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PACIFIC WOMEN LEAD - INVESTMENT DESIGN

Investment Design Title: PACIFIC WOMEN LEAD			
Start date:	2021	End date:	2026
Total proposed DFAT funding: AUD \$170 million			

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pacific Women Lead is a new Pacific regional development program to commence in 2021 for an initial period of five years with a budget of \$170m drawn from the Australian Government's aid budget. The program goal is that *Pacific women and girls, in all their diversity, are safe and equitably share in resources, opportunities and decision-making, with men and boys*. There are three end of program outcomes:

1. Women's leadership promoted
2. Women's rights realised
3. Pacific regional partners increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts.

As suggested by the program title, Pacific women will lead the program, define the problems, create solutions, and drive strategy through a Governance Board chaired by an eminent Pacific woman, with strong and diverse membership from across the region, at least two thirds of whom will be Pacific women. Pacific Women have designed the Theory of Change and actively shaped this design through a participatory, co-design process.

Implementation of the program will be through complementary partnerships with SPC (the Pacific Community) and a targeted group of Pacific women-led civil society organisations, including Feminist Funds in the Pacific. There is flexibility for co-investment and participation from likeminded donors.

The program is embedded in both a global and regional context for gender equality. Gender equality is a human right and a powerful driver of growth, development and stability everywhere. Gender inequality is at the heart of violence against women and girls and women's limited access to economic and health opportunities. Harmful social norms in the Pacific reinforce gender inequalities that women and girls face. Deep rooted structural barriers, in the form of discriminatory laws and non-inclusive institutions, reflect prevalent social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality. The global pandemic has deepened gender inequality in the Pacific and reduced the resources available to Pacific women and girls and to Pacific stakeholders including government's and civil society for services that women and girls rely on. *Pacific Women Lead* is therefore a timely contribution of funding in support of the Pacific's regional efforts to promote women's leadership, ensure the rights of women and girls are realised and increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts.

In preparing this high-level design framework, substantial consideration has been given to the deeply held cultural and religious drivers of the local contexts in which Pacific Women Lead will be delivered. Success will depend on continuing to ensure that all Pacific Women Lead activities and actions are grounded in Pacific values and principles, and people centred approaches that reinforce values of gender equality with consideration of the diversity of women and girls.

Pacific Women Lead is complementary to bilateral Australian investments in gender equality in the Pacific and to Australia's efforts to mainstream gender equality through the breadth of the development assistance program to the Pacific, through our diplomatic and security engagement and across our people-to-people programs.

This framework is a platform for a flexible and adaptive program – not a detailed, locked-in program of specific activities. A statement of requirement will subsequently be developed to inform the proposed arrangement between DFAT and SPC and a detailed design is being completed to inform DFAT’s partnerships with Pacific and Asian Feminist Funds. DFAT will also purchase enabling services to support program management and implementation and support for Pacific Posts, including transition of some activities from Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development to Pacific Women Lead.

2. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 **Gender equality is a human right and a powerful driver of growth, development and stability.** Advancing gender equality is a mechanism for realising women and girls’ human rights and contributes to sustainable peace. In the Pacific today, there remain harmful social norms underpinning gender inequality and gaps in leadership and efforts to address violence against women and women’s economic empowerment.

2.2 **Gender inequality begins from birth** and accelerates during early teenage years across many Pacific Island nations; “Gender norms and patriarchal systems that assign a lower status to girls and enforce narrow, rigid ideals of masculinity harm both girls and boys.”¹ Gender equality initiatives must ensure they effect the inter-generational changes required for gender equality to succeed long term. Therefore, the new design will seek to adopt a life-cycle approach targeting both young girls and women and young boys and men addressing the gaps they face in services, rights and opportunities. Gender equality initiatives need to have a strong focus on adolescent girls to ensure the inter-generational changes required for gender equality to succeed in the long term.

2.3 **Harmful social norms in the Pacific reinforce gender inequalities that women and girls face.** The findings of the *‘Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Six Year evaluation and management response’* indicate only modest progress against harmful social and cultural norms — transformational change has been limited. For example, while there has been an observable increase in awareness about gender-based violence, significant and longer-term steps are required to translate this into behaviour and normative change.

2.4 **Deep rooted structural barriers, in the form of discriminatory laws and non-inclusive institutions,** reflect prevalent social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality. There are limited examples of government agencies resourcing and implementing for gender equality. When laws do exist to support gender equality, often departments do not have the capacity or mandate to implement.

2.5 **Communities, institutions (for example, schools and churches), government and business all need to be part of the transformation of harmful social norms.** More dialogue is needed between government, civil society, and the private sector. The extent to which partners are equipped to engage with public and private institutions and push for legislative reform and implementation of existing laws, gender equality and human rights commitments (including Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRDP)) varies across countries. Most PICs are parties to these treaties and are bound by them under international law.

2.6 Barriers to women’s economic empowerment are prevalent in the Pacific and include a lack of employment and productive opportunities; limited access to safety, education and sexual and reproductive health services; societal expectations over domestic roles. Societal norms that traditionally see men as economic providers and women as mothers and carers inhibit women’s ability to seek and maintain employment. Economic development opportunities for improving productivity and resilience of agriculture and fisheries are targeted for men, even though women constitute half of rural producers. Societal expectations encourage early marriage and childbearing; limit women’s ability to access financial resources and labour force participation. These issues in combination perpetuate gender inequality.

¹ Dr Elissa Kennedy, Early adolescence central to gender inequality in Asia-Pacific <https://burnet.edu.au/news/1314_early_adolescence_central_to_gender_inequality_in_asia_pacific>.

2.7 To improve women's empowerment in the Pacific, national and local government buy-in to programming is essential. Integration of women's economic empowerment into other priority issues such as climate change, agriculture, fisheries, coastal management, and migration provides useful strategic entry points. Integrated approaches can also build community support for women's economic empowerment by using a community development approach that emphasises the contribution of women's economic activities to general levels of well-being.² This design process has revealed that improving gender equality across the Pacific will require detailed programming to support the rights of girls and women and improve their overall wellbeing across the Pacific.

2.8 Climate change is one of the most urgent issues affecting Pacific Island Countries that is a real and growing threat to livelihoods, cultures, ecosystems and lives in the Pacific region. Women, girls, boys, and men are differently affected and have different abilities, skills and knowledge to contribute. Increasing women's perspectives and voice will strengthen the outcomes of climate change and disaster risk management initiatives.³ Integrating climate change and disaster resilience is key to building a resilient, stable and prosperous region – and not incorporating the impacts of climate change will undermine the effectiveness of any investment.

2.9 The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted fundamental instability and inequality in the Pacific. Health pandemics have specific and severe impacts on the lives of women and girls. Since the COVID-19 outbreak first had reported cases, the gendered impacts began being documented in the Pacific and across the world. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by crises. Existing gender inequalities are exacerbated during a crisis, with the result that women and girls face even higher rates of violence, sexual abuse and control from their husbands, partners and families. Women are expected to undertake more unpaid domestic work, are less able to access essential health services and are more vulnerable to economic hardship.

2.10 Employing a gender lens highlights the differing impacts of COVID-19 on women, girls, men and boys, and other, marginalised groups in the community. Crises such as disease outbreaks heighten the vulnerabilities of different groups, accentuating inequalities and leading to the neglect of the needs and rights of the most marginalised. This includes women and girls living in poverty, migrants, people with disabilities, the elderly and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Recognising the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on marginalised groups is vital to ensure an effective health response which doesn't further endanger and exclude already vulnerable groups.

2.11 Preventative measures governments have taken to keep communities safe, such as lockdowns, are not safe for everyone. For women living in abusive and violent relationships, enforced social isolation and quarantine has been particularly dangerous as they are confined with abusive partners or family members – for women and girls with disabilities the risks of violence in lockdown situations is even further exacerbated. Women's unpaid domestic labour and care burden also has increased as a result of COVID-19 further inhibiting the participation of women in paid employment and limiting their financial recovery. At the same time, COVID-19 has forced some positive transformation, where the boundaries of what is possible can shift and expand, with the women's movement playing an early, leading role to lessen the impact on women and girls.

2.12 Women and girls with disabilities experience multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay between poverty and discrimination on the basis of gender and disability. This limits women's and girls' voices and agency and constrains their opportunities for economic, political and social advancement. Compared with men without disabilities: women with disabilities are three times more likely to have unmet needs for health care; three times

² Women's Economic Empowerment Synthesis Report: Informing the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Roadmap 2017-2022 <<https://pacificwomen.org/news/womens-groups-lead-response-to-covid-19-crisis/>>.

³ Pacific Brief: Gender, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: Ref <https://pacificwomen.org/resources/pacific-brief-gender-climate-change-and-disaster-risk-management/> UN publication

more likely to be illiterate; two times less likely to be employed and two times less likely to use the internet. Moreover, women with disabilities are at heightened risk of sexual violence compared to those without disabilities.⁴ The specific rights of women and girls are addressed throughout The Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 2016- 2025, and in Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (extended to 2021).

SIX-YEAR EVALUATION OF PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

2.13 In 2020, the six-year evaluation of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development was released (see Annex 4). The evaluation concluded that Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development “has broadened the reach of the Australian aid program to vulnerable women and girls and is supporting key civil society and women’s organisations in the Pacific. The long-term nature of funding has raised public awareness on gender equality and women’s empowerment; and the program is an asset to Australia’s partnership with Pacific governments. The work should be continued and further developed going forward”.

2.14 The evaluation also found that many of the 100+ gender equality initiatives supported by Australia through Pacific Women are making steady progress within individual country contexts, but collective regional progress has been modest in some key areas such as women’s participation in decision-making, attitudes to women’s economic empowerment, action to address violence against women and policies and practices to promote gender equality. The Evaluation also found there had been modest progress addressing harmful social and cultural norms and therefore that transformational change has been limited.

2.15 The evaluation found that Pacific Women Advisory Board members should provide strategic oversight for the redesign process and should have an explicit role in the new design. Future programming should continue to focus on building the capacity of Pacific women leaders at multiple levels, in government, community and the private sector.

2.16 In its management response, DFAT recognised that the operating context for advancing gender equality in the Pacific has changed since the evaluation was undertaken in late 2019 – in particular, the impact in 2020 of COVID-19 as a global pandemic that has had a significant and disproportionate health, economic and social impact on women and girls, deepening already high levels of inequality in the region.

2.17 This design has been prepared with the Evaluation as a key primary source of analysis, evidence and ideas. At its heart, this design seeks to build on Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development’s strengths and learn from its lessons. At the same time, the design takes account of the context for gender equality in the Pacific that is both deep-rooted and changing.

3. STRATEGIC INTENT AND RATIONALE

3.1 *Pacific Women Lead* is ambitious in its intent to take a Pacific-led approach to promoting gender equality in the region. It is focused on continuing to deliver development outcomes and to bring new emphasis to strengthening regional action and architecture in support of gender equality. The clear shift in governance and management will see women in the Pacific leading on strategic direction and enhanced engagement with SPC as a regional intergovernmental technical agency, PIFS through the new Pacific Island Forum Women’s Leaders

⁴ UN/DESA Policy Brief #69: Leaving no one behind: the COVID-19 crisis through the disability and gender lens

Meeting (PIFWLM), while continuing bilateral investments and ensuring regional approaches contribute to progress at national levels. In taking this new approach, Pacific Women Lead has been designed to address and deliver on both Pacific commitments and Australian Government commitments to progress gender equality in the region.

PACIFIC COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY

3.2 Pacific Government leaders established their commitment to gender equality through the **Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, 2012**. A review of the declaration will be completed in 2021 for the consideration of Leaders. The declaration commits “to lift the status of women in the Pacific and empower them to be active participants in economic, political and social life”. It commits with renewed energy to implement other significant global and regional commitments, including the gender equality actions of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality; the Pacific Plan; the 42nd Pacific Island Forum commitment to increase the representation of women in legislatures and decision making; and the 40th Pacific Island Forum commitment to eradicate sexual and gender based violence. In 2015, Pacific Forum Leaders committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which includes Gender Equality (SDG #5). To progress these commitments, Leaders committed to implement specific national policy actions in the areas of:

- › Gender Responsive Government Programs and Policies
- › Decision Making
- › Economic empowerment
- › Ending violence against women
- › Health and education

3.3 The Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights 2018 – 2030 (PPA), was endorsed by the Pacific Ministers for Women in 2017. It provides a roadmap for achieving gender equality and enhancing the well-being of all women and girls in all their diversity. This includes young women, older women, rural women, women with disabilities, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and indigenous women. The PPA is meant to support the implementation of commitments made in all global, regional and national instruments, and more specifically through the PLGED and Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It will serve as a tool for accelerating the implementation of the PLGED.

3.4 The PPA provides a clear definition of gender equality that is used in this design:

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

Gender equality means that women and men of all ages, in all their diversity, have equal rights in all areas of life:

- the right to be safe;
- the right to be respected;
- the right to earn incomes;
- the right to express their views and be heard;
- the right to express their gender identity;
- the right to choose how many children they have;
- the right to choose their partner;
- the right to have safe and accessible services and infrastructure for women and men differently abled;
- the right to participate in decision-making and occupy leadership positions;
- the right to decide for themselves the future they want.

Source: Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights 2018–2030

3.5 The Boe Declaration on Regional Security Action Plan commits to eradicate gender-based violence and provide space for participation of women based on merit in security processes.

3.6 The two leading Pacific regional organisations – the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC) – play complementary roles in gender equality in the region, with PIFS being the custodian of the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and SPC being the custodian of the Pacific Platform for Action. PIFS provides a biennial and quadrennial report on the Leaders Declaration; SPC convenes the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and the Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women. PIFS and SPC are member-driven and the role of government representatives is key, but the role of technical and administrative officers is critical to implementation. The Steering Committee responsible for planning the upcoming Triennial and Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women wants the agreed actions resulting from the Conference to be linked to a costed action plan, providing Pacific Women Lead with the opportunity to support this critical regional initiative.

3.7 On 3 February, Pacific Island Forum Leaders endorsed an annual standing Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting (PIFPWLM) ahead of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting to ensure an enduring focus on the critical role gender equality has on issues in the Pacific. The inaugural meeting will be held in 2021.

3.8 The PIFWLM will complement and amplify the Triennial Conference of Pacific Women and Meeting of Ministers for Women by providing a critical link to Forum Leaders on a more regular basis. The PIFWLM would serve to inform and advise Forum Leaders on priority gender issues, a function currently not performed by any existing meeting. The purpose, attendees and timing of the PIFWLM are different to the Triennial and mutually reinforcing.

3.9 Pacific countries have their own national priorities for achieving gender equality and established government institutions in charge of women's affairs/gender equality and have developed gender equality policies or are in the process of finalising their policies. PICs are also increasingly integrating a gender perspective in national development and sector plans. National gender policies prioritise issues related to gender mainstreaming and institutional strengthening, including compliance with CEDAW, ending violence against women, shared decision-making, and economic empowerment. Some policies include issues such as climate change, peace building and health. Change, reform and service delivery at the country and community level are critical to the lives of women, men and girls and boys. This design does not underestimate the importance of

country level interventions from national governments, civil society and support from DFAT country level investments. However, accountability for these investments and activities will sit at the country level. DFAT bilateral and regional investments will be connected by the regional performance framework and theory of change, which recognises and will report on country activities. The Governance Board will consider the performance of relevant country activities as reported through the regional program, and may make strategic recommendations in relation to opportunities, synergies or lessons learnt but will make no decisions. Decisions for country-level activities will remain with the relevant national governments, local partners and DFAT Posts and Desks.

3.10 In addition, key regional frameworks relating to other priority development sector frameworks – climate change, health, economic development - have strong commitments to gender equality. Much has been achieved in mainstreaming gender equality and human rights in these sector frameworks which are priorities for national governments. Evidence is clear that there needs to be a twin track approach of specific gender actions and mainstreaming gender through other development frameworks.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.11 **Australia's foreign policy** has a strong focus on the empowerment of women with the DFAT White Paper citing that gender inequality undermines global prosperity, stability, and security. Gender inequality contributes to and often exacerbates a range of challenges, including poverty, weak governance and conflict and violent extremism.⁵ Performance on gender equality is explicitly measured as part of the Performance Assessment Framework for "Partnerships for Recovery", with internal DFAT resources dedicated to ensuring gender equality is mainstreamed through all Australian investments in the Pacific. Technical support for gender mainstreaming in the Pacific will be delivered through DFAT internal support, bilateral program-contracted expertise and the regional enabling mechanism. The program's proposed Governance Board will also play a role in providing strategic insights and advice to Pacific bilateral and regional programs.

3.12 **Integral to Australia's current foreign policy is the Pacific Step-up.** Under the Pacific Step-up, Australia is making its highest ever contribution to Pacific development, and a dedicated gender program will deliver social and economic results for women and children in the region and leverage Australia's suite of Pacific bilateral and regional investments to enhance our efforts to improve gender equality in the region. The creation of the Office of the Pacific within DFAT has ensured a dedicated effort to enact Pacific Step-up. Stepping up our engagement in the Pacific is one of our highest foreign policy priorities. Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the economic, security and people-to-people initiatives under our stepped-up engagement in the Pacific.⁶

3.13 The Australian Foreign Policy White Paper spells out clearly the Australian values that are a critical component of the foundation upon which the nation builds its international engagement. "Australia's support for political, economic and religious freedoms, liberal democracy, the rule of law, racial and gender equality and mutual respect reflect who we are and how we approach the world. They underpin a strong, fair and cohesive society at home and are a source of influence for Australia internationally".⁷

3.14 This investment aligns with the priorities for Australian Aid outlined in **DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy**. The priorities guiding work on gender equality are:

- i. Enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peace building.
- ii. Promoting women's economic empowerment.
- iii. Ending violence against women and girls.

⁵ DFAT White Paper 2017 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/minisite/2017-foreign-policy-white-paper>

⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/countries/pacific-step>

⁷ DFAT White Paper 2017 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/minisite/2017-foreign-policy-white-paper>

3.15 This Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy was developed in 2016 and DFAT is planning to refresh the Strategy in 2021. Mainstreaming of gender equality is likely to remain a focus for the Strategy, as it allows Australia to leverage larger investments in pursuit of gender equality and complements targeted action to shift persistent areas of gender inequality.

3.16 **Australia’s development strategy for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, *Partnerships for Recovery***, outlines a clear approach for Australia’s COVID-19 recovery efforts. “Our efforts will focus sharply on where we can make the most difference. Our response will focus on three core action areas, which reflect our shared interests with partner governments:

- Health security
- Stability
- Economic recovery.

This will be underpinned by a strong emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable, especially women and girls.”

3.17 Under **Partnerships for Recovery**, the Australian Government has a **Pacific Regional COVID-19 Response Plan** which commits to supporting Pacific-driven responses and stronger regional and national institutions in the Pacific. This Response Plan suggests DFAT **consider vesting oversight in a strategic partnership between DFAT and the Pacific Community (SPC)**, with clear links to PIF Secretariat and the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting.

3.18 The Pacific Regional COVID Response Plan promotes the following principles that provide relevant guidance to Pacific Women Lead:

- Supporting Pacific-driven coordination on issues that are transboundary in nature
- Delivering regional collective goods and services
- Building regional institutions and norms to further regional objectives and support national capacity
- Deepening regional integration, including Australia’s connections with our region, and
- Fostering common policy approaches.

3.19 It is critical in a regional program design to be ever mindful that Australia is not just a donor, but **Australia is a member country of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and SPC**. Gender equality is a domestic concern and challenge for Australia across all the priorities identified through this design: women’s leadership, women’s rights and the regional agenda for gender equality. Australia has gender challenges and lessons learnt to share as a member country. However, Australia is also a major donor for gender equality in the Pacific region through bilateral, regional and global contributions.

3.20 **Australia aims to address climate change and strengthen socially inclusive, gender-responsive sustainable development** in our region, as outlined in DFAT Climate Change Action Strategy, and has released a \$500 million climate change funding package to support this.

3.21 **Disability-inclusive development is a priority for Australia's international engagement**. The Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (extended to 2021) address the interaction of gender and disabilities through including women with disabilities in programming on leadership, women’s economic empowerment and ending violence against women. With the 6-year Evaluation recommending that the new program “ramp up efforts to address disability issues”, *Pacific Women Lead* seeks to do this throughout all components of the program.

4. PROPOSED OUTCOMES AND INVESTMENT OPTIONS

4.1 *Pacific Women Lead* is a multi-year initiative to be delivered over the period 2021-2026 through an AUD \$170 million commitment from the Australian Government to further gender equality in the Pacific. The initiative will be characterised by flexibility with this design providing a high-level framework for a range of activities that will be developed and implemented over the life of the initiative.

Strategic framework and process for the Design

4.2 This is a **High-Level Framework Design**. It is intended to provide a platform for a flexible and adaptive program of impact with strategic partners over the next five years – not a detailed, locked-in program of specific activities. The framework determines the goals, priorities and partners.

4.3 This design has been developed through a **co-design process** by a team of 6 people, 4 women and two men, 4 Pacific Islanders and 2 Australians, with complementary skills and experiences in the region and with program design and implementation.

4.4 **The high-level program goal, priorities and outcomes were formulated following a wide-ranging process of consultations** with stakeholders, strong engagement with the Pacific Women Advisory Board and analysis of lessons from the six-year Evaluation of *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* and lessons from other gender equality programs.

4.5 Throughout the course of this design process over 200 people from civil society, private sector, government, regional and international organisations - within the Pacific and Australia - were invited to participate in consultations and through the provision of direct written submissions. The broad ranging consultation was both to inform the goals and modalities for the new program and, crucially, to be true to the aspiration for Pacific ownership of this the new DFAT investment from the outset. A list of people consulted is at Annex 6. The consultations generated a wide range of rich insights, information and feedback, with some very clear messages standing out – these included the significance of ‘women’s leadership’ as a priority in its own right; the key role of Pacific feminist civil society in the push for gender equality; the concept of ‘women’s rights’ as framing for service delivery work in key areas where women and girls are missing out; and the need for collaboration and cooperation between governments, regional organisations and civil society.

GOAL AND OUTCOMES FOR *PACIFIC WOMEN LEAD*

4.6 The proposed Goal and Outcomes are as follows:

Goal (*The high level aim we seek to contribute to but are not solely responsible for*)

“Pacific women and girls, in all their diversity, are safe and equitably share in resources, opportunities and decision-making, with men and boys.”

Outcomes (*The measurable priorities we will be held accountable for*)

1. **Women’s leadership promoted**
 - a. **Increased women's voices in decision making spaces**, from household, community, business and local level leadership through to national, regional and global political spheres.
 - b. Recognition and amplification of the **leadership of Pacific feminist civil society**
2. **Women’s rights realised**
 - a. **Women’s health** – Women and girls have improved access to quality health care services, including sexual and reproductive health, through addressing gender inequality that underpins poor health outcomes.

- b. **Women’s safety** – Survivors of gender-based violence have access to quality support services including in times of disaster and Pacific governments and communities work together to address and prevent violence, through tackling harmful social and cultural norms.
 - c. **Women’s economic empowerment** – Women have more equitable access to resilient economic opportunities and increased voice in economic decision-making.
3. **Pacific regional partners increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts**
 - a. Opportunities for **civil society, government and intergovernmental collaboration** in support of gender equality are facilitated.
 - b. **Mainstreaming of gender equality** through other development programs in all sectors across the Pacific is supported.

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES – REGIONAL

4.7 As stated in the Goal, this program’s beneficiaries are **Pacific Women and Girls, in all their diversity**. This diversity is a critically important part of this design – it means that Pacific Women Lead is for women and girls of all ages, LGBTIQ women, women from all cultural and social backgrounds, including indigenous women, and women with disability. This is clear at the very highest level of the Design of this program and is reinforced here as it is relevant to every reference to women throughout the document.

4.8 In support of regional gender equality and human rights frameworks and commitments, Pacific Women Lead will focus on funding and implementing **regional-level investments** to address shared challenges, at all times informed by national considerations and contexts. This includes recognising and harnessing the leadership and decision-making value of women in mitigating and adapting to climate change in the Pacific region and globally. The starting point for decisions on regional-level investments will be the suite of ongoing regional activities under *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (PWSPD)* and the extent to which these activities can contribute to the Goal and Outcomes of *Pacific Women Lead (PWL)* – this is addressed in Section E of this Design. In addition, there will be the opportunity for new investments using funds that become progressively available through the life of the program – see section H. Regional investments are expected to contribute to progress at national level, through a focus on supporting Pacific-driven action, knowledge management and learning on issues that are common to all countries

4.9 Further detailed work on output and activity planning will take place during the transition phase and beyond (see principles and criteria for investment in Section E). At this stage, known deliverables and the focus of future design and planning work is, as follows:

4.10 **Outcome 1: Women’s leadership promoted:**

- This outcome will support the continuation of key investments in the current *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (PWSPD)* program, in particular Balance of Power (which addresses the social norms that define political leadership as the domain of men). It will also provide the opportunity for new initiatives to support women’s leadership at all levels, from local to global and in a range of sectors beyond parliamentary politics including climate action and women’s leadership in sport. Support for Feminist Funds will be critical for supporting women’s leadership.
- This outcome introduces an explicit focus on Pacific women’s civil society, organisations working towards gender equality in the region. Some organisations explicitly identify themselves as feminist but all organisations engage in promoting transformative change and work to address harmful social norms that discriminate against women and girls. Examples of such feminist civil society groups includes: We Rise Coalition (regional); Pacific Women’s Network Against Violence Against Women (regional); Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre, Talitha Project (Tonga), Brown Girl Woke (Samoa); Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre; Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre; Femlink Pacific

(regional); Fiji Women's Rights Movement; Shifting the Power Coalition (regional); Women's Rights Action Movement (Solomon Islands); YWCA Solomon Islands; Cookhouse Confidential (Marshall Islands); Fiji Women's Fund.

4.11 **Women's rights realised:**

- This outcome will support the continuation of key investments in the current *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* (PWSPD) program, including support for the essential and life-saving service delivery of crisis centres, the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women (which promotes gender equality and reducing violence against women and girls across communities and nations in the Pacific) and current health and economic empowerment programs that will help deliver on the goal outcomes.
- This outcome will provide the opportunity to develop new work in the areas of health, including the strong focus on sexual and reproductive health, including menstrual health, COVID recovery and improving economic opportunities for women.
- Gender and sexual and reproductive health programs will be linked to make stronger connections that introduce opportunities to expand access to quality sexual and reproductive health services.
- SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) Division has a focus on human rights and gender. Support for the HRSD Business Plan will be explored through the life of *Pacific Women Lead* through annual planning and program development.

4.12 **Pacific regional partners increase the effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts:**

- Unlike the first two outcomes, which will largely be progressed through direct investment of program funds into discrete activities, this outcome will be addressed through existing and new partnership arrangements between DFAT, SPC, PIF and regional civil society. Cooperation and mutual sharing will enable increased opportunities to deliver gender equality. The success of this outcome will depend on the level of regional engagement and collaboration through both the Governance Board and implementing partners.

OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES – BILATERAL

4.13 **DFAT's bilateral gender programs** will contribute to the Goal and Outcomes of *Pacific Women Lead*, particularly in relation to women's leadership (Outcome One) and realising women's rights (Outcome Two). In the area of women's health, it is expected that *Pacific Women Lead* will support regional activities focused on sexual and reproductive health, or menstrual hygiene. DFAT's existing bilateral health programs, will continue to respond to issues around women's health through DFAT bilateral COVID-19 Response Plans and are not expected to be linked to *Pacific Women Lead*.

4.14 Country-level investments that support gender equality through DFAT's bilateral gender programs will generally be directly funded, implemented, and managed by country programs separate to *Pacific Women Lead*, but with *Pacific Women Lead* providing a cohesive strategic framework, including links to a regional theory of change and performance framework. In the case of DFAT bilateral programs in smaller Pacific countries (Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau and Niue), *Pacific Women Lead* will provide direct country-level support for grants management, technical assistance, monitoring and reporting, through either SPC or a managing contractor. Larger bilateral programs have agreed to either manage programs directly or have developed (or are in the process of developing) resource facilities or platforms to deliver programming.

4.15 Bilateral gender programs are expected to maintain a similar level of funding as provided under *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* and continue to deliver critical services, particularly crisis services for women and girls experiencing violence. This is in line with the six-year evaluation of *Pacific Women* and the

2019 Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation 'Ending Violence against women and girls: Evaluating a decade of Australia's development assistance'.

4.16 Bilateral investments will be tailored to the country context and aligned with national priorities. Programming should take forward relevant recommendations of the 6 year evaluation of PWSPD. DFAT bilateral programs will provide reporting on bilateral results and achievements that together with regional reporting, will give a complete view of Australia's investments in gender equality across the Pacific region under Pacific Women Lead. Bilateral programs will also engage with the Board on mainstreaming of gender equality through the broader bilateral program e.g. through health, education, infrastructure sectors. This means the Board will have a (high level) view of Australia's entire development program in the Pacific and can make suggestions for gender mainstreaming to address any key gaps or increase impact. DFAT bilateral programs will have the opportunity on an annual basis to share their mainstreaming approach with the Governance Board, and to benefit from the strategic insights and advice of the combined expertise of the Governance Board members.

4.17 A key point of strength for Pacific Women Lead will be a focus on strong linkages and complementarity between country and regional-level investments, and an overarching performance framework will capture the contribution of all DFAT-funded gender equality investments in the Pacific.

4.18 A key consideration in ongoing partnership discussions between DFAT and SPC is the extent to which some parts of *Pacific Women Lead* will be delivered through providing funding for implementation of relevant components of **the Business Plan for SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) Division**. These partnership discussions will continue through the transition phase in 2021.

THEORY OF CHANGE

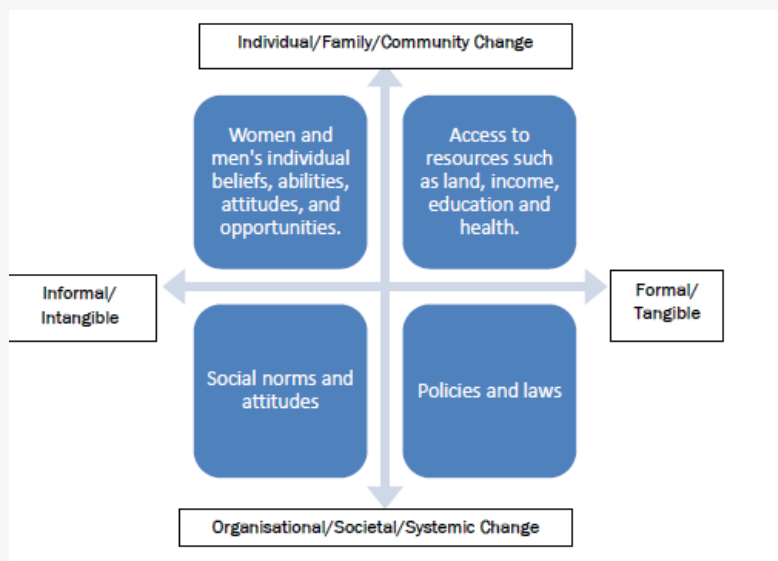
4.19 The pursuit of the goal, objective and outcomes will be undertaken through an approach that is:

- focused on transformational change and addressing harmful social norms
- relevant to culture and context, underpinned by positive expressions of Pacific cultural values
- informed by research, evidence and data
- characterised by deep engagement with Pacific governments and aligned with Ministries' mandates
 - o particularly where seeking to address discriminatory laws and institutions
 - o taking a whole of government approach, not only working with Ministries of Women

4.20 As was the case with *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development*, the *Pacific Women Lead* program will be informed by the **Rao and Kelleher Framework**⁸, a conceptual framework which identifies where change is needed to achieve increased gender equality and empowerment of women. This framework points to the interconnected areas of individual, family and community change; changes in informal and formal systems; and changes to organisational and societal systems. Its central logic, adopted by the program, is that strategies are needed across these different dimensions for longer term, sustainable impact in women's lives. This framework will not be used in a rigid way but will help inform and guide both: a) design of any new activities under *Pacific Women Lead*; and b) monitoring and evaluation of *Pacific Women Lead* so that all elements of the program from start to finish will take account of the multiple dimensions that are important to achieving progress in gender equality (see Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) included in Annex 1).

Rao and Kelleher Framework diagram

⁸ Aruna Rao & David Kelleher (2005) *Is there life after gender mainstreaming?*, *Gender & Development*, 13:2, 57-69, DOI: 10.1080/13552070512331332287



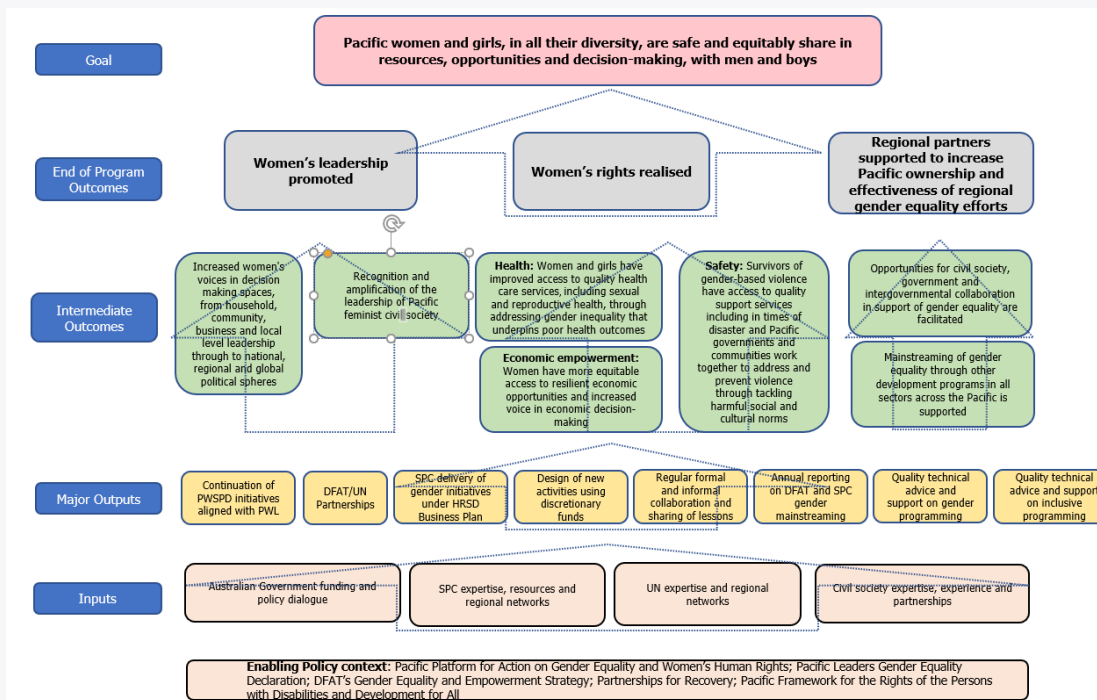
4.21 Guided by strategy sessions with the Pacific Women Advisory Board and stakeholder consultations, a Theory of Change model for the new program design has been partially developed. As this is a High-Level Framework Design, outputs and inputs that will help achieve the intermediate outcomes, the end of program outcomes and, ultimately, contribute to the Goal, are indicated at a high level and will be further developed through the transition phase during 2021 and the development of the MELF. Key considerations during the Transition Phase will be:

- **Enabling policy context:** in 2021, there will be significant developments on the regional scale in relation to gender equality. In May, the Triennial and Meeting of Pacific Ministers for Women will be held and its outcomes will be taken into account in shaping the directions of Pacific Women Lead. Later in 2021, the outcomes of the Review of the Leaders Declaration on Gender Equality will be another significant strategic consideration for Pacific Women Lead.
- **Inputs:** The Australian Government is making a significant financial and policy commitment to Pacific Women Lead and will work with SPC to maximise the total resources available to the program. The contribution of civil society, in particular Pacific feminist civil society, will be elaborated and confirmed through partnership negotiations through the transition period.
- **Outputs** – using the criteria outlined in this design, decisions will be progressively made about the continuation or otherwise of initiatives currently under way as part of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. These decisions will have a bearing on the level of funds available for new activities and investments as Pacific Women Lead progresses.

4.22 The Theory of Change will be further developed together with the MELF and considered by the Governance Board.

Pacific Women Lead: Indicative High-Level Theory of Change

4.23 An indicative Theory of Change (TOC) for Pacific Women Lead demonstrates the linkages between the goal for the Program, outcomes and associated outputs that will support the goal and approach of the program. The outputs needed to attain the intermediate outcomes will be refined by key stakeholders during the inception/transition phase of implementation. Some provisional outputs have been proposed for early preparation. However, it is deemed inappropriate to pre-determine too many outputs at this stage so as not to prescribe the direction, causal pathways and functioning of the Program at the design phase.



4.24 Once finalised during the transition phase the **Theory of Change** will fully identify the main causal pathways required to achieve the proposed EOP outcomes, in addition to specifying the steps needed to achieve the overall goal. The Theory of Change will be framed by a set of critical assumptions that underlie the proposed investment. These assumptions articulate the necessary and sufficient conditions which need to be met to achieve the success of what is being proposed. Whilst the full set of assumptions will be finalised during the transition phase, several key assumptions are already apparent, including:

Theory of Change	Assumptions
Goal Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic and political acceptance across the region to address the challenge of gender equality Wider/ongoing recognition of the importance of Pacific leadership and ownership to address the challenge of gender equality
End of Program Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Government remains committed to promoting gender equality in the region Partner countries continue to prioritise, and remain committed to increasing gender equality efforts Key delivery partners willing to build close relationships with the program and promote effective joint coordination of efforts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner countries continue to recognise and support leadership of Pacific women to enhance gender equality across the region
Intermediate Outcome Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners will commit to engaging fully with this program (including providing sufficient resources to support the program, and be willing to engage in dialogue over relevant policies and laws) • Quality technical advice from feminist CSOs available to support the program • Partners countries, DFAT bilateral programs and SCP sectoral programs welcome opportunities to engage on mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion across all activities • Partners willing to provide in-kind resources (e.g. staff time, facilities, ICT, data etc) • Activities are sufficiently targeted to enhance the desired change in beliefs, social norms and attitudes.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 *Pacific Women Lead* will be characterised by both Governance and Management arrangements that are Pacific-driven.

GOVERNANCE

5.2 Governance will be treated as it is meant to be – as being about ‘authority and direction’. *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* has had an Advisory Board with outstanding people from the Pacific who have been instrumental in making advances in gender equality in the Pacific. However, it has clearly been limited to an ‘advisory’ role – with the governance and funding decisions resting with DFAT.

5.3 For *Pacific Women Lead*, with its strong focus on Pacific ownership, there will be a Board of highly credentialed people, at least two thirds of whom will be women, with a strategic role, including decision making for key components of the program. The Governance Board will have direct oversight of certain elements of Pacific Women Lead (some funding and SPC management and activity delivery). Other activities with separate governance arrangements will share reporting and lessons – this particularly relates to Feminist Funds, for whom maintaining their own autonomy is critical, and DFAT direct funding for UN programs.

5.4 The members of the *Pacific Women Lead* Board will hold their positions in their own right, not as a representative of a particular organisation, and work collectively to support the Goal and Outcomes of Pacific Women Lead. They will be drawn from:

- Experienced people (especially women) from the Pacific – civil society, churches, private sector, government – with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion (particularly women with disabilities)

- regional organisations
- DFAT
- The Board’s Terms of Reference will spell out a transparent process for board appointments, including the impact on board membership of conflicts of interest.

5.5 The Board will:

- Monitor performance of Pacific Women Lead against its Goal and Outcomes
- Set strategic directions and establish priorities
- Make resourcing decisions at a high level for SPC and discretionary elements
- Monitor risks and safeguards
- Share strategic advice and learning with other program components with separate governance (esp DFAT funding to UN programs such as UN Women and UNFPA and civil society/feminist funds)
- Review mainstreaming across DFAT and SPC programs in other sectors

5.6 The Board will focus on the strategic level, but not get involved in the detailed running and management of the program. One other key point relating to governance is that DFAT bilateral programs will deliver their own gender equality initiatives at the national level. In some cases, especially larger programs, governance and management will rest with the relevant DFAT program who will work in partnership with national governments and civil society, but with a connection to and alignment with the overall strategic direction of *Pacific Women Lead*. Recognising constraints in smaller Pacific countries (for both DFAT posts and partners), additional support may be provided to identified smaller DFAT programs to support their management, but with governance remaining with the bilateral program.

5.7 The following table provides a high level visual representation of the governance of Pacific Women Lead. In the interests of transparency, clear boundaries are being put around the Governance Board – and the reality that certain program elements are outside the direct oversight of the Governance Board is made very clear. The Governance Board will not have decision making responsibility in relation to Civil Society/Feminist Funds (because of the importance of autonomy from government or intergovernmental organisational influence), and DFAT funding for UN/international organisations (because of the important direct relationship between Australia and international bodies of which Australia is a member) and DFAT funding for bilateral activities (because these are based on relationships and agreements between Australia and its bilateral partners). However, a significant feature of the Governance Board is that, while not having a direct governance or decision-making role in relation to these other elements, it will take an interest in the overall picture of gender equality programming in the Pacific in a spirit of mutual sharing of information, lessons, reflection and advice.

5.8 The Governance Board will also have a strategic advisory role in engaging with DFAT on the mainstreaming of gender equality through Australia’s bilateral programs in the Pacific e.g. through health, education, infrastructure sectors. This means the Board will have a (high level) view of Australia’s entire development program in the Pacific, and can make suggestions for gender mainstreaming to address any key gaps or increase impact. DFAT bilateral programs will have the opportunity on an annual basis to share their mainstreaming approach with the Governance Board, and to benefit from the strategic insights and advice of the combined expertise of the Governance Board members.

Table: Pacific Women Lead – Proposed Governance Arrangements

(A) <u>Governance Board (for SPC and discretionary elements)</u>	(B) <u>Civil Society/Feminist Funds Governance</u>	(C) <u>Bilateral and other regional funds</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Coverage/performance oversight for discretionary funding and SPC management and activities</u> • <u>Resourcing decisions for discretionary funding and SPC management and activities</u> • <u>Review Mainstreaming for DFAT work in other sectors and SPC work in other sectors</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A strategic partnership agreement between DFAT and all the Feminist Funds (Asia and Pacific)</u> • <u>Individual Grant Agreements between DFAT and each Fund (Fiji Women’s Fund, Urgent Action Fund and Pacific Feminist Fund)</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>DFAT will manage agreements for bilateral gender programs with separate management and governance arrangements</u> • <u>DFAT will manage agreements with UN agencies with separate management and governance arrangements</u>

Performance reporting and lessons learned consolidated and shared across (A), (B) and (C).

5.9 DFAT’s role in governance:

- DFAT will have a single representative on the Board and will participate equally with other board members in the governance of Pacific Women Lead
- DFAT will have the financial delegations to authorise funding requirements arising from Board decisions on SPC and discretionary components of the program. If DFAT is not able to exercise financial delegations in accordance with the decision of the Board, DFAT will be required to provide the Board with a written explanation.
- At the same time, DFAT will retain separate governance arrangements with its partnerships with Feminist Funds intergovernmental agencies, in particular the UN.

5.10 Consistent with the Pacific-led principle for this program, the Board (including one member from DFAT) will set the strategic direction for *Pacific Women Lead*, not DFAT on its own.

MANAGEMENT & DELIVERY MODEL

5.11 *Pacific Women Lead* will be professionally managed in a cohesive and coherent way, in line with the Pacific-driven principle, under the strategic direction of the Board.

5.12 An entity or entities is required to perform effective program management and directly carry out the following functions in support of a strong regional program, to be performed across multiple sectors at both the regional and national levels:

- Convening of partners and stakeholders
- Engagement with diverse women’s organisations driving gender equality
- Policy and program advice

- Grant disbursement and management
- Partnership brokering and support
- Technical assistance
- Support for mainstreaming of gender equality in other programs (including DFAT programs and potentially others)
- Data collection and analysis
- Facilitation of learning and sharing of lessons across the program
- Financial management
- Human resource management
- IT
- Fraud control
- Report to the Board on risks and safeguards
- Performance measurement and reporting
- Secretariat support to the Board
- Demand-driven support for DFAT bilateral programs

5.13 Based on an assessment of delivery model options, the proposed approach is for a Hybrid model with a Pacific regional organisation as ‘host’ and including other such actors as civil society organisations, commercial entities and government. This assessment looked at potential delivery options that:

- draw on **local Pacific expertise and** local civil society groups
- can operate in a **decentralised** way through engagement at country level with reach to provincial/rural areas
- are **accountable to partners on the ground** (Pacific governments, civil society, UN agencies etc)
- have a **footprint** and capacity at country level & a regional support hub
- have built-in **flexibility** – not just one modality but ability to tailor funding models to the needs of different programs and partners

5.14 **The Pacific Community (SPC) is the regional organisation with the clearest mandate and capacity** to perform many of the required functions and is recommended as the ‘host’:

- SPC has the regional mandate from its members⁹ to promote human rights and gender equality and provides relevant technical assistance and capacity building for this purpose through a range of modalities. SPC is responsible for implementation of the PPA and works closely with PIFS in relation to the implementation of the PLGED. SPC is implementing components / pillars of the Pacific Partnership to End Violence against Women and Girls as well as the Spotlight Initiative, and is therefore in a strong position to ensure coherence and effective linkages between these programmes and Pacific Women Lead). SPC works with member governments, civil society organisations and the private sector.
- Perceived in the region as a Pacific organisation
- SPC is accountable to its 26 members, including Australia and 22 Pacific Island Countries and Territories.
- Works across the 20+ sectors, including fisheries, agriculture, geoscience, public health, placing it in a position to develop and implement an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to Pacific Women Lead.

⁹ American Samoa; Australia; Cook Islands; Fiji; France; French Polynesia; Guam; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Federated States of Micronesia; Nauru; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Niue; Northern Mariana Islands; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Pitcairn Islands; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tokelau; Tonga; Tuvalu; United States; Vanuatu; Wallis and Futuna.

- Able to provide: programme and financial management including reporting; technical assistance; MEL; logistics and administrative support; human resources support; and strategic support through Strategy, Planning & Learning Division.
- Long term personnel (from across the region) means long term relationships with stakeholders
- Footprint across the region – relevant division of SPC (HRSD) has personnel embedded in government ministries across 8 Pacific Island Countries plus headquartered in Suva.

5.15 Within SPC, Pacific Women Lead will sit in the **Human Rights & Social Development (HRSD) Division**. This Division was established in September 2020 as the result of a merger between the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) - which was responsible for the human rights programme at SPC - and the Social Development Programme (SDP) which was responsible for the gender, youth and culture programme. The merger brings the SPC gender programme under new leadership and combines the complimentary capabilities of RRRT and SDP. It also strengthens the strategic positioning of the human rights and social development agenda within SPC and the Pacific. As a result, SPC is now well placed to more effectively deliver its human rights, gender, youth and culture programme, in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way, for better development outcomes and greater impacts for the Pacific.

Delivery model – Hybrid

5.16 A hybrid model hosted by a Pacific regional organisation with other functions delivered by partners including civil society and a commercial contractor, as follows:

- **Hosted by a Pacific regional organisation, SPC.** SPC would house and manage the bulk of the program, including technical advisory support to the region, some grant delivery and management and administrative/logistical support across the program. SPC’s existing network of offices throughout the Pacific would provide the base for the program.
- **Civil Society.** Feminist Funds, coalitions/partnerships, and women’s organisations and crisis centres are critical to enable Pacific women’s leadership and to deliver broad reaching support to women and women’s organisations across the region.
- **DFAT.** DFAT will continue to directly partner with UN partners to carry forward specific elements/projects, in particular the Pacific Partnerships to End Violence Against Women and Markets for Change.
- **Contractor(s).** Some smaller specific portions of ongoing programming will need to be put out to commercial tender for management to ensure transition risks are managed and gender equality services and advice are maintained. This will include scope for a small Quality, Technical Advisory Group (QTAG). DFAT’s Building Pacific Capacity (BPaC) program, to be designed in 2021, will provide mainstream gender support to smaller Pacific countries (particularly Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, and North Pacific countries). From 2022, and for the countries it covers, BPaC will offer a potential commercial entity mechanism to provide additional support to implement and monitor country-level activities.

Indicative division of management responsibility across partners in the hybrid model

5.17 The table below provides a summary of how management and support functions will be split across partners for *Pacific Women Lead*. This will be subject to further discussion and negotiation during the transition phase – but the following gives a reasonable estimate of the likely relativities at the program management and support level, with SPC clearly carrying most of the management and support load. While it is not envisaged

that a civil society entity will have an initial role in overall program management, civil society will be expected to take on an activity management load, along with the three other elements of the hybrid. Activity management responsibilities across all the partners will be determined in accordance with principles and criteria outlined in the Design.

SPC	DFAT	Civil Society	Contractor(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant disbursement and management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – Lead Role Convening of partners and stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and program advice to SPC-managed programs Communications Secretariat support to the Board Corporate functions (Finance; Human Resources; IT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Government due diligence requirements for partners Australian Government contracting and grant agreement processes Australian Government reporting requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feminist Funds – grants disbursement and management Incubation and capacity development to grow opportunities for women’s organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy, program and technical advice to DFAT programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning QTAG/ Independent advisory role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership brokering and support Support for Pacific bilateral programs, as required Support SPC in early stages, as requested

VALUE FOR MONEY CONSIDERATIONS

5.18 This hybrid model is proposed as the optimum approach when considering DFAT’s multifaceted *Value for Money* Principles (below):

Economy	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Ethics
1. Cost consciousness 2. Encouraging competition	3. Evidence based decision making 4. Proportionality	5. Performance and Risk Management 6. Results Focus 7. Experimentation and innovation	8. Accountability and transparency

5.19 Economy:

- Cost consciousness*: in the early stages of Pacific Women Lead, it is not anticipated that this hybrid model will rate highly on cost consciousness due to the need for multiple sets of fixed costs to set up multiple arrangements. However, over time this will improve as economies of scale come into play as some or all hybrid partners take on more activity management using their already established structure and systems.

- *Encouraging competition*: while the nature of the hybrid is primarily collaborative not competitive, there will be some positive benefits from elements of competition through: a) having each party trusted with only certain elements and being motivated to demonstrate high value; b) when new activities are developed throughout the program, impact and effectiveness will be one factor in selecting the hybrid partner to manage each new activity.

5.20 Efficiency:

- *Evidence based decision making*: the program is being designed with Pacific-led decision making at its heart, with the Governance Board empowered to set strategic directions and make resourcing decisions based on performance reporting and analysis.
- *Proportionality*: the principle of proportionality is well addressed in the way in which hybrid partners will take on responsibility for different levels of management in accordance with the size and nature of their mandates and capacity. SPC as a large regional Pacific organisation will take on the large 'hosting' role and the bulk of the support functions, and therefore will have the largest back office overheads. Other hybrid partners will have overheads proportional to their management responsibilities.

5.21 Effectiveness:

- *Performance and risk management*: the hybrid model is designed with performance and risk management front of mind – and a single managing entity would not be able to deliver. The Principles and criteria outlined below are a demonstration of how responsibility will be given to the partner best placed to deliver the best performance. Risk considerations have been key in the decision to go down the hybrid path– a single managing entity would risk too narrow a focus that could not deliver the breadth and depth of activities required to achieve gender equality.
- *Results focus*: the hybrid mode will work to a single goal and clear outcomes and will be assessed against the same overall Performance Assessment Framework, and each hybrid partner will be held accountable for results in their sphere of responsibility.
- *Experimentation and innovation*: this model by its very nature, as a combination of four different managing options with Pacific-led governance and oversight, is innovative. It has not been designed for administrative ease, but to be sophisticated in dealing with the complexity of the agenda and relationships around gender equality in the Pacific. It is designed as a portfolio of partnerships that are accountable to deliver results, and that together, leverage greater impact.

5.22 Ethics:

- *Accountability and transparency*; The hybrid model will have multiple accountabilities – to the Governance Board, itself a new approach to accountability to a Pacific-led body, to the Australian Government, to SPC and to the civil society across the region who have invested in the design of the program and will be watching its progress closely. Transparency will be provided through reporting on all elements of the hybrid being consolidated and provided to the Governance Board.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS OF SPC AS 'HOST'

5.23 There are two key areas of expectation around SPC's key regional hosting role for Pacific Women Lead:

1. **Provide effective and efficient, Pacific-driven management for the life of Pacific Women Lead program**: SPC will be expected to provide a quality management service for Pacific Women Lead, both at the overall program level and in relation to individual activity delivery.

2. **Strengthen SPC's gender equality capacity for the long term benefit of the region:** by hosting Pacific Women Lead and increasing internal resources on gender equality, SPC has the opportunity to deepen its own expertise in this area and to help the whole organisation to be more gender sensitive in all its work. This will not only provide a benefit to this program but will have long term benefits for the region through the embedding of this enhanced capacity within SPC for the long term. This is a particular and unique benefit to the region that could only be achieved through a regionally-owned, member-based organisation that is embedded in the region long-term.

POLICY DIALOGUE

5.35 **Responsibility for influencing policy rests with Office of the Pacific (OTP), Posts and SPC.** These entities have the relationships with relevant policy makers or will be able to build the necessary relationships across the life of the program. All three entities will have some form of responsibility for the day-to-day management of the program and will have a significant role in providing supporting evidence to inform policy dialogue. SPC will continue its mandated role to work with and provide technical support to member country governments. OTP will lead on Australia's regional policy dialogue. Relevant Pacific Posts will lead on Australia's bilateral policy dialogue. (See Annex 3)

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is expected to **support accountability and demonstrate the effectiveness of program delivery and results.** In particular, the MEL Framework (MELF) will address the challenges of aggregating data across different countries to provide results for the region as a whole, achieve an appropriate balance between quantitative and qualitative data that does not overly burden program staff, and use information as evidence for ongoing program improvement. The program team and partner capacity to provide high-quality data will require ongoing and targeted support. A strong learning culture for the program should be established and reinforced through practical utilisation of MEL data.

6.2 There are **three main objectives for the 'Pacific Women Lead' program MELF:**

1. To *support learning and decision making* for the improvement of the program and strengthening overall impact.
2. To *generate evidence and information* that supports the program theory of change and can be communicated to influence program stakeholders.
3. To *ensure accountability* of the program to all program partners and stakeholders, including Australian taxpayers and the people of the Pacific.

6.3 The primary users of the MEL information will be the SPC, DFAT and Pacific Island Countries and the Governance Board. Other users include regional and national stakeholders engaged to implement specific aspects of program implementation. Secondary users will be the national and subnational government stakeholders in the Pacific, relevant GEDSI professionals, and other DFAT staff who wish to be informed about progress and results.

6.4 **The MEL Framework for this project will measure progress towards the project outcomes by articulating the methods and timing for capturing relevant data, and will be used to guide the development of a detailed MEL Plan in the transition phase.** The MELF covers the five-year period of the program and will be updated annually to reflect any changes in the program approach. It has been designed to align with DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards and incorporates lessons learned on monitoring and evaluation from the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program.

6.5 The MELF has been developed with the following characteristics in mind:

- **Flexible and adaptable:** Monitoring and evaluation methods and tools will be flexible to respond to local contextual factors, particular in the early phase of implementation where remote or third-party MEL may be required.
- **Emphasis on learning:** With the commitment by DFAT to ensure authentic Pacific ownership for Pacific Women Lead, there is likely to be significant learning moments during the program. The MELF prioritises the need to internalise and share those lessons learned above any judgement of performance to date. Given this program will begin implementation during a global pandemic, new ways of working will also be tested which require ongoing reflection and adjustment.
- **Mutual accountability:** Ensuring there is mutual accountability between DFAT and implementing partners, as well as to Australian taxpayers and people in the Pacific, the MELF will capture information that demonstrates the quality of the investment and value for money.
- **Focus on outcomes over outputs:** With regional investments it can be simple to focus on the outputs and overlook the outcomes and impact that is trying to be achieved on a broader scale. The MELF strengthens the focus on measuring and communicating outcomes of the program rather than outputs, recognising that data on both will need to be collected.
- **Promoting equality and inclusion:** The MELF will contribute to the program's commitment on gender equality, and inclusion of a diversity of participants through delivering accessible, inclusive and culturally safe and sensitive processes, that further equality and inclusion.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

6.6 A set of key evaluation questions have been developed for assessing the overall performance of the Pacific Women Lead program. These questions are based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee's (OECD-DAC) criteria, to which DFAT and other bilateral donors subscribe, and align with DFAT's investment performance criteria.

6.7 The criteria for MEL include relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, management of risk, innovation and private sector engagement.

1. Has Pacific Women Lead maintained *relevance* in aligning with Australia's strategic goals in the region and the priorities of Pacific Island government partners?
2. How *effective* has Pacific Women Lead been in achieving the project outcomes and contributing to improved gender equality and women's empowerment across the region?
3. How *effective* has Pacific Women Lead been in building partnerships to ensure coordinated, joint efforts to improve gender equality and women's empowerment across the region?
4. How *efficient* are the management and governance arrangements supporting the performance of Pacific Women Lead in the region?
5. What is the likely legacy of Pacific Women Lead and *sustainability* of the benefits?
6. How successful has Pacific Women Lead been in promoting *gender equality, disability and social inclusion* in policy and practice?
7. How well did Pacific Women Lead identify and manage *risk* and protect *safeguards*?
8. To what extent did the program employ *innovative* approaches and involve the *private sector*?

6.8 A performance assessment framework (see Annex 1) is **designed to capture data to assess the program logic** and report against the key evaluation question 2 on *effectiveness*. It will measure indicators of change linked to the two outcome levels and assess progress against sex-disaggregated baseline information.

MEL RESPONSIBILITY

6.9 Monitoring and evaluation for Pacific Women Lead will be Pacific led:

- **Strategic oversight of the performance of *Pacific Women Lead*** will be the responsibility of the Board
- SPC's Human Rights and Social Development (HRSD) will provide MEL functions for the programs they directly manage. Overarching MEL will be led by a contractor, which will include regional and bilateral gender results, building on the results from Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development.
- A **Pacific-led Quality and Technical Advisory Group (QTAG)** will be contracted and will complement SPC's capacity by providing independent technical advice and undertaking regular independent monitoring. The QTAG will focus on the regional SPC and DFAT streams of Pacific Women Lead initially – in the future, it could be expanded to support other activities.
- DFAT's Office of the Pacific – Pacific Gender and Regional Development section will ensure compliance with DFAT monitoring and evaluation standards. DFAT staff at Posts will have a role in supporting data collection and analysis that can support performance decision making and learning, drawing on local MEL support as required. Note that it is expected that DFAT bilateral programs with their own MEL resources will continue to have their own MELF and monitoring, and will draw on the overarching Pacific Women Lead MELF and feed into regional level learning and data collection.

6.10 An overarching MEL plan will be developed in the inception phase of the program that will focus on approaches to monitoring at two levels:

- *Whole-of-program change monitoring*: this level will focus on and test the effectiveness of the program logic, including whether assumptions are holding true. It will also track the relevance of the program and aggregate information from the country level to tell a whole-of-program story of change.
- *Program delivery monitoring*: this level will focus on the delivery and enabling functions of the program, through monitoring the quality of inputs, and the efficiency of activities identified and implemented under the annual work plans.

6.11 The **collection of data and information for MEL will require a variety of tools and methods** that suit the information needs of each activity and support safe, accessible and inclusive practice. Key features of the approach to MEL include:

- Activities in Pacific Islands Countries will be supported by partners' own MEL capacity in each country. This approach allows ongoing reflection, co-creation and adaptation with key partners in country, with support from relevant DFAT staff at each country Post.
- Six-monthly reflection meetings for DFAT staff and key implementing partners to assess MELF adequacy for the program (including refining program logic, developing common MEL tools, methods) and make adjustments as required (ideally facilitated by a MEL advisor).
- Finalisation of the MELF, ensuring that it has both a bilateral and regional focus, including ensuring all indicators in the PAF are measurable, means of verification have been identified, and roles and responsibilities for MEL activities are clarified.

- Collection of baseline data in selected PICs early in program implementation with support from MEL advisors (including drawing on relevant existing regional and national data sets).
- Disaggregated data collection and analysis that reports results and impact for the diverse range of participants, including people with disabilities.
- Regular assessment of the efficacy of relationship building, ongoing coordination between partners, and creation of partnerships (e.g. through annual Partnership Reviews/ Health checks)
- Semi-annual progress reports from partners where specific project activities are being undertaken that respond to program outcomes and indicators (consider using a template to streamline reporting)
- Regular field monitoring visits (twice a year) in each location that includes direct engagement with communities where possible and covers child protection and PSEAH. These monitoring visits would be led by the QTAG with SPC also participating, and DFAT Post staff having the opportunity to join monitoring visits should they wish.
- Semi-annual government dialogues at both national and city level to support relationships and learning that will secure sustainable outcomes for the program.
- Regular meetings with other donors and the private sector will be scheduled by SPC – and involving other partners as appropriate - to maximise sectoral coordination and collaboration.
- Annual investment performance checks, according to DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards
- Mid-term partnership workshop with implementation partners to reflect on progress and forward plan, facilitated by an independent expert or a mid-term review of the program. This review will take stock of progress and help inform decision making regarding future programming for the investment. Indicative timing – mid 2023.
- Independent end-of-program evaluation to capture program learning, stories of success, and guide future planning and investment. Indicative timing – mid 2026.

7. GENDER, DISABILITY AND OTHER CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

GENDER EQUALITY

7.1 **Gender equality is the main objective for this investment** as the Pacific region includes countries that have the largest gender gaps in education, economic participation, and health outcomes in the world as well as some of the highest rates of gender-based violence. DFAT’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy 2016 identifies “enhancing women’s voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building” as one of three priorities. This investment will use the gender mainstreaming approach to identify opportunities for activities that will promote women’s participation and leadership in enhancing gender equality in the Pacific. A gender-responsive lens will be applied to all activities that ensures gender-differentiated systems address barriers and identify opportunities for enhancing women’s health, women’s economic empowerment and women’s safety. It will also ensure a “do no harm” approach is taken to engaging women in program activities and appropriate mechanisms in place to protect women who may be at risk (see also Risk Management and Safeguards section).

DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

7.2 The six-year evaluation’s recommendation that the new gender equality program “ramp up efforts to address disability issues” has been taken to heart throughout this whole design. In line with Australia’s policy

commitment on disability inclusion - through DFAT's Development for All 2015-2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (extended to 2021) - people with disabilities will be prioritised in this investment. Throughout the Pacific region, in both urban and rural communities, women and girls with disabilities face multiple and compounding forms of discrimination because of their disability and their gender¹⁰. Women and girls with disabilities are two to three times more likely to experience physical and sexual abuse than those without disabilities. This abuse can happen in the family, the community or in institutions.¹¹ (UNFPA 2013). The Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 – 2025, supports Pacific governments to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and provides a regional modality to strengthen coordination and collaboration in support of national initiatives. The Government of Australia and most Pacific Island Countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and have made commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, "leave no one behind". The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) as established in 2004 and is a regional peak body that works in partnership with Disabled Persons Organisations throughout the Pacific region. Since 2007, the Pacific Disability Forum's Women's Committee has provided a regional voice for women with disabilities. The committee oversees disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management women's development programme and ensures that women and girls are included in the Pacific Disability Forum's policies and projects. As Pacific Women Lead is a regional program, the Pacific Disability Forum will be a key stakeholder throughout the life of the program to ensure women with disabilities are thoroughly represented at all levels from governance to management to activity delivery. The program will also work with PDF to ensure appropriate engagement of national DPOs, ensuring the investment aligns with their own strategic priorities and addressing any challenges related to capacity and resources is encouraged. The program may also provide an important opportunity to strengthen attention to gender equality within PDF's own programming work. The program will, as appropriate, also work with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) and other service delivery bodies at the national level in support of the program goal and outcomes.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE

7.3 Climate-related disasters in the Pacific region are becoming more frequent, destructive, and costlier in terms of both economic and social impacts. The impacts of these disasters are often felt most acutely amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised people, who may include women, people with disabilities, children and older people due to context. Urban informal settlements are often areas of most risk as people lack the essential resources and services needed to secure their most basic needs before, during and after a disaster. The slow onset impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, ocean acidification and changes to rainfall patterns resulting in impacts on food and water security, health, secure housing and migration, exacerbate existing gender inequalities, often resulting in more negative impacts for women. Improving gender equality can increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of the whole community to the impacts of climate change and disasters.

7.4 This program will **incorporate climate change and disaster risk assessments** in the development of partner activities where necessary. All assessments will be required to incorporate consideration of gender equality, and disability and social inclusion in assessing the potential impacts on communities. Where significant risks or impacts are identified, the partner will be required to incorporate these risks into their risk mitigation plan. The program will integrate opportunities to build climate and disaster resilience within communities into activities and implementation plans.

¹⁰ Pacific Sisters with Disabilities at the Intersection of Discrimination, Daniel Stubbs and Sainimili Tawake
- <https://pacificwomen.org/research/pacific-sisters-with-disabilities/>

¹¹ Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 - 2025
- <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PFRPD.pdf>

8. BUDGET AND RESOURCING

8. Pacific Women Lead has an indicative budget of \$170 million over its five-year timeframe.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDS

9.1 The Risks and Safeguards tool has been completed for this program and is included in Annex 2. **Overall, the residual risk rating when controls are considered is medium.**

9.2 The **COVID-19 pandemic** is likely to have an ongoing and uncertain impact on the program throughout its early implementation, including health, social, and economic impacts and limits to movement and personal engagement within nations and across the region. Responses to COVID-19 globally continue to shift within a dynamic context. DFAT's *Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response* will continue to provide the strategic and performance monitoring frameworks for responding to the pandemic, and more specifically the Pacific Regional COVID-19 Development Response Plan will guide the adaptive management of risks related to COVID-19 in the region.

9.3 **Controls that have been incorporated in the design of this program** for DFAT to mitigate the inherently high-medium risks include:

- Complete **due diligence and contracting processes with all new partners** to ensure they meet the requirements set out in Commonwealth legislation and DFAT's policies and guidelines on financial management, PSEAH, Child Protection and Environmental and Social Safeguards.
- Monitor effective **implementation of mitigation and identify emerging risks** through the MEL framework and reporting system.
- Strengthen **partner awareness of conflict of interest** and branding issues that may arise.
- Continue **regular dialogue with national government partners** and invest in building strong relationships at the subnational level, potentially through formal arrangements as required.
- Strengthen the **skills and knowledge of DFAT staff at Post, to SPC and to other delivery partners** through access to training and resources to ensure they are equipped to monitor and manage any incidents that may occur.

9.4 **Program risks will be actively managed** through a regular, quarterly discussion of risks by program delivery partners, convened by SPC. Consequently, the program risk register will be updated quarterly to reflect any changes in the risk profile of the program. This includes ensuring that the individual named as the Risk Owner remains the most appropriate. This quarterly discussion among program partners will feed into SPC reporting to each Board meeting about risk. Where required, issues of poor risk management at the activity level will initially be discussed with the relevant program delivery partner in a timely manner (not waiting for the 3 monthly meeting) and will be escalated to the Board, if required, as part of SPC risk reporting.

10. QUALITY ASSURANCE

10. The Design was considered by a Peer Review on 25 February 2021. Written appraisals were undertaken by two independent appraisers and two DFAT appraisers.

Annexes

Annex 1	Monitoring & Evaluation Framework (with Performance Assessment Framework)
Annex 2	Six-Year Evaluation Recommendations
Annex 3	Transition

ANNEX 1 – PACIFIC WOMEN LEAD MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Pacific Women Lead will be implemented in a rapidly changing environment. Timely M&E will be critical to help the program to adjust and adapt as necessary, to demonstrate and understand where there have been successes, and to move away from areas that are underperforming.

MEL is expected to deliver accountability and demonstrate the effectiveness of program delivery and results. In particular, the MEL Framework (MELF) will address the challenges of aggregating data across different countries to provide results for the region as a whole, achieve an appropriate balance between quantitative and qualitative data that does not overly burden program staff, and use information as evidence for ongoing program improvement.

As specified in the main design document, the **three main objectives for the ‘Pacific Women Lead’ program MELF are to:**

1. *Support learning and decision making* for the improvement of the program and strengthening overall impact;
2. *Generate evidence and information* that supports the program theory of change and can be communicated to influence program stakeholders; and
3. *To ensure accountability* of the program to all program partners and stakeholders, including Australian taxpayers and the people of the Pacific.

The main audience for the MELF, and users of information generated by the MELF, will include the SPC, DFAT in Canberra and at Posts in the Pacific Island Countries involved with Pacific Women Lead. Other users include regional and national stakeholders engaged to implement specific aspects of program implementation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The MELF for this program **will measure progress towards the project outcomes by articulating the methods and timing for capturing relevant data.** The MELF covers the five-year period of the program and will be updated annually to reflect any changes in the program approach. It has been designed to align with DFAT’s Monitoring and Evaluation Standards and incorporates lessons learned on monitoring and evaluation from the *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program.

The following principles will guide M&E across the program, and will inform the manner in which the MELF should be planned and delivered (as already noted in the main design document):

- **Flexible and adaptable:** Monitoring and evaluation methods and tools will be flexible to respond to local contextual factors, particular in the early phase of implementation where remote or third-party MEL may be required. . The methods, processes and tools used will be adapted to accommodate and ensure inclusion of the diversity of stakeholders that includes culture, traditional beliefs, gender and sex identity and different forms of disability.
- **Emphasis on learning:** With the commitment by DFAT to ensure authentic Pacific ownership for Pacific Women Lead, there is likely to be significant learning moments during the program. The MELF prioritises the need to internalise and share those lessons learned above any judgement of performance to date. Given this program will begin implementation during a global pandemic, new ways of working will also be tested which require ongoing reflection and adjustment.

- **Mutual accountability:** Ensuring there is mutual accountability between DFAT and implementing partners, as well as to Australian taxpayers and people in the Pacific, the MELF will capture information that demonstrates the quality of the investment and value for money.
- **Focus on outcomes over outputs:** With regional investments it can be simple to focus on the outputs and overlook the outcomes and impact that is trying to be achieved on a broader scale. The MELF strengthens the focus on measuring and communicating outcomes of the program rather than outputs, recognising that data on both will need to be collected.
- **Promoting equality and inclusion:** With a particular focus on gender equality, disability inclusion and the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds with consideration of gender, sex, rural and remote locations, and their intersections. The program's contribution to equality and inclusion will be mainstreamed throughout the MELF through the scope of disaggregated data collected, inclusive and diversity sensitive methodology and tools, and accessible processes and communication formats.

RESPONSIBILITY

The **Board** will have overall responsibility for both the design and implementation of the MELF. As previously noted, the **Quality and Technical Advisory Group (QTAG)** will undertake regular monitoring and provide reports on progress to the Board, with logistical and secretarial support provided by SPC as the 'host'.

Where applicable QTAG will contract a MEL advisor to help in the design and implementation of the MELF, in addition to drawing on existing MEL expertise within DFAT's Office of the Pacific – Pacific Gender and Regional Development section.

IMPLEMENTATION

Due to the nature of the implementation model the MELF, and its operating, system will need to operate at three different levels to measure performance and support decision makers, which will need to be clarified during the transition period when the MELF is fully designed:

- **Programmatic level:** This requires an analysis of progress towards intended end of program outcomes (EOPOs) based on aggregated and cumulative performance data across all activities supported by Pacific Women Lead. This function supports both (1) strategic decision making in terms of whether the activities are having a catalytic effect and working in synergy with other related interventions to achieve EOPOs, and (2) management decisions on whether the model represents the most efficient and effective mechanism to deliver results. Accountability and value for money is demonstrated through the most efficient and effective use of resources across the program of activities. Analysis and reporting on programmatic level MEL will be the responsibility of SPC working with implementing partners.
- **National/bilateral level:** This requires an analysis of the effectiveness and health of bilateral relationships/partnerships across all sectors being supported by Pacific Women Lead. A key outcome of the program will be the extent to which program implementation can deepen and strengthen both regional and national partnerships to sustain the benefits. The MEL system will include key performance indicators (to be determined) to track the strength of partnerships associated with promoting the regional agenda for gender equality.
- **Activity level:** All activities supported by the will be monitored and evaluated for quality of outputs, value for money, and contributions towards program outcomes according to each of the key focal areas. Each funded activity will include requirements in their terms of reference for a monitoring and evaluation component to report on performance. KPIs will be stipulated for each activity to allow for aggregation of results at the programmatic level.

For this reason, SPC will need to ensure it:

- Has dedicated M&E personnel to meet the wide-ranging M&E requirements (including tracking progress against the objectives spelt out in the PAF both regionally and at the national level);
- Has access to MEL specialists to provide high quality MEL, reviews and evaluation to track, for example, efforts to enhance women's economic empowerment, access to resources, shifts in social norms and attitudes, and the impact of more responsive policies and legislation; and
- Has expertise that is familiar with existing data sources (such as already collected by other relevant development programs, data collected by respective PICs, and so on), and can access relevant data from other relevant development programs and data collected and collated by the respective PICs.

As previously noted, the MEL technical experts within SPC and support from MEL Advisors within DFAT's Office of the Pacific – Pacific Gender and Regional Development section will be expected to design the MELF. The MELF will be guided by the Theory of Change (ToC) commenced during the design phase and to be further developed during the transition phase. The ToC and the narrative describing the ToC is provided in the body of this design document. The ToC offers a high-level illustration of the causal pathways required to meet the expected objectives of the program. It will be up to SPC to map out the specifics of these pathways, and to ensure the MELF reflects an appropriate level of detail. Such a framework should include:

- Appropriate and feasible Indicators (based on baseline data), with relevant targets for Pacific Women Lead;
- Reliable and valid sources of verification for the data collection, including the identification of roles and responsibilities for data collection and analysis;
- The approach to be used to analyse the different types of data;
- A reporting framework (outlining what will be collected by whom, and to who it will be reported)
- A dynamic repository of all relevant data for the purposes of further research, knowledge management, and responding to information requests from stakeholders

In operationalising the performance assessment framework, partners will require agreement on the definitions of concepts such as 'women's leadership', 'women's voices', 'social norms and attitudes', 'women's economic empowerment', 'value for money' and so on. For many of these concepts, there will be no immediately apparent baseline information. Target setting may require the development of performance guidelines which set out a shared understanding of what 'success' would look like with respect to these different concepts. From these, markers of progress at various stages of program implementation could be identified and agreed to establish key baselines and realistic targets for the Performance Assessment Framework (see below).

DATA COLLECTION

A key feature of the MELF will be its description of the approach to be used to collect data, with the emphasis on utility and cost effectiveness. The MELF will need to identify the different types of tools required to ensure reliable and valid data is collected. The complexities of the data needs of Pacific Women Lead are significant and range from standard monitoring of the actions that fall under the different EoPs to complex studies to assess the social and economic impacts of the program, especially in terms of assessing progress towards its long term goal. It is critical that the MELF is explicit in describing the data collection methods and tools, in addition to ensuring that all data collected can be disaggregated by gender and can be used to illustrate the extent to which the program is meeting its commitments with regards to equity and inclusiveness

Relevant MEL tools that will be used to gather data in order to measure progress against the indicators in Performance Assessment Framework below include stakeholder surveys, participant surveys/interviews, most significant change stories, independent reviews, minutes from meetings, and a wide range of socio-economic data already being collected by the respective PICs. All monitoring methods should ensure that they are inclusive and accessible to all, with appropriate adjustments made to the range of needs of people with disabilities and of vulnerable or marginalised groups.

REPORTING, LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION

In addition, the MEL system must ensure that data collected satisfies the reporting and learning requirements specified in the MELF. Thus reporting will need to focus on providing information that meets accountability needs, informs continuous improvement, and signals investment achievements. At a minimum, evidence-based reporting would include:

- Monthly reports – produced primarily for management purposes. These will track expenditure as well as progress and quality of activities, outputs, and risks;
- Six-monthly progress reports – which will focus on monitoring the progress of different components of the program, deliverables completed in relation to the workplan and budget, relevant activity related data, as well as any relevant information pertaining to achievements and risk mitigation.
- Annual reports – will primarily report on aggregated development results and against DFAT’s Aid Quality Checklist, where appropriate, it will also reflect on the Key Evaluation Questions

During the transition stage the Pacific Women Lead will need to develop a communication strategy for the program, which in turn should support communication of evidence gathered through the MELF. SPC must also ensure, in discussion with DFAT and other key stakeholders, that suitable communication products are regularly produced by the program in order to:

- Communicate learning and good practice examples to PICs, DFAT posts, other relevant partners including Pacific feminist civil society;
- Share relevant technical information pertinent to partners as appropriate (which could, for instance, be based on targeted research related to women’s economic empowerment, access to resources, and so on); and
- As required, provide evidence-based input to briefs, speeches and reports

RESOURCES

SPC must ensure that the M&E component of the program is appropriately resourced. DFAT guidelines suggest that M&E resources should amount to between 4 – 7% of the total investment. Resource allocation for M&E should take into account appropriate levels of human resources, the data collection methods to be employed, IT solutions related to data collation, analysis and distribution, and other research needs related to gathering evidence.

It is expected that the mid-term and final evaluation of the program will be undertaken through separate contracts managed by DFAT, and funded outside the core budget of the program. Nevertheless, the results and reports of all studies conducted under the auspices of the MELF will need to be of a rigorous standard in order to not only meet DFAT’s quality assurance standards, but also so that they are of use to inform the mid-term and final evaluations.

MID-TERM REVIEW

An independent mid-term review (MTR) will be commissioned in 2023 to undertake a formative evaluation. This MTR will focus on the extent to which Pacific Women Lead is being implemented efficiently and effectively to deliver intended outcomes.

INDEPENDENT END-OF-PROGRAM EVALUATION

In addition to the routine monitoring and reporting, the program will be subject to an evaluation of the program prior to its finalisation, conducted by a suitably qualified independent evaluator.

An Independent End-of-Program Evaluation will take place in year 4 of the program to examine the overall performance of the investment. The evaluation will provide a robust assessment of the program's progress and strong recommendations on improvements and future directions. It will utilise the Key Evaluation Questions outlined in the MELF as the basis for review. Evaluation implementation and quality must adhere to DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards (standards 4,5 and 6)



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This represents an indicative high-level PAF for Pacific Women Lead based on the initial priority activities, goal and intended outcomes. This framework will need to be finalised during the transition stage, making sure it speaks to both the bilateral and regional focus of the program, and also ensuring it aligns with a finalised Theory of Change for the program. The PAF will however, continue to expand and become more specific as each annual plan is developed and approved. A key task of finalising the PAF will be to agree on a set of indicators, define each indicator, and identify the sources of verification for each indicator (including drawing on existing regional and national data sets). In addition, a **baseline study** will be undertaken during the outset of Pacific Women Lead to seek agreement on the baseline situation for each outcome area and to identify critical and achievable targets. Where applicable the finalised MELF should map to Tier 2 indicators of DFAT’s *Partnership for Recovery* PAF¹².

GOAL	“Pacific women and girls, in all their diversity, are safe and equitably share in resources, opportunities and decision-making, with men and boys.”
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OUTCOMES	Women’s and men’s individual, beliefs, abilities and opportunities <i>(basket of measures / indicators of progress)</i>	Access to resources such as land, income, education and health <i>(basket of measures / indicators of progress)</i>	Social norms and attitudes <i>(basket of measures / indicators of progress)</i>	Policies and laws <i>(basket of measures / indicators of progress)</i>	Data collection method & frequency	Baseline	Target
1. Women’s leadership promoted							
a. Increased women’s voices in decision making spaces, from household, community, business and local level leadership through to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived changes in the way decisions are made a local, national and regional levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in sex ratios on resource management committees Changes in sex ratios on climate change and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of decision-making spaces to consult with women, and respond to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and application of local policies on gender equality, including commitments to equal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

¹² Tier 2 indicators measure Australia’s contribution to development in the region against the objectives of the *Partnership for Recovery*, and in the context of Pacific Women Lead, will guide measurement under three key focal areas, namely *Health Security* (in particular health systems and preparedness, and sexual and reproductive health), *Stability* (in particular improved governance, social protection measures, violence against women, and food security), and *Economic Recovery* (in particular economic empowerment).

<p>national, regional and global political spheres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of men to women in local decision-making bodies • Extent of female participation in community-level decision making processes 	<p>disaster committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of men and women’s inputs into community resource issues • Levels of men and women’s inputs into climate change and disaster risk issues • % increase in women’s access and control over natural and economic assets 	<p>women’s needs and priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in social norms pertaining to women’s participation in decision-making spaces • Increased community support for women’s and children’s human and legal rights 	<p>representation and participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in local land- ownership laws • Changes in political participation by women at local, national, and regional level • Changes in public sector leadership and in senior management in the private sector 			
<p>b. Recognition and amplification of the leadership of Pacific feminist civil society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of Pacific women empowered to exercise their capacity for leadership • Strengthened capacity of leadership- female government officials, in CSOs, local organizations and local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of increased levels engagement between women and men on community resource issues • Strengthened Pacific feminist civil society to advocate effectively for equitable access to resources for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in women’s self-esteem and self-confidence to influence social processes • Evidence of diverse women participation and increased agency • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which governmental institutions/structures across the Pacific have afforded Pacific feminist civil society greater recognition • Extent of gender responsive and feminist laws, policies, programs, budgets • Evidence of gender sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

				and feminist policy and legislation			
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of duty bearers influenced 			
2. Women's rights realised							
<p>a. Women's health – Women and girls have improved access to quality health care services, including sexual and reproductive health, through addressing gender inequality that underpins poor health outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improvement in female life expectancy at birth Proportion of women who have their needs for family planning satisfied Proportion of births attended by a skilled health personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in the extent to which health expenditure and programmes address the needs and priorities of Pacific women Increase accessibility and utilisation of health services for women and girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which women are empowered to make informed choices to protect their health and rights Increased understanding by men of women's health needs and rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in health legislation/ policy frameworks affecting gender equality Evidence of the removal of legal and regulatory barriers that prevent women from accessing sexual and reproductive health services 	•	•	•
<p>b. Women's safety – Survivors of gender-based violence have access to quality support services including in times of disaster and Pacific governments and communities work together to address and prevent violence through tackling harmful social and cultural norms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced tolerance of violence Proportion of women and girls subjected to violence in the previous 12 months, by form of violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improvement in services for survivors % improvement in gender and protection services during disasters Economic costs of violence against women are recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % improvement in gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards women amongst the community and the justice system Increase in safer and more secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in legislation/ policy frameworks that strengthen women's safety Equitable access to justice by women Traditional and customary dispute resolution 	•	•	•

			communities for women and girls, including during times of disaster	processes protect the rights of women			
<p>c. Women's economic empowerment – Women have more equitable access to resilient economic opportunities and increased voice in economic decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of female beneficiaries who have a viable source of income • Gender gap in wages by occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of property owned or controlled by male beneficiaries and by female beneficiaries • % difference in income levels between female and male headed households • % of women who have control or joint control over family income and farm products • % of women in leadership roles for disaster planning and climate adaptation. • % of women accessing agriculture and fisheries support services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of equitable sharing of household work between women and men • Increased awareness amongst men of the importance of economically empowered women in their community and their role in resilience building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in legislation/ policy that promotes women's economic empowerment 	•	•	•
3. Regional partners supported to increase Pacific ownership and effectiveness of regional gender equality efforts							
a. Opportunities for Civil Society, government and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened capacity of civil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration 	•	•	•

intergovernmental collaboration are facilitated.	society, government and intergovernmental agencies to collaborate and respond to regional gender equity needs and priorities	between civil society, government and intergovernmental agencies to facilitate women's equitable access to resources and assets	between civil society, government and intergovernmental agencies to change attitudes and social norms	between civil society, government and intergovernmental agencies to promote women's rights and enhance equal opportunity			
b. Mainstreaming of gender equality through other development programs in all sectors across the Pacific is supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that other development programs include activities to address barriers to gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that other development programs are promoting women's access to resources and assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that other development programs are promoting initiatives to shift social norms and attitudes with respect to gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that other development programs are promoting the rights of women and girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
VALUE FOR MONEY	A Value for Money rubric will need to be developed for the whole program during the transition phase, drawing on DFAT's <i>Value for Money Principles</i> (https://www.dfat.gov.au/aid/who-we-work-with/value-for-money-principles/Pages/value-for-money-principles)						



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ANNEX 2 – SIX-YEAR EVALUATION OF PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT

The Evaluation made 10 recommendations. In its management response, DFAT agreed in full to seven out of 10 recommendations and agreed in part to the remaining three. With one recommendation already completed, the remain 9 recommendations were agreed by DFAT to be pursued through the design process.

Recommendation I: (agreed in part)

The Australian support for women’s empowerment and gender equality, particularly those activities implemented through Pacific organisations, should be maintained.

Explanation for ‘partial agreement’ in DFAT management response: “Agree that Australia’s support for women’s empowerment and gender equality should be maintained, and where possible this will include activities implemented through Pacific organisations. The intent of the new design is to continue delivery of essential services for women and girls. However, the design will also need to examine whether existing activities remain relevant to the changed regional context, and how Australian support will be delivered through global, regional and bilateral programs”.

Recommendation II: (agreed in full)

Redesign Australia’s support for women’s empowerment and gender equality in the Pacific, making use of a co-design process that identifies and addresses the interests and objectives of the Australian Government and National governments and women’s organisations in the Pacific.

Recommendation III: (agreed in full)

Australia’s future support to gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Pacific should continue to include a comprehensive approach including women’s leadership, economic empowerment, ending violence against women and increasing agency as outcomes.

Recommendation IV: (agreed in full)

The ongoing program of support should continue to support local organisations providing holistic care for survivors of violence; ramp up efforts to address disability issues and maintain attention to violence prevention.

Recommendation V: (agreed in full)

The ongoing program of support should build on the evidence base of promising practices in women’s economic empowerment and leadership, through sharing of evidence and further development of these approaches.

Recommendation VI: (agreed in full)

Pacific Women’s convening role in countries with national governments, donors, civil society organisation and donor programs should be developed further. Work should be undertaken to ensure that core program lessons are integrated into DFAT Pacific bilateral programs and are positioned to influence the work of other donors in-country.

Recommendation VII: (agreed in full)

The redevelopment of the modality for future support should give explicit attention to the mutual and different interests and objectives of Australia and other stakeholders. The systems and procedures underpinning any future support should be transparent and well communicated to all stakeholders.

Recommendation IX: (agreed in part)

Capacity building work should be strengthened and extended during the last phase of the program and in any future program support, with a view to better enabling DFAT Posts, Pacific Women partners, and government departments to both understand and address the challenges for gender equality and women's empowerment in the Pacific. Explanation for 'partial agreement' in DFAT management response: "This recommendation is being examined through the design process, and may be applied differently to bilateral and regional elements of Australia's support".

Recommendation X: (agreed in part)

The Pacific Women Advisory Board and leaders of Pacific women's organisations including faith-based organisations, should provide strategic oversight for the proposed redesign process. The roles for these leaders within any future program of support should be explicitly identified in the new design. In line with further development of the current capacity building strategy, future programming should continue to focus on building the capacity of Pacific women leaders at multiple levels, in government, community and the private sector. Explanation for 'partial agreement' in DFAT management response: "Agree that the role for an Advisory Board and Pacific leaders should be identified in the new design. The Pacific Women Advisory Board is providing strategic advice throughout the design. Programming to build the capacity of Pacific women leaders will be considered through the design process."

ANNEX 3 – TRANSITION FROM PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT TO PACIFIC WOMEN LEAD

5.24 The current *Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development* program is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. The program currently includes a very large number of separate activities requiring consideration of: a) their continuation or discontinuation under *Pacific Women Lead*; and b) the appropriate management arrangements for those activities that will continue. This design sets out principles and criteria to guide these decisions, with the detailed assessment and sequencing considerations to be set out in the Transition Plan being developed. A summary of the Transition process and sequencing of decision-making is outlined below:

DECISIONS ON CONTINUATION OF INDIVIDUAL PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

5.25 Separate to this Design process, DFAT will make decisions on:

- Activities that will have current timeframes that will seem them finish prior to the commencement of *Pacific Women Lead*
- Activities that are not effective and therefore should not be considered for continuation

In the case of all other activities that are deemed effective and have timeframes beyond the start of *Pacific Women Lead*, decisions on whether such activities should continue or not will be based on their **alignment with the Goal and Outcomes** for *Pacific Women Lead*.

DECISIONS ON MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES.

5.26 For activities that warrant continuation under Pacific Women Lead, they will need to be allocated to one of the four options under the Hybrid model:

1. SPC (host)
2. Civil Society entity
3. DFAT
4. Commercial entity (for country-level activities, this could include delivery through an existing bilateral mechanism)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.27 Overall, the following high-level principles will guide decision-making on management of activities

- Pacific ownership – this is the first principle that will be considered given the commitment to a Pacific driven approach to deliver this program. Where at all feasible, one of the two Pacific-based options (SPC or a civil society entity) will be preferred
- Effectiveness – with an eye to achieving the Program Outcomes and Goal
- Inclusion – engaging and benefiting diversity of women
- Value for money – with an eye to demonstrating efficient and cost-conscious use of funds
- Continuity of critical services (eg. for survivors of violence). A smooth transition from current arrangements is essential to ensure services and technical support are not interrupted.

Specific criteria for selecting partner to manage each activity

5.28 Decisions on the delivery partner for each specific activity will be made against the following criteria:

- Capacity of partner to deliver
- Alignment with partner's agenda
- Preference of partner
- Acceptability to other stakeholders

RATIONALE FOR EACH DELIVERY OPTION – SPC, CIVIL SOCIETY, DFAT OR COMMERCIAL ENTITY

5.29 SPC would be the preferred option for activities that:

- Fit within SPC's regional mandate from its members to promote human rights and gender equality
- Require technical assistance / capacity building provided by SPC as a development agency
- Would benefit from links to SPC's wider sectoral work, including fisheries, agriculture, education, geoscience, public health.
- Can leverage off SPC's long term relationships with stakeholders across the Pacific
- Work regionally with governments, civil society and/or the private sector, and would benefit from SPC's footprint across the region

5.30 A civil society entity would be the preferred option for activities that:

- Involve Feminist organising and advocacy to governments
- Address sensitive issues around human rights advocacy, ending violence against women and girls and/or sexual/reproductive health
- Require independence from government

5.31 DFAT would be the preferred option for activities that:

- Involve funding to Australia's intergovernmental partners
- Require Australian Government relationship management

5.32 A commercial entity would be the preferred option for activities that:

- Do not naturally fit with one of the other three options
- Require additional resources and expertise to be mobilised for a specific time period

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION-MAKING ON ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

5.33 Decisions on activity management responsibility will be made in the following stages:

- Immediate decisions will be made through the Transition Plan in February/March 2021
- In the transition phase, it is proposed that the current Pacific Women Advisory Board be tasked with making recommendations about activity management.
- once Pacific Women Lead is fully operational, the Board will recommend the allocation of new activities to the appropriate management entity.

VISION FOR FURTHER TRANSITION PLANNING BEYOND 2021

5.34 While the formal transition phase is the period up until Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development finishes at the end of 2021, the reality is that change and evolution is expected to continue throughout the life

of Pacific Women Lead, as new partners develop and strengthen their role as gender advocates and leaders. This program will at all times have a mandate and an appetite to look for opportunities to push more program management into the Pacific, particularly to the civil society stream of the hybrid model. For example, when the Pacific Feminist Fund is up and running, it may provide a good civil society option to take some of the management load. Another option to consider could involve a well-established women's crisis centre in a larger Pacific country to support the management of women's crisis centres in smaller island states. These and other options will be able to be considered and discussed by the Governance Board and program partners as the program moves through the early years of implementation.