

Independent End of Program Evaluation DFAT Management Response

Investment Summary

Investment Name	Samoa Disability Partnership Program
AidWorks Investment Number	INN258
Commencement & Completion Date	04 June 2019 – 10 February 2023
Value of Investment	AUD\$4,300,000
Delivery Partner	Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Finance as the executing agency
Implementing partner(s)	<p><u>For the Samoa Disability Partnership Program (SDPP) Agreement 75425</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of Samoa through the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) as the lead implementing agency, Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) and relevant partners <p><u>For the Samoa Hearing Program (Hearing Program) Agreement 75643</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) in partnership with the Ministry of Health
Country/Region	Samoa
Primary Sector	Community Development
Investment Objectives	<p>The Investment Design Document (IDD) of May 2019 envisaged a program that would support active implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, ratified by GoS in 2016) and showcase Samoa as a model for how other Pacific Island Countries might successfully implement the CRPD's principles.</p> <p>The goal of the SDPP was the realisation of “disability-inclusive policy and implementation across Government, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), service providers and communities”.</p>

Evaluation Summary

The Samoa Disability Partnership Program (SDPP) was designed as an AUD4.3 million four-year partnership (2019-2023) between the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of Samoa (GoS). The SDPP was Phase 2 of Australia's bilateral disability inclusion support, following on from the six-year Samoa Disability Program (SDP) as Phase 1 (2012-2019).

The independent end of program evaluation was commissioned by DFAT to inform both DFAT and the Government of Samoa on the effectiveness and efficiency of the program and identify forward-looking lessons with specific attention given to the chosen modality, quality of the partnership, governance arrangements, and delivery of the program. The evaluation also seeks to inform the design of any future bilateral disability inclusion programming in Samoa through a collaborative design between the Tautua and Tautai program.

The independent evaluation focused on accessing the impact across three End of Program Outcomes (EoPOs);

- a) GoS policies and plans are increasingly compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) [led by the MWCSD]

- b) Diverse voices, leadership and participation of people with disabilities in national, sector and community development are evident [led by NOLA]
- c) Mainstream and disability-specific services are more accessible for people with disabilities [led by MOH]

The program in Phase 2 took a stronger partnership approach through collaborative ways of working that featured two modalities:

- 1) Working through partner government systems, drawing on a Direct Funding Agreement between DFAT and GoS.
- 2) Working through DFAT grant funds specifically for the activities delivered by RACS within Outcome 3.

The independent evaluation used a highly consultative approach with key stakeholders to ensure transparency and independence. This process was managed by DFAT Apia Post in close collaboration with MWCS and the SDPP Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) that was established to provide quality advice and feedback on the approach and key deliverables of the evaluation. The draft report was circulated to the ERG on 22 March 2024 and the final report reflects the comments received, noting no substantial changes of views or disagreements. The final report was shared to the ERG including DFAT Apia development team.

Evaluation Completion Date: March 2024 with final report submitted 12 April 2024.

Evaluation Team:

Strategic Development Group

Sarah Dyer, Team Lead- Senior Evaluation Consultant and GEDSI Specialist

Setareki Macanawai, Senior Strategic Advisor – Disability Equity in the Pacific

Taulapapa Brenda Heather-Latu, Senior Strategic Advisor – Samoan-based

Giles Dickenson-Jones – Public Financial Management Specialist

DFAT Apia Post

Soraya McGinley, Third Secretary Development- DFAT Evaluation Manager

Papali'i Alexandra Iakopo-Ah Tong, GEDSI Program Manager – DFAT Evaluation Support

Summary of Management Response

The findings from the independent end of program evaluation have helped DFAT, the GoS through MOF, MFAT, MWCSO, MOH as well as NOLA and other stakeholders in identifying gaps, lessons and considerations to improve Australia's next phase of support for disability in Samoa. The management responses identify actions that will be implemented to inform and strengthen the approach in the development and design of the new phase of support.

DFAT agrees with 11 of the recommendations, agrees in principle with 8 and partially agrees with 1 recommendation made by the independent end of program evaluation. DFAT will continue to work closely with key government partners, NOLA and other stakeholders including the two flagship partnership programs Tautua (human development) and Tautai (governance and economic growth) in line with relevant policies and available resources.

Response to the specific recommendations made in the report:

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
Recommendation 1.1 DFAT draws on the areas of program focus and the capacity of both the Tautai and Tautua facilities to cooperatively manage the design and implementation of Australia's future assistance on disability rights and equity in Samoa.	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT has met with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to further discuss this recommendation and commence planning for the design and implementation of Australia's future assistance on disability rights and equity in Samoa.	28 May 2024
Recommendation 1.2 The Tautai and Tautua facility managers jointly develop a capacity statement that identifies their respective capabilities to deliver disability equity and rights. The capacity statement should articulate a proposed approach on how the two facilities will cooperatively work with government and civil society stakeholders to facilitate a co-design of a disability assistance investment. The concept note will be presented to DFAT and GoS (SMFAT, MWCSO and	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to prepare a capacity statement that articulates what the programs are already doing in the disability equity and inclusion and space, as well as forward looking opportunities in the short and long term which can be used as the basis for any design work. DFAT will ensure that GoS [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and	30 June – 31 July

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<p>MOF) for comment and approval. The final investment design and implementation arrangements will be determined through the design process (see Recommendation 2).</p>			<p>Trade (MFAT), Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of Health (MOH)] and Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) are engaged in the process of finalising and endorsing the capacity statement/concept note, and subsequent investment design and implementation arrangements.</p> <p>DFAT notes that there are already opportunities to support disability equity and inclusion through the ongoing work of the Tautua and Tautai facilities, which can be progressed without any further design process.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 2.1 DFAT resources a cooperative design process facilitated through the facilities of Tautua and Tautai.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai to facilitate a cooperative design process.</p> <p>DFAT notes that there are already opportunities to support disability equity and inclusion through the ongoing work of the Tautua and Tautai facilities, which can be progressed without any further design process.</p>	<p>Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 2.2 The design will be facilitated locally through the Tautua and/ or Tautai facility. Additional specialist external capacity on disability rights and equity may be required to support the design process. If feasible this capacity should be procured from within the Pacific region.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to facilitate a cooperative design process and will consider requirements for engaging external specialist capacity. DFAT will do so in consultation with Government of Samoa partners and NOLA. Tautua is currently (May 2024) recruiting an ongoing disability specialist to support the program.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 2.3 A very limited and targeted consultation and research is required to inform the design. There is already a strong evidence base on disability needs and priorities that has been established (from this evaluation and other MWCSD documentation, CRPD state report and SBS reports) and a diverse range of stakeholders have shared their perspectives through extensive consultations.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	The scope of any design process will be determined following preparation and review of the capacity statement described in recommendation 2.2. DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to facilitate a cooperative design process that draws extensively on this evaluation and will seek access to additional existing evidence from GoS.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 2.4 The design methodology offers an opportunity to contribute to further building capacity on disability rights and equity, and strengthening collaboration, networks, and trust between the different stakeholder groups.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	The scope of any design process will be determined following preparation and review of the capacity statement described in recommendation 2.2.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
			<p>DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to facilitate a cooperative design process that is locally led and that brings together the network of relevant actors, in the interest of maximising opportunities throughout the design process itself.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 2.5 The timing and duration of the design process needs to be determined by participating stakeholders and the facilities. Ideally, it should be completed during the calendar year 2024, and up to 6 months allowed for the design process.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	<p>The scope and timing of any design process will be determined following preparation and review of the capacity statement described in recommendation 2.2.</p> <p>DFAT and the Tautua and Tautai facilities will consult Government of Samoa partners and NOLA on what is practical for the timing and duration of a design process. DFAT notes that Samoa's hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in October 2024 will constrain capacity and availability of stakeholders.</p>	Timing and duration will be determined in consultation with Government of Samoa partners and NOLA.
<p>Recommendation 3.1 The overriding purpose and objectives from the SDPP phase 2 retain relevance, with modifications to accommodate the</p>	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to facilitate a cooperative design process that draws on the previous	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
current context, the current design offers a useful framework to guide design of the next phase of assistance.			design as a framework for reference.	
<p>Recommendation 3.2 The program should align with and contribute to achievement of commitments of the GoS in key disability focused policies and programs including the objectives of Samoa’s National Policy on Disability, and the GoS commitments to the CRPD, SDG, the Pacific Regional Framework on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2025, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2023-2032, and the Pathway for Development Samoa and the Community Sector plan.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT will work with the Tautua and Tautai facilities to facilitate a cooperative design process that ensures any future support is directly aligned with, and complementary to, the suite of existing relevant policy commitments and frameworks.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.3 The GoA Disability Rights and Equity Strategy (due to be released in 2024) should inform and guide the design of the new program.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	The forthcoming Disability Rights and Equity Strategy will inform and guide the design of any future programming.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.4 Progress action on legislative reform to comply with CRPD commitments as a state party to the CRPD, recognising that to fulfil this specialized task, external specialist capacity maybe required. A priority to address is the drafting of a Disability Act for Samoa.</p>	Partially Agree	Prioritisation of legislative reform in line with CRPD, including drafting of Disability Act, is a decision for GoS.	DFAT will seek advice from GoS on priorities in this regard.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 3.5 Strengthen evidence on cost benefits and opportunities loss related to disability service provision to help inform disability equity program and budget planning.</p>	Agree in principle	Prioritisation of this specific piece of work is a decision for the Government of Samoa.	DFAT will discuss with the Tautua and Tautai programs in consultation with Government of Samoa partners and NOLA.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.6 Commit multi-year flexible core funding to OPDs to enable them to continue to develop their organisational capacity and fulfil their responsibility as rights holders to represent, advocate and provider of services for their members.</p>	Agree	Not applicable	DFAT, through the Tautua facility and in consultation with NOLA, will explore options to commit multi-year flexible funding to OPDs.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.7 Provide flexible and stable funding to non-government service providers, recognising the critical gaps in government service provision they fill, particularly in providing outreach and home-based services. Ideally seek to link the NGO funding to existing CSO funding mechanisms established in government (for example the OGG in MEC and the NGO funding and the DDP in MWCSO). MoF should be engaged in discussion on this matter.</p>	Agree in principle	Not applicable	DFAT and Tautua will consult with Government of Samoa partners on this matter.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.8 Invest in human resource capacity development by focusing on meeting immediate and longer-term skill gaps (for example in education, podiatry, prosthetics, orthotics, and audiology). Explore options for locally designed and delivered accredited training and invest in opportunities for overseas education</p>	Agree in principle	Not applicable	DFAT, through the Tautua facility, will consult with MoH on this matter as the responsible ministry. There may also be opportunities for synergies with Australia's other investments in skills and scholarships.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<p>qualifications. MoF should be engaged in discussion on this matter.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 3.9 Locate preventative medical services, for example hearing and visual assessment and early intervention services in the mainstream health program rather than a program advancing disability equity and rights.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>DFAT, through the Tautua facility, will consult with MoH on this matter as the responsible ministry.</p>	<p>Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3.10 Review the previous Disability Taskforce (ToR, makeup) and determine enhancements for it to be reinvigorated to provide leadership, be a point of coordination, and hold advisory, accountability and monitoring responsibilities for government on advancing disability equity and rights policy, programs, and investments.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Reactivation of the Disability Taskforce is ultimately a decision for the Government of Samoa.</p>	<p>DFAT to seek advice from GoS on priorities for disability equity and inclusion. DFAT, through the Tautua and Tautai facilities, can support this work should Government of Samoa be supportive.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3.11 Fill the advisory position (that was part of the SDPP phase 2 but recruitment did not take place) within the MWCSO on disability and equity that is senior in level and visible and is filled by suitably experienced person with disability who possess the correct credentials to focus on disability equity measures. The position should work closely for and report to the disability taskforce and be properly resourced with a salary commensurate with responsibilities and experience of the postholder, and a budget provided for reasonable accommodation as required by</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>	<p>Filling this position is ultimately a decision for the Government of Samoa.</p>	<p>DFAT to seek advice from GoS on priorities for disability equity and inclusion. DFAT, through the Tautua facility, can support this work should Government of Samoa be supportive.</p>	<p>Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.</p>

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
<p>the postholder to support equity of access and contribution in the workplace. Consideration for other advisory positions designated for people with disability within the public service in other line ministries maybe considered.</p>				
<p>Recommendation 3.12 Strengthen and develop leaders within the OPD through targeted courses, mentoring and attachments to UN agencies or philanthropic groups and foster connections and cooperation with well-established OPDs globally.</p>	Agree in principle	Not applicable	The exact nature of support to OPDs will be considered during the cooperative design process. There may also be opportunities for synergies with Australia's other regional investments in disability rights and equity, including support for the Pacific Disability Forum, as well as Australia's investments in skills.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.
<p>Recommendation 3.13 Allocate budget and capacity to provide reasonable accommodation and accessible systems and processes that support equity of participation and contribution by people with disability in all aspects of the program including consultations and meetings, program documentation, proposal, and reporting (narrative and financial) formats.</p>	Agree in principle	Government of Samoa will ultimately be responsible for Government of Samoa led aspects of the programming.	DFAT will ensure that any DFAT led aspects of programming will incorporate reasonable accommodations, including accessible systems and processes. DFAT will encourage the same for Government of Samoa led aspects of programming and provide support as appropriate.	Refer point 2.5 for proposed timing and duration of design.