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FEA Plan: Institutionalizing Impact Pathways and meeting performance targets

Introduction

Institutionalizing the use of Impact Pathways (IP), and maintaining performance based on targets in the IP, throughout the projects carried out by the organization, (the FEA plan will basically seek to do this building upon a particular component of a project, the Kailash Sacred Landscape Initiative- KSLCDI) is the major performance focus of the organization.

The organization is at the beginning phase of a new five year plan and is thus seeking to have a (new and) updated set of performance targets based on IP in place for the next phase. The beginning of the last phase (about 5 years back) is when the concepts of IP (and a whole new model of performance tracking and reporting) was first introduced into all of the programs of this non-government organization. The existing LFA (logical framework Analysis) progress tables of the project and the organization show clear discrepancies in the achievements (versus targets that were planned) at all levels.

Context

The KSLCDI initiative (program) aims to achieve long term conservation of ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity, while encouraging sustainable development, enhancing the resilience of communities in the landscape, and safeguarding cultural linkages among local populations. This program falls within the Trans-boundary Regional Program and works mainly in the border areas of Nepal, India and China.

The organization has 6 Regional Programs (RP) and 4 cross-cutting Theme areas to form an overall matrix structure. The program that the workshop aims to address is KSLCDI, which falls under the RP of transboundary landscapes and primarily under the theme ecosystem services. The program is heading into its third 5-year cycle and needs to develop the theory of change and impact pathway for the next phase.

The organization has its overall strategic objectives, and the program KSLCDI has its own specific objectives. The program objective addresses components of the objectives of the organization as a whole, working within the Regional Program objectives in the middle. Besides the programs in the organization, there is also the over arching directorate, knowledge management & communication, SPM&E (Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation) and finally the Administration and Finance Units.

The entire organization is research based, and operates as knowledge based institution. The KSLCDI programs, like all others in the organization, works on various sites on the ground with the help of local partner organizations for the implementation of its projects. The basic unit

that the program follows is the set outputs that are made in coordination with all the stakeholders and the SPM&E unit at the beginning of each of the program phases. These outputs would lead to outcomes and then the objectives of the KSLCDI program as a whole. The output, however, would need activities to be achieved within them; and further the inputs would feed into these activities.

Impact

The transboundary Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSLCDI) is established, its protection and sustainable use and development of its resources are ensured by the local communities

Outcome

Livelihoods and ecosystems management are improved in a sustainable and equitable manner in selected areas of the Kailash Sacred Landscape Region

Outputs

Component 1. Innovative Livelihood Options

Component 2. Ecosystem Management








Component 3. Access and Benefit Sharing Towards Development of Resilient Communities

Component 4. Long-term Conservation and Monitoring

Component 5. Regional Cooperation, Enabling Policies and Knowledge Management

For this plan, we will only focus on deliverables from **Component 3, and only on **China** (Nepal and India are also covered under the program- the transboundary intersection of the three countries)*

Table of performance of the KSLCDI- Component 3 (China):

Component 3: Access and benefit sharing	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Key Activity Planned	Deliverables	Status
3.1 Traditional Knowledge System on biodiversity resources available	3.1.1. Traditional knowledge on biodiversity documented from pilot sites;	1. Enable traditional knowledge (TK) systems at pilot sites	1. Research in pilot sites and build database on TK	
	3.1.2. Community biodiversity registers (CBR) prepared and maintained by BMC in pilots;	2. Strengthening community rights, equitable benefit sharing on environmental knowledge	2. Support Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) and prepare a booklet on local plant/animal resources; TK on community rights	
3.2 Documentation on Community Rights and Benefit Sharing from biological resources available	3.2.1. One Policy brief on context relevant and applicable ABS mechanism is prepared and shared with key stakeholders	3. ABS policy research and guidelines	3. ABS regulation complete for Pulan County (institutional linkages from local to national level)	
3.3 Institutional Capacities regarding the ABS mechanism is strengthened	3.3.1. Training cum workshops on community based ABS implementation (2 local, one national, one international)			
Key				
Deliverables achieved and well on track				
Deliverables delayed				
Deliverables not achievable				

The problem

The access and benefit sharing component of the KSLCDI has only one outcome out of three which have met their target for China during the last 5 year phase as shown by the objectively verifiable indicator at the output level.

The Logical Framework (a component of the ToC) indicates that many of the targets from the last phase were not achieved. This discrepancy passes from the output to outcome and impact levels. This is definitely a problem within the organization and its implementing agencies (as the outputs and outcomes have shown a discrepancy). This also indicates a larger problem for the transboundary cooperation in the communities where interventions have been made in China, Nepal and India (represented by the impact level results).

The discrepancies in the outcome and outputs are not that large, however, demand improvement going forward as we enter into the next phase. Output level is well within the domain of influence of the program and management (within the organization and partner agencies), and hence can be effectively altered with appropriate actions.

The means, which are represented by activities carried out, are expected to align with the overall societal impact; if not just the outcomes of components that the organization has committed to work on to fulfill its strategic objectives. The ends are the broad societal impact which will fulfil the organizations strategic objectives as well as influence local governmental policy to institutionalize the beneficial intervening activities (which are generally socio economic livelihood and ecosystem related for KSLCDI project).

The activities affect the project, the organization, the implementing field staff (both organizational and in the implementing partners) and the communities in which they work.

Importance

Donor driven projects are expected to meet performance standards anticipated by the donor agencies (which are usually set high). The research based regional non-profit organization and the project which it houses are both donor funded, and hence need to respond to the donors and to fulfil their performance expectations. In a sense, the life of the project (and its scale) is dependent upon the performance in which they deliver, particularly in the longer run. Going into the new 5 year phase, it is essential for the project and the organization to show performance targets that are realistically achievable but which also comply with donor expectations.

FEA Framework

The KSLCDI program works with partners for implementation on the field sites across the 3 countries in the transboundary area where all 3 meet. So in a sense besides the organization, the implementing local organizations are a part of the program. Within the organization the program, management, monitoring and evaluation unit, administration and finance, knowledge management and communication, and directorate are the stakeholders. Beyond this, the ministry or policy influencers could be the other major stakeholder.

Tools

Functional Job Analysis

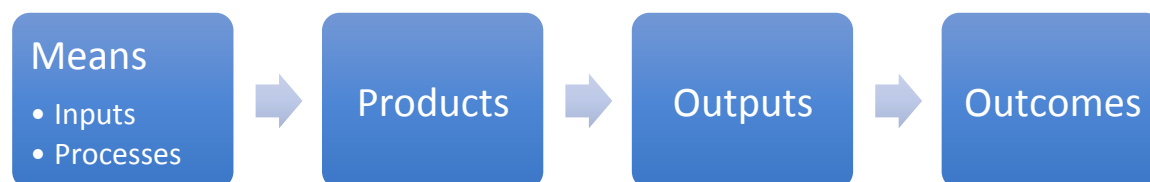
Functional job analysis is a task analysis technique that distinguishes between what gets done on a job and what workers do to get that job done. This focuses directly on workers activities in accomplishing a job. It describes what the workers do in terms of these specific activities, not in terms of what the overall job does. This can be useful in terms of clearly describing things to be done in activity level (below output targets). In a way, this can be used to by supervisors to clearly define what they expect of people working under their supervision. In addition to this, in the case of this organization which uses Human Resource tools like Management by Objectives, this analysis can give another dimension to tasks that need to be done by individuals.

Case based reasoning

This approach deals with re-using previous experiences or cases, or to adapt the experiences to new situations. Of course, the assumption here is that similar problems have similar solutions, and that problems repeat themselves. This tool is useful to use successful cases or activities that have been done in the last phase to be used going forward. This can help map clear paths to obtaining future targets.

Organization elements model (OEM)

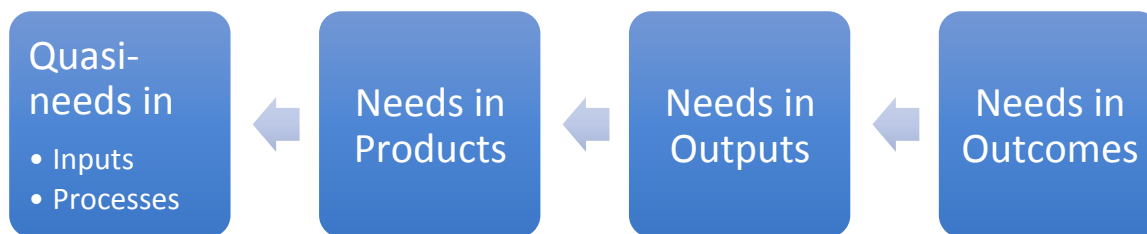
OEM provides a holistic perspective to a system that helps prevent fragmented types of interventions and accomplishments (Chyung, 2008). According to Kauffman, means are what the organizations uses and does; and ends are what organization produces.



Inputs are the “raw materials or resources” and processes are the “methods or activities”. Both of these are the means.

In OEM, there are two types of organizational results; products (micro- level results), that are the accomplishments that individuals or small group performance units perform; and outputs (macro level results), are the accomplishments that the organization as a whole produces. OEM further has the outcome (mega-level) result, which is the result produced beyond the organization.

Kauffman explains that the need analysis occurs at three different levels of results of a system (Kauffman, 2000). The strategic planning begins with the needs assessment at the mega level (outcome), which then leads to the needs assessment at the macro level (output), and finally to the needs assessment at the micro level (products). After his appropriate inputs and processes can be determined.



Needs are gaps between “what should be” and “what is” in end results, not in means (Watkins and Kaufman, 1996).

The OEM tool is useful in this organizations context as it helps to link the activity of this particular component of KSLCDI for China and relate it to higher level outcome and further impact level of the initiative. Eventually, this all is related to the vision of the organization which is for positive social and environmental impacts in the region. Impact pathway approach is very much aligned to the ideas provided by the OEM.

Data collection methods

Document Analysis

A major source of the needs analysis will be based on the LFA (logical framework analysis) of the past 5 years (extant data). This will provide actual quantitative results that show performance gap.

Survey

At the beginning of the analysis, an online survey will be conducted within the organization and project staff regarding the discrepancies and the current reporting results. Some ideas on their perspective on potential causes and solution could be gauged through this.

Interviews and Focus Group

After this, staff reflection of performance in the previous phase will take place in group and plenary discussions. Finally, Key informant conversation will be conducted with staff knowledgeable on and favorable towards changes and need to improve current levels of performance.

Initial Proposed Causes

- Started working on the ground much later than planned.
- Plans not being realistic in inception.
- Implementing partners not following plans and also not carrying out activities in sites.
- Local government regulations not being favorable to conduct activities on the field sites.
- Ambiguity of roles on the field sites regarding implementation of tasks.

Solutions

- Based on the past phase, we can recommend the program to make realistic targets that are likely to be achieved.
- Take advantage of high profile Chinese delegation visiting from Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) to our organization for a workshop. This even will give an opportunity to make the case for early implementation with CAS and local government in China.
- Use the last phase success and short comings to create a more realistic plan for the next phase.
- The roles of all employees and staff of the program need to be clearly defined to accomplish the required jobs

Results

The next review sessions of the program will take place before the final documentation, which will include the findings and recommendation.

References

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