CDEM Resilience Fund project application form

This form provides the minimum of information for the application; a detailed project plan should be developed to inform this application and may be attached.

Project title	Northland CDEM Group needs assessment technology solution.
Date of application	12 January 2021

Details on application

Applicant	Northland CDEM Group
CDEM Group/s affected	Northland
Other local authorities, Groups or organisations supporting this proposal	CDEM Group members in Northland

Project description

The aim of this project is to establish a welfare needs assessment software application that meets the mandatory needs as set by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the needs identified by the Northland CDEM Group. The following objectives support the overall project aim;

- *To meet all security and privacy requirements as outlined by the NZ Government*
- *To ensure the product provided is robust and agile and can be used in multiple responses, by both internal and external staff, and be used on a variety of devices.*
- *To continue to work with CDEM to develop the product further should software or requirements change at short notice*
- *To contribute towards establishing situational awareness in a response through the application of visual displays and robust reporting outputs.*
- *To ensure there is a strong focus on the customer experience keeping people rather than process and systems at the heart of emergency management.*

Challenge/opportunity

A function of the Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group is to respond to and manage the adverse effects of emergencies in its area, while the objective of the welfare services function is to carry out activities across the 4 Rs to provide for the needs of people affected by an emergency and to minimise the consequences of the emergency on individuals, families and whanau, and communities.

Needs assessment is the process of understanding the needs of people affected by an emergency. Needs assessment includes the provision of a system to assist with meeting the immediate and on-going welfare needs, and coordinating the actions required to meet those needs, in an integrated and flexible way.

Assessments can be rapid, collecting the bare minimum of data to meet immediate needs or more detailed assessment, requesting more information to be able to meet needs over a longer time period. In the past needs assessment was undertaken in the Emergency Management Information System (EMIS), however as this software was due to be decommissioned towards the end of 2020 the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) looked at an alternate software application and ARC GIS was the preferred application that most councils, who undertake the needs assessment were using. The ARC GIS system was to be rolled out mid-2020, however with COVID-19 affecting all of New Zealand the roll out was undertaken rapidly during March without the leisure of having time to test, train and embed the software application. During the course of its use it was found that the software had high privacy and security risks.

In Northland we have used the national welfare needs assessment survey questions and imported them into our own NRC ARC GIS system. This system did not meet the security protocols and the work around was to move the survey information every night from ARC GIS to behind the Northland Regional Council (NRC) firewall. This took a considerable amount of staff time for this transfer of data to be undertaken and resulted in a higher risk of data

being missed as was the case with one record during the COVID-19 response. We also received feedback from the staff inputting people's personnel information that the survey was not intuitive and was difficult to navigate.

Customer feedback from individuals and stakeholders was that the survey was intrusive and repetitive. This indicates that the current software application and survey does not uphold the Government's Technical Advisory Group's (TAG's) objective of delivering better responses to natural disasters and other emergencies by putting the safety and wellbeing of people at the heart of the emergency management system.

As a result of the software system being rolled out during a response there was also very little time to undertake staff training or time to build dashboards which would inform the response objectives. Both these areas were identified in the TAG report as key areas of improvement where we need to build the capability and capacity of the emergency management workforce and improve the information and intelligence system that supports decision making in emergencies. To do this we need to have confidence in the needs assessment software, have a trained and capable workforce and be able to use the data output of the system to inform decision making and for reporting purposes.

While there was an option to use the national Awhina Welfare Needs Assessment software during the COVID-19 response we were not one of the CDEM group that took up this offer due to issues around staff ability to meet the privacy and security work arounds which was to use two factor authentication.

While NEMA have committed to support the national Awhina Welfare Needs Assessment software until February 2021, the Group Welfare Manager with support of the CDEM Group Manager, have agreed to progress an alternate needs assessment software system to be implemented in Northland.

A working group has been convened locally and a project plan is being developed. To date costs associates with this project have been "in kind" and through internal working agreements within the NRC.

The project is now at a point where additionally funding is required to progress. Funding of $30,000 is sought to develop the technological solution further in partnership with a supplier.

An outline budget is attached.

Alignment with identified goals and objectives identified in the CDEM sector

This project aligns with the recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group report (2018) in particular the requirement for groups to invest in technology to ensure fit for purpose Common Operating Purpose.

The project is also aligned with the goals and objectives of the Northland CDEM Group Plan, particularly Enhancing capability to manage civil defence emergencies. The Northland CDEM group supports the development of technology that supports and enhances response capability and effectiveness. Development of a Needs Assessment portal capable of being used at the local and reginal level is a high priority for the group.
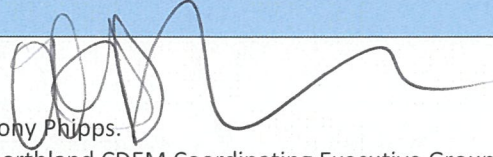

Dissemination of benefits to sector

The learnings and outcomes will be applicable to all other Groups and the information and outcomes will be shared.

Project design	
Project manager	Claire Nyberg
Other project members	Northland CDEM Group members and Northland Regional Council personal.
External providers/contractors	To be determined

Deliverables		
Milestones	Date for completion	Costs
1. Identification of user requirements	1 August 2021	Milestone payments.
2. Engage appropriate providers	August to October 2021	$20,000

3. Assessment of technological solution	October onward 2021	
4. Decision and implementation phase	November 2021	$10,000

Identified risks

Risks	Suggested management
In ability to deliver milestones on time, due to conflicting priorities i.e. response to other events.	Ensure contingency in place to delay project if required with no adverse implication to outcome.
Solution proposed does not meet required specification.	Project process managed by project owner/team. Oversight and corrective actions identified early to avoid issues arising that may impact on outcome/delivery. Regular communications amongst stakeholders.
Unforeseen or unplanned interruptions or blockages in the development process. I.e. programme does meet time frames.	As above.

Funding request and use

CDEM resilience fund contribution	$30,000			
Local authority/organisation contribution	Unknown (potentially annual licencing costs)			
Other sources of funding or support	Support in kind by NRC			
Budget	Please see above			
Applies if application exceeds $100,000 over the life of the project	Do you wish to attend a hearing in support of this application?	Yes ☐	No ☒	

Application confirmation

Approval of CEG Chair.

Tony Phipps.
Northland CDEM Coordinating Executive Group Chair.
14 January 2021

CDEM Group comment

Comment
Needs assessment is critical to response and having a local solution available is a priority for the Northland CDEM Group.