



Kirimati Island Water Project



Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

Safe and Sustainable Drinking Water for Kiritimati Island *Te Karikirake ibukin Kateimatoan Kamanoan te Ran ni Mooi iaon Kiritimati*



Background

As an atoll nation, Kiribati faces challenges in securing the right to safe and sustainable drinking water for its citizens, with only 44% of its rural population accessing at least basic drinking water supplies in 2017¹. Access to water is a particular challenge on the world’s largest coral atoll, Kiritimati Island – subject to the most variable rainfall of any inhabited island of the Pacific, and highly vulnerable to severe drought periods associated with La Niña occurrences. The only feasible source of freshwater for Kiritimati’s ~7,500 inhabitants² is groundwater located in fragile, shallow lenses. The Government of Kiribati (GoK) has earmarked Kiritimati as a growth centre for the country with the recent demarcation of 2,000 new leases on-island. This will contribute to a significant population increase in coming years and raise the pressure on current water resources. Careful, efficient and optimal utilisation of these fragile and limited resources is vital for the sustainable development of Kiritimati, and Kiribati as a whole.

From 2013 to 2018, SPC worked with GoK’s Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID), other government ministries, Kiritimati communities and private sector to deliver the EUR 4.5M European Union (EU) funded Improved Drinking Water Supply for Kiritimati Island Project. The project resulted in major improvements to water supply infrastructure, especially in London and Tennessee communities. However, significant further improvements in water provision throughout Kiritimati are required to ensure long term sustainability, cater for the increasing population and promote island wellbeing.

Objectives

This 5-year (Nov 2019 to Oct 2024) EUR 7.4M EU funded (EUR 6.2M) and MFAT co-funded (EUR 1.2M) project is part of the broader EU-Kiribati partnership for a sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. The overall objective of the partnership to support Kiribati in building greater socio-economic and climate resilience. The specific objective is to improve the use of services and goods provided by the public sector with a focus on water and sanitation in the Line Islands.

EU have partnered bilaterally with GoK to deliver Component 1 of the partnership aimed at strengthening Public Finance Management (PFM) reforms for inclusive development. SPC is responsible for delivering Component 2 of this partnership agreement aimed at improving access to safe and sustainable drinking water on Kiritimati Island. UNICEF are implementing Components 3 and 4 aimed at building resilience through improved sanitation in the Line Islands.



1 UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (2017) A Snapshot of Water and Sanitation in the Pacific 2017 Regional Analysis of UNICEF Programme Countries. Bangkok: UNICEF.

2 Kiritimati’s 2020 census population was 7,369 .

Scope

Below is a summary of the intended project scope.

Result 1. Improved evidence-based management of water resources	Strengthened monitoring and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish monitoring program for all ground reserves Build local monitoring capacity Develop and implement water quality monitoring plan
	Efficient water use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise system losses (including at household level) Create an incentive scheme for efficient water use Review island-wide water allocations
	Water security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess all groundwater reserves for further development Plan and prepare for drought response
Result 2. Increased access to safe and reliable drinking water supply	Increased access for Tabwakea, Banana, Main Camp, Bamboo and Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and rehabilitate Four Wells, Banana and NZ Airfield groundwater reserves (galleries, pumps, flowmeters, chlorinators, etc.) Install and rehabilitate reticulation in Tabwakea (predominantly), Banana, Poland and nearby new leases (piping, header tanks, meters, etc.) Provide trencher and mini excavator for pipelaying and earthworks
Result 3. Strengthened capacity to operate, maintain and manage safe and efficient water supply systems	Sustainable management and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify institutional (in)efficiencies and opportunities Water tariff, billing, admin and financial systems review Support water operations management performances
	Improved local management capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploy and train local staff Design and implement a multi-sector capacity development program for improved on the job training
	Improved community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve customer service system Implement water security awareness and behaviour change program Incentivise and enforce good household water management Train community leaders

Partners, governance and beneficiaries

Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development (MLPID) is SPC's primary counterpart in project delivery and capacity building. Other Government of Kiribati (GoK) ministries are also engaged including: Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (MISE), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs (MWYSSA) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). UNICEF, local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), private sector and the people of Kiritimati will also be involved throughout.

SPC will have a four-staff Project Management Unit (PMU) based on Kiritimati to facilitate project delivery. A Project Steering Committee (PSC), comprising relevant GoK ministries and key stakeholders, meet annually and guide project targets and implementation. An Action Coordination Group (ACG), comprising stakeholders responsible for day-to-day decision making, meet more frequently to ensure efficient and collaborative program delivery.

The target beneficiaries comprise all ~7,500 residents of Kiritimati Island. They will benefit from the strengthened capacity of their local government to sustainably manage, operate and maintain the water systems and from the establishment of reticulated drinking water supplied to households, new leases, businesses and community facilities such as schools and healthcare centres.



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