

TERMS OF REFERENCE

SENIOR AND JUNIOR STRATEGIC ADVISERS SHORT TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (STTA) TO RWASH PROGRAM, UNDER EHD OF MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Beneficiary Country

Solomon Islands

1.2. Contracting Authority

National Authorising Officer, Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC)

1.3. Country Background

The Solomon Islands consists of over 347 permanently inhabited islands. The rural population in 2019 is more than 700,000, with a high annual population growth (approx. 2.5%). Literacy rate is 80+%. 80% of the population live in rural areas and are largely engaged in subsistence agriculture. More than half of the formal employment is concentrated in the capital, Honiara.

The economy of the Solomon Islands is overly dependent on a few sectors and there is a need to diversify the bases for economic growth. GDP growth in the Solomon Islands for 2013 was 2.9%, declining from 8% in 2010, according to reports from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Economic activities weakened during this period due to declining international prices and production of cash crops, lower foreign- and domestically-financed investment and a decrease in the production and income of key drivers, such as forestry and gold mining. As of 2014, the Human Development Index (HDI) ranks SI as 166th in the world, with index 0.557.

Since the conflicts of 2003, the Solomon Islands' socioeconomic development situation has continued to improve, enhanced by donor support and the determination of the Solomon Islands Government (SIG). However, some challenges remain, especially in terms of addressing the root causes of the ethnic conflict, governance, public and private sector capacity building, commitment to relevant reforms and the urgent need to improve living standards in rural areas. Parallel to the improving economic situation, there is also a growing population with varied and high expectations, defined within a diversified geographical context.

The economic development of the country has continued to improve, building the confidence of donors and investors, although more is still required. Partnership with the EU has continued positively through cooperation under the 9th and 10th EDF framework. During the 10th EDF, the focal sector was 'Sustainable Rural Development with Capacity Building'. Towards the end of the 10th EDF, 'Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (RWASH)' was added as a second focal sector, financed with funds transferred from the remaining balances of STABEX and with uncommitted funds from on-going projects.

The Government has developed a comprehensive National Development Strategy (NDS) to guide development activities and programmes, aiming to Build Better Lives for All Solomon Islanders. This has subsequently led to the introduction of a Medium Term Development Plan. The NDS has served as the basis for EU programming under the 11th EDF support. This has positively contributed towards the creation of an environment where the Solomon Islands Government takes ownership of its development (supported by partners). The Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination (MDPAC) will continue to play a major role in implementing the NDS objectives.

Importantly, to achieve the objectives of the NDS, these objectives are linked to detailed plans of the implementation actions of line ministries, provinces and communities. Key amongst these implementation plans are the rolling, multi-year 'Medium Term Development Plans' (MTDP) and its constituent multi-year implementation plan for each Ministry; these are complemented by the development of a 'Medium Term Expenditure Framework' (MTEF).

EU support to the provision of basic services will continue in the 'Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector' for both rural and urban areas, while 'Inclusive Economic Growth through Rural Development' will work on private sector and institutional development, aiming at creating employment and increased income with a focus on the Agricultural sector.

1.4. Current Situation in the Sector

The Solomon Islands Government's (SIG) vision is that "all Solomon Islanders will have easy access to sufficient quantity and quality of water, appropriate sanitation and will be living in a safe and hygienic environment within ten years (by 2024)". A Strategic Plan has been developed, which outlines how RWASH will be developed over the next five years. The aim of the Strategic Plan is to lay the foundations for the achievement of the vision by 2024. Under the Strategic Plan, the RWASH Sector will be transformed through a national effort, involving government, churches, communities, civil society, the media and private business.

The RWASH Strategic Plan 2016-2020 has 3 strategic objectives. These are:

1. Improved WASH services in communities. Improved access to clean water and sanitation facilities in rural communities, schools, clinics and public institutions.
2. Improved sanitation and hygiene practices nationally. Improved access to and use of sanitation facilities and hygiene practices in every rural household and community.
3. Sector reform. Changes to the way WASH sector stakeholders are organised and work together to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the rural WASH service delivery.

The Strategic Plan is aimed at ensuring a coordinated, efficient and equitable approach to water supply, sanitation and hygiene in all rural communities under government leadership via the Rural WASH Unit (RWASH) within the Environmental Health Division (EHD).

The Strategic Plan presents five year targets for RWASH results. To achieve these results, it will become increasingly necessary to significantly increase the number of RWASH schemes carried out in the Solomon Islands annually. This will only be achieved by the outsourcing of RWASH Projects for the next four years to SDPs, as the EHD has a very limited implementation capacity. This will require the procurement and management of Service Delivery Contracts by the EHD and providing them with training and mentoring to ensure that they have the skills to implement according the dictates of the strategy.

National RWASH Strategic Plan targets:

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Community WASH schemes	35	67	92	131	183
Health facilities	-	15	41	80	132
Schools	-	15	41	80	132
Additional population served	-	9,900	16,300	25,600	38,100
Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Triggering (% of communities triggered)	7%	20%	47%	73%	100%
Open Defecation Free (ODF) (% communities which are ODF)	3%	13%	33%	60%	87%
Sanitation (additional population with improved sanitation)	13,300	53,200	132,900	239,200	345,500
Hygiene (additional population with hand washing facilities)	15,200	60,900	152,100	273,700	395,300

In late 2018, the Strategic Plan targets were reviewed and updated, as they were found to be overly ambitious. Based on sector performance and potential, the following strategic target were agreed upon:

Component	Annual target
Community Water Supply	3% coverage increase per year
Community Sanitation	4% coverage increase per year
WASH in Schools and Clinics	5% coverage increase per year

The RWASH Policy and the RWASH Strategic Plan envisage a change in the implementation modality of the sector. At present, the Environmental Health Division (EHD) undertakes implementation of a limited number of RWASH schemes. This has previously been supported by other projects and a small numbers of SDP contracts. However, this approach has been uncoordinated and will not reach the targets indicated in the Strategic Plan. To achieve these targets, the EHD needs to take on a role of regulation, supervision and monitoring for the sector, with implementation being carried out by Service Delivery Partners (SDP) and other projects, but under the guidelines established in the Policy and the Strategic Plan. For this to happen, the EHD needs to be retooled to take on the task of monitoring and evaluation of the activities taken by the EHD and all of SDP. This is required to ensure that the RWASH Programme is meeting the targets set in the Strategic Plan. There is also a need to supply evidence for the release of tranches of funding by the EU.

The objective of the EU support to the RWASH Programme is to:

'improve the living conditions of the rural population through the implementation of the Rural WASH policy, including sustainable management of the systems and promoting systems resilient to climate change'

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

The programme is closely coordinated with DFAT, who currently provide funding to NGOs as well as the Government. Synergies will also be sought with other larger programs such as the UNICEF project "Solomon Islands Better Learning Environment (SIBLE)".

1.6. Specific background to the assignment

The current RWASH Strategic Plan expired in 2020. Due to the global COVID19 pandemic, it was impossible to engage TA support for a timely renewal.

The RWASH Strategic Plan needs to be aligned in content with the National Health Strategic Plan and the National Development Strategy. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services requires all sub-sector strategies to be covering the same time-frame as its overall National Health Strategy (2021-2025).

2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1. Overall Objective

The overall objective of the assignment is to provide support to the EHD of MHMS in drafting a RWASH Strategic Plan for the period of 2021-2025.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- Review the current Strategic Plan and updated Strategic Targets report;
- Coordinate with the team currently developing the National Health Strategic Plan to ensure alignment;
- Consult with key stakeholders in the sector, including the MHMS Planning Division, Permanent Secretary and Undersecretary, the Ministry for National Planning and Development Coordination, UNICEF, NGOs and relevant EHD staff;
- Draft a concise but relevant RWASH Strategic Plan ready for official endorsement by the Ministry;

2.3. Results to be achieved by the Consultant/Team

The expected results over the duration of the assignment will include:

- A clear work plan is agreed with the EHD, RWASH TA Team, NAO Office and EUD for the assignment;
- Review of relevant key documents (current strategies, policies etc.);
- Individual and joint consultations with key sector stakeholders;
- Preparation of first draft Strategic Plan for wider feedback;
- Drafting of Final Strategic Plan for endorsement by the Ministry;

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

- SIG sustains its support and commitment to RWASH;
- SIG commits to ensuring an enabling environment for RWASH, especially in the context of a new structure to implement the Strategic Plan; and
- EDF funds are made available in a timely manner.

3.2. Risks

The risks considered include:

- Major natural calamities (tsunami, earthquake) occurring, thereby delaying the programme.
- Serious civil unrest develops.
- Global COVID19 pandemic prevents work from being done;

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

4.1.1. Project description

The experts will be required to work with EHD/MHMS, Office of the NAO, MDPAC, potential SDPs and EU Delegation to successfully deliver on these activities.

The Contracting Authority for the project shall be the relevant representative of the Solomon Islands National Authorizing Officer (NAO).

The project supervisor shall be the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and the Ministry being the Supervising Ministry. The project Supervisor will be closely supported by the Undersecretary for Health Improvement.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

The expert will be based at the EHD RWASH Office, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Travel outside of Honiara is not anticipated but may required..

4.1.3. Target groups

The key target for this assignment is the EHD, RWASH Team, MHMS, the relevant line Ministries, CSOs, NGOs and private sector SDPs.

4.2. Specific Activities

Under the direction of the EHD Director and Team Leader and in close collaboration with RWASH Team, the experts will carry out the following (but not limited to) activities:

- Initial briefing with EU Team Leader;
- Initial briefing with EHD RWASH team;
- Joint meeting with EHD RWASH, MHMS Planning and Senior Executives;
- Sector partner meetings;
- Review of key documents relevant to the assignment;
- Develop workplan for the duration of the assignment;
- Interview and collect information from National Health Strategic Plan consultant team;
- Interview and collect information from key stakeholders, including NPDC, UNICEF, NGOs, RDP;

- Organise and chair joint meeting with key stakeholders to share and discuss findings;
- Prepare first draft of Strategic Plan for feedback by key stakeholders;
- Organise a joint meeting to present draft SP;
- After feedback period is completed, prepare final draft of the Strategic Plan.

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The Solomon Islands EDF National Authorising Officer (i.e. the Contracting Authority).

4.3.2. Management structure

The European Commission (EC) is providing support to the sector through the Program of Improving Governance and Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH) for Rural People. This is delivered through a Sector Reform Contract and direct untargeted support to the national Treasury, and is being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) through the Environmental Health Department (EHD).

Accompanying the Sector Reform contract is a Technical Assistance component, managed by Ecorys UK. The TA team assist the sector with reporting, capacity development and institutional strengthening for improved service delivery in the RWASH sector and improved coordination with line ministries, provincial governments and stakeholders.

As part of the support, 4 long term experts are being funded. In addition, provision has been made to engage a number of short-term Non-Key Experts (NKE) to provide additional expert advice to the EHD to enable them to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.

The expert will report for functional guidance to the Team Leader. The Senior Adviser is responsible for managing the Junior Advisor. The Junior Advisor reports directly to the Senior Advisor.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the Contracting Authority and/or other parties

Office space, internet and printing facilities will be provided by MHMS. The expert will require his/her own laptop.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The experts will be based at the EHD RWASH Office, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Travel may be required outside of Honiara.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation

Provisional starting date is April 2021 and the duration is 30 days in a single input for both Experts. It must be noted that if expatriate experts are engaged and quarantine requirements are still in place, the input may involve remote work, requiring approval from NAO.

The cost for quarantine required for travel to the Solomon Islands will be reimbursable by the EU.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Personnel

The nature of the assignment requires a range of skills.

6.1.1. Expert

The assignment will be undertaken by a team of consultants. The senior Advisor must have the follow skills and qualification:

Qualifications and Skills

- At least a Postgraduate degree in Public Policy, Governance or related discipline (or otherwise, Bachelor's degree plus an additional 5 years of general professional experience)
- Strong communication skills with an ability to convey complex and/or sensitive feedback to peers and staff at all levels and other key stakeholders including Solomon Islands officials, and provide clear advice on appropriate solutions;
- Strong ability to be empathetic and culturally sensitive to various learning abilities of staff, in particular working in a Melanesian context; and
- Must be fluent in both spoken and written English with good written and oral communication skills.

General Professional Experience

The assignment requires a consultant with the following level of professional experience:

- Minimum of 10 years of working experience in Policy and Strategic planning;
- prior work experience in developing country contexts, including on large, aid-funded programmes and
- High level of ethical conduct, honesty and integrity.

Specific Professional experience

- Working experience with international development programmes, preferably in support of Government offices;
- Prior experience in the development or review of Sector Policies and Strategic Plans;
- Experience in the implementation or review of EU Sector Reform contracts;
- Proven knowledge and working experience in developing countries; and
- Experience in the RWASH sector.

The Junior Expert must have the same qualifications except for a minimum of 5 years experience.

6.2. Office accommodation

The expert will be located in the EHD RWASH Office at the Ministry of Health and Medical Services Headquarters, Honiara. Travel to rural areas is not anticipated but may be required, using basic transport and other facilities.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

The Expert will submit the following documents:

- At the beginning of the assignment a work plan to be submitted within five (5) working days of commencement of the input.
- A debriefing session before the end of input.
- Draft RWASH Strategic Plan within 1 week before the end date of the input. The EHD/MHMS, NAO Office and EU have 5 working days to comment on the draft report.
- A final report within 5 working days after receipt of comments.

7.2. Submission & approval of reports

The final document will be submitted to the EU Team Leader (pmv700101@outlook.com) and the EU Project Manger (charis.reid@ecorys.com).

The Ecorys Project Manager will submit to the Deputy National Authorising Officer, MDPAC, P.O Box G30, Point Cruz, Honiara, Solomon Islands. This report must be submitted officially in both hard and e-copy. Three (3) hard copies must be submitted to the stated address.