

EVALUATION REPORT OF SOCIAL IMPACT FUND

COMMISSIONED BY THE COOK ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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Evaluation Report for Social Impact Fund

Commissioned by the Cook Islands Government

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Abstract

The Social Impact Fund (SIF) represents the Cook Islands Government's (CIG) key incentive mechanism that was established to support civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide services that meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people. It was established under a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). The evaluation is required under the GFA and will be used by the CIG, NZ MFAT and its partners to identify learnings focused on which parts of SIF have worked, which parts have not, and why. The evaluation has been framed around assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the SIF.

The evaluation found that the SIF has performed well and has achieved its key outputs and outcomes. It has maintained efficient and effective systems which has resulted in good monitoring and reporting. The services supported by the SIF-supported CSOs are not provided by the CIG although are complementary and are well aligned with Government policies and plans. The evaluation deems that they are serving the needs of the vulnerable in the community.

The evaluation recommends that the SIF continue, implementing the recommendations contained in this report in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. It has proved to be a sound model that has delivered on its goal of improving the wellbeing of vulnerable peoples and villages through the contribution of civil society.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Secretary of Internal Affairs and the senior staff of her Ministry for their cooperation and assistance.

I acknowledge with sincere thanks the ongoing support of the SIF Coordinator, Angeline Tuara, who made arrangements for the in-country visit and who unfailingly responded to many questions and requests throughout the evaluation period. Hilary Gorman from the New Zealand High Commission also provided ongoing support.

SIF Board members, past and present, freely shared their experiences and insights.

The many recipients and beneficiaries of the SIF, staff and beneficiaries gave their time unreservedly and with great generosity. For that I am truly grateful, for their experiences inform this evaluation.

Executive Summary

Background and context of the Activity

The Social Impact Fund (SIF) represents the Cook Islands Government's (CIG) key incentive mechanism that was established to support civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide services that meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people. It was established under a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). The GFA was signed on 5 November 2012 with further variations signed in 2013 and 2014.

The SIF replaced and combined two previous sources of funding to civil society: the New Zealand funded Community Initiatives Scheme (CIS) and funding provided by the Cook Islands Government (CIG) known as POBOC (Payment on Behalf of the Crown). The SIF aimed to be a more streamlined and efficient mechanism.

The SIF provides two funding streams: contestable funding for CSOs that can provide single or multi-year services targeting: gender equality; children and youth; elderly; disability; domestic violence; or mental health. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) contributed \$1.8million and the Cook Islands Government contributed \$661,000 to this part of the SIF.

A second funding stream is for CSOs that can advance the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and is provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is administered by the Gender and Development section of the MOIA.¹ This contribution of \$925,000 is provided through New Zealand's harmonised development programme.

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation is required under the GFA and will be used by the CIG, NZ MFAT and its partners to identify learnings focused on which parts of SIF have worked, which parts have not, and why. The evaluation will inform decision making about the future of SIF: should SIF continue, if so should it be adapted and how? The results of the evaluation will be reported to the funding partners, disseminated to CSOs as key stakeholders, and made publicly available through the CIG and NZ MFAT websites.

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manner. Different methods were used in order to elicit information, perceptions and opinions. The use of a range of methods allowed the verification and triangulation of information, which increases validity. The first stage of the evaluation involved a detailed review of relevant documents, including those relating to the social context of the Cook Islands; relevant national policies; and most importantly, documents relating to the SIF.

Fieldwork in the Cook Islands (in Rarotonga and Mangaia) over two weeks in May 2016 provided an opportunity for first-hand contact with SIF stakeholders. The evaluator met representatives from all five SIF funded programmes and from 18 NGOs that received funding for 28 of the 33 funded projects.

A decision was taken in consultation with the evaluation managers not to include detailed case studies of successes and failures in this report. Success is relative and many CSOs have succeeded in different ways. The intention is not to shame those who have not performed well but to use this report as part of a learning process.

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¹ The Australian funded component is not part of this evaluation.

Key findings and conclusions

Findings are presented according to the five evaluation questions.

Relevance

SIF is supporting service delivery by NGOs to vulnerable people in key areas that the CIG does not deliver directly. There is a huge demonstrated need for these services that are community driven and supported, with a consequent high degree of ownership. The activities tie in well with national plans and policies and with broad NZ MFAT strategy.

Effectiveness

The SIF has achieved the key outputs and short and medium term outcomes stated in the Results Measurement Framework. The five programmes 'are aligned to community needs and complement government services' and 'CSOs are delivering quality services in priority areas'. These are the two required results in the medium-term. Most projects have also met these criteria.

The short-term results have also been achieved: Strategic and targeted support to CSOs; Improved capacity of CSOs to deliver targeted programmes and projects; and CSOs monitor activities and demonstrate results through results-based reporting.

The key outputs of Cook Islands Civil Society Policy and CSO Register; SIF administration processes and documents; and training and support to Cook Islands CSOs; have also been achieved albeit with some minor modifications.

Efficiency

With a few exceptions and some minor variations, the expected outputs and outcomes have been achieved in a timely and efficient manner. Funds have generally been used well with no indication that they were excessive. Financial record-keeping has been good resulting in good accountability. The SIF governance processes have been sound. The Manager has been efficient at working constructively with NGOs as well as constantly monitoring progress and has reported to the Board in a timely manner. However the demands placed on the Manager and the required outputs were deemed to be excessive and unrealistic and the evaluation found that if further support was provided to the Manager, efficiency and effectiveness could be enhanced.

Impact

Programme recipients have performed very well and have produced evidence of an excellent use of the services by the community. Project recipients have received positive feedback from their clients. A positive outcome is the creation of employment in the pa enua where jobs are scarce. Without SIF funding, programmes would have to rely on volunteers, scale down services or cease operations, which would place vulnerable people at risk.

Sustainability

The design of the SIF remains relevant as there is an increasing number of vulnerable people in the community and Government relies on civil society to provide key services. The emphasis on service provision has allowed the SIF to be focussed, efficient and effective. The SIF is embedded into CIG processes and systems and has a high level of local ownership. The successful operation of the SIF warrants its continuation with increased emphasis on programmes and less on projects and a strict adherence to service provision. The evaluation finds that donor funding is essential and that New Zealand should 'soft-tag' funding to allow the SIF to continue.

Summary of lessons learned

Many lessons have been learned during the life of the SIF. These include:

- Having robust systems in place, starting from the Results Management Framework for the Fund, meant that there was monitoring at all levels. Although some people found that developing a framework and reporting on it was difficult, they found it easier as time progressed and came to appreciate the level of accountability that it reflected. These processes set up a strong institutional framework for the SIF and defined quality standards. However the RMF was not developed and finalised until the mid-point in the programme so a lesson learned is that a clear and simple RMF should be developed at the start of a new round of SIF funding.
- Almost all the respondents in the evaluation mentioned that having the right people is critical at all levels. Having an efficient and capable SIF manager has made it successful as she has driven the process and ensured that all outputs and outcomes have been achieved. The positive support of the SIF Board during critical times and the support of the Secretary of MOIA also contributed greatly to the achievements of the SIF.
- At the implementation level, NGOs commented that having sound leadership with the right people on boards and the right staff and volunteers makes a critical difference. It was quite apparent in this evaluation that the NGOs that had problems with staffing and or boards, also had difficulties in implementing activities.
- Some NGOs that have relied on expatriates have experienced a loss of capacity and institutional memory when they leave. Thus they held the view that local Cook Islanders should be encouraged to hold key positions in NGOs.
- The SIF Manager has found that working with NGOs is a constant challenge. As many people expressed to the evaluation: NGOs have their ups and downs. The capacity of NGOs varies. Record keeping, financial management and report writing are often weaknesses. The SIF Manager found that most NGOs have governance as well as staffing issues and she found that there is a need to focus on the governance and management of NGOs to ensure successful outcomes. The evaluation identified a need for constant training and mentoring.
- Strong community ownership is essential. When projects are based firmly on community needs, they are more likely to succeed. The projects that were not based on needs had poorer results and have not lasted well.
- A lesson learned by many is the need for flexibility. At the Fund level, when the project reporting template proved too difficult, it was simplified. When activities did not work as planned, small variations were allowed.
- Taking into account logistical issues surrounding the delivery of services in outer islands, especially the Northern Group, within a tight time-frame have been a lesson learned. Longer time-frames may be needed for completion in such circumstances. Another lesson learned from the pa enua was the need to adapt to the rapid social changes taking place, including an ageing population with a high level of non-communicable diseases.
- A lesson that programme and many project recipients have learned is that when services are reliable and they deliver quality, the community has increased trust and respect for them.
- The three years of the SIF has shown that duplication needs to be addressed in a firm but fair way as encouragement and persuasion have not worked. NGOs with similar services must apply jointly for a coordinated set of activities. Those who refuse to comply will not be considered for funding.

- Despite the challenges, NGOs should be praised for taking initiatives in establishing services that are not being provided by Government. The demands and constraints can be addressed and capacity built, as the SIF has shown. Constant monitoring; simple, straightforward reporting processes; and some flexibility are key ingredients for success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are made to improve future operations of the SIF:

1. A Results Management Framework needs to be developed at the start of a future SIF in order to provide a clear direction.
2. Applications need to provide some evidence of a needs analysis to demonstrate the need and demand for the proposed service. This could be in different forms such as accompanying letters of support, data showing numbers of potential clients, or use of existing research.
3. Applicants should be asked to attach a letter or MOU to show commitment of the partners that they anticipate working with to ensure the most effective use of funds.
4. The SIF criteria needs to be tightened to focus more exclusively on service provision and to exclude other areas unless they can be shown to supplement and support proposed services.
5. A future SIF should explicitly encourage applications from the pa enua, in keeping with Government's broad policies. MOIA staff should be trained to identify suitable projects and assist with developing proposals, monitoring and reporting.
6. Programme applicants should be encouraged to include activities in the pa enua as part of applications.
7. The cross-cutting category needs to be more clearly defined to be included in a future SIF.
8. A study, based partly on the 2016, Household and Income Study (HIES) be undertaken to provide more detailed information on vulnerability in the Cook Islands, so that a future SIF could be better targeted.
9. Grantees must submit a draft report to the SIF Manager who will comment appropriately and return for finalisation.
10. The SIF should include a budget for technical assistance (TA) to provide ongoing training and support to NGOs in proposal writing, in particular developing results frameworks; data collection, reporting and, where deemed necessary, governance and institutional strengthening.
11. The issue of duplication should continue be constructively addressed in a future SIF by establishing criteria whereby NGOs that are providing similar services must submit joint proposals.
12. The SIF Guidelines should be amended to state that all activities and payments are to be made only in the Cook Islands.
13. The SIF Board TOR should be amended to provide for (1) resignations of community members; (2) one community member to be replaced annually, to provide for continuity.
14. The contract between NGOs and the SIF should stipulate that funds are for activities that are yet to take place, not refunding for past activities.
15. SIF should remain at MOIA as it is best suited for long-term support of NGOs that provide services.
16. Programmes and projects should remain but the ratio should change to 85:15 and the criteria of service provision should strictly be adhered to.

Report

Background and Context of the Activity

The Social Impact Fund (SIF) was established to support civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide services that meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people. It was established under a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). The GFA was signed on 5 November 2012 with further variations signed on 14 August 2013 and 3 March 2014.

The SIF replaced and combined two previous sources of funding to civil society: the New Zealand funded Community Initiatives Scheme (CIS) and funding provided by the of the Cook Islands Government (CIG) known as POBOC (Payment on Behalf of the Crown). It had become apparent that some CSOs were 'double dipping' as there was no mechanism in place to prevent that. Reviews of the CIS also found numerous inefficiencies in its delivery. The SIF aimed to be more streamlined and efficient with clear criteria, thus reducing the ad hoc nature of previous funding mechanisms.

The SIF provides two funding streams: contestable funding for CSOs that can provide single or multi-year services targeting: gender equality; children and youth; elderly; disability; domestic violence; or mental health. The New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) contributed \$1.8million and the Cook Islands Government contributed \$661,000 to this part of the SIF.

A second funding stream is for CSOs that can advance the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and is provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and is administered by the Gender and Development section of the MOIA.² This contribution of \$925,000 is provided through New Zealand's harmonised development programme.

The demographic profile of the Cook Islands provides important contextual background. The 2011 Census showed a resident population of 14,974, representing a drop in population since the 2006 census of some 2,000. It also showed that the population of Rarotonga continues to increase relative to the outer islands that have continually declining numbers. A distinct feature of the Cook Islands population in 2011 is the loss in the shift of the 15–29 year age groups, showing a sign of outward-migration at young ages. Foreigners comprised 12% of the population. The 2011 Census also showed increases in all age groups over 60 years of age, from 11% in 2006 to 13% in 2011, indicating an ageing population. The median age of the population increased from 27.5 in 2006 to 29 in 2011.

A clear implication of the ageing population and the accompanying high dependency rate is the need for caregivers. With high rates of emigration of people in the working age-groups and high levels of employment, there is an increased demand for services outside of the family unit. A further factor relating to ageing and disability is the very high rates of non-communicable diseases resulting in conditions such as diabetes related amputations and stroke.³

Of particular relevance to the Social Impact Fund is the number of people who self-identified in the 2011 Census as having a disability,⁴ 808, compared to 764 in the 2006 Census. This is 5.4% of the total population but the proportion is much higher in older age-groups.

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² The Australian funded component is not part of this evaluation.

³ According to a Ministry of Health media release, for the past five years NCDs have been the main cause of death in the Cook Islands. In 2014 there were 131 deaths of which 102, or 78 per cent, were caused by NCDs and cardiovascular diseases. (Cook Islands News 2 March 2016)

⁴ The word disability was not used in the 2011 census, rather people were asked to report on 'having a health problem that lasted six months or more'. MOIA has developed a database on disability by collating data from

The small population and scattered geography of the country results in a high cost of service delivery and many competing demands upon the Government's limited resources. CSOs in the Cook Islands have filled an important gap by providing some services that Government is not able to meet. There is a robust and varied civil society in the Cook Islands. As of December 2015, the SIF Manager had 210 registered CSOs on her list⁵. These were CSOs that had registered with the Ministry of Justice.

Purpose, Scope and Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation is required under the GFA and will be used by the CIG, NZ MFAT and its partners to identify learnings focused on which parts of SIF have worked, which parts have not, and why. The evaluation will inform decision making about the future of SIF: should SIF continue, if so should it be adapted and how? The results of the evaluation will be reported to the funding partners, disseminated to CSOs as key stakeholders, and made publicly available through the CIG and NZ MFAT websites.

The scope of the evaluation will include:

- the time period of the evaluation will cover November 2012 to December 2015;
- its geographic focus is the Cook Islands; and
- The target groups are vulnerable people; staff and members of CSOs; staff of MOIA, MFEM and NZ MFAT who have been involved with SIF; and people with knowledge of community and civil society issues within the Cook Islands.

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manner. Different methods were used in order to elicit information, perceptions and opinions. The use of a range of methods allowed the verification and triangulation of information, which increases validity. A mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

The first stage of the evaluation involved a detailed review of relevant documents, including those relating to the social context of the Cook Islands; relevant national policies; and most importantly, documents relating to the SIF. This included foundational documents such as the Grant Funding Agreement; documents relating to SIF processes; as well as monitoring reports submitted to the SIF by recipients and reports to the SIF Board. This stage of the research was essential to gain an in-depth understanding of the structure and operations of the SIF. These reports give a good overall picture of the efficiency of the SIF and they also provide evidence of SIF achievements.

Fieldwork in the Cook Islands (in Rarotonga and Mangaia) over two weeks in May 2016 provided an opportunity for first-hand contact with SIF stakeholders. The evaluator met representatives from all five SIF funded programmes and from 18 NGOs that received funding for 28 of the 33 funded projects.⁶ Employers, volunteers, boards and members of each recipient CSO were key informants and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to gain their perceptions and opinions. Beneficiaries of the activities conducted by the recipients were also interviewed where possible. SIF Board members and former Board members; MOIA staff; and present and former New Zealand High Commission staff were also consulted. (A list of those consulted is at Appendix E).⁷

• different CIG ministries such as MOIA, Health and Education and has a total of 838 people with disabilities in 2016, which concurs with the Census data.

⁵ This includes individual churches, sports groups, and farmers' groups among many others.

⁶ Nine NGOs received project funding more than once

⁷ Respondents were asked if their names could be included as a list in the report. The name of clients of PTI are not used as an obvious ethical consideration.

The evaluator visited several SIF recipient NGOs while their activities were underway in Rarotonga and Mangaia in order to observe their operations.

In addition to one-on-one interviews and focus groups, the evaluator conducted round-table discussions in Mangaia and Rarotonga to present preliminary findings and to elicit further comments. These were both well attended.

Limitations of the Evaluation (and the Effect of these on the Evaluation)

Due to their unavailability, the evaluator was unable to meet two members of the Evaluation Steering Group while in the Cook Islands. In retrospect, it would have been useful to meet the Ministry of Health, but time limitations prevented this.

It would have been ideal to visit other islands that receive SIF funds but this was not possible due to time and resource constraints.

Objectives and Evaluation Questions

Objective 1: Relevance

To assess the extent to which the SIF has been relevant to the needs of its stakeholders.

- Is SIF relevant to meeting the priority needs of vulnerable people, and of CIG and of NZ MFAT?
- To what extent is SIF relevant to meeting these needs?

Key findings

SIF is supporting service delivery by NGOs to vulnerable people in key areas that the CIG does not deliver directly. There is a huge demonstrated need for these services that are community driven and supported, with a consequent high degree of ownership. The activities tie in well with national plans and policies and with broad NZ MFAT strategy.

Links with national plans, policies and donor policy

The National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) Te Kaveinga Nui 2011-2015 contains eight overarching goals for the Cook Islands. Priority Four on social development includes education; health; gender equality; persons with disability; the elderly; families and communities; children and youth; recreation and sports; culture and language. Consequently all national policies must align with the priorities of the NSDP.

Of particular relevance to the SIF are the Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy and Action Plan 2014-2019; Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2011-2016; Cook Islands National Youth Policy Back to Basics for Youth 15-24 years 2015-2020; and the Kaveinga no te Rauti Para Cook Islands Policy on Ageing (draft).⁸ The Cook Islands National Health Strategy 2012-2016 is also very relevant.

The focus of the SIF fits very well with the NSDP, especially Priority Four on social development. SIF funding has also directly funded different components of national social policies, especially the

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⁸ All of these policies had previous versions except for the Policy on Ageing which has yet to be endorsed.

Disability Inclusive Development Strategy.⁹ The NSDP and the relevant policies establish the need and relevance of the sectors that are the focus of the SIF as those official documents were based on extensive research and consultation. Other relevant research confirms needs, for example, the Cook Islands Family Health Safety Survey (FHSS) Report 2014 Te Ata o te Ngakau, which found that nearly one in three ever-partnered women (32.2%) in the Cook Islands has experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.¹⁰

An analysis on youth in the Cook Islands based on the 2011 Census showed that a large number of Cook Islands youth were living overseas at the time of the census and that almost one third of resident youth had been living elsewhere in the country or overseas five years earlier, mainly in New Zealand or Australia. Although there are high levels of employment among youth, there are also significant risky behaviour patterns around driving, sexual behaviour, alcohol and tobacco use; combined with a relatively high suicide risk.¹¹ This research is relevant to the SIF by pointing to the need for particular types of intervention.

While the NZ MFAT has a key focus on economic development, the purpose of the New Zealand Aid Programme is that it 'invests money, knowledge, and skills to deliver sustainable development and poverty reduction in partner developing countries.'¹² The SIF fits in with this purpose and also with the Principles and Competencies listed in the New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The SIF also fits well with the goal of the Joint Cook Islands / New Zealand Aid Programme / AusAID Country Strategy 2008-2017: 'New Zealand and Australian development assistance fosters a less vulnerable and more resilient Cook Islands, particularly in the Outer Islands.'

Both New Zealand the Cook Islands are committed to the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness that calls for a high level of local ownership; alignment with national policies; harmonisation; managing for results; and accountability. The SIF has proven itself to be embedded well into the CIG structures and processes as the key mechanism for funding civil society. It is well aligned to national plans and policies, has managed for results and has had high levels of accountability. The principles of the SIF, contained in the SIF Policy, use the Paris Principles as a basis for assessing applications.

What has the SIF supported?

For the three funding rounds from 2013-2016, five programmes were funded for three years; and 33 projects were funded on a yearly basis. Of the five programmes, three were under the disability category; one children and youth; and one gender / domestic violence.¹³ Of the 33 projects, seven fitted into the disability¹⁴ category; eleven under children and youth; seven gender and domestic violence; and eight were cross-cutting. (Details are in Appendix D)

⁹ The SIF initially had six sectors: gender equality, children and youth, disabilities, the elderly, domestic violence and mental health. Disabilities has now absorbed the elderly and mental health as there is considerable cross-over between them.

¹⁰ Cook Islands Family Health Safety Survey (FHSS) Report 2014 Te Ata o te Ngakau,

¹¹ Young people of the Cook Islands Analysis of the 2011 Population and Housing Census, 2015, Cook Islands Government with UNFPA

¹² New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2015-2019, p5

¹³ Three of the programme recipients provided direct services (Te Kainga, Te Vaerua, PTI) and two were national bodies that channelled the funds to their branches (CICWA and CINDC).

¹⁴ Mental health and elderly were subsumed under disability.

The quantum of spending on each sector was as follows¹⁵:

Disability	\$1,331,120	
Children / youth	\$342,815	Gender / domestic violence \$503,560
Cross-cutting	\$115,025	

It is not possible to accurately assess whether either the number of programmes and projects or the expenditure reflects the greatest areas of need. As the SIF is a competitive fund, there were no quotas for any particular sector or area and the quality of proposals received was a major determinant of selection. Having the criteria of categories and activities eliminated to some extent the ad hoc nature of allocating grants that had been features of both the CIS and the POBOC.

The 'cross-cutting' category appears to have been added as it is not contained in the GFA, SIF Policy or Guidelines. No reference to its addition was found in SIF Board minutes from 2013-2015.

The SIF was targeted towards certain activities. Programme funding was for the delivery of targeted services to a specified priority area for up to three years. Eligible projects included: community education projects, training, workshops, awareness-raising activities, income generation, organisational strengthening. Infrastructure projects and international travel were not encouraged, but were considered on a case-by-case basis.¹⁶

The evaluation found that one of the strengths of the SIF is its focus on service delivery, yet it also provided opportunities to apply for a range of other activities. While it is accepted that, for example, awareness raising is often a key part of programmes and / or projects, it should only be a parallel component. A future SIF should narrow its range to eliminate infrastructure as there are other funding streams that can provide for that. International travel is also questionable as it tends to have limited community-wide benefits. (A list of other funding sources managed by MFEM is at Appendix E)

The relevance of the programmes funded by SIF is unquestionable. For example, the Cook Islands National Health Strategy 2012-2016 includes the system of child welfare clinics; community and mental health services and to rehabilitation. Yet the CIG funds these areas to a very minimal extent and it relies on NGOs to provide these essential services. If the CIG were to fund these services directly, the cost would inevitably be much higher as they currently rely heavily on volunteers.

The **Cook Islands Child Welfare Association (CICWA)** has been in existence for some 82 years and it provides 26 clinics that have been built and maintained by communities in Rarotonga, 8 in Aitutaki and 7 in Mangaia; and it works in partnership with Government hospitals and clinics in other islands. The Ministry of Health (MOH) relies on these clinics to provide a community base for weighing and checking children from 6 weeks to 4 years of age as a key primary health initiative.

Similarly with mental health: the MOH has one psychiatrist and normally has two mental health nurses, but it does not have a psychiatric unit or acute unit nor does it provide community mental health services although these feature in its strategic plan. **Te Kainga**, funded by SIF, provides a community mental health day centre that provides respite care as well as emergency care. MOH staff attend to Te Kainga clients on-site and it clearly is a key part of the country's mental health services,

Rehabilitation is also featured in the MOH Strategic Plan, yet the MOH offers very limited services in this area. **Te Vaerua**, supported by SIF, has been able to extend its services to include community-based occupational therapy, physiotherapy and provision and repair of equipment for people who have had strokes, injuries, amputations etc. Te Vaerua has also extended its work to the pa enua. The services are clearly in high demand: for example, from 01 October 2014 to 31 March 2015, 328

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¹⁵ SIF document for Public Expenditure Review
¹⁶ Grant Funding Agreement, p13

individual physiotherapy clients were seen and given 983 treatments, in hospital, home and community consultations. In the same period, the occupational therapist had 124 individual clients and gave 444 treatments.¹⁷

It is important to note that CICWA, Te Kainga and Te Vaerua all work in close partnership with the MOH and in some cases have Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and partial funding from them. Te Vaerua's physiotherapist works at the hospital some of the time and data from Te Vaerua is entered into the MOH data system. This is a clear recognition that these CSOs are providing services that the MOH is not funded to deliver.

Punanga Tauturu Incorporated (PTI), the Cook Islands Women's Counselling Centre, also works in close partnership with different parts of the CIG, especially the Police, Ministry of Justice and the MOH. PTI provides a counselling and legal aid service that is not available through government services. This fits with Outcome 6 of the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2011-2016 and the actions listed under that Outcome. The need for such a service is clear from its client numbers: from 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, PTI saw 300 clients. In their own client evaluations, 87% of clients rated the counselling service as very good or excellent. None rated it as poor.¹⁸ PTI initially struggled to provide data in its reports but has improved over time.

PTI maintains that once the pending Family Law Bill becomes legislation, its work will increase as courts will be increasingly referring cases to it.

The **Cook Islands National Disability Council (CINDC)** administers funding from SIF to support five disability centres in the pa enua: Aitutaki, Mangaia, Mauke, Pukapuka and Atiu. Prior to the SIF, these centres were funded directly from the NGO POBOC from MOIA. This fits well with the Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy that has as Activity 2.1: 'Maintain and enhance services of disability centres in the pa enua.'

SIF provides core funding for all of the NGOs¹⁹ that have received programme grants, all of which were established prior to the availability of SIF funding. This has enabled them to have office space, employ staff and pay operational costs. Without this funding, they would rely heavily on volunteers. All of the programme NGOs receive some funding from elsewhere but considerably less than the SIF core funding, as follows:

CICWA: fundraising at community level to support clinics; some clinics have received small grants through the India Grant Scheme and Canada fund to renovate clinics. As these grants are paid directly to individual clinics, they are difficult to track.

Te Kainga: fundraising through selling crafts for operational costs; New Zealand High Commission contributed to Mangaia building project; Government of Japan funded building; India Grants Scheme funded vehicle. In 2015, Te Kainga received \$20,000 from the CIG for its outer island work.

Te Vaerua: MOH contribution of \$22,000 towards salary of physiotherapist; local fundraising. In 2015, Te Vaerua received \$40,000 for its outer island work from the CIG.

PTI: Australian funding of \$200,000 over three years to support referral mechanism, legal aid, advocacy, database/IT upgrade, resources, consultants.

CINDC: \$10,000 from Pacific Disability Forum annually; occasional project funding from International Disability Alliance.

The 33 projects funded by the SIF present a wide range of needs that are not all so easily linked to key government documents as the five programmes discussed above. The projects are grouped by

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¹⁷Te Vaerua Report to SIF 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015

¹⁸ PTI Client Evaluation Summary Report 1 April 2015-31 March 2016

¹⁹ The terms NGO and CSO are used inter-changeably in this report. Official documents tend to use CSO while NGOs refer to themselves as NGOs.

sector. Some NGOs received project funding twice and were told that they would not receive any more while one received funding in all three funding rounds.

Disability: four of these projects were to support caregiving in the pa enua. Mangaia and Mauke were both funded twice for this purpose. This was a continuation of a service that started under the Asian Development Bank's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Program from 2011 to mid-2014. Te Vaerua was awarded project funding twice in addition to its programme funding to support the employment of an occupational therapist (OT).²⁰ The Creative Centre was granted project funding to support its women's collective to make and sell craft on a sustainable basis.

All of the disability funded projects were for well-established NGOs and the project funding augmented their existing work. They were thus able to strongly justify their need and the relevance of the projects.

Youth: 11 projects were in the youth / children category. The projects were varied but all had relevance to their communities. Five of these projects were in the pa enua, which has been a focus for the SIF.

One project (Oneroa Youth) was to start repair work on a church hall in Mangaia. This encouraged the church group to then go to New Zealand to fundraise for the balance required and the building was subsequently completed. Another project in Mangaia was for a water tank in Ivirua village to serve both the child welfare clinic and the surrounding community. Although infrastructure is not normally funded by the SIF, individual projects were assessed on merit and need.

A further project by the Apostolic Church in Mangaia was to purchase equipment for a project to assist slow learners with extra lessons after school. This was still functioning two years after the funding ceased. The SIF did not fund churches as such but has funded some church groups for activities. In the case of the learning project in Mangaia, the activity was open to all whether they were church members or not.

Two projects dealt with issues around risky youth behaviour, which research has shown to be an established need: a Rotary project to raise awareness on youth suicide prevention and to promote the use of a help-line was completed successfully. The Cook Islands Family Welfare Association (CIFWA) training focussed on youth reproductive health.

Some projects did not provide clear evidence of need and these struggled to implement as planned. Those included the Red Cross and the first Virtues Project. These projects aimed to work in schools but when they attempted to do so, they did not find either the Ministry of Education or individual schools able to give them the time needed. They completed the planned activities but worked more with out-of-school youth than in schools.

Te Mana Ou is a youth art project implemented in prison. This initiative was to fill a gap for the rehabilitation of young people who have been through the court system, to tap into their positive qualities. The project reports that it has identified a huge need for services to at risk youth.

Two youth projects have had implementation difficulties due to logistical issues. The Palmerston Lucky School had proposed a craft project but they were still awaiting the delivery of the correct materials, which has delayed completion. Sailing Cook Islands' Pukapuka sailing project had not been

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²⁰ Te Vaerua requested this in their original programme budget but the Board decided that they would approve the physiotherapist position first. After running for a year it worked out that they needed an assessment of clients by the OT first before the Physiotherapist could do his job, so when they applied for project funding they were able to show the figures to support the need for this position. The second project funding came from a CIG appropriation for the 2015/16 period for \$40,000, this was specifically for their work in the outer islands. The OT position has remained a project for 2 years.

completed as it had not been able to send a trainer to Pukapuka due to transport difficulties. However all materials had been purchased and the remaining expenditure is relatively small.

The evaluation heard some criticism of the Pukapuka sailing project as sailing is often associated with an affluent section of society. However it was pointed out that there are few activities for youth in remote Pukapuka and maritime activities are a natural option for an atoll surrounded by sea. The training that will go with the boats will provide an entry point for teaching aspects of safety, teamwork and organisational skills. (Further applications for funding by Sailing Cook Islands were declined).

Gender: Seven projects related to various aspects of gender. Rotaiana, a men's support centre, has had two projects funded. In the first year (2013-2014) the project was terminated as the Manager had gone to New Zealand and activities were not being implemented. For the year 2015-2016, Rotaiana, with a change of office-holders, has received further project funding, which basically covers its operational costs. Its clients include male perpetrators of domestic violence and crime, ex-prisoners, families and couples, wardens and others.

The Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA) had funding to develop materials to assist women standing for parliamentary elections in order to improve women's political participation. This fits well with Outcome 2 of the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment so the relevance is clear. An increase in the number of women elected in the 2014 elections was a good result, although the causal influence of the PPSEAWA project cannot be proven.

Te Are Pa Metua, a drop-in centre for older people, has received project funding twice in the first and third years of the SIF. It did not perform well in the first year but appears to be meeting a need, albeit with small numbers, in the latter round, as a change in personnel has made a positive difference. Although Are Pa Metua is not exclusively for older women, currently all of its clients are women. While this may be a reflection that there are more older women than men in the population, several older men attend the nearby Te Kainga day centre. Under the SIF, Are Pa Metua is categorised as a gender project.

One project that did not appear to have clearly identified commitment from partners was the Areora Vainetini in Atiu. It was not able to implement its proposal to develop duck farming and the money was returned to the SIF. A lack of support by the Ministry of Agriculture was a contributing factor to its failure to get off the ground.

A telecentre in Mangaia developed by the Cook Islands Internet Action Group (CIAG) was categorised as a gender project as it was thought that women, particularly older women, would use it. It appears however that almost no-one uses it, two years after installation. There was no evidence of a proper needs analysis and although officials at the time were supportive, there was no evidence of community ownership. This project was regarded as a pilot and applications for SIF funding for similar centres on three other islands were declined.

The **cross-cutting** category covers many areas and eight projects were funded under this heading. Six of these projects have been awarded to volunteer fire brigades on Rarotonga: Puaikura three times; Teimurimotia two times and Matavera once. Funding is used to meet operational costs such as paying for fuel, maintenance, training, defibrillators and first aid kits. Large equipment and major training is provided through the New Zealand Fire Service.

The evaluation heard criticism of the SIF funding for fire brigades as it does not seem to fit neatly into the prescribed categories. The fire brigades argued strongly that the people they assist are indeed the most vulnerable as homes, schools and businesses that have fires have a huge social and economic impact on the community. They maintain that their service is relevant to everyone in the community and the SIF funding has allowed them to focus on their activity, which is purely voluntary. The funding means that they do not have to have constant fund-raising for essentials.

The fire brigades do not receive funding from the CIG²¹, nor is there legislation or any policy setting regulations or standards for them. This is in contrast to the other focal areas of the SIF: disability, gender, youth and children, which all have relevant national policies and in the case of disability, there is legislation. While there is a need for CIG policy on fire brigades, it is beyond the scope of the SIF to initiate this process. Such policy could, for example, make it mandatory for insurance companies to pay a levy to fire brigades as is the practice elsewhere and this would assist with funding and sustainability for the brigades.

Another cross-cutting project was the development of a website for social service providers in the Cook Islands by the Cook Islands Internet Action Group (CIIAG). Although a number of NGOs initially supplied information, others preferred to have their own websites rather than being part of a combined site. Only one NGO provided subsequent updates. The website was supposed to have been taken over by MOIA but that has not happened and some two years on, the site no longer is available. Again this is a case where the idea was good but there was no apparent needs analysis and the funding application was made on an assumption of need.

Virtues Cook Islands received funding for a second project that involved the production of Virtues Inspiration cards and posters, television and newspaper advertisement. Virtues has now secured corporate sponsorship for its work, which gives some measure of sustainability and less dependence on donors.

Many questions were raised about the recipients that fell under the cross-cutting category. This suggests that there should be widespread discussion before including it again as it is extremely broad and open to interpretation.

Reaching the most vulnerable

The SIF Guidelines identify the most vulnerable, based on the NSDP. As noted earlier, these areas are gender equality, children and youth, disabilities, the elderly, domestic violence and mental health.

Globally, people with disabilities are regarded as the most vulnerable in any society. They are the least likely to complete school, to be in employment and they tend to have poor health. This can result in poverty. Although awareness of disability issues has markedly increased and improved in the Cook Islands in the past decade, a lack of understanding, stigma and negative attitudes still prevail especially towards persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities. Prejudice constitutes a barrier to employment and many areas of social participation.²² CINDC Board members expressed the view that women and girls with disabilities and people with disabilities in the pa enua are the most disadvantaged in the country.

There is no other clear definition in official documents of the most vulnerable. In the CIG official reports on the Millennium Development Goals, for example, the statement on poverty is that 'Poverty is not an issue in the Cook Islands.'

Health and disability related services maintained that they are reaching the most vulnerable as many of their clients cannot afford to go to New Zealand for services as the more wealthy might. Thus their clients are not only suffering from various impairments but they tend to be in the lower socio-economic group.

While it cannot be stated categorically that the SIF reaches all the vulnerable people in the Cook Islands, its recipients fall into the categories in the SIF guidelines and those consulted strongly agreed that they are serving the most vulnerable.

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²¹ Puaikura Fire Brigade received \$2,000 from POBOC before SIF.

²² Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy and Action Plan 2014 – 2019, p18-19

The evaluation recommends that a study, based partly on the 2016 Household and Income Study (HIES) be undertaken to provide more detailed information on vulnerability in the Cook Islands, so that a future SIF could be better targeted.

Geographical spread

While there is nothing in the SIF policy or guidelines to stipulate a geographic spread across the Cook Islands, Board members told the evaluation that they did try to include as many projects from the pa enua provided the applications fitted the criteria and met the quality standards required. The Board found that there was a tension between a strong wish to fund the pa enua and the generally lower quality of applications from there.

The breakdown of project funding in terms of geographical spread across the country is in the table below.

Table 1: Geographical spread of SIF supported projects²³

Round	Years	# applications received	# projects awarded	Rarotonga	Pa enua
1	2013/2014	49	11	8	3
2	2014/2015	30	12	6	6
3	2015/2016	14	10	8	2
Total		93	33	22	11

Of the projects in the pa enua, six were from Mangaia; two from Mauke (the same one funded twice); and one each from Pukapuka, Palmerston and Atiu. The SIF Manager explained that the apparent imbalance was due to the lack of applications of suitable nature and quality from different islands. The relatively high number of projects from Mangaia could be explained by the presence on the SIF Board of a Mangaian who was the pa enua representative who was proactive in seeking applicants and she also assisted with developing applications.

The SIF Manager also noted that there was a level of risk with some projects in remote islands of the pa enua. As noted earlier, the Atiu duck farm was not able to proceed and the Pukapuka and Palmerston projects have not been completed largely to logistical issues around difficulties with transport and freight to the Northern Group.

Not all proposals, even well-written ones, from the pa enua were accepted. A proposal seeking funding for a Zumba group was refused as it did not fit well with the SIF criteria and the view was that it should be self-funding as such groups are elsewhere.

A future fund should maintain the quality criteria but should also add in the guidelines and policy that projects from the pa enua should be encouraged. This is in keeping with the spirit of the NSDP that states that the pa enua should 'receive its equitable share of development'.²⁴ MOIA staff in the pa enua should continue to be trained to encourage applications from their communities and assist with the proposal writing process. Island mayors could also include a session on the SIF in their annual training.

It should be noted that the programmes funded by the SIF reached islands that projects may not have, through the disability centres and child welfare clinics supported by the SIF. Some projects also included activities in the pa enua. The Cook Islands Family Welfare Association (CIFWA) for example had training activities in Aitutaki and Atiu as part of its project. This approach can encouraged to be more inclusive to the pa enua.

Cross-cutting issues

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²³ Source: SIF report to Board July to December 2015

²⁴ NSDP, 2011, p9

Apart from the SIF criteria, the evaluation sought to assess whether important cross-cutting issues were addressed. In particular the issues of gender equality and a rights-based approach were considered. Environmental issues were also taken into consideration although this was not a key focus.

Gender equality was generally well addressed. All programme reports contain sex-disaggregated data as a requirement. Project reports are also meant to include sex-disaggregated data, but have not always met that requirement as recipients have often struggled to collect accurate data.

It is commendable that SIF funds both PTI and Rotaianga in the areas of domestic violence: the former focussing on victims of domestic violence and the latter on perpetrators. Yet these two organisations should be encouraged to work together as they complement each other. PTI is starting to work with male perpetrators which could place its other work at risk, as women may feel unsafe sharing a space with such men.

The evaluation found that a rights-based approach was implicitly used by the Fund and its recipients. For example, three of the pa enua disability centre managers interviewed told the evaluator that the self-esteem of its clients, people with disabilities, had been enhanced in a very positive way. The Pukapuka centre manager noted for example that there had been 'a big change in attitudes towards people with disabilities – they are now accepted by the community.'

All of the disability centres, the Creative Centre and Te Kainga encourage the making of crafts that are sold locally. The resulting income is shared between the centres, to provide some level of sustainability, and those who make the crafts. This increases the self-esteem of their clients and fulfils their rights to employment and earning. Observations by the evaluator at different centres found clients fully engaged with activities and clearly enjoying the company of others in a relaxed environment. They were thus enjoying their rights to leisure and some level of training at the same time.

Environmental issues were mainly evident in the Ivirua tank project and the Oneroa youth church hall project. The Ivirua project aimed to provide a reliable and sustainable water source for the child welfare clinic and surrounding community in a very dry area, The Oneroa hall used local timber in its construction, which saved the cost of bringing timber from Rarotonga and used local materials well. Neither of these projects appeared to have any negative environmental impact

Recommendations

- Applications need to provide some evidence of a needs analysis to demonstrate the need and demand for the proposed service. This could be in different forms such as accompanying letters of support, data showing numbers of potential clients, or use of existing research.
- Applicants should be asked to attach a letter or MOU to show commitment of the partners that they anticipate working with to ensure the most effective use of funds.
- The SIF criteria needs to be tightened to focus more exclusively on service provision and to exclude other areas unless they can be shown to supplement and support proposed services.
- A future SIF should explicitly encourage applications from the pa enua, in keeping with Government's broad policies. MOIA staff should be trained to identify suitable projects and assist with developing proposals, monitoring and reporting.
- Applicants should be encouraged to include activities in the pa enua as part of proposals.
- The cross-cutting category needs to be more clearly defined to be included in a future SIF.
- A study, based partly on the 2016, Household and Income Study (HIES) be undertaken to provide more detailed information on vulnerability in the Cook Islands, so that a future SIF could be better targeted.



Fabric printing at Te Kainga



Making nikao brooms at the Mangaia Disability Centre



CICWA members weighing children at the Aremauku Clinic, Mangaia



The SIF Manager with completed water tank at Ivirua, Mangaia

Objective 2: Effectiveness

To assess progress against the outputs and outcomes.

- What progress has been made to assess the SIF's achievements against the outputs and short and medium term outcomes described in the Results Measurement Table
- Have the key outputs, short and medium term outcomes been achieved (if yes, what and if no, why)

Key findings

The SIF has achieved the key outputs and short and medium term outcomes stated in the Results Measurement Framework²⁵. As described above, the five programmes 'are aligned to community needs and complement government services' and 'CSOs are delivering quality services in priority areas'. These are the two required results in the medium-term. Most projects have also met these criteria.

The short-term results have also been achieved: Strategic and targeted support to CSOs; Improved capacity of CSOs to deliver targeted programmes and projects; and CSOs monitor activities and demonstrate results through results-based reporting.

The key outputs of Cook Islands Civil Society Engagement Policy and CSO Register; SIF administration processes and documents; and training and support to Cook Islands CSOs; have also been achieved albeit with some minor modifications.

NGO capacity

The quality of governance, skill levels and capacity within NGOs varies widely and this affects implementation and reporting and thereby effectiveness. By definition, NGOs are run by volunteers both at the board or committee level and often at the implementation level. Office-holders may change frequently with a loss of institutional memory and skills. Weak and inconsistent leadership can also be an issue with NGOs. The SIF Manager found that many NGOs are poor at record keeping, which affects their report writing. Some NGOs employ staff, which may also change frequently. These are unavoidable and ongoing issues that need to be managed. The SIF Manager provided training to NGOs on a one-on-one basis but found that she had to repeat it as staff and office holders change frequently.

The Red Cross, for example, was meant to implement its project at a time when the organisation was undergoing staff changes and a financial crisis and it reported that this led to the inability to deliver the project as planned, stating that 'Due to our financial crisis the project staff was not able to track the finances due to shortage of staff and competing priorities.'²⁶

There clearly needs to be ongoing training and support for NGOs, potentially both in a workshop format and individually. Given the multiple roles of the SIF Manager, different options need to be considered. Training and support could be contracted out or alternatively there could be a part-time assistant to undertake routine tasks while the Manager undertook training. The first option is favoured as the tasks of training and support to NGOs are more discrete than undertaking routine office tasks.

Applications and reports

Early applications and reports from recipients were often poor. The Manager resolved this by encouraging NGOs to send her a draft report, on which she made suggestions for improvement

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²⁵ The Results Management Framework is in Appendix B

²⁶ Red Cross report to SIF, 2014, p3

before final submission. This has been a good solution which was much appreciated by NGOs and has built the capacity and confidence of NGOs to improve. This system should be institutionalised into the SIF procedures so that grantees must first submit a draft which is finalised upon approval by the Manager.

The Manager also assisted with applications but noted that she was not able to assist with very late applications. Many NGOs reportedly struggled initially with the results framework that they were required to develop as the language of outputs, outcomes and indicators was new to them. The project application template was simplified as it was initially too complicated but it was not possible to change the format for programme funding as it was part of the GFA. Applications were rated by the SIF Manager according to their quality, as follows:

- In year 1 (2013), 49 project proposals were submitted and 11 granted. 22% of these met the required quality standards. For programmes in that year, 17 Expressions of Interest were received, resulting in 11 applications, of which 5 were approved. 45% of applicants met the required standard.
- For the 2014-2015 year, 30 project applications were received and 12 were granted. 40% met the quality standards. Three of those had been recipients of the 2012-2013 project funding round.
- For the 2015/16 Project funding round, 14 applications received, and 10 were successful. 71% of applications met required quality standards.

The quality standards of programme and project applications were assessed by the Manager on how they responded to the SIF Policy and Guidelines including registrations with Ministry of Justice; the existence of a current constitution; trust deeds; registrations or affiliations to national bodies; and the structure of the bodies such as President/Secretary/Treasurer/Committees. Applications were reviewed for proposed activities including operating policies and procedures, strategic plans etc and whether they were providing a specific service that would be their activity is one of a kind; ongoing and whether it duplicate other existing services.

The Manager found that the standard of both applications and reporting improved over time. Most NGOs told the evaluator that they found the process difficult at the start but that they got used to it. Obtaining reports from SIF recipients has been a constant challenge and although the Manager commented that many reports were received late, they were all eventually submitted. Clearly the capacity of the recipient NGOs had been built to a point where they could report to the required standard. Some NGOs commented that although the reporting was demanding, they appreciated that it lead to contributed to accountability, for which they respected the SIF. Accountability was however limited to six-monthly reporting, which still potentially allowed for misuse of funds which did happen in one instance. This is a vast improvement over the previous CIS where evaluations found a low level of reporting and thus overall monitoring.²⁷

The Manager developed criteria for assessing the quality of reports. The main tool for measurement was against the sections in the Results Measurement Framework Table (RMF/T) and the statistics provided per six month report. If a draft report indicated that planned activities had not taken place, she would call the NGO and follow up. Some of the common issues she found initially were:

- Failing to match activities with RMF/T;
- Failing to match activities with finances;
- Lumping activities and finances together to make it appear as if more was happening than was actually happening;

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²⁷ Evaluation of the Community Initiatives Scheme, Cook Islands, 2010, Commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, p20-21

- Failure to include details such as number of participants at events, costs of each event or activity;
- Overseas travel by NGO staff to attend conferences or workshops and failure to report on them;
- Lack of receipts, invoices and explanations with financial acquittals; and
- Lack of basic knowledge of how to write a report.

The Manager stated that: ‘Giving a rating to each recipient is not an easy process for me because of the changes in circumstances i.e staffing, the unexpected- good times and bad times that happen during the different reporting periods, it differs! In the end I’m deciding a fair assessment over a period of time, the only transparency I’m seeing is that between the organisation, myself and the Board.’²⁸

While there is a degree of subjectivity involved in assessing quality, the RMF/T gives an objective starting point and the evaluation finds that the assessments given are fair.

The Manager noted that a key lesson learned was the need for constant monitoring, informally as well as through the formal reporting process through constant phone calls, emails and face-to-face meetings. In the case of programmes, they do not receive the next tranche of funding if the previous report is not submitted, which provides an incentive to report. At one time, CICWA had major problems producing a satisfactory report despite considerable assistance and they subsequently lost their funding for a year. MOIA staff in the past help NGOs on their islands complete their reports, which is a great help.

The accountability that SIF requires appeared to come as a shock to many NGOs that had received funding in the past with little requirement to provide regular factual reports or financial acquittals. Engagement with the SIF has thus been a learning process on many levels.

Outputs

Although the SIF administration processes and documents were finalised early in the life of the Fund, the Results Management Framework was not completed until the Fund had been in existence for some time. The project application form and reports template were later simplified as they were deemed too complex and technical. The SIF Policy, SIF guidelines and the Terms of Reference for the SIF Board were among the foundation documents completed. Key documents were translated into Maori.

The Cook Islands Civil Society Engagement Policy was completed and endorsed albeit slightly behind schedule. In retrospect the expectations for the first year of the Fund were unrealistic and impossible for one person to successfully achieve.

The SIF Manager maintains a CSO Register based on the CSOs that are registered with the Ministry of Justice. At the start of the Fund, there were 128 such CSOs and by December 2015, there were 210. She also keeps the listing of members of the Cook Islands Civil Society Organisation (CICSO), an umbrella body for CSOs. The increase over three years may not reflect an actual increase – CSOs may have existed but not registered previously. A requirement for registration for funding may have provided motivation to register. The apparently high number of CSOs registered with both the Ministry of Justice and CICSO does not give a completely true picture as some registered CSOs are umbrella organisations such as the National Council of Women, National Youth Council and National Disability Council, and their constituent members are also members, thus duplicating their apparent membership.

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²⁸ Information in this section was largely provided by the SIF Manager

The requirement for the SIF Manager to develop a separate CSO Register, as in the RMF, was unrealistic, as it would duplicate the Ministry of Justice register. Using the established register as a basis was a sensible compromise.

As noted previously, the Manager conducted training for CSOs on an individual basis on both the application and report writing process, which is an output of the RMF

This evaluation is an output which is taking place a year later than the initially proposed time.

Positive outcomes

All of the NGOs said that the SIF funding was critical for their operations and it allowed them to raise the level of their service provision to a higher and more professional and comprehensive level. In some cases, programmes were able to extend their work to the pa enua with SIF funding.

In the December 2015 report to the Board, the Manager analysed the progress of the 12 project recipients from the 2014/2015 funding round. Four were deemed to have made excellent progress; five very good; three not adequate and one had no rating as it had been discontinued.²⁹ This 70% rating of very good or excellent shows strong levels of achievement.

All of the programme recipients work closely with different Ministries of the CIG. The MOH regularly refers patients to Te Vaerua and Te Kainga, which is a recognition of the value of their services. Te Vaerua enters its data into the MOH system and its physiotherapist also works at the hospital some of the time. The Police, Courts and MOH refer patients to PTI for counselling and legal assistance. CICWA has a longstanding arrangement with the MOH whereby nurses are present at clinics to attend to babies and toddlers.

These relationships are a clear indicator of the recognition of the important role that these service providers play in the Cook Islands.

Negative outcomes

Although the outcomes were overwhelmingly positive, there have been some unintended negative outcomes. The relatively narrow scope of the SIF and the competitive nature of it, especially compared to the previous CIS, has meant that some NGOs have been excluded. The CIS funded sports bodies, religious organisations, farmers' groups and environmental bodies among others, which are generally not funded by the SIF. The range of activities funded by the SIF is also narrower than the CIS and other funding sources as it prioritises service provision. Thus NGOs applying solely for general advocacy work for example, have not been successful. There are however several other small grant schemes that such bodies can apply to and these are listed in Appendix E.

This has resulted in some ill-feeling that NGOs are fighting over the funding and potentially undermining each other in the process. Umbrella bodies such as the National Council of Women, the Cook Islands Civil Society Organisation and the Cook Islands National Youth Council have applied unsuccessfully for funding and were declined on the grounds that they are not service providers. They were clearly not happy with this decision and the National Council of Women attempted to lodge an appeal to the Board. However the mandate of the SIF on service delivery was enshrined in the funding agreement between the New Zealand and Cook Islands Governments and could not be changed by the Board.

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²⁹ The three not adequate were all from the pa enua and faced implementation challenges as described elsewhere in the evaluation. All are committed to completing their projects. The discontinued project has returned the funds allocated.

Recommendations

- Grantees must submit a draft report to the SIF Manager who will comment appropriately and return for finalisation.
- The SIF should include a budget for technical assistance (TA) to provide ongoing training and support to NGOs in proposal writing, in particular developing results frameworks; data collection, reporting and, where deemed necessary, governance and institutional strengthening.

Objective 3: Efficiency (value for money)

To assess how efficiently the SIF has achieved its sought outputs.

- Have outputs been achieved in a timely manner?
- Could the similar outputs be achieved with fewer funds? Could similar outputs be achieved in a different way?

Key findings

With a few exceptions and some minor variations, the expected outputs and outcomes have been achieved in a timely and efficient manner. Funds have generally been used well with no indication that they were excessive. Financial record-keeping has been good resulting in a high level of accountability. The SIF governance processes have been sound. The Manager has been efficient at working constructively with NGOs as well as constantly monitoring progress and has reported to the Board in a timely manner. However the demands placed on the Manager and the required outputs were deemed to be excessive and unrealistic and the evaluation found that if further support was provided to the Manager, efficiency and effectiveness could be enhanced.

The Manager

The critical success of the SIF owes much to having an efficient Manager for the past three years. Evidence of this is that timelines in the GFA have been met; most projects were completed at the time of the evaluation; reports have been received from both programme and projects³⁰; reports including financial reports have been prepared for the Board. The GFA stipulated that the Manager should maintain 'a high degree of oversight' on the SIF, which she accomplished well but at the same time found very demanding

The evaluation heard unanimous praise for the SIF Manager who provided ongoing support for NGOs during the application process and for reporting. The Manager was praised for being approachable, patient and extremely helpful.

Again this contrasts with the CIS where the 2010 found that administration had been weak, leading to underspend of funds and poor reporting and monitoring.

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³⁰ Reports from programme recipients are received on a 6 month basis, for Project recipients financials are received at 6 months then full reports are submitted at the end of 12 months/end of project

The SIF Manager provided detailed reports every six months to the Board, which then provided input into the reports. The reports are then submitted to MOIA, DCD and NZ MFAT. These reports use the template of the Results Management Framework and include detailed financial reporting.

The demands and expectations on the SIF Manager were very high and in retrospect she could have benefitted from more support, a subject which is raised elsewhere in this report. Although this would increase the administration costs to some extent, it could lead greater efficiency overall and thus improved value for money.

Value for money

This refers to the effective and economic use of resources: 'Using resources effectively, economically, and without waste, with due regard for the total cost and benefits of an arrangement and its contribution to the outcomes the entity is trying to achieve.'³¹

Three key factors contribute to the evaluation finding that the SIF has had value for money. Firstly, the relatively low administration costs (compared to the CIS for example); secondly, the high levels of expenditure on grants with relatively little unspent funds³²; and thirdly, the sound system of financial monitoring at all levels. No funds have 'disappeared' – all have been accounted for. The programmes have undoubtedly proved their value to the CIG and to the community. Project funding was less than \$50,000 per project and was generally utilised well.

The SIF kept good control over finances, requiring receipts from project recipients. This has resulted in good accountability over finances and expenditure. The one case of financial mismanagement resulted in an audit being commissioned, which highlighted serious shortcomings.

At a more macro level, while the management of the Fund was good overall, there were challenges. The MOIA relied heavily on financial support from DCD which placed a burden on broader CIG systems. Those costs are not reflected in SIF financial statements.

In some cases, the number of people using a particular service is low. This is due partly to the small population of the Cook Islands but it could also relate to the issue of duplication which is addressed elsewhere in this report. For example, the elder day centre Are Pa Metua serves very low numbers yet maintains staff, a building and a vehicle. The issue of duplication needs to continue to be vigilantly addressed.

SIF administration costs

SIF management and administration costs have been approximately 11.4% of the total SIF funding. This compares favourably to the CIS management and administration costs of 21%. The co-location with MOIA is cost effective.

Within the operational costs, there were underspends of the SIF Manager's salary board costs and technical assistance (TA), but overspends on operations. The explanation was that the operations budget was always under-budgeted. It did not cover advertising for Project funding, advertising for Board members, extra printing for proposals for each board member, and copies for signing because it is double the number – one for the recipient and one for file. Office renovations also were needed: painting, new furniture, new curtains, new window frames etc.

Allocation of funds

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³¹ Te Terai Vaka, Value for Money guideline <http://www.mfem.gov.ck/development/ttv/te-tarai-vaka-policies-guidelines-template>

³² Unspent donor funds do not generally reflect well on efficiency and can be construed that there is over-funding.

It is commendable that all funds available were allocated. Returned or unspent funds were added to the following year. Again this compares well to the CIS, which underspent funds.

Most projects received a lower amount than they had applied for, so some NGOs complained that they then had to amend their project accordingly to cater for the lower budget. This raises the issue of whether it was better to fund a larger number of NGOs in order to spread the benefits or whether it was preferable to focus on a few better performing NGOs with potentially better outcomes.

In order to increase efficiency for a future SIF, the criteria should strictly focus on service delivery, as this is the point of difference between the SIF and other small grants available in the Cook Islands. As service delivery costs are relatively high because they include operational costs, it would likely result in fewer NGOs being funded with more measurable outcomes. This would also result in a blurring of difference between programme and projects, as in effect most service delivery NGOs would operate as programmes. The case of the Mangaia and Mauke elderbility is a case in point: both deliver well established caregiver services that employ workers and they would definitely benefit from the certainty provided by three-year funding. (As noted earlier, these services were established with other funding prior to the SIF).

Programmes that are delivered on a long-term basis are likely to be more sustainable than one-off projects. This could leave a small fund for projects that could be potentially used as pilot funding to test whether the proposed service was feasible.

There is an argument for supporting only NGOs with a proven track record of delivering services. The documentation required in the application does give an indication of the NGO and ideally there would be a good record. However this would effectively eliminate community and grass-roots initiatives, some of whose projects have performed well with SIF funding.

What were the funds used for?

Applicants needed to break down the budget in detail. For the programmes and 16 of the 33 projects (such as the fire brigades, Rotaiana, caregiver services and Are Pa Metua) the funding was used to cover operational costs of office rental, electricity, water, fuel etc. In some cases there was significant purchase of materials, such as with the Ivirua water tank, the Oneroa church hall, Pukapuka sailing project. Other projects such as the website developed by the Cook Islands Internet Action Group (CIAG) had large proportions of its budget on consultant fees, which were in fact CIAG members.

The Manager found that one project recipient was using money for work already done and it was effectively refunding itself. There should be a provision in the contract that prevents this happening.

Could similar outputs be achieved in a different way?

Although it is difficult to be categorical, it would appear that the answer is generally no. As stated elsewhere, the options for NGOs is increased reliance on volunteers to save staff costs and to increase fund-raising. This is not always a realistic option. A possible cost-saving could be on expenditure on technical assistance (TA) although very few projects used this.

Are SIF financial processes efficient?

Currently the financial process is that the SIF Manager sends financial requests for programme recipients to the MOIA finance section, which then seeks approval from the Secretary of MOIA. This then goes to the Development Cooperation Division (DCD) of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM), which makes the payments from the NZ MFAT contribution. Project funds are processed in a similar manner. CIG POBOC monies are managed by Treasury (MFEM), which funds the SIF Office including the Manager's expenses, Board expenses, operational costs and Technical Assistance.

While this is a rather cumbersome process and has worked reasonably well to date, managing two funding streams has proved to be inefficient and demanding on the CIG systems generally with systems in both MOIA and MFEM Ministries already stretched. It has proven difficult to track

expenditure across the two streams leading to situations of underspends as the end of financial year approaches. MOIA has indicated that while approval of vouchers for expenditure went through MOIA finance division, they were never incorporated into the MOIA accounting system making it difficult to track expenditure. All aid funding should be tracked in the MOIA accounting system and would significantly aid better tracking of donor funded projects which would also relieve some of the administrative pressure placed on DCD.

MOIA is entering into an MOU with MFEM from 1 July 2016 to ensure stronger internal financial systems which will incorporate the integration of donor funds directly into the Ministry accounting system.

What hasn't worked

While the programmes have had a high level of success, there have been a small number of projects that have failed to succeed as expected. One was terminated; one withdrew; two have yet to complete activities from the second round of funding although they intend to do so; and a further two have completed activities but have had slightly disappointing outcomes. Only the terminated project was regarded as a failure, although with a restructured board and change of personnel, this organisation was funded again in Year 3 of the SIF. Funds from the withdrawn project were returned and re-allocated. An audit commissioned on this project found the following:

- Key findings of the review include an inactive Board of Directors, poor internal controls, and weak book-keeping skills, signing of blank cheques and missing supporting documentation.
- The Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) was terminated based on repeated requests by MOIA to provide sufficient evidence (financial or qualitative) of its successful implementation of agreed outputs and achievement of agreed outcomes.
- The organisation's level of skills of basic book-keeping was weak to nil.

The important lesson from the experience of this NGO was the need for constant monitoring, both formally every six months and informally in between reporting times. In this case, the salary payment to the absent manager continued for a number of months before it was identified. It also highlighted that there was nothing in the SIF Policy or Guidelines to prevent a staff member from collecting his salary while overseas. This should be rectified in the future so that all work and payments should be made in the Cook Islands.

The reasons for these relatively unsuccessful projects have been discussed. Poor governance at the NGO board level; lack of a proper needs analysis with a lack of community ownership; and logistical difficulties have been the main reasons.

The SIF Manager commented that each year there is one project that disappoints. A former Board Chair noted that in retrospect, there were a few projects that probably should not have been funded. Because funding applications were selected on their quality, some well-written and persuasive arguments may have received funding that possibly should not have.

The evaluation finds that this relative failure rate is not excessive. Even projects that have faced difficulties have generally completed their proposed activities. Constant monitoring by the SIF Manager has been a constructive way of ensuring that NGOs are on-track.

The SIF Board

The SIF Board comprises representatives from the CIG (MOIA and DCD / MFEM), the New Zealand High Commission and three CSO representatives who apply through advertisements in the local press. One of these should be from the pa enua. The work of the Board is set out in its Terms of Reference (TOR). The Board meets twice yearly, or more frequently should needs arise. It has been the custom, although not in the Board TOR, that the Chair is one of the three community members. The Board has a code of conduct and each member signed a confidentiality agreement under the TOR.

A key role of the Board is the selection of SIF recipients. Board members reported that discussions were always well-informed, rigorous and professional. Although there were high levels of consensus, there have been robust discussions at times. The Board minutes bear this out.

Board members said that the best written applications got chosen as the SIF Guidelines states that 'Selection will be made based on the merit of proposals received.' Some Board members thought that in retrospect that a few projects possibly should not have been selected. However they felt that all proposals had merit and potential in some ways.

The SIF Manager kept Board minutes, which are of a high standard. The minutes, Fund applications and reports are filed in an orderly manner in the Manager's office. E-copies are on the MOIA share drive.

Since the Board meets only twice a year, it is not able to deal with minor operational issues. These are left to the Manager who consults with the Secretary of MOIA or the Chair of the board. Emailing has been a good means of communication between the SIF office and Board members in between Board meetings to keep members updated, The Manager was able to discuss matters informally with the previous Chair who provided ongoing support and guidance. For example, if an NGO needed to amend its activities due to changed circumstances, they could obtain clearance from the Manager to do this if the variation was relatively minor.

The Chair responds on behalf of the Board to all complaints. The Manager set up meetings for the Board to deal with complaints/Issues when they arose. This gave added transparency to processes as decision-making is a shared process.

In a small society such as the Cook Islands, there is a constant risk of conflict of interest, as people fulfil many roles and are often involved with multiple organisations in different capacities. Despite allegations of conflict of interest made to the evaluator, there was no evidence of it influencing Board decisions. The Board TOR addresses conflict of interest and provides for Board members to absent themselves from discussions if necessary.

A strength of the Board composition is that there is little risk of political influence, especially in the selection process as the mix of membership provides checks and balances.

A weakness of the SIF Board policy is that there is no provision made for the resignation of community members. This had happened immediately prior to the evaluation and it was not clear how the situation would be resolved. The Board had the option of returning to the list of recent applicants or advertising, which would add a further cost and would take time.

A further weakness was that all the community members are required to end their terms at the same time, thus giving no continuity. As the CIG members and New Zealand representatives have changed several times, it would be better to stagger the exit of community members.

Duplication

One of the indicators in the Results Management Framework for the SIF is 'Number of CSOs delivering services that duplicate those offered by other CSOs or government.' Duplication is an issue that was raised to the evaluation, especially in the disability area. In June 2014, the SIF Manager called a meeting of disability stakeholders to discuss the issue as the SIF Board was looking at better coordination of services, sharing of resources and creating stronger partnerships. A subsequent meeting was held a week later and all stakeholders staunchly maintained the unique and important nature of the service they provided. They also maintained that they worked well together and that it did not matter if people used more than one service. Indeed the evaluation found that both in Rarotonga and Mangaia, some people did access more than one service, for example attending Te Kainga three days and the Creative Centre a further two days a week. In Mangaia, some people received services from caregivers and also attended centres. This situation arises partly as most disability centres are only open one to three days a week. However it is not the case with the Creative Centre that is open five days a week.

Comments were passed to the evaluation that PTI and Rotaianga could work better together as the first focuses on victims of domestic violence and the latter on perpetrators. There was some concern expressed that PTI is deviating from its core business to take on perpetrators, which could increase the vulnerability of its clients. These two NGOs are not working well together as they do not refer clients to one another respecting their different areas of expertise. On the other hand, they are not duplicating services as one is counselling and allied services and one is mentoring and training.

There were suggestions that the three fire brigades were duplicating services but they differed, saying that they covered the whole island more effectively with three brigades. The SIF Manager has tried to get the three fire brigades to work more collaboratively with little substantive result.

The evaluation found that the SIF Manager has made efforts to avoid duplication but individual NGOs are reluctant to cooperate as they are extremely territorial. While this in no way justifies duplication, it gives an indication of the complexity and difficulties when dealing with this area. A partial success story of the SIF Manager encouraging working together is in Mangaia where the disability and elder caregiving service combined to form one committee. However they still have their own sub-committees and conduct their activities quite separately.

The question arises as to whether SIF is inadvertently encouraging duplication by funding so many seemingly fragmented services, albeit ones that already existed prior to the SIF. If, for example, it stopped supporting Are Pa Metua (APM), would those clients then attend the nearby Te Kainga? While this question was not asked, it can be speculated that the APM clients would not attend Te Kainga as it is primarily a mental health facility.

Since a diplomatic approach has not worked in resolving the pervasive issue of duplication, a more formal and structured approach is needed. The criteria for a new SIF could be to create criteria to force joint proposals where the area of operation is very similar. While actual operations may be run separately, overheads could be shared. A statement such as 'SIF will not fund NGOs that duplicate the work of others. Such NGOs are encouraged to submit joint proposals.' The SIF Manager can help with this as part of her assistance.

It is also the role of MOIA to proactively address the issue of duplication, as the directors of different divisions coordinate the implementation of national policies. MOIA will also be addressing the Civil Society Partnership Policy 2014, the purpose of which is to clarify the CIG's, specifically MOIA's, relationship with civil society, especially in relationship to the implementation of national policies on gender, youth, disability and ageing, and to improve social development outcomes.

Is the SIF well placed at MOIA?

The evaluation found that the SIF is well placed at MOIA as it provides funding to implement key social policies that are coordinated by that Ministry. Since its establishment, the SIF has been placed under the Welfare Division, which has not necessarily been a good fit as their primary focus is delivery of the legislated welfare benefits system for private individuals not on NGO service provision. Under the proposed restructure of the MOIA, the SIF would sit within the Social Policy Division, which would have a greater alignment with monitoring the impact of the service provision by NGO partners against Government's social priorities, and should thus be better integrated into the Ministry.

Another extremely important aspect of co-locating with MOIA is its network of staff in the pa enua. The MOIA staff include their oversight of SIF projects in their monthly reports to head office and they alert the SIF Manager of any potential problems. The evaluation saw first-hand how well this works in Mangaia where the local MOIA officer is actively involved with SIF projects as well as the disability centre, funded by the SIF through CINDC. Given the high cost of travel to the pa enua combined with time constraints, the SIF Manager has only been able to visit the islands with SIF recipients once a year, so the support provided by the MOIA staff is essential for successful outcomes.

There has been a suggestion that a future SIF would sit within MFEM as it deals with other donor funded small grants programs such as the India Grant Fund. While this may reduce overheads to

some extent, it may reduce long-term efficiency as most small grants fund one-off projects and not ongoing programmes that require constant monitoring. This evaluation deems that as inappropriate, as the criteria of the SIF are quite different and requires more than mere processing but requires a real understanding of social development and community issues. The presence of a representative from DCD MFEM on the Board should prevent double-dipping as this person would have records of grantees of other programmes.

This evaluation shows clearly that the SIF Manager has needed to be constantly monitoring SIF recipients and providing ongoing technical assistance and mentoring. It is not merely a matter of allocating funds but is dependent on establishing and maintaining long-term relationships.

Recommendations

- The issue of duplication should continue be constructively addressed in a future SIF by establishing criteria whereby NGOs that are providing similar services must submit joint proposals and align their activities.
- The SIF Guidelines should be amended to state that all activities and payments are to be made only in the Cook Islands.
- The SIF Board TOR should be amended to provide for (1) resignations of community members; (2) one community member to be replaced annually, to provide for continuity.
- The contract between NGOs and the SIF should stipulate that funds are for activities that are yet to take place, not refunding for past activities.
- SIF should remain at MOIA.

Objective 4: Impact

To identify the overall effect of the initiative.

- What positive and negative long term impacts at the societal level have resulted from this Activity?
- What would have happened without the SIF or a similar scheme?

Key findings

Programme recipients have performed very well and have evidence of an excellent use of resources by the community. Project recipients have received positive feedback from their clients. A positive outcome is the creation of employment in the pa enua where jobs are scarce. Without SIF funding, programmes would have to rely on volunteers, scale down services or cease operations, which would place vulnerable people at risk.

Positive impacts

A Board member commented that the programme recipients have been 'outstanding' in their achievements and the impact of their work is very visible. The three-year funding has allowed significant outreach and she felt that there is no doubt that services have improved with secure funding. She commented that the impact of projects is often less visible as they are generally one-off projects.

Based on reports provided by programme recipients, the SIF Manager prepares summaries for the Board to demonstrate how funds are being used. The following table shows the number of clients that used the services provided by programme recipients in 2015.

Table 2: Summary of reports by programme recipients 2015

CINDC: outer island disability centres		
Number of clients	March	September
Aitutaki	32	47
Atiu	38	26
Mauke	7	8
Pukapuka	20	20
Punanga Tautaru Inc (PTI)		
Cases seen by counsellor	March	September
Cases seen by counsellor	22	154
Referrals by Police	13	60
Referrals by self	25	81
Referrals by Court	5	6
Referrals by lawyers		2
MOIA		5
Te Vaerua		
Cases seen by physio	March	September
Cases seen by physio	328	218
Treatments given by physio	983	605
Occupational therapist treatments		692
Assistive devices given		47
Te Kainga		
Clients in attendance	March	September
Clients in attendance	92	113
CICWA		
Babies attending clinics (Rarotonga)	March	September
Babies attending clinics (Rarotonga)	482	478
Babies attending clinics (pa enua)	203	202

Note: all data was sex disaggregated in original form

Programme and project recipients were extremely positive about the impact at the societal level of activities funded by the SIF. All of them reported receiving positive feedback from clients. The evaluator met clients of PTI and read client testimonies, which were all very positive about the impact of accessing counselling services on their lives and on the lives of their families.

Programme recipients are able to maintain offices with paid staff while providing services. The three-year funding for programme recipients was well appreciated in contrast to other sources of funding that are on an annual basis. The longer term funding allows for better planning, less uncertainty, better staff security and increased community confidence which enhances reputations.

A positive impact, especially in the pa enua, is the creation of employment opportunities in places where there are very few jobs. Six people were employed by caregiving and disability services in Mangaia for example at the time of the evaluation. In other islands, small numbers are employed in similar activities.

Some NGOs held the view that the competitive nature of the funding was beneficial as it rewarded NGOs that performed well.

Assessing the impact of projects

Assessing the impact of projects is more complex as the range is very wide. In some cases, the completion of the activity indicates success, such as those involving infrastructure. Project reports called for achievements in relation to the outputs and outcomes as well as listing lessons learned and challenges.

The results and impact of some projects are very visible. In Mangaia, the evaluator witnessed the caregiving service and spoke to beneficiaries of it. Clearly it performs an invaluable role in a community with a high proportion of elderly people and a rapidly changing social structure. (21.4% of

the population in Mangaia was over 60 in the 2011 Census compared to 7.8% in Rarotonga). One of the roles of caregivers is to monitor medications and to test blood sugar and to keep records. This has reportedly improved the health management of clients resulting in better quality of life for clients and fewer visits to hospital. One beneficiary couple told how the caregiver collects medication from the hospital, which is invaluable as they have no transport.

Funding the occupational therapist at Te Vaerua was a project and was reported on with the Te Vaerua programme report, indicating the number of treatments given, as in Table 2.

Fire brigades reported on the number of fires attended, education visits and responses to community requests.

The quality of project reports varied but has generally been satisfactory.

Negative impacts

A negative impact is the possible 'stop-start' nature of relying on funding. NGOs have in the past had to cease activities in some cases when there has been breaks in funding.

The application process excludes small grass-roots village-based groups as the process is too complex and these groups are not always registered CSOs. The tendency has been to fund a smaller number of bigger projects rather than a multiplicity of very small projects.

What would they do without SIF funding?

Some NGOs would have to cease operations without the funding. PTI, for example, said that without the SIF funding they would close. The caregivers' projects would not be able to continue in the same way, leaving vulnerable older people without care.

Others would scale down or revert to relying more on volunteers. Getting volunteers with relevant skills and time is reportedly becoming more difficult as people in the working age-group (20-60) are often employed full-time. CICWA is an interesting case where the child welfare clinics used to be a community centre for mothers and children with high levels of involvement. Now as most mothers are working, it is usually grandmothers and great-grandmothers who attend the clinics and who are actively engaged with CICWA.

Some NGOs would turn to local fund-raising although they are mindful that in a small community, fund-raising is never ending and there is a limit to its potential. It is also time-consuming and takes the time and energy of volunteers away from the core service provision of the organisations.

Te Vaerua stated that: 'At this stage we would only be able to rely on fundraising and donations, plus the partial amount of funding for our physiotherapist. Services would need to be reduced or stopped if this service received no more funding.'

Some NGOs felt that there are other sources of funding that they could apply to if necessary. This may be the case for project funding but is less likely for programme funding for long-term operational costs.

Some of the larger programmes – notably Te Vaerua – would like the CIG to eventually take over its operations. Others, such as PTI, would like government funding but at the same time they value their independence.

The reliance on donor and government funding could be seen to promote a dependency mentality. The counter to that idea is that most of the NGOs that received SIF funding also do their own fundraising to contribute to their costs. While in some cases, considerable assistance is received from the Cook Islands diaspora in New Zealand and Australia, this is usually for one-off projects such as buildings and is not for ongoing core funding.

There is a huge risk to the vulnerable in the Cook Islands community in discontinuing the SIF funding as most of the activities funded by it are ongoing and have not been for one-off purchases.

Objective 5: Sustainability

Sustainability in the context of this evaluation refers to the ability of the impact of the programme to be maintained over time.

- Is the design of the SIF still relevant for now and the foreseeable future? What, if anything, needs to be changed going forward? For example the types of services offered.
- To what extent has local ownership of the Activity developed?
- What critical success factors are in place to ensure sustainability?
- Is donor support required to maintain the provision of services?

Key findings

The design of the SIF remains relevant as there is an increasing number of vulnerable people in the community and Government relied on civil society to provide key services. The emphasis on service provision has allowed the SIF to be focussed, efficient and effective. The SIF is embedded into CIG processes and systems and has a high level of local ownership. The successful operation of the SIF warrants its continuation. The evaluation finds that donor funding is essential and that New Zealand should 'soft-tag' funding to allow the SIF to continue.

This evaluation has found that the design of the SIF remains very relevant to the Cook Islands. Civil society fills an important role in providing services that the CIG is unable to currently fill and without reliable funding, these services will either end or be greatly reduced. The demographic profile of the Cook Islands shows that there will be an increased number of older people and consequently more people with disabilities in the future. Thus the need for services for the vulnerable is clear.

The focus on a limited number of areas has made the funding focussed and thus more successful than the predecessor CIS that funded a much wider range of activities. The emphasis on service delivery has meant that there have been measurable results. There has been scope in the SIF policy to consider infrastructure projects on a case-by-case basis. One such case was the water tank in Mangaia. In the future, such projects should not be allowed as there is adequate funding under climate change to cater for such.

The SIF has been well embedded into CIG systems and processes, using for example, CIG procurement processes for all transactions.

The evaluation concludes that the SIF should continue and should focus on its point of difference. To date, its point of difference has been providing core funding to service providers and this should be built upon. The evaluation is aware of other small grant programmes available in the Cook Islands, none of which appear to provide core funding to NGOs. Most focus on one-off projects.

As all CSOs are locally based, there is a high degree of ownership as the recipients know what the local needs are. A few projects appeared to be based on assumptions of need rather than clearly identified need, so it is recommended that in the future, needs must be more clearly articulated. The few projects without strong local ownership were completed but have not had lasting results.

The success of the SIF warrants its continuation. It has been capably managed with good monitoring and reporting and as this evaluation reports, it has achieved its intended outputs and outcomes.

The governance of the SIF by a Board comprising the CIG, NZ MFAT and CSOs has worked well. Board members have taken their roles seriously.

A possible alternative to the SIF arrangement is for the CIG to provide core funding key programmes that are currently funded by the SIF. A precedent has been set by the Ministry of Education funding the Creative Centre as a school since 2008. Providing core funding could, however, create further dependence on government and would not fit well with either the volunteer nature of NGOs or government strategy. The NSDP makes numerous references to the importance of civil society, noting that it is a strength of the country. One of the national strategies in the NSDP is to promote partnerships with civil society and the private sector and it states that ' Meeting the needs of our children, youth, persons with disabilities and elderly requires coordinated inter-agency support and a strong partnership between government, civil society and communities.'³³

The Civil Society Partnership Policy 2014 clearly articulates how important civil society is to Government and it outlines different forms of collaboration. Thus it is not recommended that core funding to NGOs replace the SIF.

There is thus a strong argument for favouring programmes over short-term projects. The SIF to date has allocated 70.2% on programmes and 29.8% on projects. The evaluation found that:

- Programme recipients of the SIF have achieved more evidence of impact than projects;
- Three-year funding has enabled programme recipients to plan work better, provides more security for staff and has greatly improved the quality of the services provided;
- SIF funded programmes are well recognised by the CIG for their value and alignment to Government policies and strategies.

Management costs would be lower for a smaller number of programmes than a multitude of projects leading to greater efficiency and therefore effectiveness. Programmes should have a component that addresses the pa enua.

There was a view encountered that the SIF should concentrate on a few well established NGOs that have a record of service delivery. The counter view to this is that even well established NGOs have ups and downs depending a lot on their office-bearers and personnel and they cannot necessarily be relied on to deliver without considerable support.

On the other hand, many SIF funded projects have proved successful. The provision of project funds encourages volunteerism and initiative in the community. A lesson learned by the Apostolic Church project in Mangaia that had a reading programme for children and youth is relevant: 'If we want people to excel, we have to help them. We can't always rely on others to help. The reading programme was a good example of this. It just took one person in the village to help with homework. The programme showed that it could be done. The community is so dependent on government help that they don't help where they really can.' The SIF funded this project for one year mainly to purchase equipment and it has continued to operate with volunteers.

If the service provision focus is strictly adhered to, it will eliminate more peripheral applications and will eliminate the rather 'scatter-gun' approach of the first three years of SIF projects. It is quite possible that some projects will evolve into programmes as the elderbility projects in Mangaia and Mauke have effectively done. These services could be encouraged to apply under the disability centres in order to streamline processes. They currently struggle with annual funding rounds as there is little certainty for staff and clients in the continuation of the service. The fire brigades could also

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³³ Te Kavenga Nui, 2011, p31

evolve into a programme, provided they apply together. If there had been no projects in the SIF, these NGOs would not have been able to provide services and reach their current achievements.

Even though there are other small grants available in the Cook Islands, none have a focus on service provision and none provide three year continuous funding. The SIF has therefore established a niche for itself.

The evaluation finds therefore that there is still a place for projects although they should form a lesser part of the Fund. Selected projects could be used as pilots to test their feasibility. The ratio of funding between programmes and projects should change to 85:15 from its current approximately 70:30.

Ensuring sustainability

Many of the services provided by SIF recipients will never be sustainable and will always depend on some form of funding assistance in order to maintain a quality service. However people in the Cook Islands have been innovative in their efforts to fund-raise in a variety of ways.

Self-funding even to a limited extent is a possible option for some. CICWA, for example, asks mothers to donate a gold coin when they bring their children to the clinic. When the evaluator asked other service providers if they thought people would pay for the services, most said no, as they would not be able to afford to pay. They had not however raised the issue with their clients.

Some NGOs already benefit from some forms of corporate sponsorship, sometimes in the form of cash or goods.

For many, closing down is not an option as they are committed to the cause of their NGO but they know that the quality of services provided would decline without support.

Another option is for the programmes to be directly funded by the CIG. This would cost the CIG considerably more than just replacing the SIF as all NGOs rely heavily on volunteer input, which would be in question if they were taken over by Government. This could be a long-term option and each NGO should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Te Vaerua, for example, is definitely interested in eventually coming directly under the MOH.

Funding the SIF

The partnership between the CIG and the NZ MFAT has proved beneficial, demonstrating the CIG's commitment to supporting the services that the SIF has funded and reducing the dependence on donor funding. Yet at this point in time, the evaluation finds that donor support to the SIF is essential to supplement the contribution of the CIG.

If the NZ MFAT contribution was withdrawn and the remaining CIG contribution of some \$280,000 annually remained, the split between recipients would be much lower, resulting in fewer services. It could also result in more politically oriented ad hoc lobbying for project funds at certain times.

The evaluation is aware of NZ MFAT's move towards budget wide support in its assistance to the Cook Islands and the risk this could impose on the future of the SIF. It is unclear what donor funding will continue to the Cook Islands in the medium to long-term. The OECD currently ranks the Cook Islands as an upper middle-income country, which is expected to graduate to the status of high-income country in 2017. This means that it will be less eligible for donor assistance in the future.³⁴

The evaluation strongly recommends that the SIF should continue with both CIG and NZ MFAT support and that New Zealand should 'soft-tag' its allocation in order to allow the SIF to continue in its present form with minor modifications recommended by this evaluation. This is to protect the funding from being lost into general Government reserves.

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³⁴ The DAC list of ODA recipients, 2012, p1 <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/49483614.pdf>

From the New Zealand standpoint, it wants to know if the SIF is the most efficient way to provide and distribute funding, which is taxpayers' money. Given the heavy reliance on NGOs and their acknowledged importance by the CIG, the evaluation concludes that it is a useful and relevant modality for funding a range of services at a relatively modest cost.

Recommendation

- Programmes and projects should remain but the ratio should change to 85:15 and the criteria of service provision should strictly be adhered to.

Lessons Learned

Many lessons have been learned during the life of the SIF.

Having robust systems in place, starting from the Results Management Framework for the Fund, meant that there was monitoring at all levels. Although some people found that developing a framework and reporting on it was difficult, they found it easier as time progressed and came to appreciate the level of accountability that it reflected. These processes set up a strong institutional framework for the SIF and defined quality standards. However the RMF was not developed and finalised until the mid-point in the programme so a lesson learned is that a clear and simple RMF should be developed at the start of a new round of SIF funding.

Almost all the respondents in the evaluation mentioned that having the right people is critical at all levels. Having an efficient and capable SIF manager has made it successful as she has driven the process and ensured that all outputs and outcomes have been achieved. The positive support of the SIF Board during critical times and the support of the Secretary of MOIA also contributed greatly to the achievements of the SIF.

At the implementation level, NGOs commented that having sound leadership with the right people on boards and the right staff and volunteers makes a critical difference. It was quite apparent in this evaluation that the NGOs that had problems with staffing and or boards, also had difficulties in implementing activities.

Some NGOs that have relied on expatriates have experienced a loss of capacity and institutional memory when they leave. Thus they held the view that local Cook Islanders should be encouraged to hold key positions in NGOs.

The SIF Manager has found that working with NGOs is a constant challenge. As many people expressed to the evaluation: NGOs have their ups and downs. The capacity of NGOs varies. Record keeping, financial management and report writing are often weaknesses. The SIF Manager found that most NGOs have governance as well as staffing issues and she found that there is a need to focus on the governance and management of NGOs to ensure successful outcomes. The evaluation identified a need for constant training and mentoring.

Strong community ownership is essential. When projects are based firmly on community needs, they are more likely to succeed. The projects that were not based on needs had poorer results and have not lasted well.

A lesson learned by many is the need for flexibility. At the Fund level, when the project reporting template proved too difficult, it was simplified. When activities did not work as planned, small variations were allowed. The Atiu disability centre found that it now works more as an outreach service than being centre-based. Some projects that aimed to work in schools found that when that did not work well, they worked with out-of-school youth. In Tamarua village in Mangaia, there are currently no babies, so the child welfare clinic is used for a monthly clinic for older people.

Taking into account logistical issues surrounding the delivery of services in outer islands, especially the Northern Group, within a tight time-frame have been a lesson learned. Longer time-frames may be needed for completion in such circumstances. Another lesson learned from the pa enua was the

need to adapt to the rapid social changes taking place, including an ageing population with a high level of non-communicable diseases.

A lesson that programme and many project recipients have learned is that when services are reliable and they deliver quality, the community has increased trust and respect for them.

The three years of the SIF has shown that duplication needs to be addressed in a firm but fair way as encouragement and persuasion have not worked. NGOs with similar services must apply jointly for a coordinated set of activities. Those who refuse to comply will not be considered for funding.

Despite the challenges, NGOs should be praised for taking initiatives in establishing services that are not being provided by Government. The demands and constraints can be addressed and capacity built, as the SIF has shown. Constant monitoring; simple, straightforward reporting processes; and some flexibility are key ingredients for success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, the following recommendations are made to improve future operations of the SIF:

1. A Results Management Framework needs to be developed at the start of a future SIF in order to provide a clear direction.
2. Applications need to provide some evidence of a needs analysis to demonstrate the need and demand for the proposed service. This could be in different forms such as accompanying letters of support, data showing numbers of potential clients, or use of existing research.
3. Applicants should be asked to attach a letter or MOU to show commitment of the partners that they anticipate working with to ensure the most effective use of funds.
4. The SIF criteria needs to be tightened to focus more exclusively on service provision and to exclude other areas unless they can be shown to supplement and support proposed services.
5. A future SIF should explicitly encourage applications from the pa enua, in keeping with Government's broad policies. MOIA staff should be trained to identify suitable projects and assist with developing proposals, monitoring and reporting.
6. Programme applicants should be encouraged to include activities in the pa enua as part of applications.
7. The cross-cutting category needs to be more clearly defined to be included in a future SIF.
8. A study, based partly on the 2016, Household and Income Study (HIES) be undertaken to provide more detailed information on vulnerability in the Cook Islands, so that a future SIF could be better targeted.
9. Grantees must submit a draft report to the SIF Manager who will comment appropriately and return for finalisation.
10. The SIF should include a budget for technical assistance (TA) to provide ongoing training and support to NGOs in proposal writing, in particular developing results frameworks; data

collection, reporting and, where deemed necessary, governance and institutional strengthening.

11. The issue of duplication should continue be constructively addressed in a future SIF by establishing criteria whereby NGOs that are providing similar services must submit joint proposals.
12. The SIF Guidelines should be amended to state that all activities and payments are to be made only in the Cook Islands.
13. The SIF Board TOR should be amended to provide for (1) resignations of community members; (2) one community member to be replaced annually, to provide for continuity.
14. The contract between NGOs and the SIF should stipulate that funds are for activities that are yet to take place, not refunding for past activities.
15. SIF should remain at MOIA as it is best suited for long-term support of NGOs that provide services.
16. Programmes and projects should remain but the ratio should change to 85:15 and the criteria of service provision should strictly be adhered to.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

This appendix contains a copy of the terms of reference for the evaluation.

Background Information

The Cook Islands Social Impact Fund (SIF) supports civil society organisations to provide services that meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people. The SIF consists of two funding streams.

1. Contestable funding for civil society organisations that can provide single or multi-year services targeting: gender equality; children and youth; elderly; disabilities; domestic violence; and mental health.
2. Contestable funding for civil society organisations that can advance the Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

Table 1: SIF Programme and project grants by sector and year

Sector	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Programme grants			
Disability	3	3	3
Youth/children	1	1	1
Gender/domestic violence	1	1	1
Crosscutting	0	0	0
Project grants			
Disability	0	3	4
Youth/children	5	5	1
Gender/domestic violence	4	1	2
Crosscutting	1	3	3

Of the programme grants all CSOs were based in Rarotonga with some of them conducting activities in the Pa Enuu. Of the 32 project grants provided 9 were for organisations based in the Pa Enuu including 5 for Mangaia, 1 for Atiu, 1 for Mauke, 1 for Palmerston and 1 for Pukapuka.

The SIF was established under a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA), the Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). The GFA was signed in 5 November of 2012 and will end on 31 August 2016, Variation No. 1 to the GFA was signed on 14 August 2013 and Variation No. 2 to the GFA was signed on 3 March 2014. The overarching goal of the GFA is 'to ensure improved well-being of vulnerable peoples through the contribution of Civil Society.

In total, the SIF oversees NZD \$3,386,000. Contributions to the fund include: \$1.8m from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT); \$925,000 from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – provided through New Zealand's harmonised development programme, and; \$661,000 from the Cook Islands Government (CIG).

Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation is required under the GFA and will be used by the CIG, NZ MFAT and its partners to identify learnings focused on which parts of SIF have worked, which parts have not, and why. The evaluation will inform decision making about the future of SIF: should SIF continue, if so should it be adapted and how? The results of the evaluation will be reported to the funding partners, disseminated to CSOs as key stakeholders, and made publicly available through the CIG and NZ MFAT websites.

Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will include:

- the time period of the evaluation will cover November 2012 to December 2015;
- its geographic focus is the Cook Islands; and

- The target groups are vulnerable people; staff and members of CSOs; staff of MOIA, MFEM and NZ MFAT who have been involved with SIF; and people with knowledge of community and civil society issues within the Cook Islands.

Evaluation Criteria and Objectives

Criteria being assessed

The DAC criteria that will be assessed in this evaluation are:

- a) Relevance
- b) Effectiveness
- c) Efficiency
- d) Impact
- e) Sustainability

Objectives and evaluation questions

Objective 1: Relevance

To assess the extent to which the SIF has been relevant to the needs of its stakeholders.

- Is SIF relevant to meeting the priority needs of vulnerable people, and of CIG and NZ MFAT?
- To what extent is SIF relevant to meeting these needs?

Objective 2: Effectiveness

To assess progress against the outputs and outcomes.

- What progress has been made to assess the SIF's achievements against the outputs and short and medium term outcomes described in the Results Measurement Table?
- Have the key outputs, short and medium term outcomes been achieved? If yes, what and if no why?
- What (if any) unintended outcomes (positive and negative) were there? Why?

Objective 3: Efficiency (value for money)

To assess how efficiently the SIF has achieved its sought outputs.

- Have outputs been achieved in a timely manner? If yes/no why?
- Could the similar outputs be achieved with fewer funds? Could similar outputs be achieved in a different way?

Objective 4: Impact

To identify the overall effect of the initiative.

- What positive and negative medium and long term impacts at the societal level have resulted from this Activity?
- What would happen without SIF or a similar scheme?

Objective 5: Sustainability

Sustainability in the context of this evaluation refers to the ability of the impact of the programme to be maintained over time.

- Is the design of SIF still relevant for now and the foreseeable future? What, if any, needs to be changed going forward? For example, the types of services offered.
- To what extent has local ownership of the Activity developed?
- What critical success factors are in place to ensure sustainability?
- Is donor support required to maintain the provision of services?

Recommendations

- The evaluation will inform decision making about the future of SIF. A further objective is to develop conclusions and lessons learned (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency), and to use

these to identify key recommendations that will go to help address whether the SIF should continue, adapted or be ended. If continued, what improvements are recommended.

Methodology for the Evaluation

In proposing an evaluation design, the evaluation team should identify the most appropriate approach, methodology and tools to generate credible evidence that corresponds to the evaluation's purpose and the questions being asked.

We envisage that this evaluation will include a short literature and documentation review in Phase One. Phase Two includes the fieldwork focused on engagement with a broad range of key stakeholders who have been either involved with SIF or have an extensive knowledge and understanding of Cook Islands Civil Society.

The fieldwork will take place mainly in Rarotonga with a visit to the Pa Enuā. Mangaia has been chosen as CSOs there received a total of five project grants. The costs associated with the fieldwork should be included within the proposed budget. The final design will be confirmed in the evaluation plan and in consultation between the evaluation team and the Steering Group.

Culturally responsive methodological approaches

There are a range of world-views and we encourage the use of culturally appropriate evaluation designs, methods and approaches to ensure the evaluation contributes to the body of knowledge of the Cook Islands and its people which are the focus of the evaluation.

Principles/Approach

The evaluation will deliver useful, credible findings relevant to the purpose of the evaluation. The recommendations will be pragmatic and actionable, and presented in a way that promotes learning. In conducting the evaluation, the evaluation team will work in partnership with the SIF stakeholders to increase ownership and use of evaluations. The Steering Group will include representatives of CIG, NZ MFAT and Civil Society who will advise the design and fieldwork and provide feedback on the draft report. The partners and beneficiaries will be key participants in the fieldwork, the final report will be made available to them and they will be invited to a presentation of the key findings.

The evaluation team will be transparent and independent. They must have no vested interest in the outcomes of the evaluation and be independent of those responsible for policy making, design, delivery and management of the development intervention.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation team will develop an evaluation plan using or being guided by the [Te Tarai Vaka Evaluation Plan Template](#). The evaluation plan will be approved by the Steering Group. The intended results of the activity/programme (i.e. the goal, outcomes and outputs) will be clarified and described in a results diagram (program logic, logic model) in the evaluation plan. The plan may need to be redrafted if it does not meet required standards or is unclear. The evaluation plan must be approved prior to the start of any fieldwork or other substantive work. The evaluation plan is to be appended to the main written report.

It is anticipated that the evaluation plan will identify how the information needs can be met through current documentation (including undertaking documentary analysis), and what information gaps, will need to be filled through in-country fieldwork. Data collection methods, for example, in-depth interviews, focus groups, direct observation and case studies should be outlined. Research ethics including but not limited to risk, confidentiality and voluntary participation must be considered and addressed within the evaluation plan.

Team Composition

We envisage that the evaluation will be undertaken by an individual or a small team of independent contractors.

The attributes (knowledge, skills, experience) required of the evaluation team include:

- At least one team member must be an experienced evaluator, with expertise in undertaking development evaluations
- Relevant technical experience and knowledge of the role and functioning of Civil Society, engaging with and supporting vulnerable peoples, and gender equality
- Knowledge, experience and understanding of Cook Islands political, economic, social and cultural context
- Outstanding research, report writing and presentation skills
- Fluency in English and ability to speak Cook Islands Māori is desirable

Content of proposal

The proposal should be concise, well written and address the Terms of Reference.

1. *Proposed evaluation design:*

- Deliver a high-level evaluation design (briefly outlining the approach, methodology and tools) that will be used to meet the evaluation's purpose, objectives and address the questions
- Outline the strengths and limitations of the proposed methodology
- Identify key data and information sources along with any key assumptions.

Governance and Management

The evaluation will be jointly commissioned by CIG and NZ MFAT and the evaluation team will be accountable for its performance to CIG and NZ MFAT.

The evaluation will be governed by a Steering Group that will consist of representatives of MOIA, MFEM, NZ MFAT and a CSO representative. Key responsibilities of the Steering Group will include agreeing the Terms of Reference, evaluation plan and evaluation report.

The evaluation will be co-managed by Angeline Tuara, SIF Manager of MOIA and Hilary Gorman, Senior Development Programme Coordinator of NZ MFAT who will be responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the evaluation. Their responsibilities include contracting; briefing the evaluation team; managing feedback from reviews of the draft report; and liaising with the evaluation team throughout to ensure the evaluation is being undertaken as agreed.

The evaluator(s) will be engaged in accordance with the Purchase and Sale of Goods and Services Cook Islands Government Policy.

Outputs and Milestones

Anticipated key deliverables and delivery dates are as follows:

No.	Output/milestone	Description	Due date ³⁵	Indicative payment proportion of fees
1	Evaluation plan	Literature review, document review, briefing and finalised evaluation plan	18 February 2016	25%
2	Fieldwork complete	Fieldwork in Rarotonga and the island of Mangaia complete and preliminary results provided to stakeholders through a debriefing	18 March 2016	
3	Draft report	Preparation of draft report and submission to MOIA, MFEM and NZ MFAT Management response by CIG and NZ MFAT by 20 April 2016	8 April 2016	25%
4	Final report	Revised report submitted Acceptance/approval by steering group after any revisions of the draft are completed and debriefing by 2 May 2016	25 April 2016	50%
	Presentation of key findings	To present key findings & conclusions to CIG, NZMFAT and beneficiaries	13 May 2016	
Total				100%

³⁵ Due dates will be finalised within the evaluation plan.

Reporting Requirements

The evaluation report must meet quality standards as described in the Activity Evaluation Policy. It should be guided by the [Te Tarai Vaka evaluation report template](#) and should not be longer than 40 pages. The draft and final reports should be sent via email to the evaluation managers.

As this is an evidence-based evaluation, the findings, conclusions and recommendations must be based on clear evidence presented in a way that allows readers to form their own views on the validity and reliability of the findings, including assessing the vested interests of sources. Where there is conflicting evidence or interpretations, the report should note the differences and justify the findings.

The report must include a one to two page evaluation summary written in plain and simple language and targeted to Cook Islands CSOs and their beneficiaries, focused on identifying the evaluation's key findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

CIG and NZ MFAT will develop a management response to the evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations. CIG and NZ MFAT will publish the evaluation plan and report and its management response on its website.

The draft evaluation report will be reviewed by Cook Islands Government staff, stakeholders and/or experts. Further work or revisions of the report may be required if it is considered that the report does not meet the requirements of this TOR, if there are factual errors, if the report is incomplete, or if it is not of an acceptable standard.

It is the Cook Islands Governments' policy to make evaluation reports publicly available unless there is prior agreement not to do so. Information that could prevent the release of an evaluation report under the Official Information Act, or that would breach evaluation ethical standards, should not be included in the report. The final report will be approved for public release by the Cook Islands Government department responsible for commissioning the evaluation.

Relevant Reports and Documents

Relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team prior to the evaluation. These key documents will form the basis of the document review and include:

- Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) Cook Islands Social Impact Fund
- Letter of Variation No 1 & 2
- 6-monthly Progress Reports produced by MOIA
- SIF Board Policy & Code of Conduct
- SIF Board Meeting Minutes
- Civil Society Engagement Policy (latest version)
- Cook Islands National Gender Policy
- CSO Register (latest version)
- Te Tarai Vaka Activity Evaluation Policy
- 2011 Census Report
- 2005-06 Cook Islands Household Expenditure Survey Report

Other key documents will be provided at the commencement of the evaluation.

Approval by Bredina Drollet, Secretary of Internal Affairs & Chair of Evaluation Steering Group granted on 22nd December 2015

Appendix B: Evaluation Plan

Te Tarai Vaka Cook Islands Evaluation Plan for: Evaluation of Social Impact Fund

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• About this Evaluation Plan	
• Prepared by	• Helen Tavola • Consultant
• Status	• Draft, 18 April 2016

• Approved by	• [Name], [Role]
• Approval Date	• [dd mmm yyyy]

Introduction

Background and context to the Activity

The Cook Islands Social Impact Fund (SIF) supports civil society organisations (CSOs) to provide services that meet the needs of society's most vulnerable people. The SIF was established under a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) between the Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA), the Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFEM) and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). The GFA was signed in 5 November of 2012 and will end on 31 August 2016, Variation No. 1 to the GFA was signed on 14 August 2013 and Variation No. 2 to the GFA was signed on 3 March 2014. The overarching goal of the GFA is 'to ensure improved well-being of vulnerable peoples through the contribution of Civil Society. In total, the SIF oversees NZD \$3,386,000. Contributions to the fund include: \$1.8m from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT); \$925,000 from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – provided through New Zealand's harmonised development programme, and; \$661,000 from the Cook Islands Government (CIG).

Scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will include:

- the time period of the evaluation will cover November 2012 to December 2015;
- its geographic focus is the Cook Islands; and
- The target groups are vulnerable people; staff and members of CSOs; staff of MOIA, MFEM and NZ MFAT who have been involved with SIF; and people with knowledge of community and civil society issues within the Cook Islands.

Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation is required under the GFA and will be used by the CIG, NZ MFAT and its partners to identify learnings focused on which parts of SIF have worked, which parts have not, and why. The evaluation will inform decision making about the future of SIF: should SIF continue, if so should it be adapted and how? The results of the evaluation will be reported to the funding partners, disseminated to CSOs as key stakeholders, and made publicly available through the CIG and NZ MFAT websites.

Evaluation principles underpinning this evaluation

The TOR states that the 'The evaluation will deliver useful, credible findings relevant to the purpose of the evaluation. The recommendations will be pragmatic and actionable, and presented in a way that promotes learning.'

This evaluation will be looking to examine achievements of the SIF while always looking at how learnings from the past can lead to recommendations for future improvements. The SIF has been a new structure in the Cook Islands and it is inevitable that it will be constantly evolving. This evaluation provides a learning opportunity and should not be seen as an exercise in finding fault to no useful purpose.

Objectives and Evaluation Questions

The evaluation objectives and questions are as stated in the Terms of Reference. Some other questions can be addressed to provide insights such as:

- What is the capacity of the CSOs to effectively utilise SIF funds? Has this changed over time? This is an important consideration as staffing and volunteers in CSOs often tend to change frequently and capacity varies. This is clearly closely linked to the evaluation criteria of effectiveness and efficiency.
- What training and support has been provided to CSOs?
- Has the quality of reporting to the SIF been consistent? Has reporting been a burden to CSOs?
- How do SIF funded activities align to those of other funding sources such as the Government of Australia's Pacific Women? This is important to avoid duplication and inefficiencies.
- How are the different disability service providers aligned with each other and with Government? There are several different groups with varying agendas and it is important to ensure that they are aligned and not duplicating activities.
- How effective is the SIF at helping to implement national policies on gender equality, youth and disability?
- What type of challenges has the SIF faced to date?
- How has SIF addressed challenges to date and how could procedures be improved?

All of the evaluation questions are deemed to be equally important as they are inter-related. The five objectives look at both processes and product. The evaluation as a whole is looking at the difference that the SIF aimed to make and the impact it has made. It will look at what was planned; what has been achieved and how it was accomplished. Relevance is crucial as the SIF needs to ensure that it is targeting the most vulnerable, as per the goal of the Fund. Questions around effectiveness and efficiency relate to the operations of the SIF, which are important to have working well. Efficiency looks at whether the input into the SIF has been appropriate in relation to the output. Effectiveness is the extent to which it has achieved its objectives. Impact looks at whether or not the SIF has made a difference to the problem it set out to address. It may be difficult to assess impact or the effects of interventions in the long-term, but some short and medium-term impacts can be assessed and are reported upon in programme and project reports in Results Measurements Tables. Sustainability is also very important: looking at how will these initiatives survive once SIF funding ceases and how the people involved have had their capacity strengthened and are sufficiently empowered to continue.

Stakeholder Analysis

This table shows the stakeholders and outlines their interest in the evaluation, any issues or constraints and their expected involvement.

Stakeholder	Interest/stake	Issues/Constraints	Involvement/Participation
MOIA and MFEM staff NZ MFAT staff	Interest in implementing relevant national policies and interest in successful implementation of	May be seen as separate and somewhat disengaged from CSOs	Not directly involved in implementation, more in oversight

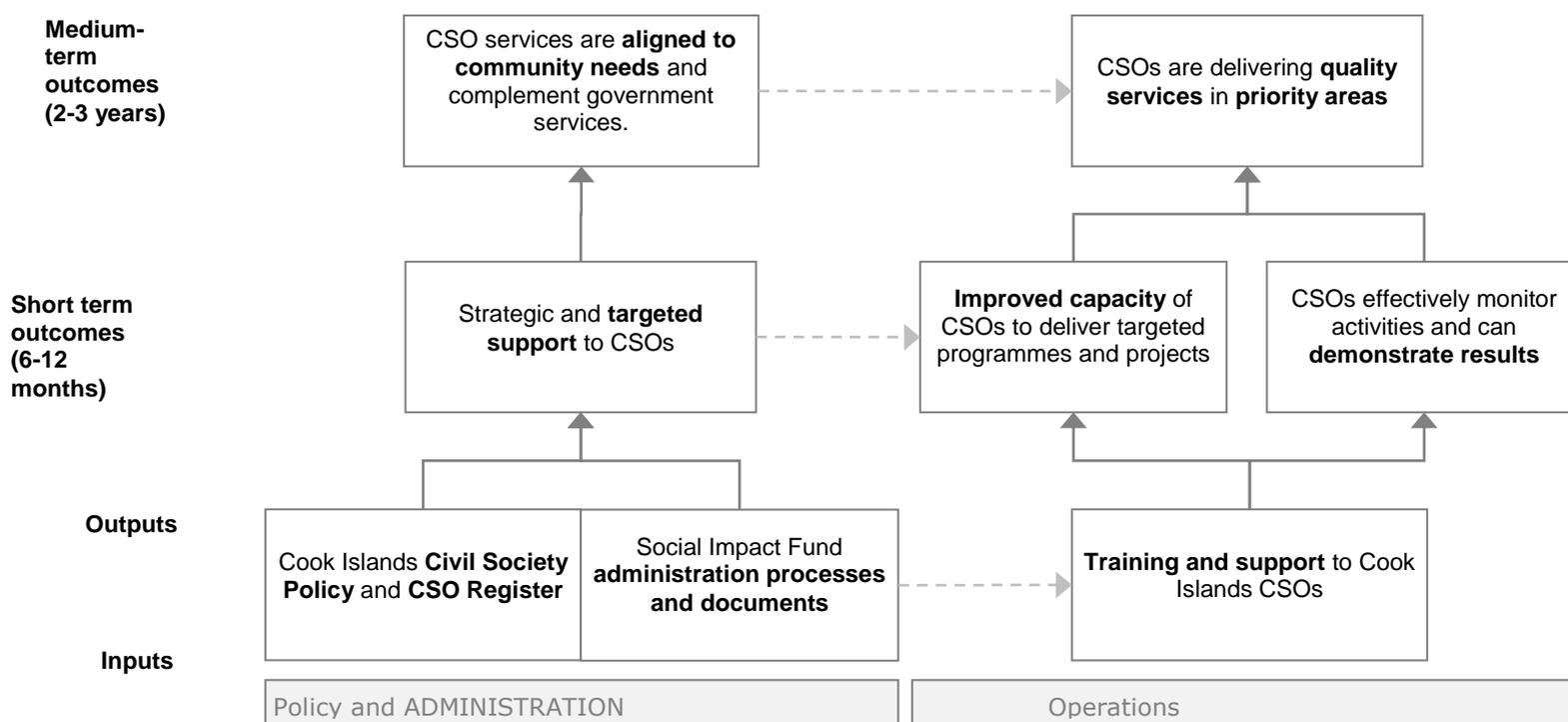
	SIF		
Administrators / staff / boards of CSO grant recipients	In their interest to see activities fully implemented	CSO staff turnover may be high and capacity may be limited.	Direct involved in implementation.
Beneficiaries of SIF funding	Direct recipients of services provided	Not all beneficiaries able to be reached. May be a tendency to give responses that are perceived to be desirable rather than genuine.	Direct beneficiaries.
Indirect beneficiaries (eg families of beneficiaries)	Have an interest in seeing that family members (eg persons with disabilities) receive services	May not be available or willing to be interviewed for evaluation.	Feel the impact of services in wider context

Evaluation Design

Intended Results of the Activity

The **Results Diagram** for the SIF below sets out the goal, outcomes, outputs and inputs.

Goal of the SIF: Improved wellbeing of vulnerable peoples through the contribution of CS



The results in this evaluation are at two levels: the overall or macro level for the whole SIF as in the Results Measurement Table for the SIF; and at the level of each SIF recipient. Each recipient CSO has a results framework with outcomes, outputs and indicators that are reported against every six months. CSOs report against baselines that have been established.

This is the key monitoring activity that feeds into this evaluation. Achievements noted in these CSO reports will contribute to the overall SIF outcomes. Outputs at the SIF holistic level can be in reports to the SIF Board and further information will be gained from the SIF Manager.

The **Results Measurement Table** is below:

Results	Indicator(s)	Baseline Information	Target	Methodology/Data Sources
Medium-term outcomes (2-3 years)				
CSO services are aligned to community needs and complement government services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake in services offered by CSOs Number of CSOs delivering services that duplicate those offered by other CSOs or government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established by 31 Dec 2012 prior to delivery of service Baseline to be established by 31 Dec 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake in services increases steadily over time Number of CSOs delivering duplicate services decreases over time 	Results-based reporting from CSOs to determine uptake of services. Use of CSO register to determine potential and actual duplication in services. Analysis by SIF Manager presented in six monthly report
CSOs are delivering quality services in priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity/service quality assessment Percentage of activities that have delivered outcomes in priority areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baselines to be established by 31 Dec 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Year 1, 60% of activities receive a rating of 'adequate' or higher, 80%, in Year 2, and 95% rated adequate or higher in Year 3. In Year 1, 60% of activities deliver on priority area outcomes. In Year 2, 80% and in Year 3, 95%. 	Results-based reporting from CSOs used to assess quality using MFAT's Activity Quality Rating Scale. Analysis by SIF Manager presented in six monthly report
Short-term outcomes (6-12 months)				
Strategic and targeted support to CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding applications and approved activities are consistent with CICS and SIF policies, and SIF priority areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established by 31 Dec 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Year 1, 80% of funded activities are consistent with CICS and SIF policies, and SIF priority areas. In Year 2, 90% and in Year 3, 95%. 	Results of funding rounds. Analysis by SIF Manager presented in six monthly report

Results	Indicator(s)	Baseline Information	Target	Methodology/Data Sources
Improved capacity of CSOs to deliver targeted programmes and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of applications that meet required quality standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established by 31 Dec 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Year 1, 50% of applications meet required quality standards. In Year 2, 65% and in Year 3, 80%. 	Results of funding rounds. Analysis by SIF Manager presented in six monthly report
CSOs monitor activities and demonstrate results through results-based reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO reporting clearly demonstrates results achieved/not achieved through SIF funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline to be established by 31 Dec 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Year 1, 75% of CSOs provide results based reporting. In Year 2, 85% and in Year 3, 95%. 	Results-based reporting from CSOs Analysis by SIF Manager presented in six monthly report
Outputs				
Cook Islands Civil Society Policy and CSO Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Cook Islands Civil Society Policy is developed MOIA to develop and maintain a register of CSOs 	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy developed by 28 Feb 2013 Register of CSOs established by 31 Dec 2012 	The Civil Society Policy references the NSDP and existing social policies. Register includes information compiled during SIF design.
SIF administration processes and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIF Policy reviewed and confirmed by the Board and aligned to the Cook Islands Civil Society Policy SIF Guidelines reviewed and confirmed by the Board Application material aligned to Guidelines Board Guidelines developed A comprehensive plan for public communication on SIF 	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SIF Policy, Guidelines and application materials reviewed and confirmed by the Board by 30 Sept 2012 Board Guidelines developed and accepted by 30 Sept 2012 Communication Plan developed by 30 Sept 2012 	Existing POBOC and CIS guidelines and application material, and information from Design phase to be consulted in the development of new material
Training and support to Cook Islands CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and support is provided to CSOs as per capacity need assessments 	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and support is provided to CSOs within two months of the capacity needs assessment 	Documentation from EOI process and application appraisal process

The above table clearly sets out the data sources that need to be used in order to test whether results have been achieved.

Information Collection

This table shows what information will be collected and how.

Question	Information Required	Information Source	Method
•			
1. Objective 1: Relevance	Assessment of how relevant activity is to community needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official documents • Interviews • CSO monitoring reports 	Document research. Interviews with SIF recipients and beneficiaries.
Objective 2: Effectiveness	How effective the SIF has been in terms of meeting intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official documents • CSO monitoring reports • Interviews 	Document research. Interviews with SIF recipients, beneficiaries & MOIA staff.
Objective 3: Efficiency (value for money)	How efficiently SIF has used its funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports including financial reports 	Document research. Interviews with SIF recipients
Objective 4: Impact	What changes has the SIF brought about? (both positive and negative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO monitoring reports • Interviews 	Document research. Interviews with SIF recipients and beneficiaries
Objective 5: Sustainability	What are medium – long-term prospects for the SIF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSO monitoring reports • Interviews 	Document research. Interviews with SIF recipients, beneficiaries & MOIA staff.

Detailed Description of Evaluation Methods

Different methods will be undertaken in order to elicit information, perceptions and opinions. The use of a range of methods allows the verification and triangulation of information, which increases validity.

The first stage of the evaluation involves a detailed review of relevant documents, including those relating to the social context of the Cook Islands; relevant national policies; and most importantly, documents relating to the SIF. This includes the foundational documents such as the Grant Funding Agreement; documents relating to SIF processes; as well as monitoring reports submitted to the SIF by recipients and reports to the SIF Board. This stage of the research is

essential to gain an in-depth understanding of the structure and operations of the SIF. These reports give a good overall picture of the efficiency of the SIF.

Fieldwork in the Cook Islands (in Rarotonga and Mangaia) will provide an opportunity for first hand contact with SIF stakeholders. Employers, volunteers, boards and members of each recipient CSO will be key informants and semi-structured interviews will be conducted with as many as possible in order to gain their perceptions and opinions. Beneficiaries of the activities conducted by the recipients will also be interviewed where possible, although it is recognised that this may be problematic in places. If numbers are large (above three) and time permits, focus group discussions will be conducted with beneficiaries, using semi-structured questions.

Other people who have been involved with the SIF and those with knowledge of community and social issues and civil society may also be interviewed.

Where possible the evaluator will visit SIF recipients while activities are underway in order to witness their operations. This will enable direct or first-hand observation (often wrongly called participant observation). This may be possible for organisations such as those providing services to persons with disability but may not be possible where the focus of the organisation is providing services to victims of domestic violence as issues of confidentiality and sensitivity are involved. This will have to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

The SIF Manager will be an important source of information throughout the evaluation. The evaluation will also interview MOIA staff who have a direct interest in the SIF, such as the Directors of Disability, Gender and Youth. SIF Board members, past and present, will also be approached to meet, either individually or as a group. MFAT staff in Rarotonga will also be interviewed. Although there will be many questions for these stakeholders in common, the questionnaires will be tailored according to the person being interviewed.

Interview schedules are attached to this plan as appendices. Ideally such research instruments would be piloted and amendments made as necessary. Due to the constraints of time, this is not possible or realistic. However the first few interviews will informally be regarded as pilots and minor changes may be made. There will also need to be some flexibility in approach as not all generic questions will be appropriate for every occasion.

There will not be a need to select participants as such: as many participants as possible will be interviewed.

It is possible that recipients of project funds (as opposed to programme funds) may be less available as projects may have been completed. However it will be important to meet as many as possible and discuss the relative success and impact of the projects and the value of SIF funding.

Every effort will be made to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere for interviews and discussions so those approached for their views are comfortable sharing information and opinions. If language becomes a barrier to understanding, I will seek the assistance of people who are able and willing to interpret.

Questions have been prepared as a guide to discussion for focus groups, which are anticipated to be groups of SIF beneficiaries. Focus groups can have the advantage of eliciting the views of many people in a relatively short time. It can also provide a safe space for people to express their views among peers. However the caveat is there that people can also influence each other in opinions.

Information gathered during the field visit may result in case studies for the final report of successful and less successful SIF funding so that lessons can be learned. However this depends

partly on the sensitivities involved and will need to be assessed after discussion with the evaluation managers.

After many years of professional experience in social research in the Pacific, I have found that sending questionnaires is generally a very inefficient way of gaining information, usually resulting in an extremely low return rate. Thus questionnaires will not be used in this evaluation.

The final stage of the fieldwork / country visit is to debrief the SIF Board and Secretary for MOIA.

Data/Information Analysis

When analysing interview schedules with qualitative responses, common themes and concerns arise. Data can be organised under these themes in order to identify patterns, trends and possible interpretations.

Interviewing a range of stakeholders enables cross-checking and verification. Although responses will mostly be qualitative, they can be analysed by assigning a numerical value that responds to answers, where appropriate, for example:

- 1 = very positive
- 2 = generally positive
- 3 = neither positive nor negative
- 4 = generally negative
- 5 = very negative

Answers will be tabulated using a Word document table or an Excel spreadsheet. Since numbers are not anticipated to be excessively large, the analysis can be done manually.

Findings from focus groups therefore have to be generalised as discussions are on broad topics rather than specific questions.

Cross Cutting Issues

Gender equality is a focus of the SIF. Even in the areas that are not specifically involved with gender, it will be taken into account. All data will be sex-disaggregated. Every effort will be made to include both men and women among interviewees, while acknowledging that the social sector is often dominated by women.

A rights-based approach is fundamental to work in all of the areas of the SIF and an awareness of this is critical as national social policies are based upon it. An example: disability is often seen from a charity perspective – helping poor helpless people improve their lives by providing services. The current approach and that contained in the Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy is that a rights-based approach should be used at all times. This means that persons with disabilities should be at the forefront of decision-making in all activities that concern them. One way of assessing this is find out how many persons with disabilities are on the management of the various disability recipients of the SIF rather than just being in a client role.

It is not anticipated that there would be environmental issues related to this evaluation. However the evaluator will bear the issue in mind should it arise?

Ethical Considerations

A brief explanation of the purpose of the evaluation will be given to all interviewees. There will also be assurances on confidentiality – that no names will be used in the report unless permission is specifically given. This will be a verbal exchange. Informants will be asked if they give permission for their names to be listed in an appendix listing evaluation participants. In the case of victims of domestic violence, names will not be used at all. No photographs will be taken unless consent is given.

Interviews will be one-on-one between the evaluator and the participant. This means that they will be private and confidential, allowing the interviewee the opportunity to talk openly.

Cultural considerations relevant to this evaluation include respect for older persons and respecting the rights of persons with disabilities rather than patronising them. The communal nature of society may mean that people are more comfortable speaking openly in a small group rather than individually. In keeping with tradition, meetings should start with a prayer. Dress should be modest rather than skimpy.

Given the nature of this evaluation, it is unlikely that any harm would come from it but the evaluator will be mindful of potential harm.

Limitations, Risks and Constraints

This table outlines potential or actual risks, limitations and constraints.

Risk/Limitation/Constraint	Likely effect on Evaluation	How this will be Managed/Mitigated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People may be unwilling to talk to evaluator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate number of respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to find out why there is reluctance – is there another reason? Ask an intermediary to intervene and explain purpose of evaluation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not possible to talk to some people such as clients of domestic violence service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May reduce validity of information in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will get information from others working in that area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People not being completely honest and open. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unreliable information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify answers with other sources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language issues may prevent good understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unreliable results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will seek interpretation where needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather and other logistical difficulties make meetings late or impossible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer respondents than desirable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reschedule where possible. Conduct telephone interviews where face-to face is not possible.

Feedback of Findings

It is anticipated that a half-day workshop of combined SIF recipients will be held towards the end of the evaluation, possibly one in Rarotonga and one in Mangaia. The purpose of these

workshops is to review finding so far on work of the SIF and for participants to make suggestions for the future.

MOIA will distribute the draft report to the SIF Board which will respond and comments will be taken into account by the evaluator according to the time-frame in the contract.

Documents to be Used in the Evaluation

Documents to be used in the evaluation include:

- National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) Te Kaveinga Nui 2011-2015
- Cook Islands 2011 Census of Population and Dwellings
- Cook Islands Household Expenditure Survey (HES) 2005-2006
- Cook Islands Family Health Safety Survey (FHSS) Report 2014 Te Ata o te Ngakau
- Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2011-2016
- Cook Islands National Youth Policy Back to Basics for Youth 15-24years 2015-2020
- Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy and Action Plan 2014 – 2019
- Civil society partnership policy 2014
- Social Impact Fund Policy
- SIF Grant Funding Agreement
- SIF Guidelines
- SIF reports from fund recipients

Timeline

This table shows the timing of key activities and deliverables.

Briefing & evaluation plan		
Key documents received by evaluator		8 April 2016
Briefing of evaluator(s) via Skype		11 April 2016
Completion of evaluation plan by evaluator	5 days	18 April 2016
Steering group to review and provide feedback	3 days	20 April 2016
Evaluation plan finalised by evaluator		30 April 2016
Final Evaluation plan approved by Steering group		4 May 2016
Fieldwork & report completion and dissemination		
Fieldwork in Rarotonga and Mangaia (14 days) completed 9-22 May	14 days	22 May 2016
Draft report submitted by evaluator	7 days	1 June 2016
CIG and MFAT evaluation response to report	5 days	7 June 2016
Revisions to report by evaluator	4 days	13 June 2016
Final report approved by steering group	3 days	16 June 2016
Report disseminated via CIG and MFAT website and to key stakeholders via email (by MOIA)		24 June 2016
Presentation of report key findings by MOIA to CIG, MFAT and beneficiaries		30 June 2016

Appendix A: Questions for Interviews and Focus Groups

This appendix contains lists of questions that will be asked in interviews or focus groups for the different stakeholder groups. (note questions for particular individuals are not included)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SIF RECIPIENTS – ADMINISTRATORS / STAFF / BOARDS / MEMBERS OF CSO GRANTEES

Introduction:

I am conducting an evaluation of the first three years of the SIF. This is to see whether it has met the needs of those who have been receiving funds and to see how well the fund has been working. Your input to this process is very valuable and I appreciate your time.

I will not use your name in the report so please feel free to be open and honest. But I will be adding a list of all the people who I have consulted at the end of the report – is it ok if I put your name(s) there?

1. Can you tell me what kind of activities you use the SIF funds for? (Looking for detail: how often do activities take place if appropriate; how many attend; how they operate etc)
2. Is the SIF funding the only source of funding for your organisation? If not, what are the other sources? Roughly what proportion of funding comes from the SIF?
3. I am looking at the positive benefits of the SIF as well as any unexpected negative effects – would you like to comment on that?
4. Your programme / organisation was already running before the SIF started. What value has SIF added compared to what existed before?
5. What would you do without the SIF funding or if you had less funding from the SIF?
6. If the SIF funding comes to an end, where could you seek funding from?
7. Who is currently benefitting from the work of? In what ways are they benefitting?
8. What is the feedback / responses that you get from people about your work? (including those who participate and others such as their families?)
9. Are there people trained to continue the work of this organisation in the medium to long-term?
10. Do you find reporting to the SIF a straight-forward process?

11. Are the SIF processes easy to understand, including the application?
12. What do you think could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the SIF?
13. Do think that there have been lessons learned along the way? What are they?
14. Has the SIF manager been helpful to you? How?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DIRECTORS OF DISABILITY / WOMEN / YOUTH / MOIA STAFF

I am undertaking an evaluation of the SIF for this Ministry. Since many of the recipients of the SIF are undertaking work in the areas of your policy, your input would be most appreciated.

With your permission, I will put your names in the list of people that I have consulted but will not quote you directly unless I have your permission.

1. The SIF is an important source of funding for implementing some of the activities that fall under the national policy in your area of work. How important has it been in helping to implement the policy?
2. Do you have any direct involvement with the CSOs that receive SIF assistance? Which ones?
3. Do you feel that the CSOs that receive SIF assistance reach the most vulnerable people in the Cook Islands?
4. Do you feel that their work has made a positive difference so far? How could this be improved?
5. Are there particular programmes or projects that you feel have been outstanding in terms of impact?
6. Are you aware of any negative impacts that have occurred?
7. How would the different CSOs be operating without SIF assistance?
8. What are the main challenges facing CSOs here and in particular the CSOs that are receiving SIF funds?
9. Question for Nono: are the different disability service providers coordinated or is there some duplication? How do they work with the MOH?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH SIF OR THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL, COMMUNITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE COOK ISLANDS

Introduction:

I am conducting an evaluation of the first three years of the SIF. This is to see whether it has met the needs of those who have been receiving funds and to see how well the fund has been working. Your input to this process is very valuable and I appreciate your time.

I will not use your name in the report so please feel free to be open and honest. But I will be adding a list of all the people who I have consulted at the end of the report – is it ok if I put your name(s) there?

Name.....

1. What has your involvement with SIF been?
2. Do you have any views on its relevance to the CSOs that it is assisting?
3. Are you involved with any particular CSOs that the SIF has been assisting?
4. Do you think that they are meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in the population? How?
5. What challenges do you think CSOs in the Cooks face at the moment?

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

(For beneficiaries of SIF programmes / projects. These questions can be used for individual beneficiaries if necessary)

Introduction:

I am conducting an evaluation of the first three years of the SIF. This is where the money comes from to fund your organisation. I want to understand whether it has met the needs of those who have been receiving funds and to see how well the fund has been working. Your input to this process is very valuable and I appreciate your time.

I will not use your name in the report so please feel free to be open and honest. But I will be adding a list of all the people who I have consulted at the end of the report – is it ok if I put your name(s) there?

Name of group / CSO.....

Location.....

How many people are here?.....

1. Do you attend this activity regularly?
2. Can you tell me about the things that you normally do here
3. How do you like coming here? What do you like / dislike about it?
4. (Are there benefits to you? What kind?)
5. Are there any changes you would like to make?

Appendix B: Checklists for Direct Observation

SCHEDULE FOR DIRECT OBSERVATION

NAME OF CSO

PLACE OF OBSERVATION

DATE

1. What is the nature of the activity being observed?
2. How many people are present?
3. What are they doing?
4. Are they actively engaged (as opposed to passively)?
5. How are the staff interacting with the participants?
6. Is there much social interaction among participants?
7. What is the general mood / ambiance here?

Appendix C: Workshop Details

This appendix provides details of workshops that will be held, and the focus of the workshops.

- [Rarotonga workshop](#)

Tentative date: Thursday 19 May 9-11am

Venue: TBC

Who will attend: people who have been interviewed during the evaluation and any others who are or have been involved with the SIF

Purpose of workshop: to present tentative findings of evaluation to participants and to seek further views on future directions for the SIF

Draft programme:

Opening prayer

Welcome remarks – MOIA

Background on SIF and evaluation process

Key findings of evaluation so far

Refreshments

Break into groups based on issues (eg gender, disability) depending on numbers to discuss questions on validity of findings, any further information / views, views for the future of the SIF

- [Mangaia Workshop \(this may be more of an informal roundtable, depending on numbers\)](#)

Tentative date: Tuesday 17 May 2-4pm

Logistics and programme as above. If numbers are small, one discussion group can take place and will discuss the SIF work on Mangaia.

Appendix C: List of Data Sources

Cook Islands 2011 Census of Population and Dwellings

Cook Islands Household Expenditure Survey (HES) 2005-2006

Cook Islands Family Health Safety Survey (FHSS) Report 2014 Te Ata o te Ngakau

Cook Islands National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2011-2016

Cook Islands National Youth Policy Back to Basics for Youth 15-24years 2015-2020

Cook Islands Disability Inclusive Development Policy and Action Plan 2014 – 2019

Civil society partnership policy 2014

National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) Te Kaveinga Nui 2011-2015

New Zealand Aid Programme Strategic Plan 2015-2019

Social Impact Fund Policy

SIF Grant Funding Agreement

SIF Guidelines

SIF reports from fund recipients

Reports to the SIF Board and SIF Board minutes

Young people of the Cook Islands: Analysis of the 2011 Population and Housing Census, 2015, Cook Islands Government with UNFPA

Appendix D: SIF recipients 2013-2016

PROGRAMME 520,000 X 3 years = \$1,560,000

CSO	Sector	Funding 2013-2014	Funding 2014-2015	Funding 2015-2016
CICWA	Y	97,500	97,500	97,500
CINDC	D	247,500	247,500	247,500
Te Vaerua	D	202,500	202,500	202,500
Te Kainga	D	75,000	75,000	75,000
PTI	G	157,500	157,500	157,500
Totals		780,000	780,000	780,000

PROJECTS

2013-2014		
CSO	Sector	Funding
Rotaianga	G	33,380
CIFWA	Y	10,000
Red Cross	Y	11,023
Are Pa Metua	G	31,680
Virtues	Y	10,520
CIAG (website)	C	22,700
CIAG (telecentre)	G	7,750
PPSEAWA	G	50,000
Puaikura Fire Brigade	C	5,000
Oneroa Youth	Y	12,875
Apostolic	Y	5,072
Total		200,000
2014-2015		
CSO	Sector	Funding
Puaikura Fire Brigade	C	8,300
Teimurimotia Fire Brigade	C	13,505
Areora Vainitini	G	1,750
Te Vaerua	D	40,000
Mangaia Elderbility	D	34,060
Mauke D/E	D	34,060
CIFWA	Y	14,869
Virtues	C	10,520
Rotary	Y	10,550

Palmerston Lucky School	Y	8,166
Ivirua Community	Y	6,000
Sailing Cook Islands	Y	34,220
Total		216,000
2015-2016		
CSO	Sector	Funding
Te Vaerua	D	40,000
Rotaianga	D	34,000
Mauke D/E	D	34,000
Mangaia Kaipatai	D	34,000
Are Pa Metua	G	30,000
Teimurimotia Fire Brigade	C	30,000
Te Mana Ou	Y	14,000
Matavera Fire Brigade	C	13,000
Puaikura Fire Brigade	C	12,000
Creative Centre	D	5,000
Total		246,000
Grand total		\$662,000

Sectors:

D – disability

Y – youth / children

G – gender / domestic violence

C – cross-cutting

Appendix E Small grants available in the Cook Islands

Small grant programme	Grant purpose	Development partner	Lead Ministry / organisation
Strengthening Resilience in Island Communities USD38,000	SRIC is only available for the 11 Pa Enuu for funds for vulnerable and at-risk groups affected by climate change and includes disaster risk reduction activities.	United Nations Development Programme	OPM – Climate Change Cook Islands
Global Environment Fund Small Grant Programme USD50,000	NHI GEF for funds of up to USD\$50,000 To support registered CSO's, NGO's and Island communities to deliver services to vulnerable and at-risk groups in 5 areas: Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Climate Change, International Waters and Persistent Organic Pollutants.	United Nations Development Programme	Cook Islands Red Cross
India Grant Fund NZD20,000	To support, promote or develop social, cultural, or economic development and sustainability, it should directly serve the basic needs of the community and have a positive and sustainable impact on the living conditions of the target group (e.g. projects referring to education, vocational training, hygiene standards, community development areas, gender).	Indian Government	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
Gender and Women in Business	Increased benefits from new livelihood options and economic opportunities for women	New Zealand Aid Programme	Ministry of Internal Affairs

Japanese Grass Roots	To achieve sustainable and environmentally-friendly economic growth and improvements in living standards.	Japan	Embassy of Japan to the Cook Islands in New Zealand
Agribusiness Grant Fund	To assist, small and medium agribusiness enterprises in the Cook Islands to increase their economic independence, to create sustainable employment opportunities and also address the capacity building and training needs through short-term training attachments and advisory services.	Food & Agriculture Organisation	Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce
Germany Small Grants Programme	The project must directly serve the basic needs of the most deprived social groups and have a direct positive and sustainable impact on the living conditions of the target group (e.g. projects referring to education, vocational training, hygiene standards, medical provisions). Gender equity aspects are to be taken into consideration (i.e. women and men should benefit from the project to the same extent).	Federal Republic of Germany	

Direct Aid Programme Up to NZD10,000	The program focuses on supporting small-scale development projects and activities that involve the beneficiaries in the identification, design and management of the projects. Successful projects are required to appropriately acknowledge the Australian Government	Australian High Commission	Australian High Commission
Fisheries Development Facility	Provides a total of \$80K in small grants to fishing clubs and \$40K disbursed in small grants to fisher folks directly		Ministry of Marine Resources
Cook Foundation	A local charitable trust that has commenced making grants identified through Members of Parliaments and charitable trust/community organisations for charitable causes in the community. Each grant is up to NZD2, 000.		

New Zealand High Commission Fund	Provides grants up to NZD25,000. The Fund supports small scale, short-term community projects that contribute to wider community well-being. The projects must be in line with New Zealand Aid Programme's mission of: Sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world. The Fund is aimed primarily at community groups and NGOs but other types of organisations e.g. schools, business associations may apply.		New Zealand High Commission Rarotonga
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Sources:

New Zealand High Commission Fund – New Zealand High Commission Rarotonga

All others: http://www.mfem.gov.ck/images/documents/DCD_Docs/Development-Resources/Cook_Islands_small_grants_programme_260416.pdf?subject=http://www.mfem.gov.ck/images/documents/DCD_Docs/Development-resources/Cook_Islands_small_grants_programme_260416.pdf

Appendix F: List of People Consulted

NAME	ORGANISATION	POSITION
Rarotonga		
Bredina Drollet	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA)	Secretary
Joseph Mayhew	New Zealand High Commission	First Secretary Development New Zealand Aid Programme Manager
Hilary Gorman	New Zealand High Commission	Senior Development Programme Coordinator
Sean Buckley	New Zealand Aid Programme	Development Manager* (Wellington, formerly in CI)
Nooroa Numanga	MOIA	Director of Disability
Ngatuaine Maui	MOIA	Director of Welfare and Board member of SIF
Charlene Hoff	MOIA	Acting Director of Youth
Ruta Pokura	MOIA	Director of Gender and Development
Angeline Tuara	Social Impact Fund (SIF)	Manager
Jude Isaia	Social Impact Fund	Board Member; Manager Atiu Disability Centre
Sharon Paio	Social Impact Fund	Board Member
Inamo McMurphy	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	President
Helen Greig	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	Secretary
Nga Teinangaro	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	Manager
Rebeka Buchanan	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	Counsellor
Mark Henderson	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	Contracted counsellor and contracted to Virtues project
Client 1	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	
Client 2	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated	
Rongo File	Cook Islands Family Welfare Association (CIFWA)	Executive Director
Polly Tongia	Cook Islands Family Welfare Association	Council Member
Naomi Manavaikai	Cook Islands Family Welfare Association	Youth administrator and President of National Youth Council
Jimmy Marsters	Rotaianga	President
Tangaroa Uea	Rotaianga	Secretary
Nadine Newnham	Te Vaerua	Vice president of Board
Marie Francis	Te Vaerua	Board member
Marie Francis	Te Mana Ou	President
Donna Smith	Te Vaerua	Occupational therapist**
Angeline Tuara	Cook Islands Child Welfare Association (CICWA)	President
Maria Browne	CICWA	Secretary; President of Oaoa clinic
Rose Kairua	CICWA	Vice-secretary; President of Tupuka clinic
Tutu Tini	CICWA	Board member; president of Pokono clinic
Tevaerangi Tatuava	CICWA	Executive Officer
Tai Roberts	Tupapa Maraerenga clinic	President
Hiawatha Tauia	Ministry of Health	Public health nurse
Maara Kenning	Ministry of Health	Dental nurse

Thomas Ngauru	Te Kainga	Volunteer staff member
Mereana Taikoko	Te Kainga	Counsellor/President
Rau Nga	Cook Islands National Disability Council	President
Bob Kimiangatau	Cook Islands National Disability Council	Secretary
Gail Kimiangatau	Cook Islands Women and Girls with Disabilities	Administrator and trainer
Nga Teao-Papatua	Are Pa Metua	President
Alexis Wolfgramm	PPSEAWA	Member
Maureen Hilyard	PPSEAWA	Member
Tuaine Marsters	Cook Islands Civil Society Organisation	Legal adviser
Lynnsay Rongokea Francis	SIF	Former SIF board chair
Maureen Hilyard	Cook Islands Internet Action Group	President
Vaine Wichman	CINCW	President **
Loloko William	Pukapuka Disability Centre	Coordinator
Anne Tierney	Cook Islands Sailing Association	Sailing Development Director
Mangaia		
Anthony Whyte	Island Administration	Executive Officer
Tere Atariki	Island Council	Mayor
Poroa Arokapiti	MOIA	Officer Mangaia
Taoi Nooroa	Island Administration	Tourism culture officer
Tuaine Tuara	Former SIF board member	Also involved with many SIF recipient NGOs on Mangaia
Gill Vaiimene	Mangaia Karapatai	President
Ina Papatua	Mangaia Karapatai	Vice President; Apostolic reading project (pastor's wife)
Tangimama Harry	Apostolic reading project	Secretary
Ruru Tangatakino	Disability centre	Coordinator
Tangi Metuakore	Disability centre	Assistant coordinator
Ne Tara	Elderbility caregivers	Coordinator
Tua Toka	Elderbility caregivers	Caregiver Ivirua village
Mata Aererua	Elderbility caregivers	Caregiver Oneroa village
Tuaine Parima	Elderbility caregivers	Caregiver Tamarua village
Noomaunga Kareroa	Oneroa Youth	Secretary
Doreen Tangatakino	CICWA	Mangaia President
Tuaine Parima	CICWA	Mangaia Secretary
Rod Dixon	University of the South Pacific	Cook Islands campus director
Papa Kimiora and Mama Ere	Elderbility caregivers	Clients Tamarua village
Mama Ame	Elderbility caregivers	Client Tamarua village
Mama Arakauvai Tangitaiti and her daughter	Elderbility caregivers	Client Tamarua village
Arumetua Atetu (Nan)	Te Ngari o Nga Ivi E Rua	Coordinator, Ivirua

*Teleconference

**Sent responses by email

15 people attended a roundtable meeting in Mangaia on 18 May 2016

20 people attended a roundtable meeting in Rarotonga on 20 May 2016

Glossary of Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this report

Acronym	Meaning
CICWA	Cook Islands Child Welfare Association
CICSO	Cook Islands Civil Society Organisation
CIFWA	Cook Islands Family Welfare Association
CIG	Cook Islands Government
CINDC	Cook Islands National Disability Council
CIS	Community Initiatives Scheme
CSO	Civil society organisation
DCD	Development Cooperation Division
DFAT	(Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GFA	Grant funding agreement
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
MFEM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MOIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NZ MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NSDP	National Sustainable Development Plan
POBOC	Payment of Behalf of the Crown
PPSEWA	Pan Pacific South East Asian Womens' Association
PTI	Punanga Tauturu Incorporated
SIF	Social Impact Fund
TA	Technical assistance