

[SOPAC PARAMETERS]

Agenda SCW01/6

The primary purpose of this paper is to update and provide members of SOPAC Council Committee as a Whole (SCW) members with key SOPAC facts and figures which form the background on which the rationalization and absorption process is to be carried out.

It provides examples of some of the issues and the processes that need to be taken and considered to achieve the objectives of SOPAC Council's decision in response to the Forum Leaders Communiqué Item 19 (b), and improve service delivery of integrated scientific and technical solutions for sustainable development in its island members.

SOPAC in Review

- Established in 1972 as the *Coordinating Committee for the Offshore Prospecting of Deep-sea Mineral Resources and Petroleum* (CCOP-SOPAC).
- Reconstituted as an intergovernmental organization, the *South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission* (SOPAC) in 1984, and The Agreement Establishing SOPAC opened for signature in 1990.
- Amended its name to the *Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission*, to be more reflective of its wider membership of North and South Pacific Island countries (SOPAC) in 2006.

SOPAC' s Mandate

SOPAC is mandated to contribute to sustainable development, reduce poverty and enhance resilience for the peoples of the Pacific by supporting the development of natural resources, in particular non-living resources, investigating natural systems and the management of vulnerability through applied environmental geosciences, appropriate technologies, knowledge management, technical and policy advice, human resource development and advocacy of Pacific issues.

SOPAC Agreement and Membership Status

The *Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Geoscience Commission* was opened for signature in 1990. It now has a membership of 21 members Countries and Territories.

Members Countries and Territories	Founding Member = f (7) Associate Member = AM (4) Full Member = FM (17)
American Samoa	AM
Australia	FM
Cook Islands	f FM
Fiji	f FM
Federated States of Micronesia	FM
French Polynesia	AM
Guam	FM
Kiribati	FM
Marshall Islands	FM
Nauru	FM
New Caledonia	AM
New Zealand	f FM
Niue	FM
Palau	FM
Papua New Guinea	f FM
Samoa	f FM
Solomon Islands	f FM
Tokelau	AM
Tonga	f FM
Tuvalu	FM
Vanuatu	FM

Technical Programmes - Overview

Ocean and Islands

Goal Improved technical knowledge of ocean and islands ecosystems for the sustainable management of natural resources.

In this context, the term ecosystem is consistent with the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Convention on Biodiversity. An ecosystem-based approach includes all physical, chemical and biological attributes together with living and non-living resources. SOPAC's role is clearly focused on the physical and chemical attributes of ecosystems and the assessment of their non-living resources.

Key component areas and purpose

- *Resource Use Solutions* – Develop technical and scientific solutions for the assessment, development and management of natural resources.
- *Monitoring Physical and Chemical Change in Ecosystems* – Develop appropriate strategies for the management of island ecosystems based upon information from long-term sustained monitoring
- *Natural Resources Governance* – Support member countries to meet their obligations for the management of non-living resources as articulated in relevant international and regional agreements.

Community Lifelines

Goal Improved community access to energy, water and sanitation, and information and communication technologies for sustainable livelihoods.

Lifelines are essential elements for people living in small island states dispersed across a large portion of the Pacific Ocean, if they are to aspire to and attain lifestyles comparable to their more affluent and developed neighbours. In this context, access to affordable energy, water and sanitation, and information communication technologies are considered to be essential lifelines for SOPAC island member country communities as they strive toward sustainable development.

Key component areas and purpose

- *Resource Assessment, development and Management* – Support the strengthening of resource assessment, development and management for energy, water and wastewater and information and communication technologies.
- *Asset Management* – Support the strengthening in asset management for energy, water and wastewater and information and communication technologies.
- *Governance and Advocacy*– Support member countries to develop, promote and implement appropriate policy, planning, regulatory frameworks and community awareness.

Community Risk

Goal To improve disaster risk management practices to build safer and more resilient communities.

The overall goal of the programme is to provide effective regional support and coordination through partnership collaboration to strengthen national disaster risk management practices to contribute to the successful implementation of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005-2015 towards building safer and more resilient communities to disasters.

Key component areas and purpose

- *Strengthening Resilience to Disasters* – Strengthen disaster management capabilities.
- *Mitigating the Effects of Hazards* – Develop technical solutions that provide a knowledge base for the mitigation of hazards and reduction of vulnerability.
- *Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management*– Assist member countries in the process of mainstreaming disaster risk management practices into national development planning.

Budget and Funding

The SOPAC Governing Council at their 36th Annual Session approved a fully secured, total combined budget of \$30 126 987 for the delivery of its 2008 Work Programme.

Core Budget comprises membership contributions (full and associate members) and other general revenue, with membership contributions constituting 4.9% of SOPAC's total combined budget. The following table provides a summary of the 2008 regular budget:

Revenue for Regular Budget (RB)	
Membership Contributions – Full Members	1 408 337
Membership Contributions – Associate Members	60 000
Other General Revenue	1 409 126
Includes bank interest, programme and/or administration revenue, Fiji government grant, transfer from surplus	
Total RB	2 877 463

NOTE: Full Members - Australia and New Zealand contribute 37.75% each (\$531 667) of the total membership contributions, with Fiji, FSM, Guam, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu contributing 2.24% each (\$31 529); and, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu contributing 0.94% each (\$13 253). Associate Members – French Polynesia make voluntary contributions of \$40 000 and New Caledonia \$20 000.

Total Combined Budget for 2008 – comprises funds from the Regular Budget (RB) of \$2 877 463, Regular Extra Budget (RXB) of \$313 072 and the Extra Budget in the amount of \$26 936 452. The RB constitutes 10% of the TCB, with the RXB and XB constituting 1% and 89%, respectively.

**2008 TOTAL COMBINED BUDGET EXPENDITURE SUMMARY
(RB + RXB & XB FUNDING)**

	PERSONNEL COSTS	WORK PLAN ACTIVITIES	TOTAL COSTS	RB FUNDING	RXB FUNDING	XB FUNDING	TOTAL FUNDING	%
Ocean and Islands								
Resource Use Solutions	689,212	5,184,921	5,874,133	21,600	150,027	5,702,506	5,874,133	19.5%
Monitoring Physical & Chemical Change in Ecosystems	618,158	934,709	1,552,866	21,600	95,854	1,435,412	1,552,866	5.2%
Ocean Governance	491,993	430,000	921,993	21,600	7,714	892,678	921,993	3.1%
<i>Sub - Total</i>	1,799,363	6,549,629	8,348,992	64,800	253,596	8,030,596	8,348,992	27.7%
SOPAC/EU Project	562,184	281,878	844,061	0	0	844,061	844,061	2.8%
Total	2,361,546	6,831,507	9,193,053	64,800	253,596	8,874,658	9,193,053	30.5%
Community Lifelines								
Resource Assessment, Development & Management	1,553,542	4,793,751	6,347,292	76,654	8,745	6,261,894	6,347,292	21.1%
Asset Management	381,718	1,109,790	1,491,508	0	43,237	1,448,271	1,491,508	5.0%
Advocacy & Governance within Community Lifelines	414,930	318,381	733,311	0	7,495	725,816	733,311	2.4%
<i>Sub - Total</i>	2,350,190	6,221,921	8,572,111	76,654	59,476	8,435,981	8,572,111	28.5%
SOPAC/EU Project	452,846	316,692	769,538	0	0	769,538	769,538	2.6%
Total	2,803,036	6,538,613	9,341,649	76,654	59,476	9,205,519	9,341,649	31.0%
Community Risk								
Strengthening Resilience to Disasters	405,784	4,179,962	4,585,746	0	0	4,585,746	4,585,746	15.2%
Mitigating the Effects of Hazards	172,623	88,500	261,123	0	0	261,123	261,123	0.9%
Mainstreaming Risk Management	838,153	2,071,462	2,909,615	0	0	2,909,615	2,909,615	9.7%
<i>Sub - Total</i>	1,416,560	6,339,924	7,756,484	0	0	7,756,484	7,756,484	25.7%
SOPAC/EU Project	468,293	232,144	700,436	0	0	700,436	700,436	2.3%
Total	1,884,853	6,572,068	8,456,920	0	0	8,456,920	8,456,920	28.1%
Corporate Services								
Information & Communications	426,368	255,000	681,368	681,368	0	0	681,368	2.3%
Finance	340,990	151,868	492,858	492,858	0	0	492,858	1.6%
Administration	162,336	652,251	814,587	814,587	0	0	814,587	2.7%
<i>Sub - Total</i>	929,695	1,059,119	1,988,814	1,988,814	0	0	1,988,814	6.6%
SOPAC/EU Project	70,628	75,534	146,161	0	0	146,161	146,161	0.5%
Total	1,000,323	1,134,653	2,134,975	1,988,814	0	146,161	2,134,975	7.1%
Directorate	723,029	277,360	1,000,389	747,195	0	253,194	1,000,389	3.3%
GRAND TOTALS	8,772,787	21,354,200	30,126,987	2,877,463	313,072	26,936,452	30,126,987	100%
% OF TOTALS	29%	71%	100%	10%	1%	89%	100%	

Staff at the SOPAC Secretariat (2008)

The following provides statistics on the current staff roll of the Secretariat.

Staff Category	Quantum	Cost FJD
Professional	48	7 100 481
Technical & Junior Professionals	38	1 078 685
Administrative and Programme Support	20*	557 621
General	4	36 000
Total	110	8 772 787

NOTE: 88% of the professional positions are responsible for direct work programme service delivery and 5 administrative support staff positions provide direct support in the 3 technical programmes.

Personnel costs account for 29% of the total budget, which in 2008 is \$30,126 987.

Donor Funding

Donor contributions in the amount of \$27 249 524 are described in the budget as regular extra budget (RXB) and extra budget funds (XB) in the approved 2008 Work Programme and Budget.

The following provides a summary of donor partners that contribute funds for the delivery of the 2008 Work Programme:

Donor	2008 Quantum of Funding Support
Australia	5 028 678
European Union	15 042 495
New Zealand	2 702 477
Republic of Korea	300 000
Taiwan ROC	2 700 000
UK	117 600
UN Agencies	817 893
USA (NOAA and TAF-OFDA)	207 546
Bi-laterals and Various <100K	320 834
TOTAL	27 249 524

Legal Overview

Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Geoscience Commission (SOPAC Agreement) - SOPAC is a legally constituted body with an agreement governed by international law. The SOPAC Agreement was opened for signature in 1990. With an initial 7 founding members, it now has a membership of 21 member Countries and Territories.

The SOPAC Agreement has provisions for amendments, modifications and for termination. Where decisions made by the Governing Council, within its powers under Article 6 of the SOPAC Agreement, impact on changes to be made to the Agreement then amendment provisions within the SOPAC Agreement must be complied with.

Article 14 provides for amendment of the SOPAC Agreement, which may be submitted to the Governing Council and may only be adopted by consensus of all members through the usual process of acceptance and ratification, to enable amendments to the agreement.

Article 15 allows for any member to withdraw from the agreement.

Article 16 authorises the Governing Council to suspend activities or dissolve SOPAC and requires ratification by two thirds of the members.

Contracts – A summary table of the contract and letters of agreement that SOPAC has signed with various donors is attached (refer page 9). It provides the necessary information to see when resources will need to be replenished for the various scientific and technical services that currently are the responsibility of SOPAC and that will remain development priorities beyond the rationalization of SOPAC into SPREP and, or SPC. The summary table also provides the list of parties to contracts and agreements that have been signed with SOPAC.

Current contracts and agreements with development partners that support delivery of the SOPAC Work Programme will need to be examined to determine the provisions for amendments, modifications and termination.

Programme	Donor	Project Name	Total Funding Foreign Currency	Total Funding FJD	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		
					Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	Jan-Jun	July-Dec	July-Dec
CLP	NZAID	Water Demand Management Programme (Phase I and II)	NZD 600,000	731,975																					
	NZAID	Water Quality Management Programme (Phase I and II - In conjunction with WHO)	NZD 700,000	853,971																					
	AusAID	Water Safety Plans - Phase 1 (In conjunction with WHO)	AUD 600,000	848,656																					
	AusAID	Water Safety Plans - Phase 2 (In conjunction with WHO)	AUD 750,000	1,060,820																					
	UNDP	Sustainable Integrated Water Resources and Wastewater Management in the Pacific Island Countries (IWRM)	USD 1,805,450	2,741,345																					
	UNDP	Pacific Islands Energy Policies and Strategic Action Planning (PIEPSAP)	USD 1,611,189	2,446,385																					
	EU	Pacific Hydrological Cycle Observing System (HYCOS)	EUR 3,524,970	7,622,881																					
	WHO	Pacific Year of Sanitation	USD 27,031	41,043																					
	CTA	Generating and Disseminating Knowledge on Community Based Processing of Coconut Oil in the Pacific	EUR 194,971	456,607																					
	EU	Pacific SIDS Integrated Water Resource Management Planning Programme (SIDS IWRM)	EUR 2,822,550	6,610,187																					
CTA	Pacific Energy and Gender (PEG) Network	EUR 202,000	473,068																						
CRP	EU	Disaster Risk Reduction in Eight Pacific ACP States	EUR 9,213,400	21,577,049																					
	AusAID NAP Facility	National Action Plans Development in Member Countries	AUD 2,250,000	3,182,461																					
	TAF/OFDA	Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme	US 94,500	143,486																					
	EU	ACP-EU Natural Disaster Facility	EUR 2,000,000	4,683,841																					
OI	UNESCO	Pacific Islands GOOS (PI-GOOS)	USD 25,000	37,959																					
	AusAID	GA Tsunami Hazard Assessment Project - Stage II	AUD 389,000	550,212																					
	EU	Establishment of Lagoon Aggregate Dredging Company for Kiribati	EUR 2,200,000	5,152,225																					
	BoMET	South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project Phase IV	AUD 1,143,858	1,617,904																					
Conversion rates (07/03/08)																									
NZD	0.8197																								
AUD	0.707																								
USD	0.6586																								
EUR	0.427																								

Partnerships/Joint Activities

Partnerships - SOPAC has embraced the philosophy of partnership which it articulates in the *SOPAC Strategic Plan 2005 to 2009* and demonstrates this in a number of ways. For example, SOPAC has, with key development partners, established and facilitates two regional partnerships, which are central to the effective implementation of regional and national initiatives within the water and sanitation sectors *The Pacific Water Partnership* and to strengthen efforts toward risk reduction *The Pacific Regional Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network*. Both partnerships have an open-ended membership and have demonstrated traction in implementation of the respective regional policy frameworks that guide these two critical focal areas. SPC and SPREP are members of both partnerships and participated in some of the activities delivered under the partnerships.

STAR - The Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) is an informal gathering of scientists, researchers, and technologists who freely support SOPAC's work programme activities and which meets annually together with SOPAC Governing Council National Representatives at the Annual Session of Council. This interface supported by the annual meeting, provides a rare opportunity for scientists and policy makers to come together regularly to discuss mutual issues of relevance to island development.

Joint Activities - At the activity level SOPAC has developed and delivers joint activities with a range of implementing agencies such as WHO and the NZ-MOH in the regional Water Safety Planning Initiative and with Geoscience Australia, UNEP *Grid* and the Commonwealth Secretariat in supporting countries to develop submissions to the UNCLCS, for extended continental shelf Examples of joint activities and/or cooperation with SPREP and SPC that are underway or under discussion include **energy** (biofuels - SPC Lands Division; adaptation and mitigation to CC that also covers the water sector - SPREP); **marine mapping** monitoring and numerical **modeling** (SPC Marine Division for inputs to coastal fisheries and aquaculture; SPREP for coastal management and conservation (in respect of mapping and managing marine protected areas)) and national action plans for disaster risk management (health dimension of DRM – SPC Social Division; implementation of the PIFACC – SPREP).

SOPAC – OPERATING PHILOSOPHY

The *SOPAC Strategic Plan for 2005 to 2009* captures the essence of its Secretariat's operating philosophy within its four strategic directions of:

1. **Sustaining Comparative Technical Advantage** – continue to facilitate access to appropriate technologies and technical expertise
2. **Instituting Good Corporate Governance** – continue to institute sound corporate governance principles of transparency, accountability and cost effective service and advice
3. **Developing Effective Strategic Management** – continue to strengthen approaches to the design, development and delivery of key programmes and priorities; and continue to be proactive in developing partnerships at all levels
4. **Supporting Sustainable Development in Pacific Island Countries** – remain committed and driven toward supporting and delivering against development priorities that fall within the remit of SOPAC's responsibilities through an appropriately targeted work programme.

The core of SOPAC's operation is applied science and technology and this has been and will continue to be its strength. It is the foundation of its contribution to supporting sustainable development through its mandate. Indeed the fact that its activities are housed in one complex allows for integrated approaches between different, mutually reinforcing disciplines in the planning, action and delivery of projects. The integrated solution to address coastal vulnerability of Tarawa, Kiribati provides an excellent example of the integrated approach adopted by SOPAC.

Science to Policy Solution to Address Coastal Vulnerability

Tarawa, Kiribati. - Coastal vulnerability is a critical issue for the 40,000 people (nearly 50% of the Kiribati population) living on Tarawa Atoll. It has been a key activity in the SOPAC work programme for Kiribati since they joined in 1980.

For the past 25 years SOPAC has been carrying out scientific and technical surveys in Tarawa, both on land and in the lagoon. A considerable amount of data has been collected which is now available to assist with developing and implementing better policies to address coastal vulnerability. A substantial amount of this data is in the form of monitoring over time, thus demonstrating change over time which is particularly important in a coastal situation which is by nature a result of dynamic processes interacting.

These data* have produced mapping, monitoring and modeling products, which have underpinned socio-economic assessments and have contributed to interventions under the Kiribati Adaptation Projects phases I and II. This multi-disciplinary solution has been achieved by inputs from scientific and technical expertise in the Secretariat, using various state-of-the art technology tools and applications and from specific activities and outputs from the three work programme areas, as outlined in the following table.

Coastal Vulnerability solution for Tarawa Kiribati	Ocean and Islands	Community Lifelines	Community Risk
Ocean and Islands			
• Resource Use Solutions	❖		
• Monitoring change	❖		
• Natural Resources Governance	❖		
Community Lifelines			
• Energy			
• Water		❖	
• ICT and, GIS and Remote Sensing		❖	
Community Risk			
• Strengthening Resilience			
• Mitigating effects of natural hazards			❖
• Mainstreaming DRR			❖
Technical Workshop (supports ALL programmes)	❖		

The efficacy of SOPAC as a repository of essential technical expertise and a key development partner in addressing key regional development priorities is crucial.

By promoting the development of natural resources, building the resilience of communities and improving their access to basic necessities, safe health, information and appropriate technologies, SOPAC contributes to sustainable development and reduction of poverty in the region. Its recurring focal theme is ‘community’ or ‘people’ and hence the underlying goal is not merely ‘sustainable development’ but equally to ensure ‘worthwhile lives’, for Pacific people, as articulated in the Leaders Vision of the Pacific Plan.

Rationalisation of SOPAC Functions into SPREP and/or SPC

From the Council record it is clear that Members agree the current SOPAC work programme and its delivery are good, thus the Leaders’ decision to consider “rationalisation” and “absorption” into SPC and/or SPREP must not result in a deterioration of service, but rather be able to demonstrate that service delivery and effectiveness will be enhanced through limiting fragmentation of SOPAC services.

Therefore it is useful to explore the likely range of options from which Council will have to decide provides the optimum future institutional arrangement that best responds to the Leaders’ decision, and is acceptable to the full membership of both SPC and SPREP governing bodies.

It is suggested that the following five options be considered with a view to selecting one or more options for further assessment:

- **Option 1 – Fragmentation** - In effect a process not unlike an auction and implicitly ad-hoc, with the possibility that elements of the work programme will be lost. The record of the Council discussion clearly indicates that this option must and should not emerge.
- **Option 2 – SOPAC work programme absorbed fully into SPC** - This option of course was considered at length in 1999-2000, and the outcome at that time was in effect the status quo.

In the interim institutional arrangements have changed in both organizations, for example SOPAC Council now has a well-developed Strategic Plan 2005-09 and new work programme structure. It is timely to review this option drawing upon the 1999 Review report.

- **Option 3 – SOPAC work programme absorbed fully into SPREP** - This option has never been considered at length and clearly this task must be undertaken before the Committee can complete its work.
- **Option 4 – SOPAC work programme absorbed substantively into either SPC or SPREP with the balance into the other** - Clearly, arrangements to bring into effect this option will emerge as a result of the outcome of consideration of Options 2 and 3.
- **Option 5 – SOPAC work programme remains stand alone** - Arrangements to bring into effect this option will emerge as a result of the outcome of consideration of Options 2 and 3, which may provide the opportunity to rationalize the services of all three technical organizations, under Pillar Two.

In order to examine these options, and thus determine a strategic approach to addressing the “rationalization” issue, it is suggested that Options 2 and 3 be considered, for further assessment.

Members will recall that during the recent Council Session and discussion on the RIF several members articulated that the SOPAC work programme had developed recognition and elements of it are well integrated. Therefore Option 2 or Option 3 has the distinct benefit that the SOPAC work programme will remain intact under the umbrella of a single institution.

The following table is a broad brush attempt to “at a glance” highlight areas of synergies and/or linkages and/or optimum complementarities of the SOPAC, SPREP and SPC work programmes.

Clearly these will need to be studied and assessed more comprehensively to determine optimum institutional arrangements for improved service delivery.

SOPAC	SPREP	SPC
Ocean and Islands		
• Resource Use Solutions	❖	❖
• Monitoring change	❖	
• Natural Resources Governance	❖	❖
Community Lifelines		
• Energy	❖	❖
• Water	❖	❖
• ICT		❖
Community Risk		
• Strengthening Resilience	❖	❖
• Mitigating effects of natural hazards	❖	
• Mainstreaming DRR	❖	❖
Corporate Service	❖	❖
Technical Workshop (supports ALL programmes)		

If the SCW, after due consideration, sees merit in this suggestion a first and essential step will be for the SOPAC Director to have bilateral discussions with her counterpart in SPC and in SPREP, as well as trilateral meetings between the three CEOs.

The outcome of these discussions to be completed for the next SCW Meeting must be two reports, each of which records fully the considerations undertaken in these meetings together with a single executive summary, which indicates the likelihood of either Option 2 or 3 (or 4) being the preferred future institutional arrangement from a work programme and improved regional service delivery perspective.

In the Council decision it was agreed that a mechanism that will enable the benefits of STAR to be continued needed to be found. A future institutional arrangement that mirrors either Option 2, 3 or 4 should provide a mechanism for the continuation of STAR. Nonetheless this issue needs to be on the agenda for discussions between the CEOs.

These reports must describe clearly what improved service delivery and effectiveness will ensue. Preferably some commentary on the likely cost-effectiveness is desirable, as well as an examination of the contractual and resource implications. However, it is understood that further work will almost certainly be required on these issues.