



The Pacific International Waters Project: Aims, approaches and challenges[☆]

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Abstract

This paper focuses on pilot activities being carried out under the Integrated Coastal Watershed Management component of the Pacific International Waters Project (IWP). The paper discusses a two-pronged approach being taken to address the root causes of identified threats to the international waters of 14 Pacific Island countries. National and local level activities are focusing on coastal fisheries, waste management and freshwater protection. The integrated strategic approach of participatory planning processes, social analysis, resource economics and communications in identification of environment problems, their causes and potential solutions for supporting behavioural change in relation to resource use and management is discussed. Some examples of country activities to date are provided. Although it is too early to assess a full range of lessons and project impacts, a number of key issues continue to provide challenges for the implementation of a large regional programme such as the IWP. They include: multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement; the establishment of partnerships needed to support integrated coastal management; and national capacity to implement community-based resource management projects.

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1. Introduction

The International Waters Project (IWP), which is implementing “the Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States” (SAP) is a 7-year initiative (2000–2006) of 14 independent Pacific Island

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states.¹ It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in association with the participating country governments.

The IWP supports a range of actions to address the root causes of identified threats to the international waters² of the Pacific Islands region relating to:

- pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities;
- modification of critical habitats, and
- unsustainable use of resources.

The actions are being carried out in two complementary, linked consultative programmes: Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management (ICWM) and Oceanic Fisheries Management (OFM).³ The Project is aimed at strengthening regional and national capacity and providing lessons for best practices and appropriate methodologies for sustainable management of natural resources.

This paper focuses on pilot activities being carried out under the ICWM component of the Pacific IWP. It discusses a two-pronged approach being taken to address root causes of environmental concerns across four key areas: waste management, coastal fisheries, marine protected areas, and protection of freshwater. An overview of the consultative mechanisms and participatory planning processes and tools to support multi-stakeholder participation in the identification of environmental problems, causes and potential solutions for action across focal areas is provided. A discussion on the focus of IWP's integration of social analysis, resource economics and various communications tools, such as social marketing, to support behavioural change for sustainable resource management is discussed. A brief update on country activities to early 2004 is also provided.

The paper concludes with a discussion of some key issues in relation to multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement and participation, partnerships, national capacity and other challenges that have emerged to date from the Project.

2. Strategic action programme formulation: regional collaboration in practice

The origins of the “Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States” lie in the outcomes of the 8th Annual SPREP Governing Council Meeting, held in 1995, where the 26 member countries and territories endorsed an initiative to prepare a Strategic Action Programme under the international waters focal area of the GEF. This began in April 1997 and combined the following activity areas:

¹Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

²“International Waters” is one of four focal areas of the GEF. The GEF defines “international waters” to include oceans, large marine ecosystems, enclosed or semi-enclosed seas and estuaries as well as rivers, lakes, groundwater systems, and wetlands with trans-boundary drainage basins or common borders involving two or more countries. The ecosystems and habitats associated with these waters are essential parts of the system. International Waters extend far inland and far out to sea.

³The Project budget is 12 million USD plus an additional USD8.1 million in co-financing. The 21 million USD is split between the ICWM component (USD 10 million) and OFM Component (USD 11 million).

- integrated conservation and sustainable management of coastal resources, including fresh water resources;
- integrated conservation and sustainable management of oceanic resources;
- prevention of pollution through the integrated management of land- or marine-based wastes; and
- monitoring and analysis of shore and near-shore environments to determine vulnerability to environmental degradation.

The basis for developing a Programme focus in these areas is outlined in the joint regional position prepared by Pacific Island countries for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the simultaneous preparation of Pacific Island National Environment Management Strategies prepared by countries between 1990 and 1996 and the Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the South Pacific Region (1997–2000).

A Regional Task Force—with representation from five Pacific island governments, five regional organisations, implementing agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), a development bank and the private sector—was established to oversee preparation of the SAP. The regional submission was prepared on the basis of national assessments, which were overseen by multi-sectoral National Task Forces (NTF) established in each of the participating countries. The NTFs were in turn supported by National Coordinators, which provided guidance for the integration of country priorities to the SAP.

Consolidation of the national assessments during the formulation process resulted in the identification of priority transboundary concerns relating to the international waters that were common to the region:

- degradation of quality;
- degradation of associated critical habitats; and
- unsustainable use of living and non-living resources.

A project to address the root causes of these concerns was presented and subsequently endorsed by the Heads of Government of the South Pacific Forum in 1997 [1]. Refinement over a period of almost two years resulted in GEF Council approval of the IWP document in August 1999 [2]. Implementation commenced in mid-2000.

3. International waters project objectives

The IWP Document is formulated on the basis that the international waters in the Pacific region are subject to threats that give rise to transboundary concerns. During the formulation of the SAP, threats were examined from the perspective of critical species and their habitats and living and non-living marine resources. Identified threats include:

- pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities;
- issues related to the long term sustainable use of marine and freshwater uses;
- physical, ecological and hydrological modification of critical habitats; and
- unsustainable exploitation of living and non-living resources, particularly, although not exclusively, the unsustainable and/or inefficient exploitation of coastal and ocean fishery resources.

The SAP formulation process examined each threat in a legal, institutional, socio-economic and environmental context. The ultimate root cause underlying imminent threats was identified as deficiencies in management. Factors contributing to the management root cause were grouped into two linked subsets: (a) governance and (b) understanding. In addition the analysis revealed a lack of strategic information available to decision-makers (e.g., government staff, managers, resource users, and communities) to evaluate the costs and benefits of, and decide between various activity options to address ultimate root causes and respond to threats [2].

The IWP is designed to support actions to address the root causes of degradation of the international waters of the Pacific Islands region. The actions are to be carried out in two complementary, nationally-driven regionally coordinated linked consultative programmes: ICWM and OFM (which focuses on the management and conservation of tuna stocks in the western central Pacific).⁴ Through the ICWM and OFM approaches, the IWP suggests a path for the transition of Pacific Islands from sectoral to integrated management of international waters as a whole, the evolution of which is essential for their protection over the long term. The IWP is the first stage of implementation of the Pacific SAP [2].

The SAP provided a regional framework for targeted Project activities and action areas. The activities and tasks that appear in the Project Document are intended to address the full range of these issues, summarised in Table 1.

4. ICWM objectives and activities

The overall objective of the ICWM component is to “address root causes of the degradation of international waters in coastal regions through a programme focused on improved integrated coastal and watershed management” [2]. Recognising that all sustainable development issues related to international waters cannot all be addressed at once, four high priority areas for immediate intervention through pilot activities have been identified:

- community-based waste reduction;
- protection of freshwater resources;
- sustainable coastal fisheries; and
- marine protected areas.⁵

Within these broad priority areas,⁶ activities involve a two-pronged approach⁷ to address root causes of environmental concerns. This involves both local and national level

⁴Responsibility for this aspect of the IWP rests with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, based in New Caledonia, and the Forum Fisheries Agency based in Solomon Islands.

⁵Staff of SPREP and the IWP Mid Term Evaluators have previously highlighted the inappropriateness of inclusion of “marine protected areas” as a focal area. It is a tool to achieve sustainable coastal fisheries.

⁶In early 2001 the Project Coordination Unit commissioned reviews in the four focal areas [3–6]. This was firstly to provide a source of current information for those associated with implementation across the region (at all levels) in primary areas of interest. Secondly, to provide a snapshot of current information in each of the focal areas in 2001 and a baseline for assessing change at the end of the Programme. Thirdly, to examine in more detail the types of pilot activities that could be implemented with IWP support. These focal area reviews were supplemented with reviews of economic issues and lessons learnt in the design of community-based resource management initiatives in the Pacific [7,8].

⁷This approach is based on research of lessons learned and best practice from the region and elsewhere and included in GEF and UNDP publications on similar types of projects. This includes a 1997 UNDP/GEF report

Table 1
The Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States Framework

Goal	Integrated sustainable development and management of International Waters
Development objective	To achieve global benefits by developing and implementing measures to conserve, sustainably manage and restore coastal and oceanic resources in the Pacific Region
Priority concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Degradation of water quality ● Degradation of associated critical habitats ● Unsustainable use of resources
Imminent threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pollution from land-based activities ● Modification of critical habitats ● Unsustainable exploitation of resources
Ultimate root causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management deficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance ○ Understanding
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management, and ● Oceanic Fisheries Management
ICWM activity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved waste management ● Better water quality ● Sustainable fisheries ● Effective marine protected areas
OFM activity areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainable ocean fisheries ● Improved national and regional management capability ● Stock and by-catch monitoring and research ● Enhanced national and regional management links
Targeted actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management/institutional strengthening ● Capacity-building/institutional strengthening ● Awareness/education ● Research/information for decision-making ● Investment

actions in each participating country to strengthen processes supporting conservation and sustainable use of coastal and watershed resources.

The Project Document proposes support for 14 “pilot projects” — one in each of the 14 participating countries. The intent was that a community would host a pilot project to develop and implement local solutions to address their priority environmental concerns. Each project was to address one or more of the four focal areas and there was flexibility to

(footnote continued)

prepared by Steven Nakashima: *Integrated Coastal Management as Best Practice in GEF Project Development: Lessons Learned From Selected Biodiversity Projects in Marine, Coastal and Freshwater Ecosystems*. Nakashima (1997, p. 16) described the need to use a “two-tracked approach” to resource management to build capacity at the national level for policy regulation while integrating implementation activities at the local or community level.

establish a new project or link to current initiatives (consistent with the intent of the Project Document) that were already underway with other means of support and partners. The focus of each pilot project was to promote increased community involvement and responsibility for local resource management and conservation initiatives, recognising that Pacific communities have significant authority, control and systems of management over natural resources.

The Project is piloting solutions to address priority environmental concerns at the community level in one or two host communities in all 14 participating countries. However, in recognition of the fact that community level action alone cannot solve all the problems relating to a particular environmental concern, or suite of environmental concerns, the Project is also piloting action on a broader scale, with an expanded set of stakeholders.

Higher-level national actions can include a variety of activities addressing national scale policy, institutional and governance considerations contributing to root causes in the environment sector as a whole, or in the IWP focal area. In addition, initial activities through the local community and sites are intended to generate lessons for internalising problems and solutions and, through this, identify other problems and actions that cannot be managed at the local level. This may suggest national level actions that need to be undertaken during the later phases of the Project.

Addressing the root causes of environmental degradation, whether through community-level resource initiatives or at the national level, requires among other things changing people's behaviour and attitudes—to shift human behaviours from practices that result in resource degradation to more sustainable actions. As a result, the IWP places special attention on understanding the human dimensions of resource use and management. It does this by including consideration of social and cultural factors and conditions between stakeholders and resources, including: economic assessments in considering factors that influence stakeholder decision-making; the active participation of stakeholders, in particular local community stakeholders, during all aspects of the pilot projects (e.g., design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation); and the role of communications in supporting behavioural change necessary for achieving sustainable resource management [2]. These technical aspects are discussed in more detail below.

Overall, targeted actions and pilot activities will focus on demonstrating methodologies and best practices and provide lessons for sustainable resource management and conservation for replication at the national or regional level in future initiatives.

4.1. Institutional arrangements and consultative context

A complex network of institutional arrangements and consultative mechanisms exist to support implementation of the IWP at regional, national and local levels. The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) based at SPREP supports six staff and provides technical and administrative support for the ICWM component.

At the national level, the IWP supports a National Coordinator, and in some cases an Assistant National Coordinator, based in the offices of the Lead Agency (in most cases the national Environment Department or Agency) with whom a Memorandum of Understanding is in force for implementation of the project.

In addition, in each country, a multi-sectoral National Task Force (and its technical working groups) oversees national implementation of the International Waters Project.

The committee has a critical role in engaging multi-sectoral representation (e.g., government, NGOs, private sector, representatives from the community-based IWP project and other projects) in IWP related initiatives; serving as a principal source of information and identification of expertise that could support project implementation; and in supporting national level activities such as national policy and institutional changes to engender success of project activities. The project's community focus means there are local consultative arrangements, such as Local Pilot Project Committees, for each of the community projects.

At the regional level, a Multi-partite Review meeting is held annually between the countries, implementing and executing agencies. The Project also reports to a number of informal and formal bodies including the annual SPREP Governing Council Meeting and various working groups of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP).⁸

4.2. Strategies for supporting behavioural change

A significant number of community-based environment and development projects have been implemented in the Pacific. These projects vary in size, scope and value. Many of these have not lasted beyond the life of external funding support. This has been attributed to, among other things, a failure to adequately consider social and economic issues that drive people's behaviour, particularly during the planning stage of projects [9,10].⁹

According to Whyte [8] in a recent review of participatory resource conservation and management initiatives in the Pacific region for IWP, there has been a lack of attention given to undertaking assessments of social issues in project planning stages as well as monitoring of socio-economic factors and processes in conservation projects in the Pacific region (see also Russell and Harschbarger [11]). In addition, essential economic elements that relate to human behaviour (why people behave the way they do) during project identification, assessment and project design, and consideration of financial and economic feasibility of solutions have not been adequately considered [10,12]. Moreover, there has been a general lack of appreciation for the role that effective strategic communications, such as social marketing, can play in effecting sustainable behaviour change for resource management [13].

To support behavioural change needed to address root causes of environmental problems and enhance the probability of success of pilot activities, the IWP focuses on integration of three technical elements to support pilot implementation activities: social assessment, including stakeholder participation; resource economics and communications (public relations, social marketing and community education) as "best practice" approaches. This integrated approach is relatively new for the Pacific region.

Guiding strategies in these three disciplines were prepared by staff at the Project Coordination Unit at SPREP in the early start-up phases of the project. These were circulated for peer review and discussed with country project staff. The strategies were intended to: (a) provide guidance in options for addressing key objectives of the

⁸CROP is a high level advisory body established by the South Pacific Forum in 1988. It exercises an advisory function on key policy and operational issues of importance to the region and regional organizations out of recognition of opportunities that could be achieved through the sharing of the region's resources. It comprises the heads of eight Pacific intergovernmental organizations.

⁹Issues contributing to this include perceived difficulty in measuring social conditions, due to lack of human capacity and training in this area, and poor standards of quality social research [8,9,11].

IWP;¹⁰ and (b) provide some guidance to SPREP staff, participating country National Coordinators, and others associated with the implementation of IWP on how these may be achieved for the IWP pilot projects. The strategies were developed following an assessment of lessons learned and past experience in community-based resource management in the Pacific region and consideration of what is achievable within the specific constraints of the Project. In addition, initial country consultations by SPREP revealed that, in some cases, there was limited local capacity and experience in social analysis, resource economics and communications. Each strategy was prepared as a generic document to be adapted, where required, to suit local conditions in each of the 14 participating countries. A brief discussion on each of these strategies, their rationale and approach is provided below.

4.2.1. *Social assessment and participation strategy*

Over the last decade, development and conservation practitioners have recognised the dynamic social circumstances in which resource projects are being developed and implemented, and the critical role that local people and communities play in the success of natural resource conservation and management initiatives through their meaningful participation (e.g., Borrini-Feyerbrand, 1997; Bunce et al., 2000; Ellis, 1997; Pimbert and Pretty, 1997; Pollnac and Crawford, 2000; Thompson and Guijt, 1999; Van-Helden, 1998; cited in [9], [8]). The IWP Project Document recognises that local communities have significant authority, control and systems of management over natural resources. The IWP also acknowledges the linkages between the success of pilot projects, understanding the relationships between stakeholders and resources, consideration of social, economic and cultural factors can affect natural resources management and the participation of community stakeholders during all aspects of the pilot project cycle (e.g., design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) [2].

The strategy follows the recently modified World Bank Social Assessment (SA) approach as a broad framework for addressing activities in social analysis and community participation that can be modified to suit the needs of the 14 IWP pilot projects, which generally will be small and localised.¹¹ SA constitutes more than socio-economic surveys carried out at the outset of projects. It is an iterative and participatory process to prioritise, gather, analyse and use information—both qualitative and quantitative about relevant social factors, including understanding the human context and consequences of projects. SA investigates social, cultural, economic, institutional and political factors and conditions at a site and provides information to assist in developing and implementing activities to deal with specific local conservation and resource management issues [9]. Social Assessment contributes to the design and implementation of conservation projects by:

- identifying stakeholders affected by, or with an interest in, conservation activities;

¹⁰The IWP Mid Term Evaluators noted that the project document does not clearly specify the intended implementation strategy for many aspects of the IWP. The Project document provides for strategy development in early phases of project. The strategies in effect served as ‘inception reports’ to provide a strategic and integrated approach to project implementation [14].

¹¹Traditionally, Social Assessment is conducted for ‘mega-projects’, such as those involving infrastructure. Furthermore, Social Assessment is often conducted during social feasibility stages of early project design as a particular requirement of World Bank projects. Although the World Bank Social Assessment approach does not exactly fit the requirements of the IWP, it does provide a broad starting point for developing a strategy.

- describing activities which threaten biodiversity conservation and defining options to mitigate detrimental human impacts on biological resources;
- defining and understanding potential conflicts between and among stakeholders over conservation measures and developing ways of minimising such conflicts;
- providing information needed to facilitate stakeholder participation; and
- defining relevant socio-economic, political, cultural and institutional factors that should be taken into account in conservation projects to enhance project success (World Bank, 1994 cited in [9]).

The World Bank states that it is advisable to undertake Social Assessment for projects where:

- changes in existing patterns of behaviour, norms or values are required;
- community participation is essential for sustainability and success; or
- insufficient knowledge exists of local needs, problems, constraints and solutions (Kudat, 1999 cited in [9]).

The strategy is comprised of three parts. Part 1 discusses the rationale for the social assessment and participation strategy and background to its development, including a review of the literature. Part 2 focuses on the elements and scope of the strategy and outlines a number of key interconnected activities to support pilot projects including:

- initial community engagement and context activities;
- stakeholder identification and analysis;
- socio-economic baseline assessment;
- social impact assessment of project options;
- formulation of a stakeholder participation plan; and
- establishment of a monitoring and evaluation plans (social issues and stakeholder participation).

Part 3 provides information on resources, a glossary of terms, methods, tools and templates to assist National Coordinators and others in undertaking participatory and social assessment activities.

4.2.2. *Economics strategy*

Economics plays a key role in understanding root causes of environmental problems by providing a framework to consider “efficiency” and providing a framework for considering how people behave (what economic incentives drive their behaviour) [10].

Resources are said to be “efficiently” used when their use generates the highest level of well-being or benefits after all the costs of using the resources have been taken into account. “Net” benefits of resource use (the benefits after the costs), are experienced by individuals, communities in villages, a district or a country. Economics provides a framework for considering the value of scarce natural resources in different uses, enabling communities and decision makers to identify those uses that will make people “best” off.

Economic analysis also provides an understanding of why people use resources in the manner that they do; why people may use resources in ways that harm the environment (e.g., what incentives encourage them to use the environment in an unsustainable manner);

and what kind of incentives and disincentives might encourage people to use resources sustainably. In considering human behaviour, economics can assist in determining how people react to different situations. This provides information to determine what management responses are likely to be successful—such as how and why they may respond to different project initiatives and activities [10].

The economic strategy outlines a framework to incorporate tasks that require an economic perspective in the project planning and selecting objectives and solutions phases and in monitoring and evaluation. The aim is to ensure that pilot activities are economically and financially sustainable and that they generate an efficient use of scarce natural and financial resources. The strategy outlines specific tasks that can be conducted at various stages of the project cycle in order to achieve specific economic outcomes. The tasks or economic activities that might be covered include:

- assessment of property rights (the ‘drivers’ of decisions) at the local and national level (incentives for unsustainable behaviour);
- Financial assessment of activities;
- economic assessments of problems at the national or local level;
- economic monitoring;
- economic evaluation of projects; and/or
- identification and assessment of economic instruments at the national level [10].

4.2.3. *Communication strategy*

In the Pacific many “awareness-raising” campaigns have been designed to help highlight environmental issues and draw attention to their root causes. However, it has become clear that these campaigns do not necessarily bring about the changes in attitudes and behaviour required to produce sustainable environmental solutions, such as those required by projects like the IWP. Given the multifaceted nature of the IWP, and the complex set of objectives and outcomes required, the IWP’s overarching communications strategy is made up of three distinct plans: public relations; social marketing; and community education [13]. These attempt to address all major communication elements of the IWP. Broadly speaking, this comprises information dissemination at global and regional levels and awareness-raising and promotion of sustainable behaviour change at a national and local level. Together, these provide an integrated framework for the implementation of communication activities for the IWP and pilot activities. Public relations activities cover all levels and use a range of tools to raise awareness and disseminate information about the IWP. Both social marketing and community education activities will be focused on community level pilot activities. Social marketing makes use of methods from the commercial centre to promote change at an individual, community and societal level. It uses commercial principles and processes to try and change the behaviour of target audiences by promoting benefits and reducing barriers to change. Community education sets out how to develop a formalised learner-focused education programme that is based on learning outcomes [13].

4.3. *Key elements of IWP pilot project design phase*

During a meeting in late 2002 in Samoa, National Coordinators and PCU staff identified a range of activities, tasks, elements and processes in social assessment and

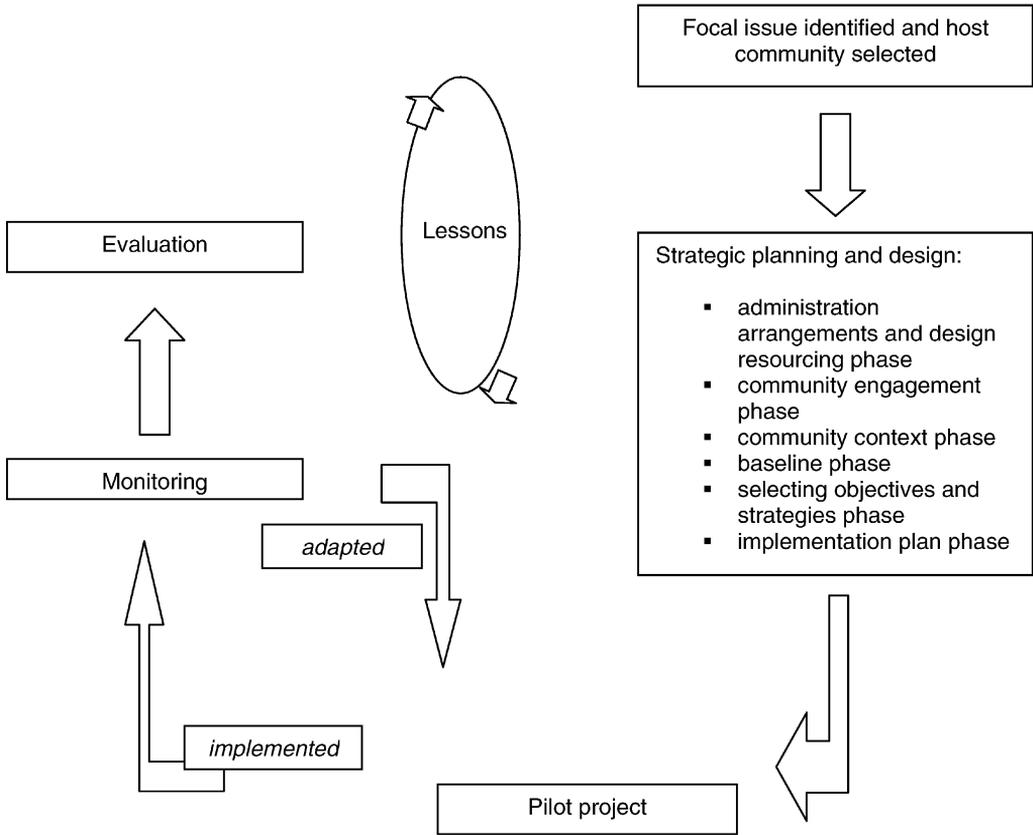


Fig. 1. Generalised project cycle for the Pacific International Waters Project.

participation, communications and economics, as well as those relating to administration and project management. By sequencing tasks and activities under broad phases, an integrated framework, which described the key phases of the project cycle and key elements of pilot projects, was generated (Fig. 1). This framework was developed into a set of draft guidelines [15] to link the strategies and streamline the integrated implementation process across each of the four focal areas to assist participating countries during the initial community-based pilot project strategic planning and design phases.¹²

Implementation of activities grouped under the strategic planning and design phase of the IWP project cycle require considerable time. The challenge is to effectively plan, design and implement a community-based project with sufficient input from the relevant stakeholder groups.

A summary of activities that could be conducted under the various stages of the strategic planning and design phase for IWP pilots include:

- administration arrangements and design resourcing activities; consultation mechanisms;

¹²The guidelines were produced to assist in communicating the intent and purpose of pilot activities at the national level, which was not clearly articulated in the Project Document or through its logical framework.

- initial stakeholder (re) engagement: e.g., planning for consultation, communications strategies, preparing for conflict, initial stakeholder analysis and participation plans, consultation protocols;
- site/community context: community/problem profiling(s) and review of existing information;
- baseline phase
 - participatory problem analysis with stakeholders (root-cause analysis including information needs assessment);
 - social, economic and resource baseline assessments to validate problems and causes (including information needs analysis);
 - providing feedback information within the community to promote further discussion and consideration of problems;
- selecting objectives and strategies phase: considering options and social, economic, environmental impacts of options for addressing root causes; working with the community to identify potential solutions i.e., the development of solution trees; and
- implementation plan phase: selecting options and developing a project map; and developing action plans for implementation, including social marketing, community education, stakeholder participation, monitoring, etc. [15].

All activities are interconnected and build on the results of each other. For example, some of the activities undertaken for social assessments—such as stakeholder analysis or socio-economic baseline assessments—are also fundamental building blocks for developing knowledge of target audiences which can be used for public relations or social marketing activities. In addition, much of the information collected to achieve economic outcomes is also the same type of information generated for social assessment purposes. This integrated list is continually being adapted and revised as countries establish their pilot activities.

5. Progress at mid-term

Project start-up has in general been slow. By late 2003, most countries were engaged in community-based pilot project planning and design activities and had commenced consideration of potential national level activities.

5.1. Initial activities

Initial national country activities during 2001–2003 focused on the establishment of National Task Forces based on stakeholder analyses to oversee national components of the IWP including: a review of priority environment concerns; selection of a key focal area(s); calls for expressions of interest; and the appraisal and selection of a site and communities to host the community-based component of the Project. A list of countries, sites and focal areas is provided in [Table 2](#).

Following on from the national assessments that were supported in 1997 as part of the formulation of the SAP (and re-confirmed in nearly all priority environmental concern reviews undertaken during implementation of the IWP in 2002), eight of the 14 countries selected “waste” as the focal issue for their pilot activities. They intend to address to a

Table 2
Selection of International Waters Project focal areas and host communities, November 2003

Country	Host community and site	IW focal area ^a			
		Freshwater	Waste	MPA	Coastal fisheries
Cook Islands	Takuvaine, Rarotonga Island	●			○
Federated States	Gagil, Rumung, Maap and Gilman, Yap State			●	○
Micronesia					
Fiji	Vunisinu Rewa, Vitu Levi Island	●	○		○
Kiribati	Bikenibeu, Tarawa Island	○	●		
Marshall Islands	Jenrock, Majuro		●		
Nauru	Buada	○	●		○
Niue	Makefu and Alofi North				●
Palau	Ngarchelong, Babeldob, Ngarchelong State and Madalaii, Koror State		●		
Papua New Guinea	Barakau village, Central Province	●	●		●
Samoa	Apolima Island and Lepa village, Upulo Island	●			
Solomon Islands	Chea and Billy Passage, Marovo Lagoon, Western Province				●
Tonga	Nukuhetulu, Tongatapu	○	●		
Tuvalu	Alapi/Senala, Funafuti	○	●		
Vanuatu	Crab Bay Malekula Island, Malampa Province	●			●

^a ● primary focal issue; ○ secondary issue.

range of waste problems (e.g., household waste; litter; sewerage; animal waste; and/or chemical waste, such as batteries, etc.).

A series of tasks have begun to lay the foundation for consideration by the NTF of governance, institutional and policy issues as the pilot project proceeds. National level actions that have commenced to support implementation of solutions at the local level include reviews of environment-related legislation and profiles of government agencies.

Other Project activities have included profiles of NGOs and developing national communication strategies. Some countries have released first editions of their quarterly newsletters and others have launched websites for their projects.

5.2. Pilot project planning and design

Most participating countries have either just commenced or are about to commence participatory planning processes to work with community and other stakeholders in the design of a project to address root causes of environmental problems. Some local capacity-building activities for Project staff and locally recruited facilitators to manage community-based processes have also been conducted. Most recently this has included sub-regional training workshops and subsequent development of a resource kit (“Collaborating for

Sustainability: A Resource Kit for Facilitators of Participatory Natural Resource Management in the Pacific”) [16] on facilitating participatory planning processes for community-based resource management initiatives. Similar initiatives are currently underway for social marketing techniques (“Social Marketing for Pacific Communities: A Resource Kit”) [17] and community-based resource economics.¹³

National Coordinators, working in many cases with locally recruited facilitators in each country, are now overseeing community engagement and stakeholder participatory planning processes at the host sites. During 2004, focus will be on an analysis of the problem(s) to be addressed in relation to the selected focal issue by stakeholders, including: social and economic issues impacting on the problems; development of action plans to pilot options to support improved community practice in respect of the problem (s); the collection of appropriate information that will assist in describing the baseline situation in each community; and development of monitoring plans.

National Coordinators and National Task Forces will continue to examine broader national issues associated with the root causes for selected focal environmental threats. In the Marshall Islands for example, a scoping exercise to identify the economic issues (problems) relating to waste in Majuro has commenced. A number of other countries, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Nauru, have either completed or commenced reviews of existing environment related legislation. The aim is to identify any overlaps, conflicts and gaps in current legislation, and make recommendations, using the results of pilot activities, for these to be addressed through the National Task Forces.

In late 2003, the IWP PCU commenced a preliminary assessment of regional and national policy development and implementation issues associated with integrated coastal and watershed management. This included convening a small workshop to identify gaps and opportunities relating to the large number of action plans, environmental agreements and regional and national strategies with implications for integrated coastal management (ICM) and to identify options for improved coordination and synergies. Recommendations from the 2003 IWP Mid-Term Evaluation related to the regional scale coordination of transboundary issues and shared concerns of Pacific Island countries relating to ICM have started to be addressed. It is envisaged that a number of follow-up activities supported under the IWP will be implemented to address ICM issues identified in the Integrated Action Strategy, which was produced as an outcome of the recent Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum convened at the University of the South Pacific in February, 2004.

6. Issues and challenges

Since actual national pilot project implementation activities are only just beginning, it is too early to assess a full range of lessons learned, particularly with respect to the impact of

¹³A course, entitled “Economics for Community-based Environment and Development projects in the Pacific”, has been designed as a collaborative effort between the United Nations Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Australian National University and the IWP as a TrainSea: Coast course initiative. The first delivery was in February 2004 at the USP in Suva. It is envisaged the course will become incorporated into the USP’s regular curriculum as an accredited unit of a graduate diploma in the Marine Studies Programme. Development of the course is supported by the GEF.

various social, economic and communications strategies being piloted to address root causes of environmental problems across the region.

However, the use of simple stakeholder analysis and participation strategies in initial stages of the project assisted in ensuring that national projects identified all potential stakeholders with an interest in the IWP focal areas who were consulted during project start-up. The important role of targeted public relations and media activities has, to date, shown to be invaluable in securing stakeholder participation in initial project activities in some countries such as Tonga, the Solomon Islands and Fiji. In addition, a national community participation programme in Niue proved successful in identifying and assessing priority environmental concerns of local residents in 14 villages and the collective discussion of possible activities to address these issues. In general, the community response to the participatory consultative process was extremely encouraging, with participatory methods new to most Niueans. Despite some difficulties in meeting arrangements related to language, timing and sequencing of activities, it was an important learning process for both the IWP and Niue, and the results have been applied to similar activities regionally and nationally [18].

A number of key issues continue to provide challenges for implementation of a large regional programme such as the IWP. National level capacity to implement the IWP at both institutional and individual levels poses implementation challenges in some countries. This includes effective, regular, multi-stakeholder dialogue across government agencies and civil society—a pre-requisite to achieve ICM. One of the remaining challenges of the project is to strengthen the National Task Forces to effectively undertake the role envisaged for them in supporting cross-sectoral, interagency coordination mechanisms, and facilitating links to policy change at the national level [14].

Establishing partnerships between government and community-based organisations to support a genuine community-based approach to sustainable resource management also presents many challenges for most government agencies among Pacific countries.

Some Pacific Island countries have limited technical capacity or experience as regards the integrated application of social, economic and communication disciplines to community-based sustainable resource management. As a result, local personnel require considerable support and backstopping in relation to awareness-raising and capacity-building activities associated with these elements of the Project.

The Project has found it challenging to implement community-based projects through a large inter-governmental agency such as SPREP. The PCU has also found it difficult at times servicing the needs of 14 countries dispersed across a wide geographical area. Finding more effective ways of communicating, preparing and disseminating project resource material (i.e., guidelines, strategies and reports) in appropriate formats to a diverse range of Pacific Islands stakeholders is also proving a challenge for the PCU based at SPREP.

On a positive note, some countries are beginning to demonstrate “best practice” in their approaches to the implementation of community-based pilot projects through participatory stakeholder consultations and the use of various tools (e.g., stakeholder analysis, participatory awareness-raising workshops), which is hoped will generate flow-on effects to other projects. In addition, some of the regional coordination units’ approaches and processes in areas of social assessment, resource economics and communications are being favourably received by other regionally-implemented projects, both within and outside SPREP.

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