



SPC
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Community



**GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE:
PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND STATES PROJECT**

**IMPACT EVALUATION OF
PROPOSAL PREPARATION USING THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH WORKSHOP
COOK ISLANDS MAY 2013**



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Introduction

Pacific Research and Evaluation Associates (PREA) delivered training on 'Proposal Preparation Using the Logical Framework Approach' to government staff in the Cook Islands on 8-13 May 2013.

The training formed part of the Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS) project is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Organisation (SPREP).

The aim of the training was to strengthen the capacity of national government staff to develop successful and integrated climate change adaptation project proposals. This will allow PSIS and donors to work together to ensure a more effective and coordinated aid delivery to address climate change at the national and regional level.

This report evaluates the impact of the training six months following the workshop.

Impact evaluation

The impact evaluation framework was informed by the anticipated short and medium-term outcomes from the training workshop.

The anticipated short and medium-term outcomes are summarised below:

- Participants submit quality funding proposals informed by the Logical Framework Approach
- Funding proposals submitted would address PSIS climate change adaptation requirements
- Increased number of quality funding proposals are funded by Government and external donors
- Implemented projects assist countries to adapt to climate change impacts
- Components of the LFA would be used in other daily work duties resulting in an increased quality of work produced

About the training workshops

The training workshop was delivered over four consecutive days. This was followed by an optional half-day of mentoring where participants could work on their project proposals.

Twenty six participants attended the training and all participants were from the Cook Island Government agencies from both Rarotonga and seven of the outer islands (Manihiki, Rakahanga, Atiu, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Mauke and Mitiaro).

The objective of the training was to build participant capacity in proposal preparation using the logical framework approach.

At the end of the workshop participants were expected to be able to:

- Describe and perform all the steps of the Logical Framework Approach and to develop a logframe matrix
- Describe and complete the key components of a funding application by pulling relevant data from the logframe matrix
- Be more aware of the donors and grant funding programmes that can be accessed by PSIS to fund climate change adaptation projects.

The key topics covered during the workshop included:

- A background on the project management cycle

- A detailed look at the logical framework approach
- Proposal writing (informed by the LFA) and
- A brief summary of climate change donors active in the Pacific region.

The effectiveness of the training workshop was evaluated through a post-workshop survey that was completed by participants on the last day.

Methodology

The impact evaluation took place in November and December 2013, approximately six months following the training. The evaluation consisted of:

- An online survey issued to all participants. Six responses were received after several email reminders.
- Interviews with a 5 participants

Interviewees that had not completed the online survey were asked the survey questions as well as some additional questions to probe more deeply on the impact of the training using an appreciative inquiry approach.

Results

There were a total of 11 respondents for the Cook Islands impact evaluation, with one online survey response incomplete. This is approximately a 42% response rate.

Workshop resources

All respondents indicated they still had both their training learner guide (hardcopy) and USB flash drive with workshop resources. At least three participants reported that they had copied the electronic version of the workshop resources onto their work computers for long term storage and later reference. All survey respondents had referred to either the learner guide or electronic resources at two and three or more times over the past six months. This reinforces with the fact that all survey respondents indicated that the resources were useful.

Use of LFA steps

Workshop participants were asked to indicate if they had used the various steps and tools of the LFA to develop a funding proposal or in other work tasks since the time of the training workshop. Table 1 below shows that approximately half of the respondents had used most of the LFA steps and tools to inform a project proposal or other work duties.

There was less evidence that respondents had developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans. However, M&E was only briefly covered in a 30 minute session during the training workshop.

There were also fewer responses indicating participants had created budgets. This may indicate that other specialists in the participants' Government department were responsible for creating budgets. It may also reflect that budgets are a challenging task that need to be covered in more detail during the training.

Table 1. Use of the LFA steps in proposal writing and other work duties

LFA Step	Used or performed since training for a project proposal	Used or performed since training for general work duties
Conducted a stakeholder analysis	6	4
Developed a problem tree	5	5
Developed a solution tree / and strategy analysis	6	5
Developed a Logframe matrix	5	3
Developed a monitoring and evaluation plan	2	2
Created a timeline or Gantt chart (Activity Schedule)	4	3
Created a budget (Resource Schedule)	3	2

Some survey respondents had no need to submit funding proposals at the time of the impact evaluation. However they indicated that they had used components of the training



“I HAVEN’T REALLY IMPLEMENTED ALL THE TOOLS THAT I HAVE LEARNT AS WE HAVEN’T BEEN GIVEN ANY PROJECTS TO WORK ON. HOWEVER THERE ARE TALKS OF AN ELDERLY FACILITY WHICH IS IN THE PIPELINE AT THE MOMENT.”

in their normal work duties. Sometimes this came through the deliberate use of LFA steps and tools and in other cases it occurred internally in the participant’s mind as they ‘logically’ thought through the problem, causes, effects and possible solutions.

Proposals prepared since the training

All survey respondents indicated that the LFA steps would be useful (3 responses) or very useful (8 responses) in preparing any future project proposals. Seven survey respondents indicated they had completed or worked on a funding proposal since the training workshop was held (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Have participants developed a project proposal?



Details of specific funding proposals communicated by the respondents are documented in Table 2. Only one of these projects was noted as having been funded. Interviews with other participants indicated that at least another three projects had been approved and were waiting for funding to come through. There were at least two proposals submitted from the Southern islands group and three from the Northern group. One participant alone submitted three proposals and all of these were approved, though only two could be funded at the present time.

Table 2. Funding proposals prepared following the training

Project	LFA tools used	Funding source	Funding applied for (\$)	Funded
Training program for Pearl Farmers on climate change impacts and adaptation.	Stakeholder analysis Problem tree Solution tree	Cook Islands Government	NZD 20,000	Undecided
Development of final report for the Youth Suicide Prevention Steering Group	Unknown. Tried to apply all the steps, but had limited time.	Cook Islands Government	NZD 12,000	No - did not align to funding priority
Hydroponic system for growing vegetables in one village and the upgrade of another existing system	Stakeholder analysis Problem tree Solution tree	Cook Islands Government	NZD 30,000	Undecided
Disaster early warning system installation in Rarotonga and outer islands	All LFA steps were conducted as part of the training workshop	UNDP	USD 200,000	Yes

Several project proposal submitted by outer island focal points for internal Government funding were reviewed and found not to be of a high quality or include evidence of using the LFA. These funding proposals were returned to applicants for further work before they would be reviewed and considered for funding. The lack of quality in some

“I ENJOYED THE WAY YOUR PROGRAM WAS DELIVERED AND HAVE NO HESITATION IN USING THE TOOLS THAT WERE LEARNT. IT WOULD ALSO BE GOOD TO HAVE A BACK UP SUPPORT FROM YOU IF THE NEED ARISES.”

funding proposals highlights the benefit and need for more follow-up support and training, as noted further down in this report.

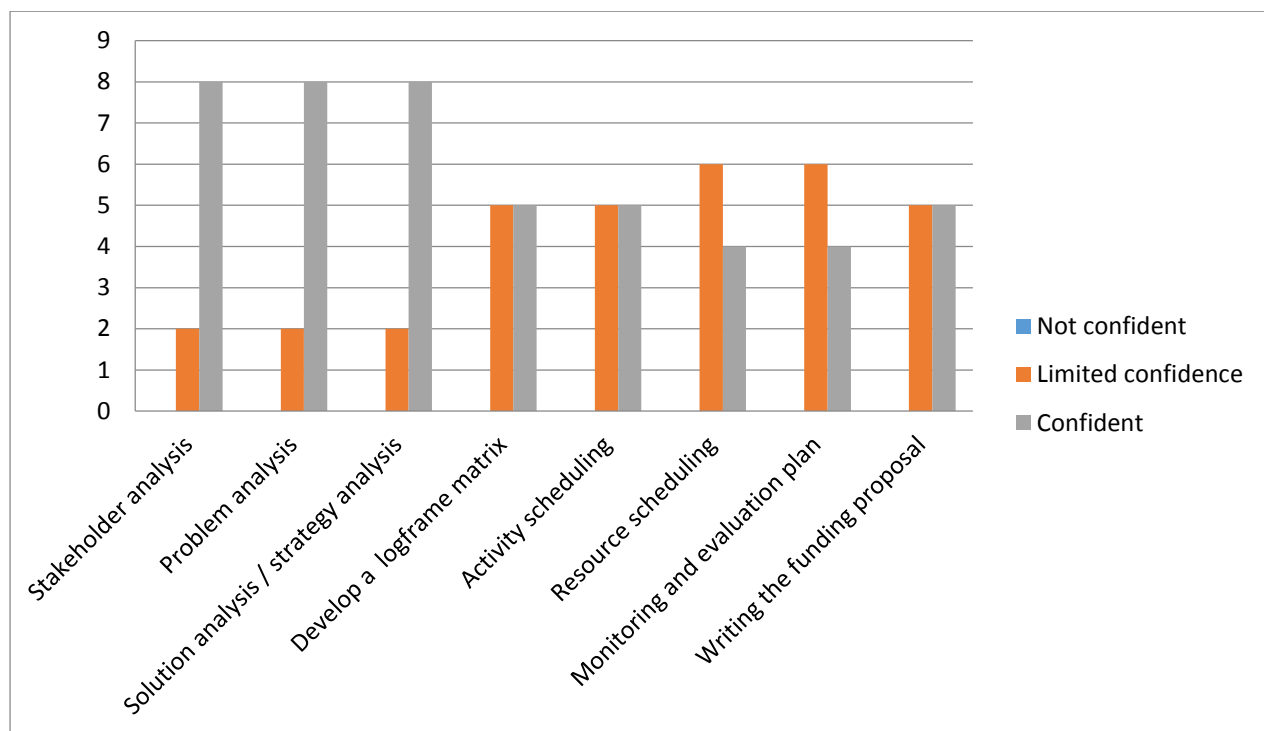
Future proposals

Six survey respondents indicated they had plans to submit additional funding proposals in the next six months and all indicated that they would use components of the LFA to inform their funding proposal.

Survey respondents indicated varying degrees of confidence in using the LFA steps in their future work (Figure 2). All respondents indicated they could use the LFA steps provided they had some assistance or they felt confident enough to lead the process themselves. Respondents were more confident in conducting a stakeholder analysis and developing

problem trees and solution trees. Participants were less confident in creating a logframe matrix, budget and timeline. One participant noted that other staff in the office could support them in the use of the LFA. This demonstrates the benefits of more than one person from each Government department attending the training session or the potential benefit of forming an informal network or community of practice to support the use of the LFA.

Figure 2. Level of confidence to use the LFA for future proposals



Additional capacity building

Participants were asked to nominate any additional training they needed to support them in their work (Table 3). An LFA refresher training and training in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) were the nominated most often.

Respondents noted that a refresher course on the LFA would help reinforce the recent LFA training. Respondents acknowledged that it can take some persistence to change existing



“VERY USEFUL TOOL BUT NEED MORE PRACTISE”

work practices and culture (i.e. not using the LFA) that have become standard practice over many years.

One participant responsible for reviewing project proposals submitted to the Cook Islands Government commented that those participants who had already been to one round of LFA training prior to the GCCA LFA workshop coped much better and were now confident in using the LFA.

In contrast, participants from outer islands who were exposed to the LFA for the first time were less confident in using the LFA when they returned back to the outer islands. One Government staff member based on Rarotonga noted that participants attending from the outer islands needed post-workshop follow-up support to help them use the LFA to develop

funding proposals to address the needs in their community. One example was provided where an economic development project based around increasing quality fish exports, developed during the GCCA LFA training, failed to materialise into a funding proposal despite it being worked on by several individuals over the four days of the workshop. In this instance, when the focal point returned to the outer island and discussed the project with stakeholders, the project completely changed and the focal point did not feel confident to lead the LFA process and so the project proposal process stalled and has not progressed into a submission. This example adds weight to the other feedback collected that Cook Islands training workshop participants would benefit from a LFA refresher workshop. Respondents noted that a request had been made to the GCCA programme for LFA refresher training in the Cook Islands.

One respondent indicated they would like additional technical support to assist with project preparation within the Cook Islands. The support could come from a regional Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agency and they would be able to assist by reviewing a funding proposal or logframe matrix prior to submission. Additionally, one respondent indicated they would benefit from mentoring in the LFA which would involve them leading the LFA process for a real life funding proposal in their department. The mentor would work with them over several weeks to help them through the process. Whilst the proposal writing training was valuable, it was noted that there was a lot of information covered during a short period of time and this didn't provide the ideal environment to apply the knowledge and skills to real life projects.

Table 3. Additional training requirements

Capacity building area	Number of nominations by participants
LFA refresher training	3
Monitoring and evaluation	2
Resource scheduling	1
Proposal writing	1
Report writing	1

M&E was another topic nominated by two participants where capacity building was needed. Increased capacity in M&E was required to ensure that funded projects were appropriately monitored and evaluated to donor requirements, as well as lessons could be captured for future projects. Additionally, capacity building in M&E would help support the development of monitoring plans linked the Government strategic and business plans.

Improving the training workshop

All participants interviewed spoke favourably about the training workshop that was delivered in May 2013 in the Cook Islands. They appreciated the content, delivery and the fact the workshop changed every day to incorporate feedback that participants made during the end-of-day workshop evaluation.

Having participants work on a real life project was thought to be extremely useful. However, in some cases focal points from the outer islands did not work on their own projects and instead joined other project tables where they worked as a team to develop a funding proposal for a different project. This group work is necessary to ensure participants get the support they need to learn and contribute to a project proposal. However, it also limits their ability to develop the project idea they have brought to the workshop. Where possible, the project ideas raised by workshop attendees from outer islands should be prioritised to ensure they get the support they need during the training workshop to develop their project idea into a funding proposal.

Conclusion

The LFA training has the greatest impact in participants with some previous LFA knowledge. The four day workshop gave these participants in particular the confidence to apply the LFA and use this to develop successful proposals

The training workshop held in the Cook Islands reinforced the ability of those who had a pre-existing knowledge of the LFA and assisted them in developing proposals, some of which were successful. Six or more funding proposals have been developed and submitted following the training. Of these, at least four have been approved, though not all were being funded immediately.

For participants who had no prior knowledge or experience in project design and proposal writing, such as some of the outer island participants, the training provided a valuable first step. However, some struggled to use the process back in their communities due to a lack of confidence. For these participants, the knowledge and skills gained from the GCCA LFA training needs reinforcing through further training and mentoring support.

Recommendations

Target the workshop to people who have some experience in the LFA or project preparation to achieve the greatest impact, in terms of building capacity to submit successful proposals.

LFA refresher training should be provided to workshop participants in the Cook Islands. The refresher training will be especially useful for participants from the outer islands or those who were exposed to the LFA for the first time in May 2013.

Post-workshop follow-up support should be provided to outer island participants, particularly for those who have just learnt about the LFA through the training. This support will help new learners to lead and use the LFA process in their communities. Forming a network of local LFA practitioners, or a community of practice, could be a means to provide such support. Alternatively, designating a local or regional LFA focal point as a mentor could also provide the required support.

The delivery of monitoring and evaluation training should be considered in the future. M&E is a critical skill required in projects and one that cannot be effectively covered as part of a four day course on proposal writing.

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