

5. Best Practices and Lessons Learned Normal Text Style

5.1. Cook Islands Best Practices and Lessons Learned

The best practices in this project include:

- the initiative taken by the Project Manager to raise money and organize the PACINET conference hosted by the Cook Islands. The conference raised awareness about e-government in the Cook Islands
- the initiative taken by the Project Manager to log all emails to government and forwarding them to the appropriate authority for an answer;
- the survey to determine the anti-virus situation in all government departments and to purchase software to protect the entire government.

The lessons learned were:

- When Internet speed is slow it hampers the use and viability of the computer and ultimately impedes the development of e-government;
- UNDP slow in supplying financial advances impeded project implementation;
- Unclear role/responsibility/accountability and reporting of the Project Manager has impeded project implementation.

5.2. Niue Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Niue Best Practices are:

- Flexible and creative project management as illustrated by:
 - Placing a national in the post of Project Manager after the International Project Manager suddenly left before his contract completion rather than contracting another international project manager
 - Finding and exploiting the Wintec on-line training for computer literacy
 - Changing from Wi-Fi to DSL to ensure the government internet security
 - Building a client-focused Tourism Portal

Niue Lessons Learned are:

- Financial advance and accounting problems harmed project implementation
- The international project manager must be contractually accountable either to UNDP or to the government. In this project he was accountable to neither because he took on the post of Project Manager in addition to his AUSAID contract as a favour to the parties concerned but contractually he had no obligation to perform
- UNDP did not exercise its management oversight or it would have known that the SIV component of the project was not implemented and would have taken action

5.3. Samoa Best Practices and Lessons Learned

Samoa best practices are:

- One-on-one learning in MCIT for staff in Samoan language by a local trainer
- Use of FOSS to design government portal
- Teaming up with the ADB project in the Ministry of Education to provide a Mobile Computer van for training remote teachers
- Teaming up with the ITU project to provide computer literacy training to the administrators of the Telecenters

Samoa lessons learned are:

- When a project manager's roles and responsibilities beyond the UNDP project are too demanding then project implementation suffers
- Sudden change like the MDG Scoreboard without analysis means high risk of failure
- When too many project outputs are changed during implementation a project can lose its way and sustainability is compromised

6. Recommendations

There are some global conclusions and recommendations as follows:

- Governments would be advised to ensure there are budgets for the development, maintenance and operation of their ICT systems;
- Governments would be advised to update/develop their national ICT policy/strategy and to ensure there is sufficient attention and funding provided for capacity building so there are people who know how to operate, develop and maintain the Internet infrastructure and that people know how to use and benefit from this new technology
- The national ICT policy development should also begin to set the basis for a legal framework relating to data confidentiality;
- All government portals should be client-focused, emphasising services available and efficient means for remote access of these services.

6.1. Cook Islands Recommendations

The UNDP project has made an excellent start in assisting the Government of the Cook Islands in its shift to e-government. But there is more work to be done if these gains are to be consolidated and taken to the next stage. The following recommendations are made to the Cook Islands Government:

6.1.1. Promotional campaign for e-government

There is still little awareness in the general public about recent e-government developments. A formal promotional campaign of the websites both domestically and overseas should be executed to be launched with the opening of the Cook Islands Portal, which should be the occasion of an open-house whereby officials would demonstrate to the public how to access the portal and how to search for specific ministries or information or how to pose a question to a given ministry. Other features of the promotional campaign should include a public kiosk with computer for individual citizens to enter the portal and search for government information or assistance. Access to the government portal should be available in every school computer as well so that students can access their government on-line

6.1.2. Capacity Development for e-government

There is still a great need for further building of e-government capacity both inside government and among the general public. A training needs assessment should be carried out targeted at web-site operators and IT systems staff inside the government and those conversant with the computer in the general public. Based on this training needs assessment, a training program should be formulated and executed.

6.1.3. Consultant Support

In addition to training there is a need for consultancy web-site and IT systems services to government ministries and agencies. The project has two excellent staff to form the core of this service but it should be augmented by standing offer contracts to a few Cook Island consultants or offshore consultants if necessary to provide the volume and scope of consultancy services required. Consultants should be required to work with the technical staff of the ICT Division to provide them with on-the-job training.

6.1.4. Outlying Island Pilots

Work has begun on two pilot e-government outlying islands under the final stage of the current project. But this work has only begun and will need to be continued in the next phase of the project. It is suggested there be three pilot outlying islands to be selected on the basis of

- ensuring that both northern and southern islands are included;
- the necessary ICT infrastructure is in place on the island;
- the island is motivated and at a stage where it can take advantage of this project.

The pilots should focus on the Office of the Island Secretary and his staff, the local school and its computer labs and courses, the local hospital and its Telehealth system and the private tourism sector.

6.1.5. E-government and the MDGs

The UNDP Country Program Assistance Plan (CPAP) for the future envisages more effort in promoting achievement of the MDGs through ICT. Specifically the CPAP says, '*(h) best practices and lessons learned documented and disseminated through Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D); (i) MDGs advocated through an "MDGs through Sports, Volunteerism and ICT4D" campaign in partnership with development partners, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and other volunteer organizations.*' The recommendations to UNDP in this report cover off this proposed initiative.

This work would involve a coordinated effort among the relevant UN agency and the relevant government ministry, e.g. Ministry of Education and UNICEF for primary school statistics. But the logical place for e-government MDG information is the future portal for the Cook Islands. Once this information is available, schools can use it for many of their courses to educate the next generation about the importance of reaching these goals for the Cook Islands.

6.1.6. Improve Internet connectivity and data transfer

The current level of Internet service from TCI is slow compared to the other islands evaluated and is holding back the Cook Islands economy, education and tourism. It would seem that government should either instruct TCI to bring its Internet service up to that of Samoa and Niue or government should open up the Internet field to competition while leaving TCI with its phone system monopoly. The experience of other countries in this regard, e.g. Samoa, will be valuable to the government in deciding on a course of action.

6.1.7. Clarify Position of the Project Manager

The position of Project Manager should either be filled by a civil servant if a qualified civil servant can be identified and the post should then be paid by the government or the position should be described as a contracted position and someone from outside should be contracted. The current situation where the post is supposed to be filled by a civil servant according to the project document but is in fact filled by a contracted person paid by the UNDP makes for tension and discord in the PMO.

6.2. Niue Recommendations

Recommendations to the Government of Niue fall into those for the further developing e-government, for capacity building and development of an ICT policy.

6.2.1. ICT Technical Capacity Development

The Information Services Office (ISO) where the UNDP project is located has an IT Manager and three new staff just graduated from high school under training. More training is urgently required in server maintenance and repair, network administration, data communications and network security. One of the servers was down two-and-a-half months before it was repaired because there was not the technical ability to repair it. Training could take the form of an attachment to a system that is operating well and where maintenance and repairs are routine. The logical place for an attachment is the New Zealand consulting firm SAFI because it knows the Niue ICT situation intimately and can be more effective than other organizations without this familiarity.

6.2.2. Computer Literacy Training

A major advance in computer literacy has taken place under the project with the on-line Wintec computer training being provided www.wintecactive.co.nz out of New Zealand. The next steps should include a campaign to raise awareness about this programme and to register more public servants, students (they must be 16 years old to register for the program) and the general public to take advantage of this effective training. Training management should make more celebration of those who pass the training and to have a graduation ceremony with graduation certificates so that the programme gains more prominence and momentum. A roster of graduates who can serve as tutors should be created to assist new registrants to the on-line programme or indeed, anyone who wants to know more about operating the computer.

6.2.3. E-Government

Much progress has been made to date but there is more work to be done. Only four government agencies have a website so there is a need to develop websites for all other government departments and agencies. As well, there is a need for departments to load up information onto the Intranet for access by other departments and agencies.

6.2.4. UNESCO Small Islands Voices (SIV) Programme

The SIV is a programme that links up the world's small island states in a forum and dialogue. Small Island States no matter where they are located share many similar experiences and challenges. The UNDP project was supposed to link up one primary school to the SIV so that the children could participate in this interesting forum but it did not happen. Now that the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) programme is operational in Niue, it would be marvellous if the SIV were installed for teachers and students to participate and take advantage of the rich learning experience from other small island states.

6.2.5. ICT Policy for Government

It is understood there was a draft ICT policy prepared some years ago. The stimulus for this policy was apparently the controversy over the .nu domain. It is important for the country's development to have a comprehensive ICT policy in place and it should be knitted into Niue's national development plan. The logical body to oversee this exercise is the National ICT Committee. The 2005-2008 Samoa ICT policy and strategy is an excellent reference for Niue to examine as a checklist of what should go in the Niue document. This exercise should have access to an international advisor to help with the scope, table of contents and technical side.

6.3. Samoa Recommendations

Samoa recommendations are broken down into those for the Samoan Government, the Telecenter programme and the project management in MCIT.

6.3.1. Recommendations for the Government of Samoa

- A major computer literacy training initiative is required to enable the people of Samoa to capitalize on the significant ICT infrastructure already in place
 - Do a country-wide training needs assessment covering public servants, students, drop-outs, teachers, village men & women and technical support people to establish a baseline;

- Set an ICT goal for each target group of people and measure success of the training effort toward that goal;
- Design ICT training as an ongoing process rather than one-shot effort
- Exploit to the maximum on-line training, e.g. International Computer Driver's License (ICDL), WINTEC, etc.
- Use volunteers as trainers, e.g. Peace Corps, UNVs, students, public servants and university students visiting their village
- Ensure that all major government initiatives have an ICT training component to them
- Implement urgently:
 - 2 planned ICT training centers in Savaii and Upolu and team up with SchoolNet programme for financing, for trainers and for trainees for these two centers
 - the mobile computer van with trainers to train up remote teachers in computer literacy
- It is understood Government is working on its next ICT Strategic Plan for the period 2010-2015. It is suggested that part of this plan should involve putting the MDGs onto the government's portal under development so as to raise awareness and build commitment for MDG achievement and ensuring that an overview of the ICT Strategic Plan is stated in the Government's overall Development Plan;
- Government has an opportunity to coordinate its Telecenter and SchoolNet expansion programme to avoid wasteful duplication.
 - Telecenters and SchoolNet facilities should be located so as to serve distinct population markets;
 - The decision to choose a SchoolNet or a Telecenter in a given area should be based on the relative strength and sustainability of the two options. This strength should be assessed according to:
 - The motivation of the key stakeholders, i.e. the school principal or the head of the women's committee;
 - The current and potential capacity of key stakeholders to launch, operate, develop and sustain the facility;

6.3.2. Recommendations for the Telecenter Development

- Training of the administrators of the telecenters needs to be ongoing both in terms of how to manage their telecenter, how to market it, computer literacy and how to diagnose and correct simple computer operation problems;
- A sustained promotional campaign is carried for each of the centers;
- Computer down time is cut down either by more frequent visits by the MCIT technician or by contracting persons locally who can repair the computer system;
- The focus at this time should be on strengthening the level of operation and effectiveness of the existing telecenters.

6.3.3. Recommendation for the MDG Scoreboard

There are two options. Government should either disassemble the MDG scoreboard infrastructure in front of Government House or it should make it come alive. If the latter, then significant resources and energy must be devoted to it. To make the site come alive would require the full-time attention of a public affairs officer to lay on regular weekly events to

showcase individual MDGs, to show films relating to individual MDGs and to put on pieces of theatre by students that make the MDGs real. Part of this option would involve deliberation as to whether and where the MDG scoreboard should be moved to and whether to replace the current LED sign with a digital sign that is legible both day and night. But before a decision is made a costing of keeping it going should be done and its funding assured. Otherwise it would be best to disassemble the infrastructure in front of Government House because it is putting both government and the UN in a bad light.

6.3.4. Recommendations for Project Management in the MCIT

The current project manager of the ICT4D project is responsible for other projects as well as a number of important government initiatives and committees. The great advantage of this situation is that she has been able to link up projects and gain synergy among these different activities. The disadvantage is that she is overburdened and this is the explanation in part for many of the incomplete ICT4D activities. She is comfortable with the idea of delegation and indeed has delegated responsibilities to her team members. But there is room for much more delegation. It would be useful to explore delegation of the following:

- Project budgets, expenditures and reporting to be delegated to the Manager of Corporate Services;
- Executive Assistant to the CEO to set up same correspondence and email tracking system used by the Ministry for all MCIT projects and to train the Project Coordinator for the ICT4D project to operate the system;
- Australian Volunteer to assist remaining ministries without websites in developing their request for proposals and to oversee execution of these contracts by the private sector;
- Project Coordinator to be made coordinator for all MCIT projects and to take over responsibility for the Telecenters and to make regular trips to visit these centers and resolve problems.

6.4. Recommendations for UNDP

UNDP MCO in Samoa is building a new programme on the following four flagship thrusts: South-South Capacity building, MDGs through Sports & Volunteers & ICT4D, Community-based sustainable development programme and the Inter-Agency Climate Center. ICT4D should play a prominent cross-cutting role in making these thrusts successful. What follows are suggestions for how and where ICT4D can be used in the new programme.

6.4.1. ICT4D in the new UNDP Flagship Programme

- Establish a UNDP website for the four programmes and train UNDP officers how to input to the website for its development and currency;
- Ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the website design and development and are encouraged to provide feedback for its further development – this will ensure the websites are focused on government and community needs rather than being internally driven

6.4.1.1. South-South Capacity building website ideas:

- On-line courses to be developed and available on the website for building management capacities, e.g. PRINCE, RBM, ICDL, WINTEC, etc.
- MDPD advocacy messages promoted on the website
- Lessons learned available on the website and searchable by key words
- Profile of all consultants/trainers in the South-South programme available for students to contact with questions or to seek assistance
- Link to the SIV programme for participants to learn and share small island experience from around the world
- The three counties reviewed on this mission, i.e. Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa each have unique features to their ICT4D status. It would be valuable to

share this experience not only with each other but with other countries in the South Pacific. For example, Niue has a lot of experience with the OLPC and can showcase this experience. Samoa has a lot of experience in creating a competitive environment for telecom and this has lowered costs and improved Internet service. Cook Islands has an effective approach for assisting ministries in creating their websites. This is valuable experience that should be put onto the website so that it is available to all.

6.4.1.2. MDGs through sports & volunteers & ICT4D website ideas:

- Basic information on the MDGs, what are they? What is the MDG status in each country? And on which MDGs is effort most needed and what kind of effort will be successful?
- Instructions for how a community or group of individuals such as a sports club can raise MDG awareness and push toward MDG achievement in their community?
- Help each country put the MDG status of the country on its government portal and into the schools so that teachers and students could do exercises on the MDGs to build understanding and commitment.

6.4.1.3. Community-based sustainable development website ideas:

- Communities where the programme works should have a computer connected to the internet functioning at speeds sufficient for transferring data;
- Information required by the community should be made available on-line, e.g. agricultural information on planting, cropping, seeds, marketing information, tourism information, environmental information, health information, etc.
- Access to best practices in animal husbandry and agriculture
- Instructions on how to carry out simple community development work such as surveys and assessments;
- Baseline data picture for all communities in the programme
- Instructions on what to do to help a community recover from a cyclone

6.4.1.4. Climate Change Center website ideas:

- There are many climate change information sources that could be made available on-line for governments and citizens in the region
- An important feature of this website will be a warning system for cyclone threats.

In addition to the recommendations for UNDP above, the following recommendations come out of this evaluation:

6.4.2. *Write more relevant intended outcomes to UNDP projects*

The intended outcomes for these projects had little or nothing to do with the reality on the ground in Cook Islands, Niue or Samoa. Drafters of project documents should make a careful situation assessment before crafting the intended outcomes. The outcomes should be realizable within the small budgets and short time frames of UNDP projects.

6.4.3. *Review of financial administration of UNDP MCO in Samoa*

All three projects reviewed in this evaluation have had problems with delays in securing their financial advances. These delays slow down project implementation and lower disbursement rates. This indicates a problem inside the UNDP MCO. Delays are sometimes related to work plans from projects being late or incomplete and this must be part of the analysis. A work process study is in order to determine what the existing system is for issuing quarterly advances and for making direct payments and to determine where the problems/delays are. Once identified then the work process can be altered to eliminate the delays. Finally, training

will be required for relevant project and UNDP MCO staff so that they know how to operate the new work process.

UNDP must be able to give clear and quick responses to recipient countries for such things as financial advances, enquiries from recipient countries about project budgets, expenditures, direct payments and balance left in the budget. It is recognized that UNDP has a centralized financial management system called ATLAS and that there are challenges in using this system but these challenges need to be overcome. The whole financial system needs to be simplified, streamlined and responsive to project needs.

6.4.4. Ensure clear accountability for project managers

UNDP would be advised to ensure there is clear accountability for its project managers. There were problems with accountability in all three projects reviewed. When accountability is not clear or is conflicting, project implementation suffers.