

# SPC-EU EDF10 Deep Sea Minerals (DSM) Project Steering Committee Meeting

6-8pm June 8 2011  
Tanoa International Hotel  
Nadi Fiji.

*By: Hannah Lily and Akuila Tawake*

## 1. In attendance:

- Dr Russell Howorth – SPC (Director – SOPAC Division)
- Dr Arthur Webb – SPC (Deputy Director – Oceans and Islands Program)
- Mr Akuila Tawake – SPC (Team Leader – DSM Project)
- Ms Hannah Lily – SPC (Legal Advisor – DSM Project)
- Mr Jerry Huekwahin – PIFS (RAO Representative)
- Mr Thierry Catteau – EU (Attaché – EU Delegation for the Pacific)
- Mr Tingikia Elikana – Cook Islands (Solicitor General)
- Mr Malakai Finau – Fiji (Director – Mineral Resources Department)
- Mr Wong Hen Loon – Fiji (Senior Scientific Officer – MRD)
- Mrs Josiane Couratier – France (Deputy Representative of France to SPC)
- Mr Kabure Tamariti – Kiribati (Deputy Secretary – Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development)
- Mr Charles Dominick – Marshall Islands (Advisor – Ministry of Resources and Development)
- Mr Richard Hipa – Niue (Secretary to Government)
- Mr Harry Kore – PNG (Director – Minerals Policy and Legislation)
- Mr Lameko Talia – Samoa (Principal Scientific Officer – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment)
- Mr Vicente da Costa Pitno – Timor Leste (Minerals Officer – Secretariat of State for Natural Resources)
- Mr Rennie Vaiomounga – Tonga (Assistant Geologist – Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources)
- Ms Eselealofa Apinelu – Tuvalu (Attorney General)
- Mr Faatasi Malologa (Director of Lands – Department of Land and Survey)
- Mr Christopher Ioan (Director – Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources)
- Mr Brooks Rakau (Minerals Coordinator – DGMWR)
- Mr Clark Peteru – SPREP (Legal Advisor - Observer)

## 2. Official Welcome:

- The Steering Committee was officially welcomed by Dr Russell Howorth, Director of the SOPAC Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).
- In response Richard of Niue commented that the inaugural regional workshop was an excellent start to the DSM Project and participating countries are hopeful that this will keep the momentum going in an interactive manner in the years ahead.

### **3. It was noted that:**

- 3.1. The DSM Project had officially started on 01/02/2011 with the appointment of Akuila Tawake as Project Manager and he reports to the Deputy Director – Ocean and Islands Program.
- 3.2. It was acknowledged that there had been some delay in the signing of the DSM Project Contribution Agreement between the SPC and the EU (the donor) due to SOPAC's corporate integration into SPC.
- 3.3. Hannah Lily had recently been appointed as DSM Project Legal Advisor, and would start in post in October 2011. Vira Atalifo had been appointed as DSM Project Assistant, and started in post in May 2011.
- 3.4. Six information brochures have already been prepared and published by the DSM Project, and received positive feedback from workshop participants. NGO representatives have requested electronic copies of these information brochures to be shared through their networks.
- 3.5. The DSM Project may consider translating these information brochures to local languages in the region. This would be a significant challenge that requires the commitment of participating countries and the assistance of in-country stakeholders.
- 3.6. As part of the DSM Project, SOPAC was collaborating with UNEP/GRID-Arendal to produce a technical report publication setting out the current state of knowledge and information held (generally – not just by SOPAC) about deep sea minerals and mining, which is aimed to assist PIC policy-makers/analysts. The full published report is likely to be around 200 pages. The DSM Project will also produce a shorter, quick reference summary document, and an e-book. The target for launch of these products is June 2012 (which ties in with RIO plus 20).
- 3.7. The other major product of the DSM Project will be a regional legislative and regulatory framework (RLRF) on offshore mineral exploration and exploitation, which is due to be finalised by June 2012.
- 3.8. Project information brochures highlighting each country's deep sea minerals potential should have economic flavours in order to attract the attention of potential investors and decision makers.
- 3.9. Country-specific information brochures should be handed to the country of origin for information and distribution. Dissemination of country-specific information brochures by any other party must be endorsed by the country of origin.
- 3.10. The DSM Project needs to target priority areas in each country and avoid having to spread its resources too thinly.
- 3.11. The link between the DSM Project and other areas of SOPAC was highlighted, for example, it was stated that the Project may encourage speedier maritime boundary agreements; and the Project may also benefit from the potential for collaborative work between Geoscience Australia and the UNEP extended Continental Shelf programme to develop habitat / biodiversity maps of the Pacific Islands region.
- 3.12. The EU representative explained that the Project was funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF funding stream, with particular focus on a regional approach to environmental protection. Economic advancement must go together with environment protection initiatives.

- 3.13. The role of the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) has been made redundant, and so that functions (which had strategic supervisory focus on all EU funded Projects including the DSM Project – not micro-management) would move to the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Project Officer.
- 3.14. Although there was interest amongst the PICs in the DSM Project also covering hydrocarbons, this was not permitted under the terms of the funding agreement with the EU. The Project must stay within the project proposal that the EU had agreed, which was already ambitious. Successful delivery of the DSM Project would however enhance the likelihood of future funding applications being successful.
- 3.15. Support from SOPAC on other areas, such as hydrocarbons, may however be available outside of the DSM Project. It was also revealed that Tonga is currently being assisted by a foreign company in assessing its EEZ's hydrocarbon potential.
- 3.16. The first SPC / SOPAC Division Heads of Geoscience meeting would be held in Rarotonga on 15-21 October 2011
- 3.17. All PICs participating in the DSM Project had been forwarded a copy of the Contribution Agreement, which contained the Project work plan and budget information – but not all Steering Committee members had seen this.
- 3.18. Australia and New Zealand had not to date participated in the DSM Project; although very positive feedback had been received from Australia. It would be good to get them onboard.

#### **4. It was agreed that:**

- 4.1. The Steering Committee would be consulted in a timely manner, and given the opportunity to influence in advance future steps in the DSM Project.
- 4.2. It would be desirable to have the same representative from each PIC participate as Steering Committee member each time – although it was recognised that this may not always be possible.
- 4.3. Each PIC would confirm to Akuila who the representative from their country would be.
- 4.4. Country-specific brochures, in addition to the six already produced, would be welcomed
- 4.5. Any data held about Nauru, Palau or Timor Leste's deep seabed minerals should be forwarded to Akuila.
- 4.6. The synergy between the Project and other work of SOPAC should be encouraged and strengthened.
- 4.7. It may be helpful for the DSM Project Team to participate in maritime boundaries meetings, so lessons learned there can be carried into the DSM Project.
- 4.8. Possibilities to co-ordinate DSM vessels and marine survey and research opportunities should be explored.
- 4.9. Akuila would inform country representatives of his proposed country visit schedule. This was likely to prioritise PICs that had already begun a process of DSM policy or legislation development – where the time window for the Project to contribute its support was limited.
- 4.10. PICs participating in the DSM Project could make a request for technical assistance at any time (contact: Akuila).

- 4.11. Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) can join the DSM Project if they wish to. Funds are available under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF OCT Envelope and the RAO for the OCTs (currently the President of French Polynesia) has to make a formal request to the EU Delegation to participate. The Steering Committee would welcome OCTs' participation in the Project provided that funds are made available under the OCT Envelope.
- 4.12. Transparency as to the budget and expenditure of the DSM Project was important. Akuila would circulate to all Steering Committee members by email a copy of the DSM Project Contribution Agreement.
- 4.13. Australia and New Zealand's interest to engage with the DSM Project should be explored.
- 4.14. The next comprehensive DSM Report update would be provided at the October 2011 SOPAC Heads of Geoscience meeting in the Cook Islands. Updates would be provided, where appropriate, by email in the meantime.