CommonSensing project Independent Midline Evaluation

Management Response

Name of programme/office/unit:	UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications ProgrammeUNOSAT	
Name of programme manager/director	Einar Bjorgo	
Name of project undertaking	CommonSensing	C2018.TARSA027.UK Space Agency
Name of evaluation	Midline evaluation	
Date:	15.09.2020	

SECTION I – Comments on Findings, Conclusions
The midline evaluation and cost-effectiveness analysis confirmed that CommonSensing project is highly relevant to the Pacific context and efficiently support governments in improving climate resilience. Also, the expected project impact will bring great added value to the national strategic planning in regard of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). To ensure the project's valued role in closing the existing gap between Earth Observation (EO) data and policy making, improved stakeholder engagement and coordinated communication are called for. This will be of focus moving forward. CommonSensing project management accepts the recommendations below proposed by the independent evaluator to achieve the intended outcomes and impact.

SECTION II - RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Management Response and Planned Action				Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)
	Accepted Partially Accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)	
1. UNITAR and Catapult should establish a mechanism to ensure the overall complementarity and coherence of activities and outputs so the results chain can deliver the expected intermediate and final outcomes. This could be done by adopting an approach based on phases; however, the project may be in a too advanced stage of execution to do so. Alternatively, project partners could take a more strategic approach in setting the weekly and monthly meetings, where the timing and sequencing of delivery of the different activities are discussed. This could be a great opportunity to also discuss the pertinence of delivering	Accepted	• Amend structure of partner meetings from round table 'gallop' to 'deep dive' to enhance coherence and complementarity. • Invite inclusion from partners to cover strategic and delivery priorities. • Move the meeting to the morning to allow attendance by colleagues in the South Pacific		Under implementation	

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	the activity at this stage or wait for another activity or the need to advance the delivery of other activities. The way to communicate with the interlocutor in the delivery of complementary activities should also be discussed to avoid double channels of information.		• Better align project comms through a single point to avoid mixed messaging			
	Management Comments: The internal communication strategy has been strengthened to break down silos and create more synergies. Regular consortium meetings will provide space to share ideas and feedback, address risk and opportunities, and co-plan activities for a long-lasting project impact.					
2.	UNITAR and Catapult should strengthen information-sharing, including information about what each partner is doing and how this is done. This could be done, for example, by promoting direct lines or links among project partners beyond the monthly meetings. It should not necessarily be about more meetings, but rather finding a way to learn about what partners are doing and linking the work, activities and results. This could be facilitated or promoted by the project manager at both organisations who have a good overview of the project and are updated on the activities' implementation. Time could also be taken to draft briefings/minutes of the meetings and share them with the other partners.	Accepted	Create a one-page status update report for regular updates per organization. PMs of UNITAR and Catapult to collate and share a link to the consortium via sharepoint bi-weekly.		Planned	
	Management Comments: Regular written progress updates on the sharepoint will ensure all project partners who are in different time zones can access to the same information at any time.					Climate finance advisors not yet in place, however tasks may be taken on by in-country experts instead.

	Recommendation	Accepted Partially accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)
3.	UNITAR and Catapult should further strengthen relationships, communication and visibility with beneficiary institutions and the most relevant development partners or at least with those who show interest. Participation in coordination forums such as the Pacific Resilience Partnership task force technical working group within the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (now co-shared by GIZ) should be explored as a channel for communication, coordination and visibility within the development community in the different existing forums. This may require that the local focal point is involved in communication and visibility actions and receives some guidance since this role is presently rather operational.	Accepted	• Update the Stakeholder Engagement Workstream analysis to identify organisations and individuals who can support CommonSensing impact and sustainability goals. • Align the above with the Communication Workstream to define tactical communication activities • Broaden our perspective on communication engagement policies to identify and deliver targeted communications to individuals and organisations. • Augment our 'push' (informing) communications with 'pull' (equipping) communications		Under implementation	

	mediated through social channels and direct engagements.			
Management Comments: Updated communication strategy will suggest the effective communication methods that are tailored to each stakeholder groups' interest and influence. It will contribute to increasing buy-in from local stakeholders and maximising the project impact.				

Recommendation	**Accepted** **Partially accepted** **Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
4. UNITAR and Catapult should strengthen external communication and visibility of the project's results. This could include, for example, strengthening the links and information-sharing between M&E results and communication and visibility WPs to elaborate case studies, stories of change or simply project achievements. It is thus encouraged to implement the communications plan and to agree on roles among the project partners in reaching out to wider audiences in sharing project achievements.	Accepted	Please see response 3 above. We recognise that we need to develop new communication models, channels and artifacts with clear calls to action to improve project achievements.		Planned	
Management Comments: Cast studies and M&E results will be communicated with a broader audience through CommonSensing monthly newsletters for improved visibility of the project's outcomes.					
Recommendation	**Accepted** **Partially accepted** **Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**

	Recommendation	Accepted Partially accepted Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)
5.	UNITAR and Catapult should elaborate case studies to deepen information on gender issues and the potential of women of becoming drivers of change in the sector.	Accepted	We recognise the intersectional variability of climate change and disaster risks on different demographics in the South Pacific and have moved to addressing these issues directly in our communications, for example in the UNGA climate justice Turning the Tide event. This focus on intersectional impacts will be a pilar of our 'pull' model of communications delivery for the remainder of the project and will augment the existing 'push' model targeting non-intersectional organisations and demographics.		Under implementation	
	Management Comments: Additionally, these plans include further discussions with Devex to leverage their journalistic expertise in broadening understanding on gender issues through case studies.					
	Recommendation	**Accepted Partially accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
6.		Accepted	• Outcome level indicators have been amended according		Under implementation	

UNITAR and Catapult should review the outcome indicators 5 to 10. This may include: 1) Merging or deleting indicators that might be tracking the same or similar information, which will help to better monitor project performance and map specific outcomes; and 2) Including intermediate outcome indicators in order to fill the current gap between outputs and more general outcomes, and include qualitative indicators complementary to the current ones as suggested by the baseline evaluation (e.g. those related to policy changes or to learning outcomes) and in order to track better changes and specific results achieved (e.g. policy or behavioural changes) in the field.		to the midline's suggestions • An additional indicator on objective assessments has been created to ensure knowledge growth is properly monitored • New output level indicators have been created to capture local engagement and the sustainability of the project's impact. • The above changes to the logframe have been approved by Caribou • Qualitative indicators are currently being reviewed			

Management Comments:	
Proposed changes to the M&E Plan, logframe and indicators are being reviewed by Caribou and CommonSensing PM, and these will be applied to the remaining project implementation period.	

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7.	UNITAR and Catapult should address the inconsistencies between the ToC and the log frame with	Accepted	The Theory of Change is being amended to ensure alignment with		Under implementation	

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	particular attention to alignment with the outcome and impact of the log frame.		the log frame. It will be included in the updated M&E Plan, which will be circulated once it has received final approval from Caribou. This more logical results chain will help clearly see the intended outcomes and impacts of the project.			
	Management Comments: Please see response 6 above.					
8.	UNITAR and Catapult should develop a process or system where capacity development planning and assessment systems are integrated to promote individual and organisational learning and improvement strategies (e.g. developing learning paths, close beneficiary tracing up and follow up coaching/mentoring). This could include, for example, developing a process promote learning environments, motivation and incentives for systemic change and ownership of the learning process and development process in the end. Within this approach, project partners become real and genuine mentors	Accepted	• Offer continuous learning opportunies in the region through a training of trainers and partnerships with the local academia. • Create 'CommonSensing Knowledge Hub', which is an online toolbox for certified trainers, government officials and university students to promote interactive learning environment. • Leverage communities of practices for peer-to-peer learning that will	CS Knowledge Hub will be hosted on the CERN server, which will be covered by UNITAR in-kind contribution	Under implementation	

and not only managers of capacity development activities.		enhance knowledge exchanges and colloabration.
• Provide on-the-job training upon requests of line ministries to help improve institutional capacity and organisational changes. In-country technical experts and climate finance advisors will facilitate activities.

Management Comments:

This recommendation has been integrated into the Capacity Development and Knowledge Sustainability plans. Using Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation, behaviours and capability improvement (Level 3) and/or performance effects on the organisational change (Level 4) can be assessed, as part of a legacy evaluation – a year after the project completion.

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9.	The TA in climate financing will not automatically make the project sustainable over time. Sustainability requires ownership, and ownership is built through engagement at the policy and political levels. UNITAR should improve engagement with government officials from line ministries as well as from prime	Accepted	Please see response 3 above.		Under implementation	
		Management Comments:
High UK representatives in partner countries will be more engaged to reach out to regional actors and improve buy-in from potential donors for project sustainability.				

ministers' office and/or cabinet. Actions on this recommendation could include, for example: • Increasing the transparency of the project with concerned ministries, including bi-directional communication and feedback conveying the progress and results achieved; • Following up on policy and budget processes. If it is expected that governments take up part of the costs of CS project liabilities, it is indispensable to engage with government at the policy level and influence the policy process and budget so the government allocates necessary human and financial resources to sustaining project results in the medium/long term as well as the protection of data. • Relying on a UK in-country representative to leverage efforts at the political level for the sustainability of the project. This would involve updating high UK representatives in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu on a regular basis on progress achieved as well as of any other political bottleneck that might undermine project implementation.		