

Evaluating the Effects of Climate Change on Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Islands Development States (SIDS)

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CARICOM Regional Framework

- * CARICOM region is at high risk from CC effects and has some scope to achieve mitigation
- * Under the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development (2009) CARICOM aims to achieve a “regional society and economy that is resilient to a changing climate.”
- * The associated Regional Framework covers 15 Member States, mostly SIDS
- * Aims to deliver a complex set of Strategic Elements, each with a set of Goals, which should contribute towards its achievement
- * M&E for the Regional Framework managed by the CCCCC (Belize)

The Strategic Elements

- * SE 1: **Mainstream CC adaptation** strategies into the sustainable development agendas of the CARICOM member states.
- * SE 2: Promote the implementation of **specific adaptation measures** to address key vulnerabilities in the region.
- * SE 3: Promote actions to **reduce GHG emissions** through fossil fuel reduction and conservation, and switching to renewable and cleaner energy sources.
- * SE 4: Promote actions to **reduce the vulnerability of natural and human systems** in CARICOM countries to the impacts of a changing climate.
- * SE 5: Promote actions to derive social, economic, and environmental benefits from the prudent **management of standing forests** in CARICOM countries.

Evaluation Challenge

- * Five Strategic Elements and 21 associated Goals to be monitored and evaluated in one M&E framework across 15 countries: **a huge task for any region**
- * 21 goals should all be associated with baselines, targets and indicators
- * Those proposing the M&E framework hoped that each country would have some indicators and targets reflecting the goals of its national priorities and policies
- * CC stakeholders in Ministries, or other bodies with a CC mandate proved not to be strongly aware of the specificities of the Regional Framework, still less of how it might be evaluated
- * No clear separation between M & E, which would only be relevant under much more developed systems

Constraints on Evaluation (1):

- * The situation with respect to targets is consistent across the countries. **That is, targets are generally only established for donor funded projects.** In many other cases, progress indicators have been defined, but are not associated with targets.
- * **Baseline data** are generally available for national and sectoral level frameworks as well as for donor-funded projects and **are therefore relatively strong compared with targets and indicators**

Constraints on Evaluation (2):

- * The data landscape is highly uneven across CARICOM member states
- * Countries with relatively major economies, notably Jamaica, have more resources to invest in national level data collection and management than much smaller economies, where public administration has limited human and financial resources
- * Similarly, countries with many projects, such as St. Lucia, have greater access to external M&E advice and funds to support this function, than countries with fewer projects
- * M&E models from relatively well-resourced countries in the region, in terms of government and project resources, cannot simply be applied to countries with fewer resources.
- * Evaluation needs to assess whether individual countries have made acceptable progress with regard to CC according to their own unique situations, priorities and resources, rather than against any region-wide “standards”

Low Status of Evaluation

- * A final important element to consider is the low status and capacity of M&E in most countries in the region. It is still largely present in internationally-funded interventions, often of a regional or sub-regional nature.
- * A number of broader M&E frameworks have been proposed, usually with limited take up from country level.
- * There is a substantial disconnect between the regional bodies proposing such frameworks, which have technical capacity, human resources and funding to participate in these exercises and the government departments or units, which need to do the detailed work to design and implement data collection and analysis at country level.
- * The latter are often under-staffed and poorly resourced, but have numerous implementation and reporting obligations, including some which are mandatory under internationally-funded activities or conventions.
- * At country level, evaluation is therefore not recognised as useful and has low status as a function

Making Evaluation Viable

- * The all-embracing M&E framework for CC is a largely unwelcome addition to existing tasks for relevant Government offices in many countries and may, in view of their insufficient human and financial resources, be virtually undeliverable.
- * Further, the requirement for capacity building needs to be carefully incorporated into the development of the overall regional M&E framework, which would need to include the substantial financial resources to undertake this over time, given the low starting point.
- * If evaluation is to have any chance of becoming a viable component of the regional approach to CC, it needs to be extremely carefully focused on a few critical issues and realistically scaled to appear implementable at country level.
- * It also needs to be part of a “package,” which will include in-person engagement of national stakeholders in its development (notably through regional planning meetings of operational staff), capacity building and financial support for national M&E functions, which should begin to include greater emphasis on evaluation

Implications for Evaluation Capacity Development

- * The region has some experienced evaluators, including with CC expertise
- * The demand for them comes mainly from international bodies, including funders
- * ECD should not be primarily focused on training for a few individuals, but should support considered approaches to the overall weakness of M&E systems in most countries

Critical Issues for Evaluation Capacity Development: The way forward

- * Critical issue 1: how to raise value and status of evaluation from a function seen as only of interest to donors to a useful resource for Government?
- * Critical Issue 2: how to bring together evaluation support from external funders into a coherent package, rather than its current fragmented “bits and pieces”?
- * Critical Issue 3: how to make a more equitable and effective balance between evaluation resources of well-resourced regional institutions and those of “shoe string” national offices?