Application of the Capacity Development Evaluation Framework in the Design Phase.

F Kotvojs, [1]; R Hurworth[2]

[1]*Kurrajong Hill, 701 Dignams Creek, Narooma, 2546, Australia (fiona.kotvojs@bigpond.com)*

[2] *Centre for Program Evaluation, The University of Melbourne, Australia (r.hurworth@unimelb.edu.au)*

Abstract

Over the last 20 years, capacity development has emerged as a core activity for most development assistance agencies. Despite this, there remains little guidance on approaches to evaluate capacity development in a way that is practical and provides meaningful findings. The few models available are not well known and have not been tested. As a result, evaluations of capacity development are reported to be of generally poor quality.

To provide greater guidance in evaluation of capacity development, the usefulness of one available model (the Capacity Development Evaluation (CDE) Framework) is being tested by investigating the application of the CDE Framework to three AusAID funded programs. This paper reports the findings of the application of the CDE Framework during activity design.

The findings presented in this paper result from the analysis of interviews with all those involved in the activity design (including donors, partner agency, the Managing Contractor, advisers and the evaluator) and reviewing available documents.

The CDE Framework was found to encourage integration of evaluation into the activity rather than evaluation being seen as a separate function. This research identified that the CDE Framework was simple in terms of concept and language. The simplicity of the Framework combined with its support for integration of evaluation was found to assist the establishment of a common understanding of the activity among stakeholders and supported the development of a comprehensible activity design. Through this, the Framework helped to communicate clearly complex initiatives to stakeholders and raise their focus from outputs to outcomes.

Those involved in designing the activity and planning the monitoring and evaluation also found that the Framework was based upon realistic resource requirements. At this stage, most expect that the evaluations implemented will be robust and rigorous and use credible evidence to produce honest results that will be useful. They anticipate that the Framework will answer most of the key questions identified by intended users, particularly those related to progress, change and achievement of objectives (Kotvojs & Hurworth, 2011).

These findings indicate that use of the CDE Framework when designing an activity and its evaluation, is of benefit. Further research will indicate whether the Framework is also of use during initiative implementation.

Introduction

Over the last 15 - 20 years, the focus of development assistance has moved to provision of support for what is known as capacity building (or capacity development). This move is due to individual agencies recognising that sustainability is dependent on capacity development and to the broader articulation of the importance of capacity development by the United Nations as expressed in a range of resolutions by the General Assembly (United Nations, 2004 and 2005).

As a result, capacity development is now core to the activities supported by most development assistance agencies (Whyte, 2004). It is estimated that at least 25% of donor funds are committed to capacity development (Whyte, 2004; Watson, 2006). In some cases, this is even higher. For example, 50% of World Bank funds for Africa support capacity development (World Bank, 2005).

However, capacity and the development of capacity are rarely evaluated. The World Bank (World Bank, 2005, xiv) notes that most of its capacity development activities "*are not routinely tracked, monitored or evaluated*". Where capacity development had been evaluated, the quality of the

evaluation undertaken was often found to be poor. These reviews found similar weaknesses with the broader evaluations (Forss and Carlsson, 1997, Lusthaus et. al., 1999; Woodland et. al., 2002; UNDG, 2002; Picciotto, 2003; Whyte, 2004; Bollen et. al., 2005; Carman, 2007; Taut, 2007; UNDP, 2008; Watson, 2006). A number of these reviews found elaborate evaluation frameworks may not be effective and may adversely impact the capacity development outcomes.

These problems may stem from the lack of guidance as to how to evaluate capacity development. Despite early and widespread recognition that the specific characteristics of capacity development activities meant there was a "*need to develop a unique framework for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development*" (Lusthaus et. al., 1999, 15), there has been little practical guidance on how to evaluate capacity development activities. La fontaine's review of approaches of over 10 major donors to monitoring and evaluation of capacity development in the environment sector (2000, 89) supported this, concluding that "*Further development of tools to support monitoring and evaluation for (capacity development) is crucial*". Most guidance provided did not include more specific information than the agencies guidance on conducting evaluations (Morgan, 2006). This can be seen in the documents produced by the UNDP (1997), Swedish International Development Cooperation (2004), UNDG (2006); and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2009). As recently as 2006, Morgan (2006, 4) identified that "*practitioners still appear to be searching for tested tools or frameworks that can help them with … monitoring and evaluation (of capacity development)*".

Since the mid to late 2000's, several models for monitoring and evaluating capacity development activities in the international development sector have emerged (AusAID, 2006; ECDPM, 2007; Kotvojs, 2009; ADB, 2010; World Bank, 2010). This paper assesses the usefulness of one of these, the Capacity Development Evaluation (CDE) Framework, when applied during initiative design. Separate research is being undertaken to assess its usefulness during initiative implementation.
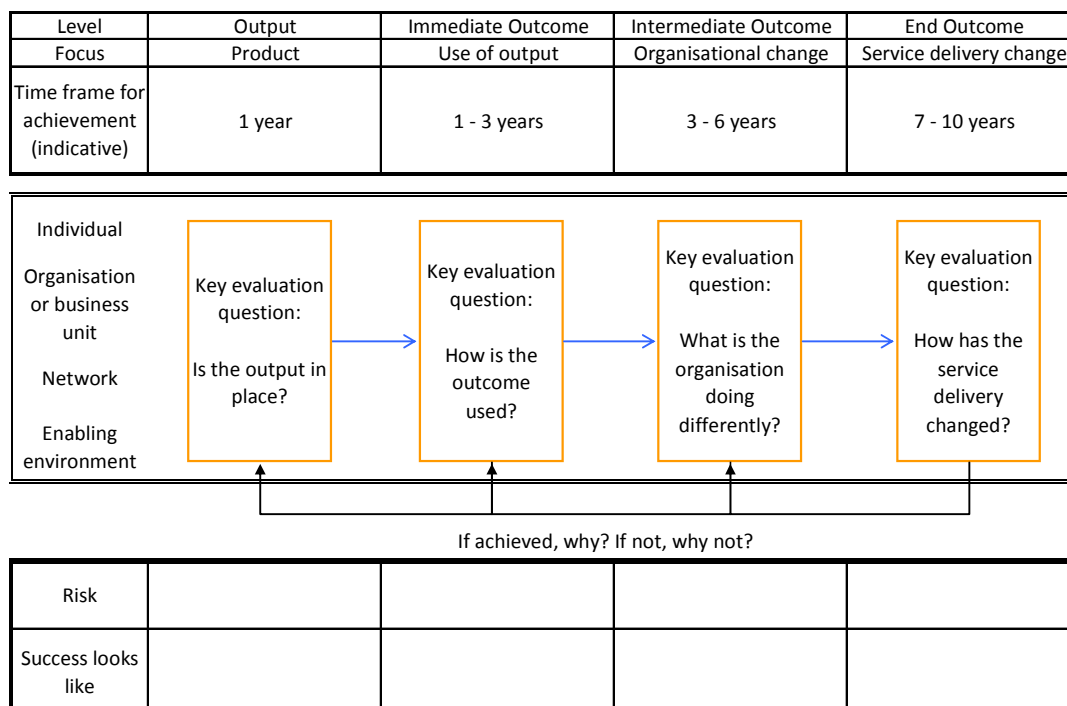
The Capacity Development Evaluation Framework

The CDE Framework integrates program logic, dimensions of capacity development (based on UNDP's (1997) four-element model) and time. The Framework has been strongly influenced by Kirkpatrick's four-level model for evaluating training – recognising that training is only one element of capacity building. It is presented in a graphical form.

Elements of the CDE Framework

The CDE Framework is comprised of a number of elements (Figure 1). These include a: results chain with descriptions for each level, key evaluation question for each output and outcome level, feedback loop, timeline, specified elements of capacity development, and description of success and risks.

Figure 1: CDE Framework.

Level	Output	Immediate Outcome	Intermediate Outcome	End Outcome
Focus	Product	Use of output	Organisational change	Service delivery change
Time frame for achievement (indicative)	1 year	1 - 3 years	3 - 6 years	7 - 10 years

Individual

Organisation or business unit

Network

Enabling environment

Key evaluation question: Is the output in place?	Key evaluation question: How is the outcome used?	Key evaluation question: What is the organisation doing differently?	Key evaluation question: How has the service delivery changed?

If achieved, why? If not, why not?

Risk				
Success looks like				

The results chain has four levels. These are the:

- Output: what the activity produces. It is a tangible product, something that can be 'held'.
- Immediate outcome: the application (or use) of the product.
- Intermediate outcome: the organisational change resulting from the application of the output.
- End outcome: a change in service delivery.

Examples of each level are provided in Figure 2. Given the focus of the CDE Framework on monitoring and evaluation at an outcomes level, it does not specifically include inputs and activities. These could be included if desired by a program. The results chain is shown in the horizontal dimension of the CDE Framework.

Figure 2: Examples of Output and Each Outcome Level.

Level	Output	Immediate Outcome	Intermediate Outcome	End Outcome
Focus	Product	Use of output	Organisational change	Service delivery change
Examples	A person with knowledge and skills in budgeting.	Person prepares a budget linked to the plan.	Business unit implements an integrated annual plan and budget.	Improved treatment of diabieties patients.
	Hospital case management system.	Budget provided for implementation of case management system (or) case management system trialled for a group of diabeties patients.	Case management system applied to diabeties patients.	

For each output and outcome level there is a single key evaluation question designed to determine whether capacity has been developed to a higher level (Figure 1). Under each of these specific questions, a series of questions will be developed for the particular activity being evaluated to consider the changes in more detail.

A feedback loop is specifically included. This requires the evaluation to ask, if the output or outcome has not been achieved, why not? The answer to this is likely to indicate a problem arising at the preceding output or outcome level of the Framework.

An indicative timeline is also included (Figure 1). This timeline is indicative and should be changed to suit the particular initiative. Where outputs or outcomes at the same level have different time frames, this should be identified.

In its vertical dimension, the CDE Framework captures the four capacity development elements identified by the UNDP (UNDP, 1997). The elements in this model are the:

- Individual. Capacity development may consider people's understanding of their role, responsibility and accountability, skills, knowledge, confidence, participation, access to information, the adequacy of incentives and wages, and feedback.
- Entity which may be a group, business unit, organisation, community or institution. Capacity development targets items within the entity's control. This includes its mission, vision, culture or values, strategies, policies, systems, procedures, or processes, competencies, or resources.
- Interrelationships between entities (networks) refers to both internal and external relationships, formal and informal.
- Enabling environment includes items that are outside the entity, but impact it. The entity may be able to influence these things, but it is not able to control them. Examples include: legislation, government policy and budget allocation. These items often present risks to achievement of the planned outcomes.

This four-level model has been widely adopted by various agencies (AusAID, 2004; CIDA (Whyte, 2004), New South Wales Department of Health (Leeder, 2006)) and forms the basis of various three level models (DANIDA, 2002; World Bank, 2005; IMF (Whyte, 2004); OECD, 2005, UNDP, 2008). The four elements have been retained as this ensures networks are explicitly identified.

These four levels also reflect four broad areas of capacity development strategies and entry points for development of capacity. For example, capacity development strategies may target the individual, and have an entry point at this level; target the organisation or a particular business unit in the

organisation, and have an entry point at this level; target internal or external networks, and have an entry point at this level, or target the enabling environment.

The 'picture of success' is defined for the output and at each outcome level. This describes the specific changes required to be able to say that the output or outcome level was successfully achieved. These must be agreed with the partners before implementation commences. Indicators may be developed from the picture of success.

The risks associated with achieving the output and each outcome level are also identified. The management strategy to address these should be documented separately in a risk management plan.

It is acknowledged that this Framework may be considered simplistic. However it is designed to provide some guidance to those who are not capacity development experts, encourage the design of capacity development activities that include more capacity development strategies than simply training, assist evaluations to specifically consider capacity development and move the focus to the outcome levels.

Methodology

This research is part of a broader piece of research considering the usefulness of the CDE Framework for evaluation of capacity development initiatives. This paper considers the application of the Framework in the design stage and further work analyses its application during implementation. Two programs that applied the Framework to support design of initiatives are used as case studies for the research reported here.

The two programs used for this work are both AusAID funded programs in Indonesia. For confidentiality purposes they are called Program A and Program B. Both are characterized by supporting a large number of discrete activities across a range of agencies. A summary of their key characteristics is set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Program A and Program B.

Characteristic	Program A	Program B
Time CDE Framework introduced	At the start of the program prior to activity design commencing.	After 1 year of implementation during which period many activities had been designed and implemented.
M&E support	Full time national and part time international M&E Specialist from before the program started. Both were qualified.	Full time national one year after program commencement and part time international M&E Specialist from six months after program commencement. Only the international M&E Specialist was qualified.
Program Director	AusAID staff as Program Director and Assistant Program Directors. Supportive of M&E.	Managing Contractor appointed Program Director. Supportive of M&E.
Experience of team in M&E	Generally limited.	Generally limited.
M&E Planning	1 year – before activities commenced (except for small 'quick win' activities which specifically occurred for the first year)	Three months in parallel with activity design and implementation.
Offices	Works across multiple locations across Indonesia.	Works across multiple locations across Jakarta.
Value	$60m	$60m.
Resources allocated to M&E	2.8% of program budget (excluding personnel).	2.8% of program budget.

This research is based on semi-structured interviews with 11 Program A and 12 Program B stakeholders conducted during the design stage[1]. These stakeholders included those from AusAID who were involved in the management of the program, internal and independent evaluators, the management team, partner agency representatives, and advisers on each team. It excludes data collected as part of the research on application of the CDE Framework during implementation.

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[1] These are referenced as follow: 2 (only where it is from a second interview), letter (the main stakeholder group the person falls into: A = Adviser, C = Partner Agency, D = Donor, E = Evaluator, M = Management,), number (sequential, no meaning), A or B (related to Program A or Program B). This is followed by a numeral representing the location of the data within the transcript.

Findings

Perspective on Elements of the CDE Framework

The definitions used for output and each level of outcome were viewed very positively. Many people recognized that differentiating between each of these is often difficult and unclear. However, using these definitions, there was more clarity in what was an activity, an output, and each level of outcome (A10A, 3105; A11A, 1069 & 6781; C7A, 4549; 2E4A, 14438; M10A, 6379). One evaluator (who has also introduced this Framework in a program not part of this research) found that the difference:

> *"...had people glued to their seats. It was almost like a hallelujah moment for those who had been involved in monitoring and evaluation training before, people grasped the concept really quickly." (EA, 7184).*

The use of these definitions had also encouraged a greater focus on what difference the output made to the organisation as a whole. Many of those who had worked on the previous project commented that this approach had improved (or even established) clarity regarding the relationship between the activities and the outcome (A11A, 1069). This had helped to clarify the logic behind the activities that they were implementing (A1B, 980; C10B, 8736; E9B, 2329; A13B, 3781). Partner agencies particularly commended the new focus on the outcomes of activities. Some were encouraging other donors to adopt a similar approach (C7A, 4549; C10B, 8736).

However, one team leader did not believe that the Framework had helped the planning process or communication with the partner agency. He did not use the Framework to support communicating the activity design or evaluation to the partner agency (A9B, 7611). This position strongly contrasted the comments from the partner agency who, on seeing the Framework stated that:

> *"I have not seen a diagram like this before. This Framework is what I am looking for, it is exactly what I am looking for, this is what I want to see ." (C10B, 8736).*

The vertical element of the Framework reflects the four elements of capacity development as defined by the UNDP. Program A did not use these elements in developing the monitoring and evaluation system or designing the activities, That this aspect of the Framework had not been used by Program A during planning was more by omission rather than design. While Program B used the vertical element of the Framework, this dimension was generally poorly understood and added complexity to the design phase (D26B, 9439; A13B, 2278; A14B, 6961; M10A, 6891; M13A, 6942). One person on Program B suggested that:

> *"It would have been better to use a simpler form at the earlier stage and then expand. It would have been easier if we had just used the (outputs and levels of outcomes) and not the four (capacity development elements)" (A13B, 6343).*

This may have been contributed to by Program B's Capacity Development Strategy focusing on the individual and to a lesser extent, the organisational level. The Strategy does not consider networks or the enabling environment, so advisers are not familiar with the 'breadth' of capacity development.

The following comment was the exception rather than the rule:

> *"I particularly liked the way the model looks at the different levels, from the individual through to the environment. It does not consider just capacity as having a narrower focus on individuals but looks at all levels where your interventions are making a difference." (M11A, 10742).*

The CDE Framework requires the time frame for achievement of outputs and each outcome level to be specified. This was seen as a major strength of the Framework with wide ranging expected benefits. The anticipated benefits included improved management of expectations (however there remained a concern as to whether AusAID would be able to accept that end outcomes could not be expected for seven to ten years), clarifying monitoring of progress towards outcomes, and assisting identify barriers to progress (2E4A, 15855; A11A, 6781 & 7431; M11A, 11009; M12A, 3830; 2A1B, 980; E8B, 4777; A13B, 3006). This is captured in the statement that:

> *"what makes me really excited about the Framework is that it clarifies what change can happen realistically and we can talk to external reviewers and stakeholders and what blocks moving to the next level" (2E4A, 15855).*

A number of people using the Framework initially thought that the specified time frames were inflexible (E1A, 7581; 2E4A, 15855). This was a concern until it was clarified that the time frames were a guide and needed to be determined on a case by case basis.

The feedback loop provides a mechanism to encourage review of the design where activities do not go as planned. It specifically asks, "if an outcome has not been achieved, why not?" A large number of those interviewed on Program A recognised the role of this feedback loop. It was seen as supporting sustainability of outcomes by encouraging the timely consideration of the approach being adopted, particularly where the outcomes were not being achieved as planned (M11A, 10129). The inclusion of this loop at each level was identified as positive. This encouraged progressive analysis of factors that either contributed to, or hindered, achievement of outcomes. Others recognized that this feedback loop provided direction in discussions amongst stakeholders during implementation (2E4A, 15748).

The CDE Framework is intended to be integrated into a program from the design stage. This has occurred on Program A where it is integrated into all aspects of program design and management at a program and individual activity level. It also occurred on Program B once monitoring and evaluation was established. AusAID saw this as strength of the Framework (D13B, 8536). On Program A, the Framework has been used to ensure that all activities contribute to a common end outcome, the terms of reference for activities are consistent with intended outcomes, indicators reflecting these outcomes are defined and there is agreement with partners and contractor's about what will be done and what is to be achieved. It has also been used to underpin contracts and contract negotiations. This is expected to increase the likelihood of achieving the planned immediate and intermediate outcomes (2E4A, 8905; A10A, 2108; A11A, 7668; C7A, 2699; M11A, 4593; M11A, 12145; M11A 3, 7730; M10A, 7145). While this is the theory on Program B, it has not occurred to the same extent. While the Framework has encouraged integration of monitoring and evaluation within an activity rather than it being seen as a separate activity (E9B, 1176, the independent evaluator found that after twelve months of implementation, the monitoring and evaluation was still seen by many as imposed rather than an integral part of activity implementation (E8B, 5183).

An unexpected outcome of the integration of M&E into the design phase is that team members do not distinguish between the challenges they faced with design and those with monitoring and evaluation. This is due to their limited understanding of both design and monitoring and evaluation. For example, one team leader identified the difficulty in determining what outputs should be produced before an adviser commenced their input as a difficulty with the approach to monitoring and evaluation (A9B, 331).

Both programs adopted a participative approach to application of the CDE Framework. There were no specific comments in relation to this.

The approach being taken on Program A is significantly different to that which any team member had experienced on previous programs. In their previous experience, monitoring and evaluation was separate, rarely planned at the start of a program and usually implemented as an afterthought. Where the monitoring and evaluation system had been developed at the start of a program, the system was then ignored and a new system developed when an evaluation was undertaken. Monitoring and evaluation had generally only been considered at the mid-term review or end-of-program review, it had not been an ongoing activity that supported management. As a consequence, indicators were often imposed part way through the program rather than agreed at the commencement of the activity. When it was considered, monitoring and evaluation was often undertaken purely for reporting purposes (2E4A, 8905; A11A, 7668; C7A, 2699; M10A, 5634 & 7648). All stakeholders recognized that the approach taken by Program A was superior to that in the previous experience.

Meeting the Criteria for a Framework for Evaluation of Capacity Development.

Previous phases of this research identified stakeholders criteria for a framework for evaluation of capacity development to be useful (Kotvojs & Hurworth, 2012). These criteria were that the framework must be: simple in terms of concept and language; based upon realistic resource requirements and robust. It also needed to support rigorous (but realistic) evaluations that use credible evidence to produce honest results; provide findings that can be (and are) used and not be dependent upon the presence of an evaluation expert. The model should: be flexible in terms of the initiatives to which it can be applied; facilitate partner participation in and ownership of the evaluation; encourage integration of evaluation into the activity; and be able to be captured clearly in a short document.

The CDE Framework was found to meet most of these criteria on both of the case study programs during the activity design stage. These findings are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Achievement of the Criteria Established for a Framework for Evaluation of Capacity Development

Criteria The Framework is:	Program A	Program B
Simple in terms of concept & language	✓	✓
Easy to use	✓	✓
Realistic in requirements of time to implement	✓	Not known at this stage
Realistic in resource requirements to implement	✓	✓
Rigorous when applied	Not known at this stage	✓
Flexible	✓	✓
Participative	✓	✓
Use of findings	Not known at this stage	Not known at this stage
Dependence on evaluation expert	Not applicable	Not known at this stage
Encourage integration of monitoring and evaluation into activity	✓	✓
Simplifies reporting	✓	Not known at this stage

Simple in terms of concept and language. All those interviewed (regardless of their attitude to monitoring and evaluation) for both initiatives found the CDE Framework easy to understand; there were no concepts they found particularly difficult. One person's comment that "*it feels very easy and it all fits together, the pieces all fit together very simply. It is really good*" (M12A, 4933) reflects the tenor of many comments. They noted that through the design process, the Framework assisted in establishing a common understanding of terms (such as output and outcomes at different levels and focus on change in the organisation rather than merely production of outputs). The Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor said that the Framework:

> "*was easy to communicate to the team who had no experience with monitoring and evaluation or who will haunted by past experiences with monitoring and evaluation*" (2E4A, 21712).

One manager from AusAID stated that the monitoring and evaluation system on the Program A:

> "*...was best practice across the AusAID programs. Of the five programs I have managed, only the Program A monitoring and evaluation system is very clear, simple, and not giving me headaches*" (D25A, 2900).

Easy to apply: The Framework itself was seen as relatively simple to apply to support the design process by those who applied it, AusAID and external evaluators (2A1B, 1309; D26B, 3158; E8B, 12039; A13B, 2002). Even those who did not support monitoring and evaluation recognise that once they became familiar with the Framework it was easy to use (A9B, 6982). It was also anticipated by all those interviewed that it would be easy to implement, however it was recognised that until implementation commences, it is not possible to assess actual ease of use.

On Program B, despite the CDE Framework being found to be easy to apply, implementing monitoring and evaluation was not easy. This was largely a result of moving from a culture where monitoring and evaluation was non-existent or at best, superficial. As a result, many on the team perceived monitoring and evaluation as additional work which was not part of their responsibility (2M5B, 6293).

Time required: the amount of time required to develop or implement the evaluation Framework was not seen by those involved as excessive (A1B, 4542; 2A9B, 6450; A14B, 2541 & 4380). The elements that took a relatively long time were consulting with counterparts of the activity design and developing the data collection instruments (A1B, 4542). At this stage it is too early to say whether the time required to implement the monitoring and evaluation system is reasonable.

Resource Requirements. On both initiatives, the resources required to implement a monitoring and evaluation system based on the CDE Framework were seen by AusAID and the team as being reasonable (M12A, 11207; D25A, 9345).

Rigour: when designed, the monitoring and evaluation system was seen to be rigorous (M5B, 1346, A1B, 3209, D25A, 9345; M12A, 11369). On Program B it was seen to be more rigorous than the

previous system as it *"defined clear and measurable outcomes at the immediate, intermediate, and end outcome level with partner agencies"* (M5B, 1346). Stakeholders identified that:

> *"...the strength of the system used for evaluation is that it is extremely rigorous and so it is likely to produce more confidence in the findings of the evaluation. It is a robust process that should give confidence to use the results"* (A1B, 3209).

Flexibility. The CDE Framework was seen as being flexible. The Framework had been able to be applied to all of the capacity development activities being undertaken by both initiatives and had been able to reflect changes in timing of activity design and evaluation, changes in the regulatory environment, and changes in industry or partner agency perspective (A13B, 4462; A14B, 7215, M12A, 11696; D25A, 9345). However, one team leader's comments indicated that he felt the Framework was rigid in that it required defining outputs and outcomes for the supported activities (A9B, 4637). This contrasted another who stated:

> *"... if you have a good structure and you know the boundaries within which you have to work, it is easier. The boundaries can always be varied if needed"* (A14B, 7215).

Participative: In general, the design of activities and their monitoring and evaluation was undertaken on both initiatives using a collaborative approach (D25A, 9345; A11A, 7668; A1B, 1345; A13B, 3448). This was a result of integration of the Framework into the design process which means that all elements of monitoring and evaluation are discussed and agreed by the partners when an activity is designed. It may be this early application of the Framework that has made it a participative process rather than the Framework itself.

Integration of M&E into activities: The evaluation of capacity development was integrated into the design of activities on both programs. For some, the use of the CDE Framework on Program B had encouraged monitoring and evaluation to be seen as part of an activity rather than as a separate activity (E9B, 1176). However, the independent evaluator found that after twelve months of implementation, the monitoring and evaluation was still seen by many as additional rather than an integral part of activity implementation (E8B, 5183).

Reporting: It is anticipated that the CDE Framework will make program reporting easier as there is clarity in outcomes. These have been reflected in all implementers' terms of reference with the requirement that reporting is against these outcomes. It is anticipated that this will overcome problems experienced in the previous phase where activity level reports focused on inputs and outputs and could not be easily linked to the outcomes (A11A, 1278).

Answering the questions stakeholders want answered.

The previous stage of this research found that the key question stakeholders wanted evaluations of capacity development activities to answer was what changes had occurred at an individual and organisational level (Kotvojs and Hurworth, 2011). The way in which these changes occurred was also important, with consideration of whether the capacity development strategy worked or not and the factors in the enabling environment that influenced the change. Stakeholders also wanted to know progress towards the outcomes, whether the objectives had been achieved and whether benefits were sustainable. Beyond this, there was interest in the lessons learnt that could be applied to the initiative being evaluated and to other initiatives.

During the activity design stage there was a high level of confidence that the CDE Framework would answer many of these questions. For some, the ability of the CDE Framework to answer the question was uncertain. These findings are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Expectation that the CDE Framework will Answer the Questions Stakeholders Require in Evaluation of Capacity Development

Question to Be Answered	Program A	Program B
Has the objective been achieved?	✓	✓
What has changed?	✓	✓
What was the contribution of the initiative to the change?	Uncertain	Uncertain
What progress has occurred?	✓	✓
Is the capacity development strategy is working?	Uncertain	
Are the benefits sustainable?	✓	✓
What environmental factors are impacting implementation?	Uncertain	✓
What lessons have been learnt?	✓	✓

Effectiveness of Capacity Development Strategy. Most interviewed either did not express an opinion or they felt that it was too early to assess whether the CDE Framework will enable managers to determine whether a capacity development strategy is or is not effective. One person expressed confidence that the CDE Framework would enable them to determine which strategies were and weren't working, and be able to make changes to the capacity development approach in a timely manner (M11A, 8164 & 10129). Another was initially uncertain as to whether the Framework would provide the required information. On reflection, he felt that the Framework should provide the required information but the issue was whether the managers were able to apply this information (M12A, 9944).

Identification of Change. All stakeholders interviewed were confident that the CDE Framework would identify what had and had not changed in individual and organisation behaviour. This was through the definition of immediate and intermediate outcomes and the "picture of success" that had been defined for each outcome (2E4A, 19282; D25A, 6109; M12A, 7258; 2A1B, 4275; 2A9B, 3480; D13B, 5609; D26B, 4604; E9B, 2962; A13B, 4405; 2M5B, 4181, 2E4A, 83; A10A, 1760; A11A, 8169; C7A, 7866; D25A, 5805; M11A, 7833; M12A, 6925; M13A, 5661). On Program B, it was noted that the previous approach to evaluation had not enabled this to occur (2M5B, 8164).

Contribution. On both programs there was a mixed perception of the extent to which the programs' contribution to these changes would be reflected. Some people believe that the Framework will provide information giving a clear sense of contribution (A11A; M12A, 6925; M13A, 3583) while others were less certain (D25A, 8033). Two people noted that using the CDE Framework did encourage contribution to be considered whereas this had not previously occurred (A11A, 8787).

Achievement of Objective. On Program A respondents were confident that they would be able to determine whether the objective had been achieved through the key indicators developed for the end outcome, combined with the baseline study. On Program B most felt that it would enable assessment of this, however there was concern over the lack of clarity of the Facility objective (D13B, 3807; E8B, 9839). The contribution of Program A to the objective was seen as being difficult to determine given that the number of different development partners operating in the sector (2 E4A, 21032; D25A, 8033; M11A, 9103). On Program B the challenge was seen to be *"...aggregating the likelihood of success from a series of small (unrelated) activities" (E8B*, 9839). On both programs, those interviewed recognized that it was unlikely that the objective would be achieved within the program's life as the program's life is five years and the objective is expected to require a longer period to be achieved.

Progress. Those interviewed on both programs were confident that the CDE Framework had provided a mechanism for determining progress towards outcomes and the ultimate objective (2 E4A, 20688; A11A, 10361; D25A, 7457; M11A, 9008; M11A 2, 8455; A1B, 1063; 2A1B, 5358; A9B, 4094). This was described in one interview as:

> *"… this is through the stages of the Framework, it doesn't only have input, output and outcome, but it breaks it down into immediate, intermediate and end outcomes and analyses it" (D25A, 7457).*

On both programs it was also noted that this had not previously been possible (A13B, 5421; D25A, 7457; M12A, 8455), with several AusAID managers stating that they had not previously seen programs that had been able to determine progress towards outcomes. On Program B, there was a concern that the descriptions for the picture of success were not sufficiently objective for an evaluator to assess progress in the same way as was intended at the design (2A9B, 5275; D13B, 3807).

Sustainability. In general, Program A stakeholders believe that the monitoring and evaluation system developed will provide evidence of sustainability (2E4A, 21353; A10A, 3531; C7A, 9708; D25A, 8769; M11A, 10129; M11A, 9494; M11A, 6438). However it was not possible to determine whether many of the responses indicated that this was because the system was based on the CDE Framework or due to other factors. For example, the proposal template requires identification of actions to support sustainability which may be the reason people have confidence that there will be evidence of sustainability rather than the CDE Framework itself. Nonetheless, one member of AusAID clearly noted that sustainability would be able to be determined because the focus of the CDE Framework was on organisational change rather than change in individuals. He continued to say:

> *"… it looks at whether we have made a difference and if not, it asks why not? This is why it is a great tool for timely consideration of the approach that we're taking as if there is no change, we can act now. Maybe we should call this a model for sustainability" (M11A, 10129).*

Opinion on Program B as to whether the Framework would identify sustainability of outcomes was very mixed. A number of people interviewed believed that it would provide evidence in relation to sustainability of outcomes (2A1B, 5722; E9B, 5098; 2M5B, 6167) while others thought it would not and that no Framework could provide this evidence (2A9B, 5883). As with Program A, it was difficult to

determine whether the comments were on the CDE Framework or the activity design process itself and because the two were so interrelated.

Environmental Factors. In both Program A and Program B it was clear that at the planning stage, the CDE Framework had encouraged consideration of environmental factors that may influence the outcomes. On Program A, it was noted that the teams had found it a challenge to identify these potential factors (A11A, 9311; 2E4A, 19640).

Most of those interviewed believed that the Framework as applied to both programs should enable environmental factors influencing the outcome to be determined. However, there was less confidence about this.

Lessons Learnt. All of those interviewed on Program A and most of those on Program B were confident that the monitoring and evaluation system would identify lessons that could be applied to the program and other programs. On Program A it was not clear from the responses whether the identification of lessons learnt was facilitated by the CDE Framework or by AIPED's knowledge management component.

Benefits of Applying the CDE Framework.

There were a number of benefits identified in applying the CDE Framework during the activity design stage. These are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Benefits Identified when Applying the CDE Framework During the Design Phase

Benefit	Program A	Program B
Establishes an outcome (rather than input and output) focus.	✓	
Improves the quality of activity designs.	✓	✓
Assists anticipating constraints to implementation.	✓	
Assists identifying what proposals should and should not be supported and communicating this to partners.	✓	✓
Helps clarify the program with stakeholders.	✓	✓
Supports manage expectations (particularly regarding timeframes)	✓	✓
Raises awareness of and clarifies M&E. Gains support for M&E.	✓	✓
Anticipated simplification of reporting	✓	
Believes it will provide early warning of constraints		✓

Use of the CDE Framework shifted the focus from inputs and outputs, to how the output will be applied and help to achieve or get closer to the end outcome (2E4A, 11237; A11A, 1069; C7A, 4549; D25A, 2492, E4A, 7224). During the design stage this has had a number of benefits in terms of selection of activities to support and activity design.

A number of those interviewed identified that partner agencies tend to have a short term planning horizon. Therefore, despite having a five year Master Plan, they tend to focus at the activity and output level and not at an outcome level (2A1B, 2259 & 2784; A13B, 7303). Consequently, support requested often failed to consider the anticipated outcomes or how the activity would contribute to the agency's long-term plan. During the previous programs, these requests were generally accepted without consideration of their contribution to outcomes or capacity development (D13B, 9132). Now if a specific proposal will not contribute to progress toward the end outcome, it is clear that the proposal should not be supported. This basis is now used by both programs to reject proposals for support. Program A noted that the CDE Framework also provides partners with a better understanding of why additional information is required to support a proposal's consideration or why a proposal has been rejected (2E4A, 11237). From AusAID's perspective, the approach adopted to monitoring and evaluation has been key in supporting this change:

> *"… without the monitoring and evaluation plan, people who work in the field will accept requests from the Government of Indonesia without considering capacity development and the long-term perspective of how this can be achieved" (D13B, 9132).*

This was seen as improving the design of activities. Activity designs on Program A's predecessor were seen to focus on inputs and outputs. With the use of the CDE Framework, there is greater focus on how outputs will be put to use (outcomes). This was seen as improving Activity Designs and Terms of Reference. Indicators are now included which identify whether the support is actually making a difference. This change in the design is seen as increasing the likelihood of sustainable outcomes (2E4A, 11237; A11A, 6020, M11A, 10129). One person on Program A also noted that the feedback

loop had stimulated them to anticipate during the design phase what may become barriers to achieving the end outcome (A11A, 7081).

On both Programs A and B, the CDE Framework was found to help clarify the program (2E4A, 23118, A11A, 2513). The previous experience of those interviewed was characterised by a lack of clarity within the team and with partners about what would be achieved and the time frames for achieving outcomes (A11A, 946; M12A, 3830). The Framework had supported the establishment of agreed outcomes and timelines for these. On Program A at the design stage, the Framework had been used to support the focus of the end outcome being changed from improved service delivery to rimproved esource allocation and management based on what could realistically be achieved in the program's life (2 E4A, 23118). The CDE Framework had provided a basis for clarifying with Program A contractors what they would produce, the timelines for this and what should be achieved.

Expectation management was seen as a significant benefit. A number of people interviewed on both Program A and Program B identified that the use of timelines and three levels of outcomes should help prevent unrealistic expectations about what the initiative can achieve (E4A, 6254; A11A, 946, E8B, 4777). This is captured by the statement:

> "… what makes me really excited about the Framework is that it clarifies what change can happen realistically and we can talk to external reviewers and stakeholders using this to show what is realistic change and what blocks moving to the next level" (2E4A, 16339).

For many on both Program A and Program B, their previous experiences with monitoring and evaluation had not been positive. At best, they had been left confused and uncertain, at worst they are "haunted" by their experience (A11A, 1279; A12A, 519 & 1367; 2E4A, 21865; A13B, 7720; E9B, 820). The CDE Framework was found to overcome this:

> "… monitoring and evaluation was scary before, but it is not now … we didn't do monitoring and evaluation (on the previous program) because we didn't know what the success looks like, … (now) monitoring lets us see the problems and what we can't achieve, we can then get it running" (A13B, 7720 & 7792).

> " the way we designed the monitoring and evaluation on (Program B) is good because I can understand it easily, … Based on my previous experience on other development projects, I have seen monitoring and evaluation as complex, difficult, not really clear to understand or as something that helped plan and design. But the monitoring and evaluation on (Program B) helped us to have a better understanding and to do better monitoring and evaluation, … it made us think of the importance of integrating monitoring and evaluation with design of the activity, not as a separate activity" (E9B, 820).

These quotes are typical of the sentiment of many. Because the terminology used was unambiguous and easy to understand, a common understanding has been established across each team and on Program A it is expected that this will also be extended to partners. This had led to a high level of support for monitoring and evaluation across all Program A stakeholders. While a few on Program B remain unconvinced of the value of monitoring and evaluation, the perspective of many changed. It was evident that use of the CDE Framework had clarified understanding of monitoring and evaluation, and specifically what was required (2E4A, 9801; A11A, 2032; C7A, 6220).

For a range of reasons, Program A is implementing a number of activities, particularly in the short term, which may not contribute to the end outcome. The CDE Framework has clarified which of these activities should and should not be evaluated. Through the use of the Framework, a decision has been made that only those activities contributing to the agreed end outcome should be considered for evaluation (2E4A, 22599). It has also moved the focus of evaluation from inputs and outputs to outcomes (A11A, 946 & 6020) and provided a rationale for deferring consideration of specific evaluation questions (M11A, 11696).

The management of Program A anticipate that the CDE Framework will make program reporting easier. At the activity level, the increased clarity of outcomes and focus on outcomes rather than outputs has been reflected in implementers' terms of reference. This is expected to assist in overcoming problems experienced in the previous phase where activity level reports focused on inputs and outputs and could not be easily linked to the outcomes (A11A, 1278).

Discussion

From the data gathered in this research, stakeholders clearly attributed clarification of the program and shifting the focus to outcomes, to use of the CDE Framework. Similarly, stakeholders agreed that the application of this Framework in the design stage had improved the quality of activity designs. This

clarity has assisted identify which activities are appropriate for program support and to communicate the rationale for these choices clearly with partners. These benefits had come through the simplicity of the definitions of output and the outcome. Stakeholders consistently expressed confidence that application of the Framework would enable them to identify changes (or lack of change) as a consequence of the support provided by the program (particularly in terms of organizational behaviour), progress toward outcomes and achievement of objectives.

For other areas, it is difficult to determine whether the response provided reflects the CDE Framework or the approach to developing the design, and monitoring and evaluation plan. It is possible that some of the other benefits attributed to the CDE Framework are a consequence of good design practice. This applies to the CDE Framework's ability to identify the lessons learnt, whether the benefits are sustainable and, to a lesser extent, to the impact of environmental factors upon implementation. For example, both programs were relatively well resourced and had evaluation expertise to develop the monitoring and evaluation plan. In this context, it is likely that good design, monitoring and evaluation practice would have eventuated regardless of the framework used.

Both programs adopted a participative approach to develop the monitoring and evaluation system, something not done by either Program in the previous phase. The use of a participative approach has increased the level of ownership of the activity and the monitoring and evaluation within the team and with partners in comparison to previous phases. However, it is not clear that this participative approach was a consequence of using the CDE Framework.

It is interesting that a major difference between the two programs is the timeframe over which the planning for monitoring and evaluation, and the design of activities occurred. This was significantly longer for Program A than Program B. This longer time period enabled greater consultation, ownership and professional development for the team on design and monitoring and evaluation. This is reflected in the higher level of recognition of the benefits and acceptance of monitoring and evaluation on Program A than Program B, and a more coherent design across the Program.

This approach also enabled the monitoring and evaluation system to be in-place prior to design commencing on Program A. As one AusAID manager stated:

> "Honestly, I have to say that it is the first program I have been on that has had a monitoring and evaluation system setup at the start of the program rather than it being developed a long time after the start. It is the first time we have had a monitoring and evaluation framework to use when we're designing activities. … Usually the monitoring and evaluation system is done as a retrofit … This monitoring and evaluation system is a breath of fresh air" (M11A, 4299).

As part of a broader program of increased support to monitoring and evaluation being implemented by AusAID's Indonesia Post, AusAID introduced monitoring and evaluation standards to their Indonesian program concurrently with the commencement of these programs. The standards increased focus on monitoring and evaluation within the AusAID program at that time. This may also have contributed to some of the changes identified from practice on previous programs.

Conclusion

This research found that during the design phase of both programs, the CDE framework met the criteria stakeholders specified for a framework to monitor and evaluate capacity development. However, it is likely that the only criteria particularly relevant at the design phase are simplicity of concept and language and the frameworks flexibility. While stakeholders' expectation is that the other criteria will be met during implementation, it is recognized that it is too early to determine whether this will be the case. Likewise all evidence indicates that application of the framework will enable evaluations to identify what has changed, progress towards outcomes, and achievement of the objective.

However, the other benefits experienced are most likely to encourage application of the CDE Framework at the design stage. This Framework helped to clarify the program with stakeholders, it made clear what was going to be undertaken and achieved and the timeframe for this. This led to an improvement in the quality of designs. Importantly, it moved the focus from inputs and outputs to outcomes. Each of these is a significant achievement in its own right. The fact that the Framework also removed many people's fear of monitoring and evaluation is also important.

The next stage of this research is to look at the implementation of the CDE Framework over the life of these two programs and a third project in Solomon Islands. This will be important in making a determination on the usefulness of the CDE framework.

Acknowledgements

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