

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS
AND ADMINISTRATIONS**

(Suva, Fiji, 5-7 November 2003)

SPC REGIONAL SECTORAL MEETINGS

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

1. The 32nd meeting of the SPC Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 32) discussed an information paper on the Secretariat's plans to rationalise SPC Regional Sectoral Meetings. CRGA 32 asked for more information to be presented to CRGA 33 on the financial aspects of the new policy. To summarise the paper presented to CRGA 32 last year, the Secretariat is balancing a more regular frequency of regional sectoral meetings by reducing the core funding provided to each.
2. The term "Regional Sectoral Meetings" now refers to a recognised standard set of sectoral meetings, no more than one per SPC programme and sometimes covering the scope of more than one programme, as follows: Agriculture, Culture, Fisheries (Coastal + Oceanic), Forestry, Public Health, Maritime, Statistics + Demography, Women, Youth. The three large-programme meetings (Agriculture, Fisheries and Health) are provided core funds biennially, and the other meetings triennially.
3. Under the new policy, the core budget provides for approximately half the cost of each these meetings. Programmes are now required to obtain supplementary funding, or share costs with another organisation, or require representatives to part-fund their own travel costs. As with cost-sharing exercises, this serves as another check that only fully justified meetings are held, and also provides more consistent access to core funds by the whole range of programmes, as well as promoting more regular consultations with member country sectoral specialists. Programmes that have already held meetings since the introduction of the new policy have found that a reasonable amount of SPC "seed" funding usually results in other sources of support or matching funding being more readily available.
4. This policy will probably result in core budget savings over the probable long-term core expenditure that would have occurred under the previous policy, where full core funding was provided to a less-well defined set of sectoral meetings.
5. In summary, the main benefits of this policy lie in greater consistency, and the promotion of cost-sharing. The policy will also be at least cost-neutral (or lead to some savings for the core budget).

RECOMMENDATION

6. CRGA is invited to note the financial aspects of the new policy on regional sectoral meetings.