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CLEAN PACIFIC 2012

The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

CIRCULAR

FILE: SPREP 1/3/4
DATE: 26 June 2012
CIRCULAR: 12/51

TO: SPREP National Focal Points

Subject: Sub-regional presence study

At the 2011 SPREP Meeting – Members noted the draft report on the establishment of a sub-regional presence for SPREP, endorsed further work on strengthening regional linkages and tasked the Secretariat to prepare a paper for consideration at the 2012 SPREP meeting which would present a detailed evaluation of options and seek endorsement of a program of action consistent with the elements identified in the Report of the Friends of the Chair.

The Report of the Friends of the Chair on this agenda item identified the following broad approaches as requiring further evaluation noting that none of these approaches were mutually exclusive.

1. Establishment of sub-regional offices including co-location with other CROP agencies;
2. Periodic sub-regional forums;
3. Project based regional presence;
4. Country desk officers based at SPREP Headquarters; and
5. Placement of SPREP Staff in line agencies in member countries

The 2011 SPREP Meeting identified the following as critical elements in moving forward:

- A formal consultation with all members prior to SPREP's 2012 meeting;
- Specific proposals, along with the rationale for support, linked to the efficient and effective delivery of programs and strategic plan priorities;
- A small number of illustrative cases studies of successful regional presence;
- Identification of Pacific Island Countries that would be the focus for improving regional linkages, including specific programs and projects requiring on-ground support;
- Robust assessment of the costs and benefits of the proposals;
- Identification of the implications of proposals particularly on delivery of services and advice into the future, including the financial impact on the core budget; and
- Identification of any factors, including external factors, likely to significantly impact on SPREP's delivery of services and advice over the term of the Strategic Plan.

As an initial step in strengthening regional linkages, the Secretariat sent out on 26th January 2012 a SPREP circular – 12/08 inviting Members to comment on the draft terms of reference for the consultant(s) to be engaged to carry out the costs-benefit analysis of available options for establishing a sub-regional presence.

In March 2012, responses were received on the draft terms of reference from 6 Members – Australia, France, New Zealand, USA, FSM, New Caledonia and France.

In April of this year, the Secretariat circulated to all SPREP Members and networks the terms of reference for establishing a sub-regional presence and invited expressions of interests from potential experts/consultants to prepare a costs benefit analysis of all the options available to SPREP for establishing a sub-regional presence.

After a competitive bidding process – KVA Consult Ltd, a consultancy company based in Apia, was selected to undertake the consultancy work. KVA have now started the preparatory work for the consultancy. Members of the KVA consultancy team will be having meetings in Apia with the Apia-based missions this week (Australia and New Zealand), in Suva with Fiji, SPC, Forum Secretariat, and Suva based missions (FSM, Kiribati, Tuvalu, RMI, FSM, Solomon Islands, USA and PNG) during the week of 2nd July. In addition, the consultancy team will be undertaking targeted missions to Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu (time permitting) the week of the 9th July and RMI, FSM, Palau (time permitting) from 16th July.

It is not possible for the consultants to visit every Member country, nor is it the intention of this consultancy. The emphasis of this consultancy, however, is to build on the initial report submitted to Members at last year's SPREP Meeting and in particular, to undertake a thorough and rigorous assessment of the costs/benefits of all the possible options.

A draft report is expected to be provided by the consultants to the Secretariat in first week of August. The draft report will be made available to Members the same week.

Introduction letters will be sent out next later this week to those Members which will be visited by the consultants for further consultation. In this regard your assistance in facilitating meetings with key stakeholders will be appreciated.

This circular is also an opportunity for those Members which have not provided any comments so far and also those countries for which it will not be possible for the consultant team to visit – to provide any inputs on the work to be undertaken by the consultants, and more broadly on any matter or concern which may be of importance to Members.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,

David Sheppard
Director General

DS/KL/ae