

REVIEW OF HHE CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT PROGRAM (CSSP II) IN SAMOA 2016 – 2021

Review report

December 2021

CONTENTS

List of acronyms	iii
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Governance arrangements	3
2.2 Management arrangements and performance reporting	3
2.3 DFAT support to CSSP Phase II (CSSP II)	3
2.4 Program activities	4
3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY	4
4. LIMITATIONS	5
4.1 Outcomes achieved	5
4.2 Documentation available	5
4.3 Stakeholders consulted	5
5. FINDINGS	5
5.1 Relevance	5
5.2 Known effects – Community development	7
5.3 Known effects – CSO development and research	11
5.4 Delivery modality insights	16
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	19
6.1 Recommendations	20
ANNEX 1: DOCUMENTATION LIST	21
ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED	25
Donors	25
Government of Samoa	25
CSOs	25
CSSP PMU	26
ANNEX 3: SDS AND CSSP M&E MAPPING	28

ANNEX 4: CSSP DONOR FUNDING PROPORTIONS OVER TIME	29
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ANNEX 5: RUBRICS	30
RELEVANCE	30
KNOWN EFFECTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	31
KNOWN EFFECTS – CSO CAPACITY AND RESEARCH	32
DELIVERY MODALITY INSIGHTS	34
RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED	35
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ANNEX 6: MAPPING OF DFAT OBJECTIVES TO THE CSSP OUTCOMES	36

List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Community Sector Plan
CSSP	Civil Society Support Program
DDP	District Development Plan
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
EoP	End of Project
EU	European Union
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GoS	Government of Samoa
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MESC	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC)
METI	Matuaileoo Environment Trust Inc
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Samoa
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWCSD	Ministry of Women Community and Social Development
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NOLA	Nuanua O Le Alofa
NSA	Non-State Actor
PMU	Program Management Unit
SBH	Samoa Business Hub
SC	Steering Committee
SRCS	Samoa Red Cross Society
SUNGO	Samoa Umbrella for Non-governmental Organisations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank

For simplicity and clarity:

- The entire CSSP program is referred to as ‘program’; individually funded pieces of work within this are referred to as ‘projects’.
- Although their strict definitions are different, ‘CSO’ refers to NSA, CBO, and NGO in this report when describing the collective of organisations receiving funding and support through the CSSP program.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is produced towards the completion of the data collection phase of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) review of the Samoa Civil Society Support Program (CSSP), Phase II (2016-2021). The review has been commissioned to assess the effectiveness of the CSSP against the objectives of the DFAT direct funding agreement (DFAT, 2016) with Ministry of Finance (MoF), Samoa. As defined in the DFAT design, the CSSP will:

- provide an effective, transparent and accountable mechanism for the delivery of development funding to civil societies to address development outcomes
- support Samoa's civil society to adopt and apply effective and innovative approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable people
- be a responsive resource for the development of civil society in Samoa, particularly by way of establishing partnerships, promoting alliances, and supporting research.

The review was conducted as the DFAT funding of support is finishing, although development partners like UNDP adaptation Fund (AF), UNDP Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the European Union (EU) continue. The report is informed by a document review, interviews (43 stakeholders, see Annex 2) and a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) survey¹. This review terms of reference directs focus on the outcomes achieved and lessons learned during the period since 2016 and to make recommendations. The intention is also to develop:

- an understanding of the known effects of the CSSP II
- insights about the delivery modality, including design, governance arrangements and direction setting
- insights about the external environment, including lessons about collective action and the changing Non-Government Organisation (NGO)/CSO 'space'.

The findings are based on each section reviewed and judged on a scale of having been found to perform 'poorly', 'satisfactorily', 'soundly' or 'well'.

RELEVANCE	Sound performance	Section 5.1
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Satisfactory performance	Section 5.2
CSO DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH	Satisfactory performance	Section 5.3
DELIVERY MODALITY	Sound performance	Section 5.4

The CSSP is reasonably well established and runs efficiently, aligning operations with government and donor needs under a governance framework overseen by MoF. The organisation is almost universally seen as being a very effective mechanism to distribute donor funds to grassroots beneficiaries, with a consistency of process combined with adaptive and supportive approaches. The staff's diligence and skills and the program's reputation and recognition in communities were also recognised. In 2021, the CSSP is showing signs of a sustainable and maturing operation.

There is a draft Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework (CSSP, 2021b), a draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2021f) and a solid history of working with five donors: EU, UNDP AF, World Bank (WB), DFAT and UNDP GCF. By November 2021, the funding for World Bank and DFAT have both been utilised with no formal ongoing commitment as DFAT Phase II expires. Donors and government have both

¹24 responses from 67; 36 percent response rate

indicated the potential for ongoing and expanded support and use of the CSSP group to deliver future community development work.

Opportunities for improvement exist in all areas to different degrees. The biggest gaps are in the levels of CSO capacity development and research. A significant limitation is the lack of outcome level data and evidence for progress here and in community development and there are ongoing efficiency improvements possible within the procurement and reporting areas. The poor performance of Samoa Umbrella for Non-governmental Organisations (SUNGO) under CSSP II was identified in program documentation and reinforced through almost all stakeholder consultations in this review. SUNGO's engagements through CSSP have been project based rather than core funding. SUNGO's delivery ran late and required CSSP support; they too require capacity development. Future SUNGO partnership as suggested under the draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2021f) would need to be carefully managed with clear deliverables and accountability measures. Compromising capacity building of other CSOs as SUNGO builds their organisation is a risk.

CSSP strengthening is also required with no finalised M&E framework, high staff turnover and project-based funding. After 10 years of operation, the organisation has demonstrated its worth under these limitations. They have evolved from a short-term mechanism to effect small grants to a widely used, multi-sector, multi-donor grant management organisation. As DFAT and WB grant rounds finalise, there will be major gaps in operational funding.

Most urgently required is for CSSP to find a funding source to support core positions previously funded by DFAT. Any future funding model is recommended to be more sustainable and proportional in its design. Ongoing government financial support could be justified given the nesting of the organisation within government, its support of the aid coordination activities and the need for a mechanism to deliver the pending constituency funding for community development. Funding through government could offer donors and government the intended 'one-stop-shop' to support grassroots communities and CSOs and is not thought to impact the ability of CSOs to continue to advocate for change in government engagements.

More specifically for DFAT, the grant management mechanism that CSSP offers does add value, even within the limitations discussed. The proposed no cost extension to mid-2022 has been rejected by DFAT through MoF. Beyond that, future projects would require a stronger strategic and outcome focus, informed by monitoring and evaluation data, tighter operational management and more stable staffing. A future version of CSSP, CSSP III, could continue be a robust and accessible way for DFAT to deliver aid.

2. BACKGROUND

The CSSP has operated for since 2010. CSSP I (2010-2015) was largely funded by the Australian Government and the EU. It sought to deliver tangible benefits to vulnerable groups through small grants to 'one off' projects carried out by CSOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), non-state actors (NSAs), including faith-based groups and sector associations.

Initially, DFAT support for CSSP II was planned to run from 2016-2020 with support provided solely to NGOs. In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSO) and CSSP to undertake additional DFAT supported activities through a 'gender fund' valued at AUD400,000. The targeted funding is allocated to women economic empowerment projects through CBOs.

A no-cost extension of CSSP II to December 2021 was approved by DFAT following a request by the Government of Samoa (GoS), through MoF. A further extension was requested in November 2021 but is not possible under DFAT procurement rules.

In addition to managing DFAT and EU funding, donor support has broadened to include the WB, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the GCF². The design for CSSP II envisaged two arms of support: a grant facility that would fund community development initiatives (as per CSSP I); and, a new CSO support facility that would build CSO capacity to improve effectiveness and sustainability of their organisations. More broadly, CSSP II was intended to meet the following expectations:

- The GoS anticipated that the program would promote the role of CSOs in national development, with the CSSP acting as a bridge between government, donors and civil society sector.
- Civil society expected the program to play a more dynamic and supportive role in the sector's development.
- The development partners saw the CSSP as a 'one-stop' shop through which CSOs could channel requests for donor funding.

2.1 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

A Program Steering Committee (SC) is tasked with providing strategic direction, operational governance and leadership. Members are drawn from the MoF, MWCSO, SUNGO, a CBO and an NGO representative, WB and DFAT. The GoS, through the MoF, has overall accountability for CSSP II and is charged with ensuring that the resources are used in the most effective, efficient and ethical manner for the benefits of the people of Samoa. It is also the signatory and contracting authority to the funding agreements held with the development partners. Through the signed MoU between MWCSO and CSSP, there is a joint responsibility to manage and implement activities supported under the gender fund.

2.2 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

A Program Management Unit (PMU) manages the Grant Facility and the CSO Support Facility. Thus far, the CSSP has acted largely as a community-facing grant management facility. The PMU is tasked with programming and implementing projects, including reporting against an M&E Framework.

2.3 DFAT SUPPORT TO CSSP PHASE II (CSSP II)

Phase I (CSSP I) ended in June 2016. Following an independent review of the program, it was recommended that DFAT continue its support to the program with improved focus on CSO capacity development, an improved M&E framework and strengthening long term partnerships with key stakeholders.

The review made 29 recommendations tagging nine as priority. The overall conclusions were that Australia and the EU should continue to support CSSP and even explore the possibilities of a CSSP II if the program moves beyond service delivery to deepening its engagement with CSOs. As a result, DFAT agreed to continue support and implement recommendations adding focus on the three objectives by placing emphasis on:

- having a more efficient and effective funding mechanism using a more targeted approach to complement efforts by the Government of Samoa in the areas of health, education, gender, disability, youth and livelihoods
- strengthening structural processes, PMU internal systems
- strengthening M&E systems
- applying research to inform decision making, policy development and national planning process

² See Annex 4 for a breakdown of spend by donor

- strengthening civil society engagement with Government of Samoa and private sector at policy level and national planning process.

A key enabler of delivering these was to strengthen work with SUNGO and to collaboratively develop a CSO Capacity Development Strategy.

2.4 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

DFAT is one source of funding for the CSSP; other donors also contribute across different sectors. DFAT support for the CSSP program was provided through the GoS and MoF. The DFAT work has included grant rounds targeting NGOs and CBOs, collectively referred to here as CSOs. 84 percent of grants were for NGOs, 16 percent for CBOs. The DFAT funds were delivered through four NGO grant rounds across 2016-19 and two CBO rounds during 2018-20. Ten CSOs received multiple grants: seven received more than one grant from DFAT and four received grants across multiple donors including DFAT. Grant recipients have included SUNGO, who was engaged to deliver capacity building, networking and research within the CSO sector. Of the 55 DFAT grants, one grant not continue at the request of the CSO and one (Beekeeping) is currently finishing their implementation due early 2022³.

Across all DFAT grants, the highest spend was in health¹ (39 percent) and agriculture (15 percent). The average cost per grant was SAT91,355 over a range from SAT15,000 to SAT200,000. The lowest spend was for disability support at SAT15,000, although some work was also done under Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and the Samoa Conservation Society.

DFAT's contributions were AUD1million each year from 2016 – 2020 and \$400k for gender specific community-based work. This was under the Small Grants Scheme Component of the Samoa Women Shaping Development Programme, generally known as the Gender Fund (CSSP, 2019b). According to the CSSP grant summaries, AUD2.7 million has been granted across 45 organisations utilising 54 grants, AUD1.27million spent on staffing and operational costs with just over AUD180,000 spent on capacity building and technical assistance. 99 percent of the grant funding has been dispersed, however the balance of the total funding unspent is around AUD360,000. A no cost extension has been requested to mid-2022 to complete remaining grants and a capacity assessment engagement. MoF has been made aware that DFAT procurement rules will not allow for this second no cost extension although alternative mechanisms may be explored. This puts funding at risk for key CSSP staff positions, the incomplete beekeeping project⁴, CSO forum and capacity assessment work to be completed.

The incremental gender funding was through CBOs by design. Most of these grants were for sewing groups: 49 percent by value. Agriculture (23 percent) and capacity building (13 percent) were next highest across seven total classifications of assistance. This demonstrates a slightly skewed but varied mix of gender support.

3. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

This review used the approach as described in the Review Plan in October 2021. It used a multi-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data and was informed by a literature review. The Aide Memoire, provided to DFAT in November 2021, allowed for reflection of initial results by DFAT. This final report was tested in a presentation to DFAT and MoF on the 21 December 2021.

³ This information has not been independently sourced by, the review team.

⁴ Acknowledged in Steering Committee minutes (CSSP, 2021g), for note in this review, delays were in sourcing goods not available locally.

The review is aligned around high-level criteria of relevance, known effects, delivery modality insights and recommendations. At a high-level, the areas of enquiry are identified in Annex 6. Performance against these has been judged by overlaying findings against the rubrics based on those proposed in the Review Plan. The details within these are slightly adapted from the Review Plan as understanding around the program grew during data gathering.

4. LIMITATIONS

4.1 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Limited availability of CSSP outcome-based indicators and results restricted the ability to triangulate conclusions about the impact and sustainability of the programme. Supporting the outcome of CSO capacity building, a baseline of 10 CSOs was done by SUNGO in 2018/19 (SUNGO, 2019) and a more recent assessment of current capabilities is currently underway. No documents referred to research work in detail and there was limited community development reporting except at a project level.

4.2 DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE

While the PMU was able to provide extensive documentation and to pivot to deliver incremental information as the review developed, the November 2021 SC minutes and the Quarter 3 (July – September 2021) report were not approved for release by the Steering Committee. Findings for the second half of 2021 have therefore been primarily based on interviews and survey.

4.3 STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Stakeholder interviews and survey groups were based on the CSSP data which is purposeful sampling rather than random and could have the potential to bias results. To help mitigate this risk, CSSP also provided contact details of unsuccessful organisations, two of whom were contacted for their inputs. There was also one opportunistic interview with a CSO who had had no interaction with CSSP at all. Other mitigations were the large number of interviews, across Savai'i and Upolu and across each sector supported by DFAT and other funders. MFAT Samoa was also not included although this was an oversight rather than deliberate. MFAT is one of the key ministries which focus on foreign policies and are responsible with regional and international organisation including the EU. The CEO MFAT is the Government National Authorising Officer (NAO) for EU program. EU work has been incorporated into this report through an EU interview and documentation only. By maintaining confidentiality of survey and interview inputs, the team has tried to encourage frank discussions, recommendations and feedback from all stakeholders.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 RELEVANCE

The CSSP is judged to address relevance 'Soundly'. It has been found to address government and donor needs through its alignment with the SDS, regular consultations and involvement of government sector partners and adherence to the processes through MoF. The changes in national context since 2016 are not likely to affect the CSSP's SDS alignment given the continuing emphasis on community development and with civil society. As demonstrated in Section 0, the CSSP ways of working at an operating level are engaging communities and CSOs and are endorsed by most donors and government stakeholders. Gaps in CSSP operations are in strategic management and the application and use of CSSP level M&E which limit the ability to make data-driven decisions on grant priorities in conjunction with donors.

The variety and flexibility of approaches is admirable. NGOs, CBOs and households have been supported with grants from as low as SAT15,000 to SAT200,000 across gender equality and empowerment, leadership, working with disability, farming, environment and health sectors. Recipients have included women, youth, persons with a disability and those living in Savai'i and Upolu. Interviews reinforced that CSSP has strong links with government and aligns with ministries responsible for the sector supported. In CSSP II, CSSP worked primarily with the MWCSO and the MNRE, with some work planned or in work with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESOC).

Government stakeholders identified that community development is a particular focus of government. They also noted that working with CSOs through CSSP has enabled government to assist in delivering grassroots benefits which would not have otherwise been accessible to government primarily working at a strategic and policy level. The alternate mechanism for support from donors might have been direct funding of CSOs and projects; some does continue to occur in parallel to CSSP. Multiple stakeholders identified that grants were also being delivered through non-CSSP mechanisms; an example is a separate agriculture program mentioned by a number of stakeholders as a potential duplication of work. Not that both modalities are through GoS although MoF feedback is that this is unlikely given different clientele and scope. Some external grant, like the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) SAFFROM program has been delivered external to CSSP but has mirrored the processes and tools developed by CSSP.

The CSSP contributes to Samoa's development, and to the 2016-2020 Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) and Samoa Community Sector Plan (CSP). The SDS goal is to *'improve the quality of life for all'*; the CSP goal is to *'improve social outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities'*. These are reflected in the CSSP goal to *'improve the quality of life for people in Samoa through effective and sustainable civil society organisations'* (CSSP, 2019e, p. 2) and by aligning its own objectives to those of the SDS.

Although there is work through the Samoa Business Hub (SBH), in general there is a gap in work with the private sector. To date, this has not included DFAT grant rounds. This is despite CSSP's design (DFAT, 2016b) and the CSSP Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d) including private sector work. If included, it would align to SDS Key Outcome 5: Private Sector Involvement in Development Enhanced). See Annex 4 and Section 5.3.

CSSP strategy exists to the extent that it is at a high level in the Strategic Policy and planned for monitoring in the M&E framework. However, operations are project based and the space for strategic discussions is limited under funding and staffing pressures. Implementing and governing these is limited under pressures of delivering grants (interviews). The aspirational role of CSOs in Samoa, the use of the CSSP as a donor harmonisation mechanism and the direction of the CSSP in its capacity building work were areas raised as donor and government priorities not overtly addressed.

While not specifically called for in this analysis, the alignment with donor needs is also a guiding principle in CSSP's Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d) and this review concludes that strong alignment has been achieved in general however it is a significant consideration in the mutual agreement of a future design as aligning donors needs to date has been difficult, although work continues. Current alignment demonstrated is in part due to the work donors are already doing in partnership with the Donor Co-ordination Group in MoF/MFAT. CSSP work is allocated through the MoF Aid Co-ordination Group.

The CSSP involvement of donors and government has enabled national priorities to be matched with donor support. The CSSP delivers projects matching these through aligned grant criteria. While other grants occur outside of CSSP at ministry levels, the CSSP is the most centralised and widely used mechanism. There are however donors who offer direct or in-kind assistance to communities that are delivered through government

outside of CSSP. MoF and CSSP suggest more collaborative approaches may enable better co-ordination and wider reach of these projects with similar CSSP work and work with the same CSOs.

Although not identified in the CSSP M&E plan or in the DFAT Funding Agreement, harmonisation of donor funding is also a key priority of government and donor stakeholders. This priority was raised in interviews and in the review of the CSSP II design (DFAT, 2016b). Donors and government stakeholders in 2021 were universally positive about harmonisation of funds although there are differences in documentation and processes across donors.

A lot has happened in Samoa and the world since 2016. There was a measles outbreak (2019/20), followed by COVID-19 pandemic (2020/21) and a new government (2021). These drove changing national priorities in the short term. Despite these context changes, the government has identified that they will retain previous SDS priorities with the new, draft 2021-2025 SDS due for release in January 2022. Given CSSP II aligns well with the 2016/17 – 2019/20 SDS, it is expected to therefore continue to align well with future priorities.

5.2 KNOWN EFFECTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The CSSP II has been judged as delivering ‘Satisfactorily’ in this area primarily because of lack of outcome-based monitoring data at a CSSP level. Interviews, end of project (EoP) reporting⁵ and the CSO survey identified some specific examples of project success and impact data however these have not been consolidated in CSSP reporting or in evidence in strategic decision making. Although there is an intention to reach vulnerable groups, the extent to which this has been delivered. While documented at a project level, this higher-level, consolidated result has not been generated.

DFAT funding was skewed heavily towards sewing and elei projects. This may not be an issue if results can demonstrate that gaps and community needs were addressed. There was one grant which was initially designed as an agriculture project however given complexity and costs in this, the group was encouraged instead to deliver a sewing project. Overall though, there was positive feedback from many groups, including this one, that the most impactful results have been in community economic empowerment, through sewing/elei and agriculture programs and of community ownership of projects. It should also be noted that the types of projects supported are not specified under funding designs, only broad donor and sector partner objectives. There have also been other areas of significant importance delivered through DFAT like the work done through the Samoan Cancer Society and through disability organisations, all of which have demonstrated success in reaching vulnerable populations through interviews and project reports.

As discussed more in other sections, the gaps filled by the CSSP are in delivering aid to the grassroots level. This has been across donor funds within the CSSP. A third of respondents to the CSO survey identified that they were able to reach more people in the community as a result of the program; another third identified that they were able to offer extra services. There may be an overlap if participants interpreted ‘extra services’ as ‘services to extra people’, however the results are very positive for the reach of the program into communities.

Our project of elei and sewing was a successful model project replicated to support other 20 villages & communities. Our women learnt new skills, now able to earn money, run their side businesses, more people reached through our Facebook page, work more with government and other organisations [CSO survey]

⁵ For example, the ADRA Community Disaster and Climate Risk Management project report (ADRA Samoa, 2018)

Government stakeholder interviews triangulated this finding, emphasising the CSSP's close working relationship with the MWCSO who are responsible overall for support to community. The CSSP also attends MWCSO monthly community meetings. This gives the CSSP a chance to communicate new grant rounds and criteria and gives communities a forum to communicate needs. CSSP has been vocal and proactive about meeting community needs through designing grant criteria and have been successful in ensuring funding programs align with CSSP processes and the needs of the community. However, the CSSP may not always be in a position to adjust the grant implementation assumptions, particularly when the budgets for project staff are set. The alignment of these inputs to the CSSP programming is through donor and government.

The data collected and reported on does not allow for a judgement on how well the CSSP reaches different groups within society. The CSSP Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d) describes a guiding principle of integrating government policies into the grants program, including as they relate to supporting vulnerable parts of the population. The CSSP has delivered this in the cross-cutting criteria in grant requests and assessments (CSSP, 2019g) but not in the monitoring and reporting.

While the Overview of CSSP document (CSSP, 2021e) provided a summary of the cross-cutting performance, it was very high-level and talked about contribution towards gender equality as a result of the sewing programs but provided little evidence of social outcomes as a result. Unfortunately, disaggregated M&E data was not available to fully understand the number and cohort of the population benefiting through the program although it has been included at a project level in some grant and CSSP quarterly reports. An example is the DFAT funded NOLA (#20193) grant where 15 persons with disabilities were identified as beneficiaries. At face value these seem low given activities included outreach programs and awareness workshops (CSSP, 2020).

Working with women, youth and persons with a disability is evident within grants classified as youth and disability and also within other projects. Examples are as supporting ending violence against women and girls (Samoa Returnees Charitable Trust) classified as counselling, youth capacity strengthening (Samoa Conservation Society) classified as an environment project and disability support (SENESE) classified as institutional strengthening. These examples demonstrate support of the vulnerable directly and through mainstreamed approaches (CSSP, 2021c).

CSSP reached a broad spectrum of CSOs. The CSO survey during this review (DFAT funded projects) showed a balance of small and large organisations and a mix of grant values. The initial DFAT grants were designed to support NGOs (16 NGOs + SUNGO) and the gender funding received later was allocated to supporting CBOs in communities (28 CBOs). Almost half of the CSOs surveyed had over 10 people on staff. Half had received support for between SAT15,000 and 50,000; 25 percent having received between SAT50,000 and 100,000 and the rest receiving over SAT100,000 (CSSP, 2021c).

Despite lack of quantifiable community impact evidence, stakeholders were very positive about the CSSP support. CSO interviews in 2021 identified that grantees felt that benefits of the grants included enabling more reach of services into the community and expanded services to communities. Interviews with donors and government supported this finding; 'we saw support of vulnerable communities over and over again'.

Under DFAT funding, there were projects supporting women (primarily sewing), youth and people with a disability (Senese, 2018); projects also covered both remote and urban areas. This finding was also reflected in interviews with government and donor stakeholders. There was concern voiced about the distribution of projects across sectors. DFAT funding of such a high proportion of sewing projects was an imbalance and for other donors, the geographic spread of flood recovery and preparedness assistance. Across all funding, the highest number of grants were for sewing and elei (26 percent of projects) however the spend was only eight

percent of the total. The highest spend was in health programs including those supporting mental health and counselling (39 percent spend) (CSSP, 2021c).

In terms of impact on persons with a disability, NOLA reported that they have assisted blind people in accessing government information ongoing and have helped the Samoa Physical Disability Team register as an NGO (Naunua O Lealofa (NOLA), 2021). In December 2020, NOLA presented the CSSP with an award in recognition of their contribution to development in the disability sector (CSSP, 2020c). Interviews highlighted assistance like awareness training for parents of children who have speech difficulties and support of children suffering emotional abuse; these were seen as valuable and sustainable changes.

EoP reports also include an area for grantees to identify other impacts. Some examples at this level were the sewing and elei projects (49% of CBO grants) increasing women's self-confidence (Mafutaga Aualofa Vavau, 2021), ability to contribute to village leadership (CSO interview), skills and economic empowerment (Alii & Faipule O Malaela, 2021), addressing family violence (Samoa Conservation Society)⁶ and increased collaboration between women's groups (interview).

Some unexpected benefits emerged in interviews for this review. For instance, although not included in scope at the design, nearby villages joined in with grant activities, expanding the reach of results. For projects funded by other donors, interviews noted other impacts. A rubbish bin project (WB) raised awareness of rubbish elsewhere in the community, like in the river systems. A project testing hearing in children found that the screening also enabled identification of other issues which could then be addressed; leading to incremental projects.

The draft M&E framework has identified Long-Term Outcome 1: Increased CSSP direct contribution to targeted communities within allocated sectors. With this focus and if outcome level indicators are tracked and used for decision in the future, understanding the impact of the CSSP will be more easily reported on and assessed. Donor interviews also reinforced this point. The February 2021 Steering Committee reiterated the importance of the CSSP identifying how they contribute to national priorities (CSSP, 2021g).

Typically, contribution analysis would consider the changes observed and compare to the program work likely to have influenced these changes and EoP reporting lends itself to this at a project level. For the CSSP, the higher-level outcomes like youth employment, gender equality in leadership or similar have not been the focus as much as providing a mechanism to deliver development aid to communities and project level results. This is reflected in the CSSP documentation, reporting and strategies with limited consolidated impact reporting.

The linkage between the portfolio of projects and any changes in community behaviour or women's lives has only been tracked at a project level. In the CSSP quarterly reporting, little disaggregation of beneficiary data has been published. Project-level impact reporting was in place with a traffic-light system in July - September 2020 reporting (CSSP, 2020). The indicators and outputs appear to be reasonable but results are not recorded consistently. This 2020 report tabulated, but did not consolidate, project results. To some extent consolidation happens at a grant round level but it is focused more on transactional deliverables than community development. In part this is expected to be because of the lack of M&E expertise, limited outcome governance focus and stretched resources. Despite the title of 'Quarterly Monitoring Update' above this table in the report, this has only been reported once in the four 2020/21 reports. The equivalent July - September report for 2021/22 has not yet been approved for release by the Steering Committee.

⁶ (CSSP, 2021c)

A sample of 15 EoP reviews (27% of total DFAT grants by number) were included in this review. Of these, only two had gender disaggregated data and one also disaggregated by age. Since the development of policies in 2019, the reporting template requires grantees to document their support of those most vulnerable (Q4) and whether there were any negative effects of the project on communities (Q6). Some report templates from 2020 also ask that performance in gender equality and social inclusion be documented (Q5). However, in the 2021 template, this question is no longer included.

Classification of grants could be improved to better understand the balance of sectors and demographics supported. For instance, youth and farming are identified as categories although they are not mutually exclusive. Youth is a cohort of the population who may work in the farming sector. While there is an imbalance in the proportions spent on sewing and elei compared to other areas. The proportion of this work in the total portfolio is more than 1.5 times higher than the combined spend in agriculture, beekeeping and farming projects by value (Grant breakdown finances, DFAT).

In the survey, 54 percent of CSOs identified that their work is with remote communities. Of these, 54 percent worked with economic empowerment, including sewing and 23 percent in farming. CSOs working in the mental health, cancer and HIV sub-sectors were also supported. Spend on grants for persons with a disability was identified as two percent of the total, again disproportionate to other spend, particularly when around 15 percent of the population are estimated to live with a disability (Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, 2014). Allocation of funding during call for proposals depends on the number and types of organizations that apply and the type of projects they intend to undertake.

MWCSD has and continues to lead the national disability programs which benefit most of the organizations with services in this area.

What is not considered here is how the grantee and beneficiary support distribution reflect gaps in communities and whether the sectors seemingly disproportionately benefiting here are funded through alternate mechanisms not in scope. DFAT supports persons with a disability within the CSSP and separately. Examples are the support of Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA), Samoa's national disability advocacy organisation through the CSSP and with MWCSD, to ensure COVID-19 response plans were inclusive. A third example is through Australian Humanitarian Partnership in food security for those most vulnerable; these use multiple funding modalities (DFAT, 2021).

Also missing in findings are a thorough analysis of why CSOs may not be applying for grants and what gaps in support might exist as a result of that. If capacity building happens through the CSSP and CSOs are not applying for or not successful in accessing the grants, how are these CSOs, and the communities they serve, supported? One respondent to the 2021 survey was opportunistically identified during the data collection and explained that they had not applied because they did not know the grants existed. Another CSO noted that they were no longer accessing grants as they had been unsuccessful in their last application, although had received funding in the past. Incomplete projects are not eligible for future funding which may have applied in this case. 25 percent suggested more communication from the CSSP would be helpful in the future and many identified that grants did not align with the work they were doing now. Elements of these sentiments were reinforced in EoP reports. However, it should be noted that CSSP is well recognised and works through multiple mechanisms to communicate. (See Section 0)

Interviews in 2021 also identified that a vulnerability index was used in proposal reviews (Government stakeholder). Feedback has identified that is used in all grant assessments. The assessment template in the CSSP Policy 5 – Grants Management defines the index calculation and confirms its intended use but only for those proposals aimed at addressing 'the priority needs of the most vulnerable' (CSSP, 2019g, p. 9).

Defining vulnerability is described as a two-part process where a CBO vulnerability ranking is applied, considering the level of education, formal employment and the location of a village. Following this stage, targeted groups and individuals are assessed to understand environmental, social and economic factors. The use of the index and specific designs of support prioritise vulnerable populations however there appears to be little reporting of the index which is not an indicator in the CSSP M&E Framework. It is only mentioned once in an annex describing MWCS Sector planning (CSSP, 2021b). Since 2019, there has been no specific mention of the vulnerability assessment data in any steering committee minutes or reporting.

5.3 KNOWN EFFECTS – CSO DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

In part due to lack of data, the CSSP II has been judged to be performing ‘Satisfactorily’ under this area. The work in capacity building and partnership with CSOs has been ad hoc. Most stakeholders identified that the CSSP staff had helped CSOs grow in operational and project management skills and that the majority of projects have been able to deliver sustainable results within the CSO and community. Support from SUNGO was absent or minimal, potentially in part to their own need to build capacity and the project-based support funding for their services. CSO networking and collaboration led through the CSSP was weak with the CSO forum has not been held since 2018. The pending approval of the draft CSO Capacity Development Plan and addition of a CSSP co-ordinator should address some of these limitations.

The CSSP’s Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d) identifies learning and capacity building as a guiding principle:

....it is encouraging and supporting the capacity development of CSOs including their institutional strengthening. CSSP encourages peer learning between CSOs so they share successes (and failures) and develop together an understanding of good development practice in Samoa. This includes an ‘action reflection and participatory learning approach’ which supports CSOs to involve beneficiaries in designing initiatives and assessing the value of them to their communities. (CSSP, 2019d, p. 3)

There were multiple interviews and survey results demonstrating improvement in CSOs’ ability to deliver projects and access funding. Multiple stakeholders identified improvements in CSOs’ understanding of probity and transparency when receiving grants, their ability to apply and be awarded grants and to deliver results. There is also more room for improvement, as evidenced by multiple issues like financial reporting and project management deficiencies listed in the CSSP quarterly reports and EoP reviews. In contrast to the CSSP’s success as a mechanism to fund community assistance, the benefits to CSOs organisationally were generally unquantified and anecdotally variable.

Interviews across all stakeholders identified that capacity has improved but there are gaps and formal needs assessments have been limited to a study of 10 CSOs in 2018/19 by SUNGO. Improvements in quantifying this are proposed through the new CSSP M&E framework⁷ which would measure the success of any new CSO Capacity Development Strategy (draft). Over 40 percent of program improvements suggested by CSOs surveyed were for more CSO training. 88 percent of CSOs were very confident (50 percent) or generally confident (38) that they understood the CSSP expectations and grant requirements. This was reinforced in the sample of EoPs reviewed There were suggestions of where more support was needed including in proposal writing and reporting, governance, procedures and M&E. The pending assessment of 17 CSOs, due 2022 should provide incremental data.

⁷ Long term Outcome 2: Increased CSO capacity to deliver programs/projects which support the national development priorities. Note: CSO includes CBO such as villages, churches, women’s groups etc and NGO (legal entities)

Long term Outcome 3: Improved Capacity for CSO to access and sustain programs/projects within allocated Sectors. Note: CSO includes CBO such as villages, churches, women’s groups etc. and NGO (legal entities)

CSO valued assistance in operational skills like financial management, governance and project management (SUNGO, 2019). A success story is SENESE which is a member of SUNGO and was part of the 2018/19 training. At that time, they were found to need policy and procedure strengthening, ongoing funding sources, a risk management plan and clarity of engagement strategies with government and other organisations. They replaced their board and strengthened operations to the point where they were able to successfully access another significant DFAT grant (SAT150,000). Positive feedback was also received for technical training like sewing. This was reinforced in all four EoP reports from sewing projects reviewed.

In contrast, Goshen Trust, Samoan National Youth Council, WIBDI and the Samoa Returnees Charitable Trust did not access any incremental grants following their capacity assessment and assistance. Another point of note is that while WIBDI was assessed as needing assistance, they did not subsequently participate in the SUNGO capacity building. SUNGO was known to be undergoing organisational changes at the time which might explain some gaps.

DFAT has invested over SAT220,000 in capacity development under CSSP II. To date the CSSP has supported CSO strengthening through individual mentoring during grant implementation, awareness sessions and project management mentoring. The CSSP also helped facilitate the 2018 CSO forum with SUNGO and by funding CSOs like ADRA and the Samoa Red Cross Society (SRCS) and SUNGO to lead more direct CSO capacity building and networking. This work has been funded by DFAT, World Bank, EU and the GCF. The SBH has also provided capacity building support under the UNDP GCF program.

Capacity building work is not institutionalised within the CSSP, except to the extent that a co-ordinator and draft strategy are now in place. In 2020, a Capacity Development Support Coordinator was appointed with which will help to elevate this work. This position took over a year to approve and recruit which may contribute to why the CSSP is somewhat behind in the work in capacity development. The coordinator and the approval and implementation of the CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2021f) will also provide a structured and meaningful approach to CSO assistance.

The draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy notes that the CSSP has been 'focused mainly on grants management for CSOs community projects' (CSSP, 2021f, p. 2) to date. Since 2019, no formal CSO capacity assessments, beyond grant evaluations, have been generated. It is understood that the EU, under the CSSP, are currently funding CSO capacity assessments through SUNGO which will help quantify gaps and support final design of the CSO Capacity Development Strategy. The Oceania Smart review of 17 CSOs will also support this; it is unclear how these two pieces of work interrelate.

This review's survey responses and interviews identified that most CSOs identified organisational growth through their own initiative and determination to deliver, supported with interactions with the CSSP group with some though MNRE, MWCSO, the SBH and technical training such as sewing. Positive feedback was received in SUNGO's assistance in notifying CSOs of grant rounds but only two of 24 CSOs surveyed acknowledged assistance beyond grant round communication.

Most CSOs had experienced little or no assistance from SUNGO. 46 percent of CSOs surveyed had had no interaction at all with SUNGO although many are SUNGO members. A number of interviews described disappointment in the level of assistance received. Donors speculated that non-member CSOs were receiving less support from SUNGO than members, however SUNGO interviews described an open door to all CSOs and no charge for assistance for non-members. A suggestion was that part of any grant could include a fixed percentage or amount for CSO professional development and assistance and this is also in the new CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2021f) (draft).

There has been significant work done in engaging with and funding SUNGO to deliver CSO capacity building, networking mechanisms and research in the sector. They are identified as key in the 2016 DFAT Funding Agreement (DFAT, 2016b), in the CSSP M&E Plan (CSSP, 2021b) and by members of the Steering Committee. For example:

- Over 2017/20 SUNGO, SRCS and ADRA worked under World Bank grants to assist grantees in 100 villages.
- In 2018/19 SUNGO was awarded SAT30,000 to assess and train 10 CSOs under DFAT funding.
- In 2019, the EU also directly granted SUNGO SAT200,000 to facilitate capacity building.
- GCF has funded work through SUNGO directly.

SUNGO is also identified in the CSSP Grants Management Policy (CSSP, 2019g) as being responsible, at least in part, for project design and management training courses for all NGOs and CBOs. In addition to these formal roles and agreements, SUNGO's own mission is to 'deliver capacity building research, opportunities, information, sharing, advocacy and support for civil society in Samoa' (SUNGO, n.d.). Some stakeholders identified SUNGO as a natural fit for the capacity building work and to facilitate the annual CSO forum and as a valuable CSO representation on the CSSP Steering Committee. The CSSP continues to direct CSOs to SUNGO for assistance. The draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2021f) identifies challenges for all CSOs including SUNGO in their income stream and ability to attract and retain skilled staff. The strategy also calls for stronger support of SUNGO, strengthen networks and alliances, more engagement of CSOs with government and to encourage synergies to subsequently build the capacity of all CSOs in Samoa.

The SUNGO 2018/19 capacity and training work, assessed 10⁸ CSOs and described delivery of a suite of formal and informal training (SUNGO, 2019)⁹. The results from this training appear mixed. Some trained CSOs were unsuccessful in or did not apply for future grants; others showed improvement although attribution to the training has not been quantified. A follow up assessment for these and an incremental seven CSOs has recently been awarded and begun assessments, due for completion in 2022 (PMU).

Multiple CSSP quarterly reports note that ongoing, the CSSP effort was required to assist SUNGO to deliver their contract obligations and to provide inputs into the draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy (CSSP, 2020). The CSSP reporting notes that both the DFAT and WB projects ran significantly late and needed to be extended. Interviews with donors in 2021 were universally unflattering about the work that SUNGO has delivered. The CSSP and SUNGO themselves also acknowledge that more can be done and that SUNGO's own capacity and organisation could benefit from further development.

Interviews identified that, despite a restructure in 2019, SUNGO's own governance and operational practices could also be strengthened before taking on a larger role like delivery of the draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy. This finding is supported through the historical assessment of SUNGO by Oxfam in 2019 (Oxfam, 2020) which found that SUNGO was at the maturing level for governance, suggesting improvement required in defining its purpose (1.1¹⁰), constituency (1.4) and goals and strategy (1.5). Other notable gaps were in internal organisational reviews, not conducted although included in policies and procedures, staff development and retention and financial recording, budgeting, management and reporting. On a positive note, the Oxfam report acknowledged the strengths in SUNGO's long history in the sector, membership processes and financial sustainability while specifically identifying the need for clearer Terms of Reference

⁸ Women in Business Development Inc (WIBDI), Samoa Federated Farmers Incorporated (SFFI), Senese, Samoa Ala Mai, Samoa Cancer Society, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Goshen, Fa'ataua Le Ola (FLO), Samoan National Youth Council, Samoa Returnees Charitable Trust

⁹ Delivered under DFAT SAT30,000 grant to SUNGO

¹⁰ This used the Oxfam Capacity Assessment (OCA) Guide.

for the SUNGO board. However, stakeholders in this review, universally agreed that there remains significant opportunity for further improvement of SUNGO's capability.

There appears to be a heavy reliance on SUNGO and significant funding distributed but limited quantifiable results; continuing to work as done historically may produce the same results and the CSO Capacity Development Strategy development provides an opportunity to reset the approach. Almost all CSOs and government interviewees gave varying accounts of the role of SUNGO ongoing. The scope of partnership and responsibility going forward requires further discussion.

CSSP Policy 9 – Partnerships, identifies a priority for the CSSP to 'promote collaborative efforts for positive developmental change through partnership building among organisations and individuals' (CSSP, 2019k, p. 3). The Policy covers partnerships, networking and collaboration across CSO, government and private sector. PMU and MoF feedback have identified that DFAT grant designs do not provide for private sector funding which is a misalignment of CSSP II design and grant scoping. There is work currently underway with the SBH under UNDP GCF demonstrating that private sector support can be provided if included in scope.

In terms of building CSO partnerships, alliances and research, the CSSP has had limited focus or success in these areas despite it being an outcome identified in the CSSP Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d). There were no examples of joint proposals or the influence of the CSSP on bringing together complementary groups to affect any synergies or similar. Some CSOs interviewed did identify that they had been able to build stronger ties with government through the program, particularly with MWCSO and with communities.

Two CSOs identified that the program had enabled more interaction across CSOs, however only eight percent surveyed identified working with other CSOs in general and not necessarily through CSSP. It is not clear whether the CSSP grant mechanism precludes joint approaches or whether the availability and benefit of collaboration is not evident to or priority for CSOs. One interviewee (CSO) believed that the CSSP could take a more proactive approach to helping them find implementation partners who have specialist skills.

Encouraging collaboration and strengthening CSO networks could be delivered in part through the CSO forum if held. Responsibility for the CSO forum is with the CSSP in partnership with SUNGO. While communication by the CSSP has been strong, the annual CSO forum has not been held since 2018; it was planned for April 2021 (CSSP, 2021g) and is now in planning for late 2021/early 2022. This delay is due in part to COVID-19 and a new government. This mechanism is important for CSO engagement with government, donors and each other as well as a mechanism for CSSP updates.

This review tested whether the CSSP's close relationship with government deterred CSOs from advocating for change. When asked, few stakeholders saw the financial support of CSOs through the CSSP as something which would put this at risk. One government stakeholder said 'they continue to have a very loud voice' and CSO interviews identified that the MWCSO meetings provided a regular platform for CSOs. The EU is currently funding 'research' by SUNGO on the capability of CSOs in Samoa, including in advocacy which should help test this. No training was identified in this area or requested by CSOs during the review.

In terms of sustainability of results, most review stakeholders were positive. Only two responses in the survey identified that the work was unlikely to continue beyond the grant. The reasons given were that one CSO still relies on external funding to continue deliver their work. The other, while delivering benefits to the community during their project, had not been as successful as hoped. Some CSOs identified that challenges they faced during implementation included losing their members to the Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE). This had limited their ability to embed the results in their organisations for the longer-term. Many CSOs also identified that their work will continue to rely on grants like these. See Section 0.

Successes were identified in the EoP reports where some communities had embraced projects and incorporated governance into the village leadership (Alii & Faipule O Apia, 2021), other projects had been deliberately designed with sustainability mechanisms. For instance, an agriculture program requires a portion of income generated from vegetable sales to be put aside to buy seeds for the next crop and to maintain the shade houses (Mafutuaga Tama Penetekoso Fagalii-Uta, 2021).

One CSO interviewed noted that a stronger linkage between District Development Plans (DDP) is a positive, grassroots-based way to make sure government policies, strategies, and subsequently grants, remain relevant to communities and support sustainability of results. This occurs through the MWCSO and the Steering Committee in conjunction with the CSSP PMU. Unfortunately, DDPs were not available at the time of CSSP II design although are utilised now and are seen to be a good mechanism to identify communities' priorities for social development. CSO interviews identified examples where the relationships developed between communities and CSOs will assist in maintaining results and help any expansion in the future. A success is NOLA's curriculum work on literacy and numeracy which has been adopted by APTC¹¹ ongoing.

Research does not appear to have occurred or been a particular priority. It is a requirement within the CSSP's Outcome 1 which seeks to increase capacity of the Umbrella Organisation, thematic networks and civil society (CSSP, 2021b). Part of SUNGO's role under the DFAT funding agreement (2016) was also the promotion of the development of CSOs through research and this is also a priority identified in the CSSP Strategic Policy (CSSP, 2019d). In terms of delivery of this outcome, no documents reviewed could be described as research and stakeholders were not able to recall any although there 'might have been a survey once'. In terms of priority, interview participants saw more value in concentrating on community development and strengthening CSOs than on research.

SUNGO was nominally responsible to deliver research under the Australian Funding Agreement (DFAT, 2016) and a number of grants, however this has not yet been delivered. The 2019 Oxfam review (Oxfam, 2020) found that SUNGO's capability in this area was also limited. In 2021 interviews, SUNGO identified their EU funded survey of Samoa CSOs as research which, in the reviewers' opinion could be argued to be capacity development work rather than research.

The Grants Policy (CSSP, 2019g) suggests that innovation should be encouraged and supported. It is difficult to define what makes an innovative project however there are some examples of unique work under CSSP. There was a waste management project, implemented by a women-led CBO in Falevao. This enabled the community to receive bins and community cages. The community also received training to learn about segregation of waste. Another example is that the funding supported the Samoa Cancer Society's Butt-it-out campaign enabled the purchase and installation of cigarette butt receptacles around Apia. This and the youth project recycling plastic waste into useful household products have not been seen before in Samoa. It is important to consider that while welcome, unique programs also add complexity to the PMU.

There continues to be a heavy reliance on donor support for the program although stakeholders identified an increasing appetite for government funding to support some key staff positions as DFAT and the World Bank funding finishes. Interviews identified that the government does have appetite to invest in the CSSP and that the recent SAT 1million development funding for each of the 51 constituencies needs an implementation mechanism. The GoS budget and supplementary budget identify SAT220,000 for the CSSP support, however the SAT150,000 supplementary element has not yet been approved.

¹¹ Australian Pacific Training Coalition

5.4 DELIVERY MODALITY INSIGHTS

The CSSP is judged to be performing 'Soundly'. Stakeholders have noted that the positives in the operation of the CSSP are in its staff, processes for grant management, reputation and recognition in communities and in their flexibility. Donors and government have indicated the potential for ongoing and potentially expended support and use of the CSSP group to deliver community development work.

In 2021, there are policies in place, an M&E framework (CSSP, 2021b) almost finalised, a CSO capacity development strategy under consultation (CSSP, 2021f), a solid history of working with five donors: EU, UNDP, World Bank, DFAT and GCF to deliver significant volumes of aid funding and recognition and relationship with communities. The CSSP's ability to deliver appears to have improved over time, supported by increasing government and donor support and continuous improvement practices. Documentation identifies close alignment with GoS national and sector planning, the Public Financial Management Act (Government of Samoa, 2001) and Procurement Operating Manual (Ministry of Finance, 2020).

The multiple donors accessing the CSSP has added both complexity of operation for the CSSP and a consistency of approach for government funnelling aid through the one CSSP mechanism. There is also a level of consistency in approach for CSOs and communities who recognise the CSSP as a centralised mechanism for support. Enablers to the CSSP's success include the flexibility it has in adding donor requirements over time and in working through different grant modalities. While differences in donor requirements and reporting were identified as ongoing opportunities for improvement, this is an area recognised and under review as is the work to simplify grant applications. Note that multiple stakeholders identified DFAT application format as being the most straightforward.

There are other opportunities to improve operations by increasing strategic focus, revising the Steering Committee Terms of Reference, strengthening risk management, consolidation of grant information and to continually simplify internal processes. Improved and more transparent coherence across donors and sectors, the CSOs engaged and communities supported would be possible with consolidated reporting.

Stakeholders universally identified the PMU as being well managed and able to deliver high volumes. There is complexity across donors, sectors, and beneficiary organisation types and grant modalities. It is not clear how centralised information is consolidated in terms of funding sources, amounts, beneficiaries and dates, although MYOB is being used. It is thought that a consolidated database, if available, would have enable a CSSP view of grants, results and beneficiary data. This was reinforced with stakeholder interviews where the PMU recommended expertise and funding to develop a central database.

Some CSO were unclear about why their original proposed budgets had not been approved in the resulting grant agreements. The PMU identified that maximum grant amounts are not always awarded as there is also consideration of a site assessment and a review of the CSO's ambition compared to ability to deliver to the extent proposed. These different perspectives may suggest clearer explanations in future awards.

Other operational practices, like annual work plans (CSSP, 2019c) and quarterly reporting are in place and appear to meet the needs of stakeholders. There are a Procurement Policy and a Financial Management Policy in place. However, the Steering Committee Terms of Reference and the Operating Manual (CSSP, 2019m) are known to require updates (CSSP, 2021) and donor reporting formats and needs vary across partners¹². The committee's membership and processes were areas identified for improvement. Policy 3 (CSSP, 2019e) describes rotation of the Chair position and two CSO positions. From meeting minutes, it

¹² Donor requirements for grant applications also vary

appears the Chair does not rotate. Processes like approvals through MoF, separate donor accounts and delays in processing contract variations are a few examples where further improvement might be possible.

The allocation of donor funding of the CSSP core staff is problematic as the proportions of donor funds vary over time. The 2019/20 CSSP workplan (CSSP, 2019c) identified that DFAT are currently funding 68 percent of staffing costs while only contributing 24 percent of the overall grant funding (CSSP, 2019c). As the DFAT contract expires in December 2021, this puts the CSSP core funding in a precarious position. Donor funding of staff has limited the ability to recruit, train and retain people, leading to staff turnover as donors come in and when their programs finish. As staff leave, others need to take up their work in the short term and as new recruits come up to speed. This issue was also identified in the CSSP Capacity Building review in 2019 and in the reflection document from 2021 (CSSP, 2021).

Solid operational practices are supported with the CSSP governance through the Steering Committee and annual audits. The CSSP Steering Committee is currently chaired by MoF and an Operational Manual and the CSSP policies have been in place since August 2019. The membership and operation of the PMU and Steering Committee are described within these. Processes are designed to align with the GoS Public Financial Management Act (2001) (Government of Samoa, 2001) and the GoS Procurement Operating Manual (Ministry of Finance, 2020). Transparency and accountability are a set of guiding principles for the CSSP as defined in their Policies (CSSP, 2019d). Evidence reviewed here demonstrates that the CSSP have achieved this through their committees, reporting and steering committee.

Interviews identified that CSO and SUNGO's positions on the Steering Committee raises interesting probity issues around their access to grants under this group. The Conflict-of-Interest Clause in the CSSP Policy (CSSP, 2019e) identifies that if this risk arises, members would be excluded from participating in related discussion. Even with this process, Steering Committee membership does offer the advantage of understanding the direction and workings of the CSSP. Alternate forms of funding could be utilised to engage CSO/SUNGO during their committee tenure, to maintain arms' length commercial relationships.

There is obvious tension between members of the committee with SUNGO interviewees. SUNGO claims they have been unfairly treated and other committee members suggesting SUNGO's input on the committee can align more with SUNGO's interests than that of the CSSP or of the CSOs of Samoa. This is not evident in Steering Committee minutes where SUNGO is seen to be an active contributor to the work done. CSO representation is seen as valuable however there is currently a gap caused by a previous member who resigned to stand for parliament. The conflict- of-interest controversy over SUNGO may be a deterrent for CSOs to become committee members if they fear they will not be eligible for grants. The only CSO Steering Committee representative declined to be interviewed so this could not be tested.

Some donors and participating government ministries are not represented on the Steering Committee either. When interviewed, these ministries identified that they were involved in grant assessments and that they saw the CSSP as a trusted partner and the Steering Committee, capable of representing their needs. As a donor of over SAT11million, UNDP has requested membership, however this was reviewed by the Steering Committee and rejected, based on keeping membership to a manageable size, with government and CSO representatives as the majority. Donors who do attend meetings noted that they cannot represent absent donors as a proxy. There is therefore a gap, particularly as the two donor members, WB and DFAT funding cycles have finished. There is a general acknowledgement that a more flexible membership arrangement may be a solution.

Other issues were in the clarity around where and when procurements (Government Tenders Board, TB) should be used rather than grants. Multiple stakeholders said ‘any goods or services over SAT50,000 go to the TB as a procurement’, however this seems inconsistent with both the Procurement Manual of Samoa (Ministry of Finance, 2020) and the processing of grants in excess of SAT50,000 on a regular basis through the Steering Committee. These examples both point to the TB allowing for organisations boards to approve grants up to SAT150,000. The Procurement Policy (CSSP, 2019i) indicates that direct sourcing is acceptable for EU funded projects although is not clear under which circumstances although they must be justifiable and reasonable. The February 2021 Steering Committee noted that the TB rejects any single sourcing of SUNGO (CSSP, 2021g). There might be a disconnect between practice and theory; clarity is required to maintain objectivity. All CSSP procurement follow government and donor processes.

The long Steering Committee meetings (around five hours) and the almost six months’ break between February and October 2021 were seen by some as issues. However, despite a lack of meetings during these six months, the CSSP continued operating. This suggests that Steering Committee agendas could be reviewed to see if some work could be done outside the meeting on a regular basis to reduce the burden when the group do meet and/or to make space for more strategic discussions. For instance, it might be possible to approve lower value grants under a simpler process.

The CSSP conducts monitoring visits and collects data but the extent to which information is analysed, synthesised, and then used for strategic decision-making is unclear. There are also gaps in M&E skills in general with difficulty in being able to recruit expertise locally (interviews). Progress against outcome-level ambitions is equally unclear, although PMU’s appointment of the M&E Co-ordinator in September 2020 offers opportunities to bridge gaps in understanding. Interviews also identified the need for the CSSP to be able to learn from the 10 years of experience and data in terms of how learning can be applied.

The 2016 DFAT funding agreement (DFAT, 2016) includes monitoring of DFAT’s objectives in a performance assessment framework. In 2021, the CSSP framework is not yet finalised despite being identified as a priority in a number of reports and steering committee meetings. DFAT’s objectives are documented in the CSSP M&E framework and the 2019 Strategic Policy (2) however, these do not align. This misalignment may be reasonable given DFAT Objective 1 could be considered an enabler of Objectives 2 and 3. See Annex 6.

The CSSP indicators in the M&E framework could be strengthened to more closely measure impact. For instance, outputs of ‘training completed’ do not reflect a change in capacity of CSOs or impact on communities. For CSOs, regular use of a standard CSO assessment framework might be more meaningful. There is also an indicator measuring the number of projects delivered by the CSSP. This depends on how many were funded and other unrelated influences outside of a CSOs capacity to deliver and is therefore not useful in decision making. Other findings and conclusions are throughout relevant sections in this report.

The quarterly reports from the CSSP include an analysis of the issues and recommendations for improvement. It is not clear how these are actioned or resolved as a number continue to appear in subsequent reporting. An example is the difficulties the PMU has with MoF lead times on approvals of contracts and funding agreements and the limited physical office space available for the CSSP operation.

While the risk management matrix was established in the 2016 design (DFAT, 2016b), mentioned in quarterly reporting, and called for in Steering Committee meetings (CSSP, 2021g), the CSSP feedback for this review is that it is currently under development through the M&E Specialist. Although referenced in quarterly reporting, it appears not to be actively used.

The CSSP Grants Management Policy (CSSP, 2019g) also defines deliberately simpler application processes for CBOs compared to NGOs and a process for CBOs whereby the CSSP transacts any procurements on behalf of the grantees. In interviews, this was reinforced as relieving some pressure of community groups in procurement management however it did add delay to the process and increase to the workload of the CSSP staff. MoF was able to adjust their requirements to enable some simplification to verbal quotes for small items. This implies a level of confidence in CSSP (donor interview).

Documentation and interviews have reinforced that the CSSP has been able to pivot to address the needs of different donors and government ministries; sometimes with very compressed time frames. An example of this was the DFAT gender funding previously under MWCSO where AUD400,000 was to be delivered through CBOs grants. The flexibility of the CSSP has enabled them to take this on and incorporate more supported project management for CBOs.

Interviews with government stakeholders also identified strong and open communication with the CSSP with few exceptions. CSOs felt supported and many mentioned the site visits by the CSSP staff for inspections (interviews). One EoP review reported that the CSSP communication was 'tremendous' (Mafutuaga Tama Penetekoso Fagalii-Uta, 2021) and one noted that the reporting was easy to understand and staff were readily available. In contrast one CSO reported that staff turnover at the CSSP made communication difficult at times (Komiti Faletua & Tausi – Saoluafata, 2021). Using the EoP reports, the CSSP also deliberately seeks feedback from CSOs on how well they are communicating which implies a continuous intention to improve.

Reporting is in place through the Steering Committee meetings and minutes, quarterly reports and on an ad hoc basis at request of stakeholders. It is however, primarily against activities, with short term outputs and transactional results. While thorough in addressing these, reporting has included limited results against design objectives or those in the M&E framework.

Feedback includes improvements since 2018 including a strengthened social media presence and utilisation of multiple forms of communication to reach stakeholders. The CSSP actively advertises grant rounds and communicates with the public in multiple ways. These include through SUNGO, social media, newspapers, TV and village representatives' meeting through MWCSO. The ability to provide proposal assistance depends on the nature of the program; not all donors provide for this in their scope. Some work is done by SUNGO. Under WB funding, five CSOs were hire to provide this support, none under the UNDP AF and SBH were contracted to help under UNDP CGF work. Arms' length practices, required for commercial engagements like this, mean CSO proposal assistance is vetoed. There have been proposals to include this in a planning component of grants (identified at the 2018 CSO forum) and as a proportion of grant funding (draft CSO Capacity Development Strategy).

Unsuccessful CSOs are given feedback and an opportunity to talk with the CSSP to understand areas for improvement. There is also appeals process which has been used. There are however still CSOs who do not apply for grants or claim they do not know why they were unsuccessful. Understanding barriers to participation may enable further CSO support and community benefit.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For DFAT, CSSP III could continue be a robust and accessible way for DFAT to deliver aid to grassroots beneficiaries. Approval of some form of ongoing support to the CSSP and the remaining work is recommended. The CSSP is reasonably well established and efficient, aligning operations with government and donor needs under a governance framework overseen by MoF. In 2021, the CSSP is showing signs of a

sustainable and maturing operation. Donors and government have indicated the potential for ongoing and expanded support and use of the CSSP work.

Opportunities for strengthened delivery are in large part recognised by stakeholders, including those in the CSSP. A future could include a stronger strategic and outcome focus informed by data, tighter operational management and proportional funding of core positions. The biggest gaps are in CSO capacity development and research. A significant limitation is the lack of outcome level data. There are also efficiency improvements possible through continuing the work to simplify and align donor processes, to drive data-based decision making and to streamline the Steering Committee processes. This is crucial in facilitating any decision going forward in terms of impact and results oriented outcomes. The poor performance of SUNGO under the CSSP II is an ongoing issue which needs a solid plan moving forward.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic and outcome focus

Further strategic leadership and cooperation between donors and government is recommended, specifically including consideration of research, private sector engagement and donor harmonisation in CSSP future objectives. Any CSSP III phase design will drive a revised Strategic Policy and M&E Framework. It is reasonable to expect this be led through the Steering Committee in consultation with key government, donor and community members and drawing on learnings to date.

Strengthen capacity building and networking for CSOs

To date, implementation has been disjointed and results are not quantifiable. The new Capacity Development Strategy is scientific and structured however remains reliant on SUNGO who has not demonstrated their own capacity well to date. Clear accountability and contract management is required for future engagements to deliver results differently.

Continue to streamline and refine Steering Committee and PMU operations

Opportunities for further efficiencies are continually raised in reporting and Steering Committee meetings. The high volume of low value transactions can create disproportionate overhead costs. Recommendations to simplify include simplifying and commonising donor reporting, improved information management systems and facilities and addressing or clearing issues continually raised in quarterly reports. A review of where procurement of goods and services for CSOs could be streamlined for common procurements.

Where possible operational decisions and low-value grant approvals might be delegated to the PMU leaving more space for the Steering Committee to set high-level direction and drive outcome-based accountability under an aligned M&E framework and institutionalised reflection and learning. A policy refresh is required to incorporate learnings to date, to refresh Steering Committee Terms of Reference and to allow for more flexible donor participation in financing and governance. Policies need to allow for donors to come and go with funding without requiring major rework to policies and procedures. A thorough process review could be a way of considering systemic improvements.

Funding design

Most urgently required is for the CSSP to find a funding source to support core positions previously funded by DFAT. The supplementary budget proposed by MoF has not yet been approved. MoF and other donor programs depend on ongoing staff in place. In future, the funding model could be more robust and proportional. Ongoing government financial support can be justified given the nesting of the organisation within government, its support of the aid coordination activities and the need for a mechanism to deliver the pending constituency funding.

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ANNEX 2: STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Stakeholders interviewed were from the following cohorts and organisations. These are split by cohort.

DONORS

DFAT, Green Climate Fund and World Bank were included in stakeholder interviews for this review.

GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

Table 1: Government stakeholders

Ministry name	Sector
MoF	Finance
MNRE	Natural resources and the Environment
MWCSD	Women, Community and Social Development

CSOs

Table 2: CSO stakeholders

CSO Name	Sector	SUNGO membership
Alii and Faipule of FATUVALU (SAVAII)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Alii ma Faipule of LALOVI, MULIFANUA (UPOLU)	Agriculture	NO
AuusoFealofaniMetotisi SATAUA (SAVAII)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Beekeepers Association – VAISALA & SAFUNE (SAVAII)	Agriculture	YES
Faataua le Ola	Mental health	YES
Goshen Trust	Mental health	YES
Komiti a Tina – VAILAVEA, SAMATAU (UPOLU)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Komiti Tina ASAGA (SAVAII)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Komiti a Tina ma Tamaitai – SALEAULA (SAVAII)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Komiti Tina Itumalo ALATAUA I SISIFO (SAVAII)	Sewing & Elei	NO
Mafutaga a Tina Katoliko – TIAVEA (UPOLU)	Sewing & Elei	NO

CSO Name	Sector	SUNGO membership
MafutagaAualofa – VAVAU (UPOLU)	Sewing & Elei	NO
MafutagaTamaEkalesiaPenetekoso – FAGALII (UPOLU)	Agriculture	NO
Mafutaga Tina EFKS / Komiti a Tina ma Tamaitai FALELAUVAO (FALEVAO) (UPOLU)	Disposal & waste	YES
Mixed Farming Cooperative Society Group Ltd - FALEASIU UTA (UPOLU)	Agriculture	YES
NOLA	Capacity building, disability	YES
Samoa Cancer Society	Health	YES
SENESE	Inclusive education	YES
SUNGO	Umbrella organisation	N/A
Tupua ma le Aumaga FALEVAO (UPOLU)	Agriculture	NO

Note that there was also a second SUNGO representative interviewed whose role is as a member of the Steering Committee.

CSSP PMU

The manager and staff working in grant management, finance, M&E and capacity development were interviewed.

The following charts (Figure 1 and Figure 2) demonstrate that 65 percent of the 43 interviews were with people identifying as female and over 40 percent of participants were between 34 and 44 years old. There was also representation from within the 25 to 34, 45 to 60 and over 60 ages.

Figure 1: Gender demographics, 43 participants

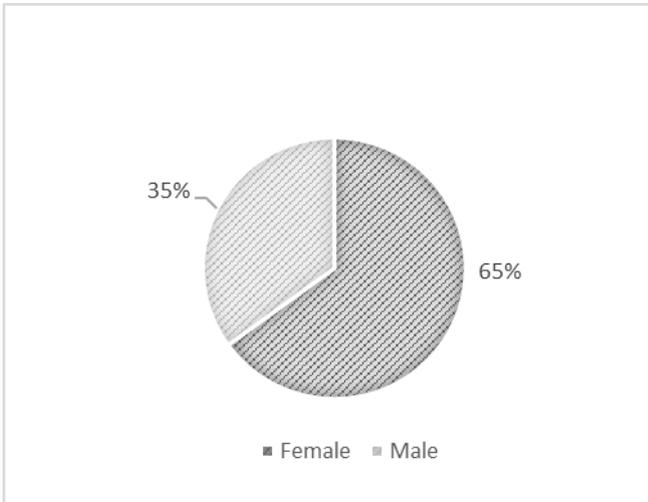
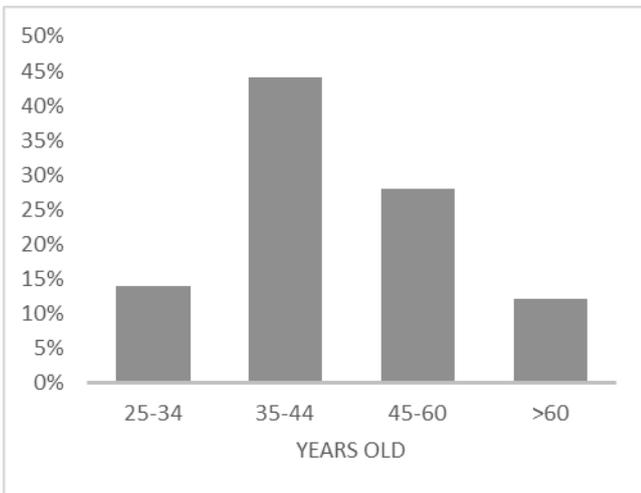


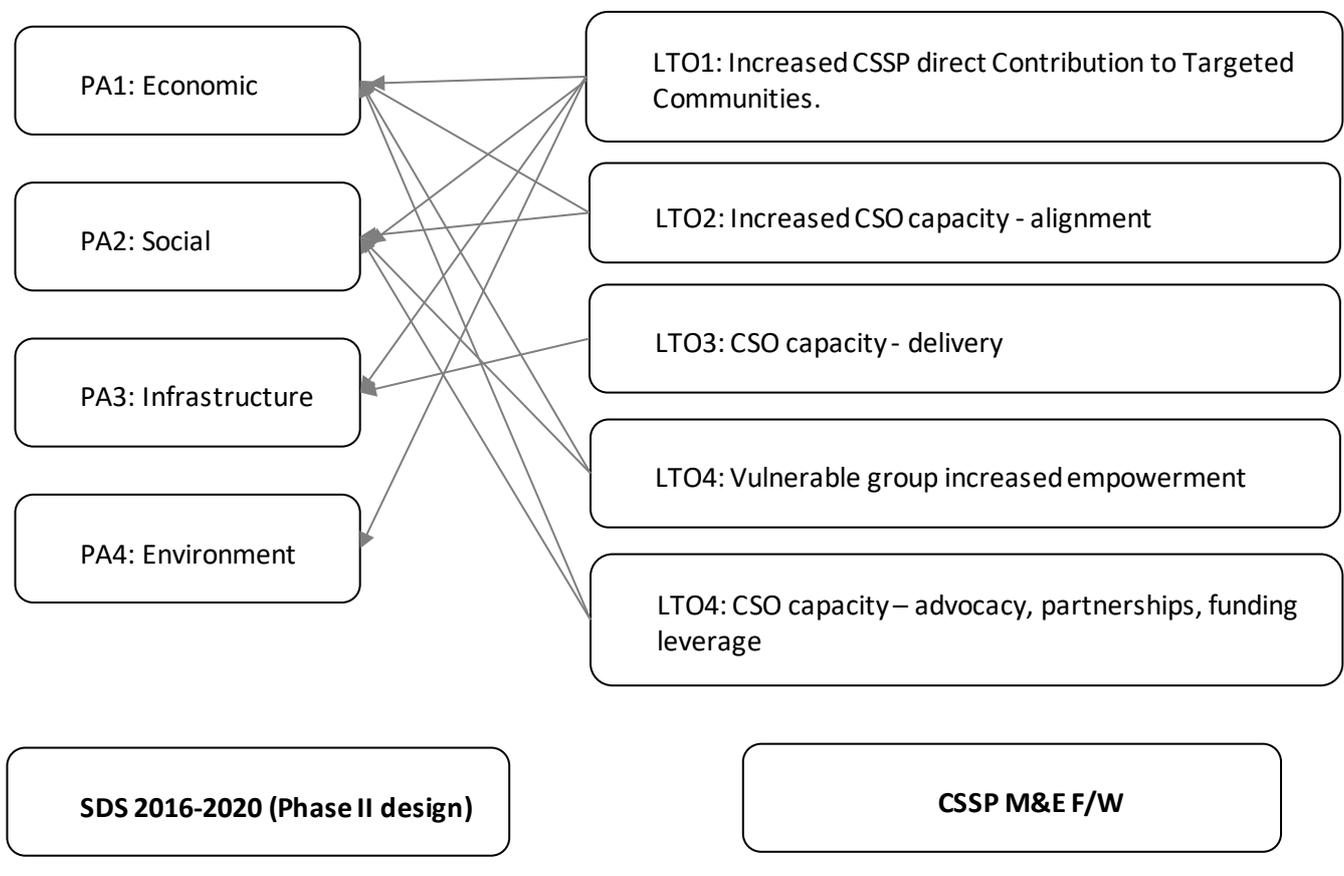
Figure 2: Stakeholder ages, 43 participants



ANNEX 3: SDS AND CSSP M&E MAPPING

This diagram (Figure 2) links the SDS 2016-2020 in place at CSSPII design, to the CSSP M&E framework. Areas are high level and effectively this demonstrates strong alignment of CSSP with national strategies.

Figure 3: SDS mapping to CSSP M&E Framework



ANNEX 4: CSSP DONOR FUNDING PROPORTIONS OVER TIME

Table 3: Donor funding of CSSP

Funding Agency	Program	Amount (SAT \$millions)	Status
EU	Capacity Building, Gender Equality and Water Management	4.40	Implementation to finish 23 March 2022
World Bank	Climate Resilience (PPCR)	4.90	Implementation finished June 2021
UNDP (Adaptation Fund)	Climate Resilience	1.80	Implementation finished December 2018
UNDP (Green Climate Fund)	EbAEDF – Climate Resilience	10.00	Implementation to finish 30 June 2023
DFAT	NGOs – General	4.30	Implementation finished September 2021
DFAT	Gender Fund	0.77	Implementation finished September 2022
Total			26.17

ANNEX 5: RUBRICS

RELEVANCE¹³

Key questions examined are:

- To what extent is the CSSP II **doing the right things**, i.e. things that matter to the needs and priorities of the vulnerable communities they seek to support?
- To what extent do the program objectives and ways of working **remain relevant** to Samoa's context?
- In what ways, if any, do program stakeholders, including participating and non-participating CSOs, believe the policy and/or **operating space has changed since the start of Phase II**? In what ways is it still evolving? And what implications might these changes have for development partners interested in enhancing the voice and performance of civil society?
- To what extent CSSP II has delivered a **coherent and balanced composition** of project portfolio, the strategic rationale for the choices made, and of potential and actual synergies and interlinkages across the projects and partners?

The rubric ratings for this inquiry area are described here. The assessment from this review is shaded. The CSSP is performing:

Well if	grants are selected utilising criteria aligned with country priorities and are delivering the program objectives; gaps are actively addressed. The program consistently demonstrates strong links with the community. It comprehensively demonstrates support to deliver results which align with and are considered valuable by stakeholders. Coherence across this program and similar initiatives in Samoa are easily demonstrated and consistently praised by stakeholders. CSSP is actively addressing ongoing alignment with changes in the Samoan context.
Soundly if	the program mostly drives projects which align with government priorities and target the highest levels of need. There is a minor imbalance, gap or overlap in sectors supported within the country; i.e. sectors not always based on areas of need to be addressed. There is evidence of reasonable coherence across this program and similar initiatives in Samoa and some planning under the new government priorities and changing context.
Satisfactorily if	the mix of projects approved is addressing key community support areas which somewhat align with the current and future national plans, although there are notable gaps or overlaps which are recognised and are being addressed. Some elements of the program approach may not be valued universally by community stakeholders or government.
Poorly if	the highest levels of need are only partially addressed if at all. And there are notable gaps or overlaps in support needed. These gaps are considered significant by government and CSOs. There is also little or no deliberate alignment of grants to address key community areas or national plans.

¹³ Numbering refers to the Findings section of this report; Relevance is Section 5.1 and these questions directly relate to relevance

KNOWN EFFECTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Key questions are:

- What is the **impact** CSSP II has made, for whom and the significance of those changes to them, specifically what impacts has the program made in **improving the social and economic wellbeing of vulnerable people** in Samoa?
- In what areas has the program been **most impactful**? Why do partners single out these cases as being of significance?

The CSSP II design document (DFAT, 2016b, p. 13) defined that CSSP activities would:

- increase community development work in vulnerable communities with MWSCD, to identify gaps in Government service delivery and ways to address these gaps in innovative and developmentally sound ways
- improve and upgrade the CSSP Vulnerability Index / Matrix
- support NGOs and CBOs which can provide innovative solutions to problems identified by DFAT sectors.

The rubric ratings for this inquiry area are described here. The assessment from this review is shaded. The CSSP is performing:

Well if	there have been sustainable and positive impacts demonstrated and attributable, at least in part, to CSSP in improving social and economic well-being of vulnerable people. Stakeholders recognise that the program is delivering change effectively; they may advocate for the program with others. Ongoing data demonstrates that marginalised groups are benefiting from the program as planned.
Soundly if	stakeholders recognise that the program is delivering change effectively and contributing to longer term organisational and country development goals. Evidence shows positive changes in the outcome result areas above are somewhat evident. Ongoing data demonstrates that marginalised groups are benefiting from the program as planned, with some areas where improvement is possible.
Satisfactorily if	stakeholders agree that the program potential for positive results are emerging, if outputs are beginning to demonstrate the likely links between activities and short-term social benefit to those most vulnerable. Other findings include that CSSP benefits are reaching a cross-section of the population although some groups are under-represented. Communication of government priorities occurs but may not reach all CSOs.
Poorly if	there are significant achievement issues and/or limitations in assessing performance, the program progress is not yet enough to be able to draw conclusions about whether it is achieving effective change and/or if most, if not all, activities which have begun are within the program establishment and staff development and are not demonstrating valuable results.

KNOWN EFFECTS – CSO CAPACITY AND RESEARCH

Key questions are:

- To what extent is the CSSP II **achieving its intended objectives?**
- How is the CSSP providing a responsive resource for the development of civil society in Samoa, particularly by way of establishing **partnerships, promoting alliances, and supporting research?**
- What is the intended and likely **legacy of the CSSP II's investments**, particularly among the CSO community?

Note that this section also incorporates:

- DFAT's Objective 2 from the CSSP II design: to Support Samoa's civil society to adopt and apply effective and innovative approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable people
- DFAT Objective 3: Be a responsive resource for the development of civil society in Samoa, particularly by way of establishing partnerships, promoting alliances, and supporting research.

Activities under this were anticipated to be:

- funding opportunities that support collective action/ partnership approaches to address development challenges
- formal partnerships established with SUNGO and others such as the private sector, to increase capacity building and training targeted at specific areas of civil society development. This should guide the development of appropriate training, including making use of the Samoan In-Country Training Program and the accredited courses being developed through that program, as well as the capacity already developed through SUNGO.
- joint approaches developed within key sectors between government and civil society in order to have complimentary strategies between the two sectors in areas such as health, education, gender, disability and infrastructure development
- locally contracted research to inform development of Samoa's civil society, i.e.: on sustainable financing options for civil society organisations, effective methodologies on engaging with government, working with the private sector.
- results of research and learning widely shared and discussed to inform policy development
- regular, constructive and relevant forums to bring together civil society, government and the private sector to strengthen CSO engagement at policy level and national planning processes
- to ensure NGOs, CBOs and other civil society groups are well informed about Government sector plans and priorities.

Part of the DFAT funding agreement required SUNGO to perform a number of tasks, including promotion of the development of CSOs through research, information dissemination, conferences and seminars and best practice award. Source: CSSP II Design (DFAT, 2016b, p. 14)

The rubric ratings for this inquiry area are described here. The assessment from this review is shaded. The CSSP is performing:

Well if	<p>there have been sustainable and positive impacts demonstrated and attributable, at least in part, to CSSP in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthening CSOs to provide innovative approaches, establish and utilise networks and alliances • strengthening CSOs to enable advocacy to government in national policy and planning direction • research useful to stakeholders. <p>Evidence shows the majority of funded projects deliver lasting effects and are expected to continue and/or scale. Government leadership and financial and in-kind support is in place and is likely to continue into the future. Other parts of government are adopting some elements of the program or adaptations of some CSO projects. CSO partnerships and networks have been formed which reinforce the work and actively identify new opportunities and synergies. Research projects have been utilised to drive lasting change or support the design of incremental programs. Innovative solutions are actively utilised, encouraged and supported.</p> <p>CSOs consider themselves more confident and more able to influence policy and national planning and informed of national priorities. This is also demonstrated through evidence of their contributions in these areas and in examples of CSO/government collaboration. Stakeholders consider that CSOs technical and management ability has generally improved as a result of participation in the program.</p>
Soundly if	<p>evidence shows the majority of funded projects deliver lasting effects and are expected to continue and/or scale at least in part. Government leadership and financial and/or in-kind support is in place and may continue into the future. Other parts of government are considering adoption of, or see the benefits of some elements of the program and CSO projects. Supported CSO partnerships and networks have been formed which are showing some benefit to participants. Research projects are underway or completed but not yet utilised widely. There is some evidence that innovative approaches are utilised, encouraged and supported.</p> <p>Some larger CSOs are more confident and able to influence policy and national planning; most feel informed of national priorities. This is also demonstrated through evidence of their contributions in these areas and in examples of CSO/government collaboration. Stakeholders consider that CSOs technical and management ability has generally improved as a result of participation in the program, with some exceptions. Most CSOs are aware of government priorities through regular communication of some form.</p>
Satisfactorily if	<p>stakeholders generally agree that the technical and management skills of CSOs have improved as a result of the program. To date there have been few research projects or instances where CSOs have worked with government and/or advocated for national changes in policy or planning. Most CSOs feel that they are engaged with government to understand priorities.</p> <p>There are some examples where results seen in CSOs and the communities they serve have been adopted more broadly and others where stakeholders believe they are likely to continue or scale. Innovation is not yet appearing in operations or projects although it may be encouraged by the PMU and Steering Committee.</p>
Poorly if	<p>ongoing CSO capacity building continues to be a priority.</p>

DELIVERY MODALITY INSIGHTS

Key questions are:

- To what extent is the CSSP II **achieving its intended objectives?**
- How well is the CSSP providing an **effective, transparent and accountable** mechanism for the delivery of development funding to civil society?
- To what extent is the **governing structure provides necessary/sufficient direction and support** for the efficient and effective delivery of the CSSP?
- To what extent are the **M&E systems fit for purpose?**
- To what extent is the CSSP **managing risks?**

CSSP II design (DFAT, 2016b) outputs were proposed as:

- a review of Steering Committee Terms of Reference based on evolving work of CSSP II
- improved communication products based and an updated communication strategy implemented
- organisational review of the PMU to ensure improved transparency and accountability and to ensure sufficient resources to carry out CSSP's expanding roles and responsibilities
- improved systems for monitoring and evaluation
- improved management and information systems to improve access to information, networking and to improve communication
- further development of proposal assessment mechanisms in CSSP II to ensure they identify proposals which are targeted to improve livelihoods for marginalised people in communities.

Source: CSSP II design (DFAT, 2016b, pp. 12,13)

The rubric ratings for this inquiry area are described here. The assessment from this review is shaded. The CSSP is performing:

Well if the program is delivered on time, within budget and delivers financial support to CSOs in a timely and transparent way. Where opportunities to deliver more have been identified, additional benefit has been achieved within the same time and budget, this may include actively facilitating synergies between CSOs and other partners. The Steering Committee encourages and the PMU actively facilitates efficiency improvement. Program reporting is established to identify where there are problems in budget and delivery in enough time to action.

Leadership and support from the Steering Committee is consistent and appropriate. Regular checks for ongoing relevance and delivery to plan are incorporated into both the Steering Committee and the PMU terms of reference and demonstrated performance.

Soundly if the program looks for opportunities to run more efficiently and is mostly delivering on time and budget and in a transparent way. The Steering Committee agenda includes PMU accountability and operational efficiency in some form although may not be actively driving results. The Steering Committee operates effectively and generally supports probity and compliance in CSSP operations.

There is evidence that the program is starting to demonstrate practices like identifying budget risks, cost-improvement ideas and synergies across CSO projects and other government mechanisms.

Program reporting is established to identify where there are problems in budget and annual work planning delivery in enough time to action. Minor areas require attention to bring back to agreed work plan. There are ad-hoc examples of where a flexible approach has been adopted to improve results. This might be adapting areas which were over budget or running late.

Monitoring and Evaluation is in place but not actively used to drive decisions. Risks and issues are addressed formally and regularly. Coordination and communication provide a level of transparency of program progress.

There are only minor areas of concern overall.

Satisfactorily if annual work planning is in place and activities to date have mostly been on time with the reach anticipated with some notable exceptions identified by multiple stakeholders.

Coordination and communication and accountability mechanisms are in place with recognised deficiencies. Monitoring and evaluation may be under development but not widely used. Risks and issues are starting to be addressed formally and regularly.

Poorly if the program has significant issues and/or limitations in management and governance. Multiple areas for improvement remain unaddressed for longer than a year. Monitoring and evaluation is not in place and budget and work planning accountability and planning is patchy. Most if not all activities which have begun are within the program establishment and staff development.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Key areas to identify are:

- any critically important gaps or missed opportunities for the CSSP II to affect change
- insights about the external environment, including lessons about collective action and the changing NGO/CSO 'space'.

ANNEX 6: MAPPING OF DFAT OBJECTIVES TO THE CSSP OUTCOMES

Table 4: Mapping of DFAT objectives to the CSSP outcomes

DFAT requirements (DFAT, 2016)	CSSP M&E Long-Term Outcomes (CSSP, 2021b)	CSSP Policy 2 – Strategy outcomes (CSSP, 2019d)
1. Provide an effective, transparent and accountable mechanism for development funding for civil society to address development outcomes.	N/A	N/A
2. Support Samoa civil society to take effective and innovative approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased CSSP direct contribution to targeted communities within allocated sectors. 2. Increased NGO capacity to deliver programs/projects to targeted communities within allocated sectors. 3. Improved capacity for villages, community and CBO to access and sustain programs/projects within allocated sectors. 4. Greater empowerment of vulnerable groups (women, youths, PWDs). 	<p>Vulnerable communities and groups have improved quality of life as a result of the projects.</p> <p>CSO implementing agencies have increased knowledge and skills in project planning and management resulting in local ownership and sustainability.</p> <p>CSO have increased capacity to carry out their respective mandates.</p>
3. Provide a responsive resource for civil society development in Samoa to establish partnerships, promote alliances and support research.	5. Improved capacity for CSSP to engage in policy dialogue, access funds and enhance public private partnership.	<p>Civil society has improved access to research, resources, alliances and regional networks.</p> <p>Genuine engagement of CSOs in policy dialogue through durable sector partnerships that promote alignment of development priorities in national planning.</p>