariat.
7. Assist Secretariat to source and secure funding in support of environment activities in the region.
8. Other responsibilities as approved from time to time by the SPREP Meeting.

Composition of the Board:

The Board shall comprise the following members, all of whom should be of high standing regionally, impartial, exceptionally well informed and perceptive, excellent communicators, and both tactical and strategic in their thinking and advice:

2 representatives from the Micronesian sub-region;

2 representatives from the Melanesian sub-region;

2 representatives from the Polynesian sub-region;

2 representatives representing Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America;

1 representative from the private sector;

1 NGO representative; and

The SPREP Director, who shall also act as Secretary to the Board.

In selecting the PICT representatives to the Board, consideration shall be given to the need to ensure an appropriate balance between high and low islands, and between French and English-speaking Members. Representatives to the Board will be selected by the sub-regions and shall serve for terms of two years, with allowance for reappointment. No member shall serve for more than 6 years, consecutively.

Funding:

The Secretariat will be responsible for securing funding for the operation of the Board. Such funding should include reasonable support to enable sub-regional representatives to consult effectively with all countries and territories in their sub-regions.

Annex 6

Efficiency of SPREP

1. SPREP's Corporate Plan (2001-2005) defines the vision for the Secretariat and identifies its core business functions. The Corporate Plan enables the Secretariat to contribute in a positive manner to the implementation by SPREP Members of the SPREP Action Plan the outcomes of which contribute, to a certain extent, to national and regional development priorities.

2. Although the Corporate Plan has not been revised or updated since 2005, it envisaged that the Secretariat, during the period 2006-2010, will intensify its efforts in collaboration with SPREP Members, civil society and with regional and international development partners, to make further progress in strengthening the capacity of Pacific Island Members to plan and manage their own environmental programmes, and to enhance regional cooperation to deal more effectively with issues that are transboundary in nature or which require intervention at the global level.

3. The Action Plan 2001-2004 identified the following Key Result Areas (KRAs) as critical to achieving sustainable development for the Pacific island countries:

KRA1	Nature Conservation
KRA2	Pollution Prevention
KRA3	Climate Change and Variability
KRA4	Economic Development

4. Each KRA had its own objective and main focus which were specifically reflected and identified in the annual work programmes of the Secretariat.

5. Although the 2005-2009 Action Plan has adopted the first three KRAs of the 2001-2004 Action Plan as its main objectives, the KRA4 has been renamed "Cross-Cutting" to better reflect the wide-ranging scope of this KRA.

6. Over the years, SPREP has consistently focused its work on the critical issues affecting sustainable development in the Pacific region, as identified by its members and espoused in the SPREP Action Plan. However, it has been suggested that SPREP should not be "put in a box" where its efficiency and effectiveness will be measured exclusively on what has been specified in the Action Plan. Rather, SPREP should be more outward-looking, entering into dialogue and partnerships with agencies and organizations outside the standard "environment circle", thereby increasing its visibility and usefulness to its Pacific Island Members and other stakeholders.

7. Feedback from the consultations indicate that SPREP has not been strategic enough in its work programme planning in recent years, as is apparent from the lack of harmonization between the programmes and action plans and poor coordination of communication. The lack of a strategic approach to issues/problems is evident from its failure to identify priorities for its work programmes and to demonstrate to Members its relevance to the region and become engaged in wider country policy development and advice.

8. Some Members have expressed the view that SPREP should be focusing more on in-country projects, especially those that can really make a difference for the countries concerned. Regional projects, by their very nature, incur too much travel and cost for the Secretariat's professional staff whose energy could be better spent in assisting Members to implement projects on the ground.

9. Regional Working Groups, while useful and effective as a mechanism for coordinating regional inputs, sharing experiences and agreeing approaches to project implementation, have contributed little to addressing critical issues at national and territorial levels.

10. Many stakeholders believe that PICTs and SPREP should explore new ways of working that will allow them to do things together. For example, joint development and implementation of national and territorial environment sector plans that are firmly entrenched in each Member's sustainable development strategy (or equivalent) would not only meet the specific priority needs of that Member, but in their totality, represent a significant contribution by PICTs to international efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of environmental degradation world-wide. Taking this path means reversing the way the Secretariat and its Members are operating at present. However, it will result in: (i) greater ownership and drivenness of projects by member countries; and (ii) help enhance the mainstreaming of SPREP-supported activities into national and territorial plans and strategies. Importantly, this has been a continuing hurdle for PICTs during the past decade.

11. It can be reasonably argued that PICTs will by necessity always place their priorities before regional or international concerns. This is well supported by the poor track record of PICT participation in the implementation of the SPREP Action Plan, the Regional Strategy for Nature Conservation and other regional programmes and plans. PICT ownership of regional plans and strategies remains a contentious issue for the many Members who feel that such plans do not adequately reflect their priorities and concerns. Additionally, there is concern that regional initiatives take away funding that should rightly come to Members for the implementation of their own projects and activities.

12. There is concern that, unlike in the past, SPREP is neither passionate nor confident enough to look for funds in support of environmental management in the region. Instead, SPREP waits for opportunities to come from the GEF and other donors. It then steps in to develop and prepare funding proposals on behalf of its Members. When this happens, PICTs question the ownership of the projects and subsequently may withhold local support for the implementation and continuation of such projects.

13. Many believe that SPREP staff and resources are often spread too thinly to meet Member expectations and this often leads to project-related activities ending soon after project funding ceases. It has been suggested that SPREP should focus on its core functions and not try to do too much with the limited resources at its disposal.

14. There is general consensus that SPREP has managed its budget and donor funding efficiently. Some donors have however expressed concern regarding the re-allocation of funds intended for projects to cover other responsibilities such as core functions which are supposed to be covered by Members' contributions. There is also concern about the charging of overhead costs on extra-budgetary contributions. A 10%

overhead fee has been levied on extra-budgetary contributions but it is not clear why and for what purpose these funds are used.

15. There is mixed reaction regarding the efficiency of SPREP in managing regional projects. While acknowledging the lack of expertise as a major contributing factor to the implementation of national and territorial projects, facilitating a more imaginative use of volunteers, NGOs and the private sector by SPREP could have alleviated the “technical gap” problem that is faced by many PICTs. There is also concern that many projects are poorly designed and planned, and many others are not sufficiently strategic in approach because they fail to take local capacity/logistics into account.

16. One significant drawback in the Secretariat’s recent history is that it has not always made a concerted effort to reach out to its membership, especially the small island states and territories, instead focusing more on the independent countries. The definition of “regional” appears to extend only to the collection of recipients eligible for donor funding which, in most cases, rules out the SPREP Members with territorial status.

17. The Secretariat should facilitate the engagement of all its general membership, regardless of status, in regional projects, even if the donor-defined region is a sub-set. In such cases it would be a valuable function of the Secretariat to invite broader engagement by its donor partners to explore options for bringing additional resources to bear to allow full engagement of its membership. A joint mission by a number of UN agencies, SPREP and other regional organizations to Tokelau was an unprecedented event that was greatly appreciated locally and achieved considerable satisfaction for the agencies involved. Other territories, such as American Samoa, Wallis and Futuna and to some extent Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, would no doubt welcome similar missions organized by SPREP.

18. With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, SPREP has not made much use of the expertise available from its more developed Members namely the United States of America and France. While financial contributions from these countries are considered by the Secretariat as “secured” for at least any one year, the Secretariat does not appear to see the need to consult with any of these countries on a more regular basis. As a result, there is a feeling that the Secretariat is less sensitive about their concerns. While appreciative of the high cost of travel to France and the United States, it is advisable that whenever possible, Management should make every effort to visit the capitals of these members to amongst other things, engage them in discussions relative to the work of the Organization, and seek additional support if necessary. Engaging more French-speaking people in the Secretariat staff would help communications and relations with the Francophone countries.

19. Another drawback as identified through the consultations is that the decision-making process at SPREP appears to be handled mostly by the senior management of the Organization, with little decision-making authority been delegated down to the programme managers, who are in most cases, more familiar with the issues at hand. The lukewarm support by top management for some implementation work, and the lack of real authority at the programme officer level to make decisions on a project basis, are hampering the credibility of the Organization as a competent, professional institution.

20. There are concerns that SPREP is not accountable enough to Members and to its donor partners. Performance and partnerships rely heavily on individuals, not the

Organization as such. SPREP Meetings tend to be orchestrated by the Secretariat, mainly for the purpose of informing about its achievements. Discussions of any substantive issues are a rarity in these meetings. Likewise, Ministerial Meetings are held simply because it is time to hold such meetings. Issues are usually discussed by officials prior to the Ministerial meetings, thus relegating the role of Ministers to 'rubberstamping' decisions that have already been agreed to by their officials.

21. The establishment of a SPREP Board, similar to a Corporation and to which the Secretariat reports and is accountable, would reduce cost and effort dispensed by the Secretariat in the organization of SPREP Meetings. There may also be value for SPREP to consider merging corporate services with other regional organizations such as SOPAC and SPC, where there are economies and efficiency dividends, for example in travel and personnel administration. Establishing a decentralized presence across the region perhaps through co-location at SPC or USP centres would no doubt improve the visibility and subsequently the efficiency of the Organization.

22. Although our consultations confirmed the efficiency of SPREP thus far in providing the services required of it, the disconnect between its regional activities and national priorities, the disconnect between the Organization and its Secretariat, the disconnect between the work programme and the funding reality, and the disconnect between staff and Management all pose serious and unnecessary obstacles to a more efficient and effective regional organization. Addressing these disconnects should be a high priority for SPREP, the Organization, in the next 12 months.

Annex 7

Effectiveness of SPREP

1. Determining the effectiveness of SPREP requires a clear understanding of the mission of the Organization which is “to promote cooperation in the Pacific islands region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations”. To achieve its mission, SPREP was to:

- develop closer linkages and effective partnerships with SPREP members, regional and international organizations to address the region’s environmental concerns;
- collaborate with other regional organizations to promote links within respective work programmes, to pursue long term protection and management of the environment and natural resources in the Pacific;
- strengthen efforts to integrate or develop effective partnerships, identify areas where greater economies of scale and efficiency can be achieved and strengthen coordination and cooperation with member countries, civil society, private sector, regional and international organizations;
- strengthen its information clearing house role and functions to support SPREP members; and
- assist to further strengthen national capacity by providing professional, competent policy and technical advice, institutional strengthening support, human resource development support, and timely responses to requests for technical assistance.

2. SPREP members are generally satisfied with the services provided by the Secretariat, and relationships between the membership and the Apia-based Secretariat have been effective and productive. However, building stronger links between the work programme of the Secretariat and the environment and development priorities of its Members required an ongoing effort. As suggested elsewhere in this report, one way of achieving this is the preparation and implementation of specific environment sector strategies that are based on each Island Member’s priorities, as identified in their development plans and strategies. Such sector plans should then form the basis for SPREP and other donor support to each PICT. This approach will ensure greater PICT support, participation and ownership of projects and activities and, more importantly, make SPREP far more visible to its Island Members.

3. As a regional and global partner in the pursuit of international agendas and objectives, the SPREP Secretariat in the past has played a significant role in providing technical and policy support to its member countries, not only at the national and regional levels but also at the international level. There is general consensus that SPREP has been extremely effective in bringing Pacific island issues and concerns to international attention. Its role in coordinating Pacific contributions to international efforts has been highly appreciated by its Members. In fact, there is a strong belief that if not for SPREP’s role in raising international awareness about the plight of the environment of the Pacific, the region would not have attracted the attention it is now enjoying from the international community.

4. In more recent years disappointment have been voiced that SPREP is no longer the force it used to be in the international arena. It is no longer as effective at placing

Pacific issues on the international agenda and is neither well prepared nor adequately informed of global issues to be able to provide much service to PICTs at international fora. As a result, the positions of PICTs have not been heard as effectively as their Caribbean and Asian counterparts, for example. SPREP needs to hold collaborative meetings with UNDP, UNEP, FAO and other relevant agencies in Apia and Suva, to find ways in which they can work together especially in relation to the GEF PAS. At least initially, such meetings should be at management level.

5. Despite its earlier success at the global scale, there is still a lingering uncertainty about the role the SPREP Secretariat should be playing in future. Much has been said about the need for the Secretariat to limit its involvement in project implementation, devolving this role to its Members and other partners in the region. Some stakeholders argue that if SPREP was effective in achieving its main objective – that of building capacity of its Members to address their key environmental concerns, – SPREP should be working itself out of existence, leaving Governments do the work on their own.

6. This argument appears to be in direct contrast with the capacity situation of many PICTs where entire environmental agencies comprise less than a handful of trained staff. Even PICTs with larger and better developed structures admit to a lack of capacity to implement technical, science-based environmental projects. An analysis of project funding proposals from several PICs reveals that between 70 and 80 per cent of the funding requested has been for capacity building related activities.

7. Most PICTs concur that SPREP has been effective in the delivery of project inputs, outputs and outcomes, although there are niggling issues to be resolved. Designing of regional projects without full consultation with Island Members, especially those listed as beneficiaries, must be avoided. Micro-managing projects from Apia results in long delays in the transfer of resources and causes frustration on the part of project staff, both in-country and at the Secretariat.

8. Despite past suggestions and recommendations, SPREP still lacks expertise in Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). Such expertise is in high demand but in short supply in several PICTs, largely as a result of the numerous, relatively large development projects being carried out in the region. The Review Team believes this is one area where SPREP might be able to operate on a 'fee for service' basis, thus enabling the position to pay for itself.

9. Regional projects, while useful and important, can divert country attention and resources away from national priorities. In some cases, countries sign on to regional projects because there are funds available, not because the projects are focusing on the priority concerns of the country concerned. To rectify this situation it has been suggested that SPREP should assist its Members to develop and implement national environment management plans (or their equivalent) that are directly embedded in the national development plans and strategies of the countries concerned. The mainstreaming of environmental considerations into national development plans is well advanced when the latter provide the basis for the development and implementation of environment management plans and strategies. Equally importantly, this also allows PICTs to focus first and foremost on their own priorities. This, in turn, contributes to regional and international efforts and initiatives. It is usual for countries to first act in their sovereign interest, with a lower priority being accorded to the regional or global environment per se.

10. Building effective and efficient partnerships between SPREP and other regional and international organizations is an invaluable approach to addressing the environmental concerns of PICTs, as recognized by the SPREP Action Plan and

encapsulated in the SPREP mission. To this end, it is encouraging to note the long list of MOUs signed between the Secretariat and regional and international organizations with interests in the Pacific. While a significant number of these MOUs are now inactive, the fact remains that SPREP is still seen as the premier environmental organization in the region. Its role is well recognized by the international community. However, issues between SPREP and some of its traditional and new partners need to be resolved as soon as possible so that they are not allowed to affect future working relationships between the Secretariat and other potential partners.

11. Achieving strong relationships between the work programmes of SPREP and other regional organizations remains as a largely elusive goal for the Secretariat. Regional working groups have been established under the auspices of the CROP. While these have been largely useful and effective as a forum for discussing project design and approaches, there has not been similar success in the joint implementation and sharing of resources by regional organizations. Similarly, while the importance of the role of the private sector in environment management has been the subject of much discussion and speculation, there is a long way to go yet before this sector is fully integrated in SPREP's work programmes.

12. Collaboration between SPREP and NGOs appear to be stagnant after earlier successes. The joint organization of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation by SPREP and a number of NGOs is an indication of the valuable contribution NGOs can make to the Pacific environment and the work of SPREP. However, SPREP needs to play a stronger leadership role in such instances, in order to ensure that the work programmes of such collaborative initiatives reflect the needs, capacities and priorities of its Island Members.

13. SPREP's role as a clearinghouse for environment information is highly appreciated by its member countries and territories, although channelling such information through the PICT Focal Points can result in information not reaching those where the need is greatest, particular at the community or project level. Strengthening national capacity to access, analyse and use information has been an important part of SPREP's work, as was the development of communication strategies to help Members promote and raise awareness about the key environmental issues affecting the Pacific islands.

14. SPREP-supported programmes and projects have been effective in generating invaluable information, findings and recommendations on issues such as state of the environment, local capacity, stakeholder participation, country needs and priorities, and to a certain extent, lessons learned. However, there appears to be no adequate systematic process for capturing lessons learned over time. There is therefore a real risk that substantial lessons learned, as well as institutional and individual knowledge, will be lost if not recorded. There is also concern that recent programmes and projects have not benefited from the lessons learned from earlier SPREP interventions. Additionally, SPREP should help promote good practices and lessons learned of other groups (NGOs, private sector, etc), not just its own 'good work'.

15. Despite previous successes, there is growing concern that SPREP has remained static over the years while the world has moved on. For example, climate change and waste management are no longer just environmental issues – they are now equally important as social, development and economic issues. SPREP is still working in 'silos' and not thinking creatively. It has more regional and less personal touch and is now largely divorced from the decision-making processes of its Members. SPREP needs to

determine how it can better interact with its Island Members. Importantly in this regard, the SPREP Focal Point system is not functioning well, and needs to change.