



Pacific Programme for Water Governance



KIRIBATI WATER GOVERNANCE

Milestone Report 1: Activities 1 and 2

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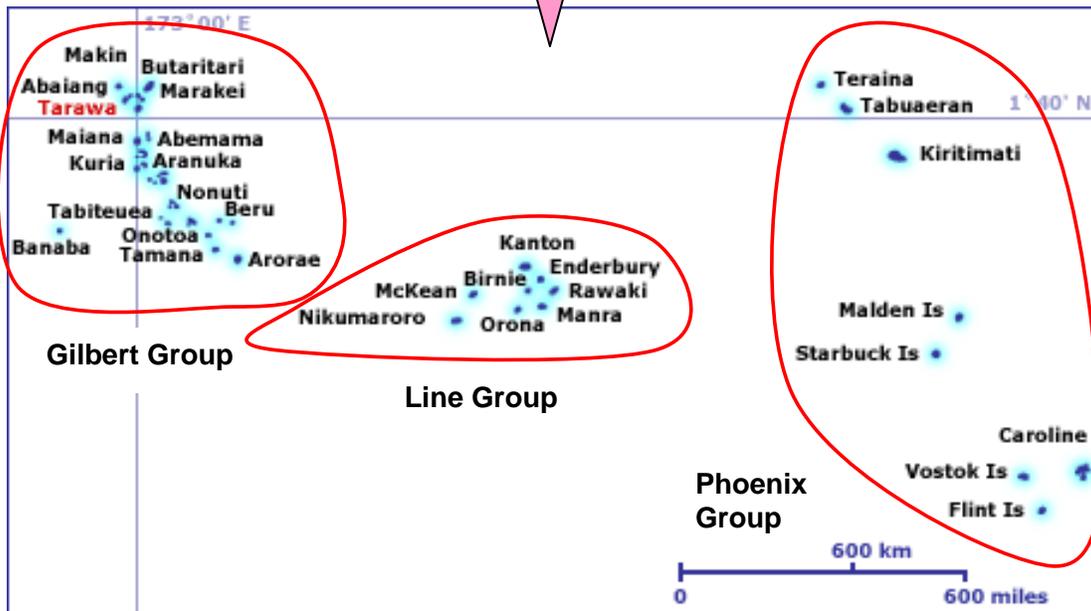
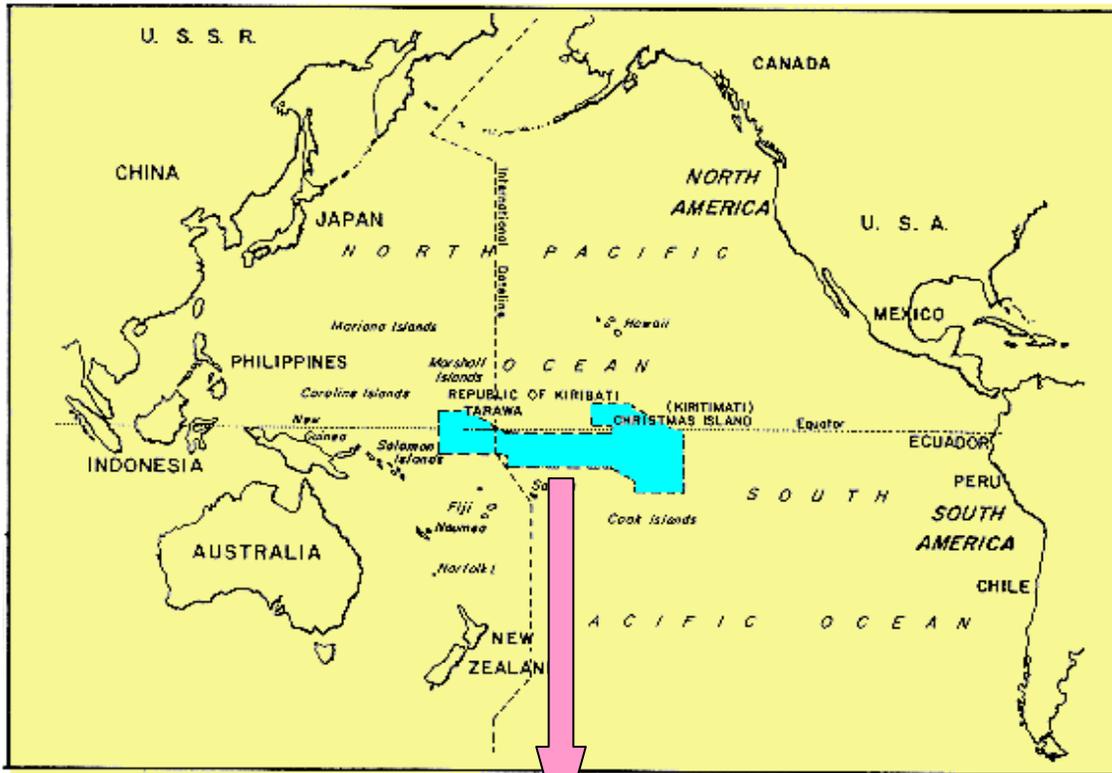
Summary

Water is a vital strategic resource upon which communities depend. The challenges faced in the water and sanitation sector in small island states are amongst the most difficult in the world and good governance is an important element in meeting those challenges. Water governance is the *capability of a social system to mobilise energies, in a coherent way, for the sustainable development, management and use of water resources*. Effective governance is open, transparent, participatory, communicative, sustainable, equitable, coherent, incentive-based, efficient, sustainable, integrative and ethical. The major challenge in water governance in the Pacific region is coping with the cultural and institutional changes necessary in the transition from subsistence cultures to the demands of developing, urban communities.

The issues currently faced in the Republic of Kiribati in the water and sanitation sector are critical and amongst the most severe in the world. Infant mortality rates due to water-borne diseases are amongst the highest in the Pacific. In urban areas, such as South Tarawa, and in some outer islands, such as Banaba, per capita availability of safe water supplies is severely limited and development opportunities are restricted. In some islands the quantity and quality of available freshwater still remains to be assessed. The problems are critical, complex and multi-faceted and require a long-term, coordinated, whole-of-government and community effort.

Currently Kiribati has no national water policy, legislation or strategic medium to long term plans for the sector. Previous attempts at forming a National Committee to integrate efforts in water have failed due to inter-ministry rivalry, a lack of definition of roles, the traditional reluctance to share knowledge and the fact that past whole-of-government committees have been largely driven by relatively short term, externally funded projects. When funding for these ceased, so too did enthusiasm. There is currently no mechanism for coordinating government and community activities in the water and sanitation sector and no mechanism for developing policy and plans and no mechanism for fostering a whole-of-government approach. In addition, the community is not engaged in the water and sanitation sector at the national or village level.

Three pilot projects are proposed here: the establishment the *National Water and Sanitation Coordinating Committee* under the National Strategic Policy and Risk Assessment Unit within the Office of the President, which includes government agency and community representatives; the drafting of National Water Policy for discussion by the Committee; and the use of draft National Policy as a framework to prepare a draft Strategic National Water Plan.



The islands of the Republic of Kiribati

KIRIBATI WATER GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Water is a vital, strategic environmental resource that underpins human well-being, health, cultural and spiritual values, and provides development opportunities. The nature of coral islands and atolls, demographic trends, climatic variation and change and the impacts of human activities all combine to impose significant risks to water supplies for island communities and their environments. The challenges faced in the water and sanitation sector in small island states are amongst the most difficult in the world. Good water governance is necessary for achieving sustainable, economic, social and environmental outcomes. Goals for improvement water governance follow from global and regional goals and imperatives.

Global Goals for Water and Sanitation

The UN General Assembly, in its Millennium Declaration in 2000, resolved “*to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of the world’s population who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water*” and “*to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources*”. The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 also set a new target of “*halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015*”. These global goals are particularly relevant to small island nations in the Pacific.

Regional Imperatives

Freshwater resources in small island nations in the Pacific are amongst the most vulnerable in the world to human and climate influences. This is particularly so in low-lying atolls, which rely on shallow groundwater. Limited quantities of safe groundwater, increasing demands, seawater intrusion, pollution from human and animal wastes, high rates of infant mortality due to water-borne diseases, social and economic costs of gastroenteritis, over-extraction, and limited resources and capacity are typical of the problems faced. Urbanisation and the impacts of climate change impose additional threats to the resilience of island populations in coping with these challenges. In these countries, water is a fragile, strategic resource on which communities and economic growth depend, and whose security needs to be assured.

As a precursor to the Third World Water Forum (3rdWWF) in Kyoto in 2003, the Pacific Dialogue on Water and Climate concluded that in many small island communities significant deficiencies in monitoring and assessment of water resources prevent small island nations from properly planning, developing and sustainably managing their limited and vulnerable water resources and that there was no systematic, coordinated approach to address these deficiencies.

The *Pacific Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management*, endorsed by all Pacific Island Nations Heads of State during the Pacific Island Leaders meeting in Auckland in 2003, and presented at the 3rd WWF, called for broadly-based national water visions, design of capable institutions, national water action agenda and plans, empowerment of communities, and integrated investment plans. It recognised that both behavioural change and long term collaboration were essential for improvement. At the Fourth WWF in Mexico in 2006, considerable progress was reported towards these objectives in the Pacific Position Paper.

Pacific Programme for Water Governance

The European Union has established a Programme for Water Governance (PFWG), for three regions, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. A successful Pacific region submission in 2002 by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) proposed three pilot studies in Fiji Islands, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands for water governance at different scales: national, major utility and local village, island or catchment based.

The overall objective of the Programme for Water Governance (PFWG) is ***to mainstream the principles of good water governance into day-to-day applications and pilot projects so as to assist in achieving sustainable water resource management and provision of water services.***

The goal of the Pacific component is ***to promote the application of effective water governance within institutions, systems, structures and processes in 3 countries in the Pacific selected on the basis of their level of development in water governance.***

The major focus of the PFWG project is on activities which will act as 'Best Practice' examples in countries including:

1. Water governance strategies developed in three island states through multi stakeholder participatory processes.
2. Pilot projects identified, designed and tested with affected stakeholders in 3 PICs
3. Projects implemented including community awareness and education
4. Regional and national co-ordinating mechanisms established
5. Experiences in PICs shared with small island states in the Caribbean region
6. Projects reviewed – lessons learned and successful projects recommended for replication.

There are some general principles for good water governance which provide guidance.

Good Water Governance

Water governance is the *capability of a social system to mobilise energies, in a coherent way, for the sustainable development, management and use of water resources.* Effective governance is open, transparent, participatory, communicative, sustainable, equitable, coherent, incentive-

based, efficient, sustainable, integrative and ethical. It includes the ability to design public policies that have as their goal the sustainable development, management and use of water resources. It also involves the building of social acceptance and support for them and the development of strategies to implement them.

The degree of water governance within a society is determined by:

- The degree of consensus about the linkages between society and water;
- Agreement on the bases for public policy that express those linkages;
- The existence of management systems that can effectively implement policies.

Governance implies the capacity to generate and implement appropriate policies based on having established a consensus and coherent management systems and adequate administration. A fundamental factor in governance is the ability to introduce and develop institutions consistent with the capability, limitations and expectations of the prevailing system.

The major challenge in water governance in the Pacific region is coping with the cultural and institutional changes necessary in the transition from subsistence cultures to the demands of developing, urban communities.

Water Governance in the Republic of Kiribati

Past projects in Kiribati, supported the Government of Kiribati with assistance from UNDP, AusAID, UNESCO IHP, SOPAC, ADB, and ACIAR, have all identified the need for enhanced water governance at the national, island and village level. The Kiribati National Consultation on Sustainable Water Management, conducted as a prelude to the Pacific Regional Consultation on Water in Small Island Countries in 2002, identified the continuing need for better coordination of the water sector. Extensive community consultations carried out throughout the Gilbert Group for the National Adaptation Program of Action, Kiribati Adaptation Project Phase I in 2004 identified 50 priority adaptation strategies. Seven out of the top ten priorities were water and sanitation-related.

The Kiribati Water Sector Road Map, developed under the ADB Project *Promotion of Effective Water Management Policies and Practices* proposed the establishment of a National Water and Sanitation Committee (or a number of committees) to advise the Government on all aspects of water supply and sanitation for all of Kiribati. Some of the functions envisaged for these committees were providing a forum for the community and NGOs to express their opinions; to review performance of the supply and sanitation systems across the nation and to review the performance of groundwater protection measures.

Kiribati and Colombia were the first countries in the world to be selected under the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Strategic Priority on Adaptation. The World Bank implemented

project *Kiribati Adaptation Program – Pilot Implementation Phase (KAPII)*, supported by AusAID and NZAID has recently been signed. The Development of National Water Policy is a keystone Technical Assistance Activity in the Water Component of KAPII. Planning for this activity assumes that a Water Resources Steering Committee will be in place to oversee and review the development of National Water Policy and other water activities in KAPII.

The pilot programme for Kiribati focuses on development of initiatives at the national level but with major implications at the island and village levels and is aimed to blend seamlessly into the water component of KAPII. The programme will run over a 10-12 month period based on brief inputs from the Australian National University to assist country facilitation of the process and development of a strategy. A key element in this process will be the re-establishment of National Water and Sanitation Committee.

Activities under this pilot programme will include:

- Discussions with stakeholders over past recommendations on water governance, particularly policies and institutional frameworks, and their application in Kiribati, together with past experiences in whole-of-government and community participation approaches;
- Initiation of processes that will lead to the re-establishment of a National Water and Sanitation Committee that includes community and NGO representatives;
- Initiation of broadly-based consultations and discussions on the basic elements of a Draft National Water and Sanitation Policy and a Draft 10 yr Water and Sanitation Plan.

The Challenges in the Republic of Kiribati

In the Republic of Kiribati, numerous Government of Kiribati (GOK) supported projects have emphasised the major and continuing challenges in ensuring that island communities have access to safe and adequate freshwater and opportunities for economic development. Mortality rates for children under the age of 5 years in Kiribati are amongst the highest in Pacific Island Nations (Table 1). While analysis of present data on the cause of under-five mortality is not complete in Kiribati, indications are that pneumonia and diarrhea are among the leading causes of sickness and death among children. Both have a strong relation to hygiene and water.

These vital challenges involve sometimes island-specific, health, technical, economic, social and cultural issues that are interrelated and cut across traditional sectoral administrative divisions. In some islands the availability of freshwater still remains to be assessed. The GOK decided in 1985 that a strategic, whole-of-government approach involving all sectors with responsibilities and interests in water was required. Even to-day, infant mortality rates in Kiribati due to water-borne diseases and lack of hygiene are amongst the worst in the Pacific.

Table 1. Mortality rates in 2005 for children under the age of 5 years in Pacific island countries (Source Country Health Information Profiles, 2005-WHO).

Country	Mortality Rate (Deaths/1000)
Papua New Guinea	64
Kiribati	43
Tuvalu	21.6
Samoa	19.3
Fiji	17.76

Identified Problems and Concerns

National consultations and numerous studies have identified and widely discussed concerns in the water and sanitation sector. Some are partly addresses in policy documents and cabinet decisions. Identified challenges to be addressed can be summarised as follows:

Water resource challenges	Water and sanitation service challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited freshwater resources • Sustainability of water harvesting • Impacts of settlement and landuse on water quality • Fragmented control, management and protection of water resources • Increasing demands for water resources • Insufficient knowledge and understanding of water resources nationwide; • Social and environmental impacts of water abstraction proposals • Land ownership in water reserves • Limited use of rainwater harvesting • Lack of community understanding and appreciation of responsible water management • Lack of conservation incentives • Limited community involvement in water resource management and protection • Impacts of human waste • Lack of national water policy and legislation • Impacts of storm surges on groundwater • Predicted impacts of climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly variable and inadequate levels of service • High levels of leakage and unaccounted for water loss at household levels • Low levels of cost recovery and non-financially viable operations • Excessive water demand and usage by users • Limited available and relevant technical skills and capacity • Insufficient knowledge and understanding for planning and management • Inadequate attention paid to wastewater disposal and sanitation measures • Inadequate appreciation of responsible water management and use by users • Limited community involvement in water service planning, management and delivery • Uncoordinated development across • Deteriorating water quality and quantity at supply sources • Landuse in water reserves • Safe water supplies and sanitation in rural areas

National Goals and Objectives

In a statement to the Maneaba ni Maungatabu (Kiribati Parliament), on the opening of its fifth session on October 31, 1994, Te Beretitenti (The President) of the Republic, presented an outline of the Government policy on all areas of its responsibility. In this statement strong emphasis was placed on the improvement of living standards of all I-Kiribati, particularly with relation to health and employment opportunities. This emphasis continues to be reflected in the National Development Strategy 2004-2007 which contains a number of goals relating to water and sanitation and protection of the environment. In 2004 Cabinet decided to make outer island water supply systems sustainable and this provides a clear policy direction.

A 20-year water sector Roadmap for outer islands was developed during in 2004 as part of an ADB technical assistance project. The Roadmap provides key milestones and targets for sector development in four strategic areas:

1. Institutional Arrangements and Policy Framework;
2. Water Resource Assessment and Monitoring;
3. Community Awareness, Consultation and Participation; and
4. Water and Sanitation Development and Management.

The highest priority under the first category was the development of national water policy.

National Water Policy and Legislation

There is currently no unified national policy on water and sanitation. Rather there are a collection of statements, decisions and interventions which make up the body of policy. Attempting to develop a sector plan in the absence of any unified vision and policy is difficult.

Draft National Water Legislation was prepared in 1992 as part of a UNCTD project. The Draft is still with the Attorney General's Office and has not been enacted. Part of the problem with this legislation involves the contentious issue of water ownership. Under traditional law, land ownership also infers ownership of groundwater.

A draft 10 Year Water Master Plan was also prepared in 1992. It has been periodically revised up to 2000 by the Water Engineering Unit and the Public Utility Board of the then Ministry of Works and Energy. It still remains a draft.

Ministerial Responsibilities

Water and sanitation cut across traditional sectoral boundaries so that no single ministry entity has complete responsibility for the water sector and sanitation sectors in Kiribati. It is however a

vital and strategic sector that requires coordination. Fig. 1 shows Ministries with some involvement in water.

Office Te Beretitenti

The *Directions Assigning Ministerial Responsibility* (5 August 2003) includes “Ministerial Coordination” and “Cabinet taskforces Chairmanship” in the responsibilities of Office Te Beretitenti (the President, OB). The strategic national importance of water and health suggests that government and community activity in water and sanitation should be coordinated by the OB within the National Strategic Policy and Risk Assessment Unit (NSPRAU). The role of the NSPRAU is to:

- Provide support to Cabinet and the President on Cabinet Memoranda
- Review national policies of strategic national importance and of long-term risk;
- Facilitate inter-ministry coordination on specific issues of national importance;
- Oversee disaster and crisis management arrangements.

Currently OB does not have the capacity within NSPRAU to coordinate water and sanitation.

The *Directions Assigning Ministerial Responsibility* (5 August 2003) also specify particular line Ministry responsibilities in water:

- Minister for Public Works and Utilities – water management; sewerage systems
- Minister for Health and Medical Services – health inspectorate services and environmental health
- Minister for the Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development – environment and conservation; waste and pollution management.

Ministry of Public Works and Utilities - Public Utilities Board

The Public Utilities Board (PUB) was established on 1st July 1977 to coordinate and manage water supply and sewage disposal in urban South Tarawa. The PUB is a Government owned corporation under the Ministry of Public Works and Utilities responsible for power generation, water supply, and sewerage. The PUB's Board of Directors are appointed by a Panel of three Ministers chaired by the Minister for Public Works and Utilities with two other Ministers appointed by Cabinet. The Board is directly responsible to the Minister for Public Works and Utilities. Regulations under the PUB Act permitted the declaration of water reserves over major groundwater sources in South Tarawa. These prohibit settlement and allow eviction of existing dwellers and land owners from the Reserves. In South Tarawa the lands overlying the freshwater lenses in Buota, Bonriki, and Teoraereke were declared Water Reserves. Teoraereke is no longer used as a freshwater source in South Tarawa because of continued encroachment by human settlement which is a continued threat to all water reserves because of increasing settlement pressures in South Tarawa and limited available land area.

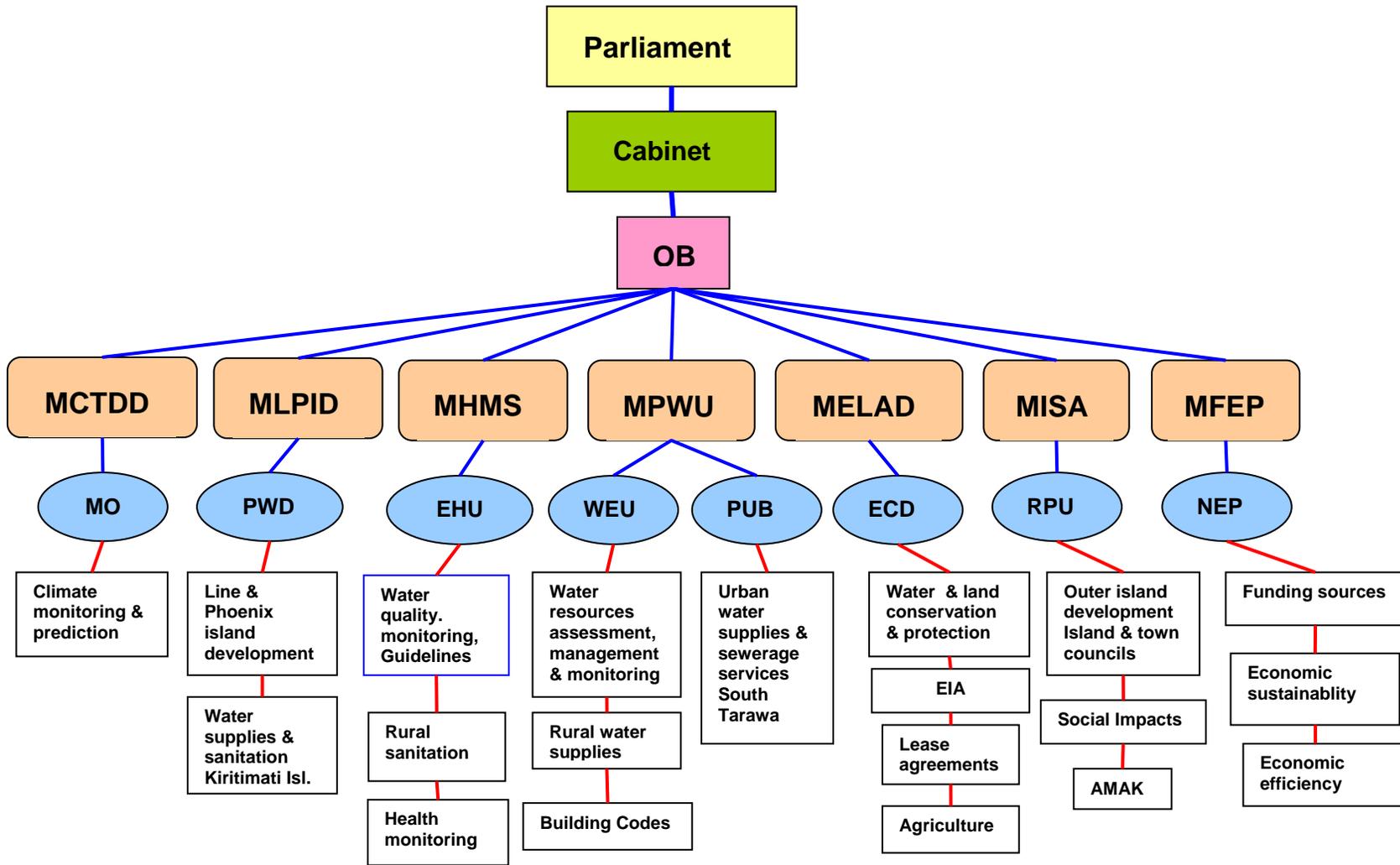


Fig. 1 Kiribati Water Sector Organisational & Responsibility Diagram

Ministry of Public Works and Utilities - Water Engineering Section

The Water Engineering Unit, WEU of the Ministry of Public Works and Utilities was established in March 1986, to coordinate Outer Island water project activities by conducting investigation of new water supply schemes, preparing designs and estimates, preparing project documents for funding submissions, implementing and managing outer islands water supply projects (except Kiritimati). WEU has water technicians in all inhabited outer islands except Canton. WEU has recently been delegated responsibility for overall water resources management in the country, including South Tarawa and Kiritimati. This responsibility includes water resource assessment, monitoring, planning, and controlling demand and the provision of water supplies in rural areas. The Ministry of Public Works and Utilities also has responsibility for establishing building regulations that include installation of rainwater collection systems.

Ministry of Health and Medical Services

In the late 1960's responsibility for water supply in the Outer Islands was under the then Ministry of Health and Family Planning. In 1985, this was transferred to the then Ministry of Works and Energy, firstly to PUB but then to the newly established Water Engineering Section. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services retains the responsibility for monitoring the quality of drinking water and has laboratories on South Tarawa and Kiritimati. The Environmental Health Unit of the Ministry is responsible for the provision of sanitary facilities to the villages outside South Tarawa which includes design and assistance with construction of pit toilets.

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development

The Environment and Conservation Division within the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development is responsible for carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment on major water resource developments, sanitation and waste disposal projects to assess their impacts on the environment. In addition, it has responsibility for ensuring the appropriate protection of groundwater reserves, of ensuring the conservation of freshwater sources and assessing the implication of climate change on freshwater and associated land resources. The Lands Division of the Ministry is responsible for the oversight of lease agreements with landowners on water reserves in South Tarawa.

Island Councils and the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs

Island Councils play a key role in the implementation of rural water and sanitation schemes. A UNDP/UNCDF Outer Islands Community Water Supply Project (OICWSP) was undertaken in 73 villages in 13 islands of the Gilbert Group in the 1990's. The project reached an agreement between the Water Engineering Unit and Island Councils that Councils involved in the project should take responsibility for the basic maintenance of hand pumps, and contribute voluntary labour and local materials. In addition, the Island Council sanitary aides, who were employed by the then MHFP network, were recruited as water technicians by the then MPWU and are

responsible for regular quality control and water supply in the villages. All Councils come under the Ministry of Internal And Social Affairs, MISA.

Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development

Kiritimati Island, 3,200 km east of Tarawa atoll is a designated growth centre for Kiribati. Water supply and sanitation services in Kiritimati are run by the Water and Sanitation Service of the Public Works Department under the Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID). The legislative basis for the operation of water and sanitation services in Kiritimati does not appear to exist.

Other Ministries

In addition to those with direct responsibilities in the water and sanitation sector, other ministries have influence, interests and responsibilities in the sector. Funding water projects and on-going maintenance costs as well as cost recovery programmes fall under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFED). Climate measurement, especially rainfall, is the responsibility of the Meteorology Office, within the Ministry of Communications, Transport and Tourism Development (MCTTD [MO]).

Previous Whole-of-Government Water and Sanitation Committees

Following the Cholera outbreak in the 1977, the British Gilbert Islands Administration recognised the need for better coordination of water and sanitation sector. The Public Utilities Board (PUB) was established in July 1977 under the then Ministry of Works and Energy (MWE), to coordinate and manage water supply and sewage disposal on South Tarawa. About the same time, an interdepartmental committee was set up mainly to review the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's (AIDAB) Tarawa Sewerage Project which ran from 1978 to 1982 in the densely populated areas of Bikenibeu, Bairiki and Betio. A reticulated freshwater system was installed in South Tarawa between 1983 and 1987 and upgraded in 1989 that extracted water from fresh groundwater lenses in the then sparsely populated islands of Bonriki and Buota.

Continuing health, water supply and waste disposal issues in South Tarawa, outer island needs and the recognition of the further need for better coordination led the GOK to formalise in 1985 the *Kiribati Water Supply and Sanitation Coordinating Committee* (KWSSCC). It was chaired by the then Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Social Welfare (MHFPSW) with deputy chair from the then Ministry of Works and Energy and secretarial support from MHFPSW. The Committee was to address the critical water and sanitation issues facing the country.

The planned role of the Committee was to monitor water quality in the country, to review and consider future water and sanitation projects before presentation to Cabinet, and to act as an

advisory body to Government Ministries and non-Government organizations on water and sanitation related matters. The Committee members were to be senior officers in MHFPSW, the PUB, the Public Works Department of the MWE, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and a representative of the non-government organisation (NGO) Karikirakean Maaun te I-Kiribati (formerly - Save the Children Federation). In late 1989, the committee prepared a project proposal for the improvement of sanitation on South Tarawa for submission to AIDAB.

AIDAB Pacific Regional Team Report, 1993

The very high incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, particularly amongst young children (see Fig. 2), led to the GOK requesting Australian assistance in upgrading the sanitation and water supply systems on South Tarawa. AIDAB's Pacific Regional Team conducted a field appraisal of the proposal in 1993. It concluded that the problem in South Tarawa was critical and that it should be addressed in as comprehensive manner as possible if sustainable and effective development is to be achieved. It recommended a multi-disciplinary, coordinated, long term (at least 10 years) program with multiple components being conducted in parallel rather than by implementing individual components and with annual budgets of several million (1990) dollars.

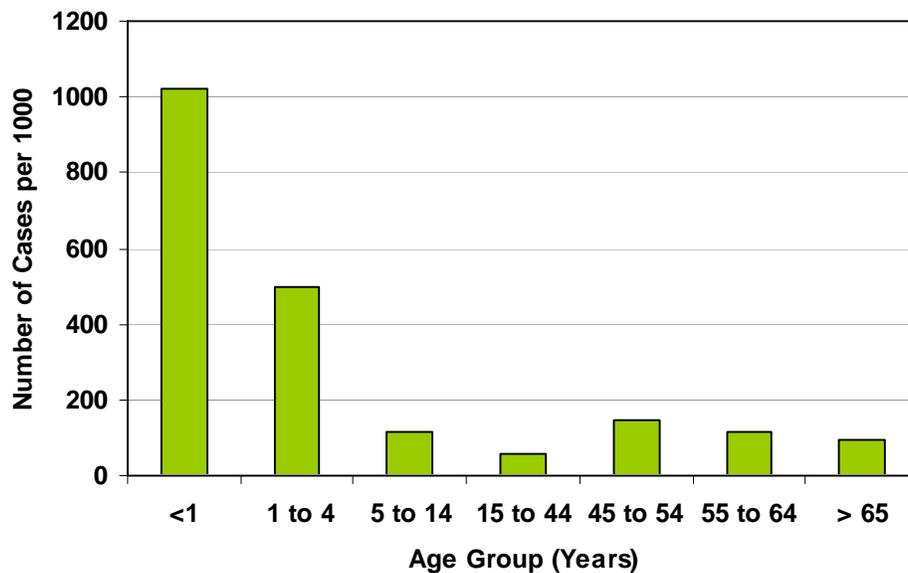


Fig. 2. Incident rate of diarrhoea disease in South Tarawa in 1990 as a function of age group.

The main issues were water supply systems, sewerage systems, sewerage disposal in non-sewered areas, solid waste disposal and population aspects including population density, resettlement and education programs. The Team recommended that community health,

education, water supply, sanitation, appropriate technology, institutional strengthening and management aspects needed to be considered in a coordinated approach and that the GOK develop suitable strategies and policies for addressing the issues.

The sanitation project proposed by the KWSSCC eventually evolved into the Sanitation, Public Health and Environment Improvement (SAPHE) Project which was funded through the Asian Development Bank from July 2000 to December 2005. The main objective of this project was to improve the development potential and well being of communities in South Tarawa through improvements to water supply, sewerage, solid waste disposal and environmental conservation.

The Demise of KWSSCC and the Draft Water Master Plan

Unfortunately the Kiribati Water Supply and Sanitation Coordinating Committee has been defunct for some time. Some of the issues cited for its demise are loss of initial enthusiasm after project initiation; disputes over what Government Ministry should be the lead Ministry, a traditional reluctance to share knowledge, and a lack of clear definitions of responsibilities and terms of reference. Instead project-specific steering committees have been formed, but these lack continuity and strategic direction and are driven by the goals of the project rather than national priorities.

The updated Draft Water Master Plan (2000), initially developed through the United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (UNDTCD) in 1992, identified some of the urgent national issues in water management that needed to be addressed. The most important were: the need for national policy guidelines in order to develop priorities; the necessity to coordinate the water sector; the fact that authority for overall water resources management had not had been vested in any Government authority and that competence for water resources management and conservation was not identified in any of the then directions assigning Ministerial responsibilities; and the under-use of rainwater harvesting.

Since that time, the *Directions Assigning Ministerial Responsibility*, dated 5 August 2003, assigned responsibilities to the Minister for Public Works and Utilities, the Minister for the Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development and the Minister for Health and Medical Services.

Kiribati National Consultation on Sustainable Water Management

The Kiribati National Consultation on Sustainable Water Management, conducted as a lead up to the Pacific Regional Consultation on Water in Small Island Countries in 2002, clearly identified the continuing need for adequate supplies of safe drinking water and for better coordination of the water sector.

Kiribati Water Sector Road Map

In an effort to improve coordination, the Kiribati Water Sector Road Map, developed under the ADB Technical Assistance Project *Promotion of Effective Water Management Policies and Practices* ranked a number of strategic actions for outer island water supplies and sanitation under four main areas: Water Resource Assessment and Monitoring; Community Awareness, Consultation and Participation; Institutional Arrangements and Policy Framework; and Water and Sanitation Development and Management. Under the institutional and policy area it proposed as highest priority the development of national water policy whilst the establishment of a National Water and Sanitation Committee (or a number of committees) to advise the Government on all aspects of water supply and sanitation for all of Kiribati ranked second in priority in this area. Some of the functions envisaged for these committees were providing a forum for the community and NGOs to express their opinions; to review performance of the supply and sanitation systems across the nation and to review the performance of groundwater protection measures.

National Development Strategy, 2004-2007

The National Development Strategy 2004-2007 contains a number of goals relating to water and sanitation.

- Under 'Economic Growth', Strategy 7.2 is: *"Ensure reliable power and water supplies in existing urban areas, eliminate subsidies to urban services and require . public enterprises to meet performance standards,.*
- Under 'Equitable distribution', Strategy 1.2 is: *"Devise cost-effective maintenance methodology for outer islands water supplies, wharves, roads, etc".*
- Under 'Equipping people to manage change – Health', Strategies 6.1 to 6.3 are: 1) *Strengthen public health education services to educate households on sanitation and human waste disposal;* 2) *improve enforcement of Environment Act and public health legislation;* and 3) *Identify cost-effective improvements to existing sanitation systems in South Tarawa and design projects for implementation over NDS period.*
- In Section 4: 'Development Strategies 2004-2007', there is a reference to health strategies: *"Health strategies include ... attention to the public health threat posed by inadequate standards of sanitation in urban areas."*

These strategies clearly cross ministerial boundaries and require a coordinated approach.

National Consultation under the Kiribati Adaptation Program, Phase I

The extensive consultations carried out throughout the Gilbert Group for the National Adaptation Program of Action, Kiribati Adaptation Project Phase I in 2004 identified 50 priority adaptation strategies. Seven out of the top ten priorities were water and sanitation related that require a coordinate government-community approach. In the top 25 strategies, 10 were water and sanitation -related priority strategies:

- Water pumps/pipes to get water from good source to settlement areas and homes
- Protect water wells
- Assess and locate available water on the islands
- Water conservation at home (including awareness raising)
- Improve sanitation, construct toilets
- Water conservation in piping systems
- Install rainwater tanks
- Install desalination plant
- Collect water from further away in the bush
- Proper use of land

Kiribati Adaptation Program, Phase II (KAPII)

The Development of National Water Policy is a keystone Technical Assistance Activity in the Water Component of the *Kiribati Adaptation Program, Phase II* (KAPII). Planning for this activity assumes that a Water Resources Steering Committee will be in place to oversee and review the development of National Water Policy and other water activities in KAPII.

The Betio Diarrhoeal Outbreak of April 2005

Between 14 and 20 April 2005 more than 400 cases of diarrhoea were reported with several fatalities, mostly from the highly crowded Betio area on the western edge of South Tarawa with the majority in the age group 1-5 years. The outbreak was attributed to the drinking of untreated water. Following the outbreak Cabinet agreed that the National Water and Sanitation Committee should be invigorated and that OB should chair the meeting given the need for a whole of Government approach.

SAPHE Project Completion Report March 2006

The Government of Kiribati Project Completion Report on the ADB SAPHE Project reviewed the benefits and lessons of SAPHE. It concluded that: *“There is still quite a lot of overlap in the regulatory duties of the different government departments, especially in the area of water, and there have been several instances where the departments could not agree to one common solution over the development of additional water resources. There is need for these departments to sit together and draw a proper line on their scope of duties.”*

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services has drafted a letter to the Office of the President (OB) requesting OB to reform a National Water and Sanitation Committee. In addition, the WHO Kiribati Office has allocated a part of its budget to revitalise a national water committee.

Community Participation and Involvement

A Committee for the Management and Protection of Water Reserves was established in South Tarawa in 2000. This Committee had both community and government agency representatives. It has been defunct for some time. There is currently no formal community involvement in the water and sanitation sector at the national or village level. Behavioural change is fundamentally important in this sector. Without engagement of and participation by the community, there is little opportunity for public ownership of the issues and little chance for change and improvement.

Pilot Project Options

The extremely high incidence of water-borne diseases in Kiribati indicates a water and sanitation sector that is stretched and vulnerable. This analysis of the current situation in water governance in the Republic of Kiribati and discussions with key players in the water and sanitation sector there has revealed a complex set of interacting problems that need to be addressed urgently if the incidence of water-borne diseases is to be reduced.

National water policy enunciates the vision of the people of Kiribati for the sector. To implement that requires underpinning legislation to provide the legal basis for action. Implementation also requires a concerned coordinated effort by the government sector and the willing participation of the community. A clear, strategic plan, assessing priorities and assigning responsibilities is required to carry forward implementation. Encompassing all these activities within a 10 month time frame is not possible. However with guidance from the key players in the water sector in Kiribati, the following priority pilot project options have been identified.

1. Re-establishment of the National Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee

In order to develop a National Water and Sanitation Policy it is necessary to have all-of-government and community support and involvement. This Committee will oversee policy development, coordinate the development of strategic plans and the monitoring and reporting to Cabinet on the state of the nation's water and sanitation services. It is essential that this committee include NGO, community and industry representatives. Justification for the Committee, terms of reference and a potential structure will be developed.

2. Drafting of National Water and Sanitation Policy

With the Committee established, drafting of a National Water and Sanitation Policy will commence for widespread distribution and discussion. This Policy document will be based on previous policy statements and decisions and various national consultations.

3. Drafting of National Water and Sanitation Policy

The draft National Water Policy will provide the framework for developing a Draft National Water Plan. This plan will describe the challenges in the water sector, the institutional arrangements for

water, the current state of water and sanitation services and then provide a strategy for meeting the policy goals enunciated in the National Policy.

Concluding Remarks

Water is a vital strategic resource upon which communities depend. The issues currently faced in the Republic of Kiribati in the water and sanitation sector are critical. Infant mortality rates due to water-borne diseases are amongst the highest in the Pacific. In urban areas, such as South Tarawa, and in some outer islands, such as Banaba, per capita availability of safe water supplies is severely limited and development opportunities are restricted. In other islands the quantity and quality of available freshwater still remains to be assessed. The problems are critical, complex and multi-faceted and require a long-term, coordinated, whole-of-government and community effort. This is currently no mechanism for coordinating government and community activities in the water sector.

Three government ministries have direct responsibilities in the water and sanitation sector. There is currently no mechanism for coordinating their efforts. Previous attempts at forming a National Committee to integrate efforts in water have failed due to inter-ministry rivalry, a lack of definition of roles, a traditional reluctance to share knowledge and the fact that past whole-of-government committees have been largely driven by relatively short term, externally funded projects. When funding for these ceased, so too did enthusiasm.

One possible way of pulling together the Ministries with responsibility in water and sanitation and community organisations is to coordinate it under the Office of the President. The *National Adaptation Steering Committee* (NASC), which will oversee KAPII, and the *Outer Island Project Coordination Committee* (OIPCC) provide models for this and the recently established National Strategic Policy and Risk assessment Unit presents an appropriate home for such a coordination effort. It is clear that the task of coordination will be significant and will require a full time National Water and Sanitation Coordinator assigned to the Unit. The national coordinator should be a 10 year position. Regional organisations and donors should consider ways of mentoring and supporting this position.

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