

MCSF Planning Committee Report 14th MCES, Palau, December 15-16, 2010

Background

The Second Planning Committee Meeting of the Micronesian Center for a Sustainable Future (MCSF) Designated Representatives was held on Tuesday, December 14, 2010, in advance of the 14th Micronesian Chief Executives Summit (MCES) in Palau. The Designated Representatives from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of Palau, Yap State, and Kosrae State were in attendance.

The MCSF Planning Committee adopted an agenda that included:

- (1) Preparation of the presentation materials for the 14th MCES plenary session, including:
 - a. clear delineation of the issues that require the consideration of the Chief Executives to affirm their approvals with respect to outcomes of the 1st Planning Meeting of the MCSF Designated Representatives that was hosted by Palau on October 5-6, 2010; and
 - b. review of next steps to be proposed to the Chief Executives.
- (2) Discussion of possible reforms or enhancements of the MCES meeting structure, committee structure, and other matters, including:
 - a. discussion of the Secretariat (MCES support) function of MCSF;
 - b. review of the proposed completion of structured interviews with Committee chairs and lead members to identify opportunities for the MCSF to add value and support the outcomes targeted by the MCES Committees; and
 - c. review of the need to prioritize fundraising, especially to identify core funding to enable the hiring of an Executive Director and formal establishment of the Center so that the interim support role the Graduate School is providing under the MCSF inception award can be effectively transitioned by June 2011 if possible.
- (3) Review of the MCSF inception award budget, including:
 - a. review of funds expended to date;
 - b. budget authorizations as currently recommended for reaffirmation of approvals by the Chief Executives; and
 - c. consideration of new initiatives or revised proposals for budgetary authority.

Meeting Outcomes

During item one of the agenda and in a subsequent meeting with the proposed panel members for the MCES plenary presentation, the Committee developed the presentation (Attachment 1). It was agreed that the panel members would include the Designated Representatives of the host jurisdiction, of the Secretary General (FSM) and of the CNMI. A significant objective of the presentation is to get an informed and deliberative reaffirmation of the approval by the Chief Executives of the items presented in the decision paper that was produced after the first Planning Committee meeting (Attachment 2).

Item two of the agenda involved discussion of the actions taken to-date by the Graduate School, under the MCSF inception award, to provide (Secretariat) support functionality on an interim basis until the Center has its own Executive Director (and staff). The Graduate School has provided support to Palau in their preparations for the 14th MCES. In addition to facilitating a Planning Committee teleconference one month in advance of the meeting, there has been direct support to Palau's Summit Secretariat including logo design, website development, and ongoing coordination with Palau's Summit Secretariat. During the MCES, the Graduate School will assist in facilitation of the Second Planning Committee meeting, support the Communiqué drafting process, and initiate structured interviews with Committee chairs and selected members to identify opportunities for the MCSF to add value and support the outcomes targeted by the MCES Committees. In the follow-up to the 14th MCES, the Graduate School will complete a Procedural Manual for MCSF support for MCES meetings to document the process and, presumably, ease the burden on future host jurisdictions. A report of the findings and recommendations from the structured interview process with the MCES Committees will also be produced and disseminated within six weeks after the 14th MCES. In anticipation of development of a multi-functional website for the MCES, Committee documents and historical (archive) materials will be gathered in electronic form.

Discussion under item two of the agenda also involved a presentation by the Designated Representative for Palau reporting the ways in which the host jurisdiction's Summit Secretariat had collaborated with and benefited from the support of the Graduate School under the MCSF inception award. Minister Yano also described the reforms or enhancements that Palau had, on its own initiative, introduced for the 14th MCES. Most importantly, the host jurisdiction modified the time allocated for Committee presentations, requested that the Committees complete substantial portions of their deliberations prior to the meeting (by virtual means) and to complete their Committee reports, if at all possible, by the end of Monday of the MCES week. The intent of the tightened timeframe is to enable the committee members from each jurisdiction to brief their principals on progress and recommendations to be presented to the Chief Executives prior to the start of the formal MCES plenary sessions.

Further discussion under item two of the agenda was dedicated to the need to prioritize fundraising under the MCSF inception award and to plan for the transition from the Graduate School's interim support role to the emergence of a fully functional and staffed MCSF. It was agreed that the urgency of this matter should also be raised to the attention of the Chief Executives to seek their input and ideas to secure sources of sustained funding for both the core functions of the Center (as Secretariat to the MCES) and programmatic outreach in support of MCES Committee priorities.

With respect to item three of the agenda, the budget status was reported by the Graduate School to the Designated Representatives. The current version of the MCSF Inception Award Budget Tracking Sheet for Designated Representatives (Attachment 3) was reviewed and the Designated Representatives were able to ask clarifying questions about the expenditures to-date and about the relatively large proportion of the budgetary resources which remain unexpended. Clear direction was given to expedite expenditures and programmatic activities once full endorsement of the procedures and protocols is reaffirmed by the Chief Executives during the 14th MCES. This same Tracking Sheet had been distributed by e-mail with a decision memo to all Designated Representatives on November 24, 2010, and was approved (with no objections) as of the effective date of December 2, 2010. A summary of the budget status was incorporated in the presentation to be delivered to the Chief Executives.

The Designated Representatives discussed the procedures for considering new or revised proposals for budget authorization and they determined that the MCSF Planning Committee as a whole could receive proposals from Committees or third parties; and, alternatively, Designated Representatives themselves could endorse proposals for consideration by the Planning Committee. It was noted the consideration by the Planning Committee would follow the existing procedures, including a polling of Designated Representatives for scoring/ranking, a poll to recommend a specific level of budget authorization, followed by each Designated Representative presenting to their respective Chief Executives to determine if there would be no objections (over a ten day period).

Based on preliminary discussions among the Designated Representatives it is understood that the Committee will receive revised proposals for the Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) training activity and support to traditional and non-traditional Women's organizations. The proposals should utilize the template format that was included as Attachment M to the Proceedings of the First Planning Committee Meeting of Designated Representatives (see Attachment 4 to this Committee Report).

The Designated Representatives were also briefed by representatives of the Center for Micronesian Empowerment (CME) on their mission and program activities. CME received funding support (expenditure totaling \$10,500) from the MCSF inception award for partial support to their Conference, “The Untapped Potential of the Marianas and Micronesian Workforce” held on October 20, 2010.

Conclusion

The Second Planning Committee Meeting of Designated Representatives concluded that there should be an “exit meeting” immediately following the successful conclusion of the 14th MCES while all of the Designated Representatives (in attendance) are still in Palau. This meeting will focus on lessons learned, next steps, and addressing certain outstanding issues that have been brought to the attention of the Designated Representatives that may affect the effective continued implementation of the MCSF inception award by the Graduate School. This meeting will commence immediately following the closure of the 14th MCES on Thursday December 16, 2010.

Attachment 1: Materials for 14th MCES Session Presentation to the Chief Executives

Attachment 2: Decision Paper for Chief Executives

Attachment 3: MCSF Inception Award Budget Tracking Sheet for Designated Representatives

Attachment 4: MCSF Internal Funding Request Template

Note: The Proceedings of the First Planning Committee Meeting of Designated Representatives are available on the website of the 14th MCES Meeting www.mcespalau.info.