

**SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

**THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**  
(Apia, Samoa, 7–9 November 2007)

*STRATEGIC POSITIONING*

**AGENDA ITEM 5.1 – THE STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, POLICY AND  
PLANNING FACILITY – A MULTI-SECTORAL TEAM OF SENIOR ADVISORS**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. As part of the new Corporate Plan, CRGA has approved the establishment of a multi-sectoral team of senior advisers to augment SPC's capacity to analyse current and future development trends and challenges and strengthen its capacity to propose multi-sectoral responses for consideration by Pacific Community members and other development partners.
2. This 'Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility' is a key initiative under the 'Strategic Positioning' corporate plan objective. It is intended to help the Secretariat achieve the other two objectives: 'increased focus on member priorities' and 'strategic engagement at national, regional and international levels'.
3. The facility is not intended to be a completely new development. Rather, it is designed to build on and expand the scope of the Planning Unit, which has made significant contributions to the planning and implementation of organisational change at SPC since its establishment in 1998. The Planning Unit's main current functions are support to SPC programmes and general corporate planning.
4. From financial year 2008, Australia and New Zealand will provide resources in support of the strengthening of the Planning Unit, in addition to their current financial allocations to the unit. The Secretariat will seek additional resources to build this facility further.
5. The Secretariat is planning to develop the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility in line with resource availability.

**RECOMMENDATION**

6. CRGA is invited to:
    - i. discuss and endorse the proposed core functions of the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility; and
    - ii. note progress with its establishment.
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## **STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, POLICY AND PLANNING FACILITY – A MULTI-SECTORAL TEAM OF SENIOR ADVISORS**

### **Purpose**

1. This paper reports on the Secretariat's implementation plan for the establishment of a multi-sectoral team of senior advisers – a key corporate initiative of the new Corporate Plan. It proposes a set of core functions for a 'Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility' and discusses the resourcing of this facility.

### **Background**

2. Rather than start a new unit, the Secretariat is planning to expand the scope of the existing SPC Planning Unit. Recommended by the mid-1990s SPC Corporate Review (Siwatibau review) and formally established in 1998, the Planning Unit's current core functions are support to SPC programmes and general corporate planning. Feedback on the impact of the Planning Unit's work has been positive. For example, SPC is widely considered to have developed strong corporate planning and programme management approaches, as well as robust monitoring and evaluation systems. The Planning Unit has contributed to these developments.
3. Starting with the relevant extract from the Corporate Plan, the following section summarises key organisational and environmental changes of relevance to the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility.

### **Changes in organisational environment**

4. Emphasis in current Corporate Plan on engagements and service to member countries and small island states: Approved by CRGA 36, SPC's new Corporate Plan for the period 2007–2012 states that 'For the new plan period, SPC is seeking resources to further strengthen its policy and analytical role by establishing a team of senior advisers with the capacity to cover SPC's various sectoral interests. These advisers will not be directly involved in the day-to-day management of programmes. Rather, they will expand SPC's ability to analyse current and future development trends and challenges, and strengthen its capacity to propose multi-sectoral responses for consideration by Pacific Community members and other development partners. This team will undertake policy analysis, and develop position papers and strategy papers relating to sectors/issues within the scope of SPC's programmes as well in cross-cutting areas. This new area of work is expected to particularly benefit small island members of the Pacific Community, given their more limited capacities.'
5. New programming approaches: A significant new role for the Planning Unit has emerged in 2007 with the development of Joint Country Strategies and the compilation of Country Profiles (see also the CRGA paper on this topic).
6. Increasing emphasis on results by SPC and stakeholders: While cited already as a major reason for the establishment of the Planning Unit 10 years ago, SPC and stakeholders – including PICTs and donor partners – stress the importance of results even more than they did in the past. Also, more difficult questions are asked, such as what the impacts or outcomes of SPC interventions have been.

7. Significant growth of the organisation: In 1998, the total number of SPC staff was about 200; in 2007, it is 350. The organisational budget has grown from 18 million CPF units to approximately 45 million CFP units. SPC has also decentralised its services, adding complexity to internal service delivery. In this time, the capacity of the Planning Unit to provide its core services has remained essentially the same.
8. It is clear from the above that the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility will need to develop a greater analytical and advisory capacity than the current Planning Unit has. It will also need additional capacity to continue to perform adequately the Planning Unit's traditional internal support responsibilities.

### **Proposed core functions of the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility**

9. The proposed core functions of the new facility are:
  - sectoral analyses to inform strategic decision-making at national level, in particular in small island states and to support regional sectoral meetings and working groups. These analyses will be done in close collaboration with SPC programmes, drawing on their strengths;
  - Joint Country Strategy design and implementation monitoring (see also the relevant CRGA paper);
  - change planning and assistance with the implementation of change to support the needs of a growing organisation;
  - support to SPC sectoral programmes (and other sections as appropriate): This is already a core function of the current Planning Unit whose staff assist their colleagues with project design, the development of strategic programme plans, liaison with donors, some financial management advice, and monitoring and evaluation approaches, and organise specialised training (e.g. training of trainers and project management cycle). The Planning Unit also manages independent reviews of SPC programmes; and
  - corporate planning: This is already a core function. The Planning Unit has led the development of the current and previous SPC corporate plans, organised corporate reviews and corporate-wide projects (such as quality assurance guidelines), assisted in the development of general policies and contributed to strategic budget issues.

### **Outlook and resources**

10. The Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility is already taking shape. Through the Joint Country Strategies, Planning Unit staff have become more directly engaged at country level. The theme paper for this year's Conference of the Pacific Community on the future of Pacific fisheries has been produced by a consultant to the Planning Unit in collaboration with SPC's programmes – in particular its fisheries programmes – and partners such as the Forum Fisheries Agency. It is a fine example of the kind of sectoral policy outputs that the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility is expected to produce for the benefit of the Pacific Community membership. Finally, Australia has provided funding for a researcher to be attached to the facility to study the effects of climate change on fisheries.

11. The Planning Unit has traditionally had two permanent positions: a 'head' (later retitled to Director, Corporate Planning) and a Planning Adviser. In addition, the unit has been host to three AusAID secondments, which provided staff development opportunities to the aid agency staff and welcome additional resources to the unit. The unit has also called on short-term consultants to help it cope with workload peaks.
12. The AusAID arrangement is expected to end after the contract of the current secondee and the Director, Corporate Planning position has been converted to Director, Social Resources Division. The Secretariat is therefore very pleased that Australia and New Zealand have committed to fund at least three positions on a long-term basis (programme funding). The new funding level has been recognised in the 2008 budget and will allow for the following permanent establishment: three Planning Advisers (one in Suva and two in Noumea) and a Planning Officer (Executive Assistant/Research Assistant).
13. SPC is seeking additional resources to establish more adviser positions that will eventually collectively cover and support SPC's main sectors. Needed expertise includes health economics, resource economics, anthropology and law.
14. The Secretariat also expects to be able to attract more one-off funding for short-term experts to work on specific issues. National governments, aid and CROP agencies, and research institutions as well as other SPC programmes may also provide short-term secondments of their staff. For example, the US State Department has recently approved the attachment of one of its staff.
15. While not part of the formal establishment of the facility, SPC's divisional directors, programme heads and other specialists will contribute actively to the work of the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility. This way, the facility will be able to draw on one of SPC's traditional strengths: the first-hand knowledge that its staff have of PICT development challenges.

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15 October 2007