



Integrated coastal watershed management, sustainable coastal fisheries and the International Waters Programme

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Integrated Coastal Watershed Management, Sustainable Coastal Fisheries and The International Waters Programme

Introduction

International waters is one of four focal areas of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The GEF was created in 1994 to provide financing for programmes and projects to achieve global environment benefits in four focal areas:

- biodiversity;
- climate change;
- international waters; and
- and ozone layer depletion.

International waters 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 (IWP 2002c).

The Strategic Action Programme for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States – or the ‘IWP’ – is a seven year Programme that commenced in 2000. The Programme involves 14 participating Pacific Island Countries:

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

The IWP has two main components: an oceanic component and a coastal component. The *oceanic* component of the IWP focuses on the management and conservation of tuna stocks in the western central Pacific. The *coastal* component of the IWP focuses on integrated coastal watershed management. It involves the implementation of 14 ‘pilot projects’ that address sustainable resource management and conservation issues in the coastal zone (2002c).

The coastal component and integrated coastal and watershed management

The coastal component of the IWP is aimed at integrated coastal watershed management. It is intended to support community-level actions to address priority environmental concerns relating to:

- marine and freshwater quality;
- habitat modification and degradation; and
- unsustainable use of living marine resources.

To address these concerns the IWP will support the establishment of ‘pilot’ projects, one in each of the 14 participating countries. Each pilot project is intended to address the root causes of degradation affecting one or more of the following four focal areas:

- marine protected areas (4 projects);
- coastal fisheries (3 projects);
- freshwater resources (4 projects); and
- waste (3 projects).

This means that as many as seven community level pilot projects could be supported under the IWP looking specifically at coastal fisheries issues.

What is a ‘community based’ pilot project?

For the purpose of the IWP, the term ‘community’ is used in a limited sense to refer to a group of people residing in a sub-village, a village or several villages in an urban or rural setting that use resources in a common area (see IWP 2002b). Specifically, the project development unit (PCU) which oversees the day-to-day coordination of work in the Programme considers that a community could constitute 50-700 households with the potential ability to control processes affecting a resource.

In IWP community based project is essentially a grass roots arrangement in which the community works to address its own problems, while being supported by expertise and resources provided by the IWP. The community is expected to identify the cause of their problems, identify and select potential responses, plan, design, implement and monitor those responses. As well as providing expertise and resources to do this, the IWP would provide support for the community project via a national steering committee, a project manager or ‘national coordinator’, a Project Coordination Unit at SPREP and various other stakeholders and/or experts (see *Administration Arrangements for the IWP* below).

What is a pilot project?

A pilot project in the IWP is intended to be a small-scale project that tests new (community level) approaches to environmental management. In this way, it is intended to generate lessons for best practice and appropriate methodologies for sustainable resource management and conservation. Under the IWP, the pilot project is intended to encourage active participation of all stakeholders in all stages of project and promote community solutions to problems.

The IWP intends that each country to establish one pilot project under the IWP. Each project would naturally address one of four focal areas covered in the Programme – waste, freshwater, fisheries and/or MPAs. Each pilot project would normally be restricted to one or more villages in one location or site. Some countries are interested in incorporating more than one site in their pilot project. Naturally this would have budgetary, logistical and administrative implications that would need to be considered. A pilot project may be a new project or work in partnership with an existing project.

The idea that a pilot project will generate lessons for future application is important. This is because the GEF and UNDP view the IWP as a whole as a ‘Strategic Action Programme’ or SAP. The SAP is considered to be an initial step that generates lessons learned in improving resource management. The IWP is therefore viewed by the GEF and UNDP as a set of activities that would eventually lead to the development of Medium-Sized (up to USD1 million) or Full Projects (in excess of USD1 million) in the future that may apply for funding.

As a result, the later stages of the IWP are likely to devote considerable effort to analyzing the results of the Programme to assist countries with the formulation of follow-up activities supported through the GEF and alternative sources of financing assistance.

Underlying principles of the IWP

The Project Document that describes the original design of the IWP (UNDP 1999) notes the importance of three key factors that are needed to ensure the success of community based environmental management projects:

- community participation;
- communication; and
- economic issues.

These factors reflect the importance of human behaviour in environmental management. For example, economics provides a framework for assessing human behaviour. Community participation is critical to the success of projects aiming to change that. Communication enables the transfer of messages to the community and of lessons inside and outside of it.

The PCU seeks to maximise the chances that these factors will be incorporated into the planning, design and implementation of community based environmental pilot projects. Therefore, together with a Project Managers, Programme Assistant and Project Accountant, the PCU contains a specifically recruited:

- community assessment and participation specialist (an anthropologist);
- a communications specialist; and
- a natural resource economist.

These individuals have developed strategies to explain how community participation, communication and economic issues will be incorporated into community base pilot projects in practice. (See IWP 2002f, 2002e and 2002d respectively.)

In addition to the incorporation of participation, communication and economic principles, the IWP seeks to develop partnerships with other agencies and programmes in the region that can provide support and expertise to its work. For instance, in different countries, IWP has already linked with the work on national biodiversity strategic action plans as well as some NGOs (such as FSP and the University of the South Pacific (USP)).

Administration arrangements for the IWP

The IWP is funded by the GEF, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The day-to-day coordination of work for the IWP, across the 14 participating countries, is conducted by a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) which is housed at SPREP.

A Programme Technical Advisory Group (PTAG) has been established to provide advice to the PCU on technical issues associated with the implementation of the IWP.

Management of in-county activities for the IWP are managed by ‘national coordinators’, project managers who are specifically recruited by national governments to oversee the day-to-day work of the IWP. National coordinators are assisted by national steering committees who work closely with the national coordinator to ensure that a wide range of stakeholder interests are met.

Reporting requirements

Operating under the GEF, UNDP and SPREP, the reporting requirements for IWP pilot projects are substantial since projects must satisfy the reporting needs of all three agencies, as well as the reporting needs of in-country agencies affected by the IWP.

To meet UNDP needs, quarterly narrative and financial reports are required from each country participating in the coastal component. The quarterly reports are fielded to the PCU which, together with its own quarterly and narrative reports, aggregates and transfers the information to the UNDP. Quarterly reports on the progress of the IWP are distributed to a wide variety of stakeholders. They are freely available from the PCU.

In addition to quarterly reporting requirements, the 14 participating governments aim to meet annually with the SPREP Secretariat, UNDP and the PCU in a Tripartite Review of financial and administrative issues associated with the implementation of the IWP. Additionally, updates of the IWP are provided to the annual SPREP meeting, and at regular briefing sessions (‘internal coordination meetings’) within SPREP. This year, a mid term evaluation of the progress of the IWP will also be conducted since the Programme is now half way through its seven year life cycle.

Implementing the IWP in-country

Arrangements for implementing the IWP in participating countries are outlined in *IWP Guidelines* (IWP 2003). This document outlines a broad approach for countries to follow. However, the communities, problems and resources in each country vary. Therefore, it is understood that, so long as countries meet the obligations and intent of the IWP in the original project document (UNDP 1999), this approach may need to be tailored for countries to meet their own circumstances.

The initial steps outlined in the IWP guidelines are broadly as follows:

- national governments recruit a national coordinator to oversee day-to-day management of the pilot project and administrative arrangements in each participating country;
- the national coordinator establishes a national steering committee (of equivalent) to oversee implementation of the IWP. This either be a specially created committee in which case the national coordinator conducts a provisional stakeholder analysis of agencies and individuals affected or affecting the IWP locally. He/she uses this stakeholder analysis to determine who participates in the committee. Alternatively, the national coordinator uses an already existing committee. Membership of the NTF is expected to evolve over time to reflect the needs of pilot projects over time. In the initial stages of the Programme, membership of NTFs is expected to reflect general national priorities in the early phases of the IWP. Later, membership of NTFs is expected to change to reflect specific project activities;

- the national coordinator arranges for a review the priority environmental concerns to be conducted. This review will assist in identifying options for the IWP pilot project to address;
- the steering committee selects one or more focal areas which the IWP pilot project can target;
- the national coordinator invites Expressions of Interest from communities (possibly with government/non-government agencies) to host the pilot project; and
- the steering committee (or nominated representatives) select a host community.

Capacity building and the IWP

The success of the IWP work hinges on the capacity of the people involved. While the project document that specified the content of the IWP did not explicitly consider the development of people in the Programme, the PCU does. Currently, capacity building in the IWP focuses on the development of national coordinators as project managers and the development of local people as facilitators.

National coordinators involved in the IWP bring a wide range of experience and knowledge to the Programme. Not all national coordinators are alike. At the same time, the demands of the Programme are wide ranging. Therefore, the extent to which national coordinators are equipped to deal with different aspects of the Programme (say, media and economic issues) varies. A number of activities are being developed in the PCU to support national coordinators in their work:

- the development of capacity development plans for staff. Working with the staff development officer, Frank Wickham at SPREP, the PCU last year developed a questionnaire to determine the comfort levels of national coordinators in different roles. The responses of this questionnaire have been used to develop draft capacity development plans for each key in-country officer. Strategies to support staff development are focused mainly on *in situ* training such as the use of mentors and training CDs but also provide for the use of formal training where considered critical. The use of these capacity management plans is still in the formative stages;
- the development of a short course in the economics to support community based management projects. Experience in the Pacific reveals that there is not always a sufficient understanding of the role that economic issues play in the behavior of resource users and the quality of the environment. Together with the USP, ANU and the United Nations Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS), the PCU is currently developing a short course for project managers including national coordinators from the IWP. The overall goals of the course are to provide managers of community based projects with:
 - a sound understanding of the key economic concepts and principles relevant in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of development and conservation projects; and
 - guidance on how to apply economic concepts, tools and approaches at all stages of the project cycle addressing community needs and aspirations.

It is currently envisaged that the course will be incorporated into the USP's regular curriculum as an accredited unit of a graduate diploma in the Marine Studies Programme (MSP). As a result, the course should provide a permanent opportunity for Pacific islanders to develop economic management skills. The first delivery of this course should occur around late September/early October 2003 at the MSP, USP in Fiji. Details of the proposed course are available from the PCU and MSP (2002a and 2002b).

As a community-based Programme, the involvement of local people in the IWP is fundamental. Communities are expected to be involved in each step of the IWP, from identification of problems through to monitoring and evaluation of the projects. One of the key activities for the community will be the generation of information on the nature and cause of the problem targeted under the IWP. To support the generation of this information, the IWP will be seeking to train locals in information collection and assessment in each country. The IWP currently plans to start a series of train-the-trainer sessions in which local individuals will be taught how to train community members in information generation. Training is expected to include participatory information generation methods such as participatory problem analysis, brainstorming and seasonal calendars.

It is hoped that the capacity building efforts of the IWP will not only assist the IWP to meet some of its needs, but will also provide some important skills development in-country for the future.

Fisheries and the IWP

To provide background information on coastal fisheries issues for the Pacific, the IWP commissioned two consultancies in 2002 to provide a snap shot of issues that may be important for pilot projects. The two consultancies provide a synopsis of information relating to:

- sustainable coastal fisheries in the Pacific (Dalzell and Schug 2002); and
- marine protected areas (Huber and McGregor 2002).

Electronic copies of these reports are available from the IWP web site and hard copy versions are available from the PCU.

To date, three countries have selected sustainable coastal fisheries and/or marine protected areas as the focus of their IWP pilot project:

- Federated States of Micronesia;
- Niue;
- Solomon Islands.

Details on the community involvement in the development of the projects for Niue and the Solomon Islands are available from this meeting.

Currently, only the Federated States of Micronesia has identified preferred sites for the implementation of a pilot project. These are in Yap State. At present, activities in Yap centre on planning to refine, extend and plan for the winning Expression of Interest for

the pilot project. This stage is critical for all pilot projects to be conducted in the IWP. Although an Expression of Interest is the *basis* for a pilot project, it is intended that the host community would be fully involved in developing that proposal in greater detail before implementing it. In particular, it is intended that all communities hosting a project will be involved in activities to return to the problem at hand and describe the symptoms of the fisheries problem (baseline information generation and analysis) as well as to analyse the cause and solutions to the problem.

Future steps in detail

Therefore, having selected a host community and site, countries will be following a broad IWP strategy to development and implement their pilot projects. The key steps are likely to include:

- a review the membership of the NTF;
- establishing teams to support the development of the project (Project Development Team, Local Project Committee, Technical Advisory Committee as needed);
- engaging the community (this will include conducting a detailed stakeholder analysis);
- collecting information on the community to provide a context to the problem;
- working with the community to analyse root cause of problem – *participatory problem analysis* is expected to be a key activity in this step;
- working with the community to generate baseline information which can provide confirmation and detail on the root cause of the problem;
- providing feedback information within the community to promote further discussion and consideration of problems;
- working with the community to identify potential solutions – this is likely to include further participatory activities such as the development of solution trees;
- assessing solutions (cultural and economic feasibility) – this is likely to include assessments of the financial feasibility of activities (such as for any proposed commercial ventures) and, economic feasibility (incentives generated for behaviour change as well as some form of cost benefit analysis of solutions);
- providing feedback information within the community to promote further discussion and select a solution;
- conducting detailed planning with community representatives;
- implementing the solution; and
- working with the community to develop monitoring and evaluation plans (see IWP 2003a).

It can be seen that the development of pilot projects under the IWP is likely to be a highly involved process if all of these steps are to be conducted. For this reason, the time frame for the IWP is important. The original time frame for the IWP was five years but has since been extended to seven (see IWP 2002a) to allow full consultation with fisheries

communities to occur. This should enable increased chances for community ownership and involvement in the pilot project.

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