

Independent progress review

Pacific Islands Media Assistance Scheme 2

Final report

Part A

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This report has been divided into two parts – Part A comprises the progress review report; Part B contains the associated attachments including a background document compiled by the review team on the PACMAS 2 approach to communication for development.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) is a 10-year commitment (2007-2008 to 2017-2018) by AusAID to support the development of media in the Pacific region. The first phase of the program which ran from 2008 to 2010 was the establishment phase to build the partnerships and carry out further design work for the program's then seven components. PACMAS 2 started in November 2011 and its design and approach respond to the lessons coming out of the first phase which was considered to be too ambitious in its scope. The current phase is for four years, 2011-12 to 2014-15, and has a budget of \$11.374 million.

The goal and objective for this second phase are consistent with those of PACMAS 1. The goal is to support better governance in the Pacific region. The objective is to support the development of diverse, independent and professional media which promote informed and meaningful public discourse throughout the region.

To meet this objective, there are four components:

1. Media capacity building
2. Media policy and legislation
3. Media systems
4. Media content

In addition to tightening the focus of PACMAS 2 to four components, the current phase has a stronger focus on communication for development (C4D)

PACMAS 2 is implemented by ABC International Development (ABC-ID) with oversight and strategic direction for the program provided by a Program Management Group. A Technical Advisory Group also provides ad hoc expertise in monitoring and review, communications for development and broadcasting.

The countries covered by PACMAS are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Review objectives

The objectives of this review are:

1. To assess the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and gender equality of the PACMAS program.
2. To generate knowledge and lessons for AusAID on how media strengthening and communications for development contributes to better governance in the Pacific.
3. To help AusAID develop a clearer picture of the role of communication for development in broader governance support, what value it provides for people and the costs involved.
4. To consolidate lessons learned and to make recommendations on possible mechanisms for improving links between regional and country-level programs working in media development.

Review methodology

The review was undertaken by an independent review team comprising Annmaree O’Keeffe, review team leader; Mandy Gyles, communication for development specialist; and Joe Harry, a Pacific broadcaster. A three-step methodology was employed in undertaking this review comprising a preparatory briefing phase, in-country visits to Vanuatu, Tonga, Kiribati and Fiji and analysis of the material collected. The review team met an extensive range of stakeholders during their in-country visits including print and broadcast journalists, broadcast technicians, journalism lecturers and course coordinators, publishers, radio station operators, government officials, NGO staff, media association representatives and regional and international organisation representatives. This is in addition to AusAID and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade staff in each of the four countries and Canberra as well as the PACMAS team and PMG members.

Findings

The review has been conducted early in the second year of the current phase. As such, it was too early to determine the impact and sustainability of an activity which requires long lead times to make well-founded judgments in this area. It is also too early to make clear and documented linkages between the achievement of the project’s objectives and its contribution to the overall goal of PACMAS which is to support better governance in the Pacific. That said, the review was able to address the lines of enquiry set out in the review objectives and to make various findings under each.

1. DAC criteria

Relevance:

The PACMAS 2 components and focus on C4D are relevant to the achievement of the project’s objective and as such of the overall development objectives of the Australian aid program. Although there are variations in challenges across the region, there are sufficient similarities to warrant the regional approach offered by PACMAS. There is an outstanding demand for quality media training and outstanding gap in basic training for broadcast technicians. C4D activities through the innovation fund are building skills of the media and civil society, providing a platform for communicating about development messages, and building local ownership. PACMAS’s contribution to poverty reduction flows from its goal and focus on achieving better governance in the Pacific region.

Effectiveness:

PACMAS 2 is on track in addressing the project’s four components and has been active in supporting C4D activities in line with the Program Design Document (PDD) and annual plans. However, as the project moves into the second half of its operations, the project’s efficiency could be strengthened through a more tightly targeted and strategic approach, identifying the geographic and thematic priorities which are also in accordance with AusAID’s own regional priorities.

As the awareness and understanding of PACMAS 2 grows across the region, the innovation fund runs the risk that as it continues to address a broad range of demand-driven requests, the absence of a more tightly focused strategic approach may lead to a degree of ad hocery in the facility with limited reinforcement of funded activity outcomes and an undermining of sustainability.

The agreed strategic activities cover a range of issues relevant to each of the components and incorporate C4D. But work plans for each of the activities are needed to underscore efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency:

To assess the project's efficiency as defined by the Development Assistance Committee – comparing implementing efficiency, cost-efficiency and timeliness in achieving objectives, three issues were considered. Firstly, is the regional model more efficient than a bilateral approach? Secondly, are the project's location and management model conducive to value for money? Thirdly, have the project's objectives, as defined in the 2011-2012 implementation plan and refined in the subsequent annual plan been achieved on time?

Overall, the review found that a regional approach to media strengthening complementing a small number of strategically important bilateral media projects appears to be the most efficient way to address this sector's development challenges. The project's management and governance configuration supports the project's efficiency. There are some administrative inadequacies which require immediate attention notably the timeliness of regular reporting, maintenance and use of an up-to-date stakeholders list and the staffing profile and balance. There are improvements needed for the website including more detailed reference to C4D as well as provide guidance on gender-specific issues. Also required is greater attention to the website's navigation mechanisms which continue to present difficulties for users. The current monitoring and evaluation framework should be examined in light of AusAID and ABC concerns including that it has become too input-intensive.

Alignment between innovation fund rounds and specific strategic activities could strengthen the impact and sustainability of outcomes. In addition it is advisable to reduce the number of innovation fund projects funded in any one round to improve efficient management.

Gender equality:

High representation of women in the media sector, particularly as students, is not translating into women being represented in any significant numbers in leadership positions. The project's gender-sensitive approaches should be strengthened through a stronger and sustained focus on gender in its public material and the emphasis given to it in its training activities as well as activity evaluation processes.

Cultural expectations of how women should "behave" around elders and leaders has an impact on the way in which they feel able to undertake their media-related tasks. C4D may offer opportunities to support women to find alternative ways of having their voices heard.

2. Supporting governance across the Pacific

It is too early in the life of PACMAS 2 to be conclusive about its success or otherwise in achieving the project's overall goal of supporting better governance in the Pacific. However, it is timely to consider the likeliness and terms of eventual success.

Although there is a temptation to consider the Pacific as an homogenous whole, it's not. Each of the 14 countries has varying and in some cases, very starkly different forms of governance and are at different stages of democracy.

PACMAS's success in achieving better governance should not be assessed uniformly across the region. Instead, it will require a nuanced and calibrated assessment with recognition of varying degrees of success country by country rather than as a whole region.

3. Role of communication for development in governance support

An important contributor to PACMAS's efforts in achieving better governance is its work in communication for development. C4D allows PACMAS to broaden its work from a focus on the media to working with civil society organisations, development partners and communities, and providing links with the media.

The C4D approach is being utilised in both innovation fund and strategic activities. The innovation fund in particular is allowing the involvement of a wide range of organisations including local NGOs, the media, regional agencies and international agencies. Helping communities be heard through these activities is giving them a voice and also raising important development issues more broadly.

Nevertheless, C4D is still in its infancy in the Pacific. The building blocks so essential for C4D – community groups and the media – face a swag of major capacity challenges. The role of indigenous NGOs in civil society action particularly outside the capitals is still very limited. The demographic profile of the Pacific also adds another challenge to effective C4D. Effective and sustained C4D outcomes require a comprehensive approach involving a number of partners and stakeholders along with the media, both as a recipient and disseminator of C4D messages, being only one part of the picture.

4. Regional/bilateral program links

Coordination and feedback between PACMAS, relevant AusAID posts and the current bilateral media activities should be more regular and constructive than is the current situation. Stronger communication and coordination would be assisted greatly through a relatively simple but adhered-to schedule of contact either via email or teleconference to ensure regular feedback and updates. This was proposed in the original PDD but it does not seem to have been activated, or at least not to the degree suggested in the PDD. Late reporting by PACMAS also hinders timely feedback and coordination.

Because of the comprehensiveness of the bilateral activities and their respective objectives, PACMAS should limit its involvement to PNG and Solomon Islands to innovation fund support – where it does not duplicate support already provided through MDI and SOLMAS – and eligibility in region-wide activities such as regional workshops.

Recommendations

Overall, PACMAS 2 is meeting a range of gaps and needs in the broader Pacific media sector, including community media, that would otherwise go unmet. It is endeavouring to achieve its overall objective through a range of activities with its delivery mechanisms providing a degree of flexibility (the innovation fund) and comprehensiveness (strategic activities) which are suitable to the Pacific region's operating context.

That said, there are several recommendations based on the review teams findings which AusAID and PACMAS are urged to consider as PACMAS 2 goes into its second half. These recommendations are summarised here:

Summary of key recommendations

Criterion/review question	Key Recommendations	Response
Relevance	<i>Maintain strong focus on strengthening media training and building capacity</i>	PACMAS team
Effectiveness	<i>Develop a tighter geographic and strategic focus</i> <i>Stronger cohesion between innovation fund and strategic activities</i> <i>Work plans for strategic activities</i> <i>Return to focus on training Pacific political and bureaucratic leaders</i>	AusAID lead to advise PMG PMG in collaboration with AusAID PACMAS approved by PMG PACMAS approved by PMG
Efficiency	<i>Administrative issues – report timeliness and updating stakeholders’ list</i> <i>Staff profile and balance addressed</i> <i>Address ongoing website inadequacies</i> <i>Include C4D and gender specific issues on website</i> <i>Review approach to M&E</i>	PACMAS AusAID and ABC PACMAS PACMAS ABC with AusAID
Gender equality	<i>Strengthen gender-sensitive approaches within training and public material including the website</i> <i>Support the emergence of more women leaders in the media</i>	PACMAS with support by PMG PACMAS to develop program for PMG consideration
Governance across the Pacific	<i>Adopt a nuanced and calibrated assessment of governance performance</i>	AusAID/ABC Melbourne
C4D and governance	<i>Note the Pacific operating context for the implementation of C4D and need for comprehensive approach</i>	AusAID/ABC
Regional and bilateral projects	<i>Implement original approach outlined in the 2011 PDD</i> <i>Limit involvement in PNG and Solomon Islands to ensure sufficient resources for other countries</i>	AusAID Port Vila, ABC Melbourne AusAID to advise PMG/PACMAS

Concluding comments

PACMAS 2 is building a reputation across the Pacific as a respected facility responding to a range of outstanding needs and gaps in the Pacific media sector. As a regional activity, it brings the advantages of critical mass to a sector which in many of the countries suffers from the disadvantages of smallness.

The project is largely on track to achieve its objective of supporting the development of diverse, independent and professional media promoting informed and meaningful public discourse. However, it is too early to determine how effectively it will eventually support the goal of better governance in the Pacific.

An important influencing factor on the PACMAS outcomes is the diversity of cultural and social mores across the region. This has both gender specific consequences as well as broader ramifications on the way in which journalism is practiced.

The inclusion of C4D as an important focus for PACMAS has presented a range of challenges associated with the newness of the concept to the Pacific combined with logistical and technical difficulties. But the C4D activities offer a good opportunity for capacity building so that the eventual impact is not limited to the output of the activity itself but is also related to the process of implementation.

The growing presence of social media across the Pacific provides fresh and increasing opportunities for PACMAS to explore. Nevertheless, it is still not a silver bullet that will transgress the basic challenges bedeviling traditional media including training and access.

PACMAS is an intensive activity to manage linked to the fact that there is a multitude of stakeholders across 14 countries that are not co-ordinated or in communication with each other. There is no one implementing partner. It is this broad range of Pacific Islander stakeholders and its majority of Pacific Islander staff that adds to the important capacity building benefits that PACMAS is bringing to the region.

1. Introduction

Background

The Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) is a 10-year commitment (2007-2008 to 2017-2018) by AusAID to support the development of media in the Pacific region. The first phase of the program which ran from 2008 to 2010 was the establishment phase to build the partnerships and carry out further design work for the program's then seven components. PACMAS 2 started in November 2011 and its design and approach respond to the lessons coming out of the first phase which was considered to be too ambitious in its scope. The current phase is for four years, 2011-12 to 2014-15, and has a budget of \$11.374 million.

The goal and objective for this second phase are consistent with those of PACMAS 1. The goal is to support better governance in the Pacific region. The objective is to support the development of diverse, independent and professional media which promote informed and meaningful public discourse throughout the region.

To meet this objective, there are four components, each with specific long and short-term outcomes (details in Table 1):

1. Media capacity building
2. Media policy and legislation
3. Media systems
4. Media content

The delivery mechanisms for these components are

- Strategic activities delivered in partnership with Pacific organisations
- An innovation fund which supports projects in line with the four components or outcomes
- Research and analysis to build knowledge about the media in the region
- Communications and networking to disseminate and encourage discussion

In addition to tightening the focus of PACMAS 2 to four components, the current phase has a stronger focus on communication for development (C4D) to help meet community needs in terms of communication, information and governance, and to address key development constraints.

PACMAS 2 is implemented by ABC International Development (ABC-ID) with oversight and strategic direction for the program provided by a Program Management Group with representatives from AusAID, ABC-ID and three Pacific media professionals. A Technical Advisory Group also provides ad hoc expertise in monitoring and review, communications for development and broadcasting.

The countries covered by PACMAS are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Table 1 – Components and outcomes

Component	Long term outcomes	Short term outcomes
Media Capacity Building	<p>The Pacific media and communications sector meets professional standards of quality</p> <p>Regional and national organisations with a stake in media governance, media systems and media production are strengthened</p>	<p>Sustainable, accredited and accessible industry-oriented tertiary-level training is available for new entrants to the media industry, senior media practitioners/owners and broadcast communication engineers.</p> <p>Regional and national media-related organisations support self-regulation (codes of ethics), support members effectively, build their capacity and advocate for media plurality.</p>
Media policy and legislation	<p>Legislation and effective media governance protect and promote Article 19 rights and independent regulatory systems</p> <p>Increased plurality (mix of public, commercial and community) within the media and communications environment</p>	<p>An increasing number of Pacific governments, non-government and civil society organisations actively promote media freedom and plurality.</p>
Media systems	<p>Access to media and information is increased through effective maintenance and extension of broadcast and information communications technology infrastructure</p>	<p>Coordination and knowledge sharing between broadcast and IT engineers is enhanced and sustained. Mapping of media access across the Pacific is in place, areas with poor media coverage are identified and strategies developed to extend access through community, commercial or public media.</p>
Media content	<p>Public has access to informative and innovative media content that supports achievement of the MDGs.</p> <p>Public has increased access to media production capacity through the development of community media or through increased access to public or commercial media.</p>	<p>Innovative media content is produced that addresses themes associated with governance and the MDGs across all media (Public Service Broadcasters, Commercial and Community).</p>

Due to delays in finalising the design for Phase 2, there was a gap between the end of Phase 1 and start of Phase 2, which commenced in late 2011. This review has occurred early in the life of the 4-year phase so its findings can strengthen the program's focus and underscore its effectiveness in its remaining years.

The objectives of this review are:

1. To assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and gender equality of the PACMAS program.
2. To generate knowledge and lessons for AusAID on how media strengthening and communications for development contributes to better governance in the Pacific, with particular implications for AusAID's country programs and sectoral teams interested in working more on communications for development.
3. To consolidate lessons learned and to make recommendations on possible mechanisms for improving links between regional and country-level programs working in media development.
4. To help AusAID develop a clearer picture of the role of communications for development in broader governance support, what value it provides for people and the costs involved. It is understood that given the short period that Phase 2 has been active, the findings in this regard may be very preliminary.

Review methodology

The review has been undertaken by an independent review team consisting of Annmaree O'Keeffe, review team leader; Mandy Gyles, communication for development specialist; and Joe Harry, a Pacific broadcaster. A three-step methodology¹ was employed in undertaking this review comprising:

1. Preparatory phase: an extensive pre-mobilisation desk review of key documents and literature provided by AusAID and the ABC as well as other material relevant to the media in the Pacific. A preliminary briefing for the review team was held in Port Vila with members of the PMG and other PACMAS and AusAID personnel.

2. In-country visits: In addition to Vanuatu, the team visited one country from each of the Pacific's sub-regions - Fiji (Melanesia), Tonga (Polynesia) and Kiribati (Micronesia). A full list of the stakeholders consulted during the review is available in Attachment 2, Review Report Part B. As a summary, the range of stakeholders whom the review team met during their in-country visits included print and broadcast journalists, broadcast technicians, journalism lecturers and course coordinators, government officials, publishers and radio station operators, NGO staff, media association representatives and regional and international organisation representatives. This is in addition to AusAID and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade staff in each of the four countries and Canberra as well as the PACMAS team and PMG members.

This report reflects a comprehensive range of their views and observations. These will be referred to throughout this report. However, in keeping with the terms of confidentiality, their comments are quoted anonymously. Maintaining confidentiality enhanced the degree to which views and comments were more forthcoming and frank.

The dates of the in-country visits were:

¹ Details of the methodology employed are provided within the agreed review plan attached in Attachment 3, Review Report Part B.

Date	Country	Purpose
25 – 28 February	Port Vila, Vanuatu	Preliminary briefing with PMG, PACMAS and AusAID + meetings with stakeholders
11 – 13 March	Nuku'alofa, Tonga	Meetings with stakeholders
8 – 9 April	Tarawa, Kiribati	Meetings with stakeholders
16 – 20 April	Suva, Fiji	Meetings with stakeholders + team analysis of findings

3. Analysis and Report drafting: Analysis of the information collected was conducted in accordance with the principles of triangulation, cross-referencing the data contained in the range of PACMAS reports and documents with the information obtained through the in-country interviews, as well as on-line research and interaction.

Methodology limitations

The review has been conducted very early in the second year of the current phase. As such, it was too early to determine the impact and sustainability of what is essentially an activity which requires longer lead times to make well-founded judgments in this area. It is also too early to make clear and documented linkages between the achievement of the project's objectives and its contribution to the overall goal of PACMAS which is to support better governance in the Pacific.

The geographic spread of the project also presented imitations. As the project covers a total of 14 countries, it was deemed impractical and too expensive to attempt to visit each of the 14 - hence the decision to visit Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati. Apart from their sub-regional representation, these countries were chosen for the following reasons:

- Fiji: because of the ongoing challenge to media freedom in that country and the importance of finding ways, through PACMAS, to support the media to overcome at least some of the challenges;
- Tonga: while Samoa has been an important location for a number of PACMAS activities, there has been less involvement by the project in Tonga. As a significant Polynesia country, it was timely to determine how effective the project is in this country.
- Kiribati: as the largest Micronesian country and one of significance to Australia's aid program more generally, it was considered the most appropriate country to include in this review.

The pre-mobilisation meeting in Vanuatu with the PMG also provided an opportunity to meet with some stakeholders in Port Vila.

While the team found individual and organisational stakeholders in Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati open and willing to discuss PACMAS and share their observations, the political environment in Fiji influenced by the strict control over the media by the Fijian authorities resulted in several appointments not going ahead. The team leader's laptop was also stolen from her hotel room during the visit.

Overall, the limitations were manageable and did not unduly hinder the team's ability to undertake its research. However, one issue for future reviews is whether the team should make its own in-country appointments. While it was possible to make a number of appointments prior to arriving in-country, in each of the countries it became evident that assistance by the Australian High Commissions (through AusAID) was important in ensuring

that a more complete set of appointments could be arranged. This reflects both the deep knowledge of AusAID officers of their respective countries. It also highlights the ongoing challenge but need for PACMAS to maintain a current list of relevant stakeholders in 14 Pacific countries.

2. Operating context

PACMAS 2 is operating across a vast geographical region home to some of the smallest and most isolated developing countries in the world. Populations range from seven million in PNG through to 11,000 in Tuvalu and a tiny 1200 in Niue. An indication of the region's economic and social development is reflected in its progress in meeting the 2015 Millennium Development Goals. As noted in the 2012 Pacific Regional MDG Tracking report,² the region's progress in this regard has been slow and uneven. As a whole, the region is off track on all goals. This result is influenced by the impact of PNG which will not meet any of the MDGs. However, even excluding PNG, the region's performance has been mixed although Polynesia is on track to achieve four of the goals.

The small Pacific island countries in Micronesia and to an extent in Polynesia face similar binding constraints to development which are largely the product of isolation and smallness. Those constraints relate to limited access to resources, human resource capacity, service delivery, governance and market maturity and breadth. And while Melanesian countries have access to considerable natural resources including arable land, these countries face significant challenges in terms of service delivery and governance.

In such a context, the media is recognised as an actual and potential tool for promoting public accountability, transparency and better governance all with the aim of supporting development efforts. This is the driver for AusAID's commitment to media development through PACMAS as its objectives and goals support the Australian Government's overarching governance strategy which sees strengthened media and communications informing the public policy debate which in turn will contribute to more effective governance. The introduction of C4D into the second phase of PACMAS has offered the opportunity to not only broaden the voices in the community for demand for better governance, but also to promote ways to address key development issues in the region.

In implementing the effort to strengthen media and communications, the challenge is appreciating that while there are similar strengths and weaknesses shaping media capacity across the region, there is also variation. An important finding by the team is the extent to which the needs and challenges facing country-specific media industries varies depending on the country context. For example, the very limited capacity and access to training and revenue for the media in Kiribati reflects the country's isolation, its small but widely dispersed population, the absence of any formal in-country training in journalism and an under-developed private sector with very limited revenue potential. While media freedom is observed in law, in practice, journalists are under constant direct and indirect political pressure to limit criticism of authorities. Our discussions with stakeholders and media practitioners in Kiribati indicated the degree to which there is overt pressure on journalists to limit their criticism of the government. A baseline media survey conducted by PACMAS³ and completed towards the end of this review also noted that there had been some instances of threats against journalists although the examples cited were several years ago.

A stark contrast to Kiribati is Fiji where the review team found there is a relatively extensive range of training facilities and opportunities, plus a robust private sector which is the source of significant advertising revenue supporting the media industry and a rich potential of journalism capacity. However, the draconian restrictions inherent in the country's Media Industry Development Decree, brought down in 2010, along with an oft-demonstrated enthusiasm on the part of the Fijian authorities to vigorously implement the decree's requirements to their full extent have resulted in a mainstream media which is either totally

² 2012 Pacific Regional MDG Tracking Report, Pacific Islands Forum Secretary, Suva, August 2012

³ Draft Living Baseline Report, submitted to ABC for review 20 May, 2013.

controlled by the Bainimarama regime (Fiji Broadcasting Corporation and Fiji Sun) or is fearful to the point of self-censorship.

Similarly, the PACMAS program has found that the broader approach of ‘communication for development’ requires different approaches in each country because of the range in human capacity, as well as individual geographic and development challenges. For example, the majority of successful applicants to the 1st round of the Innovation Fund came from the Cook Islands, where there are obvious strengths in project development and funding applications; while there have been very few applicants from Kiribati, and significant assistance has been needed to help develop the project, for example in setting up collaboration with relevant organisations and monitoring and evaluation.

The variations between countries have an important implication for the project. While there are sufficient shared challenges across Pacific media to warrant its regional approach, as a project covering 14 countries, the country-to-country variations risk placing an untenable burden on PACMAS if it attempts to be equally responsive to all 14.

A second overall observation about the operating context is the extent to which quality media training is absent across almost all countries. This reinforces the findings of the PACMAS Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) strategic engagement design document⁴. Kiribati has no in-country formal training and the team was told that there were only two qualified journalists in the entire country making even on-the-job training untenable. In Tonga, formal training is provided at the Tonga Institute of Higher Education but media industry representatives were critical of the standard of its graduates. Last year’s review of the Solomon Islands Media Assistance Scheme, SOLMAS, showed a similar situation existing there. In Vanuatu, the challenge to quality training differs and relates more to the absence of appropriate facilities and an inappropriate and dated curriculum.

There is an ironic exception to this finding. Fiji, where media freedom is absent both in law and in practice, has relatively good media training facilities. There are two universities providing a range of degrees, certificates and diplomas and the country has legislation which makes it mandatory for on-the-job training to be provided, at least within the private sector media. At least one major media organisation in Fiji has been proactive in helping provide capacity building for journalists from other Pacific Islands through PACMAS and intend to continue this support. By developing regional media skills they see benefits to their agency in terms of sharing good quality content.

That exception however does not diminish the team’s overall conclusion that a strong focus on media training and capacity building – including for civil society and government officials – should remain at the core of PACMAS’s activities. And while Fijian media stakeholders face major challenges in practising what they learn, Fiji is an important regional hub and its training facilities notably USP are available for training stakeholders from across the region.

New media in the Pacific

The growing presence of social media across the Pacific provides fresh and increasing opportunities for PACMAS to include new media platforms in their activities in a variety of ways including as a cost effective means of dissemination, to extend radio broadcast coverage (for example in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG), to provide alternative means for communities to have their voice heard and to encourage Pacific diaspora to contribute to public debate and discussion on development in their home countries via internet-based news media including blogs (for example Tongan and i-Kiribati online newspapers).

⁴ TVET Strategic Engagement Design Survey, A. Skuse, for PACMAS, December 2012

These opportunities grow out of the exponential increase in social media use across the Pacific. The latest data available from the International Telecommunications Union shows that Fiji's mobile subscriptions now stand at 727,000 out of a population of 868,000; in PNG, subscriptions have escalated from 300,000 in 2007 to 2.4 million; in Kiribati where there were 1000 mobile subscriptions in 2008, the number is now 13,788; in Samoa, the numbers have increased fourfold from 2006 to 167,400; and in Tonga, the subscriptions are at 55,000.

As noted in a recent Lowy Institute report, *Digital Islands: How the Pacific's ICT Revolution is transforming the region*, this access to mobile telephony offers a potential to address the region's geographic and economic challenges with affordable, portable 21st century technology that eclipses and leapfrogs the expensive ICT infrastructure of the 20th century.

That said, it is important to not overstate how it can support the PACMAS objectives. While the mobile subscription numbers cited above are impressive, they also reflect significant variations. Fiji's current subscriptions are at around 83% of the population; Samoa's rate is almost 90% of the population but the rate in Kiribati is just 12% of the population. In Tonga, the growth rate has been gradual with only a 10 per cent increase from 2008 to 2011 – the same years where substantial increases were happening in other countries.

Parallel to this are the very limited data available on internet access across the Pacific. In most countries, that data isn't available although ICU cites Vanuatu as having 3.5% of the population with internet access and Fiji at 18.8% (all compared to Australia's home internet access of 78.9%).

During the team's country visits to Kiribati and Tonga, it was apparent that the slow speed, high cost and limited accessibility of internet and computers beyond the capitals were important constraints to a more considerable use by PACMAS. However, mobile telephony does offer the opportunity to extend the coverage of radio through to more remote and difficult to reach parts of the country. For example, the study commissioned through the PNG Media Development Initiative in 2012 shows that mobile phones had two positive impacts – they were being used to access the national broadcaster when the signal was too weak to receive via a standard radio and unlike radios which were mostly controlled by men, mobile phones gave women control over their own listening preferences. Similar opportunities appear to be available in other countries with relatively high usage of mobile telephony. Furthermore, increased access for some Pacific countries to underwater fibre optic cables will improve the speed and quality of Internet access although whether this will lower the cost is still unknown.

One particular phenomenon that the team observed was the role played by country diaspora in supporting public debate. In Tonga, diaspora living in the USA were funding the cost of 7/24 streaming of the independent and private 89.5 FM station. In Kiribati, The Interdependent newspaper which lost its publishing licence has re-emerged as an e-net paper produced in New Zealand. This points to the potential that country-specific diaspora have in supporting a more informed and largely unfettered public debate supporting improved governance and development outcomes.

An overarching issue, however the social media is accessed and used, is the need for quality information. Feedback during the review and also the State of the Media baseline survey revealed that social media is becoming a source of information for journalists, but there is an ongoing concern by some of the more experienced journalists (e.g. in Vanuatu) about the accuracy of social media reporting and a concern that there was a disregard by some bloggers and other e-media practitioners for checking facts. There was a danger that this disregard would lead to internet-based reporting being dismissed as unreliable and misleading.

3. Analysis and findings – DAC criteria

Introduction

The findings of this review have been shaped by the approach and questions set out in the agreed review plan (see Attachment 3, Review Report Part B). The next two chapters address the team's findings in relation to the review's four objectives or lines of enquiry.

This chapter examines how the project is meeting the four DAC criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and gender equality. While not a criterion included in the review's terms of reference, there is also a brief look at monitoring and evaluation in this chapter.

The analysis is informed by the questions set out in the review plan. As recommended in AusAID's 2013 Guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation Standards, there is no mechanical presentation of the responses to the questions. Instead, the analysis under each of the criteria is informed both by the specific questions and also cross-cutting factors that became evident during the in-country visits. The findings and analysis relevant to the remaining three review lines of enquiry are considered in Chapter 4.

Relevance

Although there are some important differences in the challenges constraining media and communications in individual countries, there is a significant range of issues common enough across the region which underpin the relevance of this project's regional approach in attempting to address the development of diverse, independent and professional media which promotes informed and meaningful public discourse throughout the Pacific. How this relevance translates to the project's four components as well as communications for development focus is discussed in this section.

a) Media capacity building

As noted in Chapter 2, the need to strengthen media capacity is outstanding in the region. Industry feedback to the team was constant about the poor quality of journalism and media training. For example, one media manager in Kiribati said the organisation's major challenge was producing good quality news coverage. He said journalists have had very little training, except for short courses. He felt reporters needed more time to do more investigative reporting. They also faced government reluctance to release information which delayed news gathering.

Even in Fiji where the choice of training is significantly more extensive than other countries, there was criticism about the relevance of the undergraduate training. This supports the findings of last year's PACMAS TVET Strategic Design completed by TAG member, Andrew Skuse which highlighted the ongoing challenges for journalism training within the Technical and Vocational Education sector notably:

*(i) ongoing problems associated with access to equipment; (ii) unclear pathways to higher-level study and regional universities combined with cross-credit issues for prior study; (iii) problems maintaining contact with the local media industry/sector; (iv) inadequate learning resources for students (and existing media professionals); (v) a dated curriculum and traditional mode of teaching delivery; (vi) the need to build TVET journalism staff capacity, provide mentoring and networking opportunities; and (vii) the problem of student attrition at some of the institutions.*⁵

⁵ TVET Strategic Engagement Design Survey, A. Skuse for PACMAS, December 2012

As such, the training support provided by PACMAS through both the innovation fund and the strategic activities to build capacity is particularly relevant.

Feedback during the country visits also highlighted another issue confronting young media practitioners. A media producer in Kiribati felt that “there isn’t the protection for young journalists by their editors, who often don’t review their work before it is published. Young journalists are very reluctant to get punished for what they say, so they like to stick with topics like sport rather than reporting on the assembly. People try to avoid conflict so they try to keep things going in an harmonious way.”

Feedback was also strong about the importance of PACMAS helping to give journalists basic training, in issues such as checking information and sources and differentiating between what is news, human interest, and what is just rumour.

In Tonga, the review team also heard about issues with misreporting and poor quality journalism that were impacting in the country. Many of the young journalists did not have formal training, and the media in general did little analysis or interrogation in their reporting. A PACMAS collaborator in Tonga said that PACMAS had a vital role in capacity building, especially in improving the accuracy of reporting.

Even in Fiji there were also problems finding skilled journalists. “Getting people who are passionate about journalism is hard. The media industry has lost a lot of good journalists who have moved to NGOs and international agencies,” said one senior manager.

While the first two rounds of the innovation fund have attracted a larger number of applications for activities linked to the media content component, capacity building is the second most popular area of application activity (30% and 26% in rounds 1 and 2 respectively). The innovation fund is an important source of support for countries with no access to bilateral support for media strengthening e.g. Kiribati.

Several of the strategic activities promise to play a strong role in strengthening media capacity. It will be important to build on the three capacity building workshops held in Samoa last year focusing on NCDs, Pacific emergency broadcasting and Pacific communication technicians and broadcast engineers. Feedback about the relevance and timeliness of the workshops has been positive. The head of a Kiribati media outlet is keen for his organisation to tap into PACMAS for journalism training as he was already seeing the benefits of the training some staff had received on climate change and NCD reporting. But it will be important to follow through promptly on the workshop outcomes.

The effort to date to support national media associations (NMA) remains relevant to the project’s overall objective because of the potential advocacy role of NMAs for quality media training. NMAs can be the focal point in media development and improving quality through shared understanding of challenges and exchanging lessons as well as providing advice to young and upcoming journalists. However the relevance of NMAs is very much dependent on the willingness of local journalists to take ownership of them. Without that ongoing ownership, the relevance of NMAs is questionable and their sustainability unlikely. This has already been recognised by the PACMAS PMG following the completion of the PACMAS-commissioned study into Pacific NMAs in 2012.

Given the poor quality of journalism training, the strategic activity aimed at strengthening the five institutions providing certificate and diploma courses in journalism - Fiji National University, Tonga Institute of Higher Education, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (now Solomon Islands National University), Vanuatu Institute of Higher Education and National University of Samoa – is particularly relevant to the project’s objective. Two important findings from the team’s in-country visits are firstly the criticism about the

appropriateness of the training by the institutions and secondly that the media is not a popular career choice and students in at least in three of the countries (Solomon Islands, Tonga and Kiribati) are usually among the less capable intake in the colleges. For one of the main broadcasters in Tonga, the quality of the students coming out of country's journalism court was unacceptable. This was reinforced by another Tongan broadcaster who said that the training was not producing the people they needed.

A separate but significant impact on the quality of graduates is the very limited career opportunities in the industry combined with questionable viability of the media outlets. Out of 10 graduates from one course in Tonga, only two found jobs in the industry after graduation.

Another area of strong relevance is in the area of support for Pacific communication engineers. Compared to other news media, radio has the broadest reach across the Pacific. This is because of several factors including breadth of transmission e.g. PNG's national radio broadcaster reaches all areas of the country⁶ and even in Kiribati, despite the expanse of the country across the Pacific, the national broadcaster is the only form of mass media that reaches all islands. Radio Kiribati is also the primary communication platform in an emergency.⁷ It is a comparatively low cost medium which makes it more affordable and the extension of mobile telephony has extended its coverage particularly in remote areas.

As noted by PACMAS in its own description of this activity, and confirmed during the in-country visits, broadcasters, particularly public broadcasters, are struggling to keep their stations on air due to a variety of factors including lack of training, equipment and limited budgets. The situation has been exacerbated by the demise the SPC's Regional Media Centre which has been an important centre of training support for broadcasters. Another challenging factor is the widespread adoption of digital systems outside the Pacific. The majority of Pacific broadcasters do not have the resources to convert to digital making it essential for them to maintain and find spare parts for the ageing analogue equipment

The strategic activity working with political leaders seems to have moved away from its original intention in a way that makes it less relevant. The regional initiative's initial aim was to optimise the engagement and communication of Pacific leaders and senior bureaucrats as well as middle-level staff with the media. However, it appears that the first event within this activity will now be training senior Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC) and Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agency staff. Given the expected high competence of these senior managers on time-limited contracts and selected through a competitive process, the team was surprised that the activity had chosen this group as the first cohort for training. Journalists interviewed by the review team in Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati all felt that there would be benefits from senior bureaucrats and politicians receiving training in dealing with the media, especially those newly elected "National leaders in government don't understand the media and how to use it effectively," one said.

The team also has questions about the inclusion of an activity focusing on climate change. There is no doubt that this issue is particularly relevant to the Pacific - indeed, it is an area that is particularly well supported by bilateral donors and international agencies. So the observation here is related less to its relevance and more to the advisability of PACMAS investing its resources into an area already well covered. A particular concern related to the PACMAS effort in this area is the possibility that the media is being encouraged to focus attention on this particular issue – as important as it is – at the cost of other emerging issues which don't receive the breadth of funding and attention as climate change.

⁶ Stakeholder Analysis Report, Media Development Initiative II, January 2012

⁷ Draft Living Baseline Survey completed for PACMAS, provided to ABC 20 May 2012

Given the early days of the strategic activity focusing on Pacific media freedom, the team's observations on its relevance relate to the current operating environment. As indicated in the introductory comments, media freedom – or the lack of it – appears to be practised in different ways. The pressure on journalists in Kiribati in part is linked to the “small town syndrome” where conservatism and a determination by community leaders to keep the boat steady can have a stultifying effect on public debate. On the other hand, Fiji is witnessing state-installed and enforced media restrictions which have at their genesis a range of factors linked to the maintenance of power by an illegally installed regime.

Also impacting on Pacific media freedom is cultural expectation and practice. At least in three of the countries visited by the team, there is a reluctance to question elders and leaders. This can contribute to an environment where media freedom is not restricted in theory but in reality is a common if unintentional practice. “Good journalism is quite contrary to the traditional way of thinking in some Pacific countries, so there needs to be something that will encourage our graduates to ask questions, and draw out what really is news,” said one stakeholder interviewed in Fiji. Similar views were expressed in Tonga as highlighted by a prominent publisher: The practice of journalism can be a challenge for Tongans because of their natural shyness and preference to defer to leaders. Rather than it is said in metaphors.

Related to this is a particularly gender-specific issue in that while the media attracts a larger number of women than men, there is even more of a cultural expectation of obedience and subservience to authority on the part of women than men. A journalism trainer went so far as to assert that a major problem for women in journalism was that they were considered second-class citizens. This not only affected women negatively, but by association, the industry

As such, any relevant strategic activity in this area will need to consider a range of social, cultural, small community dynamics, gender-specific and legislative factors impacting media freedom.

b) Media policy and legislation

Media policy and legislation are highly relevant to the project's objective. However, the devil of relevance for this particular component is in its detail. The Project Design Document sets out expectations that PACMAS will consider activities relevant to telecommunications policy which is a much broader area than news media policy. While the team recognises the importance of legislation relevant to the introduction of digital communications and the fact that in some countries the regulator and the public broadcaster are the same authority e.g. Kiribati Broadcasting and Publications Authority, it is an area which demands very specialised expertise. The review team is concerned that for PACMAS to engage in this area would take it out of its core activities. In terms of broadcast policy, PACMAS can access expertise through the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) to get access to broadcast policy expertise. The team would recommend that this be the extent and that it doesn't move into telecommunications policy.

That said, it would seem that the project has limited to date its focus in this component to date to the strategic activity aimed at supporting political leaders and senior bureaucrats' engagement with the media. While the team sees relevance and value in addressing this, it has questions, as noted above with the target group for the first training activity. The other strategic activity which directly supports this component is the media freedom activity which is still in a very preliminary stage.

In terms of how innovation fund-supported activities support this component's relevance, the definition of this component is quite broad to the point that it's really not clear what policy

and what legislation is relevant. Innovation fund guidelines would need to be clearer on what really is a media policy and legislation activity. At the moment it appears that a number of activities have been described as fitting this component.

c) Media systems

As noted earlier, the operating context for Pacific broadcasters is challenging on a number of fronts. As identified at the September 2012 workshop in Samoa, there is a need for a framework that supports coordination and knowledge-sharing between broadcast and IT engineers which is one of the expected outcomes of this component.

The innovation fund has been useful in supporting some training and the provision of equipment to fill outstanding gaps. But in a field which is rapidly changing technologically, the project will need to be careful that the equipment is relevant to the technological advances. An important advantage for the Pacific media of these advances is the exponential simplification of the equipment required for all forms of media.

An important consideration for the project is the fact that there is no institution across the Pacific which provides consolidated training for broadcast technicians. The most appropriate course which is no longer being given had been provided by the then Fiji Institute of Technicians which in any case was for telecom technicians who had to make their own adaptation to broadcast. While the review is not suggesting that PACMAS fill this gap, it could identify ways through the planned TVET activity that the technical colleges could fill this gap.

An additional consideration is the impact of technological convergence on radio and television broadcasting. With the incorporation of computer software into broadcasting, it is important for the broadcast technicians to have appropriate training. However, this type of training is difficult to access. As noted in the draft baseline survey, broadcast technicians operate in an environment where they face major challenges in building and maintaining the broadcast system. "They also must engage with a variety of stakeholders, such as telecommunications companies that provide mobile and internet services via satellite, under-sea fibre cables, broadcast towers and other infrastructures." And all of this without ongoing training or access to sufficient resources.

In line with the second outcome for this component, the innovation fund has been responsive to community-driven initiatives to extend and improve community media. The baseline survey commissioned by PACMAS and completed towards the end of this review, promises to provide the gaps analysis which will support PACMAS's priority setting.

The strategic activities relevant to this component include the NCD partnership with World Health Organisation (WHO). Here there is a potential to use social media to support this activity. In public emergency broadcasting, the role of effective and efficient media systems is critical. Linked to that is the importance of training making the contribution of the TVET activity a core element to addressing this component.

A stakeholder from a community radio station based in Fiji said PACMAS has been a life saver for community media. "PACMAS is catering for a unique need, especially for community media, which has always struggled to get funds. Bigger media organisations have got funds, but not so for the community. PACMAS is having a positive effect by helping these small organisation get up to date with technology and demands for online etc."

PACMAS was also given credit in Tonga for assisting an independent media organisation transition to an online format and is now considered one of the most reliable news sources in Tonga.

d) Media content

Of all the components, media content is the one most directly linked to PACMAS's C4D focus. Its short-term outcomes look to the production of media content that addresses themes associated with governance and the MDGs across all media and a wider range of players, e.g. civil society groups. The most recent breakdown of successful innovation fund applications into the four components shows that it has been the most popular area. This would indicate a high relevance for the target groups benefitting from PACMAS.

However, the popularity of media content activities may in part be due to the way in which the IF guidelines describe the fund with the emphasis very firmly on the creation of new media content when describing what PACMAS means by "innovation" as seen in Box 1 below.

Box 1

PACIFIC MEDIA ASSISTANCE SCHEME – PHASE II Innovation Fund Guidelines for Round 2

1. What is the PACMAS Innovation Fund?

The Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) Innovation Fund (IF) has been established to provide funding support to Pacific stakeholders and development partners that play a role in media and communications in the region. It is designed to help build both technical and creative capacity of the Pacific media and communication sectors through implementation of activities under the four main PACMAS components and contribute to the achievement of PACMAS goals and objectives in the Pacific.

The four PACMAS Components are as follows:

- Media Capacity Building
- Media Policy and Legislation
- Media Distribution Systems; and
- Media Content

2. What is "innovation" under PACMAS program?

The PACMAS Innovation Fund encourages innovations that support:

- Creation of new media content (including social and citizen media) with a focus on generating public demand to achieving development outcomes
- Trialling/piloting of new forms of communication and/or platforms that serve community groups
- Investigation and execution of potential new media technologies
- Engagement in training opportunities

Aside from the innovation fund activities, the two strategic activities which address this component – the NCD activity with World Health Organisation and the climate change activity with the former Australian Federal Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (now merged with a new super Department of Industry) – also respond to two

critical issues of development concern to the Pacific – although ironically neither NCDs nor climate change are specifically referred to in the MDGs.

The need for support for producing local content was highlighted by one stakeholder in Kiribati who often received visits by international filmmakers documenting stories about Kiribati for overseas audiences but who rarely made a version for the local audience. This is made more difficult by the demise of the TV station, and the potential purchase by overseas interests.

e) Communication for Development

Communication for development (C4D)⁸ is a cross-cutting issue which can be achieved through each of the components but is also a type of component in itself. According to the PDD, the PACMAS C4D approach should support broader engagement with the media and communications sectors to encourage “effective policy environments and a plurality of media voices”. This approach and stronger focus on C4D by PACMAS 2 is relevant in terms of the project’s overall objective through its support and enhancement of a media which promotes informed and meaningful public discourse. However, as a concept, feedback from stakeholders suggests that C4D is a relatively new area of endeavour. Comments from NGO representatives both in Kiribati and Fiji pointed to the still limited understanding among stakeholders of what it is and what it aims to achieve..

The innovation fund is an important mechanism for providing support to specific, innovative C4D activities which are relevant to the outstanding development challenges for the Pacific. The applications from interested parties for rounds of funding have come from local non-government organisations, the media, regional organisations, universities, documentary filmmakers and international development agencies. The support of a variety of local agencies to undertake C4D activities increases the local ownership of the PACMAS program.

Many of the funded initiatives are producing media content, especially to do with key issues such as disaster response, disability, family issues notably domestic violence, climate change, and women’s leadership. Many are giving people in the community an alternative means of being heard, raising community concerns and ideas.

The initiatives are also building the capacity of the community, leaders and journalists to communicate with the general public; and improving their ability to relay information about issues such as gender, climate change, non-communicable diseases, disability, mental health etc.

However, given the geographic spread of PACMAS and the variety and range of C4D activities and organizations supported through the fund, there is a risk that their impact will be limited unless a more strategic approach combined with a tighter focus is applied to IF support. Although the activities supported to date are largely relevant, the impact risks being short-lived and non-sustainable, even confusing in terms of messages because they are ad hoc and do not appear to be linked to sustained and comprehensive local efforts in this area. An alternative approach to the solely demand-driven approach is discussed in the *Effectiveness* section which follows.

On the other hand, strategic activities fit well with a relevant and effective C4D approach given the comprehensive and reinforcing nature of those activities. For example, the regional initiative in NCDs is particularly relevant to addressing one of the major health challenges in

⁸ See Attachment 1, Review Report Part B for the background document on communication for development compiled by the review team as part of its process of analyzing the PACMAS approach to C4D.

the Pacific and promises to have a well co-ordinated approach through the offices of WHO, with PACMAS providing the essential media complement and most importantly, publicly and politically supported by the region's governments. Media representatives in Tonga applauded PACMAS's involvement in providing training to their reporters about NCDs.

f) Relevance to poverty reduction

The relevance and contribution of the PACMAS program to poverty reduction across the Pacific is inextricably linked to its overall goal - to achieve better governance in the Pacific region. As identified in AusAID's Effective Governance strategy⁹, there is a well-documented linkage between improvements in governance and poverty reduction. While it cannot be expected that this project alone will make significant inroads into reducing poverty across the Pacific, its contribution to the range of factors contributing to better governance will be important in this overall effort. The role of PACMAS in supporting governance in the Pacific is discussed in Chapter 3.

Summary of main findings

- The PACMAS 2 components and focus on C4D are relevant to the achievement of the project's objective and as such of the overall development objectives of the Australian aid program.
- Although there are variations in challenges across the region, there are sufficient similarities to warrant the regional approach offered by PACMAS.
- There is an outstanding demand for quality media training.
- There is an outstanding gap in basic training for broadcast technicians could be addressed through the planned TVET activity.
- C4D activities through the innovation fund are building skills of the media and civil society, providing a platform for communicating about development messages, and building local ownership.

Effectiveness

PACMAS is a lifesaver for media in the Pacific which is small and up against big constraints in terms of limited capacity and skills. We are very pleased PACMAS has found a way to support the media. This augurs well for better government as issues are aired.
Prominent journalist and editor, Tonga

PACMAS 2 is on track in addressing the project's four components and has been active in supporting C4D activities in line with the PDD and subsequent implementation plans. The in-country feedback to the review team suggests that PACMAS has been effective in supporting a broad range of Pacific media stakeholders.

Nevertheless, as phase 2 progresses, it would be advisable to consider refinements in the framework guiding the implementation of both the innovation fund and the strategic activities. For example, the innovation fund has been an effective mechanism in both responding quickly to a range of the outstanding needs of stakeholders as well as being a communication tool for PACMAS. In the early days of PACMAS 2, there was a need for the PACMAS team to build its reputation for responsiveness and relevance across the Pacific particularly in the wake of disappointments linked to PACMAS 1.

⁹ Effective Governance – Thematic Strategy November 2011, AusAID, Canberra

However, now that there is a more comprehensive understanding of PACMAS 2, as a small grants facility, the innovation fund runs the risk that as it continues to address a broad range of demand-driven requests, the absence of a more tightly focused strategic approach may lead to a degree of ad hocery in the facility with limited reinforcement of funded activity outcomes and an undermining of sustainability. As can be seen in Table 2, the extent of activities supported under the innovation fund is broad and while they relate to the project's four components plus C4D, they are a collection of unrelated activities. While the table shows a drop off in application approvals in the most recent round, the diversity remains consistent.

Table 2 – diversity of approved innovation fund activities

Approved activities	Components	Countries	Themes across both rounds
<p>Round 1 = 31 applications 23 approved activities</p> <p>Round 2 = 22 applications 9 approved activities</p>	<i>Media content</i>		
	8 activities 5 activities	Cook Islands, Samoa, Regional Samoa, Tonga, Regional	Disaster awareness Disability Climate change Gender, youth & disability Environment, Climate change
	<i>Media content + capacity building</i>		
	10 activities = 1 activities =	Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Regional Samoa	All MDGs, Gender & youth Disaster awareness Climate Change Environment
	<i>Media content + media systems</i>		
	3 activities 2 activities =	Cook Islands, Tonga, PNG, Samoa, Fiji	MDGs 1-4 Gender Youth HIV/AIDS Disaster awareness Environment All MDGs, Gender
	<i>Capacity building</i>		
	1 activity 1 activity	Regional Regional	All MDGs Gender Youth Disability
	<i>Capacity building + media policy</i>		
	1 activity	Regional	Disaster awareness, Climate change Gender

This is particularly relevant to the C4D activities funded through the innovation fund. The ultimate effectiveness of C4D has to be judged on the way it is successful in changing community behaviour and mores and supporting good development outcomes. This is usually achieved through a comprehensive and sustained C4D approach with media-linked activity only one of the tools. At this stage, it is too early to judge the ongoing impact of PACMAS's activities in this area. But the team does have some concern about the ad hoc nature of some of the IF C4D activities as they do not appear to be part of a broader comprehensive C4D strategy or effort. It was also too early to establish whether the time frames of the innovation fund projects were realistic.

However, the project could strengthen the fund's focus and so enhance its effectiveness. One option could be to identify particular areas or themes of activity that the fund will support over a rolling period that could tie in with the strategic activities. For example, media content activities supported under a particular fund round could be required to focus on NCDs and so coincide with and coordinate with the implementation of the NCD strategic activity.

Similarly, there could be an emphasis on Pacific emergency broadcasting in another round, again to reinforce and consolidate the work being undertaken in the PEB strategic activity. While taking a thematic approach to the individual rounds, it would be advisable to still maintain some degree of flexibility in the fund to allow it to respond to particularly innovative or specific proposals that respond to the core objective of PACMAS and are potentially effective one-off activities.

Also, the core aim of the innovation fund is to support innovation. There is a degree of risk associated with supporting innovation which the project should be able to support without undue external criticism. When looking for a successful innovation, there will also be failures, or initiatives that don't deliver planned outcomes.

PACMAS should also continue to help stakeholders build links with others working in relevant fields to avoid overlap and to make the work more sustainable in the long term, for example, with other activities and programs underway and planned in Tonga such as through the Tonga Health Promotion Foundation, Ministry of Health, AusAID bilateral activities, other agencies and donors.

The agreed strategic activities cover a range of issues relevant to each of the components and incorporate C4D. The January 2013 PACMAS document describing the strategic activities provides a useful outline of each of the activities. However, apart from this document's brief description of approaches and partnerships, it is not clear how the activities will be operationalized and the relevant timelines for activity-specific actions. Work plans for each of the activities are needed to underscore efficiency and effectiveness.

Another issue which could impact on the longer term effectiveness of PACMAS is the fact that it covers 14 countries including two – PNG and Solomon Islands – which already have substantial bilateral activities in the media. It is the view of the team that attempting to cover all 14 countries equally is unachievable. And to attempt this will result in a weakening of focus and impact. The team appreciates that PACMAS is attempting to cover all countries in part because there is no guidance on differentiation provided in the project documentation. There also seems to be a tendency to attempt to cover all countries because of the extent of the need. At this stage of the project's life, this stands more as a risk than an actuality because there hasn't been the time to build a critical volume of activity in some countries.

However, as the project moves into the second half of its operations, the project's effectiveness will be strengthened through a more tightly targeted and strategic approach, identifying the geographic and thematic priorities which are also in accordance with AusAID's own regional priorities. It is expected that the findings of the Baseline Living Survey commissioned by AusAID in 2012 and finalised in mid-2013 will help inform PACMAS in terms of gaps and needs within the priority countries.

In addition, the team understands that the lead party for the Baseline Living Survey, RMIT, has secured an Australian Research Council grant which will allow work with PACMAS to investigate three countries more closely to gain a wider understanding of the communication, media and communication ecologies. This will help inform work underway in these countries to better meet community needs and increase effectiveness.

Observations regarding component/activity effectiveness

Table 3 sets out the team's findings reflecting both positive and negative elements which affect PACMAS' performance in terms of the project's effectiveness in addressing each of the project's components.

Table 3: Effectiveness observations for the four components

Component	Innovation Fund	Strategic Activities
Media capacity	<p>Responsive to significant gaps in access to training</p> <p>To reinforce effectiveness, needs to consider ways in which one-off activities can receive some follow-up</p> <p>To be effective considerable PACMAS input will continue to be required by recipients</p>	<p>Effectiveness reinforced by the inclusion of media capacity strengthening in all strategic activities</p> <p>Building networks between media and communicators with key agents (e.g. those agencies working in NCDs) builds effectiveness</p> <p>Taking people overseas for short-term training has benefits, but should consider options for longer term external and in-country training and follow up in country</p>
Media policy and legislation	<p>Limited engagement to date in this component. However, of all the components, it is the most suited to one-off activity support as it can be an adjunct to activity being undertaken either by a government or donor. Therefore the effectiveness is not necessarily affected negatively through singular support</p>	<p>The only strategic activity to address this so far is the Pacific communications and engagement with the media. The review found the decision to alter the target group for this activity from political leaders and senior bureaucrats to the senior staff of SPC and CROP agencies was a divergence from the activity's original intention.</p> <p>The team suggests that the PDD inclusion of telecommunications policy work be deleted from the work plan. Engaging the expertise and competencies required to be effective in this area would broaden the mandate of the project significantly, which is not advisable given the extent of its existing workload.</p>
Media systems	<p>While only attracting 10% and 13% of applications in rounds 1 and 2 respectively, there is potential for the fund's support in media systems to reinforce the work being undertaken in within the strategic activities.</p>	<p>Limited activity has been undertaken in this area to date although the proposed subsequent work following the PEB and Communication technician workshops in Samoa promises to address acknowledged gaps in this area.</p>

Component	Innovation Fund	Strategic Activities
Media content	<p data-bbox="619 228 973 499">Positive feedback by stakeholders regarding the support provided by PACMAS to improve and increase local content. Because of the poor quality of local content and ownership, there is a strong preference by audiences for material produced overseas.</p> <p data-bbox="619 533 973 835">This is the most popular component in terms of grant applications and is particularly relevant for the PACMAS emphasis on C4D. A more focused approach to activity support in this component would strengthen the effectiveness of the activities supported.</p> <p data-bbox="619 869 973 1014">Need to address issue of short-term inputs by finding ways to develop or encourage longer term action if pilots prove successful</p>	<p data-bbox="999 228 1355 376">The NCD and climate change activities have not yet commenced so the team is unable to comment on their effectiveness.</p>

Summary of main findings

- PACMAS 2 is on track in addressing the project’s four components and has been active in supporting C4D activities in line with the PDD and Annual Plans. However, as the project moves into the second half of its operations, the project’s effectiveness will be strengthened through a more tightly targeted and strategic approach, identifying the geographic and thematic priorities which are also in accordance with AusAID’s own regional priorities.
- As phase 2 progresses, consideration should be given to introducing a thematic approach to the innovation fund to strengthen their relevance and linkage to the strategic activities.
- The core aim of the innovation fund is to support innovation. When looking for a successful innovation, there will also be failures, or initiatives that don’t deliver planned outcomes.
- The agreed strategic activities cover a range of issues relevant to each of the components and incorporate C4D. But work plans for each of the activities are needed to underscore efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency

To assess the project’s efficiency, as defined by the Development Assistance Committee - comparing implementing efficiency, cost-efficiency and timeliness in achieving objectives - three issues are considered. Firstly, is the regional model more efficient than a bilateral approach? Secondly, are the project’s location and management model conducive to value for money? Thirdly, have the project’s objectives, as defined in the 2011-12 implementation plan and refined in the subsequent annual plan, been achieved on time?

1) *Is the regional model efficient?*

As a regional program covering 14 Pacific countries with varying development challenges, the outstanding question is whether a regional program is the most efficient way to address the media-related development issues in each of these countries as opposed to stand-alone bilateral activities¹⁰.

Part of the answer relates to the Australian aid program's own priorities and budget for the region. AusAID's 2012 draft regional strategic analysis considers the benefits and drawbacks of attempting region-wide activities. In light of that analysis, it could be argued that a regional media activity may suffer from some of the same weaknesses as other regional activities described in that analysis i.e. supply-driven and weak strategic coherence.

However, in the case of PACMAS, it is important to remember that the media industry and related NGO and other stakeholders represent a very small cohort in what are mostly already very small and widely disbursed communities. In other words, there is not the critical mass essential for supporting, even justifying bilateral activities. The exceptions are PNG and Solomon Islands where bilateral activities are being implemented (at the time of this review). Other exceptions could be added to the list i.e. Fiji and Vanuatu. But in at least the case of PNG and Solomon Islands, there are vital geo-strategic interests which support the rationale behind the ongoing bilateral activities in those two countries.

PACMAS also provides a degree of cohesion for Pacific media stakeholders which is currently missing in the Pacific media landscape. While this is not an intended objective of the program, it does provide an invaluable interim support facilitating a fertile exchange of knowledge and lessons between the individual and very small media communities.

One experienced journalist in Fiji felt that in an age where the media is more technological and dynamic, a regional media development program such as PACMAS is even more important. "As a single provider with a collective approach, PACMAS is tuned in to the diverse needs in the region. Without this there is no continuity, there is one little thing here and one little thing there. This won't work any more given the environment we are in,"

In short, a regional approach to media strengthening would appear to be the most efficient way to address this sector's development challenges in the smaller Pacific islands. That said, there are ways in which the project can become more regionally efficient to buttress the activity's strategic coherence. These were discussed in the *Effectiveness* section above.

2) *Location and management model efficiencies*

The location of PACMAS 2 in Port Vila rather than the Pacific hub, Suva, is a consequence of the political situation in Fiji where there are both program and personality-related sensitivities on the part of the Fijian authorities with relation to PACMAS 2. These sensitivities were evident to the review team during its visit to Fiji and manifested themselves in the ways in which the Fijian authorities interacted with the team as well as the impact of the country's stringent restrictions on the media.

In such circumstances, it would seem that the project's operational efficiency is enhanced by being located outside Fiji. While a Suva-based location would bring some logistical and coordination efficiencies because of a co-location with other AusAID regional activities,

¹⁰ At the time of this report, AusAID was implementing bilateral media activities in PNG and Solomon Islands.

having it in Port Vila does not present any significant constraints to program delivery¹¹. It is also preferable to having it based in a Pacific capital rather than in Australia where other AusAID non-Suva based regional programs are managed as this facilitates ongoing interaction with Pacific stakeholders. Another important element of having it based in Port Vila is the way in which the project itself is attracting Pacific Islanders to all roles and providing an important capacity building facility.

Despite some inadequate implementation issues which are discussed below, the project's management and governance configuration with the ABC as the project implementing agent and the PMG providing the oversight and guidance seems to support the project's efficiency overall. The ABC has long experience in the Pacific – as a broadcaster, as a peer organisation to a number of the Pacific public broadcasters, and as a development partner. As a result there is a recognition and respect for the ABC across the Pacific media which provides a significant added value that would be difficult for other possible contractors to replicate.

A similar and significant added value for the project is evident with the presence of the Port Vila-based team leader. Feedback during the country visits demonstrated that the network he has access to is extensive and important for the effectiveness of the project. Furthermore, he appears to be widely respected and as such, the reputation of project benefits significantly from his association with it.

With regard to the PMG, this governance arrangement is reinforced by the quality of the individuals who are members of the group. The balance of expertise and gender that the overall membership represents supports this quality. The technical advisory group also provides the ongoing accessibility of PACMAS to experts in relevant areas and provides for efficiencies in terms of timely and appropriate advice.

That said, there are ongoing frustrations with the timeliness and responsiveness of the project in terms of reporting. Feedback from AusAID points to frequent lateness in the delivery of activity reports and a concern that the Port Vila team is not receiving sufficient support from the Melbourne team. In terms of the lateness of reporting, AusAID advised the team that although it had reminded the ABC of its contract requirements in this regard, there were still delays in receiving the reports prior to the regular PMG meetings. This resulted in having little or no opportunity to share the reports with relevant Pacific AusAID posts to get their feedback and input into the PMG's deliberations. This impacts negatively on the effectiveness of bilateral-regional program coordination and interaction. (See Chapter 3 – regional and bilateral media development activities.)

Another concern expressed by AusAID was linked to the project's growing staffing numbers and related questions about the right balance. The issue for AusAID relates to its frustrations about the ongoing unsatisfactory timeliness in receiving reports despite the growth in staffing. The review team noted that the original PDD outlined a staffing profile which consisted of a full-time program manager and program officer in Port Vila and a program director, program co-ordinator and research officer (all part-time) in Melbourne. It is the review team's view that given the breadth of the project's coverage, this was grossly insufficient, notably in Port Vila. It is not surprising, therefore, that the 2011-2012 Implementation Plan set as one of its activities the employment of an administration assistant and research assistant to support the Port Vila office. Subsequent to that, and in line with the expansion in M&E activities, the staffing configuration now comprises four part-time Melbourne-based team members and five, soon to be six Pacific-based team members.

¹¹ As of June 2013, the project was looking to employ an additional team member to be based in Suva to co-ordinate the capacity building activities. As noted earlier in this report, Fiji is an important location for media training.

It seems that this growth has been sanctioned by the PMG and AusAID. However, the question remains about the team's reporting efficiencies. In response to the review team's questions about this, the ABC acknowledged that there had been inadequacies in the responsiveness which the project team was in the process of addressing through a restructuring of responsibilities. While this should go some way towards addressing AusAID's concerns, strengthening the strategic focus of the project's activities and geographic coverage as discussed elsewhere in this report is likely to also support improvements in the project's efficiency and consequently outputs.

Another issue raised by AusAID was the time dedicated to the project by the Melbourne team which in the area of project management was felt to be inadequate although it would appear that the balance has been sanctioned by the PMG. Furthermore, the team was advised that there had been an earlier suggestion by the ABC to increase the amount of time dedicated to innovation fund management by the Melbourne team had been rejected in preference to this being undertaken by the Port Vila team.

Overall, it is the view of the team that these fundamental operating questions reflect inadequate ongoing discussion between AusAID and the ABC about the direction and performance of the project. This review has provided the opportunity to focus on these issues but addressing them requires more substantial and regular dialogue between the two parties.

3) Timely implementation of objectives (outputs)

In assessing the timely implementation of objectives as a measure of efficiency, the review team in this section is addressing activity outputs as set out in PDD, the 2011-2012 Implementation Plan and 2012-2013 Action Plan. In doing this, it needs to be noted that there is no consistency between these documents in terms of activity descriptions e.g. in the PDD they are variously called delivery mechanisms and indicative activities while in the 2011 Implementation Plan they are objectives and in the Action Plan, they are outputs. As such, the team has focused on the key areas of activity listed in all three documents and a summary of outputs progress is set out in Table 4.

Table 4 – Progress of scheduled activities

Scheduled activities/outputs	Progress to date
Research and analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program of research activities - Baseline survey (State of the Media) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program of research aligned to proposed strategic activities and M&E approach - Baseline Survey commissioned June 2012; final draft May 2013
Strategic activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eight strategic activities identified and approved by PMG - three workshops undertaken as first stage of three activities (NCDs, PEBs + PCTs) - comprehensive reviews undertaken to inform implementation of two other activities (NMAs + TVET) - overall, individual activities lack operational/work plans
Innovation Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - two rounds undertaken attracting 53 applications, 32 approved - third round was opened at the time of the review

Scheduled activities/outputs	Progress to date
Communications and networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - website - networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - website developed and in process of being revamped but needs more work - extensive networking activities undertaken to improve understanding and reputation of PACMAS but stakeholders contact list needs maintenance and to be referred to
Management and governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operations manual - program reporting - PMG secretariat - TAG establishment - Annual plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft operations manual to be considered at July 2013 PMG meeting - Program reporting not timely - PMG established early 2012 - TAG established May 2012 - Annual plans as required
Monitoring and evaluation	Comprehensive M&E framework developed supported by completed baseline survey (State of the Media). Refinement may be required.
Communications for Development	Ongoing and significant inputs to support this focus

As can be seen above, the programmatic activities are being implemented in a largely timely way. However, the area where there has been slippage is in management notably in the area of program reporting. This has been discussed in detail in (2) above.

In terms of the processing of innovation fund applications, the process appears to be comprehensive and inclusive ensuring appropriate comment from relevant parts of the PACMAS machinery. The team was impressed by the transparency of the process and the way in which the rationale behind decisions can be easily tracked.

While there has been progress in identifying the strategic activities and various actions undertaken to advance a number of them, there are no implementation plans which makes it difficult to assess the likely efficiency of the proposed steps to be undertaken. (This has been addressed in the *Effectiveness* section above.)

With regard to networking and workshop activities, while PACMAS has been successful in turning around the negativity about the PACMAS brand in a very short time, there are still some areas of details that need attention. The team received feedback both in Tonga and Kiribati that advice about forthcoming activities and invitations were at times late and several of the stakeholders were only aware of the activities after the event. This would seem to be linked to the currency of the stakeholder list which needs to be regularly updated and maintained.

An important and highly cost-effective vehicle for disseminating information about the project has been the PACMAS website. It has been a useful tool in alerting stakeholders to proposed initiatives and providing information on activities that have been undertaken. The team understands that the site is in the process of being revised and improved. This is strongly supported as the review team had ongoing difficulties in navigating the site. There are also significant gaps in what the website posts and its focus on particular issues notably C4D and gender. It would be useful to have a description of what PACMAS defines as C4D. Similarly, the website should be used to underscore gender-specific issues and the role which the media can play in supporting a greater understanding of these issues and to translate that

understanding into informed coverage. At the moment, there doesn't appear to be any focus on gender issues on the website. (This is discussed in more detail in the *Gender* section below.)

With regard to C4D (see Attachment 1, Review Report Part B) PACMAS is placing a high importance on introducing the approach to PACMAS to increase the effectiveness of the program in meeting community needs and building demand for better governance. The PACMAS team are learning about the best way the concept can be applied through the program, and in a Pacific setting. They are providing significant assistance to guide stakeholders in C4D implementation. C4D by its nature is a resource heavy approach, with guidance needed for recipients e.g. of the innovation fund, on project design and also on monitoring and evaluation.

While the ABC's expertise to implement C4D activities has been queried in some parts of AusAID, the team sees that the value of having the ABC as the contract manager for what is essentially a Pacific media development activity outweighs this concern. It would be difficult to find an alternative organisation which brings the same degree of Pacific media expertise to the table as the ABC. In any case, it would seem that AusAID would need to adopt a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to C4D in relevant sectoral activities to support the goals of C4D and to ensure appropriate coordination with media-specific C4D activities.

That said there are relatively simple and cost-efficient ways to strengthen the current C4D focus within the existing PACMAS management framework. As suggested in the earlier *Efficiency* section, the impact and sustainability of the C4D activities supported by PACMAS could be strengthened through greater alignment between the innovation fund rounds and specific strategic activities thus providing an opportunity for mutual reinforcement and strengthening sustained impact.

The C4D aspects of the innovation fund require significant input from the PACMAS team, the PMG and recipients in project development and setting up M&E plans. There is also concern that media content output may need to be reviewed to ensure it is acceptable. With these demands in mind it may be advisable to reduce the number of innovation fund projects to a manageable number for the program.

With regard to the project's approach to monitoring and evaluation, there was acknowledgement from AusAID that the ABC had embraced very positively advice that it should significantly strengthen its M&E framework and analysis. However, there was a concern now that the pendulum has perhaps swung too far and that there was now a higher than anticipated investment of resources into M&E. Responses to the review team findings suggest that an early examination should be undertaken to adjust the M&E approach to a framework that is more appropriate to both the activity and the operational context where both the concepts of C4D and M&E are still novel and require significant advisory inputs to guide stakeholders.

Summary of main findings

- A regional approach to media strengthening complementing a small number of strategically important bilateral media projects would appear to be the most efficient way to address this sector's development challenges.
- While locating the project in Suva would bring some logistical and coordination efficiencies because of a co-location with other AusAID regional activities, having it in Port Vila does not present any significant constraints to program delivery.
- Notwithstanding some administrative inadequacies requiring immediate attention, the project's management and governance configuration with the ABC as the project

- implementing agent and the PMG providing the oversight and guidance seems to support the project's efficiency.
- Majority of project outputs are progressing in a timely way. However, reporting timeliness remains inadequate and needs to be addressed immediately. Current staffing reorganisation may address staffing balance concerns.
- Networking and regional activities require the stakeholders' contact list to be regularly maintained, updated and used in a timely way to alert relevant stakeholders of upcoming events.
- C4D activities supported by PACMAS could be strengthened through greater alignment between the innovation fund rounds and specific strategic activities thus providing an opportunity for mutual reinforcement and strengthening sustained impact.
- It would be useful to have a description of what PACMAS defines as C4D on the PACMAS website. Similarly, the website should be used to underscore gender-specific issues and the role which the media can play in supporting a greater understanding of these issues and to translate that understanding into informed coverage. Also required is greater attention to the website's navigation mechanisms which continue to present difficulties for users
- Current M&E should be examined in light of shared concern that it has become too input-intensive

Gender equality

PACMAS is operating in an environment which has an unusually high representation of women – at least in the student cohort and at the junior levels inside media organisations. In the countries visited by the team (Vanuatu, Tonga, Fiji), women made up the large majority of media students at the universities and technical colleges. The fact that this is a broader phenomenon across the Pacific has been confirmed in the TVET Strategic Design paper completed in 2012.

This high representation of women at the student level doesn't automatically translate into a high representation of women in mainstream media. Feedback during the country visits suggest that many women are choosing to undertake tertiary training to prepare for a career in NGOs or public relations rather than in journalism. So while women make up a high proportion of the student cohort, industry leaders and managers tend to be male.

This is a loss to the media industry as women offer many skills needed in journalism. "There are particular attributes that women have that make them more suited to journalism. They read well, and listen. I have found the female journalists to be more committed and persistent, and unfortunately we have lost many from the industry," said one experienced Fijian journalist.

To address this, the project should be encouraged to consider ways in which young women journalists can receive support and training to enable them to take on leadership roles e.g. this could be undertaken in partnership with the Pacific Leadership Program. AusAID could also consider ways in which PACMAS could link into AusAID's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative.

In terms of the project's current gender-sensitive approaches, this could be strengthened through a stronger and sustained focus on gender in its public material and the emphasis given to it in its training activities as well as activity evaluation processes. While the PDD makes reference to the importance of addressing gender-specific issues in all aspects of the project, it is not clear from the documentation how this is being implemented.

The team received critical feedback about the limited reference to gender-specific issues in the innovation fund documentation. “Women’s involvement doesn't appear to be an objective. I think PACMAS could have put more focus on involvement of women and people with a disability e.g. they could make women’s involvement one of the milestones,” said a long-standing eminent NGO representative in Fiji.

As such, it did not appear to be the prominent issue for the project that it should be given the issues of gender inequality in the Pacific. The website should also be used to reinforce the project’s focus on supporting gender equality and sensitising the media to critical gender issues.

As recommended by one of the PMG members, the Pacific Media Action Plan for women identifies the gender-specific issues that should be considered by Pacific media. These include:

- resist negative stereotyping
- do not use material that condones or incites any form of violence
- promotes human rights education
- seeks partnership and information exchange with women’s civil society
- promotes gender sensitivity and the use of gender-inclusive language; and
- ensures media policies are consistent with gender equality commitments.

“Women can be supported in the production space, but what are the gender aspects of those coming back into the media where, or example, men can make progress on women’s issues so news media content reflects gender equity,” one stakeholder told the review team.

A particular gender-sensitive issue that PACMAS needs to incorporate into its consideration of activities is the relatively widely held cultural expectation of the way in which women should interact particularly with men in authority. It can be difficult, notably for young women journalists, to question authority even if it is only to achieve a better informed and balanced coverage of the issue they are reporting on. This was highlighted by a media trainer in Vanuatu, who championed the idea of a training section being established at a newspaper to give the graduates the experience and confidence they need. C4D activities may offer opportunities to support women find alternative ways of having their voices heard and listened to.

The M&E data available to date also seems to be focused more on gender involvement as a measure of the project’s approach to supporting gender equality than on how the project’s activities support enhanced understanding and coverage of gender equity issues. Although a relatively higher proportion of women than men appear to be participating in the activities, this is only one limited aspect to addressing gender equality. This is particularly important for a media activity which aims to improve informed and meaningful public discourse. Improving the discussion about the role and importance of women in the development of the Pacific is a critically important issue for PACMAS to address throughout its activities.

Finally, while gender equality has been identified as one of the four DAC criteria to consider in this review, the PDD does not give it a significant emphasis. It is contained within a brief section towards the end of the document which sets out a relatively long list of other cross-cutting issues comprising anti-corruption, disability, youth, environmental concerns and disaster risk reduction. This list seems to be a reflection of whole-of-AusAID requirements. The team is concerned that this design approach has not encouraged the project to consider gender equality in a more comprehensive way.

Summary of main findings

- High representation of women in the industry, particularly as students, is not translating into women being represented in any significant numbers in leadership positions.
- The project's gender-sensitive approaches should be strengthened through a stronger and sustained focus on gender in its public material and the emphasis given to it in its training activities as well as activity evaluation processes.
- Cultural expectations of how women should “behave” around elders and leaders has an impact on the way in which they feel able to undertake their media-related tasks. C4D may offer opportunities to support women to find alternative ways of having their voices heard.
- Project documentation does not appear to reflect the singular significance of addressing gender equality and equity issues.

Monitoring and Evaluation

While not included as a DAC criterion for consideration by this review, the team considered it would be helpful to include some comments on the M&E framework and the way it is being implemented.

The program is aiming to track its impact on the objective of improving governance in the Pacific through changes in the worldwide governance voice and accountability index of the countries involved. However, while this provides an overall guidance on how the individual countries are tracking, it would be difficult to attribute any improvements or indeed slippages to the work of PACMAS given there are many influences on governance well beyond the performance of the media however defined.

Instead, the team believes that a more effective measurement of the impact on the program's goal of supporting the development of diverse, independent and professional media will be measured through the comparative results of the baseline and endline surveys. The baseline survey was completed towards the end of this review.

PACMAS has set up an M&E framework and is tracking the various aspects of the work under way including training, the innovation fund, strategic activities and research. This includes hard figures on numbers and gender breakdown of people undergoing training, ‘stories of change’ that have been outcomes of the work, and ‘lesson learnt’. While this information is valuable, there could be better articulation of the strategic outcomes that the program is aiming for, with better indicators of how the program is tracking, to enable effective longer-term evaluation.

It will also be important for the outcomes and insights gained through baseline and other research to be integrated into the program.

The team also notes that the establishment of an effective M&E process for each innovation fund project is requiring significant input from the team given many of the recipients are not experienced in M&E. However, this is the nature of C4D and working with a wide range of recipients. Capacity building of recipients and also PACMAS staff in M&E of C4D will be an ongoing requirement of PACMAS. It is important that the M&E suits the size and scope of the initiative. It should be realistic, appropriate, useful and user friendly. As noted above in the *Efficiency* section, there is a shared concern about the degree of investment into the M&E framework and a desire on the part of the ABC and AusAID to review the current approach. The review team supports this.

4. Governance, the role of C4D, and program linkages

This chapter addresses the review's other three objectives

- identify knowledge and lessons for AusAID on how media strengthening and C4D contributes to better governance in the Pacific;
- help AusAID develop a clearer picture of the role of C4D in broader governance support, what value it provides for people and the costs involved; and
- consolidate lessons learned and to make recommendations on possible mechanisms for improving links between regional and country-level programs working in media development.

Supporting governance in the Pacific

At this stage of the project's life, it would appear that it is indeed meeting at least part of the objective – *to support the development of diverse, independent and professional media*. And while it is too soon to be clear on how well it will eventually meet the second element of this objective – *promote informed and meaningful public discourse throughout the region* – the principal delivery mechanisms i.e. the innovation fund and the strategic activities, appear to be responding to the gaps and deficiencies which currently limit the quality and reach of much of the media across the Pacific.

The question here though is how does it support the overall goal which is to support better governance in the Pacific region (see M&E section in Chapter 3 regarding governance and worldwide indicators). At this stage, it is too early in the life of PACMAS 2 to be conclusive about its success or otherwise in achieving this goal. However, it is timely to consider the likeliness and terms of eventual success.

PACMAS is principally focused on strengthening the region's media in a way that will support constructive and informed debate and discussion on, *inter alia*, country and region-wide development issues. The project's work in building capacity, addressing media policy and legislation, strengthening systems and improving local content with a C4D approach all work towards achieving this. Importantly, this has become more apparent to stakeholders during this second phase. "Earlier versions of PACMAS used to talk about governance as pertaining the governance of the media industry itself. While in more recent times that governance is seen in the broader sense and the media's role is more important. So for example, it's about journalists understanding a rights based approach," said one development manager interviewed by the review team.

It is important to note, however that as reflected in AusAID's draft Governance Performance Framework, an informed media is only one element of the factors that contribute to better governance. It forms parts of the three-pillar approach which incorporates better service delivery, improved security and enhanced justice, and enhanced human rights. It is within this third pillar that the media is seen to play its role in supporting informed public policy debate.

The review has referred to performance indicators in the draft governance performance framework to consider their relevance to PACMAS. Pillar 3's media related outcome - strengthened media and communications supporting informed public policy debate – has four outputs and a number of qualitative and quantitative indicators which roughly align with the PACMAS strategic framework. However, these outputs and associated indicators are more applicable to a single country rather than a region as extensive as the Pacific. For example, one qualitative indicators for strong and independent media include increased amount of in-depth issues-based reporting, decreased instances of government interference curbing media

independence and medium of reporting is most appropriate for reaching the greatest number of targeted audience. Measuring each of these outcomes and the results will be influenced and varied because of the significant differences between economic and governance arrangements. For example, in PNG where the National Broadcasting Corporation receives the bulk of its funding from the government and is able to access almost 90% of the population even in remote regions, and has been the recipient of significant Australian government support, the results will be different to Tonga and Solomon Islands where both national broadcasters are virtually bankrupt.

Space in this report doesn't allow for an in-depth analysis of the pan-regional appropriateness of all of the Pillar 3 outputs and their indicators. However applying the Pacific content to the pillar framework reveals that it is unrealistic to expect that there will be a uniformly strengthened media and communications supporting informed public-policy debate across the Pacific. That is not to say that there won't be progress in individual countries which should be recognised and used as a model for other countries that are lagging or even deteriorating in this area of human rights.

As such, the challenge for PACMAS is attempting to achieve an already contextually ambitious goal – better governance - across 14 countries. Although there is a temptation to consider the Pacific as an homogenous whole, it's not. Each of the 14 countries has varying and in some cases, very starkly different forms of governance and are at different stages of democracy. For example, Fiji's governance arrangements are starkly different to those of the Cook Islands. Tonga and Samoa. At the same time, Tonga and Samoa, although both Polynesian countries, are at quite different stages along the governance and economic development pathway.

The governance in each of the Pacific countries is affected by a range of factors including adherence to democratic principles which is notably absent in one of the region's most influential and economically-important countries, Fiji; cultural mores and small community dynamics which are particularly powerful in the Pacific micro-states; the influential role of churches; and the limited engagement by civil society in the political debate.

In such circumstances, PACMAS's success in achieving better governance should not be assessed uniformly across the region. Instead, it will require a nuanced and calibrated assessment with recognition of varying degrees of success country by country rather than as a whole region. PACMAS's input to improved governance is just one contribution to an area where many governments, communities and other development players are also seeking to improve, making the attribution of PACMAS's contribution more challenging.

That said, it is still important to recognise that developing and training journalists and community leaders in the Pacific is a key way to drive for improved governance. As one Ni-Vanuatu journalist told the review team "Ni Vanuatu people in government would take what I write more seriously than an expat writer."

Summary of main findings

- It is too early in the life of PACMAS 2 to be conclusive about its success or otherwise in achieving the project's overall goal of supporting better governance in the Pacific. However, it is timely to consider the likeliness and terms of eventual success.
- Although there is a temptation to consider the Pacific as an homogenous whole, it's not. Each of the 14 countries has varying and in some cases, very starkly different forms of governance and are at different stages of democracy.

- PACMAS's success in achieving better governance should not be assessed uniformly across the region. Instead, it will require a nuanced and calibrated assessment with recognition of varying degrees of success country by country rather than as a whole region.

C4D and governance

An important contributor to PACMAS's efforts in achieving better governance is its work in communication for development. C4D allows PACMAS to broaden its work from a focus on the media to work with civil society organisations, development partners and communities, and providing links with the media.

The C4D approach is being utilised in both innovation fund and strategic activities. The innovation fund in particular is allowing the involvement of a wide range of organisations including local NGOs, the media, regional agencies and international agencies.

Helping communities be heard through these activities is giving them a voice and also raising important development issues more broadly. Some examples of activities that may lead to improved governance include such activities as highlighting the need for better disaster response, raising the profile of people with disabilities, gender equality, housing rights, energy efficiency, the use of social media and mental health. Empowering people to communicate about these issues may lead to greater government and community recognition and response.

However, in the project's operating context, there are several factors which impact on the C4D contribution.

Firstly, C4D per se is still in its infancy in the Pacific, although there are no doubt many initiatives that operate in this way without the title of 'C4D'. Feedback from a number of stakeholders during the in-country visits revealed a very limited understanding of what the term C4D in PACMAS is and what it hopes to achieve. In part this is related to the term itself. But where it is known, there is confusion about how it works. There was also a concern that without a thorough knowledge of the community and its culture, the C4D approach could be counter-productive.

Secondly, the building blocks so essential for C4D – community groups and the media – face a swag of major capacity challenges. In-country visits and project documents reveal a serious deficiency in the quality of the media even in terms of the most basic skills such as reporting much less the interpretation of relatively complex development concepts. In part this is to do with the poor quality of training that PACMAS is attempting to address. In part it is to do with the quality of student attracted to the media industry, which at least in some countries is not viewed as an attractive career option. It is also a reflection of the competing demands on journalists and media outlets.

The other capacity challenge relates to the acute limitations of the reach of the traditional media. Almost all private sector media is limited to the capitals with the public broadcasters the only ones to reach the rural and outer island populations. However, even this reach is badly affected by disintegrating facilities and very limited resources with at least two public broadcasters technically bankrupt (Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation and Tonga Broadcasting Corporation). While the new media is overcoming some of the transmission and dissemination issues, its coverage still remains patchy. Aside from mobile phones, internet access remains very limited across a range of countries and is still largely the purview of urban dwelling elite.

Thirdly, the role of indigenous NGOs in civil society action particularly outside the capitals is still very limited. For a number of Pacific countries, churches play a significant and comprehensive role in influencing community response and action. By and large, they are a conservative force and have not taken on the role of change agents.

The demographic profile of the Pacific also adds another challenge to effective C4D. In PNG, 86% of the population lives in rural and remote parts of the country; in Tonga, while around two thirds of the population lives on Tongatapu, the remaining population are scattered across 30 islands; in Solomon Islands, 80% of the population is spread over 1000 islands and has 63 distinct languages; in Kiribati, while around half the population lives in South Tarawa, the other half are spread over an ocean region equivalent to the combined size of Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia and have no media coverage from the capital.

In these circumstances, there needs to be a degree of patience and focus applied to what can be achieved in the short to medium term. The team is of the view that effective and sustained C4D outcomes require a comprehensive approach involving a number of partners and stakeholders along with the media, both as a recipient and disseminator of C4D messages, being only one part of the picture. The monitoring and evaluation framework adopted by PACMAS 2 is endeavouring to determine the effectiveness of that contribution which can be accredited to PACMAS 2. But this will be an ambitious endeavour – not through any fault of the M&E framework but simply because of the challenge and varied operating context as well as amorphous nature of successful C4D efforts.

The team recognises that the C4D approach is still in its early days. However, the longer term impact of C4D and its contribution to governance would be strengthened through stronger linkages with relevant sector programs being implemented by AusAID. However this will require a formal recognition within those programs of the potential and actual role which C4D can play in supporting development goals.

Summary of main findings

- C4D activities are giving a range of players the opportunity to communicate about a range of important issues that in turn could influence the behaviour of governments and communities.
- C4D is still in its infancy in the Pacific.
- The building blocks so essential for C4D – community groups and the media – face major capacity challenges.
- The role of indigenous NGOs in civil society action particularly outside the capitals is still very limited.
- The demographic profile and spread of the Pacific also adds another challenge to effective C4D.
- Effective and sustained C4D outcomes require a comprehensive approach involving a number of partners and stakeholders along with the media, both as a recipient and disseminator of C4D messages, being only one part of the picture.
- Stronger linkages to relevant AusAID sectoral programs would strengthen the longer term impact of C4D but requires program recognition of the contributing role of C4D to development.

Lessons regarding regional and bilateral media development activities

The importance of the synergies between the regional and bilateral media development activities was recognised in the PDD. As such, it set out a way in which these synergies could be drawn on and used in the implementation of PACMAS 2. This included drawing on the lessons learned and the expertise developed through the AusAID-supported bilateral programs by using staff skilled-up under these programs to deliver activities or through exchanges and placements. The program manager, ABC and AusAID's Port Vila team were identified as responsible for monitoring and assessing areas in which the program could provide regional resources or particular expertise to benefit the bilateral programs. It was also envisaged that there would be benefits accruing to PACMAS from the knowledge and skills developed in the bilateral programs and where appropriate, opportunities for joint work. This was in part in recognition of the implementation role of the ABC for the then all three bilateral programs (Vanuatu as well as Solomon Islands and PNG). AusAID Port Vila was also expected to convene biannual teleconferences as a way of facilitating the exchange.

While the approach set out in the PDD would appear to support good coordination and effective cross-fertilisation, it has only been partially applied and on an ad hoc basis. It seems that there have not been any regular teleconferences bringing in all key parties involved in implementing the regional and bilateral activities. Furthermore, the skills exchanges between the bilateral and regional activities have also been very limited. As such, the review team recommends strongly that AusAID PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in partnership with the program managers for the bilateral and regional activities consider activating a regular schedule of teleconferences as a way of improving the cross-fertilisation and coordination between the activities.

Coordination and information exchange will also be enhanced significantly with the timely delivery of reporting. The lateness of the reports has been referred to earlier in the *Efficiency* section. But it also has an important consequence on coordination as the lateness of the report means there is no time to seek comment and advice from other AusAID posts prior to the six-monthly PMG meeting where the reports are considered

Aside from the potential to improve communication between the bilateral and regional projects, it is important to note that both PNG and Solomon Islands are priority countries for Australia for a range of strategic and developmental reasons. The two bilateral media activities are significant and in the case of Solomon Islands, is similar in approach to PACMAS. While coordination needs to be strengthened to avoid duplication and even double-dipping by local stakeholders, any expansion of PACMAS in either country needs to be considered in terms of how this might impact on the limited resources available to other countries in the Pacific where external support is limited. The axing of SPC's Regional Media Centre has exacerbated this situation.

In the circumstances, the team recommends that PACMAS limit its involvement in both countries to innovation fund support – where it does not duplicate support already provided through MDI and SOLMAS – and eligibility in region-wide activities such as regional workshops.

With regard to PACMAS linkages to non-media Pacific bilateral programs, this is an ongoing challenge in part because of existing time constraints particularly on AusAID staff in the smaller posts and in part because of bilateral post expectations of what PACMAS can deliver. While the time constraints factor will remain a challenge, more regular communication between PACMAS and the posts keeping them informed of latest developments will help posts to consider ways in which PACMAS activities may align with bilateral activities.

At the same time, AusAID posts need to be aware that PACMAS is working within a framework set by AusAID and overseen by the PMG. Feedback from PACMAS staff points to pressure being put on PACMAS from time to time to step outside this framework to support particular bilateral approaches and expectations. It can also be unclear who within AusAID is responsible for determining sectoral or thematic priorities. It seems that AusAID Suva would have preferred PACMAS to have its C4D strategic activity focus on health rather than NCDs. However, there was an acknowledgement by AusAID Suva that PACMAS and its original design team may have spoken to other parts of AusAID which encouraged PACMAS to pursue NCDs. At the same time, AusAID Tonga is about to implement a major health program with an emphasis on NCDs and is looking to coordinate with PACMAS's work in this area.

Finally, there needs to be recognition of the fact that PACMAS is an intensive activity to manage. This is not necessarily a design or implementation fault. Instead, it is linked to the fact that there is a multitude of stakeholders across the region who are not co-ordinated or in communication with each other. There is no one implementing partner. This is in distinct contrast to a bilateral activity where clearly identified local ownership and involvement in the activity is an inherent and ongoing core element. As such, bilateral posts do have an important role to play in supporting PACMAS to remain current in terms of country priorities and even more importantly local stakeholders. PACMAS is encouraged to maintain regular contact with the relevant bilateral post staff to ensure that its approach and network remains up to date.

Summary of main findings

- Communication and coordination should be strengthened between AusAID, the ABC and the bilateral media projects and PACMAS project staff. This would require a relatively simple but adhered to schedule of contact either via email or teleconference to ensure regular feedback and updates. This would mean activating the communications and exchange process set out in the original PDD but which does not appear to have been fully or regularly adhered to.
- PACMAS should limit its involvement PNG and Solomon Islands to innovation fund support – where it does not duplicate support already provided through MDI and SOLMAS – and eligibility in region-wide activities such as regional workshops.

5. Recommendations coming out of the findings

Overall, PACMAS 2 is meeting a range of gaps and needs in the broader Pacific media sector, including community media, that would otherwise go unmet. It is endeavouring to achieve its objective through a range of activities with its delivery mechanisms providing a degree of flexibility (the innovation fund) and comprehensiveness (strategic activities) which are suitable to the Pacific region's operating context.

That said, there are several recommendations based on the findings detailed in the earlier chapters which AusAID and PACMAS are urged to consider as PACMAS 2 goes into its second half. These recommendations are set out below with the rationale for each linked to the criteria-related findings analysed and summarised in Chapters 3 and 4. Cost implications also included. A summary of the recommendations including a list of those responsible for implementing the actions is in Table 5. .

Relevance:

Maintain strong focus on strengthening media training and building capacity

- The team found that there is an outstanding demand for quality and ongoing training and capacity building within the media sector across much of the Pacific. This finding has been reinforced by other reports commissioned by PACMAS 2 including the TVET and NMA studies as well as the recently completed Baseline Survey. This outstanding need is not a reflection of PACMAS' inadequacies. Rather it is a reflection of the enduring reality in most of the notably small countries which do not have the resources or population base to support the type of ongoing quality media training including for broadcast technicians that this industry requires. As such, PACMAS plays a vital role in not only supplementing training but also attempting to improve quality of existing indigenous training.
- This is also relevant for broadcast technicians whose access to appropriate training is arguably even more limited than in other parts of the media sector. Radio remains the most popular media across the Pacific including PNG due to its low cost, its breadth of coverage and its provision of sought-after news and information
- The emphasis on training should continue and should be a high priority for the remainder of PACMAS 2.

Cost implication: it may require PACMAS to increase the budgetary allocation for training to ensure sufficient resources are available but this should be possible within the existing envelope of financial resources. It is understood that in terms of human cost, PACMAS is already looking to recruit a senior team member responsible for capacity building.

Effectiveness:

Develop a tighter geographic and strategic focus

- A failing of PACMAS 1 was its attempt to implement a broad range of components. While there were other factors which resulted in a less than satisfactory outcome for that phase, the need to concentrate its focus is a vital lesson for PACMAS 2. It is important for PACMAS to resist the temptation to attempt to meet the considerable range of media-related development needs across the project's 14 countries.

To enhance the long term sustainability of the project's activities and their effectiveness, the project and the PMG, in collaboration with AusAID, should identify the priority countries for assistance. Within those countries and using the findings of reports already commissioned by PACMAS 2 e.g. the Baseline Survey, the project should identify the priority activities. That is not to say that there will be some countries among the 14 that will receive no support. Rather, the support they do receive should be commensurate not only with their development needs but Australia's own geo-development strategy. This will be informed, at least in part, by the eventual Regional Strategic Analysis which was still in draft form at the time of the review.

Cost implication: it is not envisaged that a tighter strategic focus would mean a commensurate reduction in the budget. Instead, it will enable the project to allocate resources within the current envelope of financial resources on a graduating scale of priority.

Stronger cohesion and thematic alignment between innovation fund and strategic activities

- The innovation fund has been an effective mechanism in both responding quickly to a range of the outstanding needs of stakeholders as well as being a communication tool for PACMAS. In the early days of PACMAS 2, there was a need for the PACMAS team to build its reputation for responsiveness and relevance across the Pacific particularly in the wake of disappointments linked to PACMAS 1. However, now that there is a more comprehensive understanding of PACMAS 2, as a small grants facility, the innovation fund runs the risk that as it continues to address a broad range of demand-driven requests, the absence of a more tightly focused strategic approach may lead to a degree of ad hocery in the facility with limited reinforcement of funded activity outcomes and an undermining of sustainability.
- The impact and sustainability of the innovation fund activities would be strengthened through greater alignment between the innovation fund rounds and specific strategic activities thus providing an opportunity for strengthening sustained impact.
- While taking a thematic approach to the individual rounds, it would be advisable to still maintain some degree of flexibility in the fund to allow it to respond to particularly innovative or specific proposals that respond to the core objective of PACMAS and are potentially effective one-off activities

Cost implication: there is no financial cost implication. It will require the senior members of the PACMAS team in consultation with the broader PMG to identify the appropriate forthcoming strategic activities which would be suitable as possible themes for future innovation fund rounds.

Work plans for strategic activities

- Work plans for each of the strategic activities are needed to underscore efficiency and effectiveness. The agreed strategic activities cover a range of issues relevant to each of the components and incorporate C4D. The January 2013 PACMAS document describing the strategic activities provides a useful outline of each of the activities. However, apart from this document's brief description of approaches and partnerships, it is not clear how the activities will be operationalised and the relevant timelines for activity-specific actions.

Cost implication: nil as this should be a standard practice.

Return to original intention for media training for Pacific political and bureaucratic leaders

- The team recommends that following the completion of the confirmed activity focusing on the training of senior bureaucrats in SPC and other CROP agencies that future activities return to the initial beneficiaries – political leaders and domestic senior bureaucrats.

Cost implication: nil.

Efficiency

Administrative issues: Progress and other implementation reports to be provided in a timely manner. Stakeholders' contact list to be maintained and referred to in a timely way when organising project activities and events.

- PACMAS needs to address as a matter of urgency the timeliness of its provision of progress and other implementation reports to ensure there is adequate and appropriate consideration and feedback of the reports' contents. The stakeholders' contact list also needs to be maintained and used to assist with ensuring comprehensive participation in project activities and events.

Cost implication: nil as this should be standard performance.

Staffing balance and profile considered

- The review team understands that there have been some moves towards staffing restructure and appointment of new staff to address gaps. This may go some way towards addressing perceived and actual staff inefficiencies and inadequacies. However, ABC and AusAID are encouraged to have more regular discussion as a way of identifying these issues before they become problematic in the relationship.

Cost implication: nil as this should be standard performance.

Address inadequate navigating mechanisms and other inadequacies on PACMAS website

- As the principle source of information about PACMAS for the majority of its stakeholders, it is critically important that it be as user-friendly, comprehensive and up-to-date as possible. There were ongoing problems with the website during the course of the review.

Cost implication: nil as this should be standard performance.

Include C4D and Gender specific issues on website

- It would be useful to have a description of what PACMAS defines as C4D on the PACMAS website. Similarly, the website should be used to underscore gender-specific issues and the role which the media can play in supporting a greater understanding of these issues and to translate that understanding into informed coverage.

Cost implication: nil as this is simply addressing an important oversight.

Review approach to M&E

- In light of shared concern about the intensity of resources now dedicated to M&E, a review should be undertaken to determine appropriateness of current approach. This review should not be a major external review but rather an internal review supported and guided by AusAID's own internal M&E specialists to ensure the appropriateness to AusAID of the PACMAS M&E framework.

Cost implication: There may be financial costs incurred by the program to contract support to undertake the review. There are also likely human cost implications both for PACMAS, particularly ABC ID and AusAID as human resources are allocated to the review

Gender equality

Strengthen gender-sensitive approaches

- In terms of the project's current gender-sensitive approaches, this should be strengthened through a stronger and sustained focus on gender in its public material and the emphasis given to it in its training activities as well as activity evaluation processes.
- The website should also be used to reinforce the project's focus on supporting gender equality and sensitising the media to critical gender issues.

Cost implication: there should be no cost implication in this as this should have been a standard approach since the start of PACMAS. This recommendation simply recognises the need for rectification of the current approach.

Support the emergence of more women leaders in media

- To support the emergence of more women leaders in the media, consider the development of leadership-strengthening activities for women which engage with a wider range of women to complement the Pacific Media Fellowships.

Cost implication: An element of the funding allocated to capacity building will need to be dedicated to supporting women-specific leadership strengthening training.

Supporting governance across the Pacific

Take a nuanced and calibrated assessment of governance performance

- PACMAS's success in achieving better governance should not be assessed uniformly across the region. Instead, it will require a nuanced and calibrated assessment with recognition of varying degrees of success country by country rather than as a whole region. PACMAS's input to improved governance is just one contribution to an area where many governments, communities and other development players are also seeking to improve, making the attribution of PACMAS's contribution more challenging.

Cost implication: nil

C4D and governance

Note the Pacific region's operating context for C4D and requirement for comprehensive approach

- There are several factors impacting on C4D's contribution to governance across the Pacific. C4D is in its infancy in the Pacific; the building blocks for C4D – the community and the media – face a swag of major development challenges largely outside the remit of PACMAS; the very limited reach of traditional media outside the major urban centres; the limited recognition of NGOs and other community groups as drivers for change; and finally, the region's demographic profile and isolation of population groups.
- The team is of the view that effective and sustained C4D outcomes require a comprehensive approach involving a number of partners and stakeholders along with the media, both as a recipient and disseminator of C4D messages, being only one part of the picture. The monitoring and evaluation framework adopted by PACMAS 2 is

endeavouring to determine the effectiveness of that contribution which can be accredited to PACMAS 2. But this will be an ambitious endeavour – not through any fault of the M&E framework but simply because of the challenge and varied operating context as well as amorphous nature of successful C4D efforts.

- The longer term impact of C4D and its contribution to governance would be strengthened through stronger linkages with relevant sector programs being implemented by AusAID. However this will require a formal recognition within those programs of the potential and actual role which C4D can play in supporting development goals.

Cost implication: nil

Regional and bilateral project collaboration

- PACMAS and AusAID are urged to implement the collaboration approach as set out in the original PDD. This would include adopting and adhering to a regular biannual schedule of teleconferences involving the regional and bilateral media activities.

Cost implication: financial impact is minimal; there would be some small human resource cost but the benefits are likely to outweigh this minimal cost

- PACMAS should limit its involvement in PNG and Solomon Islands to innovation fund support where it does not duplicate support already provided through the two bilateral media activities in those countries and eligibility in region-wide activities.

Cost implication: nil

Table 5 – Summary of recommendations and allocated responses

Criterion/review question	Key Recommendations	Response
Relevance	<i>Maintain strong focus on strengthening media training and building capacity</i>	PACMAS team
Effectiveness	<i>Develop a tighter geographic and strategic focus</i> <i>Stronger cohesion between innovation fund and strategic activities</i> <i>Work plans for strategic activities</i> <i>Return to focus on training Pacific political and bureaucratic leaders</i>	AusAID lead to advise PMG PMG in collaboration with AusAID PACMAS approved by PMG PACMAS approved by PMG
Efficiency	<i>Administrative issues – report timeliness and updating stakeholders' list</i> <i>Staff profile and balance addressed</i> <i>Address ongoing website inadequacies</i> <i>Include C4D and gender specific issues on website</i> <i>Review approach to M&E</i>	PACMAS – Port Vila and ABC Melbourne PACMAS, ABC with AusAID PACMAS PACMAS ABC with AusAID
Gender equality	<i>Strengthen gender-sensitive approaches within training and public material including the website</i> <i>Support the emergence of more women leaders in the media</i>	PACMAS with support by PMG PACMAS to develop program for PMG consideration
Governance across the Pacific	<i>Adopt a nuanced and calibrated assessment of governance performance</i>	AusAID/ABC Melbourne
C4D and governance	<i>Note the Pacific operating context for the implementation of C4D and need for comprehensive approach</i>	AusAID/ABC
Regional and bilateral projects	<i>Implement original approach outlined in the 2011 PDD</i> <i>Limit involvement in PNG and Solomon Islands to ensure sufficient resources for other countries</i>	AusAID Port Vila, ABC Melbourne AusAID to advise PMG/PACMAS

6. Concluding comments

PACMAS 2 is building a reputation across the Pacific as a respected facility responding to a range of outstanding needs and gaps in the Pacific media sector which represent major constraints to the sector and by association, its contribution to improved development and governance across the region. As a regional activity, it brings the advantages of critical mass to a sector which in many of the countries suffers from the disadvantages of smallness in already very small communities limiting the opportunity for effective diversity, growth and resources.

The project is largely on track to achieve its objective of supporting the development of diverse, independent and professional media promoting informed and meaningful public discourse. However, it is too early to determine how effectively it will eventually support the goal of better governance in the Pacific. In addition, eventual direct attribution to PACMAS activities for any improvements in governance will need to be nuanced because of the variations in challenges and application of governance in the 14 countries benefitting from PACMAS.

An important influencing factor on the PACMAS outcomes is the diversity of cultural and social mores across the region. This has both gender specific consequences as well as broader ramifications on the way in which journalism is practiced. For example, in some cultures, it is culturally disrespectful to question elders and leaders.

The inclusion of C4D as an important focus for PACMAS has presented a range of challenges associated with the newness of the concept to the Pacific combined with logistical and technical difficulties. But while in some cases it may be difficult to determine their eventual impact, the C4D activities offer a good opportunity for capacity building so that the eventual impact is not limited to the output of the activity itself but is also related to the process of implementation.

The growing presence of social media across the Pacific provides fresh and increasing opportunities for PACMAS to explore. Nevertheless, it is still not a silver bullet that will transgress the basic challenges bedevilling traditional media including training and access. In particular, there is a real concern about the accuracy of social media reporting and the willingness as well as ability of e-based media practitioners to practice the same essential basic skills of accurate and balanced reporting as required by traditional media practitioners.

Finally, there needs to be recognition of the fact that PACMAS is an intensive activity to manage linked to the fact that there is a multitude of stakeholders across 14 countries who are not co-ordinated or in communication with each other. There is no one implementing partner. It is this broad range of Pacific Islander stakeholders and its majority of Pacific Islander staff that adds to the important capacity building benefits that PACMAS is bringing to the region.

According to one stakeholder, in an age where the media is more technological and dynamic, a regional media development program such as PACMAS is even more important. “As a single provider with a collective approach, PACMAS is tuned in to the diverse needs in the region. Without this there is no continuity, there is one little thing here and one little thing there. This won't work any more given the environment we are in.”

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