Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF)

Monitoring and Evaluation Seminar Report

4th and 6th March 2013

TRIPLELINE CONSULTING

Crown Agents

Triple Line Consulting Ltd

3 Princeton Court

55 Felsham Rd

LONDON SW15 1AZ

United Kingdom

www.tripleline.com

St. Nicholas House

St. Nicholas Rd

SUTTON SM1 1EL

United Kingdom

www.crownagents.com

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) seminars were held on 4th and 6th March 2013 at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NVCO), Society Building, 8 All Saints Street, London.

A total of 63 people from 49 different organisations with (CSCF) grants attended the seminars. The content of the seminars was the same on both days, participants attended one of the two days.

DFID and the Fund Manager (Triple Line in joint venture with Crown Agents) would like to thank our participants for their very useful input and valuable insights provided on both days and for all the work that Grant Holders and their partners are contributing to in the reduction of poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East

The workshops were a welcome opportunity for CSCF stakeholders to learn lessons, share findings and to interact with each other.

This summary report outlines the anticipated seminar outcomes or objectives. It summarizes each of the main presented sessions. It provides an overview of Grant Holder feedback from those sessions which also highlights frequently asked questions. Finally, the report summarises conclusions and action points.

ANTICIPATED SEMINAR OUTCOMES

The seminar was designed to help Grant Holders and their partners:

- Better understand the value of reporting results and achievements which are supported by credible evidence.

- Gain insight into how individual CSCF projects fit within the Fund portfolio as a whole, contributing to its overall achievements. The seminar also aimed to provide a space for Grant Holders to test the efficacy of the analytical framework in capturing results.

- Be informed of DFID's priorities: i.e., the strong focus on learning and evidence in the remaining CSCF years.

- Improve reporting on progress and financial expenditure in annual and project completion and to reduce the need for proactive management support to correct reporting errors.

DFID and the Fund Manager were also interested in:

- Involving Grant Holders in discussion and listening to their views on: DFID priorities; monitoring and evaluation; the portfolio analysis of results and achievements; key learning areas and priorities; financial reporting; reporting on value for money and beneficiaries; as well as other aspects of project implementation such as the varied contexts in which projects are working, partnerships and fund management.

SESSION 1: CSCF PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW 2013

To contextualize the work of Grant Holders and their partners within individual projects, the Fund Manager presented the overarching objectives of the CSCF and the theory of change that underpins the programme. The composition of the portfolio in 2013 was also outlined and an overview provided of the main responsibilities of the Fund Manager (FM – i.e., the joint venture).

CSCF Overarching Objectives

- Improve the capacity of Southern civil society to engage in the **local** decision-making process;
- Improve the capacity of Southern civil society to engage in **national** decision-making processes
- Improve national linkages through global advocacy
- Provide innovative service delivery
- Provide service delivery in difficult environments

CSCF Theory of Change

That strengthened civil society helps marginalized and disadvantaged citizens in multiple countries and regions have a voice at local and national levels of government and in global debates so they can represent their essential needs and bring about positive change to policies, practices and service delivery in areas that impact on the quality of their lives and well-being.

Composition of the CSCF portfolio in 2013

- 67 projects will submit annual reports in four thematic areas (education, health, livelihoods and social inclusion);
- 29 projects will draw to a close and submit project completion reports and final evaluations.
For a breakdown of the above by CSCF reference number and thematic area, please see Annex 4.

Fund manager responsibilities in 2013

The four broad areas of fund management are:

- **Programme Management**: e.g., providing proactive management support to projects experiencing difficulties; logframe support; bi-monthly reporting to DFID on high risk projects; quarterly and annual reporting to DFID; refining templates (minimum changes expected in 2013)
- **Financial Management**: e.g., disbursing grants; processing claims; assessing annual audited reports; producing financial guidelines and capacity building support for Grant Holders
- **Transparency and Accountability**: e.g., conducting routine audits of 15% of the portfolio every quarter; developing approaches to value for money with Grant Holders;
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning** (e.g., appraisals of Annual Reports, Mid-term reports, Project Completion Reports and Independent Evaluations; quality assurance visits (10% of

the portfolio to be visited each year) learning visits (3 visits a year); working with Grant Holders to identify and present results; hosting learning roundtable meetings with Grant Holders; producing learning products.

SESSION 2: DFID'S PRIORITIES IN 2013

Rachel Grant, DFID's Manager for the CSCF and GPAF explained DFID's focus on: investing in evidence and knowledge of 'what works and doesn't work' and on how to demonstrate impact.

The CSCF is managed by DFID's Civil Society Department (CSD). The department leads DFID's policy work and contributes to the evidence base on working with and through civil society.   CSD are becoming more systematic in how they gather evidence, in particular in clarifying key questions; scrutinizing the quality of evidence, and gathering learning from across their programme.   CSD supported the development of the Bond Improve It Framework, which includes evidence principles for the sector.   Evidence is used to inform policy decisions, advise ministers, design new programmes, make the case for spending and in measuring results and value for money. CSCF makes an important contribution to DFID's evidence base: It is the longest running challenge fund and it offers a wealth of learning spanning over 10 years. Recent efforts to capture results and learning include: the portfolio analysis, the India/Nepal learning visit and the subsequent roundtable discussions with Grant Holders, as well as the survey to assess how Grant Holders collect and use beneficiary feedback. Part of the impetus for the M & E seminar is to involve Grant Holders in the methodology for gathering and analysing evidence and to promote quality data.

Rachel shared a summary of the **Bond Improve It Framework** (see Rachel Grant's presentation in Annex 2). Recommended reading: http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/improveit.html. For more information on quality of evidence score card, see: http://www.bond.org.uk/pages/the-ngo-evidence-principles.html#principles

Two important points were noted:

- The importance of bringing Grant Holders and partners into the process of reflecting on progress, results and achievements - and learning.
- An impact evaluation of the CSCF is likely. It is likely to include looking at areas where projects have closed to see what lasting impact they have had.

SESSION 3:   PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS: CSCF PROJECT RESULTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS FROM 2012

The portfolio analysis provides insight into the results, achievements and progress of the CSCF projects within the portfolio as a whole. It also examines successful approaches, lessons in relation to gender and empowerment and to what extent projects represent value for money in relation to their effectiveness, efficiency, economy and sustainability.

In 2012 the portfolio analysis was conducted by the FM. The methodology includes a quantitative and qualitative analysis of individual project reports.

DFID and the Fund Manager read Grant Holder reports in detail. The analysis of the data within these reports is conducted by sector specialists who appraise and enter Grant Holder responses to template questions into a data base. The appraisal process includes quality assurance where two sector advisers compare and agree findings. Detailed feedback letters are sent to Grant Holders and a percentage of these together with the annual/PCR reports are reviewed by DFID.

Quantitative information from the annual reports is summarized, aggregated, analysed and synthesized. Qualitative insights are identified by sector specialists in the following areas:

- Headline results in relation to policy and practice improvements,
- Approaches highlighted by Grant Holders/partners that work or do not work
- Aspects of reporting on value for money
- Number and types of beneficiaries reached, disaggregated by gender/disability/HIV status (as appropriate)
- Lessons in relation to empowerment and advocacy, gender, and monitoring and evaluation

The 2012 Portfolio Analysis has sorted CSCF projects into four thematic groups (education, health, livelihoods and social inclusion). The selection of thematic groups aids the process of analysis in that it facilitates a discussion of results and approaches if projects with similar themes are grouped together. The process of identifying thematic groups began with a consultative process in 2011. During this process Grant Holders were asked to suggest thematic areas that best described their work. This produced a list of 25 different topics that were then re-grouped by the FM into four main thematic areas. Broadly the thematic areas work. However, during the qualitative analysis sector advisers noted the usefulness of grouping projects into further sub-sectors as highlighted in the presentation. They also noted that there are some projects that could easily fit in one or more thematic areas. These concerns were discussed with Grant Holders at the end of the session and their insights are provided below.

Grant Holders provided positive feedback on the portfolio analysis and the analytical framework. The analytical framework for the CSCF involves assessing projects against the overall CSCF objectives; and against a set of progress indicators towards changing and improving and/or practices (including service delivery) that impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities. The framework also considers process (e.g., approaches that work or do not work) and lesson learning in relation to empowerment, advocacy, gender, and monitoring and evaluation. It was noted that the processes through which results are achieved is a critical part of learning. This needs to be considered in greater depth.

During an exercise to test the framework's relevance, those attendees familiar with their projects were able to find examples of results and achievements against underline(selected) key indicators. The table below illustrates useful examples.

CSCF Indicators of Progress with examples from Grant Holders

Changing/improving policies that impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities
1. Changing the discourse: Raising awareness at a national level through the media and coalition advocacy for the need for a national policy on child protection in x country.
2. Policy development (or revision): Assistance provided by the project to x government department to identify and remove discriminatory language that impacts negatively on the lives of those living with leprosy in x country.
3. Policy adoption: Ratification of ILO c189 in Uruguay. The project's contribution was: to advocate in coalition with x other NGOs to generate pressure from key opinion shapers and persuade the government to ratify the provision.
4. Policy implementation and enforcement: 8 Local committees promoting the protection of children are established along with 8 helplines that are actively being used by vulnerable children to report abuse in x regions/districts of x country.

Changing/improving practices that impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities:
1. Raising awareness: Creating and airing a radio edutainment drama designed to change attitudes and behaviours towards people and children living with disability in x region in x country.
2. Enabling marginalized voices at local/national forums: Organizing a self-help group of disabled parents to lobby for greater resources for disabled children in local council meetings in x region in x country.
3. Widening access to services: Assisting the local education department, primary schools and teachers in x region of x country to integrate disabled children into mainstream schools.
4. Improving the quality of services: Training mid-wives to provide factually correct information on reproductive health services in x country.
5. Innovative service delivery: Introducing palliative care services for the first time into an existing health network (rather than creating a new delivery system) in x region in x country.

Annex 3 provides highlights of the portfolio analysis in 2012. The analytical framework is embedded in the annual report template which can be found on the DFID CSCF website. The full report will be made available in due course.

<div style="background:#bfe0ce">

SESSION 4: NARRATIVE REPORTING: ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATES

</div>

The FM introduced the **revised annual report template for FY 12/13**. This has now been sent to all Grant Holders. The final version included some helpful recommendations made by participants at the M&E seminar.

https://www.gov.uk/civil-society-challenge-fund

The Annual Report presentation and formatting has been improved and some working clarified but overall revisions have been kept to a minimum. Furthermore changes are based on an analysis of the difficulties faced by Grant Holders in answering questions in the FY11/12 template (i.e., reporting risk; providing insight on why the project represents value for money; providing disaggregated beneficiary data; presenting results against the logframe; and providing robust evidence for progress/results). They also reflect DFID's requirements for more information about beneficiary feedback mechanisms.

The FM talked presented the revised template and answered questions from Grant Holders. Grant Holders also provided feedback and highlighted a number of minor changes which have now been integrated into a new template. It is hoped that this will be the last year that changes are made to reporting templates.

Contact details for the helpline:

> **CSCF Helpline**
>
> Telephone: 0208 788 4672 and ask for CSCF Help Desk   Email: CSCFreports@tripleline.com

SESSION 5: FINANCIAL REPORTING

The CSCF Grants Manager from Crown Agents presented some areas where common issues arise in relation to financial management of grants. He reviewed best practises for:

- Activity planning for better forecasting: Grant Holders are asked to provide forecasts based on actual planning of activities. Planning activities at the start of the year will help Grant Holders and partners assess more accurately the amount of time and expenditure required.
- Record-keeping and forecasting: The forecast section on the claim form should include actual disbursements expected and required, and NOT expenditures. Forecasts should take into consideration the timing of activities. In FY13/14 DFID will require forecasts to cover all 4 quarters before the year begins.
- Procedures for financial expenditure reporting: Do not use a forecast figure as a substitute for 'actual expenditure'. Quarterly claims need to reconcile with annual reports and PCRs.
- Maintaining financial control over partners: Grant Holders are encouraged to support local partners and to ensure their financial systems are robust and that DFID Grant Agreements are reflected in Memorandum's of Understanding, particularly in relation to fraud, bribery, and corruption prevention.

A hand-out of can be found in Annex 5.

SESSION 6: MANAGEMENT OF RISK ACROSS THE CSCF PORTFOLIO

The FM and DFID are responsible for managing risk across the CSCF portfolio. Key aspects of risk management include:

- Quarterly review of the country contexts in which CSCF projects are operating (e.g., potential for instability that may impact on project implementation such as general strikes, demonstrations, coups or elections).
- Placing projects experiencing difficulties (e.g., in financial reporting or implementation) on a risk register which is known as the Proactive Management (PMON) Tracker.
- Maintaining closer contact with, and providing support to Grant Holders who are on the PMON tracker.

- Bi-monthly meetings between DFID and the FM to discuss progress on at risk projects.
- Reinforcing the desk based appraisal of Grant Holder reporting with Quality Assurance Visits (QAV). The FM aims to visit 10% of the portfolio in a financial year.
- The FM conducts an audit of 15% of the CSCF portfolio every quarter. Level 1 audit checks include asking for proof of expenditure and exchange transactions. If these are found wanting then further checks take place. The FM can provide financial capacity building support if this required and has identified a list of projects that are likely to require support.

PERSPECTIVES OF GRANT HOLDERS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Grant Holders provided very useful feedback throughout both days which is summarized below. Frequently asked questions are also included.

Context is valuable

- Grant Holders emphasised the importance of considering the contexts they are working in. The FM highlighted that the revised template begins with an open box to provide a project summary and that context should be included. The project summary replaces the case studies. If DFID require case studies from projects, they will contact Grant Holders.

Be more inclusive!

- Grant Holders say: involve Partners in the M & E Seminar through a webinar link. (A webinar seminar link was planned but at the last minute the venue could not provide).

- Grant Holders also say: involve them in the portfolio analysis – particularly in identifying key results and approaches that work. It should be a two-way process. This task could be included in an M & E seminar which is conducted just after the appraisal of the annual reports. The FM could share quantitative findings and results and Grant Holders could, during the process of a participatory exercise highlight qualitative insights on results, approaches and learning. Use video to also record insights.

Exercise caution in the way evidence is presented

- Results concerning empowerment and rights are not always easy to measure and nor can you compare one set of results with another as contexts vary so widely.

- The FM provided assurance that scores are not used to compare projects. In addition, scores are based on self-reporting which is 'quality assured' by the FM's own analysis. One Grant Holder said: be cautious in claiming the adoption of specific policies by governments as a 'CSCF result' particularly when working in coalition toward a high level change. Such a 'narrative' could create an unfortunate power dynamic with outsiders (DFID, Grant Holders, partners etc.) claiming credit for action that is ultimately taken by governments. Best practice is to highlight contribution (with evidence) as set out in the BOND Improve it framework.

Quality Assurance Visits (QAV): Yes, but not in March

- Grant Holders say: QAVs are fine but not in March because it's the financial year end.
- One Grant Holder who had received a QAV visit testified to its usefulness. They said they found the local consultant very helpful and have worked with her since.

- Grant Holders asked: why only two weeks' notice for a QAV? The FM said: We are not looking for a prepared visit. More time can be given when there are good reasons.

Portfolio Analysis is useful: involve Grant Holders/partners in the analysis and disseminate effectively

- How is CSCF learning used? Learning is used to inform the design of new programmes and to inform policy discussions on approaches.

- What is the connection with GPAF learning? The Secretary of State wants to see a drive for joined up coordination and learning across challenge funds with similar themes and priorities being pursued.

- How does CSCF learning contribute to high level decisions (e.g., the decision to discontinue funding to India)? Learning is used to inform policy decisions, advising ministers, designing new programmes, making the case for spending and measuring results, and value for money. DFID explained that the discontinuation of funding to India was based on consultation (UK Government with the Government of India). The latter requested assistance based on the transfer of skills rather than funding.

- Grant Holders say: the Portfolio Overview and Analysis is useful. They recommended forming learning groups by specific interest groups or sub-thematic area (e.g., natural resources, forestry, environment projects; child protection projects; mental health projects value for money; gender and empowerment etc.,) so technically relevant information on approaches could be shared. This could be explored at the next seminar.

- The FM notes that more needs to be done to capture learning from multi-country projects.

- Some Grant Holders feel that the analytical framework constrains the telling of the story of: *how, what, who and why*; and, that it is challenging to capture the richness of learning and experience at the individual project level. Reporting templates may limit broader reflection. However the majority of Grant Holders who were involved in CSCF implementation said the framework works and they could provide examples against indicators.

- Grant Holders recommended new approaches to disseminating learning in compelling ways so that projects working on similar themes don't repeat the same mistakes. They also say: learning must feed into improving implementation on the ground.

- Grant Holders say they already make efforts to join up learning and evaluation from different funding streams.

Grant Holders are interested in more capacity building support from the FM

Key areas are:

- Financial management (the FM shared plans to target organisations that demonstrate a need in this area)
- Technical support related to specific sectors
- Support in finding consultants for mid-term reviews, final evaluations and other support and in developing or quality assuring TORs.

Are DFID country offices involved in the CSCF and if so, how?

- All CSCF applications were sent to country office for comments before funding decisions were taken. DFID country offices are made aware of all local CSCF projects. In some countries, where the CSCF project aligns with DFID priorities there, the country office may choose to engage with the project, however, this is not always possible.

Can the results of the beneficiary feedback survey be shared and were they useful?

- The report of the survey is attached as Annex 8. The survey results on the use of beneficiary feedback within the CSCF were very useful. DFID is managing a programme to better understand how and what type of beneficiary feedback is useful for improving development outcomes. The CSCF survey will be considered as part of this programme.
- Grant Holders are interested in hearing from DFID what constitutes 'robust' beneficiary feedback mechanisms. The FM will disseminate learning from the beneficiary feedback pilots as it becomes available.

Expectations of reporting and resource implications

- Grant Holders mentioned the resource implications regarding the amount of support required in terms of reporting and understanding/translating concepts between partners and UK grant holders.
- In addition, the increased demand for robust evidence is a departure from the provisions of the original budget agreed for M&E (up to 5% for evaluation was sometimes interpreted as 5% for all of M&E. This means up to £25,000 within a £500,000 grant total).
- Some Grant Holders say VfM is a new and complex concept which is difficult for them to transmit to partners.
- DFID and the FM are aware of the valuable role of UK based Grant Holders in supporting civil society partners in disseminating new concepts and approaches and in their upfront investment. It was acknowledged that more needs to be done to capture this added value.

Additions and corrections to the annual report template

Grant Holders provided very useful additions and corrections to the annual report template which have now been integrated into the final version. One important contribution concerned the collection of data on beneficiaries who are disabled. A number of Grant Holders ask for this to be re-

introduced into the template as they had fought long and hard for disability to be mainstreamed into development policy and practice.

<u>Feedback and tone: a warm approach is appreciated.</u>

- Grant Holders say: written feedback post reporting is useful and it can be widely circulated amongst partners.
- A number of Grant Holders say: positive feedback is also appreciated and helpful.
- Telephone calls and dialogue are also appreciated.

HOW USEFUL WAS THE SEMINAR?

Grant Holders responded to a short questionnaire on the effectiveness of the seminar. A total of 49 out of 63 participants responded (78%).

<u>90% found the seminar useful</u>
- In terms of usefulness, 8 Grant Holders scored it '1' – the highest score out of a 1 – 5 scale; 32 scored it '2'; and 4 scored '3'.

<u>Grant Holders said the seminar was useful because</u>**:**
- Could meet and discuss with DFID, FM, and other Grant Holders
- Clear explanation provided of the context and the portfolio as a whole
- An opportunity to ask questions about the new template
- Better understanding of financial reporting requirements
- An opportunity to learn about the portfolio analysis; beneficiary feedback survey; DFID priorities
- To understand better the reporting requirements and the new template
- To share challenges amongst Grant Holders
- To learn about how value for money thinking is evolving
- To understand DFID's relationship with the FM
- Gained a better understanding of other requirements such as the audit, the quality assurance visits and of the potential for further support from the FM

<u>A handful of Grant Holders (5) said they didn't find the seminar particularly useful and scored it '4' (the lowest score). Reasons included</u>**:**
- The seminar was very general, top down and extractive
- "I wasn't the right person to attend"
- The seminar should have been held earlier in the year

<u>Useful suggestions</u>
Hold the seminar in the Autumn so Grant Holders are informed of requirements earlier in the year
- Finalize the template earlier

- Distribute presentations and hand-outs
- Establish a webinar link for partners
- Share the portfolio analysis report
- Consider providing guidelines so participants can prepare if they are to contribute to providing insights on results for the portfolio analysis
- Share examples of good reporting

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The M & E seminar tried to strike a balance between learning from each other, and in particular from Grant Holders – and providing sufficient information to assure high quality reporting.

There is a collective understanding that the reporting system does not easily lend itself to telling individual project stories. While concrete results may be captured, it is often more difficult to record the intangibles.

The portfolio analysis gives, for the first time, an overview of the CSCF and how individual projects are progressing in improving policies and practices that impact on the lives of disadvantaged communities – by sector and across regions.

Financial reporting and narrative, technical reporting are linked. The FM stressed the importance of planning activities and budgeting ahead of time.

Disability needs to be captured more strongly in reporting – demonstrating how people in this situation are included and how the issue is mainstreamed (or not).

Feedback and communications from the FM has improved. The FM needs to continue to ensure a style which is more about 'engagement' and 'partnership' with less 'top down' approaches. Feedback letters post reporting could say more about the positive elements of projects.

Concerns about how projects are judged were addressed. The FM avoids 'judgements' per se. However, the FM provides DFID with an assessment on: i) the quality of reporting; ii) scores provided by Grant Holders (is their supporting evidence sufficient); and, iii) the degree of risk posed by the project.

Recommended actions:

1. Re-position the M & E seminar for maximum impact and support to Grant Holders & partners: The M & E seminar is best placed shortly after the Annual Reports which are completed by August. We propose therefore that the next M & E Seminar will be held the first week of October 2013.

2. Provide hand-outs and instructions to bring key information to feed into learning.

3. Involve Grant Holders in the Portfolio Analysis in 2013: During the M & E seminar the FM will invite Grant Holders and Partners to participate in a qualitative analysis and

presentation of progress, achievements and results; approaches that work; and learning from their individual projects. Their contribution will then form part of the Portfolio Analysis relating to achievements made in FY 2012/13.

4. Promote inclusive dialogue: In future all seminars will include a web link so partners can 'virtually' attend.

5. Consider alternative and compelling ways to capture learning and disseminate results: Grant Holders whose projects are ending and who have submitted a PCR and final evaluation will be invited to Triple Line for a 1 hour meeting to discuss their project achievements. This session will be captured on video and be made available on a web link.

6. Improve FM/Grant Holder communications: Feedback letters post appraisals will continue. In addition, the FM encouraged Grant Holders to call the Helpline if they experience any difficulties or require advice. From the FM's side we will continue to be mindful of the way our instructions land and the style of our communications.

7. Continue dialogue on the thematic and sub-thematic areas of the CSCF and on ways of working. In this respect, the FM recommends that Grant Holders read the *Bond Improve It Framework* provided in the link on page 5.

ANNEXES:

ANNEX 1: THE CSCF M & E AGENDA

ANNEX 2: DFID PRIORITIES

ANNEX 3: PRESENTATION OF THE PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS 2012

ANNEX 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

ANNEX 5: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ANNEX 6: REPORT OF THE CSCF BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK SURVEY

ANNEX 1. THE CSCF M & E AGENDA

DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund M&E Seminar
4th & 6th March 2013

Agenda

Time	Item
9.00 – 9.20:	**Arrival and Registration**
9.20 – 9.40:	**Welcome and Introductions**
9.40 – 10.00:	**CSCF Portfolio Overview 2013 – what does the CSCF show us**
10.00 – 10.10:	**What DFID wants to know from the CSCF**
10.10 – 10.40:	**What do CSCF grant holders think?**
10.40 – 11.00:	**Tea/Coffee break**
11.00 - 12.30:	**CSCF Results & Achievements in 2012 + Discussion**
12.30 – 13.15:	**Lunch**
13.15 – 14.30:	**2012-13 Narrative Reporting: Templates, Guidance and Discussion**
14.30 – 15.30:	**2012-13 Financial Reporting: Templates, Guidance and Discussion**
15.30 – 15.45:	**Tea/Coffee break**
15.45 – 16.30:	**Management of Risk across the CSCF Portfolio + Q & A**
16.30 – 16:45:	**Review of Parked Issues**
16:45 – 17.00:	**Conclusion**

Department for International Development

UKaid

Annex 2: DFID priorities

DFID Presentation

Slide 1

Department for International Development

UKaid

Evidence based policy and the CSCF

Slide 2

Department for International Development

UKaid

Clear steer on need for evidence based policy

Secretary of State "…invest in what works. Where we don't know [what works], I want to find out. It will make sure we are clearer about where we should focus our resources so we know that what we're funding will actually work as we intend.

Policy Division: Invest in evidence and knowledge on what works/doesn't work and how to demonstrate impact

Civil Society Department: Share knowledge, guidance and advice on working with and through civil society with DFID and the wider sector (plus contribute to other policy areas).

Slide 3

Department for International Development

UKaid

Policy areas where CSD leads or contributes

• **CSD lead**
  ▪ Theory of change for working with and through CSOs;
  ▪ How we fund and support CSOs
  ▪ Enabling environment for CSOs
  ▪ Reaching excluded groups
  ▪ Beneficiary feedback

• **CSD contribution**
  ▪ Empowerment/Accountability
  ▪ Gender etc.

Slide 4

Department for International Development

UKaid

How is CSD contributing to evidence base?

• PPA learning groups
• GPAF/PPA Evaluation
• Bond Improve it framework including Evidence Principles
• Learning strategies at the fund level (CSCF, GPAF, GTF)
We're becoming more systematic
• Refining research questions
• Focus on quality of evidence and how it will be used
Used in DFID for…informing policy decisions; advising ministers; programme design, making the case for spending; measuring results/VFM;

Slide 5

Department for International Development

UKaid

Role of the CSCF

• Build evidence base on what works/what doesn't on CSD's policy priorities
• Build evidence base on what works/what doesn't on CSCF objectives
• Learning priorities refined through top down and bottom up process
• For use in DFID and the sector **strength of evidence is critical**

Slide 6

CSCF learning done to date and future plans

Recent examples:
• Portfolio analysis
• India/Nepal visit
• Beneficiary feedback survey

Going forward
• Agree DFID focus; agree with CSCF grant holders the significant results in Portfolio Analysis and beyond (including context specific results)
• Put clear methodology in place for gathering/analysing data
• Quality of data from CSCF grant holders is vital

Slide 7

Improve it framework – Evidence Principles

• **Voice and Inclusion**: the perspectives of people living in poverty, including the most marginalised, are included in the evidence, and a clear picture is provided of who is affected and how
• **Appropriateness**: the evidence is generated through methods that are justifiable given the nature of the purpose of the assessment
• **Triangulation**: the evidence has been generated using a mix of methods, data sources, and perspectives
• **Contribution**: the evidence explores how change happens and the contribution of the intervention and factors outside the intervention in explaining change
• **Transparency**: the evidence discloses the details of the data sources and methods used, the results achieved, and any limitations in the data or conclusions.
• Plus **checklist** for each principle to score evidence from weak to gold standard

Slide 8

Conclusion

• CSCF has been running for over 10 years and will be ending soon
• Impact evaluation likely
• Want to get the most out of this fund for DFID, the grant holders and the wider sector
• Cannot be done in a top down way – you have the information/knowledge about what's really happening.
• Use today to help build learning partnerships – open to ideas about how to make this work and what we should be focusing on

Slide 9

ANNEX 3: PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS 2012

1

CSCF Portfolio Analysis

2012/13

What is it?

- An assessment of grantholder reporting
- Presents CSCF progress, results, achievements
- Evidence: CSCF Theory of Change
- Lessons and approaches
- Value for Money

3

Methodology

Fund Manager appraises:
- Project annual reports
- Project completion reports & evaluations

Data > database >Quantitative analysis of progress

Qualitative analysis of progress: Sector specialists > identify evidence/examples

4

What data is analysed?

Scores
Key results
Progress against milestones
Beneficiaries
Contribution to CSCF's overarching objectives
Contribution/expenditure on MDGs
Approaches & lessons
Value for money
Quality of evidence

5

Analysis by thematic area

Education 14 Projects
Social Inclusion 22 Projects
Health 20 Projects
Livelihoods 29 Projects

6

1
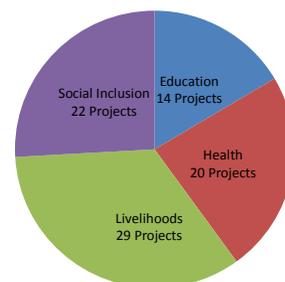
Analysis by sub-theme /country

Education	Health
1. Access/quality (9) Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, S. Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe 2. Child Protection (3) Ecuador, Senegal, Uganda 3. Female empowerment (3) Rwanda, Gambia	1. Sexual & reproductive health (8) Bangladesh, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, India, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda 2. Mental health (4) India, Ghana, Nepal, Uganda 3. TB + HIV/AIDS (4) India, Namibia, Zambia 4. Palliative care (3) Sierra Leone, Africa (multi-country), Malawi, India 5. Nutrition (1) Peru

Livelihoods	Social Inclusion
1. Climate & nat resources (8) Kenya, (Central Af. Rep, Gabon), Paraguay, Ecuador, Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, Pakistan 2. Food sec & producer's rights (8) Nepal, DRC, (Senegal, Ethiopia; Mali: Morocco, Nigeria, SA, Tanzania, Tunisia), Peru, Kenya, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Brazil 3. Labour rights & working conditions (6) India, Honduras (Peru, Mexico, Colombia), Thailand, Kenya (Multi-country) 4. Access to public services (3) Angola, India, Mali 5. Income generation (2) Guinea, Kenya 6. Land/property rights (2) Brazil, Bolivia	1. Disabled rights (9) India, Kenya, Bangladesh, Nepal, S. Sudan, OPT 2. Marginalized & urban poor (2) India, Sri Lanka 3. Older people (1) Cameroon 4. Women's political participation, GBV (7) Zimbabwe, Nepal, Ghana, DRC, Peru, Ethiopia 5. Child protection and rights (3) Cambodia, Brazil, Tanzania

The quantitative analysis

Numbers/% of projects

- Scoring: A++; A+; A; B; C by thematic area
- Beneficiaries
- Achievements/CSCF overarching objectives: Value for money
- Quality of evidence

FINDINGS: Scores

- 85 annual reports analysed
- 71%: *meeting expectations or moderately exceeding expectations* (53 projects: A; 8 projects A+)
- 29%: *moderately not meeting expectations* (39 projects – B)
- Projects scoring B: minor delays; policy environment; targets; reporting quality; evidence.
- No 'C' projects!

Beneficiaries

- 85 projects reaching approximately 11.4 million beneficiaries (disadvantaged). More than half female.

- However: 75% of projects – difficulties in presenting data on beneficiaries

- FM: Revised reporting template for 2012/13

Capacities strengthened at local/national level

Education	Health	Livelihoods	Social Inclusion
Marginalized children Disabled children Parents Excluded women	*People living with:* HIV/AIDS Life threatening diseases Mental Health & disability High risk groups (HIV, TB, Malaria)	Small producers Forest dwellers Marginalized workers in the informal economy including migrant women	Urban poor Other marginalised groups Disabled

Raising awareness of minority rights

- Creating awareness & space for minorities to articulate their needs at local & national levels
- Almost 50% of projects indicate *substantial/significant achievements*
- One third of projects: *low/early signs of progress*
- Approaches: social mobilization; training & skill development; peer leadership; self-help groups

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

13

Policy development

- More than 25% of projects: *substantial/ significant achievements*
- 1/3 of projects: *low/early signs of achievement*
- Approaches: coalition advocacy; technical working groups with government agencies

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

14

Policy adoption

- 16% of projects: *substantial/significant achievements* as a result of advocacy & capacity building activities
- First year projects – *low & early signs*
- Largely livelihood projects (labour rights; working conditions)
- Examples from health, education, social inclusion (child protection)
- *Carpe diem element: capitalize on opportunities*

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

15

Service delivery

- Widening access to services: One third of projects: *substantial or significant*
- 35 projects: *low & early signs of progress*
- Quality improvements to service delivery: 72% of projects: *substantial or significant achievements*
- Approaches: capacity building of civil society and/or tiers of government

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

16

Claiming rights

- Comes about as a result of capacity building / service delivery improvements / implementation of policies
- Nearly 50% projects: *substantial/significant achievements*
- 50% *low/early progress* (newer projects)

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

17

Value for money

Effective	Efficient	Economic	Sustainable

- 7% projects - very good analysis
- 52% of projects - good analysis
- 24% of projects - average analysis
- 15% of projects - poor analysis
- 2% of projects – no insight (!)

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

18

Qualitative analysis

- Real examples of progress and achievements;
- <u>Lessons & Approaches</u>: what worked and why; **how** the project made achievements
- Assessed qualitative responses on value for money
- Quality of the evidence

Analytical framework People & capacities

- No. beneficiaries reached (by gender, by age and describe)

- Capacities strengthened (people/institutions)

Analytical framework: POLICY (examples/evidence)

- Changing the discourse

- Policy development

- Policy adoption

- Policy implementation/enforcement

Analytical framework PRACTICE (examples & evidence)

- Rights awareness (amongst marginalized groups)
- Marginalized voices heard in local & national forums
- Increased <u>access</u> to services
- Better <u>quality</u> services

GROUP WORK

Task 1: Have we got the thematic groups right? Are you in the right one?

Task 2: how does your project contribute to our analytical framework (see handout). Think of specific examples and the evidence that supports your statements.

Task 3: Are there any challenges or revisions you would like to see to this analytical framework?

ANNEX 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PRESENTATION

UKaid
from the Department for
International Development

Civil Society Challenge Fund
M&E Seminar
4th and 6th March 2013

FINANCE SECTION

TRIPLELINE
CONSULTING

Crown Agents

Activity Planning = Good Forecasting

- Opportunity to have some control over "things just happening"

- Bridging the gap between forecasts and actual occurrences, indicating strong financial management

- Become effective at mitigating risks such as capacity surges, overlooking key activities, underfunding, etc

- Ensures stakeholders (e.g. governments, beneficiaries) are able to plan in advance to participate, increasing the effectiveness of the activity

---

Getting It Right First Time

Including Estimates in Actual Expenditure is a NO! NO!

AFR & PCR Agreeing with Claims Data

Claim Submission Dates Stays Fixed

Explaining variances on AFRs and PCR

Getting it Right- CONT'D

Reclaiming overspends in any Financial Year (FY)

FY 2012/13   FY 2013/14

QTR 1 → QTR 2 → QTR 3 → QTR 4   QTR 1

Forecast Section on Claim Forms - Disbursements NOT Expenditures

FORECAST SECTION (amounts in this section realate to Actual / Forecast amounts PAID / To be PAID to you)					
QUARTERS	APR-JUNE	JUL-SEP	OCT-DEC	JAN-MAR	CROSS CHECKER
ACTUAL / FORECAST AMT CLAIMED					
INDICATE (A=Actual F=Forecast)					£0
Please ensure that actual total expenditures replace forecasts for the quarters in which actual expenditure details are available					

WATCH THIS SPACE

- Revised GAs after FY12/13 Carry Overs

- Forecast Spend for FY13-14 by Mid March'13

- Claim Forms revert to Pre-Carryover format

- Cash returns by BACS and CHAPS

- CSCF Financial Manual Coming out

- 15% Risk Audits

Financial Control Over Partners

- Financial review during partner selection
- Sharing DFID Grant Agreements
- Signed MoUs with Partners
- Regular Reporting (linked / not linked to disbursements)
- Centralised Expenditure or Joint Approvals
- Partner Audits & Capacity Building

Support On CSCF Financial Mgt

- Induction Kwikfits – 15-20mins by phone
- General Telephone Enquiries
- Email us at cscfprojects@tripleline.com
- Manual & Website

THE HIT LIST

Tell us your Biggest Financial Management Concerns

CSCF Wheel Of Fortune

DEALING WITH RISK
Misappropriations
Frauds
Corruption
Audits
etc

PROCESSING
Claims
Budget revisions
Carryovers
etc

FINANCIAL REPORTING
Annual Fin. Reports
PCRs
Closures
Reconciliations
etc

GENERAL SUPPORT
Emails
Telephone
Personal
Other
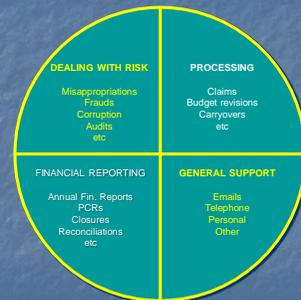
Thank You

ANNEX 5: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants at the CSCF M & E Seminar, 4th and 6th March 2013	
Grantholder	**Participant**
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	Milimo Ninvalle
Africa Educational Trust	Matthew Bullard
African Initiatives	DAVID BAINES
African Medical & Research Foundation (AMREF) UK	Mary Ash
AfriKids	Ama Atteen
Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACORD)	Nicola Bevan
Anti Slavery International	Cathy Turner
APT Enterprise Development	Kevan Moll
Basic Needs	Jane Turner
BirdLife International	Chiambeng Paulinus Ngeh
Camfed International	Christina Haberl
Camfed International	Tessa McLeish
ChildHope UK	Alessio Kolioulis
ChildHope UK	Allan Kiwanuka
Children in Crossfire	Kevin Gallagher
Concern Worldwide	Natalie Pedersen
Deaf Child Worldwide	De Gibson
Deaf Child Worldwide	Kate Gannon
Disability and Development Partners (DDP)	Maggie Owen
EveryChild	Adam Smith
EveryChild	Lucy Morris
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	Louise Elliott
Find Your Feet (FYF)	Olivia Wills
Friends Of The Earth (FOE)	Nick Rau
Habitat for Humanity	Lisa Stead
Habitat for Humanity	Manjeet Panesar
Health Poverty Action	Debs Mackay
Health Poverty Action	Tessa Hewitt
Help the Hospices	Kate North
Homeless International	JENNY HYDE
Interact Worldwide	Alessandra Furtado
Interact Worldwide	Jessie Freeman
Interact Worldwide	Sara Petersson
International Childcare Trust	Dawa Dem
International Children's Trust (ICT)	Amber Wilson-de Vries
International Development through Sport (IDS)	Joanna Knight
Living Earth Foundation	Lios McGilchrist
Living Earth Foundation	Simone di Vicenz
Marie Stopes International	June Wyer

Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP)	Yana Zayed
Methodist Relief & Development Fund (MRDF)	Guillaume Debar
Pesticides Action Network (PAN) International	Angela Russ
POWER International	Fiona Dixon
Rainforest Foundation UK	Laurence Duprat
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Sarah Sanders
Sense International	Liz Ewen
Target Tuberculosis	Clare Shaw
TB Alert	Kate Beavis
Tearfund UK	Amy Cummings
Tearfund UK	Mike Duckering
The Leprosy Mission England, Wales (TLMEW)	Joshua Miller
The Leprosy Mission England, Wales (TLMEW)	Peter Walker
Traidcraft Exchange (TX)	Ross Edgeworth
Trocaire	Laura McHugh
Trocaire	Sabrina Brett
Voice of Dalit International (VODI)	Eugene Culas
War on Want	Laia Blanch
WOMANKIND Worldwide	Reineira Arguello
WOMANKIND Worldwide	Christiana Conte
Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)	Mike Bird
World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)	Tim Meadley
Y Care International	Helen Frost
Y Care International	Jen Blackwood
DFID	**Participant**
Civil Society Department/DFID	Rachel Grant
CSCF Fund Management Team	**Participant**
Fund Manager (Crown Agents)	Charles Fekpe
Fund Manager (Triple Line)	Clarissa Poulson
Fund Manager (Triple Line)	Janet Glover
Fund Manager (Triple Line)	Juliette Seibold
Fund Manager (Triple Line)	Kelmend Kavaja
Fund Manager (Triple Line)	Lydia Richardson

Civil Society Challenge Fund

Survey on the Use of Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms in Projects

January 2013

Triple Line Consulting Ltd
3 Princeton Court
55 Felsham Rd
LONDON SW15 1AZ
United Kingdom
www.tripleline.com

St. Nicholas House
St. Nicholas Rd
SUTTON SM1 1EL
United Kingdom
www.crownagents.com

Table of contents

BACKGROUND

The Fund Manager (FM) is responsible for ensuring that the CSCF is accountable to its project beneficiaries. In the revised Fund Manager's Terms of Reference for the Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) (June 2012), DFID ask that project annual reports provide assurance that project beneficiaries **are able to comment on project performance** and that their views are considered by the Grantholders [1].

As the deadline had passed to readjust annual reports for Financial Year 2012/13 had passed when the request for beneficiary feedback mechanisms in the CSCF was stated, the Fund Manager opted to conduct a survey with Grantholders in August 2012. The survey sought to understand to what extent Grantholders and partners are currently using beneficiary feedback mechanisms. The survey also sought information from Grantholders on what different models and approaches are currently in use. The survey instrument was a questionnaire which was sent to and completed by Grantholders. It can be found in Annex 1 at the end of this report.

This report provides a summary of survey findings. Efforts to deepen the Fund Manager's and DFID's understanding of Beneficiary Feedback within the CSCF portfolio will continue. Opportunities for taking this work forward include: on-going policy discussions with DFID; a monitoring and evaluation seminar in March 2013; a proposed learning visit to Kenya in 2013; and revised annual and project completion templates that will include questions on this issue so that it is reported on annually and at project completion as part of performance appraisal.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Sixty-nine projects (66 per cent) out of 104 CSCF projects in-grant responded to the survey questionnaire. Projects that did not respond to the survey (35%) included those closing between September and March 2013 (34 projects in total closed in this period).

Of the 69 projects that responded, all but one said they collect beneficiary feedback so they could make improvements to project design and implementation. Useful insights were provided into approaches used in collecting feedback. At a high level, survey findings provide DFID with the assurance they seek about the practice and use of beneficiary feedback amongst current grant-holders.

The survey suggests routine collection of beneficiary data across the CSCF portfolio although the frequency varies: Projects collect feedback from beneficiaries through routine monitoring (83%), annually (61%) and at project end (32%).

---

[1] Within each Fund Manager annual report, provide DFID with assurance that project beneficiaries are able to comment on project performance and that any feedback has been considered by the grant holder. This should be in 20% of projects for 2012/13; 40% for 2013/14 and 60% for 2014/15.

Most projects have a formal system for collecting data from beneficiaries and 61% provided a description of their approach. As yet, very few projects (17%) ascribe a role for beneficiaries in collecting and analysing data. Even fewer projects (4) mention collecting information about their own performance including that of their project staff.

The methods described by projects for collecting beneficiary feedback include: informal contact, discussions, focus groups, workshops, written methods such as questionnaires, interviews and M & E planning events. CSCF projects are able to articulate challenges they face in collecting beneficiary feedback and the most significant of these are: planning and budget constraints in changing project design; reaching beneficiaries in remote areas; sampling (how to collect feedback when the project reaches large numbers of people); and managing expectations and frustrations. However the levels of formality in this process and in the reporting vary.

While responses provided insight into the ways in which beneficiaries are consulted at different times in the project cycle, either formally or informally –they also raise further questions. For example, while projects appear to use beneficiary feedback as a mechanism to improve *project design and implementation and assess progress,* very few responses (4 in total) mentioned asking beneficiaries about:

- The **relevance** of the project intervention to the lives of project beneficiaries (e.g. is the project focused on an area of significant, major, minor importance to beneficiaries?)
- The performance of their project field staff or perceptions about the CSO and its role in general*.*
- The need for proxies where beneficiaries are young children; and/or severely disabled.

In addition, survey findings suggest that beneficiary feedback plays more of a role in the implementation processes of Southern Partners than in those of UK based Grantholders. These are issues that need to be explored further.

Next steps

1. Contribute to discussions within DFID on beneficiary feedback mechanisms and seek further guidance from them on recent developments in relation to their research in this area.
2. Investigate the issue further during a learning visit to Kenya in 2013.
3. Incorporate the issue into the Monitoring and Evaluation seminar for Grantholders/partners to explore issues further and to seek examples of good practice.
4. Include a section in a revised annual report template for reporting on project progress in FY12/13 to elicit assurances that beneficiaries are consulted in project processes in a meaningful way.

5. <u>Discuss with DFID whether they wish to set minimum requirements for Grant-holders in terms of beneficiary feedback with, for example, publication of a guidance note for grant-holders, drawing upon the survey findings.</u>

SURVEY FINDINGS

1. **<u>Responses:</u>** there were 69 completed survey questionnaires relating to 69 CSCF projects.

2. **<u>Of the total responses, 68 (99%) Grantholders say they collected beneficiary feedback and analysed it to improve project performance</u>**. (The remaining project said that they obtained feedback informally during routine meetings, but they did not formally analyse it).

3. **<u>Frequency[2]</u>** The frequency with which beneficiary feedback is collected varies as illustrated in the table below.

When feedback is collected	No of projects	% of projects
During routine monitoring	57	83%
Annually	42	61%
At the end of the project	22	32%
Other[3]	17	25%

4. **<u>Process of collecting, analysing and using data</u>** Grant-holders were asked to describe their beneficiary feedback processes. Their narratives varied greatly in terms of form and content and while we have interfered some broad unifying findings below we consider these to be pointers for more detailed research rather than conclusions in themselves.

    57 projects (83%) appear to have a **formal system**, of some sort, in place for **collecting beneficiary feedback** (e.g., *'through case study collection; surveys; post training questionnaires; quarterly reviews; mid-term evaluation; '*).

    29 projects (42%) report collecting feedback **informally** through routine monitoring meetings and so forth, though the actual percentage is likely to be higher (e.g., *'during routine project monitoring, the project team (Grantholder) always hold a meeting with the beneficiaries to discuss the project and to evaluate the*

---

[2] This reflects actual answers given. Note that projects were able to tick more than one timing, so the totals add up to more than 100%.
[3] 'Other' included, informal contacts with beneficiaries, during quarterly monitoring, at the end of workshops or training events.

project process…A meeting is (then) held with the project partner and findings are discussed'. Reference response (RR 14)

42 projects (61%) can describe their formal mechanism for **collating and/or reporting the feedback** (e.g., *'A checklist is jointly designed; project officer/project assistant collects data from beneficiaries; project manager analyses data; findings are fed into monthly performance management meetings'*. (RR 12)

The majority of feedback requests appear to be **defined and reviewed by the project partners**, and in only 12 responses (17%) did there appear to be a significant level of involvement/control by beneficiaries or their representatives in either defining what feedback should be collected, or in reviewing feedback (for example in an annual project review workshop, or as part of a project steering group). Example of beneficiary involvement/control: *'The beneficiaries along with the project partner and other stakeholders review project performance, key achievements, failures, learning and problems faced during project operation and they suggest action. RR 16).*

5. **Type of information collected** Grant-holders described the type of information they were attempting to gather. While the original questionnaire was specific to "*Including the views of beneficiaries in project management and as part of quality assurance*", the responses took a far broader interpretation of 'beneficiary feedback', and some included (or focussed on) initial consultation, needs assessments, collection of baseline or M&E data, beneficiary groups reviewing implementation their own action plans, or (in a couple of cases) service provision by other duty bearers.

Nevertheless, a substantial majority (at least 70%) appear to welcome **general feedback** from beneficiaries or their representatives of what had and hadn't worked, including **suggestions for improvement**.

Post-workshop or post-training feedback was common.

A few (4) organisations directly mentioned feedback from beneficiaries on their **own performance**, but the direct collection of feedback on organisational or individual staff performance appeared to be rare.

Example: *The beneficiaries provided rich feedback regarding the quality of services provided by the project. This helped the project teams to (introduce) new ways and innovation to meet quality standards as expected by the beneficiaries. For example, many disabled people due to the terrain experienced tyre punctures on their*

wheel chairs from time to time. The project facilitated by establishing a tyre puncture repair facility run by a person with disability. (RR 6)

6.   **Methods** described for collecting beneficiary feedback

Method	Description	No/%
Informal contact	Including interaction at existing meetings and events, and through day-to-day contact with beneficiaries, or during routine monitoring.	**29 (42%)**
Discussions with groups of beneficiaries	This included discussions held during routine monitoring and evaluation. In 24 cases these were described as focus group discussions.	**22 (32%)**
Focus group discussions with beneficiaries	Although described as focus groups, this may be used more informally to describe a small group discussion.	**24 (35%)**
Specific workshops with beneficiaries	Some of these workshops are described as participatory reflection, or as planning & review meetings. (Sometimes these workshops also include stakeholders)	**14 (20%)**
Written methods:	Questionnaires, forms, surveys. This included the normal evaluation after training courses and workshops, and in some cases may also have related to M&E data rather than the views & suggestions of beneficiaries.	**21 (30%)**
Interviews with individual beneficiaries	Face to face interviews. Level of formality varies.	**19 (28%)**
Ad-hoc feedback	This included individual requests and submissions, and having an 'open' office in the project location.	**4 (6%)**
Other methods	• Community leaders are used to gather feedback from other community members • Democratic processes: the implementing partner is a member organisation, including beneficiaries • Radio phone-ins • A specific 'feedback mailbox.'	**4 (6%)**

Discussions with other stakeholders	Stakeholders included government, volunteers, staff, community leaders, beneficiary organisations. In two cases, family members of beneficiaries were difficult to communicate with because of being deaf-blind, or intellectually challenged.	**23 (33%)**
M & E & planning	Three organisations also included pre-activity consultation or needs assessments. Two included participatory planning methods (such as village mapping and action research). A number of M&E and planning methods were also described, including KAP studies, baseline studies, case study collection, action research, tracer studies, and village mapping.	**17 (25%)**

CHALLENGES

Respondents were asked what challenges they or their partners faced in incorporating *beneficiary feedback* into project management and implementation processes.

a. 10 responses (14%) faced few if any challenges, and these included organisations who had built flexibility and beneficiary involvement into the design of their projects.

b. A majority of responses (60) reflected that **beneficiary feedback was often in the form of requests**, which they were often unable to meet because:
   - Budgets were insufficient (28) (41%)
   - Requests were beyond the scope of the project (16) (23%)
   - Donor requirements did not provide sufficient flexibility[4] (12) (17%)
   - Expectations were unrealistic (7) (10%)
   - Requests came too late to be incorporated (4) (6%)
   - Staff time was insufficient (3) (4%)
   - Requests were not supportable, for example as they would be unsustainable after the project ended; or were outside project control; or reflected individual interests; or upset the balance between the needs of different stakeholders (4) (6%).

---

[4] This included inflexibility in moving money between budget lines, or of the logframe format, or the time taken to get changes approved. Two responses did however indicate that they had found DFID/Triple Line flexible and helpful.

  c. Two responses mentioned the challenges in managing the **frustration, animosity or withdrawal of beneficiaries** whose suggestions had not been adopted.

  d. One respondent mentioned frustration when – having taken feedback on board – beneficiaries were not as a group willing to make the personal commitment/investment in its implementation. A number of respondents mentioned challenges in **collecting and collating** feedback, due to:

- Reluctance on the part of beneficiaries to provide negative feedback (4)
- Poor quality of feedback on workshops and events[5] (3)
- Difficulties in reflecting and incorporating the complexity of different views of different groups within the community (5)
- Particular difficulties in particular beneficiaries being able to share feedback[6]
- Time constraints of beneficiaries (migration/elections/harvest time) (2)
- Time constraints (organisational) (4)
- Inhospitable, large or scattered geography[7] (3)
- One project did not deal directly with end beneficiaries, but worked instead with health professionals providing services.
- A possible unwillingness of local partners to pass on feedback to Grantholders that been critical of them.[8]

  e. Some responses stressed the need to incorporate flexibility and beneficiary feedback in the project design at the onset, so as not to raise false expectations.

  f. Other issues raised included the high staff turnover within government affecting implementation (2), and the reluctance of staff within other service providers to provide open feedback.

7. The majority of respondents (90%) were able to provide an example of where beneficiary feedback had an impact on implementation. The most common type of example of where beneficiary feedback data had an impact on implementation processes takes the form of beneficiaries requesting different sorts of services which are then factored into approaches and implementation.

---

[5] By 'poor quality', responses referred to feedback reflecting peripheral issues (such as the quality of food provided) rather than substantive issues.

[6] This referred to those with intellectual difficulties, and a group of deaf-blind beneficiaries. In both cases, family members were approached instead.

[7] In one case this was resolved through forming representative organisations

[8] This was raised in one response. No responses discussed whether they felt comfortable collating and sharing feedback critical of their own role.

Example 1: **Beneficiary feedback as part of the consultation process in project implementation**
"Supplementary Education Centers (SECs) are selected based on the feedback of beneficiaries."

Example 2: **Beneficiary feedback enables a project to respond better to beneficiary needs**
Community Action Groups of this project gave feedback after 1 year working together that they needed to start savings and credit activities within their groups for their financial empowerment. From the 2nd year, additional technical and financial assistance was provided to these groups'.

Example 3: ***Beneficiary feedback leads a project to be more culturally appropriate in raising awareness***
A multi-stakeholder platform (which included beneficiaries) reviewed radio programmes made by the project and did not approve them because they were not sufficiently 'culturally appropriate'. Their concerns 'helped the implementation team re-write and record the programmes'.

MAIN FINDINGS

The beneficiary feedback survey elicited a high level of response and offered useful insights into the <u>approaches</u> used within the CSCF to collect feedback from beneficiaries and to use this to inform project processes. The survey suggests routine collection of beneficiary data across the CSCF portfolio although the frequency varies: Projects collect feedback from beneficiaries through routine monitoring (83%), annually (61%) and at project end (32%). Most projects have a formal system for collecting data from beneficiaries and 61% provided a robust description how they do this. As yet, very few projects (17%) ascribe a role for beneficiaries in collecting and analysing data. Even fewer projects (4) mention collecting information about their own performance including that of their project staff. The <u>methods</u> described by projects for collecting beneficiary feedback include: informal contact, discussions, focus groups, workshops, written methods such as questionnaires, interviews and M & E planning events. CSCF projects are able to articulate <u>challenges</u> they face in collecting beneficiary feedback and the most significant of these are: planning and budget constraints in changing project design; reaching beneficiaries in remote areas; sampling (how to collect feedback when the project reaches large numbers of people); and managing expectations and frustrations.

NEXT STEPS

The Fund Manager will incorporate questions on beneficiary feedback into: the 2013 annual report and project completion templates; the M &

E seminar with Grantholders in March 2013; and the learning seminar to Kenya scheduled tentatively for May 2013.

ANNEX 1: LETTER AND BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK SURVEY TEMPLATE SENT TO GRANTHOLDERS

31 August 2012

Dear Grant holders,

Subject: Including the views of beneficiaries in project management and as part of quality assurance (beneficiary feedback)

DFID consider it important that beneficiaries of CSCF projects have the opportunity to comment on the activities they are involved in, and that grant holders and partners consider and act on their views as part of project management and quality assurance. This process is known as *beneficiary feedback*. It involves collecting the views of beneficiaries, considering and analysing what they say, and acting upon their views in project management and implementation processes.

Therefore, as CSCF fund manager we would like to request your assistance in understanding to what extent *beneficiary feedback* is collected, analysed and acted upon to improve project implementation and management processes.

Your feedback will be analysed and shared with DFID. It will also inform the content of the seminar for grant holders on monitoring and evaluation which will be held early in 2013.

Please could we ask you to answer the brief questionnaire on the following page by **27th September 2012**. Please use one questionnaire per project. **When you have completed the form, go to the top right hand corner of the letter and click *Submit Form* and then just follow the instructions.**

We very much appreciate your contribution.

Yours sincerely,

Juliette Seibold

CSCF Project Reference Number:	
UK Organisation Name:	
Project Partner(s):	

1	Is your CSCF project collecting feedback from ***beneficiaries*** (definition below) on project activities, and analysing and using this information in management processes to improve project performance?
	YES **NO**
2	How often (if at all) do you, as the grant holder and/or your partner(s), collect ***beneficiary feedback*** data?
	Annually **During regular monitoring** **At the end of the project** **Other** *(please specify)*:
3	If you as the grant holder and/ or your partner(s) collect beneficiary feedback data, please explain the main steps followed. *(Briefly outline steps as bullet points)*.

4	Please provide an example of where ***beneficiary feedback*** data had an impact on project management and implementation processes.
5	What challenges do grant holders and/or partners face (if any) in incorporating ***beneficiary feedback*** into project management and implementation processes?

* Definition of beneficiaries: for the purpose of this exercise, 'beneficiaries' should include end beneficiaries as well as those whose awareness is being raised. For example, parents, teachers, caregivers, service providers, and government officials.