



Yap islanders, Yap State, Federated States of Micronesia. Photo courtesy of SPREP

Building Environmental Capacity in the Pacific

The Pacific region covers more than a third of the surface of the world, across which are scattered over 25,000 islands comprising 22 countries, states and territories. Islands are typically small, with a land to sea ratio of 1:300. There are 15 ACP countries in the region, all Small Island Developing States; five of these are classified as Least Developed Countries. The total human population in the region is around 9 million; two thirds of the population and 83% of the land area come from Papua New Guinea (PNG), also the most ecologically and culturally diverse, with over 800 languages spoken.

The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) share common environmental problems: pollution, hazardous waste management, environmental destruction, overharvesting, invasive species, weak environmental and threatened species protection, poor coastal planning and climate change. Biologically the region is very rich – some islands have over 80% endemic species which occur nowhere else – yet up to 50% of the regions biodiversity is at risk. In fact, the Pacific has some of the highest extinction rates in the world.

Islands can be broadly split into two groups; low-lying atolls or raised coral platforms, and volcanic or continental high islands. Climate change and associated rising sea levels are of urgent concern for many Pacific countries. In the atoll nations of Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands climate change adaptation options are severely limited by the land area available, and the highest point is generally less than 5m above sea level. The larger high islands, notably the Melanesian countries of PNG, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji, face environmental issues such as logging and mining combined with a history of political instability, which makes addressing these issues particularly challenging. Pacific islanders are very dependent on coastal and marine resources, and the relatively large coastal zone of these small islands is highly vulnerable to environmental degradation.

Although the problems are big, the small size of many PICs also makes them relatively manageable. The environment has a high value in the Pacific islands: islanders have a close connection with the land, depending culturally, economically and spiritually on environmental resources, which provide both a “bank balance” and a “pension fund”. The development of protected areas in the region reflects this, with a high potential for engaging civil society in protected area management and biodiversity conservation. The Pacific has a strong culture of cooperation with a number of well established inter-governmental organisations such as SPREP, the Pacific Hub of the ACP MEAs initiative, serving the PICs collectively.

Milestone regional initiatives include the formation of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in 1997 to improve conservation action, endorsement of The Pacific Plan in 2005, a “living document” forming the basis of strengthening regional cooperation and integration efforts, and the Cairns Compact in 2009, driving more effective coordination of development resources from both member countries and development partners to address the Millennium Development Goals. The high level of cooperation allows the regional adaptation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). For example, the 1995 Waigani Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region is similar to the Basel Convention but is administered in and tailored to the Pacific region.

Nevertheless, MEA implementation problems in the Pacific remain severe. Issues include isolation, transport and communication problems (the region covers 6 time zones and crosses the International Date Line), absorptive capacity, limited resources, variable capacity, poor mainstreaming of MEA

in national planning processes, and high staff turnover and brain drain as professionals migrate to countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Small island populations mean that a single government employee may be responsible for meeting the many obligations of all the MEAs for a country, as well as handling the reporting to each. Vanuatu, for example, has ratified 16 international and regional conventions and agreements. Capacity is weak at all levels: institutional, enabling environment and individual, with particular need to strengthen national strategic planning capabilities and leadership skills. The PICs receive the highest levels of aid per capita in the world. Around 45% of overall aid is technical assistance, which has created a dependency on outside experts who typically deliver short-term interventions to solve immediate problems. This approach lacks sustainability. Coordination among donors is also poor at all levels – within donors, between donors and between donors and countries.

In addition to addressing some of these core capacity issues, the ACP MEA project in the Pacific recognizes the key role of coordination of development interventions for small island nations, and is helping to strengthen regional coordination mechanisms such as the Roundtable for Nature Conservation, the Roundtable for Climate Change, and the Working Groups of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific.

Lessons learned from over 15 years of SPREP capacity development experience are being applied: national workshops are far more effective than regional ones, and peer learning, secondments and exchanges work best of all. Training events should not exist in isolation, and support and follow-up are essential parts of the capacity development process. SPREP is keen to share its experience with the other regions through South-South cooperation.

Certain MEA-related challenges remain which are outside the remit of the project and which profoundly affect the ability of ACP countries to deliver MEA achievements. The most notable is harmonization of reporting across the Rio conventions. For small countries, MEA reporting obligations absorb a large proportion of their capacity, limiting options to actually deliver tangible programmes and benefits. Ensuring the sustainability of the impact post-project is also of major concern, and the Pacific hub coordinator will draw on SPREP experience and work closely with the other Hubs to address this over the next two years of the ACP MEAs initiative.

David Sheppard, Director, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

African Hub (AUC)

In East Africa, the East African Community's (EAC) first review of a draft Ecosystem Bill took place in early December 2010. The study will now be discussed with stakeholders at the national level for approval and implementation. A study to update Malawi's bio-safety law was submitted for validation at an African Hub workshop on February 28th – March 1st 2011. A similar study is under way in Mauritania. A study on Identification of the areas of environment and natural resources management in view of common efforts harmonization in Economic Community for Central Africa States (ECCAS) has been prepared and will be submitted to representatives of ECCAS Members States for validation in March / April 2011. In a wider African context, the first Conference of Parties (COP) to the Bamako Convention is now tentatively scheduled for the second half of 2011. Assistance to the Sahelian Pesticides Council (SPC) and Interstates Permanent Committee on drought in Sahele (CILSS) to develop post registration strategy is in progress. An MOU with the Basel Convention Regional Center (BCRC) Dakar is being prepared to provide training on environmental legislation, security and hazards. In a useful collaboration with another EU-funded project, the Africa Hub is jointly developing policy briefs with the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD) project to be presented at relevant conferences and workshops. For further information, please contact Ms. Fatoumata Ndoeye (frijallow@yahoo.com) and Mr. Livingstone Sindayigaya (sindayigaya@yahoo.com).

Caribbean Hub (CARICOM)

In March the Hub will be convening a Regional Workshop on Mainstreaming Guidelines in Georgetown, Guyana. The workshop targets senior policy makers from the CARIFORUM Countries. A National Training and Legal Advisory Workshop in conjunction with a UNEP ROLAC initiative will take place in April focusing on enhancing knowledge on environmental law of the region's legal drafters through capacity building services and on developing environmental laws. To facilitate exchanges among the ACP regions, the Caribbean Hub expects the participation of the Pacific Hub in this Mainstreaming Guidelines Workshop. The development of the Centralised Database continues to be a work in progress. For additional information please contact the interim Caribbean Hub Coordinator, Ms. Anya Thomas (anya@caricom.org). Please also consult the ACP MEA project (www.acpmeas.info/index.asp) and CARICOM (www.csricom.org/jsp/community_organs/sustainable_development/capacity_building_meas_acp_caribbean_hub.jsp) web-pages for regular updates.

Pacific Hub (SPREP)

The Pacific Hub held a planning session in January for the remaining project activities up to February 2013. Applying lessons learned from the second year of project implementation, the Pacific is integrating national training on improved information management with MEA mainstreaming, recognizing the need to strengthen evidence-based decision making. An initial visit has been made to Timor Leste in 14-18 February, identifying negotiation skills training as the top priority for project intervention. The Pacific Hub has also participated in the Risoe centre's regional workshop on the Clean Development Mechanism in Fiji in January 2011. Next quarter activities include the first integrated workshops in Samoa in 21-25 March, in Fiji on 4-8 April, and a negotiation skills workshop in Timor Leste in 11-15 April. For further information please contact the Pacific Hub Coordinator Dr Jill Key (Jillk@sprep.org).

UNEP Risoe Centre

At UNFCCC COP 16 the UNEP Risoe Centre organized a side event to present progress under the ACP MEAs CDM sub-component and to launch two publications: Pathways for implementing REDD+: experiences from the carbon markets and communities and CDM methodologies and technologies overview 2010. Both publications are available on www.acp-cd4cdm.org and www.acpmeas.info/ and upload the documents on the website. The web-based CDM methodology selection tool is available on www.cdm-meth.org. During the well-attended UNFCCC COP-16 side event the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5C) also showcased progress under the ACP MEAs initiative in the Caribbean. In Africa, a renewable energy and energy efficiency sector workshop took place in Rwanda in December 2010, aimed at strengthening and building in-country CDM capacities. The Pacific region in turn benefitted from a one-week regional workshop in Fiji, held on 24-28 January 2011. The workshop was organized in two components, addressed two different target audiences. The first component was a three-day workshop for CDM consultants on the CDM project cycle, project identification and design, as well as Project Idea Note (PIN) preparation and an introduction the contents of Project Design Documents (PDD). The



CDM Capacity Building Workshop, Group shot, Fiji, Jan 2011

Photo courtesy of UNEP Risoe Centre.

second component was a one-day workshop for Decision/Policy makers on the global carbon market, the CDM and other carbon finance opportunities, private sector engagement and government approval, as well as different options and experiences with CDM approval and promotion. The third component was a one-day workshop for CDM project reviewers that advise DNAs in the CDM project approval process and help local projects overcome some of the pitfalls in CDM design and implementation. National workshops were organized in Malawi on 23-24 February; Belize on 24-25 February; São Tomé and Príncipe on 2-3 March; and Angola on 8-9 March. A Caribbean Designated National Authorities (DNAs) workshop will be held in Havana from 22-24 March, which will be followed by the third Cuban national workshop. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Second National workshop will take place on 7-8 April 2011. For further information please contact Ms. Miriam Hinostroza (milh@risoe.dtu.dk).

SAICM Secretariat

The SAICM Secretariat has focused on the 10th application round of the Quick Start Programme (QSP), which closed on 11 February 2011, as well as on the eleventh meeting of the QSP Trust Fund Implementation Committee, scheduled for 13 and 14 April 2011. As ten projects have already been approved or conditionally approved for funding under the ACP MEAs, no further specific ACP MEAs funding is available under the tenth round of applications. Nevertheless, one of the strategic priorities for QSP focuses on building upon work conducted to implement international chemicals-related agreements and initiatives. As such, the SAICM Secretariat expects to receive several applications that will be relevant to the ACP MEAs initiative. The Secretariat has also continued to provide legal and administrative support to finalize QSP project agreements, in particular for projects approved at the tenth meeting of the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund Implementation Committee held in October 2010. It is expected that the five projects approved or conditionally approved at this meeting and financed under the ACP MEAs initiative will commence activities during the second trimester of 2011. The five projects approved in the sixth and seventh application rounds have already finalized their legal arrangements with UNEP. These projects address countries such as Djibouti, Mauritius, Burundi and Rwanda, the CILSS Member states (Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mauritania, Niger) and the Pacific island countries Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga. These five projects are in the early stages of implementation. For further information please contact Ms. Nora Silva (nora.silva@unep.org).

FAO

In the Africa Region, the Comité Sahélien des Pesticides (CSP) Secretariat met last November in Bamako, Mali to finalise the 2011 work plan for the enforcement of pesticide registration and post-registration in the Comité

Inter-Etats pour la Lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS) countries. The work plan will be implemented in collaboration with PAN Africa and CSP. A launching meeting with CSP and CILSS secretariat was held in mid-February in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. National stakeholder meetings of the pesticide management projects in Kenya and Malawi were held in January. So far, the projects have identified approximately 200 and 400 tonnes of obsolete stocks, respectively, which require safeguarding and disposal. A preliminary safeguarding training by the waste management company Veolia UK was completed in late 2010. About 30 tonnes of the Kenyan stock has been safeguarded through contributions from the pesticide industry is represented by CropLife International. In the Caribbean Region, inventories of obsolete pesticide stocks were initiated and completed in several countries. A regional centre was set up in St. Lucia for processing inventory data into the Pesticide Stock Management System (PSMS). Evaluations of the existing pesticide legislation and registration systems are currently underway to identify national capacity strengthening priorities. For the Pacific Region, three FAO funded Technical Cooperative Programme (TCP) projects are being formulated in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The TCPs will address lower risk alternatives to conventional pesticides on key crops, pesticide regulation and communication and awareness strategies. An assessment of container management needs has been completed in Samoa supported by SPREP with further studies planned for Fiji and Tonga. Assessment of contaminated sites has commenced. Support from the government of New Zealand on the development of a harmonised system for pesticide registration has been secured with a meeting to develop the system planned for April. For further information please contact Mr. Mark Davis (mark.davis@fao.org).

UNCCD GM

Two partnership agreements are being adopted to strengthen the implementation of scope-acp (the GM sub-component of the ACP MEAs initiative) in the Caribbean and Pacific Regions. In the Caribbean Region the GM engaged with the Caribbean Network for Rural Development (CNIRD) as the support unit of the Platform Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM). In the Pacific Region, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) will be partnering with GM to implement the Pacific scope-acp activities as well as to monitor the support process for two pilot countries: Solomon Islands and Fiji.

The GM contracted the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)/ Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen Montpellier in order to convert the existing Designing Integrated Financing Strategies (DIFS) training course into an online self-training course, which will be available on the scope-acp website (www.global-mechanism.org/news-events/news/progress-in-ec-acp-mea-capacity-building-in-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries). For more information please contact Mr. Youssef Brahimi (y.brahimi@global-mechanism.org).

European Development Days (6 - 7 December 2010, Brussels)

On 6 - 7 December 2010, the European Commission (EC) organised the 5th European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels. Organised after the Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli, and in parallel to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancún, the EDD provided a timely and focused interface for stakeholders and governments for dialogue on development issues in light of new EU's institutional set-up and current global context. Participants included current and former Heads of State and Government from Europe, Africa and rest of the world, as well as high-level representatives of governments and international organizations, development practitioners, NGOs, media and civil society. Dr. Ibn Chambas, Secretary General of the ACP Secretariat attended the event and participated with Andris Piebalgs, European Commissioner for Development to the panel on The Post-Lisbon landscape – Development at a crossroads. The ACP Group's stand at EDD raised awareness of ongoing initiatives, including ACP MEAs. Participants at the EDD showed a strong interest in the initiative and related promotional materials. For further information, please contact Sandrine Marquès (sandrine.marques@unep.org).



EDD, ACP Group stand, ACP Secretariat's Secretary-General Dr.Chambas, Dec 2011. Photo courtesy of COLEACP PIP.

This newsletter is published quarterly and includes opinion pieces by the programme partners as well as an update of latest developments. For more information on ACP MEAs please contact:

Mr. Marko Berglund (Marko.Berglund@unep.org) or visit us at <http://www.acpmeas.info/index.asp>



The ACP MEAs is a joint EU-UNEP partnership project. This Newsletter has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views, policies or official opinion of the European Commission, UNEP or contributory organizations.

