



14TH MEETING OF THE SPRFMO COMMISSION

Panam City, Panama, 2 to 6 March 2026

COMM 14 – Prop 20

PROPOSAL TO: Improving the Workability of the SPRFMO Policy For Secondments and Internships

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amend <input type="checkbox"/> Create	POLICY FOR SECONDMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS	
Submitted by: Secretariat		
Summary of the proposal:		
<p>SPRFMO has had a Policy for Secondments and Internships since 2018, updated in 2020. SPRFMO engaged an intern in 2017, a secondee from the Republic of Korea in 2018-2019 and a secondee from Chile in 2019-2020. Recent intentions to engage interns and secondees could not be pursued due to the Policy being rigid and dated. The following changes are therefore proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The scope of 'intern' is expanded to include those having completed a post education course that is not necessarily a university degree.• The process for appointing interns is simplified and made less prescriptive.• The intern stipend is expressed in relation to the New Zealand minimum wage to be competitive in the labour market, give due respect to New Zealand law, and avoid using a fixed number that requires Commission revision in future.• The scope of 'secondee' is expanded to include employees of SPRFMO Observers. This would allow for secondees from the FAO, for example, which are currently prevented. All secondments would remain subject to Commission approval under section E.• The application of the Staff Regulations to interns and secondees is broadened.• Drafting improvements are made including for internal consistency and brevity. <p>The edits are informed by legal advice on the application of New Zealand employment law, including on stipend payment of secondees.</p>		
Objective of the proposal:		
<p>The objective of the changes is to make SPRFMO's Policy for Secondments and Internships workable; maximise the benefits of interns and secondees; and minimise the costs of administration by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improving the flexibility of the intern appointment process• widening the scope of interns and secondees• aligning the Policy with the SPRFMO Staff Regulations and New Zealand employment law <p>The necessary oversight of the Chairperson and Commission in these processes is maintained.</p>		
Has the proposal financial impacts or influence on the Secretariat work?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>To be filled out by the Secretariat:</i>		
Ref: COMM14-Prop20	Received on: 11 January 2026	



POLICY FOR SECONDMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS

(Last amended March 2026)

A. PURPOSE

This policy provides administrative guidance for secondments and internships in the SPRFMO Secretariat. This policy is adopted under Article 8 (o) of the SPRFMO Convention.

The SPRFMO Commission recognises the mutual benefits of offering secondments and internships in the Secretariat. Secondments and internships:

1. Enhance cooperation and contribute to disseminating the work of SPRFMO in different environments, including among Members and CNCPs.
2. Promote a better understanding for Members and CNCPs of SPRFMO, RFMOs and fisheries in a multilateral environment.
3. Expose talented students and employees to SPRFMO's work and provide them with an opportunity to further develop their skills.
4. Provide the Secretariat and SPRFMO in general with the opportunity to accomplish additional tasks and activities that may not be supported by regular resources, including meeting support.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. An intern is a person who is completing, or has recently completed, a post-secondary education course (e.g., university or equivalent degree programme) who is undertaking an internship in the Secretariat in accordance with the terms of this policy and those requirements as set out by the Executive Secretary. An intern may be sponsored by a Sponsoring Organisation.
2. A secondee is a person employed by a national, regional or local public administration or education institution of a SPRFMO Member, Cooperating non-Contracting Party (CNP) or Observer, who is seconded to the Secretariat for a limited period of time, to use or develop their expertise in a particular area and contribute with his/her knowledge to the implementation of the tasks of the Secretariat. A secondee is sponsored, fully or partially, by a Member, CNP or Observer.
3. The sponsoring Member/CNP/Observer is the Member, CNP or Observer sponsoring the secondment to the Secretariat.
4. The sponsoring organisation is any organisation, public or private, sponsoring the placement of an Intern in the Secretariat.

C. GENERAL RULES

1. Prior to commencing in the Secretariat, secondees and interns will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure that the Commission and the Secretariat's confidential information remains secure, both for the duration of the internship or secondment, as applicable, and beyond.
2. Secondees and interns are responsible for obtaining their visa and any other legal requirements according to applicable domestic law of New Zealand.
3. It is expected that secondees and interns will have a working level of English, such that they can participate in the work of the Secretariat.



4. All rights to any work done by a secondees or interns in the performance of his/her duties in the Secretariat are the property of SPRFMO.
5. If a secondee or intern intends to publish, whether alone or with others, any text on a matter relating to the work of SPRFMO, he/she will inform the Executive Secretary in advance. The Executive Secretary will have the right to object to the publication if, in their reasonable judgement, the publication is liable seriously to prejudice the legitimate interests of the SPRFMO and/or any of its Members or CNCPs.

D. PLACEMENT OF INTERNS IN THE SPRFMO SECRETARIAT

1. For the purposes of the Staff Regulations, an intern is classed as “temporary personnel” under Regulation 11 and in accordance with Regulation 5.2 will not be classified as an “employee” for the purposes of the Staff Regulations. Despite this classification, interns will observe the following Staff Regulations:
 - a) Regulations 3.1 – 3.7 with respect to duties, discretion and confidentiality;
 - b) Regulations 3.16 – 3.21 on the Relation with Members, CNCPs and the media;
 - c) Regulation 4 with respect to hours of work;
 - d) Regulations 7.11 – 7.13 with respect to observance of public holidays;
 - e) Regulation 10.7 with respect to returning all SPRFMO property on separation;
 - f) Regulation 12 with respect to health and safety.
- 2.
3. Interns are not precluded from applying for roles in the Secretariat but an Internship does not lead to a direct appointment as employee of the Organisation.
4. SPRFMO will provide a monthly stipend for interns that is no less than the New Zealand minimum wage, except where alternative arrangements have been made between the Executive Secretary and the sponsoring organisation of the intern. SPRFMO will not be responsible for the coverage of travel costs to and from the place of residence and the location of the Secretariat.
5. The Executive Secretary will consult the Chairperson of the Commission prior to offering or advertising any internships, including on the duties and responsibilities of the intern, the conditions applicable to the post and any procedural requirements. Internships may be either general internships or for specific subject areas (for example, fisheries science/management, legal, data analysis, IT etc).
- 6.
- 7.
8. In considering candidates for internships, the Executive Secretary will bear in mind the skills and experience, the operational needs of the Secretariat and the overall benefits to the Commission. The Executive Secretary may decide not to appoint any intern.
9. The Executive Secretary will inform the Commission of internship appointments, including the basis of the decisions.
10. The Executive Secretary will set out the specific details of the internship, including stipend, duration, hours of work and duties, in writing to the intern in accordance with this policy and any applicable Staff Regulations. The intern will be asked to record, in writing, their acceptance of these terms and commitment to this policy.
11. Interns will be included in any Public Liability provisions under the Secretariat’s insurance policy.
- 12.



13. At the end of the internship, interns will provide to the Executive Secretary a report assessing the outcomes and how the objectives of the internship were fulfilled.

E. SECONDMENTS TO THE SPRFMO SECRETARIAT

1. Secondments may be undertaken in the Secretariat for a maximum of two years subject to the approval of the Commission. Any extension beyond that two-year period is subject to reconsideration and approval by the Commission. The total duration will not exceed 3 years. Secondees are not precluded from applying for roles in the Secretariat but a Secondment does not lead to a direct appointment as employee of the Organisation.
2. Secondees are not “employees” for the purposes of the Staff Regulations. However, secondees will observe the following Staff Regulations:
 - a) Regulations 3.1 – 3.7 with respect to duties, discretion and confidentiality;
 - b) Regulations 3.16 – 3.21 on the Relation with Members, CNCPs and the media;
 - c) Regulation 4 with respect to hours of work;
 - d) Regulations 7.11 – 7.13 with respect to observance of public holidays;
 - e) Regulation 10.7 with respect to returning all SPRFMO property on separation;
 - f) Regulation 12 with respect to health and safety.

Failure to comply with these obligations during the period of secondment will entitle the Executive Secretary to terminate the secondment.

3. The Secretariat will not bear any costs from the secondment other than those related to the performance of their duties during their secondment (for example, official travel expenses). The sponsoring Member/CNCP/Observer will retain responsibility for the secondee’s social security and pension as applicable in the national legislation and/or policies of the sponsoring Member/CNCP/Observer.
4. The secondee’s personal and annual leave will continue to be the administrative responsibility of the sponsoring Member/CNCP/Observer.
5. Secondees will be included in any Public Liability provisions under the Secretariat’s insurance policy. However, the secondee will be required to demonstrate that he/she has their own travel insurance and at least basic health insurance, including hospital cover prior to commencing his/her post in the Secretariat. The Secretariat is not liable for any expenses arising from a medical incident or accident.
6. Secondments need to be sponsored by a Member, CNCP or Observer. The formal intention and support will be provided by the Member, CNCP or Observer in writing to the Executive Secretary.
7. After consulting with the Chairperson of the Commission, the Executive Secretary may also suggest Members/CNCPs/Observers to consider a specific secondment position to ensure the effective functioning of the Secretariat.
8. The Executive Secretary will, in consultation with the sponsoring Member/CNCP, devise a work plan that takes into account the operational needs of the Secretariat, the benefits to the Commission, the sponsoring Member/CNCP/Observer’s objectives for the secondment and the secondee’s academic background, skills, experience, interests and aspirations.
9. The secondee will go through a SPRFMO staff screening interview¹ and final interview by the Executive Secretary who will make the ultimate selection decision to recommend the secondee to the Commission.

¹ A brief question and answer session typically conducted in a relatively informal manner.



10. Once approved by the Commission, the sponsoring Member/CNPC/Observer and the Secretariat will formalise the secondment via exchange of letters, or other suitable written means which should set out their mutual commitment to this policy. These communications will be circulated to Members of the Commission and CNCPs.
11. The secondment may be terminated at any time by either the Sponsoring Member/CNPC/Observer or the Executive Secretary. In this event, the Commission will be notified.
12. At the end of the secondment, secondees will report back to the sponsoring Member/CNPC/Observer and the Executive Secretary on the outcomes of the work plan and how the experience fulfilled the objectives of the secondment.
13. At each annual meeting of the Commission, the Executive Secretary will provide an account of the tasks undertaken by the secondee, and an assessment² of the secondment in general. At the end of each secondment, the Executive Secretary will prepare and circulate an informative report to the Commission.

² The Secondment assessment will be provided ensuring confidentiality of this document.