

Pacific Community Water Management +

RESEARCH PROJECT BRIEF

Research project overview: The ‘Pacific Community Water Management +’ research project is a three-year collaborative and applied research effort led by the International WaterCentre and Griffith University, and implemented in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. The project is funded under the Australian government’s WASH Research Awards, as part of the Water for Women Fund.

Research focus: Progressing inclusive, resilient and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and WASH outcomes in the rural Pacific through developing approaches to enable effective community-based water management.

University partners: The University of the South Pacific and Solomon Islands National University

Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partners: Habitat for Humanity Australia, Habitat for Humanity Fiji, Plan International Australia and Live and Learn Solomon Islands.

Justification: Across the Pacific, community-based water management (CBWM) remains the necessary model for rural water services due to the limited presence of government and private sector. Although Pacific governments appreciate support is required and invest in providing support for CBWM, there is a lack of evidence about what support is effective, including in different community contexts.



Partners:



Supported by:



Key research questions: How can CSOs and governments better enable rural CBWM in the Pacific to improve SDG6 outcomes (access to clean water and sanitation for all)?

Specifically:

1. What can be learned from evaluating CBWM across diverse community contexts, especially about which community governance, engagement, and support features are most aligned with inclusive, integrated and resilient SDG6, including WASH, outcomes, then
2. What approaches and tools, that are sensitive and responsive to local context and improve inclusion, can CSOs and governments use, to strengthen these community engagement, support and governance features?

Research project approach

The design involves two phases (see Figure 1): the first to generate learning by filling knowledge gaps (answering research question 1), the second to build a toolkit of approaches, trialled and refined through practice and action research in collaboration with the CSOs (answering question 2). This is a research-impact approach where actors at all levels (community, CSO, government), and at all stages of the research, contribute to learning and desired outcomes.

Phase 1 research will be conducted in communities with varying contexts and CBWM arrangements, including differing types or amounts of external support, in order to achieve the required diversity. These communities will be selected with CSOs and government.

Based upon the findings from Phase 1, Phase 2 design comprises action research and it involves working closely with our partner CSOs to develop, test and refine CBWM tools and approaches.

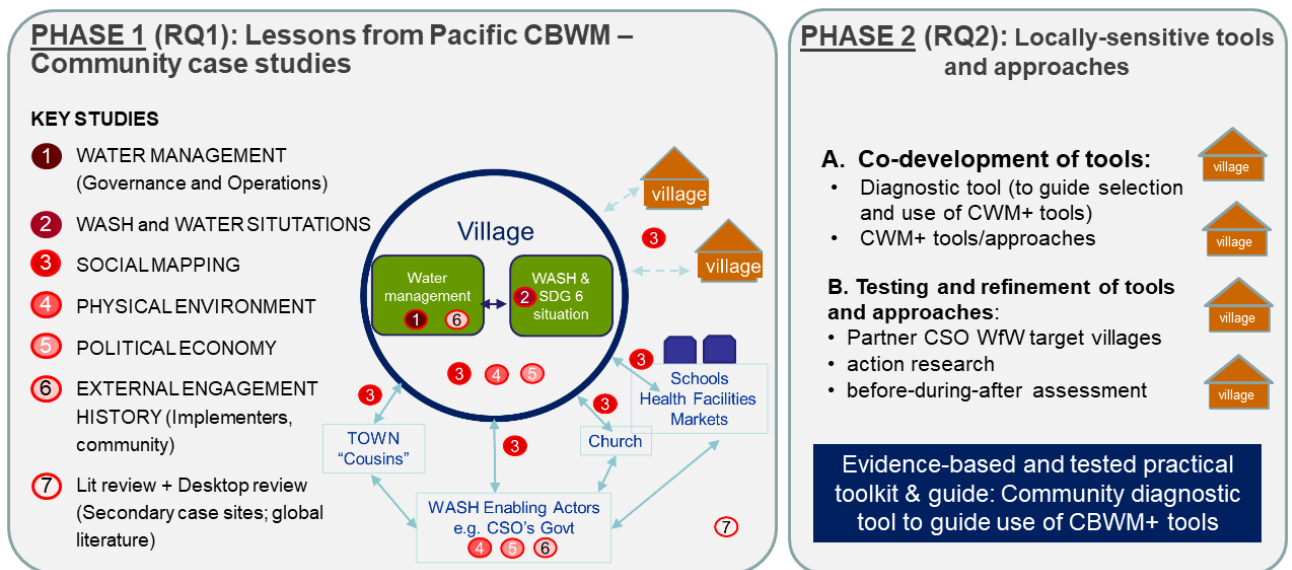


Figure 1 – Research approach: research phases

Research outcomes & outputs

A set of community management support tools will be developed and tested with partners. An accompanying diagnostic tool will be developed, to guide appropriate selection and use of the community management support tools. The tools will be designed to improve the outcomes of government and NGO support of community water management.

How we work

Researchers will be working closely with actors at all levels to ensure the research builds on experience and produces outputs ready for use by CSOs and government stakeholders. This research project also shifts from a ‘one size fits all’ approach towards a more flexible, responsive and tailored approach to supporting CBWM in rural communities in the Pacific.

Want to know more?

For more information, please contact Project Manager, Dr Regina Souter, at r.souter@watercentre.org, Principal Investigator, Dr Cara Beal, at: c.beal@griffith.edu.au or Fiji Project Manager, Dr Sarah Pene, at: sarah.pene@usp.ac.fj