

**JOINT MEETING OF SOPAC, SPC AND SPREP GOVERNING BODIES  
ON THE REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (RIF)**

(Tradewinds Convention Centre, Suva, Fiji, 7-8 July 2009)

**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS**

1. The governing bodies of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) met together under the chairmanship of the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to consider options for new institutional arrangements for their organisations. The meeting was an historic occasion, being the first time that such a joint meeting has been held. Work on the reform of the current Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) has been carried out in response to the decision of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and the previous decisions of the three governing bodies that SOPAC programmes and services should be rationalised into SPC and SPREP. As a result, the CEOs of SOPAC, SPC and SPREP, with the support of their staff, have undertaken extensive consultation to develop options for such a rationalisation and have commissioned reports from independent consultants on the financial, legal and operational implications of various options. An overriding consideration of these consultations has been the need to avoid fragmentation or diminution of SOPAC's core services, which are highly valued by its members, and to ensure that the region benefits from enhanced synergies and efficiencies as a result of the rationalisation, in accordance with the objectives of the RIF process and the wishes of Forum leaders. After extensive deliberation of the options *and associated implementation plans* presented, the joint meeting of the governing bodies of SOPAC, SPC and SPREP agreed on the following decisions. These decisions will be provided to Forum Leaders through the Pacific Plan Action Committee.

## DECISIONS

***a) With respect to the ICT Outreach Programme of SOPAC, the joint meeting of the governing bodies:***

- (i)* endorsed the integration of the ICT Outreach Programme of SOPAC into the Digital Strategy component of the proposed, new division of Economic Development, Energy, Transport, Infrastructure and Communication of SPC from January 2010;
- (ii)* noted that the final implementation plan will be presented to the meetings of the respective governing bodies of SPC and SOPAC in October 2009; and
- (iii)* noted further that the GIS and remote sensing functions constitute an integral part of the core scientific work of SOPAC and will transfer to SPC from January 2010.

***b) With respect to the Energy Programme of SOPAC, the joint meeting of the governing bodies:***

- (i)* endorsed the decision taken by Pacific Energy Ministers in Tonga in April 2009 in which *Energy Ministers:*
  - a. agreed that regional and donor coordination and delivery of energy services to Pacific Island countries be strengthened and delivered through one energy agency and through one programme contributing to the development of a stronger energy sector and improved service to member countries; and
  - b. in this context, noted that there was a need to ensure that energy policy and climate change policy remained separate, where environmental aspects are managed by SPREP and energy sector activities by SPC so as to ensure that the socio-economic aspects of energy were adequately addressed;
- (ii)* recognised the interrelationship and links between energy and climate change and the need to address energy policy in relation to climate change as an integral part of the final implementation plan for rationalisation of the energy programme of SOPAC;
- (iii)* noted that this plan will be presented for consideration to the meetings of the governing body of SPREP in September and of SOPAC and SPC in October 2009 to enable implementation from January 2010.

*c) With respect to the balance of the SOPAC core work programme, the joint meeting of the governing bodies:*

*(i)* welcomed the commitment by members to strengthen SPREP as the region's lead environmental agency, including through support for the implementation of the approved decisions relating to the independent corporate review of SPREP;

*(ii)* agreed that the following specific SOPAC functions be transferred to SPREP *from January 2010*: the Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System, the Islands Climate Update, the Climate and Meteorological Database, and the component of the energy sector relating to monitoring and evaluation of greenhouse gases and the clean development mechanism (CDM);

*(iii)* agreed that the remaining functions of SOPAC be transferred to SPC as a new geoscience division from January 2010 based on the final implementation plan to be presented to and considered by the governing bodies of SOPAC and SPC in October 2009;

*(iv)* encouraged SPREP and SPC to optimise linkages between their work programmes and activities in the area of environment to strengthen service delivery and coordination; and

*(v)* agreed that progress with the transfer of SOPAC functions be reported to the annual meetings of the governing bodies and Pacific Plan Action Committee.

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on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)  
7 & 8 July, 2009  
Tradewinds Convention Centre, Suva, Fiji**

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