

## 2019 INDEPENDENT MID-TERM REVIEW OF COMMUNITY BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT PHASE 2 (PATHWAYS)

JOINT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE FROM DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT) AND  
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (ACIAR)

### Summary of management response

We welcome the mid-term review findings and acknowledge the recommendations for Community Based Fisheries Management Project Phase 2 (Pathways). We appreciate the favourable observations and conclusions made in the mid-term review. The review provided a timely 'reflection and reset' moment at the half-way mark of the project. The review did not require major structural changes in partnerships or objectives. Rather it requires a focus on three areas: (i) maximize development outcomes, (ii) improve the sustainability of project achievements, and (iii) improved evidencing of outcomes across the project to better tell the project's story. Central to this revamp will be a clarified results framework and expanded set of end-of-project outcomes. Documenting lessons around scaling community based fisheries management (CBFM) will be a particular focus.

More detailed responses to each recommendation are included in the table below.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<u>Recommendation 1</u> Clearly articulate the development outcomes that are expected to be achieved by September 2021.	Agree	The current design document does not adequately articulate specific development outcomes. The project team is working to revise the project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to better articulate end-of-project outcomes.	ACIAR (and DFAT as required) will work with the project team to revise the project M&E framework clearly outlining what success is expected to look like at the end of the project and focusing effort and resources on achieving those outcomes. ACIAR will seek endorsement of new framework from in-house expertise before submission to the Project Reference Committee.	March 2020
<u>Recommendation 2</u> Significantly revise the template for the Annual Report to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose in reporting on progress towards outcomes. To the extent permitted by ACIAR processes, the report should reduce its emphasis on reporting outputs, and instead focus on outcomes. The Annual Report should be the primary document that tells the performance story of this investment.	Agree	The project is managed by ACIAR and the current annual report format meets ACIAR requirements for reporting on project outputs. Given DFAT's accountability of aid funding management, there is a need for the report to provide evidence demonstrating progress at the outcome level. This includes providing explanation of what the research outputs mean in the context of achieving project outcomes.	ACIAR is working on a new reporting template which will better capture project intermediate outcomes.	June 2020

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<u>Recommendation 3</u> Increase investment in monitoring and evaluation, including monitoring qualitative changes and facilitating joint analysis and learning.	Agree	The current M&E framework is high level and does not adequately specify outcomes expected by the end of the project in each country. The project achieved significant development outcomes in strengthening the enabling environment and in garnering community interest and ownership. It is important to track and document the changes in knowledge, application and implementation of CBFM principles, along with the qualitative aspects of inclusion such as changes in behaviour, decision making and access and control over resource benefits. This information provides the evidence that the project research and development outcomes contribute to changes.	ACIAR will work with the project team to increase in-country resourcing allocated to M&E. The project M&E framework will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) include specific intermediate outcomes and indicators at the overarching level, regional and country levels;</li> <li>ii) enable the project to document the changes that lead to end of project outcomes;</li> <li>iii) allow more in-country learning workshops.</li> </ul> DFAT will ensure there is sufficient investment for a robust M&E framework in future investment designs.	March 2020
<u>Recommendation 4</u> Clarify the roles, responsibilities and management lines in the ANCORS-WorldFish partnership in recognition of WorldFish's standing as an experienced and capable implementing partner. This is required to address challenges to date, and in light of the recent key staffing changes at WorldFish.	Agree	It is important that partners understand their roles and responsibilities in the project. With the recent change in WorldFish project leader, there is an opportunity to address the issue identified by the mid-term review (MTR). In addition, there is also an opportunity to involve WorldFish in the Project Reference Committee (PRC) given the organisation is a key project partner in Solomon Islands.	ACIAR will work with the project team to ensure a WorldFish representative is invited to the next PRC meeting in Q1-2 2020.	March 2020

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<u>Recommendation 5</u> Prioritise creating and sustaining linkages with other programs, and keep partner governments more regularly updated.	Agree	Coordinating CBFM activities in the region has been a challenge due to the politics of fisheries, donor agendas and the remoteness of Pacific islands. DFAT will continue to engage with other donors (e.g. NZ MFAT, EU, World Bank and FAO) in harmonise resources and activities. Similarly, Pathways will continue to actively support coordination in countries. These coordination efforts will continue in future. Pathways staff are embedded in national fisheries agencies. There are opportunities to improve communication with partner governments through the project staff.	DFAT will restart the regular donors 'catch ups' with the EU, FAO, New Zealand and Worldbank. CBFM implementation will be included as a standing agenda item. A report will be submitted to the PRC to scope possible linkages.  The project team will provide regular update on project activities for partner governments and donors (including DFAT).	On-going
<u>Recommendation 6</u> Use the Project Reference Committee (PRC) to greater strategic effect. This forum has the potential to provide considerably more strategic guidance on matters such as cross-program linkages, design of future support for coastal fisheries and sustainability/exit planning.	Agree	There is opportunity to increase the engagement by the PRC and involve important stakeholders such as partner countries representatives and WorldFish in the PRC meetings.	ACIAR will work with the project team to ensure: i) advice sought from the PRC is strategic in nature and will review how information is shared with the PRC to allow time for strategic guidance at face to face and virtual meetings; ii) WorldFish (and partner countries representatives where possible) participates in future PRC meetings.  The PRC will meet face to face in Q1-2 2020 to consider the MTR findings and consider changes the project team propose to address the MTR findings and recommendations.	March 2020

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<u>Recommendation 7</u> Put in place an exit/transition strategy.	Agree	This recommendation is consistent with the PRC's advice that the project need to consider an exit/transition strategy (PRC meeting September 2018)	ACIAR will work with the project team on a transition strategy. This should include dialogue with partner governments about increasing partner government financial allocations to CBFM work, including to functions currently supported by Pathways.  The transition strategy will be included in the design of the next phase.	July 2020
<u>Recommendation 8</u> Communicate lessons learned as early as possible, not in the last 6-12 months of the project.	Agree	There is a need for the project to document lessons learnt in a form suitable for national fisheries agencies and other practitioners. The project will need to determine as soon as possible what learnings can be finalised and appropriately packaged before the end of this project phase.	The Pathways team will document and disseminate the project lessons learnt with the aim to use these products to influence decision making in CBFM by relevant officials and organisations.	July 2020

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<u>Recommendation 9</u> Institute a structured and documented approach to capacity assessment and capacity building for national and provincial/outer island officers working in CBFM. Ideally, capacity assessment and planning processes should be conducted as a joint participatory exercise in collaboration with government, addressing government needs.	Agree	The project is entering an important final phase where partner governments, both national and provincial, need to take steerage of their national CBFM programs – and resource them appropriately.	ACIAR will ensure the project team will document its past and current capacity building activities and achievements to date, and use this as a baseline for setting capacity building goals to be achieved by the end of the project. This will be integrated into the M&E Plan to track skills and capacity progress and end-of-project capacity building outcomes.  DFAT and ACIAR will ensure that, in the next phase of support, the project will work with the three partner governments to develop appropriate capacity building programs for their officers working in CBFM. This is likely to require engagement with the corporate planning units of each organisation to develop human/financial planning strategies around critical organisational and workforce needs for effective delivery of CBFM programs by each partner.	July 2020
<u>Recommendation 10</u> Consider the effects that the project's livelihoods activities may have on the status of coastal resources in the design and monitoring of those activities, ideally through the collection of baseline data prior to implementation.	Disagree	There is a confusion in what the project aims to achieve under the livelihood objective. The project focused on adding value to existing catching rather than creating alternative livelihood activities. The aim is to maximize the use of available fisheries resources in the absence of non-fish livelihood opportunities. The livelihood evaluation tool is being used as a risk assessment. For example, solar freezer logbooks keep records of species and weights as a proxy for harvesting pressure.	ACIAR will ensure that the project team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) document the impacts of livelihood activities to build an overall picture of the effects of interventions on coastal resources and communities;</li> <li>ii) better coordinate with the Pacific Community (SPC) to leverage lessons learnt where possible.</li> </ul>	On-going

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<u>Recommendation 11</u> Build on the strong foundation established by Pathways. Significant strength of relationships, knowledge and momentum has been built up through Pathways, which should be built upon for any future support for coastal fisheries in the Pacific. This does not necessarily require a further phase of funding through the same partners.	Agree	<p>DFAT and ACIAR are in discussion with the project implementation partners about the design of the next phase. In order to maintain momentum and retain in-country teams, the design work needs to be completed and signed off by 30 June 2021.</p> <p>Consistent with the review recommendations, the project implementation partners and contracting modality will be determined as part of the design.</p>	DFAT and ACIAR are working together to identify options for a joint design process including the TORs for the design.	January 2020
<u>Recommendation 12</u> The next phase of Australian support for coastal fisheries should be more definitively a development program, not a research for development program	Agree in part	<p>Agreed that the next phase of DFAT support (Phase 3) will be a development project building on the momentum of Phase 2, with clearly identified development outcomes.</p> <p>However, the research component, having added value to the knowledge of working with communities to implement CBFM, will continue to have a role in Phase 3 with well-defined research objectives specifically linked to development outcomes.</p> <p>ACIAR and DFAT will continue to strengthen their partnership to maximize the development and research outcomes for Phase 3.</p> <p>ACIAR will commission the Final Review of Phase 2 to capture progress since mid-term review and lessons learnt that would inform implementation of Phase 3 design.</p>	<p>Phase 3 design processes approved: January 2020</p> <p>Concept design approved: May 2020</p> <p>Phase 3 final design approved: May 2021</p>	As per action plan

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<u>Recommendation 13</u> Undertake a fit-for-purpose design process, soon. There is an urgency to this in order to minimise uncertainty and the associated risk of losing key staff and having a gap between phases of support.	Agree	DFAT and ACIAR have initiated discussions with project implementation partners to begin the design of the next phase. Regional fisheries meetings (including the Head of Fisheries meeting in March 2020) will be used to engage with partners and donors to cost-effectively develop a project logic that fits its development objectives.	DFAT and ACIAR are working together on options for a joint design process for CBFM Phase 3.	January 2020
<u>Recommendation 14</u> Increase the focus on inclusion – especially disability inclusion – in any future phase of support. In line with DFAT's Development For All policy.	Agree	Design of future support will take into account social inclusion principles consistent with DFAT guidelines.	DFAT will ensure disability inclusion assessment is included for consideration in the TORs of the design.	January 2020