

## **Terms of Reference (TOR)**

### **Pacific Resilience Partnership Technical Working Group on Water Security (TWGWS).**

#### **1. Pacific water security and resilience.**

Too many Pacific people continue to live without access to safe and resilient water supply and sanitation and with disproportionately high exposure to the water-related risks of disaster and climate change. Data gathered in Pacific Island Countries indicate that approximately half of the Pacific population lives without access to basic drinking water facilities, and more than two-thirds live without access to basic sanitation. These numbers are heavily driven by the region's significant rural and outer island populations that live outside the reach of reticulated water services and face serious water security challenges compared to their urban counterparts. Water sources face threats from increasing demand, excessive water abstraction, impacts of land use and pollution, and drought. Essential drinking water and wastewater infrastructure are also at risk of increasing extreme weather events, sea level rise, and flooding.

While every country in the region is active in improving the water security of their vulnerable communities, in many cases these efforts are not keeping pace with the pressures of population growth and movement, disaster setbacks, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. If current trajectories persist, millions of Pacific Islanders will continue to endure water insecurity for generations to come, with profound implications for public health, socio-economic development, food, and energy security, the environment, and human rights.

Significant contributing factors to this situation are persisting low levels of engagement in water security compared to other sectoral issues, and inadequate consideration of water security issues in regional frameworks and decision-making fora. For example, while the significant economic, health and environmental benefits of improved water and sanitation have been well demonstrated, the issue is yet to receive the levels of attention proportionate to both the scale of the challenge and its critical role in supporting Pacific resilience. While the issue is framed by several established high-level regional policy frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Boe Declaration, and the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), none of these is currently fully engaged in water security issues nor driving the coordinated efforts required across multiple sectors and stakeholders.

#### **2. How can the PRP help strengthen Pacific water security?**

The Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) has demonstrated its ability to drive collective action among stakeholders and across sectors in support of identified regional and national priority needs and to elevate Pacific perspectives on specific issues at the global level. As a cross-sectoral Partnership, it provides a platform for information sharing, knowledge building, and learning between initiatives and stakeholders, and across sectors, which can assist in identifying gaps and adaptive opportunities for strengthened and improved responses and actions. Importantly, the PRP also maintains communication lines with Pacific Leaders through processes (such as the Forum Officials Committee and Leaders Meeting) to drive national and regional engagement and support a sustained commitment to resilience action.

The formation of a PRP Technical Working Group for Water Security (TWGWS) will provide a working platform for partners and stakeholders in the fields of water security and resilience to come together to;

- I. identify ways that the PRP can promote increased and meaningful engagement in water security as a resilience issue and;
- II. strengthen action and coordination of water security responses to support progress towards FRDP Goals.

The Technical Working Group will be anchored within the PRP to support the PRP in promoting water security as a resilience outcome. Technical and Secretariate Support will be provided by the Building Regional Action and Cooperations on Water Security Project (BRAC).

### 3. Role of the TWGWS.

The proposed role of the TWGWS will include highlighting and connecting partner initiatives for water security in the context of Pacific resilience and enabling the PRP task force to assist in driving, enhancing, directing, or establishing such initiatives under the guidance of an evidence-based engagement strategy and action plan. In essence, the core roles of the working group are to facilitate the development of an engagement strategy for water security and its associated Action Plan and contribute to regional dialogues and advocacy on water security. The strategy will provide specific strategic outcomes on water security that partners may choose to implement. Importantly the strategy will address the current gap in the lack of an engagement strategy for water security and improve engagement in water security. Support in communications, engagement, advocacy, and knowledge management will be provided by the BRAC Project to the working group.

### 4. TWGWS goal and outcomes.

The goal of the TWGWS is to strengthen engagement in water security at the national, sub-national, and regional levels, including through the development of a **Regional Water Security Engagement Strategy** and **Action Plan**. The TWGWS will assist in highlighting and connecting partner initiatives for water security in the context of Pacific resilience; and enabling the PRP task force to assist in **driving, directing, or establishing** such initiatives under the guidance of the Water Security Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. The TWGWS supports the achievement of the following outcomes:

#### Long-term outcomes:

- Decision-makers prioritize, and engage in the water security needs of Pacific communities; and
- PRP partners are driving integrated action on water security as a key component of Pacific resilience.

#### Medium-term outcomes:

- PRP partners are demonstrating strengthened engagement in water security and its role in Pacific resilience; and
- PRP partners are supporting the implementation of the Regional Engagement Strategy for Water Security and associated Action Plan, including mobilizing support for funding.

#### Short-term outcomes:

- The TWGWS is established and functional; and
- Immediate water security engagement and communication activities are identified, planned, and implemented as per needs.
- Water Security Engagement Strategy developed and launched.

### 5. Specific TWGWS outputs:

The TWGWS will support the development and delivery of the following specific primary outputs, to be further developed in a work plan to be agreed upon at the inception of the TWGWS and updated on a needs basis:

- a) A **Water Security Engagement Strategy** to identify and consult with key actors and stakeholders, identify engagement needs, gaps and opportunities at both national and regional levels, seek input and feedback, gauge stakeholder support and inform the TWGWS Action Plan.
- b) A **Communications Plan** detailing proposed early communication and engagement activities, processes, and products to support engagement and development of the Water Security Engagement Strategy.
- c) An endorsed Action Plan comprising a suite of water security coordination, engagement and awareness initiatives that contribute to the goals of the FRDP.
- d) A **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** with practical indicators to measure levels of engagement over time; and

In supporting the development of these outputs, TWGWS members will be expected to provide high-level strategic advice on strengthening engagement in water security as a critical component of Pacific resilience, including on:

- Key actors and their level of engagement in water security, including identifying barriers to effective engagement and recommendations to address these.
- Opportunities for incorporation of activities towards engagement for water security in national, sub-national, and regional meetings such as the Pacific Resilience Meeting;
- The harnessing of strategic communications and platforms essential to improving levels of interactive engagements with stakeholders;
- Water security capacity-building initiatives to support the integration of water security principles into sectoral planning, practices, and investments;
- Information, education, and communication (IEC) activities effective in increasing water security knowledge and facilitating understanding of the role of water security as a critical component of Pacific resilience;
- The sharing of water security success stories and issues with PRP members;
- Vulnerability assessment tools important to the integration of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into water security planning, practices, and investments.
- Key data gaps in understanding water security engagement including potential focus areas for case studies to determine areas of support required; and
- Entry points of partnerships that promote vertical and horizontal engagements at the regional, national, sub-national, and community levels.

Under the direction of the PRP, the TWGWS may identify engagement opportunities and initiate activities in the Action Plan that continue beyond the life of this work package. To this end, a function of the Water Security Engagement Strategy will be to identify ways to utilize existing regional mechanisms, as well as other partners and projects, that can be leveraged to deliver on the objectives and initiatives identified in the Strategy.

## **6. TWGWS principles.**

The TWGWS will take a multi-sectoral partnerships approach, adhering to FRDP's guiding principles and to the Pacific Resilience Standards of integrated, inclusive, informed, and sustained resilient development. The TWGWS will aim to reflect and promote the principles of the PRP including fairness, shared dialogue, participation, and inclusion.

## **7. TWGWS membership and modality.**

To be effective in its role, TWGWS membership will need to reflect the breadth and diversity of the PRP's constituencies, including representation of Pacific Island Countries and Territories, civil society, the private sector, inter-governmental organizations, and development partners. Membership will also be encouraged of specific organizations representing youths, women, minority groups, people with disabilities, and individuals that bring valuable perspective, knowledge, and experience of stakeholders active in this space, including national water utilities; water resource managers, and providers of hydrological services; disaster managers; the health sector; national financial and strategic planners; and nongovernmental/civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs) supporting water security at a community level.

The TWGWS will meet at least once every two months, with meetings convened at a location mutually agreed upon by Members, and on a virtual platform such as Zoom or Teams. Members will be expected to participate in all meetings, support the design, implementation, and evaluation of TWGWS initiatives, and communicate meeting outcomes effectively with their constituent groups. The TWGWS may invite organizations and individuals who are not members of the working group to engage in working group meetings as required.

### **7.1 Working Arrangements of the TWGWS.**

The TWGWS will have two co-chairs who will be appointed on a volunteer basis by members during the inception meeting. The roles of the co-chairs are to lead the working group in developing the engagement

strategy, the communications plan, and the action plan that will form the core of the working group work plan. The Working Group will report to the chair of the PRP Taskforce through the PRP Support Unit with the support of the Pacific Community (SPC). Secretariat support will be provided by the BRAC Project.

## **8. Support to the TWGWS.**

Recognizing the need for strengthened engagement in water security as a component of Pacific resilience, SPC and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) developed a program of targeted assistance to narrow the gaps in regional engagement, action, and coordination, and respond to MFAT's strategic approach to address the climate change-related water security challenges being faced by Pacific Island Countries. The resulting Building Regional Action and Cooperation on Water Security (BRAC) program aims to leverage, and support established regional architecture to improve regional engagement, cooperation, and action on water security as a critical component of Pacific resilience.

The BRAC program will be specifically resourced to support the work of the TWGWS towards its agreed outcomes through to the program closing date of December 2023, including through the development and implementation of an Engagement Strategy for Water Security and an Action Plan. Support will be provided through a small project team housed within SPC, and access to specialist TA for the development of the engagement strategy, the action plan, and online resources to support communications, engagement, advocacy, and knowledge management activities.

## **9. Membership Skills and Experience.**

Technical Working Group members should meet the following minimum criteria:

- Sound and broadly recognized expertise on water security, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, disaster response, and management in the Pacific.
- Have knowledge of the FRDP and the PRP and is passionate about building sustainable resilient partnerships and actions on water security for PICT.
- Knowledge and Experience of global, regional, and national platforms, frameworks, and policies relevant to promoting water security initiatives.
- Knowledge of funding mechanisms and processes.
- Engagements, Advocacy, and Communications Experience.
- Knowledge and experience in developing partnerships around water security.
- Familiarity with Pacific Island countries water security needs and issues.
- Passionate about improving engagements on water security needs of PICTs.
- Is a representative of a Pacific country, territory, development partner, private sector, water utility, civil society, international non-government organisation, academia, international organisations and regional organization.