Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States Executive Summary Evaluation Report

PREPARED FOR

Pacific Community

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REPORT PREPARED BY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides a short executive summary of the much longer and detailed 'Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States Evaluation Report' submitted to the Pacific Community (SPC) and the European Union (EU)[1].

The Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS) Project is a European Union (EU) funded initiative to assist nine smaller Pacific Island states (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu) to adapt to climate change. The project was implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC), with an implementation period from July 2011 through to November 2016[2].

The overall objective of the project was to support the governments of nine small island states of the Pacific in their efforts to tackle the adverse effects of climate change.

The GCCA: PSIS project consisted of on-ground climate change adaptation activities in specific sectors – coastal protection, marine resources, health, agriculture, and freshwater; supported by mainstreaming of climate change into national and sectoral policies, plans, budgets and procedures. The project also provided technical assistance, capacity building and supported regional collaboration.

The four components and key result areas (KRA) of the project were:

1. Climate change mainstreamed into national and/or sector response strategies.
2. Well-articulated sectoral adaptation strategies that address budget support criteria.
3. National climate change adaptation projects implemented.
4. Streamlined technical assistance that supports national adaptation responses delivered by regional organisations in a collaborative manner.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an end-of-project evaluation of the **Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Islands States** (GCCA: PSIS) project. It provides an independent assessment of the project's performance against key evaluation criteria, and identified lessons and practical recommendations.

Donor	**European Union (EU)**	**Funding**	€11.4m (On target to spend all funds)
Implementing agency	Pacific Community (SPC)	**Duration**	5 years (July 2011 – November 2016)
Participating countries	Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu		
Focus	Climate change adaptation		
Target sectors	Coastal protection, marine resources, health, agriculture, freshwater		

[1] The evaluation report is presented as a full report containing all sections, as well as separate executive summary, individual country evaluation summaries and case studies.
[2] The project was granted a one-year extension.

The GCCA: PSIS project covers a vast geographical expanse, with approximately 8,000 km separating Palau in the northwest to the Cook Islands in the southeast[3]. Some countries are spread across large areas, with the islands of Kiribati dispersed across 3.5 million square kilometres[4]. The nine participating countries have a total population of approximately 431,000, with the smallest country being Niue (1,479 people) and three countries (Kiribati, FSM and Tonga) with populations above 100,000. A large percentage of the populations reside on low-lying atolls or islands that face increasing threat from sea-level rise. Food and water security are key challenges across many of the countries. The region's characteristics and issues are shared with other Small Island Developing States (SIDS)[5].

There are significant challenges in implementing projects within the region, including:

- Transport logistics - unreliable, infrequent and expensive inter and intra-country transport
- Capacity constraints across the government and private sector
- Capability constraints across the government and private sector

Overall, the project was highly effective and successful in increasing the capacity of the nine target countries to adapt to climate change. The on-ground climate change adaptation measures have made a real and immediate increase in country's climate change resilience. They also serve as models that can be replicated or in some cases scaled up. Mainstreaming and capacity building activities complimented these measures and form the foundation for future work to address future climate change adaptation needs. Advancements in the ability for countries to access new modalities of climate change financings was also achieved and this will help provide the resources required to support future projects. Measured against the revised regional logframe matrix, the project achieved all but one of its targets which further demonstrates the successful implementation of the project[6]. The overall assessment of the GCCA: PSIS project is that it has been a valuable investment of EU-funding to support Pacific countries to adapt to climate change.

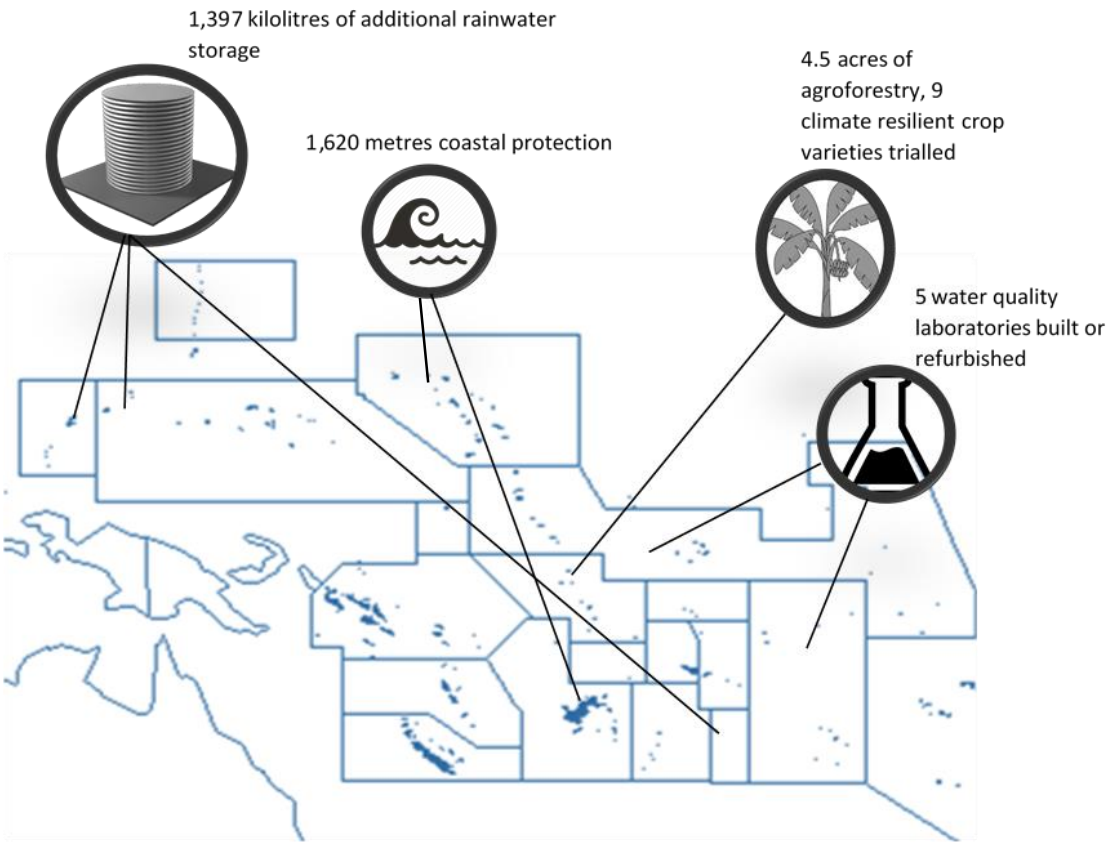
Logframe results summary

Overall objective To support the governments of nine small island states of the Pacific in their efforts to tackle the adverse effects of climate change	• Over ten new activities addressed country requests for climate change adaptation • 200 national sector specialists trained to integrating climate change adaptation into key sectors (Training provided in media, finance, Pacific Climate Change Portal) • 396 people trained in proposal preparation using the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) • Additional 992 people trained on various subjects (Food security, water security, vector borne disease, agroforestry and home vegetable gardening, tractor maintenance, media, epidemiology, WASH, GIS, food safety, behaviour change etc.)

[3] Approximately a similar distance separating Brussels (Belgium) and Beijing (China).
[4] In comparison, the European Union's land area is 4,325 million square kilometres, with a population of 508 million people.
[5] See UNEP 2014. Emerging issues for Small Island Developing States. Results of the UNEP Foresight Process. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya.
[6] Indicator not achieved related to national coordinators uploading documents to the Pacific Climate Change Portal.

	• 1,407 community members in Tarawa, Kiribati trained in the use of SODIS
Purpose To promote long term strategies and approaches to adaptation planning and to pave the way for more effective and coordinated aid delivery on climate change at the national and regional level	• New formal mechanisms in SPC to coordinate four different donors/partners engaged in delivery of climate change resilience • GCCA: PSIS officer embedded in SPREP • National climate change policy that integrates disaster risk management in three countries
KRA1. Climate change mainstreamed into national /sector policies and plans	• Three countries (Nauru, Palau, Tonga) with new/revised national climate change policy • Four countries (Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, FSM) with new/revised sector plans incorporating climate change resilience.
KRA2. Progress access to climate change funding by new modalities	• Review of mainstreaming of climate change into national plans and policies completed for all nine countries • Review and assessment of national and sector policies in relation to budget support modalities in the Pacific smaller island states completed for nine countries • Two countries (Cook Islands, Tonga) assisted with accessing/developing new climate finance modalities.
KRA3. National climate change adaptation projects	Eight of nine national adaptation projects completed by March 2016, whilst the remaining one project which had to be significantly downsized and is on schedule to complete by June 2016: • Four water sector projects (Fais in FSM; Tobi, Sonsorol, Kayangel and Angaur in Palau; Niue, Nauru,) • Two coastal sector projects (Tonga, RMI) • One agriculture sector project (Tuvalu) • One health sector project (Kiribati) • One marine resources sector project (Cook Islands) • Nine national lessons learnt workshops and one regional lessons learnt workshop • 15 videos created reaching over 39,000 people
KRA4. Streamlined technical assistance through regional collaboration	• Two new regional coordination tools available (Pacific Climate Change Portal (PCCP), SPC climate change project matrix) • 200 SPC GCCA project documents uploaded to PCCP attracting 37,900 views. SPC GCCA website attracted 3,800 hits in 2012.

On-ground climate change adaptation project highlights



	% country population benefiting from on-ground projects
Cook Islands	1.37
FSM	0.27
Kiribati	56.36
RMI	3.25
Nauru	100
Niue	100
Palau	4.06
Tonga	3.26
Tuvalu	70.9

146,285 direct and indirect beneficiaries

1,588 participants in regional and national trainings

The project design allowed countries to take ownership of the project sector selection, design and implementation which fostered high levels of project ownership and sustainability at the country level. The flexibility offered by this design approach required additional oversight from SPC to ensure the national project scope was focused and achievable considering funding timeframe constraints.

Projects implemented were relevant to and consistent with EU's policies, and SPC's Climate Change Engagement Strategy.

SPC's communication with regional donors was evident and this meant there was no duplication of project activities and in some instances collaboration opportunities were capitalised upon through joint funding and joint delivery.

The SPC adaptive project management approach was effective in identifying and responding to risks in a proactive solutions-focused manner. The high ratio of climate change advisers to countries, complemented by sector-specific advisers and support from SPC divisions, provided the required support and technical assistance to countries.

Regular country missions undertaken by the advisers increased in frequency for some countries to overcome issues and manage implementation risks. The recruitment of competent national coordinators, with supporting project officer(s), finance officer and sector specific experts in some countries, were a key success factor for most projects.

The combination of regional and national capacity building initiatives was critical in building the capacity and capability of country staff to deliver their projects, and to support countries in their ongoing climate change adaptation efforts. Overall there were 1,588 (862 men, 727 women) participants trained at the national and regional level.

The delivery of training in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) to support proposal preparation was described as a flexible and creative programme that had a positive impact on proposal writing and for general day-to-day project management tasks in the office. The project team's mentoring of national coordinators, and finance staff, helped build skills in project management and financial accountability which will deliver ongoing benefits for those individuals and line ministries.

Most projects took considerable time to develop their detailed project design, and some faced further delays with procurement, transport and on-ground works. The extension granted allowing for 5 years implementation was appropriate and required to enable national project completion.

The project's impact will take time to bear fruit, but there are numerous examples of immediate benefits from both on-ground and mainstreaming activities. The absorption of most of the national coordinators and other GCCA funded staff at the national level into government positions means that the skills and experience gained from the project will be available to countries.

Sustainability of outcomes for most projects is highly likely with the support of exit strategies, high levels of national ownership of projects and high staff retention. Ownership of projects was higher in remote outer islands where vital infrastructure to meet daily needs was provided. Whilst there was an appropriate focus on exit strategies as part of the project design, there are limited examples of national government commitment to provide national funding for the ongoing maintenance of outputs and benefits.

The effective and efficient delivery of projects was hampered by the late re-scoping of projects in two countries. Several country projects experienced high costs and delays when delivering activities in outer islands, especially small countries with limited local capacity, capability and small private sectors. The SPC lessons learnt process identified a general "rule of thumb" to multiply the overall cost and time for outer island projects by two (compared to main islands) when detailed budgets (based on quotes) and timelines are not available. Where quotes for goods and services have been obtained, then it is still recommended that a large contingency (up to 20%) be added to the budget for capital works projects in outer islands. This contingency factors in the high risks and uncertainties associated with capital works projects and the unreliable and costly transport to these remote islands.

Overall project efficiency was highly satisfactory across a range of areas including the efficient use of funding, time, personnel and the quality of assets produced. Cost efficiencies were achieved through the SPC procurement of water tanks for two country projects and in-kind contributions made by participating countries and other partners.

For some countries, the use of SPC procurement for larger tenders overcame the potential for delays and accountability risks that may arise when using national procurement policies that are not always appropriate for high value tenders. SPC's choice to involve national representatives on bid review committees provided an additional capacity building benefit from the procurement process. Overall, SPC is well-positioned to manage large infrastructure procurement when certain conditions are met:

- the works fall within SPC's fields of expertise, or a suitable external expert is brought in to develop the tender specifications and documentation
- there is a recent, and costed feasibility design
- there is sufficient project budget to cover the estimated cost and appropriate contingency
- there is sufficient time for implementation (e.g. 5-year project)
- the tender is open to local and international bidders(s) the asset owners sit on tender review panel.

The reporting process for country projects was sufficient to provide regular progress updates to SPC. Financial management arrangements and tools used were found to be efficient and effective, and should be considered for future regional projects. Revisions to both the regional and country logframes helped in project monitoring and reporting, but further improvements can be made, particularly with indicators. The differences between country logframes reflected the nationally-led approach to project design, but future regional projects should consider developing cascading logframes that provide clearer reporting linkages from the national to regional logframe.

SPC's Gender Equality Adviser and The Pacific Gender & Climate Change Toolkit helped include gender in project design which resulted in activities focused specially on women or vulnerable groups in many projects. The collection of sex disaggregated data helped to monitor gender inclusiveness.

Nearly all projects delivered positive environmental impacts as a result of their adaptation work and there were no examples of negative environmental impacts reported. No environmental risks were identified in any of the PDD risk management plans, however, environmental risks were present in some projects that should have been identified.

The project created high levels of visibility of project activities and key partner involvement. Visibility increased during the course of the implementation which is partly attributed to the recruitment of a dedicated communications officer in late 2014. Communication skills are often lacking at the national level and SPC's communications officer helped fill this gap.

The decision by the project team to utilise videos to disseminate project information and lessons learnt was relevant to the Pacific context, with videos being screened on the Pacific Way programme greatly extending the reach the project had. The national and regional lessons learnt workshops, and the lessons learnt roadshows were a useful means to disseminate project successes and lessons to key national and regional stakeholders, including other CROPs and development partners.

Overall, the evaluation findings were positive across all key evaluation criteria[7].

Relevance / Coherence / EC-value added	Very good
Effectiveness	Very good
Impact	Very good
Sustainability	Good
Efficiency	Very Good
Gender	Good
Environment	Very good
Visibility	Very good

Best practices arising from the GCCA: PSIS project are identified for sharing and replication (depending on context) are documented at end of the report. Following the best practices are a series of recommendations to inform post-project follow-up and the future delivery of regional climate change adaptation projects.

2.1 Best practices arising from the GCCA: PSIS project

Holistic approach to project design	Project incorporated on-ground adaptation projects complemented by climate change mainstreaming and capacity building. The three-pronged approach supported countries to overcome on-ground, policy and capacity deficits.
Nationally led projects	Project design process allowed countries to select the sector and priority focus area for the adaptation project. This fosters national ownership of projects. Country teams managed the project implementation, which builds national capacity and capability.
National processes supported	Allocation of funds to **national finance ministries** increases national accountability and transparency and reduces financial risks for donors. It also helps build the national capacity within the finance ministry and their capacity to access new forms of climate finance. Project supported the use of **national policies** (procurement, national pay scales) and processes (environmental regulations) which builds national capacity in their application and avoids undermining of the national policies and processes.

[7] Rating ranges from Very Weak, Weak, Good, Very Good

Skilled and resourced PMU	Regional PMU (SPC) was sufficiently staffed with capable individuals to provide a high level of support to national projects. Specifically: • High ratio of climate change advisers to countries, including a North Pacific based adviser. • SPC's flexibility, responsiveness and solutions focused approach to managing challenges and risk was essential to nearly all projects in achieving their purpose. • Frequent field trips to countries by SPC's climate change and sector-specific advisers were essential to keeping national adaptation projects moving forward. • SPC leveraged expertise across their different divisions to support country projects.
EU – SPC collaborative approach	Regular formal and informal communications between the PMU and EU delegation allowed issues to be discussed as they arose, and solutions identified.
Embedded staff	Embedding senior staff in other regional organisations (e.g. SPREP) fosters regional collaboration in the delivery of activities (e.g. training and PCCP) and enhances efficiency in delivery of services to countries.
Donor collaboration	Regular formal and informal communications between donors and development partners reduced duplication and helped identify opportunities for SPC to complement existing work being undertaken, or to work together on new joint initiatives, ensuring efficient delivery of regional support to countries and in some cases contributing to sustainability of projects.
Technical assistance on request	Project provided technical assistance on request to address in-country capacity or capability shortfalls identified at the national level. The delivery of regional and national level training helped build country capacity across common and country-specific needs to support both project delivery and ongoing climate change adaptation.

South-South exchanges	Funding of 'South-South' exchange initiatives, for example through attachments within other country departments (e.g. Nauru officer in Kiribati Environmental Health Unit), and delegations to other regional countries (e.g. Palau to Tonga), fosters a regionally-led approach to knowledge sharing.
Knowledge sharing through videos	Project's use of videos to capture project successes and lessons is an example of an appropriate and effective means to capture and share knowledge. The screening of videos on regional television (e.g. Pacific Way) and during national and regional meetings was a highly useful knowledge sharing process and increased project and partner visibility
Lessons learnt workshops	Lessons learnt workshops at the national and regional level provided a valuable process for reflection and disseminating lessons to stakeholders. The lessons learnt roadshow provided an opportunity to share lessons with regional development partners and to discuss future steps.
ROM supports adaptive management	Conducting external Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) annually, and in particular in the first 12 months of implementation, facilitates the identification and addressing of issues early in the project.
Thorough coastal infrastructure projects	Research and rigorous process informed coastal infrastructure project design and implementation, with a number of best practices: • Site selection and design informed by coastal engineering studies (including historical analysis), feasibility studies, and detailed design and costing reports. • Appropriate hybrid (hard & soft) coastal protection measures. • Coastal design engineer involved in project oversight role through several site visits. • Environmental risks assessed and addressed through EIA or EMP. • Monitoring plans developed during project design phase and are being implemented. • Estimated maintenance works and budgets developed during project design phase. • Use of locally available materials and labour to undertake works to reduce costs and provide examples for local cost-effective replication.

2.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are followed by their rating and target:

H Blue circle for priority (High, Medium, Low)

H Orange circle for ease of implementation (High, Medium, Low)

Recommendations for the EU (or donors)

Recommendations for SPC (or regional implementing partners)

2.2.1 POST-PROJECT

1. Document and share 'adaptive and flexible' approach to project management M M

- Develop a video-based knowledge management product (e.g. interview, Q&A) on the 'flexible' approach to project support and implementation to inform future regional projects.

2. Continue using the PCCP H H

- Continue use of PCCP as a repository for project documents and knowledge management products. Work with SPREP and other CROPs to publicise the PCCP as a key regional resource.

3. Conduct impact evaluations (3 years post) M L

- Impact evaluations should be undertaken for a sample of key projects (3 years post) to assess the longer-term effectiveness and impact of key outputs (e.g. coastal or water infrastructure, new agricultural methods and crops, and policies).
- Additional donor funding is needed to suport the impact evaluation for this project. In future, PMU should include as part of its project management costs an allocation for impact evaluation.

2.2.2 MOVING FORWARD

4. Longer implementation period — H H

- A 5-year implementation period is required for large regional projects to allow sufficient time to ramp up and close down, and leave sufficient time for on-ground implementation (allow up to 12 months for procurement, and 18+ months for implementation).
- Recognising the EU's new D+3 rule, countries need to ensure that all procurement is contracted by the end of the third year of implementation.

5. Make clear funding reallocation rules — H H

- Letters of Agreement (LoA) with countries need to contain and make clear funding reallocation clauses that can be actioned (at the discretion of the project manager) if implementation timeframes and other specified requirements are not met.
- SPC to develop clear plan as to how to respond to funding reallocation situation.

6. Recruit PMU staff early — M M

- SPC to begin recruitment process (e.g developing position descriptions) for PMU staff as soon as EU has finalised project funding allocation.

7. Identify relevant gender targets — H H

- Relevant gender targets from the EU Gender Action Plan to be incorporated into projects.

8. Develop cascading logframes — M H

- Cascading logframes support clarity in linkage between regional logframe and country-level logframes, and they facilitate monitoring and reporting from country-level up to the regional level.

9. Countries to demonstrate post-project financial commitment — H H

- Countries should demonstrate, through the Concept Note and in particular the Letter of Agreement, a commitment to national budget allocation to sustain project outputs and benefits post-implementation.

10. Ensure capital works projects are realistic considering time and budget

H H

- Ensure the scope of capital work projects is realistic in relation to the available timeframe (e.g. D+3) and budget, noting this project's lessons learnt from delivering projects on outer islands (logistical, capacity and capability constraints and costs for outer island projects).
- Consider applying a contingency of up to 20% to the project budget for capital works projects on outer islands when accurate costs/quotes contributed to developing the project budget.
- Apply SPC's "rule of thumb" lesson learnt and double initial timeline and budget estimates where accurate costs are not available in determining the project budget.
- Large infrastructure projects in PSIS require either recent feasibility and design studies that are accurately costed or the ability to refer to recent similar projects in the region to obtain reliable costing and time estimates.

11. Mobilise SPC divisions early in the project

M H

- Ensure sector experts from SPC's divisions are mobilised early and available to review PDDs for their feasibility and risks.
- SPC division input (e.g. GSD, CePaCT) into project implementation needs to be programmed at least 12 months in advance to ensure SPC divisions have sufficient capacity to assist projects.

12. Increase SPC's procurement capacity

H M

- Capacity (staffing levels) within SPC's procurement team should be increased to better service country level requests for SPC to undertake procurement on their behalf. Donor funds across multiple projects could be pooled to fund the initiative.

13. Actively assist countries with known implementation constraints

M H

- Provide active oversight for projects in countries that have historically experienced difficulties in successful project implementation. This can be through additional capacity building of local project staff (formal or informal training, including mentoring) as well as more frequent missions and involvement of SPC or external sector-specific technical assistance.

14. Report accumulated results and achievements

H H

- Mid-year and annual reports should include an accumulated list of results and achievements to provide a complete picture of what the project had achieved across the entire project duration.

15. Conduct LFA/project design training early

M M

- Provide training in the project design at the outset of a **all** new projects to support the development of a robust logic model.
- EU funded projects should lead with trainign in using the LFA. Training can be customised for the approaches preferred by other donors.
- Ensure PMU has capacity to take lead of M&E and suport countries in project design (problem analysis and logframe development).

16. Repeat and replicate LFA training

M M

- LFA workshops should be repeated throughout the Pacific on a regular basis, not just focussing on the nine PSIS, but also on other larger countries.
- The format for further LFA training should be a four-day workshop in the first week, complemented by two days mentoring in the second week.

17. Develop an accredited course in project design and evaluation

M L

- Engage with other regional partners and projects (e.g. ACSE TVET) to develop an accredited short course on project design and evaluation at national and regional institutions.

18. Develop national capacity to deliver LFA/project design training

M L

- Develop a cadre of skilled facilitators through a customised Training of Trainer (ToT) initiatives leveraging off the LFA training. Complementary to this, an online version of the Project Proposal/LFA program should be considered.

19. Develop and share a best practice PDD

M L

- An example 'best practice' PDD should be developed and shared through the PCCP. The PDD could contain examples of content complemented by comments as to what to include to ensure it is flexible to different scenarios.