**ITEM 4: Minutes from the Second Joint Regional Project Steering Committee Meeting**

**Via Teleconference**

---This is a discussion paper, requires members to confirm the records and note the matters arising annexed (RSC/DP2-A/01/2019) at the end of the report ---

**Minutes of the Second Joint Regional Steering Committee**

Held via tele conference

10:00a.m Thursday 14th 2017

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Soseala Tinilau Director, Department of Environment, Tuvalu & Polynesian sub-regional representative;

Dr. Stamatios Christopoulous Task Manager, UN Environment;

Dr. Daniel Robinson Associate Professor UNSW & ABS Initiative Regional Coordinator;

Dr. Geoffrey Burton GEF Consultant;

Mr. Clark Peteru SPREP Legal Adviser & Chairperson; and

Ms. ‘Ofa Kaisamy ABS Legal Adviser, SPREP

Mr. Rahul Chand ABS Capacity Development Officer, SPREP

Ms. Isabell Rasch ABS Technical & Financial Assistance, SPREP

**APOLOGIES**

Mr. King Sam Assistant to the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment, & Tourism, Palau & Micronesian sub-regional Representative

Andreas Matthias Project Manager, ABS Initiative

Trinison Tari Melanesian sub-regional Representative

1. **Welcome by the Chair**

The meeting convened with words of welcome by the Chair, and acknowledging all members joining via tele-conference noting the challenge of keeping everyone online for the duration of the meeting **Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Agenda was adopted** annexed herewith as Annex 1.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The members endorsed the minutes from the first steering committee meeting.

Under matters arising, the Chair and the Secretariat informed the Committee of the following:

1. That the ToR has been revised and submitted for consideration in this meeting. Additional comments were received on the EU membership, the – responsibility for operational matters (SPREP & ABS Initiative) and meeting procedures to be synchronised to a similar fashion to that of most SPREP Project Steering Committee Meetings.
2. The quorum set as 75% for the membership to be present for any meeting was noted to be high as most EU members may not be attending and due consideration to the remoteness of some country representatives.
3. **DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS.**
	1. ***Annual Work plan & Budget for 2018***

There was no major amendment to the proposed AWP & Budget for 2018. The proposed AWP and Budget 2018 was the same in the multiyear work plan for the ABS SPREP Project however an additional $50,000 USD- a saving from the inception workshop allocation be utilised for travels of Project Team.

The following comments were received on this agenda item:

* + 1. Members of the Steering Committee endorsed that USD$50,000 shall be provided to the Project Team travel allocation noting that these funds need to be prioritised for travel within the region.
		2. Members noted that there was no need for the committee to look at breakdown of travel budget by staff but pool the overall budget for travel for the project and the Project Manager can organise internally on the line item.
		3. The committee requested that budget line item 7 remain without any change.

**RESOLUTION 1: The budget was approved with an increase of USD 50,000 for 2018 from the savings of the funding allocated for Inception.**

* 1. ***Draft ToR for Joint Steering Committee***

The following comments were noted on the draft ToR submitted:

* + 1. The need to adjust the quorum due to its high percentage
		2. Responsibility of the committee on operational matters as in the TOR is not absolute noting that that ABS Initiative and ABS Regional have to make their own decisions on some operational matters
		3. The Joint Steering Committee to provide strategic oversight, review and approve reports and work plans that require alterations to the budget.
		4. Request from Geoff on the possibility of a meet to discuss both work plans, Chair has agreed to meet at adhoc basis.

The committee noted the change in representation from the Polynesian sub-regional countries. Mr. Soseala Tinilau is to replace Ms. Moe Saitala as member of the JPSC

**RESOLUTION 2: The Committee approved the ToR in principle with the comments provided to be incorporated by the Secretariat and a final copy to be circulated.**

The revised TOR is attached herein as **Annex 2**

1. **INFORMATION DOCUMENTS**

The following updates were received by the Secretariat

***ABS Regional Project on the Ratification of the Nagoya Protocol-Updates***

* Finalise and circulate Inception Workshop Report;
* Joint Steering committee TOR revised and finalised;
* For country assistance, Ms. Ofa Kaisamy & Mr. Clark Peteru from SPREP reviewed and send comments to Palau on Palau ABS Bill;
* Project planning exercise conducted;
* Project Management Plan and Implementation Plan 2017-2019 prepared and circulated;
* ABS conducted a Staff seminar and introduction of project components;
* Ofa Kaisamy/Rahul Chand is currently undertaking a systematic analysis of common assets/values, issues and needs between countries;
* A capacity need assessment template/form was developed and has been circulated to 14 participating countries for completion;
* ABS team joined GIZ ABS initiative team on a mission to Vanuatu & Fiji- as part of the needs & capacity assessments and preparation of regional guideline and policy directions for countries;
* SPREP Project on the Ratification of Nagoya Protocol secured partnership with the International Law Development Organisation (IDLO) to host the Legal Training for Pacific legal practitioners, policy makers & National Focal points on building legal frameworks to implement the NP. Training to be held in Fiji (venue tbc) on the 23rd-27th of July 2018;
* Meeting with UN Environment head office finance manager to discuss the ongoing issues with receiving funds from UN Environment for the final tranche of the GEF PAS Integrated Island Biodiversity Project over the past 18 months. Success was achieved with head office employing common sense and agreeing the project can be completed under a revised agreement with the addition of a couple new clauses for this kind of situation. Agreement has now been finalised and will signed by SPREP and UN Environment shortly;
* Ms. Isabella Rasch (ABS Project) presented at the joint hosted SPREP-NUS Science Conference on Nagoya Protocol on ABS as a means to drive conservation and sustainable use of biological resources;
* UN-Environment (Dr. Stamatios) requested that an annual travel plan between ABS Initiative and SPREP be shared to better coordinate in-country missions; and
* The SPREP Regional Project has 14 participating member countries and 5 of which the ABS Initiative is having broader mandate within the three main streams of capacity development, there is a need for work closely with the ABS Initiative to avoid duplication of efforts as much as possible.

***ABS Initiative Updates-***

* A financing agreement has been finalised by GIZ for ABS Initiative.
* There were 2 country visits conducted by the ABS Regional Project.
* For country assistance, the draft Bill on ABS for Palau has been reviewed by Mr. Olivier Rukundo - a consultant of the ABS Initiative.
* Daniel (UNSW) has started patent landscaping analysis using ethnobotanical texts at this stage to identify globally who might be patenting endemic genetic resources and associated TK from the Pacific region. This will be continued throughout 2018.
* A scoping has been done on the possibility of some awareness raising documents (posters) and a translation of the ABS simply explained video.
* There is a planned visit to go to PNG to meet national stakeholders and conduct technical workshop in conjunction with ABS SPREP Project.

Preparation of second work plan (for April 2018-March 2019):

- A work plan prepared by Daniel is currently being reviewed by Andreas.

- It was noted that due to ABS Initiative having a broader mandate within the three main streams of capacity development, there is a need for work closely with each other especially since SPREP project is focused mainly on ABS regulations and policy and therefore each needs to complement each other’s work and avoid overlaps.

- Daniel has received an ARC Grant on 'Indigenous knowledge futures: Protecting and promoting indigenous knowledge' for 5 years and worth $568,000 AUD. The grant proposal refers to the protection of TK in the context of the Nagoya Protocol, allows for community protocol development and/or recognition of customs, and is focused on Northern Australia, Vanuatu and Cook Islands. This grant should be mutually supportive of the projects in the region on ABS and should help inform the projects with new research.

- There is a possibility of an ABS regional workshop on ABS contracts using ABS Initiative materials, Morten Tvedt's (from FNI, Norway) expertise, and some Australian experts. The legal training is for in-country lawyers and technical experts who would be involved in MAT negotiations and ABS contract drafting. It was also requested that SPREP help with the logistics. SPREP’s partnership shall lead to a transfer of funds from ABS Initiative to SPREP for the workshop. An estimation of 39,000 Euros is estimated to be the cost.

- There are plans to make in country visits to Cook Islands and Vanuatu in in Mid-2018 (July-August) to align with Daniel’s ARC grant preliminary scoping work.

- Stamatios requested that an annual travel plan between ABS Initiative and SPREP be shared to better coordinate in-country visits.

Agenda Item 5: Other Matters

*All resolutions were noted without any other matters*

Next Meeting Date: *To be confirmed*

Annex 1

**2ND REGIONAL STEERING COMMIITTEE MEETING – 2017**

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

**14TH December- 2017**

**APIA-SAMOA**

1. ***ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS***

**AGENDA ITEM 1:** WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

1. Apologies
2. Quorum
3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting
4. ***CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING***

**AGENDA ITEM 2:** CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

1. Adoption of the Minutes from the previous meeting
2. Matters Arising from the last meeting
3. ***SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES***

**AGENDA ITEM 3:** DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

1. Annual Work Plan and Budget 2018
2. Draft ToR for Steering Committee

**AGENDA ITEM 4:** INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

1. ABS Initiative Updates
2. ABS Initiative Regional Project Inception
3. Updates on the SPREP Regional ABS Project Implementation (Legal & Capacity Building components)
4. Financial Report 2017
5. ***OTHER MATTERS***
6. ***NEXT MEETING***
7. ***CONCLUSION***

Annex 2

**Terms of Reference- Joint Regional Project Steering Committee** (*hereinafter* ‘JRPSC’)

Projects:

1. GEF UNEP-SPREP Project on the Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in countries of the Pacific Region and;
2. The ABS Initiative Pacific Region component executed by GIZ.

Considering the more or less parallel start of the SPREP executed Regional ABS Project and re-engagement of the ABS Initiative based on the 2nd phase of ACP/EU funding it was decided at the SPREP Inception Meeting to constitute ***one steering committee for both projects***allowing synergetic and efficient planning of activities which supplement each other.

The JRPSC will provide strategic leadership and governance oversight of the project.

The JRPSC is expected to make key policy decisions, guide the participating countries and responsible Parties in the execution of the project, and ensure effective oversight through receiving regular reports and reviewing the results of project evaluations that will take place periodically.

All decisions of the JRPSC must accord with the objectives, approach and scope of the projects as set out in the Project Documents. The authority of the JRPSC may be considered final on operational matters.

The JRPSC will be supported in its roles and functions by the GEF UNEP-SPREP ABS Regional Project Management Unit (PMU) that will serve as the Secretariat of the Steering Committee and prepares briefing papers and progress reports and provides all the necessary information and evidence it needs to make informed decisions.

1. **Roles and functions**

**The JRPSC will be responsible for the following specific tasks, *inter alia:***

* Provide policy and strategic oversight and support to the implementation of the projects;
* Review and approve projects annual work plans, as well as other project planning and implementation instruments and ensure that resources are distributed to their most productive use;
* Appraise project issues and risks and advise on measures to resolve such issues;
* Ensure that co-financing with partners is adhered to;
* Ensure that projects are coordinated with participating governments, donors and private sector/institutions;
* Provide inputs to the project’s annual and PIR reports;
* Support project and/or consultant evaluation(s) as applicable;
* Promote the project to potential partners.
1. **Membership**

The JRPSC is composed of the following members:

* Representative from the Implementing Agency-UNEP, representative from the executing agency- SPREP, representative from Polynesian sub-regional group, representative from Melanesian sub-regional group, representative from Micronesian sub-region, Representatives from GIZ, UNSW, UNU IAS, UNDP, ACP Secretariat, BMU and EU DEVCO

The Steering Committee will have a rotating co-chair from the country, but for other virtual meetings SPREP can Chair in their role as project Secretariat. The Secretariat of the PSC will be the ABS Regional Project PMU.

1. **Procedures**

The procedures of the Steering Committee include the following:

* The quorum for the Steering Committee will be 75% institutions, and at least 2 of the 3 sub-region representatives;
* Members of the Steering Committee must ensure continuity of participation in all meetings. If a country no longer wishes to be represented by the sub-regional representatives, they can elect another representative and inform the secretariat and the secretariat will input the name directly to the JRPSC;
* The JRPSC will play a critical role in project monitoring and evaluations by quality assuring these processes and products for performance improvement, accountability and learning;
* The JRPSC must ensure that required resources are committed and can help ameliorate conflicts within the project or with external bodies and can consider any deviations from original plans;
* The PSC will operate according to a detailed work-plan and they are expected to meet quarterly and members will need time devoted to reviewing project documentation.

 **D) Resources and Budget Allocation**

The Budget allocation for Joint Steering Committee from the UNEP-SPREP Regional ABS Project is USD$3,000; *Noting* that the above budget is primarily to be conducted using electronic communication, budget covers and regular teleconference costs for the JRPSC meetings.

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