Mid Term Review

Final Report

Mangrove Ecosystems for Climate Change Adaptation & Livelihoods (MESCAL)

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National Country Coordinator (NCC) based with the host Environment Department. The NCCs where hired in consultation with government officials and their compensation level was determined by discussion with the host departments.

A number of international or regional consultants have been engaged to backstop the national programs in biodiversity assessment (floristics and fauna); Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping; communication: and socio-economics and valuation. They have assisted in in-country training, data collection and analysis, and report preparation. There are current

Mangroves areas in Samoa and Tonga have been mapped and indicate a substantial greater mangrove area than previously reported. There is also potential to complete the mapping for Fiji and Solomon Islands, and possibly Vanuatu through collaboration with SPC-SOPAC. There has also been an increased number of mangrove species reported for each country.

One mangrove demonstrates site (Vanuatu has two) has been established in each country. Biodiversity surveys for flora and fauna have been carried out using similar methods that will allow for cross country comparisons, although there have been issues of the appropriateness of the methods for local conditions, data ownership, and Fiji's use of different methods. Additional site surveys for traditional users and socio-economics are ongoing or about to be initiated.

The legislative and policy reviews are being carried out by IUCN ORO and there is considerable concern that the reports are well behind schedule. The data has been gathered and there is a timetable for presenting the drafts to the countries for their comment that must be adhered to.

Fiji has made major advances in mangrove governance that include; reactivation of the Mangrove Management Committee, achieving strong support from the Ministry of Lands (the ministry that gives permits to release mangrove land for development/conversion), and ongoing revisions to the National Mangrove Management Plan.

Solomon Islands have implemented a community co-management plan at the demonstration site that is currently being finetuned. Additional management plans are expected for the other country demonstration sites.

Mangrove awareness activities have been initiated in all countries. The activities include posters, school and community awareness, media events, preparation of a DVD on traditional use in Solomon Islands, and a Fiji countrywide awareness campaign in conjunction with WWF (launched in early March 2013). In the next few months the completion of reports and ongoing communication planning in line with the communication strategy will increase the amount and the effectiveness of the awareness.

Future: At the start of this MTR there was no mention of a possible Phase 2. As the review progressed a number of partners and stakeholders queried the possibility of follow up. This along, with successes and potential, indicates the need for a follow up phase and the need to integrate follow up activities with current and planned conservation and mangrove projects. The review makes some suggestions for a possible Phase 2.

Recommendations

Model:

1. The approach of working through government systems has worked in spite of difficulties of the PIC government system. This approach could be continued in future projects and would be complimentary to the USAID MARSH Project.

Work Plan (Regional & National)

2. The PMU and NCCs need to continue to focus on what can be achieved, what are the priorities and outputs,

9. The PMU needs to determine the priority for which countries will have national policies or laws drafted and a timetable.

Socio-Economics

10. The PMU should encourage the socio-economic consultants to simplify the methodology and keep in close touch with other technical experts who could assist with potential valuation data. Additionally they should ensure that gender issues are addressed in their reports.

Demonstration Site Reports

11. The paucity of results from the demonstration site must be improved as indicated in recommendation 3. Additional there need to be greater communication between the NCCs and country teams and the consultants backstopping those activities.

Awareness

12. The PMU and NCCs needs to continue the efforts to publicize the project outcomes and increase awareness to a wide but targeted audience.
13. The PMU and external consultants are encouraged to continue their efforts to involve MESCAL outputs in the upcoming Pacific Science Congress.
14. Case studies of approaches used by Fiji in targeting National and Provincial governments, and Solomon Islands in target communities could be documented to indicate different approaches to the top-down versus bottom up approaches in MESCAL.

Phase 2

15. IUCN could consider ways of assisting countries in the end of project transition to ensure some MESCAL activities continue.
16. IUCN should consider the possibility of a Phase II project to follow up MESCAL including possible components as mentioned in the MTR Report.
17. IUCN should continue to expand and strengthen the Pacific Mangrove Initiate as an umbrella for Pacific mangrove projects thus joining a number of linked 15.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Terms of Reference for the mid-term review

This mid-term review (MTR) is to provide guidance to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in the implementation of the project until completion. A detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) is given in Appendix 1. The objectives of the review were to:

- Review the project implementation structure (both Program Management Unit (PMU) and in-country) – strengths, weakness and identify opportunities for strengthening;
- Assess the projects' progress and achievements against the agreed project outcomes;
- Provide recommendations on how best to proceed into the final stages of the project implementation.

The work of the Review Mission included the following tasks:

Reviewing the management structure and implementation arrangements including: i) IUCN Oceania Regional Office (ORO), ii) Project Management Team (PMU), iii) Country Teams, v) consultants, and vi) others;

Assessing and evaluating major developments related to the country projects impacts on national mangrove management policies, institutional and management structure and the mechanisms for implementation at the national level;

Assessing whether the different project components and activities proposed to achieve the objectives seem to be appropriate, viable and responsive to the conceptual institutional, legal and regulatory settings;

Assessing project progress and monitoring;

Reviewing financial planning and expenditure;

Reviewing expenditure at national level including recommendations on enhancing disbursement; and

Assessing the sustainability of the project including identification of key actions to enhance sustainability.

as Tonga had not been

The end result was: conflicting advice to the country teams; some commitments being made or perceived and then not being honoured; confusion in focus; a confusing work plan at both regional and national level; delays in signing the country agreements; delays in the in-country start-ups; and subsequent delays in achievement of results.

These issues were clearly articulate by a wide range of staff, partners, stakeholders and consultants. It clearly has delayed the achievement of results, added confusion, and a loss of early momentum. It is also a reminder to IUCN ORO senior management that proper staffing and staffing decisions need to be made to ensure that projects are managed effectively.

There have also been issues that will be discussed in 3.2.2 on the delayed delivery of the legislation and policy results that are related to IUCN and PMU staff changes and decisions.

The questionnaires explored issues of project planning, communication, collaboration and capacity building with those most closely associated with the projects. The results presented in Figure 1 reinforce the weakness of Project Planning (over 50% of responTm [( )] 3(o)-4BT 1 0 0 1 169.27 70

3.1.2. Country Teams;

As indicated in 2.2.2 MESCAL has deliberately chosen to work closely with and through governments. Most respondents to the SWOT questionnaire (Appendix 5) indicated this as strength as it increased ownership and allowed a focus on a national agenda; however, this is not without its problems. The strength of the involvement varied by country: Fiji had a very strong and supportive involvement; whereas Samoa and Solomon Islands indicated some weaknesses in this relationship. In all countries there were constraints due to the government pace, infrastructure, staff changes, delays in payments and accounting, and other government agencies had their own agenda's and work plans and were reluctant to collaborate. In addition in most countries government is not viewed favourably by communities and in four cases in two countries project field works were chased away while carrying out mangrove assessment.

However, this weakness would seem to be outweighed by the positives that included:

- Increased potential for inter departmental and inter ministry cooperation allowing leverage of staff and equipment from other departments;
- Increased commitment of government staff;
- Increased internal capacity building;
- Close contact with policy and legal staff (that may be the only way to implement policy and legislative changes); and
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- x need to coordinate, facilitate or write project reports.

One NCC was very good in the multi roles while others appeared weaker in coordinating activities and coordinating within government and community. It was not clear if these challenges were anticipated and considered in recruitment of the NCCs, but there was little training or capacity building of the NCCs to meet these challenges.

3.1.4. Consultants

The consultants brought international expertise, new methodologies and sampling techniques, and supplied or complimented in-country expertise (especially in GIS and mapping). They also proposed a common cross country methodology and cross country analysis in the floristic and fauna analysis and supplied for each country a useful survey protocol.

The weaknesses included limited in country field time partially determined by the budget (some respondents indicate the budget was too low) and a few cases of non familiarity with local conditions. There was misunderstanding on who was responsible for reporting on the data, and considerable delay in analysing the data partially as a result of ownership issues and protracted correspondence on data quality.

Capacity building was unequal. There was very little in the valuation-socio-economic methodology. In the biodiversity area in some countries it was not possible to have field practice in a mangrove environment, additional there was confusion on whether the training was intended for only those to do the field work or more broadly to increase capacity within the relevant departments. There was difficulty in three countries (Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga) in getting fisheries involvement in the training and monitoring.

The standardised methodology was intended to allow cross country analysis and also equip the