



# SPREP Circular

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**To:** **SPREP National Focal Points**  
**GEF Political Focal Points**  
**GEF Operational Focal Points**

**Subject:** **Regional GEF Adviser Position based at SPREP**

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1. For the Regional GEF Adviser position based at SPREP will finish in March 2011. However, the position has repeatedly been commended by Pacific countries for its role in enhancing access by Pacific Small Island Developing States to GEF resources. We are seeking your advice on, and kind consideration of, possible future funding arrangements so that this valuable service to countries continues to be available.

## Background

2. The position of GEF Support Adviser at SPREP has been in place since March 2007. Initially, the position was jointly funded by Australia and New Zealand for the first three years to March 2010, and for an additional one year to March 2011 by Australia. Under the terms of the existing funding arrangements, the position ceases to exist after March 2011.
3. The position was created as a response to the need to strengthen national level engagement in GEF processes and enhance access to GEF resources. This need was identified by a report in 2004 on the performance of the GEF in the Pacific that found PICs were experiencing difficulty gaining access to GEF funding compared to other Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
4. PICs requested this strengthened GEF coordination at the 5<sup>th</sup> Pacific Environment Ministers Meeting in 2004, as well as at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Workshop on Overall Performance of the GEF in March 2005. In May 2005 the Pacific Island Forum Ambassadors Working Group in New York also endorsed the concept of a regional support position.
5. The need for this regional support was again reiterated by Pacific Island representatives at the 17th SPREP Meeting in September 2006. In August 2006, the GEF Secretariat, the governments of Australia and New Zealand, and SPREP agreed that an adviser position be

created in the region to provide this needed support that had been lacking in the past.

### **Position Outcomes**

6. The 20<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in Apia in November 2009, and the 21<sup>st</sup> SPREP Meeting in Madang, Papua New Guinea in September 2010, commended this strengthened GEF coordination in the Pacific, and also the associated technical assistance made available to PICs, through the position of GEF Support Adviser since 2007.
7. The high-level segment of the 2010 meeting, involving environment ministers, recommended that “the GEF Support Adviser position at SPREP be retained, with broader terms of reference to include assisting countries with access to funding facilities other than the GEF”.
8. To date, the key outcome of the Adviser’s role has been increased access by Pacific SIDS to GEF funds. Under GEF-4, over US\$100 million has been approved for the region during the immediate past four years. This compares with US\$86 million in the fifteen years since the GEF was established in 1991 up to 2006.
9. As a result of the GEF Special Adviser position at SPREP PICs are now much better informed about GEF policies and procedures, and also are, where appropriate, provided technical assistance concerning GEF application requirements, project design, monitoring and reporting requirements. The position has ensured all 14 countries that are eligible for GEF assistance have an expert in the region to provide this assistance on a timely basis.

### **Future GEF Challenges**

10. The coordination unit proposed under the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability programme (GEF-PAS) and agreed by the PICs GEF Focal Points at their workshop in Palau in April 2008 to be based at SPREP, is still to be established. This agreement was also endorsed by the 20<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in Apia, November 2009. The Terms of Reference for the regional GEF adviser were thus amended in 2009 to assume some of the functions required for GEF-PAS coordination.
11. The GEF-5 replenishment cycle started in July 2010, and countries are again going through the process of identifying national priority needs for GEF financing, within the context of various reforms introduced for GEF-5.
12. These reform include the new System for the Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), the possibility of direct access to certain funding without an Implementing Agency, and the shift of the Country Support Programme from UNDP to the GEF Secretariat itself. Changes have also been made to the GEF Project Cycle, the Small

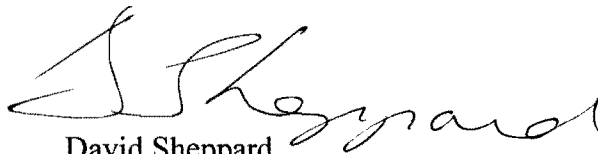
Grants Programme, and to allow for both multi-country and national programmes.

13. These challenges and changes are expected to continue to tax the capacities of many Pacific SIDS, and warrant at minimum the same level of regional coordination and technical support that SPREP has provided in recent years through the GEF Support Adviser position.

#### **Funding for the Position**

14. As stated above, funding for the position provided by Australia will come to an end in March 2011. SPREP has approached numerous development partners seeking funding assistance to enable continuation of this essential service to PICs, but so far no resources have been offered or committed.
15. Given the importance of this position to the region and to SPREP, the concern is that at a crucial juncture when new GEF resources need to be accessed by the region, Pacific SIDS will not have this necessary support from SPREP.
16. In this regard, Pacific SIDS are respectfully requested to consider and suggest funding options for the position in the future, so that this service, that has been commended by many Pacific countries, can be sustained.
17. One option is for Pacific SIDS to consider would be a multi-country GEF programme under GEF-5 that would draw on a portion of country STAR allocations, or GEF Set-Asides, that includes a component with resources for the GEF Support Adviser position. necessary. Such a programme may or may not be associated with the GEF-PAS coordination unit proposed in that programme's framework approved by the GEF Council, to be based at SPREP.
18. In the mean time SPREP will continue to explore all other available options for the purpose so that SPREP may be placed to continue provide this crucial service to you. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



David Sheppard  
Director

DS/JS/ph

