



Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC)  
Division Géosciences et Technologies Appliquées (SOPAC)

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## Second Meeting of the SOPAC Division Noumea, New Caledonia, 3-9 November 2012 (SOPAC-2)

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE
2.	REPORTS
2.5	PMEG Reports
2.5.1	OIP Programme Evaluation and Monitoring Group Report

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### REVIEW TEAM

Mark Alcock, Director, Law of the Sea and Maritime Boundaries Advice. Environmental Geoscience Division. Geoscience Australia.

James Hein, Deep Sea Resources. U.S. Geological Survey. Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center. United States.

Doug Ramsay, Manager Pacific Rim, National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd (NIWA), New Zealand.

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Programme Evaluation and Monitoring Group (PMEG) for the Oceans and Islands Programme (OIP) carried out the annual review of the OIP work programme from the 30 October-1 November, 2012.
2. The review was conducted at the SPC-SOPAC Secretariat in Suva. Copies of all the Division Meeting Agenda papers and a wide selection of OIP outputs were made available to the PMEG team prior to the review.
3. The review commenced with a briefing by the SPC-SOPAC Divisional Director, followed by meetings over the course of the two days with the OIP Deputy Director (DD) and all available Programme Staff.
4. The discussions with OIP staff were wide-ranging but with a focus on: 1) Is the OIP programme and the activities within it delivering technically robust services to the member countries? 2) Is there efficiency and value in the service provided by OIP? and 3) what are the country impacts and benefits resulting from OIPs activities.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS ON 2010 PMEG RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A separate paper was provided to the PMEG team by the DD on progress on addressing the recommendations, challenges and opportunities identified in the 2011 PMEG report.

2. PMEG are satisfied with the progress made over the year in either addressing, progressing or responding to the recommendations made. Ongoing aspects are addressed in the text below.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACTS OF THE PROGRAMME

1. The PMEG team was extremely impressed by the continued level of achievements and outputs from the OIP. We could see much evidence of the value, effective implementation, and delivery of the work programme.
2. Based on the review carried out, it is PMEGs opinion that OIP is delivering technically robust services to the member countries. Throughout all activities of the programme, the approaches used are appropriate, pragmatic and robust.
3. Given the breadth of services performed by OIP relative to the limited resources available, these services are being provided in an extremely efficient manner.
4. OIP has a well-developed network of relationships with partner Agencies and experts in the region and more beyond. It acts as a knowledge broker and facilitator between the international community and the region, ensuring that knowledge and capabilities not available within the Small Island States of the Pacific can be delivered to the region efficiently and in a manner appropriate to the level of development of these States. These relationships significantly enhance OIP's capacity to deliver services to the member States and donor States ability to deliver aid to the region and constitute part of SPC-SOPAC's "comparative advantage".
5. The Division and associated programmes has always struggled to identify and capture the resulting outcomes and impacts of its work. PMEG again emphasises the need to identify and capture examples of the ongoing impacts from OIPs activities, not just in the Division meeting papers, but also as a means of demonstrating and marketing the value of the OIP activities. The discussions held with staff during the PMEG process resulted in many examples of in-country results and impacts being highlighted. Specific acknowledgement must be made of two projects in particular:
  - The enabling of improved future governance, protection, conservation and management of resources within respective national jurisdictions from the signing of eight Maritime Boundary Agreements by seven Pacific Island country leaders at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Rarotonga. This is a major achievement. It is also testament to the collaborative nature of the activities between technical and legal country teams and the regional support provided by SPC-SOPAC, Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, Geoscience Australia, the Government of Australia's Attorney General's Department and the Commonwealth Secretariat.
  - The progress of the Deep Sea Minerals (DSM) Project and development of the Regional Legislative and Regulatory Framework (RLRF) for offshore minerals exploration and exploitation. In PMEGs view the RLRF is an extremely well-balanced and pragmatic framework that will enable sound national DSM policy, legislation and regulations to be developed. The DSM project team are congratulated for the progress that they have made and
6. In both these above cases, it is PMEGs opinion that SPC-SOPAC are showing leadership and world best-practice. OIP has demonstrated that they are very effective at marshalling and coordinating external resources and adopting a whole of picture approach (for example the integration of both technical and legal support in both these programmes). This is assisting in enabling substantive outcomes for Pacific Island countries in the form of assisting the realization of potential economic benefits from deep sea minerals and other marine resources within a framework of proper and effective governance of marine space.
7. Outcomes are also evident from many other areas of work OIP are involved with. For example marine survey work carried out this year for Fiji Public Works Department is providing sound baseline information for the upgrade or provision of wharfs and jetties, the hydrodynamic modelling in Atutaki in the Cook Islands is assisting the design and optimization of a new shipping channel. In the longer-term, data and information collected during the EDF8 projects is now being routinely requested through Geonetwork and used for a wide range of activities including marine

cable routing, underpinning coastal hazard assessments including tsunami modeling and many of the activities being carried out by the Australian funded PACCSAP initiative, and fisheries activities.

8. PMEG are pleased to see continued progress in strengthening linkages and support to the other two programmes within SPC-SOPAC, the wider SPC notably Fisheries, and through the EDF9 Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction in the Pacific OCTs Project and the work OIP are involved with in French Polynesia, reaching out to the wider country membership of SPC.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY TO COUNTRIES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

1. There is a substantial opportunity for OIP through building on the skills developed under the Maritime Boundaries, DSM project, hydrographic and associated capabilities to take a central leadership role in marine spatial planning in the region as a basis for supporting both the wider SPC, other regional organisations, and the PICs in underpinning of Oceanscape and implementing marine planning and governance.
2. Whilst the signing of the eight Maritime Boundary Agreements at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum has substantially raised the profile of the Maritime Boundaries activities, a number of countries are still not fully engaged. A challenge for OIP is to build on the momentum gained to both have all PICs fully engaged and to ensure further agreements are signed at future Pacific Island Forum leaders meetings and that relevant legislation, proclamations and Treaties are lodged at the United Nations. Such public displays of progress will ensure that the profile of this activity and the evidence of progress is maintained at the highest level.
3. With the continuation of the partnership of the Pacific Sea Level Monitoring project (COSPPAC), PMEG suggests that there is an opportunity for OIP to play a supporting role to much more effectively leverage off this excellent dataset to develop country specific and country-relevant products. Furthermore given issues and uncertainties that have occurred with vertical datums at a number of sea-level gauge locations there is a need for OIP, working with their Australian partners, to ensure that all sea-level data collected at these sites can be confidently related to the relative land-level datums used in each country.
4. PMEG notes the increasing use of Geonetwork to access OIP-held datasets and notes the activities planned to increase capacity and end-user functionality. PMEG also sees an opportunity to streamline requests for data through a data agreement form (online or otherwise), that is agreed with each country, and that would better capture what the data and information is to be used for as one mechanism of capturing results and impacts of OIPs activities.
5. OIPs workload continues to grow. PMEG has four major concerns:
  - OIP workload is stretched well beyond available capacity. Staff go well above and beyond their duties to make up shortfalls in resource capacity. A process for managing ad hoc request needs to be considered to determine their alignment to the programme's mission; the impact on the funded program of supporting them; and the realistic capacity of the programme to support them. Prioritising of existing services and building depth, or increasing external support, within the programme (particularly in the areas of hydrodynamic modelling support and surveying), rather than new capabilities, must be seen as a priority.
  - OIP faces a significant challenge in effectively project managing the wide range of projects particularly in the Marine, Coastal Science and Survey area. PMEG considers there is a need for a more programme-wide structured approach to Project Management to ensure that projects are delivered on time, to spec, and to budget. In both these areas PMEG emphasises the need for sufficient discussion and scoping of such activities with in-country end-users to ensure what is delivered is fit-for purpose.
  - The OIP is considerably more resource heavy than many other areas in SPC due to the technical nature of the services provided. At present the OIP is not being run in a financially sustainable manner. It is acknowledged that in some areas of OIP that fuller cost recovery is being attempted. However, in the absence of sufficient core funding, a more structured approach at

the programme level to the costing of projects needs to occur to ensure adequate cost recovery for programme-specific overheads such as depreciation, equipment maintenance and replacement, self-insurance, adequate equipment training and health and safety.

- Whilst the practicalities of carrying out marine-related field work in the region are acknowledged, the health and safety of staff needs to be a top priority for SPC. Field staff need to have sufficient training and processes in place to adequately identify and proactively manage potential risks. Staff should have access to sufficient protective equipment for field work, and where diving is involved personal issue equipment to carry out their work safely. The monitoring and reporting of health and safety incidents should be a key performance indicator for the organization.
6. PMEG notes the concerns raised by technical workshop staff around the limited space in the workshop given the increasing amount of equipment now held by OIP and serviced and maintained by technical workshop.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Within OIPs strategic planning processes that consideration be given to repackaging and highlighting the linkages between the OIPs thematic areas to emphasise the central and leading role that the existing capabilities can play in delivering the decision making tools that underpin the process of marine spatial planning.
2. The DSM program is well on track, but future development of their geochemical database should consider partnering with other databases holders or combining with existing databases, for example with the International Seabed Authority, U.S. Geological Survey, JAMSTEC and other Japanese agencies, German Geological Survey (BGR), among others. The final database should be interactive with the ability to be interrogated for data subsets.
3. That OIP continue with high-level advocacy to better engage all PICs to maintain momentum in developing maritime boundary agreements and assisting PICs with extended continental shelf delineation.
4. That OIP assess the need with their technical partners to address vertical datum issues in the sea-level monitoring network to enable sea-level datasets to be used confidently in coastal inundation and climate change activities.
5. In recruiting for the COSSPAC regional liaison position with OIP that consideration be given to a recruit who can lead or guide the development of more country specific and relevant products.
6. OIP explore options for increasing staff resource capacity, focusing on the coastal science/hydrodynamic modeling and surveying areas.
7. OIP instigates a more structured project management approach throughout the entire project cycle, from adequate scoping with country partners, project prioritization and appropriate project costing, through managing multiple projects for on time, to spec, to budget delivery, and appropriate technical and country peer review of outputs.
8. SPC addresses health and safety concerns of field staff and ensures that it is a top priority for the organization. Specifically all field staff have appropriate health and safety training and access to sufficient protective, and specialist equipment (such as dive gear) for their field work. Monitoring and reporting of health and safety incidents should be a key performance indicator for the organization.

Mark Alcock  
James Hein  
Doug Ramsay

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