

## Pacific WASH Webinars



Event details:

### A closer look at water quality for public health

21 May 2021

Presenters:

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Event recording and resources available [here](#).

*There is a clear link between the delivery of safe drinking water and sanitation services and improved public health outcomes in the Pacific. The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Pacific WASH Technical Advisory Team is supporting the region's utilities to recognize and manage common drinking water quality issues and work closely with local communities to raise awareness about water treatment and disinfection options and processes. On-going community education and engagement about water treatment is proving critical to achieve improved levels of water quality in Pacific nations.*

### Workshop Overview

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been active in encouraging utilities to build expertise, share local knowledge and provide practical examples of water management. In May 2021, this virtual workshop, in association with the Pacific Water and Wastewater Association (PWAA) was attended by 56 participants from 14 utilities across the Pacific region. The workshop reviewed data from the World Health Organization (WHO), demonstrating the link between water quality and key health indicators including infant mortality.

### The workshop responded to these key questions:

- ❖ What are the most common contaminants found in domestic water sources?
- ❖ What are the various treatment and disinfection techniques currently used in the Pacific?
- ❖ How can data be interpreted to improve water quality?
- ❖ Why is it important to engage local communities in building better water quality outcomes?



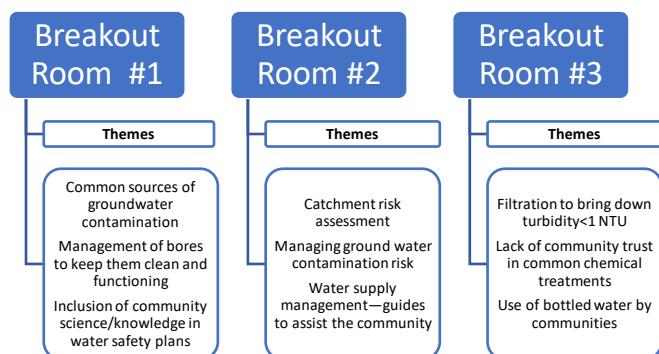
Water sources typically found in the Pacific borefields and river extraction

## Workshop Outputs

### Breakout room discussions

Discussion topic: tools and techniques to interpret water quality results

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Each breakout room included at least 10 participants with the opportunity to ask specific questions.

### Discussion Points

Workshop participants engaged in a lively discussion with the opportunity to share examples of local case studies relevant to specific countries and contexts. Major discussion points during the workshop included interest in access to low-cost, readily available **community water testing kits** accompanied by local training and community support, and **public education programs** to manage community hesitancy and concern relating to the use of chemicals in the disinfection of potable water. The value of ‘**community science**’, customs and local knowledge to develop and holistic approach to water management, and **community engagement techniques** used to build community empowerment and engagement to develop local water safety plans were also topics of common interest.

## Learning Snapshots

- **Duty of care.** Customer charters and other techniques may assist to express the responsibilities, rights and duties of both customers and utilities.
- **Data is only one piece of the puzzle.** Looking for patterns and events can help to solve the mystery of water source contamination.
- **Look for specific events that create a spike in contamination.** Weather patterns, bore cleanliness, agricultural practices and other events and human activities are all contributing factors to water contamination.
- **Communities have much cultural water knowledge.** Scientific data can be supplemented with a wealth of local indigenous knowledge and customs relating to water sources and contamination.
- **Contamination is an indicator of poor quality.** Other indicators may act as an alert to conduct laboratory water quality tests, including smell, taste and larval insects including blood worms.

## Upcoming Events

To register for the upcoming 2021 webinar topics, please contact: [lfernando@adb.org](mailto:lfernando@adb.org)

Topic	Month (2021)
Chlorine disinfection	June
Affordable water services	July
Access to water and gender issues	August
Non-revenue water	September
Organisational culture	October

ADB continues to support water service providers in the region to build resilience, knowledge and capacity to manage threats in our changing world.