



Twentieth SPREP Meeting

Apia, Samoa
17 – 20 November 2009



Agenda Item 9.2.5: Urgent Review of Regional Meteorological Services

Purpose of Paper:

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide background information and update to SPREP members on the Urgent Review of Regional Meteorological Services as called for by the Pacific Forum Leaders in their 2008 Forum Communiqué and re-affirmed by the 19th SPREP Meeting. A more updated report shall be delivered at the SPREP Meeting in September as work is progressing on this issue at the time of writing.

Background:

2. Access to regular, timely, and quality weather and climate information is of extreme relevance and importance to people of all walks of life in the Pacific. Safety in maritime transport and the aviation industries depends highly on actions taken in response to weather conditions. It is also of importance to agriculture and fisheries productivity, and industries such as tourism upon which Pacific peoples are dependent on for their livelihood, including its use in predicting the availability of water for human consumption. These and several other key national sectors will also be highly vulnerable to increased incidence of extreme weather events brought about by the effects of climate change.

3. Over recent years there has been increasing interest in the provision of meteorological services in the region. This interest has grown for two primary reasons: i) the increasing realisation of the importance of weather and climate services in terms of their contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of Pacific Island Countries, particularly in view of the impacts of increasing weather and climate related extreme events, including tropical cyclones, on the safety of lives and property; and ii) concern over the sustainability of regional services provided by Fiji Meteorological Service which plays a central role in the provision of weather services including severe weather warnings in the region. Member countries, in addition to having their own meteorological services, also rely on regional and international services, which are in need of strengthening.

4. The importance of addressing these issues has recently been emphasised on several occasions, including:

- 15th World Meteorological Congress in May 2007
- 12th Meeting of Regional Meteorological Services Directors (RMSD) in July 2007
- 16th Smaller Island States (SIS) Leaders Nuku'alofa Meeting in October 2007
- 17th Smaller Island States (SIS) Leaders Niue Meeting in August 2008
- 39th Pacific Islands Leaders Forum Niue Meeting in August 2008.

5. Pacific Island Forum Leaders 2008 Communiqué: *"called on SPREP to urgently carry out a comprehensive review of regional meteorological services, reporting intersessionally to Leaders as soon as practicable on all options, including building on existing arrangements and consideration of other service providers"*.

6. The 19th SPREP Meeting added that it: *"agree that SPREP immediately commence planning for this urgent review, and as a first step bring together representatives of interested members to provide policy oversight including the development of terms of reference for the review."*

Update

7. SPREP in late 2008 began preparations on development of a Terms of Reference tasked at delivering upon the directive of the Leaders and the SPREP Meeting. With assistance from key partners NZAID and AusAID, SPREP developed a Terms of Reference and modality of work that is summarized as below:

- Formation of a Policy Oversight Group (POG) tasked with the oversight of the Review and with tasks such as the endorsement of the TOR and selection of a Review Team.
 - *Update* The POG was created at a late 2008 meeting of the Forum Officials Committee with the FOC members agreeing to be available to participate in the review as the POG.
- To undertake the review, an independent consultancy Review Team will be formed by recruitment of consultants. This Review Team will consist of at least 3 people, and require a joint set of skills covering a variety of core skills relevant to the TOR.
 - *Update* A consultancy was advertised by SPREP and from which SPREP recruited and formed a Review Team from the interests expressed in response. The makeup of the Review Team was proposed to the POG which accepted and endorsed the Review Team, made up nationals from Tuvalu, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia.

- The Secretariat will play a coordinating role in the Review providing assistance to the POG and Review Team in facilitation of their work and preparation of final reports and documentation for presentation to the Forum Leaders.
 - *Update* The Secretariat has been working with its key donor partners NZAID and AusAID to prepare a proposal for the funding of the Review.

Discussion

8. The Review originally slated to begin in the time period March – May 2009, is at time of writing now slated to occur in August due to extended discussions with stakeholders leading to the delay in finalizing work plan and budget details. This paper is to provide a background and update for the SPREP members on the Review.

Recommendation

9. The Meeting is invited to:
- **note** the 2008 decisions of the Forum Leaders on regional Met services, and that the Secretariat is currently actively pursuing the implementation of this activity with its partners; and
 - **note** the updated report from the Secretariat and urge the Secretariat to continue the implementation of this activity with and to report intersessionally with a view to submitting a final report to Members at the 21SM in 2010.
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