



# AUSTRALIA-FIJI GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAM

Investment Design Title: Australia-Fiji Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Program (GEDSI Program)
Start date: January 2025
End date: September 2029
Total proposed DFAT funding: AUD9.6 million
Total proposed funding from all donor/s: AUD9.6 million
Current program fund annual allocation: AUD 54million
AidWorks investment number: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Risk: medium
Value: medium
Concept approved by: NA
Concept endorsed by DPC: NA
Quality Assurance completed: informal QA by DPA/ADB/PRD and Gender Equality Branch
Approval: Delegate at Post: Deputy High Commissioner, Suva

## A. Executive Summary

1. Australia and Fiji committed to a renewed and elevated Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership in October 2023. Our Vuvale Partnership sets out priority outcomes across five pillars and includes a stronger emphasis on sustainable human development, including in gender equality. The forthcoming Development Partnership Plan for Fiji outlines how we will achieve the commitments under our Vuvale Partnership.
2. The Fiji Government has made strong policy commitments, particularly on disability equity and rights, the prevention of gender-based violence and support to women’s economic empowerment. The Fiji Government launched the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls 2023-2028 (NAP). Fiji Government is also developing the National Action Plan on Women’s Economic Empowerment and a new National Disability Policy. The Fiji Government has asked Australia to support the implementation of policy efforts.
3. Australia has a strong focus on gender and disability equality within its development program and partnership with Fiji, which is well regarded. As the largest bilateral donor in Fiji, we have a strong value-add in terms of our policy and programming focus, resourcing, and ability to deploy relevant Australian and international expertise.
4. This new Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Program (GEDSI Program) responds to these priorities. The GEDSI Program will be a sub-program under the Fiji Program Support Platform (‘the

Platform’). The Platform Investment Design Document (IDD), approved in 2024, identified the need to create a new flexible, responsive GEDSI Fund through the Platform, to better embed gender equality and disability equity and rights across the Fiji bilateral programs and support Fiji Government GEDSI mainstreaming. The Platform IDD also identified that other Australian support for technical assistance and funding support to Fiji’s Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection provided through other mechanisms could potentially be contracted through the Platform, to consolidate DFAT support to the Ministry.

5. This GEDSI Program IDD outlines the Platform’s GEDSI Fund and Australian support to Fiji’s Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection, including to implement the NAP. The estimated budget allocation for the GEDSI Program is AUD9.6 million over 5 years. The Fiji-Australia Vuvale partnership already has a strong focus on GEDSI and the programs across the portfolio contribute significantly to GEDSI through mainstreaming in those programs, for example supporting women’s participation through Gender Responsive Budgeting work under the Fiji-Australia Institutional Partnerships Program requires Fijian ministries to allocate programs and budgets for women in their workplans. This work has been implemented by the Fijian Ministry of Finance.
6. The objective of the GEDSI Program is: To work together under the Vuvale Partnership to advance Fiji’s commitments on gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion.
7. The GEDSI Program aims to achieve this objective by realising two complementary End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs):
  - EOPO 1: Select ministries are mainstreaming GEDSI in policy, programs and budgets; and
  - EOPO 2: Strengthened service delivery and public education for the prevention of violence against women and girls.
8. Seven intermediate outcomes will provide pathways to meet these EOPOs in priority areas.
9. The GEDSI Program will be situated within the Platform’s governance and management arrangements, communications protocols, and approaches to monitoring, evaluation and learning. The Platform’s core personnel include the “Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub”, which comprises of technical staffing to support the Platform’s effective integration of GEDSI and climate change. The Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub team will oversee the implementation, day-to-day management and operations of the GEDSI Program.

## B. Development Context and Situational Analysis (What problem are we addressing?)

10. **Gender Equality: s 33(a)(iii)** Experiences of equality differ among women based on socio-economic position, religion, ethnicity and age. Fiji has high rates of gender-based violence, with reportedly 64 per cent of women reporting physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime. There are low levels of representation of women in national leadership. At the time of writing, 5 out of 55 Parliamentarians are women, 2 out of 18 Cabinet Ministers are women, 1 out of 10 Assistant Ministers are women, and 6 out of 19 Permanent Secretaries are women. At the community level, very few women hold traditional leadership roles and men tend to hold a greater proportion of power within families. In the education setting, girls’ attendance rates are stronger than boys across primary and secondary education, but this is not reflected in workforce participation rates. Women are more likely to work in lower paid and less secure jobs. In the health setting, women have higher rates of sexually transmitted infections to regional and global averages, reflecting challenges with access to sexual reproductive health and rights.
11. **Disability:** According to Fiji’s 2017 census, 13.7 per cent of Fijians experience at least one functioning challenge as a form of disability. One of the main causes of growing rates of disability in Fiji is non-

communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, obesity, cardio-vascular and cancer related diseases. Despite Fiji's long history of educating students with disabilities (17 special schools in urban areas and more recently through varying degrees of integration in 253 mainstream schools), children with disabilities (particularly girls) are less likely to attend and continue school beyond the secondary level. People with disabilities are less economically active than those without disability. Of the total number of people with disabilities aged 15 and over in Fiji (24,371), about 27 per cent are in the labour force, compared to 58 per cent of persons without disabilities.

12. **Social inclusion:** Fiji's estimated population is 929,766, with approximately 70 per cent on the main island of Viti Levu. Fiji has a young population, with a median age of 26.9 years. Two thirds of the population are iTaukei (Indigenous Fijians). While Fiji is classified as a Melanesian country, the iTaukei population has a mix of Melanesian and Polynesian heritage. The remaining third of the population are predominantly Fijian descendants of Indian indentured labourers (Indo-Fijians) and other minorities. In 2019-20, 24.1 per cent of the population lived below the national poverty line.
13. Fiji is one of the few countries globally to have constitutional protections against LGBTIA+ discrimination. Same-sex relations were decriminalised in 2010, however, same-sex marriage is not legal in Fiji.
14. **Climate change:** Vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by inequity and marginalisation linked to gender, disability, low income or combinations thereof, especially for many local communities. Women are affected more significantly than men by climate change and disasters, due to gender inequalities and power imbalances in access to resources and relevant information. Displacement, through disasters and climate emergencies, can also increase the risk of violence. This investment will integrate climate change and disaster preparedness considerations into awareness programs for Gender-Based Violence, and for services for survivors of gender-based violence, including during and after disasters and climate emergencies.
15. The material reality is that women, certain ethnic groups, peoples with disabilities and the LGBTQIA+ community experience inequalities and discrimination, despite constitutional and legislative protections.
16. The Fiji Government has made strong policy commitments, particularly on disability equity and rights, the prevention of gender-based violence and support to women's economic empowerment. The Fiji Government launched the NAP in 2023. The Fiji Government is also developing the National Action Plan on Women's Economic Empowerment and the new National Disability Policy. The Fiji Government has asked for Australia to continue supporting policy implementation.
17. The previous Fiji Program Support Facility (2018-2024) implemented approximately half of Australia's Fiji bilateral development program, including sector programs in health, education, social infrastructure, disaster preparedness and governance. During the life of the Facility, a range of Fiji Government Ministries requested short-term advice and assistance to mainstream gender and disability in their ministries. However, the Facility did not have human or financial resources to respond positively to these requests. During the design process for the Fiji Program Support Platform, the successor to the Facility, DFAT recognised the need to allocate unprogrammed advisory funds to such requests in the future.
18. The Platform Investment Design Document (IDD) outlined the creation of a new flexible, responsive GEDSI Fund through the Platform, to better embed gender equality and disability equity and rights across the Fiji bilateral programs and support Fiji Government efforts to mainstream GEDSI. The Platform IDD set out the prerequisites for the fund to be utilised by line ministries, for example, by appointing a counterpart and allocating funding from their budgets and a working group to carry forward the

mainstreaming activity. This was based on lessons learned about supporting longer-term sustainability and capacity building.

19. The Platform IDD further identified that other Australian support for technical assistance and funding support to Fiji's Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection provided through other mechanisms could potentially be contracted through the Platform, to consolidate DFAT support to the Ministry.
20. Since 2021, DFAT has provided financial support to Fiji to develop and implement the NAP.
21. Australia also provides core, long-term support to key women's rights organisations, including the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Women's Fund Fiji. Funding support to these organisations is outside the scope of this IDD, but it will be important for DFAT to ensure coordination, particularly given their important role in supporting efforts to prevent violence against women and girls.
22. Regional funding for gender equality is also provided through Pacific Women Lead, a portfolio of regional and bilateral investments totalling AUD 170 million over five years from 2021 to 2026, building on the previous Pacific gender equality program Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, and Australia's long-term commitment to supporting gender equality in the Pacific. Effective communication and coordination between bilateral and regional programs has at times been challenging in GEDSI investments. GEDSI expertise and experience from Platform advisors will be used to better leverage the significant investment in regional programs and ensure that cross cutting issues are mainstreamed, better resourced and strategically coordinated across the Fiji programs.

### C. Strategic Intent and Rationale (Why?)

23. The Pacific is of increasing policy importance to Australia. Australia's International Development Policy for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Indo-Pacific (August 2023) (International Development Policy) reaffirms Australia's commitment to genuine partnership and support for locally led change in the Pacific. The Policy articulates Australia's commitment to support partner countries to build effective, accountable states that drive their own development; to enhance state and community resilience to external pressures and shocks; to connect with Australia and regional architecture and to generate collective action on global challenges such as the existential threat of climate change.
24. Australia has strong policy commitments to supporting gender equality and disability inclusion, as highlighted in the International Development Policy, the International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (2024) and the International Gender Equality Strategy (2025). The Foreign Minister, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, has reinstated DFAT's 80 per cent target for gender equality in development assistance investments, signaling a renewed commitment to prioritising gender equality outcomes in DFAT's development program.
25. On 18 October 2023, the Prime Ministers of Australia and Fiji signed a renewed and elevated [Fiji-Australia Vuvale Partnership](#) setting out our commitments across five pillars: strengthening people-to-people links, deepening the economic relationship, enhancing security cooperation, building cooperation on international and regional issues, and partnering to enable sustainable human development. Australia's investment in GEDSI forms part of the Human Development pillar of the 2023 Vuvale Partnership.

26. Key GEDSI commitments under the Vuvale Partnership are:

- We commit to work together to uphold international law and principles [including]... the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [and] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other core international human rights treaties and many other international instruments; and
- We will continue to work together to ensure that women are able to participate fully and freely in political, economic and social life. We commit to the implementation of our respective National Action Plans to End/Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and meeting our obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We will work together and with civil society, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to increase women's leadership and decision-making opportunities and strengthen women's economic advancement.

s 33(a)(iii)

28. Australia has a strong focus on gender and disability equality within its development program and partnership with Fiji. This support is well regarded. As the largest bilateral donor in Fiji, we have a strong value-add in terms of our policy and programming focus, resourcing, and ability to deploy relevant Australian and international expertise.

**D. Proposed Outcomes and Investment Options (What?)**

29. The objective for this investment reflects Australia's and Fiji's commitment to work together under the Vuvale Partnership to support the Fiji's Government in advancing GEDSI. This section outlines the End of Program Outcomes, Interim Outcomes (IOs) and indicative activities under the IOs.

D1 End of Program Outcomes

EOPO 1: Select Ministries are mainstreaming GEDSI in policy, programs and budgets

30. This end of program outcome (EOPO 1) articulates the intent to support the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection to improve and strengthen its own systems to meet the objectives, national policy and action plans, and to support the mainstreaming of GEDSI across other Fiji Government ministries. The GEDSI Fund activities and advisory support to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection will contribute to this EOPO.

31. The IOs under EOPO 1 are set out below:

IO 1.1: Government staff and program partners are committed to delivering equitable and accessible policies, programs and services

32. Activities under this IO may include:

- supporting responsive short term technical assistance for GEDSI provided to Fiji Government ministries;
- establishing a governance mechanism for GEDSI coordination;
- providing the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection with human resources support for the development, coordination and implementation of policies and action plans related to GEDSI;
- training of government staff and relevant partners across ministries;
- supporting coordination, collaboration and sharing of good practices across Fiji Government ministries and Platform sector programs (for example, health and education programs); and
- supporting ongoing long-term advisors to the Minister and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection.

**IO 1.2: Policies, programs and services are informed by evidence, principles and international standards and input from women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups**

33. Activities under this IO may include:

- assisting the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection to address gaps in data collection and GEDSI analysis of data and knowledge management;
- advising Fiji Government ministries on developing inclusive monitoring and evaluation and reporting processes;
- collecting and sharing disaggregated data across Fiji Government ministries and other Platform sector programs;
- developing and socialising GEDSI evidence, research studies and government and partners; and
- integrating climate change considerations to GEDSI policies and programs.

**IO 1.3: Regular Talanoa or policy dialogue mechanism with representative CSOs to facilitate and respond to feedback from women, girls, persons with disability and people from marginalised groups on service quality and access**

34. Activities under this IO may include:

- assisting the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection on an engagement strategy with Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) and Women’s Rights Organisations (WROs);
- supporting capacity building of government, OPDs and WROs in developing inclusive policy, programs and services;
- integrating actions on climate change into GEDSI Program activities that are informed by different perspectives, rights, needs and priorities of women and marginalised groups; and
- providing direct funding from the GEDSI Program to OPDs and WROs to support programs and service delivery.

**EOPO 2: Strengthened service delivery and public education for the prevention of violence against women and children.**

35. EOPO 2 focuses on efforts through Fiji’s National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and All Girls. It will work with National Action Plan stakeholders, including the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection, other relevant Fiji Government ministries, civil society parties and technical agencies. Support will comprise of employment of the National Action Pan Unit core local staff, technical advisory support to strengthen coordination with stakeholders and program delivery, and the provision of operational costs.

36. The IOs under EOPO 2 are set out below:

**IO 2.1 Transformative public education initiatives deliver increased awareness and social norms change reducing acceptance of violence against women and children**

37. Activities under this IO may include:

- providing the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection with human resources support for the coordination and implementation of the NAP;
- supporting national engagement and public education through social norm change communications campaigns on preventing violence against women and children;
- developing an evaluation tool to collect baseline data on community attitudes to violence; and
- education activities support learning environments that are safe and climate and disaster resilient.

**IO 2.2: Strengthen equal and respectful relationships between intimate partners and within families and kinship networks**

38. Activities under this IO may include:

- building partnerships in targeted settings to implement evidence-based, long-term social norm change interventions at community-level with sports, faith and informal sector stakeholders to build skills and resources for just, healthy and safe relationships;
- supporting Fiji’s efforts to incorporate GEDSI into the school curriculum (potentially aligning with the Australia Fiji Education Program); and
- providing direct funding from the GEDSI Program to OPDs and WROs to support programs and service delivery.

**IO 2.3: Survivors-centred and multi-sector coordination of services for survivors – including before, during and after disasters and climate emergencies**

39. Activities under this IO may include:

- supporting the strengthening of services to deliver survivor centred care;
- supporting government and service providers in patient data and referral coordination;
- supporting service providers to integrate climate change considerations into their services, including on disaster preparedness and resilience of services; and
- supporting integrating climate change and disaster risk preparedness considerations into Gender-Based Violence awareness programs.

**IO 2.4: Coordinated legal services, legal protection and safety for survivors with strengthened mechanisms of accountability of acts of violence**

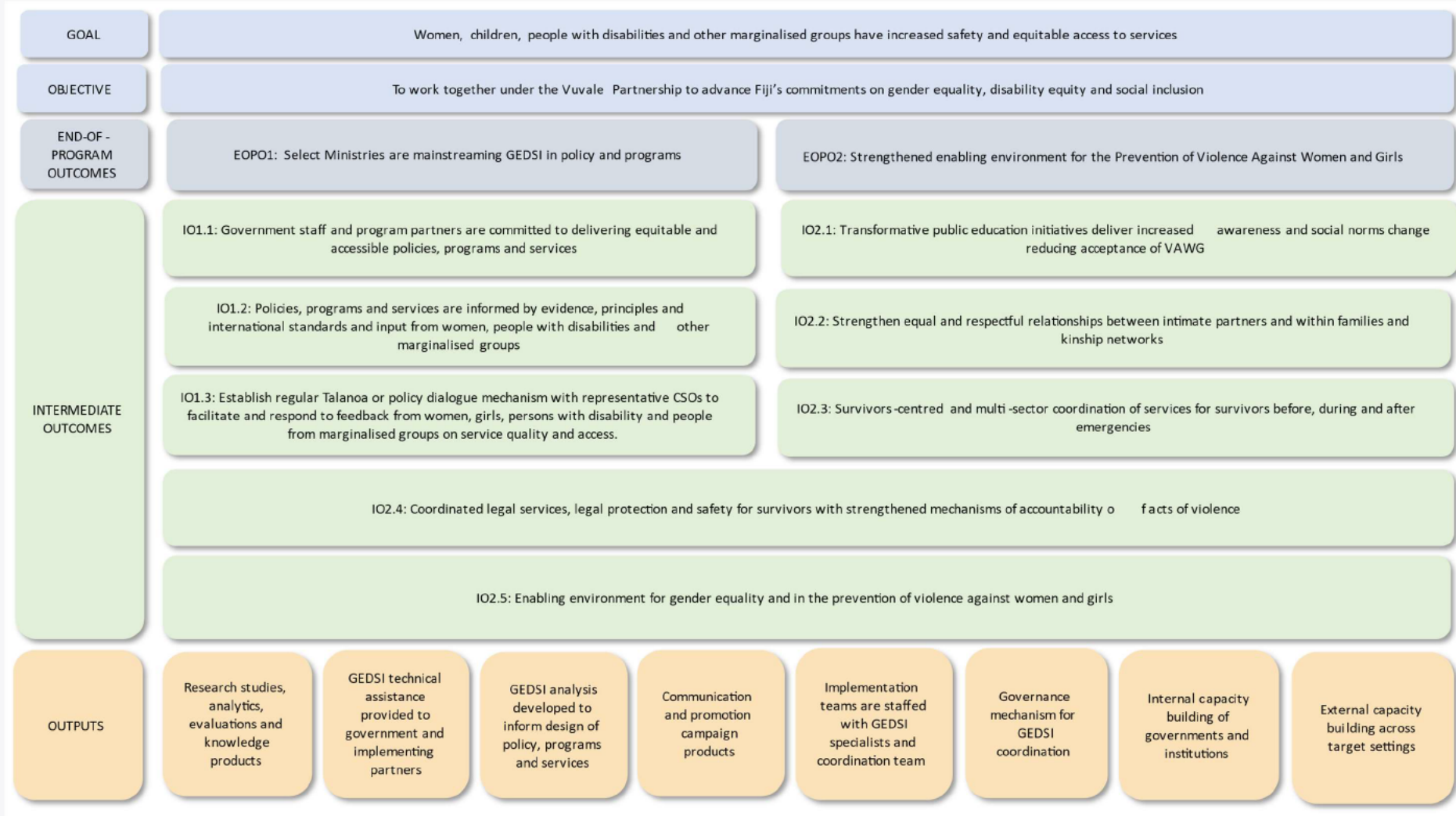
40. Activities under this IO may include:

- supporting the strengthening of justice sector and law enforcement actors to respond to violence against women and girls;
- supporting community-based dialogue within the traditional setting to explore how village bylaws might be amended to respond more appropriately to violence against women and girls; and
- supporting relevant mechanisms that coordinate safety of survivors to have gender responsive and disability inclusive climate change and disaster risk and resilience measures in place.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Theory of Change







**E. Implementation Arrangements (How will DFAT engage?)**

**E1 Platform Management**

- 41. The GEDSI Program will be one of several sector investments to be managed under the Platform on behalf of DFAT. The Platform is managed by Abt and is responsible for implementing sector programs, for achieving portfolio coherence and alignment with bilateral objectives, including climate change and GEDSI policy priorities.
- 42. The Platform core personnel include the “Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub”, which comprises technical staff to support the Platform’s effective integration of GEDSI and climate change. The Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub team will oversee the implementation, effective coordination, management and operations of the GEDSI Program. The team comprises a Cross-Cutting Priorities Lead, GEDSI & Safeguarding Manager and other advisors.
- 43. The Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub team will work closely with sector program staff to facilitate strategic links and a cohesive approach across the Platform, sectoral programs, and technical advisory support to Fiji Government ministries and links with civil society partners.
- 44. The GEDSI Program will be subject to the broader Platform governance arrangements. The Platform Management Group (PMG) is the highest governance and decision-making body of the Platform. The PMG meet quarterly and be chaired by Post’s Senior Responsible Office (SRO) and SESB1, who will have ultimate decision-making authority (reporting to the Financial Delegate and Head of Mission, Suva). Under the PMG, DFAT will consider policy engagement opportunities and manage risks. Members of the PMG will comprise DFAT Counsellors from relevant sectors; the Platform Service Provider; the Platform Leader; and the Platform Management Team. (See Platform IDD for further details).

**E2 Service Order Management: Australia-Fiji GEDSI Program**

- 45. The GEDSI Program will be implemented over a five-year period. The total indicative value is AUD9.6 million over five years. Under the leadership of the Counsellor, Human Development, a Service Order Manager (First Secretary and/or a delegated Senior Program Manager) will be responsible for governance over the Service Order, GEDSI Program, including oversight of budget, work plan, recruitment, procurement, risk management and performance monitoring.
- 46. DFAT will lead policy dialogue and manage high-level relationships with the Fiji Government. DFAT will draw on evidence and performance information produced by the MEL framework to engage key counterparts from the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection and other Fiji Government ministries.
- 47. There will be two main components to the GEDSI Program: responsive technical support to Fiji Government ministries to mainstream GEDSI through the GEDSI Fund and support to the implementation of the NAP.
- 48. The GEDSI Fund will be flexible and responsive to Fiji Government’s priorities to mainstream GEDSI. As part of early implementation, DFAT, the Service Provider and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection will develop operational principles for the Fund. Any requests for support should require the requesting ministries to demonstrate their commitment to the initiative, for example, by appointing a counterpart, potentially allocating funding and a working group to carry forward the activity.

49. Support to the NAP will draw on the existing local NAP governance mechanisms, including the NAP Secretariat, which reviews the NAP workplans. DFAT does not currently participate in the NAP Secretariat, but will request observer status if agreed with NAP parties.
50. The GEDSI Program will encourage sustainability through building the capacity of Fiji Government ministries to mainstream GEDSI across their own human resources and budget allocations.

### **E3 The Service Provider's Role**

51. The Platform Service Provider will be responsible for implementing the GEDSI Program in line with the design and direction from DFAT and Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection. The Service Provider will establish and maintain a team to implement the GEDSI Program – under the core team of the Platform Management Group. The Service Provider will provide MEL for the program and will be responsible for ensuring common tools/approaches are adopted across sector programs.
52. The Service Provider will prepare annual work plans (AWP) in consultation with DFAT and the Ministry for agreement. The AWP will outline the activities, budget allocations and human resources needed to achieve the EOPOs/IOs.
53. The Service Provider, through the Platform team, will provide expertise to facilitate knowledge sharing and promote GEDSI, climate and disaster resilience, and cross-sectoral learning. The Service Provider should consider opportunities for cross-program and multisectoral collaboration within the Platform programs (for example, mainstreaming GEDSI in health and education).
54. The Service Provider will identify opportunities for highly visible public diplomacy. A dedicated communications officer will be recruited through the Platform to lead public diplomacy efforts for the program. The Platform's MEL team will work closely with the Platform's communications team and DFAT's public affairs team to increase the number and quality of public diplomacy opportunities to elevate the profile of Australia's investment in GEDSI. These public diplomacy activities will focus on achievement of outputs and outcomes and demonstrable improvements in the lives of people in Fiji, as well as progress in implementing joint objectives under the 2023 Vuvale Partnership.

### **E4 The Program Coordinating Committee (PCC)**

55. The PCC will be the main governance mechanism to provide strategic advice, direction-setting and Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection and DFAT endorsement for GEDSI Program activities – both through the GEDSI Fund, and support to NAP activities and personnel. The PCC will be co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection and DFAT Suva Post (Counsellor Human Development). The Platform's Cross-Cutting Priorities Lead and Platform Team Leader, Portfolio Performance MEL will attend the PCC in an observer role to answer questions and report on progress.
56. The PCC will meet quarterly and will:
  - endorse the annual work plan;
  - provide overall strategic guidance to the GEDSI Program;
  - endorse GEDSI Program's strategic direction, AWP (including budgets) and other relevant policies;
  - approve the GEDSI Fund operational principles;
  - approve MEL Frameworks and products;
  - review progress achieved in the implementation of GEDSI Program;
  - prioritise the principles of sustainability and locally-led development; and

- promote harmonisation and coordination across Australian Government bilateral and regional investments relevant to GEDSI in Fiji.

57. Noting the GEDSI Fund is intended to be flexible and responsive, there will be scope to agree new activities, via email, out of session of the PCC.

#### **F. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) (How will DFAT measure performance?)**

58. MEL will be managed and resourced at the Platform level. As outlined in the Platform IDD, the Service Provider is accountable for proactively strengthening achievement of the portfolio of investments under its umbrella; ensuring that the portfolio of investments is strategically coherent; GEDSI and climate resilience are addressed effectively; promoting localisation; utilising local value chains; and achieving value for money for DFAT in delivering the portfolio of sector investments.
59. The primary purpose of GEDSI Program MEL is to support accountability and provide evidence to inform decision making and continuous improvement in the delivery of the GEDSI Program. GEDSI Program MEL will capture performance information and inform learning and continuous improvement of technical approaches and counterpart engagement processes. The focus on GEDSI MEL will be on performance and quality information to inform learning and continuous improvement of technical approaches and Fiji Government engagement. Reporting timing will be aligned with DFAT's own internal and external reporting needs, including annual quality and Tier 2 reporting, the Development Partnership Plan Performance Assessment Framework, and the Vuvale Partnership implementation tracker.
60. The Service Provider will develop the detailed GEDSI Program MEL Plan and Framework, in consultation with DFAT and partners, in early implementation. Indicators will be developed by the first quarter of 2025 and the formal MEL System will be operational within the first 6 months to fully support effective program reporting from the end of the first year of implementation. The MEL Framework will be based on the Theory of Change as outlined in Section D. It will draw on data from partner systems where possible, including MEL for the National Action Plan. Risks to the operationalisation of the MEL system include the availability of sex and disaggregated data. MEL has been adequately resourced within the Platform, with the option to contract in additional support if needed.
61. An intermediate review of the GEDSI Program will be conducted by June 2027 and a full review by June 2029 in order to take stock of the program's progress, reflect on the efficacy of the program, and to recommend any necessary adjustments to programming if applicable. These reviews will critically reflect on the effectiveness and efficiency of the program, assess the extent to which the program is making progress towards its intermediate outcomes and end of program outcomes, and identify lessons learnt to inform any program amendments or any future programs.

Table 1: MEL Accountability

Focus of Platform MEL	Focus of GEDSI MEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountable for proactively strengthening achievement of the portfolio of investments under its umbrella.</li> <li>Ensuring that the portfolio of investments is strategically coherent.</li> <li>Ensuring that GEDSI and climate resilience are addressed effectively.</li> <li>Ensuring value for money and administrative efficiency for DFAT in delivering the portfolio of sector investments.</li> <li>Aggregating sector program performance and quality data on core functions of the Platform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountable for effectively and efficiently making progress towards GEDSI Program outcomes for the benefit of Fiji.</li> <li>Ensuring progress on GEDSI and climate resilience priorities.</li> <li>Capturing performance and quality information to inform learning and continuous improvement of technical approaches and counterpart engagement processes.</li> </ul>

**G. Gender Equality, Disability Inclusiveness, Climate Change, and Other Cross-Cutting Issues**

62. The Platform IDD included GEDSI as an end of program outcome:

*Outcome 2: The Platform Service Provider has prioritised gender equality and disability-inclusive development, and climate and disaster resilience, in its systems and practices. This includes in how it undertakes sector programming and its engagement with selected Government of Fiji agencies.*

63. The Platform IDD identified that a GEDSI Fund would be established under the Platform. This design draws on a gender analysis completed for the Platform IDD and the analysis completed for the GEDSI brief for the Fiji Development Partnership Plan.

64. The GEDSI Program will be situated within the Platform’s management arrangements. Platform’s core personnel include the “Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub”, which comprises of technical staffing to support the Platform’s effective integration of GEDSI and climate change. The Cross-Cutting Priorities Hub team will oversee the implementation, day-to-day management and operations of the GEDSI Program. The team will have a dedicated operational budget through the Flexible GEDSI Fund

65. This GEDSI Program design details the Platform’s GEDSI Fund and Australian support to Fiji’s Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection to implement the NAP. This design has gender equality as a principal objective and identifies a gender equality outcome. Disability inclusion is also a deliberate objective of the design, as evidenced throughout the program logic, supporting analysis and resourcing.

66. The Platform IDD also established climate change as an objective and requires resourcing at the Platform level. Vulnerability to climate change is exacerbated by inequity and marginalisation linked to gender, disability, low income or combinations thereof, especially for many local communities. Women are affected more significantly than men by climate change and disasters, due to gender inequalities and power imbalances in access to resources and relevant information. The Platform Service Provider will be responsible for monitoring implementation and will ensure the GEDSI Program align with Fiji's national climate change priorities, including its Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plan.

The Platform Service Provider will provide climate and disaster resilience expertise, to inform the GEDSI Program workplan that mainstream climate and disaster resilience.

67. Climate change is included as an interim outcome of this design (IO 2.3). The program will integrate climate change and disaster preparedness considerations into awareness programs for Gender-Based Violence, and for services for survivors of gender-based violence, including during and after disasters and climate emergencies.
68. Implementation of the Platform and the GEDSI Program will have a strong focus on locally led development. The intent of the GEDSI Program is to work to directly support Fiji Government priorities and capabilities. Where possible, the Platform Service Provider will also engage local advisory support. The Platform Service Provider will develop a localisation plan during early implementation.
69. The GEDSI Program will embed principles of sustainability and locally-led development throughout the program. GEDSI Program activities will directly progress the Fiji Government's priorities and support a localised approach to engaging its staff. Program personnel will build GEDSI capability within Fiji Government personnel and provide support towards long-term mainstreaming of GEDSI within Fiji Government ministries. The Program Coordination Committee (see Section E above) will actively consider principles of sustainability and locally-led development in its approval of activities and annual work plans.
70. The Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls is a strong example of a locally-led change. It is also a long-term, whole of society plan. Its development, and implementation, is overseen by a local Steering Committee comprised made of Fiji Government and local women's rights organisations. Support provided through this GEDSI Program will directly support local actors and local priorities.

## H. Budget and Resources (What will it cost?)

### H1 Budget

71. The GEDSI Program will be implemented over a five-year period. The total indicative value will be AUD9.6 million over five years.
72. This budget is indicative. GEDSI Program implementation arrangements will allow DFAT to be flexible and responsive to emerging priorities. Funding allocation may be adjusted as the Fiji Government allocates more of its own budget resources towards GEDSI activities. DFAT will retain responsibility for strategic engagement with the Fiji Government and decision making on priorities and resourcing.
73. There will be the flexibility to move within line items and over financial years to respond to emerging priorities. Should there be under expenditure, there would also be scope for the Platform Service Provider to provide direct grants to non-government Women's Rights Organisations and Organisations of People with Disabilities. There may also be scope to increase expenditure, subject to Australian Budget appropriations. There is no funding allocated in 2028-29, as the IDD aligns with Platform initial contract date (until September 2029). Any further GEDSI activities after September 2029 would be subject to a new design process.

Table 2: GEDSI Program: indicative budget

	2024-25	2025-26	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
GEDSI Fund*	\$0.1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m	\$0m	\$4.1m
Fiji National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against All Women and Girls**	\$0.5m	\$1m	\$1m	\$0.5m	\$0m	\$0m	\$3m
Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection advisor***	\$0.25m	\$0.5m	\$0.5m	\$0.5m	\$0.5m	\$0m	\$2.5m
Total	\$1.5m	\$2.5m	\$2.5m	\$2m	\$1.5m	\$0.0m	\$9.6m

\* There is lower expenditure in year 1 for the GEDSI Fund, as the GEDSI Fund will commence in indicatively March 2025. The Platform IDD suggested the GEDSI Fund could be up to AUD1.5m / year. However, AUD1m is proposed under this IDD, as the Fund is a new concept, and the appetite and uptake from Fiji Ministries is still to be determined. There could also be potential cross-over with support provided through the National Action Plan line item.

\*\* AUD3m in total is allocated to the National Action Plan implementation under this IDD, based on previous Australian commitments to the National Action Plan. Unexpended funds from previous years may be rolled over into future years, or for other activities. AUD1m for the National Action Plan was expensed 2023-2025 through UN Women.

\*\*\* DFAT has supported a long-term national gender adviser in the Ministry. At the time of writing this IDD, specific position(s) had not been determined.

H2 Resources

74. Budget for core personnel costs and Service Provider MEL are reflected at the Platform level.

75. DFAT will provide strategic oversight, policy direction and contract management for GEDSI Program.

76. DFAT management will include:

- A DFAT Senior Responsible Officer (SRO, at the Senior Executive Service/ SES Band 1 Level), who will provide strategic leadership of the Platform, including ensuring strategic alignment, performance and effective risk management. The SRO will report to the Platform Financial Delegate (Australian High Commissioner, Suva) on performance, activities, expenditure, and risk.
- Counsellor (Human Development): Primary DFAT management of GEDSI Program. Maintain regular communication with the Platform Management Team through the SRO and DFAT Platform Contract Manager, and lead engagement with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection. The Counsellor will support linkages with other global, regional and bilateral investments.

- The Service Order (SO) Manager (First Secretary or delegated Senior Program Manager) will be responsible for program management including budget oversight, work plan, recruitment, procurement, risk management and performance monitoring of GEDSI Program. The SO Manager will also be responsible for reporting, through their supervising Counsellor, to the SRO. Indicatively SO Management will be approximately 0.3 FTE.

77. DFAT administration costs will include costs for independent MEL, and travel costs associated with the implementation of the investment.
78. The Fiji Government has also committed its own funding toward the implementation of the NAP. This may increase over time. The intention of EOPO 1 is to support Fiji to increasingly allocate its own resources and budgets towards GEDSI.
79. Any Fiji Government requests for advisory support would be subject to satisfaction of DFAT approved selection criteria and would require requesting Ministries to demonstrate their commitment to the initiative, for example, by appointing a counterpart, potentially allocating funding and a working group to carry forward the mainstreaming activity.

#### I. Procurement and Partnering

80. The GEDSI Program is one of several sector investments to be managed under the Platform on behalf of DFAT. The Platform IDD and procurement process were finalised in September 2024. This design will be situated within the Platform's governance and management arrangements, communications protocols, and approaches to monitoring and assessing performance and quality.

#### J. Risk Management and Safeguards (What might go wrong?)

81. The Platform's governance arrangements, including the Platform Management Group and Senior Responsible Officer, will support the active monitoring and management of risk throughout the life of the Platform, and the sector programs within it. The Senior Responsible Officer will have a key role in convening quality risk management discussions. Counsellors on the Platform Management Group will be responsible for escalating any risks and safeguards issues identified at the sector program level. The Senior Responsible Officer will have ultimate responsibility for approving risk and safeguards management measures at Platform level. The Senior Responsible Officer will escalate any risks as required to the Platform Financial Delegate, the Australian High Commissioner to Fiji.
82. The Platform IDD included a review of major risks using the DFAT Risk and Safeguard Screening Tool. The Platform IDD identified several programmatic and operating context risks that will be managed and monitored on an ongoing basis. DFAT will establish, maintain and regularly review this risk register in AidWorks (Investment INO152). As part of the Platform, GEDSI Program will be integrated into the Platform's risk management and governance processes.
83. The Platform Service Provider will be required to produce quarterly risk reports against the risk register. The Platform Service Provider and DFAT will discuss risks on a regular basis, during both formal and informal governance mechanisms, including at the quarterly Platform Management Group.
84. Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) Policy and Guidelines will be managed at the Platform level. Any credible suspicion or allegation of fraud, child abuse or SEAH would be escalated to DFAT in accordance with DFAT policies. GEDSI Program will not have any adverse environmental impacts or involve resettlement or displacement. There are no specific counterterrorism risks.

85. Specific GEDSI Program risks and mitigation measures include:

- Delays to start-up of the GEDSI Program lead to a potential gap in implementation and lack of continuity between the current phase of Australian support and the new phase of support. This risk will be mitigated by DFAT working closely with the Platform Service Provider, UN Women and the Ministry to transition the work of the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls. DFAT will also institute regular formal meetings to communicate progress and changes to timelines.
- The GEDSI Program fails to adequately include gender-sensitive programming, or people with disabilities are not adequately consulted or represented within GEDSI Program staff or GEDSI Program programming. To manage this risk, GEDSI Program will employ strong recruitment processes to encourage women and people with disabilities to apply for jobs and adopt strong “nothing about us without us” principles, with GEDSI programming to be informed by the Platform’s comprehensive GEDSI strategy.
- The risk of fragmentation of activities under this investment affects program effectiveness. While the intention of the GEDSI Fund is to be responsive and support emerging Ministry priorities that integrate gender and social inclusion in key sectors, it will also be important to ensure sustainability and localisation. The GEDSI Fund’s operations manual and PCC will ensure consideration of longer-term sustainability of interventions. Consolidating DFAT’s support to the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection’s NAP (which was previously provided through UN Women) should also increase investment coherence.
- Attrition of key staff within the GEDSI Program team has a significant impact on the program’s delivery. GEDSI Program will take mitigating actions that include ensuring competitive remuneration packages for at-risk positions, fostering a positive work environment and keeping track of national HR trends.
- The risk of fraud could affect resourcing, including the potential loss of trust, termination of contracts (staff or service providers) and the need for resources being diverted for potential audit follow-up and investigation. The fraud risks will be mitigated through training and awareness, strong procurement and recruitment processes, an external financial manager, strong contracting processes and all staff signing Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct forms. The Platform Service Provider will incorporate DFAT’s fraud requirements in the Operational Manual, including those outlined in DFAT’s Fraud Control Toolkit for Funding Recipients and Risk Management Guide for Aid Investments. Strong procurement and contracting processes will also be employed to mitigate risk of fraud by GEDSI Program staff.
- The risk a child or children harmed or abused. GEDSI Program personnel are not expected to have direct contact with children. However, there is a risk that child protection policies and procedures are not followed, and a child is harmed by GEDSI Program stakeholders, GEDSI Program or the Platform. DFAT would be exposed to legal repercussions and high reputational risks. To mitigate this, the Platform Service Provider is mandated to have child protection policies and procedures that align with DFAT standards, and all staff will be required to undergo child protection training. This would include ensuring that personnel are accompanied by other adults when in the presence of children or vulnerable adults and ensuring child-safe recruitment screening.



- Individual(s) sexually exploited, abused or harassed (SEAH) due to GEDSI Program-supported activities. To mitigate this, all Platform and downstream partner staff are mandated to have a DFAT compliant PSEAH policy and procedures prior to contracting. The Platform Service Provider’s contract has strong provisions to ensure compliance with DFAT’s safeguarding policies (including the recruitment and training of program personnel). The Platform Service Provider has sufficient human resources to support this work. DFAT will also have regular PSEAH risk discussions with the Platform.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]