

## 31<sup>st</sup> SPREP MEETING OF OFFICIALS

5, 6, and 7 September 2023, Apia, Samoa

### **Agenda item 6.4: Report of the Working Group for the Prioritisation of Recommendations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Corporate Review (ICR) and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SPREP Strategic Plan.**

#### **Purpose of paper:**

1. Submit and present report of the Working Group regarding its assessment and prioritisation of recommendations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent Corporate Review and the Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan;
2. Seek SPREP Meeting direction and endorsement of the recommendations from the Working Group regarding findings from the prioritisation process; and
3. Propose next steps in relation to the Remuneration Review, included in the terms of reference of the Working Group

#### **Background:**

4. At the Second SPREP Executive Board Meeting held in September 2020 it was decided that an Independent Review of SPREP be undertaken. The Independent Corporate Review (ICR) component assessed the overall performance of the Secretariat since the last corporate review in 2014, and the progress toward, and outcomes of, the recommendations of the 2014 Review that were endorsed by the 25th SPREP Meeting. The Mid-term Review (MTR) of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 assessed SPREP's performance in delivering the current Strategic Plan.
5. Following its consideration of recommendations from the reports of the ICR and MTR in September and October 2021, SPREP Members established a Working Group to assess the combined recommendations and put forward a prioritised set of focus areas for Members to consider. Alongside consideration of these recommendations, the Working Group were also tasked with addressing the completed SPREP Remuneration Review.
6. The Working Group acknowledges the delay in progressing this work. Over the course of assessing the recommendations through 2022, it became clear that timing of the Working Group's processes competed with other preparations for high level regional events, including the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting and other regional Ministerial meetings, which led to the delay in finalising this Report and in turning its attention to the Remuneration Review.

## Key Considerations

### Prioritisation Criteria

7. Central to framing the prioritisation criteria, the Working Group considered what *positive impact* the respective recommendations would have on SPREP's regional leadership, its internal strategic and technical expertise, the conditions for robust management working arrangements; and the conditions for robust governance arrangements. *Positive impacts* was defined as: being less resource intensive; and that it could be built on, and/or reinforce existing good practices, and that it positioned SPREP in a position of influence within the regional architecture.
8. The following prioritisation criteria questions were used by the Working Group to rank and rationalise from the thirty-six review recommendations:
  - *Question 1: What positive impact would this recommendation have on enabling the strategic and regional leadership of SPREP in supporting improved environmental management and sustainable development?*
  - *Question 2: What positive impact would this recommendation have on enhancing the internal strategic expertise and environmental technical expertise to support the delivery of the core business of SPREP and its priorities?*
  - *Question 3: What positive impact would this recommendation have on creating the conditions for robust management working arrangements and engagement at the Secretariat?*
  - *Question 4: What positive impact would this recommendation have on creating the conditions for robust governance arrangements and engagement at SPREP?*

### Prioritisation Ranking

9. Prioritisation matrices were developed which placed all thirty six recommendations into tables under the respective prioritisation criteria question. Working Group members were tasked with ranking each of the recommendations against the criteria, with scores 1 = High priority, 2 = Medium priority, 3 = Low priority. In support of numerical scores, Working Group members were asked to provide a rationale for their rankings within the same table of scores.
10. To support the capacity constraints for Working Group members, a revised "*assigned recommendations matrix*" was developed, allocating specific recommendations equally among the active Working Group members to assess, rank and provide rationale. It was determined that the ranking and rationale provided from each member would be used to reflect a general view of the Working Group in the final analysis (Refer Working Group Full Report WP6.4/Att.1) Quantitative and qualitative reflections outlined in the report seek to highlight common threads of perspective and rationale for the rankings provided.

Proposed Priority Recommendations

11. From the analysis of provided rankings and rationale, central themes were emerging, these included:

- the emphasis on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and the need to invest in great SPREP leadership in the GESI space, especially within the CROP architecture.
- establishing robust staff support mechanisms, including a disputes mechanism and staff data protections and staff advisory group were highlighted.
- Country & Territory Strategic Partnership Frameworks was one of the higher recommendations proposed and reinforced the value in collaborating with SPREP, to provide high level clarity on mutual expectations and strengthened relations.
- there was general consensus for the Secretariat to adopt a single project methodology and a robust, standardised approach to managing, delivering and reporting on its projects, as well as engaging with development partners.

12. The following table of recommendations is being proposed by the Working Group as the priority recommendations for immediate action by the Secretariat. While the assessments were made against separate prioritisation criteria, the proposed priority recommendations consistently ranked a *High* across all the prioritisation criteria.

13. The order in the **Table 1** below represent the recommendations' number in the MTR/ICR report (first column) and the corresponding text (second column):

<b>Table 1: Proposed Priority Recommendations from SPREP MTR &amp; ICR</b>	
8	<p>(i) the SPREP Senior Leadership reinforce their commitment to the implementation of the SPREP Gender Policy, with one member of the Executive team identified as a Gender Champion to lead on its implementation;</p> <p>(ii) the work of the Gender Equity and Inclusion Mainstreaming Working Group be elevated to ensure it translates into the Secretariat's management and decision-making systems and processes; and</p> <p>(iii) the Secretariat update the SPREP Gender Policy (2016) to reflect developments in GESI theory and practice in the Pacific Region. These updates would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recognition of the intersectionality of women and girls lives and other marginalised diverse groups including LGBTQI and people living with disabilities.</li> <li>• Specific policies in relation to responding to sexual harassment and family violence.</li> <li>• A commitment to train SPREP staff to enable them to effectively deliver all relevant aspects of the Gender Policy through their work with Island Members.</li> <li>• A systematic approach to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on SPREP's GESI work through programmes and projects.</li> </ul>
5	<p>The SPREP Meeting reconfirms their commitment to the development of Country and Territory Strategic Partnership Frameworks in collaboration with the SPREP Secretariat following the process that was endorsed at the 2020 Executive Board meeting. That the frameworks include a mutual bi-annual progress reporting requirement. That the Frameworks are developed and under implementation with all Island Members by the next SPREP Meeting.</p>

25	That the SPREP Meeting consider requiring the Secretariat to establish an independent external dispute mechanism to provide a neutral forum for staff grievances to be addressed and adjudicated after other dispute settlement processes, such as in Staff Regulation 12, are exhausted.
26	That the SPREP Meeting require the Secretariat to support the Staff Advisory Committee to reform itself as a single entity staff labour organisation with a higher level of independence, that operates in accordance with ILO standards.
20	That the SPREP Meeting require the Secretariat adopt a single and standardised project methodology and apply this for all projects including a detailed fully costed risk assessment for all projects.
9	The SPREP Meeting consider advising the Secretariat to prioritise fully establishing and implementing the Results Planning, Performance Reporting and Learning Framework as described in the Strategic Plan 2017-2026, particularly the “learning and continuous improvement” component, with a focus on the identification of “strategies and modalities that are most effective in supporting environmental sustainability.”
27	That the SPREP Meeting require the Secretariat to formulate a personal data protection policy. The policy should define a timeframe for retention of such data and procedures for how it is ultimately disposed.

14. The proposed priority recommendations are not exhaustive and represent where at this point, the Working Group feels the most prioritised action is needed. The recommendation that the Secretariat implement the Digital Transformation Strategy was agreed as something of high importance by members, but not ranked as such here because the substantial financial commitment required to do so would require separate investment.
15. There remains a host of recommendations that will eventually need the attention of the Secretariat. With a cohort of “medium” priority recommendations already defined, there is opportunity for the Secretariat to assess which of the medium ranked recommendations can be sequenced to follow the prioritised ones.
16. Focusing attention on the medium priority recommendations that feature consistently across the prioritisation criteria presents a good starting point to identify the next cohort of actionable recommendations for subsequent investment and implementation.
17. During the prioritisation process and through the management response from the Secretariat attached as an Annex in the report (WP6.4/Att.2), the Working Group were informed that the Secretariat had either initiated work on the recommended priority recommendations or had realigned resources and personnel to continue existing initiatives in response to the recommendations put forward by the Working Group, notwithstanding the prioritisation process.
18. The Working Group noted the proactive approach taken by the Secretariat to take forward the MTR and ICR recommendations, namely those that had been identified by the Working Group as needing priority attention of the Secretariat.

### Remuneration Review

19. The Working Group acknowledged that with the Secretariat's efforts focused on implementing the MTR and ICR proposed priority recommendations, that attention now be turned to outstanding deliverables of the Working Group, namely the Remuneration Review.
20. To this end, the Working Group has proposed that a timeline be developed for the completion of the Remuneration Review and that an independent consultant proficient in remuneration reviews be engaged for this work. The Working Group notes that this work may need to include an updated data collection exercise, given the delay between the first Review and its assessment following this SPREP Meeting, which could increase the workload and cost of the exercise.

### **Recommendation:**

21. The Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Endorse** the report of the Working Group and its prioritisation of recommendations from the MTR and ICR review;
  - 2) **Acknowledge** the Secretariat's proactive approach to implementing the proposed priority recommendations put forward by the Working Group; and
  - 3) **Endorse** for the Working Group to work closely with the Secretariat to facilitate engagement of an independent consultant, proficient in supporting the Remuneration review, and to develop a timeline for the completion of the Review for an out of session consideration by Members in the first quarter of 2024.

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21 August 2023