

One of five summary briefs for decision-makers, produced from the outcomes of the Lessons for Future Action conference: access to key insights, lessons learned, good practice and the gaps and needs for future action

## Lessons for Future Action: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Project Implementation: Strategies for on the ground action



## Introduction

Project implementation consists of elements related to project design, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. It encompasses issues as diverse as stakeholder participation and sustainable financing.

When considering on the ground action for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, effective project implementation bridges the gap between the policy and planning framework and increased resilience. Effective delivery on the ground is the ultimate test for investments in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and stands at the gateway of sustainable development in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Project implementation also brings to bear concepts such as co-benefits, transparency and governance, and monitoring and evaluation, which are common themes among all climate change and disaster management investments. As such, in addition to exploring the specifics of adaptation and risk reduction, adequate attention to basic project concepts form an integral part of strategies for on the ground action.

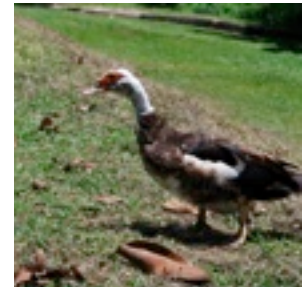
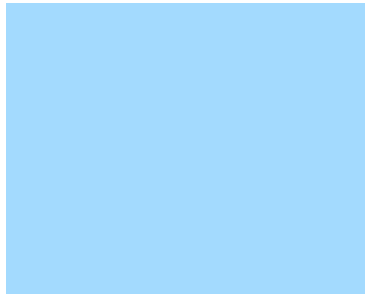
## Benefits

High quality project implementation has multiple benefits, from the immediate to the long term. For example, appropriate stakeholder participation can ensure that the project is responsive to actual needs, which is fundamental to the planning phase. It can also build ownership and ensure that implementation is placed in the appropriate institutional and cultural context. Finally it can build a community of practice to share lessons learned and promote follow up activities.

As another example, taking a strategic outlook to project implementation can help frame on the ground action within broader national and regional strategies and plans. Linking a project with ongoing national or regional activities can contribute to the long term sustainability of investments.

Furthermore, building links with existing long term programs and organizations can ensure a transformational result, maintain continuity and facilitate the replication of successful interventions. Building institutional capacity, for example, can include strengthening coordination between agencies, investing in knowledge and information management, and supporting training programs. Once capacity is built it can be applied to other climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction investments.

*" If resilience building and vulnerability reduction are presented to communities as a holistic complimentary process, then the activities are a more lasting form of genuine empowerment and community driven sustainable development" Rev. Ikani Taliai Tolu, Pacific Conference of Churches*



## Benefits from a Regional Approach

The Healthy Reef Initiative generates user-friendly tools to measure the health of the Mesoamerican Reef Ecosystem, near to Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Belize. This enables the initiative to contribute to project planning by delivering scientifically credible reports to improve decision-making.

The Initiative also establishes coral nurseries that grow climate resilient genotypes and plants them back on the reef in order to increase the resilience of the reef and repair areas that have already been damaged. As such, it supports national and local coastal adaptation and disaster risk reduction actions.

Finally the Initiative maintains a 'healthy reef' indicator framework for monitoring and evaluation. The indicator framework is based on both marine and land-based activities recognizing the multiple threats to reef systems. As part of the framework, the Initiative also publishes reports on reef health in order to build awareness of climate change threats and benefits from adaptation activities.

Outputs from the initiative include an Eco-audit, an Eco-health report card, an indicator framework and scientific reports and other relevant publications.



## Challenges

There are many good practice examples of project implementation however, in order to capture short and long-term benefits from on the ground activities, all stages of project implementation must be considered from planning and design to monitoring and follow up. Best practice at every step of the project cycle requires careful planning to address challenges.

In addressing all project implementation challenges, the special circumstances of SIDS need to be considered. These circumstances include the relatively low adaptive capacity of SIDS as well as issues related to remoteness and high reliance on natural resource based livelihoods. It is important to clearly understand and articulate how these challenges can be addressed.

*“With steps to adjust there is still a struggle with lack of appropriate materials, unforeseen circumstances of weather challenges, and the continuity of the dependency mentality despite empowerment.” Sione Fakao’fi, Executive Director, Tonga Community Development Trust*

## Policy challenges

Good project implementation requires transparency and good governance. This requires strong legislation and policy as well as strong institutions. Building such a framework for implementation involves long-term, committed efforts at all levels of government in order to establish an appropriate policy and institutional enabling environment for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Project implementation should also be closely linked to national plans. This requires not just a reactive response once development plans have been completed, but also a proactive approach in which project needs and priorities can be integrated into national development plans before they are adopted or during the revision process.

## Implementation challenges

When considering project implementation, financing, coordination, participation, and monitoring and evaluation are common concerns. With regards to financing, it is important to be able to address to true cost of project implementation in order to plan accordingly for long term financial sustainability.

Coordinating project implementation starts with active stakeholder participation at the planning stage and should involve the clear communication of project aims and objectives and the management of expectations. There is also a strong need for links between science and project implementation even if one is often misperceived as being theoretical and the other as practical.

Finally, project implementation must be clearly framed within the context in which on the ground actions will take place. For regional activities this means being consistent with regional policies and priorities, at the national level, this means respecting laws and sector needs, and for local activities this means taking full account of local cultures and languages.





## Good Practice Examples

### Pacific – Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community maintains the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) to assist Pacific Island countries and territories to conserve the region's genetic resources, and to provide access to the diversity they need, when they need it. As such, CePaCT ensures that the agricultural and forestry sectors are more resilient.

The Centre focuses primarily on the conservation of genetic diversity housing over 2,000 accessions. Through its distribution activities, farmers can use the resource conserved by CePaCT to improve food production and income generation.

Finally, CePaCT has a strong research programme aimed at reducing the vulnerability of crops and trees to pest infestations, salt water intrusion, drought and floods. This research programme supports the development of specialized technical capacity in the region and, as such, contributes to longer-term climate change adaptation and development planning.

### Adaptation Learning Mechanism (ALM)

Supported by the Global Environment Facility, the ALM is a multi-partner initiative to exchange information on the implementation of climate change adaptation projects and programmes providing a common platform for sharing and learning.

The ALM covers multiple themes, including a specific theme on disaster risk management and provides material ranging from workshop reports and training tools to policy documents and strategies.

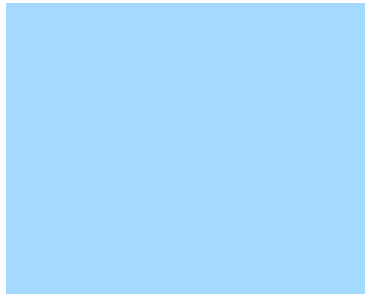
Finally ALM supports discussion forums to allow users to exchange ideas and share experiences on a specific project type.

## Lessons Learned

Attention to good project implementation must extend through the entire project cycle from conception to reporting. At all stages, projects should focus on setting, achieving and reporting on clear and realistic goals and objectives that are implemented in an inclusive and culturally relevant manner.

In order to ensure that project implementation leads to effective and sustained on the ground action, policy makers and practitioners may wish to:

- Emphasize transparency and accountability;
- Build an appropriate enabling environment (policy and institutional);
- Nest projects within the cultural context;
- Mainstream gender considerations;
- Demonstrate concrete benefits;
- Scale up the use of proven tools and technologies;
- Plan for sufficient monitoring and evaluation;
- Consider the long-term sustainability of investments; and
- Capture and make use of lessons learned.

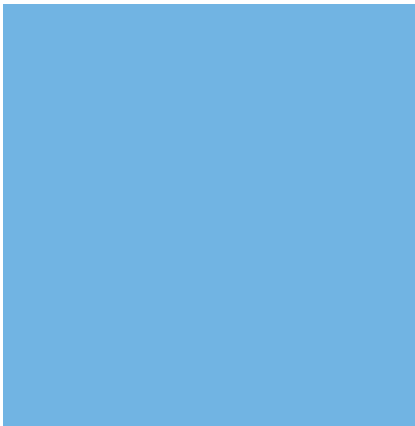


## Areas for Further Investment

Successful implementation of on ground activities often requires significant capacity building. Investments in human, institutional and financial capacity targeting agencies and organizations involved in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is critical.

There are also potential benefits to be realized through investments in robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Although monitoring and evaluation are often underfunded and given a low priority in the project cycle it is important for adaptive management and the capture of lessons learned. Monitoring and evaluation systems should be developed during the initial design phase of the project in order to contribute to the development of clear and measurable goals and objectives. Effective monitoring and evaluation also requires investments in baseline data and information, especially when considering socio-economic data. Finally, monitoring and evaluation programs should link indicators from the local to the national scales.

Finally, stronger donor coordination can contribute to the funding of projects as well as their long-term financial sustainability. Establishing dialogues with key donors in order to present climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction priorities is an important preparatory activity. Such dialogues should not be convened on an ad hoc basis but rather should form part of a concerted effort to improve and enhance donor relationships.



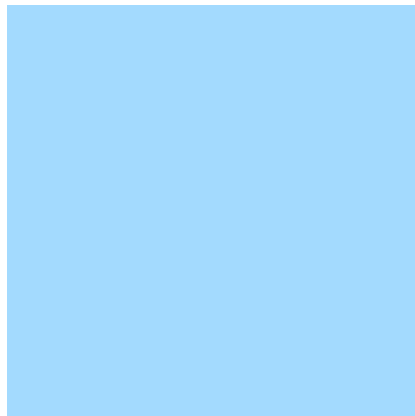
The Lessons for Future Action Conference considered the design, establishment, implementation and follow up of projects supporting climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

As a take home message, the Conference highlighted lessons learned from a 'worst practice scenario' including:

- Be really unclear on what the project aims to achieve;
- Employ your own relatives;
- Ignore local cultures and preferred languages, and use your own language of comfort;
- Ensure you do not have enough time or funding to complete the project; and
- Just forget about the next generation.

Accordingly, the Conference emphasized the point that doing everything wrong is all too common in project implementation. The importance of project implementation is the test of planning, policy and capacity building processes and highlights its importance in sustainable development agendas in SIDS.

*"National consultations enable policy managers to connect and make the distinction between the legislation, policies at the international level and how it fits into their national commitments, non government organizations and other partners or agencies involved." - Monifa Fiu, WWF South Pacific*





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