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Third Meeting of the Regional Project Steering Committee
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*“Implementing Sustainable Water Resource and Wastewater
Management in Pacific Island Countries”*

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REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PROJECT TECHNICAL SUPPORT NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT DELIVERY

1. INTRODUCTION

Delivery of country IWRM Demonstration Projects requires a high level of technical and scientific input to deliver rigorous and appropriate solutions. One of the key risks identified in all logframes is the capacity to resource appropriate expertise to undertake this work. A further risk less commonly identified, but no less important, is ensuring the quality of key technical and scientific work that is critical to project outcomes.

This paper seeks to initiate the discussion on obtaining adequate technical and scientific support and ensuring the quality of technical and scientific outputs to support national and regional project outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Project technical needs

The Project Documents identify that the demonstration projects need to focus on technical and socio-economic issues, highlighting the need to increase country technical capacity, and the core nature of the PCU in providing technical support for these projects. The Project Documents highlight technical aspects to be addressed including:

- Developing sustainability strategies focusing on institutional and technical interventions required for Demonstration scaling-up as part of National IWRM Plan development and implementation
- Capturing and disseminating lessons learned from demonstration projects
- Organising technical cooperation between countries and between regional organisations

- Collecting and disseminating technical and scientific issues
- Establishing and assisting networking between institutions in-country and external technical specialists

This session will look at how these technical aspects can be addressed in country demonstration projects and at a regional level.

2.2 Demonstration project technical needs

Table 1 identifies the technical and scientific aspects of each of the country demonstration project logframes. These components can be broadly grouped as policy and planning activities, scientific and technical studies, engineering design, mapping and guidelines.

Key questions in delivering these technical components will include:

1. *What technical work is required to deliver my project?*
Scoping the technical components adequately to ensure that they address core project requirements
2. *How do I get the technical work done well?*
Resourcing technical expertise - the breadth of technical components of each project mean that it is likely that every project will need to source technical expertise externally to the project team. Sources for this expertise include government agencies, co-funding partners (including donor organisations, academic institutes and other projects) and local and international consultants
3. *How do I know that it was done well?*
Ensuring the quality of the technical work undertaken is a critical step in delivering confidence in not only the technical work, but the outputs and outcomes of the project
4. *Is it on time and on budget?*
Budgets and timelines for technical work should be managed as part of the broader project management

If at the end of technical work, you are asking the question “what does it mean?”, then at least one of the first three questions hasn’t been well addressed. Often (but not always), this is the scoping component; defining clearly what you need the technical work to deliver to your project.

Point 4 above relates to project management, but the first three relate to quality control of the technical work, often requiring a level of specialist expertise. This session will explore options for the project managers to ensure that the technical work undertaken for the project meets the project needs.

3. PROJECT TECHNICAL REPORTING NEEDS

The project technical reporting and support needs were identified through a review of project logframes and workplans for the upcoming year. This was then considered in light of the project technical reporting completed by some countries, and finally refined through country clinics on the first day of RSC3.

3.1. Project Technical Reporting

The project technical reporting and associated quality assurance is tracked through the quarterly reporting process, commenced earlier this year. A pilot reporting format was circulated in February, and a final, revised version circulated for Quarter 2 2011 reporting. An example completed reporting form can be found in Annex 1.

To date, several countries are yet to provide the technical reports for Q2 2011 and copies of their project technical outputs.

3.2. Review of Project Technical Needs

Table 1 presents the technical needs identified for the country demonstration projects.

Table 1 – National Demonstration Project Technical Reporting Needs

Country	Engaging politicians	PES	Legal Policy Advice	Planning / Zoning	Catchment Plan	Forest Man Plan	Groundwater Man. Plan	Integrated Flood Management Plan	Loss Management and WDM Plan	Water Safety Planning	Technical replication	Biomonitoring	Water Quality Analysis	Water Quality Sampling / Mon.	Groundwater WQ sampling/ Mon.	Awareness engagement	Compost Toilets	Groundwater resource	Marine Monitoring	Septic System Design	Sludge Management	
Cook Islands																						
Fiji																						
FSM																						
Nauru																						
Niue																						
Palau																						
RMI																						
Samoa																						
Solomon Islands																						
Tonga																						
Tuvalu																						

The technical support needs reflect an increase in complexity and specificity from RSC1, where there was a strong emphasis on project management capacity building.

4. QUALITY CONTROL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR PROJECT TECHNICAL COMPONENTS

4.1. Ensuring the quality of the technical outputs

Importantly, all countries have identified that virtually no high-level reviews are undertaken of project work. These reviews are critical to provide confidence in project outputs often guiding investment of millions of dollars. A range of options are available to country projects teams to ensure the quality of technical work undertaken. It is likely that all countries will be required to engage a combination of these options to deliver their projects.

- Information and skills exchanges between countries – organising technical cooperation between countries is one of the key objectives of the regional project. To date, three exchanges have occurred on the project: Samoa into Cook Islands, with key discussions on supply system cost recovery, the Tuvalu project manager into Tonga to train project staff on composting toilet construction and maintenance and the FSM project manager into Vanuatu. Opportunities to further explore this are being considered through the project reallocation fund and by individual project.
- The series of technical workshops organised throughout the Steering Committee meeting reflect some of these opportunities. There is an expectation that countries engaging in technical work will disseminate that work both nationally and regionally. Similarly, there is an expectation that project managers will be aware of technical work relating to their project being undertaken by other country projects.
- Regional information hub – the web portal established by PCU provides an opportunity for information collation and dissemination. The intent is that all documents generated through projects will be accessible through this portal. Links to other information hubs such as the Asia Pacific Water Forum knowledge hubs (<http://www.apwf-knowledgehubs.net/>)
- Peer review – where appropriate experts can be identified, peer review is an accepted mechanism for providing quality control in technical and scientific work. It is likely that, should it be necessary to source the expertise internationally, it is also likely that a peer reviewer would need to be sourced internationally. The PCU may be able to provide guidance on potential peer reviewers for specific pieces of work.
- PCU review – the PCU has the role of establishing and assisting networking between institutions in-country and external technical specialists. In addition to this role, the PCU may be able to provide a technical review of a range of country project activities. To date this capacity has generally focussed on the technical aspects of projects and the logframes; however, as the projects move into implementing technical and scientific activities, the PCU will be able to offer an increasing level of technical input and review. One aspect of quality control to be discussed in this session is the incorporation of PCU sign-off on technical works
- Links and partnerships with regional and other institutions – regional and international institutions have a significant depth and breadth of IWRM expertise, from CROP agencies, including USP, to international organisations such as UNEP. On a regional level, these linkages are being made in part through the development of the Postgraduate training in IWRM, and through partnerships between Cook Islands and Southern Cross University but opportunities exist for collaboration across all projects. Currently, country demonstration projects are exploring work with or engaging CROP agencies (eg. Fiji – USP work on catchment assessment); international organisations (Fiji – IUCN); co-funding partners (numerous); government agencies (numerous); other universities (Cook Islands); community groups (eg. Palau) and local education centres (eg. Nauru – TAFE)
- For increasing local capacity and/or completing technical work that might be challenging to get completed through many of the above options.
- Technical advisory group or panel – The RTAG offered in past sessions to provide a WQA function for demonstration project technical outputs; however no reports have been received to enable RTAG to provide this support. Indications are that the instigation of quarterly technical reporting will provide documents for review.

- PCU to work with countries to provide support; and help in the identification of other resources when appropriate
- Increased use of the GEF Pacific IWRM web page Kava Bowl for forum discussions – whilst piloted in 2010, this facility remains under-utilised

5. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Quarterly technical reporting provides opportunity for reviews of the options adopted on a quarterly basis – the PCU will in turn forward these reports (once screened) to RTAG for review. and PMUs on a quarterly basis.

Further, the development of replication strategies provides opportunities for facilitating replication and uptake, which in turn should further regional and national information exchange.

A significant knowledge gap was identified in a review of the available technical reports and in clinics with the countries, namely:

- A desire for Guideline documents on sampling and monitoring and/or composting toilets and/or sanitation option selection?
- An economics/legal specialist is required to support teams in the development of PES systems and broad accountability.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

In considering the technical needs of national projects, several key points for consideration and deliberation have been raised, including:

- ***The role of RTAG in providing technical reviews for country demonstration PES***
- ***The need for guideline documents for targeted activities – this issue could be deferred to RTAG***