

Te Tarai Vaka Activity Concept Note: Te Tarai Vaka

Summary

This project aims to implement further and fully embed the Cook Islands Activity Management System, Te Tarai Vaka (TTV). The system was designed and partially rolled out in 2014 based on tailoring the NZ Aid Programme activity management system to the Cook Islands environment.

Indicative funding levels are \$15,000 NZD, designed to support a contract with a supplier covering a communication & training stream and system improvement stream. This would cover the following outcomes and activities:

Outputs

- Finalisation of the 2015 TTV implementation/embedding training plan;
- An online training video that anyone can watch and familiarise themselves with the key elements of the system;
- An online training video on Monitoring and Evaluation and Social and Environmental Safeguards;
- Online, accessible, user friendly templates, guidelines and processes.

Outcomes

1. A user-friendly system well utilised by Cook Islands Government and it's partners;
2. Trained users across government and other relevant stakeholders in TTV;
3. Better understanding of Monitoring and Evaluation and Social and Environmental Safeguards to meet requirements of climate change funders;
4. Te Tarai Vaka system demonstrated useful by government to manage national priorities.

NB: separate additional arrangements will be made for climate change and gender training resources.

Why: Rationale and Analysis

Accreditation with global funds like the Adaptation Fund require institutionalised development management systems. The Cook Islands Government identified the need for a national activity management system in early 2013. Research, design and consultations occurred in 2014 and finally in the last quarter of 2014 the information was posted to the MFEM website and some roll out and training was completed.

There is some level of buy in to the system across government and other stakeholders, however, the utilisation of the system and it's integration into national processes still requires further training and embedding over time. In particular, the new M&E and social and environmental safeguards (required by Adaptation Fund) is fairly new and requires upskilling.

Problem definition

The problem is that the system requires some streamlining based on user feedback and training is needed for users, especially in the new components (M&E, safeguards). While some of this can occur with in-house resources, limitations exist and external expertise is required. Training will mostly occur on a "learning by doing" basis requiring user friendly online tools.

Alignment with National development plans/priorities

TTV aims to strengthen links to national plans and government priorities by strengthening funding allocation and use of evidence to inform strategic choices. Further streamlining and training on the system is needed to ensure compliance to national budgets and reports. Systematic use of TTV by monitoring groups such as the Infrastructure Committee (IC) and National Sustainable Development Commission (NSDC) needs to become the norm.

Background Analysis

Appendix one details all of the background for this project and Appendix two outlines the completion report which identifies learnings for this next phase.

In particular the learnings to be incorporated include:

- User friendly webpage – the current design is not very clear to the user;
- Accessibility of training – online mechanism that can be accessed anytime, anywhere as needed;
- Exploration of use of Maori language/translations as part of training;
- Training needs in specialised areas is ongoing – documentation does not equal understanding. An example from the previous workshops in the area of Gender mainstreaming really highlighted this.
- Persistent effort required to achieve systemic use.

What: Activity Purpose and Description

Activity purpose and expected results

The purpose of this project is to strengthen the current Activity Management System and ensure understanding, usability and compliance on key aspects (e.g. social and environmental monitoring).

Goal	By last quarter of 2015 to have online, user-friendly training available across stakeholder groups
Outcomes Short, Long, Medium term	Short term – system approved Medium term – system implemented Long term – system embedded as “business as usual”
Outputs	1. Finalisation of the 2015 TTV implementation/embedding plan. 2. An online training video that anyone can watch and familiarise themselves with the key elements of the system. 3. Online, accessible, user friendly templates, guidelines and processes. 4. Specialised training on Monitoring and Evaluation and Social and Environmental Safeguards.
Key beneficiaries	All Government staff Project Managers Development Partners NSDC Infrastructure Committee (IC) Heads of Ministries Non-state Actors

How: Activity Design and Implementation

Possible approaches to Activity implementation

The Cook Islands Government is confident that this work can be given to a current Government contractor (Woven Communicaitons) to coordinate delivery to all outputs. Development Coordination would be responsible for project oversight.

Consultations and discussions

Consultations were extensive during the design and initial roll out of TTV. However further engagement is needed to improve the user-friendliness of guidelines, document and templates to ensure the best product is online and accessible.

Cross-cutting issues

Identified cross cutting issues of climate change and disaster risk management, environmental and social safeguards as well as gender will be included in the Terms of Reference for consultants.

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