

**Title of policy**

National Water Resources Policy (NWRP).

**Purpose of policy**

The NWRP provides the framework for the conservation, sustainable use and management of Samoa's water resources. It is in line with the Government's Statement of Economic Strategy (SES) and the National Environment and Development Management Strategies (NEMS) approved by Cabinet in 1993.

**Previous references**

The NWRP is one of the key environmental components of NEMS, approved by Cabinet in 1993.

**Requesting agency**

Department of Lands, Surveys and Environment (DLSE)

**Implementing agency**

DLSE

**Other stakeholders relevant to policy implementation**

- ◆ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology
- ◆ Health Department
- ◆ Ministry of Internal Affairs
- ◆ Treasury Department
- ◆ Ministry of Women Affairs
- ◆ Education Department
- ◆ Samoa Water Authority Corporation
- ◆ Electric Power Corporation
- ◆ Samoa Visitor's Bureau
- ◆ National University of Samoa
- ◆ Samoa Polytechnic
- ◆ Le Siosiomaga Society
- ◆ Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organisations

**Background to the formulation of the policy**

There was broad consultation among stakeholders during the formulation of the NWRP, focussing mainly on the management of water resources rather than supply of water. Water resource management is generally fragmented - the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Meteorology deals with watershed management

and hydrology while the Health Department monitors standards. No agency is formally responsible for the regulation of water resources. The Samoa Water Authority is the national service provider of water while the Electric Power Corporation is the biggest water user for hydro electricity generation. Moreover, there are no control mechanisms placed on the free extraction of water from boreholes for bottled water as used by some private sector companies selling purified natural water. Therefore a major concern is the conservation of water sources because it is a limited resource. As yet there are no effective ways of protecting water catchment areas within customary lands.

**Analysis of current situation to justify requirement for policy initiative**

Water as a resource is limited and good quality water is insufficient to cater for the increase in demand with the continuing increase in population and also for use in development activities. There are critical management issues relating to the sustainable use and management of water resources in Samoa. These critical issues need to be fully addressed through a coordinated approach involving all stakeholders.

Challenges that need to be addressed can be summarized as follows;

- ◆ Fragmented control, management and protection of water resources;
- ◆ Competing and conflicting demands for water resources by users (both consumptive and non-consumptive users);
- ◆ Insufficient knowledge and understanding of water resources nationwide;
- ◆ Social and environmental impacts of development proposals particularly abstractions are usually ignored;
- ◆ Poor water quality;
- ◆ Excessive demand on water supply;
- ◆ Lack of community understanding and appreciation of responsible water management;
- ◆ Limited community involvement in water resource management.

**Detailed statement of the policy**

Goal

To ensure community access to water of suitable quality and appropriate quantities to meet all reasonable health, environmental and economic development needs.

Objectives

The NWRP objectives are as follows:

Objectives	Comments
1. To improve knowledge and understanding of water resources.	To develop suitable water resources management strategies, it is very important to have reliable information on all aspects of water including surface water, rainwater, re-charge and draw-off

	rates for underground water; water quality. It is necessary to conduct ongoing data collection and scientific assessment.
2. To conserve water resources in partnership with all stakeholders.	The conservation of fresh water bodies and water systems is the key to the sustainable utilisation of water. Such include rivers, springs, lakes, water catchment areas, underground water and water storage.
3. To protect water resources from the adverse impacts of human activities.	The protection of water sources and catchment areas to be part of the planning process so that water quality and quantity are not adversely affected by development. Approve environmental standards and the establishment of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures for such development programmes;
4. To maintain appropriate water quality.	There is growing demand for improved water quality, not only with drinking but also waste water As well as for public health reasons, clean water is also necessary to promote economic development and investment opportunities (eg. tourism).
5. To create greater community awareness of water resources issues.	Greater community awareness and better understanding of water resources matters are likely to lead to more public involvement in water resources management.
6. To increase community participation in water resources management.	Increased community participation in water management provides the support for management programmes and activities. It strengthens public sense of ownership of water resources and stronger partnership between the public and community.
7. To develop pricing mechanisms to control the allocation of water.	At present water resources access is free, only the cost of water supply to consumers is charged. There is no incentive for service providers to use water efficiently. Therefore service providers should be required to develop equitable systems for allocating water to various users.

## Strategies for achieving the policy objectives

The following strategies have been identified for achieving the policy objectives:

Strategy	Activities
<p><b><u>Short-term</u></b></p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of the DLSE to implement the policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit Senior Policy analyst Officer under Planning section to address adverse impact on the environment from extraction of underground water resources and other matters pertaining to water resources and provide office facilities;</li> <li>• Coordinate relevant stakeholder participation</li> <li>• Encouragement of private sector participation in water conservation.</li> <li>• Continue and expand the community awareness programmes implemented by the watershed management programme</li> <li>• Develop and implement water quality management plans and programmes for critical water bodies (rivers and streams)</li> <li>• Facilitate the work of the Implementation Task Team including the annual reviews</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Medium- to long-term</u></b></p> <p>Establish a regulatory framework for the sustainable management of water resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the water resources regulatory functions into the activities of the Division of Environment and Conservation of DLSE and allow adequate resources to effect such responsibilities;</li> <li>• Establish pricing mechanisms for the extracting and allocation of water;</li> <li>• Legislate for the conservation of watershed areas and sources;</li> <li>• Enact appropriate environmental standards for the protection of water bodies from the impacts of development;</li> <li>• Set up suitable water quality standards;</li> <li>• Develop capacity for scientific assessment of the quantity and quality of surface and underground</li> </ul>

	<p>water;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the regional efforts on international waters</li> <li>• Ratify the Convention on Wetlands and support the global River Basin initiative; and</li> <li>• Conduct the tri-annual independent evaluation of the policy.</li> </ul>
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**Expected benefits from the policy initiative**

The Water Policy sets our direction for the sustainable management of water resources in the short- to long-term. Benefits from the policy would include:

- Greater public awareness of water resources issues;
- Increased community involvement in water resources management
- Conservation of water catchment areas and water sources;
- Protection of water bodies from adverse impacts of human activities
- Equitable access to water for all stakeholders;
- Efficient allocation of water to various users;
- Improved chances of water availability

**Relationship to SES and sectoral objectives/strategies**

The NWRP supports and promotes sustainable development, one of the fundamental guiding principles of the SES.

**Financial implications**

It is expected that there will be some initial capital costs involved with the recruitment of the policy coordinator and for setting up office. Some funding is also required to conduct scientific assessment of water resources parameters. In the long-term adequate finance is necessary to set up the regulatory framework for water resources and monitor compliance. Recurring costs will be provided in the DLSE annual budget.

**Human resources implications**

In short-term, a senior officer within the Planning is required to facilitate the implementation of the policy. However in the long-term, the regulatory aspects will be incorporated into the relevant Division of DLSE.

**Legislative implications**

There is an immediate need to review the existing Lands, Surveys and Environment Act 1989 to establish empowering provision for water resources under the Minister of DLSE. Other enabling regulations will then follow dealing with the other issues including: standards, EIAs, access and allocation.

**Proposed implementation schedule**

The implementation of the NWRP is expected to take effect from the time it is approved by Cabinet. An Implementation Task Team comprising the DLSE, Health Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, Fisheries, and Meteorology, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organizations and Water Authority Corporation will oversee the carrying out of activities covered by the NWRP.

The NWRP will be reviewed on an annual basis to verify progress of implementation and a full independent evaluation will be carried out after three years.

**Recommendation**

That Cabinet approves this policy.

**Responsible officer**

Tu'u'u Dr. Ieti Taule'alo .....  
Director of DLSE

**Date of Submission** .....