

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SPC GEOSCIENCE DIVISION

The SPC GeoScience Division (GSD) is new, and began operation on 1 January 2011.

The mission of the SPC is "to help Pacific island people position themselves to respond effectively to the challenges they face and make informed decisions about their future and the future they wish to leave for the generations that follow."

The goal of the SPC Geoscience Division is to apply geoscience and technology to realise new opportunities for improving the livelihoods of Pacific communities.

In the GSD context, geoscience means any science concerned with the Earth. This includes geological, physical, chemical and biological processes that occur at the earth's surface or in its interior. It includes the tools used in GSD to assess whether the use of resources is viable, and to study natural disasters and their impact on island communities.

The SPC Geoscience Division (GSD) has been established as an outcome of the regional institutional framework reform process called for by the Pacific Island Leaders Forum over recent years. Part of that process was to transfer and integrate the core work programme of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (GSD) (GSD "The Commission") into the SPC.

The purpose of establishing SPC Geoscience "The Division" is to ensure the preservation of the identity of the GSD work programme that has built up an excellent reputation, amongst both Members and donor partners over nearly 40 years.

GSD "The Commission" Governing Council has agreed to this, and both the Commission and SPC have agreed that the Division will operate from the existing campus of the GSD Secretariat on Mead Road, Nabua, Fiji. Currently the offices on this campus accommodate close to 100 staff.

GSD "The Commission" has come a long way since its establishment in 1972, first as a United

## SPC Geoscience Overview

Written by Administrator

Monday, 29 March 2010 14:02 - Last Updated Monday, 30 March 2015 07:13

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Nations Development Programme Regional Project, then in 1990 as an independent inter-governmental organisation, and from 2011, to be a new Division in the SPC. Initially the work programme focused on the assessment of deep-sea minerals and hydrocarbon potential. Over the years, the work programme of GSD expanded to include the assessment of the potential of ocean and onshore mineral resources, coastal protection and management, and geohazard assessment. Over the past decade, its mandate broadened further to include water, wastewater, sanitation, energy, and disaster risk management.

### WHAT DOES THE SPC GEOSCIENCE DIVISION DO?

The purpose of the SPC Geoscience Division (GSD) is to ensure the earth sciences are utilised fully in order to fulfill the SPC Mission. In the island context the earth sciences comprise geology, geophysics, oceanography and hydrology.

To fulfill this, the division has three technical work programmes:

- Geoscience for Development
- Water and Sanitation
- Disaster Reduction

These three programmes share common technical support services:

- Natural Resource Economics
- GIS and Remote Sensing
- Technical Equipment and Services
- Data Management
- Publications and Library

The work programme is reviewed annually by a technical advisory group consisting of members, Secretariat representatives and a Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR).

### WHO BENEFITS FROM SPC?

**Member countries** are **American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna**.

Any island member country can request assistance from the GSD Division. Benefits accrue to island member countries directly through the provision of basic geological knowledge and indirectly, through improvements in land and ocean use, leading to improved health through water and sanitation provision, wealth generation through the development of mineral resources, hazard and disaster management and sustainable development by taking into account the geo-environmental impacts of development.

### WHO PAYS FOR THE WORK OF THE GSD DIVISION?

GSD is funded by member-country contributions and supported by the following donors: **Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Canada, France, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, USAID / Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance**

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**, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Union, and certain UN agencies.**