Enhancing Pacific Capacity – Building Capacity at SPREP for Data Mobilization and Use

Programme: BID
Project ID: BID-PA2020-002-INS
Project lead organization: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
Project implementation period: 1/7/2021 - 30/6/2023
Report approved: 2/10/2023

Final Narrative Report

Executive Summary

SPREP recruited an experienced and high quality project management team to deliver the project. These appointments capitalized on existing structures and personnel. It included key players from the previous BID funded project. They brought experience, confidence and lessons learned along with a clear understanding of where the opportunities were, to add value to aligned initiatives.
The activities as per the Operational Schedule are complete.
Compared with the 2 other BID funded projects that are being delivered concurrently, the "Institutional" project is less subject to delays as a result of the pandemic.
The SPREP Invasives Team has led engagement with GBIF since the start of this project. Delivery of the project activities has led to more integration of data sharing into SPREP policy and process.
Gaining the attention of SPREP Staff is always a challenge - Staff are under constant and unrelenting pressure. It is impossible to expect that they can attend a week long Regional Data Mobilization Workshop. This was demonstrated in Phase 1.
Although only a modest list of data for mobilization are presented here, there is massive opportunity for data mobilization to be institutionalized with the effect of all biodiversity survey work procured by SPREP in the future to be published to GBIF. It is hoped that the datasets identified in the project proposal will be published in the future.

Progress against milestones

Has your project completed all planned activities?: Yes

Has your project produced all deliverables: No

Rationale: Levels of engagement were down generally, due to the pandemic, busy schedules, and workshop fatigue. Despite attempts to make the workshops attractive, we had fewer participants than hoped and many of those in attendance were not from our key target departments. As a result, we didn't get anywhere near the mobilization target.
We did get 52 datasets, however it was across the 3 BID projects. Some of the datasets were different to those identified in the Project Proposal, due to the wants, needs and preferences of the project participants.

Report on Activities

Summary of the implementation of the project activities

The Project Team had a meeting with the SPREP Legal Team to review and update contract templates. SPREP regularly procures biodiversity surveys in Pacific Island countries and territories. Historically, requirements to submit raw data have been overlooked in the procurement contracts. The Project Team developed a series of clauses to update the templates to ensure all biodiversity data gathered under SPREP contracts is delivered to SPREP for mobilization. Legal were open to the

concept and the templates were updated.

The Project Team attended meetings of the SPREP Data Committee and contributed to the development of the SPREP Environmental Data Policy. The relevant meetings happened in Q3 and Q4 2021. A draft copy was sent to David Bloom for comment and his feedback was incorporated into the final document. The policy was endorsed by SPREP and signed by the Director General on 30 January 2022. A copy was uploaded with the midterm report.

Initial engagement with SPREP by hosting a workshop to provide an overview of data mobilization and data use for decision making happened on 24 June 2022. A copy of the report is uploaded with this report.

Annual meetings to discuss progress with data mobilization and data use for decision making were affected by the delay to the initial event, however, we shortened the time frames to ensure these activities happen prior to the end of the project in 2023. It just meant that there were 6 months between meetings rather than a year.

The first of these meetings happened during the Regional Workshop. SPREP staff were invited to participate in some of the sessions to meet with the participants from the consortium countries and David Bloom, to discuss data use and mobililzation.

The Project Team met with the Chair of the SPREP Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Coordination Group to discuss the inclusion of the Data Policy and mobilization into the presentation as part of the SPREP Induction Process for new staff. The concept was embraced by the Chair and delegated to the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division of SPREP.

The Project Team is ably assisted by the SPREP Communications Team. The SPREP Communication Team supported the workshop on 24 June and subsequent events. This follows great outcomes from the launch of the PBIF with associated Communications actions.

Levels of engagement were down generally, due to the pandemic, busy schedules, and workshop fatigue. Despite attempts to make the workshops attractive, we had fewer participants than hoped and many of those in attendance were not from our key target departments.   As a result, we didn't get anywhere near the mobilization target.

Completed activities

Activity: Mainstream data processes

Description: Meeting of the SPREP Data Team and Project Staff to review contract templates
Start Date - End Date: 7/7/2021 - 30/6/2022
Verification Sources: Templates were submitted with the midterm report

Activity: Institutionalize data processes

Description: Meeting of the SPREP Data Team and Project Staff to review and update SPREP Data Policy for the inclusion of data mobilization and use processes
Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 31/12/2021
Verification Sources: Templates were submitted with the midterm report

Activity: Initial engagement with SPREP Staff

Description: Host a workshop that provides an overview of data mobilization and data use for decision making
Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 31/12/2021
Verification Sources: https://www.sprep.org/news/an-introduction-to-the-global-biodiversity-information-facility

Activity: Upgrade Induction Process for SPREP Staff

Description: Include Data Policy and mobilization in the presentation as part of the SPREP Induction Process
Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 30/6/2023
Verification Sources: Communications from the Director of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division were submitted with the Midterm Report

Activity: Raise Awareness across the Pacific

Description: Use engagement events to promote data mobilization and data use for decision making by developing social media and online case studies
Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 30/6/2023

Report on Deliverables

Deliverables - Summary

The Project Team had a meeting with the SPREP Legal Team to review and update contract templates. SPREP regularly procures biodiversity surveys in Pacific Island countries and territories. Historically, requirements to submit raw data have been overlooked in the procurement contracts. The Project Team developed a series of clauses to update the templates to ensure all biodiversity data gathered under SPREP contracts is delivered to SPREP for mobilization. Legal were open to the concept and the templates were updated.

The Project Team attended meetings of the SPREP Data Committee and contributed to the development of the SPREP Environmental Data Policy. The relevant meetings happened in Q3 and Q4 2021. A draft copy was sent to David Bloom for comment and his feedback was incorporated into the final document. The policy was endorsed by SPREP and signed by the Director General on 30 January 2022. A copy was uploaded with the mid term report.

Initial engagement with SPREP by hosting a workshop to provide an overview of data mobilization and data use for decision making happened on 24 June 2022. A copy of the report is uploaded with this report.

Annual meetings to discuss progress with data mobilization and data use for decision making were affected by the delay to the initial event, however, we shortened the time frames to ensure these activities happen prior to the end of the project in 2023. It just meant that there were 6 months between meetings rather than a year.

The first of these meetings happened during the Regional Workshop. SPREP staff were invited to participate in some of the sessions to meet with the participants from the consortium countries and David Bloom, to discuss data use and mobililzation. The final engagement was scheduled for June 2023

The Project Team met with the Chair of the SPREP Environmental Monitoring and Reporting Coordination Group to discuss the inclusion of the Data Policy and mobilization into the presentation as part of the SPREP Induction Process for new staff. The concept was embraced by the Chair and delegated to the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division of SPREP.

The Project Team is ably assisted by the SPREP Communications Team. The SPREP Communication Team supported the workshop on 24 June and subsequent events. This follows great outcomes from the launch of the PBIF with associated Communications actions.

Levels of engagement were down generally, due to the pandemic, busy schedules, and workshop fatigue. Despite attempts to make the workshops attractive, we had fewer participants than hoped and many of those in attendance were not from our key target departments. As a result, we didn't get anywhere near the mobilization target. We did get 52 datasets; however, it was across the 3 BID projects. Some of the datasets were different to those identified in the Project Proposal, due to the wants, needs and preferences of the project participants. It is hoped that the datasets identified in the project proposal will be published in the future.

Deliverables produced by the project

Dataset deliverables

Protected Area Mangrove Data for Mobilization
Dataset type: Checklist
Dataset scope: Distribution of Mangroves across the Pacific
Number of records: 1,000
Data holder: Global Mangrove Watch
Data host institution: SPREP
% complete: 50%
Status update: SPREP has this data, and will work with SPREP Node Manager to complete publication
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2023-07-31

Ornithology of Maloelap Atoll in Marshall Islands
Dataset type: Checklist
Dataset scope: Ornithology of Maloelap Atoll in Marshall Islands from historical reports
Number of records: 5

Data holder: Smithsonian
Data host institution: SPREP
% complete: 100%
Status update: Published
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5479/si.00775630.127.1
Expected date of publication:

Protected Area Seagrass Data for Mobilization
Dataset type: Checklist
Dataset scope: : Distribution of Seagrass in Protected Areas throughout the Pacific
Number of records: 1,000
Data holder: United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
Data host institution: SPREP
% complete: 50%
Status update: Partially dititalised
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2023-07-31

Distribution of Coral Reefs
Dataset type: Checklist
Dataset scope: Geographic checklist
Number of records: 1,000
Data holder: United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
Data host institution: SPREP
% complete: 50%
Status update: Partially Digitized
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2023-07-31

Other deliverables

Mainstream data processes
Description: Review contract templates and include clauses for the provision of data and data mobilization
% complete: 100%
Status update: Complete
Sources of verification: Report

Institutionalize Data Processes
Description: Review and update SPREP Data Policy for the inclusion of data mobilization and use processes
% complete: 100%
Status update: Complete
Sources of verification: SPREP's Data Policy is updated for the inclusion of data mobilization and use processes. This activity will be reported on in standard project reporting processes. See report attachments.

Upgrade Induction Process for SPREP Staff
Description: Include Data Policy and mobilization in the presentation as part of the SPREP Induction Process
% complete: 100%
Status update: Complete
Sources of verification: SPREP Staff Induction Presentations have been updated to include data policy and mobilization.

Initial Engagement with SPREP Staff
Description: Host a workshop that provides an overview of data mobilization and data use for decision making
% complete: 100%
Status update: Complete
Sources of verification: https://www.sprep.org/news/an-introduction-to-the-global-biodiversity-information-facility

Raise Awareness across the Pacific
Description: Engage with the SPREP Communications Team to promote data mobilization and data use for decision making by developing social media and online case studies
% complete: 100%
Status update: This work is ongoing and following on from a successful PBIF launch
Sources of verification: https://pbif.sprep.org/news/

Introduction to GBIF for SPREP staff

Dates: 2022-06-24 - 2022-06-24
Organizing institution: SPREP
Country: Samoa
Number of participants: 20
Comments: An introduction to GBIF for SPREP Staff
Website or sources of verification: https://pbif.sprep.org/posts/en/2022/an-introduction-to-the-global-biodiversity-information-facility/

Pacific Regional GBIF Workshop

Dates: 2022-11-14 - 2022-11-18
Organizing institution: SPREP
Country: Samoa
Number of participants: 20
Comments:
Website or sources of verification: https://pbif.sprep.org/posts/en/2022/enhancing-capacity-in-the-pacific-to-digitise-biodiversity-data/

GBIF Networking Lunch – SPREP Staff

Dates: 2022-11-18 - 2022-11-18
Organizing institution: SPREP
Country: SAmoa
Number of participants: 30
Comments:
Website or sources of verification: report attached

Communications and visibility

The project webpage provides another opportunity for project visibility. We have reviewed the page and have nothing further to add at this stage.
The primary focus of the planned communication actions was the Initial Engagement Event for SPREP Staff and subsequent follow up meetings. This is effectively a public declaration of SPREPs support for GBIF and engagement with data sharing and data use for decision making. The idea is that this will lead to increased interest from the SPREP member countries and territories, further promotion of the PBIF and the increased institutionalization of data mobilization and use processes.

Monitoring and evaluation

Final Evaluation

Levels of engagement were down generally, due to the pandemic, busy schedules, and workshop fatigue. Despite attempts to make the workshops attractive, we had fewer participants than hoped and many of those in attendance were not from our key target departments. As a result, we didn't get anywhere near the mobilization target.

Best Practices and Lessons learned

We need to find more effective ways to engage SPREP staff. This lesson also highlights the need for a GBIF representative to be based here at SPREP that can increase the visibility and presence of GBIF in the region.

Post Project activities

It is hoped that the datasets identified in the project proposal will be published in the future.

Sustainability

Sustainability Plans

The sustainability plan from the project proposal was accurate. The benefits of these amendments to process will be sustained.

"Share Pacific Invasive Species data using GBIF" was reviewed and updated to include information about the Pacific Biodiversity Information Facility. This includes a significant section on how to access data to support more informed decision making added to the set of existing Battler Series publications. These aim to take technical and scientific information and present these in a way that is accessible, engaging and educational for Pacific people. The guide is available in French also.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation

Despite the challenges and uncertainty, we managed to get the project activities completed. However, as previously described, the levels of engagement were not what we had anticipated or hoped for. For many Pacific Island communities, the pandemic presented existential challenges with severe economic impacts due to the loss of tourism, travel and commercial activity generally. When the borders finally opened, many of our partner agencies were forced to prioritise engagement and activities in extreme ways. This affected SPREP staff also.
During the project implementation period, our partner countries faced cyclones, volcanic eruptions, civil unrest, earthquakes, tsunamis, infrastructure failure and a global pandemic.
Due to the travel restrictions, the window for many of the project activities was very limited and the road to recovery for many of the Pacific Islands will be very long.