

**Attachment A**



**Australian Government**

**Final Report**

**Streamlined reporting by Pacific Island countries to  
the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental  
agreements**

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In collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

**July 2010**

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## Executive summary

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1. This report has been prepared by the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for consideration under Agenda Item 10.1. '*Streamlined reporting by Pacific Island countries (PICs) to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) - final report*' at the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in September 2010.
  
2. At the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in November 2009 under Agenda Item 11.1. '*Streamlined reporting by Pacific Island countries to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements – progress update*', Members:
  - **reviewed** the progress report and recommendations on the streamlined reporting project;
  
  - **agreed** that Australia should bring the project to the attention of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG), in particular its Working Group on National Reporting, for discussion and consideration;
  
  - **asked** Australia with the support of Pacific Island countries to raise the project at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES CoP) in 2010; and
  
  - **requested** an update on this matter to the 21<sup>st</sup> SPREP Meeting.
  
3. This is the final report on activities undertaken in relation to the project. In 2010, work progressed to implement the recommendations listed above. For example, the project was put forward at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in March 2010, and it is likely that the project will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group in September 2010.

4. In addition to this, a key priority has been to promote and communicate progress and achievements of the project to an international audience. This is to ensure that outcomes and lessons learnt from the project will be used to guide future discussion at the international level on activities to harmonise national reporting. This was achieved by launching a webpage on the project and the production of an information brochure on the project that is designed to be distributed at international meetings to inform contracting parties, international organisations, non-government organisations and other stakeholders.
  
5. Whilst the streamlined reporting template developed under this project is not endorsed for official use as a reporting tool for the biodiversity-related MEAs, it provides a valuable case study of a regional approach to streamline reporting. The template could facilitate reporting by countries in other regions with similar staffing and resource constraints. It is recommended that the lessons learnt from the project continue to be communicated at international meetings to reduce overlap and to promote the streamlining of MEA reporting internationally.

## Project background

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6. In 2007, the Australian Government, in consultation with SPREP, commenced a project to streamline reporting by Pacific Island countries (PICs) to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
7. The Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) is the implementing agency for this project in collaboration with the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). The project is funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).
8. The project focuses on the following biodiversity-related MEAs:
  - Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
  - Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
  - Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);
  - Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar); and
  - World Heritage Convention (WHC).
9. The primary achievement of the project has been the development and trial of a consolidated reporting template to the five biodiversity-related MEAs. The template was drafted in early 2008 and trialled in eight countries in the Pacific over 2008-2009: the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. The project is a practical example of how national reporting can be streamlined and harmonised.
10. A number of reports have been tabled at the past three SPREP meetings that provide further background and details on the project:
  - Options to streamline reporting by Pacific Island countries to the biodiversity-related multilateral environment agreements (2007);
  - Outcomes of the trial of the consolidated reporting template for Pacific Island countries to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (2008); and

- Progress report on the project to streamline reporting by Pacific Island countries to the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (2009).

11. These reports, as well as further information about the project, are now available on-line on a purpose-designed webpage on DEWHA's website. There is also a link to this webpage on SPREP's website. More information on the webpage is provided below.

## **Progress since the 20th SPREP Meeting**

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### **Overview of progress**

12. Work progressed in 2010 to implement the recommendations agreed by members at the 20th SPREP Meeting. For example, the project was put forward at the 15th Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in March 2010, and it is likely that the project will be discussed at an upcoming meeting of the Biodiversity Liaison Group in September 2010. Further details of this progress are provided below.
13. A key priority in 2010 has been to promote and communicate progress and achievements of the project to an international audience. This is to ensure that outcomes and lessons learnt from the project will be used to guide future discussion at the international level on activities to harmonise national reporting. Further details of communication activities undertaken in 2010 are provided below.

### **Biodiversity Liaison Group**

14. DEWHA contacted the current coordinator of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) in November 2009 to propose the addition of the streamlined reporting project to the agenda of the 8<sup>th</sup> BLG meeting. It is likely that this meeting will take place in September 2010. We were advised that a presentation on the project would be welcome at the meeting. Further to this advice, in June 2010 the Secretary General of the CITES Secretariat advised that he would raise it with BLG members as they prepare the draft agenda for the next meeting as he would welcome further information on the project.
15. The BLG is currently considering a proposal to allow observers/external participants to attend their meetings; however, no decision has yet been made. As such, we will likely request an existing member of the BLG present the project to members on our behalf. Promoting discussion on the project between the

heads of the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related MEAs is an important step in strengthening their 'buy-in', progressing action and determining a way forward that builds on the template.

## **15th Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

16. The 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP15) took place in Qatar from 13 - 25 March 2010.

17. The Australian Government submitted an Information Document ([CoP15 Information Document. 44](#)) on the project to CITES CoP15 which was made available on the CITES CoP website. The Information Document is available at: <http://www.cites.org/common/cop/15/inf/E15i-44.pdf>

18. The Information Document was introduced at the CoP by the CITES Secretariat under Agenda Item 21 on National Reports during the sixth session of Committee II. During the session, Australia informed and updated parties on the progress made with the project. The Summary of the sixth session of Committee II is available on the CITES website at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/15/sum/E15-Com-II-Rec06.pdf>

## **10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

19. We will seek to raise the project informally at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP10) which is scheduled to take place in Nagoya, Japan from the 18 - 29 October 2010. A side-event on the project may be scheduled during the CoP to publicise the project.

## **Preparation of draft examples of national reports using the template**

20. Draft examples of national reports have been prepared for countries involved in the trial of the consolidated reporting template in 2008-2009: the Cook Islands,



Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

21. The drafts will be made available in 2010 to trial countries for their approval. Once approved, some of the drafts will then be made available on the streamlined reporting webpage as examples of the benefits of using a consolidated reporting model and to display the type of information that can be communicated through the reporting template.

## **Communicating progress on the project**

### *Launch of webpage*

22. A webpage on the project has been developed and is now available on DEWHA's website. The webpage can be accessed at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/about/international/reporting/>

23. The webpage contains information about the streamlined reporting project as well as the reports prepared on the project that have been tabled at SPREP Meetings since 2007. The consolidated reporting template is also available on the website in both Microsoft Word and Abode LiveCycle format.

24. SPREP, AusAID, the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre were consulted during the preparation of the webpage.

25. A letter was sent from the Australian Government to the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related MEAs in July 2010 advising of the launch of the webpage.

### *Brochure*

26. A brochure containing information about the project as well as a link to the webpage has been published. Copies of the brochure have been sent to the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related MEAs, SPREP, UNEP-WCMC and the Nordic Council. Copies of this brochure will be made available at upcoming international meetings to promote awareness of the project. Copies can also be provided to SPREP Members who may be interested in distributing the brochures at relevant meetings and within their government.

### *Information CDs*

27. Information CDs containing all reports on the project and the template in both Microsoft Word and Adobe LiveCycle have been prepared for all SPREP Members. These will be distributed to members and other interested stakeholders during the 21<sup>st</sup> SPREP Meeting.

### *MEA Bulletin article*

28. A guest article on the project including lessons learnt from its implementation as well as the details of the webpage will be published in the International Institute for Sustainable Development's *MEA Bulletin* in October 2010.

### *SPREP website links*

29. SPREP has also played a role in publicising the project. Information about the project is now available on SPREP's website. There is a link to the project webpage that can be accessed through SPREP's Pacific Environment Information Network at: <http://www.sprep.org/publication/digest.asp>

### *United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) website links*

30. The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) has also played a role in publicising the project by providing a link to the streamlined reporting webpage on their website at: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/conventions/harmonization/links.htm>

### *IUCN Regional Office for Oceania Newsletter*

31. An article was included in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for Oceania's newsletter in May 2010 to showcase the project. The article presented a useful opportunity to convey progress on the project to IUCN members in the Oceania region and beyond. The newsletter was circulated widely via IUCN's email distribution list.

## Maintaining linkages with other harmonisation efforts

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32. We have continued to work closely with UNEP-WCMC and SPREP to ensure that work on streamlining and harmonisation of national reporting builds on existing knowledge and expertise.

### *Nordic symposium*

33. A Nordic symposium on 'Synergies among biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements' was held in Helsinki, Finland, on 8 and 9 April 2010 to identify options and possibilities for enhancing coherence and synergies among the biodiversity-related MEAs. The symposium was organised by the Ministry of Environment of Finland together with other Nordic ministries of environment.

34. UNEP-WCMC presented on 'Streamlining national reporting to the biodiversity-related MEAs' at the symposium and promoted the streamlined reporting project on behalf of the Australian Government. A report on the outcomes of the symposium is available at:

[http://www.biodivcluster.fi/pdf/Report\\_3\\_May\\_2010%20Final.doc](http://www.biodivcluster.fi/pdf/Report_3_May_2010%20Final.doc)

### *GEF project on national reporting to the Rio Conventions*

35. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is funding a US\$1.7m project to 'Pilot Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting to the Rio Conventions'. The Rio Conventions are the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Executing Agency for this project is UNEP-WCMC.

36. The three primary objectives of this project are to:

- a. develop integrated approaches to data collection/analysis and information management of relevance to the three Rio Conventions at the national level;
- b. increase synergies in the process of reporting to the three conventions without compromising relevant COP decisions; and
- c. contribute to improved overall planning and decision-making processes at the country level related to the implementation of these three conventions.

37. The project focuses on six pilot countries: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Liberia, Palau and Mauritius. The project will run from January 2010 to December 2012. A project inception workshop and the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee took place in Cambridge, United Kingdom in February 2010. Further details about the project can be found at: <http://rioconventionsreporting.net>

*14th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 14) to the Convention on Biological Diversity*

38. The streamlined reporting project was introduced at two side events run by UNEP at the CBD SBSTTA 14 in May 2010:

- 'One step at a time: joint reporting as a means to achieve better performance and delivery for the Rio Conventions', on 13 May which included a presentation on 'Streamlining of reporting to MEAs – experiences from the biodiversity cluster'; and
- 'Sync biodiversity' (synergies between the biodiversity conventions) on 14 May which included a presentation on 'Streamlining of reporting to biodiversity-related agreements – lessons for the synergies discussion'.

## Summary

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39. This is the final report to SPREP members on activities undertaken in relation to the project. The streamlined reporting project completion date is 30 November 2010. By this stage it is anticipated that the BLG will have considered the project at its 8th meeting in September 2010. Promoting discussion between the heads of the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related MEAs on the project at this meeting is an important step in progressing action and determining a way forward. Ultimately, further action to progress work on this issue needs to be determined by the contracting parties to the biodiversity MEAs in conjunction with the MEA Secretariats.
40. A key achievement has been the development of a webpage that features all relevant information about the project. This webpage will be a useful tool to progress work on this issue and to avoid duplication of this work in the future. It also provides a readily accessible source of information to policy-makers and researchers in other regions of the world engaged in similar work.
41. The streamlined reporting project has a broad range of benefits for PICs. Although the reporting template has not been formally endorsed for use by the biodiversity MEA governing bodies, it provides a valuable case study of a regional approach to streamlined reporting. The template could facilitate reporting by countries in other regions with similar staffing and resource constraints. It is recommended that the lessons learnt from the project continue to be communicated at international meetings to reduce duplication and to promote more effective and efficient MEA reporting internationally.