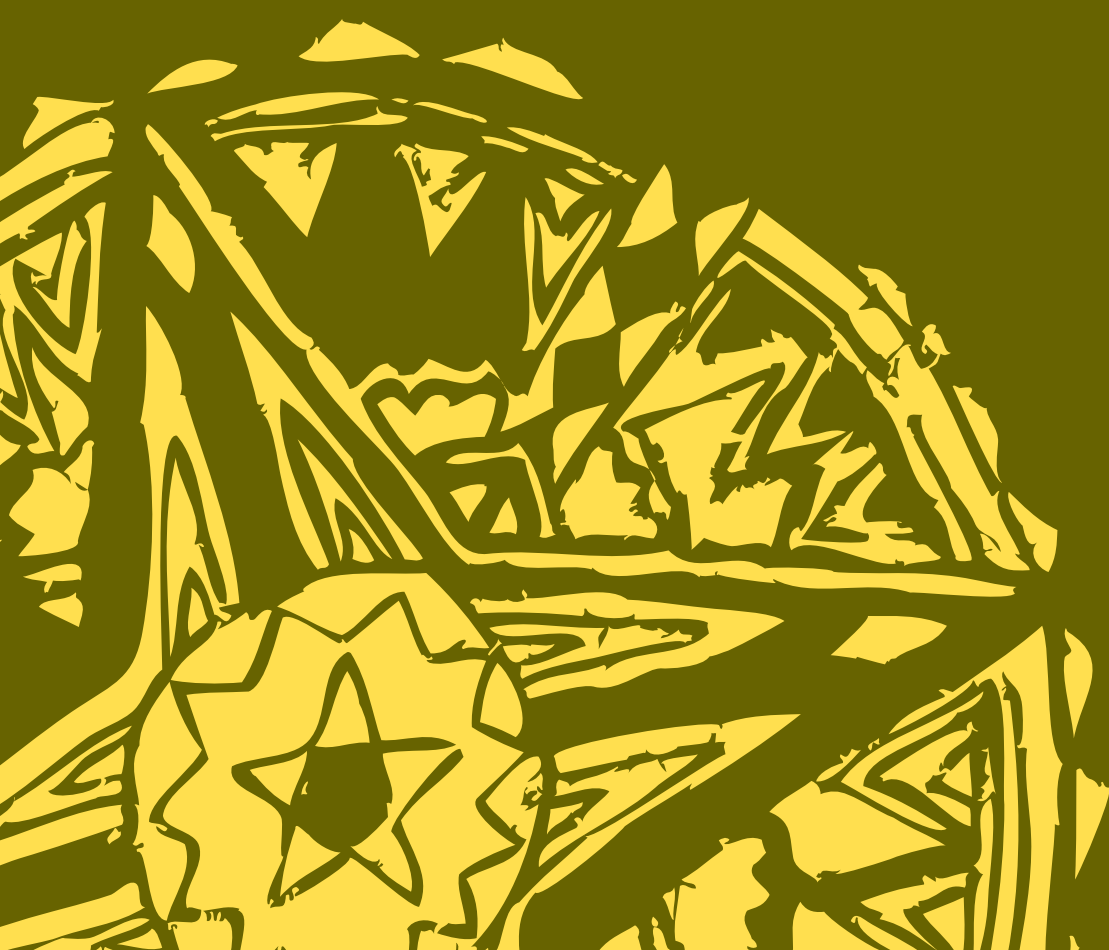




*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific





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## Foreword

Civil society/civil society organizations (CSOs) make a very real and key contribution to development and democratisation processes. Their roles include the provision of basic services such as primary education, health, water and sanitation; participating in local planning and budgeting; advocating for human rights and the needs and priorities of their constituency especially the marginalised groups; providing shelter, counseling and support services to disadvantaged groups and victims of violence; monitoring the performance of government and other stakeholders in the provision of services; and more generally, progress towards the MDGs.

It is widely recognised that an active and vibrant civil society is an important factor in the democratisation process. By mediating between the state and citizenry, civil society provides the mechanism to enhance citizens' voice and the engagement of citizens in various democratic processes that contributes to deepening democracy. While CSOs are expected to perform these varied functions, they face a range of capacity constraints and challenges. The challenges vary from organization to organization and are different in each country. They include: constraints relating to the overall external environment within which civil society operates; specific internal organizational capacity deficits that affect their ability to perform effectively and efficiently; and for many, a lack of financial resources and stability for funding their programmes or projects.

This capacity assessment of civil society organizations in the Pacific is an attempt to undertake a systematic assessment to understand and document the capacity constraints that civil society organizations face in this region. Mindful of the sensitivity of such an exercise, the capacity assessment was conducted in a participatory manner in the development of the questionnaire, in the conduct of the assessment itself, and in the validation of the results.

This Report of the capacity assessment is a synthesis of main findings and an overall picture of the capacity development challenges in five priority areas. It also identifies strengths and weaknesses, and specifically focuses on capacity gaps.

We hope this publication will provide readers with an understanding of the capacity development issues that affect civil society organizations in the Pacific region, and shed light on how they could be better supported and strengthened to advance and achieve better development outcomes for the region as a whole.

Garry Wiseman  
UNDP Pacific Centre  
Suva, Fiji

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The formulation of the overall project and its subsequent management was undertaken under the leadership and guidance of Ernesto Bautista, the UNDP Pacific Centre Regional Governance Advisor. Mr. Bautista also facilitated the process of drafting, synthesising and editing the various documents and Reports associated with the study. Mr. Baustista was ably supported by Isikeli Valemei of the UNDP Pacific Centre.

The UNDP Pacific Centre would like to thank Achila Imchen who undertook the challenging tasks of synthesising analyses from the different documents, and structured and edited them to produce a coherent and readable knowledge product.

© UNDP Pacific Centre.  
UNDP Pacific Centre  
Private Mail Bag Suva,  
Fiji Islands  
E-mail: [registry@pacificcentre@undp.org](mailto:registry@pacificcentre@undp.org)  
Website: <http://www.undppc.org.fj>

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NLU	National Liaison Unit
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisation
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRNGOs	Pacific Regional Non-Government Organizations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific

# Section 1

## Introduction

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are faced with numerous domestic and external challenges on their path for meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Like much of the rest of the world, they are experiencing the impacts of globalisation, non-sustainable development policies and, more recently, increased focus on the threat of terrorism. The proportion of the population under the basic need poverty line is rising<sup>1</sup> and rural-urban migration is leading to urbanisation and squatter settlement growth. Civil unrest and political instability in some PICs highlight the importance of urgent governance issues. These challenges are compounded by PICs' limited geographical size and location, their dependence on narrow resource bases, limited international trade opportunities, and their particular vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters.

While work is being done to develop the capacity of governments in the region to achieve the MDGs, the engagement of Pacific civil society organizations (CSOs) in this process is equally critical. UNDP has long recognized that sustainable human development, with people at the centre, cannot be achieved without the robust engagement of civil society and its organizations.<sup>2</sup> CSOs are uniquely positioned to connect with people, create awareness of people's needs, and advocate for solutions. They have the comparative advantage of non-bureaucratized and responsive structures, and a willingness to address sensitive issues. They have first hand information about 'on the ground' issues, constraints and local challenges, and the actions and commitment needed to address them.

In the Pacific region, CSOs represent a critical constituency and development partner for advancing towards the MDGs. There are currently more than 1,000 CSOs operating in the region at different levels, covering a wide spectrum of issues. This ranges from disabilities, youth, gender, trade,

health, environment, culture and governance. Over 85 percent of CSOs in the Pacific are involved in activities that are aimed at promoting or achieving the MDGs.<sup>3</sup> The CSO community therefore potentially represents a force to be reckoned with for creating positive change in the region.

The reality, however, is that this potential is constrained by the numerous challenges that CSOs face. Their legitimacy is frequently questioned by governments, with many governments viewing them with skepticism and distrust, and vice versa. There is a lack of structured mechanisms to ensure that civil society priorities are given serious consideration. Dialogue between CSOs and governments are often ad hoc, unsupported by any institutional legal frameworks. In addition, CSOs face various capacity challenges. Many of them do not have stable funding sources and rely on unpredictable, donor-driven project funding. Chronic limited human resource capacity, the inability to recruit and retain high quality staff, and high staff turnover are other areas where CSOs face urgent capacity challenges. These deficits impact their effectiveness and credibility to provide citizens with a voice, and also engage with governments and stakeholders in substantive dialogues on key development issues.

UNDP's Pacific Centre is focused on bringing about change in the region "while reflecting on the need to build capacity and local ownership."<sup>4</sup> Given the challenges required to foster higher levels of human development in the region, and the constraints encountered by CSOs in contributing to development, the Centre identified the need to conduct an extensive regional study aimed at assessing capacity development challenges of CSOs.

While CSOs have undergone disparate self-assessment initiatives with external facilitators, there has not been a systematic region-wide effort to map out and examine their capacity development

needs. What are the existing capacity levels within the CSO community in the Pacific? What are the specific capacity gaps of CSOs? What are the constraints they encounter while working towards their goals and priorities? How are they supported in their activities by their socio-economic, political and legal environments?

Underpinned by these key questions, a research study under the facilitation of the Pacific Centre was initiated in 2008 with the following objectives to:

- conduct a **Capacity Assessment** of selected CSOs operating at the regional and national levels to assess existing capacity and needs (identifying strengths and weakness);
- identify and develop realistic, feasible and time-bound capacity development strategies (based on the Capacity Assessment); and
- document **lessons learned** during the course of facilitating this initiative.

The study also assessed the **socio-economic, politico-cultural and legal environment** in which CSOs operate. The overall environment, which includes the country's policy and legal framework and state-society relation, can fundamentally impact the functioning of civil society. The 'rules of the game' influence the manner in which CSOs interact with citizens and with their governments. A proper understanding of the enabling environment is critical to understanding the factors that influence capacity development, and therefore, the design of capacity development strategies and activities.

The study was carried out during 2008-2009. Field work was conducted in six PICs:

- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
- Fiji
- Solomon Islands

- Tonga
- Tuvalu

The study also included Pacific Regional NGOs (PRNGOs), which represent networks of national CSOs at the regional level. While the in-country visits and one-one-interaction with participants occurred in the six countries, information and data were also obtained via email from CSOs in Pacific countries other than the six.

This Integrated Report presents the results of the capacity assessment study, and an overall picture of capacity development challenges in five priority areas. It covers a broad spectrum of issues within these five areas, ranging from CSO capacity for strategic planning and their infrastructural and internal management systems, to resource mobilisation issues and current capacity development activities. While both strengths and capacity assets are highlighted, the Report's focus is on capacity deficits (areas of weaknesses). Systemic inadequacies which challenge and impede the overall development and functioning of CSOs are also highlighted.

The Report is presented in sections. Section 2 presents the methodological approach used in the capacity assessment exercise, including a discussion on a Clearing House Framework which provided the framework for the assessment exercise. It presents the scale that was used to measure and rank the capacity levels of CSOs along five priority areas of the Framework. Section 3 provides an overview of CSOs in the region, exploring their areas of work and programmatic foci.

The results of the capacity assessment in the five priority areas are separately explored in Sections 4 to 8. Each section presents the ranking of CSOs in the five areas, and includes discussions on both existing

capacities and strengths. The main focus, however, is on identifying the capacity gaps of CSOs. Data variability across countries is highlighted whenever relevant.

Section 9 moves on to a more in-depth discussion of capacity strengths and weaknesses, which are not confined to a single area but rather, overlap, interlink, and span across axes. This section here also focuses more on the capacity gaps since understanding how these gaps play out requires greater attention. It highlights relevant examples of

successful capacity building initiatives in the region which may inform and assist in the planning of future capacity development initiatives.

The conclusion of Section 10 calls for a comprehensive approach to capacity development within the Pacific CSO community, and suggests building upon existing or past initiatives which have met with success. It presents key principles that must underline capacity development initiatives, including adapting training approaches to the specific regional context in order to create maximum value and sustainability.

## Section 2

# Methodological Approach

The framework for the capacity assessment exercise was provided by the Clearing House Framework. Created for and by Pacific CSOs, the Framework is a collaborative plan of action initiated by PRNGOs for strengthening NGO capacity in key priority areas. It was adopted in 2005 following a consultative process of three years (Box 2.1).

Since capacity development has come to be recognised as a process that is more complex and holistic than merely transfer of technical knowledge or developmental models from North to South, (hence, the use of the term 'capacity development'

instead of 'capacity building'), it is important that concept of 'ownership' by the recipient communities are central to its processes. International literature on capacity development strongly suggests that endogenous processes of capacity development initiatives, arising from the will of recipients themselves, play an important role in their success and sustainability. The capacity assessment exercise of this study built upon the Framework, and thus adopted an endogenously-endorsed, legitimate instrument for evaluating capacity of CSOs, instead of utilising a framework developed externally.

### Box 2.1. What is the Clearing House Framework?

*In order to ensure that the capacity assessment exercise of this study involved an inside-out process, it was constructed around the Clearing House Framework—a capacity development framework created by and for Pacific CSOs to strengthen civil society capacity in the region.*

*The Framework is the end result of a three-year participatory process based on a series of stakeholder workshops, which were borne out of common concerns on capacity building needs and priorities of Pacific regional NGOs. In 2000, a regional stakeholder workshop identified five priority areas requiring joint actions for NGOs, donors, governments: organizational development; information sharing and communication; NGO sustainability and funding; stakeholder relations; legal and regulatory frameworks. These action areas provided a broad framework upon which to build future endeavours.*

*A second work in 2001 modified the original agenda to ensure that PRNGOs could meet independently with their stakeholders to discuss any concerns arising out of the consultation processes and formulate collective priorities. The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO) was also unanimously endorsed in this meeting as the lead agency in coordinating efforts to strengthen civil society in the Pacific. At the third multi-stakeholder workshop in 2005, NGO participants committed to the implementation of a Clearing House Framework which outlined a collaborative plan of action. The Framework consisted of six areas of NGO collaboration for capacity building efforts in the Pacific:*

- Organizational development
- Information sharing and communication
- NGO sustainability and funding
- Stakeholder relations
- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- Advocacy.

Source: Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations 2005.



The assessment exercise adapted priority areas identified by the Framework into five axes of CSO 'capacity'. These were:

- organizational development;
- sustainability and resourcing;
- information sharing, cooperation and advocacy;
- stakeholder relations; and
- legal and regulatory environment.

### Field Work

The assessment exercise was based on a detailed questionnaire which collected baseline data on each of the axes, and included training-needs assessments and internal-focused and external-focused SWOT analyses. A preliminary version of the questionnaire was first presented to CSO representatives at a forum held in Suva, Fiji in July 2008. Feedback from the forum restructured the questionnaire around the Clearing House Framework. The re-worked questionnaire<sup>i</sup> was presented to PRNGOs in December 2008. A final draft of the questionnaire was completed after feedback from this meeting.

The table below presents a summary of the areas assessed under the five axes (Table 2.1).

Criteria for selecting countries included those with a large and active domestic CSO community, at least one micro-state, examples of countries with wide and geographically dispersed islands, those with a relatively localised spread, and a minimal spread across the three socio-cultural regions of the Pacific—Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. PRNGOs were included in the study group because of their unique nature and regional spread. This Report will henceforth refer to the Pacific CSOs of this study as 'CSOs'. In cases, when there is need to distinguish between domestic and PRNGOs, the former is identified as 'national CSOs'.

Fieldwork began in January 2009. Prior to the start of the field work, researchers liaised with the National Liaison Unit (NLU), the national peak body CSO in each of the PIC, to arrange for a comprehensive sector-wide representation of CSOs to participate in the study. Given the length of the

**Table 2.1. Areas of capacity assessment under the five axes**

Organizational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategy</li><li>• Organizational Culture and Climate</li><li>• Systems and Processes</li><li>• Outputs and Performance</li><li>• Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA) and Gender Mainstreaming Focus</li></ul>
Sustainability and Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures</li><li>• Manpower and Human Resource Management</li><li>• Resource Mobilisation Strategies</li><li>• Efficient Use of Funds</li></ul>
Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information-sharing Activities</li><li>• Cooperation</li><li>• Advocacy</li></ul>
Stakeholder Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users) Legal and Regulatory Framework	

<sup>i</sup> The complete questionnaire is provided as an Appendix in this Report.

questionnaire, it was decided that eight CSOs from each country would participate. (Due to issues such as cancelation of assessment appointments, however, a full eight interviews were not conducted in all of the countries).

During the assessment process, the researcher worked one-to-one with CSO representatives to complete the assessment questionnaire, and provided supporting material when possible. The researchers also took notes of conversations with CSO members and examined relevant documents to gather additional data. They contacted donors where ever possible to ensure that their views were taken into account as well.

While the questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection, the in-country field work also included CSO group consultations which included the presence of a PRNGO representative to ensure the participation of PRNGOs, and to ensure that the processes of consultation were properly observed. Furthermore, after the completion of the draft of the country assessment, a workshop was organized to discuss the findings and obtain further clarifications and inputs from CSOs.

### Rating Scale

The capacity of each CSO in the five axes was measured on a four-point scale involving four incremental stages of development. This scale is based on a Stage of Organizational Development Model which has been adapted by those used by international development agencies to measure organizational development.<sup>5</sup> The tool uses a four-point scale (see Table 2.2).

The four-point scale provides a clear picture of the specific developmental stage of CSOs as well as their path of progress into the next. Table 2.3 further presents the descriptors for each level and their relation to one another in the context of this study. The instrument was developed to be relatively generic in order to ensure utilisation across the entire CSO community in the Pacific. Various text boxes throughout the instrument provided areas where information specific to each CSO's particular context could be provided. The four-point scale was then applied to the five axes of capacity, provided in Table 2.1, along which each organization was measured.

It should be noted that this tool can only identify relative, not absolute, values of organizational performance and capacity. Moreover, while they provide a clear division of the four levels, the ratings, being dependent on the research team's interpretation of the capacity needs of each organization, are also best taken as indicative.

The analysis of the data from the field work was done in the following manner. The individual scores for each CSO in each country were summed arithmetically. Then, based on the average score of each of the six countries, the average of all the six countries was taken as the rough measure of their level of capacity development as a whole on the four-point scale. These data tabulated was used as the basis of this study's analyses, in conjunction with the other data gathered during the assessment process<sup>ii</sup>. The rankings, overall and per axis, are presented in various sections of this Report.

<sup>5</sup> As the numbers taking part in the capacity assessment exercise were not large enough (largest single country N = 12) no statistical analyses was able to be made of the data.



## Section 3

# Overview of Pacific CSOs

**Table 2.2. CSO Rating Scale**

Rating	Stage	Color Coding
1	Nascent	
2	Emerging	
3	Expanding	
4	Mature	

**Table 2.3. CSO Development Scale**

Stage	Descriptor
Nascent	The CSO is in the earliest stages of development. All the components measured are in its earliest stages or non-existent.
Emerging	The CSO is developing some capacity in structures and processes around the issues of organizational development; sustainability and resourcing; information sharing, cooperation and advocacy. Stakeholder relations and its relationship with the legal and regulatory environment are in place, and at times may be functioning inconsistently.
Expanding	The CSO has a track record of achievement. Its work is recognised by community stakeholders, government and other CSOs in the same sector.
Mature	The CSO is fully functioning and sustainable, with a diversified resource base and partnership relationships with local communities with active national and international networks.

The architecture of the CSO community in the Pacific region is a two-tier structure. One consists of national CSOs at the country level, while the other consists of PRNGOs, composed of regional CSOs whose members are national umbrella organizations

(Box 3.1). Established as informal groupings in 2002 to advance the process of regionalisation in the Pacific, PRNGOs serve as the mechanism for CSOs' engagement with inter-governmental regional organizations or agencies.

### Box 3.1. The Work of Pacific Regional NGOs (PRNGOs)

*There are several constituency-based civil society bodies working at the regional level in the Pacific region. They form a regional platform known as the Pacific Regional NGOs Alliance (PRNGO Alliance). These regional bodies span range of size and mission, and are involved in varied sectors, ranging from service provision to women, disability, faith based social services and human rights to democracy and NGO capacity building.*

*There are currently 13 organizations within the Alliance:*

- Council of Pacific Education (COPE)
- Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
- Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC)
- Foundations of the People of the South Pacific (FSPI)
- Greenpeace
- Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW)
- Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC)
- Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO)
- Pacific Islands News Association (PINA)
- South Pacific Oceania Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU)
- Pacific Council of Churches (PCC)
- World Wide Fund (WWF)
- Pacific Network on Globalization (PANG)

*These regional organizations have heavy responsibilities, but varied levels of buy-in and mandate from their constituents. They are a mixed group in terms of capacity, and can be placed in two categories: i) those with a long history of delivery, strong leadership, high profile and well resourced; ii) those that have experienced uncertainty and constant change, weak leadership, and poor organizational capacity.*

*A majority of PRNGOs do have the potential to influence that the collective voice of the Pacific is heard at the highest levels. Like their domestic counterparts, however, they face concerns about their legitimacy and accountability. Moreover, they have to facilitate the complex act of 'building partnerships' and coordinating with local, national, regional and international CSOs, governments and the private sector. A number of PRNGOs are also currently experiencing significant changes including mergers, senior staff replacements, shifts in donor priorities, and resulting withdrawal of traditional funding sources.*

*During the consultation process of this study, the option of sharing resources between regional organizations was strongly supported, as was the development of templates and tools to assist with technical issues such as financial management, business planning, human resource processes and funding. Sharing of human resources was also another suggestion (for example, PRNGOs with UN/AusAID volunteers could share this resource with other PRNGOs). All these suggestions require a high level of coordination among the regional bodies before they can be operationalised however. Building management capabilities and good governance are urgently required in this sector.*

At the country level, CSOs consist of various network and stand-alone organizations operating at the national and or sub-national levels, including various community-based and faith based organizations. CSOs in the Pacific region work on diverse and broad ranging issues. While some focus on the MDGs, a number of them work on other sectors, ranging from education to disability advocacy (Table 3.1). Youth and health are focus areas of many CSOs in the region across countries. Many national CSOs also have secondary areas of programmatic focus. PRNGOs, on the other hand, are more focused on specific areas of expertise, as are CSOs which are the local counterparts of international CSOs such as the WWF. NLUs also focus exclusively on their primary work programme, which is the coordination and promotion of the CSOs within their countries.

Besides the issues listed in Table 3.1, other areas of operation for CSOs are:

- Research
- Employee Rights
- Disaster Preparedness
- Community Development
- Disarmament
- Media Freedom
- Good Governance
- Social Justice

- Charitable Activities
- Sustainable Agriculture/Food Security
- Disability Advocacy

The consultation processes of this study revealed two reasons behind the considerable range in the activities of national CSOs. The first was that the holistic nature of activities meant that CSOs often worked across sectors. For example, the work in the youth sector naturally overlapped with education, gender and HIV/AIDS.

The other reason had to do with a more troubling aspect in the CSO community. The dependency on donor funding and the uncertainty of funding sources meant that CSOs were often engaged in a 'race to the middle' for funding sources. Their focus thus shifted according to donor priorities, resulting in varying and diverse work programmes. This important issue is discussed in detail in Section 4.

In the context of linkage to the MDGs, a number of national CSOs consulted in the study had not heard of the MDGs. A larger number, while being aware of the MDGs, did not explicitly base their programming around them. Despite this, their diverse programmatic areas meant that there was overlap with various MDG sectors (Table 3.2).

The highest degree of overlap was in the gender and environment fields (particularly in the case of Tuvalu).<sup>v</sup>

**Table 3.1. Key Focus Areas of Pacific CSOs<sup>iii</sup>**

FOCUS AREAS	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	PRNGOs
Health (e.g. HIV/AIDs)	0	0	4	5	4	1	1
Education	0	0	3	3	1	0	0
Gender	1	1	0	2	0	3	1
Human Rights	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
Environment	0	1	2	0	2	1	0
Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth	2	1	2	2	5	1	0
Poverty Alleviation	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Other	4	1	2	2	2	4	3

<sup>iii</sup> These are specifically CSOs consulted in the capacity assessment study. A number of them noted multiple key areas in which they worked. Where this was the case all responses are noted in this table.

## Section 4

# Organizational Development

The MDGs on child mortality and global partnerships had the lowest spread across CSOs, which may be explained by the relatively low level of child mortality in the region (as compared to areas such as sub-Saharan Africa). The global partnerships MDG, perceived as something outside their sphere of expertise, was also not an area of focus for many CSOs. A notable point that emerged during the consultation process, and which is not made clear in Table 3.2, is that CSOs that were affiliated to PRNGOs tended to have a greater awareness of the MDGs than those that were not affiliated.

In terms of approaches, while most CSOs in the study indicated that their work adopted both a human-rights based approach and gender mainstreaming focus, it was never clear exactly how these approaches were articulated in their activities. Participants indicated, rather, that human rights and gender issues necessarily and implicitly

underpinned their work. There was however no clear apparent linkage in their programming to explicit protocols, or to the general principles on issues of human rights or gender articulated by agencies like the United Nations. Some gender-focused CSOs, like the National Councils of Women, did utilise as reference specific international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in their activities.

Number of CSOs	Colour Code
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

**Table 3.2. Pacific CSOs Working n the MDGS** <sup>iv</sup>

MDGs	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	PRNGOs
MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1	0	2	3	2	0	2
MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education	1	0	1	2	1	0	2
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	2	1	0	4	6	2	2
MDG 4: Reduce child mortality	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
MDG 5: Improve maternal health	2	0	2	2	1	0	1
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	2	1	2	1	6	0	1
MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development	1	1	0	1	1	0	1

<sup>iv</sup> These are specifically CSOs consulted in the capacity assessment study. A number of CSOs noted multiple MDGs in which they worked. Where this was the case all responses are noted in this table. This key below provides a colour breakdown of the number of CSOs that reported working on various MDGs.

<sup>v</sup> Given Tuvalu's perilous environmental situation in the wake of global warming, it is not surprising that a very large percentage of Tuvalu CSOs in the assessment process felt that their work positively contributed to the environmental MDG. It is less certain why Tuvalu scored so highly in terms of the gender field. The rationale may simply be that a high number of Tuvaluan CSOs see much value in supporting gender issues.

Capacity development is more than the development of individual skills. A truly comprehensive capacity-development approach enables the embedding of individual gains and learning into organizational structures and processes (rather than resting solely with the individual). Institutional arrangements which enable this, in terms of strategic planning, monitoring processes, and encouraging knowledge building at broader organizational levels, are such key capacities.

CSOs in the Pacific region as a whole, including PRNGOs, scored only reasonably well in this area of organizational development. With an overall section rating of 2.91 in the four-point scale, CSOs possess an emerging level of capacity in this axis, except for those in Tonga and Cook Islands (Table 4.1).

There are some areas where CSOs have a strong record. CSOs appear to have good linkages with their end-users, and have a solid reputation, within their own sector and among stakeholders, of being able to deliver outputs. It must be noted, however, that in some countries tensions have begun to emerge in recent years due to the presence of international NGOs with substantial resources and the capacity to

drive greater levels of change. This has led to raised expectations about the kind of changes national CSOs can also initiate. Consequently, there has been decline in the legitimacy of national CSOs in the eyes of their end users in some countries. The most pressing example of this comes from the Solomon Islands where its 'fragile state' status has led a number of international NGOs with previously small operations in the country to scale their investments. This scenario has made it difficult for local CSOs to compete, not only for staff but also for donor resources.<sup>vi</sup>

CSOs also have a very positive organizational culture and climate on the whole. They consistently scored well in terms of staff being actively engaged in planning, as well having a clear understanding of their particular roles within organizational structures. On the other hand, the organizational set-up for exchanging information internally among staff about work activities, or even about employment and personnel practices, is not very strong. This could partly be attributed to the high workload of staff which does not leave them with much time to keep one another updated on their respective activities.

<sup>vi</sup> At the same time, respondents of the study claimed that the same high levels of dedication and intensity of individuals working in CSOs were occasionally turned against each other due to intense competition between them for funding, particularly within countries. Agencies, such as National Liaison Units, may be able to play a strong role in reducing this conflict, and help local CSOs work more closely in a cooperative manner.

**Table 4.1. Results: Organizational Development Capacity Of Pacific CSOs**

Organizational Development	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	Domestic CSOs	PRNGOs	Region
<b>Strategy</b>									
The organization has written strategic plan.	2.83	2.00	3.88	3.68	2.28	3.25	2.98	2.60	2.93
The organization has clearly articulated mission and goals.	3.43	2.83	3.94	3.68	2.14	3.43	3.24	3.00	3.20
Board members have clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.	3.42	2.50	2.75	3.21	3.28	2.07	2.87	2.60	2.83
Board has right mix of skills to govern the organization.	3.57	3.16	2.81	3.21	3.14	2.50	3.06	2.50	2.98
Board works well together.	3.71	3.66	3.37	3.50	3.28	2.66	3.36	2.80	3.28
Board work well with management.	3.00	3.66	3.28	3.07	3.66	2.71	3.24	2.80	3.16
Processes and protocols in place for resolving conflicting attitudes/ideas on the Board.	2.80	1.83	1.57	1.16	3.14	2.16	2.11	1.50	2.02
Processes and protocols in place for resolving conflicting attitudes and ideas between Board and management.	3.50	2.00	1.66	1.16	3.40	2.00	2.28	1.70	2.37
Good reporting systems in place between Board and management.	3.75	2.50	2.87	3.64	3.40	2.50	3.11	2.40	3.00
Board has good performance measures for senior staff.	3.00	3.33	2.00	3.16	3.00	1.83	2.72	1.90	2.60
Board developed policy statements that reflect the organization's philosophy.	3.25	3.00	2.64	3.75	3.33	1.85	2.97	2.60	2.91
Organization's mission is understood by all staff.	2.83	2.75	3.55	3.75	2.57	3.00	3.07	3.40	3.12
<b>Organizational Culture and Climate</b>									
The organization has clear organizational structure.	3.71	3.16	3.38	3.62	3.14	2.62	3.27	3.00	3.23
There is clear exchange of information within the organization.	3.14	2.66	3.38	3.43	3.28	2.37	3.04	3.20	3.03
Staff are actively involved in planning.	3.00	3.33	3.81	2.37	3.14	3.42	3.17	3.20	3.18
<b>Systems and Processes</b>									
Updated written administrative procedures exist.	3.00	2.40	2.61	3.06	2.42	2.37	2.72	3.00	2.69
Written recruitment, employment and personnel practices are clearly defined and practiced.	3.00	2.75	3.00	2.93	2.42	2.85	2.74	2.90	2.83
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are built into the organization's plans.	2.66	2.16	2.56	2.62	3.00	2.12	2.52	3.00	2.56
The organization uses the information gained from internal or external monitoring and evaluation to inform your operations.	3.83	2.00	3.05	3.37	3.28	1.62	2.85	2.80	2.85
<b>Outputs and Performance</b>									
The organization regularly reports back on its activities.	3.33	3.00	3.61	3.56	3.00	3.00	3.25	2.90	3.20
<b>Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA) and Gender mainstreaming focus</b>									
The organization draws on a Human Rights Based Approach to development in practice.	2.80	3.33	2.83	3.43	3.50	2.37	3.04	3.10	3.05
The organization maintains a gender focus in its work.	3.83	3.83	2.42	2.75	3.42	3.00	3.20	2.90	3.16
Overall Section Rating	3.24	2.81	2.95	3.09	2.76	2.53	2.94	2.71	2.91

It is note-worthy that the organizational climate of CSOs is strongly based on relationships and sharing. This personal aspect has enabled many a committed and dedicated staff member to continue, even in the face of adverse funding regimes and limited social support. It plays a valuable role in the success of CSOs, and is a major strength. This factor can be considered as a basis for capacity development in other areas, especially in building 'soft' capacities to improve overall organizational performance.

Two outstanding challenges stand out in the area of organizational development that requires examination. The first is the realm of strategy (the ability to strategically plan and implement organizational change). The data shows that CSOs are unable to adequately plan at a strategic level, and even in cases when it done, to transform this planning into concrete operational goals.

The second is in terms of the formal systems and processes within organizations (internal operating processes and systems). The weaknesses in this area are wide-ranging, from inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems to a lack of maintenance of formal policies and procedures for day-to-day operations.

## Strategy

A key capacity gap of CSOs in the region is their lack of ability to undertake strategic planning processes and break them down into operational plans. While many CSOs in the study had strategic plans in place, these plans, besides being outdated, did not always match available resources and existing capacity. Even in cases where a relatively robust strategic plan was in place, there were no clear ways by which it could be transferred to an operational level on the

ground. Strategic planning thus had little real value for CSOs that were consulted in this study.

One reason behind this breakdown is internal. CSO staff members generally lack the skills to plan strategically and transfer them into associated operational activities. The gap is further compounded by weaknesses in the set-up and operations of organizational boards. CSO organizational boards across the region, which have the mandate to provide solid strategic advice across a range of functions, are ill equipped to do so. As indicated in Table 4.1, a majority of questions on the organizational boards show scores only in the 'emerging' range.

Almost all CSOs in the study had governing boards in place, in some basic form, but almost no CSOs had formal induction processes for their board members, or formal training on the roles and responsibilities required of them. Clearly defined roles or policies on the boards' operation did not exist. Thus, a lack of formal protocols in areas such as conflict resolution between board and management, for example, impeded timely resolution of problems whenever they arose.

A lack of measures in place for the boards to manage senior staff performance made it difficult during the consultation process to assess whether such processes were in accordance with the broader strategic plan of the organization. Such gaps make apparent the lack of continuity between strategic planning and operation planning. Board members also did not have appropriate mix of skills to effectively govern their organizations. They were composed of constituent stakeholders (who often had very low levels of formal education) and local individuals who occupied prominent positions in

wider society. While constituent stakeholders played a useful role in ensuring that programming reflected needs of their communities, they could not effectively contribute to technical aspects, such as financial planning. On the other hand, the latter group of socially prominent board members, who were able to contribute with technical skills, were unable able to provide required time as board members due to numerous demands on their schedules.

A second key reason for the breakdown in strategic planning and processes is external. The main funders of CSOs are external donors who, more often than not, have 'ready-made ideas' of the types of programmes and projects that want to fund. Given the tight nature of funding regimes in the Pacific region, only a very small number of CSOs are able to pick and choose the types of funding they will accept. The result of this is that the operational activities of a majority of CSOs rarely match strategic plans, even if they have them in place. A more detailed discussion of this issue follows in Section 5.

## Systems and Processes

While the majority of CSOs have established some degree of systems and processes, their effectiveness is in question. Many of the systems and processes are informal without written administrative procedures.

### Box 4.1. Volunteerism And Pacific CSOs: 'Just Get Down and do the Work'

*While the number of volunteer staff in CSOs vary, there are very few national CSOs without volunteers on staff (only about 30 percent), and these are mainly the domestic counterparts of international CSOs such as Red Cross and WWF. About 20 percent of the CSOs consulted for this study were entirely staffed by volunteers. Volunteers come from two main sources: interested locals and overseas agencies (iPeace Corp, Japanese International Cooperation Agency, United Nations Volunteers, Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development, Australian Volunteers International).*

*Many CSOs in the Pacific region begin as volunteer organizations. This could partly be the reason why many of them do not possess formal operational structures and processes. Instead they function on the basis of loose, implicit, de facto rules. For the locals, working as volunteers is a way for them to transition into paid work. A number of CSOs reported that many of their employees begin as volunteers and then transitioned to paid staff as and when funds become available. CSOs also utilise community volunteers for particular projects on an 'as-needed' basis.*

<sup>vii</sup> At the same time, respondents of the study claimed that the same high levels of dedication and intensity of individuals working in CSOs were occasionally turned against each other due to intense competition between them for funding, particularly within countries. Agencies, such as National Liaison Units, may be able to play a strong role in reducing this conflict, and help local CSOs work more closely in a cooperative manner.



## Section 5

# Sustainability and Resourcing

*This flexible manner of operation lends itself to organizational development in a number of ways. During the consultation for this study, some staff members claimed that the lack of a strict formal structure actually helped in their performance since it made them more flexible and open to change. They attested to a just 'get down and do the work' spirit in their approach, without a need for formal organizational structures.*

*At the same time, absence of formal structures and systems leave CSOs vulnerable to a host of 'deficiencies' that impact their overall development, not least of which is a loss of institutional memory when individuals leave. A case in point comes from the Solomon Islands, where a major national CSO with a solid record of results and achievements almost collapsed during a change in senior leadership. When the two founders of the organization left, the remaining staff, who were only focused on their particular roles, did not know how the organization's various activities came together. Due to a lack of formal documented processes to ensure transfer of institutional knowledge, the organization almost went under, and recovered only after a new CEO put in a great amount of work. This case shows that even large, effective CSOs in the region are vulnerable to problems emerging out of the capacity gaps in the area of systems and processes.*

This weakness has wide-ranging impacts in the functioning of CSOs. They are unable to adequately capture data and measure effectiveness vis-à-vis inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Thus CSOs have no comprehensive knowledge of what is working and what is not, and why. (The lack of reporting data also lead CSOs to spend a disproportionate amount of time attempting to satisfy donors' accountability requirements for fund disbursement).

This lack of data also means that CSOs remain uninformed on whether they are using their limited resources in the most effective ways. For example, while many of the CSOs under consultation were able to provide data on the disbursement of funds for their programmes and advocacy work, it was only a very few that were able to provide comparable data on the actual impact of their work. An inability to effectively monitor impact implies that they may not be optimizing their financial resources.

While there is no need for CSOs to possess extraordinarily complex monitoring and evaluation systems, there is certainly a need for them to possess a rudimentary knowledge of, and ability to utilise, reporting, monitoring, and evaluating

systems. The lack of capabilities and opportunities to train staff in technical skills in this area is clearly a factor to be considered here, and this is an issue explored further in Section 5.

Besides monitoring and evaluation, there are no other areas of specific strengths or weaknesses in the CSO community as a whole under 'systems and processes'. CSO capacity varies across region depending on factors such as staff capabilities, experience and training. In other words, organizational capacity under systems and processes is linked to the strengths and capabilities of staff members. In the area of financial planning systems, for example, some CSOs in the study had weak financial systems while others had very strong ones. Factors that impacted the strength of such systems were budget discipline, monitoring abilities, and effective management of cash transfers, expenditures and acquittals by the staff. Organizations where staff members possessed good financial skills often had strong financial systems in place. Similarly, some CSOs had weak human resource management systems while others had strong ones, depending on factors such as training and staff management.



The overall capacity of CSOs in the Pacific region in the area ‘sustainability and resourcing’ is low. The CSOs in this study, with an aggregate score of 2.89, are only at an emerging level. Only Cook Islands and Tuvalu consistently scored highly in this axis (Table 5.1). Issues such as poor human resources management, lack of available appropriate training opportunities, and lack of skills in areas such as financial management are key reasons behind capacity weaknesses in this axis.

CSOs are not without strengths however. As the earlier discussion on volunteerism made clear, CSOs in the region have a substantive resource in the volunteerism that pervades their organizational culture. They scored particularly well in their ability to use local capacities in their work, in terms of financial and human resources. In fact, every single country scored in the expanding range in this area, with Tuvalu even scoring a mature level with a score of 4 in the four-point scale.

CSOs on the whole are also equipped with some form of infrastructure and internal management structures, albeit the capacity for this varies across countries. A few CSOs of FSM, Tonga and Fiji have structures as good as similarly-sized CSOs in Australia and New Zealand, but they are exceptions. At the other end of the spectrum are

small national CSOs, which operate out of private homes utilising only basic filing systems, with no ICT capacity except private computers. With little monetary resource or the capabilities to aid the design of internal management systems that would optimise their operations, many CSOs continually operate to shore up ‘leaks’ in the system. Their operations are unable to move beyond a point. The ability of CSOs to effectively plan for procuring and maintaining equipment is also relatively weak. There is a lack of skilled technical staff who can manage time between ‘working on’ and ‘working in’ the organization to make requisite changes or upgrades in infrastructural and managements structures.

Key challenges thus exist in the area of sustainability and resourcing for CSOs. Funding is the root capacity gap, which interlinks with and impact development of many other areas. Low levels of funding mean that CSOs are unable to recruit skilled staff who can take care of technical issues (which then results in its own set of challenges), and that they face constraints in basic areas such as effectively planning for, procuring, and maintaining goods and services for day-to-day operations. The other major capacity gaps in this axis are the low level of human resources, and a lack of training opportunities to upskill staff members on technical issues such as financial management.

**Table 5.1. Results: Sustainability And Resourcing Capacity Of CSOS In The Pacific**

Sustainability and Resourcing	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	Domestic CSOs	PRNGOs	Region
<b>Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures of Organization</b>									
All staff have valid job descriptions.	4.00	3.33	3.00	3.12	3.50	3.28	3.37	3.30	3.36
Possesses logistical infrastructure and equipment.	3.33	2.50	2.56	2.50	3.14	2.87	2.81	2.40	2.75
Is able to manage and maintain equipment.	3.16	2.40	2.83	2.37	3.00	2.50	2.71	2.00	2.60
Has ability to procure goods, services and works on transparent and competitive basis.	3.33	2.33	2.78	2.82	3.00	2.50	2.79	2.73	2.79
<b>Manpower and Human Resource Management of Organization</b>									
Has clearly defined system of measuring staff performance.	3.00	2.50	2.64	2.31	3.14	2.00	2.59	2.00	2.51
Has required knowledge and technical skills to fulfill its activities.	3.57	2.50	3.06	2.18	3.00	2.50	2.80	2.90	2.81
Applies effective approaches to reach its targets (i.e. participatory methods).	3.00	3.50	3.88	3.81	3.00	3.12	3.38	3.10	3.34
Knows how to get baseline data, develop indicators.	2.83	2.20	2.42	2.18	3.14	1.75	2.42	3.10	2.07
Uses local capacities (financial/human/other resources).	3.71	3.00	3.77	3.75	4.00	3.12	3.55	3.50	3.55
Possesses capacity to coordinate between field and office.	3.33	1.50	3.33	2.81	3.14	2.85	2.82	2.20	2.73
Has capability to train its own staff.	2.80	2.66	2.35	2.50	3.00	1.87	2.53	2.90	2.58
Staff have access to regular supervision.	3.00	3.33	2.50	2.31	3.14	2.14	2.73	2.50	2.76
Staff have access to training or coaching.	3.20	3.00	2.50	2.31	3.00	2.14	2.69	3.10	2.75
<b>Resource Mobilization Strategies of Organization</b>									
Has regular budget cycle.	3.25	2.00	3.11	3.28	2.83	3.57	3.00	2.70	2.96
Produces program and project budgets.	3.50	2.20	2.61	3.06	3.20	3.71	3.04	2.87	3.02
<b>Efficient Use of Funds by Organization</b>									
Accounts are regularly externally audited.	3.16	1.60	3.31	3.35	2.60	3.75	2.96	3.00	2.96
Disburses funds in a timely and effective manner.	3.33	3.00	2.91	2.85	3.00	3.57	3.11	2.30	2.99
Has procedures on authority, responsibility, monitoring, and accountability of handling funds.	3.50	2.40	3.35	3.14	3.20	3.37	3.16	2.40	3.05
Has a record of financial stability and reliability.	3.42	3.40	3.28	3.14	2.60	3.00	3.14	2.80	3.09
Has the ability to ensure proper financial recording and reporting.	3.00	3.40	3.18	3.21	3.20	3.50	3.24	2.80	3.18
Overall Section Rating	3.27	2.62	2.78	2.82	3.09	2.85	2.94	2.73	2.89

## Resource Mobilisation: Constraints and Implications

CSOs in the region—with a few exceptions of a few well-established ones in Fiji, Tonga, and FSM—are largely dependent on funding from external donors. Without this support, many of them would not be able to operate at the levels at which they currently operate, and some may even cease to exist.

Such a level of dependency impacts the sustainability and resourcing of CSOs in a number of ways. They have to attune their work areas to the funding focus of donors out of necessity. They also have to be reactive and adapt their work areas to the changing funding priorities of donors, if and when they arise, in order to maintain their funding sources over the long term (Box 5.1). The impact of this nature of funding on CSOs is wide ranging: from the areas of strategy planning and human resources, to procuring and maintaining equipment. For example, since a majority of donor funding is linked to specific projects, which rarely make explicit provisions,

it is difficult for CSOs to produce adequate levels of overhead expenses so that they can plan for procurement of new equipment as well as pay for the expenses to maintain the old.

Being vulnerable to the funding whims of external donors also limits the possibility of engaging in the kind of programmes CSOs see as best suiting their strategic intent. Very few options are available to them to obtain funding for pursuing long-term strategic plans. This factor must be acknowledged as a key capacity constraint in their functioning, both in the short and long term, and is a major reason why, as highlighted in Section 4, planning strategically has little real value for CSOs in the region.

Uncertainty in their funding makes it difficult for CSOs to create appropriate resource mobilization strategies. While Table 5.1 shows that CSOs possess adequate levels of capacity for creating project

budgets and having regular budget cycles—some scoring in the higher end of emerging range—it belies the fact that the actual process of carrying this out varies considerably year-to-year due to funding volatility.

A general lack of staff with financial management skills for accounts and budgeting compound the challenges in this area. CSOs, by and large, do possess some form of financial accounting systems, as indicated by their scoring in the high-end emerging range or low-end of the expanding range. A majority of CSOs consulted in this study had manual accounting systems, although increasing numbers were either moving or planning to shift to computerised systems. During the consultation processes, however, it was apparent that many CSOs had only limited ability to present complete sets of audited accounts for a period of longer than 3-5 years. The fault lay not with the financial systems as much as with a lack of staff members who possessed adequate financial knowledge to properly operate and update financial systems. This gap meant that the data collection on fund disbursements was not always adequate for the CSOs' external reporting or internal information needs. Unfortunately, limited resources also meant that options for additional training to upgrade skills of staff members were not always possible.

In addition, delays in the disbursements of funds by donors, which commonly occur, make day-to-day operations difficult for CSOs since they generally do not have large cash reserves. Although delays are mainly due to internal blockages within donor agencies,<sup>viii</sup> they do dramatically impact the daily functioning of CSOs. The only way this risk can be managed is if donors shift towards more timely

disbursement of funds, or a wider range of funding alternatives become available for CSOs.

It must be said, however, that in light of the low levels of funding as well as the uncertainty of their sources, CSOs have become especially efficient in using available funds. In the case of the procurement and maintenance of equipment, for example, CSOs have become adept at maximizing their resources so that they can at least provide for the overheads necessary to maintain basic infrastructure. This does not necessarily mean that they are able to procure and maintain their equipment as effectively as they would like. (Table 5.1 shows that relatively weak scores in this area). Instead, it highlights the fact that CSOs are doing as well as could be expected given their limited resources and the severe constraints under which they function.

## Manpower and Human Resource Management

CSOs face major challenges when it comes to manpower and human resource management. It is difficult for them to attract and retain skilled staff, especially in the face of major competition by donors or international NGOs which offer better employment packages.

CSOs have high staff turnover rates. Their low levels of funding means that CSOs are chronically understaffed, even with the use of volunteers. Apart from the largest CSOs, for example, it is often the case that the director of the organization has to also operate as the de facto human resources manager. Given the overstretched nature of these key positions, human resources management may thus not be receiving the attention it deserves.

### Box 5.1. Funding Priorities Of Donors Encourage A 'Race To The Middle'

*In an attempt to ensure their competitiveness for donor funding, many CSOs in the Pacific are increasingly spreading their areas of 'expertise' and programmatic focus. A recent example of this from the region is the increased importance of climate change to donors, and an increased availability of funds in this area. As a result, many CSOs across the region are attempting to align their work programmes to climate change. While this realignment makes sense in terms of obtaining funding, it also detracts CSOs from developing the sectoral expertise upon which they were first established.*

*A possible outcome of this 'race to the middle' is that larger organizations, with better internal capacity, may begin to edge out smaller CSOs in obtaining funds. This shift has already been noted, with smaller organizations feeling negative impacts. During the consultation process, a number of the specialised and smaller CSOs reported that they were increasingly competing for funds in their respective countries with larger, better equipped CSOs which present a more attractive package for donors.*

*In sum, the current scenario in the area of funding is that:*

- *due to the ongoing need for external funding, there continues to be a high degree of competition within the CSO sector*
- *the funding tendency of donors is that they look for groups to carry out programmes they have identified (and prioritised), rather than funding projects which national CSOs consider as being worthwhile.*

<sup>viii</sup> The other major risk associated with disbursement of funds from donors is misallocation of funds received by CSOs. No concrete examples of this occurring in the Pacific CSO community were forthcoming from the CSOs consulted in this assessment exercise. However, there was acknowledgement that this did occur in some places. Tighter financial regulation systems may help overcome this issue. Tighter monitoring by donors at an early stage is also probably a good deterrent. Increased training in monitoring and evaluation within CSOs may also help assuage this concern.

It is also common across the region for CSO staff members to fill a range of roles for which they do not possess appropriate skills. During the consultation process, staff members indicated that they were willing to take on these additional responsibilities (despite lack of remuneration), although they did do without appropriate training. In some cases, such situations had been carrying on for years, with the additional duties eventually becoming part of the normal workload.

The pervasive problem of poorly trained or lack of skilled staff marks the issue of training as a priority action area. On the whole, with the exception of Tuvalu, a majority of CSOs in the region only have an emerging level of capacity in possessing capabilities to train their staff. The Solomon Islands, with a score of 1.87, is in the nascent category.

Opportunities for engaging in external training and other capacity building activities are sporadic. An important point of concern CSOs highlighted during the consultation process, and which must be duly noted, was that training opportunities were available

only in the same countries, the “usual suspects” as it were, and that these opportunities were not “fairly” dispersed (Box 5.2). Moreover, given their high staff turnover, there was little institutional memory on which individuals had received training and from whom, and a general lack of accessible written records detailing the forms of training staff members had undergone.

Another issue highlighted during the consultation process was that sporadic training seminars by external providers did not necessarily best suit the needs of CSOs. While some CSOs may have received one-off training through initiatives from the donor or the larger CSO community, participants of this study noted that these sessions, while useful, did not help them gain the broader skills they required and desired for professional development. There was no ongoing support to ensure that the training received was translated into concrete changes in people’s work practices on the ground. Participants strongly indicated that it was workplace ‘on-the-job’ training and learning that they needed to ensure the development and sustainability of skills.

### Box 5.2. Opportunities For Training And Capacity Development Activities: Snapshot Assessment Of Pacific CSOs

*Training is the key component for building capacity in Pacific CSOs across the five axes of the Clearing House Framework. This issue was identified as priority not only by CSOs themselves during the capacity assessment process, but also in the collective analytical findings of the study.*

*A point of concern, however, is that training opportunities for CSOs is not fairly dispersed in the region. The Training Needs Assessment (TNA), which was part of the assessment exercise, broke down participants on the basis of the formal training they had received after joining their organizations. The results varied along country lines. Those working in Fiji and Tonga, for example, made up a far larger number of those who had received additional training than those working in Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.*

*The overall assessment that emerges from this study is that training for CSOs in the region has been country specific, short-term, and focused on particular sectors or skill deficits. Very little training occurs ‘in-house’. The majority of training initiative is largely conducted on an ad hoc basis, and provided by a limited number of external donors. These donors include:*

- AusAID
- CIDA
- Commonwealth
- NZ Aid Programme
- Various United Nations agencies

*A number of other NGOs active in the region have also provided, and continue to provide, capacity building training. The format of the training provided by NGOs, however, is to focus on the one particular CSO with whom they are working. The NGOs involved in such capacity building initiatives include:*

- OXFAM-Aus
- OXFAM-NZ
- The Nature Conservancy
- WWF

*The approach to training CSOs should be considered in light of all these factors. An issue that was repeatedly highlighted during the consultation process was the desire by participants for a mentoring approach, where individuals would receive ‘on-the-job’ training, of putting to practice skills they have picked up in workshops or training seminars. The most immediate need seems to be for competency-based skills training starting at a sub-tertiary education level, and delivered in-country, which allows the use of on-the-job training and peer-to-peer learning networks. The pursuance of a more localised format designed to be interactive and on the ground, appears to be the need of the hour.*

The only coherent training program in existence for a sustained period of time for CSOs in the region seems to be the Graduate Diploma Programme in Non Profit Management offered by the New Zealand-based Unitec Institute of Technology. Participants of the consultation process viewed this programme very favorably. However, it was considered expensive, especially in light of the fact that CSO participants had to travel overseas to receive the

training. The programme also does not possess any on-the-job training components, which means that participants are unable to engage in their regular work activities while undergoing training, adversely affecting those organizations with limited human resources. Moreover, as a graduate diploma, it is aimed at those with higher academic levels, and effectively outside the reach of the majority of CSO staff in the region.

## Section 6

# Information Sharing, Cooperation and Advocacy

CSOs scored relatively well as a group in terms of information sharing, cooperation and advocacy. The region as a whole scored in the expanding range at 3.08 (Table 6.1). A majority of countries scored between high end of the emerging and mid-level of the expanding range. Cook Islands with a score of 3.45, and Tonga with a score of 3.32, returned particularly strong scores.

CSO capacity in this sector is relatively homogenous across the region (with the exception of Solomon Islands which consistently scored a level below the other countries). A key finding is that while CSOs are very good at sharing information, it does not necessary transfer into the domain of cooperation. This, despite the fact that all the CSOs in the study agreed that increased cooperation would positively impact their work. The reason behind this appears the lack of existing formal processes for cooperation which can translate into shared programmes. The competitive nature of funding for CSOs in the region also reduces incentive for cooperation.

In the area of advocacy, while CSOs have a clear advocacy component in their work activities, they are unable to assess effectiveness due to their lack of monitoring and evaluation strategies.

### Information Sharing

CSOs appear to have relatively well-developed capacities to share information and maintain communication with their constituents. Table 6.1 shows scores in the expanding range of the scale for a majority of the countries for these capacities. CSOs clearly keep their constituents informed about their activities. The ability of CSOs to effectively utilise a range of information-sharing modalities, including informal meetings, plays a key role. E-mail, considered the cheapest with the most effective spread, is the main channel for information sharing (Box 6.1). Other modalities include the radio, newspapers, newsletters and meetings.

Another noteworthy point is that the majority of countries, apart from Tuvalu and Solomon Islands, returned high scores in terms of their linkage to organizational networks in specific sectors. This suggests that CSOs are able to effectively share information with other CSOs working in similar focus areas.



**Table 6.1. Results: Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy For CSOs In The Pacific**

Information Sharing Activities of the Organization	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	Domestic CSOs	PRNGOs	Region
Keeps informed about techniques/competencies /policies/trends in area of expertise.	3.57	3.16	3.16	3.50	2.66	2.75	2.60	3.40	2.72
Regularly accesses relevant information/resources and experience.	3.57	3.00	3.11	3.50	2.50	2.25	2.98	3.40	3.04
Maintains a regular database of relevant contacts and networks.	3.57	3.00	2.88	3.06	3.00	2.12	2.93	3.00	2.94
Maintains a regularly updated calendar of events.	3.80	2.33	2.87	2.26	2.66	2.21	2.68	3.50	2.80
Maintains regular communication with other CSOs in the country.	3.66	3.50	3.16	3.75	2.83	2.62	3.25	3.40	3.27
Maintains regular communication with other CSOs in the region.	3.33	2.66	2.91	3.42	2.33	2.75	2.90	3.20	2.94
Maintains regular communication with other CSOs internationally.	3.16	2.16	2.57	3.28	2.33	1.75	2.54	3.30	2.65
Constituents are regularly informed about the organization and its activities.	3.57	3.33	3.38	3.81	3.16	2.42	3.27	2.80	3.21
Belongs to organizational networks in its own sector.	3.80	3.33	3.77	3.87	2.83	2.28	3.31	3.30	3.31
<b>Organizational Activities to Strengthen Cooperation</b>									
Cooperates with other organizations in its work.	3.85	3.16	3.38	3.87	2.66	2.75	3.27	3.40	3.29
Has strong links within CSO community and to other social institutions (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users).	3.57	2.83	3.27	3.62	3.00	3.12	3.23	3.50	3.27
Partnerships with government/UN agencies/ private sector/foundations/others.	3.60	2.16	3.22	3.50	2.66	2.25	2.89	3.30	2.95
Partnerships are a source of funding.	2.40	2.00	3.25	3.57	2.16	1.75	2.52	2.50	2.52
<b>Advocacy</b>									
Has a strong presence in the field.	3.57	3.00	3.38	3.28	2.85	2.62	3.11	3.40	3.15
Has a clear advocacy focus.	3.60	2.60	2.66	3.28	2.57	3.50	3.03	3.50	3.10
There is a long-term community development vision.	3.50	2.60	3.16	3.14	3.42	3.37	3.19	3.00	3.17
Has a formal plan for conducting its advocacy work.	3.20	2.40	1.94	2.28	2.83	3.12	2.62	2.20	2.56
Possesses protocols for dealing with media.	3.40	2.33	2.00	2.71	2.00	1.75	2.36	3.10	2.47
<b>Overall Section Rating</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>3.08</b>

The capacity to share information however weakened as CSOs moved away from engagement with national CSOs communities to the regional and international levels. The strong score of 3.27 for CSOs maintaining regular communication with other national CSOs drops to 2.94 when communication extends to the regional level. The score drops even further at the international level (2.65). CSOs are clearly not as strongly linked to their regional and international CSO communities, irrespective of their strong communication ties at the national level.

## Cooperation

Their strong capacity to share information does not necessarily lead CSOs to cooperate with one another. As Table 6.1 shows, the scoring in this section was mainly in the emerging range, although some countries did score in the expanding range.

During the consultation process, many CSOs indicated that they could improve their cooperation with other national CSOs, but were constrained by a lack of time and easily available channels for cooperation. They also suggested that NLUs, who were already fulfilling this role to some degree, could do more to bring about increased coordination in their sector. Many agreed that increased cooperation would improve not only their functioning, but also help overcome internal capacity issues.

Another obstacle to increased cooperation is the competitive nature of the funding environment. Cooperation is difficult to foster when all are “fighting for the same dollar”. A related finding from the quantitative data is that when CSOs did cooperate with other organizations, these partnerships did not involve funding-related aspects, such as providing or pooling funds.

### Box 6.1. Using IctS To Inform: ‘No One Answers Their Phones But At Least They Check Their E-Mails’

*There is a relatively high degree of ICT usage among CSOs to communicate with their domestic stakeholders and external partners, although this is done at a low technical level and is based mainly on the use of e-mail. Indeed, many CSOs said that email was their main day-to-day form of communication. The justification here—that “no one answers their phones but at least they check their e-mails”—explains the relatively high level of information sharing among national CSOs.*

*CSOs do not possess much capacity in terms of more advanced uses of ICT such as web pages, blogs and other Web 2.0 technologies. The two reasons behind this are the lack of physical computing infrastructure (including the high replacement and repair costs of infrastructure) and the low levels of band width in the Pacific, which restrict the use of ICT for information gathering and of high-tech forms of communication such as face-to-face video conferencing. These are however not serious constraints. A strong tradition of internet forums has developed over the last decade in the region, and so there are models available on which CSOs could build ICT-related capacities.*

## Advocacy

CSOs, on the whole, have a clear advocacy focus linked into their strategies and long-term community development visions. However, given their capacity weaknesses in the area of internal monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult for CSOs to comprehensively assess the impact and effectiveness of their campaigns. This gap can also be attributed to the weak linkages between strategic planning and operational activities discussed in Section 4.

CSOs' engagement with media in their advocacy work is weak. Except for a few well-established CSOs, interaction with media seems to be on a case-by-case occurrence, and the internal capacity of CSOs to take forward media-related activities is relatively low. Many CSOs do not have designated media contacts,

and there are few formal protocols in place, if at all, on dealing with the media. Whenever media outreach is conducted, it is generally through established networks with their end-users or through external partners, and preferably via email. Traditional media sources such as newspapers, radio and television are rarely used for advocacy campaigns due to related expenses. While a few larger CSOs may be relatively well developed in their strategic use of the media, smaller organizations have no clear understanding of how they can use the media in their advocacy or general programming. The general capacity gap in human resources can be linked to this problem, since finding technical expertise in specific areas like media and communications is the major challenge.

## Section 7 Stakeholders Relations



CSOs maintain a web of relations with a range of stakeholders, including donors, constituents, government ministries and local bodies, and other CSOs in similar sectors. Their capacity for this is fairly strong, with an overall regional score of 3.15 in the region (Table 7.1). A particular strength of CSOs is the involvement of their constituents in the design and review of their programming. Stakeholders' views are actively included, and as such, they can be said to play a role in the governance of CSOs.

There are a number of weaknesses as well. The outstanding one is the low capacity of CSOs to gather baseline information about their constituents. While the involvement of constituents in the design and review of programming is a valuable approach, without 'hard' data on constituents' needs, it is difficult to ensure that CSOs' programming and advocacy work is appropriately responsive.

**External Relations** (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP<sup>ix</sup> agencies and end users)

Many CSOs in the consultation process claimed that the close connection with their end-users was their

key strength. Since CSOs actively consider their constituents views in programming and involve them in governance boards (irrespective of the members' lack of skills), they have legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders. CSOs are considered the 'voice of the community' by both their constituents and donors.

Sector-specific CSOs appear to have cordial relations with their government counterparts, and CSOs as a whole rated relations with donors positively (although this is expected given that the majority of their funding comes from donors). A number of CSOs maintain contact with the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies, but this contact is irregular (often only once a year) and focused only on a small range of agencies. These agencies are:

- Forum Fisheries Agency
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- South Pacific Regional Environment Program
- University of the South Pacific

**Table 7.1. Results: Stakeholder Relations Of CSOs In The Pacific**

Stakeholder Relations	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	Domestic CSOs	PRNGOs	Region
The organization collects baseline information about its constituency.	2.60	3.16	3.44	3.50	3.14	2.25	3.01	2.80	2.98
The organization reports on its work to its donors, constituencies, CSOs involved in similar work, local councils, and involve government ministries, etc.	3.40	3.00	3.61	3.78	3.16	2.25	3.20	3.50	3.24
The organization has an effective outreach team.	3.42	2.50	3.33	3.35	3.16	2.87	3.10	2.80	3.06
There are regular meeting with community groups.	2.83	2.75	3.72	3.57	3.16	2.37	3.06	3.20	3.08
Stakeholders are represented in your organization's advisory groups, management or governance body.	3.00	3.40	3.83	3.76	3.42	2.57	3.32	4.00	3.42
The organization includes the viewpoint of the beneficiaries in the design and review of its programming.	3.50	3.80	3.83	3.85	3.42	2.75	3.52	3.40	3.50
The organization includes the viewpoint of its non-beneficiary stakeholders in the design and review of its programming (e.g. regional organizations).	3.00	2.60	3.44	3.85	2.85	2.50	3.04	3.10	3.04
The organization runs regular events where its constituents are able to provide feedback to the organization.	3.00	2.66	3.38	3.50	2.66	2.25	2.92	3.00	2.92
Overall Rating	3.09	2.98	3.57	3.64	3.12	2.47	3.14	3.22	3.15

An area within stakeholder relations that needs greater quality engagement is between national CSOs and PRNGOs. At the moment, there appears to be a low level of awareness of PRNGOs and their role by national CSOs unless they are affiliated with a specific PRNGO. PRNGOs, which are all located in Fiji except for one, have relatively well developed communication systems with their internal stakeholders (their member CSOs) and with external stakeholders, such as bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors and other international and regional agencies.

CSOs, like other agencies in the region, have difficulty in gathering baseline information about their constituents. There are few official data sources in their countries, and CSOs have very limited knowledge of reliable mechanisms for data gathering and analysis. CSOs also scored low in the area of organizing events or platforms for their constituents to provide feedback on their work. This means that the mechanisms for CSOs receiving feedback on the effectiveness of their programmes are weak, and by way of this, they could stand to lose the legitimacy that they gained with constituents and donors.

<sup>ix</sup> The regional bodies collectively known as the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) are comprised of the following:

- Forum Fisheries Agency
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission)
- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (Formerly CCOP/SOPAC)
- South Pacific Tourism Organization (formerly Tourism Council of the South Pacific)
- University of the South Pacific
- Pacific Islands Development Programme
- Fiji School of Medicine
- South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment

## Section 8

# Legal and Regulatory Environment

The capacity development of CSOs is enabled, to a considerable extent, by the country's policy, legal and regulatory environment. It impacts how CSOs operate and interact with citizens and their governments. In general, all countries in the Pacific region make allowances for non-profit enterprise. With a regional score of 3.38, the highest in the five axes, CSOs scored particularly well in terms of their legal and regulatory environment (Table 8.1). The only exception was Solomon Islands with a score of 2.87.

The majority of CSOs in the Pacific are registered as some form of non-profit body. The registration process is not seen as being particularly arduous, except in Fiji, where it could take longer to obtain registration if a non-Fijian is at the helm of the organization. (Participants in the study indicated that this was due to parochialism in the Fijian civil service where agencies based in the country were best seen as operating under Fijian heads). Table 8.2 shows that almost all the CSOs that were consulted in the study have been formally incorporated.<sup>x</sup>

The overall high score for this axis can be attributed to the general lack of opposition by political actors to CSOs, and the realisation by governments of the important role that CSOs play in service delivery. At the same time, the high rankings belie the general consensus among CSOs, across region, that they operate under a form of benign neglect by their governments.

While it may not be difficult to establish organizational status and begin operations, there is little active

support from governments to CSOs. That governments do not go out of their way to aid CSO activities was identified as a major weakness during the consultation process. There is also weak financial support from governments for CSOs activities. Very little money comes to CSOs from domestic donations and almost no money from local governments. There is little that can be done regarding this, however, without substantial growth in domestic economic sectors at the macro level.

Exceptions to the benign neglect exist, namely in two countries. During the consultations, Fijian CSOs claimed that if a CSO was overly 'political' it could be punished by the current regime. The other was Tonga, where CSOs that worked in politically-sensitive sectors, such as human rights and the pro-democracy movements, came across some degree of low-level opposition and were marginalised by government agencies. At the same time, specific government agencies in Tonga appeared to have good connections to CSOs working in their sectors, such as health and education (as long as the organizations were not seen as being overly political).

A number of the CSOs indicated that a degree of competitiveness existed between them and their governments as the latter saw them as competitors for funds. The CSOs from Solomon Islands, for example, reported jealousies from some of their government agencies because of their ability to directly access donor funds. This factor may well explain why the country ranked in the emerging range for this axis, far below the other countries.

<sup>x</sup> The exceptions were one FSM CSO and seven Tuvaluan CSOs, which had no legal status.

## Section 9

# Capacity Strengths and Weaknesses

**Table 8.1. Results: Legal And Regulatory Environment Of CSOs In The Pacific**

	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	National CSOs	PRNGOs	Region
Legal and Regulatory Environments	3.71	3.25	3.38	3.06	3.20	2.87	3.41	3.20	3.38

**Table 8.2. Legal Status Of CSOs Consulted In The Capacity Assessment<sup>xi</sup>**

Legal Status	Cook Islands	FSM	Fiji	Tonga	Tuvalu	Solomon Islands	PRNGOs
Charitable Trust	0	0	7	0	0	7	5
Incorporated Societies Act	5	7	0	9	0	0	0
Other	1	0	2	1	1	0	0
No legal status	1 <sup>xii</sup>	0	0	0	7	0	0

<sup>xi</sup> Some CSOs consulted in the study were not charitable trusts or incorporated societies. They were: religious bodies (2); school; Memorandum of Understanding with government (WWF-Fiji); operation under the Ministry of Youth (Fiji).

<sup>xii</sup> This CSO was planning on formerly incorporating but had not yet got around to it.

A number of cross-cutting patterns in CSO capacities, spanning the five axes of the Clearing House Framework, emerge in light of this study's collective data. These can be divided into strengths and weaknesses. Since greater work is required to understand exactly how capacity gaps play out, especially if strategies are to be developed, and resources and time spent on overcoming them in an effective manner, this section gives more attention to the gaps. Since these have been already under the specific axes, this section focuses on presenting existing or past initiatives from the Pacific region to help inform, as 'strategies', when considering ways in which to overcome existing capacity challenges.

The assessment exercise identified that CSOs in the region have some capacity strengths which are consistent across the axes. These are:

- strong linkages to their end-users;
- dedication of staff;
- strong degree of volunteerism;
- ability to make change in their countries; and
- increasing CSO capacity over time.

The first four strengths have already been discussed in the earlier sections. The fifth strength refers to the capacity of CSOs to enact change, which is relatively high compared to overall Pacific standards. During the consultation process, many claimed that CSOs, as a group, have continually increased in capacity over time. This claim has to be seen in contrast to and in the context of the common belief—present at the consultations—that government effectiveness and capacity across the entire Pacific have decreased since independence. (On the other hand, not one person said that CSO capacity had decreased post-independence, indicating a trend of increased capacity over time).

Cross-cutting Capacity Gaps

Recurring capacity gaps which interlink or overlap provide a nuanced approach to identify the areas that call for special attention (Table 9.1). These gaps can be grouped into discrete categories:

- Funding
- Human Resources
- Leadership and Governance
- Strategic Planning and Collaboration
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Coordination and Communication

Table 9.1. Prioritisation Of Capacity Development Needs In The Five Axes

CROSS-CUTTING CAPACITY GAPS	Organizational Development (2.91)	Sustainability and Resourcing (2.89)	Information Sharing, Cooperation and Advocacy (3.08)	Stakeholder Relations (3.15)	Legal and Regulatory Environment (3.38)
Funding					
Human Resources					
Leadership and Governance					
Strategic Planning and Collaboration					
Monitoring and Evaluation					
Coordination and Communication					

Key for color breakdown	
High Priority	
Medium Priority	
Low Priority	

Funding

Funding constraints relate not only to low levels of available monetary resources but also the uncertainty associated with ongoing sources of funding. As discussed in preceding chapters, the CSOs consulted in the study, as a group, are dependent on foreign donors for ongoing financial support for their programming. Small CSOs are particularly vulnerable to funding shortfalls. While it is largely outside the scope of UNDP's work to determine how CSOs use funding from donors, the vulnerability of CSOs to the funding whims of donors is an acknowledged capacity constraint.

Table 9.1 shows that the most immediate work is required in the fields of Organizational Development and Sustainability and Resourcing. This spread is relatively evenly across the six key capacity gaps, showing uniformity. A relatively equal spread also occurs across the Information Sharing, Cooperation and Advocacy axis.

There is a more uneven spread of capacity needs in the areas of Stakeholder Relations and Legal and Regulatory Environment. These two axes were consistently scored the highest during the consultation process. However, as indicated by the table, even with high scoring there are still areas within the axes which demand attention.

One means of addressing this issue is through small grants schemes, such as the Global Environmental Facility's Small Grants Programme (SGP). SPG, which is implemented by UNDP in 63 developing countries, including Papua New Guinea (PNG), supports CSO activities that work on conserving biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and

protecting international waters, while generating sustainable livelihoods. It recognises the importance of small grassroots projects and their difficulty in securing funding. It offers grants that average around USD 20,000 directly to CSOs. The programme features decentralised decision-making about grant awards, with strategic directions being provided by a voluntary national steering committee in each participating country. All SGP-supported projects include capacity-building, communications, and experience-sharing elements.<sup>6</sup>

An initiative in the Pacific region along the line of SGP is the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), a regional organization chartered under FSM laws to support biodiversity conservation and related sustainable development for the people of Micronesia. The Trust was established in 2002 to provide long-term sustained funding to community-based organizations and other NGOs through a grants programme. MCT operates by delivering

financial and technical resources to conservation stakeholders throughout Micronesia. It also fulfills an important function by connecting community-based conservation stakeholders in Micronesia with a broad range of private and public donors interested in supporting conservation outcomes in the region. The Micronesia Trust demonstrates how CSOs in the Pacific may be able to work together in the Pacific to provide a source of ongoing funding.

The example of the Pacific Skills Link project—a wide-ranging programme initiated in 2000 to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and civil society in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu—also holds lessons to build capacity in the area of funding. The project included a small grants component to give smaller, more informal organizations an opportunity to ‘practice their way around the project cycle’. In the end, the project, which delivered solid capacity building outcomes, was considered an overall success (Box 9.1).

### Box 9.1. The Pacific Skills Links Project

*In 2000, the British volunteer sending organization (VSO) funded a volunteer adviser to review opportunities to develop the CSO sector in Tuvalu. This enabled a review of CSO capacity to identify areas requiring development, and a proposal for a capacity building project resulted. The project, known as the Pacific Skills Link, had as its overall goal, the strengthening of CSO capacity to alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods of disadvantaged communities in Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It was overseen by National Liaison Units (NLUs): the Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) in Tuvalu, the Vanuatu Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (VANGO) in Vanuatu, and the Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (KANGO) in Kiribati.*

*The project was wide-ranging. It was designed to address the limited power of CSOs to access resources, their lack of technical skills for planning and analysing their needs, and the lack of government recognition of CSOs. It conducted CSO profiling and needs assessments, and capacity building activities including training and coaching. It not only supported CSO umbrella organizations and civil society in networking, information exchange and advocacy work, but also in the implementation of small projects through a small grants scheme.*

*Specific capacity building approaches of the Programme included the provision of overseas development workers, formal workshops and one-to-one training, inter country staff exchanges, IT service provision through umbrella bodies, and legal advice for constitutions. During the course of the project, PSL was the facilitator for the umbrella organizations.*

*The PSL project was evaluated as a success. An evaluation report found that its capacity building activities had not only strengthened individual skills, but led to improvement in day-to-day functioning of recipient CSOs.*

*Another longitudinal study of the PSL project interventions in Tuvalu also found that the project had been generally successful. The resulting shifts in resource, expert and personal power had enabled CSOs to develop and progress to a point where they had achieved greater legitimisation by the government. This study however cautioned that it was not clear if the NGOs were sufficiently capacitated to ensure the delivery of projects following the withdrawal of project support in 2006. No data is currently available on follow-up to this study; however fieldwork for this project indicated that a lack of coordination, problems with resourcing and staff, and the cumbersome nature of the funding system in Tuvalu remained issues for CSOs in Tuvalu.*

*Sources: Tappin 2005; Cox 2006.*

## Human Resources

Not only do CSOs struggle to find technically qualified staff, but they also find it difficult to retain them, particularly in light of the larger salary packages offered by donors or international CSOs. The lack of technical staff impact many areas, not least the efficient use of CSOs’ limited resources. During the consultation process, it was clear that many CSOs had difficulty maintaining financial systems due to lack of trained staff even if funds were available and accessible.

There is indeed much room to upgrade skills of staff in technical areas through coordinated training processes. Although sporadic training initiatives take place, there is little or no coordination in the delivery of training. Donors have attempted to address the issue of training through projects such as the Pacific Skills Link, which included training workshops and one-to-one assistance for local staff.<sup>7</sup>

Volunteerism, as earlier discussed, has been one way to meet the challenge of staff shortage in CSOs. The practice of using national volunteers through a formal volunteer system is not widespread, although it is not unknown. The Papua New Guinea National Volunteer Service (NVS) is a particularly well-regarded indigenous volunteer agency.<sup>8</sup> The

philosophy behind NVS is about reinforcing a traditional idea of people supporting and assisting one another within their communities. Indigenous volunteers from NVS have helped community organizations to understand the application of planning, mentoring and evaluation from a Melanesian perspective.

There is also a role for international volunteers in the region. Pratt (2002) and Devereaux (2008) claim that capacity development can be enhanced by international volunteers working side by side with locals. From his own experience with Australian Volunteers International and United Nations Volunteers, Devereaux explains that changes made with the assistance of long-term volunteers are more likely to achieve local ownership and be sustainable, as volunteers must fit in with the management structure of the organization of their base. This obliges them to work with the resources available and at the pace of existing organizational capacity. During the consultations, this type of international volunteerism was seen by CSOs as being a useful way of helping them raise staff capacity levels. Indeed, it is also a practical example of the kind of ‘on the job’ mentoring identified by CSOs to ensure the effectiveness of training programmes.



## Leadership and Governance

'Governance,' in the context of this study, refers to the manner in which power is exercised by an individual, group or entity in the management of things, including exercise of powers by chief executive or operating officers, boards and members of an NGO.<sup>9</sup> Section 4 has discussed how the general low levels of human resources in CSOs reflect in their governance boards. The gaps lead to a number of negative consequences, one of which is slippage between the roles of governance and management. Clearly, key capacity gaps must be addressed in this area.

It is difficult to locate data on projects focused solely on improving governance in the Pacific region. However, Haley (2008) provides an example from Fiji. In 2000, following the Fijian coup, the Suva-based NGO, Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy coup (ECREA) developed a programme, supported by Oxfam Australia, to work with local Fijian communities to promote community-level engagement. This programme, known as the Social Empowerment and Education Programme (SEEP), identified leadership as one of two issues that affected community governance. The core aim of

SEEP was therefore to strengthen the capacity of local leaders, particularly focusing on dealing with external agents (land leasing units<sup>xiii</sup>), and on improving community consultation in their decision-making processes. As a result of participating in this programme, village leaders adopted a more consultative approach towards decision-making, and women began to present their views in village-level meetings where previously they had been entirely excluded. SEEP also recruited and trained community facilitators from target communities, recognising that such representatives are better placed to negotiate effectively with their communities due to communal ties. Such an approach ensured longer-term commitment to development in specific communities, encouraging sustainability. After six months in the programme, community facilitators returned to their communities ensuring that the leadership capacity built by SEEP was injected back into the communities.<sup>10</sup>

Another programme that addresses governance and leadership issues in the management of CSOs is the Pacific NGO Capacity Building Initiative initiated by CIDA and UNDP (Box 9.2).

### Box 9.2. The Pacific Capacity Building Initiative

*The Pacific Capacity Building Initiative was a collaborative project between CIDA and the UNDP to strengthen CSO capacity to initiate, manage and influence development processes in Pacific Island societies.*

*The project strategies were comprehensive. It involved the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO); built a regional network of capacity building practitioners; and established multi-stakeholder mechanisms and processes for coordinating CSO capability building activities at regional and national levels. It also included an institutionalisation of the New Zealand-based Unitec Institute of Technology's Graduate Diploma Programme in NGO Management. New Zealand provided PIANGO with funding to support CSO enrolment in the programme.*

*The Project was undertaken in two stages. First, it made efforts to raise awareness about the role CSOs play in the region, highlighting the opportunities and challenges they faced. During this stage, strategic links were forged between groups working on strengthening civil society.*

*Crucial points of exchange were established at national, regional and international levels for and amongst CSOs, governments and international development agencies. PIANGO received intensive technical and managerial support throughout the project. The project was successful in strengthening PIANGO, and the agency completed phase one better positioned to operate more effectively.*

*The second stage aimed to consolidate and sustain outcomes already achieved, and to work towards an exit strategy for CIDA. It built on previous capacity building efforts and provided intensive 'hands-on' technical assistance in the implementation of PIANGO's five year strategic plan, particularly in the area of mobilising financial and human resources.*

*The project facilitated workshops for leaders, round-table discussions, and helped country-level umbrella organizations with strategic planning. It became apparent that there was a growing number of skilled and experienced Pacific Islanders to facilitate capacity building activities, but that their availability was limited by resource constraints and demands of their own organizations and networks. A regional network of mobile 'capacity building practitioners' was established to address this, and to serve as a nucleus for a region-wide network of sector support workers. As a means of promoting cross-regional learning and grassroots capacity building, the Project Coordinator also assisted in establishing exchange programmes for community development practitioners. For example, the project connected Community Facilitators from the Bismark Ramu Group in PNG with Community Facilitators from the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy coup (ECREA) in Fiji to explore participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and community engagement techniques in rural communities.*

*The Pacific NGO Capacity Building Initiative was the first project in the Pacific to target the institutional development of the NGO sector as a whole. Certainly, it seemed that the capacity of CSOs to operate more effectively in a range of areas—human and financial management, programme planning and monitoring, public education, social analysis, advocacy and stakeholder relations—had strengthened as a result. It operated across nations, sectors, institutional boundaries, and demonstrated what could be achieved when capacity development is approached in a truly comprehensive manner.*

Source: Taylor 2005

As part of the initiative, a regional NGO specialist co-facilitated a seven day workshop attended by 14 people for NGO leaders from four provinces and Honiara in the Solomon Islands. The workshop utilised a holistic approach of teaching NGO management on an array of topics: resource mobilisation, administrative systems and procedures, public relations, project design, policy analysis and formulation, advocacy, governance and strategy development.

Following the workshop, participants themselves identified the need for ongoing formal training in managing NGOs. They asked the Development Services Exchange (DSE)—a national NGO umbrella body which facilitates and coordinates development services for NGOs and their partners—to explore

the possibility of bringing Unitec's Graduate Diploma Programme in NGO Management to the Solomon Islands.<sup>11</sup> While a few CSO managers from Solomon Islands were able to attend the Programme, its impact was minimal due to the high cost of attending. A more targeted locally-based approach to training may be more appropriate in the region.

## Strategic Planning and Collaboration

A lack of in-house capacity to undertake strategic planning affects a number of organizational capacities. As Section 4 makes clear, while CSOs may possess strategic plans, they are either out of date or do not match existing resources and capacities.

<sup>xiii</sup> This refers to individuals or companies leasing lands. About 85% of lands in Fiji are community owned and leased out through long term leases.



Related to this is the inability to transfer such planning, whenever they occur, into operational plans.

These capacity weaknesses not only impact CSOs' ability to engage with government on broader development strategies but also their ability to collaborate and coordinate amongst themselves. There are some cases which serve as encouraging examples of initiatives that have led to greater coordination between the CSO community and the wider community. One such example is the Oxfam-Solomon Islands' HIV and AIDS Programme. The initiative involves civil society (Oxfam-SI, local NGOs and programme partners) and the Solomon Islands Government. As part of the programme, Oxfam-SI initiated an informal working group—comprising of international NGO's working on HIV and AIDS programme development in Solomon Islands—which meets intermittently to network, discuss key issues, and identifies ways to collaborate and share resources. Due to these interactions, stakeholder roles have been clarified, communication greatly improved, and members better able to complement each other's activities. It has resulted in improved programme effectiveness and more efficient use of resources at the national level.<sup>12</sup> This example is an exception, however, and more work needs to be done to enable CSOs, which have relatively well developed capacity, to share information and closely coordinate activities and collaborate.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The lack of monitoring and evaluation expertise within CSOs has been highlighted throughout this report. Monitoring and evaluation is an area that has traditionally been donor-led. At the grassroots level, however, monitoring and evaluation programmes that utilise donor-driven structures are often unsuccessful. It is increasingly being recognised that monitoring in the area of development is more

successful if it is undertaken in manner that is culturally and contextually appropriate.<sup>13</sup> In PNG, the aforementioned NVS programme utilised such an approach with volunteers, assisting some CSOs to understand the value of and ideas behind planning, monitoring and evaluation using everyday contexts. Adopting such an interactive approach helped CSO communities to become familiar with the processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation, instead of seeing them as alien concepts.<sup>14</sup>

Another example comes from the Pacific Provider Development Fund (PPDF), which ran from 2000-2005 through the Child Youth and Family (CYF) agency in New Zealand. It aimed to build the organizational capacity of Pacific service providers through a culturally appropriate evaluation process. This project focused on the development of a 'Capacity Self Assessment' tool for Pacific providers, based on a New Zealand Maori capacity assessment tool. Redeveloping the tool in a Pacific Provider context, using Pacific values, ensured that it was contextually appropriate and that Pacific providers could own it. Mentoring was particularly important to the process. The PPDF funded 20 key Pacific providers, selected by CYF, who completed training in the Capacity Self Assessment tool supported by a mentor of their choice. The providers submitted a two-year development plan for funding consideration after the training. This programme enabled Pacific providers in New Zealand to strengthen core infrastructure and gave direction to planning. It also highlighted the importance of culture as the context for delivery, while emphasizing the need to re-contextualize generic tools in a more humanistic manner for a Pacific context.<sup>15</sup> Such innovative and contextualized programmes will go a long way to not only build capacity in the crucial area of monitoring and evaluation, but also in the sectors which are directly affected by its capacity gaps.

## Coordination and Communication

Although CSOs maintain good communications with their local counterparts and stakeholders, there is room for much improvement. Geographical isolation and dispersed populations make connection with others a challenge for CSOs in the region. A lack of awareness about what others are doing, or of available funding and networking opportunities, can considerably impact the capacity development of CSOs. The current consensus is that there is a negative overlap in coordination strategies among groups due to this lack of communication. Improved communication not only among themselves but also with regional and international agencies would optimise coordination among groups, both in terms of information sharing and taking action in their programmes.

CSOs, donors and governments are utilising a range of strategies in order to improve communication and coordination among CSOs and with the wider community. At a grassroots level, HELP Resources Inc, a local NGO in East Sepik province in PNG, has a different but highly effective approach to assist with local communication strategies in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Through a community multi-purpose telecenter, HELP facilitates access for local organizations to multimedia information sources and communication options about HIV and AIDS. They are able to borrow resources such as videos for training, and HELP assists with the dissemination of related publications and training manuals. HELP has also assisted the East Sepik Provincial AIDS Committee to form a community-owned approach to combating HIV and AIDS-related challenges in the province. By becoming involved in the local committee, sharing resources, and collaborating on projects with other NGOs, it has successfully helped decentralized local response to HIV and AIDS in the region.<sup>16</sup>

Communication and coordination between CSOs across the Pacific has been assisted by the rapid spread of new information and communication technologies. There are increasing numbers of formal and informal civil society networks addressing communication and coordination needs throughout the Pacific.

However, while the internet may facilitate capacity development, their impact in the Pacific region is significantly constrained by infrastructural issues.

Access is a challenge for a number of CSOs. This gap is becoming a priority issue, not only for donors but also for CSOs. In the Solomon Islands, the People First Network is an initiative to provide email access through innovation, and low-cost technology, including simple computers, short-wave radio, and solar power. It has set up a network of email stations across the islands which facilitate information exchange between NGOs, government offices, media and businesses. It also provides distance and vocational education.<sup>17</sup>

Another note-worthy example comes from The University of the South Pacific, which has developed USPNet, a communication technology system that uses ICT networks for education and training.<sup>18</sup> In addition to providing a means of distance education for those students who are unable to travel to or live in Suva, the network broadcasts public lectures and plans to provide more services to CSOs. It was successfully used by CSO leadership in Nauru to communicate with its members on the development of the CSO constitution, which was an important step in the governance of CSOs. The use of such communication tools can meet challenges posed by the geographical spread and dispersed locations of CSOs, such as those related to attending training activities and workshops at distant training centres.

## Section 10

# Conclusion: Moving Forward

CSOs in the Pacific region, with an overall score of 3.08, have not fared too poorly in terms of the capacity measures of the Clearing House Framework (Table 10.1). Of the five axes, CSOs scored in the expanding range for three and at the top end of the emerging range for the remaining two. The spread of capacity across the region is not homogenous however. For example, countries like the Cook Islands and Fiji consistently scored better across the entire range of axes as compared to Solomon Islands. The disparity can be attributed to a number of factors, including lower levels of absolute deprivation and poverty.

As the preceding analyses show, many capacity gaps of CSOs are interlinked and span across axes. The ability to undertake appropriate strategic planning, for example, is hampered by the lack of monitoring and evaluation expertise, which in turn can be linked to the issue of poor monetary and human resources.

Sustainable and effective capacity development is far more complex than what earlier capacity building or technical assistance models assumed. It needs to take into account the long-term time frame. It is a process that can also be easily derailed by a lack of human and financial resources. If an organization does not have the resources to maintain their services following the end of the capacity development input, however good the results achieved, all may be lost. Its complex process can also be hampered by facilitators who lack knowledge

of the context in which they are working, and/or who are inadequately prepared or unwilling to listen to the needs of the target or recipient groups.

Given the interconnected web of capacity gaps, the sustainable approach for meeting these challenges is to adopt a comprehensive approach, which focuses on building upon synergies in existing capacity building initiatives in the region. Building upon programmes such as the Pacific Skills Link and the Pacific Capacity Building Initiative, and improving upon their weaknesses in a coordinated and step-wise manner, would allow for a more effective use of scarce resources and ensure that future activities improve upon preceding ones that have already been met with a modicum of success.

The application of such a comprehensive capacity development approach in the Pacific region, however, must be underpinned by key principles. As discussed in the beginning of this Report, for capacity development initiatives to truly respond to the needs of local communities, the process must be an endogenous inside-out one, ensuring real ownership by the participants. Ideally, it should be initiated by the recipient organization, and involve a range of strategies at individual, organizational and societal level. It must assess “the capabilities and potential of individuals, institutions and the society as a whole...working out ways to build on these incrementally.”<sup>19</sup>

**Table 10.1. Clearing House Framework: Overall Scores For Csos In The Pacific**

	Organizational Development	Sustainability and Resourcing	Information Sharing, Cooperation and Advocacy	Stakeholder Relations	Legal and Regulatory Environments	OVERALL RATING
Regional Rating	2.91	2.89	3.08	3.15	3.38	3.08

Regarding the crucial issue of funding, capacity development of the CSO community in the region may well consist, at least initially, of working with CSOs to establish a firm funding base. The findings of this study make clear that most CSOs do not see a time when they can conceivably become financially self-sustaining, even where they are seen to be effective. Thus, finding alternative channels of funding is key to responding to the capacity gaps in this area. This perspective has been supported by previous studies on CSO capacity building in the region. In their report on NGO capacity building in the Pacific, Low and Davenport (2002) noted that a number of organizations are currently working on aspects of 'sustainability planning' through accessing alternative forms of funding.<sup>20</sup> Some of these, such as the Micronesia Trust Fund, have been already discussed.

Capacity development initiatives in the region must also take into account the broader national context, specifically the enabling environment, in which organizations function. This includes not only networks between and among CSOs (particularly in a small island context where it has been traditionally difficult to communicate and provide services to a widely dispersed population<sup>21</sup>), but also the general legal and regulatory environment. The growth and development of CSOs require suitable legal and regulatory frameworks, which are lacking in some Pacific nations.<sup>22</sup> Addressing capacity needs by strengthening skills, processes and systems, will not hold the promise of sustainable results if it does not take into account the inherently political and complex environmental realities in which they evolve.<sup>23</sup> Without clear and fairly enforced legal structures, rights of CSOs remain unprotected and organizations cannot function at optimal levels. While it is not common in the Pacific region as a whole, the examples of Fiji and Tonga show that it can be difficult for some CSOs to operate in the region.

At a more micro-level, training is clearly the fundamental modality by which outstanding challenges in the region can be met. In this case again, context must be considered. Formal training is important, but conventional management procedures are often complex and may not be readily adaptable to the needs of CSOs in this region. A UN report on the delivery of social services in small island countries notes that systematic training and education of personnel in social services in this context requires training beyond traditional management skills. The report claims that the most valuable skills for individuals and organizations may be the ability to innovate, experiment, improvise and lead.<sup>24</sup> Thus, besides technical assistance on development of hard skills (in areas of financial management or monitoring and evaluation, for example), training must also consider the development of 'soft skills' for which CSOs in the region seem to have great potential.

Ramirez (2005) defines a 'soft' system as the process of negotiation that people need in order to work and co-create together. Such a system involves several skills, including the ability to negotiate, to create a feeling of trust, to network and partner, and to facilitate process or change management. It is now recognised that unless attention is paid to these 'soft' capacities, investments in the 'hard' capacities seldom lead to improvements in organizational performance.<sup>25</sup> Developing this kind of capacity is not easy, however, and facilitation is required in order to develop soft skills in target groups.<sup>26</sup>

Developing specific competencies focusing on these types of soft skills could create opportunities for transferring them to a broader scale. The use of peer-to-peer learning groups within CSOs and between staff from different CSOs with similar functions can aid in creating an environment in which these soft skills (not to mention the hard technical skills)

can be effectively transferred. The use of 'train-the-trainers' forums—where specific pedagogical skills required to effectively transfer these skills are taught—is another tool that can be utilised in these types of capacity development processes.

A Capacity Development Plan formulated as part of this study, and an accompanying publication to this Report,<sup>xvi</sup> identifies skill-specific competencies that need to be developed in the context of the Pacific CSO sector. These competencies are a combination of both hard and soft skills. The Plan also identifies the key learning groups the training would target, as well as the modalities of delivery.

Capacity building goes beyond mere skills training of individuals however. A comprehensive approach must also involve mechanisms which inject quality input into organizational structures through a process oriented approach. In short, it must ensure that individual learning is embedded within the organization itself. This is where the use of peer-to-peer learning networks, ideally, can be linked to building capacity in areas such as strategic planning and monitoring so that the gains of

individual training—of both soft and hard skills—is embedded within the organization. Taking this into consideration, the aforementioned Capacity Plan includes a framework of activities that specifies interventions/activities aimed at building capacity development at a systemic level. It includes a monitoring and evaluation framework to enable CSOs to monitor their own progress and verify their achievements.

The ability of agencies such as UNDP to provide a platform, which connects the various capacity gaps identified in this study and appropriate interventions to fill the gaps in a coordinated manner, will play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of comprehensive capacity development in the Pacific CSO community.

The discourse on capacity development is still a fairly new field, but there are already important lessons that need to be learned and taken into account when planning future capacity development initiatives. It is hoped that this Report will not only be an additional contribution to our growing understanding of the field, but also, in particular, become a resource to aid CSOs in the Pacific region to meet their overall development objectives.

<sup>xiv</sup> UNDP Pacific Centre. 2011. A Capacity Development Plan for CSOs in the Pacific.

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> UNDP Pacific Centre 2010: 8
- <sup>2</sup> UNDP 2001.
- <sup>3</sup> Feeny and Clark 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> UNDP Pacific Centre 2010: 5
- <sup>5</sup> Booth et al 2001: 16.
- <sup>6</sup> GEF 2002.
- <sup>7</sup> Cox 2006.
- <sup>8</sup> Taylor 2005; Low and Davenport 2002.
- <sup>9</sup> Stillman 2006: 9.
- <sup>10</sup> McErvale and Maclellan, 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> Taylor 2005.
- <sup>12</sup> Haley 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> Balfour 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> Low and Davenport 2002.
- <sup>15</sup> Gush, Cameron and Sheehan. n. d.
- <sup>16</sup> Cox 2005.
- <sup>17</sup> Lopes 2003: 278.
- <sup>18</sup> Duncan and McMaster: 2008.
- <sup>19</sup> Fukuda-Parr et al 2002: 13.
- <sup>20</sup> Low and Davenport 2002.
- <sup>21</sup> United Nations 1999.
- <sup>22</sup> Taylor 2005.
- <sup>23</sup> UNDP 2008: 3-4.
- <sup>24</sup> United Nations 1999: 21.
- <sup>25</sup> de Souza Silva 2003.
- <sup>26</sup> Ramirez 2005; Pardhan and Lamba 2005.

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# Appendix: Capacity Assessment Questionnaire

## BASELINE DATA

Name of Organization:

Date of Assessment:

Conducted by:

### 1. Vision, Mission and Goals

In the area below please outline the organization's vision, mission and goals? Please use additional space if required.

Vision

Mission

Goals

### 2. Legal Status

What is the organization's Legal Status (please tick the appropriate box)?

- ☐ Charitable Trust  
☐ Incorporated Societies Act  
☐ Other (please provide details in space below)  
☐ No legal status

If No is it because:

- a) You are not required to have legal registration in your country;  
b) You do have legal registration in your country but it is voluntary and you are not registered;  
c) You are a new CSO and have not registered yet;  
d) Other (please outline in the box provided below)?

### 3. Programmatic Focus and Area(s) of Operation

Please tick the key focus area(s) of your organization?

- ☐ Health (e.g.; HIV/AIDs)  
☐ Education  
☐ Gender  
☐ Human Rights  
☐ Environment  
☐ Trade  
☐ Youth  
☐ Poverty Alleviation  
☐ Other (please outline in the box provided below)

What other areas does your organization work in as well as your focus area identified above?

- ☐ Health (e.g.; HIV/AIDs)  
☐ Education  
☐ Gender  
☐ Human Rights  
☐ Environment  
☐ Trade  
☐ Youth  
☐ Poverty Alleviation  
☐ Other (please outline in the box provided below)

If your organization explicitly bases its programming around the Millennium Development Goals, what is the key MDG for your organization?

- ☐ Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger  
☐ Achieve universal primary education  
☐ Promote gender equality and empower women  
☐ Reduce child mortality  
☐ Improve maternal health  
☐ Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases  
☐ Ensure environmental sustainability  
☐ Develop a Global Partnership for Development



Please provide us with a detailed description of your organization’s programmes over the last five years? Please use additional sheets of paper if the required space is not adequate.

	Programme One	Programme Two	Programme Three	Programme Four
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

What was the level of funding for each programme, who were the funders (please include contact details of these funders)?

	Programme One	Programme Two	Programme Three	Programme Four
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

How many staff were involved in each of the programmes and what were their roles?

	Programme One	Programme Two	Programme Three	Programme Four
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

Who were the external stakeholders involved in the delivery of these programmes?

	Programme One	Programme Two	Programme Three	Programme Four
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

Who were the recipients of these programmes?

	Programme One	Programme Two	Programme Three	Programme Four
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

Internal-focused SWOT Analysis

In the space below please outline what you see as your organization’s key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? Please use additional space if required.

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

External-focused SWOT Analysis

In the space below please outline what you think your external stakeholders see as the organization’s key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? Please use additional space if required.

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

Areas for Improvement

In the space below please outline what you see as the organization’s key areas for improvement? Please use additional space if required.

## Organizational Development

Organizational Development	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
The organization has a written strategic plan.					Strategic plan
The organization has clearly articulated mission and goals.					Mission statement/Charter document
The organization's mission is understood by all staff.					Copies of rules and procedures
The organization regularly reports back on its activities.					Annual report, Reports on the meetings of the governing body
The organization has a clear and communicated organizational structure.					Organizational chart
There is a clear exchange of information within the organization.					Internal communication protocols, minutes of staff meetings
Updated written administrative procedures exist.					Administrative protocols
Written recruitment, employment and personnel practices are clearly defined and practiced.					Recruitment, employment and personnel protocols and policies
Staff are actively involved in planning.					Minutes of planning meetings
Strategic planning is translated into operational activities.					Strategic plan, programme documents
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are built into the organization's plans.					Policy statements, Organizational plans
The organization produces clear, internally consistent proposals and intervention frameworks.					Proposals and intervention frameworks
There are measurable objectives in the operational plan.					Operational plan
The organization monitors progress against indicators and evaluate its programme/project achievement.					Internal and external evaluation and impact studies
The organization hold annual programme or project review meetings.					Minutes from programme or project review meetings
Your organization use the information gained from either internal or external monitoring and evaluation to inform your operations.					Minutes of meetings (staff or board) showing where results from monitoring and evaluation reports have been translated into organizational changes.
The organization draws on a Human Rights Based Approaches to development in its practice.					Programming protocols
The organization maintains a gender focus in its work.					Programming protocols

In the space provided below please list the members of your governing body, their roles, gender and external positions. Please use additional space if required.

	Name	Role	Gender	External Position
	<i>e.g. Sione Naka</i>	<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Lawyer</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

Organizational Development (con)	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
Board members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.					Board manual – section on roles and responsibilities
The Board has the right mix of skills to govern the organization.					Broad range of occupations of Board members (e.g. financial, law, CSO focus area etc)
The Board works well together.					Minutes of Board meetings
The Board works well with management.					Minutes of Board meetings
There are processes and protocols for resolving conflicting attitudes and ideas on the Board.					Board manual
There are processes and protocols for resolving conflicting attitudes and ideas between the Board and management.					Board manual – section on conflict resolution
There good reporting systems between the Board and management.					Minutes of Board meetings, copies of documents sent to Board members before meetings
The Board has good performance measures for senior staff.					Performance measures, minutes of Board meetings, copies of documents sent to Board members before meetings
The Board developed policy statements that reflect the organizations philosophy.					Policy statements, minutes of Board meetings

How are members of your governing body selected?

Do members of your governing body undertake training to prepare them for their governance role?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

If yes, please outline what type of training they receive?

How often does your governing body meet?

- ☐ Monthly  
☐ Quarterly  
☐ Annually  
☐ Other (please specify in the space provided below)

In the space provided please outline the mechanisms used by the Board to exert proper oversight (i.e. Board Meetings, senior staff appraisals)? Please use additional space if required.

**Possible Verifiers:** Minutes of management or decision-making meeting, Code of Conduct

## Sustainability and Resourcing

Sustainability and Resourcing	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
All staff have valid job descriptions.					Staff job descriptions
The organization has a clearly defined system of measuring staff performance.					Performance management protocols and policies
The organization has the knowledge and technical skills required to fulfill its activities.					Profile of staff, including expertise and professional experience
The organization knows how to get baseline data, develop indicators.					Use of toolkits, indicators and benchmarks/capacity-development tools
The organization applies effective approaches to reach its targets (i.e. participatory methods).					Evidence of use of different methodologies/training materials in programme completion reports
The organization uses local capacities (financial/human/other resources).					Evidence of use of local counterparts in programme completion reports and end of year reports
The organization possesses the capacity to coordinate between the field and the office.					Programme completion reports and end of year reports

The organization has the capability to train its own staff.					Staff training manuals, proof of staff training courses
Staff have access to regular supervision.					Proof of staff supervision, monitoring reports
Staff have access to training or coaching.					Proof of staff training courses
The organization possesses logistical infrastructure and equipment.					Adequate logistical infrastructure: office facilities and space, basic equipment, utilities
The organization is able to manage and maintain equipment.					Inventory to track property and cost
The organization has the ability to procure goods, services and works on a transparent and competitive basis.					Examples of how procurement is done, written procedures for identifying the appropriate vendor, obtaining the best price, and issuing commitments
The organization has a regular budget cycle.					Operating budgets and financial reports
The organization produces programme and project budgets.					Operating budgets and financial reports
The organization's accounts are regularly externally audited.					Audited financial statements
The organization disburses funds in a timely and effective manner.					Financial records
The organization has procedures on authority, responsibility, monitoring and accountability of handling funds.					Written procedures for processing payments to control the risks through segregation of duties, and transaction recording and reporting, a bank account or bank statements
The organization has a record of financial stability and reliability.					Good, accurate and informative accounting system
The organization has the ability to ensure proper financial recording and reporting.					Reporting system that tracks all commitments and expenditures against budgets by line

In the space provided below please list the members of your organization, their roles, gender, nationality and FTE. Please use additional space if required.

	Name	Role	Gender	Nationality	Length of Service	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
	<i>e.g. Mary Vakilau</i>	<i>Programme Director</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Fijian</i>	<i>2 years</i>	<i>0.2</i>
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						

In the space provided please outline the organization's budget for the last five years (in USD)? Please use additional space if required.

	Administration (including salaries)	Programming	Communications and Outreach	Total
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

**Possible Verifiers:** Operating budgets and financial reports

If there are large differences in the level of funding that you have received over this period (more or less than 5% difference between years) then please explain in the space provided below why this is the case.

In the space provided please outline the sources of your organization's income over the last five years (in USD)? In doing so please make a note of which agency, if applicable, provided the funding. Please use additional space if required.

	Investment/ Earnings	Domestic Donations	Domestic Government Grant	International Donation	International Agency Grant
2008-09					
2007-08					
2006-07					
2005-06					
2004-05					

**Possible Verifiers:** Operating budgets and financial reports

If your organization has received funding from domestic/external donors please make a note of what this was for, if this funding was allocated to specific activities, and what the outcome of these activities were? Please use additional space if required.

	Donor	Funds provided	Linked activity/ activities	Outcome/s
2008-09				
2007-08				
2006-07				
2005-06				
2004-05				

**Possible Verifiers:** Completion reports for donors



Information sharing, cooperation and advocacy

Information sharing	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
The organization keeps informed about the latest techniques/ competencies/policies/trends in its area of expertise.					Reports from participation in international, regional, national or local meetings
The organization regularly accesses relevant information/resources and experience.					Databases of partners, resource sites etc
The organization maintains a regular database of relevant contacts and networks.					Databases of partners
The organization maintains a regularly updated calendar of events.					Calendar of events
The organization maintains regular communication with other CSOs in the country.					Records of correspondence
The organization maintains regular communication with other CSOs in the region.					Records of correspondence
The organization maintains regular communication with other CSOs internationally.					Records of correspondence
The organization's constituents are regularly informed about the organization and its activities.					Mail out lists, newsletters
The organization belongs to organizational networks in its own sector.					Membership agreements

What communication tool(s) does your organization use for information sharing?

- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Print Media
- ☐ Letters
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Meetings
- ☐ Other (please specify in the space provided below)

In the space provided please rank your preferred communication method, as outlined above, and provide a rationale for this ranking (i.e. internet coverage is low in your country, radio broadcasting is too expensive etc)?

Strengthen cooperation	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
Your organization cooperates with other organizations in its work.					Memorandums of Understanding, representation on other organizations' steering committees/boards/advisory committees
The organization has strong links within the CSO community and to other social institutions (particularly with donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies and end users).					Memorandums of Understanding, Partnership agreements, membership/ affiliation in a CSO umbrella, representation on other organizations' steering committees/boards/advisory committees
The organization has partnerships with government/UN agencies/private sector/foundations/others.					Memorandums of Understanding, Partnership agreements
These partnerships are a source of funding.					Minutes of partnership interactions

In the space provided please list the organizations that your organization maintains regular contact with. Please use additional space if required.

In the space provided please outline the ways in which you cooperate with these other organizations. Please use additional space if required.

**Possible Verifiers:** Memorandums of Understanding, Statements of Cooperation

Outline below the concrete outcomes of this cooperation? Also outline any changes, both internal or external to your organization, which occurred as a result of this cooperation (i.e. joint workplans, mutual advocacy etc)? Please use additional space if required.

Advocacy	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
The organization has a strong presence in the field.					News reports
The organization has a clear advocacy focus.					Mission-statement-goal
There is a long-term community development vision.					Mission-statement-goal
The organization has a formal plan for conducting its advocacy work.					Advocacy plan (within strategic or business plan)
The organization possesses protocols for dealing with the media.					Media engagement protocols

Please outline in the space provided below where your organization obtains information for its advocacy campaigns (international groups the organization belongs to, international literature that the organization subscribes to etc)?

Please outline in the space provided below the advocacy topics you have pursued in the last five years, the costs associated with these campaigns and the outcomes of these campaigns (such as influence on changing national development policies, plans, legislation and budgetary processes).

	Advocacy Topic	Costs	Outcomes
2008-09			
2007-08			
2006-07			
2005-06			
2004-05			

Does your organization's advocacy tie in with the Millennium Development Goals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If the answer is yes, please outline in the space below how you incorporate the Millennium Development Goals in your work.

Media

In general, how often does your organization access the media?

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ quarterly
- ☐ early
- ☐ longer than a year ago
- ☐ never

What forms of media do you utilise?

- ☐ print
- ☐ radio
- ☐ television
- ☐ other (please note type in space below)

Please describe in the box below what was the media accessed for.

Please describe in the box below the positive/negative impact(s) that your engagement with the media has had on your organization's work (increased number of members, increasing engagement with government etc).

# Stakeholder Relations

Stakeholder Relations	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
The organization collects baseline information about its constituency.					Database of constituents.
The organization reports on its work to its donors, to its constituency, to CSOs involved in the same kind of work, to the local council, involved government ministries, etc.					Reports to donors and other stakeholders
The organization has an effective outreach team.					Job descriptions of staff include outreach work, completion reports of outreach work, external feedback
There are regular meeting with community groups.					Records of meetings.
Stakeholders are represented in your organization's advisory groups, management or governance body.					Membership rolls.
The organization include the viewpoint of the beneficiaries in the design and review of its programming.					Evidence of meetings or consultations with beneficiaries
The organization include the viewpoint of its non-beneficiary stakeholders in the design and review of its programming (e.g. regional organizations).					Evidence of meetings or consultations with beneficiaries
The organization runs regular events where its constituents are able to provide feedback to the organization.					Records of events, mail-outs.

In the space provided please outline how your organization gathers data on it constituency?

How often does your organization gather this data?

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ quarterly
- ☐ six-monthly
- ☐ annually
- ☐ less often than annually

If your organization runs regular outreach meetings, how often does this occur?

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ quarterly
- ☐ six-monthly
- ☐ annually
- ☐ less often than annually

# Government Contacts

In the space below please outline the main government agencies that you interact with in your organization's work.

In general, how often does your organization interact with these agencies (if you have more than one agency that your organization regularly interacts with please provide this answer for each of these agencies)?

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ quarterly
- ☐ six-monthly
- ☐ annually
- ☐ less often than annually

What are the main impacts of your organization's work on these agencies (changes in their policy, shifts in their budget allocations etc)?

# Regional Contacts

Which of the following Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies does your organization have relationships with:

- ☐ Forum Fisheries Agency
- ☐ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- ☐ Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission)
- ☐ South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- ☐ South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (Formerly CCOP/SOPAC)
- ☐ South Pacific Tourism Organization (formerly Tourism Council of the South Pacific)
- ☐ University of the South Pacific
- ☐ Pacific Islands Development Programme
- ☐ Fiji School of Medicine
- ☐ South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment

In general, how often does your organization interact with these agencies (if you have more than one agency that your organization regularly interacts with please provide this answer for each of these agencies)?

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ quarterly
- ☐ six-monthly
- ☐ annually
- ☐ less often than annually

What are the main impacts of your organization’s work on these agencies (changes in their policy, shifts in their budget allocations etc)?

Legal and Regulatory Environments

Legal and Regulatory Environments	1	2	3	4	Possible Verifiers
The legal and regulatory environment in your country of operation allows you to operate as effectively as possible.					

In the space provided please outline the ways in which the current legal and regulatory environment in your country of operation supports the effectiveness of your organization (e.g. representation of CSOs on government boards)? Please use additional space if required.

In the space provided please outline the ways in which the current legal and regulatory environment in your country of operation hinders the effectiveness of your organization (e.g. lack of freedom of speech provisions in the constitution)? Please use additional space if required.

Is there anything else that we have not asked that you would like to share with us that impacts on your organization’s capacity, positively or negatively?



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

## United Nations Development Programme

UNDP Pacific Centre  
7th Floor, Kadavu House  
414 Victoria Parade  
Suva, Fiji Islands.  
Tel: +679 330 0399  
Fax: +679 330 1976  
Website: [www.undppc.org.fj](http://www.undppc.org.fj)