CF Challenge Fund

Phase I Results and Learnings

March 2017

GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery

Department for International Development

I.   Introduction

The UK Department for International Development (DFID), under the Science for Humanitarian Emergencies and Resilience (SHEAR) project, commissioned the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to launch a competitive Challenge Fund (CF) to deliver an innovative demand-led toolkit to support risk identification and decision-making. This report documents stated milestones established in the CF Inception Report; progress to date against those milestones; and what we have learned thus far from project implementation. Some of the information contained herein could be applied toward modification of the logframe for this project, when that task is undertaken later this year.

This internal learning report updates information provided in November 2016 for the SHEAR Annual Review, and includes information from Phase I final reporting and follow up communications with project leads.[1] The reason for the difference in results reported in this learning document from those previously reported in November 2016 for the SHEAR Annual Review is that not all Phase I projects had concluded at that time. The results in this document take into account updated information and therefore show that the Challenge Fund has performed even better than was cautiously reported back in November.

II.   CF Results based on SHEAR Logframe and Theory of Change

The underlying logic of the Challenge Fund is:
- If new data/tools/approaches to support disaster risk management decision making are developed in response to local demand; and
- If there is improved capacity among the community to develop the new tool; and
- If gender is considered in risk identification, outreach and capacity development plans; and
- If there is improved capacity of local beneficiaries to apply the new tool; and
- If resources are leveraged from the private sector; *assuming*
- The Challenge Fund delivers high-quality, demand-led data/tools/approaches; *then*
- New high quality and relevant data/tools/approaches will be accessed by decision makers.
- *If* new high quality and relevant data/tools/approaches are accessed by decision makers, *assuming*
- Challenge fund projects make products available to the right people who have the capacity and demand to use them, *then*
- There will be greater and more effective investment in disaster resilience, preparedness, response and recovery in target countries.

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[1] Please see the 14 attached monitoring self-assessments from all Phase I Challenge Fund recipients. In addition to final monitoring self-assessments, careful and targeted monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) has been conducted throughout Challenge Fund implementation by regular email communication with project leads; review and scoring of inception reports; at least two calls with each project to discuss project progress and results achieved to date relative to SHEAR logframe indicators; and review of project progress reports.

This last result – greater and more effective investment in disaster resilience, preparedness, response and recovery in target countries – is at the impact level of the SHEAR logframe. The CF is not the only project which contributes to this impact level result. Clearly there are many things that would go into making investment in disaster resilience, preparedness, response and recovery possible. However, CF projects have already greatly exceeded the milestone for this result at the end of Phase I. Namely, the milestone was that at least 6 CF grantees co-design tools with local beneficiaries. Fourteen CF grantees co-designed tools with local beneficiaries, over twice the target for this indicator! The highest-level SHEAR logframe milestone for the end of Phase II is at least 6 local policies, plans or investments informed by project-funded risk tools. Despite this being an ambitious, high-level result for a larger endeavor, those CF projects chosen for Phase II funding are well-placed to deliver this result. Therefore, we expect to exceed this target by the end of Phase II.

Regarding access of these innovative tools, Phase I milestones were: (a) 20 decision-makers regularly accessing project-funded tools; (b) 5 tools are openly available to the broader user community on an appropriate platform; and (c) 50 recorded downloads of data/tools/approaches. We have exceeded all three of these milestones: (a) 23 decision-makers are regularly accessing tools; (b) 15 tools are openly-available; and (c) 2,025 downloads/access of tools have been reported. End of project targets are: (a) 30 decision-makers regularly accessing project-funded data/tools/approaches; (b) 6 tools are openly available to the broader user community on an appropriate platform; and (c) 70 recorded downloads of data/tools/approaches. The second two of these have already been far exceeded and the first one is well on track to be met, and likely exceeded. This is especially likely considering that access and use are the focus of Phase II CF projects.

Milestones for **the development of new tools** were at least 10 at the end of Phase I and a total of 10 new tools, with 50% for DFID priority countries, at the end of Phase II. Given that all 15 Phase I projects successfully developed a new tool – 53% in DFID priority countries – GFDRR has already exceeded this target by a full 50% at the end of Phase I.

In terms of the involvement of local actors in tool development, Phase I targets were: (a) 5 new partnerships developed with local partners; and (b) 10 beneficiaries involved co-development of tools. And Phase II targets were: (a) 5 new partnerships developed with local partners; and (b) 15 beneficiaries involved co-development of tools. To date, the CF has delivered 39 new partnerships with local partners and hundreds of beneficiaries who provided input into the development of these innovative tools. These indicators have also been exceeded.

Gender integration milestones for Phase I were: 10 projects consider gender in project implementation. Phase I CF implementation resulted in 13 projects which considered gender in project implementation. This target has been exceeded by GFDRR. The milestone for the end of Phase II is that all projects consider the role of gender in implementation. All Phase II CF projects have committed to strong gender integration in project implementation. We are definitely on track to meet this ambitious CF milestone.

Regarding improved beneficiary capacity to use the new tools, the Phase I target was 10 beneficiaries trained. The Phase II milestone was another 10 beneficiaries trained, for a

cumulative total of 20 trained over the life of the project. 662 beneficiaries have been trained by CF projects by the end of Phase I; this is another milestone that was greatly exceeded.

In terms of **evidence of what works in developing tools to support resilience**, the Phase I milestone was: Monitoring of first round projects completed and case study evaluation of at least 3 first-round projects in progress using rigorous evaluation methods. This milestone was subsequently modified at the mid-point of Phase I implementation by DFID to contain only the monitoring of Phase I projects. This has been completed and 14 monitoring documents are attached to this report. The Phase II target is: 2 case study evaluations of second-round projects completed and at least 20 M&E project-level assessments completed. We are on track to meet these targets; a case study of NIWA's Phase I Challenge Fund project on its drought risk visualization tool was approved and is currently ongoing. The final evaluation report is expected to be submitted by March 31, 2017.

Project leverage targets were 500,000 British Pounds in Phase I and 1,000,000 British Pounds at the end of Phase II. Using the current exchange rate of 1 British Pound = 1.24 USD, these numbers are $620,000 at the end of Phase I; and $1,240,000 at the end of the project. The CF has greatly exceeded these targets already with $2,147,500 in leverage thus far. This number is expected to increase even further as Phase II is implemented. (Please see Annex A for a listing of overall Phase I results.)

While the overall goals of Phase I projects were tool development and illustration of their success, the focus in Phase II is ensuring uptake and use of the tools. Seven out of the 15 Phase I CF projects were selected for Phase II funding. Selection criteria included all sources of project monitoring to date, as well as Phase II proposals which showed a strong path toward use of tools on the ground. CF projects are gaining the attention of others and resulting in replication in other settings. For example, one project which was chosen for Phase II funding, Deltares' Participatory Terrain Data and Modelling in Tanzania, is being replicated in other locations with other funds. In addition, another two Phase I projects (UNESCO and FloodTags, not selected for SHEAR-funded Phase II) are in the planning stages of being replicated in other settings with Belgian funding. These examples of the CF 'multiplier effect' present clear indications of project success as well as financial leverage.

III.   Challenge Fund Learning to Date

What has not worked?

Based upon consistent Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) conducted to date on all 15 CF projects, we have learned a great deal about why some projects do not progress as well toward milestones as others. Specifically, in looking at those that were not funded under Phase II, we learned the importance of developing a tool *in response to on-the-ground demand or request*. The evidence we have gathered from Phase I shows strong support for the need to develop a tool in response to local demand in order for it to be used to increase local resilience. If the tool is not developed due to local demand, it is less likely to be understood, accessed, maintained or used after the project ends. This is the one thing all six projects that are not being funded under Phase II have in common, and is therefore a key point of learning to date.

What has worked?

True partnership is on clear display in those projects that have contributed most toward reported CF results. We learned that key to these projects is careful needs assessments and nurturing of long-term partnerships with local actors. Most of the projects selected to receive Phase II funding spend a great deal of time with partners on the ground thus nurturing lasting relationships. They look first at current partner practices – how they do things – and then work together to identify and fill gaps as possible.

Gender integration into project planning and implementation takes many forms across 15 Phase I CF projects. While there are some that carefully assess gender gaps and work to address those gaps as related to their projects, others disaggregate data by sex and work to ensure their tools are used by decision-makers to prepare for and reduce risk associated with various hazards, thereby aiding women who are often adversely affected by these hazards more than men.

Interestingly, we are finding that the most meaningful gender dimensions are found in the 'last mile' during uptake of these innovative tools; that is, gender integration is most visible toward the end of Phase II projects during work at the community and village levels. While gender has been considered throughout 13 of 15 Phase I CF projects, the degree to which it is addressed in Phase II will be much higher, given the focus on uptake in this stage of project implementation.

Leverage
CF projects have successfully leveraged a great deal of cash and in-kind contributions. In looking at the source of funding – whether from public or private funds – Phase I CF projects illustrated a mix of both. When considering the path for uptake and sustainability of the tools developed, there is no discernable difference between those that were able to leverage public funding and those that leveraged private funding. We therefore strongly believe that such leverage does not have to be from the private sector in order to have impact. We are working with Phase II awardees to continue to carefully track leverage figures.

Awardee Synergies
During Phase I, we encouraged projects to contact each other when we saw the potential for synergistic gains. We will continue working during Phase II implementation to cross-fertilize aspects of projects which could benefit from knowledge sharing with each other. For example, two CF projects work in areas related to rainfall monitoring. Due to our continuous MEL efforts, we are able to learn from each project in near real-time and share that learning as applicable with both projects. Specifically, upon learning that IWMI's mobile weather stations are being used by UNDP in Solomon Islands for weather monitoring, we contacted the project lead at NIWA because that CF project also works in Solomon Islands in the area of drought. Due to our continuous MEL, NIWA was able to incorporate this information into its recent trip to Solomon Islands.

Training
Regarding training and capacity building of local stakeholders, we chose to report a conservative number of those directly affected by CF projects. In some cases, those people who were trained

by Phase I projects went on to train many others in the same tool. We chose not to include those trainees in our reporting for number of people trained by CF projects. As with many of the indicators for this work, there are 'multiplier effects' of CF project implementation, which only increase the reach and impact of this important work to get the right information into the hands of the right people at the right time.

POINTS OF LEARNING FOR POSSIBLE ADAPTATION OF LOGFRAME

As we pointed out in our inception report, logic models are fluid and subject to change as circumstances dictate. The following is information that could be used to update the CF logframe and theory of change it represents.

The overall impact the project would like to achieve is the greater utilization of risk information for risk reduction, preparedness, financial protection and reconstruction decision making and to bridge the gap between the technology and the users. However, this result – ***utilization of risk information*** – is missing from the project logframe. We think that utilization of CF tools is the highest level result within the manageable interest of CF projects. When looked at in logical progression, use of the tool by local decision makers should appear after access and before investment in the logframe. Use is mostly triggered in the event of a disaster or pending disaster and therefore not easily measured during CF implementation, but we believe we will be able to measure it toward the end, as well as after completion, of Phase II.

In conducting continuous MEL during CF implementation, we learned that there could be many ways to define indicators found in the logframe. We therefore think it would be enormously helpful, moving forward, to come to agreement on more ***precise definitions*** on what is meant by leverage, gender integration, etc. This would help gain a clearer picture of exactly what was intended versus what is occurring. It would also allow for a richer analysis of CF impact.

As previously stated, we learned that in-kind and cash contributions ***do not have to be from the private sector*** in order to have impact.

We have learned that there are ***several layers of beneficiaries*** in CF projects. The first layer is the typically mid-level government officials with whom projects have the main initial contact. The second layer is the higher-level government decision makers who will receive information from the tool in an easily-understandable manner. And the third type of beneficiary is the ultimate user of information from the new tool, or the person who is most susceptible to feeling the impact of a hazard. The focus of Phase I of the CF was primarily on the first-level beneficiary, typically the mid-level government official. During Phase II, all three types of beneficiaries will be involved in ultimate use of these innovative tools.

In addition to some of the points above, we also think that revision of the logframe should include updating milestone dates. For example, due to contracting lead times and other issues, projects began later than anticipated; this pushed the dates back for milestones, but they have not yet been revised in the CF logframe.

Annex A: CF Results from 15 Phase I projects updated as of January 31, 2017

# of projects that are co-designed with local beneficiaries	14
# of decision makers accessing tool	23
# of tools available on open platform	15
# downloads of tools	2,025
# of partnerships established	45
# of new tools developed	15
# of partnerships developed with local partners	39
# of projects that consider gender	13
# beneficiaries trained	662
Amount of leverage	$2,147,500