

14TH PIMRIS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

by Maria Kalenchits, PIMRIS coordinator

Marine information professionals, librarians and people in charge of fisheries libraries from the region (as well as a number of observers) came together at the University of the South Pacific (USP), in Fiji on 24 September to attend the 14th Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS) Steering Committee Meeting. Participants came from seven Pacific Island countries and territories, including Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands.

PIMRIS was established more than two decades ago with the aim of improving access to information on marine resources in the Pacific Islands region. PIMRIS participants come from ministerial or departmental libraries from most Pacific Island countries and territories, as well as four regional agencies: 1) the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), based in Apia, Samoa; 2) the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), based in Honiara, Solomon Islands; 3) the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), based in Noumea, New Caledonia; and 4) the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), based in Suva, Fiji. The PIMRIS Coordination Unit is based in the Division of Marine Studies, at USP in Fiji.

PIMRIS Steering Committee meetings are held biannually to evaluate activities completed during the intersessional period and to decide on future plans and priorities. This year's reports and discus-

sions were framed around the topic "from a print to a digital environment", and emphasised a need to preserve locally produced documents in digital format for each fisheries department in the region. Starting in 2009 in the framework of ODIN (Ocean Data and Information Network) - PIMRIS project, PIMRIS participants from five pilot countries — Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Solomon Islands — have been involved in establishing institutional repositories in their fisheries departments. The project is supported by the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme (IODE) of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. As a result of collective efforts by PIMRIS agency participants and staff of the IODE Project Office, the Pacific Islands Marine Portal (<http://www.pimrisportal.org>) was established earlier this year as part of this project. The portal contains news, articles and directories of websites relevant to Pacific fisheries and to the coastal and marine environments of the Pacific region. The portal is administered jointly by all PIMRIS stakeholders and is hosted by UNESCO's IODE.

The PIMRIS Coordination Unit also reported on the establishment of two new digital collec-

tions — the USP Aquatic Repository for documents on marine and aquatic studies produced by USP, and the PIMRIS Regional Repository for published and unpublished documents produced by fisheries departments in the region. SPC, SPREP and SOPAC participants reported on developments of their own digital libraries.

Establishing a sustainable funding mechanism was discussed during the meeting as one of the most critical issues for PIMRIS. It was noted that all PIMRIS stakeholder agencies (i.e. FFA, SPC, SPREP, SOPAC and USP) should consider joint multilateral funding for PIMRIS regional activities. Including PIMRIS regional activities into SPC and SPREP projects funded by the European Union was recommended, and the possibility of writing joint funding proposals to donor agencies (e.g. New Zealand Agency for International Development and Australian Agency for International Development) was discussed.

A list of standing orders, recommendations and actions for the coming intersessional period was agreed on. The next PIMRIS Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held in Suva, Fiji in 2011.



2009 PIMRIS Steering Committee meeting participants.