

Australia-World Bank Growth and
Prosperity in the Philippines (AGaP)
Trust Fund Independent
Midterm Review

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Aid Activity Summary

Concept	Details
Aid Investment Name	Australia World Bank Growth and Prosperity in the Philippines (AGaP) Single-Donor Trust Fund
Commencement date	26 th March 2019
Completion date	June 30 th 2024
Total Australian dollars	10,550,000.00 (USD)
Delivery organisation	World Bank, Philippines
Country/Region	Philippines
Primary Sector	Inclusive economic growth

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The Mid Term Review was led by Beth Elson, an independent evaluator, supported by Moira Enerva as co-evaluator. As such, the views presented reflect the professional judgement of the evaluation team and do not necessarily represent the views of DFAT or the World Bank Group, nor bind them to action.

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Abbreviations

4Ps - Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program; also, Pantawid

ADB – Asian Development Bank

AGaP - Australia-World Bank Growth and Prosperity in the Philippines Trust Fund

AMPED - Advancing Multilateral Partnerships for Economic Development

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BARMM - Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao

COVID-19 - corona virus disease

CPF - country partnership strategy

DFAT - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DOH - Department of Health

DOTr – Department of Transportation

DP – development partner

DPL - development policy loan

DPWH – Department of Public Works and Highways

DSWD – Department of Social Welfare and Development

EOPO – end of program outcome

GDP - gross domestic product

GEDSI - gender equality, disability, and social inclusion

GESI - gender equality and social inclusion

GOA – Government of Australia

GOCC - government-owned or controlled corporation

GoP - Government of the Philippines

G-to-G - government-to-government

IBRD – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; also, World Bank

ICT – information and communications technology

IMF - International Monetary Fund

INGO – international nongovernment organisation

LGU – local government unit

M&E – monitoring and evaluation

MMBRT - Metro Manila Bus Rapid Transit

MTR - midterm review

NA - not applicable

NCR - National Capital Region

NGO – nongovernment organisation

NTFC - National Trade Facilitation Committee

ODA – official development assistance

P4I - Partnerships for Infrastructure

PDP - Philippine Development Plan

PhilSys - Philippine Identification System (national ID)

PWD - persons with disabilities

RCEF - Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund

SC – Steering Committee

SPC – significant policy change

TA - technical assistance

TF - trust fund

TTL – task team lead

UN – United Nations

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

WB - World Bank; also, Bank

WEE – Women’s Economic Empowerment

Note: All financial information are stated in US dollars, unless otherwise indicated.

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Australia-World Bank Growth and Prosperity in the Philippines (AGaP) Trust Fund is a strategic partnership between the Government of Australia, represented by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the World Bank (WB). It provides funds and technical expertise to generate and share knowledge and assist the Government of the Philippines (GoP) in the design and implementation of critical policy reforms and programs. To achieve this, AGaP provides support in four outcome areas: (1) project development, preparation, and implementation support; (2) policy reform and dialogue; (3) public debate and awareness; and (4) partnerships and implementation platforms.

This midterm review (MTR) captures AGaP implementation and results achieved from March 2019 through December 2021. Seven AGaP-funded projects were reviewed for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, with recommendations for program improvement based on findings and analysis of the program's changing context. The seven projects reviewed were: (1) Technical Assistance for Development Policy Loan (DPL) Reforms; (2) Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems; (3) Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization in the Context of the Mandanas Ruling; (4) Women's Economic Empowerment Program; (5) Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines; (6) Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19 Response Project; and (7) Support for Post COVID-19 Active Transport Development in Metro Manila.

Key Findings

The period covered by the MTR was a challenging operating environment, with the Philippines one of the countries hit hardest by COVID-19 in the East Asia and Pacific region. During the period covered by the MTR, AGaP's activities significantly contributed to AGaP's overall objective of facilitating knowledge exchange and assisting the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs. The MTR found evidence of AGaP effectively operationalising its strategy of being a program that emphasises agility and speed of response, being proactive in analysing needs, and shaping technical assistance to support policy reform. In particular, the flexibility built into the design of the AGaP Trust Fund, which builds on a long and successful partnership in the Philippines between the Government of Australia and the World Bank, proved valuable under COVID-19. The single-donor trust fund mechanism enabled DFAT and WB to move quickly to support GoP. In this context, the MTR team assesses AGaP to be on track in terms of progress towards achieving its objectives.

Relevance. AGaP demonstrated strong alignment of its objectives and priorities with those of GoP, WB, and DFAT. It has been highly responsive to the challenges presented by changes in the operating environment, which included the COVID-19 pandemic starting early in the program, followed by national elections and the change in GoP administration. The flexible nature of the Trust Fund enabled both DFAT and WB to move quickly to support changes in GoP priorities, which involved balancing being responsive to the needs of GoP while managing established sectoral projects under AGaP. The same flexibility allowed DFAT and WB to respond to requests for technical assistance from GoP following significant changes in the legal and regulatory environment. Finally, the MTR notes the strong alignment in the strategic priorities of DFAT and WB in the Philippines, and these are consistent with GoP's own development vision.

Efficiency. AGaP grants have served to supplement existing World Bank resources, meaning a relatively small fund for technical assistance is amplified through its association with the WB's loan portfolio. The rationale for the Trust Fund is that it should be an efficient model for implementation, reducing administration and overheads, and promoting flexibility and

responsiveness. The MTR found that this has enabled AGaP to respond quickly to emerging opportunities. By end of April 2022, 81 percent of the total trust fund allocation of \$5 million had been approved and 64 percent disbursed or committed expenditure. As the program was over halfway through at this point, the pro rata disbursement target (assuming a linear expenditure pathway) would be approximately 60 percent, and data show that indeed this is what has been achieved.

Effectiveness. AGaP enabled rapid and practical governance support to GoP, with highly targeted technical assistance around specific areas of implementation of economic reforms. High-quality analytical work was delivered, including on gender inclusion, and these informed WB's and DFAT's management of their respective development portfolio, enhanced staff knowledge, and contributed to public discourse and policy dialogues. The technical briefings provided to GoP were used extensively in the formulation and implementation of COVID-19 response programs, especially those targeting vulnerable groups. The challenges in optimizing DFAT's role in influencing policy reforms, mainstreaming gender in operations, broadening stakeholder engagement, and ensuring timely disclosure and dissemination of knowledge products are noted in the MTR, with both partners committing to address them at both strategic and operational levels.

Gender equality. AGaP funding enabled more support to be provided to WB task teams to ensure that new operations addressed gender through the internal WB process of gender tagging. Sharing of good practices across DFAT-funded World Bank trust funds contributed to AGaP having a dedicated gender grant. However, the evidence of effective gender mainstreaming across the AGaP grants is mixed and DFAT has consistently raised this as an area of the program to be strengthened. AGaP has demonstrated that in some sectors gender equality themes can be integrated quite easily (for example, COVID-19 recovery), but integration into other sectors requires deeper understanding of how gender issues influence economic growth, human capital, and productivity. The report produced by the Women's Economic Empowerment grant is an excellent example of how data and insights can indicate new entry points for advancing gender equality.

Disability. There are some good examples of AGaP activities that considered the needs of people living with disability, with the majority of these being part of the COVID-19 response efforts. Certain grants included a clear objective of inclusiveness and a diversity of stakeholder engagement with women, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. The virtual nature of stakeholder engagement under COVID-19 restrictions reduced some accessibility issues and resulted in increased and more diverse participation. Nevertheless, the evidence of effective disability inclusion across the AGaP grants is mixed, and this is an area that both partners can strengthen.

Monitoring and evaluation. A results framework guided AGaP's M&E activities, including the preparation of project reporting templates for WB task teams, and use of its M&E process to monitor AGaP's implementation (e.g., through WB's Annual Progress Review). Reporting on grant activities and results was mostly diligent, although there is inconsistent reporting across the life of some grants, as well as against the AGaP results framework. More attention is needed to describe how grant outputs and outcomes relate to this framework. There is a need to utilise M&E further to stimulate a process of reflection, adaptation, and learning to inform strategic decisions.

Risk management. AGaP effectively managed multiple staff transitions on both the DFAT and WB side with minimal disruption to the program. This has also taken place in the context of a global pandemic, which was understandably not anticipated by the initial risk register. Outside of the formal meetings in the AGaP governance structure, discussions between WB and DFAT

task teams were useful in managing sector issues and is a practice that should be encouraged across other projects. The rapidly evolving situation during the height of the pandemic brought on GoP requests that had implications on the activities as originally conceived for AGaP-supported projects. The responsibility and flexibility given to WB staff in managing projects helped them manage risks in AGaP-supported projects. Moreover, risk management is adequately covered especially because AGaP benefits from the risk management capacity and resources embedded in the WB projects that it supports.

Sustainability. The sustainability of AGaP-supported projects is likely, given that they are embedded in investment lending, policy loans, and broader technical assistance and analytical work whose implementation precedes or extends beyond the grants' effective date. Moreover, they are underpinned by laws and policies and have strong government ownership. The governance structure has worked well overall, especially during the height of the crisis. There are some good examples of AGaP enabling a constructive partnership. For example, through encouraging an exchange of ideas and not just acting as a delegated trust fund. Finding fertile common ground in other areas will require a new approach to collaboration and facilitation. Moreover, there is opportunity to use AGaP more extensively as a vehicle for enhancing DFAT's relationship and visibility with GoP and facilitating increased DFAT involvement in policy dialogue around key reform areas.

Recommendations

The evidence of AGaP support for policy reforms around inclusive and sustainable economic growth is strong, with AGaP demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness in a most challenging operating environment of a global pandemic and a change in GoP administration. AGaP will need to maintain momentum behind ongoing reforms in some areas, while supporting the new administration and its priorities. To improve the likelihood of sustainability, AGaP could better utilize project resources and diplomacy from the DFAT side of the partnership. **Based on the performance to date, the development priorities of the Philippine Government, and the country programs of World Bank and DFAT, the MTR recommends that DFAT continue to support AGaP beyond its current end date (June 30, 2024).** AGaP should continue as a single donor programmatic instrument, a modality that balances the effectiveness of the Bank's delivery with the benefits of a bilateral mechanism. The flexibility of AGaP, purposefully built into the design by DFAT and the WB,¹ should also be retained.

In considering future priorities, AGaP should facilitate a deeper examination of the types of economic reforms that can facilitate poverty reduction to improve the quality and resilience of economic growth. This should include agreeing gender-related targets for the next phase of AGaP and examining the correlations between poverty and Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, the strategy should strengthen considerations of climate change and its integration with disaster resilience in its policy work. For example, infrastructure, energy transition, digitisation, and natural resource stewardship.

Specific actions are needed in program administration, specifically in operational guidelines for gender mainstreaming. The results framework will require more verifiable indicators that can be used in monitoring and evaluation, including the integration of gender as a cross-cutting theme in the framework. The existing reporting mechanisms such as annual reports need to thread the grant outputs together to show how the AGaP approach is leading to changes. On governance,

¹ The ToR for this review states that 'AGaP is designed to be flexible to respond to emerging needs, and as policy priorities evolve over time, including during changeovers in administration, and during crises, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.'

each level in the structure (task teams, Operations Committee, Steering Committee) needs clear parameters and functions, with the Operations Manual updated accordingly.

Gender equality

- Revise the Operations manual to include clearer expectations on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.²
- Revise the AGaP results framework to include gender as a cross-cutting theme, consistent with the grant proposals and reporting templates.

Disability

- Revise the Operations Manual to include clearer expectations on disability, and social inclusion considerations more broadly.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Discuss and agree in the Operations Committee allocation of sufficient M&E resources and costing, including a clear process and frequency for updating the M&E Plan.³
- Explore appropriate impact measurement methodologies that are capable of tracking the complex variables inherent in governance reform programs.⁴
- Clarify the version of the results framework the program is reporting against and add more detail for objectively verifiable indicators and means of verification, including ways to measure the degree of influence on policy reform that can be attributed to the activities, and how these outcomes confirm the validity of the program's theory of change.
- Use the annual reports to thread the grant outputs together to show how the AGaP approach is leading to changes, and how these relate to the broader AMPED objectives
- Amend the Operations Manual to set out a consistent financial reporting template, with explanation of terms and process for approving transfers between accounts.

Sustainability

- The partnership should better utilise resources and diplomacy from DFAT, in particular the Ambassador, to improve the sustainability of AGaP.⁵

Program management

Each level of the AGaP governance structure needs clear parameters and functions, with the Operations Manual updated accordingly. For example:

1. The Operations Committee should discuss the issues raised in this section (Program Governance Arrangements and Partnership) and agree a new working method including an updated grant proposal workflow, decision points, milestones, and responsibilities across the partnership.
2. The Operations Committee is responsible for detailed discussion of the grant proposals and needs to allocate time and resources to do this effectively. Meeting minutes will be

² For example, include selection criteria for AGaP activities such as, *Gender analysis and review by Gender Specialists of both Australia and the World Bank prior to submission*. DFAT could consider adding a Gender Guidance Note to the Ops Manual (see annex 7 for an example from the Ops Manual from the ABP2 Trust Fund in Vietnam)

³ For reference DFAT's Design and Monitoring & Evaluation Standards provide a guideline that 4-7% of budget is allocated for M&E.

⁴ Example methodology provided in the Monitoring, evaluation and reporting section

⁵ See the 'Partnership between DFAT and World Bank' section of the report for additional detail.

drafted and shared. This committee also decides when a proposal is ready to be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.

3. The Steering Committee takes a strategic view of the program and approves grants, discussion of which should be confined to how the grant contributes to the strategic goals of the program.
4. AGaP grant teams (Post and WB) should agree parameters for communication to ensure regular meetings take place. For this to be successful, it should include examining why meetings are not happening as frequently as in some grants they used to.

Communication and Visibility

- Review the communication guidelines in the Operations Manual for consistency with the level of ambition for visibility of the partnership. Agree ways of working across DFAT and the WB to achieve this ambition.
- Review and update the communications strategy, including AGaP's key messages, and how to document and disseminate AGaP impact stories.
- AGaP Secretariat to draft and share a schedule of upcoming AGaP events and meetings so that DFAT can plan its participation accordingly. Include a review of progress (including any issues, risks, and uptake of outputs by the government) as a fixed agenda item in Operations Committee meetings.

The future

- AGaP should continue as a single donor programmatic Trust Fund beyond its current end date (30 June 2024).
- AGaP should facilitate a deeper examination of the types of economic reforms that can facilitate poverty reduction to improve the quality and resilience of economic growth. This should include agreeing gender-related targets for the next phase of AGaP and examining the correlations between poverty and Indigenous Peoples.
- AGaP should strengthen considerations of climate change, and its integration with disaster resilience, in its policy work. For example, infrastructure, energy transition, digitisation, and natural resource stewardship.

Introduction

AGaP is a strategic partnership between the Government of Australia, represented by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the World Bank (WB). Commencing operation in March 2019, AGaP provides funds and technical expertise to generate and share knowledge and assist the Government of the Philippines (GoP) in the design and implementation of critical policy reforms and programs.

AGaP forms part of DFAT's broader economic governance investment in the Philippines, the Advancing Multilateral Partnerships for Economic Development (AMPED). AMPED aims to contribute to the Philippines' rapid, sustainable, and inclusive growth by strengthening the ability of the Government to manage the economy for growth, with participation of the private sector, and by creating a strong partnership between Australia, the Philippines, and multilateral financial institutions.

Under the AMPED umbrella, AGaP supports the policy reforms and programs in the Philippine Development Plan and the country's long-term vision, *Ambisyon Natin 2040*. AGaP is designed to be flexible to respond to emerging needs, and as policy priorities evolve over time, including during changeovers in administration and during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve this, AGaP provides support in four outcome areas:

Outcome Area 1: Project development, preparation, and implementation support

Outcome Area 2: Policy reform and dialogue

Outcome Area 3: Public debate and awareness

Outcome Area 4: Partnerships and implementation platforms

The Trust Fund began in March 2019, with the expectation that all funds would be disbursed in five years or by 30 June 2024. The total commitment of Australia to AGaP is US\$10.55 million: the initial commitment of \$5 million in March 2019; and an additional commitment of \$5.55 million in March 2022. The additional commitment includes circa US\$2 million from DFAT's regional Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I) program in support of the Mindanao Transport Connectivity Improvement Project and Pre-Feasibility Studies for Energy Transition Projects.

AGaP is a programmatic trust fund that finances activities aligned with the overall development objectives of both partners as articulated in framework documents including, but not limited to, the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework for the Philippines 2019-23 and Australia's Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response. Specific activities funded by AGaP are decided jointly between Australia and the World Bank through the governance mechanisms of the Trust Fund.

There are seven grants approved and implemented under AGaP during the review period (March 2019 – December 2021):

1. Technical Assistance for Development Policy Loan (DPL) Reforms (\$1,350,000; January 2020 – June 2022)
2. Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems (\$900,000; January 2020 – March 2023)
3. Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization in the Context of the Mandanas Ruling (\$275,000; January 2020 – November 2021)
4. Women's Economic Empowerment Program (\$250,000; January 2020 – March 2022)
5. Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines (\$300,000; June 2020 – May 2022)
6. Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19 Response Project (\$300,000; June 2020 – June 2022)
7. Support for Post COVID-19 Active Transport Development in Metro Manila (\$50,000; June 2020 – December 2021)

Strategic Context

The key focus of the Philippine Government's medium-term reform program is enabling inclusive growth. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 outlines policy priorities to deliver inequality-reducing transformation, increase growth potential, provide an enabling and supportive economic environment, and build foundations for sustainable development. This includes enhancing competitiveness and growth, boosting job creation, fostering more open market regimes, strengthening peace, and strengthening resilience to natural disasters. Over the past few years, President Duterte's administration (2016-22) maintained macroeconomic stability and implemented key structural reforms geared toward achieving inclusive growth and addressing long-standing policy and institutional challenges. The structural reforms of most relevance to areas of AGaP support are: (1) institute progressive tax reform and more effective tax collection; (2) accelerate annual infrastructure spending to account for 5% of GDP; (3) promote rural and value chain development toward increasing agricultural and rural enterprise productivity and rural tourism; (4) ensure security of land tenure to encourage investments, and address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies; (5) invest in human capital

development, including health and education systems; and (6) improve social protection programs, including the Government's conditional cash transfer program, to protect the poor against instability and economic shocks.

The World Bank's Country Partnership Framework is aligned with the Philippine Government's priorities in the PDP and *AmBisyon Natin 2040*, the long-term collective ambition of the Filipino people to build a prosperous and predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor or left out of economic development opportunities.

The Australian Government and the Philippine Government marked 75 years of bilateral relations in 2021. The close relationship serves both countries in tackling the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia developed the Philippines COVID-19 Development Response Plan, which outlines how it collaborates with the Philippine Government in strengthening health security, maintaining stability, and promoting economic recovery. As the world emerges from the pandemic, the Australian Government will determine a new set of development priorities to support the economic recovery of partner countries in the Indo-Pacific, including the Philippines.

The Philippines was one of the countries in the East Asia and Pacific region hit hardest by COVID-19. To manage the spread of the virus, authorities implemented strict quarantine procedures and health protocols, restricting mobility of people as well as the operational capacity of businesses. The subsequent heavy declines in consumption and investment growth, exacerbated by the slowdown in tourism and remittances, resulted in significant growth contraction in 2020. Nevertheless, the economy started to recover with a 5.6 percent year-on-year expansion in 2021, buoyed by public investment and a recovery in the external environment. Following a strategic focus to scale up vaccination in the National Capital Region (NCR), which contributes to nearly 40 percent of GDP, about 92 percent of the adult population in the region have received their COVID-19 vaccinations. However, the country's vaccination rate is lagging behind some ASEAN peers.

Although it happened after the period covered by this report, it is pertinent to note that the country had a presidential election, with Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the son of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr., winning a landslide victory alongside his vice-presidential running mate Sara Duterte-Carpio, the daughter of former President Rodrigo Duterte. Marcos Jr. began his six-year term on 30 June 2022, with an economic team that brings together economic managers who served in previous administrations. Thus far, the indications are that the economic team will pursue an economic recovery plan that is built on improving the quality and access to social services, particularly health and education. This resonates with the inclusive growth objectives of AGaP. Moreover, the economic team's affirmation of the need for fiscal discipline amid the impacts of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, as well as the priority on services and infrastructure projects to generate employment, offers a platform for constructive engagement in the coming years.

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of this MTR are to: (1) independently assess AGaP's effectiveness and efficiency, including gender and disability inclusion, in achieving the program objectives; (2) assess the sustainability of AGaP's outcomes and how they can be strengthened or expanded in the future; and (3) based on the assessment of findings and analysis of the changing context, offer recommendations for program improvement.

In the absence of an explicit theory of change in the World Bank's program document, the evaluation team used AGaP's program objective and outcomes, the Results Chain and Key Performance Indicators (Annex 2) from the program document. Together, the objectives, outcomes and results framework provide the basis for a logical framework for achieving the overall objective of the program, which is to facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs.

The progress in achieving the overall objective and its four outcome areas was the focus of the evaluation. The analysis was framed around key questions relating to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender equality, disability inclusion, M&E, risks and safeguards, and sustainability (see Annex 2 for a detailed list of questions).

The research method comprised the following four components: (1) literature review; (2) meetings and discussions with stakeholders selected by the AGaP Secretariat and the Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs (DFAT); (3) semi-structured interviews with program participants of DFAT and the World Bank Group; and (4) discussions with selected program management team members to reflect on the issues emerging from the MTR.

The MTR uses critical case sampling, which permits logical generalization and maximum application of information, i.e., if it is true in this case, it is likely to be true in other cases. The literature review did not uncover any cases that were outliers. Although interviewing more GoP and non-AGaP stakeholders would have further strengthened the MTR findings (see limitations section below), the MTR team is confident in the validity of findings presented in this report.

Limitations

As noted in the MTR Plan, triangulation of data collection methods is intended to strengthen confidence in the findings. The MTR team was only able to meet with one GoP counterpart (former Department of Finance) and one development partner (UNICEF). The evaluation team was informed that this was due to the change in the national leadership following the Philippine elections, which meant that some of the relevant interviewees are no longer in post. It is not clear why nongovernment stakeholders were unavailable to interview.

The MTR team relies on the accuracy of the material in the literature review and the statements made by interviewees. However, the limited ability to triangulate findings with GoP and other non-AGaP stakeholders is a notable limitation. This is particularly challenging in evaluating sustainability and identifying attribution or contribution to outcomes in policy reform.

AGaP's Operations Committee began drafting and circulating meeting minutes during the later period of the MTR timeframe, so there were limited records from this part of AGaP's governance structure for the MTR team to use as reference materials and for triangulation of findings.

Overall Findings

The period examined by the MTR was a challenging operating environment, which included the COVID-19 pandemic starting early in the program, followed by national elections and the change in government administration. During the period covered by the MTR, AGaP's activities significantly contributed to AGaP's overall objective of facilitating knowledge exchange and assisting the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs. In particular, the flexibility built into the design of the AGaP Trust Fund, which builds on a long and successful partnership in the Philippines between the Government of Australia and the World Bank, proved valuable under COVID-19. The mechanism enabled DFAT and WB to move quickly to support GoP.

In assessing the performance of the program, the MTR had five questions to address (summarised as follows). The report examines and discusses these issues in more detail.

1. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial and technical inputs provided by AGaP in generating results, including gender and disability inclusion, and how AGaP can be strengthened in the future.

The MTR finds AGaP to be an efficient model for achieving DFAT's aims. The Trust Fund reduces administration and overheads and promotes flexibility and responsiveness. AGaP grants have served to supplement existing World Bank resources, meaning a relatively small fund for technical assistance is amplified through its association with the Bank's loan portfolio. AGaP enabled rapid and practical governance support to GoP, with highly targeted technical assistance around specific areas of implementation of economic reforms, for example through support for the Development Policy Loan (DPL) reforms.

The evidence of AGaP advancing gender equality and disability goals through its grants is mixed and DFAT has consistently raised this as an area of the program to be strengthened. The new Australian administration has highlighted gender as an increasing priority and AGaP will need to respond to this expectation accordingly. DFAT's umbrella investment AMPED does not currently have a gender strategy or gender action plan at investment level and AGaPs' contribution to rectifying this shortcoming will be an important step in strengthening the development impact of DFAT resources, especially as AGaP is already regarded by DFAT as a key program under AMPED. The MTR makes recommendations to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness, and formulate clearer expectations on the cross-cutting themes of gender equality, disability inclusion, and women's economic empowerment.

2. Assess the sustainability of AGaP's outcomes, and how they can be strengthened in the future.

By prioritising support for longer-term national initiatives, AGaP has enhanced the prospects for sustainability. The MTR found that the sustainability of AGaP-supported projects is likely given that they are embedded in investment lending, policy loans, and broader technical assistance and analytical work whose implementation precedes or extends beyond the grants' effective date. However, there is a need to strengthen the line of sight between the activities in AGaP and DFAT's broader AMPED investment. The MTR makes recommendations on how AGaP could focus less on the outputs that inform policy reform and more on supporting the process of reform and governance itself.

3. Identify case studies illustrating good practice and achievements and document lessons learned.

AGaP's latest annual report (2021) includes several case studies that, in the opinion of the MTR team, are good illustrations of how activities within each grant have led to their intended policy outcomes, with positive material impact for citizens. These include accessible health facilities for persons with disabilities under the outcome pillar Project Development, Preparation, and Implementation Support; bike lanes for a safe and healthy metro under Policy Reforms and Dialogue; Pantawid family sessions for improved parenting and community participation under Public Debate and Awareness; and more women in disaster response teams to illustrate Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment.

The MTR makes recommendations on how these instances of effective projects can be better woven into an explanatory narrative that demonstrates how the AGaP approach leads to change and the prospects for replicating that process in other programs.

4. Outline ways in which the partnership could be strengthened to enhance policy influence, flexibility, and responsiveness to evolving Philippine Government priorities.

The strategic background has evolved since the Trust Fund was first conceived. There are new government administrations in both Australia and the Philippines, heralding shifts in emphasis and new priorities. It is therefore important to have more collaboration on decision making and alignment of priorities. In preparation for the Government of Australia's revised development strategy, AGaP should facilitate a deeper examination of the types of economic reforms that can facilitate poverty reduction as a means to improving the quality and resilience of economic growth. This should include agreeing gender-related targets for the next phase of AGaP, and examining the correlations between poverty and Indigenous Peoples. Climate change and its integration with disaster resilience is especially important in a maritime country with vulnerable coastal communities. This has implications for AGaP's policy work in infrastructure, energy transition, digitisation, and natural resource stewardship. Including DFAT in more interactions with stakeholders will be important to ensure that the forthcoming program is relevant and well-targeted.

Influencing policy reform in the way envisaged by programs such as AGaP requires continuous engagement with policy makers and those who influence them. The AGaP team is seeing results with this approach, as illustrated by the DPL grant, but it is difficult to measure the value of this impact. To be successful, the process needs to operate in the background and allow space for policy makers to find their own way towards executing the reforms. Therefore, the M&E function of the program needs to find ways to measure the degree of influence on policy reform that can be attributed to the activities, and how these outcomes confirm the validity of the program's theory of change. The AGaP team should review the tools available that aim to do this.

5. Provide recommendations for consideration and action by the AGaP Steering Committee and practitioners in the World Bank and DFAT, especially those related to the future of the Trust Fund and the need for future phases of work.

Based on the performance to date, the development priorities of the Philippine Government, and the country programs of World Bank and DFAT, the MTR recommends that DFAT continue to support AGaP for future phases of investment. This report makes specific recommendations on how AGaP can enhance some aspects of its work while retaining the flexible and responsive nature of the program. AGaP should continue as a single donor programmatic instrument, a modality that balances the effectiveness of the Bank's delivery with the benefits of a bilateral mechanism. The flexibility of AGaP, purposefully built into the design by DFAT and the WB, should also be retained.

Assessment and Findings

Relevance

Key findings:

- There is strong alignment in the strategic priorities of DFAT and WB in the Philippines and these are consistent with the GoP's own development vision.
- AGaP has been highly responsive to the challenges presented by changes in the operating environment. For example:

Covid-19. The flexible nature of the Trust Fund enabled both DFAT and the WB to move quickly to support changes in GoP priorities, which involved balancing being responsive to the needs of GoP while managing established sectoral projects under AGaP.

National laws and regulations. The same flexibility allowed DFAT and WB to respond to requests for technical assistance from GoP following significant changes in the legal and regulatory environment, for example the Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas petition that increased the amount of national government tax revenue transferred to local governments.

Alignment of objectives and design with the partner's strategic objectives

Through AGaP, WB and DFAT support AmBisyon Natin 2040 and the medium-term Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022. The updated PDP has five major programs: health system improvement, food security, learning continuity, digital transformation, and regional development. These programs aim to build the resilience of individuals, families, businesses, government, and society under the 'new normal'.

Taken together, WB's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) and DFAT's Advancing Multilateral Partnerships for Economic Development or AMPED have strong alignment with the country's goals and priorities. AGaP itself is anchored on the CPF and AMPED, specifically as it provides funds and technical assistance to generate and share knowledge and assist GoP in the design and implementation of critical policy reforms and programs. In WB's CPF 2019-23, these reforms and programs are driven by priority investments in human capital (health, education, and nutrition), competitiveness and job creation, peace building, climate and disaster resilience, governance, and digital transformation. In DFAT's AMPED, these reforms and programs aim to contribute to the Philippines' rapid, sustainable, and inclusive growth by strengthening the ability of the Government to manage the economy for growth, with participation of the private sector, and by creating a strong partnership between Australia, the Philippines, and multilateral financial institutions.

A review of the objectives and design of AGaP grants indicates overall alignment between the strategic objectives of GoP, WB, and DFAT. Two grants supporting the biggest investments, namely, Technical Assistance for Development Policy Loan Reforms and Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems, support competitiveness, human capital development, and digital transformation, among others.

WB task teams reported regular and frequent meetings with GoP counterparts, not only for technical briefings but also for project planning. Some meetings included high-level discussions, including the WB Annual and Spring Meetings. These practices demonstrate pathways of alignment at strategic and operational levels. In AMPED, DFAT aims to use this partnership between WB and GoP to magnify the influence and impact of DFAT's development assistance.

Program adaptation to changes in policy or operational context

Several development challenges overlaid AGaP's implementation during the period under review. Foremost is the global pandemic, with the Philippines one of the countries hit hardest by COVID-19 in the East Asia and Pacific region. Another is a cluster of landmark laws and policies with huge impact on governance and the country's fiscal position. Among these are the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Law that makes conditional transfers and social protection at the core of GoP's national poverty reduction strategy and human capital investment program. In response to the public health and economic impacts of the pandemic, GoP passed the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act and the subsequent Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, as well as the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises. Finally, GoP issued Executive Order No. 138, s. 2021 to implement full devolution and the substantial increase in the internal revenue allotments of local government units as upheld in the Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas case.

AGaP has been highly responsive to the challenges presented by these changes in the operating environment. With the pivot of WB's and Australia's country programs toward COVID-19 support, the Operations Committee acted swiftly on the grant proposals. The literature review and interviews with task teams indicate that grants originated from requests from GoP counterparts, even for discrete projects. One example is the Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines requested by GoP to help inform its policies and programs for COVID response. In this grant, the Department of Finance sought WB's help initially to process its data about firms, and with the request extending to assistance to conduct three rounds of firm surveys.

In the grants for Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19 Response Project and the Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila, no formal call for proposals was made, according to the task teams. Rather, there were internal discussions for strategic utilization of available funds for COVID response. This was confirmed by DFAT and WB Operations Committee members, noting that during the lockdowns and travel restrictions, the Operations Committee was quick to act, with several discussions of grant allocation done outside of formal meetings, in most cases through video calls and phone calls. DFAT cited its conscious alignment with AGaP outcomes at the height of the crisis brought on by the pandemic and how WB similarly brought in the "broader Bank perspective," thereby ensuring complementation of the partners' support in the Philippines.

Infrastructure continues to be a priority under the new Philippine administration. It was noted in AGaP's 4th Steering Committee meeting that DFAT's regional infrastructure program, Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I), provided an opportunity to broaden the partnership between DFAT and the World Bank, where P4I agreed to fund an energy and a transport activity under AGaP. WB task teams also highlighted AGaP's contribution in specific activities related to policy dialogues and technical advice, which ordinarily are not covered in its financing instruments such as the Technical Assistance for DPL Reforms, a facility for budget support.

Efficiency

Key findings:

- AGaP grants have served to supplement existing World Bank resources, meaning a relatively small fund for technical assistance is amplified through its association with the WB's loan portfolio.
- AGaP is a single donor programmatic trust fund. With this simple structure, fund disbursement has been quick and efficient.

Under the AMPED umbrella, the objective of AGaP is to facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs. It is funded by contributions from the Government of Australia represented by DFAT, complemented with World Bank's administrative resources. The AGaP partnership is implemented over five years. The Trust Fund became effective in March 2019 and all funds are expected to be fully disbursed by 30 June 2024. More resources might be added to the Trust Fund in succeeding years, depending on results achieved and implementation progress.

The trust fund model for this program is reported by both World Bank and DFAT to be working well. The rationale for the Trust Fund is that it should be an efficient model for implementation, reducing administration and overheads and promoting flexibility and responsiveness. This has enabled AGaP to respond quickly to emerging opportunities.

AGaP's Steering Committee noted the need 'to be strategic in the allocation of AGaP [Trust Fund] resources to activities with high likelihood of delivering high impact results'.⁶ They agreed that AGaP resources would be broadly allocated under the following budget envelopes:

- Technical assistance to support DPL reforms
- Guided calls for proposals to support analytical work for ongoing reforms of shared interest to DFAT, WB, and the Government of the Philippines
- Flexible funding, just-in-time support for emerging needs and requests from Government
- Program management, including monitoring and evaluation.

The literature review shows evidence that AGaP has used resources efficiently. By building on existing relationships with GoP counterparts, the AGaP team was able to anticipate demand and quickly design activities to meet emerging needs. This is demonstrated by the support for implementation of the Rice Liberalization law, which was an objective of the initial DPL grant proposal. During the process of defining the guidelines for accessing the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), the team realized that this was no longer a priority for support, so they focused instead on the updating of farmer registry and diversification effort. This agility was anticipated in the design of AGaP and there is evidence it is working well.

On the other hand, the concept of the flexible funding envelope has not been as effective. At outset, a fund of \$0.5 million was allocated for flexible funding support for emerging needs and requests from GoP.⁷ World Bank interviewees explained that it was difficult to identify small projects that would have measurable impacts aligned with AGaP's goals. The December 2020 Steering Committee noted the low uptake of the just-in-time support activities to date and agreed the remaining resources would be allocated to support the increased demand for analytical support during the pandemic and the upcoming political transition.⁸

⁶ AGaP 1st Steering Committee Minutes, 6th June 2019

⁷ AGaP 1st Steering Committee Minutes, 6th June 2019

⁸ AGaP 3rd Steering Committee Minutes, 8th December 2020

At the January 2022 Steering Committee meeting, the co-chairs expressed appreciation for the continued effective partnership between WB and DFAT and the way that AGaP has been able to respond flexibly and nimbly to the Government's demands, particularly in responding to the COVID-19 health and associated economic crisis.

Disbursements

The World Bank has systems in place for monitoring and reporting on expenditure by grant. The most recent report available to the MTR team is dated 5th May 2022, which is slightly beyond the reporting period of this MTR. The previous disbursement data, shared with the Operations Committee in September 2021, do not include detail of disbursed and committed funds per grant. The following table shows that 81 percent of the total trust fund allocation of \$5 million had been approved by end of April 2022, and 64 percent has been disbursed or is committed expenditure. There is an unspent balance of 18 percent of the approved amount. As the program was over halfway through at this point, the pro rata disbursement target (assuming a linear expenditure pathway) would be approximately 60 percent, and indeed this is what has been achieved. A more detailed disbursement table is in Annex 4.

The first Steering Committee meeting in June 2019 agreed to frontload funding allocations, noting the limited window available for pursuing critical reforms during the remaining term of the Duterte administration and the potential need for analytical and advisory support during the political transition. This proved to be an efficient way to give momentum to the early phase of the program, as grant projects were able to mobilize quickly. This is most notable in the DPL grant, where it was anticipated that the project would need \$400,000 per annum for three years, and this has proved to be an accurate forecast.

The only projects that have notably underspent are TF Program Management (\$200,000 not yet transferred to the account); and the Subnational Finance and Decentralization grant, whereby \$125,000 of the underspend has been allocated to the next phase of AGaP.⁹ The WB did not provide the MTR team with a satisfactory explanation for the program management underspend.

Summary of disbursements as of 5th May 2022

	Approved Grant amount	Disbursed & Committed	Balance	% Spent
1. Ongoing	3,350,000	2,621,853	728,147	78%
a. AGaP TF Program Management & Grant Administration*	300,000	82,436	217,564	27%
b. TA for Pantawid SP	900,000	675,014	224,986	75%
c. TA for DPL Programs	1,350,000	1,138,623	211,377	84%
d. Implementation Support for Phil. COVID-19 Response Project	300,000	247,031	52,969	82%
e. Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in Phil.	500,000	478,748	21,252	96%
2. Closed	700,000	571,033	128,967	82%

⁹ AGaP 4th Steering Committee Minutes, 25th January 2022. Note however that based on financial status data as of May 2022, this grant was fully disbursed.

Independent Evaluation

	Approved Grant amount	Disbursed & Committed	Balance	% Spent
a. Subnational Finance & Decentralization (Mandanas Ruling)	400,000	271,436	128,564	68%
b. Philippines Women's Economic Empowerment Program	250,000	249,942	58	100%
c. Post COVID-19 Active Transport Program Devt in MM	50,000	49,655	345	99%
TOTAL	4,050,000	3,192,886	857,114	79%

Effectiveness

AGaP's overall objective is "to facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs". As this is more a description of a method of working instead of an endpoint, evaluating its effectiveness is likely to focus on the quality of the activities rather than the outcomes. Nonetheless, the AGaP Annual Report (2021) does a good job of illustrating how the policy reforms supported by the program will enhance the conditions for economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This reflects the priority given to said goal in the Steering Committee, where DFAT "acknowledged the timely preparation of proposals to support Government's response to the COVID-19 crisis...addressing short term needs of counterpart government agencies and reflecting longer term strategic implications".¹⁰ The AGaP strategy emphasises agility and speed of response, being proactive in analysing needs, and shaping technical assistance to support policy reform. In respect of the change in emphasis required by the pandemic, AGaP was effective in exemplifying that agility.

The program is delivered through discrete grant-funded projects and most of this section of the evaluation report discusses each grant in turn. Each project has its own objectives and target outcomes, which are intended to contribute to the program's overall objectives. The annual reports illustrate how aspects of each grant are relevant to the target outcomes. However, with some exceptions (for example, COVID-19 response), the reports do not attempt to weave the threads together to show how the grants complement each other.

AGaP's effectiveness could be enhanced by exploring the pathways of action towards reform, what works and what does not, how specific inputs (for example, technical briefing notes) lead to policy outcomes, or why in some cases they do not. This is useful for capturing lessons that can be applied in other WB and DFAT programs, and indeed shared with the world at large. This would build on the legacy of work that DFAT has supported around 'thinking and working politically', and 'doing development differently'. The M&E section of this report suggests how AGaP can contribute to this domain.

However, the absence of such an analysis does not diminish the effectiveness of the program in largely achieving its objectives and target outcomes as set out in the results framework.

Technical Assistance for Development Policy Loan (DPL) Reforms

Key findings:

- AGaP support through the DPL series facilitated rapid and practical governance support to GoP. The grant achieved this through highly targeted technical assistance around some specific areas of implementation of economic reforms.

This is the largest grant in the AGaP portfolio and aims to provide 'just-in-time' technical assistance to support the Government of the Philippines in promoting competitiveness and enhancing fiscal sustainability. This project accompanies the World Bank's Development Policy Loan (DPL) series, which aims to support the Government's goal of boosting inclusive growth, accelerating poverty reduction, and strengthening resilience to natural disasters and climate change.

There is good evidence from the literature review and interviews that AGaP support through the DPL series facilitated rapid and practical governance support to GoP. The project achieved this through highly targeted technical assistance that provided analytical underpinnings for policy

¹⁰ AGaP 3rd Steering Committee Minutes, 8th December 2020

reform, as well as technical support for the implementation of complex reforms such as rice tariff liberalization and the national identification system (PhilSys).

According to WB team members, one of the strengths of AGaP is the way it enabled them to commit to helping GoP counterparts achieve the DPL milestone triggers by providing targeted TA for each theme. In turn, this encouraged GoP to engage with the wider DPL process, with confidence that they would receive necessary support. Additionally, the WB Global Practice team dealing with various line agencies related to the DPL reform triggers expressed satisfaction with the way AGaP was able to assign technical assistance to complement their support. This is an example of how AGaP added value to the large DPL loan and enhanced the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Example of activities that illustrate evaluation findings

AGaP funded a Trade Facilitation Agreement Gap Analysis under the Support for the Establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC). According to WB team members, the approach for ensuring effective engagement with GoP is to align work with their ongoing reform priorities and identify where TA can close the gap between aspiration and achievement. While the executive order to establish the NTFC had not been signed at the time of the gap analysis, the WB knew there was political support for it to happen. The analysis supported by AGaP quantified the different areas where the Philippines had a trade facilitation gap. The work was timed such that once the executive order was signed and the committee formed, AGaP's report would inform the strategic plan. The WB was then well positioned to work closely with the committee on prioritizing which reform areas should be tackled first, thereby enhancing the likelihood of maintaining momentum for reform and translating the gap analysis into action.

A former senior official from the Department of Finance expressed satisfaction with the support provided under AGaP for ongoing tax reforms. The official highlighted this project as a good example of the WB being well-prepared to support reforms with detailed analytical work that was delivered at the right time.

According to the WB team, there is an advantage in having a dedicated trust fund to support a series of DPLs, especially in a country where implementation is a challenge. The rationale being that the first series of loans prompts the passing of reforms but does not guarantee implementation. However, having a series enables analytical support to focus on piloting and implementation of some laws and facilitates progress, with the Government reaching agreed milestones. In summary, the DPL set an agreed timeline for milestones, and AGaP enabled the WB to provide continuous support via TA to achieve them. The complementarity of the loans with the Trust Fund is, based on the achievements of this grant, an effective way to meet reform goals in the Philippines.

Effectiveness of outputs

The interview with GoP noted the good quality of the material outputs produced by AGaP but also recommended that AGaP spend more time on government engagement rather than technical and analytical support. While the Bank has strengths in presenting ideal technical solutions, in reality the route to policy reform is uncertain, so the more pressing need for the Government is how to implement pragmatic solutions to deliver the results. GoP counterparts do not want to be treated as a client, whereby they are sent papers to read. They need more meetings, time for brainstorming solutions together, helping the Government directly to do the analysis as opposed to WB doing the analysis on their own. In summary, AGaP could focus less

on the outputs that inform policy reform and more on supporting the process of reform and governance itself.

The other problem cited by GoP is how to get Congress to act on a particular reform, as this requires a lot of time and effort to communicate with the diversity of stakeholders. It was felt that currently AGaP is not sufficiently supporting this sort of engagement. The AGaP results framework includes “public debate and awareness” as a target outcome, and the Annual Report describes this as “rallying support behind policy change”, through explaining “the rationale behind proposed reforms, their intended benefits, and measures to protect the public against any negative impacts”.¹¹ It is not clear if the intention is to stimulate policy dialogue, or to communicate government policy. The message from a GoP interviewee is that policy dialogue is an essential part of the reform design process: it will strengthen both the particulars of the reform and its legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders (especially legislators) that have a hand in co-creating it.

On the other hand, AGaP reports that it has set up “collaboration platforms”, as per outcome area 4 of the results framework, with the DPL grant being the biggest of these.¹² This platform “resulted in major reforms in rice liberalization, digitalization, trade facilitation, telecommunications and internet infrastructure”. However, the nature of this platform is not described in any of the DPL grant reports, and it is not clear if this in fact refers to “collaborative activities”, which could be meetings or workshops. This may reflect a weakness in the AGaP design, whereby the emphasis is on “informing” the public debate with evidence instead of inviting stakeholders to enter into a dialogue that helps shape the policy. Shifting the approach to be more collaborative may resolve some of the issues raised by GoP, while also inviting DFAT to become more involved in that process of dialogue.¹³

Measuring and attributing policy influence

In evaluating policy reform programs, it is difficult to prove attribution. This requires a specialist approach to measurement, which is discussed in more detail in the M&E section of this report. In the context of the DPL grant, the World Bank team identified some indicators that can signal if technical inputs are contributing to intended outcomes. For example, the ongoing demand from GoP for support of the DPL goals is a positive sign that the inputs are valued and have influence. The AGaP team has often provided input to new laws, and the signifier of effective influence is whether their detailed comments are incorporated into the law or policy.

However, the way the grant outputs are documented makes it difficult to measure progress against indicators, as observed by DFAT Post. The 2021 Progress Review lists 46 “deliverable documents”, of which only one is for public access and the rest are marked “Official Use only”. Many of the knowledge products are internal GoP documents. For example, the DB Roadmap Report (produced under the Doing Business pillar) is now a non-public asset of the Anti-Red Tape Authority. Similarly, the completed studies in support of Trade Facilitation Committee establishment are internal to the Bureau of Customs, Philippine Trade Facilitation Committee.

A further impediment to tracking the progress of the grant is the inconsistency in the way the project is structured. The proposal sets out five objectives for the grant, but the progress reports do not follow this structure. Instead, those reports refer to “pillars”, some of which can be matched to the original proposed objectives, but some cannot. It is, of course, acceptable (and often sensible) to change activities during the course of a grant to reflect changing circumstances (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), but the original objectives of the grant would usually

¹¹ 2020 AGaP Annual Report, paragraph 42

¹² 2021 AGaP Annual Report, paragraph 38

¹³ This is discussed in more detail in the M&E section

need to be preserved. It is possible to see how the ‘pillars’ described in the progress report can be seen to contribute to the original objectives, but this relationship is not described in the report. For example, “Objective 5: Increase tax effort and reduce contingent liabilities from GOCCs”, is dropped altogether as no mention is made of it in the progress reports, with no reason given for its absence. These inconsistencies are illustrated in the table in Annex 8.

Engagement with DFAT

Both parties agreed that the DPL grant focuses on economic reform areas that are beneficial for the GoP, and DFAT recognised the comparative advantage that WB brings to this subject. The World Bank team appreciates a hands-off approach by DFAT, whereby the donor is a “supporter and enabler”, rather than a “micromanager”. DFAT is broadly happy with the engagement process around the DPL sub-projects. For example, they were involved in the design process for the competition and trade activity and peer reviewed the design for the concept note on Public Financial Management (PFM). However, DFAT also noted that DPL activities are not easy to track, partly because there are fairly limited engagement points for DFAT during implementation. Additionally, some analytical work and results of meetings with GoP are shared with DFAT, but this is usually for information only, without an invitation to engage and comment, and sometimes content is out of date by the time DFAT receives it. The DFAT program team emphasised that exchange of information and ideas is important for them to deepen their understanding of economic reform areas. Consequently, not receiving updates in a timely manner is a missed opportunity for collaboration.

DFAT is designing a new economic development program that includes reform areas currently supported by the WB and engagement through the DPL has already helped the thinking of the new design. However, DFAT does not have direct G-to-G relationships with economic departments and would like more opportunity to engage with GoP partners. As WB has invested a lot in nurturing relationships with government counterparts, this could be put to good use by including DFAT in more interactions with stakeholders, which will be important to ensure that the forthcoming program is relevant and well-targeted.

Cross-cutting themes

The literature review of the cross-cutting themes for the DPL grant was impeded by the lack of information supplied in the grant’s annual reports. For example, the section of the 2020 Annual Progress Report has ‘NA’ in answer to the gender, climate change, and innovation questions, while the 2021 Report does not supply information about any of the cross-cutting themes. The grant proposal identified target outcomes for these themes, so progress needs to be reported. The title of the DPL grant includes Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters, which refers to the third pillar of the DPL loan series, which is “strengthening financial resilience to natural disasters and climate change”. Although the DPL grant is not directly concerned with climate change, the absence of any reference to it is notable. In general, gender equality, women’s economic empowerment, and disability are also absent from the DPL activities and outputs. For example, the report on smallholder agriculture includes barely any mention of the crucial role played by women in the farm economy.¹⁴

The WB team acknowledged that gender equality and women’s economic empowerment are a priority for DFAT. For their part, DFAT staff believed that WB generally tried to comply with the requirements to integrate GEDSI themes into the DPL via pragmatic and meaningful approach and engagement. For example, the support on PhilSys national ID system recommended ways to allow home-based registration for persons with disabilities and incorporated processes sensitive to the unique requirements of Indigenous Peoples. Both the WB and DFAT teams speak in

¹⁴ Realizing Scale in Smallholder-Based Agriculture: Policy Options for the Philippines

similar terms about the challenges of integrating GEDSI into macroeconomic reform, and this impression informed both DFAT's low expectations and the Bank's categorization of gender equality as "not applicable" for this grant. However, recently published designs for DFAT economic governance programs include a strong emphasis on integrating GEDSI into macroeconomics, building on DFAT's work on the "smart economics" of gender equality and other authoritative research in this area, for example by the IMF. Encouragingly, it was noted that DFAT Post will boost their capacity on the economic aspects of gender equality in the coming months, which will be an opportunity to better integrate these cross-cutting themes into the DPL project.

Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems

Key findings:

- There is good evidence of high-quality analytical work, for example on the effectiveness of social protection payments, and the effective engagement of sector experts from both DFAT and the WB.
- However, given DFAT's long history of support to GoP on social protection, AGaP could have done more to build on this legacy.

This grant supports specific activities in the WB-assisted Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The grant's objective is to *provide technical assistance and advisory services to the Government of the Philippines in key areas to promote the efficient and effective delivery of the Pantawid program*. It has two components: (i) support to World Bank lending operations; (ii) support to government program or policy.

Aligned with AGaP's objective of aiding project development and preparations, this grant was used to prepare the analytical work for the third and mandatory update of the country's nationwide database of poor households called *Listahanan 3*. A related program, and for which the grant produced technical notes, is the integration of GoP's various databases to set up a dynamic repository of core beneficiary records of the country's conditional cash transfer program or *Pantawid*. These activities contribute to the digitalisation reforms in the country and are expected to make the delivery of social assistance more efficient, including in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which holds a cluster of the poorest population. Early progress toward these reforms—achieved during the early months of the pandemic—was the quick delivery of analytical work used in GoP's policy issuances on social assistance and the shift to digital delivery of social protection programs.

The grant also supported the design of the fourth wave of Pantawid impact evaluation, which will inform subsequent policy directions for this core poverty reduction program of the Government. This demonstrates another strong alignment with AGaP outcome areas, specifically evidence-based policy making towards key socioeconomic reforms.

This grant exhibits the value of facilitated collaboration and partnership between WB and DFAT, with task teams affirming the usefulness of their regular meetings to tackle issues related to the grant and share lessons about social protection in general. This community of practice involves other development partners as well, including UNICEF, which similarly appreciated the collaboration. WB cited DFAT's role in convening development partners around social protection, which DFAT intends to further enhance through parallel bilateral engagements with DSWD. In particular, DFAT indicated keen interest in providing technical assistance to DSWD similar to its support in embedding expertise in the department to provide advice to staff and officials during the early years of the Pantawid program.

This grant's support for capacity building and consultations with beneficiaries and DSWD staff strengthened the program's engagement with key stakeholders, particularly in enhancing the design of the family and youth development sessions. For example, the youth development sessions adopt a differentiated approach in addressing dropout rates of boys and girls in school. Although there is a gender and disability focus within this grant, more could be done to systemise gender analysis to ensure that the government program is gender-sensitised and contributes toward poverty reduction and COVID-19 recovery equitably.

DFAT acknowledged the high quality of the analytical work produced under this grant and how it provided evidence that informed the programs and decisions of DFAT Post. DFAT also noted that it provided input in some of the technical papers, including the design of the impact evaluation; it also participated in project missions. Most of the studies are public documents, posted on the web and disseminated in forums with appropriate acknowledgment of DFAT's support. Nevertheless, there is opportunity yet untapped for more substantial involvement given DFAT's long-standing support for social protection in the country. For example, the participation of DFAT in some public events has been largely ceremonial, as noted by the WB task team. This does not utilise the expertise, both within DFAT or its network of social protection practitioners, that could potentially enrich the policy dialogues. In addition, WB would like to see more visibility of the partnership, with the heads of both institutions reinforcing key messages in support of the reforms, for example, in their meetings with government counterparts and in public events.

Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization in the Context of the Mandanas Ruling

Key findings:

- There is evidence that AGaP support informed public discourse and policy dialogue around how the Mandanas ruling could be an opportunity to improve the delivery of services and strengthen the demand-side of transparency and accountability.
- However, while this grant supports the central government, there is little evidence of broad participation of local government units in the technical consultations that informed the analyses.

The grant responds to GoP's request for the necessary data analysis and technical advice on the fiscal impact of the Supreme Court's Mandanas Ruling that includes all national taxes (internal revenue and customs duties) in the calculation of internal revenue allotment. With this ruling and starting 2022, local government units receive a substantial increase of 31 percent more on said allotments. This is the impetus for the grant, whose objective is *to assist the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of the Mandanas ruling to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth through a more effective decentralization process.*

It has four components: (i) multistakeholder policy dialogue to leverage the Mandanas ruling to strengthen subnational finance and decentralization; (ii) economic and social impact assessment of the implementation of Mandanas ruling in the medium to long term; (iii) subnational fiscal analysis for provincial, city, and municipal local government units; and (iv) advisory to the Department of Agriculture and Department of Public Works and Highways on role shifting after re-devolution from implementing to monitoring.

The grant delivered all the intended outputs for this project, most of which were in the form of analytical work and technical briefings presented to GoP. The WB task team cited the usefulness of the analyses to the Budget Department in the 2022 budget deliberations, as well as in GoP's subsequent policy issuances on the implementation of the Mandanas ruling. The team also reported that GoP requested for further technical advice on the devolution of agriculture and

public works—which the team viewed as an indication that GoP was satisfied with the support provided through the grant.

The outputs for the grant focus not only on economic services, but also on sectors that are central to inclusive growth: health, social welfare services, and education. This demonstrates the grant’s strong alignment with AGaP’s support for evidence-based policy making toward improved delivery of basic services.

Much of the policy debate under the grant transpired at national level, including engagements with GoP’s policy research agency, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies. Hence, while the intent is to assess local government capacity, there is little evidence of broad participation of local government units in the consultations that informed the analyses or the technical presentations and knowledge exchange—an opportunity that could have enhanced the contribution of this grant in AGaP’s outcome area on policy dialogues with key stakeholders.

DFAT considered its own involvement in this grant as timely, providing useful input to the review of some of the research. In some cases, though, input from DFAT could not be considered due to the time-critical delivery of the studies. The implementation of this grant also did not meet DFAT’s expectation for more visibility in the discussions, especially considering that public financial management is one area where it had previous bilateral engagement with GoP.

Women’s Economic Empowerment Program

Key findings:

- The gender tagging under the WEE grant was effective in promoting gender inclusion in the World Bank’s investment projects and lending portfolio. However, gender tagging is an internal WB process that is not used for analytical work and therefore did not contribute to mainstreaming gender across AGaP.
- The WEE grant generated strong analytical work such as the *Overcoming Barriers to Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Philippines* report and related policy note. The report enhanced knowledge within the WB and has been used by DFAT across their development portfolio.

The objective of this project is to enhance knowledge and strengthen policies and programs that address emerging challenges to women’s economic inclusion, particularly to understanding the demand and supply of care work in the Philippines and its implications for women’s labour market participation. Two of the three components under this grant were to improve the WB’s operational aspects of gender mainstreaming through:

- **Gender tagging** WB investment project financing (IPF) and lending operations (DPLs) by identifying what gender components could be included and then designing those components in new WB operations.
- Supporting the development of the **World Bank’s Country Gender Action Plan (CGAP)** FY20-24, which is being finalized. The CGAP will identify priority gender gaps and include a bolder strategy for policy, analytical, and capacity work to help World Bank teams integrate gender into their work.

The third component produced an analytical piece to enhance understanding of the barriers and enablers of women’s economic inclusion and their participation in the workforce—*Overcoming Barriers to Women’s Economic Empowerment in the Philippines*.

There is good evidence from the literature and interviews that the gender tagging activity was effective in promoting gender inclusion in the World Bank’s investment projects and lending

portfolio. However, gender tagging is an internal WB process that is not used for analytical work and therefore did not contribute to mainstreaming gender across AGaP.

The grant generated strong analytical work through the *Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines* report and related policy note. DFAT informants described it as “an excellent product” that filled a gap in knowledge. This report has been widely used by DFAT and has added value across their broader portfolio. For example, informing the design for new programs focusing on education, skills and work; and the impact of COVID-19 on working women. However, the WB team acknowledged that “the program has been less successful in achieving impact on government policies”.¹⁵

The grant has focused primarily on AGaP outcome area 1– project development and preparation and to area 2 – policy reform and dialogue, although it is important to note that dialogue has mainly been with GoP and development partners but less so with the broader INGO and NGO development community. The evidence of progress against outcome area 3 – public debate and awareness is limited. The primary analytical output under this grant was completed just before the close of the program in December 2021, and while a successful roundtable event was organized with key stakeholders, there was little scope for policy influence at that point, as the current GoP administration was winding down ahead of elections on 9 May 2022.¹⁶ DFAT partners stated a desire to see more outreach activities in phase 2, especially now that there is a research product to disseminate.

The WB gender team explained that the rationale for focusing on internal WB gender mainstreaming processes was partly because it was challenging to find champions in GoP to drive the gender agenda. By starting with the WB's lending portfolio, existing projects provided an easier entry point for gender and it enabled AGaP to lever the Bank's investment portfolio. During the timeframe of the MTR, a total of 17 WB projects have received gender technical support.¹⁷ It is important to note that gender tagging is not used for analytical work and therefore did not contribute to mainstreaming gender across the other AGaP grants.

The WB felt that AGaP funding helped strengthen coordination and strategic coherence on gender issues across World Bank teams, through the collaboration required to deliver analysis and generate priorities for the second round of AGaP funding. Indeed, WB Philippines achieved a 75 per cent gender tag rating for FY21 from a baseline of 50 per cent in 2019.¹⁸ There is also evidence that the WEE activities under AGaP helped the WB country team make the case for a senior in-country gender staff, with the result that a specialist TTL has been based in the Manila office since September 2021.

This grant was instrumental to improving the analytical underpinning of WB loans, where data related to gender issues are often not available, especially at a granular level and in economic reform sectors. For example, AGaP funding enabled the Philippines Customs Modernization Project (PCMP), an \$88.28 million WB project financing investment to be gender tagged. This included introducing targets for the Bureau of Customs to start collecting sex-disaggregated employment data of customs officers and developing a human resource management strategy that incorporates targets for gender balance of all BOC employees.¹⁹

Based on discussions with NEDA and other development partners, the *Overcoming Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment in the Philippines* report was an important contribution to

¹⁵ Activity Completion Summary (May 2022) Philippines Women's Economic Empowerment Program

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ A full list of gender-tagged projects can be found in Annex 8

the topic of home-based work and women entrepreneurship, with useful policy options to answer the challenges. This led to the Philippine Statistical Authority introducing questions about mode of work in the Labor Force survey. The report highlighted problematic social norms, emphasising the need to convince society that women have an important role, and their participation in the economy is as important as their role in the family.

DFAT and WB have agreed to significantly increase the funding allocation for Women's Economic Empowerment Phase 2, increasing from \$250K for Phase 1 up to \$400K. This reflects DFAT's strong commitment to funding gender in its development programs coupled with a desire for greater ambition for gender across AGaP. The design builds on phase 1 and includes a set of concrete initiatives to better understand constraints faced by female entrepreneurs in land titling, financial inclusion, and e-commerce.

Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines

Key findings:

- The real time monitoring informed technical briefings with GoP and its COVID-19 response programs in public health, social assistance, labour, business, transport, and agriculture—especially those targeting vulnerable groups. However, public disclosure of some of the findings encountered significant delays.
- The findings of the surveys were frequently referenced by other AGaP-funded projects as well as WB studies and policy advice, including growth forecasts and the WB's Philippines Economic Update.

The grant's development objective is *to inform government's policies in response to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 through real time monitoring across sectors*. It has three components: household surveys, firm surveys, and community surveys—done from July 2020 through May 2021.²⁰ The firm surveys replaced big data analytics, which was not pursued; only three surveys instead of four were conducted each for households and firms; and the third of the community surveys was cancelled.

While departing significantly from the plan, the task team reallocated resources to respond to GoP's request for analysis of the impacts of the pandemic on firms and labor demand, and expansion of the household surveys to cover access to education and vaccine hesitancy, particularly in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) where hesitancy was high. The task team also found no significant change in the community survey indicators, and with tracking the same key informants across several waves of the pandemic becoming more difficult due to mobility restrictions, the task team focused on households and firms instead.

GoP appreciated the quality of analysis provided through the grant, which benefitted from WB's survey methodology and global best practice. Among the government agencies whose policies and programs were informed by the survey findings, the task team cited the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force; the National Economic and Development Authority in its own monitoring of the impact of GoP interventions on economic and social sectors; the Department of Labor and Employment in formulating the National Employment Recovery Strategy 2021-2022; and the Department of Finance in crafting a transition note for the new administration.

Among AGaP-supported projects, the findings of the surveys were used in policy advice and analyses, especially those targeting vulnerable groups, in health, social assistance, business and competitiveness, and agriculture. WB studies similarly drew from the findings of the survey,

²⁰ This refers to the actual surveys as published by WBG ([link](#)), round 1 for firms in July 2022.

including the growth forecasts and socioeconomic analysis of WB's Philippines Economic Update.

The findings were complemented by the task team's technical briefings for GoP's oversight and line agencies. With these briefings and the policies informed by the survey findings, there is adequate evidence that the grant achieved its objective of informing GoP policies and WB operations. However, given the rapidly changing situation during the pandemic, GoP indicated that timeliness in sharing the findings would have been more helpful to the Government as it managed the impacts of the pandemic on the economy. The WB team noted the same issue of timeliness in publishing the findings of later surveys on the external website, which was quite delayed, thereby not fully maximizing the usefulness of the research on public discourse, including in the media.

DFAT's involvement in this project was limited to one briefing about the findings of the surveys, and there is no evidence to indicate that the findings informed its policies and programs in the Philippines.

Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19 Response Project

Key findings:

- This grant was effective in helping GoP forecast demand and quickly procure the medical supplies and equipment needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Although this grant did not have specific activities for policy reform, the stakeholder consultations with persons with disabilities and vulnerable groups did result in operational guidelines adopted by the Health Department in improving the accessibility of health facilities in the country.

With GoP request for financing and technical assistance to manage COVID response, and the pivot of WB's and Australia's country programs toward COVID-19 support, the AGaP Steering Committee affirmed priority support for this grant. Its development objective is *to strengthen the Philippines' capacity to prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by COVID-19 and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness.*

This grant supports specific activities in the World Bank-assisted Philippines COVID-19 Emergency Response Project implemented by the Department of Health (DOH). These activities are: (1) strengthening M&E of the project; (2) strengthening the project inclusiveness of gender and vulnerable populations through the project's stakeholder consultation and engagement; (3) improving the implementation of medical waste policies by DOH; and (4) supporting the forecast of DOH's requirements for medical supplies and equipment to be purchased under the project to be able to benefit from WB-facilitated procurement. One activity was not reported: South-to-South learning exchanges to strengthen laboratory capacity at the national and subnational level.

The emergency situation required quick turnaround in the acquisition and deployment of vaccines and medical supplies. To this end, the grant was effective in helping GoP forecast demand and quickly procure the medical supplies and equipment needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Technical assistance was also extended to DOH in the conduct of vaccine readiness assessments that helped determine the country's capacity to deliver the vaccines and identify the gaps and opportunities for enhanced readiness, along with the setup of ICT-enabled project monitoring tools for data collection and processing.

Although this grant did not have specific activities for policy reform, the stakeholder consultations with persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and other vulnerable groups did result in tools and guidelines adopted by DOH in assessing the accessibility (such as the presence

of ramps for persons on wheelchair) of public health facilities in the country. Also, at the request of the Health Department, the grant supported a qualitative assessment of vaccine hesitancy to help shape communication campaigns. Another input to DOH's operations is the guide developed through the grant for the safe collection, storage and disposal of contaminated materials and infectious wastes. The accessibility assessment tool and medical waste management procedures are now part of DOH's operational guidelines, and the WB task team reported that DOH committed to allocate funds to build accessible public health facilities in the future.

The evaluation team was not able to meet with GoP counterparts for this project, and hence cannot fully triangulate its findings. In addition, while this grant delivered the expected outputs which were used to support DOH's WB-assisted project and GoP's national COVID-19 deployment and vaccination plan, DFAT expressed the need for better alignment with the AGaP results framework and indicated its preference for projects that contribute directly to policy reforms for rapid, sustainable, and inclusive growth. As with most other grant activities involving analytical work, DFAT would like to explore more opportunities for collaboration, such as by contributing to technical reviews and dialogues.

Support for Post COVID-19 Active Transport Development in Metro Manila

Key findings:

- Although this is a small grant, it is well aligned with both AGaP objectives, cross-cutting themes, and GoP priorities.

The project design document does not explicitly connect the grant project to the AGaP objectives of "design and implementation of reforms toward sustainable and inclusive growth", but this is implied in the subject matter, which is concerned with bicycle lanes in urban areas. The project is consistent with DFAT priorities and as an innovative project, this fits well with other DFAT programs (e.g., P4I/infrastructure) and the WB's Metro Manila Bus Rapid Transit (MMBRT) project. The project performed particularly well against outcome area 3 – public debate and awareness, with extensive outreach to business groups and citizens, especially women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.²¹

The purpose of the project was to support the GoP Active Transport Development Program, which included an allocation of funding to construct a bike lane in three metros/cities by providing technical and capacity building support to government agencies and selected LGUs. Active transport was included as a priority area for intervention under the Bayanihan 2 Law to support COVID-19 response and recovery and allocated a budget of \$26.6 million. The program is supported by several development partners and includes a number of government agencies. AGaP activities included conducting a safety assessment of the bicycle lane designs and reviewing the guidelines. The GoP engagement was primarily with the Department of Transportation (DOTr, which has a policy regulation role) and less so with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH, which is in charge of construction). This narrow focus means there is little evidence of AGaP having influence on GoP's active transport strategy, but there may be opportunities to enhance technical execution of aspects of the program in the future.

The AGaP team sought insights from the WB social safeguards officer to help design an inclusive consultation process, with particular attention to including organisations representing persons with disabilities (PWD). The WB team explained that this was building on lessons learned from an earlier transport-related project that failed to include PWDs in the consultation process. However, the social safeguards officer was only involved at the start of the design and did not

²¹ 2021 AGaP Annual Report, Annex D Progress Towards Results

have sight of the results of the consultation, which the WB team acknowledged was a missed opportunity for further technical input. Equally, involving WB gender specialists could have strengthened the effectiveness of this activity, over and above the insights provided by the WB consultant who was a cycling advocate and provided access to her extensive network of cycling organisations.

Despite the absence of input from the WB Gender team, the project conducted a good analysis of GESI issues, such as examining how gender is relevant to active transport choices and consulting with a diversity of stakeholder groups, including a network of persons with disabilities. The WB team noted the importance of consulting “with the community on design standards and guidelines to ensure the built infrastructure will be safe for all users, particularly the more vulnerable groups”.²² While this is a strength of the project, the analysis could have gained greater understanding of any differences in perceptions of transport modes based on gender or disability if the online “Perception Survey” had disaggregated responses. Additionally, the approach seemed to focus on safeguarding rather than seeking opportunities for the active transport to benefit these groups, such as how the design could accommodate the different needs of PWDs in a way that would enable them to enjoy similar benefits from the bike lanes as other people.²³ The drawback of viewing active transport through a safeguarding lens (instead of looking for opportunities for empowerment), is that it leads to framing errors. For example, it is incorrect to describe women cyclists as a “vulnerable” group along with children and the elderly, when there is no meaningful gender-based difference between the vulnerability of men and women using bicycle lanes.

The WB team reported that DOTr was fully on board with research findings and recommendations but DPWH, the agency responsible for the design and construction, did not engage with the WB except to attend one or two meetings. When the WB team presented the results of the technical survey to DOTr, they agreed that many aspects of the bicycle lane construction needed to be improved. However, by this time the civil works contract procurement was already at an advanced stage so there was less flexibility to revise designs based on the AGaP-funded safety audit. This was a missed opportunity. However, as the DOTr has a plan to roll out active transport to other parts of the country, the technical input will be useful in the future. For example, DOTr has secured additional funds to further improve connections to local government units, presenting an opportunity to ensure that these designs include the AGaP supported recommendations.

The limited scope of project may be partly due to the small budget. The WB team reported that “the project team only received \$50k which is not sufficient for the intended support on active transport development”.²⁴ The AGaP grant was initially 50 percent of the budget (the other \$50k was funded by Bloomberg Road Safety TF). However, this was insufficient and the team “sought additional resources from the WB GRSF and Bloomberg Road Safety TF, plus additional resources received from the Netherlands Embassy”. Therefore, the attribution of the impact of this grant needs to be tempered by acknowledging the essential contribution from other donors. However, the technical inputs marshalled by WB were appropriate and well-received, providing a credible foundation that invited close collaboration with the other donors and ongoing good relationships with GoP counterparts.

²² 2021 AGaP Grant Annual Progress / Accomplishment Report

²³ A study in London found that around 15% of people with disabilities actively cycled for transport in 2014, compared to 18% of non-disabled people. ([link](#))

²⁴ AGaP Grant Annual Progress / Accomplishment Report Jan - Dec 2021

Gender equality

Key findings:

- The evidence of effective gender mainstreaming across the AGaP grants is mixed. For example, gender equality and women's economic empowerment is absent from the DPL progress reports.
- Sharing of good practices across DFAT-funded World Bank TFs contributed to AGaP having a dedicated gender grant.

Gender equality was integrated in the design of AMPED, consistent with both DFAT policy and the mainstreaming approach adopted by the World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016-2023. Thus, while there is no specific investment-level gender equality objective for AMPED, projects may have specific gender-related objectives. DFAT expected WB to apply its own gender action plans and strategies to the respective AMPED-funded projects and the activity M&E frameworks.²⁵

However, the concept note for AGaP did not include any reference to gender equality or women's economic empowerment.²⁶ Furthermore, the AGaP results framework does not include any goals or indicators relating to gender, nor is there any reference to measuring gender equality indicators in the annual progress report template.²⁷ Nonetheless, the AGaP grant proposal templates included a specific section on how the project identified and would address gender issues as a cross-cutting theme; and how their GoP partner institutions would be enabled to pursue gender mainstreaming.

AGaP did approve a grant dedicated to women's economic empowerment, which is discussed in the Effectiveness section of this report. The aims of this grant were well aligned with the Philippines' strategic development priorities of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and strengthening human capital. However, it is important that gender is also mainstreamed across other grants, otherwise there is a risk that the gender-related activities are not connected to the broader development aims of both AGaP and AMPED.

In interviews for this evaluation, DFAT staff explained how they consistently raised with Bank counterparts the need for AGaP to focus more on mainstreaming gender equality and women's economic empowerment themes. The December 2020 SC meeting is the first reference to gender in minutes from the formal governance structures, in which an extension of the WEE grant was agreed (in principle), noting the possibility of an "increase in funding for additional gender activities".²⁸ The Operations Committee in September 2021 called for AGaP to apply resources to "further work on gender" as a priority for programming remaining AGaP resources.²⁹ It is not clear whether this referred to work under the WEE grant and/or broader gender equality mainstreaming.

Women and girls have been disproportionately disadvantaged by the impacts of COVID-19, and this brought attention to gender equality issues to which AGaP needed to respond. The program did so in several ways. For example, the activities under the post COVID-19 Active Transport Development in Metro Manila grant included some insights on gender. Based on progress reports and interviews with teams, the data and evidence generated from analyses supported by AGaP informed the government response and recovery efforts of the Department of Finance,

²⁵ AMPED AQC 2020

²⁶ Concept Note: Australia WB Trust Fund for Growth and Prosperity in the Philippines (n.d.)

²⁷ AGaP Operations Manual (December 2019)

²⁸ AGaP Steering Committee minutes (8 December 2020)

²⁹ AGaP Operations Committee minutes (16 Sept 2021)

National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Health. The evaluation team was not able to meet with any GoP representatives to validate these findings.

The evidence of AGaP advancing gender equality goals through the DPL and the subnational finance and decentralization grant is less clear. In general, gender equality and women's economic empowerment is absent from the DPL progress reports, and it is unclear from the literature the extent to which the economic and social impact assessment of the implementation of Mandanas ruling included gender in the analysis.

As detailed under the Effectiveness section, AGaP funding enabled more support to be provided to WB task teams to ensure that new operations addressed gender through the internal WB process of gender tagging. The evaluation team was informed that the DPL grant was designed much earlier than the WEE grant, resulting in the DPL not being included in the gender tagging under AGaP. This is a missed opportunity. WB acknowledged that gender is an area that needs to be strengthened in AGaP and interviews also revealed they felt that some sectors (human and social development) are more "naturally geared" towards integrating gender than others. DFAT also acknowledged challenges integrating gender in economic activities. WB now has an in-country TTL for gender, which according to DFAT has already elevated women's economic empowerment into economic discussions, and DFAT informed the evaluation team they will be boosting their gender resources at Post. These are positive signs for advancing gender equality goals in phase 2 of AGaP.

The new Australian administration has already highlighted gender as an increasing priority. Discussions with Post indicated GOA might reinstate the gender performance target that 80 percent of aid investments address gender issues in their implementation. Therefore, AGaP should take the opportunity to lead in this area. DFAT's umbrella investment AMPED does not currently have a gender strategy or gender action plan at investment level and AGaPs' contribution to rectifying this shortcoming will be an important step in strengthening the development impact of DFAT resources.

AGaP has demonstrated that in some sectors, gender equality themes can be integrated quite easily (for example, in COVID-19 recovery), but integration into other sectors requires deeper understanding of how gender issues influence economic growth, human capital, and productivity. The report produced by the Women's Economic Empowerment grant is an excellent example of how data and insights can indicate new entry points for advancing gender equality.

Recommendations

- Revise the Operations Manual to include clearer expectations on gender equality and women's economic empowerment.³⁰
- Revise the AGaP results framework to include gender as a cross-cutting theme, consistent with the grant proposals and reporting templates.

Disability

Key findings:

- The evidence of effective disability inclusion across the AGaP grants is mixed.

³⁰ For example, include selection criteria for AGaP activities such as, *Gender analysis and review by Gender Specialists of both Australia and the World Bank prior to submission*. DFAT could consider adding a Gender Guidance Note to the Ops manual (see annex 7 for an example from the Ops Manual from the ABP2 Trust Fund in Vietnam).

Similar to the position of gender equality, there is no specific investment-level disability inclusion objective for AMPED, and the concept note and results framework for AGaP did not include any reference to disability inclusion. Nonetheless, the AGaP grant proposal templates included a specific section on how the project identified and would address disability inclusion issues as a cross-cutting theme.

There are some good examples of AGaP activities considering the needs of people living with disabilities, with the majority of these being part of the COVID-19 response efforts. For example, in Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems, the program's beneficiaries are vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities among them. The grant supported analytical work that considered the specific needs of persons with disabilities, such as in identifying beneficiaries and in digital cash transfer payments. Moreover, the enhancement of the content and delivery of family and youth development sessions as well as the design of Pantawid's impact evaluation accounted for disability and inclusion. In Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines, the survey questions, desk research, analyses and key findings captured the needs and conditions of persons with disabilities over time during the pandemic. In Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19 Response Project, the stakeholder consultations with persons with disabilities resulted in the development of a self-assessment tool to determine the accessibility of public health facilities

The intersectionality of how AGaP grants "geared towards COVID response address challenges to disability inclusion" was discussed at an Operations Committee meeting in 2020. These grants included a clear objective of inclusiveness and a diversity of stakeholder engagement with women, Indigenous Peoples, and persons with disabilities. According to interviews with the WB, for some government counterparts, conducting stakeholder engagement to inform a design was novel, and routine funding for such an activity is not readily available. The virtual nature of stakeholder engagement under COVID-19 restrictions reduced some accessibility issues and resulted in increased and more diverse participation.

COVID-19 highlighted the importance of inclusion in design and implementation of reforms. As AGaP enters phase 2 and future priorities, the challenge will be to mainstream these considerations across all AGaP grants.

Recommendation

- Revise the Operations Manual to include clearer expectations on disability and social inclusion considerations more broadly.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Key findings:

- Reporting on grant activities and results was mostly diligent and comprehensive. However, there was less attention paid to linking program outputs and outcomes to AGaP's results framework.
- There is weak evidence that M&E processes stimulated a process of reflection, adaptation, and learning to inform strategic decisions.

Although AGaP sits under the AMPED investment framework, DFAT requires AGaP to have its own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms, with DFAT coordinating at the investment level to ensure outputs and intermediate outcomes contribute to the AMPED end of program outcomes (EOPOs). DFAT's Design and Monitoring & Evaluation Standards provide a guideline that 4-7 percent of the budget should be allocated for M&E resourcing and costing, including a clear process and frequency for updating the M&E Plan. AGaP's M&E budget is included under the Program Management and Grant Allocation envelope, which makes it hard to track allocation and spend dedicated to M&E.

The Bank and DFAT worked closely to develop the results framework at the design stage of AGaP, acting on a recommendation from the previous DFAT-WB Trust Fund. According to Bank staff, they also met with the M&E adviser from the AMPED M&E resource hub who approved the results framework. This framework guided AGaP's M&E activities, including the preparation of project reporting templates for WB task teams and use of its M&E process to monitor AGaP's implementation (e.g., through WB's Annual Progress Review).

Reporting by TTLs in charge of each grant is an important part of the M&E system because it provides the raw material from which a complete picture of the program's effectiveness can be compiled. In AGaP, semi-annual and annual progress reports are completed at the grant level, and that content is used for AGaP level reporting to DFAT which is also biannual. The facility secretariat works with task managers to address bottlenecks. The WB acknowledged that the standard internal WB reporting templates did not capture all the information DFAT needed, and so it developed a new reporting template for AGaP.

The literature review shows that during the period covered by the MTR, there has been inconsistent reporting across the life of some AGaP grants as well as against the AGaP results framework. For example, an impediment to tracking the progress of the DPL grant is the inconsistency in the way the project is structured. The proposal sets out five objectives for the grant, but the progress reports do not follow this structure. It is, of course, acceptable (and often sensible) to change activities during the course of a grant to reflect changing circumstances (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), but the original objectives of the grant would still need to be preserved. The inconsistent approach to recording results against the original objectives makes it difficult for an outsider to understand the overarching story.

The need to demonstrate how project outputs contribute to their purpose is not only important within AGaP itself. DFAT highlighted the need to strengthen the line of sight between the activities in AGaP and DFAT's broader AMPED investment, although this appears to be a finding relevant for all AMPED partner programs.

Like other development partners, the World Bank and DFAT are grappling with the challenge of finding the best ways to measure and report on the impact of policy development support. Development partners can, at best, share skills, knowledge, experience, and fresh perspectives that contribute to informed decision making by governments that are themselves fully

responsible for their policies.³¹ Influencing policy reform in the way envisaged by programs such as AGaP requires continuous engagement with policy makers and those who influence them. The AGaP team is seeing results with this approach, as illustrated by the DPL grant, but it is difficult to measure the value of this impact. To be successful, the process needs to operate in the background and allow space for policy makers to find their own way towards executing the reforms. Claims of attribution by a donor can even be counterproductive to the relationship with the partner government.

Therefore, the M&E function of the program needs to find ways to measure the degree of influence on policy reform that can be attributed to the activities and how these outcomes confirm the validity of the program's theory of change. The AGaP team should review the tools available that aim to do this. One example is Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP), which uses double-blind surveys to unravel the textured nature of how different influences interact to induce change.³²

The Operations Manual states that the results framework is essential for measuring achievements by the program and will be updated as needed to reflect any adjustments agreed by the Operations Committee or Steering Committee during implementation. However, the evaluation team found that the outcomes have been altered without any record of that change being agreed at the Steering Committee level. The outcomes tabled in the Operations Manual are as follows:

Project development and preparation

Policy reform and dialogue

Public debate and awareness

Partnerships and implementation platforms

In contrast, the 2020 Annual Report and subsequent reports include this depiction of the overall objective and outcomes:

To facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the Gov't in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs.

- **Project development, preparation and implementation support**
- **Policy Reform and Dialogue**
- **Public Debate and Awareness**
- **Partnerships and Collaboration Platforms**

The overall objective is the same (forgiving the minor spelling mistake), but outcomes 1 and 4 are slightly different. In the case of outcome 4, there is a material difference between "collaboration platforms" and "implementation platforms". This has bearing on how this outcome is measured.

This MTR is no substitute for an M&E report and is not designed to measure detailed progress against indicators. In summary, there is strong focus under AGaP against the first 2 outcome areas. This makes sense for an economic policy reform program that intends to be responsive to

³¹ DFAT Office of Development Effectiveness observed that "it is important not to overstate the level of influence that can be achieved as an external actor. Policy making is unpredictable and subject to many factors beyond Australia's control.... [Australia] needs to be willing to take a low profile in helping national reformers to achieve their objectives." (ODE, 2018, 'Investing in Regional Prosperity')

³² Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) is a systematic approach to gathering, coding and presenting qualitative data that helps organisations understand their contribution to change in the context of other factors which also contribute to change. Also see ODE 'Policy Influence: Lessons from a Synthesis of 2017 Evaluations' ([link](#)); and ODI (2011) 'A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence' ([link](#))

GoP policy reform momentum. Outcome 3 came into prominence when the COVID-19 pandemic triggered activities with more public engagement, and meetings with GoP, DPs, UN, and other partners. However, in the next phase, AGaP will need to broaden the scope of debate to include the general public and civil society.

Outcome area 4 is ambiguous, partly because of the lack of clarity over the “collaboration” or “implementation”. The indicator is for “number of collaborative activities conducted”. In grant reports, these activities have been meetings, which would have been expected to happen anyway, and the emphasis is on “informing” the public debate with evidence, instead of inviting stakeholders to enter into a dialogue that helps shape the policy. There is a risk that this pillar of AGaP conflates activities with outcomes, which will weaken the story the program is otherwise capable of telling. This outcome pillar could benefit from further explanation in future progress reports, and AGaP should consider shifting the approach to be more collaborative and inviting DFAT to become more involved in that process of dialogue.

In interviews, DFAT staff explained how they appreciate the high quality of WB reporting and the increased attention given to results vis-à-vis program objectives and cross-cutting themes in the most recent annual report. However, they would like reporting to expand beyond inputs and outputs to include greater reference to the policy development nuance such as the risks and sensitivities around aspects of GoP decision making. Upgrading M&E as a function within AGaP could facilitate connections across pillars, encourage sharing lessons learned and enhance its use as a planning tool. There is budget available for this in the program management allocation (which is largely underspent, as discussed in the Disbursements section of this report).

The MTR team found it difficult to reconcile the expenditure data with the annual reports and the Steering Committee minutes. For instance, the draft Annual Report (2021, page 14) states ‘DFAT’s overall funding commitment’ as \$4.01 million. WB staff explained that DFAT will understand “committed” to be the same as the “approved” amount. However, the table of “disbursement performance” shows the total transferred (i.e., committed) to the grant account as \$3.75 million, with no explanation of the discrepancy. Furthermore, the amount committed to the Subnational Finance and Decentralization grant was \$400,000, which was later changed to \$275,000 to reflect the underspend. The view of DFAT staff is that the original allocations should not change between reports. Instead, the underspend represents a surplus that can be later allocated to other grants.

Recommendations

- Discuss and agree in the Operations Committee allocation of sufficient M&E resources and costing, including a clear process and frequency for updating the M&E Plan.³³
- Explore appropriate impact measurement methodologies that are capable of tracking the complex variables inherent in governance reform programs, including ways to measure the degree of influence on policy reform that can be attributed to the activities, and how these outcomes confirm the validity of the program’s theory of change.
- Clarify the version of the results framework the program is reporting against and add more detail for objectively verifiable indicators and means of verification.
- Use the annual reports to thread the grant outputs together to show how the AGaP approach is leading to changes, and how these relate to the broader AMPED objectives.
- Amend the Operations Manual to set out a consistent financial reporting template, with explanation of terms and process for approving transfers between accounts.

³³ For reference DFAT’s Design and Monitoring & Evaluation Standards provide a guideline that 4-7% of budget is allocated for M&E.

Risk Management

Key findings:

- AGaP effectively managed multiple staff transitions on both the DFAT and WB side with minimal disruption to the program. This has also taken place in the context of a global pandemic—which was unlikely to have been on the risk register.
- The transition to new ways of working such as virtual meetings was handled well, without a negative impact on relationships.

With staff transitions, tenure overlaps and mentoring between incoming and outgoing staff worked well with WB and DFAT. To better manage future transitions, especially at high level posts, AGaP briefings are recommended—which the WB Secretariat had offered to provide to DFAT counterparts to ensure program continuity and familiarity with AGaP processes, including the WB project development cycle and the opportunities in the cycle for WB and DFAT collaboration.

Outside of the formal meetings in the AGaP governance structure, the discussions between WB and DFAT task teams in social protection and the trade facilitation component of the Technical Assistance for DPL Reforms were useful in managing sector issues and is one practice that should be encouraged across other projects.

The rapidly evolving situation during the height of the pandemic expectedly brought on GoP requests that had implications on the activities as originally conceived for AGaP-supported projects. In some cases, these were ad hoc requests such as in the Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila where, to respond to GoP request, the WB task team tapped resources from the Bloomberg Road Safety TF and the Netherlands Embassy to complement AGaP and WB resources for capacity building. In the case of Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines, additional firm surveys were conducted and other activities were not pursued. In all, the responsibility and flexibility given to WB staff in managing projects helped them manage risks in AGaP-supported projects. Moreover, risk management is adequately covered especially because AGaP benefits from the risk management capacity and resources embedded in the WB projects that it supports.

However, as noted in the Monitoring and Evaluation section of this report, task teams could do well to ensure that changes emanating from risk management decisions are not only consistent with the AGaP results framework but as well reflected in the grant reports. In fact, with the country's gradual recovery from the impacts of the pandemic, M&E is one area of AGaP operations that requires more focus. This is affirmed by one DFAT official who alluded to M&E having been not top priority as the partners dealt with the COVID crisis.

Sustainability

Key findings:

- The sustainability of AGaP-supported projects is likely given that they are embedded in investment lending, policy loans, and broader technical assistance and analytical work whose implementation precedes or extends beyond the grants' effective date. Moreover, they are underpinned by laws and policies and have strong government ownership.

The rationale for AGaP as outlined in the concept note provides a good foundation for sustainability, namely, “to further strengthen a long-standing partnership through a continued close collaboration and support to a program of financing and technical assistance that is well aligned with the strategic priorities of the country”. Moreover, AGaP’s objective is ultimately to support sustainable and inclusive growth with a large focus through the DPL grant on supporting fiscal sustainability.

World Bank staff interviewed for this MTR highlighted how sustainability had been built into their ways of working. AGaP activities are designed to support reform priorities agreed jointly by GoP and the Bank. Prioritising support for longer-term national initiatives increases the prospects for sustainability. For example, providing the analytical underpinnings for new reforms, such as updating regulations to encourage investment in telecom, increased the chance the reform will be well executed. Similarly, when AGaP has given just-in-time support for the implementation of complex reforms such as rice liberalization and PhilSys. However, it is not always clear from the progress reports how some recommendations are being introduced to the GoP for formation into policy. The M&E section in this report highlights the need for AGaP to find ways to measure the degree of influence on policy reform that can be attributed to the activities. This would strengthen the evidence for, and likelihood of, sustainability. Indeed, in the case of the *Overcoming Barriers to Women’s Economic Empowerment* report, the Bank admitted that the analytical work lacked sponsorship from within GoP, making it harder for policy reform to be sustained. However, the WB also pointed out that they were confident this was a reform area of interest for GoP and the analytical work would help identify specific policies. This will be something to follow up during the next phase of the program.

AGaP is designed to be flexible to respond to emerging needs, and as policy priorities evolve over time, including during changeovers in administration. The evaluation found the WB to be prepared for the transition to the new administration in the Philippines, aware of the likelihood of new counterparts, and their own set of priorities. President Marcos began his six-year term on 30 June 2022, with an economic team that brings together economic managers who served in previous administrations. Thus far, the indications are that the economic team will pursue an economic recovery plan that is built on improving the quality and access to social services, particularly health and education. This resonates with the inclusive growth objectives of AGaP. The WB team will need to maintain momentum behind ongoing reforms in some areas, while understanding and getting to know the new administration and their priorities. To improve the likelihood of sustainability, AGaP could better utilise resources and diplomacy from the DFAT side of the partnership.

Recommendation:

- The partnership should better utilise resources and diplomacy from DFAT, in particular the Ambassador, to improve the sustainability of AGaP.³⁴

³⁴ The context for this recommendation is also discussed in the Program Management section

Program management

Program governance arrangements

Key finding:

- The governance structure has worked well overall, especially during the height of the crisis. However, the Steering Committee has recently become involved in a level of detail that should properly be agreed at lower levels of the governance structure.

AGaP's governance structure consists of three bodies: (1) the Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Australian Embassy Deputy Head of Mission and the World Bank's Country Director, which is the overall policy and decision-making body; (2) the Operations Committee, co-chaired by DFAT's Development Counsellor and the WB's Operations Manager, which supports the Steering Committee and oversees the progress of AGAP-funded activities and resolves implementation issues as they arise; and (3) the Secretariat, which serves management and administrative functions with representatives from both DFAT and the World Bank.

The AGaP TF Coordinator performs an interface role between TTLs and DFAT. Interviews indicated that for the period covered by the evaluation, this role worked well. Some interviewees referred specifically to the responsiveness and effectiveness of the Secretariat, which relieves other levels of the partnership from administrative burdens.

The administration agreement requires that the Steering Committee meet at least once a year. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the governance mechanisms continued to function and facilitate joint decision making. In fact, the Steering Committee and overall governance structure proved to be agile and responsive to the crisis and significant and timely decisions were made in response to increased and changing needs and demands for AGaP support. However, during this time, less attention was paid to ensuring that there was methodical record keeping of decisions between DFAT and WB, making it challenging to track what and when things were agreed.

The AGaP Operations Manual is the guide to managing the grants funded by AGaP. The manual sensibly avoids being overly prescriptive for a trust fund that needs flexibility to be effective. However, a balance is needed if the document is to be an effective guide for DFAT and the WB, especially when key personnel changes occur. For example, the manual includes a list of functions of the Steering Committee but not for the Operations Committee, which may help to explain why some of the problems described below have occurred.

Interviews with both DFAT and Bank staff have revealed an emerging mismatch concerning how the most recent governance processes have been followed in practice. This has occasionally led to a sense of frustration on both sides. This mismatch is most evident in the way grant proposals are developed and approved and the available entry points for DFAT in that process.

The TF Administration Agreement, which empowers the Bank to enter into grant agreements on behalf of the donor, does not specify how the donor is to be involved at the concept development stage. However, the Operations Manual allows for the TTLs to "reach out to DFAT counterparts to solicit their inputs/feedback in refining the proposals, as appropriate". The Bank sees at least two advantages to this pragmatic approach: firstly, it ensures that by the time a grant proposal reaches the Steering Committee for approval, it is already familiar to the donor, and should not require further amendment; and secondly, this enables AGaP to access DFAT expertise and networks. Therefore, proposals brought to the Steering Committee should have already been through an internal technical review within the World Bank, engagement between DFAT and TTL counterparts, and a detailed discussion and agreement by the Operations Committee.

However, the Steering Committee has recently become involved in a level of detail that should have been properly agreed at lower levels of the governance structure. Recent minutes have recorded that proposed grant activities are “agreed in principle”, instead of “approved”, implying that some detail is still up for debate. When the Steering Committee fails to provide a definitive decision, the process slows down and AGaP becomes less flexible and responsive.

In the judgment of the evaluation team, this issue should not detract from the hitherto smooth operation of AGaP. It would not be sensible to introduce overly rigid procedures that would undermine its effectiveness, however, DFAT and the WB should revisit and commit to grant proposal workflow decision points and milestones. At issue is the degree to which DFAT is given opportunities to engage with the concept development—including in meetings with government—how their feedback should be reflected in the final version presented to the Steering Committee; and the missing role of the Operations Committee in mediating the process. The Bank team could do more to brief their DFAT counterparts early in the concept development process; agree on areas where DFAT can bring in expertise; and ensure the grant will contribute to end of program outcomes and cross-cutting themes. DFAT could ensure that appropriate resources are applied to engage with the concept development in a timely manner; agree on the proposal in full before the Steering Committee; and acknowledge how the Trust Fund Administration Agreement delegates the allocation and supervision of grants to the Bank.

Despite these challenges, interviewees emphasised the strength of the partnership. This could be enhanced by more systematic reporting and record keeping, so the respective teams are well informed about decisions and strategy. Some of this is already in hand, for example efforts have been made to strengthen the Operations Committee and record minutes.

The Partnership between DFAT and World Bank

Key findings:

- There are some good examples of AGaP enabling a constructive partnership. For example, through encouraging an exchange of ideas and not just acting as a delegated trust fund. This is most evident where counterparts in the partnership are naturally aligned, for example social protection and economic development teams exist in both DFAT and the WB. Finding fertile common ground in other areas will require a new approach to collaboration and facilitation.
- AGaP has not entirely met DFAT’s expectations for the Trust Fund to be a vehicle to enhance DFAT’s relationship and visibility with GoP and facilitate increased DFAT involvement in policy dialogue around key reform areas.

The overall quality of the partnership is very good. DFAT and the World Bank build upon each other’s comparative advantages and both welcome the coherence AGaP brings to the shared priorities of economic reform and inclusion in the Philippines.

It was highlighted in interviews how DFAT’s locally engaged staff play an effective and valuable role in providing an institutional memory of AGaP, ensuring a sense of continuity despite the frequent changes of personnel (for instance, three DFAT Counsellors since 2019). In addition to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the second half of 2020 saw DFAT restructure the Philippines Post with the merger of the Economic and Development Counsellor roles. This created an additional workload for the Counsellor now responsible for a broader portfolio but has the potential to strengthen the link between DFAT’s economic portfolio and its other development investments.

The response to COVID-19 exhibited the strength of the partnership. When the pandemic began, everyone transitioned to remote working, and the focus of DFAT and the WB was on pivoting

the program to COVID-19 response and recovery while also maintaining the established areas of work under AGaP. The DFAT Counsellor at that time expressed appreciation for how quickly the WB established a responsive mechanism for COVID-19 focused projects and was impressed with how flexible AGaP's structure was to be able to adapt to a very different operating environment.

During the MTR interviews, the World Bank team welcomed DFAT's request for more engagement to strengthen AGaP's ability to meet its goals and facilitate greater visibility for Australia through the partnership. Interviews highlighted the sincere belief on the part of the Bank that DFAT can provide added value in GoP engagements and well-informed technical responses to proposal designs. Some of these matters relate to formal program governance and are explained in the previous section. In other areas, achieving this next level of partnership will require clarity and expectation on both sides. For example, DFAT teams would like to receive more policy development nuance and insights into GoP priorities.

The World Bank team mentioned the importance of receiving timely inputs on reports so as not to diminish the value of the feedback, for example the outstanding feedback on the 2021 AGaP Annual Report. Communication issues may be behind these delays, in which case they should be easily overcome by ensuring that the World Bank team's expectations for feedback are clearly expressed, and the DFAT team is given ample notice of when reports are likely to require review.

In summary, there is a desire on both sides for greater ambition for the partnership. It was reported that the new Australian Ambassador to the Philippines has spoken about the need for increased diplomatic visibility in ODA programs. This chimes with the strong message from DFAT throughout the MTR process regarding its aim to improve engagement with GoP counterparts and involvement in policy reform discussions. Because AGaP is interlinked with the Bank's broader support to GoP for policy reform, involving the Embassy at the most senior level could open more opportunities for collaboration. AGaP could look to other DFAT-WB partnerships, such as ABP2 in Vietnam, where this feature of the partnership is working particularly well.

Recommendations

Each level of the AGaP governance structure needs clear parameters and functions, with the Operations Manual updated accordingly. For example:

1. The Operations Committee should discuss the issues raised in this section (Program governance arrangements and Partnership) and agree a new working method including an updated grant proposal workflow, decision points, milestones, and responsibilities across the partnership.
2. The Operations Committee is responsible for detailed discussion of the grant proposals and needs to allocate time and resources to do this effectively. Meeting minutes will be drafted and shared. This committee also decides when a proposal is ready to be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval.
3. The Steering Committee takes a strategic view of the program and approves grants, discussion of which should be confined to how the grant contributes to the strategic goals of the program.

AGaP grant teams (Post and WB) should agree parameters for communication to ensure that regular meetings take place. For this to be successful, it should include examining why meetings are not happening as frequently as in some grants they used to.

Communication and Visibility

Key findings:

- AGaP’s visibility and branding objectives, as outlined in the Operations Manual, were not achieved across all grants and at the trust fund level.
- There is shared ambition at the senior level for more visibility of the partnership, however this is yet to be achieved.

The AGaP communication strategy, branding and visibility guidelines are part of the Operations Manual, which was approved by the Steering Committee in December 2020. It is clear about the visibility aspired in AGaP whereby the focus is on the partnership between WB and Australia, Australia’s support, and impacts of the partnership.

Four grants—social protection, COVID-19 monitoring surveys, active transport, and women’s economic empowerment—acknowledged DFAT support in its knowledge products, and in most cases, included the Australian logo. Of the four, social protection and the COVID-19 surveys are notable in applying the branding guidelines. For example, the COVID-19 survey findings are publicly disclosed in the [grant’s webpage](#), all of which acknowledge Australia’s support (researchers can also download editable data from WB’s open-source [microdata library](#)). However, with the other AGaP grants, there is no evidence to show that the guidelines were used, in part because most of the activities involved technical advice (no public document involved) and analytical work presented directly to GoP counterparts as “Official Use only” documents.

While DFAT noted that it participated in joint project missions, public events, and some meetings with GoP counterparts—and again, these were mostly with the same grants that did well in applying the branding guidelines—DFAT is of the view that there are a number of missed opportunities for visibility, specifically in highlighting the partnership between WB and DFAT. For example, DFAT noted that they have not been invited to join the WB in their meetings with DSWD, consequently missing the opportunity to reinforce both WB and the Government of Australia’s key social protection messages.

The MTR team notes that visibility and branding are conflated in the Operations Manual, whereas they have different meanings. Ensuring that branding is correct, or that DFAT officers are invited to speak at launch meetings, is to ensure that Australia’s contribution is visible to partners. However, visibility works both ways. DFAT staff need to be part of the dialogue with GoP and stakeholders. As the Office of Development Effectiveness concluded: “Experience shows that trust funds work better when DFAT is actively involved with programs.”³⁵

The Operations Manual includes an **Option to Waive** the guidelines and according to the WB, a number of government meetings were confidential and time-critical in nature, which is covered by this option. Nevertheless, there are AGaP meetings that do not fall into these categories and where DFAT could have been invited. The WB suggested that in future, a schedule of upcoming AGaP events could be shared so that DFAT could plan its participation accordingly.

The evaluation found the WB at a senior level shared the same aspiration for visibility and proactiveness as DFAT. The heads of both institutions have a role in reinforcing the AGaP key messages in support of the reforms, for example, in their meetings with government counterparts and in public events.

AGaP’s key messages and the communication strategy were discussed and agreed upon by WB’s External and Corporate Relations team and the Australian Embassy’s Public Diplomacy team.

³⁵ ODE, 2018, ‘Investing in Regional Prosperity’

However, the strategy should be reviewed and updated as these have not been done since the strategy was approved two years ago. While the key messages do have a reference to COVID-19 response, the situation has evolved and AGaP now has some results to add to the narrative, especially its contribution to policy dialogues and reforms during the pandemic. Again, as DFAT said, “there needs to be a narrative and clear message or story about the partnership, a communication in the context of collaboration.” To support this endeavour, AGaP could better utilise the existing WB and DFAT social media and website resources. AGaP impact stories, for example using DFAT’s Significant Policy Change [SPC] Process and Templates for Qualitative Reporting, could be used as a guide.

Recommendations

- Review the communication guidelines in the Operations Manual for consistency with the level of ambition for visibility of the partnership. Agree ways of working across DFAT and the WB to achieve this ambition.
- Review and update the communications strategy, including AGaP’s key messages, and how to document and disseminate AGaP impact stories.
- AGaP Secretariat to draft and share a schedule of upcoming AGaP events and meetings so that DFAT can plan its participation accordingly. Include a review of progress (including any issues, risks, and uptake of outputs by the government) as a fixed agenda item at Operations Committee meetings.

Conclusions

AGaP is now in its second phase, with the remaining period (up to 30 June 2024) broadly pre-programmed, although there remains flexibility to respond to emerging priorities. The strategic background has shifted since the Trust Fund was first conceived. There are new government administrations in both Australia and the Philippines, heralding shifts in emphasis and new priorities.

Based on the strength of the partnership with the WB and the success of AGaP to date, DFAT interviews during the MTR indicated a preference for the program to continue beyond 2024. This arises from DFAT’s understanding that AGaP’s strength is its broad reach across sectors. Based on the findings outlined in each section above, the MTR recommends AGaP should continue as a single donor programmatic instrument, a modality that balances the effectiveness of the Bank’s delivery with the benefits of a bilateral mechanism. The next phase of AGaP should retain the flexible and responsive nature of the program. However, this breadth and flexibility should not be at the expense of informative reporting, which DFAT now expects to provide insights and signal future entry points for the partnership. They would also like to see more collaboration on decision making and alignment of priorities, which are likely to shift when the new Australian government launches its revised development strategy in the coming months. In anticipation of this, the AGaP team could facilitate a deeper examination of the types of economic reforms that can facilitate poverty reduction as a means to improving the quality and resilience of economic growth.

The new strategy is also likely to emphasise DFAT’s commitment to gender equality (for example, by reintroducing the target that 80 percent of programs must include gender-related outcomes) and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, supported by a First Nations approach applied to foreign policy. In the context of AGaP, this could mean examining the correlations between poverty and Indigenous Peoples. This will be accompanied by a fresh focus on climate change, which is especially important in a maritime country with vulnerable coastal communities. This is likely to prompt an integration of climate change and disaster resilience, with implications for policy work in infrastructure, energy transition, digitisation, and natural resource stewardship.

The modality of AGaP as a single donor programmatic instrument is seen by DFAT as a good way to balance the effectiveness of the Bank's delivery with the benefits of a bilateral mechanism, and they would now like to build further on this model. However, it is important to note that there is an emerging preference in the WB for multisector, multi-donor trust funds. If AGaP closes in 2024, as currently planned, then any successor is unlikely to be set up on similar terms. If DFAT prefers the AGaP model, then both parties should commence planning now for a seamless extension.

The new administration in the Philippines will change the strategic landscape for AGaP, and a former senior GoP official shared some suggestions for adapting to this change. The recommendation is for AGaP to start thinking about how some development challenges stand in the way of other problems being resolved. For example, the blockages to making transformative change in areas such as health and education include land reform and gender equality (as anticipated in AGaP's recent report on obstacles facing women in employment).

Furthermore, reform pathways are impeded by the way the civil service is structured, which has so much bearing on how policies and therefore reforms are implemented. For example, GoP needs support to address the misallocation of resources across the civil service, which are currently circumvented by creating ad hoc committees to bridge gaps between departments or national agencies. This is connected to the need for reform of public financial management, where civil service salaries absorb a third of the national budget. Unless GoP can work with development partners to find a pathway towards fundamental structural reforms, then attempts to tackle the problems in the foreground will yield minimal results. This is an area of development that has higher risks, requires more innovation, and is dependent on a trusted partnership with technical advisers over the long term. It also requires a renewed focus on public dialogue and finding ways for reformers within the system to share ideas and results. This is a good fit with both DFAT's expertise in governance reform and AGaP's approach to building relationships across government.

Recommendations

- AGaP should continue as a single donor programmatic instrument beyond its current end date (30 June 2024).
- AGaP should facilitate a deeper examination of the types of economic reforms that can facilitate poverty reduction to improve the quality and resilience of economic growth. This should include agreeing gender-related targets for the next phase of AGaP and examining the correlations between poverty and Indigenous Peoples.
- AGaP should strengthen considerations of climate change, and its integration with disaster resilience, in its policy work. For example, infrastructure, energy transition, digitisation, and natural resource stewardship.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

1. Background

a. Program Description

- i. The Australia - World Bank Trust Fund for Growth and Prosperity in the Philippines (AGaP) is a strategic partnership between Australia, through the Australian Embassy to the Philippines, and the World Bank, through its Philippines Country Office. The Trust Fund provides funds and technical expertise to facilitate knowledge exchange that will assist the Government of the Philippines (GOP) in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs.
- ii. AGaP forms part of Advancing Multilateral Partnerships for Economic Development (AMPED), DFAT's broader economic governance investment in the Philippines. AMPED is managed by the Australian Embassy as a single aid investment to ensure coherence of activity selection across a range of multilateral partnerships. It aims to contribute to the Philippines' rapid, sustainable, and inclusive growth by strengthening the ability of the government to manage the economy for growth, with participation of the private sector, and by creating a strong partnership between Australia, the Philippines, and multilateral development partners. AMPED activities provide separate but complementary technical assistance activities in collaboration with different multilateral partners, including the World Bank.
- iii. AGaP is founded on a close working relationship between World Bank and Australia. It has been set up as a programmatic trust fund to finance activities aligned with overall development objectives of both partners, articulated in key framework documents including (but not limited to) the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework for the Philippines 2019-23 and Australia's Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response. Specific activities to be funded by AGaP are decided jointly between Australia and the World Bank through the governance mechanisms of the Trust Fund as articulated in the AGaP Operations Manual (see [Annex A](#)).
- iv. To date, total commitment of Australia to AGaP has reached US\$10.5 million, from the initial commitment of US\$5 million in March 2019 and additional commitment of US\$5.5 million in March 2022. More resources are likely to be added to the Trust Fund in succeeding years, depending on results achieved and implementation progress. The Trust Fund commenced operations in March 2019, with the expectation that all funds would be disbursed in five years or by June 30, 2024.

b. Development Objective

- i. Under the AMPED umbrella, the objective of AGaP is to facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the GOP's strategic priorities for the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs, as reflected in the Philippine Development Plan and AmBisyon Natin 2040. AGaP is designed to be flexible to respond to emerging needs, and as policy priorities evolve over time, including during changeovers in administration, and during crises, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Governance Structure

- i. The Steering Committee is the policy and decision-making body for the program of activities supported by the Trust Fund. The Steering Committee makes the overall strategic decisions for AGaP. The Operations Committee, on the other

hand, supports the Steering Committee by overseeing the progress of AGAP-funded activities and resolving implementation issues as they arise.

- ii. The AGaP Trust Fund Manager in the World Bank is responsible for the administration of the AGaP portfolio as outlined in the Administration Arrangement and for providing secretariat support to the Steering Committee and Operations Committee.

d. Implementation Arrangements

- i. AGaP grants can be executed by World Bank task teams, Philippine Government agencies or other third-party recipients, although all AGaP grants approved have been executed by the World Bank.
- ii. The World Bank's standard due diligence and quality assurance procedures are applied for each grant funded activity. Individual World Bank task team leaders are assigned to manage each grant funded activity and collaborate closely with counterparts in the Philippine Government and in DFAT.

2. Rationale and Objectives

- a. The rationale for the Midterm Review of AGaP is to assess the Trust Fund's performance and gauge its effectiveness and relevance. It will assess whether the AGaP Trust Fund has fulfilled its mandate, with a dual focus on accountability and learning, as well as the effectiveness of World Bank and DFAT's partnership under AGaP. This will be based on the OECD-defined evaluation criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability³⁶, with particular emphasis on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI).
- b. The outcomes of the review will help inform the World Bank and DFAT on the future direction of the AGaP Trust Fund including possible adjustments to the results framework, areas of focus and/or the activities to be supported. This will support a strategic and responsive alignment to Philippine government priorities.
- c. The review will feed into DFAT's annual progress reviews of the AMPED investment, which will be conducted in the second half of 2022 for DFAT. It will also be published as part of DFAT's 2022 Development Aid Evaluation Plan. Key success stories drawn from the review will also provide useful material for joint communications and media, which in turn will amplify the Trust Fund's success.
- d. The objectives of the Midterm Review are to:
 - i. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the financial and technical inputs provided by AGaP in generating results, including gender and disability inclusion, and how it can be strengthened in the future;
 - ii. Assess the sustainability of the AGaP's outcomes, and how they can be strengthened in the future;
 - iii. Identify case studies illustrating good practice and achievements, document lessons learned;
 - iv. Outline ways in which the partnership could be strengthened to enhance policy influence, flexibility, and responsiveness to evolving Philippine government priorities; and
 - v. Provide recommendations for consideration and action by the AGaP Steering Committee and practitioners in the World Bank and DFAT, especially related to the future of the Trust Fund, and the need for future phases of work.

³⁶ OECD evaluation criteria as defined on the website <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>. This review will be limited to assessing effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, and exclude relevance and impact. It will also include special attention to gender equality and disability inclusion, as key crosscutting issues for DFAT.

3. Scope of Services

- a. Time period. The review shall cover all AGaP's support to fulfill its mandate during the period from its set-up in March 2019 and through to the end of December 2021.
- a. Content and Methodology. The Midterm Review (MTR) Evaluation Team, composed of two (2) short-term consultants with a Team Leader and a Co-evaluator, shall review the Trust Fund's midyear and annual reports, grant proposals, concept notes, and any progress reports from the grants (see Annex 2 for the specific responsibilities of the Team Leader).
- b. As part of the Inception Report, the MTR Evaluation Team is expected to provide an evaluation plan that responds to the proposed evaluation questions in Annex 4 and on how they intend to address the implications of current limitations in the conduct of the review. The MTR Evaluation Team is also tasked to prepare questionnaires for the key interlocutors, refine the proposed evaluation questions in Annex 4, and consult/interview World Bank AGaP grant recipient teams and relevant DFAT staff to elicit evidence that can inform the review. The MTR Evaluation Team should aim to get a sense of any results achieved beyond the output level, and sustainability including any unintended effects. The review shall also aim to explore options for the future, based both on retrospective findings and independent data collection and perspectives for AGaP's forward-looking focus.
- c. The informants shall include a broad range of key representatives in the World Bank including senior management, AGaP secretariat, AGaP grant task team leaders (TTL) and members, and government counterparts from both oversight and implementing agencies directly involved in the programs and projects supported by the grants. Consultations and interviews are expected to be undertaken primarily through virtual means.
- d. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies should be used. Information shall be triangulated and validated, and data quality shall be assessed and described in a transparent manner (this includes assessing strengths and weaknesses of sources of information). Assessments shall be made on factual findings, and findings shall be based on reliable and credible data and observations.
- e. Assessments shall include gender, disability, poverty reduction and other equity considerations as cross-cutting issues in the analytical approaches of proposed methodologies. The review shall be based on the results framework with objective hierarchy, explicitly linking inputs, activities, and results, and identifying factors influencing successful outputs and outcomes within a range of contexts and factors that inhibit achievement of stated objectives. This will provide a framework for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the AGaP's work and may provide guidance for a future trust fund phase.

4. Selection Criteria

- a. Strong background in international development and policy reform;
- b. Proven experience in leading a team doing an evaluation of governance arrangements and management mechanisms of different partnership arrangements and aid modalities in various country programs, particularly trust funds;
- c. Proficient in evaluation methods applicable in assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of different partnership arrangements and aid modalities, particularly trust funds;
- d. Knowledge of key policies and programs of the GOP, particularly in sectors, which both Australia and the World Bank support;
- e. Familiarity with DFAT and World Bank policies, operations, and procedures; and
- f. Solid information analysis and report writing skills.

5. Deliverables and Timeline

- a. Timeframe: April - September 2022

Inception Report (with the Evaluation Plan)	Up to 4 days
Zero Draft Report (reflecting findings immediately after the data collection period)	Up to 15 days
Presentation of Zero Draft Report to AGaP Steering Committee	1 day
Updated Draft Report (reflecting all main findings, conclusions and recommendations)	Up to 4 days
Final Report (not exceeding 40 pages excluding summary and annexes)	Up to 3 days (due on July 15, 2022)
Presentation of the Final Report	1 day

6. Governance of the Midterm Review

- a. The review shall be carried out by an independent team of consultants contracted by the AGaP Secretariat. The consulting firm will be selected and deployed based on World Bank procurement and supervision procedures for consultancy services.
- b. The MTR Evaluation Team is entitled to consult stakeholders pertinent to the assignment, but it is not permitted to make any commitments on behalf of the World Bank. The MTR Evaluation Team Leader will report directly to the AGaP program manager in the World Bank, who will approve all deliverables including the final report.
- c. The AGaP Operations Committee will provide advice to the MTR Evaluation Team on deliverables such as inception report, zero draft report, updated draft report, and final report.
- d. The MTR Evaluation Team shall take note of comments received from the Operations Committee and other stakeholders. Where there are significant diverging views between the MTR Evaluation Team and stakeholders, this shall be reflected in the report.
- e. Final approvals and decisions will be made by the AGaP Steering Committee.

7. Acceptance Criteria and Reporting

- a. The deliverables must meet the requirements of these Terms of Reference. Their content must reflect the appropriate depth and expertise for the assignment, and the MTR Evaluation Team must provide all background findings, surveys, interviews, data analysis and other supporting information. All reports shall be submitted to the AGaP secretariat by email, and no hard copies will be required.

Annex 2 KEQs, Data Collection Methods, and Evaluation Team Approach

Key evaluation questions and scope

Scope

The MTR Evaluation Team will aim to document output level and outcome level results achieved to date and examine sustainability, including any unintended effects and safeguard issues. The review will also aim to assess and recommend options for the future of the partnership.

Primary and secondary evaluation questions

The table below sets out the primary questions that mark the main areas of enquiry, and the secondary questions that will explore those aspects in detail. A more detailed table is in Annex 4, indicating the likely sources of data, such as reports and interviewees, alongside further notes to guide the evaluation team's approach. Stakeholders will be asked only those secondary questions that help elicit additional data from them or triangulate evidence from other sources. For instance, some questions will not be appropriate for government counterparts. Therefore, the questions each interviewee will address are shown in brackets. A questionnaire for the key interlocutors will be drafted based on the evaluation plan and the literature review.

Table 1. Primary and secondary evaluation questions³⁷

Primary Questions	Secondary Questions
How relevant was AGaP to the situation and challenges facing the Philippines?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent are the AGaP outputs and outcomes consistent with the GoP development strategies, priorities, and objectives, and Australia and World Bank's country strategies and objectives? 2. To what extent has the AGaP Trust Fund responded to the changes in the operating environment and GoP priorities?
How efficiently was AGaP executed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To what extent have overall and grant resources been allocated and utilised in an efficient manner? 4. Are the amounts provided to grant recipient teams proportionate to their grant objectives? 5. How have the grants served to supplement existing resources among project teams and grant recipients (core Bank budgets, time and resources of staff and consultants, related IBRD financing)? 6. How well did the governance arrangement facilitate decision-making to contribute to the efficient implementation of the Trust Fund?
How effective was AGaP in achieving its objectives?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To what extent has the AGaP met its objectives at the different level of results chain, overall and through individual grants? 8. What are the internal and external factors that contribute to the ability of AGaP to fulfill its mandate, and how and to what extent have these factors contributed to this ability? 9. What, if any, positive or negative unintended effects resulted from AGaP activities? 10. What is the perception of project task teams (both recipients of the grants, and others) on the added value of AGaP to their existing work?

³⁷ The primary and secondary evaluation questions have been refined. However, they retain the substance of those presented in the TOR.

Primary Questions	Secondary Questions
	<p>11. In what ways did the Trust Fund strengthen the partnership between DFAT and World Bank?</p> <p>12. Has the AGaP activities contributed to demonstrating satisfaction levels and/or behaviour changes among GoP beneficiaries?</p> <p>13. How was policy dialogue used to influence the development agenda and supported the achievement of program outcomes?</p>
How has AGaP advanced gender equality goals?	<p>14. To what extent has the AGaP Trust Fund considered and tracked gender equality issues and risks, and the needs of women and men?</p> <p>15. How did analysis of gender equality gaps and opportunities inform or influence activities?</p> <p>16. What progress was made in effectively implementing strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment?</p> <p>17. How has the program contributed to promoting gender equality in World Bank policies and processes?</p>
How has AGaP considered the needs of people living with disabilities?	<p>18. How did the activities consider people with disabilities in planning and implementation?</p> <p>19. To what extent has the AGaP Trust Fund considered, tracked, and addressed issues of people with disabilities?</p>
How did M&E inform strategic decisions?	<p>20. Was the Trust Fund M&E system designed, implemented, and resourced sufficiently to monitor and evaluate all components of the Trust Fund?</p>
Were risks anticipated and mitigated with safeguards?	<p>21. How well do the Trust Fund operations adhere to World Bank safeguards and what can be enhanced?</p> <p>22. Is there active management of risks in relation to the achievement of the intended outcomes, to avoid negative impacts on people, the environment, and resources?</p>
How will the impacts be sustained beyond the life of the program?	<p>23. How have AGaP government partners demonstrated ownership of AGaP outputs?</p> <p>24. Knowledge sharing: how well were successes and lessons learned shared? What more could be done to share the outcomes of the Trust Fund activities?</p>

Methodology

The evaluation will use a mixed methods approach to analyse quantitative and qualitative data to inform judgements on the key evaluation questions. Methods will include extensive document and data analysis, complemented by stakeholder interviews. Information will be triangulated and validated, and data quality will be assessed and described in a transparent manner (this includes assessing strengths and weaknesses of sources of information). Assessments shall be made on factual findings, and findings shall be based on reliable and credible data and observations. Data will be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability where possible.

Assessments shall include gender, disability, poverty reduction, indigenous issues, and other equity considerations as cross-cutting issues in the analytical approaches of proposed methodologies. The review shall be based on the AGaP results framework with objective hierarchy, explicitly linking inputs, activities, and results, and identifying factors influencing successful outputs and outcomes within a range of contexts and factors that inhibit achievement of stated objectives. This will provide a framework for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of AGaP's work and will provide guidance and recommendations for a future trust fund phase.

Sampling

The [DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation standards](#) recommend that for short reviews that rely on analytical rather than statistical inference, purposeful sampling is appropriate. There are many ways of doing this depending on the nature of the program being evaluated and in the case of AGaP, critical case sampling is an appropriate approach. The objective of critical case sampling is to permit logical generalization and maximum application of information because if it is true in this one case, it is likely to be true of all other cases.

Ethical considerations

The midterm evaluation will be guided by the Australian Evaluation Society Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations.³⁸ Throughout all phases of the evaluation, the team will apply DFAT's Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance and will act in accordance with these ethical principles.³⁹ During data collection, participants will be fully informed of the purpose and use of the review, and informed consent will be obtained before proceeding. Participants will have the option to skip over any questions they do not feel comfortable answering and will be allowed to withdraw from the interview at any time. Where possible using local engaged staff to assist in-country research, it is hoped that any cultural, language or perceived power differences between the review team and participants will be minimised.

Most meetings will be virtual and the evaluation team will request permission to record interviews to complement notetaking. Where a virtual meeting is not possible, it may be held in person with the in-country member of the evaluation team. The recorded interviews will only be used for the purpose of the evaluation and will remain confidential. If a participant does not feel comfortable with the interview being recorded, no recording will be made.

Due to the relatively small number of activities and participants, there is a risk that the identity of individual interviewees could be deduced by some readers of the report. The report will take steps to ensure anonymity for respondents:

³⁸ <https://www.aes.asn.au/ethical-guidelines>

³⁹ See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/ethical-research-evaluation-guidance-note.pdf>

- Generalizing statements and analysis so as not to identify respondents or organisations directly in the analysis;
- Reducing the necessity to include a respondent's direct comments, however, if necessary, then ensuring non-identifying language and ensuring identifying details such as organisation and/or role are withheld;
- Where a respondent may agree to include an identifying statement or piece of analysis, ensuring that the relevant wording is agreed with the respondent for inclusion in the report, with acknowledgement.

Conversely, it is important to ensure that information from public sources within the report is clearly referenced, to avoid incorrect attribution to individuals that contributed to the report.

Document review

The document review will entail analysis of information including WB and DFAT documents, AGaP's midyear and annual reports, grant proposals, concept notes, and any progress reports from the grants.

The evaluation team will draw heavily on the program level data compiled by the WB AGaP team but will also examine any available additional analysis from independent or third-party sources. This will include but is not limited to M&E reporting; evaluations and reviews; analysis by other development partners, NGOs, universities and think tanks; and reporting by GOP and multilateral partners such as the UN, ADB, and the IMF.

The WB AGaP team has also committed to make available to the evaluation team any other reasonable requests for information and documentation relating to the midterm evaluation.

Key informant interviews

Semi-structured key informant interviews will be undertaken with a broad range of stakeholders: representatives of the World Bank and DFAT, including senior management; AGaP secretariat; AGaP grant task team leaders (TTL) and members; and government counterparts from both oversight and implementing agencies directly involved in the programs and projects supported by the grants.

The approach of using the same or similar questions with each of these partners will allow the review team to reliably identify consistent themes or perspectives in the responses of different partners.

Prior to the commencement of any interview, the team will outline the purpose of the review, how the information will be used, and steps that will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of responses (such as non-attribution of quotations). Informants will be made aware that the review's final report may be published by DFAT

Interactive discussions will be conducted with selected program management team members to reflect on the issues emerging from the evaluation, explore causal relationships, and outline improvements that can be made to the program.

Analysis and conclusions

All evidence will be triangulated where possible to ensure rigour. This means that emerging themes from quantitative analysis of economic, fiscal, and social data; the document review and interviews will be tested in subsequent interviews and against quantitative outcomes where data permit.

The team will establish consensus on what constitutes reliable, robust data and evidence and how quantitative and qualitative analysis will be combined to reach a conclusion in relation to each of the key evaluation questions. The team will also work collaboratively throughout the analysis process to help ensure that the multi-sectoral strengths of the team are reflected in the final report.

The team will make professional judgements in relation to each of the evaluation questions. These judgements will be informed by a consideration of the relative strength of the evidence available (considering triangulation, source of evidence, etc). The supportive evidence for each judgement and recommendation will be provided in the final report. Where relevant, the team will draw on DFAT's Investment Monitoring Report rubric to support the analysis process. The team leader will provide quality assurance and a consistency check on the draft analysis and report.

Limitations

- Challenge of identifying attribution or contribution to outcomes
- Within the limited time available, it will not be possible to provide a representative picture of the performance of AGaP's many activities nor answer all questions in equal depth
- Most interviews will be conducted remotely, which may limit rapport and candour.
- The change in the national leadership following the Philippine elections may mean some of the relevant interviewees are no longer in post.

Annex 3 AGaP Results Chain and End of Program Outcomes

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	To facilitate knowledge exchange and assist the Government of the Philippines in the design and implementation of policy reforms and programs
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OUTCOMES (results that need to be achieved to meet the overall objectives)	PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND PREPARATION	POLICY REFORM AND DIALOGUE	PUBLIC DEBATE AND AWARENESS	PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLATFORMS
	Projects to support GOP policy reform priorities enhanced	GOP capacities on evidence-based and inclusive policy development and formulation improved	Awareness of identified stakeholders to relevant GOP policies and programs increased	Partnerships and platforms for effective and efficient collaboration strengthened
	<u>Indicator:</u>	<u>Indicators:</u>	<u>Indicator:</u>	<u>Indicator:</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased relevance and timeliness of projects developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased utilization of research results and empirical data by relevant government agencies in policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased proportion of identified stakeholders that have become aware or have gained knowledge on relevant government policies and programs per thematic area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased satisfaction on the collaboration platform established
			Public debate informed by empirical evidence and analysis enhanced	
		<u>Indicator:</u>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of references made on studies / analysis supported by the Trust Fund during public debates per thematic area 		



<p>OUTPUTS (products and services that needs to be delivered / completed to achieve intended outcomes)</p>	<p>Support activities to project preparation conducted</p> <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects that have been pilot-tested • Number of project feasibility studies completed • Number of situational studies / analysis conducted • Number of safeguards instruments completed • Number of project-related consultations undertaken 	<p>Government capacity development projects and technical assistance on relevant policies and programs implemented</p> <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of advisory services and analytics reports completed • Number of reports on options / Tradeoffs for Gov't Programs / Policy Reforms completed • Number of "How to Notes" for Implementation supported • Number of inputs to IRRs of Government Policies / Legislations provided • Number of training programs conducted • Number of knowledge exchange with other countries undertaken • Number of workshops among government agencies conducted • Number of government personnel that have participated in TF supported training and learning activities 	<p>Public information, education and awareness projects on relevant policies and programs conducted</p> <p><u>Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of dissemination workshops, forum and stakeholder consultations conducted • Number of participants that benefitted from dissemination workshops and stakeholder consultations • Number of information, education and communication materials 	<p>Partnerships and governance platforms for collaboration established</p> <p><u>Indicator:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of functional implementation structure and procedures • Number of collaborative activities conducted
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Annex 4 Detailed disbursements

AGaP projects approved before 25th January 2022

Financial report as at 5th May 2022

	GRANT AMOUNT (a)	TRANSFERRED (b)	REMAINING AMOUNT (a-b)	DISBURSED (c)	FUND BALANCE Percent (c/b)	CLOSING Committed (d)	Available (e)	Total (d+e=f)	Percent f/b	DATE
1. Ongoing	3,350,000.00	3,150,000.00	200,000.00	2,427,081.38	-	194,771.53	528,147.09	722,918.62	-	-
<i>a. AGAP TF Program Management & Grant Administration</i>	300,000.00	100,000.00	200,000.00	78,255.87	78.26%	4,180.05	17,564.08	21,744.13	21.74%	12/30/2023
<i>b. TA for Pantawid SP</i>	900,000.00	900,000.00	-	667,569.17	74.17%	7,445.30	224,985.53	232,430.83	25.83%	3/31/2023
<i>c. TA for DPL Programs</i>	1,350,000.00	1,350,000.00	-	1,080,269.62	80.02%	58,353.45	211,376.93	269,730.38	19.98%	6/30/2022
<i>d. Implementation Support for Phil. Covid-19 Response Project</i>	300,000.00	300,000.00	-	186,960.54	62.32%	60,070.73	52,968.73	113,039.46	37.68%	6/30/2022
<i>e. Real Time Monitoring of Covid-19 Impacts in Phil.</i>	500,000.00	500,000.00	-	414,026.18	82.81%	64,722.00	21,251.82	85,973.82	17.19%	5/31/2022
2. Closed	571,436.43	571,436.43	-	571,033.11	-	-	403.32	403.32	-	-
<i>a. Subnational Finance & Decentralization (Mandanas Ruling)</i>	271,436.43	271,436.43	-	271,436.43	100.00%	-	-	-	0.00%	11/30/2021
<i>b. Philippines Women's Economic Empowerment Program</i>	250,000.00	250,000.00	-	249,941.99	99.98%	-	58.01	58.01	0.02%	3/31/2022
<i>c. Post Covid-19 Active Transport</i>	50,000.00	50,000.00	-	49,654.69	99.31%	-	345.31	345.31	0.69%	12/31/2021

Independent Evaluation

<i>Program Dev't in MM</i>										
TOTAL	3,921,436.43	3,721,436.43	200,000.00	2,998,114.49		194,771.53	528,550.41	723,321.94	-	-
<i>Initial TF allocation</i>	5,000,000.00	-	-	-	60%	64%	-	-	-	-

Annex 5 List of AGaP Completed Outputs

OUTCOME 1: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND PREPARATION

Monitoring Level	KPI
<p>Projects to support GOP policy reform priorities enhanced</p> <p>OUTPUT: Support activities to project preparation conducted</p>	<p>Increased relevance and timeliness of projects developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects that have been pilot-tested • Number of feasibility studies completed • Number of situational studies/analysis conducted • Number of safeguard instruments

Progress to Date

World Bank-Financed Projects Supported by AGaP	Project Amount (US\$)
Promoting Competitiveness and Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters Development Policy Loan Series	1.1 billion
Social Welfare and Development Reform Support Program	750 million
Beneficiary FIRST Social Protection Project	600 million
Philippines COVID-19 Emergency Response Project	500 million

OUTCOME 2: POLICY REFORM AND DIALOGUE

Monitoring level

GOP capacities on evidence-based and inclusive policy development and formulation improved.

OUTPUT: Government capacity development projects and technical assistance on relevant policies and programs implemented

KPI

Increased utilization of research results and empirical data by relevant government agencies in policy development

- Number of advisory services and analytics reports completed
- Number of reports on options, trade-offs for government programs, policy reforms completed
- Number of “How to Notes” for implementation supported
- Number of inputs to IRRs of government policies/legislations provided

Progress to date

AGaP Grant	No. of analytical reports, advisory services, guidance notes produced
Technical Assistance for DPL Reforms	4
Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program	3
Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization	3
Women's Economic Empowerment	1
Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines	5
Strengthening Implementation Support for Health COVID Response	8
Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila	3

KPI

- Number of training programs conducted
- Number of workshops among government agencies conducted
- Number of government personnel that have participated in TF supported training and learning activities
- Number of knowledge exchange with other countries undertaken

AGaP Grant	No. of capacity building activities conducted	Participating Government Agencies	No. of Pax
TA for DPL Reforms	2	DA, DICT, NTC	50
Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program	52	BSP, DOLE, DSWD, IPA, LBP, MSSD, PIDS, PSA ADB, UNICEF, USAID E-PESO	250
Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization	3	DBM, DILG, NEDA	400
Women's Economic Empowerment	3	NEDA	50
Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines	3	DOF, DOLE, DSWD, NEDA	50
Strengthening Implementation Support for Health COVID Response	1	AFP, PNP	800
Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila	2	DILG, DOH, DOTr, DPWH, NEDA LGUs Academia, NGOs	400

OUTCOME 3: PUBLIC DEBATE AND AWARENESS

Monitoring Level	KPI	Progress to Date
a. Awareness of identified stakeholders to relevant GOP policies and programs increased	Increased proportion of identified stakeholders that have become aware or have gained knowledge on relevant government policies and programs per thematic area	The grant for Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization in the Context of the Mandanas Ruling took a multisectoral approach in helping the government achieve a more effective decentralization of public resources, which has benefitted the quality of the policy advice and TA support to the government. The webinars and public dialogues galvanized the support of two key oversight agencies (the DBM and the DILG) and built consensus among line agencies, local government leaders, and civil society groups on the demand-side and supply-side of transparency and accountability for a more efficient public service delivery.
b. Public debate informed by empirical evidence and analysis enhanced	Increased number of references made on studies/analysis supported by the Trust Fund during public debates per thematic area	The Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines complemented the information available from other sources and they were used by oversight and implementing agencies in developing interventions and implementing rules and regulations for COVID response. The project was notable for providing timely information, especially on geographic areas and topics that were not usually covered in other surveys, such as vaccines, perception of government actions, and challenges in online learning. In addition, the survey findings were used extensively in World Bank analytical work, including the Philippines Economic Update. Two policy notes emanated from the surveys, which received considerable media coverage: one on strengthening effective learning during the pandemic and another on vaccine hesitancy. The survey webpage (worldbank.org/covidmonitor) is in the top 10 most visited pages in the World Bank Philippines' website.

OUTPUT:

Public information, education and awareness projects on relevant policies and programs conducted

KPI

- Number of dissemination workshops, forum and stakeholder consultations conducted
- Number of participants that benefitted from dissemination workshops and stakeholder consultations

Independent Evaluation

AGaP Grant	Dissemination workshops, forum and stakeholder consultations	Audience	No. of Pax/Reach
TA for DPL Reforms	7	ARTA, BIR, BOC, BSP, CAAP, DA, DBM, DENR, DFA, DHSUD, DICT, DILG, DOF, DoTr, DPWH, DTI, ERC, FDA, NEA, NEDA, PCC, PEZA, PRC, PSA, SEC, TC LGUs Academia, Think tanks	400
Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program	4	DSWD	50
Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization	2	DBM, DILG, House of Representatives, Senate, NEDA LGUs Private Sector Academia, Think Tanks DFAT, EU, UN	1,000
Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines	3	Private Sector, Labour	60
Strengthening Implementation Support for Health COVID Response	11	NCIP IPs, PWDs, Women	350
Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila	4	Vulnerable groups, road users, general public	7,600

KPI

Number of information, education and communication materials

AGaP Grant	IEC materials developed	Scope/ Reach
TA for DPL Reforms	300	2
Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program	DSWD partner agencies, general public thru DSWD website and social media pages	5
Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization	2 million thru websites and social media pages of DBM, DILG, World Bank, LGUs	12
Women's Economic Empowerment	1,000 thru WB website and social media pages	1
Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines	35,000 thru WB website and social media pages	8
Strengthening Implementation Support for Health COVID Response	DOH Website	1
Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila	DILG, DOTr, DPWH, NEDA, LGUs Academia, Citizens, NGOs	3

OUTCOME 4: PARTNERSHIPS AND IMPLEMENTATION PLATFORMS

Monitoring Level

Partnerships and platforms for effective and efficient collaboration strengthened

OUTPUT: Partnerships and governance platforms for collaboration established

KPI

Increased satisfaction on the collaboration platform established

Progress to date

Functional structure of implementation through the Trust Fund Steering Committee; processes and procedures are stipulated in the AGaP Operations Manual. The partnership is expected to expand with the Steering Committee's approval of new proposals, including on Mindanao connectivity and energy transitions under the Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I).

KPI

- Presence of functional implementation structure and procedures
- Number of collaborative activities conducted

AGaP Grant	Collaboration
TA for DPL Reforms	ICT infrastructure design and data integration of the Small Business Wage Subsidy (SBWS) program of DOF, COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) of DOLE, Financial Subsidy to Rice Farmers (FSRF) Program of DA, and Social Amelioration Program (SAP) of DSWD
Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program	DSWD and DOLE for the Family Development Session and Youth Development Session program design; BSP and PSA for the digitalization of cash transfers; and development partners to contribute resources and technical expertise for the program, including USAID, ADB, and UNICEF
Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization	DBM, DILG, DPWH on roles, co-sharing scheme, institutional framework following re-devolution for improved monitoring and accountability
Women's Economic Empowerment	WB specialists representing urban, health, social protection and other global practices drew up technical proposals for gender analytical work that conjoin gender in the Bank's portfolio and the priority areas of the Bank-administered think-tank Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP)
Real Time Monitoring of COVID-19 Impacts in the Philippines	DOF, NEDA, DSWD on the survey instruments, identification of sampling population, and deployment of survey instruments
Strengthening Implementation Support for Health COVID Response	Better communication, coordination, and accountability within the DOH central office, its regional centres, and line agencies, and extending to LGUs. The grant drew from the expertise of WHO, UNICEF, and other international partners in developing COVID assessment and monitoring tools.
Support to Active Transport in Metro Manila	Additional resources were provided by the Global Road Safety Facility under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety and the Netherlands Embassy.

Annex 6 List of Persons Consulted and Schedule of Meetings

World Bank

Person Consulted	Role	Date
Abrigo, Vincent	Program Assistant	Aug 17 & Sep 1, 2022
Azarcon, Yolanda	Former Trust Fund Coordinator (2019-June 2022)	July 22 & Sep 8, 2022
Belghith, Nadia	Task Team Member for Philippine Women's Economic Empowerment Program (P173002/ TF0B2024)	September 6, 2022
Buchhave, Helle	Former Task Team Lead for Philippine Women's Economic Empowerment Program (P173002/ TF0B2024)	September 6, 2022
David, Clarissa	Senior External Relations Officer	August 24, 2022
Fock, Achim	Operations Manager	August 26, 2022
Galang, Roberto	Senior Private Sector Specialist, Lead for Trade and Competitiveness in TA for DPL Reforms (P172157 / TF0B278)	September 1, 2022
Gerochi, Hope	Task Team Member of Support Post COVID-19 Active Transport Development in Metro Manila (TF0B2079 / P172913)	August 19, 2022
Grafilo, Pamela	Former Consultant for Monitoring and Evaluation	August 9, 2022
Herrera, Rommel	Operations Officer	Aug 17 & Sep 1, 2022
Magdamo-Maitim, Lilanie	Senior Operations Officer	Aug 17 & Sep 1, 2022
Morrison Mary	Task Team Lead for Philippine Women's Economic Empowerment Program (P173002/ TF0B2024)	August 4, 2022
Osornprasop, Sutayut	Task Team Lead for Strengthening Implementation Support for the Philippines COVID-19Response Project (P173877/ TF0B3554)	August 18, 2022
Piza, Sharon	Task Team Lead for Real time monitoring of COVID-19 impacts in the Philippines (P174356/ TF0B3554)	July 26, 2022
Qian, Rong	Task Team Lead for TA for DPL Reforms (P172157 / TF0B278) Supporting Subnational Finance and Decentralization in the Context of the Mandanas Ruling (TF0B2079/P172913)	July 25, 2022
Rodriguez, Ruth	Co-Task Team Lead for Strengthening Support for the Pantawid Program and Philippine Social Protection Systems (P173380/TF0B2024)	August 15, 2022

Australian Embassy – DFAT

Person Consulted	Role	Date
Aquino, Angela	Program Officer (Development)	July 29 & Aug 8, 2022
Bakker, Abigail	Second Secretary (Development)	August 9, 2022
Borja, Grace	Senior Program Officer (Development)	July 29 & Aug 8, 2022
Harley-Cavanough, Georgina	First Secretary (Development)	August 8, 2022
Le, Thanh	Counsellor (Development)	July 29, 2022
Lorico, Glennie	Program Officer (Development)	August 9, 2022

Person Consulted	Role	Date
Mckenna, Sheona	Former Counsellor (Development)	August 18, 2022
Palomo-Jensen, Elnora	Senior Program Officer (Trade and Economic)	August 25, 2022
Reid, Simon	First Secretary (Trade and Economic)	August 25, 2022
Rico, Jore-Annie	Senior Program Officer (Development)	August 8, 2022
San Jose, Daniel	Senior Program Officer	August 8, 2022

Government of the Philippines

[Note that as only one person in GoP was available for interview, the name has been redacted. This is explained in the 'limitations' section of this report]

Person Consulted	Role	Date
Anonymous	Former Department of Finance	September 13, 2022

Development Partners

[Note that as only one DP was available for interview, the name has been redacted. This is explained in the 'limitations' section of this report]

Person Consulted	Role	Date
Anonymous	UNICEF	August 29, 2022

Annex 7 Australia’s Gender Guidance Note (ABP2)

1. Background

Hanoi Post has set a target that 100% of new designs – which includes ABP II – will be rated as satisfactory in addressing gender equality at the peer review and at the first of its Aid Quality Check (AQC).

The criteria that DFAT uses to assess gender equality performance in the AQC process is shown in Table 1 below. This is also the basis for this Guidance Note. The text in bold draws attention to the main requirements that ABP II needs to demonstrate. Also note that Hanoi Post’s target means that it will no longer approve programs whereby gender equality is not an objective of the investment.

Promoting equality between men and women was [pick the best option below]

- a principal objective of this investment
- a significant objective of this investment
- not an objective of this investment

Question	Answer
Analysis of gender equality gaps and opportunities substantially informed the investment.	1 2 3 4 5 6
Risks to gender equality were identified and appropriately managed .	1 2 3 4 5 6
The investment effectively implemented strategies to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.	1 2 3 4 5 6
The M&E system collected sex-disaggregated data and included indicators to measure gender equality outcomes .	1 2 3 4 5 6
There was sufficient expertise and budget allocation to achieve positive gender equality outputs and outcomes	1 2 3 4 5 6
As a result of the investment, partners increasingly treat gender equality as a priority through their own policies and processes .	1 2 3 4 5 6
Overall rating	

Table 1: DFAT’s Aid Quality Check Criteria

2. Advice

The AQC criteria are interpreted below. ABP II will meet satisfactory performance and approval, if the following minimum requirements are met and noted in the design document. The recruitment of a Gender Advisor will undoubtedly expand what is feasible for the ABP to pursue.

Criteria	Threshold for approval
Gender equality is a significant objective of this assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to gender equality (or men and women) included as one of the overall objectives of the investment. • Reference to gender equality (or men and women) included within the set of objectives for each pillar. <p>It is not expected that every activity will have a gender equality objective, but it is expected that a Gender Advisor will review each activity proposal to determine that gender is not relevant.</p>
Analysis substantially informed the investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design document includes gender analysis relevant to the overall program objective, and implications for ABP. <p>The design document includes analysis within each pillar analysis, and implications for each pillar.</p>
Risks identified and managed	A relevant gender related risk and risk treatment is included in the program risk matrix, and in each pillar level risk matrix (if there is one).
Implementing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design includes as a deliverable a gender strategy or plan is developed by the ABP II Gender Adviser in the Inception Phase to ensure gender is comprehensively mainstreamed throughout the pillars. <p>In the TORs or expectations of each Pillar Team Lead, it must be noted that the ABP Gender Advisor is included in the routine development and review processes of pillar.</p>
M&E collects sex-disaggregated data and indicators on gender equality outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The M&E framework should incorporate the program and pillar level gender objectives. • Selected (meaningful) indicators should be disaggregated by sex. It is not expected that all data is sex disaggregated. • The M&E Framework needs to be reviewed and approved by the ABP Gender Advisor. • Reporting templates need to include a dedicated gender section. It is also expected that all population data which is selected for disaggregation in the M&E framework is reported by sex in the (e.g., people trained, people reached).

Criteria	Threshold for approval
Expertise and budget allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The endorsement a stand-alone gender pillar, with a budget that is comparable to the level of the other pillars. • Budget needs to be adequate for a full time Gender Advisor who leads the gender mainstreaming work, and the gender pillar work. • Budget also needs to be allocated to ensure the participation of a Gender Specialist in any independent mid-term and/or end of program review.
Partners increasingly treat gender equality as a priority in own policies and processes .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Bank is able to report on whether (ideally, how) the ABP's approach to and resourcing of gender has had an influence internally, and with any ABP counterparts. It may be simplest to include this as a reporting requirement in the progress or annual template.

Annex 8 Women's Economic Empowerment grant: Gender-tagged projects

A. Approved Lending

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
1	Second Additional Financing for Philippine Rural Development Project (P169025)	Increasing women farmers' access to production services such as credit and financial services as well as technology and other productive resources.
2	Philippines COVID-19 Emergency Response Project Additional Financing (P175953)	Prioritizing selected gender interventions to address gender inequality in access to vaccine. Gender will be prioritised in project monitoring, evaluation, data collection and analysis. It is also supporting gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement and consultations, including involving gender-focused civil society organisations and partners, with specific outreach and communication to women and men groups.
3	Philippines COVID-19 Emergency Response Project - Additional Financing 2 (P177884)	The second additional financing is supporting gender-sensitive stakeholder engagement and consultations, including involving gender-focused civil society organisations and partners, with specific outreach and communication to women and men groups.

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
4	Additional Financing for the KALAH-CIDSS National Community Driven Development Project (P161833)	This additional financing is seeking to close the gender gap in paid community labour. The DSWD explicitly included a Key Performance Indicator on the percentage increase of female participation in KC-NCDDP paid labour during sub-project implementation from percent at baseline (2014) to 25 percent by the end of 2020.
5	Philippines Seismic Risk Reduction and Resilience Project (P171419)	The project is aimed at reducing existing gaps between women and men by supporting an increase in the percentage of women that execute DPWH's emergency planning and response functions. The project is supporting courses that will provide DPWH staff with the qualifications and certification needed to perform these expanded emergency planning and response roles. The courses will be tailored to improve gender-informed response to meet the differentiated needs of women, men and children in emergency preparedness and response
6	The Philippines Multisectoral Nutrition Project (P175493)	This project is looking at the delivery of quality Maternal and Child Health, and nutrition services including adolescent reproductive health, deliveries assisted by skilled birth attendants, and antenatal as well postnatal services in project areas with lower levels of access to these services. It is geared towards addressing other gender-specific determinants of undernutrition and decision making within households. An example of this could be incentivizing women, as well as men and community leaders, to gain knowledge about nutrition and adolescent reproductive health for their behaviors on nutrition would improve over time.
7	Fourth Disaster Risk Management Development Policy Loan with a Catastrophe-Deferred Drawdown Option (P177125)	The Development Policy Operation is seeking to increase women's participation in DRM related skills development courses that are male dominated by (i) enhancing the design of TVET courses to meet the specific skills and learning needs of women; (ii) setting a target to ensure that 40 percent of graduates from automotive, construction, electrical, and metals are women and (iii) incorporating social and behavior change communication and community campaigns to increase men and women's awareness of gender norms and stereotypes affecting women's enrollment in technical TVET courses and subsequent access to job opportunities.
8	Beneficiary FIRST Social Protection Project (P174066)	The project is helping to reduce the gender gaps in access to ID and financial services, ensuring equal access to social assistance programs. The project is supporting targeted social mobilization and awareness, increasing efforts to increase female representation in DSWD's cash transfer

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
		programs. In particular, targeted interventions for pregnant women and mothers with young children and close monitoring of beneficiary needs by gender through the electronic case management system are being supported. In collaboration with the Philippine Statistics Authority, the project is supporting targeted information campaign among social assistance beneficiary households so female heads can be included.
9	Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project (P172399)	The project is seeking to address the gender gap in the number of women land title holders. It is testing and scaling up new procedures to increase the number of female names on titles as either individual owners or co-owners through marital property. ¹¹ Specifically, the updated procedures for field consultations, in the Project Operations Manual (POM) will require Department of Agrarian Reform staff to inform both males and females of their ownership rights and facilitate the registration of all female Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries as primary owners or the inclusion of spouses on the title.
11	Philippines Customs Modernization Project (P163428)	The project is collecting sex-disaggregated HR and employment data to establish a human resource management strategy that incorporates targets for gender balance of all Bureau of Customs (BoC) employees and to strengthen human resource management systems to enhance female civil servants' eligibility and successful competition for Third-Level positions, respectively.

B. Approved Recipient Executed Grante

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
12	Conflict Monitoring and Land Resource Management for Marawi and BARMM (P173706)	The project included more information on the impact of COVID-19 on women and on the representation of women in resource use and management planning in its covered areas.

C. Pipeline Projects

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
13	Teacher Effectiveness and Competencies Enhancement Project (P164765)	TEACEP will help close the gender gap in dropout rates at grades 4-6 by 2 percentage points through the Department of Education implementing several activities to create a conducive learning environment that caters to the different learning needs of girls and boys in K-6 and keeps them in school. Activities include training school heads to engage with parents about boys' risk of

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
		drop out and ensuring that the instructional and learning materials provided are not biased in favor of, or against, girls or boys and that they cover topics of interest to both girls and boys.
14	Mindanao Inclusive Agriculture Development Project (P173866)	To address the gap in sex-disaggregated data related to Indigenous Peoples in agriculture, MIADP will conduct community situational analysis, involving the participatory gathering of sex-disaggregated demographic, social, and agriculture-related data. The process will serve as a platform for building a database and a system for collecting, analyzing, and monitoring sex-disaggregated data and gender gaps in agriculture, as well as inputs to the preparation of Ancestral Domain Agriculture Implementation Framework (ADAIF). At the end of the project, it is expected that the Department of Agriculture will adopt the system for gender analysis and mainstream this into their broader information system.
15	Fisheries and Coastal Resiliency Project (P174137)	FishCORE identified a gap in the representation of female-led organisations in registered fisher organisations. The Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources will provide access to finance through grants to increase women’s capacity to grow their enterprises, offer technical trainings and knowledge-building activities on relevant topics of coastal management, ecosystem rehabilitation, aqua-/mariculture, entrepreneurial ventures, and alternative livelihoods along with business and leadership trainings and support the formalization of female fishers’ groups. The project also helped the team identify a relevant indicator targeting that 25% of enterprises established through the livelihood and enterprise grants are women-led/owned.
16	Philippines Alternative Learning System Project (P175318)	The project will identify the causes of the gender gap in enrollment in ALS. The project has proposed activities to address these causes, such as childcare.
17	Agus-Pulangi Hydropower Complex Rehabilitation Project (P173728)	The project conducted a gender assessment that identified a gender gap in technical roles, specifically in Mindanao Generation Unit’s cadetship program. APHCP will pilot a mentoring program for female cadets to equip them with the skills and confidence they need to increase their success in being recruited into staff positions and encourage the creation of a safe working environment for women by establishing breastfeeding stations and toilets for female technical staff as well as providing advanced technical and vocational training to female staff. A target has been set of increasing the percentage of female cadets from 21% to 30%.

D. Dropped Project

No.	Project Title	Gender Entry Point
17	Civil Service Modernization and Human Resources Management in the Philippines (P168235)	The project will support the HR Departments to institutionalize a gender and development database to analyse sex-disaggregated HR data and use it for strategic gender diversity decision making. These actions support the Government to implement the existing Joint Circular for implementing and monitoring gender parity goals for the Third-Level positions.

Annex 9 DPL Implied Results Framework and Prior Actions

This table was prepared by the evaluation team to reconcile the status of each objective (or pillar) of the DPL grant with the progress reports. Items in red indicate notable omissions or deviations from the original grant proposal. The second column 'DPL Reform Area/Trigger' was added by the AGaP team, at the request of DFAT, to assign the DPL Prior Actions to the grant objectives.

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
Objective 1: Promote competition through regulatory reforms to increase agriculture productivity.	n/a	<p>Verification of farmer registry.</p> <p>Selection of clear and transparent eligibility criteria for accessing the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).</p> <p>Identification and prioritization of key milestones of the Rice Liberalization Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and prioritization of triggers for DPL III.</p>	<p>Advisory note and report on the verification of the farmer registry.</p> <p>Report on Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Report on milestones of rice liberalization act and suggested triggers for DPL III.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Cancelled</p> <p>Cancelled</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>n/a</p>

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
[Added in June 2020 report]	Prior Action 4 (DPL2): Through Department of Agriculture (DA) resolutions No. 1 to 6, the DA has established clear and transparent eligibility criteria for accessing the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to implement the Rice Liberalization Act and the Joint Memorandum Circular Number 01-2019.	A framework and operational strategy for encouraging non-profitable rice farmers to diversify to sustainable and economically viable value-chain	'...support the strengthening of the institutional framework to identify policy and investment options to reshape and improve the diversification of the Philippine agri-food system'	New	Ongoing
Objective 2: Increase competitiveness through better access to economic opportunities.	Prior Action 6 (DPL3): Through a memorandum of agreement between the DSWD and PSA, the government has (i) adopted PhilSys as primary means of social assistance beneficiary identification and verification and (ii) established guidelines for implementation thereof.	support effective design and implementation of the PhilSys	Advisory note on institutional structure, human capital and skills, and budget for the PhilSys.	Ongoing	Ongoing
Objective 3: Increase access to financial services through improving payment system infrastructures.	Prior Action 7 (DPL3): Through issuance of Circulars 1126 and 1127, BSP has strengthened payment system governance framework and risk management.	provide technical assistance and capacity building support to the BSP on the implementation of the National Payment System Act.	Technical assistance will deliver activity documentation (training materials, workshop proceedings, and observed changes) and a policy	Ongoing	Ongoing

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
			paper on payment systems oversight.		
Objective 4: Improve national budget planning and management by adopting an annual cash-based budget and an integrated financial management system.	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a statement of requirement for a single, integrated fiscal planning and budget preparation systems, linked to BTMS. - TA support for government to develop data analytics procedures and systems for analyzing budget expenditure and procurement practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statement of requirement for a single integrated fiscal planning and budget preparation system, to provide a basis for a procurement RFP. - TA support to develop data analytics software, procedures manual and training on BOOST and procurement diagnostics, building on work performed under the RAS agreement. 	Now described as 'Analytical Support and Capacity-Building Support to the DOF on the tax reform program'. Not clear if this pillar is same as the one in the proposal.	Ongoing dropped
Objective 5: Increase tax effort and reduce contingent liabilities from GOCCs.	Prior Action 5 (DPL3): Through enactment of the CREATE Act, the government has rationalized tax incentives and improved process for monitoring and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Just-in-time technical assistance to the Department of Finance Tax Reform team' 'Rationalizing the basis for subsidies paid to GOCCs [SOEs].' 'Improving coordination of GOCC oversight through an interactive monitoring platform.' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory and analytical notes supplied to the DOF tax team in aid of the crafting of the legislation for the tax policy reforms. Rationalizing the basis for subsidies paid to GOCCs How-to-Note Improving coordination of GOCC oversight through an interactive monitoring platform 	Dropped? Not mentioned in this report.	n/a
Pillar: COVID-19 response (added in Dec 2020 report)	n/a	'Advice to DOF and other line agencies on the process	Support implementation of the social protection	NEW: Partly completed, partly ongoing	Partly completed, partly ongoing

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
		and ICT infrastructure design...' 'Technical note on data governance and data verification as part of the design of future subsidy programs.'	program supported by COVID emergency DPL. 'Inform design of future social protection programs to improve efficiency and timeliness. '		
Pillar: Investment in Telecom (added in Dec 2020 report)	Prior Action 1 (DPL3): Through JMC 1-2021, issued by DICT, DILG, DPWH and other government agencies, the government has introduced non-discriminatory access to poles, broadband infrastructure and the simplified fixed broadband network rollout process.	'Inform the formulation of the fixed broadband policy framework '	Report on the Spectrum Management policies for DICT.	NEW	Completed (report on Spectrum Re-Stacking)
Pillar: Doing Business (added in Dec 2020 report)	Prior Action 2 (DPL3): Through JMC 1-2021, issued by ARTA, DICT, SEC and other government agencies, the government has streamlined and automated national and local government processes for starting a business.	Support implementation of Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act	DB Roadmap Report for selected indicators identifying...reforms or other recommended actions, with specific focus on Starting a Business, Dealing with Construction Permit, Protecting Minority Investors and Resolving Insolvency	NEW	Completed report on ARTA Ease of Doing Business Reform Roadmap
Pillar: Trade Facilitation (added in Dec 2021 report)	Prior Action 3 (DPL3): Through Customs Memorandum Orders 21-2020, 02-2021, 09-2021, and 26-2021, the Bureau of Customs has strengthened	Support for the Establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee. Trade Facilitation Agreement Gap Analysis.	?	n/a	Completed studies in support of Trade Facilitation Committee

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
	regulatory framework for implementing risk-based controls and enhanced cargo selectivity.				
Gender	n/a	<p>‘...farmer registry and transparent eligibility criteria for the RCEF’</p> <p>‘... help PSA dedicate sufficient attention and resources to ensure that such potential barriers are identified and addressed (e.g. to handle grievances and complaints).’</p> <p>‘Data analytics software and methods would allow easier identification of gender impacts and assessment of their contribution to gender and other policy objectives.’</p>	n/a	‘NA’	Report left blank
Disability	n/a	<p>‘... help PSA dedicate sufficient attention and resources to ensure that such potential barriers are identified and addressed (e.g. to make available home-based registration for disabled persons; to handle grievances and complaints).’</p>	n/a	‘...establishing a national ID program will help improve inclusiveness to the poor and vulnerable, which is expected to broaden inclusion and improve the efficient delivery of key public services.’	Report left blank
Climate Change	n/a	<p>‘Climate change-related policy initiatives will be more easily tagged and tracked through the budget preparation process and the</p>	n/a	‘NA’	Report left blank

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
		results of spending across the country through various policies and initiatives will be more easily assessed both individually and collectively using the data analytics methods.'			
Private Sector Development	n/a	<p>'Key milestones of the rice liberalization and its IRR will be assessed having in mind the development of the private sector. Any recommendation should be in line with crowding in the private sector, rather than crowding it out.'</p> <p>'The introduction of a National ID system...and the implementation of a National Payment Systems Act, are expected to ... further boost investments by the private sector'</p> <p>'... allow for identification of specific reference points and monitoring arrangements for private sector development related activities.'</p>	n/a	'...National ID System...expected to boost service delivery, financial inclusion, and facilitate the transition of the Philippine economy into the digital age which would broaden the country's prospects and further boost private sector investment.'	Report left blank

Objectives	DPL Reform Area/Trigger of Grant proposal	Inputs of Grant proposal	Outputs of Grant proposal	Progress Report Status (Dec 2020)	Progress Report Status (Dec 2021)
Innovation	n/a	‘...innovative ICT features to make a registry that is in line with agriculture 4.0’ ‘...seek to further advance innovative approaches for the implementation of the PhilSys’	n/a	‘NA’	Report left blank