**ITEM 5 – IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS**

**Part A. Project (ABS Regional Project) Implementation Report July 2017 – July 2018**

---This is an information paper, does not require a decision, submitted for noting----

1. ***Progress Update of 2017***

1.1 The project implementation began in June 2017. A full project team consisting of 1 local staff and 2 international staff were functioning by November 2017.

1.2 The activities started with an inception and capacity building workshop held in Apia from 26-30 June. Experts from the Un-Environment, ABS Initiatives, University of New South Wales and SPREP facilitated the inception and capacity building workshop. This event included a full press and media coverage. The inception report was approved by the Project Steering Committee during its first meeting on 14 December.

1.3 Throughout 2017, the project held three in-country workshops and capacity building training on building legal frameworks to implement the Nagoya Protocol. Two of the country missions were made jointly with the ABS Initiatives for Fiji and Vanuatu. During the country missions, the project facilitated a series of in-house training on ABS implementation. Based on these consultations a baseline analysis to identify common assets, particularly relating to traditional knowledge, issues and needs between these countries have been produced for Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa.

1.4 A project dedicated webpage on the SPREP’s website has been prepared and fully effective online.

1.5 A joint Steering Committee has been formed for ABS Initiative and the GEF-UNEP SPREP ABS Regional Project. The TOR for the steering committee was approved by the members during the first steering committee meeting on 15 December 2017.

1.6 Based on the needs and limited allocation for project travels, the PMU put up a case and justifications for a re-direct of USD 50,000 un-utilized funds from the Inception workshop budget for PMU official travels. The Steering Committee endorsed the request on 15 December during the steering committee meeting.

1.7 The project was able to make key amendments to the draft ABS Law for the Republic of Palau. The views, opinions, and recommendations from the project was endorsed and in-cooperated into the draft ABS Law.

1.8 The project prepared an instructional Cabinet paper template for the countries with intentions to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing Arising from the Utilisation of Genetic Resources. The template will provide steps to be taken to become a party to the Nagoya Protocol and the legal, financial and the social implications the countries may experience after becoming a party.

1. ***Project Updates for 2018***

2.1 The project supported legal and capacity assistance to the Governments of Tonga and the Solomon Islands in their efforts to ratify the Nagoya Protocol. The project visited Tonga and the Solomon Islands and held a series of capacity building workshops and facilitated intensive discussions and in-house trainings in both countries. The two countries secured cabinet endorsement to ratify the Nagoya Protocol, one in April (Solomon Islands) and Tonga in May, 2018.

2.2 The project assisted with drafting of the ABS Policy for Samoa through a consultative process. The project assisted in the facilitation of the final validation public and community consultations both for Upolu and Savaii.

2.3 The project developed and finalised two drafting instructions for Fiji and Cook Islands on how to draft ABS Law. In Cook Islands the drafting instructions will give further effect to Goals 11.3, 14.3, 15.1 and 15.5 of the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2020, Biodiversity Theme 4 and Aichi Biodiversity Goal 16 of the Cook Islands National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the Cook Islands Traditional Knowledge Act of 2013, and the Ministry of Agriculture’s commitment to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The drafting instructions for Fiji will give further effect to the Environment Management Act 2005, Endangered Species & Protected Species Act 2002, Forest Decree 1992, iTaukei Affairs Act 1945, Fisheries Act Cap 158, Marine Spaces Act Cap 158A, Fisheries Offshore Decree and the National Biodiversity National Action Plan 2017-2024, in particular the aspects of Focus Area 1 on addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.

2.4 The Project successfully developed the ABS Roster of Experts and Regional Technical Assistance. The project has developed a web page layout for the ABS Project’s dedicated page on the SPREP website where the ABS Roster and regional technical assistance will be hosted. A guidance policy on the use and accessibility of the ABS Roster of Experts is in place and has been shared with countries.

2.5 In terms of capacity building, the project managed to secure financial and technical assistance from the ABS Initiatives and the International Law Development Organisation to hold two regional trainings and workshops in Nadi, Fiji. The two trainings will focus on ‘Building legal frameworks to implement the Nagoya Protocol’ and ‘Mutually Agreed Terms and how to make ABS contracts effective’.

2.6 The project has successfully reviewed the environmental scientific permits for Kiribati. Views, recommendations and opinions suggested by the project have been considered by the Ministry of Environment Kiribati and have been integrated into the Environment Research Permit. However, a wider consultation on the reviewed draft of the permit needs to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Environment of Kiribati.

2.7 Project has prepared a standardised “capacity building needs assessment form” that have been circulated to participating countries to collect information on the capacity building needs, gaps and challenges in implementing the Nagoya protocol. The information collected through the template will be used towards finalising capacity building needs report for the region.

2.8 So far, using the assessment template, the Project has collected information from seven (7) countries. Some information was sent by countries while some was collected as part of the country visits. The information is now being used to prepare a detailed “challenges in implementing the Nagoya Protocol Report”

2.9 The Project has developed the “Institutional Capacity and Progress in Implementation of Nagoya Protocol” tool that will be used to score national institutions in each country. The scores shall provide information on the status of progress and capacities that exists within the national institutions. A narrative report will be prepared to explain the situation.

1. ***Planned contribution to strategic priorities/targets***

3.1 The project is in full alignment with Articles 5, 6, 8, 9 and 15 of the Nagoya Protocol and the GEF Strategic Goal #3: Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and Strategic Objective #8: Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

3.2 Based on the scope and objectives of the project, progress is provided below of the following indicators.

**Indicator: Number of countries that support a draft regional position on future policy development.**

*At least 4 policies have been developed for Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa and Palau*

**Indicator: Number of countries that have ratified the Protocol**

*At least 2 countries (Tonga and Solomon Islands) successfully delivered Cabinet Decisions to ratify the Nagoya Protocol.*

**Indicator: Number of awareness raising activities and stakeholders reach by awareness raising activities.**

*3.3* The project held 2 workshops and stakeholder meetings with CEOs both in governments and NGOs in each country during the country visits. Countries are Palau, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa. Capacity building and high level workshops were held in Palau, Tonga and Solomon Islands targeting members of the House of Delegates and Cabinet Ministers. Technical and awareness workshops were done in Marshall Islands, Fiji, and Vanuatu. At least 2 countries, Tonga and Solomon Islands secured sufficient political support for ratification.