

A new idea is first condemned as
ridiculous
and then dismissed as trivial,
until finally,
it becomes what everybody
knows.

—William James, American philosopher and psychologist

US Freely Associated States (FAS)

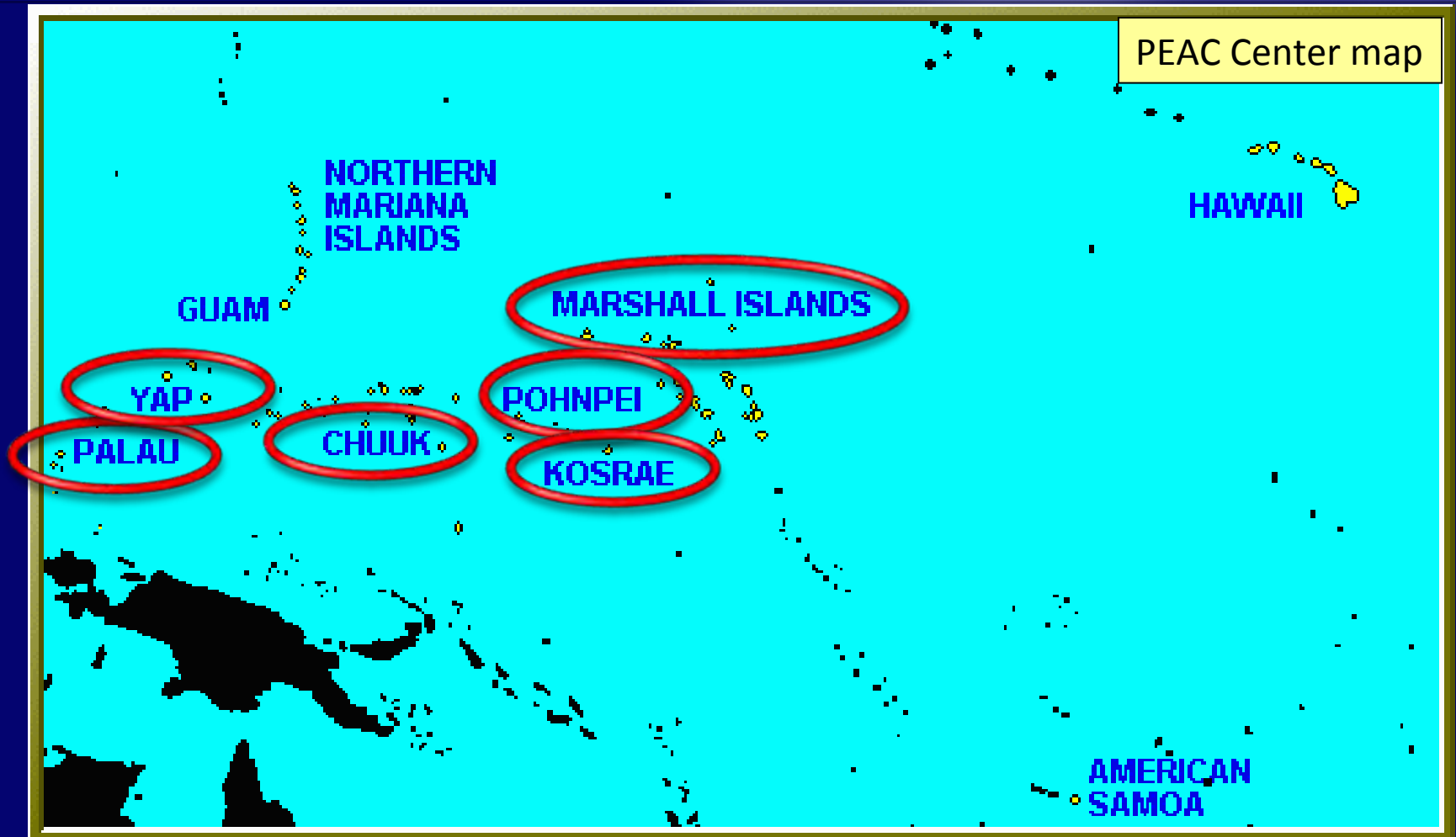
Laboratory Certification

26th Pacific Islands Environment Conference
Program
June 24, 2009

LT Elena Vaouli
US Public Health Service
American Samoa EPA



Freely Associated States



PROBLEM



- FAS Labs were **NOT CERTIFIED** to analyze water samples
- Lack of confidence in data
- Antiquated equipment
- Lack of supplies
- Inadequate staff training



SOLUTION



US Freely Associated States (FAS) Laboratory Certification Program



- **Voluntary**
- **Designed for FAS Labs**
- **Modeled after USEPA Lab Certification Program**
 - **Hands-on training**
 - **Technician testing**

How do labs get certified?



- **Pass lab audit**

- On-site
- Every 2 years



- **Have certified lab technician(s)**

- Pass written exam
- Pass demonstration of proficiency

Critical Elements



- Lab Facilities
- Basic Equipment
- Adequate supplies
- Qualified staff
- Quality assurance
- (Funding)



The Audit



- Lab technicians receive training
- COs conduct audit
 - Review records
 - Inspect lab
- Test lab techs
 - Written exam
 - Practical examination of proficiency



How we made it happen



**June
2006**

- Survey labs, develop program

June 2007

- Present program to FAS Directors

July 2007

- Present program to FAS lab staff

Who else made
it happen



**SOPAC
assists
RMI Lab**

**IDEXX
provides
starter kits
to FAS**

**DOI
funds
program
starting
Oct 2007**

Performance Measure 1



GOAL:
2 Techs per lab
certified for DW



Performance Measure 1



GOAL:

2 Techs per lab
certified for DW



Result:

Goal Exceeded

17 certified analysts

For DW

Performance Measure 1



GOAL:

2 Techs per lab certified for DW

Result:

Goal Exceeded

6 certified analysts for marine water



Performance Measure 2



GOAL:
6 Labs equipped to
analyze DW
samples

Result:
Goal Met



Performance Measure 3



**GOAL:
3 Certified Labs
For DW**



Drinking Water



Performance Measure 3



GOAL:
3 Certified Labs
For DW

Result:
Goal Exceeded
6 Certified Labs
for DW
2 Certified Labs
for Marine Water



Drinking Water

- RMI
- Palau
- Yap
- Pohnpei
- Chuuk
- Kosrae



Marine Water

- RMI
- Palau

Performance Measure 4



GOAL:

6 Labs with approved QA Plans for DW

Result:

Goal Exceeded

6 Labs with approved QA Plans for DW

2 Labs with approved QA Plans for Marine Water



Drinking Water

- RMI
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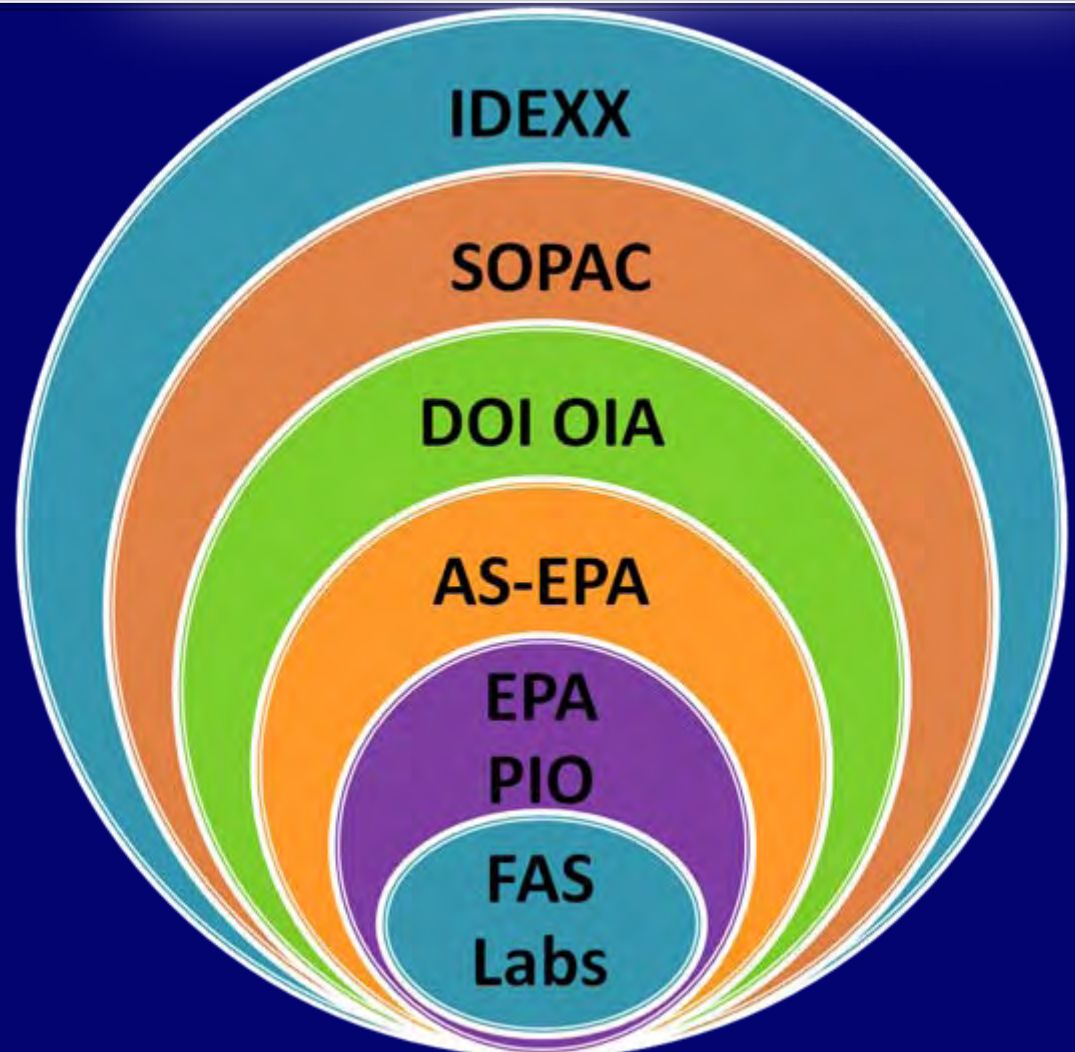
Marine Water

- RMI
- Palau

More results



- Additional funding and in-kind support



More results



- Palau analyst certified as USEPA Lab Certification Officer



Kimie Ngirchechol
USEPA Certified 2008

Next steps

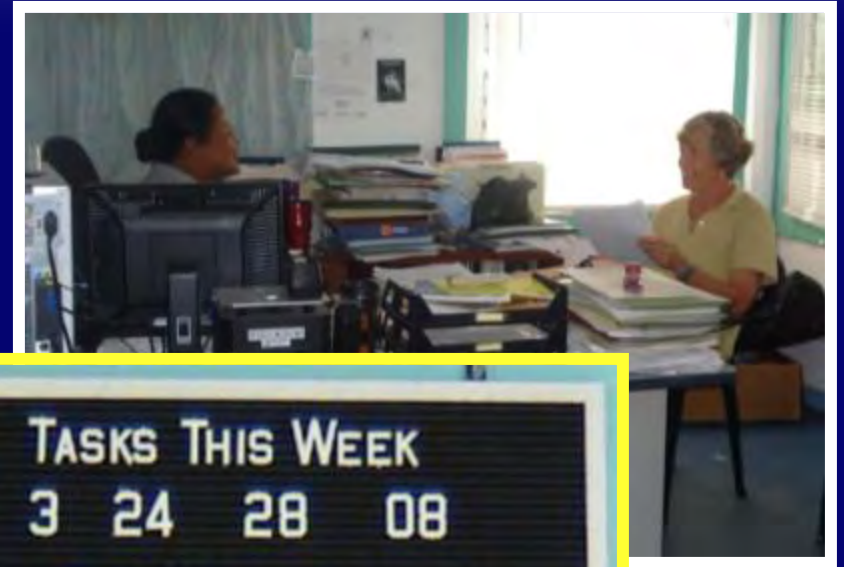


- Build sustainability
- Continue audits and training
- Seek continued funding
- Involve CNMI and Guam lab staff

Lessons Learned



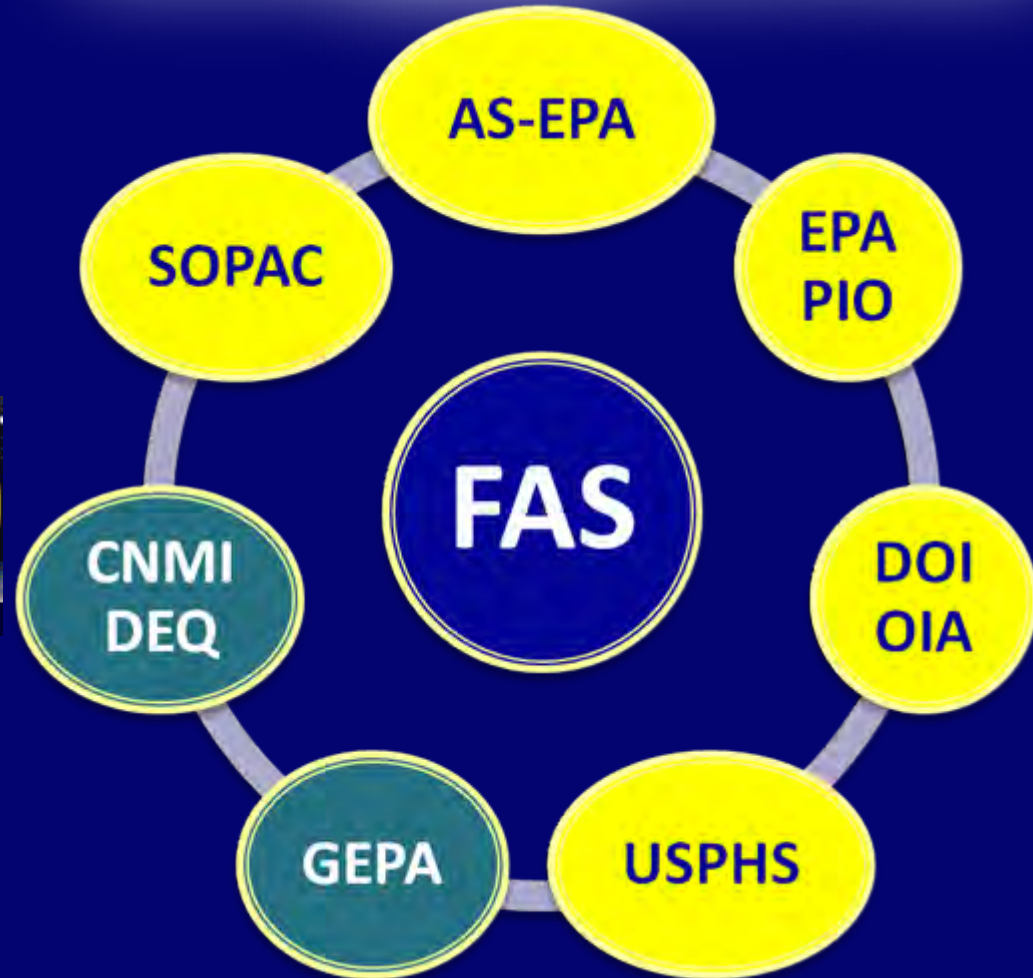
● Persistence



Lessons Learned



- Persistence
- Partnerships



Lessons Learned



- Persistence
- Partnerships



“This program is an excellent example of partnership and of leveraging technical expertise to get these critical drinking water labs certified.”

Lessons Learned



- P
- P
- Get support & commitment from the top

“We are proud to have provided the lead in the development and implementation of this important program to help our sister islands, and ASEPA will continue to provide this service to the FAS islands whenever the need may arise.”

Lessons Learned



- Get support & commitment from the top

