

History of the Fiji GIS and Remote Sensing User Forum

and the

Pacific GIS & Remote Sensing Council

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1 Summary

The monthly GIS&RS meetings began nearly 30 years ago between the Fiji Forestry Department and the Fiji Land Information Support Centre (FLIS).

These informal meetings grew fast as several Suva based organisations and Government Departments established GIS units in the first part of the nineties.

Fiji Lands Department created the Fiji Land Information Council meeting always a day after the GIS&RS User Group.

SOPAC as regional organisation had supported GIS&RS institutionally and also financially.

To support the GIS&RS development a GIS&RS newsletter was created (1993) and an e-mail distribution list (1995). These vehicles developed as an outreach to other Pacific Island Countries.

To summarise developments documented through presentations in the GIS&RS meetings a Fiji GIS&RS User Conference was conducted in 1998.

The idea of GIS&RS user groups were transferred to other Pacific Island Countries whereby the Conference developed into a Regional Conference and SOPAC took stronger part of the Conference management in 2003.

SPC, which took over SOPAC, was not able to further host the budget of the Conference and requested the Conference Committee to take over the budget as an independent body in 2017. A turning point where the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council was formally founded. This Council also hosts an independent website, manage the Pacific Islands GIS&RS Newsletter and the e-mail distribution list GIS-PacNet.

2 Introduction

Every first Tuesday of the month the GIS and Remote Sensing (RS) community in Fiji meets at different locations where GIS or RS application is performed. This is also working in many other Pacific Island Countries. Very few are left who remember the origin, the up and downs and the benefits these meetings created.

The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC) is an output of the monthly GIS&RS meetings. The papers show the purpose, structure and function of PGRSC why PGRSC is an output of the monthly meetings

This paper highlights particular points as far as the author remembers. The paper will be updated from the first version to further versions as soon as new historical facts come up.

3 The Start of the GIS&RS User Group Meetings

In 1991, Osea Tuinivanua and Wolf Forstreuter based at the Management Services Division of the Forestry Department (MSD-Forestry) along with Neil Pullar from New Zealand Aid who was based at the Fiji Land Information Support Centre (FLIS) discussed potential monthly GIS and Remote Sensing User Group Meetings. The first meeting was conducted in Colo-i-Suva, at the MSD-Forestry. These meetings attracted a number of organisations with the idea to establish a GIS within their sectors. Meetings were held the first Tuesday every month at a different location to

experience the working environment of various GIS users or potential users and in due turn the Fiji Government formed a Fiji Land Information Council with members of different Government institutions, which always met one day after the informal GIS&RS User Meeting gather the information discussed.

This structure still exist in Fiji where besides the GIS&RS User Forum the Fiji Geospatial Information Management Council exists and actively meets and has an own national one day conference.

4 The Style of the Meetings

The style was not exactly planned but pushed by the first group who organised the meeting and this continued to date. An interesting fact is that the meeting style was applied by other Pacific Island Countries. Thus the meetings have a fixed structure of institutional updates, coffee pause and presentations. The meetings also changed the location to get to know the different offices of GIS&RS units.

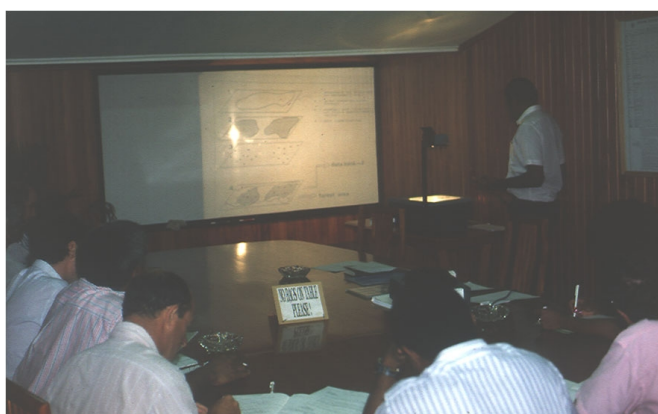


Fig 01: GIS&RS User Meeting head quarter of Fiji Forestry Department in 1993, Josua Wakolo explains overlay analysis in raster environment.

4.1 Informal Meetings

The format was as informal as possible to encourage inexperienced GIS users to share. There was and still is no Chair, no adoption of minutes of last meeting and normally a sort of round table setup with the purpose to get information from emerging GIS professionals. They are normally financed by donors with new software, new hardware and have people from outside bringing new ideas.

The form of the meeting is mostly that all institutions which are present introduce themselves, explain what they had carried out during the last four weeks and what they intend to do during the next month. This was followed by a coffee break and then short presentations explaining new applications, soft ware or hardware.

4.2 The Suva Hash Run

In the beginning participants from SOPAC, MSD-Forestry, MRD and Lands Department¹ were members of the Suva Hash Run setup to purposefully avoid an early closing of meetings on a Monday, the Suva Hash Run takes place and meetings were planned for Tuesdays. This tradition still remains although very little know the history and take part in the Hash Run today.

5 The Purpose of the Meetings

The purpose of the meetings have envolved slightly over the years following regional or global issues, for instance different data formats. The listing tries to capture all purposes during the time the meetings were conducted.

1 The Director Lands were "Hash Master"!

5.1 Avoidance of Work Duplication and Sharing Instead of Re-Producing

This became an issue over time whereby several GIS units were implemented in Fiji by different projects and donors companies who intended to sell data to Fiji, which had been already purchased by other projects. In the meetings participating organisations explained their plan for the next month's revealing work. Duplication and sale of data twice to these organisations could be avoided through the meetings.

5.2 Knowledge Sharing

GIS&RS implementation in several cases required adaptation to Pacific environment. This applies to projections, data quality and physical environment with salty air and missing air condition. Here specific Pacific knowledge was created and it was a huge advantage to share this between the users.

5.3 Enhancement of Personal Contacts

Initiation of the informal meetings with coffee breaks were to provide the an open forum to meet new people and exchange addresses. This personal contact improved the communication between users and saved time in the long run.

5.4 Data Documentation and Data Exchange

To support data exchange and avoid expensive re-production all participating organisations agreed to list all spatial and tabular data available, soon after starting the monthly meeting. This created data catalogues, which printed documents listing the data available, the format, the size, the history and way the data was created. This was a first step of metadata creation.

The data catalogues were stored at the Lands Department as central focal point for spatial data. However, after a while the documents were not updated and this activity was not continued.

To exchange spatial data the GIS&RS community also agreed² on common data output format e.g. Autocad DXF, which was at that time the format available as possible output in most software products. After a while data format translators became available and agreements on common data output formats were no longer necessary.

5.5 Agreement on Common Software

A discussion of agreement on a common GIS and RS Software was made between regional organisations such as SOPAC, SPC, USP, etc. and the Fiji GIS&RS User Group followed this. This was to enable faster help through these organisations by concentrating on one software product. However, with member organisations having their own donor supplied software – this started to disable the agreement. It finally stopped when USP signed a contract with ESRI Software and stopped the support for MapInfo as agreed product.

2 All "agreements" of the GIS&RS User Group were verbal agreements documented by the minutes of meeting, however, there were no signed contracts or MoUs.

5.6 Software Assistance

The e-mail distribution list GIS-PacNet started as MapInfo GIS software support online. The GIS&RS User Group expressed the need to have a direct support and SOPAC started the list soon after internet was implemented in relevant organisations. SOPAC's Director Philipp Müller gave the "green light" for the IT section to create and host the list. However, very few wanted to address that they are facing problems and the list changed the purpose.

6 The GIS&RS Newsletter

The first GIS and RS Newsletter was published in 1993 and distributed in Fiji. This was created and there was a need for a regular information platform since there was no Fiji medium to: (i) report and document the monthly GIS&RS User Meeting, (ii) distribute new developments in the areas of GIS, RS and upcoming GPS applications and (iii) report about data available in Fiji.

The Newsletter started as a simple print out of a WordPerfect written A4 document edited by Wolf Forstreuter and Les Allinson. In 1994, SOPAC's Director supported the Newsletter with professional staff and Lala Bukarau joining the team. James Britton (USP) joined the newsletters working group in 1998. During the time users of other Pacific Island Countries were interested in the newsletter where SOPAC printed and posted these to member countries.

Shortly afterwards, a network was established of national **newsletter distribution points**. They received packages of bigger quantities and distributed to subscribers locally and regionally. By the end of the nineties the Newsletter was downloadable from the SOPAC website, with postage of newsletters continuing as certain countries had limited internet access.

The newsletter can still be printed if there is a need, however, this is an exception.

The PGRSC took ownership and the newsletter publishes in irregular intervals. It is crucial to note that the newsletter is the only publication, which focuses on spatial data application in Pacific Island Countries. It is also an easy way for Pacific islanders to have an own articles published. As the newsletter has an ISSN number an article counts as "**publication**". This is often overlooked.



Fig 02: The GIS&RS Newsletter changed from Fiji User Group GIS and Remote Sensing News in 1993 to South Pacific and Fiji GIS/RS News in 2000, Pacific Islands GIS/RS News to Pacific Islands in 2001 and then Pacific Islands GIS&RS Newsletter 2019

Regional articles are collected through the efforts of PGRSC established focal points in the Pacific [see <http://www.picgisrs.org/focal-points/>] who are also active members of GIS&RS User Groups.

The newsletter today has another important function - it is a **documentation of the GIS&RS history of the Pacific**. Arguments such “mangrove mapping has to be handled by institutions outside the Pacific” can be refuted with articles showing successful forest and mangrove monitoring carried out by Pacific islanders years ago. For apparently new ideas the newsletter depicts the issue was already intensively discussed for example an own Pacific satellite image data receiving station.

7 The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference

The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference is a direct output of the GIS&RS User meetings in Fiji where it's history and function is explained in the following sub chapters. - There are GIS&RS conferences in Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii, however, the Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference is today the biggest GIS&RS conference of the region where Pacific Island Countries are presented.

7.1 The Start as Fiji Annual GIS&RS User Conference

In 1998 USP, under the guidance of James



Fig 03: James Britton head of the USP GIS section was the initiator of the GIS&RS User Conference in 1998.



Fig 04: In 2003 more participants from other Pacific Island Countries moved in, above Tebutonga Ereata, Director Lands Department in Kiribati explains GIS development in Tarawa

Britton, approached the Fiji Lands Department to jointly conduct a two day National GIS&RS Conference, which was than extended to a 3 day conference in 1999. In 1999, the first participants came from outside of Fiji. The first poster competition was conducted in 2001, and has since been an integral activity of the platform. The first companies moved in, in 2003, with the arrival of image vendors. In the same year, the EU funded a regional project at SOPAC assisting GIS and RS application in Pacific Island Countries which resulted in more participants expected from Pacific Island Countries leading to renaming of the Fiji Conference.

7.2 The Change to Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference

In 2004 the National Conference was renamed as the “Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference” due to the increasing interests of participants that came from Pacific Island countries. The Conference became a focal platform to show GIS&RS development in the Pacific and new developments that could be implemented in the Pacific.

As it still stayed as “User” Conference it was an extremely interesting platform for companies to present new hardware, software, data and new methods to apply GIS&RS. This resulted in financial support towards Conference budget by these companies.

Lands Department Fiji remained the main financier and organiser and opened the Conference every year to date with hand-in-hand of SOPAC / SPC and regional based GIS&RS users.



Fig 05: The Conference grew and in 2004 an exhibition area was added as companies started to display products and the first satellite selling companies moved in. Poster of Ono-i-Lau recorded from OrbView-3 satellite.

7.3 Functions of the Conference

The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference held the number one **platform GIS&RS for users** to share of experiences from different island countries. Islander speaking to islander.

The **platform for companies and scientists to address Pacific islanders** is mentioned above. There is no other conference or symposium where so many Pacific islanders are present and able to share common ground and network with regional professionals and emerging professionals.

Both to address Pacific Islanders and to showcase Pacific island GIS&RS applications are performed through normally more than 70 presentations within the four days. In addition, there are social functions every evening to allow networking.



Fig. XX: John Trinder (ISPRS), Wolf Forstreuter (GIS&RS User Group) and Les Allinson (ISPRS) guided the first discussion session in 2005.

In 2005 ISPRS joined the initiative and was part of the first **discussion session** of the Conference. The former president John Trinder helped to guide this discussion sessions. Now this session is an important function of the Conference and has since been held every year. The session provides an opportunity for companies, scientists and GIS &RS users to meet and share ideas. Many applications, which required an

adaptation to Pacific environment, were discussed at the Conference and implemented during the following years..

7.4 Outlook of the Conference

The formation of the PGRSC stemmed from the User Group and Conference and enabled the 2017 Conference. The next step will be to regionalise the Conference more than it currently is. The council currently established focal points in all Pacific Islands to share the information about the Conference but also to organise presentations and ideas by the countries to building up to the next Conference. In 2020, for the first time the Conference will be held outside Fiji whereas Vanuatu will organise the venue and the infrastructure.

Through the GIS and RS Council Pacific islanders will have a vehicle to directly influence the Conference but also the other driving forces of the Council such as newsletter, e-mail distribution list and the website.

8 E-Mail Distribution List GIS-PacNet

The e-mail distribution and communication list GIS-PacNet was established by Franck Martin with the intension to have a platform to help MapInfo GIS software users to operate their GIS as mentioned above. This was about 1995 or 1996 where e-mail started and SOPAC was the pioneer and a distributor in Fiji.

The mailing list was seldom utilised to asked questions as this is not the Pacific nature or culture, however, the list very soon distributed news in the areas GIS, RS, database and GPS applications. Also the minutes of the monthly GIS&RS User Meetings were distributed whenever issues of regional relevance were discussed.



Fig 06: *The Pacific Islands GIS and Remote Sensing User Conference 2018*

The list has nearly 700 members, however, the interesting part is that they are distributed all over the Pacific and today with better Internet than 20 years ago the remotest village can be reached. The list was hosted at SPC, but had to move to PICISOC³.

9 The Role of SOPAC and SPC

Already in the early nineties SOPAC's Director Philipp Müller saw the need to employ the tools GIS and Remote Sensing and got the mandate from Pacific Island Countries to support initiatives to

3 PICISOC = Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society

implement both in the member states. For many years SOPAC and later SPC pushed for the monthly meeting just in recent years with the Lands Department as the driving organisation.

The GIS&RS newsletter had been financially supported by SOPAC through the instruction of Philipp Müller enabling printing and posting also to other Countries.

The e-mail distribution list GIS-PacNet was hosted by SOPAC until SPC's takeover. As SPC tried to close down the list it was then moved to PICISOC and is now operated by the PGRSC.

In summary SOPAC and later SPC supported Fiji to keep the implementation of GIS&RS going and at the same time transferred the model with projects but also through newsletter, GIS-PacNet and the Conference to other Pacific Island Countries. This is only possible with a strong link between SOPAC/SPC and Lands Department.

10 GIS&RS User Meetings in Other Pacific Island Countries

Through GIS implementations in power utilities in Tonga and Solomon Islands during the late nineties the Fiji model of GIS&RS User Groups was applied in these countries with Marshall Islands and Kiribati following shortly after the millennium. With the beginning of an EU funded project implementing GIS and RS many other countries followed as the project covered 16 Pacific states. In many countries these user groups are still active and have a representative linked to the PGRSC.

The majority of Pacific Island Countries follow the Fiji model having user groups as informal bodies, but incorporating the latest GIS&RS initiatives.

11 The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC)

The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council is a direct output of the Conference Committee, which is an output of the monthly GIS&RS meetings. The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference 2017 prompted the establishment of the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council.



Fig 07: The Minister Lands and Mineral Resources (centre) launch PGRSC in March 2018

The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC) was established to oversee the activities of the Pacific Islands GIS & RS User Conference and in response to the need to outsource the Conference administration and procurement processes outside of SPC.

The Council's board members, constitution and all institutional arrangements were achieved within a limited time frame as it was paramount for the council to open a bank account that will accommodate all funds directed towards the logistics and activities of the GIS&RS User Conference.

11.1 Purpose of the Council

The constitution states five objectives of the Council:

1. To promote the development of GIS and Remote Sensing (RS) data, technologies, methods and services for the pacific region;
2. To enable collaboration and share lessons learnt across regional agencies and commercial parties;
3. To discuss and establish methods in building adaptation for the Pacific environment for solutions working already well outside the region;
4. To manage the distribution, publication and awareness of conference outcomes;
5. To establish robust links with other GIS, RS and scientific bodies regionally and globally. The Council was initially established to oversee the 2017 GIS&RS User Conference and was later recognised as a body that could promote and help support further developments of GIS & RS tools in the region.

11.2 The Structure of the Council

The Council will hold a minimum of three Trustees and five Board Members besides the GIS & RS Conference Committee.

11.2.1 The Trustees

The Trustees are the guardians of the Council and are accountable for the organisation. These are persons who are familiar with the objectives of the Council. The three Trustees are:

The former Permanent Secretary Lands and Mineral Resources **Malakai Finau**. Malakai Finau was also the former Director of the Fiji Mineral Resources Department, an organisation that has over the years, worked closely with the GIS and RS conference and community.

Dr. Russell Howorth worked many years at SOPAC⁴ (now the Geoscience, Energy, and Maritime Division of SPC) and at the end of his term served as the Director. SOPAC was the leading Pacific organisation regarding GIS and RS. He is still Director of the Circum-Pacific Council. Dr Russell Howorth is also a trustee of STAR⁵.

Rajendra Singh received a prestigious award by the Fiji Government for his organisational work in education for Fiji and know how transfer is one of the objectives of the Council.

11.2.2 The Board

The Board of PGRSC makes far-reaching decision and all financial decisions. To have a Board is a requirement for a Council in Fiji. The current board members are:

- Dr Wolf Forstreuter (Chair), Consultant
- Salote N. Viti, Lands Department (Vice Chair)
- Dr Nick Rollings USP
- Leba Gaunavinaka, Lands Department
- Litia Volau Gaunavou, SPC

4 SOPAC = Secretariat of Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission later integrated in SPC

5 Detailed description in chapter Links to Other Organisations.

- Keleni Raqisia, MRD
- Sachindra Singh, SPC

The Board meets whenever financial decisions or far-reaching decisions have to be made. Voting also is performed through e-mail.

11.2.3 The Conference Committee

The PGRSC Conference Committee is the most active arm of the Council and normally meets every two weeks. Most decisions and activities are made and carried out within and by the Committee members. All Council Board members are members of the Committee as well, however, not all committee members are part of the board.

11.2.4 Country Focal Points

In order to regionalise our annual Pacific Islands GIS & RS Conference, the Council moved forth to select/nominate national focal points. The focal points are responsible for the following activities:

- (i) Collect and summarise ideas on improving and creating a more inclusive Pacific Islands GIS & RS Conference.
- (ii) Promote the Conference by receiving the latest news.
- (iii) Follow up national presentations and assist in facilitation.
- (iv) Distribute spatial and non spatial data.
- (v) Distribute the GIS&RS Newsletter.

Focal Point Cook Islands

The position is currently vacant

Federated States of Micronesia

Name: Snyder Biza

Email: sbiza78@gmail.com / sbiza@fsmdecem.fm

Phone: (691) 320 8814/8815

Title: GIS & Data Officer

Organization: FSM National Government - Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (FSM DECEM)

Website: <https://decem.gov.fm>

Guam

Name: Maria Kottermair

Email: mariakottermair@triton.uog.edu

Phone: +1-671-735-2751

Title: Geospatial Coordinator for Micronesia, Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Science Center

Organisation: University of Guam

Website: <https://www.uog.edu/pi-csc/>

Kiribati

Name: Catherine Paul

Email: catherinep@mfmrd.gov.ki

Phone: N/A

Organisation: Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resource Development (MFMRD)

Website: <https://www.mfmrd.gov.ki>

Marshall Islands

Name: Benedict Yamamura

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Currently active:

Name: Mark Stege

Email: markhstege@gmail.com

Northern Marianas

Name: Bradley Eichelberger

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Phone: +1-670-664-6009

Organisation: Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Niue

Name: Richard Siataga

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New Caledonia

Name: Damien Buisson

Email: damien.buisson@gouv.nc

Phone: +687 727444

Title: Head of the GIS&RS department

Organisation: New Caledonia Government

Website: <https://georep.nc>

Palau

Name: Mike Aluerio

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Papua New Guinea

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Email: piiketalu@gmail.com

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Title: GIS Teaching Tutor

Organisation: University of Papua New Guinea

Website: <http://www.upng.ac.pg/site/>

Name: Dominic Afuyave
Email: dafuyave@pngpower.com.pg
Phone: +675 3256988
Organisation: PNG Power

Samoa

Name: Titimanu Simi
Email: titi.simi@mnre.gov.ws
Phone: +685 32759
Title: PARTneR Coordinator
Organisation: Disaster Management Office (DMO)
Website: www.mnre.gov.ws

Solomon Islands

Name: Joy Papao
Email: jpapao@gmail.com
Phone: +677 87288
Title: Consultant

11.2.5 Council Members

In November 2018 the Board decided to have registered membership for the PGRSC. There are three types of membership:

Institutional Members

Organisations that are offering products, services, training, education or support in Geospatial Science can become institutional members of PGRSC. Currently following organisations hold institutional membership: (i) Geoscience Australia (ii) Fiji Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Samoa (MNRE), (iii) Ministry of Sugar Industries – Fiji, (iv) AllTerra, (v) BLUECHAM SAS (vi) Eagle Technology, (vii) SPREP, (viii) INSIGHT SAS, (ix) University of Guam, (x) Sivaconsult, (xi) Drone Service Fiji, (xii) Kenex, (xiii) Kahuto Investment Pte Ltd, (xiv) Silvaconsult AG

Personal Members

People who are working in a professional capacity in geospatial science and are active in professional development and have appropriate geospatial science qualifications or the equivalent experience can become personal member of the PGRSC.

Student Members

Student membership can be received by full time students enrolled in a geospatial science degree, diploma or certificate, or a bachelor degree from a cognate discipline with a major in geospatial science course component.

11.2.6 Outlook

The formation of the PGRSC was a necessary follow up of User Group and Conference in enabling the 2017 Conference. The next step will be to regionalise the Conference more than it

currently is. The council currently established focal points in all Pacific islands to share the information about the Conference but also to organise presentations and ideas by the countries to building up to the next Conference. Here the three vehicles for information dissemination will become an even more important role.

11.3 The Vehicles for Information Dissemination

The Council has three “vehicles” to disseminate information:

1. Pacific Islands GIS&RS Newsletter
2. Information distributing e-mail list GIS-PacNet
3. The Pacific Islands GIS&RS User Conference including website and Facebook site.

All three tools for information distribution were described before.

11.4 Links of PGRSC to other Organisations

The Council has strong links to other organisations with similar objectives. The links are institutionally where Trustees of the Council are at the same time Trustees of related organisations and there are links through the web site and working relationships.

STAR = Pacific Science, Technology and Resource Network. Originally an advisory group for SOPAC annual session. Today an own Council. The chairman is Permanent Secretary Dr Raijeli Taga. Russell Howorth is one of the Trustees of STAR. PGRSC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with STAR for mutual assistance.

ISPRS = International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing. ISPRS was first time present at the Conference in 2005. ISPRS distributes its information and bulletins through the PGRSC network. In 2018 PGRSC became the Regional Member of ISPRS for Pacific Island Countries.

CPC = The Circum-Pacific Council is an international, non-governmental, tax-exempt association of earth scientists, engineers, and oceanographers who represent government, industry, academia, and other organizations and institutes with interests primarily in the Pacific region. CPC was founded in 1972 as a cooperative organization between the U.S. Government (U.S. Geological Survey) and industry (petroleum and mining companies) to improve upon scientific communication and exchange of information about geology and natural resources of the Pacific Basin and surrounding land regions. The PGRSC Trustee Russell Howorth is one of the CPC Directors. Discussions

SPC = Pacific Community (before South Pacific Community). The Pacific Community is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region. It is an international development organisation owned and governed by its 26 country and territory members. With more than 600 staff, the organisation's headquarters are in Nouméa, New Caledonia, and it has regional offices in Suva, Fiji, and Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, as well as a country office in Honiara, Solomon Islands, and field staff in other Pacific locations. Most Board and Committee members of PGRSC are working at SPC and the job description covers objectives of the Council.

PICISOC = The Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society serves the Society's purposes by serving the interests of the global Internet community through its presence in the Pacific Islands. It

focuses on local issues and developments, and as an impartial advisor to governments and the public on matters of significant interest to Pacific Island people. PICISOC first came into being in 1994 as IT-PacNET when a group of technical guys working for SOPAC decided to set up a support organisation. Through their association with regional organisations they were able to expand the organisation, and finally join the group up with the Internet Society in 2002. The 600+ regional members of PICISOC come from 22 countries which constitute the Pacific region (they are all members of the Pacific Islands Forum). The PGRSC forms the special interest group GIS and RS within PICISOC. PICISOC hosts for PGRSC the GIS-PacNet

SIBA|GITA = Spatial Industries Business Association is the leading association representing the Spatial Industry. SIBA|GITA is committed to working with Government and Academia to build a more innovative, in Australia and the Pacific. SIBA|GITA provides a network of businesses, tender alerts, networking and collaboration opportunities, professional development, think tanks and direct business opportunities. SIBA is present during the Conference and uses the platform to hand out the spatial business award. The Council is helping to distribute the message to apply for the award through GIS-PacNet. The PGRSC signed a MoU with SIBA|GITA.

SPREP = Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme left SPC in Noumea in 1992 and relocated to Samoa. It achieved autonomy as an independent inter-governmental organisation with the signing of the Agreement Establishing SPREP in Apia on 16 June 1993. SPREP (the Secretariat) is the region's key inter-governmental organisation for environment and sustainable development, and is one of several inter-governmental agencies comprising the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP). The purposes of SPREP are to promote cooperation in the South Pacific Region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. SPREP is an institutional member of PGRSC.