

## THEME 5: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

### INTRODUCTION

The effective and sustainable management of water resources in small island countries of the Pacific and other regions is vital for the health and social well being of their people, the protection of their environments and the development of their economies. The very limited nature of water resources, the vulnerability of these islands and their resources, including water, to natural disasters, over-exploitation and pollution combined with increasing demands for freshwater due to expanding populations and, in some cases, tourism, industry and agriculture, makes the management of water resources a very high priority. Effective institutional arrangements for this task are essential.

In reality, many institutional issues currently constrain the achievement of the goal of effective and sustainable water resources management. At the national level, there is often fragmentation in the water sector and inadequate water resources legislation, policy and planning. At the administrative level, there is often insufficient local human resource capacity to conduct water resources assessment and monitoring. Other issues include conflicts associated with the use of water from customary land tenure, impacts of land use on water resources, problems with design and implementation of water projects (often funded by donors), and insufficient community education, awareness & participation. In addition, there are some knowledge gaps that require further applied research and actions to disseminate results.

A Planning Meeting held in Vanuatu in February 2002 identified *Institutional Arrangements* as one of a number of major themes to be addressed at the forthcoming Pacific Regional Consultation Meeting to be held from 29<sup>th</sup> July – 3<sup>rd</sup> August in Fiji. The list of the six Themes adopted for discussion at the Regional Consultation Meeting and further details about the meeting are provided in the "Information for Participants" brochure.

### SCOPE

At the Regional Consultation Meeting, the Institutional Arrangements Theme (Theme 5) will consider a number of key elements, including the following:

- ?? Establishing the traditional, constitutional and planning principles for water resources management.
- ?? Reflecting the specific social geography of each country in its institutional arrangements for water.
- ?? Identifying the desired institutional framework.
- ?? Being clear on which elements of the water sector are to be integrated and how.
- ?? Recognising the boundaries created by the existing constitutional and legal framework.
- ?? Being clear on the policy objectives required for key elements of the framework.
- ?? Developing frameworks that go beyond centralised command-and-control institutions and into the community.
- ?? Deciding how far delivery mechanisms are to be partnered with the private sector.
- ?? Identifying capacity building and training needs - particularly in the area of water resources legal policy and planning.

Inevitably, there are some overlaps with the other five Themes.

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## **SESSION**

### **Outline**

The Theme 5 session, to be held on the morning of Thursday 1st August, will include presentation of a theme paper and case studies. These papers are intended to set the scene for a discussion involving all delegates, particularly those involved in water resources law, policy and planning.

### **Theme Paper**

The theme paper, to be presented at the Regional Consultation Meeting will provide an overview of each element. A summary of key issues, concerns and constraints in relation to water law, policy and planning will be provided. The paper will also explore measures at international, regional, national and local level that have been taken in recent years to address some of the fundamental issues impacting this theme in small island countries. Finally, the paper will outline measures that could be taken to improve the situation, and suggest possible actions for consideration.

The focus of this paper is not on the whole water sector but rather on a number of key elements as indicated above.

### **Case Studies**

To emphasise certain aspects of this theme speakers will present four case studies from selected small island countries. The purpose of these case studies is to provide practical examples of a sample of institutional issues and strategies put in place to deal with these issues - and to provide a catalyst for discussion.

The selected case studies are:

- ?? Institutional strengthening issues related to the Samoa Water Authority.
- ?? Institutional issues and reforms from the utility perspective of the PNG Water Board
- ?? Institutional issues resulting from the private/public sector partnership in Vanuatu
- ?? Institutional experiences with National and Local Water Committees – from Tonga and Vanuatu.

### **Discussion**

Following the presentations, there will be time for discussion of key issues and draft proposals. It is anticipated that Country delegates will comment on relevant national experiences, concerns and possible actions based on their own National Consultations (prior to the Regional Consultation Meeting) and Country Briefing Papers (presented on the first day of the Meeting).

### **Working Group**

It is intended that an Institutional Working Group will be formed during the Theme Session to develop proposals and priority actions arising from the papers and the discussion for later endorsement by later plenary session of the Regional Consultation Meeting. This Working Group will meet, as required, after the Theme session to develop such proposals and a draft action plan.

## **INPUT FROM COUNTRY DELEGATIONS**

Country delegations are encouraged to identify their own key issues and concerns in relation to this theme and to develop their own priorities for actions. The major opportunity for this is through the National Consultations and the Country Briefing Papers. Further opportunity will exist during the discussion phase of the Theme 5 session and through the proposed Working Group.

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## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information, please contact the Theme 5 Resource Person, **Mr. David Hill**

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