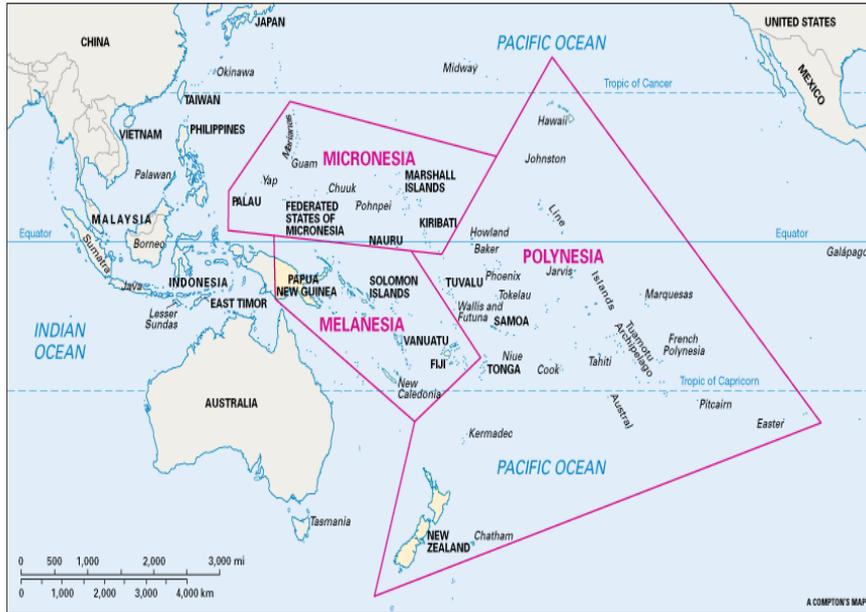


The Pacific Island Advisory Group (PIAG) Report Update

18th Programme Board
Agenda Item 3.2
Geneva, Switzerland
1-3 Sept 2020

Tony Milne
on behalf of PIAG members

Intro: Pacific Island Community



-The Southern Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean covering 88 million sq.km2.

- The Pacific Islands are made of 22 island nations. Their combined 'Exclusive Economic Zone' is over four times the size of the entire European continent.

It is a vulnerable region, facing challenges from climate change, natural disasters, biodiversity loss and sea level rise.

Livelihoods fundamentally depend on the ocean.



Background: key drivers leading to the PIAG

- **GEO Week 2019 Canberra Declaration:**
 - Article 10. Welcome new members from the Pacific and other island nations to the GEO community, and recognise the significant capabilities they have to offer.
 - Article 11. Emphasise the importance of GEO being inclusive of these countries with their significant and increasing exposure to disaster risk, climate change and sustainable development challenges.
- **GEO Week 2019 Talanoa Statement** “EO in the Pacific”, 5 Nov 2019:
 - Pacific Island region’s statement on how they want to engage with GEO
- **ExCom 51:** “establishment of a Pacific Island Advisory Group ... to recommend ways to improve communication and engagement in GEO by the Pacific and other island nations”
- **ExCom 52** “Pacific Islands Advisory Group engage more closely with the Programme Board and with Asia-Oceania GEO as it continues its work”

PIAG: Fast Facts

- **Established May 2020** following GEO Secretariat call for nominations
- **Membership – 5 governments, 5 POs:**
 - Members: Australia, France (New Caledonia), US, China, EC
 - POs: Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society, World Ocean Council, Pacific Community, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Micronesian Conservation Trust.
- **3 Co-chairs:**
 - Pacific Community (SPC)
 - China (Ministry of Natural Resources of P.R. China)
 - Australia (Geoscience Australia)
- **Five videoconferences** held to date

PIAG: Draft Terms of Reference (TOR)

- **Draft structure:**
 - Purpose: to advise the GEO PB and ExCom on the implementation of the Canberra Declaration articles relevant to the Pacific Island Countries
 - Term: initially 12 months, option to extend as appropriate
 - Membership: open to all Members, Associates and POs, esp. from Pacific
 - Duties and deliverables: strengthen Pacific-GEO relationship (governance, flagships, WP activities, regional caucuses etc); build a community of practice to share knowledge, expertise, data and information and opportunities, make recommendations to ExCom on further opportunities/issues as identified to support GEO's 3 Engagement Priorities
- **Next steps:**
 - Continue consultation with the Pacific Island Group; Strengthen connection with the PB and Work Program; Endorse TOR

PIAG: Current Status and Activities.

- Pacific Data Hub launched in 2019 <https://pacificdata.org/>
- SPC is leading a needs assessment study to look at the strategic EO needs of the pacific (funded by the governments of USA, NZ and Australia).
- SPC staff have undertaken a Review of the GEO WP and identified immediate interest in, *Blue Planet; Disaster and Sendai; Biodiversity and Ecosystem*, and Sustainable Development Goals (*SDG*) WP Initiatives.
- DIGITAL EARTH PACIFIC Project Announced - funding being sought.
- The 'Pacific Geospatial Surveying Council' has taken the decision to become a collective voice for Pacific EO data collection in the region. This links senior Pacific Country Government officials together for the first time on EO decisions.

PIAG: Some Challenges

- Resources: small governments with big remits – challenge of access to staff
- Identify the needs and priorities of the island countries. Reduce duplication.
- Achieving balance: delivering EO support structures quickly but fit for purpose and dependent on Pacific Countries leadership and collaboration
- Time-zones: eg. 8am in Geneva is 6pm in Suva, 7pm Apia, 8pm Honolulu