

# P R E S S   R E L E A S E

## EU-SPC Joint Press Release

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

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*For Immediate Release*



## **New EU-funded project will contribute to sustainability of Pacific fisheries**

***The European Union (EU) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) signed the contributions agreement for a new regional fisheries project today in Pohnpei. The Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region (SciCOFish) project, funded by the EU and implemented by SPC, has a budget of €9 million (US\$11.7 million) and will run for the next four years.***

The project will contribute to fishery sustainability by providing the 15 Pacific ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States) member countries, with a reliable scientific basis for development of management arrangements for both oceanic (tuna) and coastal fisheries. The project will build capacity in a number of areas, including: strengthening of national observer programmes; the ability to collect information on coastal fisheries; and improved management of data from both oceanic and coastal fisheries.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Ambassador Wiepke van der Goot, Head of EU Delegation for the Pacific, noted that the project builds on several earlier initiatives funded by the EU and successfully implemented by SPC. He pointed out that its objectives are in line with the EU's and Pacific Island countries' mutually agreed strategy for assistance to the region, which has a 'blue/green theme' (focusing on the oceans and conservation). 'The natural resources of the Pacific Ocean are fundamental for the well-being of Pacific Island people; but they are also of global interest and concern. We are happy to contribute to ensuring their good management and conservation for future generations,' he said.

SPC Director-General Dr. Jimmie Rodgers said that his organisation would carry out the project in an effective and efficient manner. He observed that the EU is an important and greatly valued partner in the region, and provides much needed support in the natural resources sector. 'It is significant that this agreement is being signed here in Pohnpei,' he added 'not only because of the importance of fisheries to the Federated States of Micronesia and its neighbours, but also because this project will see the first SPC Fisheries Specialist posted to our North Pacific office in Pohnpei. This is in line with our policy of decentralising and putting services nearer to the people who need them.'

The EU is one of the largest donors of development aid to Pacific Island countries and has committed €95 million (US\$117 million) to regional projects alone over the next 4–5 years. ENDS



**For further information please contact:**

**Bernhard BLAZKIEWICZ**  
**Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific**  
**Suva, Fiji**  
**Tel: 679-3313-633**  
**Email: [Bernhard.BLAZKIEWICZ@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Bernhard.BLAZKIEWICZ@ec.europa.eu)**



**SPC**  
Secretariat  
of the Pacific  
Community



**Mike BATTY**  
**Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine**  
**Ecosystems Division**  
**Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)**  
**Noumea, New Caledonia**  
**Tel: 687-2620-00**  
**Email: [Mikeb@spc.int](mailto:Mikeb@spc.int)**