



C-Change Response to: IDRC Comments on the Milestone Framework Submission

This document provides responses to the April 23, 2010 letter from IDRC regarding comments to the C-Change submission of its Milestone Framework, January 15, 2010. This document accompanies the submission of the C-Change 2011 Milestone Report provided to IDRC, as requested, on January 17, 2011. It is noted that the responses below were also invoked in the preparation of the 2011 Milestone Report.

The C-Change Milestone Framework was submitted to IDRC, as requested, on January 15, 2010. The following itemizes the IDRC comments and the C-Change responses to same. In what follows, the IDRC comments (in italics) precede the response statements by C-Change.

Comment 1. Cover letter: There was some concern that the Milestone Framework could be misinterpreted and sections would provide overlapping coverage. The noted concerns did not seem apparent to me. This exercise was for the team to collectively identify the methods you would use to track progress towards C-Change goals. As you use the proposed methods, you will be best placed to organize the data when reporting to external audiences and in drafting your mid-term and final reports.

Response: C-Change acknowledged its challenges in coordinating and developing the initial preparation of the Milestone Framework. However, in hindsight, the team certainly confirms that that exercise was most useful, and even necessary, in providing the foundation for the follow up 2011 Milestone Report including the organization and tracking of project progress that it has been designed to do.

Comment 2. Section A, 2.1: It was noted that the team did not respond to adjudication committee comments (formal application). The team is strongly advised to address these points raised in the Milestone Report (due January 15, 2011) as it will be reviewed by the Mid-term review committee.

Response: C-Change acknowledges that the comments of the three (3) Assessors provided by FAX were not included in the Milestone Framework report of January 15, 2010 due to oversight. C-Change would like to note that the stated response of "None" in 2.1 of the Milestone Framework was due to our understanding at that time (January 15, 2010) that there were no received adjudication reports for the C-Change Formal Application. C-Change responses to the Assessors' comments are submitted as part of the January 15, 2011 Milestone Report, as requested.

Comment 3. Section 1.1, p. 4: The effectiveness of management structures are to be assessed by quantitative indicators, and later in the document it is evident that various committees will provide qualitative feedback through reflection on the functioning of committees and management processes. I think this approach strikes the right balance. The latter approach will prove useful as the team receives feedback from partners and researchers.

Response: C-Change acknowledges that the Milestone Framework indicators were designed to provide a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators. We acknowledge that the strict application of indicators presents an ongoing challenge. As such, the use of indicators and the mechanism for their application to all team members is continuing to evolve.

Comment 4. Section 1.2, and 4.2: The proposed content of the C-Change website will likely promote transparency and serve as one vehicle for knowledge mobilization. If you monitor website use, you will be in a position to use this data as an indicator of knowledge mobilization.

Response: Since the submission of the Milestone Framework, the C-Change website (www.coastalchange.ca) and the C-Change Social Network site (www.facebook.com/coastalchange) have been launched (as of April 2010). Moreover, since that time, website monitoring has been in place (via weekly website use reports). We are very pleased to report that these monitoring results have continued to show growth in the use and activity of our Social Network site and growth in contributions and content to our website. As an example, the following table is the latest “Facebook Update” for our site (as per the email received to dlane@uottawa.ca on Monday, January 10, 2011, 8:50pm):

facebook

Hi Dan,
Here is this week's summary for your Facebook Page:



C-Change: Managing Adaptation to Environmental Change

76 monthly active users ↓12 since last week

95 people like this ↑1 since last week

3 wall posts or comments this week ↑3 since last week

95 visits this week ↑14 since last week

Thanks,
The Facebook Team

The message was sent to dlane@uottawa.ca. If you don't want to receive these emails from Facebook in the future, you can [unsubscribe](#).
Facebook, Inc. P.O. Box 10005, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Comment 5. 1.2, Appendix 2, 3, 4: These appendices appear to be complete. The model outlined in Appendix 2 proposes a co-applicant champion for each community and pairing these champions so that all comparison sites are linked. It looks like a simple way to promote learning across sites and I will mention this approach to the other ICURA teams. For Appendix 4 (roles and responsibilities) another project specified what the co-directors expected from co-applicants / ICURA-funded researchers in terms of assessing how community actors/students participate in activities. Having team members (site champions) play this role might be considered. Your R&R profiles currently mention the expectations for training and research but are silent on expectations for monitoring and evaluation of (emerging) results. Making this more explicit may effectively enlist the co-applicants, and promote the integration of field level observation into your monitoring system.

Response: C-Change acknowledges the need for monitoring and evaluating expected outcomes and notes that this responsibility has been explicitly included in the Roles and Responsibilities for Co-applicants in Year 2 (and intended thereafter) as detailed in the Appendix 3- Co-applicants' Roles and Responsibilities, Year 2 (pp. 7-22) of the 2011 Milestone Report.



Comment 6. 1.4 (b): The budget you have should be commensurate with proposed activities. The budget should not be a 'limitation'. It is only a limitation if you are programming beyond the means of your budget. Build your monitoring framework and expected results around what you have the resources to do. If you leverage additional funds, this should be phrased as adding value to your program rather than overcoming a limitation.

Response: C-Change acknowledged its challenges in delivering its ambitious program of research and community alliance, especially in the international forum. To this end, C-Change, with the assistance of its Operations Manager is working closely on project budgeting and use of funds in planning, as well as in seeking out opportunities for leveraging project work and finances through networking and collaborating with institutions in Canada and the Caribbean re travel, and organizing and presenting workshops.

Comment 7. 1.4 (e): Note: If sub-contracting is envisioned through the IDRC grant, Patrick Watson should contact IDRC in advance. There are sub-contracting clauses in the IDRC Memorandum of Grant Conditions that need to be considered.

Response: C-Change acknowledges and appreciates this feedback.

Comment 8. 1.4 (f): This section is not clear to me but it is important that data collection enables the use of data by other researchers in the alliance. If this is intended, then UWI and UOttawa need to develop a research protocol for collecting data, obtaining informed consent, coding data etc., so that personal identifiers are removed, and agreement on who can use the data and under what conditions.

Response: C-Change researchers have taken the initiative within their own institutions and regions (Canada and the Caribbean) to develop the required protocols for data collection and use, etc., and roles and responsibilities have been assigned accordingly. (See also Appendix 3- Co-applicants' Roles and Responsibilities, Year 2 (pp. 7-22) of the 2011 Milestone Report.

Comment 9. 2.1.: For student learning, would it be possible to dig a bit deeper than whether the student met the academic requirements of the home institution? This is an expectation of every student. You want to be able to say what has been the value added to student learning from participating in C-Change. You could do so by asking all students to submit a one page description of what difference their participation in C-Change made to their academic experience, and how it differed from their cohorts in the same program. For those who graduate before C-Change ends, following up with them see how they perceived the impact of their training on their academic/career path. This is anecdotal data but potentially more revealing than whether the student met the academic expectations of their home institution.

Response: C-Change acknowledges and appreciates this advice and is in the process of taking steps to document the activities of research associates including undergraduate, and graduate students' activities at their respective institutions as well as through their activities with the C-Change community partners.

Comment 10. 2.2. (i, ii) This section is rather silent on what tools you will use to monitor the listed activities to see whether they have any effect on community behaviour. Several techniques are mentioned (e.g., community profile templates) but the challenge will be to demonstrate how this profile influences community behaviour. What kind of actions might you expect to see following the introduction of these techniques? Can you measure this change?

Response: C-Change recognizes the difficulty of documenting and monitoring the degree to which the project impact community behaviour. To this end, the C-Change research process spends considerable time to understand its communities from the perspectives of the local government structure, and the community leaders in commercial, social, and cultural activities. The development of a Community Profile determined from known community definitions links C-Change to the communities' own means of describing its status including its vulnerabilities and threats from storms and sea level rise. Presentation of the Community Profiles to the communities is an action that is designed to connect the alliance and lead to mutual appreciation between and the university and the community partners in the alliance. Directed and measurable critical and corrective action and confirmation by the community from the C-Change workshops asserts the community's engagement in the project. Documenting its meeting activities both with its researchers and research associates, and with and among its partners in the communities will identify project impacts. The activities of the evolving C-CATs are meant to link the community groups accordingly, as well as manage expectations and move toward deliverables.

Comment 11. 2.3.: Is co-supervision by Canadian / Caribbean academics envisioned in any of the degrees?

Response: Co-supervision by C-Change teams within and across Canada and the Caribbean is definitely anticipated. Current experience to date links graduate students work to the project over all and active feedback and commentary has been readily sought and provided by all team members to students at institutions in Canada and at UWI in the Caribbean. This feedback, advice, and supervision has taken place at every C-Change meeting among researchers at the different institutions, and at participating conferences and workshops.



Comment 12. 3.1. (Similar to 2.2. comments): This sections tells me what will be monitored but the question was looking for some indication of how indicators will be monitored. If you write in the mid-term report that your 'local area community database provided opportunities for sharing learned experience' (p12), external readers will likely ask you on what basis are you making this claim. What data are you going to collect and how, so that come the mid-term, you will have the indicators and data to make your case?

Response: C-Change acknowledges the need and its intent to monitor its progress in executing the research program. Academic progress can be monitored by the involvement in research activities and by the body of work completed by C-Change researchers, collaborators, partners, and students. Student retention and student rates of engagement (relative to the demand of students) also indicate influence (within the institution) of the project. Influential academic impacts include the numbers of projects, papers, degrees, granted, and conference papers and presentations. Secondly, participation at C-Change workshops in the community, members present, and groups represented are indicators that imply influence.

Comment 13. In terms of assessing quality of research, the metrics for academic quality likely differ from how community partners will assess quality. I would imagine that you will have a range of 'research outputs' and some will speak more directly to your academic peers than they will your non-academic partners. Given the program, I would think your metrics for assessing quality should reflect the perspectives of both audiences.

Response: C-Change acknowledges the separation of the quality of its deliverables for the academic audience versus its community partners. C-Change emphasizes the delivery of outputs from research to communities as the primary objective. Further, the process of community output delivery requires that the work be also publishable and in support of student work as Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP). It is C-Change's view that academic work be developed for the ultimate purpose of assisting and supporting decisions on adaptive capacity and strategic planning in order that the communities can be in an improved position to understand and enhance their capacity to deal with increasing storm frequency and severity.

Comment 14. 4.2. (p.14): Related to comments above, does the development of site-specific Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs) provide an opportunity to implement a pre/post intervention awareness test. A potential tool could be a focus group (or equivalent) on what the community understanding is on existing plans and hold these at various intervals through the project so see if awareness has changed. I realize that you can't do this kind of exercise for all the work you are planning but you should attempt to do something like this in your training, research, knowledge mobilization components to build the evidence to assess C-Change progress.

Response: C-Change acknowledges the importance of this comment and notes that this point was made by an invited member of the C-Change Advisory Committee. That contact who hails from National Defence made it very clear that the development of a CAAP document would require an ongoing renewal and testing of the issues. He suggested that the Defence model of running “event simulations” not only invited the community to apply the CAAP, but also permitted the opportunity to revise and revisit those elements that worked and those that did not. With this in mind, C-Change development of the CAAPs, with the assistance and agreement of the communities, is actively considering the ways and means of developing these simulations in order to test and improve its CAAPs.

Comment 15. *Appendix 5 is very thorough as are the meeting minutes. Excellent*

Response: C-Change appreciates and acknowledges this comment and is thereby encouraged to continue the documentation of its meetings among team members.

Ottawa
January 2011