

Background

In response to the 1999-2003 political tensions and unrest in Honiara, the Honiara City Council (HCC) Institutional Capacity Building Project (the Project) was founded in 2006. The Project was designed to support the HCC in rebuilding its institutions, improving the HCC's governance and basic service delivery capacity to support sustainable urban development, and to maintain peace and stability. The Project was funded by the New Zealand Aid Programme and implemented by the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) through its Pacific Project office in Suva, Fiji, in partnership with the Solomon Islands Government, and the HCC itself. Pursuant to the project design and funding agreement with the New Zealand Aid Programme, an external review of performance was conducted.

Purpose and objectives

Evaluation criteria utilized for conducting an examination of the Project included:

- Relevancy of the Project to the needs of the citizens of Honiara and the people of the Solomon Islands; to policy development in the Solomon Islands and the NZAID Programme Strategy; and, to cross-cutting issues.
- Efficiency of the Project in terms of resource management; capacity building; value for money; budgeting and financial control; management arrangements; and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Effectiveness and Impact of the Project's outputs in providing an improved flow of benefits to the intended target groups; and in terms of making a positive contribution to higher level strategic objectives.
- Sustainability of the Project's impacts beyond its five year duration.

Main findings

Overall, it was found that the Project has restored HCC's institutional legitimacy and integrity; remains highly relevant to the needs of Honiara, development strategies for the Solomon Islands and for related donor programmes; and has contributed to addressing key cross-cutting issues.

Key areas of concern included: lack of understanding by the wider public of the role and importance of both HCC and the Project; delays in appointing counterparts, refuse collection and infrastructure maintenance; limited progress in certain key areas; unnecessary complexity in financial management; and inadequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks across individual activities.

Conclusions and recommendations

Main recommendations include: increasing efforts to explain the relevance and national significance of HCC and Project activities to key stakeholders; streamlining project reporting and financial management arrangements; devolving local project management to the City Clerk; replacing the monitoring and evaluation framework with corporate planning; directing more initiative towards encouraging women to stand for local election and accepting

appointment as Councillors; and directing more effort towards improving HCC's image.