



PACIFIC ISLANDS APPLIED GEOSCIENCE COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) Reform transfers SOPAC functions into SPC and SPREP

30 March 2010: Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director-General of SPC, Mr David Sheppard, Director of SPREP and Dr Russell Howorth, Director, Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), will at the SOPAC Secretariat at 3 pm on Wednesday, 31st March 2010 sign three Letters of Agreement which together comprise full implementation of substantive elements of the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) Reform agreed to by Pacific Island Leaders at recent Forum Meetings (Annex D of the 2009 Cairns Forum Communiqué refers).

The three Letters of Agreement are as follows:

1 Between the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). It constitutes the record of full and effective transfer and integration of specific functions within the work programme of SOPAC into SPC upon the date this Agreement is signed and dated. The specific functions covered by this Agreement comprise the activities generally described in the SOPAC Work Programme as “Energy”.

2 Between the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). It constitutes the record of full and effective transfer and integration of specific functions within the work programme of SOPAC into SPC upon the date this Agreement is signed and dated. The specific functions covered by this Letter of Agreement comprise the activities generally described in the SOPAC Work Programme as “ICT Outreach”.

3 Between the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), to record the transfer upon the signing of this Agreement of the following specific functions from SOPAC to SPREP.

- Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS).
- Islands Climate Update (ICU).
- Climate and Meteorological Databases (CMD).
- Energy functions related to Climate Change, specifically monitoring and evaluation of Greenhouse Gas and the Clean Development Mechanism.

As a result of these institutional reforms,

- SPC will assimilate, accommodate, and operationalise the Energy activities of SOPAC into the Energy Programme of the new Economic Development Division located at its Nabua Campus in Suva, Fiji, that was established on 1st January 2010. Initially SOPAC's ongoing energy activities together with the petroleum data, information and advisory function transferred to SOPAC from PIFS in 2009 will form the basis of the 2010 SPC Energy Programme. SPC further acknowledges that the immediate priority areas for the Energy Programme will be: (i) the completion of the review of the Pacific Islands Energy Policy and the development of a new policy, strategy and implementation plan; (ii) the convening of an Energy Officials Meeting in Noumea in May followed by an Energy Ministers' Meeting in Australia; and (iii) fully assume the role and responsibility of the lead agency for regional energy matters. These actions are consistent with the outcomes of the recent Pacific Energy Ministers and associated Officials Meetings in 2007 and 2009 and the Forum Leaders' Meeting in 2009.
- SPC will assimilate, accommodate, and operationalise the ICT Outreach activities of SOPAC into the Communications Programme of the new Economic Development Division. Also to be co-located in the programme will be SPC's digital strategy outreach programme comprising the Rural Internet Connectivity System (RICS), the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) initiative and the coordination work relating to submarine cable technology all of which are currently operating from the SPC headquarters in Noumea. SPC further acknowledges that the immediate priority areas for the programme will be: (i) the completion of the second Digital Strategy (originally approved by the Leaders as part of the Pacific Plan in 2005) together with the commencement of implementation; (ii) to play the lead role in the CROP ICT Working Group; and (iii) to organise the ICT Ministerial Meeting planned for Tonga mid-2010 and follow up on the outcomes. These actions are consistent with the outcome of the Forum ICT Ministers Meeting in 2006 (referred to as the "Wellington Declaration") and the outcome of the Forum ICT Ministers Meeting in Tonga in 2009.
- SPREP will strengthen its role as the lead environmental organisation particularly its lead role in climate related activities.

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