

Abstract Solomon islands water governance project

The Pacific Programme for Water Governance project (PFWG) funded by EU and facilitated by SOPAC, aims at implementing water sector reforms in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), particularly on improving water governance. The Solomon Islands was selected in 2005 as one of three Pacific Island Countries, in accordance with PFWG selection criteria, to benefit from the initiative. KEW Consult Ltd, a water consultancy firm, is the consultant for this project and currently working in collaboration with the Solomon Islands Government and SOPAC.

This project duration was 12 months started from January 2006 and its main purpose was to promote the application of effective water governance in institutions, systems, structures and processes in the Solomon Islands through the application of pilot projects and day to day applications. The emphasis was to develop and enhance new and existing water governance initiatives through the selected pilot projects of developing appropriate policy and legislation formulation as well as public awareness programmes.

The National Task Force selected, decided that the programme should concentrate on the three main activities as follows: development of a National Water Policy, development of a Water Resource Legislation and conduct Awareness on Stakeholder

Although difficulties were noticeable in bringing together stakeholders to discuss the above and also given the recent political unrest activities during the project time period, the above three activities were completed with much emphasis given to development of the National Water Policy.

Programme activities for Solomon Island Water Governance project included started with a visit to the Solomons to collect all relevant documents. This was followed by a 4 day observational/water study tour to Samoa, involving a delegation of Government Heads of 3 distinctive water organisations, namely Mr Robinson Fugui, Director of Environmental Health, Ministry of Health, Mr John Waki, General Manager of Solomon Islands Water Authority and Mr Charlie Bepapa, Director of Mines, Energy and Water, Ministry of Natural Resources. The Water Study Tour was a result of the volatile events that took place following the general elections in Honiara in April, which precluded the ability of the consultant to travel to Honiara to engage in consultation with key stakeholders over water policy and regulatory issues.

Because of the need to give emphasis on communication amongst the stakeholders and also awareness, it was proposed to employed a local Programme Coordinator to assist in implementing the programme activities not only during the project timeframe but also after the project especially on conducting and coordinating activities of awareness, not only in Honiara but all the other provinces and outer islands.

The Programme Coordinator was appointed by government on August and was since paid by KEW Consult until December 2006. This position is currently financed by the Solomon Island government through the Water Resource Department.

Further consultation was held in November with wider stakeholders and follows on from the consultation meeting that was held in September with Government and NGO stakeholders during the time of the SOPAC meeting in Honiara. That meeting was hosted by SIWA and drew out various issues relating to the draft policy.

The project is completed with the National Water Policy developed and the Water Resource Legislation reviewed in accordance to policy through stakeholder consultations and discussion with the key water stakeholders. Cabinet submissions have been prepared to submit the two important documents for Cabinet endorsement. Government has approved budget for further awareness of the Policy and Legislation.