



European Union – North Pacific – Readiness for El Niño (RENI) project

Assessment of Project Impact

A methodology to determine the beneficiaries' viewpoint

Background

Assessing the impact and sustainability of a project's activities requires revisiting the project site a few years after the project has been completed to consult with the project's beneficiaries to identify the impact of the project – those activities that worked well, as well as those that were less successful. The purpose of carrying out such a post-project investigation is to learn how a similar project can be better delivered in the future.

In the context of the Pacific Islands, such impact assessments are best conducted in the local language by local professionals from the same country and framed as a consultative dialogue rather than an assessment. This is to provide community members with an environment in which they feel comfortable and ready to openly share their opinions about the project's activities. Given the Pacific Islands' traditional culture, it is appropriate to meet with the different societal groups separately, e.g. with the chiefs, with the men, with the women, and with the youth. In some cases, it may also be useful to have a follow-up meeting with all the groups together.

This fact sheet presents a simple methodology for conducting such an assessment and provides an example of one assessment from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) conducted in 2019.

Methodology



Understand the context of the project to be assessed: Using project reports, determine what was achieved, when it was completed, and which partners were involved (national and international).



Conduct the consultation

- *Assemble the team.* Team members should be professionals from the country in which the project was conducted. Complete logistical arrangements, e.g. arrangements for refreshments.
- *Obtain permission to conduct the consultation* from the relevant national authority and community chiefs/leaders.
- *Conduct the consultation in the local language.* Meet separately with the different groups in a consultative and participatory setting to discuss:
 - What worked well? How and in what way?
 - How did your household cope during an extreme event (flood, typhoon, drought, heat wave)?
 - What should have been done differently?
 - What did not work well? What were the challenges?
 - Who takes care of upkeep and maintenance?
 - What would you change if the project was to be done again?
 - What was the most beneficial impact for you?
- *Conduct a technical assessment* of any on-the-ground measures that were part of the project.



Prepare and share a report on the findings: After presenting the findings to the participating community, share the report widely and together with other partners apply the recommendations to the design and implementation of new projects.

Example of a Project Impact Assessment in FSM



Fais Island, Yap State, FSM: Community consultations with the women's group and one of the rainwater harvesting systems.

Context

A climate change adaptation project, completed in 2015, provided 250 Kilolitres of additional water storage and easy access to pumped water for the 300 people living in Fais Island, Yap State, FSM. Implementing partners included Yap State Government, the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Australian Agency for International Development. As a result of the project, residents of Fais Island had sufficient water during Typhoon Maysak (2015) and during the 2016 El Niño drought.

Consultations

The consultations took place over a 3-day period in February 2019 involving an 8-person team from Yap State Government and the private sector. Around 100 people from Fais Island – chiefs, men, women, and youth – participated in the series of separate and combined consultations. A technical assessment of the water security measures was also undertaken.

Findings

The project provided additional safe drinking water for the community to use, and this resulted in improved health and hygiene for the community. During the 2016 El Niño drought the community had sufficient water and did not need to request emergency supplies. Community members also noted that they spent less time hauling water from the well to their houses. However, on the negative side, they noted that some of the water storage tanks had defects resulting in leakages. Further, they noted that they should have been involved in the installation of the water storage systems so as to acquire the skills needed for repair and maintenance.

Applying the findings

The recommendations from these findings were applied during another water storage installation in Kapingamarangi, Pohnpei State, FSM, in September 2019. A different type of water storage tank was purchased and the community members were contracted to help with the installation over a 14-day period. Maintenance training was provided to the community in September 2019 and in February 2020, as well as the necessary tools and some spare parts.

Conclusion

Impact assessments are important, low-cost activities that can provide critical information about the design and implementation of future projects. The main recommendation is to conduct impact assessments of previous projects before embarking on new interventions. In this way, lessons learnt are applied and project delivery is more effective.



Kapingamarangi, Pohnpei State, FSM: (L) Community members involved in the installation of new water systems; (R) Providing water for the most vulnerable, including the oldest resident on the island.