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

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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: 14/6/2022

Narrative Midterm report

Executive Summary

The Building Capacity at SPREP for Data Mobilization and Use project has made steady progress and is largely on track.

We have developed an excellent project management team. The development of the team capitalizes on existing structures and personnel. It includes key players from the previous BID funded project. The team have been carefully recruited under various projects. It is a high performance team with a culture of delivering high levels of productivity. It is well led and works in a very cohesive way. This is also of benefit to the 2 other BID funded projects that are being delivered concurrently and the Pacific Biodiversity Information Facility.

The activities are largely on track as per the Operational Schedule and we have made significant progress. 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 up til the start of this project. Delivery of the project activities has led to more integration of data sharing into SPREP policy and process. Engagement levels are set to receive a major boost on 17 June, when we host the first SPREP/GBIF introductory event for SPREP Staff. This event has been slightly delayed due to covid restrictions. There will be communications actions associated with this event. These will include publishing a story through the SPREP regional channels and social media.

We are not proposing any changes to the project for the remaining period.

Progress against milestones

Has your project published at least one dataset through GBIF.org?: Yes

Dataset published:

Dataset	DOI
Ornithology of Maloelap Atoll in Marshall Islands	https://doi.org/10.15468/56rj3d

Has at least one member of your project team received certification following the BID capacity enhancement workshop?: Yes

Name of the workshop participant: Kasaqa Temoinunia Tora

Certification obtained: Basic Badge

Report on 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 is uploaded with this report.

Initial engagement with SPREP by hosting a workshop to provide an overview of data mobilization and data use for decision making is planned for 17 June. A copy of the agenda is uploaded with this report.

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

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. Communication actions are planned to support the workshop on 17 June and subsequent events. This follows great outcomes from the launch of the PBIF with associated Communications actions.

Completed activities

Activity: Mainstream data processes

Description: Meeting of the SPREP Data Team and Project Staff to review contract templates
Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 31/12/2021
Verification Sources: Templates uploaded with this 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 uploaded with this report

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 - 31/12/2021
Verification Sources: Confirmed by the Director of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance for all staff induction presentations moving forward

Report on Deliverables

Deliverables progress summary

The Building Capacity at SPREP for Data Mobilization and Use project has made steady progress and is largely on track.

The datasets included in the proposal are still work in progress. The SPREP Events are likely to draw out unpublished data. We will be looking to publish all data during the Regional Workshop planned for either Q4 2022 or Q1 2023. The Regional Workshop is part of the other BID Funded projects.

The Initial Engagement with SPREP Staff Event was delayed by covid restrictions. It is now planned for 17 June. This causes subsequent delays for the follow up meetings. However, we will reschedule the follow up meetings to occur at 6 monthly intervals, to be completed prior to the project end date.

The Ornithology of the Marshall Islands is a new deliverable. Data is currently being digitized from historical reports. The Ornithology of Maloelap Atoll in Marshall Islands is a small subset of checklist data to be published prior to the completion of the project

Progress towards deliverables

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: We have the data. Aiming to publish while building capacity for data mobilization at the Regional Workshop planned for Q4 2022 or Q1 2023
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2023-03-31

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: We have the data. Aiming to publish while building capacity for data mobilization at the Regional Workshop planned for Q4 2022 or Q1 2023
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2023-03-31

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: We have the data. Aiming to publish while building capacity for data mobilization at the Regional Workshop planned for Q4 2022 or Q1 2023
DOI:
Expected date of publication: 2021-03-31

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: This dataset has been published with much more to come
DOI: https://doi.org/10.5479/si.00775630.127.1
Expected date of publication:

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: See Report attachments

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 be 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: 10%
Status update: To be held 17 June
Sources of verification: N/A

Engagement with SPREP Staff

Description: Host 2 annual meetings to discuss progress with data mobilization and data use for decision making
% complete: 0%
Status update: Revised dates now Nov/Dec 2022 and June 2023
Sources of verification: N/A

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: 20%
Status update: This work is ongoing and following on from a successful PBIF launch
Sources of verification: https://pbif.sprep.org/news/

Communications and visibility

The Project Team includes a communications specialist. Jordan Schuster was recruited in 2021 as part of a cofinancing project. His role is to manage project communications through the project activities. Initiatives will utilise the SPREP regional media channels, SPREP website and social media. We have the logo's for the EU and GBIF and are familiar with the visibility requirements from the Phase 1 BID funded project.

SPREP has a separate Communications Team who manage the SPREP website. https://www.sprep.org/ has a regional focus and is a recognised platform for sharing relevant information. The SPREP Communications Team have a web of networks through the Pacific.

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 will be based on the upcoming 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

Monitoring and evaluation findings

Measurement of the project activities against the original proposal and schedule reveal that BID-PA2020-002-INS is largely on track to achieve its objectives at the mid term point.

The Project Management Team is highly capable. It includes key figures from the Phase 1 project who bring experience, confidence and a clear understanding of where the opportunities are to add value using aligned initiatives. The team includes members with complementary skill sets who have existing working relationships and a culture of high performance and productivity levels more usually associated with the private sector.

However, the point of the exercise, in this instance, is to broaden the engagement with SPREP Staff from other programmes and teams. So far our initiatives have been well received by the organization. SPREP hosts many data portals and online resources. One of the challenges is to develop understanding amongst SPREP Staff of what makes GBIF/ PBIF different to the others. Another challenge is to hold their attention for long enough to achieve this and develop their capacity.

SPREP has staff members who have completed basic and advanced training provided by Laura Russell. These people will be called on to provide assistance moving forward. It is likely that they are the ones who will be asked to manage the publishing of data for project managers. As the requirement for data mobilization develops data mobilization should be included in project design generally.

Our friend and Jedi master Mr David Bloom provided excellent feedback on the Environmental Data Policy. We are hoping to involve him in the upcoming engagement events. We have video from Melianie's presentation to launch the PBIF. This will be reused to support the engagement event also.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation

The Building Capacity at SPREP for Data Mobilization and Use project has made steady progress and is largely on track. This project has only been affected by the covid restrictions in a minor way.

The timing of the Initial Engagement Event for SPREP Staff was pushed back due to enforced lockdowns. It is now rescheduled for 17 June 2022. This delay has the cascading effects of needing to reschedule the follow up meetings. However, these can all be completed prior to the end of project in June 2023.

GBIF leads the Biodiversity Information for Development (BID), a programme funded by the European Union. The programme provides supplementary support for activities addressing the needs of regional researchers and policymakers through mobilization and use of biodiversity data.

GBIF