



PRIF NEWSLETTER

Issue 5, March 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Through this newsletter, we wish to bring you up to date with PRIF's work and also invite your comments and feedback on its activities. We encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues. To subscribe/unsubscribe to the PRIF newsletter, or to provide any comments or feedback please contact the PRIF Secretariat on secretariat@theprif.org or telephone +61 2 9235 6571.

In this issue of the PRIF newsletter we would like to update you on some of the following activities:

1. **Welcoming the European Commission and European Investment Bank as PRIF partners**
2. **The tender process for the PRIF Management Unit**
3. **Kiribati Road Rehabilitation Project (KRRP)**
4. **The Samoa National Infrastructure Strategic Plan**
5. **The Tarawa Program for improved Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste Management (Kiribati)**
6. **Financial and Operational Strengthening of the Solomon Islands Water Authority**
7. **The Nauru National Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan**
8. **Institutional Assessment of Road Construction and Maintenance Services in Tonga**
9. **Performance Benchmarking of Power and Water Utilities in the Pacific**

Our 'Activity in Focus' for this issue is the **Vanuatu Transport Sector Support Program**. The article "Not Just Another Road Project" can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Welcoming the European Commission and European Investment Bank as PRIF partners

The PRIF partners welcome the European Commission (EC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) as members of PRIF. The EC and EIB have a substantial program in the Pacific, in particular in the energy, water and sanitation sectors and provide significant development funding for infrastructure in the region. For PRIF, as a multi-donor coordination and funding facility, having two additional partners will further enhance infrastructure development funding and coordination among development partners' activities in the Pacific.

EC and EIB representatives have been attending PRIF Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) meetings as observers since August 2009 and now as official members are formally part of the IWG and the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The PRIF partners look forward to future coordination and work with both the EC and EIB.

Tender process commences for PRIF Management Unit

The PRIF Management Unit is currently being competitively tendered by AusAID on behalf of the development partners to a private contracted firm. The Management Unit will combine the roles of the PRIF Secretariat and the Pacific Infrastructure Advisory Center (PIAC). It will be primarily responsible for the management and operations of advisory services and knowledge hub activities as well as coordination of activity development and implementation.

The Request for Tender (RFT) for the PRIF Management Unit was advertised by AusAID on 2 December 2010 and closed on 17 March 2011. The selected Managing Contractor's role will involve the provision of financial management, procurement and contract management, logistics and coordination for the Management Unit.

Mobilisation of the Management Unit is now scheduled for mid 2011.

Update on PRIF's work

Kiribati Road Rehabilitation Project (KRRP)

The first joint co-financed WB-ADB project in the Pacific, the Kiribati Road Rehabilitation Project, has been approved with a total of AU\$37.900 million of PRIF funds contributing to rehabilitate and upgrade the road network in South Tarawa. The project will restore the only road connecting the communities of South Tarawa; a road that has not received maintenance for many years. The improvements to the road will mean that 42% of Kiribati's population will be better connected to clinics, markets and other services. The project will also improve efficiency by upgrading the link from the seaport of Betio, and the airport for the people of South Tarawa. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Public Works and Utilities and will also support the necessary sector and institutional reforms to ensure sustainable financing and maintenance of the road network. This includes building the resilience of Kiribati's transport infrastructure to natural disasters on road infrastructure and enhancing road safety. The KRRP not only highlights the synergy of PRIF partners working together, it is also a prime example of a multi-purpose infrastructure project as it incorporates the replacement of parts of the South Tarawa water mains.

PIAC

As part of PRIF's overarching goal to achieve broad-based growth and improved living standards for all people in Pacific island countries, one of the key outcomes sought is greater capacity within Pacific island countries to plan and manage infrastructure for sustainable and improved delivery of services. To achieve this outcome PRIF's advisory center, the Pacific Infrastructure Advisory Center (PIAC), has been assisting the governments of several Pacific island countries in identifying their infrastructure priorities and creating strategic infrastructure plans.

Samoa National Infrastructure Strategic Plan

PIAC has assisted the Government of Samoa in developing a National Infrastructure Strategic Plan (NISP), which outlines its priorities and directions for major initiatives in the economic infrastructure sector over the next 5-10 years. This is the first infrastructure strategic plan for the country and it is

the Government's intention that the plan be regularly updated as part of the national planning and budgeting process. The plan is a result of extensive consultations by the 4-person consultant team with infrastructure managers, users, private sector, and development partners. The plan covers infrastructure initiatives with national significance and includes investments in water supply and sanitation, power, information technology, transport (road networks, maritime and aviation) and solid waste management.



Apia Port (left) and Water Treatment Plant in Alaoa, Samoa (right), Source: Mr Isikuku Punivalu, Samoa

The Tarawa Program for improved Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste Management (Kiribati)

The Government of Kiribati has formally approved the Tarawa WS&SW Program which represents a government lead and coordinated effort to improve service levels in these sub sectors. The Program involves the WS&SW related activities of the Kiribati Urban Development Programme (NZ), the Kiribati Adaptation Program (WBG) and the Sanitation Improvement Project (ADB). The Government has established a Task Force to manage the program and has requested PIAC to assist in monitoring progress. A first monitoring mission of PIAC is scheduled for the last week of March 2011.

Financial and Operational Strengthening of the Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA)

To strengthen the managerial capacity of SIWA, PIAC has agreed to fund the services of an interim General Manager and interim Chief Financial and Administrative Officer to SIWA, each for six months; and a Legal Adviser for six weeks. The interim management plan is to conduct a rapid situational analysis of SIWA, focusing on organizational, management, operational, and financial constraints. Following this they will formulate a short-term recovery strategy and action plan to promote immediate improvements in service levels and operations and upon approval by the SIWA Board, implement the short term recovery strategy.

Nauru National Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan

PIAC is also supporting the Government of Nauru in preparing a National Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Plan (NISIP) for the next 5-10 years. The NISIP contains an infrastructure stocktake, an infrastructure sector needs and gaps analysis, a prioritized list of infrastructure investments, an



Phosphate Mining in Nauru, Source: Milovan Lucich, ADB-PLCA

appropriate infrastructure maintenance program, a funding strategy, support for sub-sector priority programs over the coming five years, and support for activities to be undertaken by the Government to deliver infrastructure priorities over the short to medium term. The draft NISIP is expected to be finalized in March 2011. A consultant team is also assisting in strengthening the planning capability of the Aid Management Section of the Nauru Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

Institutional Assessment of Road Construction and Maintenance Services in Tonga



Road in Tonga. Source: Engr Glen D'Este

Upon the request of the Government of Tonga, PIAC is providing the technical services of one international and one national consultant to evaluate the various options for creating a transparent and cost effective institutional framework for ownership and management assets related to construction and maintenance of roads in Tonga. These include the government's quarry and the asphalt plant as well as larger road maintenance equipment in Tonga. The TA also aims to stimulate the involvement of local contractors in road maintenance and related infrastructure projects.

Performance Benchmarking of Power and Water Utilities in the Pacific

In February 2011, PIAC in association with the Pacific Waste and Water Association (PWWA) and the Pacific Power Association (PPA) along with the support of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community - Applied Geo-science and Technology Division (SPC/SOPAC), commenced a utilities performance benchmarking project for the Pacific region. Having a sustainable benchmarking system for power and water utilities in the Pacific will help utilities improve their performance and enhance the availability of information on sector performance. A two-person team has been fielded for each of the water and power sectors for the three-phased 10-12 month technical assistance. The teams will work on the development of methodology, expansion of the current performance indicators, and data collection and analysis. The teams will also help organize a regional workshop to provide feedback and survey results, and prepare a benchmarking report with recommended programs and activities on performance improvement.

For any further information on the work of PRIF or PIAC, or to place requests for technical or advisory assistance, please visit our website www.theprif.org or contact PIAC at piac@theprif.org.

If you have any enquires or if you have an event or a document related to infrastructure that you would like shared through the PRIF newsletter or website, please contact the PRIF Secretariat at secretariat@theprif.org.

More information about PRIF activities is available on the PRIF website: <http://www.theprif.org>

Activity in Focus – Vanuatu Transport Sector Support Program

Not Just Another Road Project

By Jennifer Kalpokas Doan (AusAID)

AusAID is partnering with the Government of Vanuatu and island communities on a road project that will empower communities and generate jobs. It is a new approach that may pave the way for more reliable island road access in Vanuatu in the future.



Lolovinue Villages in South Ambae carrying out emergency repairs to a river crossing on South Road that becomes impassable in and after heavy rainfall over the island

Lolovinue Village South Ambae – It is early August in the coolest part of the year and, under the shadow of the recently active volcano Mt. Manaro, a group of 12 villagers are repairing one of about 65 deep stream crossings on the only road which connects the small and sparse south coast villages with the Island capital of Lolowai at the eastern end of the island.

Mt Manaro is the dominant feature of Ambae Island, part of the Vanuatu archipelago and located some 260kms north of the capital Port Vila. About 5,000 inhabitants, half the island's population, had to be evacuated in early December 2005 from the path of a possible lahar, or mud flow, when the volcano started spewing clouds of steam and toxic gases 10,000 feet into the atmosphere.

A group, equipped with only picks and shovels, are replacing large round river washed stones to restore a trafficable passage for a 4wd vehicle to pass the stream bed which can quickly rise to a water depth of over 5 meters after a deluge of rainfall over the island. The villages conduct their work with a sense of purpose. Provincial Health Official Hope Leodoro, who has lived and worked on Ambae for most of his life and knows each individual in the work gang by name, explains: "The people feel they are doing something very important, helping our remote and isolated villages along the rugged south coastline get better access to the town of Lolowai where their hospital, market and police services are located."

Hope, who relies on the road remaining open in order to deliver his Malaria prevention program, also supported by AusAID, stressed the importance of the engineered stream crossings that are either being restored or newly constructed. "The local villagers can generally help to get my vehicle out if it becomes stuck along the road, but if I get stuck in one of the many steep and rugged stream crossings then there's little hope of moving it" he said. "Without safe and reliable stream crossings along this road I can't do my job or help the people in an emergency" Hope stated.

Linking Villages to Town and Providing for Escape

The Lolovinue Village group is one of eight that are currently employed through the Provincial Office of the Public Works Department (PWD) to do basic road maintenance work under Phase One of AusAID's Vanuatu Transport Sector Support Program (VTSSP). The program will shortly commence construction of around 65 engineered fords – or paved wet stream crossings- on Ambae island to improve the reliability and connectivity of the South Road. Following construction the crossings will then be maintained by the communities who will receive skills training from Road Maintenance Engineering Advisers funded by AusAID.

More than 3900 people living on the south and east side of the island rely on the South Coast Road to access school, health and market facilities located in the capital Lolowai. More importantly this population rely on the road as their only possible evacuation route in the event of a volcanic eruption, so keeping the road in a trafficable condition is a critical need.

Acting Director General for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities in the Vanuatu Government, Jotham Napat, says his Government's objectives in creating increased opportunities for local contractors and community groups were twofold. Firstly it will generate significant local employment opportunities with flow-on effects to the local economy including increased trade and general commercial activity. "The much needed cash injection to the local economy will increase the spending power of participating communities" he said.

Secondly the Government's approach through the Public Works Department will result in development, over time, of a local contractor base and improved road maintenance skills amongst community groups across Vanuatu. "This will ultimately enable more affordable and sustainable road maintenance programs, particularly on the more remote islands. We don't need expensive international contractors to do this work, we need to build up local businesses so that Vanuatu can be more self-sufficient," said Mr Napat.



Penama Province Provincial Malaria Program Supervisor Hope Leodoro taking a break at one of the villages along the South Coast Road Ambae. "Without safe and reliable stream crossings along this road I can't do my job or help the people in an emergency," Hope stated.

Most of Vanuatu's 234,000 people live in rural and remote island areas where infrastructure is often poor or non-existent and this deficiency combines with geographic isolation to create poverty and a lack of job opportunities. "PWD saw real economic stimulus potential in small scale contractors and community groups participating in the maintenance of critical access roads. AusAID is happy to help provide new opportunities for communities to learn skills and generate income" said AusAID Governance for Growth Program Manager Leith Veremaito.