GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE:
PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND STATES PROJECT

IMPACT EVALUTION OF
PROPOSAL PREPARATION USING THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH WORKSHOP IN TONGA

PACIFIC RESEARCH & EVALUATION
ASSOCIATES

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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 Tonga on 17-21 February 2014.

The training formed part of the Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS) project 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 Programme (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 four 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 adaption 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 workshop

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.

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. Results from the evaluation were documented in the post-workshop report submitted to SPC.

The Tonga workshop had a large number of participants. Thirty-three people attended the training over the four day workshop program representing various departments of the Tongan Governments and some NGOs, as well as meteorology department directors and senior staff from PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji.

The post-workshop evaluation indicated that the workshop was very successful in building capacity and motivation of Tongan government staff and NGO members, as well we that of the meteorology department representatives, to use the logical framework approach to design projects and inform the preparation of proposals. The participants noted the benefits of thinking through projects at the design stage rather than jumping straight to solutions or actions. Informal feedback from participants during the training indicated that the material presented resonated with participants and that there was a strong likelihood for some, or all elements, of the LFA, to be used both for proposals as well as for planning in the workplace.

Methodology

The impact evaluation took place in June 2014, four months following the training. The evaluation consisted of:

- An online survey issued to all participants.
- Phone calls to remind participants to complete the survey, or to complete the survey over the phone.

The online survey was sent to 31 participants with contact details. Two workshop participants did not have valid email addresses, or other contact details.

A number of group email reminders were sent following the initial invitation to complete the online survey. This was followed by personally addressed reminders and phone calls which proved successful in getting participants to complete the questionnaire. The evaluation team provided a MS Word version of the questionnaire to participants and a number of the respondents took up this option.

Results

There were a total of 19 respondents for the Tonga impact evaluation, from a total of 29 participants with valid contact details giving a response rate of approximately 66% for participants with valid contact details.

Workshop resources

Sixteen of the 19 respondents (84%) indicated that they still had both their training learner guide (hardcopy) and USB flash drive with workshop resources. This is a very high proportion of respondents compared to other training workshops. One respondent only had their learner guide, whilst one respondent indicated that they only had the USB drive. There were no cases of respondents not having access to either the learner guide or the USB drive.

Six respondents had referred to the resources more than three times since the training. (Table 1). Seven respondents used the resources between two and three times. This totals 68% for respondents who accessed the resources more than two times since the training. This may indicate that the respondents saw a need to use the LFA either in their work duties, or to prepare a proposal, and referred to the learning resources to guide them in the process. Five respondents indicated that they had only referred to the resources once, and one had indicated that they had never referred back to the workshop resources.

Table 1. Use of learning resources post-workshop

	Number	Percentage
Never	1	5%
Once	5	26%
Two or three times	7	37%
More than three times	6	32%

Though most of the respondents had access to the workshop's learning resources, and had referred back to them at least once, SPC may consider providing an electronic version of the revised learner guide and resources to a central contact in Tonga (e.g. grant coordinator) so that they can place the resources on an internal server, or intranet/internet in the same manner that the Cooks Islands has done[1]. This will ensure that all participants have access to a copy of the resources, as well as expanding the reach beyond those who attended the training. The addition of the updated resource can then be communicated to all participants as another reminder about the training and supporting resources.

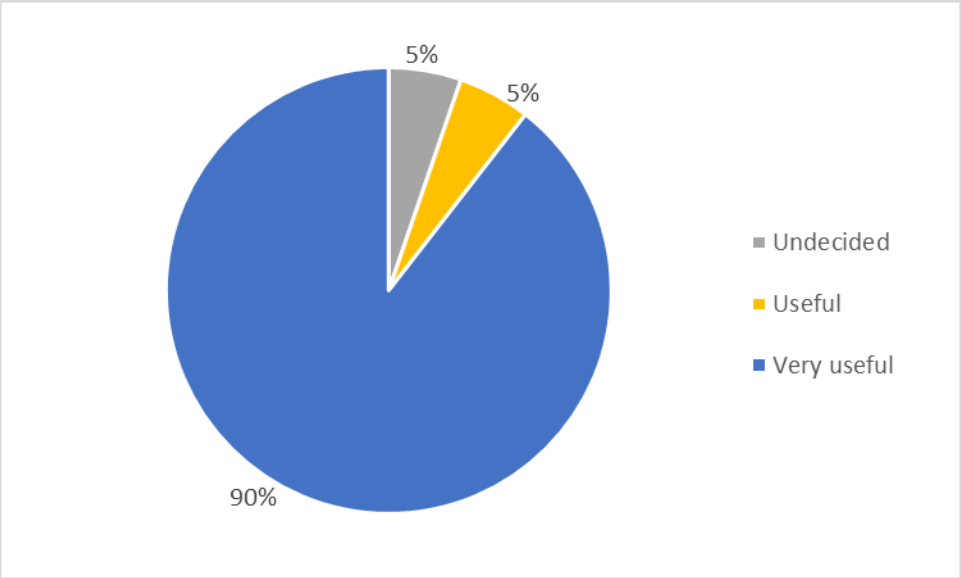
Use of LFA steps

Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they had found the LFA steps and tools useful in informing future project proposals (90% very useful, 5% useful- see Figure 1). One respondent (5%) indicated that they were undecided as to the usefulness of the LFA. This respondent had only referred to their learner resources once. This indicates that the training topic was valued, and that the training was delivered in a manner that communicated the importance of the LFA as a useful tool to the local context.

"MY JOB AS A DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER IS MADE EASIER DUE TO THE SKILLS THAT I HAVE PICKED UP DURING THE LFA TRAINING."

[1] http://www.mfem.gov.ck/58-development/aid-resources/295-logical-framework-approach-training-material-and-resources

Figure 1. Usefulness of the LFA steps and tools in informing future project proposals



Seventeen of the 19 respondents indicated having used at least one of the LFA steps for proposal preparation, or in general work duties. The number of respondents using the LFA steps is outlined in Table 2. Participants reported having used the LFA steps more in performing general work duties (58 times across all steps) than in preparing proposals (45 times across all steps). This demonstrates that the LFA training has built capacity of staff not only in proposal preparation but also in the performance of their role in government, and emphasises the benefits of the LFA process in planning for both work and proposals.

Table 2. Use of the LFA steps in proposal writing and other work duties - Niue

LFA Step	Used or performed since training for a project proposal	Used or performed since training for general work duties
Conducted a stakeholder analysis	7	12
Developed a problem tree or solution tree	8	7
Developed a logframe matrix	9	6
Developed a monitoring and evaluation plan	6	11
Created a timeline or Gantt chart (Activity Schedule)	9	11
Created a budget (Resource Schedule)	6	11

Proposals prepared since the training

Four of the 19 respondents provided details of five proposals that they had contributed to developing or submitted (Table 3). This is a lower number than that of respondents who indicated that they had used the LFA steps in preparing proposals (Table 2). The difference may be due to respondents only including the 'details' of proposals already submitted, rather than being worked on at present. Three of the five proposals are noted to have been successful, and the remainder are pending. Elements of the LFA process had

been used for all of the proposals. This indicates that the respondents have been able to put into practice the skills learnt in the workshop.

Table 3. Funding proposals prepared following the training

Donor / Grant Name	Were you successful	Did you use LFA	Short Proposal Summary
World Bank/Asian Development Bank/FAO	Not yet completed	Yes	Climate proofing rural infrastructure (access roads for commercial agricultural farms)
MAFFF	Yes	Yes	Construction of a Greenhouse for Nursery purposes. (TOP$15,000)
Office of Climate change and Development	Yes	Yes	It was a small project proposal to help fund our PNGNWS WMO day celebrations. we succeeded and secured about USD4000.00
Air Niugini	Not yet but in process	Yes	To fund upgrade of our Airport Residence and communications upgrade at Nadzab Airport, Lae, Morobe Province, PNG
Tonga Health	Yes	Yes	This Proposal was to have a health program on radio on the fight against NCD which the radio (my organisation) was to conduct solely; to the public especially to those who are unfortunate to access such information on how to fight against NCD. TOTAL VALU : TOP$2500.00

Future proposals

Ten survey respondents indicated they had plans to submit additional funding proposals in the next six months. Three respondents were unsure, and six noted that they had no plans to submit proposals.

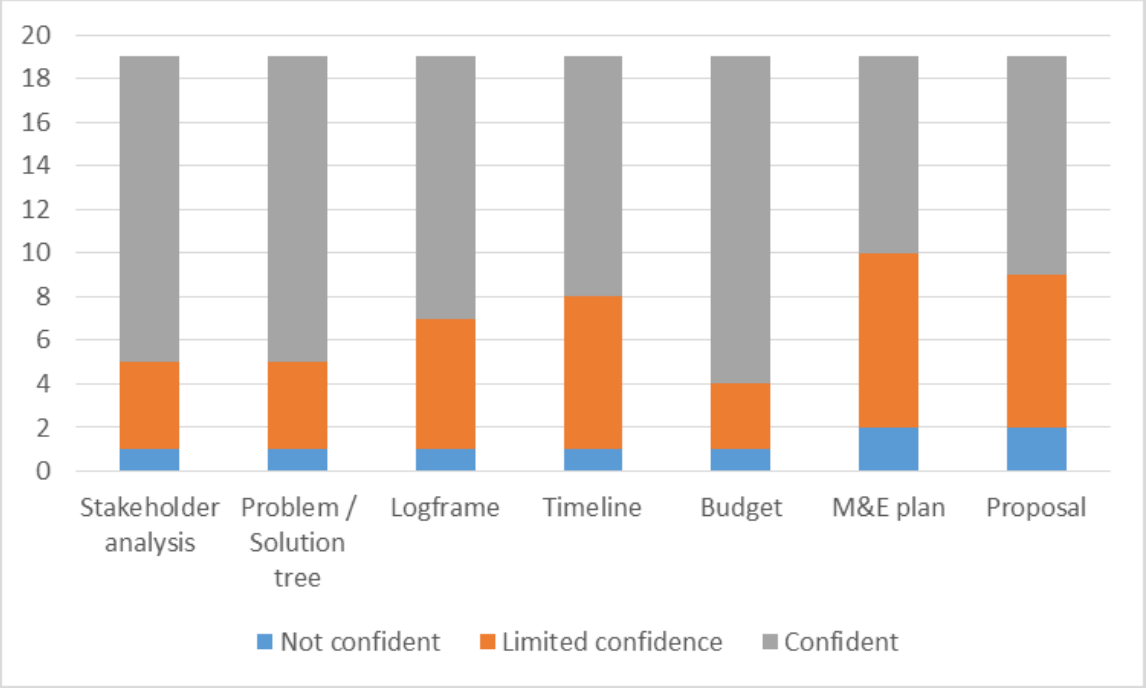
All (19) of the respondents noted that they would use the LFA, or parts of it, in preparing future project proposals.

With most of the respondents indicating the intention to submit proposals, the benefits of the training are likely to continue into the future. This is supported with the high number of respondents indicating that they would use the LFA in future proposals which demonstrates the positive impact of the LFA training in motivating participants to use a clear, logical process to design better projects, leading to better-prepared proposals.

Survey respondents indicated varying degrees of confidence in using the LFA steps, developing an M&E plan, and preparing a proposal following the training (Figure 2). Respondents indicated higher levels of confidence with stakeholder analysis, problem/solution tree and budgets. The lowest levels of confidence were for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans and proposal writing.

The lack of confidence in M&E and proposal writing can be explained by the limited time spent covering these two topics during the training. M&E was an additional add-on component of the training, and only part of the last day is spent on writing up the framework for a proposal. Overall, the results are positive in that there was a good balance between respondents indicating confidence, and those with limited confidence, with only minimal numbers indicating no confidence. There is the potential for the development of an informal network or community of practice to support the use of the LFA in Tonga. This should be encouraged so that the skills can be practiced, reinforced and maintained over time.

Figure 2. Level of confidence in using the LFA, M&E and proposal writing following the training - Tonga



Additional capacity building

Participants were asked to nominate any additional training they needed to support them in their work. Their responses were categorised in Table 4.

Seven respondents nominated training in M&E. This reflects the lower level of confidence in this topic, which as noted previously, was covered very briefly during the training. Six respondents nominated a refresher course in LFA. Some of these respondents indicated

"IT IS BETTER I THINK TO DO MORE CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION."

that they would like a future workshop split between a refresher on the LFA, followed by M&E training.

"Perhaps if we re-do the same LFA training. The first day is a follow up of the first training and the second day will be on monitoring and evaluation of the coastal protection measures that is to be implemented in the eastern Tongatapu so that the local communities also involve."

"CREATING BUDGETS THAT ARE REALISTIC AND FUNDABLE, TOGETHER WITH A MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN THAT IS MEASURABLE AND REALISTIC ENOUGH THAT IT COULD ASSIST WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY AND OWNERSHIP OF THE PROJECT BY THE COMMUNITY OR BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR PROGRAM."

"It is an excellent idea to have a follow up training and not just a one-off workshop. Also important to keep the line of communication alive particularly with Martin and Damien in case anyone need help or assistance in terms of preparing a proposal."

"It is also good to have the same facilitators to follow up on what they have done. As a mean to see what was the weakness and what they could improve on."

Table 4. Additional training requirements- Tonga

Capacity building area	Number of nominations by participants
Monitoring and evaluation	7
LFA refresher course	6
Proposal writing	1
Logframe	1
Facilitation skills	1
Budget	1

As noted earlier, future training could also be provided on writing proposals. The LFA training focusses on the LFA process to guide the content of the proposal, rather than focussing on the writing element of a proposal.

"Should be more time spent on wording the funding proposal. I am confident in doing all the LFA process except for writing the proposal."

A focus on proposal writing could be done through providing participants with examples of well written, and poorly written proposals. This could be achieved through online, or remote training, or through mentoring. Developing skills in proposal writing itself can also come from practice, with feedback on draft submissions (e.g. through mentoring).

Several respondent noted that the training should be delivered to a wider audience:

"Yes definitely but for the whole country at departmental level. That means we'd have to gather department representatives to the workshop for you to come and run."

"I believe this is a key skill for all middle managers and senior official at operational management level. Keep the training and the good training."

"To do another training with the other department like National Planning and the Budget division of all line ministry."

Feedback on the workshop

Respondents were asked to provide feedback about their reflections of the training. Respondents indicated that the training was very useful. Respondents also noted that the training needed to be longer, and that it was important to put the knowledge and skills into practice. Several participants indicated that they would have liked the training to be longer, with more exercises and groupwork, and more time spent on proposal writing.

"MORE GROUP EXERCISES WOULD BE HELPFUL AND FOR THE TEAM MEMBERS TO BE PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WORKSHOP."

"Great training, but more time is needed to guide participants through the whole process."

"I enjoyed the workshop and learnt a lot from it. Although I think there should be more practice exercises to become more familiar with the process."

There are definitely benefits to extending the training as this would allow more time to be spent covering topics such as M&E and proposal writing. However, getting participants to take more time off work can be challenging. The Tonga participants were generally prompt with their arrival time, and participation in every day of the training compared to some of the other workshops held previously.

One option to meet the need for more time, and continuing mentoring and feedback on proposals, could be to deliver an intensive training as per this training, followed up by remote mentoring. It should be noted that PREA facilitators offered all the participants the opportunity to submit drafts for review, but this offer has yet to be taken up.

"TRAINING SHOULD BE BI-ANNUAL (TWICE A YEAR MORE LIKE A REFRESHER TRAINING ON LFA)."

Conclusion

The Tonga workshop was successful in increasing the knowledge and skills on the use of the LFA for both proposal writing and general work duties.

The training led to a high number of respondents using some of the LFA steps in their work duties or project proposals within six months of the training. Though only four respondents had submitted proposals, all of them had used the LFA steps. In addition, all respondents indicated that they would use some of the steps in future proposals. Though the success of the proposals cannot be directly attributed to the LFA training, the open feedback from Tonga respondents indicates the positive impact of the training. This is supported by several respondents indicating that they would like refresher training on the LFA, and that the training should be delivered to a wider audience.

The respondents have provided constructive feedback on training improvements, including extending the training time to cover more topics, including M&E and placing more emphasis on proposal writing.

Overall, the impact of the Tonga training was positive. The evaluation concludes that the GCCA-funded training is contributing to achieving the core objective of the development of better funding proposals. Additionally, the benefits have extended beyond proposal preparation with LFA being incorporated into regular work duties.

Recommendations

Updated LFA training resources (e.g. electronic copy of learner guide, slides and templates) should be made accessible to all participants, either downloadable from an internet/intranet site, or emailed directly.

LFA refresher training should be provided to workshop participants to increase their confidence in specific areas of the LFA.

Forming a network of local LFA practitioners, or a community of practice, would provide support for participants who do not yet feel they have enough confidence in undertaking the steps of the LFA. Alternatively, designating a local or regional LFA focal point as a mentor could also provide the required support.

Providing a mentoring service so that participants have a person to review their draft proposals and provide feedback. This provides a means to practice and improve the written component of proposal preparation.

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.