

Pohnpei-wide Mangrove Vulnerability Assessment completed

Micronesia Conservation Trust

Pohnpei—Mangroves are vital to the communities of Micronesia, and especially Pohnpei. They filter water from sediment and unnecessary nutrients, host nursery habitat for fish, crabs and other marine life, provide livelihoods and protect coastal communities from storms and storms surges. Mangrove ecosystems are vital to the survival of Pohnpeian communities by keeping them resilient and protecting them from the impacts of climate change and global warming such as more frequent droughts, flooding and saltwater inundation

into farmlands. However, today, our mangroves are being threatened not just by climate change, but also human impacts such as dredging and landfills.

On February 25th, 2021, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), its local partners including the FSM National Department of R&D, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Micronesia Program, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP) and Pohnpei State Department of R&D, held a webinar with the United States Forest Service (USFS), the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the University

of Tasmania (UTAS) to discuss the findings and recommendations from this 5 year long vulnerability assessment that covered almost all the mangrove areas in Pohnpei. Specifically, during the meeting, the US federal agencies and the UTAS shared the outcomes of the data they had gathered and analyzed on the status of Pohnpei's mangroves over the past 5 years. The outcomes of the project include an island wide Mangroves Vulnerability Assessment, and climate change prediction analysis

See "Mangrove Assessment" on page 4



May 13th planned for repatriation of stranded citizens

Declaration of public health emergency extended to May 31st, 2021

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FSM Information Services

April 4, 2021

PALIKIR, Pohnpei— Per Congressional Resolution (C.R.) 21-252, the Declaration of Public Health Emergency originally implemented by His Excellency David W. Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), on January 31st, 2020, has been extended to May 31st, 2021. Citizens interested in reading C.R. 21-252 may find it here: https://gov.fm/files/CR_21-252_-_Effective_Date_for_COVID-19_Emergency_Declaration_on_May_31_2021-compressed.pdf

For the great bulk of citizens, residents, and

stakeholders, including those residing in the FSM and those stranded abroad, C.R. 21-252 offers no change from the status quo of the past several months and is thematically similar to the previously enacted C.R. 21-245, C.R. 21-228, C.R. 21-185, and C.R. 21-175. Economic provisions, such as cargo shipping and at-sea transshipment of fish, remain in place and unaltered. Travel into the FSM remains restricted, with limited exceptions; outbound travel from the FSM remains open, though such activity is discouraged unless it is medically necessary.

While it remains the intent of the FSM National Government to achieve a minimum 70% vaccination rate amongst its eligible population (i.e. adults aged 18 years and up) prior to the renewal of most repatriation activities from COVID-19 affected jurisdictions, there has been recent but significant movement in the planning for repatriation efforts from the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the stranded medical patients in the U.S. Territory of Guam.

See "Repatriation" on page 5

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Some depositors allege wrong doing by Bank of Guam handling of “stimulus checks”

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 29, 2021

Pohnpei—Seven plaintiffs, some US citizens and some FSM citizens, have filed a complaint (CA 2021-008) for damages against the Bank of Guam for the bank’s handling of deposits of United States Department of Treasury funds, so called “stimulus checks”.

The plaintiffs say that when the Bank of Guam either failed to honor US Treasury checks or in some cases, “returned” money to the Internal Revenue service that plaintiffs had deposited into their accounts, Bank of Guam violated their contractual obligation to their customers amounting to fraud and theft.

They allege that in some instances, the Bank of Guam established itself as the entity that would determine whether a depositor was eligible to receive a stimulus payment from the United States Treasury by requesting that the depositor present a

United States passport, a United States tax return, or W-2 form issued by an employer in the United States.

They further allege that the Bank of Guam also contacted local businesses including the Bank of the FSM telling the local businesses that they were prohibited by law from cashing or otherwise negotiating US Treasury checks. They claim that action was in an effort to keep its customers and other people from being able to negotiate US Treasury checks in the FSM.

The civil action claims that the “Bank of Guam has refused and continues to refuse to communicate with the Plaintiffs about the status of their deposits, other than to advise the Plaintiffs that they need to contact the United States Internal Revenue Service.”

Plaintiffs argue that “there is no provision of United States law or FSM law that authorizes the Bank of Guam to intercept and hold deposits issued by the United States Treasury like that at issue here,

including serving as an agent for the United States Internal Revenue Service.” It also says that there is no provision of US or FSM law that requires the Bank of Guam to scrutinize or investigate the deposits made with it. The plaintiffs argue that the checks that were properly issued by the US Treasury present no evidence of fraud and should have been immediately negotiated as a bank would do with any other properly issued financial instrument.

In some cases, and in the absence of any communication from the Bank of Guam saying otherwise, some of the plaintiffs operated on the assumption that their deposits had cleared. They only found out otherwise after their accounts were overdrawn.

As causes of action, plaintiffs have charged the Bank of Guam with breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, due process violations, violations of the Consumer Protection Act, fraud, theft, and conversion.

Plaintiffs seek a preliminary injunction requiring the Bank of Guam to accept any and all deposits from the plaintiffs of any and (all) negotiable instruments issued by the United States Treasury with the deposit to be immediately credited to the Plaintiff’s account. They are also requesting the court to award reasonable attorney’s fees, along with pre-judgment interest, post-judgment interest, costs and any other relief permitted by law.

At press time, attorney for the Bank of Guam had not yet filed a response to the plaintiffs’ allegations.



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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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Motions and counter motions continue in question of COVID-19 border closure constitutionality

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

April 8, 2021

Palikir, Pohnpei, FSM—Motions in Civil Action 2021-007, the complaint for declaratory relief in the matter of the Constitutionality of FSM President David Panuelo’s emergency declaration that closed the borders are continuing. On February 26, 2021, 13 plaintiffs who are FSM citizens, each affected by the border closure and representing each of the four FSM States, filed the suit for declaratory judgment. As covered in The Kaselehlie Press, on March 15, the government defendants filed a motion to dismiss, alleging failure to name the FSM States as indispensable parties and a non-justiciable political question.

On March 26, the plaintiffs filed an opposition to the defendants’ motion to dismiss. The Court has not ruled on either motion and on April 5, Associate Justice Larry Wentworth set the hearing time for Wednesday April 21 at 10:30 a.m. Today, the defendants filed a motion in opposition to the plaintiffs’ motion

in opposition of the motion to dismiss. Usually a motion of that type would be called a reply in support of motion to dismiss.

In their opposition to the motion to dismiss the civil action, defendants argued that since the power to regulate immigration is expressly delegated to the national government, it is a national power and not a State power. “In other words, the FSM States did not close down the national borders because the FSM States are without any proper constitutional authority to do so,” the defendants argued.

Government defendants countered plaintiffs’ argument. “It is...necessary to note boldly the responsibilities extended to the FSM States by the resolutions of the FSM Congress. The resolution provides the direction for a creation of an FSM COVID-19 Taskforce, which entails the combination of essential offices from both the National and State Government. The task to try and tackle COVID-19 is a complicated issue as it does not affect any one state within the FSM but the

Nation as a whole. No one state can claim sovereignty and jurisdiction over their handling of the COVID-19 Pandemic as possible conflicts can result within the Nation and it of those not a party would not satisfy a complete relief: Such a judgment will invites (sic) others similarly situated to file similar complaint against the defendants,” they argued.

Defendants argued against the governments claims that the Court is excluded from hearing the case because it is a non-justiciable political question. “... the Plaintiffs have asserted the violation of their constitutional rights protected under the FSM Constitution. And the FSM Constitution delegates the power to determine what the law is belongs to the FSM Supreme Court by Article XI Section one of the FSM Constitution. To hold otherwise would mean ‘government’s actions could never be questioned or reviewed’,” their opposition motion said.

The defendants countered plaintiffs’ argument. “...the Plaintiffs’ claim of constitutional violation is misplaced and ignores the good policy that the people of

this nation carved into the Constitution when ratified. If this is not a good policy, the most appropriate solution are those processes provided as well under Article XIV of the FSM Constitution. Needless to re-emphasize that Plaintiffs ignores to understand Section 9(6) of Article X of the FSM Constitution, which states... A civil right may be impaired only to the extent actually required for the preservation of peace, health, or safety: The civil rights impairment that FSM citizens and residents are witnessing is a temporary one. An absolute necessity for the safety, peace and health of all. It is also critical to understand that the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution are not absolute, rather are subject to the laws.”

From their statement on the matter, it appears that defendants are arguing that laws can suspend the Constitution rather than the Constitution governing the establishment of laws. They appear to be arguing that the Supreme Court has no role in determining where a law is constitutional or not.

Japan government provides \$3.7 million for FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

April 8, 2021

Palikir, Pohnpei—This afternoon, Ambassador of Japan to the FSM Sobashima Hidenobu met with FSM Secretary for Foreign Affairs Kandhi Elieisar to officially sign paperwork to turn over a \$3.7 million grant to be used for capacity building at the FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute.

The FSM Fisheries and Maritime Institute (FMI) is located in Yap and operated by the College of Micronesia FSM. It offers majors in Navigation, Marine Engineering, and Fishing Technology.

Ambassador Sobashima said that FMI has been hampered in its ability to conduct field training due to lack of necessary equipment. He said that the grant would be used for construction of additional classrooms and dormitory rooms, and also rigid-hull inflatable boats and a training ship.

“After the construction of the facilities and the provision of the equipment are completed, the number of the students of the Institute is expected to increase

by 30 to 90, and the Institute will be able to conduce field training using the provided training ship and boats, which will pave the way for strengthening the FSM’s maritime transportation and security capabilities, deterring illegal fishing and human trafficking, among other possible problems,” Ambassador Hidenobu said. “Thus it will develop the FSM’s foundations for resilient and sustainable development, contributing to the promotion of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”

“Fisheries and Maritime Institute is the only institution for the education of maritime matters in the FSM, with its reputation and expectation widely felt not only throughout the FSM, but also in Palau, and the Marshall Islands, in the Micronesian region,” he said.

Secretary Elieisar thanked the Japanese government through its Ambassador for providing the essential grant. He also commended College of Micronesia FSM Interim President, Karen Simion, who was present at the ceremony, with the support of the FSM Department of Education for their foresight in applying for and securing the grant.

“FMI has potential to grow into an important learning institution of varied specialized disciplines,” Secretary Elieisar said, “churning out citizens with expertise in modern navigation techniques including celestial navigation, in engineering, and so forth that could help ensure the vast maritime domain that we have in apprehending IUUs (Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated fishing vessels), and other violations of our waters.”

“Who knows,” he said, “maybe one of FMI’s students will develop robots that swim in the ocean gathering data, or an algorithm that detects IUUs.”

“Indeed, FMI is the only maritime institution, one of its kind in vocational learning in our country... and I cannot overemphasize the importance of FSM in the development and security of the maritime domain of the FSM, and in affording invaluable technical skills and knowledge to our citizens for employment opportunities, particularly in our fisheries sector, which is the number one priority sector of our country,” Secretary Elieisar said.



Using implementation and climate science to diminish Dengue in the FSM and RMI

Pacific Islands Health Officers Association

(Hagåtña, Guam) – Many US-Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPIs) are disproportionately affected by climate change. Low elevation islands, particularly those in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), have already experienced rising sea levels and persistent drought affecting access to drinking water, decreased living space, and climate-sensitive diseases like dengue.

The FSM and RMI health leadership and PIHOA have teamed up with the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) U.S. Department of State to building predictive models. Using climate and dengue data, the team will develop and implement early warning systems against dengue for the FSM and RMI. This lead time would allow FSM and RMI to train vector staff, reduce mosquito sources, test insecticide

resistance, and perform outbreak-ready maintenance or procurement of vector control equipment and materials.

"The project's outcome aims to give these Pacific Island nations lead time – of weeks or even months – using predictive models, to prepare a public health response to reduce the impact and severity of dengue," said Dr. Limb Hapairai, PIHOA Regional Medical Entomologist at the 2021 Virtual Consortium of Universities for Global Health's (CUGH) Annual Conference.

Dr. Hapairai and other Implementation Scientists dedicated to climate adaptation recently convened to share information and resources to close the gap between knowledge and practice. Meeting participants were engaged in a series of presentations, case studies, and discussions to find practical ways to optimize evidence-based interventions for complex public health challenges. One of the CUGH meeting objectives was to bring experts together to find solutions to challenges faced by climate-

change programs using implementation science. Hapairai.

"One of the challenges that we face in the region is staff availability and high-turnover, especially trained ones. Due to financial and HR constraints, Environmental Health Departments do not have dedicated mosquito control programs with full-time staffing. Staff is frequently assigned to activities that are considered higher priority which may limit the development and maintenance of an early warning system." said Dr.

Though the early warning systems for FSM and RMI are in the initial phases, the information and resources gained from the CUGH meeting will be critical for the success of the project. These experiences and projects afford a valuable opportunity to take stock of implementation challenges and design research and analysis to improve understanding of how to design adaptation programs and assure their successful implementation.



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REQUEST FOR BID

For the
"PICS Library/Classroom Building"
in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia

NOTICE

The Pohnpei State – Program Management Office (PNI-PMO) is hereby soliciting bids from interested entities for the purpose of implementing the "PICS Library/Classroom Building" in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia. This work will be performed with funding under the FSM Infrastructure Compact grants.

Further details of this bid package may be obtained by sending a written letter of interest by email to projects@pnipmo.gov.fm the subject heading, "PICS Library/Classroom Building".

1. Contractor's Qualification:
The Contractor's Qualification Statement must be submitted in PDF format to the above email address no later than 4:00PM, Pohnpei, FSM time, Thursday, May 12, 2021, to be considered.

2. Pre-Bid Conference: Scheduled for June 2, 2021 at 10:00AM at the PNI-PMO Office in Kolonia, Pohnpei and/or by Zoom Conference due to Covid 19 travel restrictions.

3. Bid Closing: Only Qualified Contractors will be asked to submit a bid. The bid package must be received by Pohnpei State – Program Management Office (PNI-PMO) in Kolonia, Pohnpei State, no later than 4:00PM, Pohnpei FSM time, Thursday, July 22, 2021.

4. Bid Opening: All proposals received shall be opened immediately following the closing of the Bid.

The PNI-PMO reserves the right to reject any and all bid tenders for any reason, if in the PNI-PMO's sole opinion to do so would be in Pohnpei State's best interest.



...Mangrove Assessment

Continued from front page

for the island of Pohnpei (called a WARMER Mode). Additionally, the report included a Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) and the ongoing Surface Elevation Table (rSET) for the Pohnpei State. Emphasis was on presenting the methodologies, results and management recommendations that could be used to continue to protect the ecosystem services provided by Pohnpei's vast mangrove system. A key finding of both reports concluded that while climate change and sea-level rise are going to be the long-term threats to the health and viability of Pohnpei's mangroves, human impacts such as dredging, pollution, and coastal development

are currently the major threats to Pohnpei's mangroves.

To continue the discussions locally, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei and its partners are preparing for the 2nd Mangrove Conference on March 17th -18th, 2021. This conference is meant to provide the outcomes of the ongoing initiative including recommendations to the Pohnpei State Government, resource managers, local governments, traditional leaders and communities to encourage dialogue that will help identify the most effective and appropriate mangrove management strategies for Pohnpei.

...Repatriation

Continued from front page

Per C.R. 21-252, stranded medical patients are given the first priority for return into the Nation from COVID-19 affected jurisdictions.

On March 30th, 2021, the FSM National Government sent a diplomatic note to the Government of the United States of America requesting a humanitarian assistance flight from Guam to the FSM. Since the sending of that diplomatic note, and an equally supportive and receptive response from the U.S. Government, President Panuelo—upon consultation with the FSM COVID-19 Task Force—has designated May 13th, 2021, as the repatriation date for stranded medical patients, attendants, students, and top-level diplomats.

Additionally, the U.S. Government has offered to provide the FSM with medical capacity-building personnel. Noting that the two primary arguments the Pohnpei State Legislature suggested for postponing repatriation efforts in December, 2020, were premised on the lack of sufficient medical

personnel, and the lack of ventilator training—of which neither issue has been addressed, as there remains a personnel shortage and ventilator training has not begun—President Panuelo has been recommended by, and has since advised, the FSM COVID-19 Task Force that he supports the arrival of doctors from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and/or the U.S. Department of Defense. Such medical personnel will be asked to provide assistance during the Nation's initial repatriation efforts, and to build medical capacity within the FSM.

The FSM COVID-19 Task Force has recommended, and President Panuelo has concurred, that repatriating citizens will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with limited exceptions.

It is expected that, on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021, the FSM COVID-19 Task Force, in a joint meeting with the Pohnpei State COVID-19 Task Force, and the Embassy of the United States of America, will further clarify the details of the May 13th repatriation activity.

C.R. 21-252 still requires the implementation of a 14-day pre-quarantine and two negative COVID-19 tests, without modifications or exceptions to these requirements. In the event the FSM COVID-19 Task Force,

either through consultation with the State COVID-19 Task Force/s and/or medical specialists, determines that such a 14-day period is unnecessary, either in whole or in part, the Executive Branch would be mandated to submit the justification to the 21st FSM Congress' Congressional Committee on Health & Social Affairs, and receive a formal written communication signed by a majority of its members, if the 21st FSM Congress is not in session.

All repatriating persons will undergo the same COVID-19 testing and security protection regimes. All preventative and protective measures necessary to effectively complete this repatriation effort successfully are being implemented and put into effect both in Guam and in the FSM. Access and visitation to designated pre-quarantine and quarantine facilities is restricted.

As of April 3rd, 2021, 26% (15,552 persons) of the Nation's eligible population has received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 17% (9,866) have received their second and final dose of the vaccine.

In addition to having received 62,600 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine thus far, the FSM has also received 1,800 doses of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has a shelf-life of six months, compared to the Johnson & Johnson vaccine's shelf-life of three months.

"We are among the most fortunate countries in the world," President Panuelo said in a statement, "As we've kept our Nation COVID-19 free. We began our COVID-19 vaccination campaign on December 31st, 2020, and now it's our citizens' individual responsibility to take the vaccine, and help protect yourself and your family, to help keep the overall safety and health of our Nation intact from the devastation of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We mandate children to take certain vaccines before going to school for their safety and our Nation's safety, and so it doesn't make sense that our Nation's adults are hesitant to do the same."

"We are committed to May 13th as our first repatriation activity from a COVID-19 affected jurisdiction," President Panuelo continued. "I emphasize again that it is a very serious responsibility upon our Nation's citizens to ensure that you get vaccinated at the nearest possible opportunity. I am mandating that every National Government frontline worker—every doctor, nurse, customs, immigration, quarantine, and police officers, and transportation workers, who may come into contact with repatriating

Madolenihmw officials convicted of multiple charges related to theft of funds

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

April 11, 2021

Pohnpei—After many hearings, Pohnpei Supreme Court Associate Justice Robert Nakasone issued a judgment of conviction for four former Madolenihmw officials including the former magistrate, Petrick Ringlen. The judgment, which was issued on March 2, only last week came to the attention of The Kaselehlie Press. A sentencing hearing was scheduled for April 6, but was postponed.

Last year, Pohnpei State charged the four with various crimes after a Pohnpei Office of the Public Auditor revealed that they had been receiving significant, unauthorized payroll advances, some for more than a decade. Besides Ringlen, the convicted officials were Maioleen Etse, the Madolenihmw government treasurer; Sohnaem George, an account clerk; and Hernet Ringlen, a tax collector for Madolenihmw.

The four were each initially charged with Grand Larceny, Embezzlement, Theft by Failure to Make Required Disposition of Funds Received, Misconduct in Public Office, and Criminal Conspiracy.

According to the March 2 judgment, prosecutors agreed to dismiss the charge of Criminal Conspiracy.

The judgment said that prosecutors had also offered the opinion that a person could not be simultaneously charged with Grand Larceny and Embezzlement. They offered to dismiss the charge of Grand Larceny. The Court disagreed, and used several pages in its judgment to explain why it decided not to dismiss that charge. It found all defendants guilty of both of the felony charges along with the remaining charges after dismissal of the Criminal Conspiracy.

persons—be fully vaccinated, and encourage our State Governments to do the same, so as to help ensure that we have as airtight a repatriation regime as possible. This can make or break our Nation's overall health and safety if we don't take the personal responsibility to get vaccinated."

As of April 5th, 2021, the FSM remains COVID-19 free.

Queries regarding the Executive Branch's

It said that between the years 2007 and 2019, the Madolenihmw Treasury had paid out a total of \$321,631.81 in salary advances, with an unpaid balance of \$106,496.60. The issuance of salary advances is prohibited by law and even had the Madolenihmw Government had issued a statute authorizing it, such statute would have been illegal according to Pohnpei law.

Pohnpei Auditor Compliance Investigator Sophia Pretrick testified during trial that in the years 2017 and 2018, Petrick Ringlen received 52 regular paychecks along with 60 salary advances. George received his regular payroll checks and 39 salary advance checks. Etse and Hernet Ringlen also received their regular pay and salary advances.

The judgment said that all of the accused waived their rights and spoke freely when questioned.

Pretrick told the court that George prepared the requests for advance, Etse certified them and Petrick Ringlen approved them.

The State proved to the Court that Petrick Ringlen has an unpaid balance for advances of \$29,542.18. Maioleen Etse has a balance of \$9,200.43. Sohnaem George has a balance of \$16,910.10. Hernet Ringlen's unpaid balance is \$11,872.38.

"Based on evidence adduced at trial, the Plaintiff (prosecutor) proved beyond reasonable doubt that Defendants committed the offenses charged. Accordingly, I find that defendants committed the offenses of Grand Larceny, Embezzlement, Theft by Failure to Make Required Disposition of Funds Received, Cheating, and Misconduct in Public Office," the judgment said.

Each of the charges is a felony. At press time, the scheduled sentencing hearing had not yet taken place.

execution of C.R. 21-252 can be relayed to the Manager for Environmental Health & Preparedness, Mr. Moses Pretrick, at mpretrick@fsmhealth.fm or at +691-320-8300. Queries may also be relayed to the Public Information Officer/Press Secretary, Mr. Richard Clark, at richard.clark@gov.fm or +691-320-2548. Citizens may also send a direct message to the Office of the President's Division of Public Information on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/piofsm/>

CDC awards \$1,497,451 to expand Micronesia's COVID-19 vaccine programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Funding can be used for innovative partnerships with community-based organizations to increase vaccine uptake, including in underserved populations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded Micronesia \$1,497,451 to support local efforts to increase vaccine uptake by expanding COVID-19 vaccine programs and ensuring greater equity and access to vaccine by those disproportionately affected by SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The award is part of \$3 billion in funding that CDC has granted to 64 jurisdictions to bolster broad-based vaccine distribution, access, and administration efforts. The funding was made available by the American Rescue Plan and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act and will provide critical support through CDC's existing immunization cooperative agreements in communities around the country.

"We are doing everything we can to expand access to vaccinations," said CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky,

MD, MPH. "Millions of Americans are getting vaccinated every day, but we need to ensure that we are reaching those in the communities hit hardest by this pandemic. This investment will support state and local health departments and community-based organizations as they work on the frontlines to increase vaccine access, acceptance, and uptake."

To ensure health equity and expanded access to COVID-19 vaccines:

- 75% of the total funding must focus on specific programs and initiatives intended to increase vaccine access, acceptance, and uptake among racial and ethnic minority communities; and,
- 60% must go to support local health departments, community-based organizations, and community health centers.

For example, funds could be used to identify and train trusted members of the community to conduct door-to-door outreach to raise awareness about COVID-19 vaccines and help individuals sign up for appointments. Funds may also be used to support hiring community health workers who perform culturally-competent bilingual health outreach so they can provide people who are receiving care with the information they need to get

a free vaccination.

These awards are part of ongoing efforts by CDC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to increase public education, awareness, and access to COVID-19 vaccines and strengthen health equity.

Last week, HHS launched the COVID-19 Community Corps – a nationwide, grassroots network of community leaders people know and trust, to encourage Americans to get vaccinated. Community Corps members will receive weekly updates on the latest scientific and medical updates, talking points about the vaccine, social media suggestions, infographics, factsheets with timely and accurate information, and tools to help people get registered for an appointment and vaccinated. The Community Corps launched on Thursday, April 1 with over 275 founding members, and as of Friday, April 2, more than 3,000 had already signed up.

CDC plans to award more than \$250 million to community-based organizations serving minority or underserved communities to support their COVID-19 outreach efforts, including connecting members of the community with health services and vaccinations.

The HHS Office of Minority Health is also investing \$250 million to encourage COVID-19 safety and vaccination among underserved populations in minority communities.

HHS, through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), will invest more than \$6 billion from the American Rescue Plan into Community Health Centers nationwide to expand COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and treatment for vulnerable populations.

CDC announced a plan to invest \$2.25 billion to address COVID-19-related health disparities and advance health equity among high-risk and underserved populations through grants to public health departments.

CDC also plans to provide \$300 million to jurisdictions for community health worker services to support COVID-19 prevention and control and address disparities in access to COVID-19 related services, such as testing, contact tracing, and vaccinations, as well as an additional \$32 million for training, technical assistance, and evaluation.

For information on where funds will be distributed, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/funding-update.pdf>

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION (RFQ)

Ref: RFQ/FJI/JPN/004/21

Construction - DECEM-NEOC Extension & Existing Building Refurbishment

The United Nations Development Programme hereby invites construction firms to submit bid for "DECEM-NEOC Extension & Existing Building Refurbishment"

Complete submission comprising of technical and financial proposals should be sent to the following email in accordance with the procedures layout in the RFQ documents:

Email submissions

etenderbox.pacific@undp.org

The Terms of Reference (TOR) together with other related information can be obtained from the UNDP Office, upon e-mail request to vimal.pillay@undp.org or downloaded from the procurement section of UNDP Fiji Website <http://www.pacific.undp.org>. The closing date for submission of RFQ is 22nd April 2021. Any Proposal received after the deadline for submission, will not be accepted.

Pre bid meeting will held on 8th April 2021 at 2pm at the following venue:

Venue: Conference Room, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM)

Address: Palikir, Pohnpei 96941

Federated States of Micronesia

Contact person: victorina.loyola@undp.org



Pohnpei State Government
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REQUEST FOR BID

For the

"Kinakapw to Lehn Diadi Waterline Extension"
in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia

NOTICE

The Pohnpei State – Program Management Office (PNI-PMO) is hereby soliciting bids from interested entities for the purpose of implementing the "Kinakapw to Lehn Diadi Waterline Extension" in Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia. This work will be performed with funding under the FSM Infrastructure Compact grants.

Further details of this bid package may be obtained by sending a written letter of interest by email to projects@pnipmo.gov.fm the subject heading, "Kinakapw to Lehn Diadi Waterline Extension".

- Contractor's Qualification:** The Contractor's Qualification Statement must be submitted in PDF format to the above email address no later than 4:00PM, Pohnpei, FSM time, Thursday, May 12, 2021, to be considered.
- Pre-Bid Conference:** Scheduled for June 9, 2021 at 10:00AM at the PNI-PMO Office in Kolonia, Pohnpei and/or by Zoom Conference due to Covid 19 travel restrictions.
- Bid Closing:** Only Qualified Contractors will be asked to submit a bid. The bid package must be received by Pohnpei State – Program Management Office (PNI-PMO) in Kolonia, Pohnpei State, no later than 4:00PM, Pohnpei FSM time, Thursday, July 29, 2021.
- Bid Opening:** All proposals received shall be opened immediately following the closing of the Bid.

The PNI-PMO reserves the right to reject any and all bid tenders for any reason, if in the PNI-PMO's sole opinion to do so would be in Pohnpei State's best interest.

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Doone the big winner of Tuna Commission and CFC fishing tournament

By Pohnpei Fishing Club

March 27, 2021

Pohnpei—After a tough year for Pohnpei Fishing Club tournaments due to COVID-19 complications, the 2021 fishing year began in earnest for the Club with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission/Caroline Fisheries Corporation Tournament. It was the first tournament of the year.

We had a fine day for the most part. A little rain hit at the end, but that was just to cool everyone off. The seas were a little bumpy, but not like January or February which was really rough this year.

The good thing was the fish were biting, and we had some very good catches.

There was a variety of fish brought in. Our first marlin of the year was the winner, and there was also a nice size sailfish, a couple of big yellow fin and some nice dog tooth tuna. The wahoo are still biting and it looks like the mahi mahi are finally back.

Killian Doone on Poahwaohwoa was the grand prize winner of \$700 in the big fish category for his 193.4 pound marlin. Wilmar Aquino on Happy Hookers took the \$500 second prize with a 68 pound sailfish. Close behind was Lara Trott, with a 67.5 pound dog tooth tuna.

For that fish she won the third prize of \$350, but Trott also caught another big dog tooth tuna of 57 pounds which won her the \$100 prize for top lady angler.

\$150 prizes were also awarded to anglers with the biggest fish in each species. Jimmy Barnabas won the top prize in that category for his 66.5 yellow fin. Shambhu Prasad caught a 28.5 wahoo for top prize in that species. John Hedson won the prize for barracuda at 18.5 pounds. Jody Robey caught a nice 22 pound mahi mahi for the \$150 prize for that species. Marcela Hawley landed a fat 17.5 skipjack for the top prize in that category.

Dave Spencer, fishing aboard Dolphin, won the junior angler prize of \$100 for a 10 pound yellowfin.

The weigh in had a nice if somewhat wet and rowdy crowd. 18 boats registered for the tourney and it was a good start to the season.

No one caught the marlin jackpot. It is now \$7,700.00 to beat the club record of 450 pounds.

Lara Trott donated an EPIRB to be raffled off to small boat owners who didn't already own one. Kevin Ihara, Jr. won that raffle for the boat "Young Blood". The club supports safety and wants to encourage every boat operator to get an EPIRB.

Thanks again to the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and Caroline Fisheries Corporation. We appreciate the sponsorship and the support.



Rotary Clubs of Hilo, Hawai'i donate school supplies to classroom in Chuuk

Rotary Clubs of Hilo

The global pandemic has made the past year difficult for schools, teachers, and students for a host of reasons. In Chuuk, teacher Ankiambom Chia stepped in to cover third and seventh grade classes due to teacher shortages at her charter school on the island of Weno in Chuuk State. Rotary Club members, Tim Hansen of Rotary Club Hilo Bay and Charlene Iboshi of Rotary Club South Hilo heard about Chia's school and her work with students. Hansen mobilised his local Rotary club members and they worked together to donate new school supplies and classroom materials.

Rotary Clubs gather leaders in communities across the globe who promote and advance understanding, goodwill, and peace worldwide as part of their mission. Chia reflected that having the donation has been helpful in a time when supply chains have been under stress and has been an uplifting gesture of Pacific solidarity.

For more information about Rotary in Hawai'i go to <https://rotaryd5000.org/>

To learn more about Akoyikoyi School in Chuuk visit: <http://www.ship-hoops.org/akoyikoyi-school/>

When 23 flat rate boxes of donated school supplies as well as a box containing 50 calculators came in, Chia, got a call from the local post office letting her know the boxes had arrived. In the days following, her students who attend the charter school, Akoyikoyi Elementary in Chuuk, helped to open boxes full of school supplies.



Grant contract signed for the project for construction of security fence for Gagil Elementary School, Yap State

Embassy of Japan in FSM

On March 16, 2021, the Grant Contract Signing was concluded for The Project for Construction of Security Fence for Gagil Elementary School, Yap State between H.E. Sobashima Hidenobu, Ambassador of Japan to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Hon. Henry S. Falan, Governor of Yap State. The project will provide the Department of Education, Yap State with the funds up to US\$90,908 under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects by the Government of Japan.

For a long time, Gagil Elementary School has suffered from the intruders who broke into the School's facilities and animals such as dogs and pigs damaged the crops in the School's garden. This is dangerous because the excretas of the animals can cause infectious diseases for people.

This project aims to provide a secure and healthy education environment for the students and teachers of Gagil Elementary School, by building security fences surrounding the School to protect the School's property against vandalism and prevent the spread of infectious diseases from the animals.

After the building of the security fences, Gagil Elementary School is expected to provide a secure and healthy education environment for all students and teachers, including the environmental education activities in the School's garden without any risk of infectious diseases.




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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia's National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward a Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Consultant to be working with FSM NORMA in Pohnpei, FSM. The Consultant services include:

GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK

Generally, the ICR Consultant will produce an implementation completion report that independently and fully reviews the FSM's implementation of the PROP Project to document issues, lessons learned, and make recommendations on the Project's performance. Consultant is expected to:

1. Thoroughly review documents produced by the project to assess these outputs and their relevance and impacts in terms of pursued development outcomes; Review and determine the extent to which the stated objectives of each component were achieved; Liaise with partner organizations, consultants and stakeholders to review project achievements alignment and impact for the PDO, results framework and M&E processes; Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of methods and mechanisms adopted for the implementation of each component; Analyze financial alignment under each project component and assess whether the use of funds matches progress, efficacy, quality, and timeliness of procurement and disbursement activities; Review the adequacy of project implementation and management arrangements in terms of staff, effectiveness in use of existing systems (fiduciary, safeguards, M&E), contract management capacity and reporting; Assess the performance and delivery capacity

of the partner agencies involved in implementing the project with its key implementing agencies; Assess quality of cooperation with other relevant donors, partners, and institutions within the sector as well as the clarity of roles and responsibilities, effectiveness of decision-making and adequacy of implementation support arrangements.

2. Identify and document how effectively key project implementation issues were addressed and risks were managed; Identify and document lessons learnt during project implementation and providing a lessons learnt report with support from the PIU, project partners and consultants.
3. Make recommendations based on the review findings to assess overall performance, achievement of the project development objectives and the suitability of project outputs.
4. Prepare a Completion Report with a PowerPoint presentation provided to DOFA (executing agency) for informing donors and other relevant parties of review outcomes and lessons learnt through project implementation. The consultant would be presenting the report using the PowerPoint to NORMA, DOFA, R&D, DHSA as other key IAs and stakeholders of this project.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1. Master degree or equivalent in fisheries, fisheries management, natural resource management, economics or development or related areas. Bachelor degree may be acceptable with relevant professional experience in FSM.
2. At least 5 years of professional experience in fisheries management, development projects, project design, management, and/or monitoring and evaluation
3. Proven experience in project monitoring and evaluation, completion report preparation especially on World Bank projects is a plus.
4. Demonstrated analytical capacity, well-developed technical writing and editorial skills, proficient computer skills and proven capacity to work independently and under pressure to meet deadlines.
5. Languages: Good working knowledge (speaking, reading and writing) in English
6. Organizational skills: Good organizational skills, setting of priorities and meeting deadlines
7. A sound understanding and knowledge of international and regional fisheries instruments, including the background in sustainable economic and community development and institutional capacity development is desirable.

DURATION OF THE PERIOD& COST OF CONSULTANCY

The consultancy will be for a period of about 3 months commencing in April 2020 and consultant is expected to commit thirty person-days to deliver outputs. Cost of consultancy is negotiable but to be based on international market rate and qualifications. Given COVID19 travel restrictions, innovative and flexible approaches to implementation of the consultancy could be discussed on completion of Report. FSM-based consultants are also encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION

The FSM NORMA invites consultants to indicate their interest in providing the above-mentioned services by submitting electronic and/or hard copies of 1) Letter of Interest, 2) CV, and 3) information/current contact details of counterparts of 3 latest relevant assignments. Submission of EOI is preferred by April 15, 2021 to Mr. Eugene Pangelinan, Executive Director of FSM NORMA at info@norma.fm. Selection will be in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers (January 2011 edition). Full Terms of Reference (TOR) can be obtained from: NORMA, FSM National Government, Ambrose Building in Kolonia. Postal address P.O.Box 122, Pohnpei, FM 96941; Office Telephone: 691-320-2700/5181; Email: info@norma.fm Copy to crawford.nimea@norma.fm

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World-first COVID-safe travel corridor opens between Palau and Taiwan

Republic of Palau- Office of the President

A world-first COVID-safe, quarantine-free “Sterile Corridor” opened today between Palau and Taiwan with the arrival of Palau’s first inbound tourism flight since March 2020. The sold-out China Air flight landed in Palau at around 7:30 pm, carrying Taiwanese travelers eager for their first international vacation in over a year.

Palau’s border has remained closed since March 2020 to keep its local population of 18,000 safe from the risk of COVID-19. Palau is one of the only countries to remain completely COVID-free, but as tourism is Palau’s biggest economic driver, the border closure has had a devastating effect on the country’s economy.

Palau’s President, Surangel Whipps, Jr. returned to Palau from Taiwan on the Sterile Corridor’s inaugural flight following his first State Visit since taking office in January. On arrival in Palau, President Whipps marked the occasion with a ceremonial signing of the Palau Pledge: the country’s official passport stamp that all visitors must sign on arrival, promising to preserve Palau’s environment and respect its culture for the sake of the next generation.

H.E. Wallace Chow, Taiwan’s Ambassador to Palau, and H.E. John Hennessey-Niland, US Ambassador to Palau, joined President Whipps at the signing ceremony and also signed the Pledge to commemorate all three countries’ efforts to ensure Palau could safely reopen to tourism.

Speaking on arrival back in Palau, President Whipps said: “I’m very happy this day has finally come. This is the first sterile travel corridor in the world between two COVID-free / COVID-safe countries, and I’m very proud of the work Palau and Taiwan have done to get us here. Taiwan is the perfect partner for this safe travel corridor. Not only because of their success in combating COVID-19, but also because Taiwanese travelers treat Palau’s people, environment, and culture with respect when they visit. Our two nations trust each other – hence why we are able to have zero-quarantine at both borders.”

“I would like to acknowledge our Ministry of Health, the Palau Visitors Authority, the Bureau of Tourism, all border protection officers, and all front liners for their efforts to make this possible. I must add that our non-government and private sectors have been very cooperative in making this possible, and their participation in the process

demonstrates the robust cross-sectoral partnership that we have here in Palau. Indeed, the corridor is safe and sterile because I experienced it firsthand, and I ask for people’s patience as we continue working to improve travel to Palau and build back better.”

“Palau is a safe destination. We have always been COVID-free, and we’ve activated a robust preparedness plan to ensure our residents and visitors stay safe as we open with care. We are also grateful for the partnership and the generosity of the U.S. Government, which provided the vaccine doses to Palau to make this sterile travel corridor possible.”

Palau was one of the first countries in the world to receive the COVID-19 vaccine thanks to the support of the U.S. Government’s Operation Warp Speed program. Over 65% of Palau’s adult population is now vaccinated against COVID-19. Palau’s Bureau of Tourism has also been busy preparing for the reopening with the launch of its Pandemic Safety Certification Program – training and certifying tourism businesses on how to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 ensuring employee and visitor safety. Over 100 businesses are already certified, with many more to follow in the coming weeks.

Taiwan is also taking stringent preventative measures to ensure the safety of the new travel corridor. All Taiwanese travelers to Palau must have tested negative for COVID-19 at the airport prior to departure and cannot have had the virus in the last three months.

Speaking on the new travel corridor’s significance to Palau’s tourism industry, President Whipps added: “This presents a rare opportunity for Taiwanese travelers to visit our beautiful country when no other visitors can, while helping us rebuild our economy at the same time. We look forward to warmly welcoming our Taiwanese guests from today onwards. COVID has made people reevaluate their impact on the planet, and post-COVID, we know they want to travel to destinations that align with their personal values. Palau is uniquely positioned to welcome these high-value, low-impact visitors.”

Ecotourism is the world’s fastest-growing travel sector expected to reach USD 333 Billion by 2027. During the pause in tourism caused by COVID-19, Palau’s private sector partnered with Palau Government to re-tool the nation’s travel offering to make it even more sustainable and further strengthen Palau’s brand promise as a Pristine Paradise.

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REI)
FIT-OUT WORK FOR
THE WORLD BANK FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA COUNTRY
OFFICE AT POHNPEI
REI NO. 21-0354**

The World Bank Group invites General Contractors to participate in a Request for Expression of Interest (REI) for pre-qualification for the office fit-out works for The World Bank Federated States of Micronesia Country Office at Pohnpei. The firm should have minimum annual average revenues of US Dollars 1,500,000.00 for the past three years.

Project Description
The project is located at International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Resident Mission Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia “Pacific Court” Suite 201, Mpomp, Nett, Pohnpei Federated States of Micronesia, 96941

Scope
The project is to provide fit-out works of the following:

- Total fit-out area of the project is about 4,575 Sq.ft
- Work will include interior construction and finishing works: office partitions, doors and frames, fixtures, fittings, etc. Electrical, AC, ventilation, Fire protection systems, Plumbing and sanitary, Security, IT, AV system, and miscellaneous.

The REI will be issued to interested General Contractors starting April 06, 2021. The last day for submission of expression of interest is on April 26, 2021 5:00 PM EST. To be considered as eligible to participate, firms must meet all the mandatory criteria outlined in the World Bank Corporate Procurement Web site under Business Opportunities.

For details, please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/> and click Corporate Procurement Under Businesses and click Business Opportunities and then Administrative Procurement and search for REI No.21-0354. For further information or questions please contact Kamal Altafullah via e-mail at kaltafullah@worldbank.org.

Commencement of the main contract is scheduled for June/ July 2021 and assumes a 3-month duration for completion.

Correction:
The article in the March 31, 2021 edition entitled “UNFPA donates Personal Protective Equipment to FSM” was inappropriately attributed to UNICEF instead of the correct UNFPA.



Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia

Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia Statements of Condition December 31, 2020 and 2019

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Cash and due from banks	\$3,216,941	\$8,843,083
Federal funds sold	5,565,000	3,130,000
Interest-bearing deposits in banks	<u>72,677,394</u>	<u>31,487,057</u>
Cash and cash equivalents	81,459,335	43,460,140
Interest-bearing deposits in banks	17,278,000	20,772,000
Securities available for sale	52,743,058	53,879,555
Loans, net of allowance for loan losses	51,225,274	50,540,856
Accrued Interest receivable	762,060	469,894
Prepaid expenses and other assets	568,987	398,296
Premises and equipment, net	1,879,540	1,981,498
Total Assets	<u>\$205,916,254</u>	<u>\$171,502,239</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY</u> 		
Liabilities:		
Deposits:		
Noninterest-bearing	84,417,670	51,181,138
Interest-bearing	<u>92,978,894</u>	<u>93,019,202</u>
Total deposits	177,396,564	144,200,340
Accrued interest payable	6,215	11,547
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	1,017,184	1,253,418
Total liabilities	<u>178,419,963</u>	<u>145,465,305</u>
Commitments and contingencies		
Stockholders' equity:		
Common Stock, \$5 par value, 1,000,000 shares authorized; 934,348 shares issued and outstanding	4,671,740	4,671,740
Additional paid-in capital	4,663,576	4,663,576
Retained earnings	16,934,654	16,106,422
Accumulated other comprehensive income	1,226,321	595,196
Total stockholders' equity	<u>27,496,291</u>	<u>26,036,934</u>
Total Liabilities & Stockholder's Equity	<u>\$205,916,254</u>	<u>\$171,502,239</u>



Bank of the Federated States of Micronesia Statements of Income Years Ended December 31, 2020 and 2019

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Interest income:		
Loans	\$4,690,606	\$4,620,448
Interest-bearing deposits	549,994	1,168,845
Investment securities	1,036,371	1,203,650
Federal funds sold	<u>12,027</u>	<u>60,582</u>
Total interest income	<u>6,288,998</u>	<u>7,053,525</u>
Interest expense:		
Savings	85,931	252,909
Other time deposits	<u>63,702</u>	<u>89,285</u>
Total interest expense	<u>149,633</u>	<u>342,194</u>
Net interest income	6,139,365	6,711,331
Provision for loan losses	335,000	240,000
Net interest income after loan losses	<u>5,804,365</u>	<u>6,471,331</u>
Non-interest income:		
Loan fee income	265,141	320,254
Service charges on deposit accounts	153,747	165,361
Other	<u>412,146</u>	<u>394,266</u>
Total Non-interest Income	<u>831,034</u>	<u>879,881</u>
Non-interest expense:		
Salaries and wages	2,088,282	1,877,120
Employee benefits	379,526	318,411
Occupancy	361,347	379,023
Data processing	285,122	294,213
Furniture and equipment	217,244	196,894
Electronic banking	201,867	224,376
Gross Receipts and use taxes	167,343	221,521
Telephone	164,068	174,837
Correspondent bank fees	131,638	137,366
Insurance	99,216	103,809
Professional fees	95,754	320,937
Director and shareholder	68,052	90,123
Stationary and supplies	57,673	105,529
Travel	36,600	108,940
Credit and collection	29,905	18,260
FDIC deposit insurance	27,425	20,964
Business development	12,750	23,167
Postage	6,159	21,774
Teller and operating losses	1,775	8,813
Miscellaneous	<u>39,303</u>	<u>39,057</u>
Total Non-Interest Expense	<u>4,471,049</u>	<u>4,685,134</u>
Net Income	<u>2,164,350</u>	<u>2,666,078</u>
Other comprehensive Income :		
Net unrealized gain on investment securities	631,125	888,177
Comprehensive income	<u>2,795,475</u>	<u>3,554,255</u>

FSM fuel prices to rise in line with regional increases

Vital FSM Petrocorp

April 5, 2021

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia - The Vital FSM Petroleum Corporation (FSMPC) wishes to inform our valued customers of an upcoming increase in wholesale prices to the following fuel products: diesel (ADO), unleaded gasoline (ULP) and dual purpose kerosene (DPK). As advised in previous months, regional and international prices have been on an upward trend since April 2020. In the last four months alone, the price per barrel of unleaded gasoline rose from \$49.74 to \$70.48 (see Figure 1).

Customers are advised that the impending increase of \$0.15 per gallon becomes effective Monday, April 12, and, depending on trends in the regional and international market, may be followed by similarly sized increases in the months of May and June.

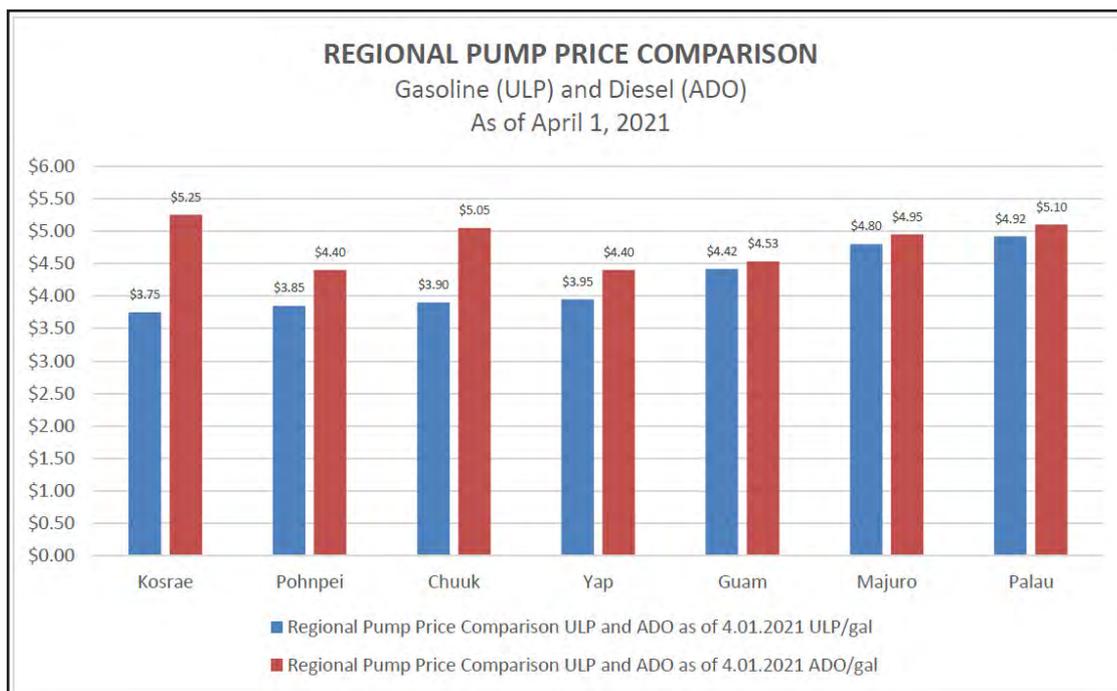
This will be the first increase to FSMPC's wholesale prices in 30 months, with the last price increase effective on October 10, 2018. The last price movements were two reductions in 2020, when FSMPC reduced ADO, ULP and DPK wholesale prices—first, on April 21 with a decrease of twenty-five cents per gallon

(25cpg), and second, on May 21 with a decrease of fifteen cents per gallon (15cpg). Since then, retail prices across the four states of the FSM have experienced a steady downwards trend, with prices lowering from the national average of \$4.38/gal in April 2020 to the current national average of about \$3.91/gal.

Customers were advised in FSMPC Press Statement 2-2021 dated February 26, 2021 of the possibility of a price increase in oncoming months. In neighboring Micronesian islands, the pump price of unleaded gasoline are now as high as \$4.42 per gallon in Guam, \$4.80 per gallon in

the Marshall Islands, and \$4.92 per gallon in Palau. Kosrae maintains the lowest pump prices throughout the greater Micronesian region at \$3.75 per gallon.

FSMPC Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Mr. Johnny Adolph explained: "We have absorbed price increases for the last six months; unfortunately, during that time, international prices have risen and continue to rise for the various fuel products. Following the scheduled increases in the oncoming months, we will remain well within the benchmark of +\$0.25 of Guam's pump prices." CFO Adolph concluded, "We continue to feel the impact of COVID-19 on our business, and are unable to cushion price increases as much as we used to."



Government of Japan hands over a \$177k grant for garbage trucks for Kolonia Town

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 18, 2021

Pohnpei—On Thursday, March 18, officials from the Kolonia Town government met with Ambassador of Japan to the FSM Sobashima Hidenobu to formally sign paperwork and receive the commitment of a grant for two new garbage trucks for Kolonia Town. The grant amount is \$177,088 which will cover the cost of procurement, shipping, and wharfage.

Ambassador Sobashima described the scope of the project during his speech. He said that in 2011, the Government of Japan donated two garbage trucks to Kolonia Town which then served its residents for nearly a decade. However, both of the trucks have recently broken down and are no longer usable for waste collection.

To cover the service shortfall, the Kolonia Town government has been renting a flat bed truck with a self-contained crane to collect waste but it is not sufficient to the task. Kolonia Town approached the Government of Japan asking if they would be willing to supply two more trucks and the government responded positively.

Ambassador Sobashima said that with the provision of the two new garbage trucks, the frequency of waste collection in Kolonia Town will be able to increase from once every two weeks to once a week which will benefit the 6,000 people living in Kolonia.

"This is in conformity with the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 through a comprehensive life-cycle approach announced in the G20 Osaka Leaders' Declaration in June 2019," he said.



**Office of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program
FSM Department of Finance & Administration
INTEGRITY UNIT**

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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTING SERVICES)

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Nationals Only

Country: Federates States of Micronesia

Project: Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancement (PRIME) P172225

Assignment Title: PRIME Project Officer (PO)

Reference No: FM-DOTCI-211011-CS-INDV

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancement Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services ("the Services") includes liaising and working with the Project Manager, Central Implementation Unit (CIU) staff and other Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DTCI) staff on finance and procurement requirements of the project. The PO will assist in ensuring that all funds disbursed and procurements under Project are conducted in accordance with the provisions in the legal agreements between the Work Bank and the FSM Government.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment are attached to this request for expressions of interest.

The Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure now invites eligible individuals ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services (attach curriculum vitae with description of experience in similar assignments, similar conditions, etc.). The criteria for selecting the Consultant are:

Mandatory

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Business Administration or other relevant degrees. Relevant Associate Degree may be considered with proven experience of at least three (3) years more than the minimum specified below.
- Minimum of three (3) years relevant experience.
- Experience with working in a team environment.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- Competency in the use of computer applications, especially MS Office and Excel.

Desired

- Demonstrated ability to work under pressure and pay attention to detail.
- Good communication skills.
- Experience in procurement, project accounting and/or administration.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrower" Fourth Edition, November 2020 ("the Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours i.e. 0800 to 1700 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by Friday April 30, 2021.

Robert Goodwin,
PMU Program Manager
Prioritized Road Investment and Management Enhancement (PRIME) Project
Department of Transportation, Communication and Infrastructure (DoTC&I)
Palikir, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
Office: +691 320-2080
Email: rsgoodwin@hotmail.com;
Web: www.tci.gov.fm

And cc to:
Ciu.tci@gov.fm
Central Implementation Unit



Management Accountant

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (Forum Secretariat) is the region's premier political and economic policy organisation, with a vision of helping to create a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives.

The international organisation works to achieve this vision by fostering cooperation between governments, collaboration with international agencies, and by representing the interests of its members - including directly engaging with community members in order to identify pressing needs of the region.

The work of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is guided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) as:

The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complimenting national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and embracing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole.

The FPR is underpinned by the Blue Pacific narrative, endorsed by Forum Leaders in Samoa in 2017, which calls for a long-term regional commitment to act as one "Blue Continent" as the means to achieve its development aspirations. The Leaders vision was that it would serve as the platform to reinforce and inspire the region in its shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean, and to reaffirm the connections of Pacific peoples with their natural resources, environment, culture and livelihoods.

The Opportunity

The Forum Secretariat is looking for a **Management Accountant** to join the team in Suva, Fiji. The position reports to the Team Leader – Finance, Asset Management, Procurement & Travel and will be responsible for developing the Annual and Revised Budgets and Forecasts, manage all aspects of the Forum Secretariat's donor funding including reconciliation of the relevant ledger accounts, to provide timely and accurate monthly project and management financial reports and advice to project managers, cash flow management and investments,

Vacancies

assist in preparation of annual financial reports, and development of financial policies and procedures including the finance manual.

To facilitate the above, the incumbent will be responsible for:

- Budget Formulation and Forecasting;
- Budget monitoring and analysis;
- Donor Fund Management;
- Cash Flow and Investment;
- Assist in preparation of Annual Accounts;
- Review of Financial Policies and Procedures; and
- Management of the Management accounts unit.

The Forum Secretariat is seeking a strategic and proficient individual who holds an Accounting degree with at least three years' work experience in management and financial accounting in a regional or international organisation. Experience in project and donor fund management would be beneficial to applicants interested in this position. Applicants with demonstrated experience in managing a financial accounting system with ability to work to deadlines especially as it relates to financial analysis and reporting and providing budget monitoring reports would have an advantage over other candidates.

The Benefits

The appointment carries a competitive remuneration and benefits package including medical and life insurance. The starting salary will be in the range of **SDR 26,955 to SDR 30,412** per annum. At the 1 March 2021 exchange rate this salary range was equivalent to **FJD78,954 to FJD89,080**. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free. To be eligible for this position, the applicant must be a national of a Forum member state*. Applicants must be willing to travel periodically via economy class.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through our website: www.forumsec.org where an information package containing the job description and remuneration details is also available. Candidates must include in either their application or Curriculum Vitae the full contact details of three referees. The Forum Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer. **Deadline for applications is at 5pm (Fiji time), 23 April 2021.**

* Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Opinion Editorial

Sexual Assault Awareness month: Awareness and action needed for prevention

*US Ambassador
Carmen G. Cantor*



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). Each April is a time to take stock and for each of us to ask, “How can I raise awareness and become more of a positive change agent?” A quote from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center website puts the issue in perspective:

“Even before its official declaration, SAAM was about both awareness and prevention of sexual assault, harassment, and abuse. Looking at the history of the movement to end sexual violence, it’s clear why: It’s impossible to prevent an issue no one knows about, and it’s difficult to make people aware of a problem without providing a solution. The two work in tandem, and they always have.”

Becoming informed about sexual abuse doesn’t occur without painful reflection and acknowledgement of the sobering facts of sexual abuse worldwide, heightened this last year by the conditions of our global Covid-19 pandemic: According to the United Nations Report: The World’s Women 2020: Trends and Statistics:

“Violence against women and girls remains a global issue. During COVID-19 lockdowns, many women and girls have been isolated in unsafe environments where they are at heightened risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. Around one third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; and 18% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months.”

No country escapes the searing negative consequences of Sexual Abuse. According to the Department of Justice, 1 in 4 women and 1 out of 6 men in the United States are sexually abused in their lifetime.

The Department of State’s Micronesia 2020 Human Rights Report touches on the issue, and notes the challenges here, stating “Due in part to social stigma, family pressure, fear of further assault, or the belief that police would not involve themselves in what is often seen as a private family matter, such crimes were underreported, and authorities prosecuted few cases.”

There is much that can be done. Armed with awareness of the issue, we can continue

to advocate within our communities. I recently gave opening remarks at the 2021 Guam Collaboration Project Roundtable for the Guam Coalition Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence. Part One of this virtual event looked at the underpinning history and culture of violence. Part Two highlighted regional partners and resources to counter sexual abuse.

As a member of the FSM community, the United States Embassy continues to collaborate with the National, State and Municipal governments; and various women and youth groups with supporting solutions to sexual assault and family violence in FSM. One takeaway experts have shared is the underlying value for women to have the economic power to make their own decisions.

In order to support these goals, the U.S. Government is providing financing to the International Office of Migration to implement a grant to improve women’s economic development across the Freely Associated States. The U.S. Embassy and IOM in FSM have already hosted several events for this grant, which has powerful objectives: to raise awareness of gender discrimination, teach women how to lead their own businesses, and provide grants to small, women owned businesses and organizations. Giving women the financial

power, and spurring development of skill and self-esteem serves women and their communities by being able live more resilient lives, and make life decisions from a position of strength.

Last year, the Embassy participated in the #BlackOutViolencePohnpei campaign and we walked around the entire island of Pohnpei to raise awareness about domestic violence. This April, we are supporting Sexual Assault Awareness Month through April by wearing black and posting photos online every Thursday with various local groups. The movement is gaining momentum, U.S. Embassies in Suva, Majuro, and Koror joined our online campaign April 15. We used our collective message, “U.S. Embassy staff throughout the Oceania region wear black to demonstrate support for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. We stand together to raise awareness that sexual harassment, assault, and abuse can happen anywhere. We urge governments, law enforcement, NGOs, and individuals to begin honest conversations about sexual violence, support survivors, and take action to prevent sexual violence in all its forms.”

I invite you to join us and wear black every Thursday in April. Together we can raise awareness and work towards our ultimate goal to stop and prevent sexual assault and gender based violence.

Bring us home!

Your Excellency, Mr. President Panuelo,

Hafa Adai from Guam. I hope this letter finds you in good health and spirit. I am writing to you as your constituent and a friend and I am writing on behalf of the many FSM Citizens who are stranded outside of their home states, many of them are dependent on their relatives for help for a long long time. For my case, I have been away from the FSM and most especially been separated from my children for more than a year. Many others including patients, students, government employees, and FSM citizens who visited their families abroad are financially, emotionally, physiologically, and physically drained and suffered for more than one good long year. With great respect, the love of our nation and states, and to allow the necessary time for the FSM and its states to prepare and establish the necessary health and safety protocol, trainings, and build quarantine facilities, we unselfishly chose perseverance over what others might have interpreted as disturbances or rocking the boat.

Now it is more than one year and there still seems to be no definitive timeframe insight for FSM Citizens like ourselves to return home. Consequently, and as the FSM continued to extend AND extend some more months of its border closure, more and more of us have died and

buried in others foreign lands. Many others are being sick. As we patiently and quietly waited some more, our loved ones also have become ill and some unfortunately have passed. Our children, spouses, and members of our families who depended on us for our care and responsibilities have suffered some more. The prolong overdue separation of FSM families and denial of their rights to be united is a prime case of an FSM leadership invented humanitarian crisis and human right torture. The time to make further excuses and unjustifiable reasons to keep us out of our homeland is now dissuading. It seems to be comforting to bring in imported products from COVID-19 infected areas and countries over your own citizens as cargo ships and cargo flights regularly come in and out of the FSM without any interruption in their schedules.

Yes, we know that the FSM has allowed without hesitation two huge gigantic pieces of foreign metals (Ms. Voyager and Ms. Chief Mailo) with FSM crew to return to the FSM from Covid-19 infected countries. The Japanese metal “Voyager” and its crews of at least twenty FSM citizens went through the quarantine protocol and now all crew members are united with their families and the boat is regularly sailing and providing transportation services between our islands. The Chinese metal “Chief Mailo” that went to the Philippines to be refurbished brought an awakening PANIC into the entire FSM. But over time, the case was said to be

historical and the FSM citizens and others on the boat and the boat itself went through similar but little longer quarantine protocol and now are happily with their families.

On the contrary, hundreds and thousands of stranded FSM citizens abroad have completed their vaccine shots, being tested several times and the result continued to be the same-negative. As we wait and went through the daily emotional torture of physical separation from our homeland, uncertainties and anxieties continue to take its toll on us due to the unclear articulation of when FSM stranded citizens can be allowed to be repatriated. What else and what more do you want to subject us to the emotional agony in other’s foreign lands? And while we continue to be indecisive and without any repatriation plan basically to due fear and coronaphobia, our neighboring countries of the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands can repatriate their citizens and unite families but not the FSM? In the case of the Marshalls, they have successfully dealt with the positive case in their country, have contained the spread of the virus and now RMI is COVID-19 free. The FSM?

I am convinced that the basis that convincingly led your conviction and intuition to make the decision that it was safe to bring home the Voyager and Chief Mailo from Covid-infected Japan and Philippines should be no different from any decision for repatriation of stranded FSM citizens.

If anything, there should be much greater comfort to bringing home stranded citizens because it involves lesser risk. These citizens like myself and others who are holed up in Guam have for over a year now been quarantined and isolated. Additionally, we have already been fully vaccinated and tested negative and continued to be self quarantined. Once we arrive back in FSM, we will also be subject to the same sets of Covid-19 protocols accorded to the crew of the two boats. I remember that the Voyager returned to FSM during the heist of the pandemic and no vaccine was available then. However, it seems to be too easy to turn a blind eye to certain situations like bringing home the boats with higher Covid-19 risks and try to make the incidents part of history to silently erode with time from our thoughts.

On behalf of the thousands of FSM stranded citizens, I am appealing to your heart to believe in yourself and in the efforts and preparations that you have made. Separate yourself from the babies who are skinned in adults coverings, Rise up, Step forward and Take your leadership challenge as the leader of ALL FSM citizens and bring us home.

With sincere gratitude and well wishes, I remain.

Faustino Yarofaisug



College of Micronesia-FSM

Yap | Chuuk | Pohnpei | Kosrae

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Australian Embassy Supports CFE's Greenhouse Solar Energy Upgrade Project



Picture and story credit to: Australian Embassy

The Australian Embassy is proud to support the College of Micronesia's Centre of Entrepreneurship through our Direct Aid program, with Charge d'Affaires Takuro Steele presenting a cheque to Timothy M a m a n g o n ,



Executive Director. The Australian Embassy will contribute \$15,000 towards Centre of Entrepreneurship's greenhouse solar energy upgrade project. With the greenhouse facility facing many unplanned power interruptions, the installation of a new solar panel system will ensure reliable power to greenhouse components. Production of high quality vegetables for students will increase, while reducing operational costs for the greenhouse. The project will also be used as a facility to educate students in modern agriculture farming practices.

Financial Aid Assistance During Summer 2021



SEG For Summer 2021

All continuing students who carried full time credit loads for both last fall semester and spring semester, maintained good academic standing and will be registering for less than six credits (6) load this summer will receive SEG assistance. Ninety-five percent (95%) of their tuition for the summer session will be covered by the SEG assistance.

PELL Grant For Summer 2021

Continuing students who carried full credit loads in both last fall and spring semester, maintained good academic standing and will be registering for at least six credits (6) load this summer will receive Pell Grant.

Returning and new incoming students attending Summer must fill out and complete FAFSA 2020-2021 before June 30, 2021 and must submit to Financial Aid Office by June 16, 2021 all required documents such as completed COMAFA, copy of birth certificate or passport, 2018 wage and tax statement and V1 verification form.

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