



COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS (CRGA)
SUBCOMMITTEE FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN
(28 – 29 June 2022, Suva, Fiji and virtual meeting)

Information Paper 1

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: PACIFIC COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020 CAPSTONE
REPORT**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Paper summary

1. This paper presents the *Synthesis evaluation of SPC's Strategic Plan 2016–2020: Capstone Report* (Capstone Report), dated 31 March 2022.
2. The report provides key findings and recommendations to inform the Secretariat and members in the implementation of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2022–2031 (Strategic Plan).
3. The report serves as a legacy piece from the past CRGA Subcommittee to the incoming CRGA Subcommittee to ensure continuity in service, share learning and strengthen ownership of the performance oversight.

Key points

4. The purpose of the evaluation was to generate evidence to inform the early implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2031.
5. The Capstone Report found that SPC had been successful in strengthening its position to deliver greater contributions during the period of the strategic plan.
6. The Capstone Report:
 - i. identified four key lessons;
 - ii. reached six conclusions;
 - iii. made 10 recommendations.

7. To guide early implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2031, a comprehensive management response to the recommendations will be developed.
8. Several recommendations align with those previously identified in other processes, for example, via the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2016–2020, as such, progress was in train.
9. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discussed the findings at its April Retreat, and this paper provides an interim Secretariat response and indication of progress.

Background

10. Upon conclusion of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 period, SPC was keen to understand the utility of the Strategic Plan as a tool for guiding SPC, especially in a rapidly changing context, the contribution of the Strategic Plan to key global, regional and organisational development goals and identify key lessons to inform the early implementation of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2022–2031.
11. SPC commissioned Allen + Clarke, an independent research and evaluation company, to provide the synthesis evaluation of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The evaluation took place from October 2021 to March 2022.
12. The evaluation aimed to promote learning based on SPC’s experience during the 2016–2020 implementation period. The evaluation did not focus on the content of the Strategic Plan 2016–2020 but rather on SPC’s performance in its implementation.

Analysis

13. The Capstone Report (Annex A) and supporting one-page knowledge product (Annex B) were delivered 31 March 2022.
14. The evaluation identified four lessons, reached six key conclusions and made 10 recommendations.
15. Overall, it found that SPC is a stronger organisation than it was when the Strategic Plan was developed and had been successful in enhancing its position to be able to make greater contributions during the strategic plan, through significant strengthening of reporting systems, planning, organisation-wide learning and reflection, financial management and resourcing systems.
16. The evaluation noted that externally the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs have become strong drivers of work in the region, and while the COVID-19 pandemic provided additional economic and social challenges, it had also allowed SPC to demonstrate its flexibility and adaptability.
17. The evaluation found SPC has contributed extensively at the regional and country level, by utilising its strengths, including: member country ownership; good relationships; a focus on people; work programmes that connect people to the environment; its science and technical capabilities; capacity building; and by delivering regional public goods.

18. The evaluation also made key findings in relation to areas that could be strengthened when implementing the new Strategic Plan including: focusing on the value of SPC's unique expertise and relationships to improve priority setting approach and practice; country programming, including coordination with other agencies (where possible); systems to support whole-of-organisation implementation and reporting (not the sum of divisional level implementation and reporting); and staff engagement with the Strategic Plan as 'One SPC' through values and leadership.
19. Specific findings were shared in relation to the uneven application of the Strategic Plan as a planning guide across the different divisions. Challenges included integrated programming and incorporation of human rights and minority groups.
20. The development of a comprehensive management response commenced upon receipt of the report, including the discussion of the findings and recommendations at the April 2022 SLT Retreat. The outcome will be an action plan addressing each recommendation and including a response (agree/disagree), explanation of response, action, responsibility and timeframe.
21. Given that a number of these lessons and recommendations had been flagged earlier, either by internal SPC processes or external evaluations, some work has commenced aligned with the findings of the Capstone Report, and an interim response is provided as follows:

Capstone Report recommendation	Interim Secretariat response	Summary status
1. Continue to build on existing strengths and improvements in strategic-level systems and processes so that SPC can focus on achieving outcomes for member countries.	<p>This work continues with the shift to more thematic/integrated programming using Key Focus Areas (KFAs) in the new Strategic Plan, along with a clear roadmap for implementation via the Strategic Results Framework which is tied to global, regional and national priorities, and cross-sectoral priorities mainstreamed across KFAs.</p> <p>Significant effort and investment, however, is required to strengthen the institutional effectiveness of SPC to be fit for purpose and to deliver on the ambition of the Strategic Plan. Some of the activities such as strengthening procurement capabilities and processes are underway. Others including critical HR capabilities for anticipatory workforce planning, require immediate attention and investment.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>Requires attention</p>
2. Implementation of the current Strategic Plan should include clear guidance to staff about overall direction and provide tools and other support to enable staff to	The development of the new Strategic Plan was an inclusive process that gave staff multiple opportunities to participate at various stages of its development. A comprehensive socialisation guide will increase ownership and linkages between staff activities and the strategic direction of SPC. MEL tools will continue to be	In progress

align their work with the Strategic Plan.	<p>refined to align with the new Strategic Plan. The newly-established resource mobilisation office will lead in developing SPC's resource mobilisation plans and tools to support staff to address challenges with prioritisation and resource mobilisation.</p> <p>One critical investment to support the organisational transformations and scaffold integrated programming and the delivery on the KFA ambitions of the new strategy is a fit-for-purpose planning, project management and reporting system.</p>	Requires attention
3. Ensure SPC's SER policy is fully implemented and monitored.	<p>Implementation and monitoring of the Social and Environmental Responsibility (SER) policy is being considered in the development of the theory of change and mid-term Strategic Results Framework for each KFA.</p> <p>With new investments in gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) and women in leadership, there is opportunity to develop consistent measures of progress in key SER areas including gender equality, disability and leadership.</p>	Early stages
4. Develop clear and explicit prioritisation approaches to ensure SPC can better negotiate the inherent challenges of being responsive to member country and donor needs and meeting its own objectives.	<p>The new Strategic Plan includes a value proposition for the first time, which is also reflected in the theory of change.</p> <p>The newly established resource mobilisation office will lead development of resource mobilisation plans and tools to support staff to address challenges with priority setting and resource mobilisation.</p> <p>Linking budget and work planning will lay the foundations for improved practice in outcomes-based prioritisation and country-based reporting.</p>	<p>Early stages</p> <p>Requires attention</p>
5. Continue to foster good relationships, and leverage these to support resourcing and prioritising activities.	<p>Good relationships and leveraging support continue to be priorities for SPC. Resources continue to be mobilised through existing and new partnerships, e.g. with long-term partners DFAT and MFAT and the Pacific Women Lead programme coming under SPC.</p> <p>The publication of the fourth edition of <i>The Pacific Community Governance Compendium</i> and streamlining of processes is a practical mechanism to improve communications and relationships between SPC and member countries and territories.</p>	In progress
6. Progress the development of country programmes, using lessons learnt about coordination and communication.	<p>The establishment of the Polynesian Regional Office strengthens the subregional scaffolding to support closer engagement and needs based programming at the country level.</p> <p>Identifying opportunities to coordinate programming through the lens of the KFAs with CROP and other partners will be important in the design of new country programmes.</p>	In progress
7. Continue to develop monitoring, evaluation and	The current work on the Strategic Results Framework will result in a revamped MEL function as well as the	In progress

learning (MEL) capacity and capability, including linking these activities to planning and accountability activities.	development of associated tools and resources to support monitoring, evaluation and learning. Each KFA includes a 'data, statistics and knowledge pathway' which will require indicators for which additional capacity will be required to develop. This is also the case for additional indicators that will be required for reporting against other strategies, including the Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy.	Requires attention
8. Develop measures of organisational achievement against the Strategic Plan objectives.	Output and outcome indicator summaries are provided in the new strategic plan across pathways. The current work on the Strategic Results Framework will develop measures of achievement against across all KFAs by pathways.	In progress
9. Consider measurement and reporting at the country level.	The Strategic Results Framework currently under development will incorporate links to country-level National Strategic Plans, regional priorities and the SDGs.	In progress
10. Support staff at all levels to engage with the values and direction in the Strategic Plan, work cohesively and take ownership of the Strategic Plan.	The development of the new Strategic Plan was an inclusive process with staff having multiple opportunities to participate at various stages of development. The socialisation guide and tools, including tools specifically on the values will increase ownership, promote collaboration and integration, and linkages between staff activities and the strategic direction of SPC.	In progress

Conclusion

22. The development of a formal management response commenced upon receipt of the report, the outcome of which will be an action plan addressing each recommendation and including response (agree/disagree), explanation of response, action, responsibility and timeframe.
 23. The Capstone Report has made a valuable contribution to SPC's learning from the previous strategic plan period, helping to improve and focus early implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2031.
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Annex A

Synthesis evaluation of SPC's Strategic Plan 2016–2020, Capstone Report, 31 March 2022.

Annex B

Synthesis evaluation of SPC's Strategic Plan 2016–2020, Summary, 31 March 2022.

What was the purpose of the evaluation?

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Assess the use of the Strategic Plan as a tool for guiding SPC
- Assess the contributions of the Strategic Plan to key global, regional and organisational development goals
- Identify lessons learned based on SPC's experience implementing the Strategic Plan.

This evaluation was conducted to help inform the early implementation of SPC's current Strategic Plan 2022–2031.

The evaluation was conducted by Allen + Clarke, an independent research and evaluation company. It took place from October 2021 to March 2022.

How was the evaluation conducted?

Approach

This synthesis evaluation integrated existing findings and primary data from multiple sources to understand the extent to which strategic level activities have contributed to achieving the intent outlined in the Strategic Plan and to bring together lessons learnt by SPC during the implementation period

Data collection methods

- A review of 14 documents.
- Six interviews and two focus groups with SPC's senior leadership team members.
- One focus group with members of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) Subcommittee on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Eight interviews and three small group interviews about three projects or programmes implemented during the Strategic Plan period across the Pacific region.
- An online stakeholder survey, with 54 completed responses.

What lessons has SPC learnt in the implementation the Strategic Plan 2016–2020?

Relationships are at the heart of SPC's success

SPC consistently identified the value of relationships with member countries, local stakeholders, and development partners in achieving its objectives and meeting regional and national priorities.

Maintaining communication and working in a coordinated way with member countries is crucial

SPC recognised the benefits of greater coordination within country programmes, open communication, and being more strategic.

Prioritisation of work should centre on SPC's unique value

Greater prioritisation is required. Focusing on the value of SPC's unique expertise and role in the region may help guide SPC to prioritise.

Greater collective effort is required across SPC

Enhancing staff engagement and supporting staff to work collectively and oriented around the strategic plan will support implementation.

Strengths and limitations

This evaluation included context-rich, qualitative information from SPC senior leadership, member country representatives, and SPC project staff and stakeholders. This was complemented by evidence from existing evaluations and organisational documents, and the online survey ensured the wider membership and partnership stakeholders of SPC had an opportunity to contribute. The mixed-method approach ensured a range of perspectives informed the evaluation and that the findings were robust. However, the findings are the perspectives of those who participated, and are not representative of all the people involved in the delivery of SPC's overall work programme.

What recommendations did the evaluation identify?

1. Continue to build on existing strengths and improvements in strategic-level systems and processes so that SPC can focus on achieving outcomes for member countries.
2. Implementation of the current strategic plan should include clear guidance to SPC staff about overall direction and provide tools and other support to enable staff to align their work to the strategic plan.
3. Ensure SPC's SER policy is fully implemented and monitored.
4. Develop clear and explicit prioritisation approaches to ensure SPC can better negotiate the inherent challenges of being responsive to member country and donor needs and meeting its own objectives.
5. Continue to foster good relationships, and leverage these to support resourcing and prioritising activities.
6. Progress the development of country programmes, using lessons learnt about coordination and communication.
7. Continue to develop MEL capacity and capability, including linking these activities to planning and accountability activities.
8. Develop measures of organisational achievement against the strategic plan objectives.
9. Consider measurement and reporting at the country level.
10. Support staff at all levels to engage with the values and direction in the Strategic Plan, work cohesively, and take ownership of it.