

Terms of Reference
for the
**Forum Officials Committee (FOC)'s
Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR)**

Mandate

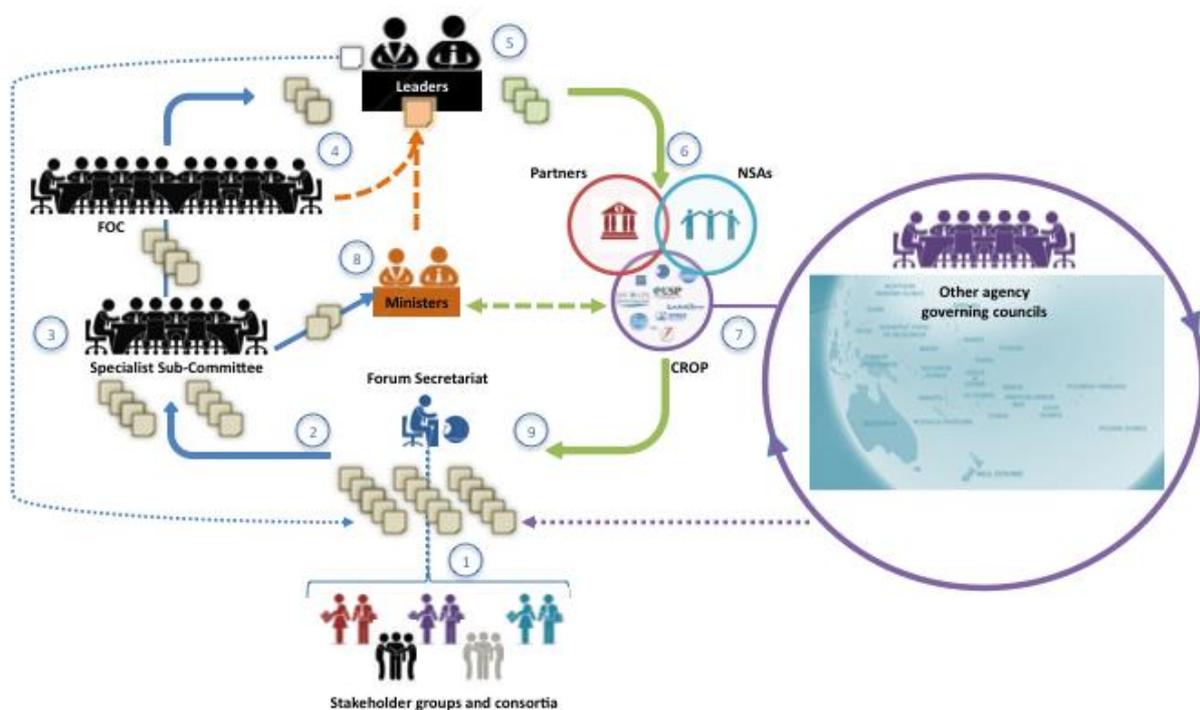
The formation of a specialist sub-committee on regionalism (SSCR), responsible to the Forum Officials Committee (FOC), was mandated by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders at their Special Retreat in Cook Islands on 5th May, 2014.

The SSCR was further endorsed by Forum Leaders at their 45th Pacific Islands Forum in Palau on 31st July, 2014, “to be composed of allocated positions for suitably-skilled representatives from each sub-region, Australia or New Zealand, a Smaller Island State, civil society and the private sector, with the Secretary General (the permanent Chair of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific—CROP), as Sub-Committee Chair and supported by co-opted specialists as required, and be selected by a panel of Forum members serving on a rotational basis” (Forum Communiqué, 2014).

Purpose

The SSCR’s purpose is to play a key role in implementing the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* by identifying and assessing priority initiatives to advance Pacific regionalism for Leaders’ consideration.

The SSCR’s role will be to recommend to the FOC, the representative body of Forum members, which regional initiatives should be overseen by Leaders, and which may be better overseen by Ministers, as set out in steps 1 to 5 of the priority setting process established in the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* (see Box 1 and figure below).



The SSCR will not have a role in reviewing recommendations made directly to Leaders by Ministerial meetings or by the FOC; the volume of such recommendations will be managed through approaches applied at the Ministerial meeting level and the FOC

process for developing the Leaders' agenda. Such approaches will be consistent with the principles of the tests for regionalism set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, with the Leaders' direction that Ministers may take decisions directly in their areas of competence without the need for further review by Leaders, and with the intent of ensuring the annual Leaders' agenda is short and focussed on highest priority political issues.

Box 1: Process for Priority Setting (excerpt from the Framework for Pacific Regionalism)

1. All interested stakeholders will be eligible to submit proposals for new regional initiatives to be overseen and driven by Forum Leaders. Proposals will be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, using a standard template that demonstrates how the proposed initiative is in line with the values and objectives established in this Framework, and how it meets the approved tests for regional action (see Annex 1 of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism). The Forum Secretariat will assist stakeholders requiring assistance with this process.
2. The Forum Secretariat will check proposals for completeness, and will compile all eligible and viable proposals for further consideration by a specialist sub-committee of the Forum Officials Committee (FOC). The list of proposals will be made publically available.
3. The FOC specialist sub-committee will review new proposals alongside progress reports for any existing initiatives. It will evaluate whether any existing priorities should be halted due to lack of progress or unfavourable re-evaluation against the tests; and whether any new proposals should be put forward for the consideration of Leaders. The specialist sub-committee's decisions will be made public and will follow clear and transparent principles aligned with the values and objectives set out in this Framework.
4. The FOC will receive the specialist sub-committee's report to Leaders, and have an opportunity to provide comments or further advice to Leaders. The FOC will compose a proposed agenda for Leaders, including consideration of the recommendations of the specialist sub-committee, consideration of pressing issues forwarded to Leaders from Ministerial meetings, and political issues identified by FOC as requiring Leaders' guidance. The FOC will have responsibility for ensuring that politically sensitive and major regional issues and initiatives are the focus of Leaders' meeting agendas.
5. At their annual Forum, Leaders:
 - Will be invited to consider the specialist sub-committee's recommendations, identify a small number of regional initiatives for the region to focus on (with no more than five, ongoing or new, to be selected at any one time), and provide directions on further policy development, implementation, and reporting;
 - Will have opportunity to discuss other highest-priority concerns raised by Ministers and the FOC for Leaders' guidance; and
 - May propose new ideas for regional initiatives, which would be subjected to the evaluation and priority-setting process set out in the previous steps.

Composition and selection criteria

The SSCR should be appropriately skilled, informed, experienced, and motivated to fulfil its role in identifying and assessing priority initiatives to advance Pacific regionalism.

Membership positions. The SSCR will comprise eight individual members who are citizens of Forum member or associate member countries. Each member will hold one of the following allocated positions:

- An individual from a Melanesian country;
- An individual from a Micronesian country;
- An individual from a Polynesian country;
- An individual from Australia or New Zealand;

- An individual from a Smaller Island State;
- An individual from a civil society organisation in the Pacific;
- An individual from a private sector organisation in the Pacific; and
- The Secretary General (the permanent Chair of CROP), as the SSCR’s Chair.

Expertise and experience. Each of the SSCR’s members should have some of the following attributes, and across its members the SSCR should ideally have all of the following attributes:

- a) Expertise in economics, planning, or financial management;
- b) Expertise in public policy formulation and implementation;
- c) Expertise in sustainable development—spanning social, environmental, and economic areas;
- d) Expertise in gender analysis;
- e) Expertise in pacific regional political economy analysis;
- f) Demonstrated experience in strategic priority setting and high-level advisory work;
- g) An in-depth appreciation of the implementing capacities of country governments, civil society, the private sector, regional and international organisations, or development partners; and
- h) Sound experience in the development, implementation and/or assessment of the impacts of regional initiatives on national-level priorities and interests, and on different stakeholder groups.

Additional experts. If it is not possible to form a SSCR with all of the above areas of experience and expertise, or if the SSCR is asked to consider specific proposals that require judgement beyond current SSCR members’ areas of expertise, additional short-term expert advisers—including, where appropriate, experts from CROP and other regional and international agencies—may be co-opted to provide advice. In addition, CROP Executives will provide written advice for the SSCRs consideration on proposals that fall within CROP areas of expertise.

Term. SSCR members should serve for a term of 18 to 36 months, with no more than three new individuals assuming membership positions at any meeting after the first to ensure that the SSCR as a whole always retains experience and knowledge of the process and regional initiatives under implementation. (Initial terms of appointment will be varied to ensure that no more than three members have their terms due to expire in any six month period.)

Independence. The SSCR should reach fair and balanced decisions that are neither unduly biased towards special interests, nor unappreciative of special needs. SSCR members should not seek to specifically represent the views of a particular group, agency, or country, but rather to make decisions in line with Pacific regional interests. Time spent in SSCR activities will be viewed as a leave of absence from ordinary duties, and will be compensated for with an honorarium.

No SSCR member may be represented by another individual from his or her country; membership is personal.

Selection process—initial committee members

For selection of the first SSCR, the following process will apply:

Panel. Selection of SSCR members will be made by a panel of three senior officials of Member countries—one each nominated by the Forum Chair's country, the former Forum Chair's country, and the in-coming Forum Chair's country.

Applications. A call for applications to serve on the SSCR will be extended by the Forum Secretariat to all Forum member and associate member countries (including contacts outside of government). All interested individuals will submit a CV and an official application form to the selection panel.

Selection. The selection panel will review all applications received, and will identify the best-skilled candidate to fill each allocated position, while also ensuring that the overall composition of the SSCR has gender balance and a broad skill-set across the areas of expertise and experience set out above. The PIFS Secretary-General will consult widely with members to assist the selection panel in the initial shortlist. The panel will then circulate its proposed list of top candidates, and ranked alternative candidates, to be appointed as SSCR members to all Forum member countries and official focal points of civil society organisations and the private sector for comment. If any serious concerns about the proposed top candidates are raised, or a strong rationale for preferring the ranked alternative candidates is presented, the panel will reconsider its proposed list accordingly and submit its final recommendation on the SSCR's appointment to the FOC for decision. The Forum Secretariat will be charged with implementing the FOC's decision.

Selection process—future committee members

After the initial SSCR has formed, if any members retire from the SSCR due to the expiry of their term or decision not to complete their full term, the following process will apply:

Panel. A selection panel of three senior officials of Member countries will be recalled, with its membership reflecting the current Chair arrangements of the Forum (one each nominated by the Forum Chair's country, the former Forum Chair's country, and the in-coming Forum Chair's country).

Applications. A call for applications will be extended to fill only the vacated position(s). All interested and eligible individuals will submit a CV and an official application form to the selection panel.

Selection. The selection panel will review all applications received, and will identify the best-skilled candidate to fill each vacant position, while also ensuring that the overall composition of the SSCR has gender balance and a broad skill-set. The panel will then circulate its proposed top candidate(s) for the relevant position(s), and ranked alternative candidates, to all Forum member countries and official focal points of civil society organisations and the private sector for comment. If any serious concerns about the proposed top candidates are raised, or a strong rationale for preferring the ranked alternative candidates is presented, the panel will reconsider its proposed list accordingly and submit its final recommendation on the SSCR's appointment to the FOC for decision. The Forum Secretariat will be charged with implementing the FOC's decision.

Tasks

The SSCR's key tasks will include:

- Reviewing new proposals for regional collective action against the tests set out in the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* to identify those that are viable and warrant political oversight;
- Reviewing advice received from CROP agencies or other qualified implementing organisations on the feasibility and strategic value of the proposals;
- Reviewing progress reports for any existing initiatives under Leaders' oversight;
- Evaluating whether any priorities that are currently actively overseen by Leaders should be halted due to lack of progress or unfavourable re-evaluation against the tests, or should be delegated to another oversight body;
- Evaluating whether any *new and additional* proposals should be put forward for the consideration of Leaders;
- Determining whether proposals not put forward for the consideration of Leaders should be referred to Ministers, officials, or agencies for further consideration and implementation; and
- Preparing a detailed report with observations on the proposals received and recommendations to Leaders. This should be submitted to the FOC at least three weeks prior to its meeting. The FOC will then forward this report to Leaders with its own comments and recommendations.

The Forum Secretariat will support the SSCR in fulfilling these tasks by:

- Providing staff to perform secretarial services in support of the SSCR, including preparing files of all eligible proposals and circulating these six weeks ahead of SSCR meetings, compiling any background documents requested by the SSCR to support decision making ahead of meetings, coordinating SSCR meeting logistics, and preparing draft meeting reports within two weeks of SSCR meetings; and
- Contracting short-term expert advisers, at the SSCR's request, to provide support in areas where the SSCR does not have sufficient expertise or experience to reach an informed decision.

Approach

In fulfilling the above tasks, the SSCR should, at their first meeting, agree on an approach based on the following principles:

- Decisions should be based on the application of the tests and criteria and the observance of the vision, values and objectives set out in the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.
- Decisions should be informed by appropriate expertise, either from within the SSCR or from co-opted specialists.
- Decisions should be transparent, and made publically available.
- Decisions should be made in a consistent matter, either by consensus or majority agreement.
- Decisions should not exhibit any bias towards particular country or agency interests, except where these are in line with special needs established under the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.

- Decisions should ensure that Leaders have no more than five initiatives (existing or new) under consideration at any one time.

Meetings

The SSCR should meet at least twice annually, at least six weeks prior to the pre-Forum and budget meetings of the FOC.

Budgeting and oversight

The Forum Secretariat will set aside a limited budget to cover the following costs:

- Meeting expenses (venue and equipment hire, refreshments, printing services);
- Economy class return travel for SSCR members from their home base to the meeting venue, and per diems (to cover accommodation, meals, and incidentals);
- An honorarium for SSCR members for meeting attendance;
- Training opportunities to up-skill and further professionalise the capabilities, accountabilities and responsiveness of the SSCR;
- Fees for external, short-term, expert advisers (if suitable advice cannot be obtained from CROP or other partner agencies).

The FOC will review overall adherence to these terms of reference and expenditure on the SSCR on an annual basis, as part of its regular review of the Forum Secretariat's performance, budget, and work plans. Any concerns about individual SSCR member performance will be referred to the FOC for closed-session consideration.

Attachment A

**Application Form for the Forum Officials Committee (FOC)'s
Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR)**

Name:	
Citizenship:	
Position and agency:	

SSCR membership post applied for (select one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Melanesian country
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Micronesian country
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Polynesian country
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from Australia or New Zealand
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Smaller Island State
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Pacific regional civil society organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	individual from a Pacific private sector organisation

Experience and expertise offered (select all that apply; please attach resume demonstrating this experience and expertise):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Expertise in economics, planning, or financial management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expertise in public policy formulation and implementation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expertise in sustainable development—spanning social, environmental, and economic areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expertise in gender analysis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Expertise in pacific regional political economy analysis
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated experience in strategic priority setting and high-level advisory work
<input type="checkbox"/>	An in-depth appreciation of the implementing capacities of country governments, civil society, the private sector, regional and international organisations, or development partners in implementing regional initiatives
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sound experience in the development, implementation and/or assessment of the impacts of regional initiatives on national-level priorities and interests, and on different stakeholder groups.

I certify that I have read and understood the terms of reference for the SSCR, am willing to serve on the SSCR for at least two years, and am available to meet twice yearly for SSCR meetings.

Signature:

Date:

