

P R E S S R E L E A S E

EU-SPC Joint Press Release

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European Union signs €14.4 million Renewable Energy Programme with three Pacific Island Countries

The European Union (EU) today signed a multi-country programme with the governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau. The programme provides €14.44 million (approximately US\$20 million) in assistance for a renewable energy and energy efficiency programme that will help improve the quality of life on the outer islands and reduce dependency on fossil fuels. The programme, known as North-REP, complements the bilateral cooperation programmes of the individual EU Member States. It is the single largest financial commitment ever made by the EU in these three countries.

"These countries are very remote from international markets, making them particularly vulnerable to movements in international petroleum prices. This programme will help improve the overall capacity of the energy sector through energy efficiency measures and grid-connected renewable energy and increase access of remote populations to affordable and reliable renewable electricity services" said Ambassador Wiepke van der Goot, Head of EU Delegation for the Pacific.

"Climate change is a serious threat to all countries, but particularly to the communities of low-lying atolls in the Pacific. Because this programme creates energy from the sun, it will help to mitigate some the damaging effects expected of climate change", he added.

The North-REP programme will be implemented over four-years with assistance from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community – a regional agency with a 60-year track record of supporting Pacific island countries. At today's signing ceremony in Pohnpei the Secretary General of SPC, Dr. Jimmie Rodgers, said, "SPC is very happy to be associated with North-REP. Electricity on the outer islands makes it possible to deliver other programmes such as internet services and the one laptop per child initiative".

North-REP is fully consistent with the policy objectives of participating governments and will carry out various activities at national and local government levels to raise the profile of energy efficiency and conservation. In the outer islands, it will provide renewable energy based electricity to households, schools and health centres. This is expected to have a positive impact on income generation and the quality of education and health services - resulting in poverty reduction, improvement in the quality of life and increased opportunities. ENDS



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