



**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**REVIEW OF THE SMALLER ISLANDS STATES PROGRAMME UNIT**

9 March 2015

## 1. Background

The Smaller Island States Leaders in their 2014 meeting in Palau **directed** the Secretariat to action in close consultation with SIS Officials a full assessment of the progress and capacity of the SIS Programme Unit over the last five years, to determine **impacts of efforts; gaps and possible solutions** and **report back to Leaders**.

1.2 The Smaller Island States (SIS) grouping comprises of the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. In 2006, the Smaller Island States Unit was formally established and set up at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat following the Leaders' decision to *“develop new initiatives and advocate for the needs of Smaller Island States, particularly given their limited capacity and fragile and vulnerable environment, including to climate change.”*

1.3 The Pacific Plan endorsed by Leaders in 2005 recognised the special needs of SIS in the regional development agenda. In line with this recognition, CROP agencies and development partners have undertaken substantial work to more effectively support SIS. The Secretariat work has included the establishment of the SIS programme unit in the Forum Secretariat, placing SIS Officers in each of the seven countries, and supporting dedicated SIS officials and SIS Leaders meetings. A SIS development fund was established and is currently looking at more programmatic ways to support SIS. In addition, a number of early initiatives under the Pacific Plan have been implemented specifically for SIS, including the Ombudsman programme and a regional approach to the provision of auditing services. There have also been efforts to improve sub-regional shipping services and other forms of technical assistance for SIS.

1.4 A key feature of the Pacific Plan was that it focused on regional initiatives and priorities, while it refers to the special needs of SIS, in most cases the priorities of SIS have been included under broader regional priorities, such as shipping, climate change, or labour mobility. There was not been a specific strategy under the Pacific Plan for SIS. Nevertheless, even in the absence of a specific strategy SIS have still successfully identified ways to supplement their national capacity by integrating services that relate to their common issues, for example in the governance sector.

1.5 The SIS Officials' meeting has been the main institution to consider and set SIS priorities for Leaders to deliberate and make decisions. The SIS Leaders' priorities and decisions provide the mandate for the SIS Programme Unit's work programme and the collaborations with development partners including the CROP agencies in the implementation of SIS Leaders' decisions.

1.6 The SIS Programme Unit which comprises of the Development Cooperation Adviser, the SIS Programme Officer and SIS Officers; is one of the sections within the Secretariat's Strategic Partnership and Coordination Programme (SPCP). The SIS Officers (SISOs) were established within governments to effectively facilitate and implement the SIS work programme. An Exchange of Letters between the Secretariat and the respective SIS Governments provide details of the support rendered by both parties in hosting and working with the SIS Officer. As such, the key function of the SISOs is to provide an essential link between the Smaller Island States and the Smaller Island States Unit to facilitate and coordinate the effective implementation and progress of decisions of SIS and Forum Leaders. The SIS Programme Unit has a dedicated SIS Development Fund Programme which provides technical and limited financial support to deliver on key results areas in SIS countries. These key result areas include the following:

- Increased national technical capacity in drafting development frameworks, policies, strategies and legislation across;
- Aid policy completed and coordination/management units established within SIS; and
- Targeted private sector engagement in development planning and implementation

1.7 The Forum Secretariat's Corporate Plan and the Strategic Partnership and Coordination Programme's (SPCP) strategic plan together with the Forum and SIS Leaders' Decisions provide the mandate and directions of the work of the SIS Programme Unit. The SIS Programme Unit's main objectives are to:

- i. Coordinate and support the SIS Leaders' Meeting and facilitate implementation of their decisions; and
- ii. Provide monitoring and coordination of assistance with respect to implementation of targeted initiatives in Smaller Island States.

## **2. Purpose of the Review**

2.1 The purpose of the Review is to provide SIS Leaders with a full assessment of the SIS Programme Unit's progress and capacity over the last five years, and to determine the impact of its efforts, identify gaps and possible solutions.

2.2 The findings from the Review will contribute to articulating how best the Forum Secretariat through its SIS Programme Unit, improves coordination and facilitation of assistance to the SIS; reporting on progress; mobilising resources to action SIS Leaders decisions; and strengthen the Secretariat's support to SIS through the country based SIS Officers.

2.3 The findings from the Review will be used to contribute to the development of a SIS Strategy for the Secretariat, as also determined by SIS Leaders at their meeting in Palau.

## **3. Methodology**

3.1 The review will be conducted in three parts; a desk review; questionnaire based survey amongst Forum Island Countries including SIS; and SIS country consultations. The review will be conducted by an independent consultant. The Consultant will work closely with the Secretariat in the design and implementation of the desk review; design and analysis of the qualitative questionnaire; and in scheduling and coordinating country consultations in SIS with the assistance of SIS Officers.

3.2 Each part of the process is to ensure sufficient coverage of all stakeholder perspectives, including drawing on the Secretariat's corporate documentation related to planning and budgets for the SIS programme Unit; and perspectives of SIS Leaders, relevant government officials and agencies closely associated with the SIS programme Unit work.

### *Part 1 – Desk Review*

3.3 A desk Review to be conducted in the Forum Secretariat. The desk review will focus on the following:

- i. Identify key outputs and results of the SIS Programme Unit for the period 2010-2014 from the Forum Secretariat's Corporate Plan, the Strategic Partnership and

- Coordination Programme Strategic Plan, the SIS Programme Unit annual reports to SIS Leaders and SIS Officials and Leaders' decisions;
- ii. Identify from SIS Officers' reports including Monthly Update; Quarterlies and Pacific Plan Annual Reports key outputs and results for the period 2010-2014;
  - iii. Outline the rationale and utility of the partnership modalities developed between the Forum Secretariat and SIS for the period 2010 – 2014, including a review of the Exchange of Letters and SIS Officers' Consultancy Agreements
  - iv. Identify and assess linkages of budget allocation to work outputs and results of the SIS programme Unit for period 2010-2014;
  - v. Review and provide comparative analysis of SIS programme Unit budget requests and proposed work plans to actual budget allocations agreed to by the Forum Officials Committee for periods 2010-2014, including linkages between SIS Leaders decisions on SIS budgets and FOC decisions;
  - vi. Identify examples of collaboration with CROP Agencies in implementing SIS Leaders Decisions;
  - vii. Identify how best the SIS programme Unit could improve its leadership in the Secretariat on the coordination, and facilitation of SIS related matters;
  - viii. Identify capacity constraints/ strengths in the SIS programme unit;
  - ix. Make recommendations on findings from the desk review.

#### *Part 2 - Questionnaire Survey*

3.4 A questionnaire will be developed and distributed among Forum Island Countries including SIS officials and regional agencies on the effectiveness of the service of the SIS Programme Unit, in support of the SIS. A survey will ensure to the extent possible, feedback from a broad range of stakeholders associated with the work of the SIS programme Unit. This survey will be conducted by the SIS officers with relevant officials in-country. The Secretariat will facilitate the completion of the survey with non-SIS Forum Island Countries and regional agencies.

3.5 The survey will cover questions related to the effectiveness of the SIS Programme Unit structure, including the placement of SIS Officers in country; the role of the SIS Programme Unit in coordinating and facilitating financial and technical assistance to SIS; and the preparation of SIS Officials and Leaders' meetings and the implementation and monitoring of their decisions.

#### *Part 3 - Country consultations*

3.6 Country consultations will be conducted in all SIS and will engage primarily SIS Leaders and Senior Officials. This phase is crucial, as the Review will require the perspectives of the SIS Leaders' and Senior Officials on the SIS Programme Unit. Consultation with SIS leaders and officials will enable a discussion on clear directions on what they see as the core roles and responsibilities of the SIS Programme Unit to support their development efforts and priorities.

It is anticipated that the consultant will visit all SIS countries.

#### **4. Scope of the Review**

4.1 In fulfilling the objectives of the review the scope of the review will focus on the following:

*a) Relevance & Sustainability*

- i. How relevant is the SIS Programme Unit to SIS governments? In what areas need improvement?
- ii. To what extent has the SIS Programme Unit promoted SIS ownership of the Unit and built capacity within member states?
- iii. How can the SIS Programme Unit sustain its provision of assistance and support to SIS governments, both financially and technically?
- iv. What capacity is needed to improve the sustainability of the SIS programme unit support to SIS, in terms of policy coordination, advocacy, resource mobilisation, and monitoring and reporting?

*b) Effectiveness & Efficiency*

- i. To what extent has the SIS Programme Unit achieved its outcomes as identified through Leaders' decisions, Forum Secretariat's corporate plans, Strategic Partnership and Coordination Programme's strategic plans; SIS Unit Programme's Objectives and the Exchange of Letters with individual SIS Governments?
- ii. Has the SIS Programme Unit been effective in providing assistance and support to SIS governments? Meeting SIS governments' needs/priorities, etc and implementing SIS Leaders' decisions?
- iii. In what areas can the SIS Programme Unit improve on?
- iv. How effective have the placement of SIS Officers in-country been in the nature and quality of support provided by the SIS programme Unit?
- v. How efficient is the Forum Secretariat's Budget and Planning process in providing the resources required to implement SIS Leaders Decisions?
- vi. Are there sufficient measures to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the SIS Programme Unit, including SIS officers?

*c) Impact*

- i. What visible impacts are there at the country level resulting from support by the SIS Programme Unit? Do these impacts complement SIS Governments' priorities/goals?
- ii. Are there indications that the SIS Programme Unit has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, increased satisfaction in the overall support of the Secretariat to SIS Governments and Leaders?

*d) SIS Strategy*

- i. What areas should an SIS Strategy emphasise to enhance and ensure relevant and sustainable support to SIS?

#### **5. Consultant's Outputs**

In consultation with the Director Strategic Partnerships & Coordination, through the Development Cooperation Adviser and SIS Programme Unit Officer, the consultant will provide the following outputs:

- a. A summary report of key findings from the Desk Review of the SIS Programme Unit;
- b. A survey questionnaire which captures the scope of the Review;

- c. Summary report of the key findings and recommendations from the survey questionnaire;
- d. Summary report of the key issues and findings from the SIS country consultations
- e. Draft consolidated analytical report on the Review of the SIS Programme Unit.
- f. A Concept Note on the SIS Strategy for the Secretariat based on the review’s findings and linkages to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

**6. Qualifications and Experience**

- a. An advanced university degree (Masters or equivalent) in development studies, international relations, economics or other related field;
- b. Substantial experience in the provision of high level strategic policy advice on development issues preferably within the Pacific Island Forum Countries and/or Smaller Island States of the Forum;
- c. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the development issues facing SIS countries and experience of technical assistance within the region;
- d. Sound knowledge in designing and implementing effective consultation methodologies in the Pacific region.
- e. Demonstrated experience in high level engagement with SIS Officials and Leaders.
- f. Have worked for more than 7 years in the Pacific region in a relevant field .
- g. Excellent command of English, including written and oral communications skills.

**7. Review Steering Committee**

7.1 A Review steering committee will be established to oversee progress; provide overall guidance; and contribute to preparing the final Review report to SIS officials for their consideration. The Review Committee will consist of SIS and PIFS officials. SIS will be represented by the SIS Troika (past, current and incoming Chair of the SIS Leaders meeting). In this regard, Palau, RMI and Tuvalu will represent SIS, with the current SIS Chair, Palau taking on the Steering Committee chair as well.

7.2 The Secretariat will be represented by the Director of the Strategic, Partnership and Coordination Programme or their nominee.

7.3 The Secretariat will prepare a work plan for the Steering Committee in line with the key milestones of the review itself. It is anticipated the Steering Committee will utilise to the extent possible communications technology for its meetings.

7.4 The roles and responsibilities of the Review Steering Committee will be:

To provide overall management and guidance on the Review process.
To provide update and progress report to the Secretariat and SIS countries on the Review.
To appraise and provide inputs to the finalisation of the Review report
To present the final draft of the Review Report to the SIS Officials meeting in 2015.

## 8. Review Milestones and Timeline

Desktop review of SIS Programme Unit	Fourth week of April 2015
Survey questionnaire completed and dispatched to SIS officers.	First week of May 2015
Country consultation visits to all SIS countries (average 3 days in each SIS)	First week of May 2015
First draft of the Review Report submitted to the Review Steering Committee for feedback.	End of June 2015
Draft Review Report circulated internally and to CROP Agencies and SIS for feedback and comments.	
Feedback on draft report to Consultant for revision	Mid July 2015
Revised Draft Report submitted to the Review Steering Committee for finalisation.	End of July 2015
Review Steering Committee to present the Review Report and its recommendations to SIS Officials Meeting in 2015	11 August 2015
Final Draft of the Review Report presented to SIS Leaders	07 September 2015