

Women's Fund Fiji Mid-Term Review

management comments

Women's Fund Fiji provides funding and capacity development support to women's groups, organisations and networks in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women's empowerment and gender equality. It operates through direct grants and partnerships to achieve its goals.

Australia's support to Women's Fund Fiji is directed to both core organisational costs as well as to a range of the grants provided to women's organisations in Fiji. Australia funds Women's Fund Fiji through the Fiji bilateral program (AUD3 million, January 2022–2024) and through the Amplify–Invest–Reach (AIR) Partnership (AUD1.8 million; January 2022–2025). DFAT funding represents around 56 per cent of the Fund's budget.

In 2024, DFAT initiated a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of Women's Fund Fiji for the period 2022–2024, with the key focus on its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability.

The mid-term review took place from 2 July 2024–29 August 2024. The review team met with a diverse range of stakeholders, including development partners such as MFAT, civil society, Women's Fund Fiji grantees and partners, community representatives/members, and DFAT.

KEY FINDINGS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The review found that:

1. Women's Fund Fiji is providing an effective program of support, consistent with the findings of the previous review.
2. Women's Fund Fiji is increasing its program efficiency but is still developing its capacity and direction as an organisation.
3. Women's Fund Fiji is relevant to stakeholders (including DFAT and Government of Fiji) and has worked effectively in the Fiji current context.
4. Women's Fund Fiji is working towards a more sustained state but a strategy for organisational sustainability should be a priority for the next strategic plan.
5. Women's Fund Fiji's participation in the AIR Partnership is benefitting the Fund in several ways. There has been clear value in the additional funding provided through the Partnership by DFAT and the extra resources facilitated by other partners. The Partnership has also facilitated capacity building between comparable staff in the Fund and other women's funds.

The Mid-Term Review was a useful exercise that provided the partners and stakeholders an opportunity to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of DFAT's support to Women's Fund Fiji. This process has proven to be useful in identifying areas where the Fund needs to invest more resources and efforts.

DFAT agrees with all four recommendations of the review. Details of the Management Response to each recommendation is included in the table on the next page.

Individual management response to the summary of recommendations

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Action Plan
<p>Recommendation 1 Utilise the new strategic plan to focus on organisational development, considering the operational and strategic issues identified in this review</p>	WFF	Agree	DFAT has requested Women’s Fund Fiji provide an updated five to seven-year Strategic Plan, for implementation from January 2025. A key focus of the updated Strategic Plan will be addressing key operational issues at Women’s Fund Fiji, including strengthening systems development; developing Standard Operating Procedures against all its organisational policies; improving M&E to more deliberately include learning; strengthening leadership and governance; and improving organisational sustainability. The Strategic Plan will also clearly outline the intention of programs delivered by Women’s Fund Fiji and demonstrate their contribution to women’s empowerment and gender transformation. It will also outline steps it will take to communicate the Fund’s priorities to its donors and partners, and detail how it will better capture and represent the views and experiences of grantees and partners.
<p>Recommendation 2 DFAT redevelop its Investment Design Summary to more accurately identify its rationale for funding and ongoing support to WFF, including the value of core funding for Women’s Funds</p>	DFAT	Agree	DFAT will enter into a new agreement with Women’s Fund Fiji by May 2025, and explore options to continue its support to Women’s Fund Fiji for the next five to seven-year period. As part of the new agreement, DFAT will develop an Investment Design Summary that will more clearly identify its rationale for funding and ongoing support to Women’s Fund Fiji.
<p>Recommendation 3 DFAT continue funding to WFF until at least 2029 in order to realise the full value of its investment in the Fund</p>	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation in principle, noting DFAT’s intention to develop a new five to seven-year design with Women’s Fund Fiji, from May 2025, which are subject to budget and other approval processes.

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<p>Recommendation 4 WFF be incentivised and supported to further develop its Fiji based collaborations to increase its overall contribution to change</p>	<p>DFAT</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>DFAT will use the new design phase to support Women’s Fund Fiji to strengthen its networks and partnerships with feminist organisations and CSOs/NGOs; better align with other DFAT investments (Pacific Women Lead; Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre; We Rise Coalition) and Government of Fiji priorities. DFAT will use this opportunity to strengthen coordination with Women’s Fund Fiji Board and Trustees, management and staff, as well as with the Government of Fiji and other Fiji based partners. We will also support Women’s Fund Fiji to leverage and expand its partnerships with the private sector, and enhance collaboration with partners such as the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs to work with communities in translations and protocols, noting the increasing demand to meet village and community expectations.</p>