During the planning stage for the implementation of each activity, the national coordinator will face the crucial issue of outsourcing expertise in order to implement the activity in question. Most of the activities of this project, in order to be implemented at the highest international standards, require high experience and skills. No improvisation can be allowed. In no instance the national coordinator should be tempted to undertake the activity herself/himself because this is not included in her/his TORs - this is even more valid if he/she does not have the required qualifications and experience.

In fact, Article 3/Comma d of the Project Management Agreement signed between SPREP and each country national government states: "SPREP reserves the right to withhold payments if in the opinion of the Director General the services performed under this Agreement are **unsatisfactory**, **incompetent**, or **incomplete** or money is owed to SPREP by the National Executing Agency".

This is because SPREP has signed a **Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA)** with UNEP committing to support and guide the countries to implement the project's activities to the highest possible standards of quality in order to have the highest impact on the ground.

The national coordinator has two options in order to outsource expertise:

1) request technical assistance from SPREP or **SPC**

2) make an international tender and choose the best offer in terms of quality of the service and price.

Option 1 is cheaper, as the time of the SPREP/SPC experts does not have to be paid. Only the travel expenses are to be paid (flight ticket and DSA), by choosing this option. On the other hand, SPREP/SPC experts are often very busy, so the request of assistance should be made in good advance. If this option proves to be unfeasible, then the national coordinator should resort to prepare a tender and trying to get the best offer at international level. Activities budget allocations were made on the assumption that international expertise would be seek and hired.

If a competitive offer is made at national level (competitive in terms of quality of the service and price) the national expert can be selected for the job (it is actually desirable). As far as a fair tender process is arranged, and SPREP staff is allowed in the selection process (see **minimum requirements for tendering process**, below).

Note: **most of the activity budget allocations were designed and approved with the idea in mind of the need to get external expertise and the need to cover it.**

Also note: for GEF-PAS projects there is no point in aiming at saving activity budget allocations. All expenditures must be done according to the workplan and any change must be duly justified at UNEP level. All expenditures must be carefully accounted for and will be carefully audited. **Leftover funds, at the date of official project termination, will NOT remain with the country and will have to be returned by SPREP to UNEP/GEF**.

The tendering process can be done either by the national executing agency or by SPREP. The tendering process at SPREP takes between 2 and 3 months (from the preparation of the TORs to the signing of the contract). The most efficient and timely between the two options (national agency or SPREP) should be chosen by the national coordinator.

**Minimum requirements for an acceptable tendering process** will envisage the following steps:

- preparation of the TORs and job advertisement with the technical assistance from SPREP management

- advertise the job internationally and nationally (SPREP will assist in this, through his regional network)

- pre-selection and short-listing of applications according to *a priori* set criteria (done by national coordinator with SPREP assistance)

- selection of best three offers according to *a priori* set criteria (done by national coordinator with SPREP assistance)

- negotiation of the contract with the applicant who has made the best offer

- signing of the contract.

Download **here** an example of a TOR successfully used by IAS project.