

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Fiji's water sector plays a fundamental role in the country's sustainable development, contributing to poverty reduction, food security, economic growth and the well-being of Fijians.

CURRENT STATUS

Over the years, reasonable progress has been achieved in the water and wastewater sector with approximately 82% of Fiji's population (98% of the urban population and 58% of the rural population) having access to safe drinking water with adequate quantities. Also, 28% of the population have access to the central sewerage system.

Government has made major capital investments in the maintenance of water sources and catchments, upgrading of water treatment plants and wastewater treatment plants, upgrading distribution systems, water carting to intermittent water supply areas, rural water projects, and solving non-revenue water issues.

As at October 2023, WAF records a total of 156,571 water connections and 33,392 wastewater connections. WAF has also completed a total of 353 rural water supply projects benefitting an estimated 73,832 population for the period 2017 to 2023 and is supplemented by the distribution of a total of 12,565 water tanks to the rural communities.

CHALLENGES

1. Governance and administrative framework operating in silos.
2. Increasing demand for water and wastewater services exceeding infrastructure design capacity.
3. Aged infrastructure causing loss of treated water or Non-Revenue Water ('NRW') level of 48%.

4. Lack of financing modalities to supplement existing Government investment in the water and wastewater sector.
5. Vulnerability of water and wastewater infrastructure to adverse impacts of disasters and climate change.
6. Lack of access to water supply in specific rural areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Progressive institutional reforms on existing governance and planning of water and wastewater services such as WAF corporatisation and tariff review.
2. Innovative technologies with the need for decentralised systems, ecological purification system, desalination plants, packaged treatment systems and fostering rain-water harvesting systems in communities.
3. Robust NRW programmes to aid water supply leakage identification and infrastructure maintenance when required.
4. Investment in Climate and Disaster Risk Resilient Infrastructure.
5. Exploring new financial and contract modalities such as Private Public Partnership for improved water and wastewater infrastructure.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

- **Strengthening Water Sector Planning and Sustainable Resource Management:**
 - ✓ Finalise and implement the National Water Resource Management and Sanitation Policy, Integrated Water Resource Management Plan, Water and Sewerage Services Bill and National Groundwater Resources Development and Management Policy.
 - ✓ Better coordination of roles, responsibilities, management and data sharing amongst various stakeholders, including WAF, DWS and the Department of Waterways.
 - ✓ WAF Corporatisation.
 - ✓ WAF tariff review.
 - ✓ Formulate Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan.

➤ **Expand access and work towards ensuring equity in the provision of water and sanitation services to all Fijians.**

- ✓ Strengthen institutional frameworks and review existing policies, regulations, standards, incentives, legislation and processes governing the provision of water and wastewater services.
- ✓ Finalise wastewater master plans and allow for flexibility of connection where appropriate.
- ✓ Continue to implement existing major programmes under WAF with the aggressive NRW programmes.
- ✓ Promote Ecological Purification Systems and desalination plants dedicated to supply water to islands where there is no viable source of fresh water.
- ✓ Construct regional centralised sewerage plants with larger treatment capacities and efficient technologies.

➤ **Ensure long-term sustainability in the provision of freshwater resources and catchment security.**

- ✓ Adoption of Water Sector Strategy 2050.
- ✓ Adoption and Review of National Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- ✓ Identify and develop new sustainable water sources.
- ✓ Develop water catchment management plans to ensure the protection of Fiji's sustainable freshwater resources.
- ✓ Implement adaptation measures to protect freshwater aquifers from saltwater intrusion.
- ✓ Develop education and awareness programmes on the efficient management and conservation of water resources.