



SPRFMO
South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation

10TH FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

9, 10 and 14 February 2023

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10TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Manta, Ecuador, 9 to 14 February 2023

FAC 10 – Report

1. Opening of the Meeting

a. Meeting arrangements

1. The Finance and Administration Committee Chairperson, Mr Jimmy Villavicencio (Ecuador), opened the 10th meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee and welcomed participants.
2. Chairperson Villavicencio briefly provided an overview of the subjects to be discussed and highlighted the importance of agreeing on a budget that allows the Organisation to continue operating effectively.
3. The list of participants is available as Annex 1 to this report.

b. Adoption of the Agenda

4. **The FAC adopted** the Meeting Agenda (FAC10-Doc01) available as Annex 2 of this report without amendments.

c. Meeting Documents

5. **The FAC approved** the list of meeting documents (FAC10-Doc03_rev1) received in accordance with RoP 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.
6. The Executive Secretary noted that all documents were available via the *Team's* platform. Additional revisions or working papers would be uploaded as they became available.
7. The rapporteurs (Mr Luis Ore and Mr Michael Cipoletti) were appointed. Interpretation was also provided for the meeting and the FAC was thankful to Ecuador for arranging for these services.

2. SPRFMO Report of Income

a. Member contributions

b. Voluntary contributions

8. In accordance with Financial Regulation 4.11, the Secretariat presented FAC10-Doc04_rev2, reporting on annual contributions from Members, any voluntary contributions received, and any investments and other income received.
9. The Russian Federation noted that its annual contribution for Financial Year 2022-23 is outstanding due to difficulties associated with transferring money at this time. The Secretariat offered to continue to work with the SPRFMO bank and the appropriate authorities to explore options for enabling receipt of this contribution. The Russian Federation also stated that they would continue to work from their side to overcome these difficulties.
10. The FAC noted the SPRFMO Report of Income (FAC10-Doc04_rev2).

3. SPRFMO Financial Reporting

a. Financial Statements

11. The Secretariat presented an overview of the 2021-22 Annual Financial Statements of the Commission (FAC10-Doc05).



12. **The FAC recommended** the Commission accept these Annual Financial Statements.

b. Auditor Report

13. The Secretariat presented the Auditor's Report in accordance with Financial Regulations 9.7, 9.8 and 9.9. In the Auditor's opinion, the *"the accompanying special purpose financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organisation as at 30 June 2022, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies as disclosed in Note 1 of the special purpose financial statements."*

14. **The FAC recommended** that the Commission accept the Auditor's Report (FAC10-Doc05).

c. Statement of Transfers of Appropriations and Write Offs

15. The FAC noted that no transfers of appropriations were made during the Financial Year 2021-22; and after full investigation, on 30th June 2022, the Executive Secretary authorised writing off obsolete fixed assets with a book value of NZ\$ 1,847 by way of disposal (FAC-Doc05.1).

d. Accumulated Surplus Account

16. In accordance with Financial Regulation 4.3, the FAC reviewed the amount available in the Accumulated Surplus Account (refer to Page 10, FAC10-Doc05). The FAC noted that the net amount available in the Accumulated Surplus Account, in excess of the three-month operating cost of the Organisation, was NZ\$ 428,816 as of 30 June 2022.
17. The FAC noted that according to Financial Regulation 4.5 the amount available in the Accumulated Surplus Account that is in excess of three-months operating costs should be returned to Members, unless otherwise decided by the Commission. The FAC noted that as the budget was not able to be finalised during the FAC, and that the balance of the Accumulated Surplus Account should be considered in that context.

e. SPRFMO Contingency Fund

18. In accordance with Annex 2 of the Financial Regulations, the Secretariat reported on the status of the Contingency Fund (FAC10-Doc05.2). The FAC noted that the level and resourcing for the Contingency Fund was NZ\$ 159,327 (41% of the level determined in Annex 2 of the Financial Regulations).
19. The FAC discussed the Secretariat suggestion that the Contingency Fund is used to support the expenses associated with securing a new SPRFMO provider for database services. The FAC did not think that this was an appropriate use of this Fund as the purpose of this fund was *inter alia* for emergency and/or unforeseen extraordinary expenses rather than foreseen events as in this case.
20. The FAC noted that as the budget was not able to be finalised during the FAC, and that the balance of the Contingency Fund should be considered in that context.

f. Developing States Fund

21. In accordance with Annex 1, the Secretariat presented the status of the Developing States Funds (FAC10-Doc05.3). The Secretariat explained the outcomes related to the various applications from Members to use the Developing States Fund (in Financial Year 2022-23) to support participation in SPRFMO meetings. The FAC was invited to make recommendations to the Commission regarding the proposed budget allocation of NZ\$ 35,000 for this Fund.
22. The Cook Islands acknowledged that they were one of the Members who had benefited from this fund and were very grateful for the support.



23. The United States commented that so far, the Developing States Funds had only been utilised for traveling expenses, and reminded the meeting that it was also possible for Developing States to apply for funds to support technical assistance and capacity-building. According to information provided by the Secretariat there is over NZ\$ 160,000 available for these purposes and the United States encouraged relevant Members to consider making applications to access these funds if such assistance is needed.
24. **The FAC recommended** that the budget allocation for Category 9 – Developing States for the Financial Year 2023-24 be finalised through the adoption of the budget in the Commission.

g. Scientific Support Fund

25. In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.4 the Secretariat presented the status of the Scientific Support Fund (FAC9-Doc05.4).
26. The FAC noted that in the Draft Budget for Financial year 2023-24 (FAC10-Doc06), the proposed allocation for Scientific Support is NZ\$ 366,000. The FAC noted that most of the items (value NZ\$ 356,000) are funded by voluntary contributions from China, the European Union and the United States. The FAC thanked these Members for their contributions to SPRFMO's scientific work.
27. The FAC requested that the line Item for the Scientific Committee Fund be amended so that the amount of funds needed from the SPRFMO budget is clear.
28. After discussions on the overall SPRFMO budget, **the FAC recommended** that the proposed allocation of NZ\$ 10,000 for the Scientific Committee Fund to be approved by the Commission.

4. Future Budgets and Contributions

a. Draft Budget for financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25

29. In accordance with Convention Article 15.4 and Financial Regulation 2, the draft budget for the Financial Year 2023-24 and the forecast budget for the Financial Year 2024-25 were examined by the FAC (FAC10-Doc06). The draft budget was supported by two supplementary papers (FAC10-Doc06.1 and FAC10-Doc6.2) relating to the Secretariat's proposal travel plan and database development.
30. For Financial Year 2022-23, the net total proposed budget amount proposed by the Secretariat is NZ\$ 1,659,934 with a forecast budget for Financial Year 2023-24 also provided for a net amount of NZ\$1,712,140.
31. One Member requested further clarification on reasons for the cost differences between the P3 staff members. The Executive Secretary replied that each salary band has 13 steps and the two P3 staff members are at different steps.
32. The Executive Secretary advised that in early December 2022, SPRFMO's current database provider advised they would cease provision of database services for SPRFMO. The Secretariat presented FAC10-Doc6.2 containing advice on the current database and data management issues and a pathway to address these through the development of a new database. The FAC thanked the Data Manager for the high-quality advice.
33. The FAC noted that it had not been possible to seek fulsome quotes in time for this meeting, but that preliminary estimates suggested it would cost a minimum of NZ\$ 90,000, and the Secretariat has estimated it would likely be higher to address the issues identified in Doc6.2. The preliminary estimate was provided in (COMM11-WP06). The FAC noted the importance of securing a new database provider and allocating an appropriate level of funding in the budget. The FAC considered NZ\$ 130,000 could be a conservative estimate, and noted that it may need to be partially funded through assessed contributions and partially through other sources of revenue.



34. The FAC also noted the need to resolve this quickly to ensure there is no disruption in data services.
35. Noting several issues associated with staff costs, the performance review, database costs and the host for the next meeting were outstanding **the FAC recommended** the Commission continue working on the budget.

b. Contributions for Financial Year 2023-24 and estimate for Financial Year 2024-25

36. The Secretariat presented document FAC10-Doc07 containing two options for Member contributions with the first option based solely on using the current budget formula. The 2nd option considers the effect of including funding from *Other Sources* of NZ\$ 186,000. The Secretariat subsequently provided an updated document (FAC10-Doc07_rev1) but it was not considered by the FAC.
37. The Executive Secretary noted that the schedule of contributions would need to be updated based on any revisions to the budget. **The FAC recommended** the Commission continue working on the schedule of contributions.

5. Matters Concerning the Financial Regulations

a. Selection and appointment of independent Auditors

38. The Executive Secretary presented FAC10-Doc08 on Selection and appointment of independent auditors and explained that the term of appointment for the current auditors had come to an end. The paper outlines the results of a call for tender process that was run seeking proposals to provide these services to the SPRFMO. The FAC was advised that there was only one response to the tender, which is the Commission's current auditor.
39. **The FAC recommended** that SPRFMO engage Crowe New Zealand Audit Partnership for another term.

b. Budget formula

40. The Secretariat presented FAC10-Doc09 on the SPRFMO budget formula comparing adopted contributions since 2018 with what contributions would have been payable using the current formula as specified in the financial regulations.
41. The FAC noted this paper.

6. Matters Concerning the Secretariat and the Staff Regulations

a. Secretariat report on intersessional activities

42. The Secretariat presented FAC10-Doc10_rev1 covering SPRFMO Membership, CNCPs, Observers, SPRFMO Officers, Secretariat matters, main service providers, SPRFMO meetings, Media requests, Fishery Statistics and Communication activities, as well as the activities relating to SPRFMO's ten-year anniversary. The document also has 2 annexes detailing the Data files received and processed by the Secretariat in 2022 and monitoring of tasks derived from previous meetings.
43. The FAC thanked the Secretariat staff for their hard work throughout the year.
44. The FAC noted FAC10-Doc10_rev1.

b. Staff performance review summary

45. The Executive Secretary presented FAC10-Doc11 which summarised the staff performance reviews. Concerns were expressed with the information presented in the paper and a revised version (FAC10-Doc11_rev1) was offered to better explain the elements considered in making the staff performance ratings.



c. Secretariat Staffing Strategy

46. The Executive Secretary presented FAC10-Doc14 and FAC10-WP10.
47. The FAC noted that many of the issues raised in FAC10-Doc14 were outside SPRFMO's remit, and were instead matters that could be discussed with the Host State. The FAC thanked New Zealand for their willingness to work with the Secretariat and to provide advice where appropriate.
48. The FAC considered conditions for General Services Staff based on a working paper prepared by the Executive Secretary (FAC10-WP10). The FAC requested further explanations for the changes proposed in the paper and confirmed that the FAC must be consulted prior to implementing any change that materially affects the operation of the Secretariat or the working conditions of the employees. The FAC also noted Staff Regulation 13.1 which confirms that any decision made by the Executive Secretary in respect of the application or interpretation of the Staff Regulations after having consulted with the appropriate parties, will be final.
49. Regarding the current conditions for General Services Staff **the FAC recommended** that the internal Secretariat practices relating to the application of Staff assessment be independently reviewed against the UN standard. **The FAC recommended** that general services salaries are clearly and directly benchmarked with rates equivalent to those paid in Wellington for staff of equivalent qualifications and experience. **The FAC recommended** that independent legal advice is obtained on the Staff contracts. **The FAC recommended** that all this information be presented to the FAC11 meeting for its consideration.
50. **The FAC agreed** that in absence of sufficient justification, the FAC was unable to support the proposed amendments regarding working conditions of General Services staff and the matter would be able to be revisited when the above information was available.
51. The Executive Secretary presented FAC10-Doc12 containing a Secretariat staffing strategy. The paper details the current Secretariat resourcing and functional areas and provides an assessment of each staff position. The Executive Secretary stated his view that the current staff roles are appropriate and represent an effective use of the resources which are available to the Secretariat at the present time (being 5 full time staff). The paper also looks at anticipated Secretariat resourcing and provides a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis on the staffing. The paper concludes that the increased tasking coming from the work of the Commission, the increased volume of data being managed by the Secretariat, the need to support the Scientific Committee's multiannual workplan and broaden the compliance activities clearly make the case for additional staffing in the Secretariat.
52. The FAC understood the concerns raised by the Executive Secretary. The FAC expressed its very sincere appreciation for the hard work of all the individuals in the Secretariat and the importance of ensuring staff felt valued within the Secretariat and by the Commission. **The FAC agreed** it was important to provide a sustainable working environment and that this issue could be partially solved through the staffing strategy.
53. The FAC considered the Staffing Strategy presented by the Executive Secretary in FAC10-Doc12. As in previous years, the FAC noted that the Secretariat's current structure may not best serve SPRFMO's current and future strategic needs. **The FAC recommended** that further work continue intersessionally, coordinated by the Secretariat with the support of a Consultation Group.
54. **The FAC recommended** that the Consultation Group be open to all Members, with work to commence no later than April 2023 electronically. **The FAC recommended** that a draft be circulated to Members for feedback by no later than 31 July 2023 and include costs for different structural options. **The FAC recommended** that the Secretariat submit the outcomes of this work to FAC11.



7. Meetings of the Commission & Subsidiary Bodies

a. Date and Venue for 2024

55. There were no offers to host the 2024 Annual Meeting.

b. Potential hosting 2025 & 2026

56. There were no indications of intent to host either the 2025 nor 2026 Annual Meetings

c. Scientific Committee Meeting 2023 and potential hosting 2024 & 2025

57. Panama confirmed its offer to host the 2023 Scientific Committee meeting. Panama suggested the Scientific Committee be held from 7 to 16 September 2023 in Panama City. This period would include a pre-SC workshop from 7 to 9 September with the main Scientific Committee meeting being 11 to 16 September 2023. On behalf of the SC, the FAC gratefully thanked Panama and accepted the offer.
58. No offers were made to host other future meetings of the SC.

8. Office Holders

59. The Executive Secretary noted that Chairperson Villavicencio's first term will conclude at the close of the 10th FAC meeting and invited nominations as per rule 5 of the Rules of Procedure.
60. There were no nominations and the FAC forwarded this matter to the Commission for its consideration.

9. Other Matters

61. There were no items discussed under other matters.

10. Adoption of Report

62. **The FAC10 adopted** its report on 15 February 2023 at 17:05 hrs.

11. Meeting Close

63. The meeting was closed on 15 February 2023 at 17:07 hrs



10TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (FAC)

Manta, Ecuador, 9, 10 & 14 February 2023

ANNEX 1 – List of Participants

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10TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (FAC)

Manta, Ecuador, 9, 10 & 14 February 2023

ANNEX 2 – FAC 10 Meeting Agenda

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING
 - a. Meeting Arrangements
 - b. Adoption of the Agenda
 - c. Meeting Documents
2. SPRFMO REPORT OF INCOME
 - a. Member contributions
 - b. Voluntary contributions
3. SPRFMO FINANCIAL REPORTING
 - a. Financial Statements
 - b. Auditor Report
 - c. Statements transfers of appropriations and write offs
 - d. Accumulated Surplus Account
 - e. SPRFMO Contingency Fund
 - f. Status of the Developing States Fund
 - g. Status of the Scientific Support Fund
4. FUTURE BUDGETS AND CONTRIBUTIONS
 - a. Draft Budget for financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25
 - b. Contributions for financial years 2023-24 and estimate for 2024-25
5. MATTERS CONCERNING THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS
 - a. Selection and appointment of independent Auditors
 - b. Budget formula
6. MATTERS CONCERNING THE SECRETARIAT & THE STAFF REGULATIONS
 - a. Secretariat report on intersessional activities
 - b. Staff performance review summary
 - c. Secretariat staff matters
7. MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION & SUBSIDIARY BODIES
 - a. Date and Venue for 2024
 - b. Potential hosting 2025 & 2026
 - c. Scientific Committee 2023 and potential hosting 2024 & 2025
8. OFFICE HOLDERS
9. OTHER MATTERS
10. ADOPTION OF THE FAC REPORT
11. CLOSE OF MEETING