

**FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(5–6 November 2024, Papeete, French Polynesia)

Working Paper

**WORKING PAPER NO 4. INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (IIR) OF THE PACIFIC
COMMUNITY (SPC)**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Paper summary

1. This paper outlines the work led by the CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan (the Subcommittee) to progress CRGA 52's recommendation to undertake an independent institutional review (IIR) of the Pacific Community (SPC) within the context of the review of the regional architecture (RRA) process.
2. The paper outlines the process taken by the Secretariat on behalf of the Subcommittee to procure independent consultants for the IIR.
3. The paper details the five-phase approach undertaken by the consultants and provides the Overview of Emerging Findings (Overview) [Annex A] prepared by the consultants.
4. The paper also includes a list of guiding questions to facilitate member consideration of the DRAFT Final Report.

Key points

5. At CRGA 52 members agreed to undertake an independent institutional review of SPC to continue work undertaken by the Friends of the Chair Group.
6. At CRGA 53 members approved the terms of reference co-created by the CRGA Subcommittee over three drafting sessions. Agreement was made for the CRGA Subcommittee to act as the appropriate vehicle to lead the member-led, independent review, with the Secretariat providing support functions.
7. In the past year, the Subcommittee has led a competitive procurement process to engage Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) and Collaborate Consulting (CoLAB) to undertake the review. The consultants have provided an inception report, presented to the Subcommittee for approval.

8. The inception report outlines five phases to the review, following the *Kakala* Research Framework.¹
9. The consultants have completed a desktop review of evidence and engaged with members, stakeholders and staff, and are completing analysis.
10. The Overview is a synthesis of the primary and secondary data presented by the consultants for member consideration.

Recommendations

11. CRGA is requested to:
 - i. note the member-led process to engage and guide independent consultants with their review;
 - ii. consider the guiding questions within this paper for validating the Overview of Emerging Findings;
 - iii. make suggestions for the DRAFT Final Report; and
 - iv. approve the recommendations as put forward by the Secretariat.

¹ Johansson-Fua, S. (2023). *Kakala Research Framework*. In: Okoko, J.M., Tunison, S., Walker, K.D. (eds) *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods*. Springer Texts in Education. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04394-9_44.

Background

12. The terms of reference for the IIR were approved at CRGA 53. It was also agreed that the CRGA Subcommittee be the guiding *kaitiaki* of this process, with the Secretariat supporting procurement, logistics and member engagement throughout the review process.
13. Procurement for the IIR consultancy took place between 24 January and 26 March 2024. SPC's Legal team was engaged early to ensure an independent and member-led process, in alignment with SPC's procurement policy and principles of high ethical standards, value for money, open competition and social and environmental responsibility. To ensure a member-led process, the CRGA Subcommittee Co-Chairs participated in the Technical Evaluation Committee and the Procurement Committee, with oversight of the procurement process at each stage.
14. Each stage of the procurement process is outlined in the table below.

Stage	Date
<p>Publication of the request for proposal (RFP)</p> <p>This RFP was advertised on the SPC website as well as the Development Aid and Tenders.Net websites.</p>	<p>24/01/24 21/02/24</p>
<p>Bid opening by procurement team</p> <p>The Procurement team checked that all the bids were submitted in compliance with the process (separate technical proposal and financial proposal, receipt of all required documents such as conflict of interest declarations and due diligence forms).</p>	<p>23/02/24</p>
<p>Technical Committee evaluated bids</p> <p>A first assessment of the submissions was carried out by the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC). Part of the technical evaluation process includes bid presentations, and the next step involved inviting the shortlisted bidders who scored over the 70% threshold to present their bids.</p>	<p>27/02/24</p>
<p>Procurement Committee considered TEC report</p> <p>The report from TEC was considered by the Procurement Committee, including a detailed analysis of the 10 bids received, information for careful consideration and legal advice regarding potential perceived conflicts of interest, and recommendations for bid presentations.</p>	<p>19/03/24</p>
<p>Technical presentations by shortlisted bidders</p> <p>Three bidders were provided with 20 minutes for presentations followed by a further 10 minutes for Q&As.</p>	<p>21/03/24</p>
<p>Procurement Committee's final consideration of technical proposals, presentations and financial bids</p> <p>The analysis of the initial bid evaluation, the bid presentation and the financial evaluation was considered by the final Procurement Committee. Based on the final rankings and considered discussion by the Procurement Committee, a final decision was made regarding the successful bidder.</p>	<p>26/03/24</p>
<p>Contract signature</p> <p>Contract signed between HAG/CoLAB and SPC.</p>	<p>19/04/2024</p>

15. In summary, 10 technical bids were assessed by TEC. Three bidders were shortlisted and invited to present their technical bids. All shortlisted bidders had experience working in the Pacific and scored highly on the criterion good knowledge of the Pacific, including on regionalism (governance mechanisms) and the regional architecture.
16. Based on the Procurement Committee's final consideration of the technical and financial bids, the IIR contract was offered to a partnership consultancy between Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) based in Melbourne, Australia and Collaborate Consulting (CoLAB) based in Suva, Fiji. The consultants were selected based on their experience, an approach emphasising values and partnership, and value for money. The contract between SPC and HAG and CoLAB was signed on 19 April.
17. In the *teu* phase (conceptualisation of the review), the Secretariat provided the consultants with a list of literature, including nine previous organisational reviews since 2012, to inform the inception report. An inception report was received by the CRGA Subcommittee Co-Chairs on 22 May, with a presentation by the consultants delivered on 28 May.
18. The CRGA Subcommittee approved the inception report, *kakala* methodology and high-level timelines for the IIR at its annual meeting on 3 July. Members emphasised comprehensive engagement and consultation across SPC's membership, including with the Small Island States (SIS) and recommended that consultations include the subregional offices, the private sector and youth. The resulting recommendations should be concise, readable and reflect a balanced representation of views across SPC's membership. Members requested a defined list of high-impact recommendations (approximately 10 in total) that are clearly aligned with the RRA and the future direction of SPC.
19. On 27 June, *Circular No. 24/77 – Update on the Independent Institutional Review of the Pacific Community* was sent by the Secretariat to CRGA members. The circular provided a high-level overview of the IIR process, the inception report, the curriculum vitae of the HAG/CoLAB consultants and invited members to contact the consultants regarding engagement opportunities in the review.
20. From June to September the *tolu* phase (data collection through *talanoa* and *nofo*) included member consultations, key informant interviews, surveys, group deep dives, staff open door consultations, journey mapping and document reviews. To support wide consultation across SPC's membership, SPC's regional offices for Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia supported the consultants to organise virtual member consultations and in-country visits undertaken in Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Complete details on consultations held during the data collection phase are provided in Annex B.
21. On 19 September, *Circular No. 24/111 – Independent Institutional Review and CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan* was sent by the Secretariat to CRGA members. The circular provided members with an update on completed and planned consultations and advised members to contact the consultants for bilateral consultations before 30 September. The circular also provided the links to the member and partner survey open to governments, civil society organisations, the public sector and other relevant development partners. SPC promoted the survey through its official social media channels on 26 September and again on 1 October.

22. From September to October the review entered the *tui* (analysis) phase. The CRGA Subcommittee Co-Chairs received the draft report of emerging findings on 4 October. The draft summary emerging findings is provided in Annex A for member validation.
23. From November 2024 to February 2025 the IIR will enter the *luva* (reporting and outcomes) phase and *malie* (relevance and usefulness) phase. The draft final report will be available to members in mid-December, with feedback invited by members until mid-January. The IIR will be completed in February 2025 with the communication of findings and recommendations in the *mafana* (application transferability and sustainability) phase.

Conclusion

24. Members are invited to validate the draft emerging findings report using the guiding questions below and to make suggestions to include in the DRAFT Final Report.
 - a. Do these findings resonate with you? Why/why not?
 - b. Are there any findings that either stand out or surprise you? Why is this the case?
 - c. Are there any critical gaps? How could these be addressed?
 - d. Are there any misunderstandings or misinterpretations?
 - e. What suggestions do you have for the consultants to take forward into the final drafting of the full report?

Recommendations

25. CRGA is requested to:
 - i. note the member-led process to engage and guide independent consultants with their review;
 - ii. consider the guiding questions within this paper for validating the Overview of Emerging Findings;
 - iii. make suggestions for the DRAFT Report; and
 - iv. approve the recommendations as put forward by the Secretariat.
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ANNEX A

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

Overview of Emerging Findings - Presented to CRGA



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



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Introduction

SPC has engaged Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) in partnership with Collaborate Consulting Pte Ltd (CoLAB) to undertake an Independent Institutional Review (IIR), in response to recommendations from the Committee of Representative Governments and Administrations (CRGA) 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 and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

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.*

There are five key objectives with this member-led review seeks to achieve, which are as follows:

- 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

About this document

This document puts forward the key themes that are emerging from the early stages of analysis of the Independent Institutional Review of the Pacific Community (SPC).

This document was prepared by the review team in early October 2024. The process for this review included a desk review, rapid review across the research team of a selection of key notes, and results from the staff Mentimeter survey. The detailed interview transcripts, alongside the results from the member and partner survey (which closed on 18 October 2024) will be analysed, coded and triangulated for the final report. As such these themes, whilst strongly emerging from the data, are still very much preliminary. This rigorous analysis and triangulation will be ongoing through October and November.

The *objective* of this document is to put forward these initial insights to test, validate and further refine with key stakeholder groups.

The primary *audience* for this report is SPC's governance bodies including the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), and the CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan. This report has been drafted to inform representatives attending CRGA 54 taking place in Tahiti, French Polynesia between the 5th and 6th of November 2024. Secondary audiences include SPC leadership, staff and partners.

The review team would sincerely like to thank all who have given generously their time and insights as part of this review to date, including members, SPC staff and partners. This review has been highly participatory and we have so valued the willingness and openness that we have been afforded.

Methodology

The consultation process for this IIR took place between June and September 2024 (with responses from the member and partner survey still being collected through to 18 October).

The approach to this review was grounded in Pacific methodologies, specifically the *Kakala* research framework; a Tongan developed and Pacific owned framework which centralizes Pacific world views in research and evaluation processes. Figure 1 provides an overview of the stages of the *Kakala* framework, and where we currently are in the process.

Figure 1: *Kakala* framework

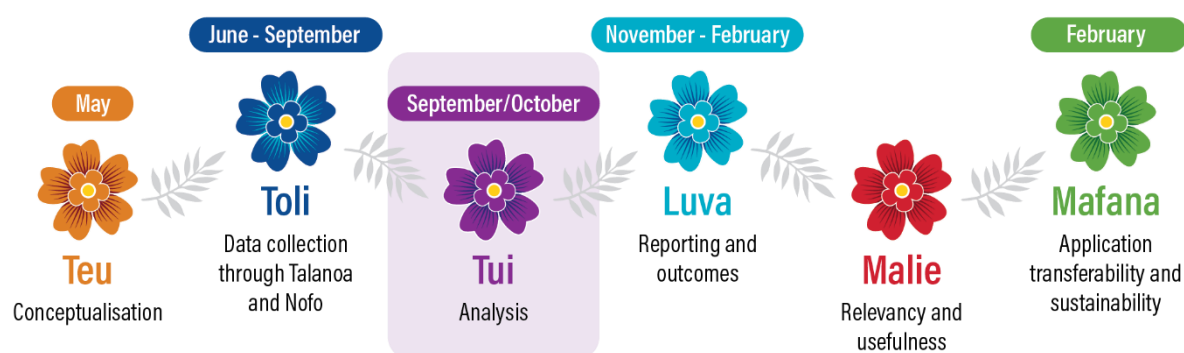






Figure 2 below provides an overview of the data collected through the *toli* phase (June to September).




Figure 2: *Methodology*



-  Review of over 35 documents
-  15 Member consultations
-  3 in-country visits
-  40 Key Informant Interviews with SPC, CROP staff and donor / implementing partners
-  9 focus group discussions/talanoa sessions with SPC staff and partners
-  5 open door staff consultations (4 in English and 1 in French)
-  Survey reaching over 240 staff
-  Survey reaching 114 members and partners
-  Journey mapping of 2 key convenings



Emerging themes

There are seven overarching themes that the team has identified during the early analysis period for the purposes of this report. These themes are summarized in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: *Snapshot of overarching themes*

Theme	Summary
 <p data-bbox="220 331 432 465">Theme 1: SPC's contribution to meeting member needs</p>	<p data-bbox="472 237 1358 338">SPC is contributing to meeting member needs, but there is scope for stronger engagement in country-level planning processes to more consistently align priorities, capabilities and expectations between SPC and members.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 342 1358 701" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 342 1294 376">• Technical support is mostly well aligned with member priorities <li data-bbox="520 398 1358 510">• Positive practices include co-locating staff at the Ministerial level, providing technical capacity strengthening and linking members with key meetings <li data-bbox="520 533 1337 600">• Country-level strategic planning process have been well received to align priorities and capabilities <li data-bbox="520 622 1345 701">• Efforts to decentralize through regional offices are welcome in more closely connecting to members, but could be further augmented
 <p data-bbox="220 817 432 952">Theme 2: SPC's role as a regional organisation and partner</p>	<p data-bbox="472 723 1396 857">SPC is a leading and well-resourced CROP agency, with a mandate that is built on a legacy of trusted partnerships, significant convening power and reach across the Pacific region. There are opportunities to enhance coordination and cohesion with partners to further advance shared agendas.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 862 1396 1261" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 862 1385 929">• SPC is well regarded as the leading scientific and technical organization, of the Pacific, for the Pacific <li data-bbox="520 952 1297 1019">• Strengths include in convening power, technical capabilities and reputation in technical sectors <li data-bbox="520 1041 1374 1153">• SPC is regarded by donors as an efficient and effective organization to deliver through, however there are tensions in SPC's ability to manage both donor expectations and member priorities <li data-bbox="520 1176 1396 1261">• There are opportunities for SPC, as with other CROP peers, to overcome challenges to more effectively and collectively deliver for the Pacific
 <p data-bbox="220 1377 432 1489">Theme 3: Fit-for purpose governance</p>	<p data-bbox="472 1283 1374 1384">SPC has robust, grounded governance arrangements but critical disconnects at the CRGA level and internally are creating barriers to effectiveness and efficiency.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 1388 1396 1865" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 1388 1305 1500">• Whilst SPCs governance arrangements are robust, there are opportunities to strengthen both governance <i>arrangements</i> and <i>communication</i> related to governance <li data-bbox="520 1523 1377 1590">• There is perceived disconnect between member representatives at the governance level and technical line ministries <li data-bbox="520 1612 1374 1724">• Members feel well supported to engage in governance processes, however more time could be set aside for debate and decision making by members <li data-bbox="520 1747 1396 1865">• There are opportunities to strengthen internal governance and between the Executive and Senior Leadership Team, in addition to greater transparency around how decisions are made.

Theme	Summary
 <p data-bbox="233 331 419 398">Theme 4: SPC's operating style</p>	<p data-bbox="472 241 1374 338">The operating challenges SPC faces are well known, well documented and have been exacerbated due to rapid growth. Change is underway but progress takes time and requires investment and collective effort.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 344 1382 779" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 344 1382 454">• The main operating challenges documented and identified are around lack of investment in centralized functions including finance, procurement, grants, legal and HR <li data-bbox="520 479 1382 546">• Systems are struggling to remain fit-for-purpose alongside the significant scale and speed of growth of the organization <li data-bbox="520 571 1382 638">• Some stakeholders feel that policies are not fit-for-purpose, and others' feel that policy implementation and compliance is the main barrier <li data-bbox="520 663 1382 779">• Project-based funding is a barrier to the sustainability of organizational operations; however, progress is underway to shift from 20 to 30 percent flexible core funding.
 <p data-bbox="213 896 440 1070">Theme 5: Strengthening approaches to risk identification and management</p>	<p data-bbox="472 806 1374 902">Despite recent advancements in identification of and management of risks at the institutional level, stronger organisation wide approaches need to be rolled out, and risk management devolved and institutionalised.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 909 1374 1422" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 909 1374 1019">• The need to strengthen approaches to risk has been identified and actioned, with steps including the establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and in-house internal audit function <li data-bbox="520 1043 1374 1153">• There is scope to strengthen the culture of risk ownership and accountability to devolve responsibility for identifying and managing risks <li data-bbox="520 1178 1374 1288">• Operational risks continue to be key challenge despite measures put in place based on learning from COVID-19. These have been further highlighted by the recent Noumea unrest <li data-bbox="520 1312 1374 1422">• Risks around the organisation's ability to identify, recruit and retain talent are critical considerations with the ability to impact SPCs ability to effectively deliver

Theme	Summary
 <p data-bbox="209 331 443 506">Theme 6: Driving progress to strengthen Human Resource (HR) approaches</p>	<p data-bbox="472 241 1326 338">SPC is taking steps to enhance its Human Resource systems and processes, however there is still a critical need for clear communication about the improvements and ongoing efforts.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 344 1385 936" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 344 1385 495">• Significant inroads are being made to strengthen HR capability. Changes have been made to the structure of the team (to: operations and advisory, remuneration, systems and performance management, and recruitment and strategy) <li data-bbox="520 517 1385 622">• Despite investments in terms of personnel and budget, there is acknowledgement that system strengthening is an area for improvement <li data-bbox="520 651 1385 801">• There is an identified need to continue to focus on ensuring that the right people with the right skills are in the right roles; strengthening recruitment processes and retention capability to ensure that the right people can be retained <li data-bbox="520 831 1385 936">• There is wide recognition of the need to strengthen its focus on Pacific-based talent, for example through removing barriers for prospective Pacific candidates
 <p data-bbox="209 1052 443 1227">Theme 7: Implementation progress of the Strategic Plan: Goal 4 and KFA 7</p>	<p data-bbox="472 963 1326 1028">The investments in Goal 4 and KFA 7 are beginning to bear fruit, though progress remains uneven and cultural shifts still required.</p> <ul data-bbox="520 1034 1385 1514" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="520 1034 1385 1142">• SPC has made progress in strengthening institutional effectiveness and delivering integrated programs through streamlined services though gaps remain <li data-bbox="520 1171 1385 1236">• The flagships are the most well recognised efforts to shifts ways of working, though progress remains uneven <li data-bbox="520 1265 1385 1373">• Investments in institutional reforms demonstrate how intention can drive change in priority areas, such as in MEL capability, being held up as an exemplar in the region <li data-bbox="520 1402 1385 1514">• Progress on SER is varied, with well recognised efforts to mainstream gender equality making progress, whilst other areas such as disability inclusion require further investment



Theme 1: SPCs contribution to meeting member needs

SPC is contributing to meeting member needs, but there is scope for stronger engagement in country-level planning processes to more consistently align priorities, capabilities and expectations between SPC and members

“Managing partnerships is always difficult – you have the big and small partners, so programming and strategic interest is one that SPC will have to manage – whether they do that effectively is a question SPC has to answer but whether they are responsive to

members is a difficult position that they are placed in and I am sure one reason why the members have asked for this review”² (CROP agency representative)

SPC’s role in meeting member needs is well regarded and appreciated, providing technical support that is in most cases, well-aligned to the priorities of Pacific Island members. Examples of practices that are well regarded include co-locating staff at the Ministerial level, providing technical capacity strengthening, linking members with key meetings and facilitating connections across technical areas. Several participants reflected on the challenges caused by SPC initiatives taking people out of their roles for international visits, which often leaves capability and resource gaps in-country. There are also differences in experiences and expectations across countries and territories. For example, for territories such as French Polynesia, SPC is viewed more as a development partner, emphasising technical cooperation over assistance. In contrast, smaller, small island state nations called for greater support and focus on capacity building and local engagement.

“SPC need to work on strategies & approaches that compliment or advance national efforts. There's too many regional and national workshops that occupy govt officials from actually carrying out their jobs. The approaches should be on spending adequate time at national level to implement instead of using the 'fly in, fly out' approach. Investment should be directed to bolster national capacity, i.e. more national staff & less regional advisors.”³
(member survey respondent)

There are strong examples of where strategic country-level engagement and planning processes have been well received and go a long way in agreeing on mutual priority areas (such as those articulated in National Development Frameworks) and what SPC has the capability to offer. There is a tension between the desire to further scale these national-level planning processes and the ability of some members to further resource additional consultations and planning initiatives, due to the well-documented resource strain across member countries and territories. This points to the need to have clearly contextualised and scalable processes across the diversity of the membership. Participants also shared the differences between “communication” and “engagement” with members when meeting member needs – pointing to deeper collaborative approaches to working together over information sharing. There are however further tensions in managing this critical difference given the strain which many members are already facing and a need to find the right balance, which is unique to each individual member country.

There are different perspectives insofar as the extent to which SPC is “driven” by partners/donors or led by members. Managing the scale and volume of relationships and partnerships across the diversity of technical areas and number of members is well recognised as a challenge. Efforts to

² Interview 28

³ Member survey respondent

strengthen approaches to partnerships, resource mobilisation and strategic communications demonstrate investment in overcoming some of these tensions.

In-roads in overcoming these tensions have been made through efforts to de-centralise. The shifts to regional offices have been largely welcomed in demonstrating commitment to closer proximity and consistency of engagement with members. The Regional Directors are valued for the experience and expertise they bring to the roles. There were limited examples of some members feeling that the functions were an additional layer of bureaucracy rather than adding value and a strong sentiment that these roles could be elevated further in terms of delegated authority, and that further capability could augment the capability and functionality of these roles at the regional level (for example, through increased technical expertise existing regionally). There are also calls for stronger and more consistent communication around the roles of the regional offices to clarify their purpose, their offering and stronger engagement with SPC via these offices with sub-regional forums such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group and Micronesian Island Forum (MIF).

“Regional Directors are fundamental, have recruited awesome people who know the region, and are incredible political conduits and if you don’t have people sitting at that level- without them SPC will be distant to its members, too far, Suva and New Caledonia is just too far”⁴ (member representative)



Theme 2: SPC’s role as a regional organisation and partner

SPC is a leading and well-resourced CROP agency, with a mandate that is built on a legacy of trusted partnerships, significant convening power and reach across the Pacific region. There are opportunities to enhance coordination and cohesion with partners to further advance shared agendas.

“we need to understand that not all CROP agencies work with the same government focal point...when it boils down to how well we deliver and do partnerships we fail because we tend to work across different government bodies and perpetuate disconnect amongst the government bodies”⁵ (CROP agency representative)

SPC is held in positive and high regard by its partners across member governments, donor and development partners and CROP agencies as the leading scientific and technical organisation that is an advocate for the region, is relevant and responds to the development needs and priorities of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). Reported strengths of SPC include its significant convening power, technical capabilities to respond to the ongoing and emerging issues of its members, provision of quality technical assistance and demonstrated success and reputation in specific sectors including fisheries, health, education and agriculture.

SPC is seen to be working in a strategic and collaborative way with its partners, as evidenced by the numerous events that SPC convenes across key thematic areas, approach to convening from end to

⁴ Interview 3

⁵ FGD 33

end (in preparing for, convening, and closing the loop on outcomes), and the diverse partnerships it holds. At the heart of this approach is connecting into government and inter-governmental processes and mechanisms at a community, national, sub-regional and regional level to ensure SPC support is aligned to member needs and coordinated with key partners such as other CROP agencies, or organisations with similar priorities.

“I have not seen a single coordination convened and led by government where SPC is not there with government”⁶ (development partner)

Donor partners are critical for SPC. SPC is regarded by donors as an efficient and effective organisation to deliver funding through, based on its demonstrated capacity and results, and its position as a regional organisation with reach across the Pacific region where donor partners could not reach through a bilateral programming approach. Partnerships that are built on trust and flexible approaches are enablers of SPC in progressing in key areas, for example in delivering gender-inclusive and socially responsible programs, including contributions to the region’s development priorities and goals. There are however widely recognised challenges for SPC in managing donor expectations whilst remaining focused on meeting member priorities.

“SPC just need to be careful they stay focused and don’t follow the money and other work that is not core work for SPC”⁷ (member representative)

Box 1: SPC as a CROP agency

“Coordination with other CROP is in process and part of a broader, common challenge amongst CROPs. There are times when we experience mandate creeps – which are attended to in the ongoing organisations and meetings we have. Where we fail to strengthen partnership is in working with national government when we do not plan and coordinate and then overload and duplicate work at the national level”⁸ (CROP agency representative)

While SPC is highly regarded within the CROP agency landscape, there are identified challenges around SPC’s role as a CROP agency, and opportunities to overcome them. Stakeholders called for SPC to:

- Share resources and information regularly, particularly at the sectoral level to help connect partners and work in a more coherent way
- Avoid ‘mission creep’ via sticking clearly to the organisation's mandate and respecting the mandates of other CROP peers

⁶ Interview 12

⁷ Interview 3

⁸ FGD 33

- Practice greater coordination and coherence with other CROP agencies and retain commitment to CROP harmonization.

Several stakeholders reflected that these opportunities are not unique to SPC as they are relevant across the CROP group.

Stakeholders perceive that SPC's approach to partnerships enables trust building, open communication, responsiveness and is underpinned by SPC's demonstrated success and capability in building partnerships when done within the scope of its mandate. Stakeholders did however acknowledge the difficult task for SPC is managing the scale, complexity and diversity of partnerships, and the tailored approaches required to meet the unique needs and priorities of different stakeholders. Opportunities to strengthen partnerships include strengthened engagement with civil society; exploring 'non-traditional partnerships; maintaining a clear and consistent approach to partnerships with members; maintaining partnerships within the organisations mandate; and strengthening collaboration with partners on areas that are mutual priorities.



Theme 3: Fit-for purpose governance

SPC has robust, grounded governance arrangements but critical disconnects are creating barriers to effectiveness and efficiency

“There is a lot of work to be done with regard to multilateral governance, particularly between contacts with the MoFA and the technical focal points, the CRGA and the Conference and the other regional technical meetings (Heads of). The roles of each body need to be clarified, as do their links with the various relevant departments of the secretariat: Executive, technical divisions and regional offices in particular.”⁹ (member representative)

SPC's governance arrangements across multiple levels, whilst robust in terms of how they are structured, are understood and perceived differently across stakeholder groups. Participants identified a range of opportunities to strengthen both *governance arrangements and communication* related to governance to with a view to strengthening understanding around how governance works at SPC. Many stakeholders lack clarity around what governance at SPC looks like, with perceptions including that it is complex, layered, bureaucratic, slow and out of date. Figure 4 below provides a snapshot of some of the terminology used in consultations with SPC staff and members to describe SPCs governance in one word.

Figure 4: Describe governance in one word

⁹ Interview 25

political satisfactory duplicating
fair broad efficient organised duplicating
fragmented obscure hierarchical
flexible transparent impractical necessary
inconsistent unclear vague collaborative
inclusive slow technocrat

The most widely reported challenge with the current governance arrangements at the member level is the perceived disconnect between the member representatives (who sit within Foreign Affairs Ministries within countries and territories) and technical line ministry representatives, who are closer to the day-to-day work with SPC at the divisional level. In some cases, there is not a consistent process for technical line ministries to formally or structurally feed into the governance processes. There are also further challenges with change in personnel of representatives within the governance bodies (primarily the CRGA), which leads to time and investment to ensure that new representatives have the level of information required to feed into critical discussions and decision-making processes.

“The tricky thing with governance is you will have different people turning up to CRGA. So, there is something to recommend that Pacific countries to be consistent in their membership. Not getting consistent country positions as well that is the other thing to come through and reminder to SPC members that they ensure their positions and interventions are consistent.”¹⁰ (member representative)

Many members largely feel well supported by SPC through their guiding as part of the governance processes. Members feel that organisation is strong, communication timely, and that they are actively and proactively supported to meaningfully engage in the processes, for example receiving briefing materials in a timely way to support their preparations and being well supported with any logistics they require to ease their participation. Some members feel that the structure of the governance meeting agendas doesn't require sufficient time for discussion and decision making, as updates from SPC are prioritised over member debate.

As an intergovernmental organisation, SPC faces governance challenges related to balancing national and regional interests. Member representation and pursuing of country-specific priorities can sometimes clash with the broader goals of SPC, creating difficulties in prioritising between national and supra-national objectives. Furthermore, consensus-based decision-making can slow down progress.

¹⁰ Interview 11

Internally within SPC, there is scope for further enhancements within the internal organisational governance. Whilst progress in establishing the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been welcomed, the group is not a decision-making body. Challenges were identified by some participants around the function and composition of this large group and the relationship between SLT and the Executive. Suggestions were put forward to consider whether an interim layer between SLT and the Executive could be a more targeted decision-making body in support of the Director General (DG) and Deputy Directors General (DDGs), though this would further layer and complicate what is already recognised as a complicated governance architecture. Further, staff called for more transparency and greater communication around decision-making processes within senior mechanisms within the organisation.

“The decision-making body (Exec) – doesn’t have minutes/papers or records of decisions that were taken. I don’t know how often they meet or what is on the agenda...”¹¹ (SPC staff member)

There are further sub-levels of governance within the organization, for example at the program level. These mechanisms, whilst seen from funding partners and some staff to enable effective communications around program progress, as well as enhance program delivery, sit outside of the established governance mechanism across the organization. There is an inherent risk in this approach if perpetuated at scale, could lead to fragmented and inconsistent approaches to governance, which both risks undermining progress towards Goal 4 (see further theme 7 below).



Theme 4: SPC’s operating style

The operating challenges SPC faces are well known, well documented and have been exacerbated due to rapid growth. Change is underway but progress takes time and requires investment and collective effort.

“[SPC needs to] strengthen the [operational] side of the shop to keep up and sustain growth. Procurement can’t manage the volume...we don’t have knowledge information systems across Divisions, recruitment cannot move roles fast enough...this is the foundation of what our technical work should be able to sit on”¹² (SPC staff member)

Many of the well documented operational challenges faced by SPC stem from common factors. The most common challenge in more effective and efficient ways of working was found to be the historical lack of resource for centralised functions that underpin the organisation, particularly finance, procurement, grants, legal and HR. This lack of resource (in many cases, human resource – i.e specific roles) leads to bottlenecks and reduces speed, responsiveness and ability to meet member needs and regional priorities in a timely way. Importantly, during the period of this review,

¹¹ Interview 1

¹² Interview 30

a business case was being considered to inject critical resources (an additional 27 roles) into procurement and grants; the outcome of which remains to be seen.

Existing systems are struggling to remain fit for purpose alongside the speed and scale of organisational growth. Examples include procurement systems, knowledge management systems and crisis management systems and processes. Some of these challenges are closely linked with perceived gaps in human resourcing, but system strengthening also requires significant investment in terms of the systems themselves. However, this review also found many examples of where these investments have place – such as the 2023 automation of travel system and the strategic restructuring of the finance team to function-based roles, away from location-based roles and the shift towards a finance shared services model. There is a clear gap between the investments and how and when the results are visible in terms of changed practices.

Internal and external participants suggested for SPC to take a strategic "pause" to reflect on its internal systems as a crucial step to ensure it can keep up with program implementation and deliver on its commitments. This reflection can help SPC recalibrate its operations, align resources with priorities, and address inefficiencies that may hinder its mission. Pausing to reflect is not just a one-time event—it should lead to a continuous improvement mindset where SPC regularly assesses and refines its systems. This ensures that the organisation stays adaptive and responsive to evolving needs.

“SPC has really grown quite considerably over the last 10 years, organisations continue to grow and keep growing but they are eventually forced to answer the hard questions, such as when do we upgrade our systems? These things tend to be put off, but they are critical”¹³ (member representative)

There is a tension around the extent to which policies or culture around policy implementation is a barrier to more effective and efficient operations. Some internal stakeholders suggest that some critical policies require updating, though others note that the policies are there, but that staff don't know them, implement them, socialize them, or comply with them. There is also a sentiment from some that there may be scope for further contextualisation of some policies for the Pacific.

The limitations of project-based funding are well known to SPC, and strides are being made to change the balance of funding and models to better support centralised resourcing. Recent efforts to change cost recovery models and develop a resource mobilisation strategy are well received, however funding partners should also continue to consider financing in a more flexible and enabling way as is prioritised by some partners, including DFAT and MFAT. SPC can advocate for more flexible and core funding from existing and new donors, emphasising the need to support the organisation's operational stability, infrastructure, and long-term capacity-building initiatives. Moving progressively from 20 percent to 30 percent and more flexible and core funding will help reduce dependence on project-based funding and enable SPC to focus on its strategic goals.

¹³ Interview 6

“This is a challenge. SPC is not alone in its funding dilemma-because its budget setting is 20% flexible core funding and 80% project based funding but now it is good that they have a resource mobilisation strategy. We see it with their procurement and sometimes with HR and doing their best but SPC continues to grow and are their systems keeping up and how to do this when budget models are not flexible to do this as well”¹⁴ (development partner)



Theme 5: Strengthening approaches to risk identification and management

Despite recent advancements in identification and management of risks, stronger organization wide approaches need to be rolled out, and risk management devolved and institutionalized

The need to strengthen approaches to risk management have been identified and actioned at several levels over recent years. Risk has been elevated within the governance structure of the organisation, with the establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) following the 2012 Independent External Review of SPC is seen as a positive step towards implementing a standardised approach to identifying and implementing risk management. Box 2 below further details the critical role of the ARC.

Box 2: About the ARC

The ARC provides assurance to the CRGA that the organisation is operating in line with approved policies and procedures, and with the highest levels of probity, professionalism and accountability. The ARC has engaged external accounting and audit firms to address priorities within the risk framework approved by the CRGA. The ARC’s role does not include the management of risk, and this function sits within senior leadership.

The strengthening of the SPC in-house internal audit function is an important initiative that positions the organisation to drive further improvement in the area of audit and risk. The review further found that there have been positive steps taken to strengthen the area of grant management at SPC with support from the European Union (EU) Project Management Unit, which was established to mitigate the risk of non-compliance to EU funding requirements and ineligible costs.

“SPC did the right thing on internal audit function to highlight what we need to do. We have multiple partners auditing us. The real bit is how to prioritise and how to get there.”¹⁵
(SPC staff member)

A culture of risk ownership and accountability is not strong within the organisation. There is an identified need for stronger ownership of risk across multiple levels of management in project planning, investments, partnerships, and operational processes to ensure risks are proactively

¹⁴ Interview 11

¹⁵ Interview 32

addressed. Staff feel that senior leadership are risk averse in addressing sensitive issues such as domestic violence support or medical emergencies nor are the policies and processes for staff welfare clear. While risk management is essential, excessive caution can hinder necessary actions, slow decision-making, and prevent the organisation from confronting critical challenges. Several stakeholders identified the need for clearer communication around accountability and ownership of risks, and escalation processes should be outlined to ensure that accountability for risk management is appropriately devolved.

“[Risk management] it doesn’t really seem to be valued – it is not given the attention or the value – everyone is so busy, has so much to do etc but no ownership”¹⁶ (SPC staff member)

Despite progress on strengthening risk processes, operational risk continues to be a significant challenge. Stakeholders identified that the organisation is currently not structured in a risk-sensitive way – for example, being split across Fiji and Noumea. The 2024 Noumea crisis has shone a light on this risk and the impact that it has had on operations and business continuity. Stakeholders did feel that there had been progress and application of learning following COVID-19 with stronger contingency and continuity planning in place, however there is still scope to strengthen crisis management approaches (including pre-crisis testing and adaptations), business contingency planning, and exploring of models to diversify risk related to structure and location. Further efforts to decentralize, including decentralization of authority and increase in technical capability at the sub-regional level (see also theme 1 above) would help to better spread risk.

Inefficiencies in HR processes including recruitment, onboarding, and career development can make it difficult for SPC to attract and retain talent from the Pacific region which is considered a significant risk to SPCs ability to deliver on their mandate and commitments. Further, when funding is project-based (see also Theme 4 above), staff positions are often tied to specific projects, which can lead to job insecurity and high turnover when projects end or new funding is not secured. This is especially true for technical and program staff whose roles are dependent on specific grants and an issue in an organisation grappling with HR challenges, as explored further in Theme 6 below.

“One of the greatest risks right now is HR and personnel retention given the quickly changing environment and staff retention, not only situation in New Caledonia but things are becoming more risky and I don’t believe SPC is keeping up. Where can this sit? this should be done better; in [our Division] we have immense difficulty in recruiting people into technical role can take up to a year sometimes; so if we don’t have this primary capability in SPC- this is a risk and this should be on the list for executive”¹⁷ (SPC staff member)

¹⁶ Staff open door consultation participant

¹⁷ Staff open door consultation participant



Theme 6: Driving progress to strengthen Human Resource (HR) approaches

SPC is taking steps to enhance its Human Resource (HR) systems and processes, however there is still a critical need for clear communication about the improvements and ongoing efforts.

“No clarity in HR policies that haven’t been upgraded. We ask HR difficult questions, and they say ‘the policy says this’ but sometimes the policy is outdated. Systems and processes need to help us deliver this strategy”¹⁸(SPC staff member)

Emerging findings in this review suggest that significant inroads are being made to strengthen HR processes, systems and optimize capability. Over the past two years, the human resource team has been restructured into three capability areas: operations and advisory, remuneration, systems and performance management and recruitment and strategy with the overarching objective to strengthen operational effectiveness.

There have been investments in HR, both in terms of personnel and budget to address process and system improvement, however there is acknowledgement within the HR division and via the 2023 HR audit that human resource system strengthening (including information systems) is an area of improvement. Strong leadership commitment enables progress towards these efforts to strengthen systems and processes. Examples of recent good practice developments include in drafting HR standard operating procedures (SOPs), improvements in the performance development system (PDS), the development of a learning and development system to enable better professional development management, and HR data analytics reporting (SPC Human Capital Analytical Report) to enable senior management to make informed decisions about workforce and succession planning. The organization is also launching the first Learning and Development Adviser role – another example of investment in staff capability and retention.

“Put in place solid data analytics called the SPC human capital analytical report to create a clear picture of what workforce and succession planning is for SPC. ... allows the senior leadership to look at data analytics and see where workforce sits, when to start recruitment process etc and that data is shared with executive. The same is done with all divisions where every 6 months we report on workforce so they can manage better and so that there are no positions falling vacant or able to streamline recruitment process.”¹⁹

The review found that while there has been progress towards enhancing SPC’s HR systems and processes, communication about these improvements is not translating across the organisation. The senior leadership team in HR provide updates to Directors, ARC and CRGA, however this is not flowing SPC-wide to ensure that staff members are aware of the latest developments, especially when changes are made to policies and procedures.

¹⁸ Staff open door consultation participant

¹⁹ Staff open door consultation participant

There are diverging views as to whether SPC is succeeding in recruiting and retaining right mix of skills and capabilities within the organisation, with some positions including technical and scientific roles, partnership and resource management proving particularly hard to recruit for. There is however a strong acknowledgement on the importance in investing in the right people with the right skills in critical centralised functions (such as procurement) as enablers of operational efficiency (see also Theme 4). Attracting professionals with strong relevant technical backgrounds and upskilling or reskilling existing staff will ensure that individuals with potential are trained in relevant processes contributes to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, risk mitigation and resource use. This strengthens overall program implementation and contributes to the success of development initiatives in the Pacific.

There is clear recognition of the need for SPC to continue to strengthen its focus on Pacific-based talent, which has been identified in several previous reviews²⁰. SPC should continue to tap into the deep knowledge and experience that local Pacific talent possess, rather than relying too heavily on external global experts who may not fully understand the region's unique needs. There are also examples within various divisions such as EQAP and FAME where early professionals have progressively moved into senior professional roles. The career progressions are a way of empowering local professionals to take ownership of regional projects and initiatives (see Box 3 for an example). This helps retain knowledge and skills within the region. Promoting stories and case studies of Pacific-based talent who have taken on leadership roles should be encouraged, showing a clear pathway for others in the region. If expertise is required, implement clear knowledge transfer programs where international experts are brought in to train, upskill, and mentor local employees, ensuring that knowledge stays within the region. Further, efforts to assess HR systems and processes to be more responsive to the Pacific context are underway, however further work is required in this space to ensure processes and requirements aren't barriers for Pacific talent. Examples include in roles requiring bilingual candidates, or requiring mandatory levels of tertiary education, valued over significant regional experience.

"Too many people from outside the Pacific on international bands, we have capable and education people in the Pacific"²¹

Box 3: The Pacific Island Professionals Program (PIPP)

The PIPP is a great example of building and nurturing Pacific-based talent, emphasising local expertise and leadership within the region by opening progression growth opportunities for Pacific staff for example, a 2017 participant of the PIPP becoming the Director of Fisheries in Vanuatu. There are also examples of the PIPP evolving from its origins in fisheries to also include in climate change and education. Programs like this play a key role in preparing the next generation of leaders to step into critical roles, ensuring that Pacific organisations remain locally led and managed over time.

²⁰ 2018 partnership survey; 2022 Friends of the Chair review;

²¹ Staff open door consultation participant

By expanding initiatives like the PIPP, SPC and other organisations in the region can ensure that local capacity continues to grow, enabling Pacific Island nations to become self-sufficient and better equipped to address their own unique challenges.



Theme 7: Implementation progress of the Strategic Plan: Goal 4 and KFA 7

The investments in Goal 4 and KFA 7 are beginning to bear fruit, though progress remains uneven and significant cultural shifts still required.

“There are three things that SPC is doing great: 1) Flagships as a vehicle to move the work in a more integrated way, with the people-centered approach as the driver 2) Women in leadership programme, while a first for CROP agencies, it is definitely a programme that can be used for behavioural change, promote leadership, create male champions and strengthen gender equality. 3) Promoting a one-SPC and one-CROP way of working. This shows us as an exemplar within the region”²²

The Strategic Plan 2022-2031 outlines SPC’s commitment to improving its institutional effectiveness (Key Focus Area 7 - KFA 7) and delivering integrated programs through streamlined services (Goal 4). SPC has made progress in aligning with these critical areas of focus, but several gaps remain that affect its capacity to fully achieve them.

The development of the flagship programmes is clearly the most recognised of shifts in ways of working that directly contributes both to Goal 4 and KFA 7. While some early work is still ongoing, and progress across the flagships uneven, the initiatives exemplify SPC’s efforts to coordinate across divisions to tackle some of the region’s most pressing issues. This review however has also identified that the identity of KFA 7 and Goal 4 is to a large extent wrapped up in the flagships, with sentiment from some that this focus presents too narrow a focus on the main issues that have led to Goal 4 and KFA 7 being prioritised.

“We’ve focussed on the flagships, or narrow aspects of shared services etc. Both these things are important, but they are less than half of it. I’ve been distressed to see that in workshops, we talk about the flagships – they are important at leading it but they aren’t the most important point of collaborating across Divisions.”²³ (SPC staff member)

Box 4 further explores how the flagships are contributing towards these critical areas and some of the considerations for the flagships in ensuring that they continue to drive shifts in ways of working.

Box 4: Changing ways of working through the Flagships

²² Member survey respondent

²³ Interview 1

Flagship programs provide a unified approach the four priority issues (see below), both across the organisation but also in SPCs approaches across the region. They mobilize resources by securing donor support, showcasing SPC's capabilities, and promoting internal and external coordination. Flagship programs have in some cases contributed to shifts in member thinking towards system-based approaches, such as moving from food security to food systems. Successes include improved product visibility and collaboration across divisions, fostering a more efficient and effective organization.

In 2023, flagship programs' main achievements²⁴ include:

- **Climate Change Flagship** enhanced capabilities by recruiting specialized staff and linking leadership with expert groups, securing climate finance, and launching regional climate data products.
- **Food Systems Flagship** established an interdisciplinary working group, fostering collaboration with private sector and international stakeholders, and building engagement through events like COP28.
- **Gender Equality Flagship** progressed design phase, incorporating culture and traditional knowledge, and facilitated discussions with Pacific Island leaders to advance gender equality programming.
- **Oceans Flagship** utilized a theory of change process, including capability mapping, and integrated scientific knowledge with indigenous wisdom through initiatives like the Ocean Portal and new coordination roles.

However, challenges remain, such as varied internal uptake, the need for capability growth, clear governance, and resource inequity across the flagships. SPC systems need adaptation to support flagship programs, emphasizing member-led priorities and better resource collaboration. Peer-to-peer learning, conversations at the leadership level and appropriate funding are vital enablers driving these changes forward. Despite the challenges, the flagship approach is gradually integrating and evolving SPC's ways of working.

Further well-regarded institutional reforms that are contributing to KFA 7 include in SPC's commitment to strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) processes and systems, contributing to better evidence-informed decision making and accountability. The leadership of SPC in MEL is recognised and respected at the national level as paving the way to stronger MEL practices, and serve as a blueprint for others, particularly CROP peers. This investment has also seen a shift from six MEL roles in 2016 to 30+ MEL roles in 2023, and a shift from a focus on evaluation to system strengthening and a focus at the regional level, including contributions to the 2050 Strategy and PacMEL.²⁵ Initiatives that seek to strengthen collective approaches in this space (such as MEL Net), as well as concerted efforts to centralise and strengthen results reporting across the organisation and for the Strategic Plan via the Strategic Results Framework (SRF), are all examples that illustrate how investment and intention can lead to significant structural shifts.

²⁴ [2023 Results Report](#)

²⁵ [2023 Results Report](#)

“No one else in the Pacific has MEL capability like them...they are the best in the game”²⁶

Figure 5 below provides an overview of reflections on SPCs progress towards the pathways towards achieving KFA 7.

Figure 5: Insights on progress towards KFA 7

Pathway	Insights on progress
Policy to action: Coordinated strategy and planning improves integrated governance across the Blue Pacific architecture, shifting toward a OneCROP approach	<i>“SPC is expanding into a policy, decision making and technical agency – “do everything construct”. This must be reviewed to ensure it effectively feeds into the capacity gaps and affirm whether it should also touch on policy related areas.”²⁷</i>
Data, statistics and knowledge: Regional data ecosystems and improved data governance enable greater data sharing and empower members too use evidence for decision-making	<i>“SPC’s emphasis on learning from data as well as information management is commendable. This is too often lacking in other institutions, and I hope executive and leadership support for information and knowledge management continues at SPC, seeing it also as knowledge custodianship...Hoping that SPC continues on this path and brings other CROP agencies along with it.”²⁸</i>
Innovation and research: Strengthened cross-SPC planning and communication, innovations in our business systems and funding for internal innovation, drives necessary transformations	<i>“SPC is an organisation that is very committed to continuous improvement and has become a very sophisticated well run organisation and still wanting to get better. [They] set a good standard for accountability, culture, innovation and strategic planning...they just need to look at making sure these efforts are commensurate with what the resourcing they have”²⁹</i>
Digitilisation and technology: Appropriate technology and digital investments provide evidence and enable effective engagement for shared and inclusive decision making, networking and learning	<i>In the scientific and technical capability, we have been able to support members in areas like digital earth and making use of space assets which have been free for us to use for the last 30 years but we just did not do it, and other regions in the world are doing it, now we trying to make that work for the Pacific. So we are building the capability and bringing the members along with us in leaps and bounds ahead of other regional orgs in the Pacific in the way we doing work and the how we are doing it.³⁰</i>
Capability and influence: SPC invests in staff and member capabilities and develops gender sensitive systems supported by appropriate facilitates and by communities of practice with deep sectoral capabilities and leadership skills	<i>“There seems to be some sensitivity towards progressing works on Gender and Gender Equality. These trainings should be embedded within the institution and part of induction. These steps will not only help the staff personally but also assist staff to better collaborate with the communities.”³¹</i>

²⁶ Interview 28

²⁷ Member survey respondent

²⁸ Member survey respondent

²⁹ Interview 11

³⁰ Interview 30


³¹ Member survey respondent

SPC’s focus on Social and Environmental Responsibility (SER) has also advanced its role in delivering inclusive development programs that are people-centred and environmentally responsible. Efforts and progress in mainstreaming gender equality are also of note, demonstrating SPC’s institutional capacity to address priority issues that transcend technical siloes. It was noted by several stakeholders that funding and partnerships play a critical enabling role in progressing such issues, with significant investments from donors contributing towards the ability to make strides in gender, and flexible funding being a key enabler for progressing SER.³² While SPC has made notable progress in gender equality and environmental sustainability, the review found comparatively limited evidence of approaches to strengthen disability inclusion across the organisation. Whilst there are examples of progress (such as the work of Human Rights and Social Development, the inclusion of people in disabilities in coastal fisheries, and accessibility improvements to SPC Offices), this continues to be a priority moving forward, acknowledging that some of the enabling factors that have driven progress in other areas are not visible for disability inclusion.



Historically, divisions have faced bottlenecks and delays working with/being supported by central functions (refer also to theme 4 above on operational challenges), which has contributed to the challenges of divisions working in a fragmented way, undermining progress towards Goal 4. Divisional Directors often must seek external funding, leading to divisions being more accountable to donors than to member countries, which detracts from a cohesive, whole-of-organisation perspective approach and compromises the ability to focus on member needs (see also theme 1). There are opportunities to further centralise some functions to overcome some of these sticky fragmentation challenges, such as with services that support divisions in convening critical sectoral meetings – a core contribution of SPC in contributing to regional priorities requiring significant resource and investment.

Next steps: Where to from here?

As put forward in the introductory section to this report, these themes are far from final. Over the coming months, the team from HAG and CoLAB will undertake the following steps moving forwards finalisation of the report:

Phase	Indicative timing	Key dates
 Phase 1 –Teu (Inception)	By end May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed

³² Mid Term Review of the Pacific Community Core Funding (2020-2024), MFAT.

 <p>Phase 2 – Toli (Primary and secondary data collection)</p>	<p>June – September 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed
 <p>Phase 3 – Tui and Malie (Sense Making and Validation)</p>	<p>September – October 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft of emerging findings and validation with CRGA by 5th November (CRGA meeting) <i>ongoing</i> Discussion with CRGA on emerging recommendation areas
 <p>Phase 4 – Luva (Write up and finalisation)</p>	<p>By 31 January</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report with CRGA Subcommittee cochairs by 13 December Final report incorporating all feedback received by 31 January 2025
 <p>Phase 5 – Mafana (Communication and presentation for endorsement)</p>	<p>By 28 February 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final presentations/dissemination activities to be completed by 28 February 2025

Annex B: Data collection for Independent Institutional Review (IIR)

Member Consultations

Fifteen (15) member consultations took place with the following member countries and representative groups:

- Australia
- Cook Islands
- CRGA Subcommittee for the Strategic Plan (2 sessions)
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
- Guam
- Heads of Missions (Fiji)
- New Zealand
- Papua New Guinea (PNG)
- Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Vanuatu
- Wallis and Futuna

General invitations were sent to all 27 country and territory members via circulars, sent out on 27 June and 19 September. These circulars invited members to connect with the consultants for bilateral consultations, if of interest.

Direct invitations also sent out to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau and Tuvalu.

Country visits

In-country site visits took place to three (3) countries, being: the Cook Islands, RMI and FSM.

Key Informant Interviews

Forty (40) interviews with SPC staff and partners, including Deputy Secretary General, PIFS, and Regional Review of Architecture (RRA) Process Leads.

Consultations

Nine (9) consultations have taken place with the following groups of stakeholders:

- CROP agency representatives
- Development partners
- SPC Human Resource Leads
- SPC Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Net (MEL focal points)
- SPC Senior Leadership Team (2 sessions)
- SPC Flagship Leads
- SPC Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

Open door sessions

Over 240 SPC staff were reached through six (6) open door sessions (five in English and one in French)

Surveys

- One SPC staff survey receiving 254 responses
- One Member and partner survey receiving 114 responses

Journey mapping

Process and outcome mapping of the following key convenings:

- The Youth Ministerial Meeting (October 2024)
- The Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting (May 2023)

Document review

Review of over 35 relevant internal (SPC) and external (Pacific regional and Member country specific) documents.
