



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Twentieth SPREP Meeting

Apia, Samoa
17 – 20 November 2009**Agenda Item 8.2 : 2009 Triennial Review for Support Staff****Purpose of Paper**

1. To present to the SPREP Meeting the findings of the 2009 Triennial Review for Support Staff, including the Annual Market Data Review.

Background

2. The CROP governing bodies and CROP Executives have adopted harmonised general principles for determining support staff salaries, terms and conditions to be reviewed against the local employment market as the comparator market to ensure consistency and fairness among CROP support staff, irrespective of their base station. Under these principles, the terms and conditions of CROP support staff are reviewed every three years against the local employment market from which they are recruited.

3 The last Triennial Review for Support Staff was conducted in July 2006. In line with all other CROP agencies, SPREP conducted a Triennial Review for Support Staff in 2009. The annual market data review of the local market salaries was also included in the 2009 Triennial Review in line with the 2004 decision of the Governing bodies of the CROP agencies *'that the market be reviewed annually with appropriate annual adjustments to the salary scales, which will ensure that salaries remain aligned with the market'*.

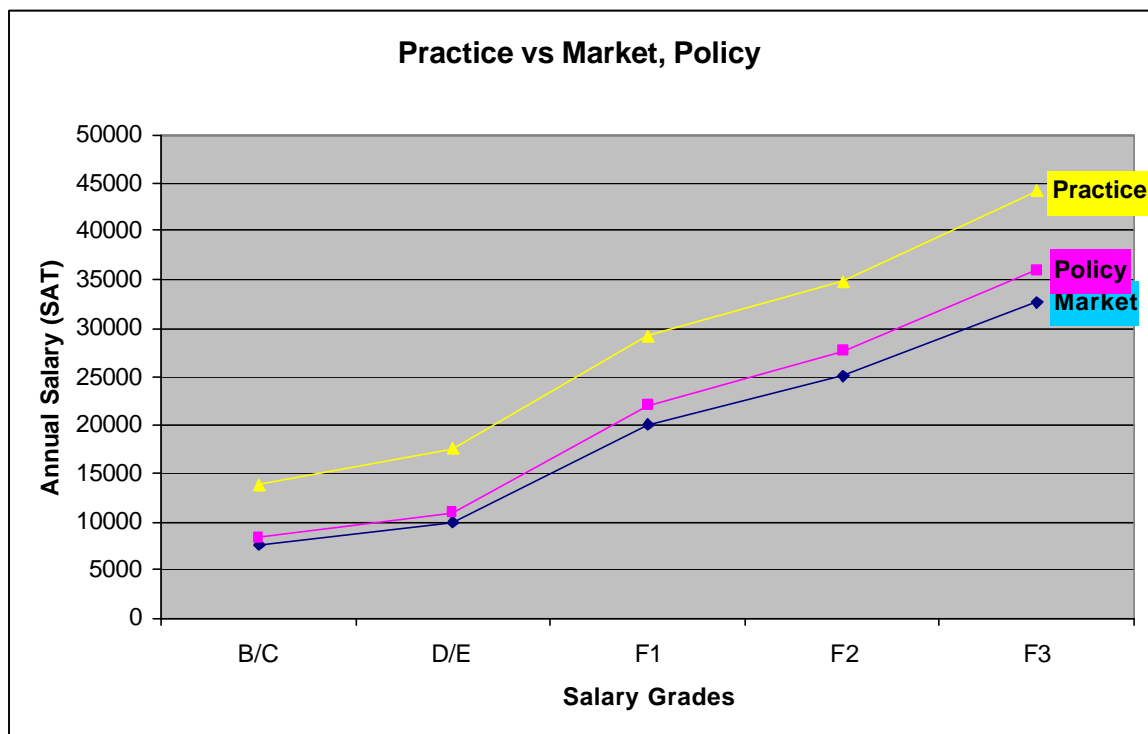
4 The main purpose of this review, as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Attachment 1), was to conduct a comprehensive and comparative survey between the current level of remuneration offered to SPREP support staff and the remuneration offered within the Apia general labour market, being the reference market. The goal was to determine whether SPREP support staff remuneration is comparable and competitive to the local market, whether remuneration meets the four Principles/Practices referred to in the Terms of Reference, and to make appropriate recommendations for adjustment where necessary.

5 The 2009 triennial review, including the market data review, was conducted by Mr Esekia Solofa, former Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, now a private HR consultant in Apia and Chairperson of the Government of Samoa's Remuneration Tribunal.

Salary Scale

6 The consultant based his report on data obtained from a survey of nine of the major employers in Apia, including the Government (nineteen public service organisations) as the major employer in the local market, and some private sector employers of a comparable size and nature of support staff work to SPREP. The report addresses the salaries of individual staff members and therefore in the interests of their privacy, this paper only outlines the results in general terms.

7 In terms of salary scale, the overall findings of the Triennial Review is presented in the following graph:



In summary, based on the recent market data survey:

- a) the SPREP support staff pay practice line surpasses the average market payline; and
- b) the SPREP support staff salary scale and grade pay bands exceed the CROP policy payline benchmark for support staff (10% above the upper quartile of the general market).

8 There has been some considerable shift between the 2008 and 2009 market data. The analysis of the 2009 market data, under the methodology and market data survey of a different consultant from that commissioned by SPREP over the past three years, now shows that the SPREP salary scale sits above that of the CROP policy benchmark for support staff, and as a result, no upward adjustment is required to align the SPREP salary scale to that of the benchmark.

9 Because the SPREP support staff salary scale now sits above that of the policy benchmark, one response could be to adjust the salary scale downward to align it to the policy benchmark. However, due to the likely impacts this would have on morale, productivity and retention and the ongoing uncertainties associated with market data sources (particularly since this is the first year that the survey was conducted by a different consultant), the Secretariat would prefer to continue the historical CROP-wide practice to retain its payline at its current position and wait until the market catches up.

10 The revised payline now also suggests that the SPREP support staff salaries should not be a significant factor any more in attracting suitably qualified, skilled and experienced staff for positions when they are advertised in the local market, and that other factors, including scarcity of skills, availability of other non-cash staff benefits and overall work environment are more likely to be the drivers.

11 Taking all of the above into consideration, SPREP Management has decided to retain the existing Support Staff Salary Scale as is and to continue annual reviews of the reference market data. Unless the annual reviews reveal further declines in the average payline of the reference market that would lead to further widening of the SPREP practice payline from the CROP policy payline, the Secretariat intends to continue the CROP-wide historical practice of maintaining salary scales in such circumstances until the market has caught up.

Other Terms & Conditions

12 The consultant's report further recommends changes to other specific staff conditions. These are mainly policy issues which are within the discretion of the Director. Some changes have been made in the best interests of support staff and of the organisation. None of the decisions made in response to the recommendations of the 2009 Triennial Review are substantive and therefore they do not require changes to terms and conditions in the Staff Regulations. As part of its role as a participating agency in the CROP Harmonisation Working Group, the Secretariat continues on a regular basis to compare its terms and conditions for support staff with those adopted by the other CROP agencies, mindful however of the differences in reference markets.

Financial Implications

13 No general salary increases are proposed for support staff in the 2010 budget. Any consequential changes to terms and conditions will be absorbed within planned budgets for 2010.

Recommendation

14. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the outcome of the 2009 Annual Market Data Review for Support Staff and the Secretariat's intention to retain the existing salary scale; and
- **note** that as an outcome of the 2009 Triennial Review, some policy decisions on support staff terms and conditions that fall within the discretion of the SPREP Director have been made.

27 October 2009