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Title:	Summary of the Evaluation of capacity development efforts at FAME
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Summary/short description/key points:

Following on from the SPC Heads of Fisheries (HoF11) outcome 6(b) calling for a follow-up evaluation of in-country outcomes or impacts relating to FAME’s capacity development activities, FAME has contracted independent consultants to implement the evaluation.

This paper highlights the key findings and recommendations for members to review and endorse.

Recommendations:

Members are invited to:

- a. note the independent *Evaluation of capacity development efforts at FAME*, as requested at HOF 12, is in the final stages of completion by *Allen + Clarke*.
- b. note that, within the context of FAME being considered to be a relevant, effective and impactful provider of capacity development, the evaluation identified 15 recommendations to strengthen the capacity development efforts at FAME.
- c. provide guidance and comments on the *Evaluation of Capacity Development Efforts at FAME*.
- d. noting that the report will be finalised in mid-June, endorse the report’s recommendations to enable FAME to incorporate the outcomes into its business planning over the coming year.

Introduction

1. In 2019, SPC Heads of Fisheries called for a “follow-up evaluation of in-country outcomes or impacts relating to FAME’s capacity development activities (e.g., application of learning); further analysis of training data to better understand reasons behind imbalances by gender and by country/territory”.
2. In the latter part of 2020, FAME contracted the consulting firm *Allen + Clarke* to carry out an ‘Evaluation of Capacity Development Efforts at FAME’. *Allen + Clarke* have now provided a draft final Evaluation Report for consideration. The main conclusions and recommendations of the draft Report are presented below, and a full copy of the draft report provided as an accompanying document.

Evaluation purpose and methodology

3. The evaluation’s purpose was to investigate FAME’s capacity development approaches and capture lessons learned and provide information on the nature, extent and potential impact and sustainability of FAME capacity development. While there have been evaluations of individual FAME projects, and of SPC-wide efforts, there has not been an evaluation of FAME-wide capacity development efforts.
4. The evaluation focused on the period of the FAME Business Plan 2016-2020. Given that COVID-19 impacted how FAME delivered capacity development in the final year of this period, the evaluation also assessed how FAME adapted its capacity development support to the pandemic environment.
5. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach that gathered data from a document review, an online survey of training participants, and interviews with diverse stakeholders.
6. Overall, the evaluation found that FAME was considered to be a relevant, effective and impactful provider of capacity development. Within that context, the evaluation identified 15 recommendations to strengthen the capacity development efforts at FAME.

Status of the report

7. The report, as attached, is a final draft version, which is undergoing review by FAME staff prior to being finalised. The review process largely deals with verification of data and additional matters of detail, so although the attached version remains a draft, we do not expect significant changes to the recommendations. The draft report is available online as Background paper 4 and the report is to be finalised in mid-June 2021.

FAME Management response

8. FAME sees the report as a valuable input into its overall Divisional planning process, providing useful guidance for future capacity development work. FAME proposes to incorporate the outcomes of the report into its Business Plan development over the coming year, and therefore seeks HOF endorsement of the report recommendations. This will allow FAME to work on

developing formal responses for incorporation into the new Business Plan to be presented to HOF 14 in 2022.

Key findings

9. The key themes raised through this evaluation were:
10. **Relevance:** The mix of regular, ongoing courses and bespoke support is a pragmatic way to manage the tension between supporting a common, regional fisheries at the same time as a national, diverse inshore fisheries.
11. **Effectiveness and impact:** Participants highly rated the effectiveness of FAME capacity development. There are also opportunities to improve both the teaching ability of training staff as well as the accountability of participants, in a way that would improve the broader impact on organisations. FAME also faces some constraints in this area from the way that participants are nominated for some courses.
12. **Efficiency and sustainability:** The efficiency and sustainability of FAME's capacity development must be considered in the context of consisting largely of donor-funded programmes and projects.
13. Within individual programmes and projects, this evaluation found that FAME staff are generally mindful of seeking best value for their interventions.
14. There is potential for greater efficiencies across FAME by greater coordination between sections. The step-change toward greater online training and materials also provides an opportunity for FAME to rationalise some of its travel to focus on where face-to-face capacity development provides particular value.
15. **Gender and social inclusion:** Across all FAME sections, only 29% of participants were women in the period from 2016-2020. There is also significant variance on gender inclusion between the FAME section that delivers the capacity development. Some sections had less than 10% women participants.
16. This means that even where outcomes from capacity development courses benefitted the women involved, there are still too few women that experience this opportunity.
17. Similarly, from the survey results, the best that can be said for disabled people is that they are significantly under-represented in FAME's capacity development.
18. **COVID-19:** FAME's capacity development model has largely been predicated on international travel. With COVID-19 extinguishing this avenue, FAME pivoted quickly to providing what training it could online. The overall number of courses and participants inevitably dropped, but some of the key annual fixtures were able to continue virtually.
19. Many FAME staff considered that COVID-19 accelerated the move to more online training and support; and that this should continue in the future. This was supported by views from other stakeholders that online capacity development will have a greater role even once international travel resumes. There was still a strong desire, however, for this to be supplemented with in-country support.

Key recommendations

20. The evaluation recommendations, excerpted from the report are as follows:
21. Recognising that much of FAME's capacity building is working well, we propose a suite of changes aimed at improving FAME's delivery and outcomes at national level.

Relevance

22. The evaluation recommends that FAME:
- 1. Continue providing capacity development with a mix of annual courses and responsiveness to country needs.**
23. While responsiveness introduces a range of challenges, including for planning and efficient use of resources, it is highly valued by PICTs and considered an integral part of FAME's overall value proposition.
- 2. Work in close partnership with Members, especially in relation to coastal fisheries**
24. The diversity of SPC's membership means that PICTs have differing levels of capacity and development. The character of training needs to recognise this and be tailored to meet the needs of specific local circumstances. This may mean, for example, focus on in-country group training, and bringing in specialist expertise where FAME lacks the relevant skills. In some instances, sub-regional level training may be appropriate, where common issues are being faced.
- 3. Use regional frameworks for longer term planning**
25. Recognising that there are multiple drivers for FAME's work, it should make greater use of regional frameworks and strategies to guide its medium-term planning. This, blended with FAME's regional knowledge, would enable it to extend the planned time horizon for scheduling support at national level, and identify future skills required in house to meet these needs (e.g., through donor support).

Effectiveness and impact

26. The evaluation recommends that FAME:
- 4. Enhance the monitoring and evaluation framework**
27. Section 13 proposes a set of enhancements to FAME's practice in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. This involves identifying clearer objectives for specific capacity building activities, improved tracking over time (database), and greater feedback loops to improve delivery.
- 5. Approach 'training' as a specialist skill**
28. The review found that the quality of training / trainers made a significant difference to participants' experience and learning outcomes. FAME should recognise this and provide training for its staff (especially new staff) to improve presentation and communication skills in a Pacific Island context.

6. Review its privacy policy, and ensure it is understood by staff and implemented consistently

29. This should include anonymising the personal data currently available on the FAME Results Dashboard.

The role of PICTs

30. Recognising that SPC members can assist with improving effectiveness, the evaluation also recommends that SPC Members:

7. Focus on trainee selection and feedback

31. Home government managers of training participants should ensure that staff are selected for training that matches their role, experience and potential career path. Clear expectations of trainees should be set ahead of courses and steps taken to enhance accountability. This could be achieved through mechanisms such as requiring presentations upon returning to the workplace.

Efficiency and sustainability

32. The evaluation recommends that FAME:

8. Increase the focus on cost-effectiveness

33. The costs of training, on a per person basis, vary significantly under different modes of delivery. We encourage FAME to apply some formal consideration of relative costs of different methodologies in designing capacity development programmes, while also seeking the best training outcomes.
34. COVID-19 has shown the cost savings possible with remote technologies, as well as providing clearer signals about what works remotely, and where there are clear benefits from working face-to-face.

9. Build on experience with on-line training

35. As an opportunity to improve efficiency and effectiveness, FAME should consider providing more refresher courses online. This can be a time-efficient way to keep skills current.

10. Enhance intra-FAME coordination

36. FAME should also enhance communication across its two programmes and respective sections, so that staff have a greater awareness of each other's work and schedule. This need has been increased due to expanded on-line training, which can lead to different programmes/staff simultaneously scheduling virtual events with the same in-country staff or teams.

11. Increasingly partner with other providers

37. FAME should explore opportunities to partner more with local (national) institutions, including educational institutions and NGOs. This can be cost effective where further enhancing local capacity in the sector.

12. Heighten intra-Pacific cooperation

38. FAME should actively seek opportunities to support or broker intra-Pacific cooperation in training and capacity development.

Gender and social inclusion

39. The evaluation recommends that FAME:

13. Continue to implement the recommendations of the FAME Gender stocktake

40. Building off the work of the Human Rights and Social Development Division and progress made to date, FAME should continue to implement the recommendations of the FAME Gender stocktake.
41. As part of this, recruiting a social scientist would be valuable for improving gender analysis as well as enabling wider understanding of the effectiveness and impact of FAME's other programmes.

14. Increase participation and outcomes for women, youth and vulnerable groups

42. Given that less than 30% of participants during the evaluation period were women, FAME should develop strategies to improve gender participation across the board, and especially in those areas with lowest participation rates. To support this, FAME should refresh course materials to ensure they incorporate gender representation and perspectives.
43. Limited data is gathered on the inclusion of people of vulnerable groups. In the absence of such data, it is difficult to assess the outcomes for these groups. FAME should begin collecting such data to fill these gaps and assess whether there are barriers to participation for people of vulnerable groups.

COVID-19

44. The evaluation recommends that FAME:

15. Build off the COVID-19 step-change

45. COVID-19 has catalysed a sudden and substantive shift in attitudes and capacity to use online training and resources. To build on this FAME should invest in producing more online materials, videos, and app-based systems. This has the potential to address some challenges of distance, and to improve efficiency and sustainability.
46. FAME should also explore practical steps to improve engagement for online training, such as sending materials in advance to minimise impacts from internet disruption and working with organisations to ensure access to adequate facilities.

Consideration by HOF

47. HOF participants and partners are invited to:

- a) note the independent *Evaluation of Capacity Development Efforts at FAME*, as requested at HOF 12, is in the final stages of completion by *Allen + Clarke*.

- b) note that, within the context of FAME being considered to be a relevant, effective and impactful provider of capacity development, the evaluation identified 15 recommendations to strengthen the capacity development efforts at FAME.
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