

# National Sanitation Taskforce

## Draft National Sanitation Policy 2009 Summary Document

### Why do we need a National Sanitation Policy?

The Government of Samoa has a responsibility to ensure land and water resources are managed in a manner that supports the environmental, social, cultural and economic well-being of current and future generations.

At present there is no integrated overall wastewater policy for Samoa. However over the past year, the Joint Water Sector Steering Committee has identified that there is an urgent need to establish a sustainable approach to the provision of sanitation services to improve the environment and public health.

The recent studies indicate that Samoa is served mainly by septic tanks and a variety of on-site wastewater systems. For the central business district in Apia, there is a major project underway to help improve the ability of the Apia's wastewater system to cope with development growth and to further improve the way Apia treats its wastewater. This includes the construction of the Samoa Water Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Pressure Sewer System.

The Draft Policy is about improving wastewater management and treatment. A National Sanitation Policy is needed to guide the Government's decision-making relating to wastewater management, and address the main challenges we face:

#### **Water Quality and Well-being**

Water quality has improved in some instances, in others it is at best static, and at worst declining. Recent studies indicate that the poor sanitation conditions is affecting ecosystem health, recreation values, limiting people's enjoyment of the waterways and coastal ecosystems, and resulting in health risks.

#### **Urban Growth and Development**

The population growth is being accommodated by peri-urban development and urban intensification (increasing the density of housing within Apia). Urban development – buildings increases the amount effluent required to be effectively treated, this increases the land requirement for effluent management.

#### **Public Education**

As awareness of environmental impacts has grown, the need to deal with on-site wastewater problems has become more pressing. Individuals, communities and special interest groups require targeted information to improve decision-making at the site level.

More and more, the need for everyone to have access to information is recognised as vital to good wastewater investment and operation decisions.

### **Institutional Strengthening**

The current Authorities require an extensive review of procedures aimed at streamlining processes so that the legal framework is effectively administered.

What do we want to achieve?
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### **Our vision**

A sustainable wastewater management framework that supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental health of the present and future generations.

### **Our Goals and Objectives**

#### **Goal 1: Strengthen internal and external partnerships**

- Promote collaboration between regulators, industry and individuals.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for improved coordination among stakeholders.

#### **Goal 2: Improve system performance through improved practitioner competency, management practices**

- Develop tools that serve as implementation and information guidance.
- Provide assistance in training for practitioners (i.e. designers, installers, inspectors and maintenance providers).
- Identify efforts needed to improve acceptance of appropriately managed systems.

#### **Goal 3: Improved accountability, control and oversight through enhanced regulatory performance**

- Promote and integrate policies that share regulatory authority over on site systems to assure compliance with regulatory requirements.
- Encourage relevant Authorities to inventory, assess and develop tracking systems.
- Initiate efforts to improve management practices for key problem areas, such as Apia urban areas, and significantly impacted source waters.

#### **Goal 4: Improved decision-making through improved public awareness**

- Support community groups, individuals, and projects that further the Draft Policy's goals.
- Increase awareness and understanding of wastewater, including the role of the relevant Government Authorities.
- Encourage a wastewater system that are appropriately managed and performs effectively.

## How are we going to meet our strategies and objectives?

There are many actions the National Sanitation Taskforce could implement to achieve the long-term goals and objectives of the Policy. However, the Taskforce needs to prioritise its actions in alignment with other planned activities and resources. Most importantly, the Taskforce needs to focus on those areas that address the most pressing issues we face. Given this, the implementation of the Draft Policy will focus on the following:

### **Wastewater Management**

A wastewater management system is designed and created to manage wastes. In Samoa, village households are characterised as having on site systems that consist of pit latrines, and basic septic tank technology. With the rapid increase in the size of settlements and increased understanding of wastes as a source of human disease, our land, rivers and coastal areas are being overwhelmed by the volumes of waste they are expected to handle. The current concern about the impacts on the ecosystem, and on amenity and recreation is forcing us to review and ensure wastewater management practice is effective.

The Draft Policy prioritises management strategies to strengthen the wastewater sub-sector.

#### **1. National Education and Awareness Campaign**

Public education will be central to achieving the goals and objectives of the Draft Policy. The Draft Policy proposes the development of plans for:

- Raising general public awareness
- Schools
- Construction industry, including developers and businesses
- Government bodies

These will be implemented in collaboration across the relevant Government authorities and other key stakeholders to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

#### **2. Regulatory**

In addition to education, a Sanitation Technical Committee is proposed to be established under the Draft Policy to coordinate efforts and actions affecting wastewater management through Samoa. Each relevant and responsible Authority will play a key role in facilitating improvement to development standards. This will formally be incorporated in a Memorandum of Understanding / Service Level Agreement.

The Draft Policy's commitment to focusing on:

- Establishing a voluntary registration system of on-site wastewater systems
- Improve records management from pump-out contractors
- Ensure wastewater management system owners monitor effluent discharge

### **3. Subsidy Scheme**

The proposed Subsidy Scheme will be essential to encourage residential and community institutions to improve development standards of their on-site systems. This will provide an incentive for the public to access finances to assist in funding necessary sanitary works (i.e. rehabilitative or new construction). It will be the Strategy's aim to implement sanitary works in sensitive priority areas as opportunities arise and in accordance to the relevant laws.

### **4. Capacity Building**

It is the Draft Policy's objective in achieving the goals and objectives to access, develop, and provide for competency training. The Draft Policy will encourage short-term courses for relevant personnel both private and public professionals.

### **5. Wastewater Infrastructure Planning**

This Strategy establishes a national approach for overall planning and sanitary capital improvement works. The development of a National Sanitation Master Plan will be for:

- Planning future demand
- Consider on-site management systems where appropriate

### **6. Monitor and Review**

The development of the Draft Policy has highlighted areas and actions where the information and knowledge could be improved. The expectation is therefore, that the Draft Policy tracks the progress of all actions. Several areas require on-going and further investigation to be carried out to ensure actions are implemented and where revisions are appropriate to stay on track against the goals and objectives.

What are your views?
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To help develop the National Sanitation Policy for Samoa, we need your views on how best to meet the challenges ahead. More information about the Draft National Sanitation Policy is available on the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's website: <http://www.mnre.gov.ws>.

The full Draft can be uploaded from the website. A printed copy can be viewed at the Planning and Urban Management Agency reception area, or requested by emailing: [jude.kohlhase@mnre.gov.ws](mailto:jude.kohlhase@mnre.gov.ws).

Submissions on the Draft National Sanitation Policy will close at 5pm, Friday 14 August 2009. If you have any questions about the Draft National Sanitation Policy contact 23 800 extension 61.