# Monitoring Report

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| Monitoring reference | MR-136212.01 |
| Report date | 30/09/2010 |
| Project title | Pacific Environmental Information Network (PEIN) |

## I. Intervention data

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| Status | FINAL |
| Monitoring Report Type | Ex-Post |
| Aid Modality | Project approach |
| Project | Multi Country / Regional Project - Consolidated/Horizontal Report |
| Project Management | Project managed by the Delegation (devolved) |
| Financed via a thematic budget line | No |
| CRIS Number | D-016978 |
| Project Title according to Financing Agreement/Financing Decision | Pacific Environmental Information Network (PEIN) phase II |
| Domain | European Development Fund |
| DAC - CRS Sector | - |
| Additional DAC - CRS code | 41081 - Environmental education/training |
| Geographical zone | Pacific Region |
| Keyword (for innovative interventions) | |
| Date Financing Agreement/Financing Decision/Contract signed | 07/03/2005 |
| Person responsible at HQ | |
| Person responsible at Delegation | CASELLA Cristina |
| Monitor | Frans GEILFUS |
| Project Authority | Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) |
| Type of implementing partner | Regional bodies (MERCOSUR, SADEC, ASEAN, etc) |
| Start date - planned | 22/12/2004 |
| End date - planned | 31/12/2007 |
| Start date - actual | 05/04/2005 |
| End date - actual | 31/12/2008 |
| Monitoring visit date | from 06/09/2010 to 20/09/2010 |

## II. Financial data

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| Primary commitment (EC funding) | 560,000 |
| Budget allocated for TA | Not Available |
| Secondary commitment (funds contracted of EC contribution) | 504,397 |
| Other funding (government and/or other donors) | 0 |
| Total budget of operation | 560,000 |
| Total EC funds disbursed | 504,397 |
| Financial data on | 20/09/2010 |

## III. Grading

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|---|---|
| Relevance and quality of design | B |
| Efficiency of implementation | B |
| Effectiveness | B |
| Impact to date | B |
| Sustainability to date | B |

## IV. Summary of conclusions

**Relevance and quality of design**

The issues of inadequate resourcing and staffing of libraries and information centres have been identified as a weakness of the development framework that needed be addressed by governments and donors. Weaknesses include the identification and collection of documents, bibliographical registration, staffing and training of libraries and government financial support. The proposal by SPREP to develop a capacity across the member states in the region for an information system on environmental issues was very relevant, given the difficulties of environment institutions and the public in general to access comprehensive and adapted sources of information. The first phase of PEIN (2000-2003) allowed establishing the central library at SPREP headquarters in Apia, but funding was too limited to allow significant capacity building in the countries. The new proposal was intended to develop information databases and hubs across the 14 PACP countries. The final evaluation of PEIN 1 indicated that national libraries were used mostly by school students and barely by professionals; it had also put in doubt the sustainability of the project once external funding would end. An important hypothesis was that libraries and hubs in national environment institutions would obtain strategic government support for operational costs so that material and training provided by the project could be made good use of. This hypothesis was not verified in most countries. Libraries remained at the bottom of priorities in cash strapped Environment Departments, and manned with undertrained or transient staff. The new project manager put in charge in 2007 was able to adjust the strategy and scale up the use of internet and digital databases, focusing the project on developing a web-based platform easier to manage and accessible to all users in the countries and beyond. The addendum 1 granted no cost extension and the endorsed PEIN 2008 Annual Work Programme and logframe changed the focus towards establishing National Environment Information Centers (NEIC) instead of traditional libraries.

**Efficiency of implementation**

During the first two years (2006-2007) the project concentrated its efforts in assessing the needs of national information centres and libraries, providing computer equipment and software to environment departments in the 14 countries, training partner librarians in the use of the software, providing paper copies of key information to partner countries libraries. The first project coordinator resigned end of 2006 and was replaced early 2007 by Peter Murgatroyd, who remains in charge to date. In some countries, most notably Samoa, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, work started from scratch. Computing and information management equipment and software was provided to partners such as: Solomon Islands Ministry of Conservation, Environment and Meteorology, Kiribati Environment and Conservation Division, FSM Department of Economic Affairs / College of Micronesia, Marshall Islands Office of Environmental Planning and Policy Coordination, Palau Environment Quality Protection Board; Cook Islands Environment Dept; Ministry of Marine Resources, Papua New Guinea Dept. of Environment and Conservation, Solomon Islands Ministry of Conservation, Environment and Meteorology, Nauru Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Environment, Samoa Ministry of natural Resources and Environment, Tuvalu Dept of Environment, Vanuatu Environment Unit. There was intensive in-country training on maintenance and development of the resource centres and associated databases with PEIN focal points. The project also organized national and regional workshops on principles of information management. It also provided hardcopy materials to country libraries. It soon became clear that the impact and sustainability of concentrating in building capacity at national level around each partner library would be limited, considering the low priority given by each government. Training and awareness would not be sufficient and it was noted that the PEIN team was expected in each country to come and substitute local personnel in fixing software issues, cataloguing documentation etc. The outputs in terms of in-country capacities were not satisfactory, due to the low institutional commitment in most partner countries. Software had to be replaced several times in some countries. From 2008 the work focused more on the build-up of PEIN digitized database and setup of PEIN webpage, soon to become the single most complete

source of information on environmental issues in the region. Thousands of documents are available for consultation and download from the PEIN webpage. The PEIN is also producing two important instruments that are providing promotion for the instrument and linkages between its users: the PEIN Digest (sent monthly) which includes headlines on environment news, briefs and abstracts of new resources of interest within PEIN, and the fortnightly newsletter "What's new in your library" presenting books and new resources online from SPREP Library and PEIN database.

## Effectiveness

The project has been fairly effective in achieving the main outcome of establishing the information networks and hubs required for integrating environmental information in the region. The PEIN website and virtual library go now far beyond what was initially planned in terms of outreach and information base. The Project Purpose of "Environmental information widely available and more accessible in the region by 2008" has been largely achieved. Statistics of users' hits on the PEIN website indicate steady increases since the end of the project. The PEIN website obviously allows for a very comprehensive array of information to be available on Pacific environment. It includes for each of the 21 Pacific countries and territories (including the American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas not covered by EU), a country profile, country reports from the different institutions, a section of information from the country's environment institutions, academic literature, links to relevant country websites etc. For the period May to August 2010, the number of hits on the PEIN homepage was between 32,000 and 42,000 monthly. Detailed statistics from August 2010 show that PEIN website had significant visits on each Country Environmental Library with 6 of them amongst the most visited pages in the site: 387 views for Fiji, 313 for Solomon, 278 for Tonga, 254 for PNG, 239 for Tuvalu, 225 for Kiribati, with all other country libraries with lesser but significant visits monthly.

## Impact to date

The PEIN database and webpage with its wide network of users is certainly making a positive contribution to national capacity for environmental management and sustainable development of Pacific as stated in its overall objective. Among comments from PEIN website users that we could collect from a small e-mail survey, the most significant point to a wide impact as summarized by this testimony: "They have been extremely useful especially on country missions of the project I work with. It has not only been useful for us employees, but has been extremely useful for our country colleagues – (national project coordinators, national project management units, government line ministries). They find all information relating to their country on PEIN (national development strategies, NEMS, etc)." The existence of a comprehensive database, easily accessed from most countries thanks to progress in connection to the internet, is having an impact on the efficiency of coordination. As one of the survey answers points out: "PEIN has provided quick to access information virtually on the countries we have visited. It has practically saved approximately 100,000 dollars of our project money from hiring consultants just to collect and collate country specific information, sector-specific information (strategies, plans, etc). It is also the opportunity cost that is significantly being reduced because it would have been valuable time that would have taken up to dig up such information that is readily available at the press of a few buttons."

## Sustainability to date

The PEIN database and website has been maintained and expanded since the end of EU funding, as it has become a central feature of SPREP information platform and a major service to its partner countries. The librarian and manager of PEIN is maintained through core funding. So far, as expressed by SPREP Director, the commitment of the institution is to maintain the instrument and expand it as far as funding allows. The quality of the work has been linked with the current manager, who has trained his assistant; it would be important to ensure continuity in the approach and avoid fall back such as stopping the regular updates that are allowing the database to be such a useful instrument. Activities for developing in country capacities are now supported by a pan-ACP programme: "Capacity Building related to implementation of multilateral environment agreements in ACP countries" (2007/020-844) implemented by SPREP for the Pacific hub. There is a high level of use of the PEIN in all countries although more promotion is certainly needed. The project has been instrumental in inspiring and helping the setup of WebPages in three partner countries (Fiji, Samoa and Palau).

## Key observations and lessons learned

The project has shown how the use of information technologies can help overcoming some structural weaknesses of small islands developing states. Since it is unlikely that enough funds and human resources could be available and committed in the long term for information management, the virtual environment libraries are now providing more information, in a more easily accessible and cheaper way to many more users.

The example has a great potential to serve as reference for replications in other sectors. Currently there is work on a special task force on information management in the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) working on developing common information platforms and avoid duplications. Obviously there is a lot to learn from the PEIN experience in that direction.