Dear friends and colleagues,

Thank you to all who followed and contributed to this Exchange: “Ensuring Sustained Impacts of Donor-Driven Programs”. While the number of responses we received this time was small, we nonetheless got some very insightful contributions from members of this Community of Practice.

Dr. Gillian Cambers at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in Fiji, for example, raised a particularly insightful and practical suggestion, urging donors to think about a two-phase approach to project funding. In that approach, the first phase of the project implements the main activities, while the second phase, using “only 10% of the total value of Phase 1”, runs the project at a smaller scale – and with the explicit goal of measuring impacts as a “key feature”.

It is clear that M&E is a critical component of any project; however, it is oftentimes overlooked. Interestingly, Merl Hilario at the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development in the Philippines added that measuring capacity building impacts is not difficult, but there needs to be funds available to do it.

When discussing how project impacts can be better sustained, Hilario noted the need for donors to identify specific government entities who would work with communities. This idea of continually engaging communities, stakeholders and project beneficiaries resonated throughout the discussion.

It is also interesting to note V.S. Balasubramanian’s perspective that the people and institutions that were trained by a particular project could be considered as “assets created” – which, in the most ideal circumstance, would continue the capacity building and knowledge dissemination. He highlighted his experience at the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in India where the bank took ownership of several GIZ-supported technical programs.

Similarly, Patrick Jasper, also from NABARD, emphasized the need to build partnerships with training institutions to leverage their capabilities as well as to conduct training of trainers programs particularly during the funded phase of a project. This is exactly what USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific has been doing through our “Urban Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Training Course” and the recent “Managing Project Preparation for Climate Change Adaptation Training Course”.

You can read their full responses to the 12th APAN Exchange in this consolidated replies report.
Thank you again for your insightful contributions. I always welcome new topics for future Exchanges. Please drop me an email at the.exchange@adapt-asia.org with your ideas. I look forward to hearing your views again, and learning more, in our next Exchange.

Best regards,

Dr. Peter N. King
Senior Advisor
Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance
USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific

Responses from the APAN Community

Contributors from the APAN Community to the 12th Exchange (20 June – 6 July 2016).

1. Patrick Jasper, Asst. General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), India (Posted on 5 July 2015)

Patrick Jasper, Asst. General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), India (Posted on 5 July 2015)

Dear Peter,

Thanks for the opportunity to participate in the exchange. I am jotting down some points with respect to Points 1 and 3. I am not quite sure about No. 2. Hope it is of some help.

1. Disseminating and Ensuring Sustainability

I would suggest partnerships with these institutions so as to leverage their own existing training facilities / infrastructure. In this way when institutions require such training programmes or capacity building, experts can be called and the training given to stakeholders. This reduces costs for both the trainers and the trainees. The partnership could be in the form of MoUs or technical partnerships which are more informal. Another way would be to conduct Trainers Training programmes during the Funding phase and then ensure that the trainers then disseminate this information either to stakeholders or other partner institutions in their area of operations. This would involve proper selection of participants.

3. Revisiting Impacts

Yes it most certainly does. As far as Development Projects are concerned, Sustainability is an important issue on which the success or failure is judged. This can be ensured only if the project can be revisited after a few years. It is also important to understand the issues involved in the long run and the lessons learnt. We have been doing this in NABARD on a case to case basis. We have been implementing Community Based Watershed Project for a long time now. These projects helped create community organisations like Self Help Groups and Village Watershed Committees. We are now in the process of consolidation these groups and organisations into Producer organisations or companies by leveraging on group dynamics. As a result we have had to look into how effective these entities have been since the close of the actual funding and to look into their day to day activities.

However post evaluation of a Capacity Building project as mentioned is a different ball game all together. It will involve actually engaging with the participant over a longer period to evaluate the continuous impact the project had. Difficult but possible especially if participant selection has been...

2. V. S. Balasubramanian, Farm Sector Policy/Development Department, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Karnataka Regional Office, Bangalore, India (Posted on 4 July 2016)


4. Dr. Gillian Cambers, Programme Manager
done right.

Once again thanks for the opportunity.

Patrick Jasper
Asst. General Manager
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), India

V. S. Balasubramanian, Farm Sector Policy/Development Department, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Karnataka Regional Office, Bangalore, India (Posted on 4 July 2016)

Greetings to all. Here are my views.

Methods for sustenance:

We can try similar attempts which we do for projects involving physical/tangible visible benefits, where we handover the assets created to a Community/an Institution with some corpus or with an activity which gives sustainable income.

Under this programme also, there are assets created, the people who were trained, the institutions which were supported with training material and capacity. These assets should continue the capacity building and disseminate knowledge.

Funding may ideally taper but engagement should continue. In our various capacity building programme with our channel partners we do gradually reduce our financial support but keep the engagement on, to enter again with minimum assistance, if necessary in future. Also capacity building is bundled with the developmental projects so that the activity continues and partners build on them.

Learning is a continuous process and the knowledge resource base (Trainers/Centre of excellence/Training Cells/knowledge champions) should continue the capacity building activities. The updation of knowledge resource is important and a mechanism to revisit the syllabus, case studies, update the training kit created, best practices, refresher courses at periodic intervals may become one of the exit options.

As far as strategies is concerned, the best could be to coordinate/tie up/engage with the existing capacity building infrastructure/systems available in the country and/or with the development partners to take a more proactive role in continuing the valuable activity. Engagement should continue even after the handover process. We at NABARD can take the example of GIZ Technical collaboration in various programmes. Type and nature of engagement varies. The engagement has matured with lot more ownership by NABARD. Some pilots have been mainstreamed. It started in watersheds, tribal development now towards climate proofing, low emission development, green economy, etc. However here in these cases, Capacity Building have been part of a programme (which are funded on a loan or grant basis by KfW and there are parallel engagements), not a standalone. So for as the standalone capacity building programmes are concerned, different strategy may have to be applied.
Post project completion engagement may help in preserving the valuable lesson learned and constant updation of information.

**Post-Evaluation:**

Capacity Need Assessment (CNA) tools may be used post project at some intervals to assess whether there is a considerable change in the skills gained or happening as intended. Suitable reporting mechanism - systematic monitoring and feedback mechanism may be created if not available already.

**V. S. Balasubramanian**  
**Farm Sector Policy/Development Department**  
**National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**  
**Karnataka Regional Office**  
**Bangalore, India**

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**Merl Hilario, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff, Focal person, Tribal Zone Management Component, Palawan, Philippines (Posted on 22 June 2016)**

The best strategies is for the funder to identify the govt entity who work with the community (immersed). We, the PCSDS tried to develop partnership with CSOs, POs, and other govt entities. However our fund from the government delimit our activities, although yearly we have small funds available, but not enough to cover the communities who are prepared to accept the programs they wished with our assistance, especially the indigenous communities in the province of Palawan. Once we develop livelihood projects, our small fund can sustain the monitoring as part of government counterpart. I'm so disappointed that I can't move with the bulk of community request for assistance in the management planning of their conserved areas. Our pilot site needs assistance in capacity building of the local government units for their acceptance of IP plans and have it mainstreamed with their CLWUP/FLUP. Conditions that will foster a successful handover and ownership that will ensure sustained impacts at the national and local levels will be achieved if the local government units (LGUs) has been properly capiticated with their responsibilities. Our experience make sense, since we implemented the integrated area development programs, turned-over to the communities and LGUs were done but sustainability were not achieved due to lack of funds for linkaging to market and updating/transfer of technology and revisit the communities after program completion.

Measurement of capacity building impacts is not difficult for us if we have fund to do it. We have program on ECAN Education and Extension, but with a very small and limited fund. A good example of a post-evaluation of a capacity building project other than climate change is mentoring/continue capitivating through on-the job training programs related to their livelihood needs. We have also enforcement programs that could support, but has a very limited fund.

With high hope that we could be a partner to reach vulnerable and marginalized indigenous communities.

Hear from you.
Sincerely,

Merl Hilario  
Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff  
Focal person, Tribal Zone Management Component  
Multi-tasked with: ECAN Education and Extension  
Palawan, Philippines

Dr. Gillian Cambers, Programme Manager – Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Nabua, Fiji (Posted on 21 June 2016)

Good day,

The Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States project supported by the European Union and implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) is also coming to an end this year and we have grappled with the same three questions. Here are some of the ways we have tried to address them:

**Question 1: Disseminating the knowledge and experiences.**

During our closing months, we prepare a “Lessons learnt roadshow” consisting of a short video and presentation documenting some of the experiences and lessons learnt and based on the project’s interventions in the countries. The roadshow lasted about 90 minutes and most importantly included 45+ minutes for discussion. We took this roadshow to ten different organisations in Fiji, Samoa and FSM, as well as the diplomatic corps in Fiji and reached more than 200 climate change professionals. We found the verbal discussion an excellent way to share experiences and knowledge.

**Questions 2 and 3: Sustainability and measurement of impacts.**

Our project had a duration of 5 years and achieved some elements of sustainability. We would like to propose in the future that donors consider a 2 phase approach to project funding: (a) Phase 1 would cover years 1-5 and would cover execution of the main activities and would close at the end of year 5; (b) Phase 2 would consist of years 6-10, would be funded by the same donor with only 10% of the total value of Phase 1, and would provide for continued M&E, measurement of impacts, continuation of selected key personnel and small scale project activities, and maintenance of intervention measures.

The measurement of impacts, which is rarely done, could be a key feature of the phase 2 activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Gillian

Dr. Gillian Cambers  
Programme Manager – Global Climate Change Alliance: Pacific Small Island States (GCCA: PSIS)
Dear friends and colleagues,

Thank you for supporting this Exchange Series. Over the last three years, we’ve reflected on many key climate and development topics and learned so much from one another. I greatly appreciate every response, idea and experience that you’ve taken the time to share. It is indeed through your contributions that we’ve managed to foster and grow this Community of Practice.

Some of you might be aware that this Exchange Series was conceived by the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project team. It continues to be implemented and supported by the project as a way to meaningfully engage with APAN’s broad network of adaptation practitioners, including government officials.

Helping eligible government officials obtain financing for climate change adaptation is USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific’s mission since 2011. This is achieved through a combination of direct government support in project preparation and capacity building at the regional, national and local levels.

In 2016, the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project is approaching closeout. One item that remains high on our agenda is the question of sustainability – particularly, how best to sustain our impacts and, more generally, how to ensure donor-driven programs, like ours, continue to deliver results beyond the life of the project.

Allow me to take this opportunity to seek your feedback and learn from your experience in sustaining project impacts. Please consider the following questions:

1. At USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific, we partner with institutions, like Climate Change Asia at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, to house and deliver capacity building programs, such as the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific “Urban Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Training Course” and the recent “Managing Project Preparation for Climate Change Adaptation Training Course”. We leverage the capabilities and goodwill of counterpart agencies and see this as one method to disseminate and sustain our project’s knowledge among training institutions and government agencies. In your experience, what other methods are there to help disseminate and sustain similar knowledge and capacity building activities, once the principal funding ceases?

2. The need to view sustainability as a critical issue in all donor-driven programs is paramount because development partners, and also countries,
often pay little attention to projects once they’re completed. Valuable lessons learned are lost and information becomes outdated rapidly. What strategies do you think are available to convince countries, as well as development partners, to take a more proactive role in continuing a valuable activity after the initial funding ceases? What conditions foster a successful handover and ownership that better ensure sustained impacts at the national and local levels? Finally, how do we transform our current approach to development in order to guarantee more long-term impacts?

3. In your experience, does it make sense to revisit the question of impacts some years after project completion, as is often done by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank for their loan projects? Capacity building is notoriously difficult to measure impacts because of the attribution issue, so does the transition to a post-project environment make post-evaluation invalid for capacity building projects like USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific? Is there any good example of a post-evaluation of a capacity building project in a domain other than climate change?

I look forward to receiving your responses and to another robust discussion.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Peter N. King  
Senior Advisor  
Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance  
USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific

Admin matters: For each Exchange, you have about two weeks to share any thoughts, ideas and experiences via the-exchange@adapt-asia.org with the group. At the end of the Exchange period, a consolidated summary of the discussion will be shared.

The APAN Exchange Series is facilitated by the APAN Knowledge Management Team and supported by the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project. The team moderates the exchanges and ensures that members receive a maximum of one email a day. Messages posted reflect the personal views of the contributors and not the positions of their organizations.

If you would like to opt-out of the Exchange at any time, please contact Augustine Kwan, Programme Manager at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies at kwan@iges.or.jp.

The APAN Exchange Series is made possible with the generous support of USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific. Learn more about APAN and our partners by visiting: http://www.asiapacificadapt.net/