Evaluation Review 3

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Evaluating programmes through a climate adaptation lens: Reflections from coastal areas in Asia and the Pacific

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AR4	Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC
AR5	Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCAR	Climate change adaptation and resilience
CCM	Climate change mitigation
CO2	Carbon dioxide
DFID	Department for International Development
DME	Design, monitoring and evaluation
DRM	Disaster risk management
ECPC	Environmental Conservation and Protection Center
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMSL	Global mean sea level
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLR	Sea level rise
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
STF	Septage treatment facilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WG II	IPCC Working Group II on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

Evaluation Reviews are short papers highlighting and/or distilling 'lessons learned' from a selection of evaluation reports that are relevant to M&E of climate change adaptation.

Introduction

The world's coastal areas – and the people living along them – are highly vulnerable to climate change. The IPCC's recent AR5 report (2014) states with very high confidence that "coastal systems and low-lying areas will increasingly experience adverse impacts such as submergence, coastal flooding and coastal erosion due to relative sea level rise" (ch. 5 p. 2). Although climate change is an inherently uncertain process, certain trajectories of change are predicted with increasing confidence, including rising average global temperatures and sea level rise. However, the impacts of these changes on coastal and island communities are more complex than the widely reported 'global warming-ice melt-sea level rise' narrative might suggest. This makes it all the more important that we learn how best to adapt to these impacts through effective monitoring and evaluation of current adaptation practice.

Impacts on coastal communities

The rate of sea level rise remains uncertain, with the greatest source of uncertainty stemming from the potential response of the large ice sheets of Greenland and West Antarctica, meaning large increases this century cannot be ruled out. (Nicholls *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Global mean sea level (GMSL) is only part of the story; sea level rise will vary regionally, shaped by a complex mix of human-induced climate change and natural factors, resulting in some areas being more severely affected by sea level rise (SLR) than others, both in the short and longer term. Untangling the different drivers of SLR is challenging. Climate change impacts on coastal communities are also influenced by shorter-term events (such as tropical cyclones and storms) and natural climatic phenomena (such as El Niño – Southern Oscillation (ESNO)), which can combine with SLR to worsen storm surges and coastal inundation. Again, we are still at an early stage of understanding how climate change may influence such events and trends. Current data sets indicate no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency over the past century (IPCC 2013, Chapter 2, p.217) however, there is little doubt that current storm risks combine with climatic (e.g. SLR) and non-climatic factors (e.g. population growth in coastal cities) to increase the vulnerability of coastal-dwellers.

It is important that we also look beyond SLR when examining the impacts of climate change in coastal areas. Changes in sea temperature and ocean acidification will have major implications for populations where the sea is both a provider of food and livelihoods. The impact of climate change on marine ecosystems, combined with resource exploitation fuelled by growing coastal populations, may have devastating consequences for already stressed livelihood systems. For example, coastal and island communities may be affected by a combination of reduced fish stocks and salinisation of limited agricultural land and water sources, while coral bleaching may impact negatively on tourism.

The adaptation challenge for Asia and the pacific

Islands and low-lying coastal areas across Asia and the Pacific will be especially affected by climate change. Relative to other regions, Asia is highly exposed to coastal and river flooding in terms of population and assets, an issue compounded by rapid economic growth and coastward migration of people into urban coastal areas in many Asian countries (Nicholls and Cazenave, 2010). The scale of the adaptation challenge is highlighted by the IPCC who state with high confidence that "without adaptation, hundreds of millions of people will be affected by coastal flooding and will be displaced due to land loss by year 2100; the majority of those affected are from East, Southeast and South Asia" (IPCC 2014, Chapter 5).

Climate change adaptation (CCA) refers to the "adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm, increases resilience or exploits beneficial opportunities" (IPCC 2007: 869). More recently, there has been an increased focus on resilience to climate change, i.e. "the ability of a system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change" (p. 880). However, given the scale of likely climate change impacts in many coastal areas, this concept must be more than 'bouncing back better'; it must consider the transformation of existing systems and be deeply embedded in broader development practice.

Climate change adaptation and resilience (CCAR) needs in coastal and low-lying areas of Asia and the Pacific are as significant as they are urgent. Vietnam, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are usually seen as the most vulnerable areas, although they are by no means uniquely at risk. CCAR programming in coastal areas includes a diverse range of projects and sectors, including improvement of physical infrastructure and zoning regulations; flood management measures; coastal natural resource management; responses to the salinisation threat to agriculture; disaster management (including disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, and institutional capacity); new land use planning approaches and capacity building. There has been a growing focus on ecosystem-based adaptation in coastal areas, whereby natural systems such as mangroves (Schmitt *et al.* 2013) and salt marshes (Barbier *et al.* 2011) are maintained or enhanced. Such approaches can act to lessen adverse climate impacts and may also bring additional benefits to the local area (e.g. mangroves acting as natural fish hatcheries).

How effectively we learn from these emerging efforts to enhance resilience will be a critical factor in the future of coastal communities across Asia and the Pacific. Monitoring and evaluation processes can play a key role in this process of understanding impacts, and developing and defining locally appropriate adaptation responses.

Purpose, methodology, & audience

This third paper in the SEA Change / UKCIP Evaluation Review series highlights 'lessons learned' from a small selection of published CCAR evaluations of programmes in high-risk coastal areas in Asia and the Pacific. The objective is to distil key lessons regarding M&E processes that are of interest to a broad professional audience. In this review, we examine the different ways, and the extent to which, CCAR perspectives are integrated into the DME processes of four programmes (see below), and demonstrate how this affects evaluation processes as well as opportunities for generating new knowledge. We also consider how programme evaluations can be better harnessed to contribute to the emerging evidence base on effective CCAR programming.

The selection of documents outlined below represents a sample of published evaluations of CCAR-relevant programmes in high-risk coastal areas in Asia and the Pacific. We were limited by the fact that most programme evaluations are not published and thus constrained by a narrow range of examples from which to choose. However, the selection represents a range of experiences, implementing agencies and donors from which to learn. It should be understood that this paper is neither a meta-analysis or systematic review of evidence, nor a critique of the authors' work or of the programmes and projects evaluated: rather it is an assessment of the evaluation processes and the extent to which they have generated useful information to enhance knowledge on climate adaptation. We hope this review will prove useful to programme managers and M&E specialists seeking to improve CCAR practice and research in coastal zone programming.

Evaluating coastal programmes through a climate change adaptation lens

This section provides a detailed analysis of the four evaluations including a description of each project / programme and the evaluation methods and approaches applied. We then identify lessons that can be learned from these evaluation processes and, in some cases, the specific project and programme. These programmes encompass a diversity of approaches aimed at protecting vulnerable coastal and low-lying areas, and include adaptation interventions in India, the Philippines, Bangladesh and fourteen Pacific Island countries. Some of the interventions are focused on infrastructure and engineering responses, while others address institutional capacity and the social drivers of poverty and vulnerability.

Strengthening adaptation capacities and minimizing risks of vulnerable coastal communities in India (AdaptCap)

Arora, R., Chaturvedi, A., Saluja, M.S., Chrabarti, R., and Reil, A., 2014.

The AdaptCap project aimed to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience in coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, in South East India, through interlinking adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction activities aligned to other local and regional development priorities. It is a joint initiative of the Indian and German Governments, funded by the European Commission. The M&E framework applied to the AdaptCap project combines two systems:

1. An overall M&E system to capture the extent to which the project is achieving its expected results and is contributing to its specific and overall objectives. This is structured around four work packages that aim to deliver the following 'expected results':
    - » Coastal communities implement well-directed and locally adapted concepts and approaches for adaptation and mitigation of climate change and disaster risk reduction.
    - » Suitable climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCA / CCM) technology and methodology applied to the infrastructure of coastal communities.
    - » Technical and management capacities of local constituents strengthened to respond to climate change by using CCA, CCM, and disaster risk management (DRM) measures.
    - » Local public awareness created; national, regional and international experience exchanged; and cooperation fostered on coastal community CCA, CCM, and DRM.
2. An M&E system that examines pilot projects implemented in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which seeks to assess the sustainability and impacts of individual pilot projects. This system uses a number of general assessment criteria in order to examine pilot project performance, usually informed by a combination of site visits and interviews with community members, project staff and other key stakeholders.

Lessons and reflections on the M&E process

The AdaptCap programme has a clear focus on CCA, by strengthening adaptive capacity and minimising risks and vulnerably of coastal communities. This framing provides a sound basis for what can be considered a strong DME framework.

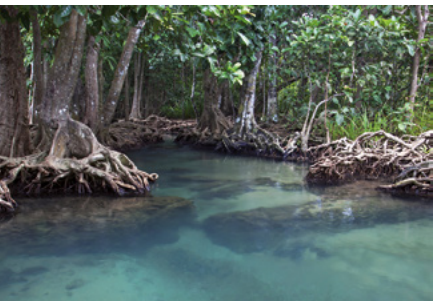
Adaptation perspectives were fully integrated throughout all stages of the DME process, which enabled the programme to keep on track in terms of both strategy and implementation. It was also easier to understand the contributions that different aspects of the programme had made to increasing adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerabilities. The M&E framework included a mix of quantitative and qualitative success indicators, and also monitoring criteria for trends, risks, changes, and timelines which helped to capture progress and impact over time.

Where process indicators were used, the evaluators attempted to provide information on the depth and quality of progress, rather than simply recording a binary response. For example, Indicator 4.2 refers to 'District Disaster Risk Management exchange initiated'. The evaluation report not only recorded that bilateral exchanges with district officials in all six districts had been initiated but recognised that "a strong exchange on DRM among the districts has, however, not yet been achieved." Exploration of the reasons behind such findings (i.e. why certain aspects of the pilots were working well, or not) was variable. For example, where indicators illustrated a delay in progress in Tamil Nadu, a combination of local politics and the turnover of Government staff were among the reasons cited, but in other cases the contextual factors for promising or disappointing performance were not expanded upon.

The second aspect of the AdaptCap M&E process focused on the pilot projects. These projects were evaluated against consistent and clear standards and criteria which also appear to have provided the framework for monitoring and reporting. The evaluation report uses this consistent framework for all of the pilot projects, enabling comparisons to be made across the portfolio where appropriate. However, the responses also highlight some of the risks associated with such standardised templates. While not doubting the validity of the evaluation, in some cases there was a tendency towards standardised responses. For example, in response to the evaluation question "Has the pilot proven to be culturally appropriate and supported by the community?" the majority of projects reported an identical response of "cultural appropriateness and community support are very good", often with little or no elaboration.

Overall performance

AdaptCap was able to not only achieve targets, but has also been instrumental in building capacity, ownership, and the integration of adaptation perspectives across both NGO programmes as well as local government initiatives. The programme was able to demonstrate pilot projects and engage local partners, with the aim of scaling these projects up and out. The clear focus of the programme on adaptation-related objectives enabled the M&E framework to explore broader adaptation progress using indicators, and assessing the pilot projects using interviews and site visits. Arora *et al.* (2014) argues that clear processes and guidelines for vulnerability and needs assessments contributed to meaningful and strategic participation with other stakeholders, who developed clearer understandings about the climate hazards and socio-economic drivers of vulnerability and resilience.



Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project mid-term review

Hunnam, P., Kenny, G., and Carpenter, C., 2012.

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PACC) was implemented across fourteen Pacific Island countries, under the oversight of the UNDP and in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). "The concept underlying PACC is to assist Pacific island countries to decrease their vulnerabilities and increase their resilience to the impacts of climate variability and change" (Hunnam, Kenny, and Carpenter: 30). The project logical framework identifies three main outcomes (with subordinate outputs):

- **Outcome 1**: Policy Changes to deliver immediate vulnerability reduction benefits in the context of emerging climate risks defined in all PACC countries (policy mainstreaming).
- **Outcome 2**: Demonstration measures to reduce vulnerability in coastal areas (pilot projects).
- **Outcome 3**: Capacity to plan for and respond to changes in climate related risks improved (Capacity development).

The pilot projects specifically aimed to support Pacific island nations to implement and demonstrate adaptation and resilience projects in priority sectors, i.e. water resource management, agriculture/food production, and coastal (infrastructure) management.

The purpose of the Mid Term Review (MTR) was to provide a comprehensive review of the progress achieved by the PACC project in terms of development, design and implementation, covering the period from 2006 to mid-2012. Evaluation was based upon a detailed review of available project documentation, and visits to ten of the fourteen participating countries for discussions with project staff and partners and site visits.

Lessons and reflections on the M&E process

As with the AdaptCap project evaluation, this review emphasises the importance of explicitly and thoughtfully addressing CCAR issues throughout a programme's M&E framework. The fact that PACC was specifically designed as a climate change adaptation programme is clearly significant in this regard: its stated goal was "to reduce vulnerability and to increase adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in key Development Sectors identified by 13[1] participating countries in the Pacific" (Hunnam, Kenny, and Carter 2012: 32). However, in the case of PACC it is evident that the M&E framework was not effective in tracking and assessing efforts to meet this goal. The MTR provides a valuable reflection on the M&E processes employed, and concluded that the programme's M&E framework had not been an effective guide to help managers and implementing partners keep the programme 'on track'. The authors found that the generic and rather simplistic PACC project logical framework was "inadequate in terms of giving both clarity and confidence to project executants and participants" (p.7) and, as a result, was underutilised. Indeed, many of the indicators associated with each desired outcome and output appear weak and often failed to consider the depth and quality of the intervention (e.g. "Number of Guidelines developed" as an indicator of "Output 2.6.1a: Guidelines to improve resilience of coastal food production systems to the impacts of climate change", p.32).

An important strength of this MTR (rather than the programme) is the way that it reflected upon the full project cycle including planning, design and implementation phases, as well as management and governance structures, in some cases identifying significant flaws: "The MTR finds that project plan, design and budget were poorly developed in the Project Document, and have not been adequately developed through 'adaptive management' during implementation." (p.7).

The authors acknowledge that the review was undertaken relatively late in the lifetime of the project "which reduced the relevance or utility of the exercise for some of the project executants and participants" (p.6). This somewhat undermined the excellent structure of the MTR described above, as difficult issues regarding the design, management and implementation of the project could not necessarily be addressed satisfactorily or in a timely manner. This was almost certainly beyond the control of the authors, but highlights the need for a regular process of reflection and evaluation which enables valuable evaluation findings to be applied.

The authors places a strong emphasis on making clear and practical recommendations for the programme – a key function of such reviews and evaluations. Their efforts are only let down by the timing of the MTR which appears to limit the applicability of these findings. The review is less successful in drawing out lessons that are more widely applicable to other adaptation projects; this may well be a function of the brief provided to the authors. The 'take home' message for commissioning bodies is that efforts need to be made to ensure the identification of clear, transferable lessons in addition to programme-specific recommendations.

1 *Thirteen Pacific island countries have been engaged in the PACC Project since its inception in 2009, and were joined in 2011 by Tokelau as the 14th.*

Overall performance

The authors concluded that the programme had underperformed in terms of progress towards the overall goal and the three main objectives, stating that "the overall impression of PACC is one of a regionally-conceived and planned project delivering advice and assistance to a fairly uniform and static series of local actions or sub-projects" (p.36). Specifically, the regional support element of the project was deemed to be only "marginally satisfactory". The review of tools and guides applied in the PACC country projects to date suggested a mixed bag of results, with some interesting and useful exercises undertaken, while others did not work well.

There were also some fundamental issues with regard to the pilot projects, in particular the prescription of single sectors and the early selection of specific pilot projects were aspects criticised in the MTR. Both factors contributed to an assortment of isolated projects with limited broader application, rather than serving as a springboard towards promoting resilience in a more strategic and integrated way. The authors identified that "the prescription of single sectors and early selection of specific pilot interventions was a significant mistake... it led to a narrow focus... effectively inhibiting any broader thinking or planning from the outside. The fundamental need for a proper vulnerability and adaptation assessment was lost" (p. 35). The experience from the PACC programme suggests that it is imperative to approach the topic more systematically from the outset. Focusing on a specific pre-designed project without a coherent analysis of both climate change impacts and an assessment of vulnerability and adaptation needs seems to have limited the relevance of these projects.

The evaluators highlight that beginning the programme with pre-determined sectors, but no adaptation-specific guidance for project selection or M&E, backfired. By the time of the evaluation, the fragmented set of projects had not developed strategic momentum; rather there were simply a collection of one-off initiatives, some of which had limited relevance to climate change adaptation. Hunnam, Kenny, and Carpenter argued that the lack of underlying strategy informing the selection of pilot projects was carried throughout the M&E framework for the entire programme. They also indicated that the PACC logframe was generic, vague, and too targeted at the regional level; country programmes did not have their own logframes at all. This resulted in the programme reporting on a myriad of activities "with insufficient critical analysis" (p. 9), and few demonstrable results and lessons from an adaptation perspective. The single sector focus also failed to address critical cross-sectoral issues, despite the fact food production, water and the coastal zone are inextricably linked, especially in a Pacific island context. PACC is not alone with regard to such criticisms; often complex cross-sectoral approaches are overlooked in favour of discrete, sector-specific adaptation interventions which appear more manageable, even if the outcomes are less beneficial in the long term.

South Mindanao integrated coastal zone management project

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Inada, J., 2011.

This project's goal is to "promote comprehensive environmental conservation management of coastal and watershed ecosystems" (Inada 2011: 1) in south Mindanao, along the south coast of the Philippines' southernmost major island. The project constituted a 2,299 million yen loan (≈USD$22.5 million at current exchange rates) from the Government of Japan, which over a ten-year period financed tree plantation and agro-forestry, coastal civil works and physical infrastructure, the establishment of an Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC), a livelihoods assistance project, and two major septage treatment facilities (STFs). In terms of coastal zone management responses, this project represents a fairly typical package of interventions, albeit one that heavily emphasised infrastructure and civil works. The loan agreement was signed in 1998, and the project was implemented over the course of a decade.

Inada's (2011) evaluation of JICA's financing of an integrated coastal zone management project in southern Philippines makes no mention of climate change. This is remarkable given the Philippines is in the top 12 of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries (World Bank 2009) and ranked second in 2012 for weather-related losses (Kreft and Eckstein 2013) – a report that was published before Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in late 2013. Protecting vulnerable coastlines and populations is an urgent priority for the Philippines, thus the failure to consider climate change in this evaluation is very surprising.

The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess the project in terms its relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency. The evaluation had a strong focus on the technical delivery of the project, with little or no consideration of the vulnerability or adaptation context; perhaps a direct result of the project not being framed in terms of climate change objectives.

Lessons and reflections on the M&E process

The failure of the underlying project to factor in climate change may be partially explained by long-term nature of the project; the loan agreement was signed in 1998, before climate change was prominent on international development agendas. However, it is a concern that a 2011 evaluation of a project of this nature and focus failed to address climate change, even within the section that assesses the project's relevance to the Philippines development policy and needs. It reinforces how a failure to consider climate change at the design stage can lead to a total oversight in later evaluations. This is especially true where evaluation processes take a narrow focus by asking 'did the programme do what it said it would?' without accounting for evolving knowledge and a dynamic policy context. On the other hand, this example highlights that programmes that are not 'packaged' as CCAR may in fact contribute to it, thus when seeking to learn from adaptation practice we need to look beyond those initiatives clearly labelled as 'climate change adaptation'.

The failure to consider climate change in this programme, and in the evaluation process, may well have implications for the evaluation findings and the appropriateness of the programmatic decisions that have been made. For example, JICA approved a request to reduce the targets in mangrove and riverbank rehabilitation plantations by 474 hectares and transfer this target to agro-forestry (p.7), because of the low survival rate of mangrove and riverbank plantations and beneficiary preferences for agro-forestry activities. However, because enhanced resilience in a changing climate is not a specified objective, the evaluation fails to assess the appropriateness of such a decision in the context of likely climate impacts.

The evaluation has a strong focus on technical objectives and this is reflected in the way performance was assessed. The relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of the programme were rated by firstly setting an evaluation rating for each component of the project (e.g. the civil works aspect might be rated 'b' for efficiency). These rating were then aggregated to provide an overall rating, e.g. for the overall programme efficiency. There are clearly a number of weaknesses in this approach from which other CCAR programmes can learn. Firstly, the evaluation does not provide a description of how these ratings were determined or what exactly the ratings mean. The authors also acknowledge that "there is no established method to aggregate those evaluation ratings of different components into overall rating" (p.3). This reinforces the dangers of seeking to quantify and summarise evaluation findings without a transparent and robust means of doing so. The assessment of impacts also failed to explore in any depth the causal chain linking activities to perceived impacts. For example, an increase in fish catch because of the mangrove plantation was reported in some locations, but no attempt is made to explore the link between this statement and programme activities in more depth. Similarly, economic growth in the programme area is mentioned in the context of the broader regional development objectives of the programme, however the contribution the programme has made to economic growth is not quantified or explored in any detail.

CCAR programmes will often have to grapple with issues of attribution, contribution and causality, and methods to deal with these issues comprehensively need to be considered at programme design phase if the data is to be available at the point of evaluation.

The evaluation report makes a number of references to the participatory nature of aspects of the project, yet assessment of the effectiveness of participatory approaches is generally ignored. For projects seeking to engage communities in adaptation, it is essential that the success of engagement and capacity building processes are fully assessed. We would also expect the evaluation methodology to employ participatory methods in order to understand different perceptions of project performance (e.g. an intervention may be successful in technical terms yet fail to deliver benefits to vulnerable groups). In this evaluation, a survey of beneficiaries ('Peoples' Organisations') was undertaken, but there seems to have been limited exploration of what the survey responses tell us about the involvement of communities.

Overall performance

The report concluded that the project had "largely achieved its expected impacts" (p. 21) and that "the project is [rated] high in its relevance and effectiveness, fair in its sustainability and efficiency" (p.29). Several recommendations and 'lessons learned' were identified, but there was little effort to identify those which might be relevant to similar projects. This evaluation highlights the difficulty in identifying lessons for climate change adaptation when it is not directly addressed during the design phase of an intervention or in the evaluation brief. The result is somewhat frustrating, as had this been considered there surely would have been useful lessons for the programme, and others to, learn. This failure is the key lesson; it is hard to learn from adaptation efforts if they are not overtly identified and considered from the outset.

The Department for International Development's (DFID) climate change programme in Bangladesh

Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). ICAI, 2011

This mid-term evaluation assesses DFID's investment in the Bangladesh Climate Change Programme, a programme which was approved in 2008 and which was planned to run to 2013. Bangladesh is home to one of the world's largest delta systems with two-thirds of the country being less than five metres above sea level. It is considered to be extremely vulnerable to climate change. DFID invested £75 million[2] of assistance that was directed into three complementary channels: a Strategic Fund (new knowledge, building technical capacity); Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme; and a Climate Change Resilience Fund. Much of the emphasis of the programme is on making homes and livelihoods more resilient to short-term shocks. Activities included cyclone shelters, early warning systems, 'climate-proofing' agriculture, raising homes above flood levels, and upgrading or improving infrastructure. Other activities supported public policy, research, and the building of institutional capacity. Most of the funding was channelled through the World Bank and UNDP.

The evaluation assessed programme objectives, delivery, impact and learning, as well as providing an overall assessment. The methodology used comprised a three-week, four-person evaluation team visit to Bangladesh to assess "whether UK assistance for climate change adaptation is effectively and efficiently responding to the needs of the people of Bangladesh" (p.6). This incorporated six site visits; a programme of meetings with direct beneficiaries, government officials, implementers and local and international experts; and an assessment of DFID and its partners' systems. The evaluation process is not oriented towards detailed technical matters, rather much of it focuses on internal management processes, including issues surrounding its main partners (World Bank and UNDP), and overall performance.

2 *As of the time of writing, only £13 million had been spent.*

Lessons and reflections on the M&E process

The structured approach (focused on objectives, delivery, impact and learning then concluded with practical recommendations) provides a thorough yet simple structure. The emphasis on learning is particularly commendable, as too often this is overlooked in evaluation processes, yet is a critical factor in improving future adaptation practice. Other CCAR programmes can also learn from the straight forward and effective presentation of the report. This may seem like 'window-dressing', however the succinct (20 page), clear and well-presented main report makes the findings far more accessible to programme staff, donors and other adaptation practitioners alike. This is likely to have very practical implications for the number of people who will benefit from the findings.

The programme was praised by the evaluators for having "balanced objectives aligned to the country's needs" (p. 1) and it "demonstrates considerable innovation" (p. 1), a finding which reinforces the importance of well-defined adaptation-related objectives identified in the previous cases. In terms of delivery, the decision to channel funds through UNDP and World Bank was viewed positively, however, the evaluators felt that DFID was not holding these partners sufficiently to account for their performance in implementation (especially in the light of project delays). The assessment of impact was limited as much of the programme had not yet started, but where interventions were underway, they appeared to be performing well with good levels of local engagement, with some examples provided. In assessing learning, the evaluation team highlighted the high degree of innovation exhibited in terms of generating new knowledge about the impacts of climate change, piloting new approaches to adaptation, and new forms of disaster management. They also commented on the good balance of knowledge transfer, pilot projects, and large-scale implementation.

As with our other examples, the evaluation recommendations proposed are practical, however are largely related to the management of the programme as opposed to either technical recommendations or those developed for wider application. That said, some recommendations may well be useful for other CCAR programmes. For example, the evaluators highlight that DFID should support monitoring of the activities and achievements of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan by local and international civil society organisations. Such an approach would ensure greater local participation in the DME process, whilst building local capacity and provide opportunities for learning to infuse other organisational structures.

Overall performance

The overarching conclusion of ICAI's (2011) evaluation of DFID's climate change portfolio in Bangladesh was that "the programme is technically sound but more effort is needed from DFID and its implementing partners to measure the difference it is making". This measurement is needed in order to more effectively "demonstrate the long-term achievements that are likely to occur and to learn from the programmes" (p. 18). Overall, the programme was given a 'green-amber' performance rating, indicating that the programme meets most of the criteria for effectiveness and value for money.

Summary and conclusions

The evaluations of these four programmes in the Philippines, the Pacific Islands, Bangladesh, and India represent an interesting range of contrasting examples. All addressed vulnerability and adaptation in low-lying coastal areas, albeit with a medley of strategies and projects. Together, they represent a broad range of approaches, and exhibit considerable differences in how well adaptation perspectives were integrated into their programme DME frameworks. Reading across the four evaluations, a number of key lessons and priorities can be identified:

1. **Programmes and projects that did not clearly reflect adaptation perspectives in their design provided a weak platform for effective adaptation M&E and learning**. It may seem obvious, but a failure to take into account climate change in programme design makes it extremely hard for effective adaptation lessons to be learnt through M&E processes. The JICA-funded South Mindanao project illustrates how opportunities to understand adaptation effectiveness can be missed if the intervention does not explore the relationship between climate change and project objectives thoroughly from the outset. In contrast, the AdaptCap programme established a clear set of adaptation objectives and 'expected results' that provided a sound footing for later evaluation work. ICAI's (2011) evaluation also praised the objectives developed in relation to DFID's Bangladesh programme which were viewed as being both innovative and well aligned to the country's needs.

2. **Not all adaptation efforts are, or necessarily need to be, branded as climate adaptation projects**. This paper highlights that while these projects need to embed adaptation objectives in their design, adaptation practitioners must also learn from mainstream development projects.

3. **M&E frameworks must reflect adaptation objectives and allow for complex issues to be explored**. The evaluation of the PACC programme found that even where adaptation objectives are reflected in specified outcomes, these need to be supported by effective M&E processes and methods. In this case, the authors found the generic and simplistic logframe was inadequate, while the indicators developed also appear very limited. Similarly, ICAI's evaluation praised the design of objectives but highlighted that greater effort was needed by DFID and its partners to measure the difference it is making. As stated in other publications (e.g. Bours *et al*. 2014b) there are a number of factors which made adaptation M&E challenging, and these must be addressed by tailoring conventional approaches and considering the use of other methods (such as Theory of Change or social learning methods) rather than hoping simplistic 'off-the-shelf' methods will suffice.

4. **Evaluate the full project or programme cycle, not just the implementation**. For M&E to be an effective learning tool it needs to be embedded in all stages of the project cycle; equally it should also reflect upon these stages. It is often the case that M&E focuses only on the implementation. Hunnam, Kenny and Carpenter's (2012) review of PACC included a review of planning, design and implementation phases while ICAI's evaluation of DFID's work in Bangladesh took a similarly thorough approach. Such an approach enables a more holistic assessment of why a programme was or was not effective, and means that recommendations can deal with fundamental issues such as project design.

5. **Evaluate learning**. If learning is a critical part of both M&E and adaptation programming more generally, then DME approaches need to consider this specifically. ICAI's evaluation approach that examined objectives, delivery, impact and learning, should be commended in this regard. Linked to this, we would like to see more explicit efforts to articulate wider lessons with applicability in other contexts. Understandably, recommendations in the four evaluations were often project or programme specific, relating to management structures and so on, however, it would not have taken much more effort to draw out a few broader recommendations for other adaptation practitioners. This is something that needs to be highlighted in the Terms of Reference provided to evaluators.

6. **Dig deep to understand why**. The four evaluations used a range of indicators (some more appropriate than others) in order to understand performance. However, the degree to which the evaluators sought to understand the underlying reasons behind these indicators varied considerably. Qualitative methods can play a key role in this regard, allowing evaluators to understand the contextual factors that prevented or enabled adaptation action.

7. **Timing matters, link M&E processes to programmatic needs**. The mid-term review of PACC is a prime example of the importance of timing. The authors make many valuable observations and recommendations that simply come too late to be acted upon, as the review was conducted towards the end of the programme. This is a critical message for donors and those commissioning evaluation work.

8. **Ensure beneficiaries participate in evaluation processes**. A number of the evaluations included site visits, interviews and beneficiary surveys. While such approaches were probably proportional to the types of evaluations being undertaken, there appeared to be limited effort made to genuinely 'stand in the shoes' of stakeholders and beneficiaries in order to understand the project or programme from their perspective. There was very limited emphasis placed on evaluating the stakeholder engagement processes, even where programmes claimed to be 'participatory'. If adaptation is to be successful, then those affected are usually central to the success of these interventions. This should be reflected in the design of interventions, which should then be evaluated thoroughly.

9. **Clarity and presentation is important**. ICAI's succinct, well-presented report is easy to read and informative. It is easy for donors, programme staff and others working in the field of adaptation to identify key messages and lessons. This may seem a peripheral issue, but if evaluators cannot communicate lessons effectively, then the uptake of this knowledge will be reduced considerably.

As illustrated in this review, the climate-related challenges faced by coastal communities in Asia and the Pacific are huge, and significant investments are now being made to address these. DME processes will play a key role in guiding this investment towards locally appropriate interventions and in maximising the use and impact of these resources. This places a great emphasis on ensuring DME systems are robust, aligned to adaptation-specific objectives and focussed on learning through practice. If not, adaptation progress is likely to be both slow and expensive, to the detriment of both donors and local communities.

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SEA Change is a free, online Community of Practice on monitoring and evaluation of climate change interventions in Asia and beyond. Their goal is to develop a culture of high quality and rigorous M&E frameworks, approaches and methodologies. They intend to do so by developing partnerships between members of their platform and building member capacity for strengthening discourses and practices on M&E. www.seachangecop.org

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