

Inception report: Independent institutional review

June 2024

Prepared for SPC



HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



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OVERVIEW

The purpose of this inception report is to present a detailed methodology, workplan, timeline and draft tools for the independent institutional review (IIR) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). This report is for consideration by SPC and the Community for Representatives of Governments (CRGA) subcommittee for the strategic plan (2022-2031). It is the first deliverable under the project.

Background

SPC has engaged Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) in partnership with Collaborate Consulting Pte Ltd (CoLAB) to undertake an IIR. This review is being conducted in response to recommendations from the CRGA 52 to undertake a review of the organisation within the broader context of the Review of Regional Architecture (RRA) process, in which the Forum Leaders agreed to consider the suitability of the current architecture to achieve the vision as articulated in the *Strategic Plan 2022-2031*.

Within SPC, this review complements nine previous organisational reviews¹ spanning back to 2012, the most recent of which was undertaken in 2022. The evaluative findings from the 2022 report were used to inform decision making and the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031. The strategic plan has been agreed by the CRGA subcommittee to be reviewed at 3, 5 and 8 year milestones.

In June 2023, the subcommittee considered the three-year milestone reviews focus, agreeing the purpose to be alignment, coherence and fit-for-purpose. At this meeting, the sub-committee discussed the merit of an evaluative approach that brings together the evaluative strands of the following three initiatives in a meaningful way:

- IIR
- Three year review of the *Strategic Plan 2022-2031*
- RRA

This evaluative activity is the outcome of the discussion and endorsement. This inception report details how this evaluative activity will be approached by the team.

Purpose and Objectives

The overall *purpose* of this evaluative activity is to:

Provide an independent opinion and set of recommendations to the full CRGA membership on the Pacific Community as a Pacific-owned scientific and technical capability in service to the region.

We understand that the evaluative activity as articulated in the Term of Reference (ToR) presented five key objectives, being:

¹ The nine previous reviews refer to those included in the ToR, being the [2012 Independent External Review](#); [2012 Report of the expert reference group](#); [2014 Governance review](#); [2018 mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 Partnership Survey](#); [2019 Capacity Development](#); [2022 Synthesis evaluation of SPC's Strategic Plan 2016-2022: Capstone Report](#); [2022 Friends of the Chair Review](#); [2022 Australia SPC partnership](#); [2022 MFAT-SPC core funding mid-term review](#)

- Objective 1: To assess to what extent the organization is fit for purpose to deliver regional aspirations and priorities
- Objective 2: To assess to what extent the organization is fit for purpose to deliver the aspirations in its strategic plan in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7
- Objective 3: To assess SPC's operational model, governance arrangements and institutional capacities and identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities.
- Objective 4: To assess relevance in relation to member needs and service delivery
- Objective 5: To review the alignment and implementation process at the three-year horizon of the SPC *Strategic Plan 2022-2031* within the broader context of this institutional review

These objectives provide a detailed and complex set of questions for this review to address, highlighting the importance of an initiative that as agreed, will bring together the three strands in a meaningful way to inform decision-making. In response to the thorough and broad lines of questioning articulated in the ToR, the evaluation team have proposed a slightly condensed version of the questions that correspond to each of the five objectives. The *rationale* for this revised approach is to consolidate and streamline the strands of enquiry, and better collect, organize and make sense of data.

A table presenting the original research questions, proposed revisions and rationale is provided in Annex A. Once this has been endorsed, the evaluation team will populate a more detailed evaluation framework including methods and analysis approaches to answer each of the sub-questions.

Audience

The primary audience for this evaluative activity is the full CRGA membership, CRGA subcommittee and SPC Leadership.

Secondary audiences include (but are not limited to):

- Internal: all Divisions and teams within SPC
- External: development funding partners, CROP agencies, implementing and other strategic partners

Limitations

The broad and complex scope of work put forward for this evaluative activity brings opportunity, but also potential challenges and limitations.

1. **Stakeholder availability:** many of the key stakeholders targeted for data collection during this activity have significant competing priorities. This means their time to engage may be limited, and their responsiveness to emails and other communications may be restricted. In mitigating this limitation, we will work with the Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL) team to identify representative sample early and be informed about best way to effectively communicate and invite participation. We have built in flexibility across the process to ensure that our team are available (to the extent possible) to engage at convenient times and in convenient ways across the stakeholder group.
2. **Ability to triangulate data:** the team has intentionally designed this process to include a diversity of data collection approaches to address the broad scope of this review. There are however some questions whereby we envisage having limited data sources against them, meaning our ability to triangulate across the data sets may be limited. Our sampling strategy prioritises key stakeholders who can provide best learning and response to key evaluation questions. We will use our evaluation team debrief sessions during the evaluation to support sense-making of evaluation findings and use sense-making sessions to validate and refine findings, implications and recommendations with key stakeholders.
3. **Interdependencies with external factors:** a key interdependency of this piece of work is the RRA, with several questions addressing what the scope of SPC's contributions in the region could or should be in a post RRA context. To the extent possible we will work with stakeholders involved in the RRA process but do not have any direct influence on how that process is to be rolled out, including timeframes, findings, and ability to coordinate with this review team.
4. **Broad scope limiting the ability to dive deeply:** the scope of this activity, as highlighted above, is extremely broad. Whilst we acknowledge the various important stands of this work it poses a limitation in being able to delve deeply into all priority issues and related questions posed in the ToR. To overcome this limitation, we have proposed the above-mentioned consolidation of some of the priority questions under the objectives and hope to discuss further prioritization with key stakeholders during the inception process.

Scope

The following parameters are important considerations for the scope of this review:

1. **Assess the implementation of, not results against the strategic plan:** this evaluative activity is not designed to report against the results of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031. It is however to assess the extent to which the operationalization of the strategic plan, with a focus on if KFA 7 and Goal 4 is on track, and to what extent the priorities in the plan are contributing towards regional commitments and the priorities of members.
2. **Assessment of member priorities:** this evaluative activity broadly will assess the extent to which the organization is meeting member needs and priorities though will not delve into country-level detail for all members, nor specific in-depth focuses on programmes, or individual technical areas.

METHODOLOGY

Four primary elements underpin our methodological approach to this project: 1) Localised, 2) Ethical, 3) Participatory, and 4) Iterative.

1. Localised

In working together, HAG and CoLAB will leverage the unique skills of each partner to ensure that the approach to this activity is grounded in contextual realities of the Pacific region. This will help to ensure approaches and processes are appropriate, contextualised and support ownership and uptake.

2. Grounded in Pacific methodologies

Our approach will be guided by the [Pacific Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Capacity Strengthening Rebbilib](#), specifically the Kakala Research Framework to structure our methodology. This Tongan developed and Pacific owned framework centralises Pacific world views in research and evaluative processes. We have used the steps in the Kakala Research Framework to define our methodological approach. More information about the Kakala Research Framework is provided in Box 1 below. Pacific research tools, such as talanoa will also be used to gather data in line with the Kakala framework.

3. Ethical

Throughout our work, HAG adheres to the Australian Council for International Development's [Principles and Guidelines for Ethical Research and Evaluation in Development](#). Respect for and commitment to these principles is reflected in the work that we do and the way that our organisation is structured. The four core principles underpinning ethical research are:

- Respect for Human Beings – We recognise the intrinsic value of every person and are committed to participant welfare first and foremost
- Beneficence – Our actions are done to benefit others; the expected benefit of our research is weighed against potential harm
- Research Merit and Integrity – Our research is well justified, high quality, and committed to a genuine search for knowledge
- Justice – Our research is equitable and non-discriminatory, with unbiased participant recruitment and equal opportunity to participate.

4. Participatory

The participatory approach to this work is as important to the process as it is to the result. The project team will ensure that the process actively involves as many diverse stakeholder groups as possible to ensure a robust methodology, but also that stakeholders feel engaged and can actively and safely participate in the process at a time and in a way that works for them. To enable full participation, we will be able to conduct data gathering in English as well as in French, leveraging the language skills of a French-speaking HAG team member. Shared ownership, engagement and buy in are critical for a successful and meaningful result.

5. Iterative and flexible

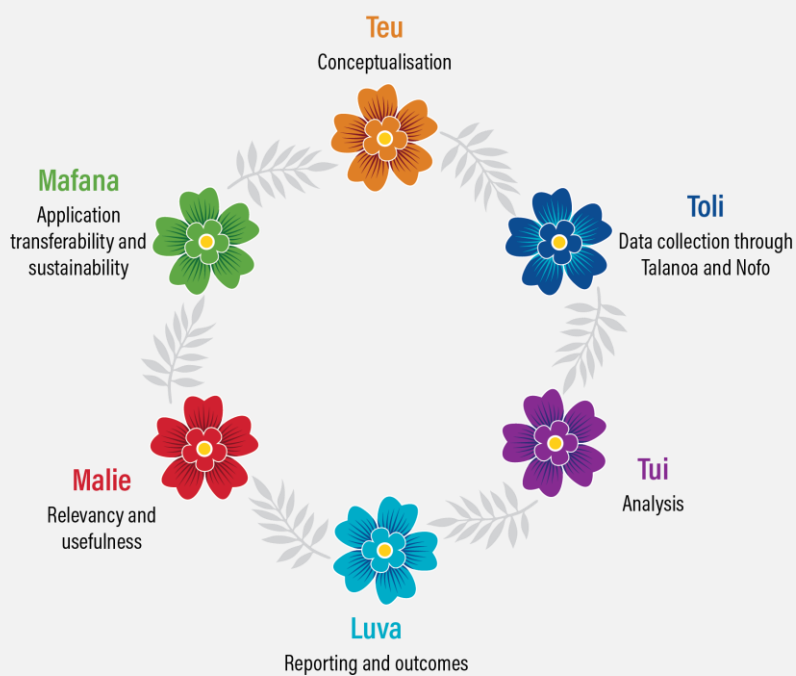
Throughout this project we will continue to iteratively build a picture of the extent to which SPC is a member owned, fit for purpose scientific and technical institution delivering for the region. We will continuously test emerging themes, and ensure that our approaches to data collection, sense making, and validation bring an equal mix of robustness and flexibility to lead us where the data takes us. The approach will also allow the team to adapt approaches and tools to consider emerging themes and priorities.

Approach

The project will use a mixed methods approach combining a series of methods for collecting and triangulating data and validating and making sense of key themes. As articulated above, the project will also use the *Kakala* Research Framework as its basis. More detail about the *Kakala* Research Framework is provided in box 1 below.

Box 1: Kakala Research Framework

The *Kakala* Research Framework was developed to give Pacific researchers a way to frame concepts and theories through a Pacific lens. It uses the concept of stringing a flower garland, representing collaborative processes with an intended outcome in mind.²



² Johansson Fua, S. (n.d) *Kakala* Research Framework: A Garland in Celebration of a Decade of Rethinking Education. Retrieved from https://repository.usp.ac.fj/8197/1/Kakala_Research.pdf

Applying the approach of the Kakala Research Framework, each step of the review has a clearly defined purpose, is linked and connected, and builds on each other. Through each phase of data collection, we will weave the knowledge, wisdom, and experiences of those who participate together to create a garland that is shared by all who have participated in the evaluation process. The approach is also symbolic in ensuring the outcomes of the review are grounded in the voices and experiences of Pacific peoples, and that recommendations are taken forward by SPC to enhance service delivery and responsiveness to members.

Phase 1 –Teu (Inception)



Teu means to prepare; the preparatory stage before the work begins. It is the time for conceptualizing, planning and designing.³

Purpose: to determine in detail the priorities, methodology, timeframes and project interdependencies to ensure a successful evaluative activity

During this phase, we will: 1) hold a kick-off meeting with the Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL) team of SPC and kick off meeting with the CRGA sub-committee co-chairs 2) undertake a rapid, high-level scan of relevant documents, 3) draft the detailed methodology, evaluative framework and evaluation tools. This inception report is the outcome of this first phase.

Output: Detailed approach, including methodology, workplan and draft evaluation tools.

Timeline:

- Draft inception report to be submitted 21 May 2024
- Final inception report (incorporating feedback) by end May 2024 (subject to feedback from CRGA co-chairs) **Deliverable 1.1**



Key communication milestone (SPC): circulate summary of endorsed inception report.

Phase 2 – Toli (Primary and secondary data collection)



Toli refers to choosing objects, such as picking flowers. It involves the process of choosing data that has been identified during the Teu stage.⁴

Purpose: to collect primary and secondary data against the evaluation framework

During this phase we will conduct primary and secondary data against the evaluation framework. A mixed methods approach will be used to capture data from a range of sources. An overview of the proposed data collection, including objectives and sample is included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Data collection methods

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

Method	Objective	Sample
Desk review	To review key internal (SPC) and external (regional, national) documents to understand broader context in which this review sits, and gather key data as evidence to answer review questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal documents, including (but not limited to: previous reviews; reporting to CRGA sub-committee; Divisional business plans, reports provided by/prepared by members of MELNet External documents including (but not limited to): documents related to the RRA process, Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent 2050; Sustainable Development Goals
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	To understand perspectives of key internal and external stakeholders on the appropriateness and future direction for SPC with respect to the organizational and regional context	<p>KIIs will be carried out remote (via Zoom or Teams) and face-to-face as appropriate. Face-to-face meetings provide opportunity for richer learning enabled through relationship and connection. Up to 25 key stakeholders, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPC Leadership SPC Heads of Division and other key positions (e.g Governance, Legal) External stakeholders (CROP Agencies, key development partners) CRGA sub-committee co-chairs, and other representatives Sample of technical representatives from across key areas
Talanoa/ focus group discussions (FGDs)	To elicit feedback from key internal and external stakeholders on the appropriateness of, and future direction for SPC	<p>Talanoa sessions /FGDs will be carried out face-to-face as much as possible to capture the richest data, however remote sessions will be possible if required. Up to 8 talanoa sessions will be held, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRGA subcommittee (during July 2024 meeting) SLT – deep dive (scheduled for June 12 2024) MELNet (June 6 2024) Open door discussions with SPC staff (propose 3 sessions – June/July/August 2024) Mid-term review team for Women in Leadership initiative (TBD) Key regional/RRA process stakeholders (TBD)
Survey	To understand member perspectives on successes, challenges and opportunities to strengthen SPCs role with respect to the internal organisational context, broader regional context and member priorities	Member representatives identified to participate in the survey will be informed by an initial document review and will be discussed and agreed with SPC.
Key meeting observation	To understand how key forums within SPC, and organised by SPC take place,	<p>Observing up to 8 key meetings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRGA subcommittee for the Strategic Plan meeting Noumea (2-3 July 2024) Deliverable 2.3

Method	Objective	Sample
	including how challenges and priorities are discussed, decisions are made and how they are communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and Risk Committee meeting – Thursday 18th and Friday 19th July 2024 • September MELNET meeting (Date TBD) • August PIF meetings – TBD • SLT meeting/s • Divisional mid-year reporting workshops (happening early July 2024 – number TBD)
<p>Case studies (Goal 4 and KFA 7), including sub regional site visits (Nofo)⁵</p> <p><i>*Note that the review team are still looking into alternative methodologies to guide the case study approach, specifically in evaluating progress against strategic futures</i></p>	To undertake a deep dive of progress towards Goal 4 and KFA 7, including perspectives from one sub-regional office	<p>Following initial desk review, interviews, travel to one sub-regional office (TBD) will be prioritized to gather further, detailed data. At the sub-regional level, data collection will include:</p> <p>Meetings with key stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal (leadership in sub-region) • Session with sub-regional staff • Up to 4 key external stakeholders (member representatives, development partners)
Journey mapping (2 areas of focus)	<p>To:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) map the process of convening key groups of Leaders in the membership, including how they are brought together, how discussions are managed and how outcomes are taken forward 2) map the journey of a flagship – how it is/has come together, and how it is contributing towards a more integrated way of programming 	<p>Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One key meeting including Leaders of various areas (e.g Heads of Agriculture, or Ministerial Level meetings). Possible meetings – Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (July 7 2024, Suva); Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting (date and location TBD – July 2024) • One key flagship (TBD, pending discussion with SPC and desk review to determine the most appropriate flagship)

⁵ A complementary research tool to the *talanoa*, *nofo* is a research tool in which the researchers are engaged in observation and immersed in the context

Outputs:

- All data collected and documented (internal to project team only)
- Comprehensive list of references and summary of surveys **Deliverable 2.1**

Timeline:

June – September 2024



Key communication milestone (SPC): share key dates for staff open door sessions

Phase 3 – Tui and Malie (Sense Making and Validation)



Tui in the context of the Kakala Framework means ‘to string a garland’, referring to the analysis stage of research. It involves the process of looking for similarities, variations and emerging patterns in the data.⁶



Malie reflects shared understanding between audience members and performers. In the Kakala research process, Malie happens throughout – ensuring that the research approach is continuously self-reflective and fit for purpose.⁷

Purpose: To analyse the themes emerging from across the data, formulate key findings and validate what is emerging with key stakeholders

Once the secondary and primary data has been collected, it will be organised and analysed against the evaluation framework. The research team will use Dedoose coding software to code the data against key themes. Once the data has been coded, the HAG and CoLAB teams will work together to make sense of what has emerged through workshops to craft key findings and possible recommendations. Analysis will be guided by the evaluation questions and sub-questions set out in the evaluation framework provided in Annex A. Analysis will be both qualitative and quantitative in line with the data collection tools. As appropriate the evaluation team will ‘quantify the qualitative data’ to substantiate the weight of evidence for the evaluation findings.

Once the internal project team has made sense of what has emerged and formulated a clear picture, we will undertake a process to test and validate what has emerged. This will be done through both targeted validation sessions with specific key stakeholder groups, and ‘open door’ consultation sessions with SPC staff to give the opportunity to provide feedback on what has emerged.

Outputs:

- Up to four targeted validation sessions, targeting:
 - 1. SPL
 - 2. SLT
 - 3. CRGA Subcommittee (**Deliverable 2.2**)
 - 4. External stakeholders (particularly those involved in the RRA process)

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ *ibid*

- Up to two open door validation sessions with SPC staff

Timeline:

September – October 2024

- ✓ **Key communication milestone (SPC): share dates for two open door validation sessions with SPC staff (and upload slides/recording from presentation following)**

Phase 4 – Luva (Write up and finalisation)



Luva means ‘a gift from the heart’; the Luva process refers to the reporting and dissemination stage, returning the gift of knowledge to the people who have given the knowledge’ The reporting process should acknowledge those that have contributed their knowledge and elevate and protect Pacific knowledge systems

Purpose: to draft the final report (including executive summary)

This phase focuses on addressing the feedback received during the validation phase and writing up the final report. The final report will be accompanied by a short (4-6 page) summary. The report will be comprehensive yet concise, focusing on clearly communicating key information to inform decision making.

The CRGA subcommittee will review the report and provide consolidated feedback, after which a revised final report will be submitted for endorsement.

Outputs:

- Draft final report, including summary and powerpoint presentation, to be submitted to CRGA Subcommittee co-chairs **Deliverable 3.1**
- Final report and summary, addressing consolidated feedback **Deliverable 3.2**
- Final report and summary incorporating feedback from CRGA **Deliverable 3.3**

Timeline: Draft report to be presented to the co-chairs in November 2024. Final report incorporating all feedback to be submitted latest 28 February 2025. A more detailed timeline for presentation to, and receipt of feedback from SPL and CRGA sub-committee to be discussed and agreed.

- ✓ **Key communication milestone (SPC): upload summary of key findings online**

Phase 5 – Mafana (Communication and presentation for endorsement)



Mafana refers to warmth, or when someone has been touched emotionally. In the context of the Kakala research framework, this is the final step in the process where there is transformation and a shared understanding of the creation of a new solution to an existing problem.⁸ This is our hope when communicating the final outcomes.

Purpose: to communicate the main findings of the review with key stakeholders

⁸ *ibid*

This final stage focuses on sharing the knowledge that has emerged with the main audience groups. The findings and recommendations will be presented to the full CRGA membership via the slide deck that is to be prepared to accompany the main and summary reports. We propose that additional dissemination activities take place to ensure that those who are interested to hear the outcomes of the process can do so, including providing reflections on what the process has meant for them.

Outputs:

- Presentation of findings of the report to CRGA
- Up to three additional dissemination sessions/activities (such as presentation to SLT, presentation to RRA stakeholders and presentation to SPC staff)

Timeline: Dissemination/communication events to be held latest by 28 February. As above, timeline and dates for specific sessions to be agreed, pending agreement on key dates for phase 4.

 **Key communication milestone (SPC): share date for final presentation to staff/upload final deliverables**

The Evaluation Team – roles and responsibilities

This section details how the members of the core team will work together. The team is comprised of Jess Lees and Beth Eggleston (co-Directors, HAG) based in Australia and Iris Low and Leaine Robinson (co-Directors, CoLAB) based in Fiji.

Jess Lees (HAG) will be the overall Team Leader. Jess will be the primary (though not exclusive) point of communication with SPC and will coordinate activities across the evaluation team. Jess will also co-lead on data collection. Jess will be the main lead writer of the final outputs, with significant inputs from across the whole team.

Beth Eggleston (HAG) will provide Strategic Advice and support. Beth will also be heavily involved in data collection, leading remote and in person interviews as appropriate.

Iris and Leaine (CoLAB) will be involved in all parts of the evaluation ensuring that regional and country perspectives inform the evaluation design, data collection methods, analysis and write up of evaluation findings. Together with other team members they will be involved in document review, conduct of KII and/or FGD and also analysis and preparation of evaluation findings and production of evaluation outputs.

All evaluation team members will work collaboratively on planning and conduct of the evaluation. Our evaluation approach includes targeted points for remote team engagement, in addition to ongoing email communication, to ensure that all milestones of design, analysis and preparation of evaluation findings draw on the experience and expertise of the whole team. We will have periodic meetings as a team to continuously debrief on what is emerging.

Engagement with SPC






The evaluation team will work with SPC in a collaborative way to deliver a successful review. The following groups within SPC have specific roles and responsibilities:

- CRGA Subcommittee Co-Chairs: will provide governance oversight throughout the implementation of the review and provide overall guidance to the review.
- Director Strategy, Performance and Learning, the Lead – Strategy and Innovation and the Lead – Quality and Impact: will provide day-to-day contract and process management, including logistical, budget

support and approval of deliverables and payments. The evaluation team will be in regular communication with this team via weekly and/fortnightly meetings. This team will also support with brokering other connections internally within SPC, and externally with key stakeholders

- CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan: will provide quality assurance to the findings and conclusions of the review and propose improvements if required.

Timeframe

Phase	Indicative timing	Key dates
 Phase 1 – Teu (Inception)	By end May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick off meeting with SPC held 1 May 2024 • Kick off meeting scheduled with CRGA co-chairs 27/28 May 2024 • Draft inception report submitted 21 May 2024 • Final inception report including CRGA subcommittee co-chair feedback by end May 2024
 Phase 2 – Toli (Primary and secondary data collection)	June – September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential key dates indicated in Table 1 above. These will be further refined with SPC throughout inception.
 Phase 3 – Tui and Malie (Sense Making and Validation)	September – October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of emerging findings and validation with CRGA by 31 October 2024 • Specific dates for validation sessions TBD
 Phase 4 – Luva (Write up and finalisation)	By 28 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft report in November 2024 • Final report incorporating all feedback received by 28 February 2025
 Phase 5 – Mafana (Communication and presentation for endorsement)	By 28 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final presentations/dissemination activities to be completed by 28 February 2025

ANNEX A: PROPOSED EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Objective 1: to assess to what extent the organisation is fit for purpose to deliver regional aspirations and priorities			
1	Original Questions	Proposed questions	Rationale
1.a	What has been SPC's regional progress in realising Pacific aspirations (e.g the 2050 strategy and other regional commitments)?	What has been SPC's regional progress in realising Pacific aspirations (e.g the 2050 strategy and other regional commitments)?	No change
1.b	Identify 2050 Strategy priorities that are relevant to SPCs work and mandate. What readiness and resourcing does SPC have to help deliver on these?	What readiness and resourcing does SPC have to deliver on relevant commitments and priorities in the 2050 Strategy?	Slight change to focus on <i>readiness and resourcing</i>
1.c	What is SPCs unique role and contribution relative to other regional partners? (including other CROP agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, and other regional development actors)	What is SPCs unique role and contribution relative to other regional partners? (including other CROP agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, and other regional development actors)	No change
1.d	How has SPC contributed to the delivery of regional public goods?		Suggest removing to focus on SPC contributions to 2050 priorities, as above
1.e	To what extent does the organisation's strategy consider the specific needs of PICTs and complement national strategies?	To what extent does the organisation's strategy consider the specific needs of PICTs and complement national strategies?	No change
1.f	What course corrections or changes may be required post-RRA findings?		Suggest remove to focus more broadly on course corrections under objective 5
Objective 2: to assess to what extent the organisation is fit for purpose to deliver the aspirations in its strategic plan in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7			
2	Original questions	Proposed questions	Rationale
2.a	How effective are SPC's governance arrangements to deliver high quality, timely results, in terms of		Moved to objective 3

	goal/strategy setting, accountability and oversight of SPC business, and in terms of collective decision-making		
2.b	To what extent do members have their views considered in decisions and have influence in relation to institutional effectiveness and direction setting?	To what extent do members have their views considered in decisions and have influence in relation to institutional effectiveness and direction setting?	No change
2.c	To what extent have monitoring, evaluation and reporting frameworks and arrangements aligned with the regional and organisational contexts, and provided evidence for improved programme management and accountability for results?		Suggest removing to retain high level strategic focus
2.d	What can SPC learn from its existing partnerships? How can it establish stronger partnerships to achieve its strategic goals and priorities? What partnerships should it consider pursuing?	What can SPC learn from its existing partnerships? How can it establish stronger partnerships to achieve its strategic goals and priorities? What partnerships should it consider pursuing?	No change
2.e	To what extent and how are the SPC values built into and affect decision making processes?		Suggest removing and covering in three-year horizon review
2.f	What are the organisation's key capability, strengths and gaps in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7?	What are the organisations capabilities, strengths, and gaps in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7?	No change
Objective 3: to assess SPCs operational model, governance and institutional capacities and identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities			
3	Original questions	Proposed questions	Rationale
3.a	How effective and efficient are the current SPC services provided to PICTS?		Have moved to objective 4
3.b	Is the operating style, decision-making on operational matters, and service delivery model fit-for-purpose?	Is the current operating style and, decision-making on operational matters fit for purpose?	No change
3.c	To what extent have administrative procedures of allocating funds and managing actions facilitated or impeded progress towards the strategic objectives?		Suggest removing to retain the focus at the strategic governance and operational level
3.d	What are the ideal organisational governance arrangements and structure to support optimum service delivery to PICTs?	What are the ideal organisational governance arrangements and structure to support optimum service delivery to PICTs?	No change

		How effective are SPC's governance arrangements to deliver high quality, timely results? In what way does the governance arrangement support goal/strategy setting, accountability and oversight of SPC business, and collective decision-making?	Have moved from objective 2 as the question is specific to governance.
3.e	What factors are enabling or inhibiting change in relation to SPCs operational model, governance arrangements and institutional capacities?	What factors are enabling or inhibiting change in relation to SPCs operational model, governance arrangements and institutional capacities?	No change
3.f	Are the skills, experience and knowledge of SPC's staff matched to the competencies required to deliver services to members?	To what extent are the existing human resource capabilities, systems and processes appropriate for meeting member needs and service delivery?	Suggest rolling three questions on HR processes and systems into one. This is a big area which could be it's own piece of work. This review can address at a high level but suggest that fully addressing this (reviewing JDs, salaries, working conditions, detailed HR processes) requires a stand-alone review.
3.g	Are staff recruitment processes, job descriptions, salaries and working conditions adequate for improving and enabling technical competencies in Pacific staff		
3.h	Is the operating system supporting the capability needs and workforce development, i.e is there appropriate resourcing, policies and processes?		
Objective 4: to assess relevance in relation to member needs and service delivery			
4	Original questions	Proposed questions	Rationale
4.a	Discuss, explore and assess SPC technical service delivery and relevance of services experienced by each PICT at the technical line ministry/agency level and against wider national development plan achievement	To what extent is SPC's technical service delivery and provision of services relevant for meeting member needs and priorities?	Slightly changed to have a broader focus on relevance rather than detailing each PICT technical line ministry (refer to limitations section on inability to detail for each individual member)
4.b	What priority did the PICTs give to specific programmes and how important was SPC's work to the development programmes of individual members		Suggest remove this question as the ToR stipulates this review is not about specific programmes
4.c	To what extent have the strategies and implementation approaches of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031 positioned SPC a key player in national development agendas?	To what extent have the strategies and implementation approaches of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031 positioned SPC a key player in national development agendas?	No change

4.d	What recommendations are identified for the future focus and strategic direction of SPC's long-term core services, building on the work done under this review, the 2050 Strategy Implementation plan, and the RRA?		Suggest remove to focus more broadly on course corrections under objective 5
		How effective and efficient are the current SPC services provided to PICTs?	Question moved from objective 3 as it relates to delivery to members
Objective 5: to review the alignment and implementation process at the three-year horizon of SPC's Strategic Plan 2022-2031 within the broader context of this institutional review			
5	Original questions	Proposed questions	Rationale
5.a	What course corrections to the plan would better guide the operations of SPC to support members' development needs?	What course corrections to the plan would better guide the operations of SPC to support members' development needs and in the context of the 2050 Strategy and RRA process?	Have broadened to capture course corrections to meet member needs and considerations for 2050 Strategy and post RRA context
5.b	How has the operationalisation of the strategic plan been taken up, including strategic shifts and components of programme activities being well designed and logically aligned to the achievement of the strategic plan?	How has the operationalisation of the strategic plan been taken up, including strategic shifts and components of programme activities being well designed and logically aligned to the achievement of the strategic plan?	No change
5.c	To what extent has implementation of the strategic plan contributed to prioritisation and integration of appropriate strategies to advance human rights, gender-based approaches, social and environmental responsibility mainstreaming, and consideration of target groups (e.g. gender, age, traditional knowledge holders, persons with disabilities, other relevant target groups)?	To what extent has implementation of the strategic plan contributed to prioritisation and integration of appropriate strategies to advance human rights, gender-based approaches, social and environmental responsibility mainstreaming, and consideration of target groups (e.g. gender, age, traditional knowledge holders, persons with disabilities, other relevant target groups)?	No change
5.d	What have been the main enabling factors and barriers to delivering this strategic plan and what are we learning from them?	What have been the main enabling factors and barriers to delivering this strategic plan and what are we learning from them?	No change
5.e	To what extent and how has SPC implemented the pathways of KFA 7 on its journey to the 2031 Future State?	To what extent and how has SPC implemented the pathways of KFA 7 on its journey to the 2031 Future State?	No change

5.f	To what extent is the Strategic Plan 2022-2031 aligned with global, regional and national development goals and priorities?		Suggest removing as this has been addressed in the Strategic Plan development process
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ANNEX B: CONSOLIDATED LIST OF TOOLS

Summary table of methods	
Tool	Objective
A) Plain Language Statement	To ensure that all participants understand the objectives of the project and how the information they share will be used
B) Document review coding matrix	To understand a) the broader regional and national agenda/s, b) the internal factors at various levels within SPC, and c) the relationship between these internal factors and regional and national progress
C) Key informant interview guide	External: To gather diverse perspectives on how SPC is perceived externally, including how it contributes to regional and national priorities, and what shifts need to take place to ensure ongoing relevance Internal: To understand internal barriers and enablers to SPC better contributing to effective, efficient, and relevant service delivery
D) Talanoa/ FGD Guides	External: To gather diverse perspectives on how SPC is perceived externally, including how it contributes to regional and national priorities, and what shifts need to take place to ensure ongoing relevance Internal: To understand internal barriers and enablers to SPC better contributing to effective, efficient and relevant service delivery
E) Member Survey	To understand member perspectives on SPC, how the organisation is supporting regional and member priorities, and what needs to shift to drive more efficient and effective service delivery
F) Key meeting observation guide	To understand how key structures and mechanisms function and to what extent they enable effective, efficient and relevant service delivery
G) Case study guidance	To guide the development of the two case studies, including the parameters of sub-regional data collection
H) Journey mapping guidance	To understand the various stages in two key priority areas, and map the inputs, process and outcomes
I) Draft template for final report	To put forward an initial, high-level structure for the final report to ensure clarity on key messaging

Tool A) Plain Language Statement

Independent Institutional Review of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Date: April 2024 – February 2025

Team: Jessica Lees, Beth Eggleston (Humanitarian Advisory Group); Iris Low, Leaine Robinson (Collaborate Consulting Pty Ltd)

Source of Funding: SPC

This Plain Language Statement contains information about the process for undertaking the independent institutional review (IIR) of SPC. Its purpose is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible the review process so that you can make a fully informed decision as to whether you wish to participate. If you have any questions about the review, please feel free to contact one of the review team. Contact details can be found at the end of the document.

Purpose

SPC has engaged Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) in partnership with Collaborate Consulting Pte Ltd (CoLAB) to undertake an IIR. This review is being conducted in response to recommendations from the CRGA 52 to undertake a review of the organisation within the broader context of the Review of Regional Architecture (RRA) process, in which the Forum Leaders agreed to consider the suitability of the current architecture to achieve the vision as articulated in the *Strategic Plan 2022-2031*.

Within SPC, this review complements nine previous organisational reviews spanning back to 2012, the most recent of which was undertaken in 2022. The evaluative findings from the 2022 report were used to inform decision making and the development of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031. The strategic plan has been agreed by the CRGA subcommittee to be reviewed at 3, 5 and 8 year milestones.

In June 2023, the subcommittee considered the three-year milestone reviews focus, agreeing the purpose to be alignment, coherence and fit-for-purpose. At this meeting, the sub-committee discussed the merit of an evaluative approach that brings together the evaluative strands of the following three initiatives in a meaningful way:

- The IIR
- The three year review of the Strategic Plan 2022-2031, and;
- The RRA

This evaluative activity is the outcome of the discussion and endorsement. This inception report details how this evaluative activity will be approached by the team.

Purpose and Objectives

The overall *purpose* of this evaluative activity is to:

Provide an independent opinion and set of recommendations to the full CRGA membership on the Pacific Community as a Pacific-owned scientific and technical capability in service to the region.

We understand that the evaluative activity as articulated in the Term of Reference (ToR) presented five key objectives, being:

- Objective 1: To assess to what extent the organization is fit for purpose to deliver regional aspirations and priorities
- Objective 2: To assess to what extent the organization is fit for purpose to deliver the aspirations in its strategic plan in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7

- Objective 3: To assess SPC’s operational model, governance arrangements and institutional capacities and identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities.
- Objective 4: To assess relevance in relation to member needs and service delivery
- Objective 5: To review the alignment and implementation process at the three-year horizon of the SPC *Strategic Plan 2022-2031* within the broader context of this institutional review

Methods

The review will use the following methods to generate and gather data:

Method	Objective
Desk review	To review key internal (SPC) and external (regional, national) documents to understand broader context in which this review sits
Key informant interviews (KIIs)	To understand perspectives of key internal and external stakeholders on the appropriateness and future direction for SPC with respect to the organizational and regional context
Talanoa/ focus group discussions (FGDs)	To elicit feedback from key internal and external stakeholders on the appropriateness of, and future direction for SPC
Survey	To understand member perspectives on successes, challenges and opportunities to strengthen SPCs role with respect to the internal organisational context, broader regional context and member priorities
Key meeting observation	To understand how key forums within SPC, and organised by SPC take place, including how challenges and priorities are discussed, decisions are made and how they are communicated
Case studies (Goal 4 and KFA 7), including sub regional site visits (Nofo)⁹	To undertake a deep dive of progress towards Goal 4 and KFA 7, including perspectives from one sub-regional office
Journey mapping (2 areas of focus)	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map the process of convening key groups of Leaders in the membership, including how they are brought together, how discussions are managed and how outcomes are taken forward • map the journey of a flagship – how it is/has come together, and how it is contributing towards a more integrated way of programming

What your participation will involve

To participate in this review, you must be over the age of 18. If you decide to participate, you will be requested to participate in an interview/consultation/talanoa or workshop.

⁹ A complementary research tool to the *talanoa*, *nofo* is a research tool in which the researchers are engaged in observation and immersed in the context

Interviews will not be video or audio recorded. Notes will be taken to ensure the team accurately captures the views and ideas of key informants. Notes will be captured in workshops but no attribution made to individuals.

Risks and potential benefits to participants

Possible benefits of participating in the review include the opportunity to influence the forward direction of SPC in better contributing towards regional priorities and member needs. It is not expected that you will be exposed to any risk or harm by participating in this review. Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected as detailed below.

It is not envisaged that any of the questions or themes arising will be sensitive for participants. However, in the event that questions make you uncomfortable please advise the review team and we can move to the next question – you don't need to answer anything you feel uncomfortable with. If there are incidents (past or present) that arise during the review that you want to report please follow the reporting guidelines of your organisation.

How privacy and confidentiality will be protected

Any information obtained in connection with this review that can identify you will remain confidential. Only members of the review team will have access to the data, and data collected during the survey will not be identifiable. During interviews, group discussions workshops and in key meetings, notes will be taken to ensure the team accurately captures the views and ideas of key informants, and non-attributable quotes from interviews may be used in various outputs.

Participation is voluntary, and the participant has the right to withdraw from further participation at any stage

Participation in the process is completely voluntary and individuals may, without any penalty, decline to take part or withdraw at any time without providing an explanation, or refuse to answer a question. Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with SPC, or the review team.

How the information will be used

The information collected across the data set will be analysed together to determine key trends, findings and inform recommendations. These will be presented in the final report that will be shared with all stakeholders that participated in the review.

About your involvement in the research

- Your participation is voluntary. You do not need to answer anything you don't feel comfortable with.
- Notes will be written during the interview to ensure we record your opinions accurately.
- We will not attribute any comments or findings to you personally, however as the number of people we are speaking to from some specific sub-sets is small (for example, specific organisations), it may be possible for someone to attribute back comments, though the review team is committed to ensuring that identifiable information is not reported as such. If there is something you do not want recorded please let us know.
- If you require more information about the review or your involvement in this review, please contact Jess Lees via email at jlees@humanitarianadvisorygroup.org

If you have any complaints or concerns about the review please contact Beth Eggleston via email at beggleston@humanitarianadvisorygroup.org or Emily Sharp, Director Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPC) at emilys@spc.int

Tool B) Document review coding matrix

Objective: To understand a) the broader regional and national agenda/s, b) the internal factors at various levels within SPC, and c) the relationship between these internal factors and regional and national progress

Objective	Key data
1. To assess to what extent the organisation is fit for purpose to deliver regional aspirations and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional priorities SPCs contributions to regional priorities SPC capacity to deliver on regional priorities SPCs unique role/value add PICT member priorities/strategies
2. To assess to what extent the organisation is fit for purpose to deliver the aspirations in its strategic plan in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational capacities/strengths/gaps in relation to Goal 4 and KFA 7 Existing partnerships/potential future partnerships Member contributions to decision making/institutional effectiveness (KFA 7)
3. To assess SPCs operational model, governance and institutional capacities and identify strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating model Decision making processes Governance arrangements Enablers of effective operating/barriers to effective operating Enablers of good governance/barriers to good governance Human Resource processes, capacities and systems
4. To assess relevance in relation to member needs and service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical service delivery (relevance to member needs) Service delivery (effectiveness/efficiency) to members National development agendas (relevance of SPC strategy)
5. To review the alignment and implementation process at the three year horizon of SPC's strategic plan within the broader context of this institutional review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the strategic plan (institutional shifts) Implementation of KFA 7 (Pathway to future state) Strategic plan implementation (Barriers) Strategic plan implementation (Enablers) Strategic plan implementation (progress towards: human rights; gender based approaches; social and environmental responsibility mainstreaming, and consideration of target groups including diverse ages, genders, traditional knowledge holders, PWD and other relevant target groups)

ANNEX C: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS TO BE CONSULTED

Commented [JL1]: Forthcoming - in discussion with SPL

Name	Position	Email contact	Type of involvement (e.g KII, FGD, survey)
	Director, FAME		
	Director EQAP		
	Director CCES		
	Director LRD		
	Director GEM		
	Director SSD		
	Director PHD		
	Director HRSD		
	DDG (Operations and Integration)		
	DDG (Science and Capability)		
	DG		
	Representatives, Pacific Board for Educational Quality		
	Representatives, Audit and Risk Committee		
	Representatives, CRGA Subcommittee		
	Micronesia sub-office		
	Melanesia sub-office		
	Polynesia sub-office		

External partners

Organisation	Name/s	Position	Contact details	Type of engagement
PIFS				
SPREP				
USAID				
MFAT				
DFAT				
UN Agencies				
Thematic partners				
Pacific Youth Council				