**SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABLE ENERYG INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS (SEIA) IN THE PICS**

**Concept Note**

1. **Introduction / Background**

Energy is an important factor in shifting towards sustainable development and poverty reduction in the Pacific region. The region has for so long relied on fossil fuels for their energy needs. However, the commodity has time and again demonstrated its lack of consistency, reliability and above all its devastating effects with respect to its impacts on the region’s fragile economies and environment.

With the above, communities in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have also been made to put up with the expensive costs of fossil fuels and above all the overall lack of access to about 7 million (70%) of its population (including PNG). Today electricity supply has only concentrated in urban areas and only recently it has slowly trickled inland or into the rural areas.

With climate change issues and the ratification of the Paris Agreement, countries urgently need to leapfrog into low emission economies. In recent years individual countries in the PICTs have adopted the game changer by moving towards renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) technologies. The private sector, as the engine of growth, has a key role to play in this transition to low emission economies.

1. **Overview**

Outcome 2 of the PCREEE calls for strengthened capacities of local key institutions and stakeholder groups through the up-scaling and replication of certified training and applied research programs and mechanisms.

Output 2.2 makes reference to the creation of a Pacific certification / accreditation scheme for individuals, organisations and products is created (in collaboration with SEIAPI) and operational. Output 2.3 is on key stakeholders which are trained by the certified trainers on RE&EE aspects of high relevance for the local business and industry sector.

For Outputs 2.2 & 2.3 to be effectively pursued, there is a need for a collective industry entity for the PCREEE to deal with rather than trying to deal with each individual registered private sector company in the energy sector.

Industry Associations are not new in the region and there are national associations like civil engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers, bus and taxi owners, etc. At the regional level, there is the Sustainable Energy Industry Association of the Pacific Islands or SEIAPI and the Association of Development and Finance Institutions in the Pacific or ADFIP. Each of the associations have varying degrees of activities and success, with some lasting more than 20 years.

The phrase “United we stand Divided we fall” remains valid in all circumstances. In the emerging market for RE and EE in the PICs, there is a need to urgently protect the reputation of the technologies and the players in the industry too. For instance, inferior products and sub-standard installations can be very damaging to the technology and industry alike.

1. **Objective**

PCREEE’s effort in supporting the establishment of SEIA are aimed at:

* Providing a solid platform for the industry to provide an united voice to government and policy makers alike
* Providing a platform for introducing quality assurance and accreditation in the industry
* Foster collaboration, capacity building and networking among members

1. **Baselines**

There is presently no national energy industry associations in the Pacific other than the Solar Energy Association of PNG or SEAP.

Through the 10th European Development Fund European Union Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training on Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation (European Union PacTVET), Level 1 – 4 regional competency standards, certification and accreditation schemes for trainers and training institutions on renewable energy are being promoted.

Under the Sustainable Industry Development Project, SEIAPI and the Pacific Power Association are conducting training workshops on guidelines and standards for off and on grid solar photovoltaic systems.

The capacities of key institutions and stakeholders in the energy sector (e.g. public institutions, utilities, banks, companies, consultants educational and research institutions); are very weak on mainstreaming of gender aspects;

1. **Target Outputs**

* At least 3 national industry associations are established and registered during the First Operational Phase of the PCREEE.
* At least 5 training standards adopted by the centre (at least one is dedicated to gender mainstreaming)
* At least 80 trainers are certified across at least15 islands (at least 30% are female)
* At least 5 training institutions and universities adopt the competency standards
* At least 800 key stakeholders across 22 islands are trained by the certified trainers and/or institutions (being at least 30% are female)
* At least 40% of the trained experts apply their received skills in the energy sector of PICTs (at least 30% are female)

1. **Strategy**

PCREEE’s support will mostly be in the allowing areas:

* Facilitate the conduct of consultation meetings and annual general meetings.
* Technical assistance to draft the association’s constitution and rules of procedures.
* Act as the Interim Secretariat for the association
* Facilitate collaborations and networking among the associations and within members of an association
* Provide and facilitate training opportunities for the associations
* Promote and link the national associations to SEAPI as the regional arm

1. **Possible Partners**

The SEIA will be conducted as a partnership with the national energy offices, chamber of commerce, SEIAPI and the EU PacTVET project.

1. **Complementarity and Replicability**

The SEIA will complement PCREEE’s Sustainable Energy Research Fund, PCREEE Sustainable Energy Entrepreneurship Facility (PSEEF), the RE and EE innovation competition and the Promotion of entrepreneurship in renewable energy & energy efficiency for youths (PERE4Y) in the Pacific.

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