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

Natural Solutions for Island Resilience

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 2/12/2 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points

DATE: 17 April 2015

CIRCULAR: 15/32

SUBJECT: **Invitation to Pacific Island Country and Territory Members to submit nominations to attend the *Journées bleues* conference on ecotourism, June 1st to 5th 2015 in Tahiti**.

Dear Pacific Island Country and Territory Focal Points,

We would like to invite Pacific Island Country and Territory (PICT) members to submit one nomination, whom French Polynesian Government will fund to attend the Blue days conference to be held in Tahiti from Monday June 1rst to Friday June 5th 2015 (5 days).

The Blue Days project, initiated by the Government of French Polynesia, set up by SPREP and the French Polynesia Environment Service, plans to gather 100 stakeholders - all from SPREP member countries - to share a common vision: "**To offer the Pacific the opportunity to become a destination of excellence for marine ecotourism because of its biological richness, its responsible practices and its living culture**." This is a long-term project since it will also propose to endorse a future multi-annual programme, and will answer the questions of and encourage initiatives from professionals, tourism promoters, local communities, naturalists, scientists (from any discipline) as well as countries representatives. The consultant hired by SPREP to prepare this programme will contact you soon.

The 3 themes of the *Journées bleues* conference are:

- Culture and ecotourism: practices of professionals with remarkable examples between man and animals; inspiring stories; good practices; professional recognition; etc
- The state of knowledge and innovating results for the profession coming from scientific research and expertise in the area of blue ecotourism, marine species, and the impact of ecotourism on biodiversity: sustainability; regulation; marine protected areas roles; etc…
- The structuring and development of blue ecotourism in the Pacific: economics; role for NGOs, civil society, agencies, governments, politicians, and tourism promoters; comparative advantage of the Pacific; synergy; framework and vision for a new niche.

Through the generous support of the French Polynesia Government, SPREP is able to invite one official from each PICT to attend this conference.

We inform you that the French Polynesia Government is also funding the simultaneous translation (French/English), during the plenary sessions. The working groups will be facilitated by bilingual students.

1) We would like to invite countries to nominate your official environment focal point or your official tourism focal point. The agenda will be presented soon, as we are waiting for available participants to confirm their presentation. You will be part of all the sessions and could be reporters for working groups.

Please send your nomination to both SPREP (Pascale Salaun: pascales@sprep.org) and French Polynesia Environment Service DIREN (Miri Tatarata: Miri.TATARATA@environnement.gov.pf) by no later than Friday 1st May 2015.

Once in touch with DIREN, you will get more details for your reservations: flight, accommodation, visa and so on. For those of you traveling by their own means (ship for instance), please do not forget to bring your invoices: this will be the only way to be refunded.

If you are interested to come along with another focal point or expert for whom you can provide the funding, please let DIREN know to facilitate the bookings.

2) We would also like to ask you to send, before Friday 8th May, 2015, a mid-term report of your national or territorial action plan implementation of SPREP's Marine Species Action Plan[1] 2013-2017 for both turtles and cetaceans. If you are able to also provide information on sharks, we will include it in our new regional shark framework project. For this review, please keep in touch with the Adviser at SPREP: michaeld@sprep.org

For those of you who are presenting, please could you send your presentation title and summary (one paragraph) by Friday April 24th, 2015 to Pascale Salaun: pascales@sprep.org and Michael Donoghue: michaeld@sprep.org. Later on we will ask you to send the full presentation (PPT or/and paper if needed), by Monday 18th May 2015 in the aim to facilitate the translators' work.

For more details on the project, please contact:

- Michael Donogue : michaeld@sprep.org
- Pascale Salaun : pascales@sprep.org
- Miri Tatarata : Miri.TATARATA@environnement.gov.pf
- Gabriel Sao Chan Cheong: Gabriel.saochancheong@environnement.gov.pf

We look forward to hearing from you soon and meeting you at this important conference in Tahiti in June.

Yours sincerely,



Kosi Latu
Acting Director General

KL/MD/rmg

[1] The document is available from the SPREP website: you will find the action plan guidance for turtle page 27 and cetaceans page 43.