

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC)

Volume I – Final
Report

A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s

An evaluation of this magnitude with global ramifications cannot be accomplished without the support of many individuals, whether for the design, the data collection, or the overall logistics required to cement the whole process. Universalia would like to thank the representatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat and of member countries, especially where Field Missions took place, for sharing their knowledge and experience and contributing to the success of this evaluation.

Universalia also wishes to thank the members of the Evaluation Team who led the different components of the work, undertook the country and case studies, analysed data, and provided logistical and administrative support. The main findings of the evaluation result from their collaborative effort.

Executive Summary

Following the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2005, the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) encouraged member countries to raise their annual contribution to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC or “the Fund”) by 6% for each of the next five years. Member countries responded by making increased contributions contingent upon a review of the CFTC to examine the overall support being provided by the Fund.

Hence, the purpose of this Evaluation of the CFTC is to report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the technical assistance provided by the Fund, as seen in both its overall operations as well as in the Secretariat’s capacity to manage it. The methodology employed for the Evaluation includes a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques, including document review, project review, individual and group interviews, as well as Field Missions to four geographical regions (the Caribbean, Africa, the Pacific, and Asia). In total, the Evaluation Team members visited eleven member states and conducted interviews with over 275 stakeholders.

The Nature of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation

At the outset of the Evaluation, the Team members conceptualised the CFTC as being a program of technical assistance, with the CFTC being a “donor” and the member states being “recipients”. However, as substantive data collection began and after examining the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), it became increasingly apparent that the relationships fostered under the CFTC were qualitatively different from the traditional donor-recipient paradigm of most other development aid programs. Therefore, the Evaluation Team’s first challenge was to clarify this misconception and to come up with an analytic model which allowed it to perceive the CFTC in a more accurate light. It is the Team’s view that the CFTC be seen as a unique example of multilateral, voluntary cooperation and partnership among like-minded nations. Indeed, it is clear that the CFTC’s overarching mandate is to contribute to development efforts in member states not so much by direct interventions as by laying the foundations for long-term relationships with partners through a process of building understanding, sharing experiences and promoting mutual cooperation. It is readily apparent that this paradigm of doing business produces a far different relationship model than the traditional interventionist approach to foreign aid, wherein there are clear hierarchical relationships of donor-recipient or supplier-receiver.

In light of the above, a four-sided model was developed to permit the evaluation to be conducted:

- Ever since its inception, the CFTC has not been a traditional development program with a stereotypical donor-recipient model.
- The CFTC’s mandate and governance do not lend themselves to comparison with the mandates and governance of other development organisations, or to the measurement yardsticks that are often used to articulate the performance of traditional donor-driven development programming.
- The CFTC’s voluntary and contributory nature implies governance and decision-making paradigms that are different from those used by multilateral international financial institutions and national bilateral development agencies.
- The CFTC’s small scale, and that of the COMSEC as a whole, implies that it develop management, decision-making, and performance measurement systems appropriate to its unique circumstances and not simply be compared to those of much larger institutions.

Key Evaluation Findings

Benefits to CFTC Contributing Countries

The Evaluation Team analysed the benefits the CFTC brings to participating countries by using a conceptual framework based on where the benefits take place – at the institutional or policy level, in organisations, or at the individual level.

At the *institutional* level, the evidence suggests that CFTC activities have supported the building and strengthening of public institutions. Activities and projects in the countries under review often seem to focus on legislative or policy change. In particular, the types of projects analysed in the Desk Reviews and Field Missions seemed geared to generate common policies to facilitate trade negotiations, create new entities and regulatory frameworks, revise legislative frameworks, and promote public sector reform processes.

From an *organisational* perspective, a large proportion of the benefits of CFTC technical cooperation have been at the level of units, departments, or ministries. The Field Missions and Desk Reviews identify a number of changes that include improved systems and data availability, improved processes or procedures, new products or services, and new or revised plans and strategies. Debt management assistance is also recognised as an effective Pan-Commonwealth initiative and is a prime example of organisational strengthening, although it appeared to encounter challenges in some countries.

The CFTC has also been beneficial to *individuals*, mostly through CFTC-sponsored training programs and scholarship opportunities. The data gathered from the surveys suggests that the training has contributed to enhancing skills, providing on-the-job relevance, and opportunities for networking and sharing experiences. Almost all of the survey respondents noted that the training they attended was relevant to their professional needs, enhanced their professional skills, and proved to be beneficial in their work. However, the benefits of CFTC training activity for organisational capacity are limited and mostly indirect, due to factors that include staff turnover in the public service and the absence of effective follow-up mechanisms.

Nevertheless, strengthening country capacity appears to be one of the major and ongoing benefits of the CFTC. For this evaluation, country capacity building was conceptualised in three ways: *expansion*, *replacement*, and *gap filling* (for a complete definition, please refer to p. 26-27 of the report).

It was found that the CFTC has contributed to the *expansion* of capacity in some countries by helping to build human resource or technical capacity to continue work. In other words, it increased the country's ability to implement a function or address an issue upon completion of CFTC involvement. On the other hand, the Field Missions also found that some countries' expectations for capacity expansion as a result of the technical cooperation were not met because no planned efforts to transfer technical knowledge to the host country were made.

The CFTC has also played critical roles in capacity *replacement* by ensuring that essential services are maintained, especially in times of crisis or natural disaster. (Conversely, other stakeholders stated that the CFTC was not meeting the needs of their country.) The CFTC has also helped to fill gaps, particularly in small nations, by providing temporary technical skills or specialised human resources.

The Evaluation also focused on the contribution of the Fund to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In that regard, it appears that the economic, public sector renewal, trade, and international cooperation programming of the CFTC indirectly contributes to the attainment of two MDGs, namely “To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1)” and “To develop a global partnership for development (Goal 8)”. A few CFTC projects also contribute to the health and education sector-related MDGs, although these make up only a small portion of CFTC activities as a whole. Additional assistance was forthcoming for HIV/AIDS (Goal 6) on a regional and pan-Commonwealth basis, in the form of training.

In the end, the success and benefits of CFTC activities are influenced, to a large extent, by the specific country context as well as the way in which activities are designed and delivered.

Strategic Planning & Rationale

The Commonwealth Secretariat has made efforts to improve strategic planning over the past three years by introducing regional consultations and country technical cooperation frameworks. However, these planning tools are not yet effectively known or used in all regions by the Principal Contact Person (PCP) or by COMSEC.

In the sample of countries reviewed, it appears that CFTC projects are generally supportive of national development plans or priorities. The contributions to national development priorities derive from two types of projects: those that appear to be designed to meet specific national priorities or needs as spelled out in formal plans (National Development Plans, Poverty Reduction Strategies), and those that evolve in response to emerging issues or situations reflecting government priorities. Unfortunately, CFTC programming often is not linked to larger scale plans and priorities of other development partners, as encouraged by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Therefore, although the CFTC is relevant to Commonwealth nations, there are several risks to its ongoing relevance in the current context of international development cooperation.

Comparative Advantage

The CFTC’s comparative advantage is determined by its ability to respond to the needs of small nations, the partnership ethos that underlies its origins, the quality of its experts, its recognised technical expertise in certain areas, and its ability to strengthen the response to global issues. Its expertise is also recognized in numerous areas, most notably debt management, trade negotiation/facilitation, public sector renewal, legal support, economic development, and democratic development.

Efficiency

To begin with, it appears that the selection methodologies used by COMSEC to provide personnel for CFTC- supported programming are efficient and effective, given the nature of the CFTC itself, although it is the Evaluation Team’s view that there is room for improvement. One concern is the informal nature of the Experts Database, which creates internal inefficiencies. More positively, where the experts are concerned, the percentage recruited from developing countries for long-term assignments supports the CFTC’s contention that it promotes South-South cooperation and mutual understanding. However, the percentage of developing country experts for short-term assignments is markedly lower, while female expert involvement, which stands at approximately 20% for both long-term and short-term CFTC assignments, leaves much room for improvement. The CFTC’s basic rates of pay for long-term assignments, defined as being of one year or longer, are highly cost efficient when compared to pay rates in other large multilateral organisations, such as the UN, for similar positions.

It is the evaluation team's finding that COMSEC's financial management information system does not permit adequate ongoing analysis of cost efficiency. The recent introduction of the Performance Management Improvement Project, however, should increase COMSEC's ability to analyse various aspects of cost efficiency and effectiveness.

Program Administration and Implementation

In the Evaluation Team's view, the existing approaches to CFTC record keeping limit COMSEC's ability to both monitor programming delivery and to demonstrate results to different stakeholders. Furthermore, it was observed that the current decision-making structure at COMSEC does not promote cross-analysis or identifying the opportunities for programming synergies. Project identification mechanisms are generally informal and do not enable cross-comparisons at the national level.

The norms set out in the COMSEC manual and other documents delineating its relationships with the Point of Contact (POC) and the Principal Contact Person (PCP) appear to be simultaneously complex and ambiguous. Nevertheless, smaller states appear to adhere to the CFTC- defined "norms" with respect to the POC and PCP relationship more than larger or medium sized nations.

At the national level there is limited evidence that CFTC programming is integrated with, or planned in conjunction with, the work of other development partners. In general, on-site representatives of other partners have a limited understanding of the CFTC and of its role in the nation in question. Fortunately, the situation is far more encouraging at the regional or global levels.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

COMSEC's strategic and operational plans do not yet reflect a consistent results-based framework. As for the projects themselves, the current approach to monitoring them is uneven and primarily focused on reporting outputs and events. Furthermore, follow-up assessments of CFTC projects/programming have not yet been regularised, thus further complicating the whole monitoring and evaluation process.

On a more positive note, the current formal evaluations undertaken by COMSEC of CFTC-supported programming are consistent with expected norms.

Strategic Governance

While the strategic governance arrangements appear to be adequate, the extent of cooperation between COMSEC, member representatives in London, in-country PCP, and others are affected by a number of variables, all of which have an impact upon overall governance. It was noted, in this regard, that some of the largest contributors to the Fund are seeking more active and participatory decision-making mechanisms for the CFTC.

Conclusion: Strengths and Challenges for the CFTC

Strengths

One of the main strengths of the CFTC is that it is highly valued by small states for several reasons. First, the CFTC's gap-filling (and general provision of technical experts) provides smaller nations with access to technical and professional capacities that they simply could not expect to either develop themselves or procure elsewhere. Secondly, The CFTC's (and, by extension, COMSEC's) informal organisational structures lend themselves to being responsive to the needs of smaller

member states. By contrast, in some larger countries, the CFTC attracts less visibility due to the existing portfolio of other large, competing programs. The scale of CFTC cooperation with smaller nations (frequently funding a single advisor/ specialist in a small nation for the long term) appears to have more significance to them than the larger programming of other aid partners. Finally, the CFTC is also valued for its responsiveness to small-scale challenges that other donors would not be willing to undertake and such projects directly respond to local needs.

Challenges

The challenges noted by the Evaluation Team largely relate to COMSEC's evident inability to articulate a clear vision for the CFTC and how it can "fit" within the new paradigms of global development. The ambiguities and overlaps within CFTC's current mandate are challenges to its long-term viability, not so much because they detract from the acknowledged quality and relevance of the programming, but because they can lead to decreased effectiveness.

Considering the CFTC's weak monitoring and evaluation capacity, the current regime of non-standardised reporting, combined with limited compliance to results-based management, leaves the CFTC behind its other Paris Declaration partners and has the possibility of calling into question the program funding obtained from some of its larger members.

The nature of the PCP/POC system may be one of the factors why the CFTC was generally absent from donors' discussions. However, these factors do not mitigate the fact that COMSEC has apparently not been able to capitalise on opportunities for synergies and the sustaining of pilot efforts. Finally, an increasingly important limitation of the CFTC is the lack of systematic enforcement of the roles and responsibilities of the PCP and the POC.

The strengths and challenges noted above point to a mixed overall conclusion. It is one, however, where the strengths and benefits clearly outweigh the challenges.

Avenues for the Future

This report highlights five general areas for improvement that could enhance the impact and effectiveness of the CFTC: mandate clarification; CFTC governance arrangements; planning systems; administrative & project level decision-making; and, finally, performance measurement and reporting.

The Evaluation Team suggests that COMSEC establish an internal Task Force to clarify some of the mandate-related ambiguities noted in this report and to restore a more sustainable balance between the legitimate desire for responsiveness on the one hand, and the long-standing, albeit overlooked, recognition of a degree of program prioritisation.

Regarding governance arrangements, three recommendations are hereby made: First, COMSEC could consider the benefits of establishing a subcommittee / contact group of the Executive Committee, one dedicated exclusively advising the Executive Committee as a whole relative to major CFTC-related issues. Second, it is also recommended that COMSEC / CFTC procedures be amended to enable member states, should they so wish, to designate their High Commissioner in London to act as principal spokesperson in relation to the CFTC. Third, the findings with respect to governance are clear in concluding that the current PCP/POC/COMSEC relationship model is detracting from the overall performance of the Fund. For this reason, the CFTC should offer member states two models for a refreshed PCP/POC/COMSEC relationship, with one model clearly recognising the paramount role of the national PCP as the national overall coordinating body, and the other with the PCP role more narrowly defined to be limited to a transactional clearing house for the transmission of funding.

The recommendations with respect to planning systems focus on CFTC planning mechanisms. The Evaluation Team suggests that the Biennial Technical Cooperation Frameworks be made the basis for mid-term, nationally-sensitive planning and be developed through a more participatory process. Furthermore, it is suggested that the structure of the ComSec Strategic Plans (and internal resource allocations systems) be amended to focus on the priority areas that the proposed Task Force has identified. In addition, it is felt that COMSEC might realise further benefits by limiting resource allocation to only those programming areas that have been identified as priorities or which have constituted more than 5% of overall discretionary CFTC funding.

Regarding administrative matters, The Evaluation Team recommends that the current ad hoc process of CFTC funding approval be replaced at both the Director and Deputy Secretary General level with a formalised bi-monthly process. In fact, a cyclical approach to project approval would enable senior managers to take more informed decisions about the relative worth of a proposed project and where it fits in relation to national needs or in relation to the biennial Technical Cooperation Frameworks. Furthermore, an additional area of possible improvement involves the CFTC's internal project approval documents, which could be redesigned to increase use of past performance data, focus on issues of sustainability and synergies, strengthen the use of RBM principles to include mandatory performance indicators, and to require a discussion of the linkage of the project in question to CFTC priorities and the attainment of national development objectives. It is also suggested that COMSEC engage in a process of outreach to national PCPs to enrich the pool of candidates that comprise the Experts Database.

Finally, there is room for improvement in the areas of performance measurement and reporting. To improve the CFTC's efficiency, COMSEC might consider accelerating existing initiatives to consolidate records management, and to do so to at least at the divisional level. It is further recommended that the CFTC institute a follow-up mission one year after project completion to ascertain with the responsible national authority the medium-term outcomes of the project in question. It is also suggested that the annual "Assistance to Countries" Report be redesigned so as to include information about the goals of the project in question and how it has supported national and CFTC priorities. The same would apply to the CFTC Biennial Report for the attainment of medium-term results, thus enabling linkages to be made with national and / or CFTC priorities.

Acronyms

CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ComSec	Commonwealth Secretariat
CPAD	Communications and Public Affairs Division
CSD	Committee on Sustainable Development
CS-DRMS	ComSec Debt Recording and Management System
DFID	Department For International Development (United Kingdom)
EAD	Economic Affairs Division
EXCO	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GIDD	Governance and Institutional Development Division
HC	High Commission
HDI	Human Development Index
HLRG	High Level Review Group
HRU	Human Rights Unit
LCAD	Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NZ	New Zealand
NZAid	New Zealand Aid
PAD	Political Affairs Division
PCP	Primary Contact Points
PMIP	Performance Management Improvement Project
PMRU	Project Management and Referrals Unit
PNG	Papua New Guinea
POC	Points of Contact
PTL	Project Team Leader

A c r o n y m s

RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission for the Solomon Islands
RBM	Results-based management
SASD	Special Advisory Services Division
SGF	Strategic Gap Filling (evaluation)
SGO	Secretary General Office
SPED	Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division
STPD	Social Transformation Program Division
TC	Technical cooperation
TORs	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation
YAD	Youth Affairs Division

Glossary

Accountability	As a criterion for assessing governance and management, the extent to which accountability is defined, accepted, and exercised along the chain of command and control within a programme – starting with the annual general meeting of the members or parties at the top and going down to the executive board, the chief executive officer, task team leaders, implementers, and in some cases, to the beneficiaries of the programme.
Baseline	An analytical description of the situation prior to the development intervention, against which progress can be assessed or comparisons made.
Cost-effectiveness	The extent to which a programme has achieved or is expected to achieve its results at a lower cost compared with alternatives.
Effectiveness	The extent to which a programme has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, taking into account their relative importance. The term is also used as a broader, aggregated measure- encompassing relevance and efficiency as well- of the overall outcome of a development intervention such as a GRPP.
Efficiency	The extent to which a programme has converted or is expected to convert its resources/inputs (such as funds, expertise, time, etc) economically into results in order to achieve the maximum possible outputs, outcomes, and impacts with the minimum possible inputs. (also called cost-efficiency)
Evaluation	<p>A management activity to assess: the appropriateness of a programme's design and implementation in achieving its objectives; the programme's results both intended and un-intended; and the factors affecting the level and distribution of the benefits that the programme produced. (Adil Khan, Australia 1998)</p> <p>The periodic assessment of relevance, performance, efficiency and impact (both expected and unexpected) in relation to stated objectives. (World Bank)</p> <p>The systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed policy, programme, or project, its design, implementation, and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and achievement of its objectives, and its developmental effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.</p>
Financial management	The processes that govern the recording and use of funds, including allocation processes, crediting and debiting of accounts, controls that restrict use, accounting, and periodic financial reporting systems. It also includes the processes which ensure that funds are used for the purpose intended – a fiduciary standard that is expected by the vast majority of donors. In cases where funds received accumulate over time, it would also include the management of cash and investment portfolio.

Glossary

Governance	The structures, functions, processes, and organisational traditions that have been put in place within the context of a programme in such a way that it achieves its objective in an effective and transparent manner. It is the framework of accountability and responsibility to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their objectives.
Impacts	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long –term effects produced by a development intervention, directly and indirectly, intended or unintended.
Indicator	A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or help asses the performance of a development actor.
Individual	This generally refers to the effects of CFTC training activities on individual participants. These individuals are generally public servants in Commonwealth countries.
Inputs	The financial, human, and material resources used for a development intervention.
Institutional	Institutions are understood as the written and unwritten rules, norms and constraints that humans devise to reduce uncertainty and control their environment. These include: 1) written rules and agreements that govern contractual relations and corporate governance; 2) constitutions, laws and rules that govern politics, government, finance, and society more broadly; and 3) unwritten codes of conduct, norms of behaviour, and beliefs. ¹ For the CFTC, this category encompasses policy and legislative reform as well as any systems change that is being promoted through a CFTC activity or project.
Legitimacy	As a criterion for assessing governance and management, the way in which government and managerial authority is exercised in relation to those with a legitimate interest in the programme – including shareholders, other stakeholders, implementers, beneficiaries, and the community at large.
Monitoring	<p>A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. (OECD)</p> <p>The continuous assessment of project implementation in relation to agreed schedules and the use of inputs infrastructure and services by project beneficiaries Monitoring provides managers and stakeholders with continuous feedback on implementation. (World Bank)</p>

¹ Menard, C. and M. M. Shirley (eds) (2005). “Handbook of New Institutional Economics”. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 1.

Glossary

Objective	The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or programme is expected to contribute. (World Bank and OECD)
Organisational	Organisations are defined as formalised entities that involve a cluster of people who are brought together for a common purpose. Organisations both conform to and influence institutions. They can be categorised as private or public, for-profit or non-profit, governmental or non-governmental, and so forth. For the CFTC, this includes the different units, departments, ministries, or other types of organisations (including non-governmental) that may benefit from CFTC technical cooperation.
Outcomes	The achieved or likely short-term and medium effects of the outputs of a development intervention.
Outputs	The products, capital goods and services that result from a development intervention. This may also include changes resulting from the intervention That are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
Partners	Stakeholders who are involved in the governance or financing of the programme (including the members of the governing, executive, and advisory bodies).
Performance monitoring	A continuous process of collecting and analysing data to compare how well a policy, programme, or project is being implemented against expected results.
Relevance	The extent to which (a) current global/regional challenges and concerns in a particular development sector and (b) the needs and priorities of beneficiary countries and groups.
Resources	The inputs that are used in the activities of a programme. Broadly speaking, the term encompasses natural, physical, financial, human, and social resources.
Results	The outputs, outcomes or impacts (intended or unintended, positive or negative) of a development intervention.
Results-based management	A management strategy focusing on performance and achievement outputs, outcomes and impacts.
Stakeholders	The parties who are interested in or affected, either positively or negatively, by the programme. Stakeholders are often referred to as “principal” and “other” or “direct” and “indirect.” While other or indirect stakeholders – such as taxpayers in both donor and beneficiary countries, visitors to a beneficiary country, and other indirect beneficiaries – may have interests as well, these are not ordinarily considered in evaluations unless a principal stakeholder acts as their proxy.

G l o s s a r y

Sustainability	When the term is applied to the activities of a programme, the extent to which the benefits arising from these activities are likely to continue after the activities have been completed. When the term is applied to organisation or programme is likely to continue its operational activities over time.
Technical cooperation	Provision of advice and/or skills in the form of specialist personnel, scholarships and grants for research and associated costs. Technical cooperation should not be equated with capacity development which is a much wider concept. TC is one input to the capacity development process.
Technical cooperation frameworks	A newly established set of CFTC documents that are designed to present a two year forecast of likely CFTC activities an also which present a set of general information about the Commonwealth as whole, the CFTC and the level of national development
Transparency	As a criterion for assessing governance and management, the extent to which a programme's decision-making, reporting, and evaluation processes are open and freely available to the general public. This is a metaphorical extension of the meaning used in the physical sciences – a “transparent” object being one that can be seen through.
Value-for-money	The extent to which a programme has obtained the maximum benefit from the outputs and outcomes it has produced with the resources available to it.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation	1
1.3 Organisation of the Report	2
2. Methodology	4
2.1 Overview	4
2.2 Methods	4
2.3 Limitations	6
3. The Nature of the CFTC	7
3.1 The Need for Clarity	7
3.2 Defining Characteristics	8
3.2.1 The Basic Mandate	8
3.2.2 Ambiguous Priorities	10
3.3 Implications	13
4. Overview of CFTC from 2000 to 2006	15
4.1 Financial Overview	15
4.2 Geographic Overview	15
4.3 Programming Overview	17
4.4 ComSec Division Involvement	19
5. Key Evaluation Findings	21
5.1 Benefits of CFTC to Recipient Countries	21
5.1.1 Introduction	21
5.1.2 Institutional, Organisational, and Individual Benefits	21
5.1.3 Contributions to Increased Capacity	28
5.1.4 Contributions to MDGs	32
5.1.5 Factors that Influence the Effectiveness of CFTC Activities	34
5.2 Strategic Planning and Integration of CFTC	36
5.3 Rationale and Comparative Advantage of the CFTC	41
5.4 Efficiency	45
5.4.1 Introduction	45
5.4.2 The Selection of Experts	45
5.4.3 Financial Resource Control	48
5.4.4 The Cost Efficiency of the CFTC	49

5.5 Programme Administration and Implementation	53
5.5.1 The Management of Information	53
5.5.2 Project Selection and Decision-Making	54
5.5.3 The POC/PCP Relationship in Terms of Project Implementation	55
5.6 Partnership and Liaison with Others	57
5.7 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation	59
5.7.1 Introduction	59
5.7.2 Planning for Results	59
5.7.3 Monitoring	60
5.7.4 Evaluation	61
5.7.5 Reporting	63
5.7.6 Integrating Lessons Learned	64
5.8 Strategic Governance	65
6. Conclusions: Strengths and Challenges for CFTC	69
6.1 Strengths	69
6.1.1 Strong Value for Small States	69
6.1.2 Gap Filling and Capacity Enhancement	69
6.1.3 Responsiveness to Small Scale Challenges	70
6.1.4 Responsiveness to and Respectfulness of Local Needs	70
6.2 Challenges	70
6.2.1 Ambiguous Mandates	70
6.2.2 Incomplete Planning, Reporting and Decision-Making Systems	71
6.2.3 Weak Links with Partners	72
6.2.4 Ambiguities in the Governance Apparatus	72
6.3 Overall Conclusions	72
7. Avenues for the Future	73
7.1 Mandate Clarification	73
7.2 CFTC Governance Arrangements	74
7.3 Planning Systems	77
7.4 Internal Administration and Decision-Making	78
7.5 Performance Measurement and Reporting	81

Exhibits

Exhibit 4.1	CFTC Allocated Budget per year (2000-2006)	15
Exhibit 4.2	Number of Country Projects by Region 2002-2006	16
Exhibit 4.3	Number of Regional Technical Cooperation Projects by Region	16
Exhibit 4.4	CFTC Disbursement per Capita (2001-2006)	17
Exhibit 4.5	Number of Trainees by Region	17
Exhibit 4.6	Commonwealth Programmes per Plan Period	18
Exhibit 4.7	Direct Programme Expenditures (2002/03-2003/04)	18
Exhibit 4.8	CFTC Direct expenditure by Programmes (2004/05-2005/06)	19
Exhibit 4.9	CFTC Number of Projects by ComSec Division (2005-2006)	20
Exhibit 5.1	Examples of CFTC Contributions to Institutions	22
Exhibit 5.2	Examples of CFTC Contributions to Organisations	23
Exhibit 5.3	Examples of CFTC Capacity Expansion	29
Exhibit 5.4	Examples of CFTC Gap Filling	31
Exhibit 5.5	Regional consultations	36
Exhibit 5.6	Examples of initiatives with linkages to Government Plans	38
Exhibit 5.7	Comparative advantage of CFTC in designated countries and regions	42
Exhibit 5.8	Governance components of CFTC	65

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Universalia is pleased to submit to the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED) of the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) the draft final report for the evaluation of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). Established in 1971, the CFTC is also characterised (albeit not fully accurately) as the “development arm” of the Commonwealth and it is the principal tool by which the Commonwealth provides technical assistance to its member countries. Unlike other technical assistance funds, the CFTC is a *mutual* and *voluntary* fund, where member states “contribute resources according to their ability and draw on them according to their needs.”²

Following the Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 2005, ComSec encouraged member countries to raise their annual contribution to the Fund by 6% for each of the next five years. Consequently, member countries proposed that a review be undertaken to examine the overall support being provided by the Fund prior to increasing their annual contribution. While these declarations have influenced our thinking, they should not be over-emphasized. Our work was to examine primarily systems and process and to ascertain the nature of the contributions that the CFTC has made, using a set of targeted nations as case studies. The impact of increased funding necessarily will enrich the CFTC’s overall ability. However, the issues and findings that follow have been made independent of the impact of increased funding or decisions by some to as not yet adhere to the request for additional support.

1.2 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation of the CFTC was to report on the operations of the Fund, especially on the effectiveness and efficiency of the technical assistance provided, but also on the overall aptitudes of the Secretariat in handling the Fund.

The specific purposes of the evaluation were:

- To assess the relevance of CFTC activities in relation to the objectives, principles and priorities of member countries’ development priorities and their contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- To examine policies and practices followed by the Commonwealth Secretariat in its administration of the CFTC;
- To assess the ability of the Commonwealth Secretariat’s monitoring and evaluation process to provide information about CFTC development effectiveness;
- To identify the strengths, weaknesses and comparative advantage of the Fund;
- To recommend how the CFTC can be strengthened as a development fund and where efficiency gains could be realised;
- To recommend ways in which non-contributing member states (**Note:** *The ToR for this assignment uses the word “donor” at this point, the use of which, in our estimation is a misnomer given the contributory /member state nature of the CFTC*) can play a constructive role as CFTC contributors, including through cooperation with the Commonwealth Secretariat; and,
- To recommend lessons that can inform the future direction of the CFTC.

² <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/subhomepage/158192/>

At the outset of this evaluation and in light of the upcoming new ComSec Strategic Plan and its likely impact on the CFTC, we wish to underscore that our work therefore was not to undertake a “ground up” review of the fund and its role within the Commonwealth as a whole, or the broader global community. We therefore were advised to take as preconditions the general mandate and historic traditions of the fund. It is for this central reason that we have done so, albeit we do look towards a degree of clarification with respect to how the MoU has been interpreted and in some ways misunderstood. We understand the desires of some who may have thought that this exercise could play a primarily policy development role – to ascertain what broad roles the CFTC might play in a post MDG environment. However to do so, to explore new types of programming, to question the fundamentally the public sector nature of the CFTC’s programming base, would have require more than evaluative tools. A combination of a highly complex “impact” evaluation, with comprehensive needs assessment reaching out to all member states would have been required, sets of activities clearly beyond our mandate.

1.3 Organisation of the Report

The report is presented in three volumes. Volume I (the present document) is the synthesis of the overall findings of the evaluation and is structured as follows:

- Section 2 presents the methodology of the evaluation;
- Section 3 is an historical synopsis of the nature of the CFTC;
- Section 4 is an overview of the assistance provided to member countries by the CFTC for the period under review (2000-2006);
- Section 5 presents the major findings of this evaluation;
- Section 6 highlights the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the CFTC;
- Finally, section 7 provides recommendations for future programming.

Volume II of this report presents case studies and Desk Reviews that were conducted for the evaluation and that contributed significantly to the key findings of the overall report. The five case studies were based on Field Missions to eight countries:

- St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Grenada Case Study (Caribbean);
- Tanzania Case Study (East Africa);
- The Gambia Case Study (West Africa);
- The Maldives and Sri Lanka Case Study (Asia); and,
- Samoa and the Solomon Islands Case Study (Pacific).

Desk Reviews were conducted for the following countries:

- Brunei;
- Kenya; and,
- Malaysia.

Volume III provides appendices related to methodology and data collection:

- Evaluation matrix;
- Instruments – interview protocols and questionnaires;

- Evaluation data sheet – including list of team members and schedule of the four Field Missions;
- List of people interviewed;
- List of documents consulted;
- Questionnaire results;
- Commonwealth Countries by Region;
- Findings & Recommendations.

In this report, we have used brief vignettes to illustrate relevant examples and provide some of the rich details that emerged from the data collection for this study. These sometimes include quotes and comments, but to protect the privacy of individuals, we have not used their names.

2. Methodology

2.1 Overview

The methodology for this evaluation was based on key review questions contained in the evaluation matrix, included in the Inception Report submitted in May 2007 and approved by ComSec (see Volume III, Appendix I).

The methodology consisted of a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques that included document review, project review, individual and group interviews, as well as Field Missions to four geographical regions (the Caribbean, Africa, the Pacific, and Asia). As described in section 1, the Evaluation Team developed eight country case studies as well as three country Desk Reviews. The Caribbean and Pacific missions allowed the Evaluation Team an opportunity to interview regional organisations in Barbados and Fiji.

Work planning and data collection for the study took place between May and September 2007. The instruments developed for data collection (interview protocols and questionnaires) are presented in Volume III, Appendix II.

The review was carried out by a team of specialists in programme evaluation, education, and policy and trade cooperation. A list of the team members with the schedule of the four Field Missions is included in the evaluation data sheet in Volume III, Appendix III.

In total, 43 technical cooperation (TC) projects were reviewed in eleven member states, and 275 stakeholders were interviewed for this evaluation. A complete list of people interviewed is presented in Volume III, Appendix IV. The lists of people interviewed in the course of each Field Mission are presented in each of the eight case studies in Volume II (Note : The case studies for the two nations in Asia, the two Caribbean nations and the two Pacific island nations were combined, resulting in five combined/ separate country case studies and three stand alone Desk Reviews.

2.2 Methods

Document Review

The Evaluation Team examined a wide range of documents at various levels (the project level, country level, and Secretariat level). These included Country Technical Cooperation Frameworks, Project Appraisal Documents, Memorandums of Understanding, Annual Performance Reports, Country Strategic Reports, ComSec Strategic Plans, previous evaluations, and documents from the Project Management and Referrals Unit (PMRU). General reference documents were also consulted and reviewed in the course of the study. A complete list of documents reviewed is presented in Volume III, Appendix V.

Questionnaires

With 53 member states, the Commonwealth is as vast as it is geographically diverse. In order to obtain a purposeful sampling, the Evaluation Team sent online questionnaires to all 53 Primary Contact Points (PCP) around the world and to hundreds of CFTC trainees. When valid email addresses were not readily available, questionnaires were faxed.

Surprisingly, the better response rate came from the trainees as 117 out of 313 responded, including both online and faxed questionnaires. As for the PCP, only 12 out of 46 responded to the questionnaire. Fortunately, the Evaluation Team was able to compensate for this shortcoming by meeting a substantial number of PCPs during the Field Missions. An overview of the questionnaire results is presented in Volume III, Appendix VI.

Regional Field Missions

The Evaluation Team conducted four regional Field Missions between June and September 2007 as well as two missions to the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, the United Kingdom.

The purpose of the missions was to meet stakeholders face-to-face in order to better assess the quantity, quality and timeliness of CFTC assistance.

Type of stakeholders interviewed during the Field Missions:

- Primary Contact Points (PCP)
- Technical Cooperation (TC) experts
- CFTC trainees
- Line Ministries (for trainees and technical cooperation)
- Regional organisations representatives
- Other development partners

The criteria identified to select the countries for regional Field Missions were the following:

- An adequate geographic balance of nations;
- The size (number and value) of activities supported by the CFTC;
- A balance between small nations and others;
- The exclusion, as much as possible, of countries visited for the Strategic Gap Filling evaluation;
- A relative mix of regional and national projects;
- The distribution of projects among varying types so as to ascertain whether concentration or dispersal has any results-oriented impact;
- The impact and contribution of other development partners;
- A balance between varying levels of development; and
- Other circumstances that might highlight unique CFTC characteristics.

The projects selected for review in the case study countries, which are specified in each of the country reports in Volume II, were selected based on range of factors including their relative financial value, diversity of sectors, duration, completed or close to completion, and strategic importance (in terms of scope and budget) to the country in the period under review. By selecting these projects, we aimed to ensure that we could interview stakeholders related to them. In the course of more general interviews with the PCPs and other stakeholders, other projects were also discussed.

Desk Reviews

Desk Reviews are a mix of document review and telephone interviews that broaden the regional scope of an evaluation with minimal resource investment. The Evaluation Team conducted Desk Reviews for Brunei Darussalam, Kenya and Malaysia, which allowed them to explore issues and gather more data to better tell the CFTC story.

2.3 Limitations

As noted above, the low response rate on the questionnaire sent to Primary Contact Points (PCP) was a limitation, which the Evaluation Team compensated for by meeting a number of PCPs during the Field Missions.

Data aggregation and analysis were seriously hindered by the lack of consistent data:

- The Assistance to Member Countries report that provides an overview of TC projects worldwide was provided only for the year 2002 to 2006.
- In 2004, ComSec expanded from 4 to 15 programmes and the names of all programmes were changed and regrouped – which made it impossible to track programming over the six-year period.
- Financial data were not presented consistently (i.e., for some countries the budget was shown, while in others the expenditures were shown).
- Access to project data was uneven across the eleven sample nations, especially in relation to project reports.

Due primarily to the lack of CFTC follow-up and evaluation mechanisms, and the consequent lack of data, it was often impossible to corroborate the testimony of key stakeholders in case study countries, especially when they attributed positive organisational or individual changes to a CFTC programming element. Equally, data limitations hindered our ability to make baseline comparisons or to analyse projects in an aggregated fashion.

3. The Nature of the CFTC

3.1 The Need for Clarity

As we began to approach this evaluation in the early winter of 2007, we examined the initial Terms of Reference largely in light of the prevailing assumption that the CFTC was a type of development cooperation programme, and that it shared many characteristics with the trust fund-like bodies of many of the CFTC development cooperation partners. At that time, we tended to conceptualise the CFTC more in terms of it being a program of technical assistance and also more in terms of the CFTC being a “donor” and the various member states being “recipients”. Indeed, some of the early material we received from ComSec as background material spoke in terms of “the donors”. However, as we began substantive data collection and examined the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), it became progressively clearer to us that the CFTC was something quite different from the paradigm of a donor/recipient relationship that provides technical assistance to developing countries. This view became ever clearer to us in light of the Paris Declaration and the stipulations in several places in the initial Terms of Reference for this assignment that aspects of the CFTC be evaluated in light of commitments made as part of The Paris Declaration.

Milestones of CFTC

- 1971: The CFTC is established by CHOGM, six years after the establishment of COMSEC.
- 1998: Establishment of an Internal Task Force to consider how the CFTC could be best adapted to both the changing development context and its reduced resource base.
- 1999: Publication of the Task Force Report entitled “CFTC: A Rethink”
- 2002: Revised Memorandum of Understanding following the acceptance of the “CFTC: A Rethink” report
- 2003: Adoption of the Aso Rock Commonwealth Declaration at the Abuja CHOGM that underlines the continuing need to support development and democracy

Therefore, as part of our Inception Mission we explored in detail what the senior decision-makers of the ComSec conceptualised as the fundamental nature of the CFTC. Interviews with representatives from Canada, Australia and The United Kingdom somewhat complicated this situation as they often compared the CFTC with the way these nations operated their bilateral development assistance programming. Indeed, this misunderstanding and use of the word “donor” even entered the ToR for this assignment. In our estimation, this usage was not simply a “short form”. Rather, based on some comments received with respect to the draft of this Report, the traditional donor/recipient stereotype which is not reflective of the CFTC reality seems to be persistent.

We noted a divergence in the understanding about the nature of the CFTC. On one hand, we heard that it is a somewhat different from of development programming and that it had some unique founding characteristics. On the other, we heard that it was out of step with contemporary development thinking.

Therefore, the first analytical challenge for us will be to clarify these misunderstandings and thus ensure that the CFTC is seen for what it actually is – a unique example of multilateral and voluntary cooperation and partnership among like minded - nations.

Make no mistake, seeking to eliminate poverty and promoting people-centred sustainable human development are explicit contemporary goals of the CFTC. But, it is far more than a globally minor development program that disburses relatively small grants and fills personnel gaps in public services.

3.2 Defining Characteristics

The genesis of the CFTC began some 35 year ago, only six years after the establishment of the Commonwealth Secretariat and immediately in the wake of the national independence movement that transformed the British Empire from a colonial network into the modern Commonwealth, a partnership of like - minded sovereign states. By the early 1970s, it had become evident that the modern Commonwealth was largely composed of developing countries, mostly former colonies or protectorates, all of which faced considerable social and economic development challenges.

3.2.1 The Basic Mandate

Accordingly, in 1971 Commonwealth Heads of Government recognised that there would be considerable benefits if the recently established Commonwealth Secretariat itself set up a mechanism to assist member states in dealing with these profound challenges. However, from its inception the new entity, The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, was envisaged to be more than another aid - giving body.

While we were unable to secure from ComSec the original MOU that established the CFTC, the following citation from its 1976 version ably sets the tone and begins to show that the CFTC from its inception was something different from a multilateral aid-giving initiative.

1976 MOU
<p>I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUND</p> <p>Commonwealth Governments have agreed to establish a Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation to be administered by the Commonwealth Secretariat and to be financed by such voluntary contributions as individual Governments may from time to time provide. The Fund will form part of the Commonwealth Secretariat and will thus share its legal capacities, privileges' and immunities.</p> <p>II. PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS</p> <p>1. The major purpose of the Fund will be to take advantage of shared experiences and similarities to promote development in the Commonwealth, thereby demonstrating in a practical way the ideals of co-operation and mutual assistance and strengthening the multilateral links among Commonwealth countries and peoples.</p>

There are some clear signals in this citation that differentiate the CFTC from what might be a traditional bilateral or multilateral aid programme.

First, the CFTC is to be established as a voluntary membership based body where all who contribute are members, not differentiated between “donors” on one hand, and “recipients” on the other. This basic differentiation has governance and strategic implications for policy direction which we will address shortly.

Second, the mandate is to take advantage of shared experiences and similarities to promote development and thereby promote cooperation, mutual assistance and multilateral links among the Commonwealth and its peoples. In our estimation, this mandate is far less an interventionist development mandate, than it is one designed to strengthen collaboration, understanding and the mutual sharing of knowledge.

Let us fast-forward over 30 years to the most recent version of the memorandum in 2002.

2002 MOU
<p>I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUND</p> <p>Commonwealth Governments have agreed to establish a Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation to be administered by the Commonwealth Secretariat and to be financed by such voluntary contributions as individual Governments may from time to time provide. The Fund will form part of the Commonwealth Secretariat and will thus share its legal capacities, privileges' and immunities.</p> <p>II. PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS</p> <p>1. The major purpose of the Fund will be to take advantage of shared experiences and similarities to promote development in the Commonwealth, thereby demonstrating in a practical way the ideals of co-operation and mutual assistance and strengthening the multilateral links among Commonwealth countries and peoples. The Fund will support efforts aimed at sustainable and people-centered development and the elimination of poverty."</p>

We can easily see that the two citations are quite similar with the exception of the addition of one sentence to the 2002 version that emphasizes: "... efforts to support ..."

In short, in our estimation the CFTC's overall mandate is to contribute to development effort not so much by direct interventions, as by a process of building understanding, the sharing of experiences and the promotion of mutual cooperation. This produces a far different ethos than an interventionist approach to foreign aid wherein there are a clear subsidiary relationships "donor" / "recipient," "supplier" / "receiver."

Turning to the actual name of the fund, it is interesting to note that it is called a fund for "technical cooperation," and not "technical assistance," (the latter implying an interventionist and subsidiary kind of relationship).

These fundamental characteristics of the CFTC are not understood in a similar manner by all CFTC stakeholders. We found among some key member states, views to the effect that the CFTC was a technical assistance fund that is/ should be akin to traditional bilateral aid - giving programming. The ethos of mutuality and partnership that is the core of the CFTC is understood differently among the Commonwealth members. In our estimation, there are probably two intersecting causes for this divergence of perceptions.

First, CFTC communications themselves promote the Fund as "the Commonwealth's development cooperation arm." This, in our view is a simplification and also not fully reflective of its actual underpinning philosophy. This simplification is compounded by ComSec and CFTC documentation, public reports, and some materials for ComSec state level decision-makers, that emphasise a set of unique characteristics or comparative advantages that are largely about operational modalities - being faster than other development partners, being more responsive, being more cost effective, etc. Indeed of these often repeated lists, probably the only attributed comparative advantage that actually relates to the CFTC's philosophical roots is "the honest partner/ broker" role which more address the mutual sharing / respect / forging links components of its mandate.

Second, there may be some ambiguity in the way successive MOUs have articulated CFTC priorities, juxtaposed against the range of actual programming supported by the CFTC.

3.2.2 Ambiguous Priorities

Both the 1976 and 2002 versions of the MOU contain subsequent clauses that attempt to define the scope of the areas where the fund will promote understanding, cooperation and mutual linkages.

Here is the relevant citation from the 1976 MOU.

- 1) Subject to the availability of resources, the Fund may, in response to requests to do so, provide technical assistance for economic and social development in the Commonwealth in accordance with such terms and conditions as may from time to time be laid down by the Board of Representatives
- 2) In this Memorandum "technical assistance" means the provision of advice through experts and consultants, training, specialist seminars, and equipment (including documents and books) to support staff financed by the Fund, and will be in the fields of:
 - (a) planning (including manpower and educational planning and sectoral analysis) and plan implementation;
 - (b) the preparation, appraisal, execution and evaluation of developmental projects;
 - (c) statistics, finance, tourism, transport, and public administration;
 - (d) the taxation and development of resource based industries;
 - (e) regional and sub-regional co-operation in a variety of fields; and
 - (f) activities related to the foregoing
- 3) The Fund may also finance education and training of personnel from one developing Commonwealth country in another developing Commonwealth country in such fields and under such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Board of Representatives.
- 4) The Fund may also provide such further technical assistance financed in such manner as may from time to time be agreed by participating Governments

Note the largely public sector nature of the envisaged areas of activity, and the clear presumption that the CFTC's role is to promote what would now be called "good governance"- the acknowledged primary building block and vital pre-condition for sustainable development.

The 2002 MOU is somewhat different.

3. Subject to the availability of resources the Fund may, in response to requests to do so, provide technical assistance for development in the Commonwealth in accordance with such terms and conditions as may from time to time be laid down by the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth Secretariat.
4. In this Memorandum 'technical assistance', means the provision of professional advice, transfer of best practice and the enhancement of skills and knowledge in support of policy and institutional development, capacity building and specific projects and programmes for economic, social and political development. It should typically be delivered through experts and consultants, training, the provision of technical documents, manuals and equipment, and the promotion of technical co-operation among member countries and with others.
5. The Fund will draw its focus from the development content of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan that in turn will reflect the decisions and direction of Commonwealth Heads of Government. The Plan will include as an annex, a planning and implementation framework for the CFTC that, with the Plan itself, will be reviewed every four years and approved by the Board of Governors. The implementation framework may cover, *inter alia*, details on the targeted development results of the Fund and the evaluation and accountability approaches used.

6. The focus of the Fund's assistance should be in three areas:

- (i) special programmes of assistance focusing on (a) good governance (b) global issues (c) support for negotiations with international organisations and multinational companies and (d) democracy, rule of law and human rights;
- (ii) programmes which provide technical support for policy development and advocacy of Commonwealth interests at the regional/global level and
- (iii) programmes which seek to meet strategic gaps in skills and assist capacity building through the provision of experts, training and professional advisory services on a demand-led basis, in the Secretariat's areas of focus and expertise.

In some ways, the 2002 iteration of the MOU seems to provide far more latitude than the 1976 MOU. However, it appears to have resulted in more ambiguity.

For example, Paragraph 5 links the CFTC to the all-encompassing strategic goal framework, and paragraph 6(iii) enables what has become to be know as "gap filling" and introduces the open-ended clause " ... on a demand-led basis, in the Secretariat's areas of focus and expertise." In discussions with Secretariat senior management, "the Secretariat's focus and expertise" was attributed to mean any area in which the Secretariat presently had an operational programme.

On the other hand, Paragraphs 6(i) and 6(ii) imply a narrower focus, more akin to the precision of the 1976 MOU. These paragraphs provide a "short list" to be considered in light of the overall priorities set out in the ComSec Strategic Plan, which the 2004/5 – 2007/8 version sets out as follows:

24. The Plan sets two long-term goals for the Secretariat that reflect the 2003 Commonwealth Aso Rock Declaration's emphasis on the promotion of democracy and development in ways that are mutually reinforcing:

Goal 1 To support member countries to prevent or resolve conflicts, strengthen democracy and the rule of law and achieve greater respect for human rights.

Goal 2 To support pro-poor policies for economic growth and sustainable development in member countries.

Goal 1 (Peace and Democracy) will be achieved through 4 Programmes:

- 1 Good Offices for Peace
- 2 Democracy and Consensus Building
- 3 Rule of Law
- 4 Human Rights

Goal 2 (Pro-Poor Growth and Sustainable Development) will be achieved through 9 Programmes:

- 5 International Trade
- 6 Investment
- 7 Finance and Debt
- 8 Public Sector Development
- 9 Environmentally Sustainable Development
- 10 Small States
- 11 Education
- 12 Health
- 13 Young People

Each of the thirteen identified programme areas (and the accompanying two cross-cutting programmes) then sets out sub-objectives which contribute to the growth in the potential scope of CFTC support.

This potential for differing interpretation and ambiguity is further increased by paragraph 6(iii) which enables what has become to be known as “gap filling” and introduces what may be a very open-end clause “ ... on a demand-led basis, in the Secretariat’s areas of focus and expertise.”

Thus, the current MOU theoretical leaves the CFTC having to respond to (...on a demand-led basis ...) a virtual waterfront of subject matter areas, notwithstanding the seeming priorities set down in 6(i) and 6(ii).

Indeed, given that the Commonwealth itself is an embodiment of many of the British legal and Parliamentary traditions, including many related to how laws are to be interpreted, there is a fairly well recognised Westminster tradition of legislative interpretation that while separate paragraphs should be read separately, the internal contents of a given paragraph should be read together. Thus, from this Westminster interpretative tradition, we can see that paragraph 6 of the current MOU is open to differing interpretations.

It is all too easy therefore to portray the CFTC as an initiative that has a virtual endless mandate with a small budget to execute it, and thus which faces considerable mandate fulfilment challenges.

This debate also has been characterised by some as a zero-sum game - “responsiveness” on one side (demand-led basis) versus “restrictive” on the other. We heard from both sides of this debate with some member states going as far as saying any effort to narrow the mandate (to move away from what they perceived was a totally demand-driven basis) would constitute grounds for withdrawal from the CFTC itself, notwithstanding that the MOU itself implies some degree of prioritisation, albeit ambiguously.

CFTC decision-making further complicates matters. As we will show in subsequent findings relative to project decision-making systems, the CFTC’s present decision-making paradigms encourages the belief in a demand-driven basis due to its ad hoc and individualistic nature. CFTC documentation, including the current 2005 CFTC Report “ Advancing Development and Building Prosperity” further amplifies this tendency to see the CFTC only in terms of it being a responsive agent for the demands of the member states.

In our view this responsive / restrictive dichotomy (and the corollary argument that the CFTC is without focus) is more a reflection of a lack of understanding that the CFTC at this time already makes a degree of de facto prioritisation due to its strong focus in public sector programming, combined with the fact that the CFTC itself is such a small entity that it may seem to “get lost” among its larger partners to the Paris Declaration.

We also need to recall that the CFTC is a small fund in comparison to the scale of the activities of its many bilateral and multilateral development partners.

For the financial year 2006/07 the CFTC’s planned budget for both years combined is in the range of £24 million (including staff costs). By contrast, the annual budget of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) alone is in the range of £1.5 billion (including staff costs). On a national basis and in terms of a comparison between CFTC support and the combined assistance that a nation may benefit from, as we will show later in this report, CFTC support frequently amounts to well less than 1 % of the overall national development portfolio.

Discussions that ensued at the time of the submission of our Interim Report (where we raised these issues) tended to point to a growing realisation on the part of senior ComSec decision-makers of the practical impact of these ambiguities on the ability of the CFTC to perform its primary mandate as a force for cooperation, understanding and mutual assistance, again a mandate that we contend is quite different from a traditional multilateral aid giving body. These discussions also recognised that the small size of the CFTC exacerbated these mandate and priority challenges.

We wish to make note of a potential important change in the landscape of the CFTC that has begun to occur since the submission of an earlier version of this Report in January, 2008. We have been advised that a draft of the upcoming ComSec Strategic Plan proposes to drop specific references to “gap filling” as a discrete programming area.

The analysis of the impact of this sort of development is beyond the scope of this assignment which was set down in late 2006 and which was ratified in the May Inception Report. To that end, we cannot comment on the new Plan; nor can we comment on the viability for the future of the 45/40/10/5 ratio of programming modalities suggest in “Re-Think” now nearly a decade ago.

We are also aware of the continuing revision of the Strategic Gap Filling evaluation, the commencement of which predated this assignment by nearly a year. While we are generally in accord with its Findings and see many parallel conclusions, it again would be inappropriate for us to provide in essence policy analysis advice, as opposed to evaluative findings, on its implications.

Nevertheless, in light of the mandate ambiguities noted above and these two evolving circumstances, we are of the view that it may be timely to conduct a focused review of the ambiguities related to CFTC’s existing mandate. Our lead recommendation presents a proposal to do so.

3.3 Implications

There are several implications arising from the unique nature of the CFTC:

First it needs to be recognised that a voluntary and member-based entity like the CFTC will necessarily function in a more collegial and consensus-based pattern of strategic decision-making than a bilateral development agency that has as its driving force the policies of a single government. Likewise, the decision-making and prioritisation models of multilateral development banks cannot be directly compared to the CFTC’s, again in large part due to the consensus-based nature of the Commonwealth, which is the CFTC’s parent.

Second, the CFTC’s largely public sector focus implies that it makes contributions to the support of national development objectives and by extension to MDGs. On the surface it may seem hard to link a project to support a historical architect in Grenada as part of hurricane reconstruction, or an advisor helping to design a new stock market in The Maldives, with a Millennium Development Goal. However, on reflection, activities such as these can contribute to building or sustaining capacity for effective governance, and thus make an indirect contribution to long term economic growth that should result in eventual reduction in poverty. As we will describe in subsequent elements of this report, the problem that the CFTC currently faces is that its management systems today cannot “connect the dots” between operational level programming and its own higher level goals, let alone the MDGs.

Third, the CFTC’s role in building mutual understanding and Pan-Commonwealth positions, especially in matters related to international trade and in relation to negotiations with international organisations, is not well understood or well communicated. Bringing together representatives from member states with representatives of international organisations and other national governments to

discuss issues such as money-laundering or the encouragement of public/private investment partnerships are potentially important activities that may enable member states to shape their economies so as to promote transparent private investment, the recognised real engine of growth for development. Likewise, assisting member states in off-shore boundary clarification issues may enable them to better harness their full national economic potential. But they are difficult to communicate and equally difficult to situate in the context of the present climate of focusing on how to achieve more visible and practical global goals such as those related to Education for All, or the health-related MDGs.

Fourth, the small size of the CFTC, which we have alluded to above, makes it difficult to make these upward linkages to either national development goals or the MDGs. For example, strengthening the prosecutorial services in The Gambia can result in a more transparent and predictable legal system, cornerstones required for building investor confidence and thus promoting investment for development. However, the small size of such an initiative, less than £40, 000 per year, tends to result in it being submerged in a sea of high value and higher visibility programming provided by other development partners. Small project size also complicates performance reporting due to lack of economies of scale. It also makes it problematic to expect that ComSec could simply transplant the planning and reporting mechanisms of larger partners whose “scale” may be exponentially greater.

In light of these four implications we have come to develop in essence a four-faceted prism through which we conducted our evaluation of the CFTC, on which we have based our Findings, and on which we will shape our Recommendations.

The four facets of this prism are:

- The CFTC from its inception, has not been, and is not, a traditional development programming within the understanding of the stereotypical donor/recipient model.
- The CFTC’s mandate and governance do not lend themselves to comparison with the mandates and governance of other development organisations, or to the measurement yardsticks that are often used to articulate the performance of traditional donor-driven development programming.
- The CFTC’s voluntary and contributory nature implies governance and decision-making paradigms that are different from those used by multilateral international financial institutions and national bilateral development agencies.
- The CFTC’s small scale, and that of the ComSec as a whole, implies that it develop management, decision-making and performance measurement systems appropriate to its unique circumstances and not simply be compared to those of much larger entities.

4. Overview of CFTC from 2000 to 2006

This section provides an overview of CFTC assistance for the six-year period under review (2000-2006), and is based on the limited and incomplete data provided to the evaluation team. It includes a financial overview of the Fund as a whole, as well as analyses by geographic regions, by CFTC programmes, and by ComSec divisions.

4.1 Financial Overview

CFTC Budget

From 2000 to 2006, the governing bodies and member states allocated £133,117,153 to the CFTC, with an annual average of £22,186,192. The allocated budget increased 17% over the six-year period, as shown in Exhibit 4.1. It should be noted that over the past few years, the main financial contributors to the CFTC have been the following countries: Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and the UK. For example in 2006/07, the UK stands as the biggest provider with roughly 30% of the total budget. Canada is second at 24% followed by Australia at 17%, New Zealand at 7% and finally India at 3.6%.³ The percentages are approximately the same for 2007/08.

Exhibit 4.1 CFTC Allocated Budget per year (2000-2006)

YEAR	BUDGET ALLOCATED
2000/01	20,500,000
2001/02	22,000,000
2002/03	22,220,000
2003/04	22,930,000
2004/05	21,368,417
2005/06	24,098,736

4.2 Geographic Overview

CFTC involvement has been concentrated in four regions that encompass most Commonwealth member states: the Caribbean, Africa, the Pacific, and Asia. A complete list of member countries by region is provided in Volume III, Appendix VII.

The Africa region has received the greatest amount of CFTC assistance, both in terms of number of projects awarded and in terms of total resources allocated. This is not surprising given that Africa is a large continent populated by many Commonwealth member states that face some of the world's most important developmental challenges.

In the years for which data were available, the number of CFTC country projects awarded to the Africa region was equal to or greater than the sum of projects for all other regions combined (see Exhibit 4.2).

³ CFTC pledges by Country: 2006/07-2007/08

Exhibit 4.2 Number of Country Projects by Region 2002-2006⁴

YEAR	AFRICA	ASIA-MED	CARIBBEAN	PACIFIC
2002/03	70	9	47	15
2003/04	135	49	44	29
2005/06	73	18	24	18
Total	278	76	115	62

Africa also implemented the greatest number of regional technical cooperation projects, although not by so great a margin as for country projects. In this category, a significant number of projects were implemented in regions populated by small states, namely the Pacific and the Caribbean (see Exhibit 4.3).

Exhibit 4.3 Number of Regional Technical Cooperation Projects by Region

YEAR	AFRICA	ASIA-MED	CARIBBEAN	PACIFIC
2002/03	31	7	11	12
2003/04	28	4	25	15
2005/06	10	2	7	9
Total	69	13	43	36

In terms of CFTC expenditures, Africa also received the greatest share of CFTC assistance. For the year 2003/04, the only year for which data were available for expenditure per region, Africa absorbed 40% of CFTC expenditures, followed by the Caribbean at 24%, the Pacific and Pan-Commonwealth initiatives at 13% each, and the Asia-Mediterranean region at 10%.⁵

While the Africa region benefits most from CFTC in terms of overall funding and number of projects, the Caribbean region benefits most in terms of disbursement per capita (see Exhibit 4.4). In fact, among the case study countries, the small island states of the Caribbean and South Pacific regions received significantly more CFTC funding per capita than any other regions.

⁴ The evaluators could not obtain data for the all six years. The data for 2002/03 and 2003/04 were taken from the Annual Performance Reports. The data for 2005/06 were taken from the Assistance to Member Countries document.

⁵ Annual Performance Report – 2003/04

Exhibit 4.4 CFTC Disbursement per Capita (2001-2006)

NATION	CFTC DISBURSEMENT ⁶ (£)	POPULATION ⁷	CFTC DISBURSEMENT PER CAPITA
SVG	496,441	119,000	4.17
Grenada	722,354	103,000	7.01
Tanzania	1,205,215	37,849,133	0.03
The Gambia	1,461,666	1,517,000	0.96
Samoa	507,209	214,265	2.37
Solomon Islands	605,881	478,000	1.27
Malaysia	239,374	27,544,000	0.01
Sri Lanka	540,561	19,668,000	0.02

At the other end of the spectrum, the Asia-Mediterranean region benefits the least from CFTC technical cooperation country projects and, understandably so, since it has the smallest number of Commonwealth member states and is the most developed of the regions.

However, while the Asia-Mediterranean region does not implement as many technical cooperation projects as other regions, it does fare better in terms of the number of trainees sponsored by the CFTC (see Exhibit 4.5). In fact, it only trails Africa as the region that gets the most CFTC assistance for public servant training although, once again, by quite a substantial margin as CFTC sponsored more trainees in Africa than in all the other regions combined.

Exhibit 4.5 Number of Trainees by Region⁸

YEAR	AFRICA	ASIA-MED	CARIBBEAN	PACIFIC	TOTAL
2002/03	1203	610	135	145	2093
2003/04	3221	830	473	262	4786
2005/06	2672	730	588	223	4213

4.3 Programming Overview

According to the data provided by the ComSec in the Annual Performance Reports, most CFTC funds are targeted towards specific Commonwealth programmes. However, it is difficult to track specific programme expenditures over time since the number of programmes has increased and their names have changed in 2000/01 and later in 2004/05.

Between 2000 and 2001, CFTC assistance was linked to 11 Commonwealth programmes, also known as strategic goals. From 2002/03 to 2003/04, CFTC assistance was spread over 5 Commonwealth programmes and since 2003/04, it has been spread over 16 Commonwealth programmes⁹ (see Exhibit 4.6).

⁶ Based on direct assistance for year 2001/02 to 2005/06 – Countries Strategic Frameworks

⁷ All population figures taken from latest census as shown on Wikipedia.

⁸ 2002/03 & 2003/04 – Taken from Annual Performance Reports ; for 2005/06, figures taken from Assistance to Member Countries document

⁹ Annual Performance Reports 2000/01-2005/06

Exhibit 4.6 Commonwealth Programmes per Plan Period

2000/01-2001/02	2002/03-2003/04	2004/05-2007/08
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consensus Building, Promotion of Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights • Gender: Equality of Opportunities • Realising the Potential of Young People in Development • Addressing the Vulnerability of Small States • Science and Technology for Development • Capacity Building Through Training and Provision of Experts • Help in Conflict Situations and Post Conflict Stabilisation • Human Development • Information, Media and Public Relations • Secretariat Governance, Executive Direction, Planning, Evaluation and Administrative Services • Management of Globalisation and Promotion of Good Governance for Economic and Social Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Offices, Democracy and Human Rights • Good Governance and the Rule of Law • Gender and Youth • Vulnerability of Small States • Achieving Millennium Development Goals for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Office for Peace • Democracy and Consensus Building • Rule of Law • Human Rights • International Trade • Investment • Finance and Debt • Public Sector Development • Environmentally Sustainable Development • Small States • Education • Health • Young People • Gender, Equity and Equality • Capacity Building and Institutional Development • Corporate Governance, Management and Communications

Between 2002/03 and 2003/04, approximately 94% of CFTC expenditures went to two programmes, primarily the “Achieving the Millennium Development Goals for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development” programme, and, to a lesser extent, the “Good Governance and the Rule of Law” programme (see Exhibit 4.7).

Exhibit 4.7 Direct Programme Expenditures (2002/03-2003/04)

PROGRAMME NAME	2002/03		2003/04	
	DIRECT EXPENDITURES (£)	PERCENTAGE	DIRECT EXPENDITURES (£)	PERCENTAGE
Good Offices, Democracy and Human Rights	500,000	3.5%	613,000	4.4%
Good Governance and the Rule of Law	2,838,500	20.1%	3,291,962	23.6%
Gender and Youth	310,000	2.2%	335,000	2.4%
Achieving Millennium Development Goals for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development	10,415,000	73.9%	9,660,845	69.3%
Vulnerability of Small States	30,000	0.2%	30,000	0.2%
Total	14,093,500		13,930,807	

From 2004 to 2006, the CFTC expenditures were much more diversified (with 15 programmes), but the most significant expenditures were concentrated in four programmes: Capacity Building, Public Sector Development, International Trade, and Investment (see Exhibit 4.8).

Exhibit 4.8 CFTC Direct expenditure by Programmes (2004/05-2005/06)

PROGRAMME NAME	2004/05		2005/06	
	DIRECT EXPENDITURES (£)	PERCENTAGE	DIRECT EXPENDITURES (£)	PERCENTAGE
Good Offices	-	0%	-	0%
Democracy	421,112	3.0%	265,675	1.7%
Rule of Law	703,490	5.0%	709,507	4.6%
Human rights	209,586	1.5%	199,707	1.3%
International Trade	2,045,875	14.6%	2,810,679	18.4%
Investment	1,889,202	13.5%	1,618,237	10.6%
Finance and Debt	789,828	5.6%	968,200	6.3%
Public Sector Development	2,819,076	20.2%	3,632,966	23.7%
Environmentally Sustainable Development	28,590	0.2%	37,757	0.2%
Small States	59,623	0.4%	80,405	0.5%
Education	270,086	1.9%	365,094	2.4%
Health	198,252	1.4%	234,980	1.5%
Young People	4,000	0.0%	95,040	0.6%
Gender, Equality and Equity	278,322	2.0%	405,978	2.7%
Capacity Building	4,269,586	30.5%	3,884,202	25.4%
Total	13,986,628		15,308,427	

However, it is important to mention that the numbers provided in exhibit 4.8 are only referring to **direct expenditures** for the financial years in question. To get a better picture, salaries and associated operational costs of the two largest divisions as well as a common service charge for the operational costs of the other divisions should be included in CFTC expenditures. Finally, all these programmes are also recipient of a significant level of direct ComSec funds.

4.4 ComSec Division Involvement

The ComSec has two divisions which are completely funded by CFTC: the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) and the Special Advisory Services Division (SASD). Understandingly so, the GIDD as well as the SASD receive the greatest share of CFTC resources and projects and this, for every geographical region and every type of assistance (country, regional or Pan-Commonwealth projects).

A number of other divisions are also allocated CFTC resources within the parameters of the MOU, namely the Economics Affairs Division (EAD), the Political Affairs Division (PAD), the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Division, the Social Transformation Program Division (STPD), the Communications and Public Affairs Division (CPAD), the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD), the Human Rights Unit (HRU), the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED), the Youth Affairs Division (YAD) and the Secretary General Office (OSG). However, their role in CFTC activities is somewhat more limited. Of these divisions, the PAD and the EAD are the two most involved.

For example in 2005/06, GIDD sponsored approximately 44% of all CFTC technical projects, followed by the Special Advisory Services Division (SASD) with 36.5% of assistance, the Political Affairs Division (PAD) with 10.5%, and the Economics Affairs Division (EAD) with 9%. The EAD is involved primarily in Pan-Commonwealth projects (19 of its 20 projects).

Exhibit 4.9 CFTC Number of Projects by ComSec Division (2005-2006)

YEAR	GIDD	SASD	PAD	EAD	TOTAL
2005/06	96	80	23	20	219

5. Key Evaluation Findings

5.1 Benefits of CFTC to Recipient Countries

5.1.1 Introduction

Both the 1976 and 2002 MOUs for the CFTC state that among other purposes, the Fund will take advantage of shared experiences and similarities to promote development and mutual understanding in the Commonwealth. As described in Part 3 of this report, the Fund also respects national needs and differences, and thus responds to the needs of its members. As we have also discussed, notwithstanding the ambiguity about the interpretation of paragraph 6 of the current MOU, its primary focus is to promote technical cooperation in public sector management and policy skills.

The Fund's effectiveness, then, is based on the extent to which its initiatives support the stated mandate and goals of the CFTC, notwithstanding the ambiguities noted earlier. The evaluation TORs for this review described effectiveness in terms of "benefits of the CFTC to recipient countries". We will expand this notion to embrace the other equally valid objectives of the CFTC. However, in the end, the consideration of effectiveness comes down to the seemingly simple question: What difference has CFTC actually made?

This section analyses the benefits identified in the sample of eleven countries that were reviewed, either through field visits or Desk Reviews. It also overviews summary data collected in London so as to give a fully rounded interpretation of the benefits that have accrued from the CFTC. These benefits of the CFTC are illustrated by using two frameworks for understanding the types of effects of the technical cooperation at the country level: (i) effects on institutions, organisations, and individuals, and (ii) effects on capacities at country level (expansion, replacement, and filling a gap). These are further described in the subsections and findings below.

5.1.2 Institutional, Organisational, and Individual Benefits

The Evaluation Team analysed CFTC benefits using a conceptual framework based on where the benefits take place – in institutions, organisations, or for individuals. For the purposes of the assessment, we used the following definitions (see full definitions in the Glossary on page xi).

- **Institutions:** For the CFTC, this category encompasses policy and legislative reform as well as any systems change that is being promoted through a CFTC activity or project.
- **Organisations:** For the CFTC, this includes the units, departments, ministries, or other types of organisations (including non-governmental) that may benefit from CFTC technical cooperation.
- **Individual:** For CFTC, this generally refers to the effects of training activities on individual participants – usually public servants.

Finding 1: CFTC activities and projects have supported the building or strengthening of institutions.

CFTC activities in the countries under review often focused on legislative or policy change, which would be considered to be at the institutional level. The types of projects that we analysed in the Desk Reviews and Field Missions aimed to generate common policies to facilitate trade negotiations, create new entities and regulatory frameworks, revise legislative frameworks, and promote public sector reform processes. Some examples selected from the country reports and from summary data collection (especially a review of CFTC support for oil, gas and mineral policies) are shown in Exhibit 5.1.

Exhibit 5.1 Examples of CFTC Contributions to Institutions

COUNTRY	TYPE OF COOPERATION	EFFECT
Maldives	Capital Market Development Project: a technical advisor on site for one year and subsequent advisory services in legal drafting and regulatory development	<i>Transformation of an over-the-counter and informal market system into the nation's first formal stock market:</i> This included a full set of corporate laws that provide world-class guarantees of business transparency. Although it is not possible to link these structural, regulatory, and legislative changes directly to the level of market capitalisation, the fact that the capitalisation of the nascent market has increased four fold (from \$53 million in 2002 to \$207 million in 2007) in only four years is a positive indicator.
Samoa	Project to support establishment of the Samoa International Finance Authority (Offshore Finance Centre): advisory services over the course of 3 years	<i>Creating and strengthening independent authority and legislative framework on offshore finance:</i> The SIFA has been created and strengthened through ongoing TA funded by CFTC, which developed legislation and policy, gave it independent status, helped build its product base.
Regional: Caribbean and Pacific regions	Various projects supporting WTO / trade law and negotiations: Hub and Spokes Project (Pacific) Support for regional organisations (such as Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, the CARICAD, and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat) Financing for Technical Negotiation Groups in each country (Caribbean)	<i>Strengthening trade policy and system:</i> In the Caribbean, the combination of activities has fostered dialogue and cooperation on a regional scale that united the CARICOM states under one strong trade negotiation position and gave the region some weight in its tough negotiations with the EU and the WTO. The suite of activities in the Pacific is reported to have helped establish the region's structures and procedures for the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations with the EU, Pacific Island Agreements such as the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement, WTO and other trade-related initiatives.
Tanzania	Capital Markets Review Project: Advisor for the Capital Markets and Securities Authority (CMSA) to Review the 1994 Capital Market and Securities Law	<i>Fostering the development of a more transparent investment market:</i> Revising regulatory framework for capital markets by : establishing a working relationship between ComSec and CMSA between 1993 and 1997 supporting the creation of the CMSA. The most recent technical cooperation supported development of a regulatory framework for improving the administrative and operational efficiency of Tanzania's securities markets. In addition, CMSA policy was to work in close collaboration with CFTC expert to ensure product ownership and full transfer of expertise.
The Gambia	Technical assistance for the development of new minerals legislation	<i>Increasing investment potential in the resource industries to promote development :</i> Assistance was provided in 2004 to strengthen the national legislation regarding mineral rights and usage
Ghana	Technical assistance for the development of new petroleum regulatory arrangement and a national minerals policy	<i>Increasing investment potential in the resource industries to promote development:</i> Assistance was provided from 2004 to 2006 to strengthen the national legislation regarding petroleum regulation, culminating in Cabinet approval of new policies. Parallel assistance was provided in the same time frame resulting in draft national minerals regulations

COUNTRY	TYPE OF COOPERATION	EFFECT
Swaziland	Technical assistance for the development of new minerals legislation	<i>Increasing investment potential in the resource industries to promote development:</i> Assistance was provided from 2001 to 2006 to strengthen the national minerals legislation and regulations, culminating in Cabinet approval of new policies and the eventual approval of new legislation.
Sri Lanka	Technical assistance in developing a national policy and legislation to promote public / private investment partnerships.	<i>Promoting new kinds of investment so as to strengthen economic development and the diversification of capital bases:</i> A senior advisor was assignee to the responsible state agency. This process of technical cooperation led to the establishment of new national policies to promote public / private partnership and to initial instances of co-investment.

The factors that influence the effectiveness/potential of technical cooperation (both in the countries and in the nature of CFTC cooperation) are noted separately in a subsequent finding. Institutional effects are particularly sensitive to a host of factors in the economic, social, or political environment that influence stakeholders and may limit the possibility of policy, legislative, or system change. For example, in relation to the nearly two dozen technical cooperation projects related to oil, gas and / or mineral rights regulations, Cabinet-approved policy statements or legislation would be the natural outcome. However, in at least half of these instances, such institutional transformation has yet to occur due to external factors, many times apparently related to political priorities.

Finding 2: A large proportion of the benefits of CFTC technical cooperation have been at the level of units, departments, or ministries.

At the level of organisations (mostly government ministries, departments, or units), the Field Missions and desk studies identify a number of changes that include improved systems and data availability, improved processes or procedures, new products or services, and new or revised plans and strategies. Selected examples from the eleven nations surveyed are shown below. At this point it should be made clear that tables such as the following, and the one preceding, do not portray all the instances of positive benefits. Rather they show some “highlights”.

Exhibit 5.2 Examples of CFTC Contributions to Organisations

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EFFECT
Tanzania	Agri-business development project – advisory and financial support provided by the CFTC to the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) food processing programme	As an organisation, the SIDO was able to improve the quality of its training, conduct training of trainers in food management, develop new products, and expand its programme delivery. SIDO is cited again in Exhibit 5.3 on contributions to expanded capacity.
Maldives	Cooperation with the Public Service Division with workshops and seminars spanning several years	Positive impact on the PSD’s ability to modernise. The support enabled the translation of new ideas relative to performance assessment into a new performance management system and the translation of new ideas about human resources management into the upcoming Public Service law that will transform the structure and management of the public service as a whole.

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EFFECT
Maldives	Support to develop data base on fiscal forecasting for the Monetary Authority	Staff time required to prepare fiscal forecasts has been considerably reduced as a result of the data base. The Monetary Authority plans to broaden its usage across the public sector so as to improve the quality of expenditure forecasting and thus improve the quality of national fiscal and macro-economic planning.
Kenya	Technical Advisor to the Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI)	Reinforced statistical and biometric competency of the researchers and scientists, and the structure for the team that will enable them to conduct research of a more rigorous quality.
Kenya	Technical Advisor for the Fisheries Department on the Management of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)	Enabled the Fisheries Department to improve regulatory frameworks, have a better view of its resources, and take better decisions since key data on fish stock are now available. In the absence of the project, the department would not have information on fishery development possibilities.
Samoa	Second Chance Education (SCE) Project, a project implemented through Commonwealth Service Abroad Programme (CSAP)	The effect of this project was two-fold. Matuaileoo Environment Trust Inc (METI), an NGO, expanded its programming in two areas – coconut soap production and support to the Ministry of Education in life skills training curriculum design for the Second Chance Education (SCE) model – both of which it is sustaining after the project is over. The project also introduced the SCE model in the Ministry of Education design of vocational-technical educational programmes; a pilot programme was implemented in 2006 and the Ministry has reportedly integrated SCE as a policy.
Brunei	CTFC Assistance	Department of Agriculture (DOA) was able to identify and implement strategies for increasing Brunei's agricultural competitiveness and strengthening the agribusiness sector. The review team found that as a result of this project, a revitalised agribusiness management culture was introduced at DOA and a strategy was developed to allow Brunei to continue to operate in the liberalised trade environment created by the WTO and ASEAN.

Finding 3: Debt management assistance is generally recognized by COMSEC staff and member countries as an effective Pan-Commonwealth initiative and is a prime example of organisational strengthening. There are cases, however, that illustrate the challenges that this initiative faces in adapting the assistance (advisory and training) to countries and sustaining the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS).

ComSec has been assisting member countries in the area of debt management since the late 1980s through the provision of the Commonwealth Secretariat – Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS) software and technical assistance in debt management. The technical assistance has included advisory services on debt management policy and analysis, debt data quality, institutional arrangements for debt management and the use and maintenance of the debt management applications. A 2007 survey of client satisfaction shows across the Commonwealth, in nations large and small, a high degree of satisfaction with CS-DRMS and with the support provided by ComSec for it. We chose to examine CS-DRMS in the eleven nations surveyed.

- The Field Missions in the Pacific and Africa generally report the countries' perceived benefits from this assistance. In the Pacific, respondents at Ministry of Finance in Samoa indicated that they would now like to integrate internal debt management and ensure that CS-DRMS links to their government financial system.

- In Tanzania, the CS-DRMS system itself and the 2000+ edition particularly has been effective in maintaining quality debt management for the country. It has contributed to raising public awareness about the pressing need to control the nation's growing debt in the form of proactive debt management. CFTC is also credited with having provided sound technical expertise over the last decade. A regional CS-DRMS user-group was established and a helpdesk at COMSEC has been instrumental in fielding questions from system users. In recent years, however, the interaction with COMSEC has been diminishing and a recent announcement from COMSEC indicated that in future the financial support for maintaining the CS-DRMS software would need to come from the participating countries themselves. For some nations this may pose a sustainability challenges both in terms of systems maintenance as well as ensuring the continuation of the human capacity.
- In the Gambia, the debt management project is cited as one of the only reviewed projects that effectively expanded local capacity.

The exception to the positive feedback in the Field Mission countries is The Maldives, where Ministry of Finance officials recount a history of episodic and unsuccessful cooperation with ComSec on the CS-DRMS initiative. The difficulties have not been with the software or hardware for the system, but rather in the lack of manuals and local adaptations that were needed, but could not be undertaken due to absence of a critical mass of capacity. The PCP for the Maldives played a key role in securing a new partner – the Asian Development Bank – for the implementation of the system.

These examples illustrate the challenges that face Pan Commonwealth programming initiatives both in tailoring content and services to each nation, delivering the type/frequency of support that is required in the country, planning within a multi-year framework so that country stakeholders are aware early on about their role in sustaining this kind of initiative. Both the success in Tanzania and the difficulty in Maldives illustrate these factors with respect to the CS-DRMS.

Finding 4: CFTC training programmes have helped to enhance professional skills and have provided on-the-job benefits for individuals. Respondents provide an overall positive assessment of the quality of ComSec-organised training programmes.

In most of the Field Missions and Desk Reviews, the Evaluation Team had the opportunity to consult individuals who had been involved in CFTC-sponsored training programmes and/or scholarship opportunities. These data were complemented by the short survey sent to the list of the participants in recent ComSec-organised training programmes (primarily short training programmes as opposed to the degree or certificate programmes).

These data provide the basis for a positive overall assessment of the benefits to individuals of CFTC training. These benefits derive from the perceived contribution of the training to:

- Enhanced skills: Respondents generally confirmed that they were able to gain new knowledge and skills resulting from the training content, the sharing of ideas with individuals from diverse backgrounds, and the opportunities that training events provided for testing one's abilities, ideas and assumptions.
- On-the-job relevance: The skills developed were considered critical to the execution of individual's duties. Several respondents cited ways in which the training helped them in the positions they returned to immediately after the programme, and in several cases, when they were promoted to more senior management positions.

- Potential for networking and sharing of experiences: The ability to exchange and learn from the diversity of views of public officials from throughout the Commonwealth was also cited as a positive feature of the training programmes. The training events provided the forum for learning from international best practice.

Almost all of the survey respondents noted that the training they attended was relevant to their professional needs, enhanced their professional skills, and proved to be beneficial in their work. A few of their comments on the benefits of training programmes are highlighted in the side bar.

In general, respondents commended the facilitators, materials, and design of the training programmes. They also commented on the positive mix of participants that brought together senior to chief executive officers who had many years of experience in the public sector. CFTC training was compared favourably to the training programmes offered by other development partners. More than half of the survey respondents indicated that they did not have comparable training programmes available in their own country.

According to training participants, the primary shortfall of the training programmes, noted with some frequency, was the relation between the volume of work/material to absorb and the limited time period for the training. Some respondents stressed the difficulties in applying their new knowledge upon return due to a lack of critical mass in their units or departments. They noted that equally important to the effectiveness of training initiatives is post-training support, which was absent or modest in the countries sampled for this evaluation. This issue is discussed further below.

Participant Comments on Benefits of the Training Programmes

“I had heard about the training from other people who had done it, but it was an eye-opener. The training brought home to me the importance of Monitoring and Evaluating projects for results. I have seen many projects and programme being conducted but one does not know if the programmes were meeting the needs of the target people and if they do one cannot gage the benefits. This training had truly assisted me and I fully intend to make a difference in the programmes with which I work in my Ministry. There are seven programmes in all and six of them need proper structures for effectiveness.”

“Once I returned to my country, I have introduced and set up new voluntary organisation for public servants namely “Clean Hands”. What I gained from the CFTC programme was main initiation to set up this organisation.”

“I did like the sharing of information among practitioners from the different countries. It has helped to learn from best practices and also created a network that I still use for advice.”

“The training exposed me to Government Officers from other countries and we were able to compare our experiences and how far each represented country had gone in implementing performance management systems, the hardships and hindrances encountered and the way forward. The training experience was very educative.”

Source: Survey sent to Training Participants

Finding 5: The benefits of CFTC training activity for organisational capacity are limited and mostly indirect, due to factors that include staff turnover in the public service and the absence of effective follow-up mechanisms.

Although the case study and Desk Review reports, and even responses to the survey, provide examples of the efforts and intent of individuals either to share their knowledge and skills with others or to implement new ideas within the organisation, in practice, this is still mostly the exception rather than the rule. This is not a weakness of the CFTC alone. In fact, most training programmes face the challenge of ensuring that training activities that target individuals are somehow linked back to their organisations which can implement change (whether it is a Performance Management System, Monitoring and Evaluation System, Knowledge Management, etc.)

It is no surprise that the training effects for individuals seldom translate into effects at the unit/departmental level or that these are not sustained over the medium to long term. The Strategic Gap Filling (SGF) evaluation also found that *“while benefits accrue to individuals in the form of knowledge and skills, credentials and enhanced possibilities for career development, they do not always translate into benefits for the sponsoring organisation.”* (Baser, Morgan, et. al, 2006: 65)

The Field Missions and Desk Reviews identify several factors that influence this process of knowledge transfer. A few of these have to do with in-country conditions, such as:

- The extent of turnover in the public service, an issue that was raised in The Gambia and Kenya country reports as a limiting factor for sustainability of any training initiative targeting government officials.
- The extent to which there is a central coordinating entity that is prioritising training for public officials, ensuring alignment with national human resource development plans, setting requirements for knowledge transfer after the training, and overseeing a selection process that is perceived to be transparent. The Field Missions included countries where the process appears to be generally well organised in this regard (Maldives, Samoa, Grenada) and others where it appears to be less well coordinated (Solomon Islands, Kenya, Tanzania, Sri Lanka). In general, to the extent that prioritisation of training and selection process is coordinated by a public service commission or its equivalent, it facilitates the kind of linkages and follow-up that are raised below.

Other factors that influence knowledge transfer are more within the sphere of action of ComSec in coordination with its PCP and POCs:

- Lack of a knowledge transfer system: In most countries, what was missing was a formal knowledge transfer system, that is to say a mandatory and useful way of sharing knowledge or a knowledge transfer element. Although many participants reported that they had shared materials with staff and co-workers and had submitted a post-training report (often a requirement from the entity coordinating the training opportunities for the public service), these were not linked to formal plans to transfer the new skills and to sustain their usage. Furthermore, in some countries visited, there was no official requirement for the trainee to report on or share materials with his/her colleagues.
- Lack of follow-up to the training activity: Based on the data available, the Evaluation Team assessed CFTC training against the best practices before, during, and following training activities as described in Broad and Newstrom (1991). A summary of the results of the survey with CFTC-sponsored trainees has been included as Appendix VI of Volume III. The largest variance from established best practices from our point of view was in relation to follow-up to CFTC training. Follow-up could include: requiring participants to propose follow-up activities in their training reports, share these reports with supervisors, engage supervisors in follow-up; facilitation/promotion of on-line or in-country fora for training participants (see sidebar on Grenada discussion group); follow-up consultation on the use of training by the ComSec; clear requirements for sharing lessons with colleagues; and other mechanisms. Such follow-up is also crucial for CFTC performance management system.

In the Caribbean, a strong correlation was made between the number of national trainees attending training and the sustainability of the training results: the more nationals attended a training programme, the more likely that training could be used to make a difference. In Grenada, for example, four officers from different Ministries participated in Development Evaluation Training. In addition to finding the training useful individually, they formed an informal discussion group amongst ministries to discuss applications of the training in the workplace.

- Absence of a critical mass of trainees required to adopt change in the workplace: The interviews also highlighted the need for a critical mass of trainees to attend the sessions, in order to increase the transfer of learning to the workplace. For example, trainees interviewed regretted the lack of exposure of their supervisors and senior managers to the training that they had received.
- Limitations deriving from the geographic location of the training: Related to the issue of critical mass, several of the countries expressed demand for more in-country and regional programmes that might make more sense from the point of view of cost-effectiveness. Since recipient countries must finance the travel costs, when the trainings are held in places that are further away, by necessity the government must limit the number of participants, thus reducing potential for critical mass and sustainability of the training results. These demands were clearly expressed by government officials in Samoa, The Gambia, Caribbean, Kenya, and Sri Lanka, who suggested greater reliance on more regional or sub-regional training hubs, and where possible greater number of in-country training activities.

The SGF made several recommendations with regard to training, including the need to use a broad range of approaches to adult continuous learning and to evaluate long-standing training programmes. We concur with these recommendations.

We have chosen not to make specific recommendations relative to CFTC training programming for a number of reasons. In our estimation, increasing the effectiveness of training is not a stand-alone activity. Current shortfalls in planning, design of initiatives and approval impact on virtually all CFTC areas of activity. For example, greater consideration of sustainability and knowledge transfer would not only increase the effectiveness of training, it would also impact on the building of long-term organisational capacity including what until now has been called “gap filling”.

5.1.3 Contributions to Increased Capacity

CFTC technical cooperation usually involves the provision of experts from other Commonwealth countries to government ministries for either very short-term assignments (from several weeks to several months) or medium-term assignments of one year or even more if the contract is renewed. As described by the SGF study (p. 81), these experts engage in a wide range of functions and activities, including advisory (political advice, positioning advice, specialised/technical advice, supporting strategy/planning processes), operational (taking on critical government functions), promoting change (in attitudes and approaches within agencies), or training. The experts may or may not have an explicit capacity development mandate, although it has become an implicit consideration and oftentimes an expectation of their work.

Strengthening country capacity is one of the major and ongoing benefits of the CFTC. In order to facilitate the analysis, the Evaluation Team conceptualised CFTC contributions to strengthening country capacity in three ways:

- **Expansion:** This refers to activities/projects of technical cooperation that increase the country's ability to implement a function or address an issue after the intervention or activity is completed. For expansion to take place, some capacity must exist before the CFTC project begins. This would include, for example, building capacity to manage a public stock market, to manage mineral rights/natural resources, to conduct macro-economic forecasting and public expenditure management.

- **Replacement:** This refers to activities/projects that help to fill positions in the public service, often over a sustained period of time, where there is a need for such a position and expertise, but there are no individuals available or willing to take the position locally. This approach helps to ensure that essential services are maintained in the country. Examples of this kind of contribution can be found in CFTC-supported judges, agricultural advisors, and legal drafting specialists.
- **Filling a gap:** This refers to the effect of technical cooperation in which temporary external technical skills/specialised human resources are provided, which are simply not available in a country, most often small states. Examples of such support include historical architects, negotiators on maritime boundaries, oil and natural gas specialists, public / private partnership specialists, trade negotiation assistance.

Finding 6: CFTC has contributed to expanded capacity in some countries by helping to build human resource or technical capacity to continue work in a specific area.

The most desirable effect of technical cooperation is that some capacity is built in a country that will sustain the efforts after the expert has left. Capacity expansion generally requires some country capacity to exist at the outset of the assignment (i.e., one must have the human resources whose skills will be enhanced). The evaluation found examples in which either the expert or the recipient government agency adopted approaches to help ensure expansion of country capacity at the end of the assignment. Selected examples from the Field Mission countries are provided in Exhibit 5.3 below. In these examples, the CFTC supported capacity development by intentionally including a mix of training and systems development, or by complementing the expert's advisory work with mentoring, coaching, and training. These sorts of capacity enhancements, frequently the "product" of a gap-filling intervention, illustrate the broad sort of capacity building that may be envisaged by the recommendations of the SGF and the likely directions of the upcoming draft Strategic Plan.

The Field Missions also found that some countries' expectations for capacity expansion as a result of the technical cooperation (e.g., The Gambia) were not met. While the quality of outputs of the TC was recognised, however, there were no planned efforts to transfer technical knowledge to the host country. These interventions may illustrate the sort of less beneficial programming that has not taken sustainability considerations or mechanisms to build local capacity in mind during project design and approval.

Exhibit 5.3 Examples of CFTC Capacity Expansion

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EXPANSION EFFECT
Grenada	Grenada Recovery Programme: Expert to help revitalise and diversify the livestock industry because of its importance as an economic sector and for food security during natural disasters	The CFTC expert reviewed the actual livestock situation on the island and subsequently designed a programme to train other specialists. He trained more than 70 students on livestock issues such as cross-breeding to improve the genetic stock on the island and livestock exploitation's best practices. Grenada is currently holding talks to develop a certification programme in that domain.
Grenada	Strengthening Capacity in Legal Drafting	The CFTC expert recruited two suitable persons and trained them in order to enhance the capacity of the Attorney's General Office.

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EXPANSION EFFECT
Tanzania	Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO)	As noted earlier in Exhibit 5.2, SIDO expanded its capacity to deliver programming, which in turn allowed for the development of 20 SMEs certified by the Tanzanian Food and Drug Bureau of Standards. SIDO brought in local technical experts to provide advice during the project and they continue to provide consultancy services to SIDO, in effect creating a network of experts that supports the organisation.
Solomon Islands	Registrar of the High Court	The CFTC experts at the High Court over the years (both the former Registrar and the expert serving as Puisne Judge) provided mentoring and coaching to a Solomon Islander who is now in the position of Registrar, replacing the former CFTC-funded expert.
Maldives	Capital Market Development	The CFTC expert developed new procedures and trained existing and new personnel in the design and management of a new transparent capital market. Although additional support would be beneficial, the capital market continues to flourish and the newly trained staff are expanding the range of corporate disclosure regulations.
Sri Lanka	Public / Private Partnerships	The CFTC expert largely conducted a training and capacity – building exercise designed to foster long-term skills in the mechanisms of public private partnerships within the Sri Lanka Board of Investment. This process has resulted in an on-going internal capacity and has generated a longer-term effect of being instrumental in launching several high value public private partnerships in the utilities sector.
Kenya	Forest Biometrician for Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI)	In addition to providing technical advice on experimental design, data analysis, and interpretation (which was positively evaluated by KEFRI's internal evaluation of the Advisor), the CFTC advisor also trained in-house personnel, and respondents were optimistic about the possibility of sustaining the results of the work.
Brunei	Water Service Department support	A technical expert assisted the Water Service Department in the construction of four dams. The expert provided coaching to several local construction companies and worked with them throughout the entire process of the building of the dams. Secondly, the Public Works Department was assisted with the implementation of a computerised project management system.

Finding 7: CFTC has played critical roles in capacity replacement to ensure that essential services could be maintained even in times of crisis or natural disaster.

CFTC experts have also helped to fill positions when no one is available in the country. Capacity replacement also takes place in situations of crisis or natural disasters, helping to ensure that essential services are maintained. This was the case with CFTC support to the judiciary sector in the Solomon Islands, where a foreign Puisne Judge position was funded by CFTC. This support was considered crucial by the Chief Justice as well as external development partners such as NZAid, UK High Commission, and the Regional Assistance Mission for the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) for two reasons. First, it allowed the Court to reduce its backlog of civil cases as it began to address the criminal cases arising from the political crisis and attendant violence. Second, ComSec is particularly valued for its neutrality when it comes to funding for the judiciary. Stakeholders in the judiciary sector in the Solomon Islands indicate that the “replacement” of capacity is still necessary given both the political situation in the country in the aftermath of the crisis, and the availability of nationals willing and able to take on positions in the High Court.

In The Gambia, however, stakeholders suggest that the CFTC approach to strengthening the high court system is not meeting the needs of the country – either in terms of reducing the backlog of accumulated cases or strengthening the capacity of the judiciary (with little in the current CFTC approach to help attract and train Gambian magistrates). Sector stakeholders indicate that the country does not face an immediate lack of in-country capacity, but rather the problem of chronic low wages for public servants, which is a disincentive for professionals to enter the judiciary. Despite government officials' communications with ComSec on the limited success of the project, there has not yet been a change in the strategy.

However, the support of CFTC goes beyond responding to judicial situations. In the wake of the Asian Tsunami a network of health professionals, volunteers recruited under the auspices of the Commonwealth's Volunteers' Programme, and funded via CFTC were deployed to Sri Lanka and The Maldives. Likewise, after the devastating earthquake in Pakistan similar teams of medical volunteers were supported through CFTC funding. In Guyana, immediately after massive flooding in 2006, CFTC provided augmentation of local engineering capacity. These latter examples also show the flexibility and rapidity of the CFTC. For example, Guyana's High Commissioner reported that the decisions to augment national engineering capacity in response to this natural disaster took only a handful of days.

Finding 8: The CFTC has helped to fill gaps, particularly in small nations, by providing temporary technical skills or specialised human resources.

In many developing countries large and small, stakeholders noted that some kinds of expertise and specialisation are not and never will be available locally. CFTC has helped to provide a temporary resource person with the required expertise, but with no planned mandate to transfer those skills locally.

Exhibit 5.4 Examples of CFTC Gap Filling

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EFFECT IN FILLING THE GAP
Grenada	Rehabilitation of the Nutmeg Industry	A team of spice experts prepared a programme of rehabilitation for the industry – which was a major source of income for Grenada before it was devastated by Hurricane Ivan.
Grenada	Actuary hired to revise the Government of Grenada's pension plan as part of the Human Resources Development Project	There are few actuaries in the Caribbean so the initiative has helped to fill a gap. The Advisor was not expected to train others.
St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)	IT adviser for the SVG airports	Helped to computerise the operations of the airports and train staff on its utilisation, but did not develop IT specialists per se.
Tanzania	Mnazi Gas-to-Power project: Legal, economic, and technical advice to the GoT to improve its negotiation capacity as Tanzania needed a robust modelling programme to improve contract negotiations with the partnering private firm.	The expertise provided by CFTC incorporates a unique wealth of knowledge generated from worldwide experience. The ability of CFTC experts to use their connections and field knowledge to carry out background checks on prospective partners was noted as an advantage. However, the local or internal expertise developed as a result of the assistance was found to be difficult to maintain.

COUNTRY	PROJECT	EFFECT IN FILLING THE GAP
Samoa	Preparation for Maritime Boundary Negotiations	Samoa sought CFTC assistance for delimiting its maritime boundaries with neighbouring States, of which only one is sovereign and is in a position to negotiate directly with Samoa. The others are dependencies of large metropolitan States: American Samoa (USA); Tokelau (New Zealand); and Wallis & Futuna (France) and therefore, with substantially greater capacity and resources for negotiation. CFTC provided short-term experts on Law of the Sea and hydrography to advise the GoS on strategic negotiating options. Such expertise (maritime law and hydrography) were not available locally.

CFTC support for the oil, gas and mining sectors is also an example of the filling of a gap by providing specific technical advice that realistically could not be sustained in many smaller nations. A 2007 evaluation conducted for SASD is replete with examples of how CFTC programming filled particular one-time needs. The types of actions in question include: international off-shore mineral rights negotiations, assistance in royalty negotiations, developing legal or regulatory frameworks, etc. Support for international trade negotiations, via either long-term experts posted to a national government, or shorter term consultancies is another example of this dimension of support for national capacities.

What may be equally interesting to note in relation to this sort of capacity support is that it is relevant for large, as well as small nations. In our 11 nation survey we uncovered examples in nations as large as Tanzania, and as small as Grenada. The common characteristic is that all these nations lack an endogenous capacity within their existing public sectors in the area in question, and are not likely to require one on an on-going basis.

This, however, is a double edged sword. In many of these cases, a future need may arise – another round of trade negotiations, a need to settle a subsequent maritime dispute, a new mineral negotiation. To that end, the CFTC probably would remain the most viable source of support.

5.1.4 Contributions to MDGs

This section speaks to benefits that are not articulated by the two frameworks presented above but that relate to ComSec Strategic Plan priorities.

Commonwealth strategic documents and the two most recent CFTC reports (2003 and 2005) include several statements about how the Commonwealth as a whole and the CFTC in particular support the attainment of the MDGs. The MDGs are eight goals¹⁰ to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. They are drawn from the Millennium Declaration that was adopted during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

¹⁰ Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger ; Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education; Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women; Goal 4: Reduce child mortality; Goal 5: Improve maternal health; Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability; Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Finding 9: The economic, public sector renewal, trade related, and international cooperation programming of the CFTC indirectly contribute to the attainment of two of the MDGs – Numbers 1 and 8.

In the eleven nations we surveyed, we noted a preponderance of programming directed toward these general areas. We also noted that MDG 8 is further described in the following fashion:

Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system (includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction; both nationally and internationally)... and

Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

Excerpts, MDG Monitor, UNDP, 2007

Even taking into account its small scale and that such small programming can only be expected to make indirect and long-term contributions, it is apparent that the CFTC claims to be supportive of MDG attainment are valid.

Finding 10: A few CFTC projects contribute to health and education sectors/MDGs, although these make up only a small portion of CFTC activities as a whole.

Given the priorities set out for the CFTC and its mandate, both of which we have discussed in Part 3 of this report, it is not surprising that only a small percentage of CFTC programming has been directed towards the attainment of health and education MDGs. In the eleven nations we surveyed we found only one specific education or health related project - the Second Chance Education Project in Samoa.

What we did uncover, however, were a number of instances of regional and Pan Commonwealth programming and training sessions for HIV/AIDS related considerations. We found a number of training sessions and workshops for public servants in virtually all regions that focused on the impact of HIV/AIDS on levels of human resources in the health care system.

We also identified some regional training sessions in Africa where the MDG goal of universal access to education and full primary education was discussed in relation to the impact of HIV /AIDS on national education systems.

Given its status as a cross-cutting priority, we noted that a number of regional training workshops addressed gender equality issues and a few gender equality specialist positions were being supported by the CFTC .

The characteristics of CFTC support for these aspects of the MDGs are that the programming is largely training/ orientation and conducted at a regional level by bringing together national representatives. To that end, this sort of programming not only supports the attainment of the MDGs; it also promotes the attainment of the CFTC goals of forging mutual understanding and Pan-Commonwealth solutions to key global issues. The programming also appears to be largely for public servants – helping them to address the public policy challenges of the education and health related MDGs.

Looking more broadly, we recognise that the current distribution of CFTC resources across the 16 programming areas of the ComSec results in quite small sums being allocated to high profile areas like democracy, education, health, etc, most of which having been the subject of high profile CHOGM declarations. Clearly, it might seem anomalous that the Commonwealth's major interventionist device, the CFTC has not played a more significant role in these areas. However we

wish to recall that the historic and current mandate of the CFTC (as set down in its MoU) is weighted towards public sector renewal and the fostering of long-term pro-poor development by promoting economic growth.

With likely changes in the Strategic Plan and the elimination of “gap filling” as a discrete activity, some commentators might expect that this study address how to increase activity in what some might argue to be “under-served” areas. While we sympathise with these desires, we wish to point out that doing so would have required a different kind of study from the outset.

We have noted earlier that to do so adequately would have required a detailed impact evaluation combined with a full-scale needs assessment process so as to balance a full assessment of past impact across the 16 programming areas, contrasted with a member-state driven future needs analysis. Such a process in our estimation would result not only in a complete review of the CFTC back to “first principles”; it would also necessarily entail a thoughtful discussion of the role of the Commonwealth itself as an force for peace, international cooperation and understanding; let alone sustainable pro-poor development.

Our first recommendation, therefore proposes to clarify current mandate ambiguities. It does not envision a new mandate. (A table linking findings to recommendations is provided in Volume III, Appendix VIII)

5.1.5 Factors that Influence the Effectiveness of CFTC Activities

Finding 11: The success of CFTC activities is influenced by both country context and the way in which activities are designed and delivered.

In reviewing the country reports, we noted several factors that influenced the extent to which technical cooperation activities yielded positive effects in recipient countries. These factors fell into two main categories, the first of which was the country context:

- Political will and other country circumstances at the time of a technical cooperation can have an effect on the success of a TC activity.
 - In the Solomon Islands, the country put a higher priority on other sources of income generation (such as natural resources) and did not follow up as closely on the implementation of the Tourism Strategy that was developed with support from the CFTC.
 - In Tanzania, it was a matter of timing: Two CFTC experts were provided to the Tanzania Public Service College at a time when the college was just being established. Stakeholders now reflect that the utilisation of experts could have been better planned and coordinated.
 - In Sri Lanka the desire to increase private sector investment at the time, encouraged ministers to seek assistance in developing new skills to promote public/private partnerships.
 - In the Maldives, the overall commitment of the government to renew its Public Service and to continue the process of increased public sector transparency led the government to continue with public sector renewal programming.
 - The dynamics of the public service, particularly staff turnover, can affect the sustainability of technical cooperation initiatives. The effect of turnover, cited particularly in the Gambia country report in relation to training, applies as well to the advisory services provided by Commonwealth experts in other CFTC initiatives. Likewise in Sri Lanka, key public sector respondents noted that high turnover among senior level administrators resulted in the need to re-offer training.

The second category of factors that influenced the success of CFTC activities were related to the way in which CFTC Technical Cooperation was designed and delivered:

- Continuity in technical cooperation helped to ensure a longer-term effect and sustainability. Several successful TC projects identified in the case studies (particularly those where there was an institutional effect) involved several years of CFTC engagement. Examples include database development in the Monetary Development Authority or the capital market development in the Maldives, or the Samoa International Finance Authority.
- By contrast the following example illustrates an instance of poor design. In Sri Lanka, senior respondents noted that some CFTC sponsored programming for permanent secretary level personnel was poorly designed due to the fact that the trainers were unaware of local dynamics within the upper levels of the public service and that the programming reflected Canadian / United Kingdom conditions and not those that face the public service head of a ministry.
- The role that the country played in the design of the technical cooperation and the selection of consultants influenced the results of the activity. While in some countries visited stakeholders had no concerns about the design process for Technical Cooperation (St. Vincent and Grenadines, Grenada, The Maldives, The Solomon Islands), in others, government officials indicated that they had limited input into the definition of the terms of reference and selection of the experts, which was in turn cited as a factor that limited the effectiveness of the TC. Respondents in Sri Lanka and The Gambia, for example, reported that they would like to be more involved in the drafting of TORs, pre-selection, short listing, and final selection of candidates.
- The nationality of advisors may have influenced capacity development effects, particularly in capacity expansion, which is of interest to government officials. Respondents in Sri Lanka, the Gambia, and Tanzania noted that the assignment of international experts does not necessarily help to build capacity within their own civil service. They suggested that a pool of local advisors/specialists could provide more relevant and cost-effective services. In this regard, it is important to note that some respondents perceive that CFTC technical cooperation allows only non-nationals to be hired. These stakeholders were also generally unaware of the “experts roster” maintained by ComSec and the procedures used to access it.
- The expert’s competency and familiarity with the context were noted as important contributors to project success. Although the South-South experience was seen as an advantageous feature of the CFTC, what mattered most was the expert understands of the situation – either through similar experience in another region or through knowledge of the region. A key example is the Rehabilitation of the Nutmeg Industry project in Grenada, in which CFTC brought an expert from India who proved to be an extraordinary success. Despite his lack of exposure to the Caribbean, he had a thorough understanding of the nutmeg industry in another part of the world. The Sri Lankan example of unsuccessful training for senior officials demonstrates the corollary, whereby presumed experts were completely unaware of important local dynamics.
- The personality of the expert was also cited as a factor that can affect both the technical product and the potential to contribute to expanded capacity of the country team. The SGF evaluation (p. 62) also noted the importance of personal qualities as a contributing factor in successful technical cooperation.

5.2 Strategic Planning and Integration of CFTC

This section comments on the planning process of the CFTC and the extent of integration between CFTC activities and the national development process.

Finding 12: ComSec has made efforts to improve strategic planning over the past three years by introducing regional consultations and country technical cooperation frameworks. However, these planning tools are not yet effectively known or used in all regions by the PCP and by ComSec.

Beginning in July 2004, the ComSec adopted a four-year strategic planning cycle and a two-year operational plan cycle. Previously, governments endorsed a Strategic Plan covering a 2-year period to reflect the fact that CHOGM meets and decides upon Commonwealth mandates every two years. The new, longer-term planning cycle recognizes that, while aligning itself to the CHOGM mandates, the Secretariat needs to develop and articulate a longer term vision in a more holistic and integrated way.

The new cycle aims to ensure that ComSec is able to assess with member countries their development needs of highest priority, and roll-out a comprehensive programme of assistance to support development efforts in a measured way that also supports capacity development.

Operationally, ComSec has taken steps to strengthen regional planning through triennial consultations and technical cooperation frameworks.

Regional consultations

The regional consultations identify a broad agreement/consensus on CFTC programming in the region. An inaugural round of four regional consultations was held in early 2006 in preparation for the development of the newly established Technical Cooperation Frameworks.

Exhibit 5.5 Regional consultations

REGIONAL CONSULTATION	DATES/YEAR
Caribbean Regional Consultation	Grenada from January 25 th to 27 th 2006
Africa Regional Consultation	Gaborone, Botswana, 29 – 31 March 2006
Asia-Mediterranean Regional Consultation	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16-18 February 2006
Pacific Regional Consultation	Fiji, from March 8 to March 11, 2006

The meeting reports for all four consultations illustrate these fora provided for discussion on:

- Implementation of the ComSec Strategic Plan for 2004/05- 2007/08 in the region as well as in individual countries;
- Areas of future emphasis or de-emphasis; and
- Recommendations on how to improve performance, relevance and sustainability of CFTC supported development interventions.

The regional consultations appear to be a positive addition to the planning process, although they are not yet as effective in all regions. The knowledge about and views on these consultations varied considerably among the different countries and regions visited, as well as among the ComSec staff and High Commissions interviewed in London.

In most of the case study and Desk Review countries, there appeared to be limited knowledge about the regional consultations among the PCP and their staff, except in the Caribbean region. One of the challenges, perhaps, is that the consultations are one of several ComSec meetings that take place in a year, and they are not standing out as a distinctive forum.

In the Caribbean, the regional consultation is seen a useful forum for discussing regional issues and as a region-driven exercise to which the CFTC is able to respond. However, the stakeholders note that the implementation of recommendations emerging from such fora is not systematic. In Africa and Asia, however PCPs and POCs had very little awareness of the regional consultations. In the Pacific views about the regional consultations were mixed

As other respondents noted, these consultations are still a new addition to the planning process and may require several cycles and a more participative developmental process before they are recognized as effective vehicles that can provide strategic input in to the CFTC planning process.

Technical Cooperation Frameworks

ComSec has also introduced biennial Technical Cooperation Frameworks for each country for the period of 2006/07 – 2007/08. These new Frameworks provide standardized information for each of the countries. This includes the information about national development priorities, an overview of past and proposed cooperation programme (both direct assistance and regional or pan-commonwealth programming), a review of key issues identified in the regional consultation, and the country's contributions to the CFTC.

The interviews with stakeholders in Field Mission countries and in London suggest that these Frameworks are unevenly known and used by PCPs and ComSec staff.

The officials in the Solomon Islands PCP office acknowledge importance of the CFTC Cooperation Framework as an operational/working document to guide cooperation, but noted that as things evolve, other factors need to be taken into consideration. In the Caribbean, the Technical Cooperation Frameworks were described as being more informative than useful since the Framework is seldom used to influence requests for assistance. Likewise, in The Maldives the framework was recognised, but seen to be subordinate to a national annual prioritisation process run by the PCP. In other countries, such as Sri Lanka, Kenya, The Gambia, and Tanzania, and even in Samoa the stakeholders were not consistently aware of the existence of this planning and cooperation framework.

In part, the process that is used to gather the government's input may not engage the key stakeholders in a process of setting priorities. It appears that this Framework is written by ComSec with the information that is provided by countries. A questionnaire format is used and it may not be the PCP who fills this in, depending on whether or not he/she is also responsible for coordinating the ODA coming in to the country.

Nonetheless, as with the consultations, the Frameworks have only recently been introduced and require more time and a more participative development process to be used as a planning tool and institutionalised. In the future, the ComSec might consider improvements in the process for developing the Framework and also ensure that the priorities defined therein are specific enough that they can help to facilitate decision-making among PCP/POC and ComSec, without becoming rigid directives.

We will present specific recommendations regarding the strengthening of both the regional consultations and the frameworks.

Finding 13: In the sample of countries reviewed, CFTC projects are generally supportive of national development plans or priorities.

As noted in the CFTC Planning and Implementation Framework 2004/05-2007/08 annexed to the ComSec Strategic Plan for the same period, national development priorities and agreed frameworks for action, such as PRSPs, are to provide the basis for CFTC interventions at the national level.

In all of the nations sampled for this evaluation, government officials reported that the CFTC projects in general are supportive of their national development plans or priorities. The contributions to national development priorities derive from two types of projects: those that appear to be designed to meet specific national priorities or needs as spelled out in formal plans (national development plans, poverty reduction strategies) and those that evolve in response to emerging issues or situations that are also considered to be government priorities.

In cases where national strategic development plans or poverty reduction strategies were in place (all countries except in Solomon Islands, where the national plan was under development at time of the Field Mission), the Evaluation Team examined those plans in order to corroborate the direct or more tangential linkages that were explained by government respondents. A few examples of these projects and the way in which they link to the national plans/strategies are presented in the table below. The table below also illustrates that these national plans are so encompassing that public sector strengthening efforts can easily be matched with the objectives and goals.

Exhibit 5.6 Examples of initiatives with linkages to Government Plans

COUNTRY	EXAMPLE OF CFTC ACTIVITY	COMMENT
Samoa	Second Chance Education	The Strategy for the Development of Samoa (2005-2007) includes a Strategy for Education Development and a priority in improving curriculum and assessment practices, which includes the promotion of second chance education.
Tanzania	Improving Debt Management and Recording	Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) establishes a cluster on Growth and reduction of income poverty, with a goal of Ensuring sound economic management. One of the cluster strategies is: Reduce external debt to sustainable levels (50% of GDP or less) through improved debt management.
The Gambia	Technical Cooperation on Mining Matters – linked to Private Sector Development High Court Judges to Strengthen the Judiciary linked to Judicial and Constitutional Reform Debt Management Assistance linked to Public Sector Management and Administrative Reform	Most projects appear to be aligned with existing national development priorities, although none of the respondents could provide evidence that the CFTC projects were actually planned in any formal way (i.e., stated in a strategic planning document).

COUNTRY	EXAMPLE OF CFTC ACTIVITY	COMMENT
SVG	CFTC Institutional strengthening and export strategy – SVG DEVCO/NIPi	<p>The government development priorities are derived from the Medium-Term Economic Strategy (2002-2004)</p> <p>These two activities are linked to two priorities: Agricultural Economic Diversification and Export Services and Human Resource Development and poverty reduction</p> <p>Overall, it appears that the CFTC activities are in line with the national development goals of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, especially with regards to the “Economic diversification and export services” component.</p>
Grenada	The Rehabilitation of nutmeg industry	<p>The development priorities of the country have shifted drastically following hurricane Ivan.</p> <p>The project is linked to the hurricane recovery strategy and is meant to Stabilize Public Finances and Promote Reconstruction of Grenada’s Economy with Sectoral Interventions.</p>
The Maldives	Capital Market Development initiative Monetary Authority data base strengthening	The Seventh National Development Plan includes specific references to capital market development, and strengthening the national monetary authority
Sri Lanka	Public/private partnership support	The Ministry of Finance and Planning has established set of broad sectoral goals including ones related to the promotion of private sector investment
Brunei	Project management systems expert (Department of Public Works) and Computer design and graphics expert (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports)	<p>The Eighth National Development Plan (2001 to March 2006) combined a more committed and aggressive exploitation of the oil and gas sector with efforts to stimulate growth of the private sector and to promote human resources and industrial development</p> <p>These projects are linked to the following national priority: Public sector reform and governance</p>
Kenya	Chief Technical Advisor, Participatory Management and Forest Biometrician Activities in forestry include implementation of the Forestry Development Policy, enforcement of the Forestry Act, and promotion of private sector participation in reforestation and management of forest plantations.	These projects are both linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), as articulated by the Government of Kenya.
Malaysia	The strengthening of the Professional Services Development Corporation (PSDC) and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), are strongly focused upon building the capacity of these para-governmental institutions.	The Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), emphasizes human resources and knowledge-based services

In addition, the CFTC is noted for its ability to also respond to emerging issues or situations at the country level that are also considered to be government priorities, yet are not articulated in national plans. Examples of this include the CFTC assistance for negotiations of maritime boundaries, negotiations with oil, gas and mining companies, and support for historical architects in restoration efforts.

Finding 14: CFTC programming often is not linked to larger scale plans and priorities of other development cooperation partners.

The current trend in development cooperation and the intent of the Paris Declaration is for harmonisation and coordination among partners. Country governments have strengthened their efforts to coordinate development cooperation by creating “donor” forums and designating government focal point for ODA.

The Field Missions found that most development partners in countries visited were unaware of the ComSec’s programming and of the specific activities supported by the CFTC. At the meetings with High Commissions, the Evaluation Team was generally requested to provide a briefing on what we knew CFTC was supporting in the recipient country. The exception is in Solomon Islands where the ComSec’s longstanding support for the judiciary was known and valued by most of the partners interviewed. Overall, however, the linkage of CFTC plans and subsequent programming actions to that of other development partners is sporadic. The lack of integration is occurring for a number of reasons:

- The general absence of a representative for the ComSec that participates in the increasingly popular “donor” forum or coordination meetings. One cause for this absence may be the lack of a ComSec field presence in the regions. However, given the apparent degree of day-to-day interface with partners that is taking place, these absences cannot be explained away due to lack of resources. For example, the Commonwealth is not a signatory to Tanzania’s Joint Assistance Strategy, which cedes responsibility and authority for coordinating aid and all other forms of assistance to the Government of Tanzania. Consequently, ComSec does not participate in any of the sector working groups that support the government.
- The size and relative weight of CFTC assistance in relation to much larger bilateral or multilateral investments. CFTC assistance represents a very small percentage (often less than one percentage point) of the ODA in countries reviewed. This means that government officials may, justifiably, give less attention to the coordination, planning and integration of the CFTC.
- There appear to be no systematic mechanisms for keeping High Commissions informed of in-country CFTC activity. The communications from High Commissions in London is inconsistent. When ComSec staff visit the countries, they do not appear to include the debriefing with High Commissions in their plans.

This is not to excuse apparently uneven levels of harmonisation and cooperation. Rather, combined with our findings relative to the short-term planning horizon of many CFTC projects, planning systems that do not fully embrace a full short to long-term results hierarchy and also influenced by what we will argue is an ad hoc approach to project selection, it is not unexpected that the CFTC faces a challenge in increasing the degree to which its work is harmonised.

Subsequent recommendations will advocate a degree of prioritisation/selectivity, strengthened project planning systems that would be more “results-driven”, strengthened national level planning systems (Technical Cooperation Frameworks) and cyclical project approval, along with the full scale implementation of PMIP, all will increase the possibility of more thoughtful consideration of

where CFTC initiatives “fit” / can contribute to larger agendas. Of course, all these recommendations implicitly entail a rebalancing between responsiveness and prioritisation/positive selection based on more recognisable criteria.

Finding 15: The planning of the CFTC is affected by a perceived dichotomy between responsiveness and focus, and the accompanying challenges for defining results. This issue presents a risk to the CFTC on-going relevance, given the current context for development cooperation.

The ComSec’s 2004/05 – 2007/08 Strategic Plan includes 16 different Programme areas, with their respective objectives. Each of these areas is further disaggregated into priorities and expected results.

The CFTC priorities during the Plan period are reflected in the Strategic Plan’s Programme statements. The CFTC, in responding to national and regional developmental needs and priorities identified by governments, aims to ensure that these needs are situated within the framework of the goals and programmes of the Secretariat and its comparative advantage (paragraph 20, Strategic Plan 2004/05 – 2007/08). The Strategic Plan framework provides few means for prioritizing or focusing CFTC assistance.

In addition, many member states and ComSec staff conceptualise the CFTC as being a largely responsive programme that does not operate within a framework of priorities or central goals. The characteristic of “being responsive” to member needs has implied that ad hoc and individual requests should be considered by ComSec and approved.

However, since its inception, as we have noted in Part 3 of this report CFTC governing documents always have envisioned some degree of focusing and not purely a responsive programme .

Over time, as we have indicated earlier, a perceived dichotomy between responsiveness and focus has emerged. However, as this Finding and others show, the nature of the CFTC obliges both flexibility and focus; it is not one without the other, both are essential.

The imperative to focus does not imply a call for tight prioritisation nor should it compromise flexibility. Rather, it implies a more sensitive balance between responding to genuine unforeseen needs of CFTC contributing members, and the more focused spirit that is set out in the guiding MOU. With these principles in mind, there are thematic/ programmatic areas where the ComSec has had a comparative advantage.

5.3 Rationale and Comparative Advantage of the CFTC

This section presents findings on the comparative advantage of the CFTC and its on-going relevance and rationale.

Finding 16: CFTC comparative advantage is determined by its ability to respond to the needs of small nations, the partnership ethos that underlies its origins, the quality of its experts, its recognized technical expertise in certain areas, and its ability to strengthen the response to global issues.

Each of the country mission and Desk Review reports presents findings on the comparative advantage of the CFTC. These are summarized below in Exhibit 5.7. The table presents a mix of conceptual and practical advantages. In examining CFTC literature, one has a tendency to see an emphasis on process comparative advantage (e.g. accessibility, speed, cheaper than others, flexibility). This list of characteristics of the CFTC was included in each of the new country Technical Cooperation Frameworks.

The Evaluation Team wishes to emphasize more fundamental comparative advantages. For instance, the CFTC has an ability to respond to the needs of small nations where others may not be sufficiently flexible in relation to the public sector. Also, it is worth mentioning the CFTC focus on capacity (3 dimensions), some specific areas of recognized technical expertise (see sidebar), and the fact that the CFTC and ComSec provide a fora for strengthening responses to global issues through its Regional and Pan-Commonwealth programming. In addition, this programming provides both economies of scale and opportunities for partnership/mutual understanding among members.

Areas of recognized expertise:

- Debt management
- Trade negotiation/facilitation
- Public sector renewal
- Legal support
- Economic development
- Democratic development

Finally, the CFTC's partnership ethos, which differentiates it from traditional donor-driven development programming, is also an element of its comparative advantage. We recognize that some in the development community would not consider such a catalytic role to be development, but we do not agree with that assessment. We do agree with the assumption that the contributory nature of CFTC procedures brings a different sense of partnership and collaboration to the Fund, which is in the spirit of promoting pan-Commonwealth understanding, so central to very MOU since the inception of the CFTC.

For small nations, the advantages are even more noticeable. Indeed, the greatest degree of worth seemed to come from very small nations, namely The Maldives, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Gambia. This can be explained by the fact that ComSec seems to pay more attention, while the larger donors simply do not have the time and the flexibility to meet very small needs. In addition, in these small nations, one advisor for a year can make a significant difference. By contrast, in Kenya, Tanzania or even in Sri Lanka, the CFTC is overwhelmed and is not seen as positively.

Exhibit 5.7 Comparative advantage of CFTC in designated countries and regions

COUNTRY	COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
Pacific	Niche roles in locally significant areas such as maritime boundaries, support for oil, gas and mineral development. Recognition of long-term comparative advantages in public sector renewal and promotion of rule of law. Seen as not imposing its own development plans on nations. Capable of responding to small scale needs. However, CFTC also is seen as slow in processing initial requests or contract extensions.
Tanzania	Through "just-in-time" interventions that focus on specific needs, the CFTC is perceived as a highly flexible instrument that can be used to address emerging issues and capacity gaps, without excessive administrative hurdles or transaction costs. It has low transaction costs associated with the preparation of CFTC project proposals, is unique in its capacity to bring in highly trained and well-respected technical experts to support in-country needs. The fact that the CFTC operates only in Commonwealth member countries is perceived as a great asset in terms of its ability to provide relevant technical and legal advice, given the common governance system shared by member countries.
The Gambia	The CFTC remains unique in its ability to provide ministries and governmental departments with senior level technical expertise at short notice. It is perceived as a highly flexible instrument that can be used to address emerging issues and capacity gaps, without the excessive administrative hurdles and transaction costs that other development agencies impose Respondents also underlined the absence of lengthy administrative hurdles, ComSec's ability to respond quickly to project submissions, and the reassuring presence of clearly defined in-country CFTC Points of Contact who are able to field questions and to provide guidance on project or training applications.

COUNTRY	COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE
Maldives	Respondents stated how responsive it was, how it could move faster than its larger partners, and how it respected Maldivian needs. But perhaps most important was the fundamental recognition that the CFTC could address capacity issues that others appear to be unable to address in a timely fashion.
Sri Lanka	Sri Lankan stakeholders also praised the rapid response of CFTC and the quality of some of the public sector managerial training that it has sponsored.
Caribbean	Procedures to request assistance from the CFTC were qualified as flexible and speedy. ComSec is responsive, and there is a good communication flow whether through the POCs, the PCP or directly through ComSec. The CFTC is defined as a mechanism requiring minimum amount of administration, speedy, and clear contrary to other means of support available to the countries. CFTC is regarded as being quick and efficient when it comes to delivering assistance while other cooperation programs are somewhat deemed more bureaucratic and slower in delivering aid.
Brunei	The CFTC has a comparative advantage in a country such as Brunei, which receives very limited support from the bilateral and multilateral donor community. Indeed, by virtue of its advanced level of economic development it does not benefit from many bilateral development projects, although it receives some assistance, most significantly from Japan, followed, to a lesser extent, by France, Germany, and Korea. In addition, respondents indicated that although the overall financial value of CFTC interventions remains relatively small, the CFTC programme has a broader outlook, provides easier access mechanisms and tends to respond very quickly to member requests.
Kenya	According to the stakeholders interviewed, the comparative advantage of the CFTC when compared with the programmes of other development cooperation partners is its responsiveness to the country's needs and the fact that it "speaks the same language". In this context, "speaking the same language" refers to the natural affinities, politically and culturally, that the Commonwealth shares with Kenya and the mutual understanding arising out of these affinities is not, at first glance, shared to the same extent with other partners active in the country.
Malaysia	The comparative advantage is summarized in two words: responsiveness and flexibility. The responsiveness and flexibility of the Fund allows the CFTC to fill development gaps that are left behind by other partner agencies, all of whom have set agendas.

Finding 17: The CFTC is generally aligned with the principles of aid effectiveness.

One of the issues raised in the TORs for this evaluation was the extent to which the CFTC has been implemented to link with the global development context. That global development context has been most recently influenced by the adoption by the international community of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). The Commonwealth is a signatory to this Declaration. Even if the Paris commitments are largely predicated on the traditional donor/recipient model, the evaluation finds that the CFTC generally exemplifies these principles, and in fact has had some of them as characteristics since its inception.

- **Ownership:** This principle refers to the need for partner countries to exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions that donors respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it. In the sample of countries supported by CFTC, the requests for cooperation generally come from the country and are not part of a directive programming approach from the Commonwealth. Furthermore, the unique membership basis of CFTC and its participative decision-making systems exemplify the principles of local ownership and have done so for thirty years.

- **Alignment:** This refers to donors basing their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures. In all countries, as noted above, the Evaluation Team confirms that CFTC projects are generally supportive of larger national plans.
- **Managing for Results:** Managing for results means managing and implementing aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision-making. The CFTC faces a limitation in this area because the ComSec has not yet fully implemented its system to support the management for results.
- **Mutual accountability:** In putting this principle in practice, donors and partners are accountable for development results; both partners and donors enhance the accountability and transparency in the use of development resources. Since all ComSec members contribute to the Fund and there is also cost sharing on individual activities (such as governments paying for the travel costs for attending ComSec training), CFTC adheres to this more naturally than other programs. However, the evaluation also points to aspects of reporting on CFTC results and use of resources that could strengthen this principle.
- **Harmonisation:** The intent of this principle is for donors' actions to be more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective. As noted in several sets of findings, the absence of field presence, combined with a lack of coordinated planning, considerably limits the harmonisation of CFTC with other initiatives.

Finding 18: Although the CFTC is relevant to Commonwealth nations, there are several risks to its ongoing relevance in the current context for international development cooperation.

As noted above, all the countries surveyed identified comparative advantages and acknowledged the relevance of the CFTC.

The CFTC makes a small but marked contribution to national development goals; it is able to address small scale issues that are difficult for others to address in a timely or efficient fashion; and it offers a pool of experts that understand challenges facing Commonwealth nations. Furthermore, it is relevant due to its contributory nature, which makes it different from others, and in its continued fulfilment of the 1970s original mandate, as updated in paragraphs 2-6 of the 2002 MOU.

Nonetheless, despite the commitment of most Commonwealth Nations to increase their contributions (by a proposed 6% per year over 5 years), the monetary value of the Fund continues to decline when taken in constant terms and is likely to represent an increasingly smaller proportion of the totality of development cooperation.

In this context, the CFTC faces the risk of marginalization. Given its small scale programming, its indirect linkages to national development strategies—and by extension MDGs—are tangential and based on how small scale programming can collectively contribute to larger scale goals. In addition, as noted above, its programming is not clearly linked to larger scale plans and priorities of other development cooperation partners. The breadth and scope of ComSec's programming base (13 programme and 2 cross-cutting initiatives) combined with a lengthy listing of priorities as set out in current Strategic Plans also reinforces this risk. The small scale of the CFTC and tendency to see it as largely responsive to individual and ad hoc requests also poses a risk to its long term relevance.

5.4 Efficiency¹¹

5.4.1 Introduction

In this section we address several CFTC efficiency issues that are related to how CFTC operates in relation to certain key principles of aid effectiveness - how CFTC experts are selected, how financial resources are controlled, and the extent to which the CFTC may be more cost-effective than other comparative development programming.

5.4.2 The Selection of Experts

Like all signatories to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the ComSec is committed to human resources management processes that are transparent as well as timely. However, the CFTC occupies a somewhat unique niche both in size and philosophy, and its processes cannot be compared directly to those of the large bilateral or multilateral organisations that signed the Paris Declaration. Thus we approach issues relative to the way the ComSec selects personnel for CFTC programming in this light.

Finding 19: The selection methodologies used by ComSec to provide personnel for CFTC-supported programming are efficient and effective given the nature of the CFTC itself, although there is room for improvement.

In our review of CFTC long and short-term assignments we noted that the CFTC Roster (an inventory of consultants operated on the basis of voluntary submission of curriculum vitae and not presently possessing means of refreshment) is used in about 40% of short-term assignments, with “unspecified means” constituting nearly all the remaining balance. The Strategic Gap Filling evaluation noted a 50% utilisation rate for strategic gap filling assignments. Moreover, once personnel have been selected (by whatever means) they are entered into an Experts’ Data Base. We have noted that this data base does not embody performance information that might enable it to be used as a more sensitive selection tool.

With an average of about 500 short-term assignments per year attributed to the CFTC by ComSec information systems, a 40% rate of using a roster system might seem low and appear to undermine the apparent probity of ComSec selection methods. However, a more careful examination of the data shows that a significant percentage of assignments, approaching 50%, have final values of less than £4,000. This reflects the relatively small scale of many CFTC programming activities; it also demonstrates the difference between ComSec and other signatories to the Paris Declaration.

Turning to the provision of long-term experts, presently there are approximately 70 such assignments world wide and the annual turnover rate appears to be less than 20 assignments per year. Of these, data from the recent SGF evaluation for 2004/05 shows a much higher ratio of some 70% recruited from the Roster, while a further 15-20 % were secured through “head hunting” – a process of consulting recognised experts to identify possible candidates.

¹¹ In order to eliminate duplication and ensure consistency between findings and recommendations, some of the efficiency elements noted in the revised evaluation matrix of the Interim Report have been moved to section 5.5 on Program Administration and Implementation. (e.g., how CFTC projects are selected and how the PPC/POC system functions).

Virtually every modern public sector or multilateral organisation possesses a hierarchy of procurement methodologies wherein the more expensive a contract may be, the more complex, transparent (and time consuming) are its requirements for procurement. For example, in the Canadian federal system, managers have authority to procure most consulting and contractual services up to approximately £12,000 without recourse to a public selection process. This type of approach reflects a pragmatic managerial calculation of risk versus effectiveness and timeliness.

Given the current state of the art of international development cooperation procurement, it is reasonable to conclude that any form of public selection process would require a minimum of six or more weeks to execute from public announcement to public notification (not including time to finalise contractual arrangements). This would considerably add to the time frame of many of the small projects and thus impede the ability of the CFTC to respond to unanticipated circumstances.

In light of the size of ComSec and the size of the CFTC 's budget, a pragmatic and rhetorical question naturally arises: What could possibly arise for CFTC partner nations if ComSec chose to adopt a set of procurement policies more akin to the large scale methodologies of some of its Paris partners ? In our estimation, to do so and to include a larger number of the relatively small projects would increase the amount of time required to respond to member states and thus degrade one of the CFTC's recognised comparative advantages, namely that it is more timely than other major development cooperation partners.

Finding 20: The somewhat voluntary and self-identification basis of the current CFTC Roster / Experts' Data Base system, combined with the absence of formal feedback and lack of data on past performance, limits the usefulness of the Roster and the Data Base.

Our review of the CFTC Roster / Experts' Data Base system paralleled the findings of the SGF evaluation, which raised some concerns about the applicability of the Roster/Data Base and also addressed the contemporary relevance of it – namely, the degree to which it is refreshed and the extent to which it integrates past performance considerations.

With a total population in the several thousands and it not having the means for refreshment or updating, the size of the Roster substantially exceeds the demand being placed upon it. Turning to the Experts' Data Base, the absence of a formal system of pre-qualification assessment, combined with the lack of a link between a candidate and past performance (CFTC assignment related data) leaves it more of a basic identification tool than a precise mechanism to select qualified candidates.

As noted above, the size of the ComSec and the CFTC preclude recourse to some of the more rigorous selection methodologies that other signatories to the Paris Declaration may use for larger assignments. Nevertheless, the absence of formal mechanisms to refresh the Roster/ Data Base and techniques to reach out to attract new candidates (especially from developing nations) again limits their overall utility as rigorous selection methodologies.

While we clearly recognise the financial implications involved in pre-qualification techniques and the costs of periodic refreshment, we will present some low-cost alternatives that are designed to increase their utility and outreach especially in relation to gender balance and in reaching out to qualified experts who are nationals of many of the member states that are developing countries.

Finding 21: Although CFTC does not engage in anticipatory selection planning, and although stakeholders are generally pleased with the results of the CFTC selection process and its timeliness in comparison to other development partners, the informal nature of the Roster creates internal inefficiencies.

Several CFTC assignments are not articulated through comprehensive and anticipatory planning processes. This in is large part due to the prevailing ‘responsive paradigm’ at the ComSec – the desire to promote responsiveness and provide rapid assistance (two functional characteristics that the ComSec identifies as comparative advantages). However, such flexibility results in additional challenges on the informal Roster system. For example, managers of the Roster do not appear to have sufficient time or resources to engage in anticipatory recruitment or to broaden their outreach to identify new pools of candidates (even if they had the resources to do so). They also do not have the means to cross-match candidates with any information relative to past performance on prior CFTC assignments, largely due to the fact that performance management data is presently incomplete.

However, there is no direct evidence that such barriers have reduced the quality of CFTC personnel. In fact, we found a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of personnel, and the PCPs and POCs we surveyed in eleven countries did not voice any specific concerns about the quality of the candidates that comprise the Roster system. For them, the results (i.e., quality personnel) were paramount, and selection processes were seen as an internal means to that end.

Indeed, the only possible major area for suggested improvement in the way ComSec recruited CFTC personnel related to timeliness, namely the desire for even more rapidity of recruitment and contractual engagement. In comparison to the work of other development partners, PCPs and POCs commented favourably about the timeliness of the CFTC. When we explored these remarks with POCs and PCPs, and their desire for an even “faster “ CFTC , however, we found that the size and scope of the work of other partners involved much more lengthy selection processes, while the small size of CFTC assignments (frequently one person short-term assignments) lent themselves to more rapid, informal selection processes.

Finding 22: The percentage of experts recruited from developing countries for long-term assignments supports the CFTC’s contention that it promotes South-South cooperation and mutual understanding. However, the percentage of developing country experts for short-term assignments is markedly lower.

Long-term assignments

The 2006/07 data on CFTC long-term experts (in post, or with firm position offers) shows that approximately 60 out of 82 experts (73%) were from developing nations. Of this total and among developing nations, India, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ghana each contributed six.

However, this information needs to be placed into a temporal context. Less than 10 years ago the total number of CFTC long-term experts exceeded 150, with numerically far more representation from developing nations, especially India. Likewise, a decade ago, some 65 long-term new hires were processed annually, a marked contrast to the 11 new hires in 2006/07.

Short-term assignments

The 2005/06 CFTC data shows that out of 476 short to medium term assignments, approximately 45% were filled by individual experts or companies from developing nations. These data are somewhat questionable, however, due to ambiguities in how ComSec management information systems record the nature of contractual assignments. As we will describe in more detail in a subsequent finding related to Programme Administration, current ComSec record keeping mixes together assignments that are designed to support ComSec management functions for the CFTC, with actual CFTC programme delivery.

Given the ComSec's London headquarters, it is understandable and probably more cost effective, to source a number of such support activities from suppliers in the United Kingdom. However, because current ComSec data systems do not provide details about the nature of these short-term assignments, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of "support" versus "programming."

Finding 23: The percentage of female participation is approximately 20% for both long-term and short-term CFTC assignments.

The long-term and short-term data we examined showed that approximately 20% of assignments are conducted by women. The actual percentage may be somewhat higher because ComSec gender-related data for short-term assignments is categorised on the basis of male, female, or "company", with "company" being listed at about 25%.

With respect to long-term assignments, data of the past decade shows a relative growth in female participation from about 10% a decade ago to about 20% in 2006/07. This positive trend, however, has to be placed into the context of an overall 50% reduction in long-term experts as a whole over the past decade, from about 150 to a present total of about 70.

The nature of the present set of long-term assignments may be a contributing factor in the 20% female participation rate. By far, the majority of current long-term assignments are directed towards economic or legal/judicial tasks, traditionally male pursuits; while few are directed towards human development areas such as welfare, health, education or civil society participation (including gender equity specialists).

5.4.3 Financial Resource Control

Finding 24: The basic systems of financial resource control appear to be adequate for a fund the size of the CFTC.

Current CFTC financial management systems, along with internal policies on discretionary expenses such as conference participation and travel expenses, enable ComSec Directors and Assistant Secretaries General to have an adequate ongoing awareness of the level of resource commitments and sufficient control of discretionary expenses.

CFTC financial reporting systems are focused on resource control at the level of individual responsibility centres of Directors. This level of control enables a sufficient degree of oversight and the ability to control resources in a flexible, yet consistent fashion. The current levels of delegation of financial authority to Directors for CFTC project approval (£ 15,000<)¹² enables rapid response while placing resource decision making in the hands of the level of ComSec management (Directors) most responsible for the link between day-to-day operations and resource decision making.

¹² The new RBM Guidelines recommend that the ceiling be raised to £ 50,000 but it has not been approved yet.

It should be noted that while in our estimation current financial management systems are adequate for a fund of this magnitude, presently ComSec does not possess an updated Financial Procedures manual or a current training programme to ensure consistency of application. While we support the views of the ComSec auditor relative to improved control, we also would caution that any renewals be considered in light of the size of the CFTC so as not to excessively bureaucratise and potentially reduce the timeliness of CFTC programming.

This level of delegation ensures that the crucial input/output relationship is reviewed by the Directors who again are most responsible for ensuring long-term budgetary planning and execution.

Finding 25: Notwithstanding the ad hoc nature of much of the CFTC's programming, there is a general concordance between planned biennial allocations and actual programme expenditures.

An examination of budgets and subsequent reports to decision-making bodies shows that ComSec's biennial plans for resource allocation by thematic area and by country are generally translated into roughly parallel expenditure levels. Variances from planned to actual expenditures are in the range of 5-10%, not in our estimation a significant gap given the demand driven and ad hoc nature of many CFTC supported projects.

This finding leads to a hypothesis that ComSec operates with an informal internal planning system wherein a few key staff (regional advisors, along with supervisory and managerial personnel largely in GIDD, EAD and SASD) informally manage the supply / demand relationship.

This concordance also may be a factor of the duration of some CFTC assignments, especially multiple year assignments of long-term experts (and gap filling as a whole) and multi-part consulting assignments. In these instances, the actual room of fiscal manoeuvre of directors is substantially less than the size of the budget due to what are in essence a series of multi-year pre-commitments.

5.4.4 The Cost Efficiency of the CFTC

Virtually every major CFTC report of the last decade affirms that one of the most valuable comparative advantages of the CFTC is that its interventions are substantially more cost-effective and efficient than the development interventions of its major partners. While this statement is true in some respects, it has been very difficult to confirm within the parameters of this particular evaluation.

Turning to the related issues of the administrative efficiency and consequential cost effectiveness, the claims of CFTC's cost-effectiveness and administrative efficiency over the work of other development partners appear to rest on one or two studies done 6-7 years ago, especially the following: *An Evaluation of Commonwealth Secretariat Assistance to Member Countries with "Negotiations" (1990 –99)* by Percy S. Mistry (2000). On several occasions, we asked for this report and others related to cost-effectiveness in April 2007, but never received them before the assembling of this Report.

In November 2007, we received *"Interim Report on Cost Analysis,"* an undated and un-attributed document that provides data only through 2001. This study noted the lack of information available from ComSec to permit analysis of cost efficiency: "...there is an urgent need for the development of an appropriate management information system within divisions to enable easy access of costs of experts and consultancy advice."

Methodology

Given the lack of data, the Evaluation Team developed a methodology to assess some basic aspects of cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Beginning with the CFTC claim that its experts (long and short-term) provide high quality service at considerably lower cost than other development partners, we examined samples of both long-term and short-term assignments.

Long-term assignments

We examined the compensation of 70 long-term experts in post as of March 31, 2007, and compared their basic compensation with the United Nations salary scale for Professionals and Higher Categories. We chose the UN pay scale as a comparator for several reasons – it is global, is based on the principle of attempting to attract the best qualified by paying competitive rates, and is regulated by a long-standing, transparent human resources management system. For the purposes of this salary comparison we used an exchange rate of £1 = \$US 2.00 (mid-2007 rate), as most UN family organisations remain tied to the US dollar. We did not include post allowances or travel costs, due to the degree of variance in these discretionary arrangements among organisations and governments.

Short-term assignments

For short-term assignments (less than 12 months duration), we selected a sample of 40 CFTC 2005/06 assignments out of a total of approximately 500, ranging in duration from two weeks to about a year (approximately 40 weeks). We selected assignments where there was a clear delineation of the rate of pay per day, or which were of such a short duration (less than 4 weeks) so as to be reasonably able to assume continuous work. We excluded volunteer assignments, those that seemed to support internal CFTC administrative and managerial activities and those where the details of the assignment were not clear. (Our examination of one sample year of data shows that a considerable number of assignments are so poorly recorded that it is nearly impossible to draw relevant comparisons.)

For comparators, we drew on our own portfolio of technical assistance missions and those of our strategic business allies for training seminars and short-term on-site experts. We used the rates charged by consulting firms such as Universalis and its corporate partners in its contracts with global bodies (such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank) as well as the rates charged by individuals when working outside the corporate environment.

We did not consider travel and living expenses (the impact of these expenses has been factored out as the ComSec has adopted UN per diem rates).

One limitation to useful comparisons is that most CFTC short-term assignments (2005/06 data) entail the hiring of individuals rather than firms. By contrast, the technical cooperation supported by many of CFTC's development cooperation partners are much larger in scale and involve contracting to corporate entities, which naturally have considerably higher overhead costs than individual consultants (and which may have different tax treatments as well).

Finding 26: The CFTC basic rates of pay for long-term assignments (one year or longer) are very cost efficient in comparison to UN basic pay rates for comparable positions.

The highest paid current long-term experts are approximately six judges whose fees are in the annual range of £30,000 to £32,000 (about \$ US 60,000 – 64,000), excluding all allowances. Given the importance of these positions and the individual expertise required, comparable positions in the UN system (P5 or D1) would have compensation ranging from US\$120,000 to \$US 144,000. The

CFTC comparative advantage in relation to these few senior positions is quite apparent, with a ratio approaching 2:1.

Well over half of the 70 current long-term experts (largely experts assigned to individual ministries in CFTC partner nations) fell in the annual range of £25,000 – 27,500 (about \$ US 50,000 – 55,000). Given that these individuals provide expert policy and/ or programming advice to a ministry (and are the core of gap filling) we equate them to mid-level UN professionals (P3 and P4), with compensation ranging from £41,500 to £50,000.

In comparison to the UN P4 level, the CFTC cost-advantage is markedly less, but still substantial in a ratio approaching 4:3. If the UN's P3 range is used (intermediate level professionals) the ratio becomes much closer, approximately 5:4, thus reducing the CFTC comparative advantage.

Of the 70 long-term assignments examined, only a few had basic rates of pay below £25,000 per year.

This analysis is subject to potential inaccuracies because we did not have access to CFTC job descriptions (save for a few project approval documents that related to the appointment of long-term experts). We did not develop an average for the 70 long-term assignments because it would not have been practicable to attempt to average UN salaries to develop a relevant comparator. (The UN classification system's P and D ranges relate not only to technical subject matter specialists, but also to a range of managerial and administrative functions.)

Although we cannot directly attribute CFTC's comparative advantage to specific causes, one likely factor is the nationality of the 70 long-term experts. According to CFTC supplied data, approximately 22% of the 70 experts are nationals of the UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, while the remainder come from middle or lower income nations of the Commonwealth. This not only tends to confirm a long-standing claim that the CFTC promotes South-South technical cooperation, in so far as the provision of long-term technical experts is concerned, but it is also reasonable to infer that the salary scales in the home nations of many long-term experts are lower than those in the North.

Finding 27: The CFTC enjoys a modest comparative advantage with respect to the compensation for short-term assignments.

The sample CFTC assignments included the development of tourism strategies, legal drafting assignments, developing conferences and training programmes (nationally and regionally), short-term IT assistance to nations, short-term subject matter specialists, and other such assignments.

Compensation for these assignments ranged from £250 per day to a high of £ 375-400 per day for two recent assignments in St. Vincent and the Solomon Islands. The mid range for basic compensation was about £300 per day.

Comparable assignments conducted by consulting firms ranged from £500 to £600. These rates compare very favourably with the CFTC sample average of about £300.

By contrast, a review of three assignments undertaken by individuals and small teams outside of the corporate environment (which may be more analogous to CFTC short-term consultancies) shows a much closer ratio, with compensation in the range of £300 to £400 per day.

Therefore, the CFTC clearly holds a strong comparative advantage for short to medium term corporate assignments. However, its advantage over non-corporate assignments appears to be somewhat less, but still advantageous. However, the absence of systematised monitoring system makes it difficult to assess the cost-effectiveness of CFTC programming.

CFTC's claims related to cost-effectiveness (as opposed to cost efficiency) cannot be substantiated by existing monitoring data. The absence of key reports that detail CFTC cost advantages left us to focus on salary cost comparisons. However, lower costs do not necessarily translate into high quality programming or programming that meets needs.

The Benefits and Relevance elements of this evaluation have demonstrated the degree to which CFTC programming is valued and meets needs through a variety of dimensions. These benefits, however, were largely ascertained through Field Missions and direct contacts with programming participants and managers – not by means of a review of CFTC documentation.

While CFTC's financial management system adequately controls and tracks expenditures, it provides limited data for analysis.

Finding 28: ComSec's financial management information system does not permit adequate ongoing analysis of cost efficiency.

Nearly a decade ago *"CFTC: A Rethink"* (1999) suggested that ComSec establish a capacity to systematically analyse and report on the apparent cost efficiency of CFTC programming. Other studies allege not only cost advantages in term of the salaries paid to experts (and total compensation packages provided to them), but also cost advantages with respect to internal administration. We have seen second hand citations that allege administrative costs advantages, but without the reports themselves, we cannot verify these claims against contemporary data.

As we have indicated above with respect to cost advantages, when we analysed existing data such as reports of short-term consultancies for fiscal year 2005/2006, we noted inconsistencies in the presentation of information that made large scale analysis problematic. For example, we observed several different ways of expressing contracting costs in relation to per diems and durations. In some instances, long assignments were matched with very low total compensation packages that would indicate daily compensation of less than £200. The compensation of some assignments was captured as "all inclusive"; while others were captured as a daily rate of compensation.

In examining the nearly 500 assignments listed in the report for 2005/06 there was no clear differentiation between assignments designed to deliver technical cooperation programming, and activities designed to support the administration of the CFTC itself (assignments to develop IT systems, write internal reports, etc.). Initially we identified potential internal assignments by a coding CWG (meaning Commonwealth Secretariat), but came to realise that a significant number of CWG assignments provided support to vital regional activities such as workshops and training sessions.

Finding 29: The introduction of the Performance Management Improvement Project will increase the ability of ComSec to analyse various aspects of cost efficiency and effectiveness.

As is discussed in several elements of this evaluation related to performance measurement and resource control, the soon to be implemented elements of the Performance Management Improvement Project will considerably increase the ability of ComSec to analyse cost-related considerations in the context of more accurate and standardised project information. For example, standardised project design and periodic financial and programmatic reporting will enable staff to conduct cross-analysis of the CFTC portfolio in a more sensitive manner.

5.5 Programme Administration and Implementation

The Programme Implementation and Administration component of this evaluation combines several related elements. Our findings concentrate on four major areas: 1) the management of information; 2) Project selection and decision-making; 3) The POC/PCP relationship as it relates to the selection of projects; 4) The degree of partnership with others involved in development cooperation programming

5.5.1 The Management of Information

Our findings with respect to the management of CFTC related information and documentation need to be considered in light of the size of the ComSec itself, the size of the CFTC, and its unique nature. The findings that follow, while not generally positive in nature, reflect the past management style of ComSec as a whole and CFTC in particular. Many of these findings are being superseded by ComSec -wide and internal to CFTC renewal measures. Our findings with respect to information management concentrate not so much on systems elements, but on how these elements strengthen or hinder the effectiveness and impact of the CFTC as a whole.

Finding 30: The existing approaches to CFTC record keeping limits the ComSec's ability to monitor programming delivery and also to demonstrate results.

We found an informal approach to record keeping at ComSec with respect to CFTC programming. For the evaluation study, the services of a former ComSec officer were retained to assist in on-going data gathering and specifically to access project records. While we received project approval documentation for all the 11 nations we surveyed, we were able to uncover only scattered examples of six month, year end, or end of project reports.

We used the Field Missions and desk-top surveys to ascertain whether such reports had in fact been completed as is required. We found that they had been completed according to standards, with some samples being provided to us. Discussion with senior staff at ComSec revealed that several key units of ComSec, including GIDD, do not have a consolidated approach to records management and that project records have been dispersed among individual staff members. This in our estimation results in several performance and assessment challenges:

- When an extension or revision is required, it makes it difficult to find the appropriate PDD or other relevant document necessary to proceed;
- The uneven nature of the format of project prevents any comparative data analysis;
- Cost/benefit analysis is made very difficult due to lack of consolidated and automated reports;
- Internal information sharing and the promotion of formalised organisational learning are limited;
- When a handover to a new manager takes place, it is incomplete and leaves gap in corporate knowledge;
- Appraisals, reviews, quality insurance procedures and evaluation studies cannot rely on the availability of the key documents and there is no consistent quality standards to filing papers or ensuring that key reports or documents are securely filed;
- Preparation of briefs for senior management in a timely and efficient fashion is also difficult;
- Any effort to strengthen the quality of the Experts Database is hampered by the lack of consolidated performance data (of whatever nature);
- Finally, duplication of documents is not a good use of resources and time.

Finding 31: Efforts are underway in GIDD and across ComSec to strengthen the quality and consistency of record management.

Senior managers of GIDD advised the Evaluation Team as early as April 2007 that they had recently put in place new approaches to records management that would result in the consolidation of GIDD records into one registry and which would end the acknowledged custom of individuals maintaining their own personal records systems. Likewise, we examined the soon to be implemented Performance Management Improvement Project. Its planned 2008 full implementation will result in standardised reporting formats across not only CFTC activities, but with respect to all ComSec programming.

These two separate initiatives will not only transform record keeping and constitute major steps to address the four shortfalls noted above. They also will have positive effects on the management philosophy of ComSec as a whole. Finally, measures such as a consolidated registry for close to 70% of CFTC-related activities along with new automated data and record keeping will expand internal awareness of non-financial performance data.

5.5.2 Project Selection and Decision-Making

Finding 32: Project identification mechanisms are generally informal and do not enable cross-comparisons at the national level.

Our data indicates that the newly established Technical Cooperation Frameworks were not the primary tool for project selection. POCs and PCPs alike reported that the major selection tools were informal discussions between themselves and ComSec personnel. We also were advised that even more informal mechanisms such as ministerial discussions at ComSec meetings of ministers also came into play.

While such mechanisms may be speedy, what may be even more important is the impact of their informality. They limit cross-analysis of programming effects and the ability to link projects with the work of other development cooperation partners. We also observed, especially in larger nations, that there was scant consideration of internal economies of scale, or long-term sustainability considerations.

Finding 33: The current decision-making structure at ComSec does not promote cross analysis and the opportunity for programming synergies.

At present CFTC operates within two levels of project decision-making, <£15,000 at the Director level, and, >£ 25,000 at the Deputy Secretary General level. We reviewed ComSec decision-making mechanisms at both levels.

We found that while decision-making documents had been standardised and while most had integrated some of the principles of Results-Based Management (RBM), project approval appears to be undertaken on an individual case by case basis. While documents did attempt to link suggested programming to “national goals”, for the most part such linkages, in our estimation, were pro-forma statement, or the goals cited so broad as to enable linkage with virtually any kind of programming.

Few references were made to the new Technical Cooperation Frameworks and there was limited evidence that decision makers were being given advice about how the planned CFTC initiative might link with others, or might result in synergies.

We observed these tendencies early on during our data collection and, accordingly, asked several senior staff members at ComSec to “map out” decision-making with us. It appears that the new Technical Cooperation Frameworks played a minimal role in their decision-making and that decisions were often based on an intuitive understanding of the client’s needs.

5.5.3 The POC/PCP Relationship in Terms of Project Implementation

This subset of Findings speaks to how the POC/PCP relationship functions at the national level in relation to national planning and decision-making. Overall, there appears to be an inverse relationship between overall size of development cooperation programming and the degree to which CFTC activities are internally planned in member states.

Our data indicates that in the larger nations, and even in medium sized nations like Sri Lanka, CFTC programming was minimally coordinated or internally prioritised. By contrast, in the smaller nations (the two Caribbean nations, Samoa, The Maldives and The Gambia), CFTC initiatives were better coordinated and some degree of internal prioritisation had taken place.

Finding 34: Smaller states appear to adhere to the CFTC desired “norms” with respect to the POC and PCP relationship more than larger or medium sized nations.

The ComSec’s stated procedures are premised on an inter-relationship at the national level between the largely ministerial POCs and the national level PCP.

In most larger and medium-size countries this fundamental premise was largely in disrepair. Malaysia or Brunei were somewhat different since their programming base is very limited and also because they are substantial “net contributors”, and thus face different challenges from most other CFTC member states we surveyed or visited.

In The Gambia, the CFTC is entirely managed by the Primary Contact Point (PCP), and represented by the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Personnel Management Office (PMO). All project submissions, training applications, and scholarship requests slated for CFTC consideration have to be validated and authorised by the most senior officer of the submitting department before being sent for final approval by the PCP. The PCP and his staff confirm the relevance of the submission to The Gambia’s national development priorities (for projects), and duties and responsibilities in the case of training applications. The effectiveness and efficiency of this formal procedure is evidenced by how well the CFTC is known and appreciated within The Gambia’s civil service, the PCP’s intimate knowledge of both previous and ongoing CFTC projects, and his acquaintance with the reports submitted by appointed technical experts.

We found in Tanzania, Kenya and Sri Lanka that the anticipated norm of a coordinated national approach led by a PCP was effectively missing. In these nations ministerial POCs tended to negotiate directly with London ComSec staff and relegate the PCP function to a minimalist one of a transaction centre for the disbursement of funds.

By contrast, in The Gambia, The Maldives, the two Caribbean nations and to varying degree Samoa and the Solomon Islands we encountered instances of coordinated national planning where ministerial POCs and the national PCP had close relationships. In effect the CFTC portfolio in these smaller nations appears to be, to varying degrees, a nationally managed activity.

Several POCs and PCPs in larger or medium sized nations pointed out that the CFTC portfolio was but one of many development cooperation partnerships, and likely one of the smallest. Several candidly remarked that the level of administration and interface envisaged by the ComSec’s manuals was disproportionate to the value (financial and “development impact”) of CFTC activities.

Our review shows that in nations like Kenya, Tanzania and Sri Lanka, the CFTC programming portfolio constitutes only a small fraction of 1% (for Tanzania an overall development envelope in the range of £850 million annually versus a CFTC budget of approximately £1 million). Conversely, in the smaller nations, and especially most of the small island states we reviewed, the CFTC portfolio tends to be in the range of 2-4% of the total development portfolio. What may be more important than monetary value in these smaller nations is that the CFTC “design” is more accommodating to smaller scale challenges than the normative patterns of larger partners. POCs and PCPs alike in these smaller nations we surveyed emphasised that the CFTC provided ranges of services that others could not. Several also remarked that they felt that the Commonwealth as a whole was more respectful to the needs of smaller states than some of their larger development partners.

Finding 35: The norms set out in the ComSec manual and other documents for the POC/PCP/ComSec relationship appear to be excessively complex and somewhat ambiguous.

We examined CFTC Manual and other documents to first map out expected norms of inter-relationships and responsibilities. We then compared these norms to actual behaviours in the 11 nations we surveyed and identified some ambiguities. The first major ambiguity relates to the role of the PCP as a national clearing house. ComSec documentation on the one hand implies that the PCP should be the focal point, providing national leadership and a coordinative centre. Documentation implies that the PCP plays internal decision-making and prioritisation roles.

However, the same documentation also envisages direct ComSec ministerial POC relationships wherein ComSec staff and ministerial POCs may engage in project identification (and subsequent delivery). This implies that the ministerial POCs should liaise with their national PCP, but no compulsion is implied - namely, current procedures while implying a leadership and coordinative role for PCPs also permit direct and practical project negotiation between ComSec staff and ministerial POCs.

A second problem appears to lie in what some PCPs see as a lack of communications on the part of London ComSec staff. In larger and medium sized nations, PCPs indicated that that ComSec staff did not communicate systematically with them. Rather, these PCPs allege that the main lines of communication run to ministerial POCs.

In our estimation, one of the reasons for what appears to be significant procedural ambiguity lies in the informal nature of current CFTC management practices, combined with an implicit recognition by ComSec decision-makers that the CFTC is not uniformly valued in member states. The lack of clarity with respect to the PCP role and the divergence between some statements about a leadership and coordinative role, and others about how POC are to inform their national PCPs, leads us to the conclusion that ComSec is aware that some nations wish to have a highly coordinated and internally planned CFTC relationship; while others do not.

This may be a further manifestation of CFTC attempting to be “responsive” to a range of demands and situations. However, in our estimation the net result of this absence of clarity appear to be a lack of presence in larger nations.

We discussed this issue with some ComSec staff in London as part of our mapping out of the way projects are identified, approved and delivered. Staff indicated that they naturally were aware of the provisions of CFTC manuals and procedures, but argued that if nations chose not to use them, they had limited options to encourage them to do so. We also noted that some ComSec staff indicated being more at ease in maintaining informal relationships with POCs, as opposed to any more formalised and centralised approaches.

These issues lead to the obvious possibility for overlap, lack of synergy, lack of consolidated planning frameworks, etc. We consider this ambiguity to be the one of the most important shortfalls of the current way the CFTC functions as a whole.

Overall, concerns were raised in relation to three dynamics of the PCP relationship. The first of which is the inadequate or infrequent communications with London. The manual, web site, and existing meeting venues may be insufficient for sharing information, ongoing communications, engaging PCP in programming process, and generally strengthening the role of the PCP. The second relates to the culture at ComSec of preferring informal and direct relationships with POCs, which tends to undermine the system. The third is the perceived complexity of the system in relation to the size of CFTC portfolio vis-à-vis other development partners in each country.

5.6 Partnership and Liaison with Others

One of the key themes of the Paris Declaration is a commitment to increase level of coordination among development cooperation partners so as to maximise the totality of development interventions. The TORs for this assignment also raise the consideration of how the CFTC is linked to the work of other development cooperation partners and this section highlights some of the issues identified as part of our analysis.

Finding 36: At the national level there is limited evidence that CFTC programming is integrated with, or planned in conjunction with, the work of other development partners. The situation is far more encouraging at the regional or global levels.

With the exception of the two Caribbean nations and The Maldives (and excluding Malaysia and Brunei for the reasons cited earlier in this section) we uncovered little evidence that CFTC projects were planned or subsequently delivered in light of the programming portfolios of other major partners.

When we asked why it seemed that CFTC projects were considered in such a stand-alone fashion, we were advised that the small size of the CFTC activities tended to result in their not being able to be linked. They in effect are stand-alone activities designed to respond to specific needs that others cannot (or will not) address.

This is problematic in key areas such as public sector reforms and public sector capacity building, or training activities, where bilateral and multilateral partners are clearly active yet with limited harmonisation with the CFTC. We encountered instances in Africa and in Asia where nations had gone to other partners to secure additional travel funding to participate in regional training programming or regional conferences (UN bodies and regional development banks), but where the programming in question was not linked to these other on-going initiatives. We encountered similar instances where CFTC was providing public sector capacity building, but with no linkages between these measures and the work that others were doing.

In our estimation, and notwithstanding the different nature of the CFTC, these situations may result in lost opportunities for synergies.

Despite these national level issues, we found considerable evidence to show that ComSec staff worked at regional and global levels with the total range of development cooperation partners at the policy making level.

We observed a number of instances where CFTC support was used to enable national representatives to attend regional and/ or global conferences mounted either by others directly, or in partnership with the Commonwealth itself. We also found evidence in the Caribbean, in Malaysia and The Maldives where CFTC support enabled national delegates to attend regional specialised training and orientation sessions organised by other partners.

Such action are clearly positive and in many ways illustrate one of the less understood characteristics of the CFTC- namely that it has as an objective the formulation of national and Pan-Commonwealth responses to key issues.

Finding 37: At the national level, in general, on-site representatives of other partners have a limited understanding of the CFTC and of its role in the nation in question.

With the exception of the two Caribbean nations, in other countries visited or studied the on-site representatives of other partners, bilateral or multilateral, were often not aware of the role of the CFTC in the country.

Several representatives of major development partners such as regional development banks were candid in saying that while they had “heard of” the CFTC, its small size in comparison to their national portfolios made it less relevant to them.

Not surprisingly, they tended to see the CFTC as a small contributor to their own work and had a poor understanding of its somewhat different nature. From our perspective, the absence of systematic partnerships at the national level makes it difficult for CFTC initiatives to be used in a catalytic role. Some London – based stakeholders (ComSec staff and High Commissioners) advanced the view that one of the roles for the CFTC was to “pioneer” certain types of actions in the expectation that other larger partners might then assume longer –term and more sustainable roles. In essence, this sort of an approach results in a “pilot program” paradigm.

We uncovered little if any evidence to support this contention of planned “pilot programming”. In The Maldives we found a case where the local implementation of the highly respected public debt management systems (CS-DRMS), which is seen by many as a CFTC success story, was impeded for a long time by a local lack of technical capacity. The eventual full scale launch of CS-DRMS in The Maldives was made possible by a fairly substantial grant from the Asian Development Bank, which was sourced, not with ComSec assistance, but apparently by the national development planning authority directly.

In discussions regarding partnership, POCs, PCPs and ComSec staff alike contend that the nature of current CFTC activities do not lend themselves to integration with others. Given that some of the financially largest CFTC projects may only involve multi-year support for a single technical expert, it is difficult to see how such stand-alone programming might be integrated. POCs and PCPs contend that the provision of such experts (and strategic gap filling generally) expand national capacity. However, this does not mean that CFTC programming should be designed without awareness of the work of others and, more importantly, without the need to ensure sustainability. In Sri Lanka and in Kenya we observed programming that had been initiated by the CFTC (market reform and agronomy), but which faced longer-term sustainability issues due to the absence of a “follow on” sponsor.

5.7 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

5.7.1 Introduction

One of the most important issues in this evaluation concerned how ComSec assesses the performance of the CFTC, and how performance is related to the way it plans, manages and subsequently reports on CFTC results.

This section examines CFTC's management functions from a results perspective: planning and decision making, monitoring and evaluation¹³, reporting to decision-makers and stakeholders, integrating lessons learned.

5.7.2 Planning for Results

This section examines how ComSec and CFTC have integrated the principles of Managing for Development Results (MfDR) in their planning processes.

Finding 38: ComSec strategic and operational plans do not yet reflect a consistent results-based architecture.

There is a gap between ComSec's results-based higher level architecture, and the planning documents that are used at a more immediate level for the CFTC. Our review of the eleven Technical Cooperation Frameworks led to the following observations.

First, the frameworks we examined did not integrate all the information that is needed to plan for results, and the plans for anticipated projects were often quite sketchy. The text describing upcoming assistance (where planning for results would be essential) was frequently less than a page, while significantly more space was allotted to showcasing the "Strengths of the Commonwealth and the CFTC" and other such repetitive and descriptive elements. The frameworks did not link anticipated projects to national development goals (indicating how they might make a difference), and did not provide any performance expectations or needs analyses (indicating where the projects would fit).

However, we wish to emphasize that this first round of Technical Cooperation Frameworks represents a solid start and holds the possibility of becoming a sort of national level mid-term planning tool. We will make recommendations regarding possible improvements in their structure and how they are developed.

Second, the internal project planning and approval documents for the eleven nations surveyed were inconsistent with the principles of MfDR. While the basic format was in accordance with expected CFTC standards, many project approval documents had gaps or missing sections. More importantly, in a significant number of frameworks, the logical framework (the primary tool for RBM) was either not completed or contained unfunded implications related to monitoring and performance indicators. For example, in relation to the provision of legal experts in several of the surveyed

¹³ Monitoring is defined as a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds.

Evaluation is defined as a management activity to assess: the appropriateness of a programme's design and implementation in achieving its objectives; the programme's results both intended and un-intended; and the factors affecting the level and distribution of the benefits that the programme produced.

nations (The Gambia, Tanzania, and The Solomon Islands) the simplified logical framework contained complex performance indicators related to overall improvements in the quality of the judiciary and the rule of law, but did not make provisions for these in the budget, project description, monitoring strategies, or follow up.

Among the eleven nations surveyed, a few training programmes at the national level contained an end-of-programme questionnaire (which some euphemistically called “an evaluation report”), but none seemed to provide for follow-up with participants to ascertain how the training may have produced individual, organisational or institutional benefits.

Turning to the regional and Pan-Commonwealth programming (and training in particular), respondents and participants in the eleven nations noted the same absence of systematic follow up. One should note however that the upcoming implementation of the Performance Management Improvement Project (PMIP) may improve the quality of CFTC project design and planning.

5.7.3 Monitoring

The following findings address how CFTC projects and programmes are monitored for development results.

Finding 39: The current approach to project monitoring is uneven and primarily focused on reporting outputs and events.

Our review of project data from the eleven nations surveyed found that CFTC six-month reports and end-of-project reports (from both medium to long-term experts and short to medium-term consultancies) were largely narrative and financial reports on what was done, with whom, and when, and did not report on pre-determined performance indicators, even if any had been called for in the project approval documents.

The following quotes from the *2007 Evaluation of Technical Assistance for Investment in Oil, Gas, and Mining* best summarises the situation regarding the adequacy of existing monitoring mechanisms.

In the absence of post-project monitoring, we are unable to state with any certainty that the implicit projected project results of OGM TA in developing investment in the minerals sector have been met.

It was noted by the Evaluation Team that little or no attention appears to be paid to monitoring both the effectiveness and sustainability, either by the Commonwealth Secretariat itself, or via reports from client governments.

Paradoxically, however, in describing what they had done in some of these narrative reports, some of the authors sometimes described changes that had occurred (results) and which should have been identified as indicators of performance. What is absent, however, is a systematised approach to periodic reporting that emphasises the attainment of results.

Beyond the current lack of standardisation of monitoring requirements, we are unable to ascertain with certainty the causes for the lack of results-based monitoring in CFTC.

One possible cause may be a lack of understanding on the part of CFTC experts and consultants of the importance of demonstrating a more complex approach to stewardship – going beyond a reliance on process and resource control. A second possible cause may be the level of appreciation (and acceptance) among some ComSec staff at the working level of the centrality of MfDR. A third may relate to the roles played by national POCs and PCPs.

We noted in our interviews with ComSec staff and POCs/ PCPs that, like many professionals, their natural tendency is to focus on “doing the job at hand”, and to see results-based planning as the notion and responsibility of somewhat distant central planners. We have witnessed these same views in national public services in other developing and developed countries (including Canada), multilateral development cooperation bodies and multilateral/ regional specialised technical organisations.

However, with appropriate leadership, the implementation of the PMIP may serve to strengthen the quality of periodic monitoring. The introduction of the new standardised Project Completion Reports with fixed elements (e.g., lessons learned, main achievements, risk management, and likely sustainability) may provide ComSec senior managers with the tools they need to more sensitively monitor projects and programmes.

One caution with systems such as PMIP is that they must become part of a more forward-looking management culture based on results, and not simply forms to be filled out by staff in order to comply.

5.7.4 Evaluation

Our mandate for this assignment was to review the evaluation function in relation to CFTC and in particular to assess:

- Are there mechanisms in place to evaluate development outcomes? Are these mechanisms used?
- Are the monitoring and evaluation systems in place rigorous, transparent and independent?

The findings which follow attempt to ascertain the root causes for perceived shortcomings in the evaluation function as a whole and specifically in relation to its ability to evaluate for development outcomes.

Finding 40: The current formal evaluations undertaken by ComSec of CFTC-supported programming are consistent with expected norms.

Studies of the CFTC were conducted by AUSAID in 2000 and by New Zealand in 2003; these painted a mixed picture as to the strength of the evaluation function of the ComSec in relation to CFTC activities. A study conducted by Universalia in 2003, *Study on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Follow up and Utilisation of Evaluation Findings* also presented somewhat mixed findings on how ComSec makes use of evaluation findings.

From 2003 to 2007, four other ComSec evaluations have been conducted under the auspices of SPED:

- Evaluation of the Commonwealth Media Development Fund – 2005;
- Evaluation of development assistance in the area of corporate (private sector) governance – 2005;
- Evaluation of the development of a strategic framework for the Commonwealth Secretariat for the Tourism Sector – 2006;
- Evaluation of the Strategic Gap Filling Programme – 2006 onward.

In addition, a fifth evaluation was conducted in 2007 by SASD of one of its own programme areas: Technical assistance for investment in oil, gas and mining.

All five evaluations exhibit the qualities of independent reviews – they all present both positive and not so positive findings, question the adequacy of some of the management systems used to plan and deliver programming, and all were conducted by outside consulting entities (which is not to say that this is considered an absolute requirement, as well staffed internal evaluation units can be equally as objective as external consultants).

A common feature of all five was a reliance on case studies, primarily due to the common recognition of the lack of internal data on which to build (see earlier quote on SASD's OGM evaluation). As in this study, the absence of monitoring or follow-up data limits an evaluation team's ability to assess the totality and to develop hypotheses, and then in turn to use case studies to enrich and drill deeper into these hypotheses. In essence, an unavoidable reliance on case studies forces the case studies to become data collection proxies for the whole. This issue is not unique to ComSec; many multilateral technical agencies and development cooperation organisations face similar evaluation challenges.

One major evaluation, the SGF, demonstrated another alternative – intensive, long-term, in-depth analysis that necessarily has considerable cost implications. The SGF Evaluation began with the commissioning of a complex and wide-spread evaluation in 2004, with field work in 2005, and a major report in 2006. Management at ComSec has yet to finalise its response to the major recommendations. The SGF evaluation, while undoubtedly comprehensive and methodologically sound, demonstrates a problem common to many such studies – the trade off between timeliness on one hand, and the need for and time involved in comprehensive primary data collection in the absence of internal performance-related data systems on which to build.

These examples point to a sometime overlooked consideration – evaluation as a management function does not exist separately from continuous monitoring undertaken by programming staff and from programme planning that builds in performance assessment techniques and requirements from the outset.

Finding 41: Follow-up assessments of CFTC projects/programming have not been regularised.

This finding attempts to address a conceptual gap in a continuum of the assessment of performance, beginning with reporting for fiscal probity, through periodic results monitoring by staff, and on to wholesale evaluation for development results.

Many times evaluation is seen as a sort of synthesis function – examples of this type of evaluation include the collective assessment of programming supported by the Media Development Fund (the subject of a 2005 evaluation of ten years of varied programming initiatives) and the more recent comprehensive assessment of Strategic Gap Filling. There is, however, another equally important sort of assessment – one that seeks to follow up on a more individual basis on initiatives and one that, like monitoring, is done by staff themselves.

In this regard, we found no evidence of a systematised approach to follow up that would enable the gathering of lessons learned or information on the consequences and results achieved by various projects and programming initiatives. We did not uncover any systematised use of questionnaires after the fact (i.e., not at the immediate end of an initiative, but sometime thereafter) that might be able to ascertain from recipients/ participants/ PCPs or POCs what happened next or whether the capacities strengthened have been able to be sustained.

We are very cognisant that ComSec is a small organisation with a limited budget for managerial overhead. We also heard from PCPs around the world that they wish to maximise project resources to aspects of delivery and are not fully comfortable with the notion of setting aside resources for what they consider to be ComSec business. This latter consideration is not uncommon among

partners from developing nations who have scant resources to begin with, and even fewer for accountability and performance assessment purposes.

Nevertheless, the absence of even simple systems of follow up on a project basis makes it very difficult for ComSec decision makers to be able to demonstrate effectiveness and relevance.

Finding 42: The small scale and somewhat separate nature of most CFTC programming makes it difficult to plan and allocate resources for systematic follow up.

This finding is the corollary to that which discussed the absence of systematised project monitoring. Our review of the portfolio of programming supported by the CFTC shows a preponderance of small scale projects that have little if any internal resources earmarked for performance assessment activities. Economies of scale and lack of critical mass negatively impact on the ability to follow up via internal mechanisms such as questionnaires, let alone conduct external evaluations.

This is not so much a criticism of the ComSec itself, as it is a recognition that a fundamental transformation of the understanding of the purposes of development cooperation has occurred over the past decade which has placed additional emphasis on the assessment of performance in terms not only of compliance and probity, but more importantly on the basis of results.

However in our estimation, one of the internal causes of the lack of resources for both monitoring and follow up may be the somewhat ad hoc way CFTC project decisions are taken and the absence in the decision-making apparatus of sufficient consideration of performance. Again, some of the elements of PMIP (e.g., the project appraisal documents) may serve to regularise decision making and give emphasis to the need to budget for performance.

5.7.5 Reporting

Findings in this section focus on how CFTC reports to its stakeholders – the member states and their representatives.

Finding 43: The current CFTC reports to member states emphasise output and resource control over reporting on the attainment of development objectives.

This finding has two dimensions: The first relates to the biennial CFTC reports that the Secretariat prepares that roughly synchronise with CHOGM (2003, 2005 and presumably 2007). The second relates to the set of periodic reports to the Board of Governors and its Executive Committee (EXCO) - Annual ComSec Performance Reports (which integrate CFTC activities), Assistance to Countries Reports, and Six Month Progress Reports (which again integrate CFTC activities).

In relation to the first group, CFTC reports, we compared the most recent CFTC report (2005), and to some extent the 2007 Report of the Secretary General, with the large scale annual/ biennial reports of major government departments of selected G8 nations, and the major performance reports of multilateral bodies that were submitted to member state assemblies (analogous in some ways to CHOGM).

While the CFTC reports demonstrate very high production values and are highly visual and compelling communications documents, a results-based comparison with other reports was not favourable to the ComSec products.

The annual reports of departments and ministries of Canada and the United States exhibit tight results-based architectures where targets and performance indicators are explicitly linked along with, in some instances, actual data sources. In the Canadian case, individual ministry reports are then aggregated upwards into a new Canada Performance Report that emphasises the two highest

levels of national goals and indicators of performance. Naturally, all of these reports from governments also include narrative text and examples; they are not simply tables of data.

Turning to multilateral bodies, as we have noted earlier in this evaluation, the results architecture of ComSec's (and by extension of CFTC) strategic planning documents is not as developed as that of many other multilateral bodies and especially UNESCO's last four biennial Programme and Budget documents (31/C4 – 37/C4 inclusive). It is not surprising therefore, that CFTC's biennial reports do not compare favourably with either UNESCO's biennial C/3 series or FAO's biennial Programme Implementation Reports. Adopting a more focused approach to results-based planning documents is not necessarily a costly proposition or beyond the scope of an organisation the size of ComSec.

Turning to the second group of reports that are more cyclical, and whose prime audience is the Board of Governors and EXCO, we found that the two major cyclical reports "Assistance to Countries" and "The Annual Performance Reports" largely concentrate on outputs and resource control information and not on results (i.e., in this context, on development outcomes). These reports do not contain to the same degree the cyclical information that is presented in, for example, WHO's six month Interim Performance Assessments, which clearly link expenditures to the indicators of outcome performance as set down in the biennial plan.

5.7.6 Integrating Lessons Learned

This section examines ComSec mechanisms or ability to engage in a process of organisational learning, in its simplest form, by using experiences and results of past programming to influence the design and / or selection of upcoming initiatives.

Finding 44: The limitations of current ComSec systems of project planning and approval and project / programming monitoring severely constrain the opportunity for organisational learning with respect to CFTC activities.

This finding is somewhat self-evident, given earlier findings on monitoring. In mapping the "journeys" of CFTC-sponsored projects with ComSec staff and then with national PCPs and POCs, we saw only the most fragmentary efforts to build on lessons from past assignments, with the possible exception of a set of inter-connected public sector modernisation workshops held in the Maldives. In project decision-making processes, we did not see evidence that any attention was being given to "track record." Rather, the episodic and case-by-case approach to project decision making deters efforts to promote systematised organisational learning and the promotion of long-term capacity enhancement.

Again, the implementation of PMIP may offer opportunities to promote organisational learning. Indeed, several elements of the PMIP have the possibility of transforming ComSec decision making and reporting, and the same holds true with respect to the promotion of organisational learning. The anticipated Quality Assurance Review and new Project Completion Reports offer a foundation on which management can begin to ask questions relative to the impact of lessons learned and to explore in a more systemic fashion the impact of sustainability considerations, one of the chief limitations of current project approval systems.

5.8 Strategic Governance

This section is concerned with the governance of the CFTC. Governance is a process by which an organization or program is regulated. It involves revitalizing the organizational charter through reinterpreting and supporting a renewed sense of purpose, setting organizational direction and priorities, and creating a context for integrity and accountability. Among other things, the governance system should facilitate setting strategic direction, providing organizational oversight and performance review, communications and reporting with key stakeholders.

The foundations for the governance of the CFTC are laid out in the MOU of the CFTC. This MOU has been updated several times since the Fund was first established in 1971. The most recent has been in 2002. Also, at the 2002 CHOGM, a decision was made to streamline and integrate governance of the Commonwealth Secretariat and improve governments' direction and oversight of the resources they contribute to Commonwealth activities. For the governance of CFTC, the 2002 revisions had several implications since they:

- Established a Board of Governors;
- Established the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors;
- Dissolved the Board of Representatives of the CFTC;
- Dissolved the Committee of Management of the CFTC.

The Exhibit 5.8 below presents an overview of the key bodies and positions involved in the Governance of the Secretariat and more specifically, the roles they are expected to play in the Governance of the CFTC. Although there is overlap between roles these entities play in governance of the CFTC and the other activities of the Commonwealth, namely Commonwealth Secretariat and Commonwealth Youth Programme¹⁴, we try to emphasize wherever possible the roles that are specific and most relevant to the CFTC. In some cases, these are roles that are not formally recognized as part of the governance structure (in the MOUs) but that in practice are key to facilitating the processes for governance functions (such as strategic direction, oversight, etc) to be carried out.

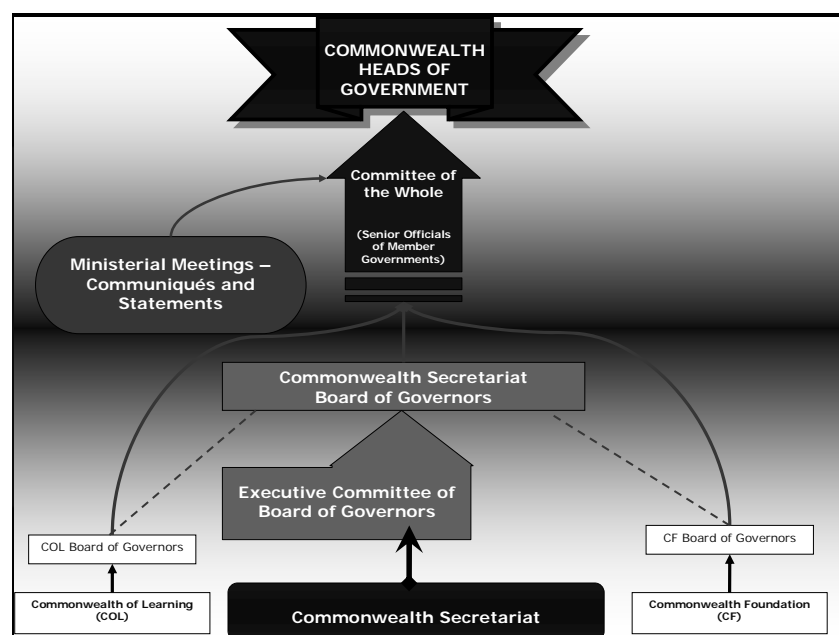
Exhibit 5.8 Governance components of CFTC

ENTITY OR POSITION	COMPOSITION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO CFTC GOVERNANCE
Board of Governors	Senior officials of member countries, all Commonwealth governments	<p>The Board meets annually or more frequently as required. A segment of each meeting should be dedicated to CFTC issues. The Board receives reports on each of the individual funds, provides strategic direction on policy issues, reviews implementation of CHOGM mandates, among other key responsibilities.</p> <p>In addition, specifically with regard to CFTC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues guidelines for operations and management of the Fund • Discusses and approves plans of expenditure • Reviews financial regulations for the CFTC at least once every six years <p>Decision making: Majority decisions must have support of representatives contributing three-quarters of the CFTC resources in the financial year</p>

¹⁴ There was also the Commonwealth Science Council but it was dissolved in 2006.

ENTITY OR POSITION	COMPOSITION	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO CFTC GOVERNANCE
Executive Committee	8 members representing largest contributors 8 members representing other Governments Chairperson: The Commonwealth Secretary General	The Executive Committee meets quarterly. It receives and reviews reports on operations of the individual funds, overseas budget and audit, makes policy recommendations to Board of Governors. With regard to CFTC, the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers balance between headquarters staff, field personnel, and other operations to be financed by the Fund • Determines acceptability of financial arrangements and general terms and conditions for provision of technical assistance • Reviews CFTC content of the annual report and of the Strategic Plan Decision making: Majority decisions must have support of representatives contributing three-quarters of the CFTC resources in the financial year
Secretary General of ComSec		The Secretary General of the ComSec is the organisation's chief executive officer. Appointed for a four year term (subject to one reappointment) by Heads of Governments at CHOGM, the Secretary General is charged with the management of the ComSec and its various programme areas and the delivery of the undertakings that are made at CHOGM or by other decision-making bodies.
High Commissions in London		As representatives of their respective nations to the Court of St. James, High Commissioners also play key roles in Commonwealth governance apparatus. They serve as the national representatives on the Board of Governors and the Executive Committee (although in some instances they may delegate this role to a staff member)
Primary Contact Point		The PCP is expected to assess and communicate the country's national priorities and to coordinate with POCs in country. The PCP also contributes to definition of strategic direction by providing input to the Technical Cooperation Frameworks and regional consultations.

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Revised Agreed Memorandum on the Commonwealth Secretariat, 2002 and interviews with COMSEC staff and High Commissioners



Source: COMSEC Overview presentation (2005)

Finding 45: Strategic Governance arrangements appear to be adequate, but the extent of cooperation between the ComSec, member representatives in London, PCP in country, and others depends on a number of factors.

In general, respondents in the countries sampled and those interviewed in London are satisfied with the current structural arrangements for the governance of the CFTC and the fact that its governance is part of the whole governance model for the ComSec and for the Commonwealth as a whole.

Few respondents from developing countries wished to create a different governance structure. However, many of these same respondents reported that the CFTC sometimes was “self-governing” because of its internal decision-making systems and because of what is perceived to be an absence of effective communications vehicles.

Some respondents were concerned with the nature of the Strategic Planning process and characterised it as excessively internal for a membership-based organisation. There was some concern about the regional consultations, and whether they were being adequately used in playing a central role in strategic direction. We heard different views from respondents on how they view these consultations. Interviews in countries visited and in London, ranging from a positive appreciation of the process, to a strong criticism of the process, and the view that it was good starting point for a systematic planning effort and that more time was necessary for them to mature and gain credibility.

Finding 46: The role of the High Commissioner in the CFTC governance paradigm is understood differently amongst stakeholders.

Probably the most consistent concern about the strategic governance of the CFTC was different interpretations of the role of the London-based High Commissioner in the way the CFTC is governed. These issues do not relate to the roles that High Commissioners play on the Executive Committee, but to the roles they play with regard to CFTC decision-making.

Several observations were shared with the team. In some cases, High Commissioners play a very active role in interacting with CFTC personnel, to some degree becoming a sort of on-site PCP. In other cases, the London-based personnel saw themselves as isolated from CFTC personnel and from the planning and delivery of CFTC work in their nations.

The current MOU and CFTC guidelines leave some doubt as to the role of the London-based High Commissioner. One fact that may impact on this situation is that many of the smaller Commonwealth nations have very small London bases, one or two professional staff. By contrast, larger nations like Nigeria, India or Ghana have extensive London operations and have personnel specifically set aside to address CFTC – related matters.

A second fact that may affect the way High Commissioners function in the CFTC governance and decision-making streams may relate to whether the PCP is housed in the foreign ministry, or whether it is located in ministries of finance or planning. There appears to be no consistent pattern. However, we did observe that in instances where the London respondents and the PCP were from the same ministry (a foreign office) there appeared to be a higher level of satisfaction on the part of the London – based High Commission personnel.

This also may be due to an ambiguity with respect to CFTC versus Commonwealth governance. In relation to the Commonwealth as whole, the London-based High Commission staff have much clearer responsibilities as their nation's “voice.” The current POC/PCP system interjects a complication into what would normally be a traditional diplomatic relationship.

For the purposes of this evaluation, however, we assessed the High Commissioner – CFTC relationship from the standpoint of whether existing mechanisms contribute to or weaken the effectiveness of the CFTC.

We see an uneasy balance at this point. While we recognise that High Commissions could play a more substantive role with ComSec, we also recognise that to do so would mean changing the way CFTC operates at a programmatic level.

In our estimation, therefore, what may be needed are some minor modifications to the PCP/POC system that might give member states more flexibility in shaping a ComSec-member state relationship that meets their unique needs and differing capacities.

Finding 47: Some of the largest contributors to the Fund are seeking more active and participatory decision-making mechanisms specifically for the CFTC.

Although the principle contributors to the CFTC – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK – are on the whole satisfied with the governance of the CFTC, there is a call for some greater degree of specific governance for the CFTC as opposed to the current model where ComSec governance and decision-making paradigms “do double duty.” Among these members there were concerns raised that given the importance of the CFTC to the overall work of the Commonwealth and given that CFTC funding comprises a majority of the ComSec’s overall budget, a “special CFTC committee” might be in order. Respondents from these members, however, tended to represent their bilateral development agencies and also tended to view the CFTC within a traditional donor/recipient paradigm.

Nonetheless, given some of our earlier findings about the lack of awareness of the true nature of the CFTC and those related to lack of integration / synergies and even the immediately above finding relative to the roles of High Commissioners, there would appear to be some benefits in considering some enhancements of the strategic governance arrangements.

6. Conclusions: Strengths and Challenges for CFTC

As we conclude the evaluation we wish to highlight several strengths and some challenges that the CFTC may need to address over the coming years.

6.1 Strengths

6.1.1 Strong Value for Small States

The scale of the CFTC, less than £25 million per year including administrative and overhead costs, places it in a very different order of magnitude than its major partners, including most of the UN specialised agencies that have adhered to the Paris Declaration. As our findings have demonstrated, the CFTC is generally relevant and generates marked benefits, especially for smaller states. Indeed, what became apparent in our review of eleven nations was a disproportionate and what could be seen to be an inverse relationship – the smaller the state, the more the CFTC appears to be relevant and the more benefits (in comparison to the overall ODA portfolio of the nation) appear to accrue.

We conclude that this may be in large part due to the fact that the CFTC's contributory and membership driven base, and the fact that the family of Commonwealth nations, is largely composed of small states – including a large number of small island nations. The CFTC has long indicated that one of its comparative advantages was its receptivity to, and relevance for, smaller nations. Our evaluation confirms this.

The value for smaller states is evident in several different manifestations.

- The CFTC's gap filling (and general provision of technical experts) provides smaller nations with access to technical and professional capacities that they simply could not expect to either develop themselves or sustain.
- The CFTC's (and by extension ComSec's) informal organisational structures lend themselves to focusing on the needs of smaller members. By contrast, in some larger nations, the CFTC gets less visibility among the country's needs to plan and administer larger portfolios.
- The scale of CFTC cooperation with smaller nations (frequently funding a single advisor/specialist in a small nation for duration of in excess of a year) appears to have more significance to them than the larger programming of other partners.

6.1.2 Gap Filling and Capacity Enhancement

This second overall strength is somewhat of a corollary to the benefits for smaller nations. However, in this instance, gap filling as well as the other two dimensions of capacity enhancement also tend to be beneficial to larger nations.

In Kenya, Tanzania and Sri Lanka we found instances of very beneficial gap filling / capacity enhancement of the same type as we experienced in smaller nations – namely single longer-term advisors performing roles that for whatever reason could not be undertaken by local personnel. In these instances it was the size of the assignment (a single person in a crucial / catalytic role) and its critical nature that determined the level of success.

This leads to a third overall strength that again relates to the size of the CFTC in comparison to the development portfolios of its partners.

6.1.3 Responsiveness to Small Scale Challenges

In almost all the eleven nations we surveyed, PCP indicated that the CFTC allowed their country to undertake small scale initiatives that other partners may not have supported. Key respondents from Commonwealth nations like Nigeria, Guyana and Ghana also noted that some of the most significant CFTC supported programming was designed to meet small scale (and largely “capacity-related”) challenges. Indeed, one of the most senior respondents we interviewed recounted an instance of a major public sector leadership transformation that was triggered by the involvement of two CFTC-sponsored experts for a period of less than a year.

In our estimation, the flexibility of the CFTC fosters such positive responses to small scale challenges although these positive results are often difficult to demonstrate.

6.1.4 Responsiveness to and Respectfulness of Local Needs

As we have noted in several earlier elements of this evaluation report, CFTC supported programming is widely seen as being responsive to local needs. However, we also have noted that there are concerns that the balance between responsiveness and passivity to any request remains uncertain; and this perception is due to the following factors:

First, unlike other development portfolios, the CFTC’s membership-driven basis appears to lead to a sense of collective ownership, as opposed to external “charity”. In this context, the CFTC predates the Paris Declaration’s commitments to Ownership and Alignment.

This degree of respectfulness also relates to the perception that the CFTC’s work is not driven by the external development agendas of other partners. It is at this point that our discussions with key stakeholders entered a highly sensitive political arena.

Whether based on fact or not, we encountered a number of key respondents, in London at ComSec, among High Commissioners, and among senior national level stakeholders, who were collectively of the view that CFTC programming did not “come with strings attached.”

Second, Commonwealth support via the CFTC is perceived by many of these same respondents as “non-partisan”. This perception may be due to the tendency in CFTC and ComSec planning documents to be highly general, and non-directive (in comparison to the planning frameworks of other partners). It also may reflect a clear and long-term ethos on the part of the Commonwealth, as an institution of global cooperation and understanding, to set itself apart from the political and diplomatic agendas of some of its larger members--for example, its stance on apartheid versus that of the United Kingdom during the 1980s and early 1990s--and to play an “honest broker” role.

6.2 Challenges

We now turn to the set of challenges that face the CFTC. What follows largely relates to the current inability to articulate a clear vision for the CFTC and where it can “fit” within the new paradigms of global development. The points also will identify some key internal limitations that face the CFTC.

6.2.1 Ambiguous Mandates

As we have noted in Part 3 of this report, the current CFTC MOU contains a series of ambiguous clauses that have served to blur the intended direction of Commonwealth Heads of State, and which have also served to reinforce the perception among some development partners that the CFTC is a relatively small responsive fund that will support a very wide range of projects without prioritisation. As part of our review, it appears that some small islands, including several we surveyed, tend to wish to see the CFTC strictly in term of the “responsive and permissive” clauses of its mandate and

advised our team than they might reconsider their affiliation with the CFTC if any significant degree of prioritisation or “graduation” (the idea that some members no longer require CFTC) was to be considered.

The first issue -- graduation -- is related to the inescapable fact that many of the small island nations of the Commonwealth, as well as many of its smaller members, in general, are “medium” development nations. It is recognised that there is considerable global pressure to focus limited development resources on least developed nations (which for the Commonwealth largely means African nations, with one or two exceptions, such as Guyana). Adopting this approach – to focus on least developed nations – would shut down CFTC activities in more than half of the current member states that benefit from programming.

Some major developing Commonwealth members like India already are substantial net contributors, while some others like Ghana, Nigeria and even Kenya are rapidly approaching a time where their CFTC contributions will at least match the monetary value of the national programming they receive. It is natural, therefore, that there might be some concern among smaller island members that a drive to harmonise the CFTC with other international agendas would leave them out of what would appear to be a more Afro-centric approach.

The Millenniums Development Goals also relate to the CFTC’s ambiguous mandate. The MDGs set out clear and easy to understand global targets. By contrast, the mandate of the CFTC is complex, and does not embody the easy to understand clarion calls that the MDGs do.

Finally, the recent decisions to eliminate “gap filling” as a discrete programme and to emphasize that technical assistance should embody long-term capacity enhancement leads to a need to reassess the meaning of several clauses of the MoU.

In short, the ambiguities and overlaps with the current mandate of the CFTC are challenges to its long-term viability, not so much because they are detracting from the acknowledged quality and relevance of programming, as they are resulting in the CFTC being perceived as not relevant.

6.2.2 Incomplete Planning, Reporting and Decision-Making Systems

As we have noted in the Efficiency, Implementation and Relevance sections of this report, CFTC planning and decision-making systems detract from its overall relevance and effectiveness and, to some degree, also limit the consideration of the sustainability of programming and its contribution to long-term capacity enhancement. This is in large part due to the fact that these systems are generally informal and, in the case of performance reporting, no longer reflect the global thinking about organisational and programmatic performance reporting. We wish to emphasise, however, that the implementation of PMIP may significantly enhance planning and reporting by regularising and strengthening currently weak systems.

Especially considering the CFTC’s monitoring and evaluation capacity, the current regime of non-standardised reporting, combined with limited compliance to results-based management, leaves the CFTC behind its other Paris Declaration partners and places the CFTC at some degree of risk with some of its major members who provide the lion’s share of the funding.

6.2.3 Weak Links with Partners

As we have described in this report and in the accompanying country case studies, we found only sporadic evidence of levels of coordination with other partners. The CFTC was, in general, absent from donors' discussions perhaps due to the limitations of the PCP/POC system.

However, these limitations do not assuage the fact that the ComSec has apparently not been able to capitalise on opportunities for synergies and the sustaining of pilot efforts.

6.2.4 Ambiguities in the Governance Apparatus

An increasingly important limitation of the CFTC is the lack of systematic enforcement of the roles and responsibilities of the PCP and the POC, although it appears that they function best in small island nations. We have noted that the relationship between the High Commissions and the CFTC is equally uneven due to a divergence in lines of governance. We have also noted the degree to which member state level governance of the CFTC is largely symbolic and difficult to separate from the overall consensual governance of the Commonwealth as a whole.

6.3 Overall Conclusions

The Strengths and Challenges noted above point to a mixed overall conclusion. It is one, however, where strengths and benefits clearly outweigh the challenges.

We conclude that the CFTC is a relevant instrument to achieve the aims that are set down for it in its mandate, and that it results in high quality programming that is of great benefit to member states, large or small.

We conclude that the CFTC and its unique hybrid model is not well understood and therefore frequently misperceived. However, the CFTC also faces a need for a degree of renewal and "fine-tuning", largely in relation to its administrative, performance management, and decision-making systems. Such renewal and fine tuning would better position the CFTC among development partners and increase its likelihood to "make a difference" - and for that contribution to be recognised.

7. Avenues for the Future

The above general conclusions lead directly to our set of fine-tuning recommendations. For clarity we will link each recommendation back to sections of this evaluation report so as to show a clear nexus between diagnosis on one hand, and prescription for renewal on the other.

We have identified five general areas where a degree of fine-tuning might enhance the effectiveness and influence of the CFTC. The five areas are:

- Mandate Clarification
- CFTC Governance Arrangements
- Planning Systems
- Administrative and Project Level Decision-Making
- Performance Measurement and Reporting

The recommendations that follow, as they affect specific types of programming, for example, training or technical assistance and “gap filling”, are generic in nature. Issues related to programme design and approval in relation to sustainability or prospects for long-term capacity enhancement affect training programming in the same general fashion as they do technical assistance or some aspects of what has been called gap filling. Therefore, we have not chosen to develop specific sets of recommendations for specific types of programming.

7.1 Mandate Clarification

Our recommendations with respect to mandate clarification stem from our discussion of the nature of the CFTC in Part 3 of this report and subsequent findings that have shown that the CFTC is not well understood by its major stakeholders.

Recommendation 1: The ComSec should establish an internal Task Force to clarify some of the mandate ambiguities noted in this report and to set a contemporary balance between the legitimate desire for responsiveness on the one hand, and the long-standing, albeit overlooked, recognition of a degree of prioritisation.

We are recommending that the Executive Committee or the Board of Governors establish a focused internal Task Force to address the mandate ambiguities we have presented in this report. The Task Force should:

- Be tasked to prepare a report for consideration at the 2009 CHOGM that would be based on the assumption of the basic continuation of the historic mandate of the CFTC as expressed in the 2002 MoU.
- Clarify that the CFTC would have prime obligations in relation to a “short list” drawn from the current sixteen programmatic areas, as opposed to the current statement in its current MOU about “areas of specialisation” and as well to address the ratio for programme modalities that “Re-Think” set down some years ago in light of apparent decisions to eliminate “gap filling” as a discrete programme.
- Better situate Pan Commonwealth and regional programming. To do so, it should give emphasis to how these supra-national areas of work contribute to the often-overlooked aspect of the CFTC mandate to promote cooperation and mutual understanding.

- Identify means to better engage member states in the direction of the CFTC, recognising the continuation of overall unitary governance.
- Better explain how the CFTC contributes to MDG attainment, while at the same time respecting national development commitments.

It would be beneficial if the Task Force could complete its work by the early 2009 so that member governments could have time to consider its advice in relation to decision-making at the 2009 CHOGM to be hosted by Trinidad and Tobago.

The Task Force might wish to avoid defining the areas of specialisation of the CFTC in terms of operational programming modalities like “rapidity, or cost-efficiency”, and should not venture into operational areas.

Tuning to its format, we would suggest that the Task Force remain internal to ComSec. We are not proposing a member state Task Force, or one which would delve into operational programme delivery details.

As for the leadership and composition of a task force, we recommend that one of the two Deputy Secretary Generals assume responsibility for its leadership and be supported by internal ComSec resources. In terms of membership, we would advise a small group of less than 10 members, possibly assisted by a very few recognised external experts who might play a “challenge” role for the Task Force toward the end of its deliberations.

7.2 CFTC Governance Arrangements

Our recommendations related to fine tuning CFTC governance arrangements stem from our discussion of Strategic Governance and Implementation Issues. They largely focus on two areas: high level overview, and the PCP/POC/CFTC relationship.

An additional governance / member state liaison issue arose during some of our field work. Pacific and some Asian stakeholders urged us to consider recommending some kind of “field offices” so as to promote enhanced communications. While we sympathise with these concerns, our mandate limits us to proposing renewals that are generally within existing budgetary levels a network of global field office clearly would constitute a major new financial commitment. More importantly, however, given the unitary governance of the ComSec as a whole, such offices would have to serve not only CFTC interest, but those of all aspects of the work of the Commonwealth. In our estimation, therefore, proposing field offices would entail a major policy and programming review that exceeds our CFTC-focused mandate.

Recommendation 2: ComSec should consider the benefits of establishing a subcommittee / contact group of the Executive Committee to oversee the CFTC.

This recommendation stems from the extent to which we heard concerns that while the fundamental governance model of the Commonwealth served the general needs of the CFTC, something more might need to be done to provide more immediacy in the governance of the CFTC from that of ComSec as a whole, while of course recognising the overall unity of governance that successive CHOGM’s have underscored. We do not wish to propose a parallel Executive Committee. Rather, we feel that a specific standing CFTC sub-committee or some type of contact group of the Executive Committee might be a beneficial augmentation.

We do not believe that a subject specific sub element, formal or informal, of the Executive Committee would violate either the letter or spirit CHOGM's decisions relative to unitary governance. No new decision-making body would be established. Rather, as a sub-committee or "contact group" this new entity would be to review and recommend its parent Executive Committee.

In this way, such a sub-committee might be better able to provide on-going high level direction / advice for the CFTC, with its recommendations being subject to the ratification of the whole of the Executive Committee. The membership of this sub-committee/ contact group should include nations other than those on the current Executive Committee, thus broadening the functional governance of the CFTC.

In terms of roles and responsibilities, we would suggest that the aforementioned mandate Task Force consider a sort of first step of elaborating an advisory / observatory role for a new sub-committee or contact group with its advice and recommendations clearly being subject to the full ratification by the whole of the Executive Committee. We have not proposed whether to call this entity a "sub-committee", or a "contact group". The former would imply a more formalised role; while the latter tend to imply a looser, much more advisory role. We wish to underscore that this new body – a subcommittee or contact group would NOT have formal decision-making responsibilities. It would be advisory and while it might be able to make recommendations to EXCO, it would not have its own power, thus continuing the unity of governance as specified by successive CHOM statement.

In our view, one of the overlooked roles of the Executive Committee may be to provide policy leadership as opposed to transactional decision-making. In our estimation, a sub-committee/ contact group might provide new opportunity for the ComSec, and the Commonwealth as a whole to have a venue for more searching policy discussions than can be accommodated within the current EXCO structure; and better be able to consider inter-dependencies and synergies with other partners and emerging issues that might fit within CFTC 's more clearly defined areas of responsibility(see above).

As well, an advisory sub-committee/ contact group would be a natural audience for internal policy papers, finalised evaluation reports, etc. Of course, we would again suggest that a mandate task force carefully examine such advisory roles so as not to impinge on the basic management framework of ComSec, the same time enabling transplant and interactive discussions about key issue and directions. We also wish to note at this point that subsequent recommendations about reporting to member states would play an additional role in increasing the dialogue among the membership of the CFTC about its role and its directions.

In developing what we consider to a recommendation central to the revitalisation of the CFTC we realize that some might be persuaded to see even a "contact group" as breaching the notion of unitary governance. If that were to be the general view, then an alternative approach to increased oversight and direction would be to expand EXCO meetings to contain even more CFTC-specific discussions and also to provide time for more wide-ranging discussion of policy. However doing so would not expand the circle of engaged member states. Our advisory sub-committee / contact group proposal suggests a broader membership than that of EXCO itself, thus bringing more member states into the dialogue and thus broadening the sense of collective ownership of the CFTC as a force for cooperation and mutual understanding and not merely as a classic development intervention.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that ComSec / CFTC procedures be amended to enable member states, if they wish, to designate their High Commissioner in London to act a chief port parole in relation to the CFTC.

This recommendation stems from the extent to which there seems to be ambiguity in some member states about the roles that their London-based High Commissions may wish to play in relation to more operational CFTC decision-making and liaison. As we have noted in the Strategic Governance section, some High Commissions indicated that the current PCP/POC approach does not let them be involved in a meaningful way. By contrast, we also recognise that some member states may not wish to alter the PCP/POC system to include a more active role for High Commissions.

Our recommendation is quite simple – that each member state be given the right to designate the High Commission as the first point of contact for that nation. Member states would have the right to set whatever internal arrangements best suit their needs as to the relationship between the PCP/POCs and the High Commission. Such a degree of flexibility may better serve varying national interests than the current system that envisions PCP/POC roles in a national context.

Recommendation 4: The CFTC should offer member states two models for a refreshed PCP/POC/CFTC relationship, with one model clearly recognising the paramount role of the national PCP as the national overall coordinating body; and the other with the PCP role more narrowly defined to be limited to a transactional clearing house for the transmission of funding.

Our findings with respect to Governance and Programme Implementation are clear in concluding that the current PCP/POC/ComSec model is detracting from the overall performance of the CFTC. In our estimation, what is required, like that which we have suggested in relation to High Commissions, is a degree of flexibility that would enable member states to determine what model is more appropriate for them. In our estimation two basic models may be proposed:

- **In the first model** the PCP is the acknowledged national principle point of contact assuming full national planning and coordinative roles. ComSec personnel would work through the PCP in relation to project selection, national prioritisation, approvals and resource delivery. The network of national POCs would be limited to subject matter and individual project delivery details. This model (which we observed in a number of the countries we surveyed) implies a degree of national coordination and the assumption by a national PCP of clear leadership.
- **The second model** would recognise that some member states have neither the capacity, nor the interest, to systematise their relationship with the CFTC and would prefer to have an issue -specific approach, with the formal PCP becoming involved only for pro-forma purposes and resource transfers. This model reflects the reality we witnessed in many of the larger and medium sized nations we surveyed.

Subsequent recommendations will suggest more formalised interaction between member nations and ComSec. Therefore, while we wish to respect national choices and have suggested an option that perpetuates fragmentation, we are of the view that the first option – recognition of the paramount role of the national PCP – would better serve the interests of both the ComSec and its member states.

This recommendation is not mutually exclusive with recommendation 3. It is quite conceivable that a member state might choose to vest more formal authority in the London-based High Commissioner, while at the same time recognising that the national PCP would play only a minor transactional role.

7.3 Planning Systems

Our recommendations with respect to planning systems focus on CFTC planning mechanisms. We are aware of the cost implications involved in the transformation of planning systems and have developed our recommendations within what we consider to be a largely revenue - neutral approach.

Recommendation 5: The Biennial Technical Cooperation Frameworks should become the basis for mid-term and nationally sensitive planning and should be developed through a more participative process.

The newly established Technical Cooperation Frameworks offer the possibility of becoming national medium term plans. We are recommending that the ComSec give special attention to these Frameworks and reshape them to increase their utility.

First, these frameworks should be developed in concert with national PCPs in a much more interactive fashion. Second, the network of regional consultations should be used as the launching pad for the development of the enhanced Frameworks. In this way, common issues can begin to be explored collectively by member states. Finally, the focus of the new Frameworks should be on the country in question, its national development plans, how anticipated CFTC programming links to them and how it also contributes to CFTC priorities. To that end, we wish to underscore that the refreshed Frameworks should delete much of the repetitive and descriptive current content.

Recommendation 6: The structure of the ComSec's Strategic Plan and its element related to CFTC (and internal resource allocations systems) should be amended to focus on the priority areas that the proposed Task Force has identified. In addition, allocations of resources should be limited to those programmes that have been identified as priorities or have constituted more than 5% of overall discretionary CFTC funding.

This recommendation is the natural corollary to Recommendation 1 – namely to establish some degree of balance between responsiveness and prioritisation. Assuming that the ComSec agrees to set such a new balance and establish broad lines of priority areas, it is only natural that the Strategic Planning and resource allocation systems of ComSec support such a new balance.

This recommendation does not speak to the 45/40/10/5 ratio of the modality of programming. Neither does it speak to “freezing” budget levels at some 95%. Rather, it addresses the distribution of CFTC resources among the 16 programming areas (including corporate governance and management)

We recommend that ComSec takes a decision not to allocate/ earmark CFTC funds to programming areas that historically have not reached this 5% base level. Rather, the resources in question might be set aside into a new CFTC Strategic Reserve that would be allocated on the basis of emerging needs and crisis situations. We also would suggest that the Internal Task Force, recommended earlier examine this issue.

In short, this recommendation speaks to setting a new balance between responsiveness/demand driven on one hand, and degree of prioritisation on the other. It also speaks to a reality of critical mass and the ability of the ComSec to demonstrate the “worth” of the CFTC to its partners. Of the 16 programming areas, those that have historically utilised in the range of 2-3% (or less) of CFTC funding have only limited chances of being either sustainable or making a significant enough difference to warrant resources fragmentation.

Of course, if an internal task force were to decide that effectively unrestricted responsiveness should be the determining characteristic of the CFTC, then this recommendation would be superfluous. However, based on our data collection and extensive interview process, we witnessed sufficient realisation that some degree of focus/prioritisation might be desirable.

In terms of disbursement from such a new reserve fund, we suggest that regardless of project size, a Deputy Secretary General's approval be required. The effect of this sort of an approach would be to provide CFTC with a discretionary reserve to be directed towards crisis situations, or emerging issues. It also would enable CFTC to better address the MDGs and some of the high profile commitments that have been made at CHOGMs.

As we have noted in Part 5 of this report, CFTC programming in support of health and education MDGs is quite limited. One of the potential major benefits from this sort of reallocation might be that a discretionary reserve would give the CFTC a targeted tool to make strategic interventions in support of MDG attainment and possibly to promote true pilot projects that then could be sustained by others.

In making this proposal we are cognisant that some might interpret a discretionary reserve as the CFTC abandoning some programming entirely, especially those that have historically utilised less than 2-3% of overall CFTC resources. To counter this risk, we suggest that if new leadership mechanisms are developed for the Executive Committee, one of the tasks to be explored might be to review expenditures from the discretionary reserve and to provide ComSec staff with advice on the best likely uses of the reserve over the short to medium term time frame.

7.4 Internal Administration and Decision-Making

The four recommendations that follow speak to issues related to how projects are approved, and how CFTC experts are selected. Given the lack of quality data, we have not chosen to make a specific recommendation that would parallel the "Rethink" proposal to establish a centre to assess cost-effectiveness as a whole. To do so would be to add a new analytical function that requires additional resources. As well, assessing cost efficiency and cost effectiveness requires a solid baseline on which to formulate comparative analysis. Until PMIP is fully mature and has generated a solid set of quantitative reports over several years, the required baseline simply will not exist.

Recommendation 7: The current ad hoc process of CFTC funding approval should be replaced at both the Director and Deputy Secretary General level with a formalised bi-monthly process at both levels.

In the Programme Implementation section of this report we discussed the limitations of the current ad hoc approach to CFTC programme decision-making and that the current approach did not enable Directors or Deputy Secretaries General to be able to compare and contrast initiatives, let alone consider proposed projects in light of past performance. While we have noted that project approval documents appear to have been standardised, albeit frequently submitted incomplete, what was apparent in our overall review of how projects are planned and subsequently selected was the absence of a collective overview of "where a projects might fit."

While we recognise that PMIP will increase the level of project information and enhance the accessibility of decision-making, we wish to emphasize that it still results in case by case approach, albeit one supported electronically to a far greater degree. The ability to see 'where a project fits' and the ability to take stock of it in light of broader considerations is not enhanced.

A cyclical approach to project approval would enable senior managers to take more informed decisions about the relative worth of a proposed project and where it fits in relation to national needs or in relation to the biennial Technical Cooperation Frameworks. A cyclical approach also would provide sufficient lead time and predictable timing so as to permit more accurate project approval documents.

While a cyclical approach might increase the time lag for project approval somewhat, we are of the view that a short increase to provide more time for internal review is warranted, especially if the ComSec also decides to clarify its mandate and provide a new balance between responsiveness and prioritisation. Any such lag time in comparison to the current ad hoc systems would be well warranted if it were to provide additional time to balance being demand driven with attempting to adopt a higher degree of prioritisation.

Of course, as with any system, genuine emergency situations could be handled outside of the cyclical approach so as to ensure timeliness. However, we wish to stress that in such cases the requirement should be a genuine emergency, and not simply a matter of convenience. For example, support to assist in disaster or crisis situations would be obvious examples of situations requiring an immediate response.

As to the timing of the cycle of decision -making, we suggest that a bi-monthly cycle - resulting in six decision-making cycles per year - would seem to constitute a balance. A shorter cycle, monthly, might not generate sufficient critical mass of projects to allow for cross-comparison and also to permit full completion of required documentation. By contrast, a longer cycle, quarterly, might be too long to remain faithful to the CFTC's overall commitment to provide timely services.

This recommendation speaks to decision-making in an effort to build a linkage between possible greater prioritisation and actual decision-making. In addition to this cyclical approach, we would also suggest that SPED consider hosting a series of cross-divisional seminars each year to informally discuss among practitioners 'what works best'. Data from PMIP, which by then would be in the hands of both professional staff and managers could be used to animate what could be informal efforts at internal knowledge transmission.

Recommendation 8: CFTC internal documents, especially project approval documents, should be redesigned to increase use of past performance data, focus on issues of sustainability and knowledge transfer; synergies, strengthen the use of RBM principles to include mandatory performance indicators, and to require a discussion of the linkage of the project in question to CFTC priorities and the attainment of national development objectives.

As noted in the Implementation section of this report, project approval documents now appear to be standardised, albeit with considerable "gaps" in completion rates. This recommendation, combined with the one immediately preceding, would increase standardisation and permit more sensitive analysis.

We recommend that a renewed approach to project approval documentation focus on issues of sustainability and knowledge transfer, a key shortcoming of many current CFTC projects, and also emphasise how the project in question would complement both CFTC and national priorities. Increasing emphasis on sustainability for all varieties of CFTC support and the parallel benefits of promoting knowledge transfer would respond to the need for the CFTC to build long-term capacity as opposes to simply "doing a job".

Turning to the issue of promoting synergies, updated project approval documents could also detail past and present analogous CFTC programming and briefly discuss “success”. Likewise, some consideration might be given to adding information about analogous programming of other partners so as to see ‘where the CFTC fits’ and the possibility of working together so as to promote longer-term capacity enhancement. Data from elements of the PMIP also should be included so as to emphasise standardised reporting requirements and relevant performance indicators. Turning specifically to managing for results, we also recommend that refreshed project approval documents better integrate the CFTC’s results architecture and that an agreed upon performance measurement framework be contained in each project design and subsequent submission. This information also will need to be embodied in the PMIP’s various elements.

Responsibility for submission of project monitoring data also should be articulated in each project design. Perforce, while contracted personnel should provide the information, the ultimate responsibility lies with COMSEC staff.

Over time, consideration also might be given to including past performance data related to the portfolio of national projects so as to inform CFTC decision-makers about the total “track record” of the work of the CFTC in the country in question. This type of additional information would enable CFTC managers to come to address the totality of national performance and have the information to be able to take hard, and sometimes, unpleasant decisions.

Recommendation 9: ComSec should engage in a process of outreach to national PCPs to enrich the pool of candidates that comprise the Roster / Experts Database. In addition, ComSec staff also may wish to develop an internal policy to require re-submission of candidate information on a cyclical basis, possibly in the range of every 3-5 years from initial submission.

Our findings related to Programme Administration and Efficiency discussed the nature of the Roster and Experts Database system and highlighted some of its current limitations, especially given the level of its usage. This recommendation also speaks to some concerns that national respondents and some High Commissions raised with us about the degree to which the represents a suitable selection of candidates drawn from all nations.

The voluntary nature of the current systems, combined with the level of available human and financial resources and the size of CFTC programming in general, makes it unrealistic to propose complex new HR arrangements that would institutionalise lengthy and costly Request for Proposals approaches. Our recommendation, however, is designed to increase to some degree the outreach of the Roster and by implication, the Experts Database.

We propose that the central national contact point be asked annually to suggest to CFTC additional personnel that they may be aware of. This might mean that additional nationals might become increasingly aware of the Roster and seek to join it. It also might encourage additional female participation.

The second part of this recommendation speak to the issues we raised in Finding 19 relative to the quality of candidates and the necessary balance between ensuring probity and transparency while also recognising that the size of CFTC assignment would preclude recourse to complex and time consuming RfP-like recruitment systems.

Our next recommendation amplifies on strengthening the quality of human resources decision-making for the CFTC.

Recommendation 10: The PMIP performance data should be integrated into the Experts Database so as to provide information on “past performance.”

Unlike the immediately foregoing recommendation, this recommendation to link new performance data to the Experts Database would involve some additional staff work. We have found that one of the limitations of the Database is that it does not contain any information about past performance on CFTC assignments. This, in our estimation, is one of the major shortfalls of the Experts Database at this time.

The implementation of PMIP will provide the additional data that could be added to candidate profiles contained in the Database. We would advise that a simple addition to the Database’s profile be made which would indicate prior CFTC (or ComSec in general) assignments, and whether they were completed on time and on budget. Additional comments also could be provided to give a fuller picture.

Inclusion of past performance data might give rise to some perceptions of lack of natural justice. The approach however of appending the end of contract reports would seem to be a viable compromise between no past performance data, and a new and as undeveloped performance appraisal – kind of system. We also recognise that in the recent past, end of assignment reporting has been infrequent or uneven at best. It is our view however, as we have noted on several instances in this report that serious commitment to implement PMIP and the commitment to withhold fund or otherwise impose a sanction for non-compliance would ensure more effective end of contract assessments.

In our Findings, we spoke to the adequacy of CFTC selection methodologies in light of the size of CFTC programming and the balance between greater transparency via more traditional RfP style processes and responsiveness/ rapidity. In another light, our field work found a consistently high degree of satisfaction with the long / short term experts and the training provided. The ToR for this assignment mandated us to develop recommendations within existing resource levels. To that end, we came to the conclusion that a major overhaul of CFTC selection to more closely mirror the practices of development cooperation partners would entail considerable additional costs and would necessarily slow selection.

The combination of greater outreach, a process of cyclical refreshment of the Roster and the addition of performance data to the Experts’ Data Base constitutes a relatively cost-neutral option inline with the nature of the CFTC’s current portfolio of cooperation programming. Should the CFTC evolve towards fewer in number, but higher individual cost programming activities, there would be more compelling arguments to more regularised selection by means of a hierarchy of competitive selection methodologies.

7.5 Performance Measurement and Reporting

The recommendations that follow are drawn from our Findings with respect to Performance Management, as well as some related to Implementation issues. They have been designed not to impose unrealistic expectations on an organisation the size of the ComSec, and in light of the small project size of most CFTC activities. It would serve no purpose to attempt to transplant M&E approaches applicable for projects with individual values well in excess of £1 million into the CFTC’s environment where average project values are only a small fraction of this sum.

The recommendations that follow also do not speak directly to augmenting the present evaluation capacity of ComSec. In our estimation, the major performance challenges that face CFTC, and by extension ComSec as a whole, relate to efforts to regularise and systematise the introduction of Results-Based Management via PMIP. Additional stand alone evaluations might provide information about specific issues, such as the five studies we have reviewed for this evaluation itself. However,

additional stand alone evaluations cannot resolve the more deep-seated performance challenges that face ComSec, and due to their high individual costs (especially if the intent of an evaluation is to address “results”) are resource-intensive.

We have also not proposed recommendations which would alter the planning and more importantly, the reporting frameworks of the ComSec as a whole. While we would encourage ComSec management to consider adopting a highly results - based framework for all its reports, in line with our mandate, we have chosen to focus our attention on reporting vehicles that are specific to CFTC.

Recommendation 11: To improve the efficiency of the CFTC, ComSec should accelerate existing initiatives to consolidate records management, and to do so to at least at the divisional level.

The Administrative and Implementation, as well as Evaluation and Monitoring, elements of this report detailed the informal situation regarding records management and the impact of this informality on the ComSec's ability to demonstrate fiscal and programmatic stewardship. We noted that in GIDD there are efforts underway to regularise and consolidate divisional records. These efforts are most welcome and should be further encouraged.

In addition, we would advise that ComSec as a whole establish a new organisation-wide records management regime that would consolidate records at a minimum to the level of programmatic divisions. That would entail consolidation of divisional records for Economic Affairs, GIDD, Social Transformation, SASD, Legal and Constitutional, Political Affairs, Youth Affairs and one overall consolidation of administrative and support functions such as Corporate Services, SPED, and Communications and Public Affairs.

We recognise the costs of records management consolidation and urge ComSec to seek additional support, if required to, provide for the physical consolidation and cataloguing, as well as the eventual transformation of the majority of the records into machine-readable and searchable formats.

Recommendation 12: CFTC should enforce a follow-up one year after the completion of its projects to ascertain with the responsible national authority more medium-term outcomes of the project in question.

This recommendation speaks to what we consider to be a significant potential gap in the renewal of the way ComSec reports on results. While PMIP and potentially revised project approval documentation would ensure a focus on results and indicators from project design through approval and throughout implementation, this continuum would end with the submission of a to-be-standardised end of project report via PMIP.

Such a continuum ends at the nexus of outputs and outcomes and ComSec does not have a means to access reliable data on longer-term implications of CFTC activities. To address this shortcoming, we recommend that a new component be built into the design of all CFTC initiatives – a mandatory “one year after” report back to CFTC about the medium-term implications of a project. This one year after review can also become a major analytical tool to ascertain the degree that CFTC programming has been sustained and the contributing or limiting factors to its sustainability. Likewise, it also would give the CFTC an initial window into short/medium term outcomes, in this instance the degree to which local capacity has been enhanced.

Questions such as the following could be the focus of such reports:

- Was the project sustained?
- Has it been able to achieve its medium term goals and what factors contributed to, or mitigated, against goal attainment?
- Has knowledge been transmitted to others within the country and if so how?

The current informal nature of Com Sec/ PCP/POC relationships would detract from the ability to secure such reporting. However, should ComSec agree to the more regularised approach we are suggesting, there would be a higher possibility for the completion of such reports. We also suggest that the regularisation of project approval into a cyclical format would give ComSec senior managers the leverage they might require to encourage higher levels of completion of such new “follow – up “reports. In short, follow up report completion could become a precondition for the approval of new funding. Requiring more regularized national reporting either via PMIP or via this new “follow up “ report would encourage members states, large and small, to consider the more formalised option we have suggested regarding the PCP/POC/ComSec relationship.

While some might wish to include a more detailed results framework from the outset, we are of the view that moving even to a fairly simple, but regularised, follow up mechanism (beyond the time horizon of PMIP) represents a major transformation in itself of CFTC thinking about reporting and results. As such, to foster completion/ compliance from the outset, we are of the view that a fairly direct approach such as this probably may have a higher chance of success that a more complex, albeit more methodologically follow up report.

This recommendation may involve additional work for both ComSec staff as well as national personnel, and we also recognise that it constitutes a transformation of thinking about relationships between ComSec and member states. However, in our estimation, without a mechanism to begin to gather information on a complete basis about medium term implications of the CFTC, the ComSec will continue to face risks relative to its ability to demonstrate the “worth” of the CFTC.

Recommendation 13: The annual “Assistance to Countries” Report should be redesigned so as to include information about the goals of the project in question and how it has supported national and CFTC priorities.

Our review of reporting to member states as discussed in the Monitoring and Evaluation and Implementation elements of this report has shown that current reporting formats are largely transactional and focus on resource control and basic output reporting. Of these periodic reports, the annual Assistance to Countries Report may be the most important.

Renewing and redirecting this report may be facilitated by the implementation of PMIP which will enable a more automated approach to the capture and reporting of basic expenditure and programming information. Indeed, to this extent PMIP will increase the range of “on-demand” performance information available to ComSec management.

We recommend that “Assistance to Countries” be redesigned to provide for more “results” related information – namely the addition of the intended goals of an initiative and how the initiative is linked to both national and ComSec / CFTC priorities. Given the fact that many initiatives span more than one year the refreshed report needs to better emphasise the duration of all projects.

Again, in designing this recommendation, we have been guided by an iterative model. Adding in some basic results information would materially contribute to increasing awareness and a focus on results. The risk in adding in more complex results frameworks is that at the outset data might not be available and thus partial completion might lead to discouragement. By contrast, starting with a

somewhat narrow set of factors would tend to encourage higher rates of completion. Over time of course, and subject to resource availability, additional elements could be included, again assuming that quality data be available.

Turning to the reporting on training, workshops and regional activities, we suggest that the current approach of disaggregating down to individual countries be set aside. In its place we suggest that regional or multi-national activities be reported as such with sufficient detail being given as to the purpose of the activities. Aggregated data could be provided on participation. However, the current tendency to disaggregate down to the country level results in ambiguity, and only is valuable to the extent that it currently shows members “that they received their share of the seats.”

A refreshed "Assistance to Countries" also would give the Executive Committee and potentially a new CFTC sub-committee/ contact group much more user-friendly tools with which to assess overall CFTC performance and to better enable these decision-makers to provide more sensitive strategic advice and direction. Similarly, a more result-based “Assistance to Countries” report also would enable the CFTC to better explain its relevance to its partners.

Recommendation 14: The biennial CFTC Reports should be redesigned to focus more on the attainment of medium-term results and links to national and / or CFTC priorities.

At present every two years the ComSec develops a more consolidated public report on the activity of the CFTC. Recent versions have been developed in 2003 and 2005. At the moment, these reports appear to have primarily a communications value. Recognising that these reports have a different audience from those noted immediately above, we recommend the full scale transformation of these biennial reports to become primary vehicles of demonstrating CFTC’s results, and for going beyond reporting primarily what was done, to what difference CFTC programming has made.

The recommendation to require a formal “follow up” for each instance of national programming along with data from PMIP would provide the information on which to base a refreshed series of biennial CFTC reports. We also would recommend that these reports include the results architecture for CFTC as a whole so that member states and others can easily see the upward connections, and how small projects can collectively contribute to larger goals, a key perceptual problem we identified in this evaluation. In addition, some consideration might be give to using a refreshed biennial report to better emphasise the cooperation and mutual understanding aspects of CFTC mandate, aspects which we have argued have been overlooked.

We would suggest that these large scale reports take as their model some similar biennial documentation based by UN systems bodies like UNESCO, WHO or FAO. Our point of emphasis is that, based on national models like those used in Australia or Canada or international ones, large scale reporting can and should be results-based. This does not mean using “development” jargon. Rather, it means using plain language to show how highlighted initiatives contribute to CFTC and / or national development goals. It does not require that every initiative be included. Rather, highlights would serve to emphasise the contributions of the CFTC. In short, what we are proposing is not to duplicate “Assistance to Countries”, but to better use the flagship biennial reports to demonstrate “what difference” the CFTC can make to global and national development goals.