

Backstopping Rural Water Management in the Solomon Islands and Fiji

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Community Water Management in the Pacific



- Large rural populations, communally owned land and resources. 45% (Fiji), 75% (Solomon Is) live in rural areas
- Dominant service model: Community-based Water Management (CWM)
- **WASH development in the Pacific is sluggish, and in some cases worsening**
- Original model of CWM is not sustainable in the long term
- The more viable improvement is CWM+
- Long term external support following the initial handover

PACWAM+ project 2018 - 2022

Pacific Community Water Management +

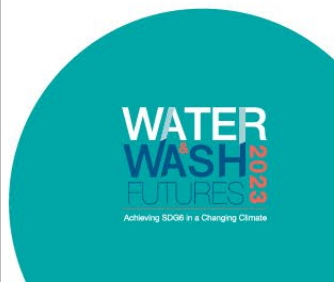
- Phase 1 Formative Research,
- Phase 2: Developing & Trialling Approaches
- **Backstopping**



The Backstopping Approach

- Backstopping technician/officer from the water utility service provider
- Regularly scheduled visits
- Being a “backstop” - stand behind the water committee and help to catch and solve problems

WHAT IT IS	WHAT IT ISN'T
To provide advice and support to the water committee	To fix problems for the water committee or community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trainings/showing people how to repair or operate the water system• Having discussions about management issues eg fundraising, collective action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing the water system• Providing funding• Providing spare parts• Writing proposals



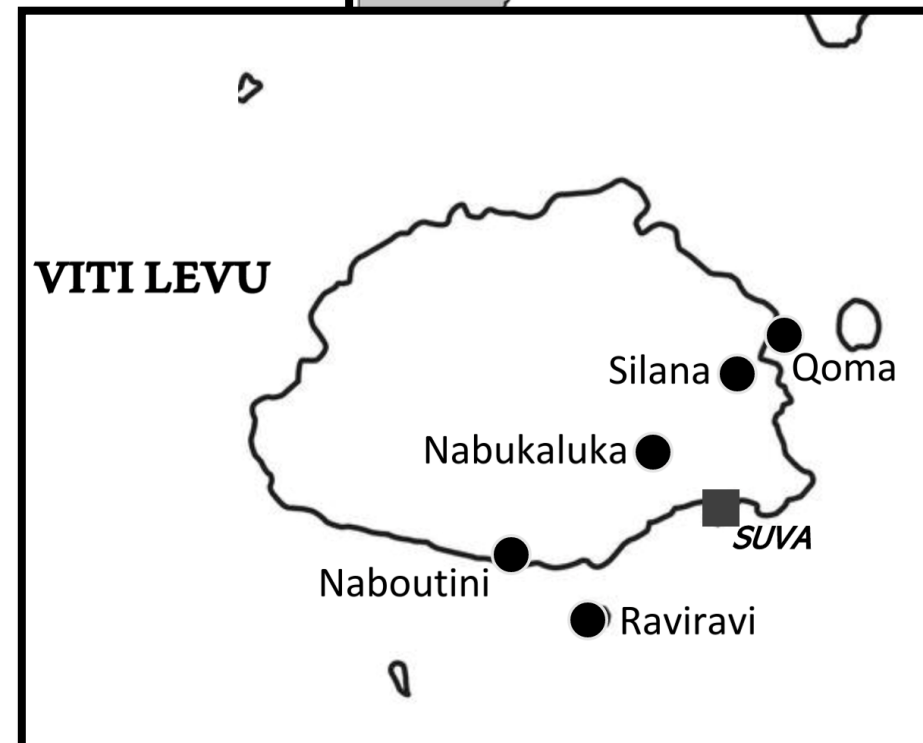
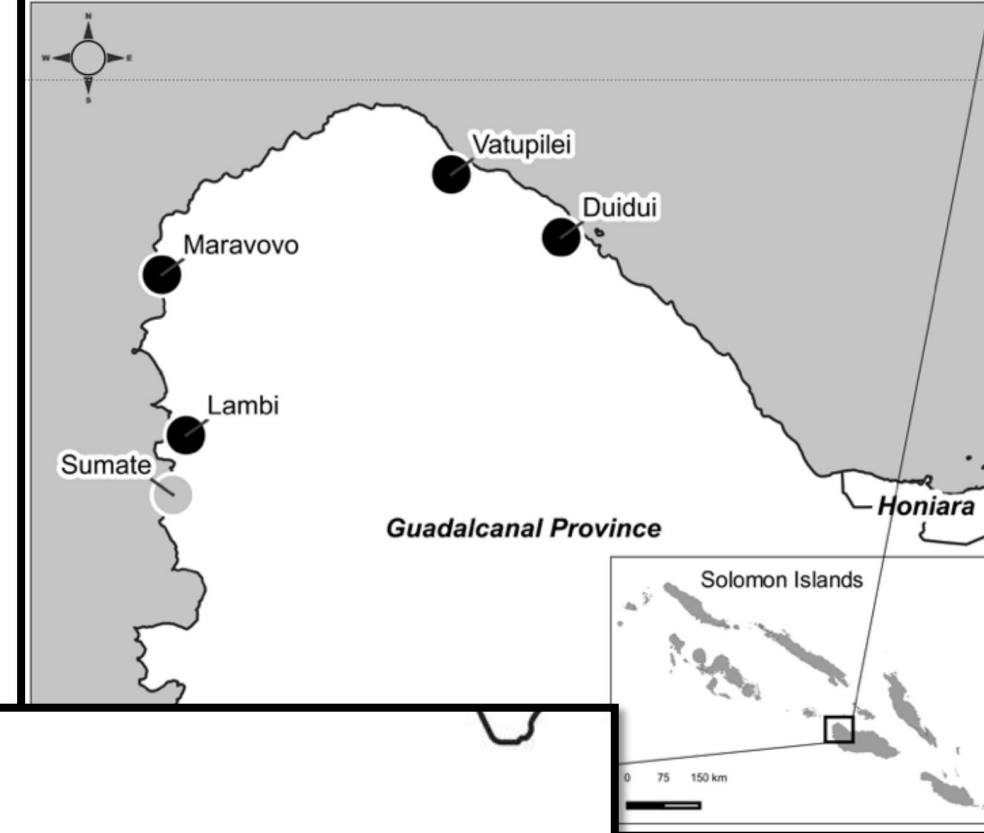
Backstopping pilot study

Site criteria

- established community water systems
- age of the system (Sols: 3-10yrs, Fiji: 5-10)

Pilot study

- SOLS 4 sites, 3 visits over 3 months
- FIJI 5 sites, 4 visits over 3 months
- Baseline, process and endline monitoring



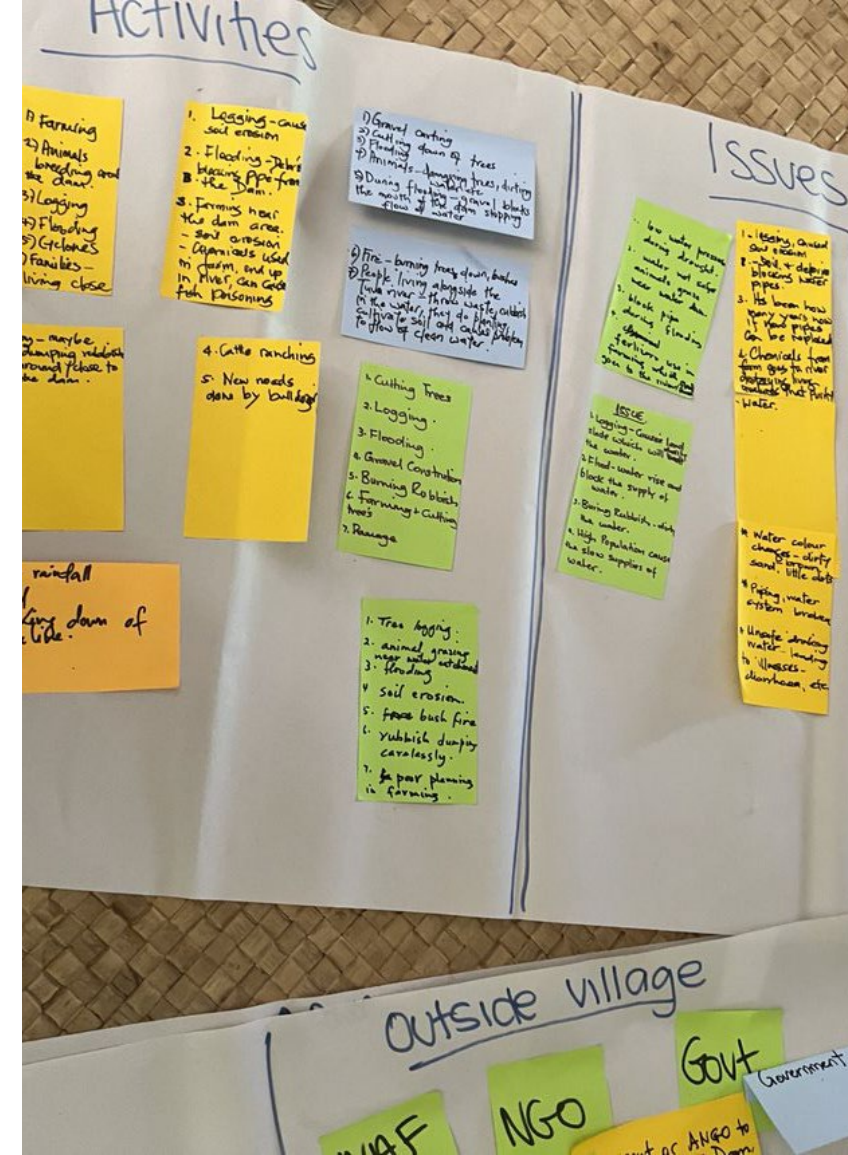
SUPPORT FOR BACKSTOPPING

- Broad support from service providers (WAF in Fiji, Guadalcanal Provincial Govt in SOLS)
- Recognised the value of Follow-Up, but lacked resources (staff and time) to implement it



KEY FINDINGS

- The backstopping approach can provide the ongoing long-term support which is vital, but largely lacking.
- **Not just ‘technical backstopping’ → ‘Water committee backstopping’**
- Non-technical aspects: water committee roles and responsibilities, collective action, fundraising, communications, proactive water management
- The backstopping approach is flexible enough to meet the unique challenges and capacities of a wide range of communities



IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS



- Regular visits (2-3 monthly intervals)
- The same backstopping officer – rapport and continuity
- Importance of the backstopping officer – ability to **support, upskill, motivate and empower the water committee** in both technical and non-technical aspects
- Efficiency and cost effectiveness – clustering visits to neighbouring communities.

CONCLUSION

- A streamlined backstopping routine can be a valuable tool for long term sustainability of rural water systems.
- Reaffirms the need for the + in the **CWM+** model



QUESTIONS?

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