

**Independent Evaluation of the
Community-based Climate Change Action Grants (CBCCAG)
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

Initiative Name	Community-based Climate Change Action Grants		
Aid Works initiative number	INK189		
Commencement date	12 October 2011	Completion date	28 February 2016
Total Australian \$	\$16,931,831.95		
Implementing partner(s)	CBCCAG was implemented in partnership with multiple Non-Government Organisations, including: Oxfam, CARE Australia, Save the Children International, Act for Peace, Live & Learn, The Nature Conservancy and Plan International.		
Country/Region	Vietnam, Timor Leste, Philippines, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tonga.		
Primary sector	Adaptation and mitigation to climate change.		
Initiative objective/s	The Community-based Climate Change Action Grants support community-based adaptation and mitigation activities in developing countries in partnership with non-government organisations. The objectives of the program are to: increase the resilience of communities in developing countries to the unavoidable impacts of climate change; and reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions while also contributing to development priorities in the target communities.		

INITIATIVE SUMMARY

The Community-based Climate Change Action Grants (CBCCAG) program supports community-based adaptation (CBA) and mitigation activities in developing countries. The CBCCAG co-invested with a range of NGOs, including Oxfam, CARE Australia, Act for Peace, Live and Learn, The Nature Conservancy and Plan International.

The program forms part of Australia's international 'fast-start' commitment of \$599 million (2010-2013), building on the outcomes and achievements of previous support for community-based adaptation activities. The program builds on Australia's previous support for community-level adaptation activities in developing countries and complements Australia's support for small-scale community-based work through the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Program.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Objective: The purpose of the independent evaluation is to inform DFAT's future investments in climate change adaptation and mitigation programs and provide guidance on strategic issues pertaining to DFAT's broader climate change programming. The NGOs managing the projects are an equally important audience, having an interest in the outcomes and lessons as they apply to the design and implementation of comparable future work.

Evaluation Team: The independent evaluation is the result of a comprehensive review process involving broad stakeholder consultation and involvement. The evaluation team was conducted by a specialist team from Griffin NRM Pty Ltd, comprising: Dr. Kate Duggan (climate change specialist); and Bruce Bailey (monitoring and evaluation specialist).

DFAT'S RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

DFAT agrees the CBCCAG program is best viewed as a snapshot in the longer-term development programs of the implementation partners and participating communities. In the three-year timeframe, partners integrated the risks of climate change in their work with communities to improve livelihoods and build resilience, and contribute to the global evidence base for community-based adaptation. CBCCAG enabled partners to build knowledge and skills about the risks and vulnerabilities posed by changing weather and climate in their local contexts.

The review, particularly its findings and recommendations, will be useful for guiding future investments in climate change programs as well as informing the designs of other climate initiatives. Overall, DFAT broadly agrees with the recommendations made by the review some review recommendations will require ongoing discussions as climate investments are mainstreamed across the aid program. Specific responses can be found in the table below.

No.	Recommendation	Response
1	<p>Keep going: Invest in a further phase, building on the partnerships and achievements to date, adjusting pathways to impact and approaches based on lessons learned.</p> <p>Continue the approach of integrating climate change through a community development lens, focusing on the issues concerning communities, such as food and water security, health and incomes, which provide benefits in the short term as well as resilience to the specific impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>Agree that it is important to build on achievements made to date. As DFAT mainstreams climate change activities through Australia's development program, we will continue to look for opportunities to continue the approach of integrating climate change through a community development lens.</p>
2	<p>Go deeper: Deepen community understanding of the risks that changing weather and climate poses for their lives and livelihoods. Keep working on enabling their timely, ongoing access to good information such as forecasts and warnings so that they can incorporate it into their planning and investment.</p> <p>Look for opportunities and partnerships to broker knowledge, and for translating and making complex technical information accessible to communities in forms that make sense and can be applied in their livelihood systems. Try to ensure that the knowledge is integrated in community knowledge systems (e.g. for food and water security) and is not disconnected from decision-making processes. Always tailor communication to the education and technology levels of communities; engage them in its production.</p> <p>Look for partnerships that can help to build technical skills locally over time, including in local government extension services, and to support extension centres (such as climate centres and field schools) as their capacity to provide accurate, timely, relevant information to communities gradually develops.</p>	<p>Agree. Enabling access to timely and quality information is critical to planning and investment.</p> <p>Early warning systems and assessments form an important part of Australia's support to mitigate the impacts of disasters. DFAT recognises the importance of community disaster planning and enhanced meteorological services and will continue to invest in these areas.</p>

3	<p>Integrate science and traditional knowledge: Continue and enhance the integration of scientific and technical knowledge for understanding and managing the risks of climate change with community knowledge of their environment, their development context and their livelihood systems. Communities are best placed to develop adaptive options, initially from within their livelihood systems, when they are provided with a reasonable depth of understanding of the risks and likely impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Work with local partners to understand these systems before new technology and options for reducing the risks of climate change are introduced, so that they can better identify ways to meet local needs.</p> <p>Continue to incorporate traditional knowledge and practice in assessments of vulnerability and adaptive capacity, and facilitate the use of local resource governance mechanisms and jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Agree. DFAT recognises the importance of incorporating traditional and local knowledge into climate change activities and planning. DFAT will continue this practice.</p> <p>As the evaluation identifies, Communities have extensive, deep knowledge about their resources and how best to manage them to sustain their livelihoods. It is critical to incorporate this knowledge into planning to meet local needs.</p>
4	<p>Work with community governance structures: Continue to provide facilities for communities to organise around climate change issues. Make sure these are connected to mainstream community development planning groups and systems (e.g. farmer and water groups) and that the knowledge and experience are integrated, informing the decisions of these organisations. These connections can be mutually reinforcing, providing knowledge and capacity building across sectors and interests.</p>	<p>Agree. Coordination and knowledge sharing between different interest groups and governance structures was integral to achieving the outcomes of the program.</p>
5	<p>Tailor activities to the needs, roles and skills of different groups: Ensure that the vulnerabilities of all groups in the community are fully appreciated, discussed and assessed. Provide opportunities/spaces for all groups to access the knowledge they need for these discussions. Make sure there are mechanisms to connect these with mainstream community development decision-making.</p> <p>Focus resilience-building activities on the roles of groups that may not be active in traditional decision-making in communities, providing opportunities for them to understand and discuss the risks within their particular circumstances, and to come up with ways to reduce the risks and contribute to the resilience of the whole community.</p> <p>Include child-led and child-centred approaches to engage children/youth in vulnerability assessments, adaptation planning and local action. Their inputs are unique and essential to overall community resilience. Specific expertise and methods are needed for this, including different media and forms of communication that 'speak to' children and harness their creativity. Form partnerships to provide these.</p> <p>Provide opportunities to connect children to wider knowledge networks and access to ongoing education about climate change where possible (e.g. through mentoring and courses) while the formal education system matures.</p>	<p>Agree. All projects in CBCCAG employed participatory planning models, providing the foundation for wide community engagement.</p> <p>DFAT notes most projects reported that they have more work to do in engaging people with disabilities. While some projects targeted support through activities that facilitated disabled access, this is an area in need of further work. This area will be given greater consideration for future investments.</p>

6	<p>Deepen community experience of options for adaptation: Continue community-led testing of options for reducing the risks of climate change in their livelihood systems and, over time, for adapting these systems. Look for partnerships to support these options and for development of innovations.</p> <p>These should include partnerships with government through complementary planning and development. These partnerships can provide essential infrastructure and services, and facilitate access to water, markets and mechanisms such as technical assistance/ incentives, seed funding, market regulation and trade agreements.</p> <p>Partnerships could be established with the private sector to provide for the genuine engagement and the rights of producers. These partnerships can support supply of inputs for conservation farming, integrated pest management and low-cost, efficient water and fuel technology. They can also open up markets to a more diverse range of produce.</p> <p>Partnerships could also be forged with research for development agencies, actively engaging them on the ground to monitor and assess different options, and to inform their research. This will make their research more relevant and responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>Agree. DFAT acknowledges and recognises the importance of community-based adaptation and the importance of incorporating the lessons learned from this program in future investments.</p> <p>DFAT will continue to assess and consider options going forward to work closer with the private sector in this area, particularly through implementation of the outcomes of the COP21 Paris Agreement.</p>
7	<p>Engage with local government early and on multiple fronts: Begin engaging with local government at the start of activities. Work with their local leadership to ensure that project activities are coordinated with other work in the local area and to ensure that officials are fully across the project. Keep them regularly updated.</p> <p>Engage technical officials in capacity building around climate change. This will take time to develop and will not be sufficient in many areas to support the ongoing needs of communities for technical assistance, especially as climate change impacts worsen. However, it all helps and is an effective way to engage officials with communities, and for them to hear community voices.</p> <p>Support this capacity building by providing other opportunities for technical officers to build their skills, for example through mentoring, formal training courses and professional exchanges, so that they can more effectively support community needs. This is an ongoing process that requires sustained investment, education and training.</p> <p>Connect community planning for climate change adaptation to mainstream local government community development programs. This is challenging and requires dedicated effort, but working outside these systems is not sustainable and is unlikely to deliver ongoing benefits for communities.</p> <p>Start small, for example by facilitating integration of community vulnerability assessments in local construction planning, so that community road projects are designed to withstand weather, and supplies provided through agriculture programs suit changing weather conditions. This means working with officials such as engineers, agronomists and natural resource managers (where they exist) and not just extension workers.</p> <p>Opportunities are emerging in some places to integrate through DRR programs, although these too are commonly disconnected from mainstream development budgets, and dedicated DRR program budgets (where they exist) tend to be small and lack transparency.</p>	<p>Agree. The projects engaged local governments through various mechanisms. DFAT acknowledges that engagement with the local government at early stages in the program promotes local ownership, improves coordination of responses and aligns development priorities.</p> <p>DFAT also recognises limited capacities and resources can cause engagement and sustainability challenges, some of these challenges can be overcome with early planning, engagement and adequate coordination.</p>

8	<p>Look for partnerships to deliver complementary development at scale: Climate change plays out across landscapes and ecosystems and many of the risks such as large floods, drought and drying conditions are best addressed at this scale. If they are not addressed at this scale, the work of communities (e.g. small-scale flood protection, sea walls, new water supplies, and new production technologies and systems) can be quickly undermined. Where it is achieved, however, the impact can be truly transformative.</p> <p>Firstly, the landscape scale processes must be understood, requiring specialist technical expertise, which is rarely available locally. Then it entails establishing cooperative networks across communities and local government administration areas, far beyond the scope of communities to achieve. Civil society can play a role through advocacy and its own extensive networks, including with national/provincial government, development banks and donors.</p>	<p>Agree. DFAT acknowledges Engagement with government provides mechanisms for scaling out successful approaches to other communities and wider areas.</p> <p>The private sector also offers potential for supporting scaling out and leveraging of funding and activities. DFAT will continue to consider ways for a broad range of actors to coordinate and effectively and deliver complementary work at scale.</p>
9	<p>Consolidate the CBCCAG evidence base on community-based climate change adaptation across the projects: Analyse it and document outcomes, experiences and lessons to see if it is possible to define ‘models’ and approaches that can be shared to inform future programs and the global methodological discussion on CBA. Make the evidence base available and accessible.</p> <p>This evidence base also offers a wealth of knowledge to inform discussions about entry points for climate change in community development, complementing knowledge from adaptation efforts around the world. Properly analysed, it could inform our understanding of what ‘resilience’ means in community settings, how it relates to short-term development benefits and how investment might need to be ramped up to deal with worsening impacts.</p> <p>The CBCCAG evidence base is of particular value in the context of the Pacific Region, home to many of the world’s most vulnerable areas and to millions of at-risk people who have not benefited from the industrial and resources booms that fuel global climate change. It offers rich, in-depth experiences and lessons to guide the next wave of donor investment.</p>	<p>Agree. Experiences across the program highlight the need for streamlined, targeted environment assessment and management tools, drawing on the substantial global knowledge base, for community-based development work. A number of lessons and achievements can be drawn from these programs and it is important these lessons are incorporated into future planning.</p>

10	<p>Don't start again: Build on the achievements in the project locations. Deepening the knowledge and experiences of communities and local partners will enable the evidence base and good practice generated by the CBCCAG program to be adapted locally for wider application</p>	<p>Agree. The findings and lessons learned from CBCCAG projects, and workshops held throughout the life of the program, have established a strong evidence base for future investments and best practice. These achievements will be valuable to build on for future climate investments.</p>
11	<p>Continue the consortium approach: It is an efficient implementation method with large potential benefits for all partners.</p> <p>Ensure that roles and responsibilities of partners are clear upfront. Provide mechanisms for collaboration and synergies in the way different partners work (i.e. not just working separately).</p> <p>Engage all partners in the design process, agreeing on objectives, outcomes, budgets and pace of implementation.</p> <p>Jointly develop a project-wide monitoring and evaluation system. Ensure it is structured to report against program as well as project objectives and outcomes. Provide dedicated resources and expertise to coordinate regular monitoring, analysis and reporting. Provide a range of opportunities for cross-learning within and between communities and across project countries. Local partners highly value these.</p>	<p>Agree. The consortium model proved to be efficient and effective to build capacity of local partners and enabled the sharing of lessons and approaches.</p> <p>DFAT recognises and agrees that the consortia approach added value however future investments using this approach will require greater monitoring and evaluation practices at both consortia and program levels.</p>
12	<p>Build local partner capacities: Supporting local partners through good coordination, sharing of new methods and technologies, and providing access to wider networks is an effective ongoing role for international NGOs to play.</p>	<p>Agree. Local partners were integral to the implementation of CBCCAG, good coordination and sharing of knowledge was important to achieve the outcomes of projects.</p>

13	<p>Provide support for program managers: Provide clear directions on DFAT requirements and design guidelines. Enable input from Posts and DFAT sector specialists (where these still exist). Provide opportunities for Post to engage (e.g. by giving Post a role in program management and cross-program events, and sharing progress reports).</p> <p>Develop a program-wide monitoring and evaluation framework, setting out program objectives, outcomes and indicators, and a coherent theory of change. Provide regular opportunities for cross-learning across the program and feedback to implementation partners on program-level progress. Extend these to include opportunities for sharing of skills and methods, including professional placements, peer-to-peer exchanges and methodology workshops.</p> <p>Enable regular cross-program communication and exchange (e.g. through a program website or blog).</p> <p>Provide resources for consolidation and analysis of the evidence base across the program to inform future programs and wider methodological development in CBA.</p>	<p>Agree that regular opportunities for monitoring and evaluation are critical to achieving outcomes against objectives. Some project teams provided training for local partners in monitoring and evaluations and shared lessons through cross-country and peer-to-peer exchanges. DFAT recognises most project teams consider that more opportunities could have been made available for cross-learning both within and between projects. We encourage NGOs to continue to work together and with DFAT to share learnings from CBCCAG.</p>
----	---	--