



SOPAC



SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/X
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Second Meeting of the Regional Technical Advisory Group
for the SOPAC/UNDP/UNEP/GEF Project:
*“Implementing Sustainable Water Resource and Wastewater
Management in Pacific Island Countries”*

Nadi, Fiji, 25th – 26th October 2010

PROVISIONAL MEETING MINUTES REGIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (RTAG) 2ND MEETING

1 Welcome

The Regional Technical Advisory Group RTAG, convened in session RSC2.6, met on the evening of Thursday 22nd July 2010 to consider the items tasked to them. The following provides a brief summary of discussions and recommendations to the Regional Steering Committee.

The GEF IWRM Project Manager, Marc Wilson, welcomed and thanked participants. He spoke to the importance of WATSAN in regional discussions and the need to move on from the broad MDGs that are potentially not identifying why we are not moving the region’s water and sanitation issues forward. Marc identified the need for indicators that are meaningful to civil society, that let us know where we are going, whether we’re succeeding and are accessible to the average person.

He highlighted that currently, water and sanitation are lacking political support and civil society; however, the human rights declaration on water provides the opportunity to drive this forward at a regional level. In this process, indicators are potentially a key driver, but only if they are meaningful. Marc identified that he is a strong believer in indicators that roll up, rather than down to and that are relevant to individuals and countries and at a regional level. He stressed the need for good indicators to support and drive policy, particularly relevant as regional and many national water policies are reviewed over the upcoming year.

The GEF IWRM Project Manager then invited the Chair, Keu Mataroa to open the RTAG session.

Keu Mataroa reiterated the importance of indicators in informing communities and supporting decision-makers during an important period for the region. He then declared the meeting open.

2 RTAG Meeting Minutes

2.1 Attendees

Keu Mataroa (Chair)
Marc Wilson (GEF IWRM Project Manager)

Science and Technical Experts

Chris Paterson
David Duncan
Peter Sinclair
Peter Wegener

Other Representatives

Leerenson Lee Ariens (public water utility representative)
Ulukalesi Tamata (USP - CROP Representative)
Jinhua Zhang (UNEP)
Emma Mario (UNDP)
Sopoaga Sam Semisi (GEF IWRM Country representative)
Rhonda Robinson (EU IWRM Project)

Invited Participants

Russ Kun (Nauru)
Pisi Seleganiu (Tuvalu)
Paul Maoate (Cook Islands)
Deborah Manase (Marshall Islands)

2.2 Apologies

Marius-Adrian Oancea (EU)
Milika Sobe – NGO representative

Invited Attendee Apologies

Tony Kuman (Papua New Guinea)
Vinesh Kumar (Fiji)

3 ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Item 6 - *Arrange for project mid-term review in September 2011, with the view of completion of the review by the end of 2011* awaiting response through the Regional Steering Committee.

All other Actions arising addressed in Agenda Items.

4 FRESHWATER VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

David Duncan presented document SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/5 "Pacific Freshwater Vulnerability Assessment", an assessment of the vulnerability of regional freshwater resources, based on a method adapted from basin-level assessment. Country representatives of countries assessed in the report were invited to actively participate in the session.

Key points of discussion, addressed through breakout groups and open forum discussion included:

- The representativeness of the seven countries selected
- The focus on the main islands of countries, rather than some of the smaller islands was appropriate
- The appropriateness of the indicators both regionally and on a country by country basis
- The two indicators developed for the Pacific that differ from the original UNEP methodology
- Whether weightings would be appropriate for different indicators
- The relative vulnerability of the Pacific countries compared regionally and with Asian and African river basins
- The conclusions and recommendations from the report

A working group met subsequent to the first day's session to work on the IWRM classifications. This group recommended adopting a tickbox approach with more categories. This approach was reworked and resubmitted to RTAG for consideration.

The RTAG agreed that:

- The seven islands assessed were representative of the variation across Pacific Island Countries**
- Island-based approach indicators were appropriate for the Pacific Island Countries**
- The indicators adopted from the UNEP methodology were appropriate for the Pacific**
- The Indicators developed for the Pacific (rainfall-based productivity and Integrated Water Resource Management) were appropriate for the Pacific**
- That no weightings would be applied to indicators**
- Further comments would be provided within two weeks of the meeting**
- The report would be supported, including conclusions and recommendations, pending any further comments received within this timeframe**
- The revised IWRM classification framework presented was to be adopted**

Country representatives agreed that:

- All indicators were appropriate for their countries**
- The results were broadly representative of the vulnerability of their country's freshwater water resources**
- The report would be supported pending any further comments in a two week timeframe**

5 PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE OUTLOOK WATER CHAPTER

David Duncan presented document SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/6 "Pacific Environment Climate Change Outlook Water Chapter", which will form the water component of the UNEP regional outlook report, and will ultimately inform the global GEO-5 process. Country representatives present for the UNEP Freshwater Vulnerability Report were invited to actively participate in the session.

Mr Duncan walked the RTAG and country representatives through the report. Minor edits were suggested to the report as part of this process.

The RTAG agreed that:

- Further comments would be provided within two weeks of the meeting**
- The report would be supported, including conclusions and recommendations, pending any further comments received within this timeframe**

6 PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Christopher Paterson presented the document SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/7 "Regional and National Project Monitoring and Evaluation", a review of the GEF IWRM project monitoring and evaluation programme, national demonstration project outputs and setting baselines for the project. Country representatives present for the UNEP Freshwater Vulnerability Report were invited to actively participate in the session.

The presentation highlighted the large number of project activities that were not recognised in national demonstration project logframes, not recognised by project managers in survey responses or both. Chris highlighted the challenges to achieving the project outcomes without a clear recognition of project outcomes by project staff and inclusion in logframes.

The presentation flagged significant further work that was required to establish national demonstration project baselines and to establish monitoring programs to track progress. It also flagged that many of the demonstration projects were at significant risk of slipping. Weaknesses in several of the project document logframe targets were also highlighted. Problems included lack of clarity of the actual target, combination of multiple targets, unrealistic timeframes, unrealistic targets and targets with poor capacity for measuring achievement. The importance of resolving these issues was stressed to enable baselines to be established and to track progress and success of the demonstration projects.

Chris also highlighted the need to progress national level initiatives, which many demonstration projects were slow to develop and failed to recognise in the survey responses. The importance of project teams engaging the APEX bodies at national level was stressed, as was the need for closer engagement of the Focal Points in several countries in achieving project deliverables and outcomes.

Participants were asked as part of three breakout groups to consider individual targets and identified similar challenges. Targets were found to be confusing and the need for further clarification clearly identified. Monitoring approaches identified by the breakout groups included both output tracking, such as the nature, complexity and number of consultations and meetings conducted, through to outcome level monitoring of improved sanitation facilities.

The way forward outlined by Chris is for the PCU to work with countries to finalise logframes reflecting the overall project and demonstration project indicators.

The RTAG agreed that:

- The PCU is to work with country project teams to ensure that all indicators are reflected in the country demonstration project logframe***
- The PCU is to work with country project teams to ensure that the Focal Points are engaging the APEX bodies to deliver national outcomes***
- Country project staff should review their project logframes to ensure that project document indicators are reflected in their logframes***

7 REGIONAL IWRM INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

7.1 Regional Indicator Framework

David Duncan presented document SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/8 “Regional IWRM Indicator Framework”, outlining the issues to be addressed and options for a Regional Indicator Framework for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water Use Efficiency (WUE).

The presentation included discussion on the characteristics of conditional and stress indicators, including the timeframes for reporting. The shorter timeframe for responses associated with management response indicators was highlighted, together with the need to combine all indicator types into the regional framework.

David identified the importance of national information needs underpinning the regional indicator framework, recognising that unless indicators were nationally relevant, reporting was not likely to be sustained. This was highlighted by the lack of national and regional level information available for the ADB Asian Water Development Outlook, assessing some key high level indicators.

National representatives were invited through breakout groups to identify the information needs important to their countries and associated reporting cycles. Current national reporting cycles were limited across the countries considered, with the exception of Samoa restricted to government Agency financial reporting. Samoa required annual performance reporting against a strategic plan. Cook Island currently has an audit ongoing reviewing the water sector and changes may come from this process. The Chair highlighted the value in countries, including Cook Islands, adopting some of the high level indicators for national reporting. National reporting against climate change national action plans was also commencing in several countries. Key issues at a national level identified in the breakout groups included the ongoing availability of water and capacity to meet future demands, level of groundwater pollution and implementation of national policies.

David Duncan presented the strengths and weaknesses of the two key types of indicator approaches, composite indices and headline indicators. The ability to incorporate several layers of information into composite indicators was identified as a strength, but the challenge in obtaining ownership of intangible numbers was pointed out as a major challenge to understanding and ownership by decision-makers.

The RTAG agreed that:

- There is value in pursuing a linked national and regional indicator framework***
- The PCU will provide support to countries in developing national indicator frameworks***

- ❑ *The PCU will develop a pilot regional indicator framework and national pilot frameworks for Tuvalu, Cook Islands and FSM by February 2011 for circulation amongst the RTAG*
- ❑ *Upon RTAG agreement of the indicator framework the PCU will look to developing a worked up regional pilot indicator framework for sign-off at the 3rd RSC meeting in July 2011*

7.2 Governance Indicators

The SOPAC IWRM Adviser, Dave Hebblethwaite presented document SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.2/9 "IWRM Governance Indicators". This presentation briefly outlined various options for governance indicators within national and regional frameworks and how these frameworks can be used to aid IWRM mainstreaming within national reporting frameworks. The presentation explored the use of governance indicators as part of a practical monitoring and evaluation system, and noted the various elements and functions of governance at a global, regional, national and local level. The concept of "good governance" was discussed, noting the subjective nature of defining what styles of governance are indeed "good". It was suggested that, to be of practical use, indicators of good governance should be simple, pragmatic, achievable and coherent.

The presentation reviewed the origin and principles of IWRM, and how these principles might be used as the basis of water governance indicators. Various IWRM governance components of SOPAC's IWRM programmes were summarised. Regional examples were also briefly discussed, including governance indices developed for East Asian countries and African River Basin Organisations. The presentation looked at how water governance indicators can form part of management plans that link community aspirations with government responses, and discussed the example of Niue's water management planning process that links village level plans to Niue's national strategic planning process. Finally, the presentation posed the question of how governance indicators can make an actual impact in Pacific Island Countries, and discussed how indicators can be tailored to inform practical water resources management and hold the process accountable at its many levels.

8 OPTIONS TO RUN A SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM PRIOR TO THE RSC MEETINGS

Rhonda Robinson presented paper SOPAC/GEF/IWRM/RTAG.7, outlining options to run a scientific symposium prior to RSC meetings. Rhonda discussed the paper through with the participants providing background information to the request for this initiative and potential options available for RTAG to consider in moving this forward if they should decide to do so.

She explained there are few scientific symposiums in the Pacific region outside of Australia and New Zealand that provide an avenue for scientists, Pacific Islanders and other partners working in and for the region to present their work, findings and lessons learned. The few options outlined for RTAG to consider included the following:

- ❑ STAR (SOPAC's Science, Technology and Resources network) which occurs on an annual basis in conjunction with SOPAC's Annual Session
- ❑ Pacific GIS&RS Conference occurs annually focusing on the use of GIS and Remote sensing tools for natural resource management.
- ❑ Various USP options through their research facilities
- ❑ Asia Pacific Science Congress held every four years in rotating venues throughout the Asia-Pacific Rim and Basin
- ❑ Hosting a one day event prior to the Pacific IWRM Programme RSC's whereby scientists are invited at their own cost to come and present their relevant findings to the Steering Committee and other partners.

The chair informed RTAG that he had raised the idea of a scientific symposium at the 1st RTAG and further stated that the Cook Islands will be hosting the STAR Session and next Annual Session of the Secretariat in 2011 and efforts would be underway soon in the Cook Islands to advertise the STAR session to the broader scientific community for their attendance in the IWRM community.

Rhonda invited Chris Paterson to provide further input on the idea of a scientific symposium in which he elaborated for RTAG that despite initially having reservations about the idea of a scientific symposium attached to an RSC meeting given the logistics required to bring this together along with other commitments to the RSC's and the IWC training, the benefits gained from focussing on the IWRM demonstration projects specifically and the science involved with their implementation would be positive.

Marc Wilson expressed the same sentiments as Chris Paterson and highlighted that the idea for scientific symposiums are also not currently budgeted for and suggested that in order to maintain the workload, logistics and funding required for RSC meetings a "Science Session" for half a day could perhaps be included as part of the RSC itself without having to extend out the RSC by extra days focussing on the Pacific participants presentations of the science in the IWRM demonstration project implementation. He also stated that as has been suggested in the paper, should other scientific partners like to attend they could do so at their own costs and put this option to RTAG for consideration as well.

The RTAG agreed that:

- The PCU seek to organise a science session as part of the RSC sessions, with presentations by the Pacific participants on the science in the demonstration projects***

9 PROJECT TECHNICAL QUALITY CONTROL AND ASSURANCE

David Duncan spoke to the RTAG on the role of RTAG in project technical quality assurance and control. He talked to the RTAG of requests received from several country project managers to use the RTAG as a form of quality control for project technical work. He outlined two options for RTAG consideration: that RTAG formally make comments on all submissions or that all technical submissions be circulated to the RTAG for consideration. He highlighted that in either case, turnaround times would need to be short (typically of the order of one week) to ensure that project progress was not delayed.

Discussions focussed on the significant time commitments of reviewing all project technical outputs and the value that RTAG could add to technical components. Circulating all technical documents provided RTAG members with the opportunity to be aware of project technical work and to provide input into preferred areas of expertise as opportunities arise.

The RTAG agreed that:

- The PCU would circulate technical documents for review by the RTAG with a one week comment period***
- Reviews by RTAG members are optional***

10 LESSONS LEARNED

Ruth Urben gave a brief presentation of the proposal outlined in the paper 'Lessons Learnt Action for Output'. She explained how the Lessons Learnt that are being reported each quarter from both EU- and GEF-IWRM national staff will be handled for greater accessibility, by posting listings of titles on the pacific-iwrn.org webpage, and, each quarter, posting the selected most useful lessons entire. The floor was asked to recommend whether a rotating panel of PMU staff should be established to peer review 3 Lessons Learnt reports each quarter, and provide feedback to the authors on the value or gaps in each report, in terms of its usefulness and completeness for other IWRM practitioners.

Initially, the time demands this would make on PMUs was a concern for the floor; however it was outlined that each PMU would be a peer reviewer only once a year, and for only 3 lessons.

The RTAG agreed that:

- A rotating panel of PMU staff be established to peer review 3 Lessons Learnt reports each quarter, and provide feedback to the authors***
- Other lessons learnt review processes should be the responsibility of regional EU- and GEF-IWRM staff***
- Each national PMU is to be advised of this decision***

11 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was agreed for late February 2011. The possibility of a teleconference meeting to manage costs was raised by Marc Wilson and acknowledged by the Chair.

12 CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

The 2nd RTAG meeting was closed at 5:30pm by the Chair.