

QTAG |

Papua New Guinea
Quality and Technical Assurance Group

Final review

PNG–Australia Governance Partnership

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Submitted by:

Team Leader, QTAG Review Team

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About QTAG

The Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG) provides strategic, advisory, review, and quality assurance capability and services to support the delivery of Australia's aid program in Papua New Guinea. It is designed to assure both governments that the agreed development objectives are being addressed efficiently and effectively and that development outcomes are emerging.

The goal of QTAG is to improve the quality and performance of the Government of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) programs that support stability and inclusive growth in Papua New Guinea.

The objective of QTAG is to enable DFAT and GoPNG to make more informed decisions and exercise greater accountability for the performance and quality of agreed strategies and selected projects.

QTAG is implemented by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) Australia.

Executive summary

This report presents the third and final review of the Papua New Guinea–Australia Governance Partnership (PAGP). The review was conducted by the Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG) between October 2021 and April 2022.

This executive summary introduces the PAGP and provides an overview of the review, including the approach utilised and findings relating to the platform, individual partnerships and deep dives. Based on these findings, a series of lessons are presented to guide future governance programming.

Introduction to the PAGP

The PAGP was a single-provider model for delivering Australian development assistance in partnership with PNG. It was designed as a facility with seven sub-partnerships. A ‘facility’ approach was instituted to promote learning and collaboration between workstream partnerships that would lead to governance outcomes at a scale that had been unachievable from previous standalone programs. The managing contractor (MC) was mobilised in April 2016, and PAGP closed at the beginning of April 2022. The seven workstream Partnerships (active as of October 2021) were:

- the Bougainville Partnership (BP);
- the Decentralisation and Citizen Participation (DCP) Partnership;
- the Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth (EGIG) Partnership;
- the Institutional Partnerships Program (IPP) Deployed Support Services (DSS);
- the Kokoda Initiative Partnership (KIP);
- the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Partnership Fund (PPF); ¹and

The original Key Result Areas (KRAs) for the Governance Partnership were as follows:

- effective governance programs addressing development opportunities and constraints in priority areas are delivered;
- governance programs effectively address critical gender issues;
- efficient and effective operational support is provided to PNG stakeholders and the Australian High Commission (AHC); and
- high-quality knowledge and learning about governance and development in PNG is communicated effectively to stakeholders.

¹ As confirmed in the Terms of Reference, the PNG–Australia Transition to Health (PATH) will not be a focus for this review as it does not form part of the PAGP.

By 2018 it was clear that the design of the PAGP had been highly ambitious. There were significant achievements in the early years but PAGP's scale and complexity presented significant challenges in terms of managing the facility and ensuring that it was responsive to the needs of both the AHC and GoPNG. In a restructuring in 2018, the original emphasis on adaptive programming underpinned by effective learning processes was maintained. The role of the central platform, however, became explicitly one of supporting the partnerships, including achieving collaboration between them. The development results were now clearly the responsibility of the component partnerships. The restructuring led to the development of a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for the central platform with the following high-level purpose:

Purpose: To contribute improved efficiency and effectiveness of the PAGP Partnerships through the provision of common administrative services and other support services and by promoting strengthened collaboration across the Partnerships on priority issues, enhanced Value for Money (VfM) and Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) systems, and enhanced strategic relevance and responsiveness.

Overview and approach of the review

The principal purpose of this review is to provide an independent assessment of the evidence of achievement against the PAGP outcomes. Lessons learned from the PAGP are presented to inform the three new governance programs in PNG, as well as future programming in other contexts. This review focuses on the period between 01 April 2019 and 01 March 2022. It incorporates two deep dives: one on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) and one on the impact of COVID-19.

The final review was conducted in two phases. At the end of Phase 1 it was agreed that, due to the scale and complexity of PAGP and its component programs, as well as the significant pivot to respond to the COVID-19 emergency, a conventional review against the existing PAFs was inappropriate. Instead, the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s 'Guidance Note: Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for Facilities' (September 2020) has been used to develop a coherent review of performance. This structure was captured in an Aide Memoire at the end of Phase 1. The four interrelated perspectives included in the Framework are:

- development results;
- stakeholders and partnerships;
- learning and adapting; and
- operations.

The four perspectives have been utilised to assess the performance of the PAGP and to derive lessons. The development results perspective is addressed primarily at partnership level. For the other three perspectives, performance and lessons from each partnership contribute to an overall assessment for PAGP as a whole, including the platform. Through this framework, the review can analyse the PAGP's outcomes.

Table 1: PAGP Outcomes

PAGP Outcomes
Enhanced effectiveness due to greater cohesion and collaboration between the Partnerships and between the platform and Partnerships
Enhanced VfM and MERL systems
Enhanced strategic relevance and responsiveness to the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of PNG (GoPNG) and local partners

The relevant partnerships' highest-level objective statements (these are variously named, impact, purpose, goal, and outcome) are presented below. Annex IV presents the outcomes for all the Partnerships.²

Table 2: Outcomes for PAGP partnerships

Partnership	Highest-level objective
BP	Pillar 1, Autonomy and Effective Governance, ABG is a more accountable and effective autonomous government. Pillar 2: Agriculture and Economic Development, faster, more inclusive, and sustainable economic growth in the Bougainville economy; Pillar 3: Peace, Community Cohesion and Resilience, strengthened foundations for sustainable peace and stability.
DCP	PNG's national, sub-national and inter-governmental institutions are better able to provide quality services and development outcomes that respond to the needs of citizens.
EGIG	Inclusive and sustainable economic growth through macroeconomic stability, strengthened fiscal management, and private sector development.
IPP DSS	A strong and durable economic and strategic partnership between Australia and Papua New Guinea.
KIP	Pillar 1: The Track, a safe and well-managed track where the special military values and historical integrity is protected; Pillar 2: The People, enhanced quality of life (health, education, and livelihood outcomes) and income for landowners and communities of the Kokoda Track Region; Pillar 3: The Environment, sustainable use of the IPZ catchment area.
PPF Education	Early grade children in targeted schools have improved literacy and numeracy outcomes by Feb 2022

A selection of development results have been analysed and are presented as mini-case studies. The results were chosen after extensive discussion with stakeholders in Phase 1. This approach does not address all performance assessment framework (PAF) indicators, but rather provides a range of evidence from which to assess the accuracy of reporting by the MC. Overall, this review found that the reporting presented by the MC is accurate.

Evidence used in this report comes from a variety of sources. An extensive document review and consultations across AHC/DFAT, GoPNG, and stakeholders form the basis of the findings. Additionally, the analysis relies on knowledge gained from other QTAG processes

² This review only considered partnerships that were functioning as of October 2021, the commencement of the review.

and products, including evaluations of individual Partnerships and annual reviews completed in 2018 and 2019.

This review also assessed the implementation of the 2019 annual review recommendations. In all cases, the progress was deemed satisfactory. For some of the recommendations the initial review and analyses to support implementation were conducted, but the process was overtaken by the pivot to respond to the COVID-19 context. The review team considers this appropriate and well documented.

Findings - Development results

This section considers the question: what development results did each partnership set out to achieve and what progress can be evidenced in the sampled interventions?

EGIG – Focus and Results

EGIG managed three areas of work: macroeconomic stability, public financial management, and inclusive growth. The partnership engaged with a range of government departments, private sector partners, and research institutes. EGIG goals were ambitious, particularly for reforms requiring political drive over which the partnership had little control. This review assessed progress and verified results in five intervention areas. Evidence shows that EGIG made progress towards its goals in the interventions sampled.

EGIG was able to achieve significant outcomes while operating at an acceptable level of risk. The implementers maintained good relations with key stakeholders in highly contentious areas such as loan negotiations and customary land tenure. Innovative projects with higher levels of risk, such as the digital ID system, were undertaken. The highly responsive nature of the support, in a context where multiple actors influenced decisions, enabled EGIG to engage on the priorities of senior GoPNG actors and has resulted in numerous successes. However, it led to some confusion about how the program was to be governed and managed and came at some cost in achieving a coherent program of support that was well understood by staff of the recipient departments.

DCP – Focus and Results

DCP delivered three components: a policy support program; empowerment, voice, and accountability (EVA); and the Local Solutions Program. In addition, DCP managed two substantial components, the Church Partnership Program (CPP) and the Media Development Initiative (MDI). This review analysed three broad intervention areas; summaries drawn from in-depth reviews of CPP and MDI are presented as annexes.

DCP's interventions on decentralisation policy produced mixed results. Engagement with the original central partner, DPLGA, was difficult. A substantive body of evidence was produced that could support reform, but this is a deeply political issue in which the engagement with external actors was bound to be challenging. DCP work with the Department of Implementation and Rural Development (DIRD) on a management information system (MIS) to support the oversight of PNG's significant spending on service improvement projects can produce impressive levels of analysis. Outcomes in terms of better planning and oversight could follow – but that depends on willingness inside and

outside government to use the information. DCP's Sub-National Advisers pioneered a place-based approach and implemented 23 matched funding projects with sub-national partners. Many of these delivered immediate benefits, but the yield in governance terms is more limited. The Markets, Economic Recovery and Inclusion (MERI) program was successful in keeping open 12 markets that served over 60,000 people. The intervention led to changes in how markets are managed that include provisions for women to play a bigger role. It also opened a policy dialogue about hygiene standards.

KIP – Focus and Results

KIP brings together a broad range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to enhance livelihoods and the maintenance of the Kokoda track, an area of shared cultural significance for Australia and PNG. It is structured around three pillars: the Track, the People, and the Environment. From 2022, KIP will transition to the Australia–PNG Sub-National Program (APSP).

KIP's rapid mobilisation to design and implement tangible community infrastructure in response to COVID-19 is broadly consistent with the findings of previous reviews. The elements of the program with tangible inputs progressed best. Community-level and local governance structures previously supported by KIP were able to engage and mobilise community support and local suppliers. Progress in other areas, particularly institutional strengthening, stalled after initial progress. While there are risks in prioritising the tangible over the intangible, KIP could enhance progress across multiple areas by replicating this kind of integrated model and the social capital it helps produce. At the same time, a concerted effort should be made to utilise this momentum to progress essential community-level engagement and policy progress in support of environmental protection under Pillar 3.

BP – Focus and Results

BP was designed around three pillars targeting long-term development outcomes in Bougainville: autonomy and effective governance; economic development; and peace, security, and community cohesion. From 2022, BP will transition to the Australia–PNG Sub-National Program (APSP).

BP worked through a range of tangible and intangible approaches. Capacity building across the government was relatively slow due to several factors, including the pandemic and the need to resolve a range of issues after the 2019 referendum. In response, BP shifted its emphasis towards building capacity within civil society, notably through youth organisations and networks, supported by a small grants model. This enabled continuity through the COVID-19 period and developed a strong youth-based civil society with the potential to engage on social, economic, and political issues. BP's pivot to COVID-19 resembled that of KIP and demonstrated the utility of established networks when consulting and mobilising communities, bringing together tangible and intangible approaches effectively.

PPF Education – Focus and Results

Initially, PPF focused on providing services to the GoPNG priority sectors of health and education. The health grants have now transitioned to a new program PNG-Australia

Transition to Health, not assessed by this review. The education outcomes were delivered through grants to three international NGOs working with PNG and Australian partners.

Positive results were seen in terms of the development of English and Maths Standards Based Curriculum (SBC) teacher training manuals and their roll-out within target provinces, as well as upskilling school boards of management in financial management and planning to improve their performance. While National Department of Education endorsed the SBC English and Mathematics Inservice teacher training manuals for use across PNG, there is ongoing work between PNG Education Institute and Department of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology to accredit the materials so they can be institutionalised. Additional work to support teachers to improve performance within school settings through teacher learning circles is also yet to be institutionalised. Due to COVID-19, the modality for PPF pivoted, with the PPF team providing a greater level of coordination between GoPNG and the delivery partner international NGOs. This adaptation ensured that PPF continued delivering during the COVID-19 period to address both urgent needs and opportunities enabled by the inherent flexibility within the program and its overarching Theory of Change.

IPP – Focus and Results

IPP is a government-to-government program that strengthens institutional relationships and generates benefits for PNG and Australia. DSS, managed by the MC, is responsible for the safe deployment of the Australian personnel to PNG, and for the GoPNG officials to Australia. It provides logistics and administrative support, along with assistance on monitoring and evaluation, capacity development, and GEDSI training.

The QTAG evaluation of IPP DSS in March 2020 noted positive developments. The quality of support enabled advisors to concentrate on their workplans and encouraged repeat deployments. It was instrumental in building strong relationships between the respective departments. Feedback to this review suggested that agencies had deployed individuals who were passionate about building capacity and who wanted to improve the sustainability of their inputs. There were concerns about overlapping and cumbersome MEL processes and whether the findings of reviews were widely enough shared and considered to engender trust and joint action on the recommendations.

Deep Dive – COVID-19

COVID-19 has been a strong driver of adaptation, with the coordinated response being one of the most significant demonstrations of the value of the platform and of the suite of Partnerships as a whole. The response has highlighted the relevance and effectiveness of PAGP in terms of both tangible development outcomes and in demonstrating the value of the institutional structures, systems, and social capital built through the Partnership.

Deep Dive – GEDSI Deep Dive

At the start of PAGP, there was an ambition to address critical gender issues, but little articulation of what those critical issues might be or how gender equality and governance are interlinked. There was also little initial guidance for realising this ambition. Over time, PAGP incorporated clearer gender process outcomes into its results framework, requiring Partnerships to have GEDSI strategies, to report spend on activities directly addressing

gender, and to provide regular reporting on GEDSI mainstreaming and achievements. At the same time, different Partnerships identified relevant issues and incorporated additional gender-focused activity. However, this still falls short of fully integrating a gendered perspective into governance programming.

Given that behavioural change in support of gender equality takes time and subsequent benefits will emerge only gradually, it is too early to assess the longer-term impacts of PAGP approaches to GEDSI. However, there is evidence of significant changes in the approaches taken at platform level and across Partnerships. Based on an understanding of what works in GEDSI mainstreaming and social development, the approaches that were taken present a positive picture.

Development results – key lesson: While progress was made towards key result areas, the absence of systematic aggregation of development results from the partnerships created an accountability gap for PAGP as a whole.

Findings - Stakeholders and Partnerships Perspective

This section of the report considers the following question: how is PAGP engaging stakeholders and partners and meeting their needs?

The original design envisaged a facility with a strong management function and a politically responsive approach to delivery, enabling delivery of greater impact than individual projects in a complex context. In 2018, for operational reasons, the ambition was scaled back, reducing the role of the central platform in steering individual Partnerships. This resulted in there being no central point within GoPNG to which PAGP as a whole was accountable. While the capacity of any single point in GoPNG to coordinate such a complex program is unproven, it led to some dissatisfaction with PAGP governance arrangements and reduced the potential to further strengthen these capacities within GoPNG.

Individual Partnerships each developed their own governance and accountability relationships. The place-based Partnerships of BP and KIP used their planning process to develop consensus and to put in place a workplan for which each is accountable. EGIG was highly responsive, with fluid planning processes—this was welcomed at senior levels in GoPNG but was less welcome at the middle-management level. DCP was somewhat frustrated by a difficult relationship with its central partner—it met more success with later engagements in which partner departments had stronger roles in setting the direction of work. The management of the sub-national program demonstrates the power of locally respected individuals who bring tangible inputs to the table.

The recurring theme is the need to clarify roles and responsibilities in a context of three partners: GoPNG, AHC, and the MC (the number of partners sometimes becomes four when there is an implementing sub-contractor or international NGO). PAGP successor programs are smaller in scale but still complex. Appropriate governance arrangements will be needed to ensure coordination and accountability, but also to confer scope to change the emphasis of engagement depending on where progress is strongest or where new needs and priorities become evident. A continuation of the MC's reporting on contributions to PNG's Medium Term Development Plan would provide some degree of centralised accountability.

Stakeholder and partnerships – key lesson: identify a central point for GoPNG to understand and engage with the program. This should not be a central logistic and coordination body, but a mechanism to ensure high-level engagement and facilitate accountability.

Findings - Learning and adapting perspectives

This section of the report considers the following question: how did PAGP adapt to opportunities, and how did it improve?

The central Knowledge Management function was discontinued when PAGP transitioned to become a platform. Some questions were raised around the strategic justification for that decision - some PNG stakeholders were adamant that this would lose the holistic view necessary for governance reform. That said, making each Partnership largely responsible for its own learning yielded notable instances of adaptation. It was also clear that PAGP made considerable progress on the MEL processes that underpin adaptation. There was also merit in the MC's strong belief that PAFs with precisely defined outcome statements would be inappropriate in this context. However, this further exacerbated GoPNG's accountability gap for the program as whole. A compromise of annually agreed outcomes, indicators, and targets might have helped fill that gap.

There were numerous examples of synergy being achieved across the Partnerships, facilitated at least in part by the central platform. The response to COVID-19 was a prime example. What is clear, however, is that the platform leadership was not in a position to *enforce* collaboration between the Partnerships. Multiple reporting lines reduced the ability of the platform to achieve cohesion, at least to the extent that the original design had envisaged. This was also a factor in how effectively knowledge has been used to adapt. That requires clarity about who can make decisions, and to what extent, about a change in focus or approach. In PAGP's three-way partnership, that clarity was not always achieved.

Learning and adapting – key lesson: institute appropriate governance arrangements within individual programs. Whilst these will look different for each, at a minimum these should have clarity on roles and responsibilities, clear targets, adequate authorisation and capacity for DFAT and MC to reallocate resources based on performance.

Findings - Operations perspective

This section of the report considers the following question: to what extent did the PAGP embed DFAT's VfM principles?

From the operations perspective, this report concentrates largely on cost consciousness: the extent to which reasonable opportunities have been sought to reduce costs at every level of operation. Total expenditure on PAGP between 2016 and 2022 amounted to AUD 616.8 million. This represents an underspend of AUD 61.2 million (9%) against the final budget. This pattern was consistent with the wider operation of PAGP, which experienced a slow start (as teething problems with the original design were addressed) followed by an acceleration, but one that was eventually curtailed by the pandemic.

Until mid-2019, the spend on administration (21%) was higher than the budget (19%). That picture improved: over the whole period, administration costs were reported as 18% of total costs. QTAG has met some challenges in verifying the extent to which all the Partnership administrative costs have been included in that calculation. In general, while our assessment is that the measures put in place delivered VfM on the economy dimension, the data available are not sufficiently detailed to support that conclusion strongly. Our analysis questions the basis of some cost-savings claims, pointing to the need for standardised benchmarks to reduce the subjectivity of these calculations.

The final part of the operations section collates the VfM assessments undertaken throughout the report against a sample of five of the DFAT VfM Principles. There were serious attempts to introduce a VfM framework, but these attempts have not produced an agreed basis for assessing DFAT's VfM Principles. This review finds that VfM was broadly achieved in the areas of economy, efficiency, and ethics, while progress could not be measured accurately in the areas of effectiveness and equity.

Operations – key lesson: Developing a VfM framework that aligns with DFAT's VfM Principles should be a priority for future programs to adequately measure economy, effectiveness, efficiency, ethics and equity.

Conclusions and looking forward

Lessons and recommendations relating to each partnership and deep dive are contained within the body of the report. The following high-level factors however should be taken into consideration when building future governance partnerships.

- GoPNG needed to have a holistic understanding of the objectives and the achievements of the governance investments as a whole. It should be able to hold the implementers to account for their performance. The PAGP platform PAF primarily addressed managerial issues. Future programs should have a PAF that incorporates *development outcomes*, presented in a form that senior decision-makers can easily access. Mechanisms for high-level guidance and scrutiny of the whole program should be put in place.
- In a context where development is seen as primarily tangible, incorporating elements that will have visible and easily recognised benefits early on can build support and deepen engagement with stakeholders. This increases the likelihood of institutional changes being implemented.
- PAGP led to some good examples of networking but it is not clear that those opportunities were exploited to the full. More should be done to build coalitions for change across components and to let the advisors who are implementing projects learn from each other.
- The level of ambition on GEDSI should be clear within program design and be integrated into MEL frameworks from commencement.
- The facility/platform model came into its own in the face of the COVID-19 emergency. PAGP was able to 'flex' to the changed context in a way that would have

difficult to achieve in separately managed small programs. The relationships that individual partnerships had built enabled them to understand the needs of government counterparts and to feed into a prioritised response program. At other times, however, it has been difficult to realise to the full the potential of a facility modality as envisaged at the time of the original design. Smaller programs, as established by the deconstruction of the PAGP, should allow for easier management, greater diversity of MCs and reduce risk for DFAT.

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List of abbreviations

ABG	Autonomous Bougainville Government
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ADOF	Australian Department of Finance
AHC	Australian High Commission
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
APSP	Australia–Papua New Guinea Sub-National Program
AUD	Australian Dollar
AUSMAT	Australian Medical Assistance Teams
BACRA	Bougainville Agriculture Commodities Regulation Act
BCG	Bougainville Community Grants
BECOMES	Bougainville Cocoa Families Support Project
BP	Bougainville Partnership
BPA	Bougainville Peace Agreement
BWSP	Bougainville Water Security Project
BYF	Bougainville Youth Federation
CCI	Cultural Creative Industries
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CEPA	Conservation and Environment Protection Authority
CLoC	Customary Landowner-Owned Companies
CoP	Community of Practice
CPP	Church Partnership Program
CRP	COVID-19 Response Package
CSF	Commodity Support Facility
DCP	Decentralisation and Citizen Participation
DDA	District Development Authority
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIMS	District Information Management System
DIRD	Department of Implementation and Rural Development
DLPP	Department of Lands and Physical Planning
DNPM	Department of National Planning and Monitoring (PNG)
DOF	Department of Finance
DPLGA	Department of Provincial and Local Level Affairs
DSS	Deployee Support Services
EGIG	Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth
EVA	Empowerment, Voice, and Accountability
FSV	Family and Sexual and Violence
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFMS	Integrated Financial Management System
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IPP	Institutional Partnerships Program
IPZ	Interim Protection Zone
JSB	Joint Supervisory Body
JTT	Joint Technical Team
KAL	Knowledge, Adaptation, and Learning
K+K	Kina Plus Kina
KIMP	Kokoda Initiative Master Plan
KIP	Kokoda Initiative Partnership
KRA	Key Result Area
KTA	Kokoda Track Authority
KWSP	Kokoda Water Security Project
LPIT	Local Project Implementing Team
LTA	Long-Term Advisor
MC	Managing Contractor
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MDI	Media Development Initiative
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MERI	Markets, Economic Recovery, and Inclusion
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning
MPTF	MERI Project Task Force
MSU	Management Support Unit
NCOBA	National Coordination Office for Bougainville Affairs
NEC	National Executive Council
NLDP	National Land Development Program
NMAG	National Museum and Art Gallery
NRI	National Research Institute
OBEC	Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework
PAGP	Papua New Guinea–Australia Governance Partnership
PATH	Papua New Guinea–Australia Transition to Health
PCR	Program Completion Report
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFM	Public Financial Management
PGK	Papua New Guinea Kina
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PPF	Papua New Guinea Partnership Fund
PSLR	Public Sector Leadership and Reform
QTAG	Quality and Technical Assurance Group
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SIP	Strategic Implementation Plan
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SNA	Subnational advisor
SNG	Subnational government
SOE	State of Emergency
TA	Technical Assistance
TRC	Traditional Resource Custodians

VfM	Value for Money
VHV	Village Health Volunteers
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

1 Introduction

This document presents the third and final review of the Papua New Guinea (PNG)–Australia Governance Partnership (PAGP). The review was conducted by the Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG) from October 2021–April 2022. This document is structured as follows:

- background, purpose, context and approach of the final review;
- methodology;
- review of development results from partnerships and an assessment of relevant Value for Money (VfM) principles;
- deep dives on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) and COVID-19;
- exploration of stakeholder and partnership, adaptive management and operations perspectives (adapted from DFAT’s performance assessment framework for facilities) and an assessment of relevant VfM principles;
- conclusions and lessons learned.

1.1 – Background to PAGP

The managing contractor (MC) mobilised PAGP in April 2016 under a four-year contract, with four one-year extensions available. PAGP formally closed in April 2022.

The single facility model aimed for greater coherence and coordination of Australia’s governance investments in PNG. Seven previous programs were rolled into PAGP. The consolidation aimed to achieve greater flexibility to respond to PNG’s complex political and operating environment. Additionally, it sought efficiencies in aid management through economies of scale and reduced administrative duplication.

PAGP was comprised of a shared service platform and seven workstream partnerships:

- the Bougainville Partnership (BP);
- the Decentralisation and Citizen Participation (DCP) Partnership;
- the Economic Governance and Inclusive Growth (EGIG) Partnership;
- the Institutional Partnerships Program (IPP) Deployed Support Services (DSS);
- the Kokoda Initiative Partnership (KIP);

- the PNG Partnership Fund (PPF);³ and
- the Public Sector Leadership and Reform (PSLR) Partnership.⁴

The original Key Result Areas (KRAs) for the Governance Partnership were as follows:

- effective governance programs addressing development opportunities and constraints in priority areas are delivered;
- governance programs effectively address critical gender issues;
- efficient and effective operational support is provided to PNG stakeholders and the Australian High Commission (AHC); and
- high-quality knowledge and learning about governance and development in PNG is communicated effectively to stakeholders.

A restructuring in 2018 led to the development of a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for the central platform with the following high-level objectives.

Purpose: To contribute improved efficiency and effectiveness of the PAGP Partnerships through the provision of common administrative services and other support services and by promoting strengthened collaboration across the Partnerships on priority issues, enhanced Value for Money (VfM) and Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) systems, and enhanced strategic relevance and responsiveness.

- Enhanced effectiveness due to greater cohesion and collaboration between the Partnerships and between the platform and Partnerships
- Enhanced VfM and MERL systems; and
- Enhanced strategic relevance and responsiveness to the Government of Australia (GoA) and the Government of PNG (GoPNG) and local partners.

The development outcomes expected of the PAGP are fully expressed in the PAFs that have been developed for the individual Partnerships. The highest-level objective statements (these are variously named, impact, purpose, goal, and outcome) are presented below. Annex IV presents the outcomes for all the Partnerships.

Table 3: Outcomes of PAGP partnerships

Partnership	Highest-level objective
BP	Pillar 1, Autonomy and Effective Governance, ABG is a more accountable and effective autonomous government. Pillar 2: Agriculture and Economic Development, faster, more inclusive, and sustainable economic growth in the Bougainville economy; Pillar 3: Peace, Community Cohesion and Resilience, strengthened foundations for sustainable peace and stability.

³ As confirmed in the Terms of Reference, PNG–Australia Transition to Health (PATH) will not be a focus for this review as it do not form part of the PAGP.

⁴ PSLR was completed in early 2020. A Final Investment Monitoring Report was undertaken. Whilst it may be referred to in this document, it does not have a central focus.

DCP	PNG's national, sub-national and inter-governmental institutions are better able to provide quality services and development outcomes that respond to the needs of citizens.
EGIG	Inclusive and sustainable economic growth through macroeconomic stability, strengthened fiscal management, and private sector development.
IPP DSS	A strong and durable economic and strategic partnership between Australia and Papua New Guinea.
KIP	Pillar 1: The Track, a safe and well-managed track where the special military values and historical integrity is protected; Pillar 2: The People, enhanced quality of life (health, education, and livelihood outcomes) and income for landowners and communities of the Kokoda Track Region; Pillar 3: The Environment, sustainable use of the IPZ catchment area.
PPF Education	Early grade children in targeted schools have improved literacy and numeracy outcomes by Feb 2022

The original budget for PAGP was AUD 310 million. This expanded over time with the addition of PPF (AUD 146 million), KIP (AUD 13.827 million), and EGIG, PSLR, and DCP (a total of AUD 127 million). Total expenditure on PAGP over the period 2016 to 2022 amounted to AUD 616.8 million, an underspend of AUD 61.2 million (9%) against budget. The level of underspend was highest in 2017/18, before decreasing over the next two years and rising again to 10% in 2020/21. The breakdown of expenditure by Partnership is below in Table 1. PSLR, ESS and various Community and Civil Society service orders make up the remainder of the expenditure on PAGP.

Table 4: Expenditure by Partnership (in millions AUD)⁵

Partnership	Total
BP	113.6
DCP	116.4
EGIG	54.3
IPP DSS	20.1
KIP	21.5
Platform	102.5
PPF	121.4

1.2 – Background to the review

QTAG conducted two previous annual reviews to consider progress of PAGP in 2018 and 2019. The third and final review covers the period from 1 April 2019 to the end of PAGP in April 2022, with a focus on the final reporting requirements. Since the last annual review, the following notable impacts on PAGP operations have influenced implementation:

⁵ All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

- in August 2020, the Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership was signed, providing a framework for the partnership between the Government of Australia and Government of PNG (GoPNG) to 2030;
- in line with the Investment Concept 'Deconstructing PAGP', PAGP will be concluding in April 2022, with operations having ceased on the 31 December 2021. The final six months will focus on handover/transition to new arrangements, or the conclusion of activities; and
- the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact implementation, requiring PAGP to move to a partial remote working model. There was also a move within DFAT to implement the Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 development response policy and subsequent performance framework.

1.3 – Purpose of the final review

The overall purpose of this review is to provide an independent assessment of the evidence of achievement against PAGP outcomes. Within this, the review has three purposes:

- Purpose 1: to understand, contribute to, and verify performance for each workstream partnership;
- Purpose 2: to strategically assess progress on implementing the agreed management responses to the 2019 PAGP Annual Review's recommendations; and
- Purpose 3: to provide recommendations for DFAT management of the transition from PAGP to new program arrangements (this purpose was fulfilled in the *aide memoire* in Phase 1).

1.4 – Context of the final review

There have been significant changes within PAGP and the world at large since QTAG's previous review in 2019. The onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 irrevocably changed the environment for PAGP, negatively impacting economic activity and mobility. Additionally, it increased the precarity of thousands of disproportionately marginalised Papua New Guineans, presenting new development challenges. MC senior leadership were evacuated and transferred to remote working to support the health and economic responses to the pandemic. GoPNG departments were closed during multiple periods of lockdown, which impacted counterpart engagement. This review was hampered in its inability to bring specialists into PNG, relying on in-country coordinators and online communication. This has impacted on the level of access that the review team has had. COVID-19 and its impact on outcomes for PAGP will be explored in further detail in Section 3.9.

1.5 – Approach of the final review

The final review was conducted in two phases. It was conducted remotely, with team members based in PNG and internationally, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase 1 took place in October–December 2021. It aimed to ensure that priorities were agreed and that plans were in place to facilitate the capture of results and lessons in the second and main phase. It also sought to identify risks arising from the process of closing PAGP and the transition to future programs. QTAG facilitated discussions with each workstream partnership and relevant Australian High Commission (AHC) teams around expectations and requirements for the review, identifying gaps in existing evidence, key achievements, and lessons to be analysed. Initial discussions were also held regarding reporting across the platform, including on focus areas of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) across PAGP and the impact of COVID-19. Further discussions were held on the PAGP approach to Value for Money (VfM).

Phase 2 was conducted following the submission of the program completion reports (PCRs) by the MC, received in February 2022. Phase 2 focused on the validation of evidence against outcome level reports provided in the Facility Completion Report in March 2022. It covers a sample of key achievements for PAGP and individual partnerships and includes two deep dives into GEDSI and COVID-19. This phase involved conducting key informant interviews of stakeholders, including the Government of PNG (GoPNG) and implementation partners. The QTAG analysis of outcome statements focuses on effectiveness, impact, and sustainability, together with GEDSI. This assessment will inform completion of the Final Investment Monitoring Report.

1.6 – Approach to VfM

A VfM review of PAGP has been undertaken as part of this final review. VfM is a requirement under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (2013) and under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. This review addresses each of DFAT's VfM themes: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and ethics, as well as equity (as proposed by the MC).

2 Methodology

The final review structure was developed based on DFAT's 'Guidance Note: Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for Facilities' (September 2020). While PAGP is not required to apply it retrospectively, the framework represents a coherent basis for examining performance across such a complex program.

The design of this approach is based on four interrelated perspectives that are critical to the overall success of PAGP. These are:

- development results: what are the prospects that the end-of-program outcomes will be achieved?
- stakeholders and partnerships: how did PAGP engage stakeholders and partners and meet their needs?
- operations: how did PAGP manage and deliver key operations? and
- learning and adapting: how did PAGP adapt to opportunities and improve?⁶

To address the development results perspective a sample of interventions have been analysed in depth. These are presented as mini-case studies for each partnership. The results were chosen after extensive discussion with stakeholders in Phase 1. While QTAG considered various views on which interventions to analyse, the final decision rested with the review team. The main criterion informing the choice was the potential to yield lessons for the analysis under the three remaining perspectives (particularly in areas not already reviewed in-depth during the PAGP implementation period), while ensuring that the interventions assessed fell under as many Partnership outcomes as possible. While the sampling approach did not address all PAF indicators in full, it provides a sample that can be used to draw conclusions on the accuracy of the reporting by the MC. In general, this review has found that the reporting is accurate.

VfM is considered across the report document, reflecting the integration of relevant DFAT VfM principles into the PAF. Four of the eight DFAT VfM Principles were selected for review as outlined in

⁶ DFAT (2020) 'Guidance Note: Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for Facilities'.

Table 5, providing a sample of VfM results.⁷ The MC's additional Principle, Gender Inclusion, has also been reviewed. A summary of results is provided within the operations perspective.

⁷ The principles that are not reviewed are encouraging competition, proportionality, performance and risk management, and experimentation and innovation. The report does not purport to draw conclusions on these principles.

Table 5: PAF for Facility Guidance Perspectives & VFM dimensions

PAF for Facility Guidance Perspectives	Development	Stakeholders and Partnership	Operations	Learning and Adapting
VFM Principles	Effectiveness – results focus Equity ⁸ - gender and social inclusion	Ethics – accountability and transparency	Economy – cost consciousness	Efficiency – evidence-based decision making

On this basis, the final review is structured into the following sections.

- **Section 3: Development results perspective:** This includes subsections on individual partnerships, with an exploration of a sample of focus areas and an analysis of impact and lessons learned. It includes discussion of the VfM principles of effectiveness and equity.
- **Section 4: Stakeholder and partnerships perspective:** This focuses on a PAGP-level analysis, with examples from individual partnerships. It includes discussion of the VfM principle of ethics.
- **Section 4: Learning and adaptation:** This focuses on a PAGP-level analysis, with examples from individual partnerships. It includes discussion of the VfM principle of efficiency.
- **Section 5: Operations:** This presents a results summary of VfM from across the PAGP and the individual partnerships, focusing on the VfM principle of economy.

Evidence used throughout this report comes from a variety of sources. Numerous data triangulation points were used to validate emerging findings. Key steps in the review included:

- an **initial consultation** exploring existing evidence and preliminary perspectives on PAGP and partnership performance, conducted October–December 2021: fifteen consultations were held with the MC and AHC, along with other key stakeholders.
- **identification of key sample areas to investigate:** priority results areas were identified for every partnership to align with the principle of proportionality in reviewing a program of this size. These areas were chosen in conjunction with AHC and were presented in the *aide memoire* (deliverable for Phase 1).
- an **extensive document review** of over 120 documents using qualitative data analysis matrices for every partnership, providing an overview of PAGP: the document review centred on April 2019–March 2022, and included relevant documents outside this window. Documents were analysed for reference to key sample areas, as well as overarching focus areas and deep dive topics. Documents were collated from a diverse range of sources, including the MC and AHC, and were

cross-examined with external reporting (by QTAG and by other external stakeholders).

- a **remote and in-country consultation**: a total of 34 interviews were held across the partnerships and at platform level. In-country consultation focused on access to local stakeholders, particularly government counterparts, local non-governmental organisations, and partners. Consultations were held in PNG and remotely.
- **presentations on emerging findings**: a workshop was held with the AHC partnership teams and other members of the AHC executive to explore initial reflections. Another workshop was held with members from the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), the key GoPNG counterpart to PAGP, to collect early responses.
- **technical quality assurance**: external technical expertise was sought outside QTAG to review findings to ensure they met DFAT reporting requirements and presented high-quality analysis.

3 Development results perspective

3.1 – Overview

This section discusses the results of a sample of interventions across each of the partnerships, reviewing the intended outcome, the process of implementation and results achieved, as well as providing an analysis of the impact and lessons learned. Two deep dives are included which consider PAGP’s approach to GEDSI and its adaptation in response to COVID-19.

The final subsection considers the results and the focus on gender and inclusion in the context of the VfM requirements of effectiveness and equity.

3.2 – EGIG

Context

The goal of EGIG was to work with partners across the public and private sector of PNG to promote economic reform and action that drives inclusive and sustainable economic growth. EGIG incorporated three main workstreams; macroeconomic stability, improved fiscal management, and inclusive economic growth. Within these workstreams, projects spanned the breadth of economic governance, private sector development, and economic development, focusing on loan negotiations and support to the Internal Revenue Commission, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the Business Council of PNG, among others. EGIG operated as a facility, organising technical assistance (TA) and relevant logistics, with limited direct intervention by program staff.

The value of the EGIG support was Australian dollars (AUD) 54.3 million over the lifetime of the partnership (2017/18 to 2021/22), an underspend of AUD 6.1 million (10%). Over this period, 56 technical advisors, program leads, and support staff were funded on a mixture of short-term and long-term contracts. The personnel comprised a mix of international advisors (64%) and locally engaged staff (36%).

Table 6: Expenditure on EGIG in AUD (millions)⁹

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual			10.1	12.7	11.0	10.4	10.1	54.3
Budget			10.4	13.8	8.9	15.8	11.5	60.4
Difference	N/A	N/A	0.3	1.1	-2.1	5.4	1.4	6.1

The program logic outlined by EGIG provides detailed outcomes for each workstream, along with indicators and important dimensions of the work. These are useful for assessing the success of EGIG; however, no targets were developed at the commencement of the

⁹ All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

partnership and no reporting against the indicators has been undertaken in the final reporting.

Focus Area 1: Integrated financial management systems (IFMS)

Intended outcome

Work on IFMS contributed to the intended outcome: public expenditure management that improves the operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability of public finances. The most relevant indicators were:

- the Department of Finance (DOF) was able to implement reforms required under the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Roadmap and Corporate Plan;
- DOF improved systems and processes for expenditure management; and
- the number of organisations reached, the total number of government personnel involved, and the implications for broader policy were important dimensions of the work.

Process of implementation

EGIG advisors were embedded within the DOF structure, some holding roles such as First Assistant Secretary. At the height of support in 2019, six advisors were within DOF. This decreased to five by the end of 2021. The work of some advisors necessarily required access to sensitive information; confidentiality agreements were signed in these cases.

Technical Assistance (TA) personnel helped facilitate coordination between EGIG and other donors. Many EGIG-supported projects received additional support from other donors, such as the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, the World Bank, the Pacific TA Centre, and the United Nations Development Programme.

EGIG TA also supported an IFMS redesign to accommodate the different levels of government and statutory authorities, supported system enhancements, maintenance, interfaces, training, and user support.

Results achieved

The IFMS rollout resulted in 47 national departments, 11 authorities, and 15 of the 22 provinces utilising the system. Estimates indicate that IFMS is now being used to budget and process approximately 95% of expenditure, with integration more advanced at the national level. The sub-national rollout was hampered by COVID-19, which reduced travel to the provinces and by a malware attack in 2021, which caused the rollout to be discontinued. Capacity building was undertaken in the use of IFMS, but tight rollout timelines impacted the depth of this training.

EGIG TA also supported the development of the policy infrastructure necessary to ensure that IFMS resulted in stronger public financial management (PFM). Work included cash management, the public finance legislative framework (the PFM Act), national procurement, non-tax revenue, and statutory reporting. The majority were completed.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

EGIG has contributed to improvements in operational efficiency, transparency, and accountability of public finance in PNG. Many of these changes, particularly at the national level, are well embedded, and would require a strong political push to overturn. However, implementation is unfinished in some areas. More reform is needed to operationalise the procurement framework and the Finance Management Manual to ensure the PFM Act is followed. Sub-national integration is understandably constrained given the malware attack.

The coordination role played by the EGIG advisors with other donors reduced the level of duplication which can be common with multi-donor support, although delays were still felt in procurement and approval processes.

The 2020 PEFA provides a snapshot of PFM in PNG. While progress has been made since the 2015 PEFA, significantly more progress is required before PNG can be considered to have an adequate level of PFM, with numerous areas scoring a 'D' indicating that performance falls below the basic level—such as bank account reconciliation, which received some EGIG assistance. Sub-national PFM is a particular area of weakness identified by the PEFA and consultations. The IFMS rollout needs to be completed, and further upskilling in its use at the sub-national level will be required to ensure that it is operationalised correctly.

Some reservations about the support were raised in the consultations, with a perception that some timelines of outstanding reforms have been missed due to reduced support from EGIG in recent years. Engagement between DOF advisors, EGIG management, and other EGIG TA has been sporadic; there is some confusion about the roles of the MC and AHC in making decisions. Attempts were made to link this work with other areas of EGIG and PAGP, such as DCP, but this did not take hold, limiting knowledge transfer and effective networking. The notable exception to this was the twinning arrangement with the Australian Department of Finance (ADOF) organised through PAGP, whereby DOF staff were paired with ADOF staff. This was more successful in building capacity and contributing to EGIG outcomes.

There have been numerous successes by EGIG in the space of PFM over the life of the program. Despite this, as stated by the MC, IFMS remains fragile and largely depends on a broader political commitment to PFM reform. This is particularly the case at the sub-national level. Commitment to PFM reforms will need to be maintained in areas where gains are slow, and results are not visible (outside of five-yearly PEFA reviews). However, this does not detract from the financial windfalls that can be gained when PFM is operating effectively, increasing accountability and transparency. As such, AHC should continue to support PFM and consider ways in which support may need to be broadened to address the PFM Roadmap 2020–24. This could include support to agencies other than DOF (e.g. the Auditor General), providing greater focus at the sub-national level, and considering providing support to required infrastructure.

Numerous lessons have been learned throughout the support to IFMS.

- While the PFM reforms have been timely, their impact on fiscal sustainability, accountability, and transparency will take time to materialise. Support should continue in the area of PFM and thought should be given to addressing weaknesses

in national departments (in addition to DOF) and sub-national governments to reflect the slower progress made towards PFM in these areas.

- Support should be maintained in areas of less obvious priority, such as bank reconciliation and procurement, as the success of IFMS is intimately linked with wider reforms.
- Thought should be given to how informal relationships between advisors across PAGP could be created organically to reduce reliance on senior management to create these linkages.
- The relationship between DOF, AHC, and EGIG needs to be defined clearly to ensure that all parties, including advisors, understand how decisions are made.
- The risk that TA stand in for local capacity has been long recognised. This review heard accounts indicating how difficult it is to some norms of working given the incentives at play. A focus on capacity building of staff is still needed to reduce reliance on embedded advisors.

Focus Area 2: Support to GoPNG loan negotiations

Intended outcome

Work on the loan negotiations contributed to the outcome: *policies that promote macroeconomic stability, human development, and inclusive growth are prioritised*. The most relevant indicators to this were:

- the cost, quality, and diversity of government financing improved; and
- increased multi-donor support examining PNG economic challenges and opportunities.

Debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio and donor support to address economic challenges were important dimensions of this intervention.

Process of implementation

Support to the loan negotiations process centred on the Treasurer's Office; support on other work within the Macroeconomic Stability workstream was provided to the Treasury, to research partners (Australian National University, the University of PNG, National Research Institute (NRI)), and the Bank of PNG, among others. Two Technical Advisors were placed with Treasury, one commencing in 2019 and the other commencing in late 2021. One of these Technical Advisors worked closely with the Treasurer's Office. These advisors were placed in response to requests from GoPNG. Three staff within the Treasurer's Office were also supported by EGIG funding.

The Technical Advisors facilitated the loans process and provided support to the Government of Australia by supporting the Australian Treasury in forecasting the fiscal framework. The advisor also supported GoPNG on technical requirements and implementation, moving between AHC and GoPNG to ensure that all parties were prepared for the negotiations. EGIG support also helped with the development of policy matrices,

coordinating with national departments to help them meet policy requirements and developing a range of analysis to support the loan process for other multilateral donors. Finally, the Technical Advisor provided coordination and advisory support to GoPNG in its discussions with the International Monetary Fund on the Staff-Monitored Program, including the development of a tracking system now maintained by Treasury.

Results achieved

Loans to the value of AUD 2.5 billion were supported by EGIG. Access to project funding from multilateral and bilateral donors was also supported by EGIG to the value of more than USD 2 billion.

Debt as a percentage of GDP rose from 32.4% in 2016 to 49.2% in 2020 following increased financing requirements due to COVID-19. Over the duration of EGIG, external debt increased as a percentage of total central government borrowing from 37% in 2016 to 50% in 2021. Against the intended outcomes, EGIG supported GoPNG's political commitment to access a broader composition of financing sources, with new multi-donor support contributing to the increase in external debt.

However, it is difficult to determine the value of the TA provided by EGIG given the support function played. The introduction of new and cheaper financing sources, and the processing of loans would likely have occurred regardless of TA support given the GoPNG commitment to increasing access to concessional finance and the severity of the fiscal position of PNG pre- and post-COVID-19. The MC claims that access to the IMF general allocation is the exception to this, as this was not a source of funding that GoPNG was aware of prior to the support provided by the advisors.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The contribution of the advisors helped ensure that the loan negotiation process was completed in reasonable time and that GoPNG's diplomatic relationships were upheld, including with the Government of Australia, despite tensions often being a feature of such negotiations. Smooth diplomatic relations between donors and GoPNG should not be undervalued, as these create the avenues for further appropriately targeted support. Support to the process came at a vital time when access to finance was important for the sustainability of public services and to respond to COVID-19's health and economic impacts.

Access to loans via donors ensured that GoPNG received concessional rates, which will decrease costs over the life of the loans. This provides greater fiscal sustainability and greater availability of funds in future to allocate towards key economic, social, and environmental outcomes. However, except for the IMF general allocation, whether the EGIG TA influenced access to these loans other than by increasing the speed of processing is unclear. Given the debt categories utilised by the multilateral banks, it is unlikely that actions by EGIG influenced the interest rates provided.

There are indications that, in the context of fast-moving negotiations, the role of the Technical Advisor in supporting the Treasury was not always clear. Moreover, the responsive nature of the support may have come at the cost of building local capacity to take on these roles in future. With the TA often working directly with the Treasurer's Office, there were reduced opportunities for knowledge transfer to Treasury staff.

Lessons that have been learned from the loan negotiation process include the following.

- Clear agreements should be established with the Treasury Department and relevant teams on the contribution to be made by EGIG to ensure there is clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, and subsequently of opportunities for knowledge transfer.
- Focus on capacity building within the Treasury should be increased, including with the Debt Team, to ensure that similar loan negotiation processes can be undertaken in future with reduced support from TA.

Focus Area 3: Customary land tenure

Intended outcome

Customary land tenure fell under the intended outcome: increased economic participation and opportunities for women, marginalised groups, and rural populations. The relevant indicator was improvements in PNG's land tenure system enables economic opportunities. The bankability of land and its contribution to enlarging access to economic opportunities was an important dimension of this intervention.

Process of implementation

TA support was provided to the NRI and the Constitutional Law Reform Commission, and funds were provided to Niugini Land and Properties. EGIG supported the 2019 Land Summit, including prior consultations and workshops, the summit itself, and the development of the subsequent National Executive Council (NEC) submission.

EGIG TA assisted in drafting policy papers, facilitating and guiding departments in assessing their legislative gaps, assisting the Technical Working Committee of the National Land Development Program (NLDP), facilitating discussions between landowners, developers, and the government, and delivering capacity building training to the Land Reform Committee, the Technical Working Committee, and the Transitional Project Management Unit under the NLDP Phase II. EGIG also supported the PNG Property Developer's Association to engage with government and other stakeholders and provided technical advisory and capacity building support to Customary Landowner-Owned Companies (CLOC).

EGIG funded NLDP officers and the Lands Project Management team, learning about the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) lease system under the Torrens Lands system. A twinning arrangement was agreed with the ACT government, but these plans were disrupted by COVID-19.

EGIG also supported the application of existing legislation to convert customary owned land into bankable state lease titles. The process utilised was recorded in a manual for future use by the Department of Lands and Physical Planning (DLPP).

Results achieved

Progress has most been marked on the bankability of lands, including by two state lease titles being awarded for the Napa Napa Land. This established a pathway for customary

landowners to collateralise land. A manual outlining this process was developed, and the process is currently being replicated to establish the town of Lae Nadzab.

The Land Summit resulted in 17 recommendations and the establishment of committees with responsibility for achieving those recommendations. Strata title legislation was also developed with support from EGIG. This legislation is currently with NEC for approval.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Strong progress was made in the lands space with the support of EGIG. The advancement of the Napa Napa Customary Land Project and the development of Strata title legislation were notable achievements given the complexity and political nature of land in PNG. The support from EGIG and AHC was delivered in a politically astute and cautious manner that balanced multiple stakeholder needs. Despite this, the role of AHC and EGIG on the land project was at times unclear; agreements between AHC and GoPNG on the role of the Government of Australia in this area of work should be developed prior to the commencement of the next iteration of support.

More support will be needed to ensure DLPP has capacity to undertake the necessary legislative and policy changes. Staff reported confusion regarding the applicability of the Napa Napa Land process to other land matters. While this support does not have to be embedded, it should be long-term given its nature. Proceeding with the previously agreed twinning arrangement would be an approach to sustainably developing skills across the breadth of the department. This is particularly important with an ageing workforce and weak succession planning.

The capacity of the Ministry of Justice and the Investment Promotions Authority should also be considered, as they will be important players if this investment is to yield returns. Similarly, a continued focus on upskilling CLoCs should be considered to ensure that the overarching outcome of 'increased economic participation and opportunities for women, marginalised groups, and rural populations' is realised.

Numerous lessons have been learned through the support to customary land tenure.

- Agreements should be developed between AHC and GoPNG prior to the next iteration of support, clearly delineating roles and responsibilities.
- Further support will be required within the DLPP to ensure results achieved are sustainable, most notably in capacity building and support towards achieving the remaining NLDP II recommendations.
- Support should be considered to the Ministry of Justice and the Investment Promotions Authority to assist them in meeting recommendations under the NLDP II.
- There should be a continued focus on upskilling CLoCs.

Focus Area 4: Digital identification systems

Intended outcome

The Digital Identification Systems work fell under the outcome: increased economic participation and opportunities for women, marginalised groups, and rural populations. The relevant indicator was increased proportion of the population that have access to improved financial services. The number of financial institutions operating within a new framework for digital identity and the number of financial institutions targeting lower income customers were important dimensions of this work.

Ultimately, the project aimed to achieve greater financial inclusion by lowering the barrier (cost and convenience) for people to access digital functional identity documents (IDs).

Process of implementation

EGIG supported the establishment and implementation of YuTru, a private sector-led digital trust framework for digital identification that was registered in early 2020. EGIG TA assisted in raising seed equity from shareholders, integrating protocols, undertaking a procurement process to identify a digital ID service provider, and transferring knowledge to support sustainability.

EGIG also facilitated the work by building relationships with the public and private sector, conducting research, coordinating with other donors, and funding training on cyber security. The digital identification system creates a functional ID that does not cross into the national identification work being undertaken separately by GoPNG. However, EGIG TA provided high-level training and capacity assessment support early in the life of that program.

Results achieved

As PAGP ends, this work is still at an early stage. Although the digital identification system is yet to be operationalised, the procurement process identified a service provider for the digital ID platform. The platform identified was above budget, which required YuTru to return to the market to raise additional capital, delaying timelines. YuTru has since attracted three key shareholders—two private-sector entities, and one statutory authority—and now has sufficient capital to proceed with implementation.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Implementing a digital identification system to improve financial access through a private company in PNG was always going to be an innovative and somewhat risky investment by EGIG and AHC. So far, despite some delays, the risk has been justified, with the investment by shareholders indicating that the project is bankable. It has shown key stakeholders in PNG that new, digital systems should be explored and that financial services do not have to adhere to traditional systems. While a digital identification system is necessary, other complementary strategies will be required if financial inclusion is to be achieved.

EGIG provided strong support to the development of YuTru, not just directly via the TA provided, but also indirectly through the creation of relationships and collaboration with other donors. This focused support from the EGIG management was critically important for YuTru.

The sustainability of the investment in YuTru is heavily tied to two factors: the motivations of the shareholders, and the human resources within YuTru. There is little to be done about the former, but AHC does have the ability to provide support to the latter. Given the delayed rollout of the system, strong consideration should also be given to support for the implementation of the system and the process of integration with users.

Lessons learned through the development of YuTru were as follows.

- Strong support from senior management within a MC and the AHC is required to ensure that innovative approaches succeed, particularly by strengthening networks and building credibility.
- Further support will likely be provided to YuTru towards the implementation of the platform and to empower the company by providing further guidance to staff and engaging them throughout the various stages of implementing the platform.

Focus Area 5: Creative and cultural industries (CCI) support

Intended outcome and indicators

CCI support fell under the outcome: increased economic participation and opportunities for women, marginalised groups, and rural populations. Three indicators were relevant to this work:

- increased number of women participating in SMEs;
- increased number of women owning/leading SMEs; and
- the establishment of alternative revenue sources for marginalised groups and rural populations.

Process of implementation

EGIG support to CCI had three elements: targeting improved product development, business development, and marketing. It was a multi-layered initiative, interacting with industry actors and market players. Research was undertaken on the intellectual property system in PNG, assessing group representation within micro-SMEs and the bilum industry. From this, a program was developed that included developing quality standards and colour theory for bilum weavers, educating SMEs and creators on copyright law and spreading the cultural identity of bilum.

EGIG also created a bespoke market in Goroka of Eastern Highlands province and centres of support in the Eastern Highlands, Chimbu, Madang, and Morobe provinces.

Results achieved

There is some evidence of growth in sales for SMEs (particularly those owned by women), and that new micro-businesses are being created. Additional revenue of more than PNG Kina (PGK) 200,000 (approximately AUD\$76,000) was reported by 91 remote bilum weavers in the months following their participation in market access training. It is not clear whether there has been an increased number of women participating in SMEs or an increased

number of women-owned or women-led SMEs. However, there are indications that women benefited from the training which focused on women weavers. Some remote traditional weavers have connected with an international buyer in Australia and exported products internationally.

Evidence also suggests that the bilum weavers have greater knowledge about intellectual property, how to search for investments, and how to generate income. Thus, although it is unclear how much progress has been made against the outcome, numerous results have been achieved.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

CCI is an example of strong use of research to ensure that the correct gaps in SMEs were identified prior to proceeding with interventions. COVID-19 created several challenges for CCI, limiting access to SMEs and creators, which resulted in three-quarters of the participants being lost. Across the breadth of support to SMEs, high-level strategy seems to have been limited.

The support required by SMEs varied depending on the location, given vastly different costs and access challenges. Consultations suggested that decisions were sometimes made which did not consider these challenges and the need for local responses.

Men are also integral in the creative industry, sourcing the material required for weaving. A focus on women only in the bilum industry should be reconsidered in the future if the whole industry is to be strengthened.

Lessons learned across the broader spectrum of SME support included the following.

- Succession plans should be developed in future so nascent businesses know where future support can be accessed. Linking operators with larger, domiciled retail companies should be considered as an option to strengthen the sustainability of interventions when targeting industry.
- A greater understanding of, and engagement with, the informal sector outside of Port Moresby is required to ensure that decisions and interventions are context-specific, and an industry profile of SMEs and the creative industry in PNG should be developed.
- Further training will be required for SMEs; however, this should be undertaken strategically by focusing on new SMEs, or on SMEs that have not received training in the past.
- A holistic production chain approach should be utilised in the support to SMEs, considering also the supply of materials required in the CCI.

EGIG Overall Commentary

As stated in previous QTAG reviews,¹⁰ the EGIG goals were ambitious from the start, particularly in areas where political drive was required over which EGIG had little control. While performance targets were missing, evidence shows EGIG made progress towards its goals in the areas sampled. In its PCR, EGIG identified lessons from its performance management arrangements. An adequately funded Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting, and Learning (MERL) Workplan was needed to support the Annual Workplan; a database would have helped produce an analysis of progress against the PAF; and agreement for on an ongoing program of analytical studies. We agree with these suggestions.

EGIG was able to balance anticipated outcomes with potential for increased risk, managing to maintain relationships with key stakeholders in highly contentious areas such as loan negotiations and customary land tenure. Innovative projects with higher levels of risk, such as the digital ID system, were also undertaken, providing evidence that pilot programs should be attempted within the context of EGIG support in the future.

However, the engagement of EGIG with some departments was not well understood, likely due to the responsive nature of the support. This responsiveness provided EGIG with the ability to engage on GoPNG priorities and resulted in numerous successes. It did also however impact their ability to deliver a coherent program of support that was well understood by recipient departments, and which could deliver longer-term capacity building.

In relation to GEDSI, EGIG had a slow start but introduced a series of discrete GEDSI-focussed activity, for example commissioning research on gender in the public sector. However, the interlinkages of gender equality and inclusive growth never became a central or overarching focus for EGIG.

The lessons learned from EGIG were as follows.

- Clear, high-level agreements on intended areas of support should be developed in partnership with recipient departments, in addition to Tasking Orders for specific pieces of work at the commencement of the next program. These should clearly outline areas of work to be supported by AHC and areas of work to be supported solely by GoPNG. Relationships with mid-level staff should also be maintained to ensure that an understanding of roles is understood across the relevant departments.
- Relationships between technical advisors is one way to ensure that knowledge is transferred across the partnership. Consideration should be given in the future to how these informal relationships can be created organically in the future to increase learning and adaptation.
- Capacity building should be a priority of EGIG. Training should take place over an extended period, as opposed to short and sharp training sessions, to ensure that knowledge transfer is taking place.

¹⁰ Review of Australia PNG Economic Partnership, 2019.

- Articulating the role of GEDSI in economic governance and inclusive growth early within a programme cycle is essential to ensure GEDSI mainstreaming across.
- Success in many areas of economic governance and inclusive growth is often slow and hidden, but this does not reduce the need for the support. Realistic outcomes should be developed for the next phase of support which considers the speed at which outcomes can be achieved given recent progress and the political economy of the relevant support area. These outcomes will need to reflect less tangible areas of support within economic governance.

3.3 – DCP

Table 7: Expenditure on DCP in AUD (millions)¹¹

DCP	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual			24.4	23.7	27.1	25.0	16.3	116.4
Budget			26.6	26.3	23.9	24.1	16.6	117.5
Difference	N/A	N/A	2.2	2.6	-3.2	-0.8	0.3	1.1

Context

The intended outcome for DCP was that PNG's national, sub-national, and intergovernmental institutions should be better able to provide quality services and development outcomes responding to the needs of citizens. DCP delivered three components: a policy support program; empowerment, voice, and accountability (EVA); and the Local Solutions Program. A range of embedded TA and advisors supported national policy work; sub-national support was delivered by advisors and a program of matched funding projects; and grants were made to a range of organisations to progress EVA objectives.

In addition, DCP managed two substantial longstanding components with their own objectives. Although neither was central to the results areas selected for this review, the Church Partnership Program (CPP) and the Media Development Initiative (MDI) have contributed significantly to DCP's overall results, as summarised in Annex 8.2.

The DCP Theory of Change proposed that mutually supportive actions at three levels were necessary: national policy development and implementation, sub-national capabilities, and citizen participation. Those actions should be grounded in local context and target local needs and priorities. The results should be communicated effectively to amplify influence on policies, practices, and programs.

¹¹ All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

Focus Area 1: Decentralisation policy and engagement with GoPNG partners

Intended outcome

In PNG, the structure and degree of decentralisation has been politically contested since independence, with government and donors investing heavily to make decentralisation work. Supporting development and implementation of a decentralisation policy and legislative framework was central to DCP's engagement with its main government counterpart, the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA).¹² Policymaking capacity was an important intermediate outcome.

Engagement with the Department of Implementation and Rural Development (DIRD) came later in the program. Members of Parliament (MPs) exercise considerable influence over the Services Improvement Programs (SIP), the largest source of discretionary funds at sub-national level. Management of the SIP was of particular interest within DCP, notably support to the Provincial and District Information Management System (PDIMS) which aims to strengthen oversight and accountability of the SIPs.

Process of implementation

Embedded advisors were the main means of support to DPLGA before PAGP. DCP took over several advisor engagements, but over time reduced the number and intensity of support. Several studies were conducted on key issues (including gender aspects of decentralisation) through the National Economic and Fiscal Commission. The partnership between DCP and DPLGA was to be coordinated/governed through a joint Steering Committee, but this was rarely active. By 2020, DCP reports noted slow progress. By 2021, as priorities shifted to address the COVID-19 pandemic, this aspect of the Policy Support Program was discontinued.

Engagement with DIRD was initiated as support for policy through DPLGA declined. The DIRD program was scoped in late 2019, and a 'proof of concept' phase agreed and initiated mid-2020. This program built on earlier assistance from the EU which generated interest in the use of data. A longer-term program was endorsed in early 2021, with the successful initial development of the DIRD Program Management System. A subcontractor to DCP supported DIRD in technical aspects and in demonstrating the power of analysis through an integrated system to national and sub-national stakeholders. The subcontractor supported training of DIRD personnel to maintain the platform. Pilot districts and provinces for the development were selected based on a number of predetermined DIRD criteria, including their commitment to effective use and reporting of SIPs.

Results achieved

Partly as result of DCP support, cabinet approval for a Certificate of Necessity for the revision of the Organic Law for Decentralisation was achieved. The need to revise PNG's approach to decentralisation, and the options for doing so, are more widely understood.

¹² DCP has engaged with other agencies on policies such as integrated community development; the engagement on decentralisation is not the sole policy engagement undertaken.

Policy work has revealed significant political, economic, and administrative issues and the complexity of engaging in what remain vital issues for the future of PNG.

By end 2021, despite significant constraints, DIRD had a functioning platform, up-to-date SIP data and a range of priority DIMS data on all 22 provinces and 89 districts, with greater depth of data on five pilot districts and two provinces. The analytical potential of the platform attracted attention from key stakeholders at national and sub-national level.

Evidence on DCP results is very strong. Reports on the management and the analytical and reporting power of the PDIMS are available from DIRD. These accord with accounts given to QTAG. Previous in-country reviews by QTAG indicate that the depth of the policy analysis of decentralisation was impressive.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Prospects for decentralisation policy reforms are complex and changeable, bound up with national parliamentary arithmetic. The absence of a clear request for support from GoPNG indicates the charged nature of the issue. The ramifications of the challenging relationship with DPLGA for the rest of DCP are discussed further below.

Progress towards policy impact via engagement with DIRD has been strongest. The PDIMS has impressive analytical capacity. However, prospects for greater accountability for SIP funds will be determined by political factors and not just availability of data. In the current context, the more likely route to impact is through some districts and provinces using the platform to better target and implement projects, with other districts eventually following their example, particularly if the vote-winning potential of impactful projects can be publicised. To a large extent, the impact of this investment is dependent on wider reform decentralization.

The immediate lesson from the two government relationships is that, in the PNG context, success in building stronger institutions is heavily dependent on relationships built on trust. Support to DIRD was requested by a minister with links to the Australian aid program, who also gave vigorous support to implementation. DIRD led engagement and showed a level of commitment often absent from engagement with DPLGA. However, this individual's subsequent departure from the department could hamper future progress towards impact highlighting the need to cultivate a broad support base for reforms and a network of productive relationships of trust.

Finally, in engagement on such a sensitive policy issue, it is vital to understand how influence occurs in PNG and incorporate that into the respective roles of the contractor, TA advisors, and AHC. Local expertise with local credibility, able to focus on relationship building, has been key to progress made so far.

Focus Area 2: Local solutions and sub-national engagement

Intended outcome

The intended outcome of the Local Solutions Program, the core of sub-national engagement, was: provincial, district, and local authorities better equipped to respond to

citizens and provide, or facilitate, better service delivery and economic opportunity.¹³ For most of the program, six Sub-National Advisors (SNAs) had a combined district/provincial government role. The central aim of those deployments was to support the local solutions outcome, however, their role gradually widened to support the Australia aid program more generally.

Process of implementation

The SNAs have two principal sources of funds. The Priority Partnerships budget supported capacity building. Substantial compared to SNG training budgets, it originally focused on district staff but widened to include provincial and community members. In addition, the Kina+Kina (K+K) budget line supported 23 locally significant infrastructure investments of varying scale across six districts. K+K required match funding from the SIPs. Each project had service delivery and economic development objectives and was also used to catalyse better planning and implementation of the SIP funds controlled by the District Development Committee (DDC). In most cases the MP controls the DDC. K+K was replaced by the Sub-National Development Partnership Fund in 2020. This was similar but more competitive and with an explicit GEDSI allocation at 40% of funds.

From a GEDSI perspective, the Local Solutions Program had potential to address key gender issues affecting local constituencies, including FSV. Several Sub-National Advisors worked hard to link with women's groups to determine women's priorities and perspectives. There was a K+K proposal developed for a Provincial FSV-VAC, demonstrating cooperation between advisors and the potential of local programming to respond to FSC needs on the group. However, this proposal remains pending within DFAT.

Expenditure on the three elements of local solutions during DCP is below.

Table 8: Expenditure on DCP in AUD (millions)

K+K	4.65
Priority Partnerships	5.03
Sub-National Development Partnership Fund	0.33

Results achieved

An earlier QTAG review noted the high value attached to the training at SNG level, and that greater VfM was achieved by widening the pool trainees. This, together with the infrastructure investments, contributed to local economic development, increased governance capacity, and strengthened sub-national institutions. The formation of Local Project Implementing Teams (LPITs) allowed development of capacities to plan and manage projects that could improve implementation of other SIP projects.

Priority Partnerships funding reached 17,932 men and 14,310 women with capacity building activities. The numbers directly benefiting from K+K was relatively small, the population of

¹³ In the partnership agreement with DPLGA, this statement was simplified to: 'Local solutions for local challenges—frontline service delivery and economic opportunity in the provinces and districts are improved.'

districts affected was roughly 845,000. The scale of benefits cannot be assessed at this stage.

This element of DCP was reviewed in depth twice by QTAG and evidence is strong. Precise records were kept of the training numbers. The absence of impact data is understandable, as the K+K work was discontinued.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

K+K intervention leveraged AUD 727,000 from the SIP. Those funds have almost certainly been used to better effect than the other SIP resources. In co-managed projects, the formation partnerships have supported improved outcomes and may make projects more sustainable. Those good examples may have some effect on attitudes to how to use the SIPs longer term.

It is difficult to assess governance gains from such short-term interventions. While the focus of Local Solutions on the management by the DDCs of SIP was justified by the scale of resources at play, it has not yet yielded commensurate gains in wider governance of these funds. Matched funding was secured, although not always delivered on time, but that is a narrow marker of success and says little about how the bigger pot of funds was used. The achievement of wider impact requires more time. Scepticism about whether K+K was appropriate in governance programming is understandable. The main lesson is that once the investment has been made it needs time to yield governance benefits. The decision taken by the AHC to close this program means the test of whether such an infrastructure investment could yield institutional reform is incomplete.

Implementation of K+K was challenged by weak relations with DPLGA although, even with full DPLGA support, negotiating projects with more explicit governance aims would have been difficult given the power of patronage arrangements in SIP. These projects, together with the training program, did however cement the position of the SNAs. They were later able to use the strength of their relationships to support a successful COVID-19 response, in part through a repurposed Local Solutions Program. The lesson is that in PNG tangible inputs help build strong relations with government.

Focus Area 3: The Markets, Economic Recovery, and Inclusion (MERI) Program

Intended outcome

The immediate outcome was ongoing safe operation of major fresh food markets during the COVID-19 pandemic. Longer-term objectives were to strengthen governance in markets and improve market-based livelihood opportunities for traders, particularly women.

This intervention stemmed from a direct request from the Prime Minister. This presented an opportunity to contribute to the COVID-19 pivot whilst driving participation in decision-making in important local institutions hence retaining alignment with its original objectives. In many (but not all) markets, women have a dominant presence as vendors and buyers, so the intervention had significant GEDSI dimensions.

Process of intervention

The program was designed in April–May 2020 and implemented over 12 months from June 2020 – extended from a planned six-month implementation period. Funds committed amounted to AUD 6,418,676.

The main physical interventions were small-scale water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) improvements and the distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) - both critical for keeping markets open. DCP played a coordination role and provided both funding and infrastructure through the contractor retained for the local solutions investments. UN Women, under contract from AHC, facilitated local-level stakeholder engagement and development of governance arrangements.

The formation of Local Project Implementation Teams (LPITs) for each market built on experience from the DCP Local Solutions Program. LPITs were the main means to ensure that arrangements developed would make markets safer and more inclusive on a sustained basis. LPITs had strong presence of women and persons with disabilities, whose capacity to engage effectively was built. A task force was established for high-level coordination of this intervention, including the Secretary of the Department for Community Development and Religion and the DFAT Minister Counsellor.

Results achieved

The livelihoods of over 17,000 vendors (3,812 men; 13,517 women) were supported, with markets serving over 65,000 people continuing operations.

In 11 of 12 markets, enhanced facilities were handed over to local authorities. While there are signs of deterioration in WASH facilities in some markets, in most these remain in operation. The impact of the PPE supplies was less significant. Lessons learned and a toolkit have been developed and disseminated on better management of market. A policy dialogue has been catalysed on improved WASH in markets

The gender-based violence (GBV) component of the intervention enhanced women's ability to address some of the short-term impacts of the pandemic, such as increased domestic violence. Their access to leadership opportunities and political influence increased.

This case study was based on an independent review. The main findings accord with the accounts given to QTAG and the evidence is very strong.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The main lesson is that high-level support delivered progress in the context of a clearly defined, critical and urgent issue. Additionally, the centrality of markets to the livelihoods of people who already possess a reasonable level of social capital increased the likelihood of improvement. It still required effective coordination at all levels: the MERI Project Task Force (MPTF) provided a venue for high-level, multi-agency discussions of market operations. It helped open a policy space to engage on WASH in markets.

The second lesson is that LPITs can play an effective role in local-level coordination. It would be unrealistic to expect all these to develop into sustained governance mechanisms

and there are signs that progress is stronger in urban areas. However, in several cases they continue to expand stakeholder participation and influence decisions on how markets are managed.

This intervention conforms to many of the principles of a politically astute, multi-stakeholder engagement. The comparative effectiveness of the LPITs and the MPTF demonstrated the organising power of an issues-based approach.

DCP Overall Commentary

DCP's strategy was based on an interdependence that left the program vulnerable to one pillar lagging. Work on decentralisation policy has been patchy, with knock-on effects. For instance, changes to accountability provisions within the decentralisation policy would have enabled support to citizen voice to have a greater impact.

DCP's relations with DPLGA fluctuated during the program, affecting GoPNG authorisation. Given the importance of decentralisation policy, continuing to nurture that relationship made strategic sense. Avoiding capture by one partner is good risk management and a key lesson from expanding central engagement to include DIRD is that multiple partnerships make the program less vulnerable¹⁴. Other lessons are that investing in personal relationships is important and having the GoPNG in the driving seat makes the delivery of outputs more likely. It is too early to say that outcomes will be achieved.

Given the range of investments, the acknowledgement midway through PAGP that DCP was a facility simply recognised reality. The original partnership inherited legacy projects that limited scope to achieve coherence across, and even within, workstreams. Some projects within the EVA component, although valuable on their own terms, were not designed to impact on public policy or accountability. The lesson here is the importance of moving quickly to achieve strategic coherence and avoid being overly constrained by legacy investments.

The main lesson from MERI is that a well-managed issues-based approach to implementation can deliver tangible benefits together with institutional change. The MDI review explored the potential of such an approach. With large and semi-independent components such as MDI and CPP, BCEP¹⁵ will also resemble a facility with components' work strongly determined with reference to their own partners' priorities rather than being solely by the program leadership. Nevertheless, there is space for cross-program collaboration. An issues-based approach would provide a fulcrum around which collaboration could develop. There is clear potential for MDI, for instance, to reinforce positive messaging around governance arrangements in MERI markets and promote replication.

On GEDSI, DCP incorporate interesting discrete activities to address FSV or gender inequality. However, the importance of gender equality to wider goals has not been well

¹⁴ Comparable accountability programmes supported by other bilateral donors, are often not attached to a single government entity. Rather, they attempt to influence a range of government actors, retaining the possibility of changing focus depending on their judgement of where influence is possible.

¹⁵ The Building Citizen Engagement Program (BCEP) is the successor to DCP.

articulated in the partnership theory of change and this appears to limit the scope of ambition.

Previous QTAG deep dives on DCP noted the capacity of the sub-national advisors and recommended empowering them with a greater range of intervention tools beyond training. Under the place-based approach, SNAs potentially become more central but they have disempowered as decision making became more centralised during the COVID-19 pivot. At the same time, that pivot produced the MERI program, one of the most impactful investments and one to which the SNAs contributed. The trade-offs in the role and mode of operation of SNAs will need to be carefully considered going forward.

3.4 – KIP

Context

The Kokoda Campaign of World War II was a milestone in Australian and PNG history, and both governments remain committed to protecting the Kokoda Track through the flagship Kokoda Initiative. KIP commenced in July 2016, building on a previous assistance phase. A new design document guided implementation from August 2017 to December 2020, structured around three pillars: the Track, the people, and the environment. In December 2020, the KIP design framework was further updated to reflect the COVID-19 context, including closure of the trekking industry. The revised program increased focus on livelihood programming and income generation for communities and GEDSI. This aligned with *Australia's COVID-19 development response*.

Table 9: Expenditure on KIP in AUD (millions)¹⁶

KIP	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual			3.8	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.2	21.5
Budget			4.3	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.2	22.0
Difference	N/A	N/A	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5

The Kokoda Initiative brings together a broad range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. PNG's Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) leads delivery alongside other PNG agencies, including the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA), the Tourism Promotion Authority, the National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG), and the Northern and Central Provincial Administrations. The Australian Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment leads on Australia's technical engagement with CEPA for the protected area management of the Kokoda Region Interim Protection Zone (IPZ), coordinating with a range of Australian departments and institutions. External stakeholders include Kokoda tour operators in both PNG and Australia, veterans' groups, other small community and industry bodies, and non-governmental organisations.

¹⁶ All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

Focus Area 1: High-level PNG–Australia relationships

Intended outcome

The growing relationship between PNG and Australia lay at the heart of the KIP as both a strategic objective and an overarching goal, as well as being a fundamental approach to delivery. This was not a defined outcome area with indicators; rather, it was an intent to contribute to the strengthening of the relationship between PNG and Australia through high-level political and diplomatic linkages and the development of connections of shared heritage. Several outcome areas supported this, including preservation of military heritage surrounding the track, development of community-based museums, and public diplomacy, research, and media within PNG and internationally around Kokoda’s heritage.

Process of implementation

Implementation of the KIP rested on multiple institutional partnerships between PNG and Australia, as well as political and diplomatic engagement within both PNG and Australia. The KIP Independent Review (2020) noted that governance arrangements are complex, and that roles and responsibilities could be confusing. PNG–Australia cooperation on the KIP was institutionalised through its governance mechanism. The Kokoda Initiative Committee, chaired by the Minister for the Environment and Conservation, comprised of relevant ministers, governors, MPs, and a representative from DFAT to provide strategic direction to counterpart agencies in the implementation of the Kokoda Initiative Master Plan (KIMP). Community representatives from Oro and Central provinces also attended meetings as observers. The Kokoda Initiative Committee reported to the Prime Minister and Cabinet of the Government of PNG through the NEC.

Results achieved

Activity to forge PNG–Australia partnerships on Kokoda was well documented in project reporting and confirmed through consultations with individuals involved. KIP forged high-level relationships within GoPNG and Government of Australia institutions, as well as with cultural and academic institutions in both countries. Efforts focused on developing, documenting, and sharing aspects of military and shared heritage relating to Kokoda have been consistent, amplified by public diplomacy efforts in both Kokoda and Australia through public events and media content, as well as the production and dissemination of the Kokoda Story documentary. Notably, the NMAG documentary film entitled ‘ETOA: A Kokoda Track Story’, produced in 2019, was recognised by the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology’s 2020 Martin Davis Award for Best Public Archaeology. The film is regularly shown on PNG television and is being marketed for international distribution.

Broader international engagement in areas of military heritage was also substantial, including cooperation between the Australian, American, and Japanese remains search and recovery agencies, with KIP brokering increased interaction between these agencies. Engagement with the Australian War Memorial was initiated and holds potential for greater cooperation on conservation and interpretation issues going forward. NMAG’s standing in international military and cultural heritage scholarly circles was raised through participation in conferences and seminars, including at the Pacific History Association, the Australian Maritime Museum, and the Australian National University. Relationships were also created

or strengthened with the Department of Veteran’s Affairs and the Australian Defence Force, as well as with the International Council on Monuments and Sites, Deakin University, Western Sydney University, and others. These partnerships bolstered the interpretation, preservation, and promotion of a strong joint heritage within PNG and Australia, and on the international stage.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The relationship between PNG and Australia appears to be strengthened through engagement on Kokoda, providing a platform of relationships and trust from which to cooperate in other areas. COVID-19 presented a test of the strength of the GoPNG–Government of Australia relationship, with COVID-19 pivot activities for Kokoda reflecting priorities of both government partners. The Australian response to COVID-19 was aligned with the existing structure of the KIMP and capitalised on existing social and political infrastructure forged through the KIP. The existing relationship enabled rapid introduction of new program activities. That said, maintaining this sense of trust requires ongoing dialogue and there should not be complacency as the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 situation evolves and new demands emerge. Emerging frustrations and tensions should be promptly addressed to reduce the risk that gains could be lost.

Focus Area 2: Expansion of the IPZ

Intended outcome

Under the ‘environment’ pillar, KIP’s intended overall outcome was the gazettal¹⁷ of the protected area. The intermediate outcomes included drafting of legislation and engagement with stakeholder communities to ensure that they understood and participated in the process. KIP aimed to develop high-level governance arrangements that took account of the views of communities on the track, as well as institutional coordination for the management of the track and the expansion of the IPZ.

Process of implementation

The critical activities were submission of a formal request for protection of the Kokoda IPZ under the Conservation Areas Act and developing the supporting Protected Area Management Plan for approval. Under PAGP, drafting of the request commenced and the management plan was drafted, incorporating a proposed Community Benefit Sharing Agreement, but this process will continue beyond the conclusion of PAGP. Gazettal of the IPZ as a protected area requires traditional custodians and community leaders to comprehend the potential revenue streams from protected area status and the responsibilities required for its management. Achieving consensus was the key step: customary landowners must agree, and communities must consent. A consultation strategy was developed. Due to the geographical, cultural, and political complexity of the consultation process, confirming consent is expected to take between one to two years. Since mid-March 2020, due to COVID-19 and long delays in finalising the communications strategy, community consultations on gazetting the IPZ stalled. Only minimal meetings with

¹⁷ Recognition under statutory civil law.

communities, landowners, and stakeholders took place. A consultancy to research financial modelling of power and water levies in Protected Areas commenced, but communications products and the Community Benefit Sharing Agreement require further development and finalisation for more in-depth consultations to progress.

Results achieved

As acknowledged in the KIP Program Completion Report (PCR), progress towards gazettal was limited, including on achieving community and landowner consent for the draft Protected Area Management Plan. This was reported by the MC as being largely due to weak institutional capacity and inability to engage effectively with community and key stakeholders. Interviews with stakeholders also suggested that ongoing capacity challenges, restructuring, and competing agendas and priorities within key institutions engaged on Kokoda were key factors in limiting progress on IPZ expansion.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Progress towards expansion of IPZ and achievement of World Heritage status stalled due to capacity constraints within key institutions. A change in priorities due to COVID-19 also played a part. Over the program lifecycle, activities led by KIP partner agencies in PNG, the KTA, CEPA, and NMAG struggled to gain momentum and traction, particularly around institutional strengthening, and capacity building. This reflected wider resourcing constraints: for instance, long-term technical support was needed from the Government of Australia Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment to support the process of extending the IPZ. However, the emerging Traditional Resource Custodians (TRC) (Landowner) Identification Project should enable engagement with the Kokoda TRC multiple clan groups and communities more effectively. The establishment of a legally constituted TRC representative association, supported by targeted capacity development, would enable a structured approach to TRC consultations in progressing the gazettal of the Region.

As the KIP enters a new phase, it will be important to refocus on the longer-term strategic future of the IPZ and ensure full community buy-in. Partnerships across communities, local governance, and civil society organisations developed through existing infrastructure and service delivery elements should be harnessed as a platform for engagement around issues relating to the IPZ, including discussion of land rights, community roles, and a sustainable economic model.

Focus Area 3: Development of a ranger cadre

Intended outcome

The KIP aimed to develop an accredited cadre of rangers with the basic skills required to stabilise the track structure. Rangers are also needed to support and monitor the implementation of KTA activities that preserve the special military and natural values of the area.

Process of implementation

The Ranger Capacity Development Programme was implemented between July 2021 and February 2022. It took a considered approach, consulting communities to raise awareness prior to commencement. An open recruitment process attracted high levels of interest and enabled selection of candidates best suited to these holistic roles. KIP focused heavily on achieving high quality of curriculum design and delivery, developing a curriculum tailored to the PNG and Kokoda cultural and geographical contexts while reflecting international standards and best practice. The training methodology and delivery combined theory and practical application, which included trainees undertaking priority track maintenance works to improve safety and access. This demonstrated an effective use of TA and partnership with the Queensland Authority delivering the curriculum and the training. Results achieved

The activities implemented are well documented in KIP reporting, complemented by a case study of a selection of trainees. This details the nature of the training, the roles now undertaken by graduates, and the impacts it had on the individuals and their communities, alongside pictures of the activities undertaken by the new rangers. Nineteen out of 20 trainees graduated from the ranger training, having completed training in competencies equivalent to a Level I Certificate in Conservation and Ecosystems Management. They are now working as rangers in holistic roles that encompass physical maintenance of the track, ensuring social safeguards and community outreach. The recruitment specifically sought to include women for the first time and four of the 19 graduates were women, the first women rangers in PNG.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Newly trained rangers testified to diverse benefits to themselves as individuals, to the maintenance of the track, and to Kokoda communities. They play holistic community roles, building relationships with a range of stakeholders and cooperating to deliver on physical maintenance and improvement of the track and social initiatives. The rangers were aware of how their roles explicitly align with and contribute to the KIMP. The trainees reported that they play a key role engaging with communities, representing the KIMP, and addressing arising issues, making it easier to maintain buy-in for the KIMP from communities. The tangible construction and repair work done by the rangers also built community confidence in them. Furthermore, women trainees spoke of acquiring broad life skills and empowerment through the training and viewed their roles as important models of women's participation—they actively encouraged other women to exercise their voice. This aligns with work elsewhere in KIP to support women's empowerment, leadership, and participation, and is a significant contribution to gender equality in Kokoda.

Focus Area 4: Water security

Intended outcome

The Kokoda Water Security Project (KWSP) sat under a broader expected outcome of enhanced quality of life (health, education, and livelihoods) and income for landowners and communities of the Kokoda Track Region. Under the COVID-19 pivot, it aimed to improve lives through provision of clean water as part of an integrated public health approach to tackling the pandemic. A secondary aim was to stimulate the local economy during the

shutdown of tourism, providing income to local businesses and labourers to participate in construction.

Process of implementation

KWSP demonstrated GoPNG and Government of Australia collaboration in both planning and funding (GoPNG contributed 20%) as well as collaboration and coordination between provincial governments, health authorities, communities, leaders, churches, schools, and health centres to maximise COVID-19 awareness, prevention, and mitigation opportunities through the construction of the WASH facilities delivered alongside health promotion activities. KWSP's 'localisation' approach was appreciated by communities. Water supply infrastructure was delivered to communities through local companies, using local labour (both men and women). The KWSP was mobilised rapidly, enabled by its use of existing health infrastructure, such as maternal and child health (MCH) patrols, village health volunteers (VHV). The delivery approach was adapted to overcome contextual challenges associated with infrastructure construction. Drawing on lessons from a similar project in Bougainville, KWSP built test sites to demonstrate quality standards to local contractors prior to their commencing work. They also undertook central procurement and delivery of materials, as it was hard to access these.

Results achieved

Water infrastructure was delivered to 36 communities in Oro and Central provinces. The KIP PCR outlined the implementation to a high degree of detail, presenting a case study testifying to the impacts of the KWSP, alongside photographic evidence of the new water infrastructure. Case study testimonies emphasised the impact on households now able to access clean water and on women and girls particularly, as they had previously taken responsibility for collecting water but now have more time for other activities. Stakeholders testified to economic benefits—construction engaged eight small building companies, 22 local service suppliers, and 421 community members (122 women and 299 men) as labourers at a time when livelihoods linked to tourism had ceased due to COVID-19. In addition, in a recent household survey by KIP, 90% of Kokoda households reported increased knowledge and changed practices to prevent COVID-19, due to access to water and knowledge around COVID-19 prevention. The evidence for the process and immediate outcomes is strong.

Case study testimonies conveyed improved quality of life for communities, including benefits for gender equality and the needs of women and girls through access to clean water and through targeted health activities.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

KWSP was a high-impact, well-integrated project in the context of COVID-19. The combination of tangible infrastructure with intangible services like COVID-19 awareness campaigns was effective in engaging communities, fostering behaviour change both through new facilities and new knowledge. The success of the public health campaign around COVID offers lessons for community education and engagement on other issues, including those related to the gazettal of the IPZ.

Focus Area 5: Promoting women's leadership

Intended outcomes

KIP aimed to increase participation and influence of women in leadership positions across KIP activity areas, including in service delivery, community governance, and business groups.

Process of implementation

Aligning with the KIP GEDSI SAP from 2019, the KIP supported women in communities through Pillar 2 activities, mostly through health and education; business, economic development, and income generation; and livelihood improvement activities. The approval of the GEDSI SAP in mid-2019 marked a step-change in both focus and expenditure. GEDSI activities incrementally gained traction with increased expenditure increasing from AUD 696,998 in 2019 to AUD 770,428 (17%) in 2020 and AUD 952,340 (29% of budget) in 2021. Increased expenditure and clear targets were instrumental in making and documenting progress.

The program applied a thorough monitoring and evaluation system to collect sex-disaggregated data and allocated sufficient budget to achieve gender equality outputs. They also encouraged partners to strengthen gender equality within their institutions. Results of the 2019 Kokoda Household Survey, released in early 2020 during the early onset of the pandemic, provided qualitative and quantitative data to inform GEDSI SAP priorities and support for women's leadership. These were a critical learning tool from which to design further activities in support of women's leadership through the pandemic period.

KIP's engagement with GoPNG on institutional capacity building activity declined during the lifetime of the KIP, due to competing demands and resourcing challenges. There was less work with GoPNG on GEDSI as a result. KIP focused instead on working on women's leadership primarily with and through the private sector and community and non-state partners. They promoted women's leadership and GEDSI mainstreaming and implemented varied activities to promote women's participation and leadership across different institutions, including household and community decision making, economic empowerment, and representation on school boards, trade centre committees, and the Campsite and Guest House Owners Association.

Results achieved

Through KIP, women took on a range of service delivery roles in health, education, and conservation (track maintenance), as well as being represented on decision making bodies where roles were previously filled by men. Women represent 36% of the leadership/membership in KIP partner schools BoMs, mainly holding the secretary or treasurer positions. In the Campsite and Guest House Owners Association, one of five executive positions is held by a woman and 12 out of 76 members are women. The Trade Centre Project targets women in business across the Kokoda Track and has supported 115 women (and 91 men) in product development and diversity. Women comprise 50% of all village health volunteers working across the Kokoda Track, undertaking outreach health

services patrols. Over 40 local women are regularly engaged as village health volunteers supporting MCH patrols. Approximately 20% of rangers are now women.

The Kokoda Track GEDSI Survey (2019) provided strong evidence that women have increased disposable income because of the Campsite and Guest House Project; that both men and women collectively make decisions about household income; that women are supported to access maternal health services; and that parents collectively make decisions about access to education for their children. Women's engagement in social and economic spaces is increasing, and key gender related indicators are good compared to other regions. For KIP counterpart agencies (KTA, NMAG, CEPA, the Tourism Promotion Authority, and the provincial governments), however, there was limited opportunity to engage GoPNG institutions around women's leadership due to a general slowdown in institutional strengthening activities, and therefore less traction in implementing related elements of KIP's GEDSI SAP.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The approach supported women to access and conduct leadership roles within service delivery, the private sector, and community institutions. Recruitment of women to positions of leadership increased women's visibility across Kokoda institutions and demonstrated their value to decision making, service delivery, and economic activity. Women's roles in health service delivery and education increased support for girls' participation in education and for women to access MCH services by extending coverage of services and making these adaptable to context and accessible through local women-led provision. For example, 90% of pregnant women accessed antenatal care at local health facilities or on MCH patrols (rates higher than GoPNG provincial averages of 49% for Central and 40% for Oro provinces). Women recruited to the committees of the local community Museums and Trade Centres were also able to safeguard these spaces for women's small business activities, as the committees have a role in monitoring usage. Women's leadership is therefore seen as an effective way to progress broader outcomes for women and girls and development indicators across sectors.

KIP Overall Commentary

Consistent with previous QTAG reviews, KIP demonstrated uneven progress across its three pillars, with Pillar 3: The Environment, seeing a slowdown in progress due to the challenges of COVID-19 to the institutional capacity building, consultation and accompaniment of high-level processes required to secure gazettal of the IPZ with full engagement of communities and other key stakeholders.

Limited progress towards intangible elements of the KIMP covered under Pillar 3 contrasted sharply with the rapid mobilisation to design and implement tangible community infrastructure in response to COVID-19. The utilisation of existing community-level and local governance structures to engage and mobilise both community support and local suppliers was effective and demonstrates the art of the possible in this context. Whilst seeking to avoid over-prioritising the tangible over the intangible, KIP should replicate this kind of integrated model and the social capital that supports it. At the same time, a concerted effort should be made to utilise this momentum to progress essential community-level engagement and policy progress in support of Pillar 3.

From a GEDSI perspective, KIP has a well-integrated approach and has progressed further than most partnerships in defining expected outcomes and targets in its gender strategy. Maintaining this focus and ensuring a high level of ambition on GEDSI will be important in future Kokoda programming. Greater focus on adding value to women's leadership would be a good idea to ensure that women broadly are able to engage differently with women elected to positions of responsibility so that benefits are for women across the community, not solely for those who benefit directly from employment or opportunities to undertake community leadership.

The transition from the CRP period to a post-COVID context must also ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to re-engage the range of government institutions effectively, using this transition as an opportunity to overcome broader institutional challenges that hindered progress prior to COVID and set institutional capacity building on a fresh trajectory. This is an opportunity to re-assess the optimum form of technical assistance to add momentum to institutional development.

3.5 – BP

Context

Following conflict from 1988 to 1997, a peace process from 1997 to 2005 led to the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) and the establishment of the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) in 2005. In 2016, the Government of Australia transitioned select Australian funded ABG governance programs and community development activities into BP. The BP was designed around three program pillars targeting three long-term development outcomes: autonomy and effective governance; economic development; and peace, security, and community cohesion. From 2022, BP will transition to the Australia–PNG Sub-National Program (APSP).

In 2019, a referendum resulted in 97.7% of eligible Bougainvilleans who voted doing so in favour of independence. The vote triggered the mobilisation of an ABG/GoPNG post-referendum consultative committee which, after a year of slow progress impacted by COVID-19 and ABG elections, regained some traction in 2021 with the signing the Sharp Agreement (March 2021) and the Joint Supervisory Body (JSB) roadmap for Bougainville independence (July 2021), now scheduled for 2027.

Following the referendum and building on review processes, an update to the BP Design and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was agreed. However, the delay of the Referendum Return of Writs (December 2019), as well as repurposing BP to address Australia's COVID-19 development response from March 2020 and the ABG general elections, delayed the production of the updated Design and Monitoring and Evaluation framework. This was approved by DFAT in November 2020. Alongside the COVID-19 pivot, the design continued support to the Office of the Bougainville Electoral Commissioner (OBEC) for the general elections (Pillar 1), economic development and agriculture-related activities (Pillar 2), and small grants projects for strengthening stability and community cohesion (Pillar 3).

Table 10: Expenditure on Bougainville in AUD (millions)¹⁸

BP	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual	0.4	18.0	24.2	19.1	18.5	19.6	14.2	113.6
Budget	0	18.4	23.5	19.1	18.4	19.6	14.0	113.0
Difference	-0.4	0.4	-0.7	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.2	-0.6

Focus Area 1: Referendum and post-referendum processes

Intended outcomes

Under Pillar 1, the BP aimed to contribute to the delivery of the independence referendum and provide subsequent support to the post-referendum commission process through increased institutional capacity in ABG institutions and reflection of the BPA in emerging policy and legislation. The expected outcome was that PNG and Bougainville governments would be enabled to engage on the core requirements of the BPA and the post-referendum framework.

Process of implementation

Support to the Bougainville independence referendum and post-referendum process was implemented through the placement of advisors within key institutions to accompany development of legislation and policy, as well as institutional development and capacity building. It included capacitating the Referendum Task Force, providing research to underpin deliberations and enabling the National Coordination Office for Bougainville Affairs (NCOBA) to deliver intergovernmental coordination.

The BP Strategic Advisor worked on an organisational capacity assessment for the NCOBA to develop a Capacity Building Plan (CBP). From mid-2020 (post-referendum), in response to contextual challenges and COVID-19 restrictions, the emphasis shifted away from strengthening broad-based corporate planning activities across ABG departments and towards supporting ABG/GoPNG agencies addressing priority tasks associated with the draw-down of powers – a narrowing of focus. This included supporting the Joint Technical Team (JTT) and JSB and maintaining post-referendum dialogue and policy development. The BP TA shifted focus to activities associated with ABG policy, legislative drafting, machinery of government, JSB consultations, NCOBA capacity building, fisheries and cocoa policy development, a post-referendum task force and consultations, and support to the OBEC. TA and capacity development support lost traction further in 2021 due to the untimely passing of the former BP Advisor to NCOBA.

Results achieved

The Bougainville Electoral Support Project improved the capacity of OBEC to manage future elections, increasing officers' skills to manage electoral processes. Gender inclusion in OBEC and in electoral management more generally improved. The BP also supported a

¹⁸ All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

Bougainville Referendum Research Project, with National Research Institute completing the first phase of research. However, due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the second phase has not yet commenced.

More broadly, there was limited activity in supporting the implementation of the BPA post-referendum in terms of developing structures, governance arrangements, and consultation mechanisms. There have been few substantive activities in support of strengthened leadership and strategic planning for inclusive development, including updating the Bougainville Strategic Development Plan 2018–22 priorities. In December 2020, BP conducted an organisational capacity assessment and Capacity Development Plan (CDP) reflection survey with all departments that had implemented a CDP. Summary results were presented in the BP PCR and reflected opinions of department secretaries and/or senior staff on the efficiency and effectiveness of CDP's implementation between 2018 to 2020. All departments reported that BP technical advisory assistance had been reasonably effective and valued. Three secretaries rated technical advisory support as 70% effective in increasing capacity. Some secretaries reported that leadership instability (revolving secretaries) over the last three to four years had impeded the effectiveness of technical advisory assistance and the department's implementation of CDPs. This is strong evidence for the role of TA in accompanying the referendum and post-referendum reform and the change this is seen to bring to host institutions. However, it would be useful going forward for the BP to articulate the process of institutional capacity building and change in greater detail and how technical advisory support contributes to this alongside other influences.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

BP technical advisory support helped facilitate post-referendum consultations and JTT/JSB deliberations. This created an opening to sponsor and resource a new restructured, independent NCOBA. BP should maintain capacity to support the post-referendum dialogue once structures are established. The Government of Australia is in a strong position to support both governments in that process. The BP should maintain capacity to respond when opportunities arise over time. Going forward, it is recommended that the Government of Australia remain adaptable to take a lead role in supporting post-referendum consultations that serve the objectives of both governments. This may be extended to resourcing secretariat support to post-referendum consultations within a restructured NCOBA.

From early 2020 through to mid-2021, ABG capacity development activities slowed markedly, largely attributed to a redirection of ABG resources and program focus away from administrative reform to accommodate the referendum; additional demands due to the pandemic and demobilisation of BP advisors; the ABG elections (from July 2020); and 13 vacancies in senior ABG public service positions.

Overall, in the BP, support to policy development, legislative drafting, legal issues, and the machinery of government presented satisfactory progress (reflected in December 2021 scorecard ratings) and/or good potential for gaining traction under the APSP transition. While these policy and legislative shifts were well documented in project reporting, it is hard to trace the path of change in terms of attributing specific progress to the roles of BP advisors due to the complexity of the change process and influences outside of the control of the BP. However, under the future BP modality, the MC should innovate with ways to report key institutional and policy change processes in greater depth over time, through longitudinal

tracking of advisory and capacity building activities and how they relate to the political economy and institutional development.

Focus Area 2: Peace and young people

Intended outcomes

The intended long-term outcomes of Pillar 3 were strengthened foundations for sustainable peace and stability through community cohesion, dispute and conflict resolution, youth development, and broad-based livelihood development. Intermediate outcomes included improved capacity of Bougainville institutions to foster inclusive development of youth and the engagement of Bougainville youth in economic, social, and civic activities.

Process of implementation

The strategy included youth peace committees accessing multiple pathways to integrated development, alongside support to peace and reconciliation processes at community level and the awarding of community grants to support livelihoods. Three grant modalities—the Bougainville Peace Building Program, the Bougainville Youth Initiative, and the Bougainville Community Grants Scheme—were the main means of implementation. Embedded technical advisors supported capacity development of institutions receiving grants.

Portfolio management of small grants is resource intensive. The capacity development support had a secondary aim of enabling the Bougainville Youth Federation (BYF) to administer grants in future. In the case of the Youth Network (the Youth Federation and its Youth Associations), micro-grant recipients also contributed local labour and resources to progress activity implementation. Livelihoods support took a ‘learning through doing’ approach with youth. Youth association affiliates sought additional funding and labour from other community sources, such as MPs and local businesses, to complement their activities. Activities provided young people with skills and knowledge relevant to village life and provided opportunities through practical livelihoods learning and doing to engage in income generation.

Results achieved

Through 18 small grants to the 17 district and through urban youth associations and the umbrella body BYF, BP strengthened the governance of the Youth Network and improved access to local youth groups across Bougainville.

Three hundred and seventy-five youth groups, made up of over 29,000 individual youth, became affiliated to the 17 district and urban youth associations. Four Bougainville-based service providers contracted by BP also delivered livelihoods activities through the BYF and youth association network. A running total of 318 economic micro-projects owned and run by youth were supported across all of Bougainville since 2020. As reported by the MC, youth projects have targeted both male and female-led civil society, recognising that these groups have different needs, interests and constraints.

The youth livelihoods ‘learning and doing’ approach produced numerous examples of micro-projects that started under the auspice of BP training and blossomed into ongoing micro-business. Many of these stories flew under the radar of program monitoring due to the

immense complexity of the reach of the Youth Network, its decentralised design and the fact that many activities happened in remote areas of Bougainville. The achievements and benefits of the Bougainville Youth Initiative workstream were well documented in the BP PCR and evidenced through a consolidated case study covering a range of locations: Siwai, Bana, and Buka Youth Associations.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Alongside broader reconciliation and economic interventions to support peace, strengthening of the Bougainville-wide Youth Association network created a platform enabling youth inclusion in the ongoing political and economic development of Bougainville. The level of youth exclusion is a key factor in determining the risk of future conflict. The platform will enable provision of further support to youth, such as livelihoods interventions, while harnessing the network to engage youth in decision making in support of peace. As the post-referendum process unfolds, this ability to reach young people offers the prospect of inclusive development of Bougainville's social, legal, and economic institutions.

A clear lesson is that the youth groups that succeeded most prioritised sound internal governance, such as elected committees, and reflected strong leadership. Capacity building to support good governance as youth organisations emerge is important for a sustainable youth-led civil society. The youth groups provided opportunities for youth to exercise peer-to-peer governance in a sphere going beyond family, village, and clan, laying foundations for inclusive governance processes more widely in Bougainville.

Stronger local civil society organisations and networks provide potential to reduce the administrative demands of small grant modalities for the MC. Future programming under BP and other programmes should, where appropriate, work with local entities to support them in administering small grants. This would also build on the success of 'learning through doing' in BP support to youth.

Focus Area 3: Cocoa sector support

Intended outcomes

Under Pillar 2 (agriculture and economic development), the long-term expected outcome was faster, more inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. Increased quality, quantity, and diversity of primary industry production and emerging industries growth was an end-of-program outcome. Several intermediate outcomes related specifically to the cocoa sector: improved production, quality and investment returns through cocoa farmer groups, improved economic and social wellbeing of younger and older women and men in cocoa farming families, and cocoa farmers having access to improved technology and market knowledge.

Process of implementation

Support was delivered through Commodity Support Facility (CSF) Grants, Commodity Innovation Projects, and the Commodity Supply Chain partnership. This support was not solely for cocoa production, although the Commodity Support Facility awarded grants specifically for the cocoa sector. The CARE Bougainville Cocoa Families Support Project

(BECOMES) also focused on economic and social welfare elements, and the Annual Bougainville Chocolate Festival provided a focal point for improvements to the sector.

Additionally, ABG and GoPNG collaborated in developing policy frameworks for agricultural commodity and fisheries regulation in Bougainville. This saw good progress as ABG prioritised policy and the development of commodity and fishery legislation. Support to the development of this legislation was provided by full-time, Bougainville-based, and home-based technical advisors.

Results achieved

The results of support to the coffee sector were well reflected in the BP PCR, including case study evidence exploring how activities led to improvements in cocoa production and benefits to farmers and communities.

A 2019 survey and subsequent analysis of 137 farmers suggested significant increases in production volume were already being experienced and would more than double by 2025. The payback point for the investment was predicted as 2023, with the latest data supporting these estimates. By the end of 2021, production quantities and quality for all 25 first-round cooperatives had increased in line with CSF targets.

In the PCR case studies, cocoa farmers commented that cooperatives enhanced management and technical skills and were able to grow and distribute seedlings. Management training for the cocoa farming business groups were effective, imparting market knowledge and access to improved technology. Improved cocoa quality and quantity enabled farmers to diversify their income and contribute subsequently to improved community and social wellbeing. Farmers reported the improvement in economic and social wellbeing of younger and older women and men in cocoa farming families as a significant change. With the outputs provided, farmers were already experiencing and embracing improved economic and livelihood changes, including the ability to diversify income sources from cocoa earnings to venture into SME activities. Respondents from interviews generally agreed that they are experiencing a significant increase to their income, enabling them to meet household needs, cultural obligations, school fees, housing, etc., including being able to save some money. A focus group discussion conducted with women farmers highlighted that more women now took leadership roles within the cocoa sector. Interviews with both men and women strongly highlighted that there has been a positive change of perception towards women's leadership from both men and women, which reflected positively on CSF outcomes.

Participants in BECOMES training on family business management and working together for gender equality reported an impact at household level. This highlighted the importance of proper communication and understanding between husband and wife, joint decision making, the value of saving money and proper budgeting, and the management of money earned from cocoa sales.

Simultaneous support provided by the BP-sponsored program BECOMES to CSF cocoa farming business entities, the timely establishment of the Bougainville Agriculture Commodities Regulation Act 2020 (BACRA), and the Bougainville Cocoa Regulation to suit the needs and context of the Bougainville cocoa industry, appears to have effectively catalysed the cocoa sector.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The evidence suggests that support for collectives produced improvements in inclusivity, governance, and cocoa production and quality. However, linking producers to markets and reducing supply chain impediments was challenging. Linking producers to markets through sustainable supply chains is essential if increased quality is to lead to increased incomes for cocoa farmers over the long term. Supply chain integrity will require further support, particularly in strengthening the partnership with buyers and exporters to give market confidence to pay premium prices for high-quality cocoa. The implementation of BACRA presents an opportunity to develop cocoa quality control protocols and to generate increased revenues to ABG.

Focus Area 4: Community government and women's participation

Intended outcomes

Pillar 1 had autonomy and effective governance as its overarching outcome, with a functioning and well-managed public service improving organisational capacity and service delivery in targeted key ABG departments as an end-of-program outcome. Within this, the drafting and passage of the 2016 Community Government Act by the Bougainville Parliament formed an intermediate outcome, particularly provisions for enhanced representation of women in local government positions. Another intermediate outcome was subsequent support for the conduct of the 2021 community government elections. The BP GEDSI SAP included further objectives to enhance participation of women and underrepresented groups in leadership, decision making, and peace building, including at the community government and ward assembly levels.

Process of implementation

BP provided TA through an advisor to develop the Community Government Act, passed by ABG in 2016.

In 2021, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) continued to target the operational capacity of OBEC and to promote women's involvement in the electoral process through support of a combination of annual workplan initiatives and improving individual officers' skills to manage electoral processes. BP supported IFES's 'She Leads' project activities. Promoting 'your voice, your vote, your future', the Bougainville Electoral Support Project leveraged lessons learned from the violence against women in elections (VAWE) initiative to promote the voices of women, persons with disabilities, and youth during the ABG consultation process on the results of the referendum.

The program approved small grants through ward assemblies and community governments to promote the participation of women in leadership and decision making in the identification and implementation of small development projects. Vice-chairs and chairs of ward assemblies and community governments worked together on these projects (roles were split between men and women). The BP also included activities to foster male allies in support of women's election to leadership positions.

Results achieved

TA ensured women's engagement in, and leadership of, formal community governance structures. ABG approved integration of gender equality considerations and incorporated a requirement to alternate community leadership positions between men and women.

OBEC successfully administered the 2020 ABG election and the 2021 community government elections. Under the Community Government Act, each community government with a man as its chair will be required to replace them with a woman, and vice versa. Since most community government chairs are currently men and most community government vice-chairs are mostly women, in upcoming elections it is expected that women will be elected to the vast majority of Bougainville's 47 community government chair positions.

Annex 7 of the BP PCR presented a GEDSI scorecard, noting satisfactory progress on Bougainville Community Grants (BCG) support to women's participation. Of seven grants directly being implemented by village assemblies throughout Bougainville, 43% of executive positions were occupied by women (i.e. nine women and 12 men were in leadership positions). The BP PCR summarised findings from focus group discussions conducted by IFES with elected community government women leaders and female ward members to better understand the challenges they faced in the execution of their office as an elected official. Female ward members also joined the survey. IFES supported OBEC to develop its GEDSI policy further to address these challenges. All OBEC departments now hold at least one meeting to implement their GEDSI policy SIPs. IFES implemented a 'She Leads' training and awareness session for all IFES and OBEC staff, and OBEC has nominated a GESI focal point.

Additionally, women are better represented on peace committees and other local decision-making committees. More women now sit on grant committees and management committees, for example. The PCR reported that little progress was made developing male allies for women's leadership.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The BP PCR reported a possibility that the requirement to alternate community governance chair and vice-chair positions between men and women could be overturned. This is a reminder that progress on gender equality can also be reversed, and that further focus is required to retain this commitment when it is time for women in vice-chair positions to take on chair positions. A stronger push on working with men and boys to change perceptions of women's leadership is required to create a broader base of support for the current system. Structured work with male allies to challenge voices against women's leadership would also reduce the likelihood of a reversal in gender equality gains.

Focus Area 5: The Bougainville Water Security Project (BWSP)

Intended outcomes

As the pandemic unfolded, the BP worked in partnership with DFAT to repurpose planned activities to comply with ABG's COVID-19 pandemic state of emergency (SOE) requirements and to support the Government of Australia, GoPNG, and ABG to develop a rapid response to COVID-19 that aligned with Australia's COVID-19 development response.

The BWSP sat under the BP Pillar 2 (agriculture and economic development), with the overall long-term expected outcome of faster, more inclusive, and sustainable economic growth in the Bougainville economy. Stated intermediate outcomes or outputs included implementation of the BWSP and providing benefits to Bougainville businesses and communities, including benefits from access to water and economic benefits associated with the project implementation.

The process of implementation

The BWSP was approved by BP Steering Committee in October 2020 and commenced late in the first quarter of 2021. The BWSP was designed as an integrated, high-impact project combining infrastructure construction with health promotion and fostering local and community cooperation and governance. It utilised existing social structures in Bougainville and relationships already forged by the BP, enabling rapid consultations at community levels to ensure local ownership of the new facilities and local engagement in the construction process. At the same time, it sought to stimulate the local economy during the COVID-19 SOE period. Child protection and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment training was also delivered to building contractors and teachers, given the potential risks to students during the construction period.

With the BWSP, BP adopted a nuanced approach to VfM rather than a whole-of-PNG open market approach. Aligning to Australia's COVID-19 development response to take into consideration the benefits to the wider political economy and 'economic' benefits to Bougainville, BP balanced the tension between the VfM competition and effectiveness principles to support income generation and enable economic recovery in Bougainville. Local companies were engaged where possible, as were others from elsewhere in PNG. The BP also remained closely involved in the procurement and construction process in order to ensure high quality and coordination.

Results achieved

At the end of 2021, the BWSP was 85% complete. The project provided a regular supply of clean, safe drinking water to promote greater health protection. Water storage and supply structures were built at select schools and public markets, delivered in partnership with ABG. The water installations comprised of an 8 m × 4 m steel structure for harvesting water, and two 9,000 litre water tanks and fittings. A total capacity of 558,000 litres of water storage was constructed. Thirty-one schools now have capacity for 18,000 litres of water—around 90 litres per student for an average-sized school. An estimated 6,000 or more students and teachers benefited from regular clean and cost-free water supply.

The BWSP increased income generation to Bougainvilleans by taking a localisation approach, utilising local companies and contractors to implement construction works. It also established governance arrangements at the school sites and small businesses to manage facilities. The project engaged six Bougainville building companies, 40 local service suppliers, and 350 community members (50 women and 300 men) as labourers. Most community members employed were Bougainvillean youth affiliated with local Youth Associations within the locality where the construction took place. Of the total expenditure to date, PGK 2,193,938 (43%) was expended directly into the Bougainville economy and PGK

2,856,767 (57%) was spent through PNG companies and suppliers for materials and transport.

The benefits of the BWSP were detailed in a case study in the BP PCR based on interviews with school beneficiaries, community leaders, and individuals engaged in construction. Informants described the impact of the new water supplies in allowing schools to stay open. This allowed a continuation of education. A range of less tangible impacts were also described by informants, particularly in terms of positive behaviour change across the school community. Informants reported that the water facilities increased children's attendance and performance and motivated parents to work together to improve and build other facilities, including the school fences. The project also provided economic development and cash stimulus in Bougainville during the SOE period, when other livelihoods options declined. They engaged local building companies, as well as 25 local transport and hardware suppliers. They also engaged over 440 community members as labourers and semi-skilled workers (20% women).

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

The BWSP demonstrated an effective integrated approach building on established social and economic structures and adapting procurement and monitoring approaches to accommodate contextual challenges while maximising local benefits. This approach also increased the positive perception of the program among local communities, further strengthening social capital in support of broader outcomes. The BWSP demonstrated a strong GEDSI aspect, adapting to meet the needs of women and girls as well as people living with disabilities.

BP undertook direct procurement of rainwater collection structures through competitive tendering, buying direct from major suppliers without adding builders' margins and achieving economies of scale and discounts through upfront buying, shipping, and storing in bulk. The MC estimated that this saved an estimated PGK 1. At the same time, the project targeted opportunities for local small-scale business stimulation, employment, and economic development, as well skill development. The planned pipeline of infrastructure works is expected to have generated over AUD 2.5 million within the Bougainville economy by April 2022. BP successfully managed a place-based approach that included a mechanism and robust governance structure for effective coordination and delivery of sectoral investments that contextualised Bougainville, GoPNG, and development partner political economy issues, mobilising local resources and knowledge to maximise impact. BP operates in an evolving environment, in which activities and timeframes cannot always be fully controlled to achieve desired results. The localised approach, balanced with central procurement, could be extended to more complex infrastructural investments over time, accompanied by intensive support from the MC team, maintaining an adaptive approach.

Going forward, the water supply construction could be complemented even further by COVID-19 prevention and immunisation activities at construction sites, such as education campaigns in handwashing, market management in washing down market stalls, or attendance of health officials at localities promoting COVAX and COVID-19 risk mitigation. Over the medium term, the BP should assess sustainability of the water infrastructure, including governance arrangements, community benefits, maintenance and upkeep, and

impact to community, all of which may yield further lessons. There is potential to scale up further, with additional localities identified in the more remote rural locations of Bougainville.

BP Overall Commentary

BP provided a range of tangible and intangible inputs. As elsewhere, there was a notable slowdown in the intangible side of accompaniment within ABG institutions, not least due to COVID and related shifts in advisor deployment but also other challenges in the post-referendum context as well as individual factors that influence advisor deployment. This highlighted the vulnerability of the accompaniment model and the importance of creating capacity building plans that enable greater sustainability.

Whilst capacity building across ABG slowed, there was a shift towards building capacities within civil society, notably through youth organisations and networks, supported by a small grants model. This enabled continuity through the COVID period and has developed a strong youth-based civil society which offers a platform through which to increase youth engagement across a range of social, economic and political issues.

The BP pivoted to support the COVID response, particularly through the integrated approach to WASH, health promotion and stimulation of the local economy through localised labour and procurement. This model shared lessons that were successfully replicated in Kokoda. It demonstrated the utility of established networks when consulting and mobilising communities, bringing together tangible and intangible approaches effectively. Going forward, similar approaches could be taken to ensure that all tangible development projects effectively engage communities to ensure buy-in as well as maximising local benefits through needs-based design, local employment and ensuring that educational and behaviour change efforts align with tangible changes.

3.6 – PPF (Education)

Context

PPF was a five-year grant mechanism established in 2017 to support GoPNG priority sectors of health and education. It aimed to identify and incentivise high performing NGOs to deliver longer-term, large-scale, and value-for-money projects through partnerships that enable reach in delivery.

This review focusses on selected results from PPF's education programmes¹⁹. Education access, student retention and daily attendance continue to be challenging across PNG. Contributory factors identified include poorly qualified elementary teachers, insufficient infrastructure, limited and inadequate teaching and learning resources, low parent and community involvement and weak leadership and management of schools. PPF activities have specifically targeted these barriers to education. PPF's theory of change (ToC) was developed in the early stages asserts, "if we improve teacher practices and strengthen the inclusive learning environments in schools as well as improve parents' capacity to support

¹⁹ PPF health programmes have already transitioned to the new PATH programme and so are not considered here.

their child’s learning and work with government to imbed good practices in teacher education institutes and policy, **then** improvements in student learning can be sustained beyond the life of the program”.

PPF comprises three education grants to consortia led by Save the Children, World Vision and CARE Australia, with activities in different provinces spread across PNG’s four regions. Together for Education (T4E), led by World Vision (WV) partnered with Child Fund, Library for All, the Consultative Implementation Monitoring Council (CIMC) and the Australian Institute for Sustainable Communities (AISC) at the University of Canberra. Rapidly Improving Standards in Elementary (RISE), led by Save, partnered with Callan Services and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Pikini Kisim Save (PKS), led by CI, partnered with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, the University of Goroka, the Queensland University of Technology and Church Education Agencies.

All three grants contribute to the four overarching PPF end of program outcomes (EOPO):

- EOPO 1: Teachers demonstrate improved practices
- EOPO 2: School learning environments are inclusive, safe and enable student learning and attendance
- EOPO 3: Parents/caregivers demonstrate improved practices towards enhancing student learning and attendance
- EOPO 4: The early grade education system in PNG is strengthened and more resilient

The AHC shares lessons learned with the National Department of Education (NDoE) through an MoU and engages both GoPNG and NGO stakeholders. With the onset of COVID-19, the program PPF adopted a stronger coordination role in supporting adaptation by the three programmes to meet GoPNG priorities as they worked in collaboration with the NDoE.

Table 11: Expenditure on PPF (Health + Education) in AUD (millions)²⁰

PPF	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual		20.1	19.8	29.5	26.6	16.4	9.1	121.4
Budget		0	25.7	36.5	32.0	16.5	9.2	119.9
Difference	N/A	-20.1	5.8	7.0	5.5	0.1	0.1	-1.5

Focus Area 1: Teacher training

Intended outcome

PPF aimed to produce a cadre of well-trained teachers through provision of various professional development trainings. Within this broader outcome areas, the review particularly looked at efforts to produce, and gain approval by NDoE, of Standards Based Curriculum (SBC) English and Mathematics Inservice Training Manual for Elementary Prep 1 and 2 teachers, to be implemented in the 10 selected pilot provinces.

Process of implementation

The grantees worked closely with NDoE (national and provincial officers) on the development of the SBC English and Math Teacher Training Manuals and its piloting in teacher training settings. The manuals were approved at the Teacher Education Technical Working Group (PPF, NGO leads, AHC and NDOE and approved by NDoE's Top Management Team for wider usage (in-service) across PNG.

Results achieved

Results for this outcome area were reflected in detail in the PCR as well as individual grantee reports from the implementing INGO's. This included reports from teacher training processes and perspectives of those trained. Anecdotal evidence from interviews with stakeholders have been used to verify claims and explore additional aspects not reflected in reporting.

6,455 elementary teachers were trained and are now better equipped to deliver the English and Maths SBC and provide an improved quality of education to early grade learners.²¹ 2,502 elementary schools across 10 provinces and 1,035 early learning centres across three provinces are better resourced to support effective teaching and learning activities.

The PCR estimates that 360,575 children benefited from better qualified teachers who received support and training through the program. However, the PPF PCR also states that whilst many elementary teachers received some orientation to the new SBC, few received

²⁰ Note this is the combined spending for both PPF health and education. The focus on results in this document is on education, as health transitioned out in 2020. All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

²¹ PPF PCR July 2017-January 2022, verified in the interviews with World Vision and Save the Children through T4E, RISE and PKS and documented by Care International in its Completion Report.

extensive training on how to use the teaching resources effectively and many schools do not have a complete set of resources.

Whilst NDoE endorsed the usage of the SBC English and Mathematics Inservice teacher training manuals for use across PNG, there is ongoing work between PNG Education Institute and Department of Higher Education, Research, Science & Technology to accredit the materials so that they can be institutionalised.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

It is evident that the INGOs did well to deliver teacher training outcomes but needed more engagement with the National Department of Education. Further work remains to operationalize policies, procedures, and support mechanisms, so that the SBC training manuals can be fully rolled out. The training of a teacher cadre under PPF has assumed that these teachers will cascade best-practice approaches to other teachers in their workplaces. It remains to be seen whether they will be able to do this. School support structures may be the determining factor here.

Focus Area 2: Teacher professional development

Intended outcome

PPF aimed to develop mechanisms to further enhance teacher learning and effectiveness beyond initial curriculum-based training, with focus on Teacher Learning Circles (TLC) to improve teaching and learning outcomes in the school setting. This would contribute to achievement of the long-term outcome that teachers demonstrate good practice by active involvement in reflective practices for continuous improvement.

Process of implementation

School-based TLCs were first piloted in Central province and then expanded to Morobe and Madang. The project developed 18 TLC modules which required teachers to watch project videos of classroom teaching and discussed observed practices. Discussions centred on topics covered, strengths of lessons taught, new learnings, ways to strengthen the lessons, and plans for their own teaching. The videos were recordings from phase 1 and in phase 2, 15 new videos were produced. Each province was provided with 25 tablets preloaded with modules.

Given the delay in institutionalising the SBC teacher training manuals, formalisation to develop ongoing teacher learning and performance improvement mechanisms has also been delayed

Results achieved

Results for this outcome area were reflected in detail in the PCR as well as individual programme reports from the implementing INGO's. Perspectives from interviews with stakeholders have been used to verify claims and explore additional aspects not reflected in reporting.

Whilst TLC modules were piloted in the three provinces as detailed above, this was not rolled out further and the requirement for in-school professional development has not been further institutionalised.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Occasional teacher trainings are not enough to ensure quality teaching. It is suggested that NDOE invest in comprehensive teacher professional development that includes on-going in-service training using the Teacher Learning Circles modality, provision of teaching materials like Bilum Books to be used in the classroom. Bilum Books are good teaching resources, and regular teacher monitoring. There is still a need to create a pathway for upskilling of teacher qualifications and the need to produce more books”.

The T4E project piloted TLCs in support of teachers’ professional development in addition to literacy and numeracy trainings. TLCs should be promoted as a sustainable professional development model as it is low cost and requires only occasional resource support. The TLC approach can be included as part of in-service program. PEA/DEA officials should take charge in continuing TLC, Teacher Training, and Lesson Observations in their districts. Teacher professional development is key. It should be comprehensive and continued. Initial teacher training must be increased and should be ongoing to set teachers up for success as elementary teachers.

Involving more PDoE officers in project implementation activities would be a good approach to ensure the work is sustainable. Future programmes should seek to maximise PDoE engagements alongside INGO implementation.

Consultations identified the system to get teachers registered on payroll as a significant issue and also found that school inspectors need to be provided with more resources to carry out their responsibilities (i.e. transport costs). Multiple factors impact on the effectiveness of efforts to ensure quality teaching in schools.

Focus Area 3: School Leadership

Intended outcome

PPF aimed to improve school leadership and governance through strengthening the capacity of School Boards of Management (BoM) to develop School Learning Improvement Plans (SLIP) and oversee their implementation.

Process of implementation

Stakeholder groups inclusive of the communities, parents, caregivers, and school board of management (BOM) were actively engaged in SLIP implementation and empowered to promote inclusive schools through awareness sessions and training.

Results achieved

Results for this outcome area were reflected in detail in the PCR as well as individual programme reports from the implementing INGO’s. Perspectives from interviews with

stakeholders have been used to verify claims and explore additional aspects not reflected in reporting.

It was reported that BOMs who received training in SLIP have the capacity to develop their own SLIPs and to oversee implementation of the plans. This was articulated by the T4E Project Lead during consultations for this review:

“With the leadership training and SLIP training provided by T4E project, school BOM got refreshed /clarified on their roles and were able to develop simple and implementable SLIPs using the simplified and contextualized SLIP Training Manual suited for Elementary TIC/SBOM capacity.... for those school BOMs already trained by the project. The project also introduced them to internal resource mapping and generation so they will not be dependent on the unreliable TFF. They were given tips/ideas how they can internally generate resources to implement their SLIP. The T4E have monitoring data/information/written impact stories showing schools who have built additional classrooms, concrete school, etc., as part of their SLIP implementation. Below is just one of those SLIP impact stories am talking about”

The PPF PCR reports that teachers, school administrations and governing bodies are more aware of the need to create inclusive learning spaces for children and the importance of regular school attendance and making sure this is captured in School Learning Improvement Plan. This claim is backed by the consortium partners’ interviews. According to an INGO team leader, “BoM chairpersons were provided with gender and disability inclusion training. Teachers in Charge were provided with training and guidelines on providing lesson observations and coaching and mentoring support to their own teachers”. A similar view is shared by another NGO Team Leader, “BOM chairpersons were involved in a week-long training on Inclusive and Home Reading sessions which included caregiver and reading club sessions. BOM chairpersons were trained on organizing and preparing the sessions so that the teachers could facilitate sessions”.

Analysis of impact and lessons learned

Work with BoM’s appears to be effective in transforming the vision and knowledge of school leadership, helping the individuals that make them up aware of their potential to effect change through implementing a more systematic approach to goal setting, monitoring, and support. The benefits of BoM working closely with communities are now appreciated and off a fresh approach to education as a key community service with vested stakeholders supporting this.

PPF Overall Commentary

Across PPF’s education outcomes, all INGOs verified the statistics presented in the PPF PCR, restating progress despite the geographical terrains they had to work in, the political landscapes, lifestyle of the different communities, and the challenges of provincial and subnational governments weakness in implementing GoPNG directives. COVID-19 abruptly affected delivery of services, but PPF was able to shift its’ modality with an enhanced role for PPF coordination across the implementing grantees. This shift enabled PPF to achieve original aims despite the additional challenges of COVID because of the strong and supportive PPF Administration, the systems, structures and learning experiences of the

INGO and partners and the support accorded by the GoPNG stakeholders on the ground – provincial and local level education providers. PPF demonstrated adaptability during the pandemic period which presented additional challenges such as schools shutting down or scaling back and problems getting technical support. Flexibility was key to continuing a useful intervention which pivoted to address aspects of NDoE's COVID Response and Recovery Plan. Collaborative partnerships within the consortium arrangement enabled successful achievement of key outcomes by pooling together of resources and knowledge sharing. Engaging subnational stakeholders and partners on the ground was vital, as well as having local knowledge, is a vital basis for adaptability.

In terms of equity, it is not clear how focus provinces for PPF were selected. It would be useful, in future programmes, to ensure greater articulation of how targeting related to needs across the country in order to track the overall effectiveness of this approach for national educational outcomes.

Over the 5-year implementation period, PPF demonstrated increased focus on GEDSI, developing a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) and introducing new approaches over time. Most notable is the work of Save the Children and Callan Services to assess needs of people with disabilities across the education system. This provides a basis from which to enhance provision of a previously largely excluded group within PNG's education system.

Overall, PPF demonstrated the importance of partnering with the National Department of Education and Sub-national levels of Provincial Education Divisions and at District level and provides lessons that can be replicated in further improvements to education services in remote and rural PNG.

3.7 – IPP DSS

Context

IPP DSS was managed by the MC. This supported the IPP, a government-to-government program aiming to strengthen institutional relationships and generate benefits for PNG and Australia. Twelve Australian and 18 GoPNG agencies participated. IPP employees provide peer mentoring, coaching, and capacity building support to GoPNG officials. Several institutional relationships were also funded by sectors outside the IPP (known as non-IPP agencies) used IPPDSS services.

DSS is responsible for facilitating the safe deployment of Australian personnel to PNG, and GoPNG officials to Australia (known as 'reverse deployees'). The service is charged with logistics and administrative support for DFAT, government agencies, and all deployees. Following a redesign in July 2017, DSS was also made responsible for monitoring and evaluation support, capacity development support, and GEDSI training and socialisation within the program. Over 2019, 2020, and 2021, 223 IPP deployments were carried out, with 91 deployments from non-IPP agencies. Non-IPP agencies include COVID-19-related Australian Medical Assistance Teams (AUSMAT), the Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia, and the Australian Election Commission.

IPP DSS spent a total of AUD 14.36 million between FY 2017/18 and FY 2021/22. The partnership was severely impacted by COVID-19, as is further explored in Focus Area 2. IPP

DSS was placed into periods of ‘pause’ at DFAT’s request for some periods of 2020/21 due to border closures and the return of deployees. As of March 2022, five deployees have returned to PNG, down from 178 in 2019.

Table 12: Expenditure on IPP DSS, in AUD (millions)²²

IPP	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Total
Actual	0.2	5.6	5.3	4.8	3.5	0.4	0.3	20.1
Budget	0	10.9	8.6	5.5	5.3	0.4	0.4	31.0
Difference	-0.2	5.3	3.3	0.7	1.8	-0.1	0.0	10.9

Focus Area 1: Operations support provided by DSS

Examination of this focus area comes primarily through interviews with key informants and review of documents provided by the MC. The feedback from all the agencies was positive regarding support from DSS. This was particularly true of the support delivered during the complicated months at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Security assistance while deployees were based in-country was reported by several sources as prompt, appropriate, and a positive aspect of the program. Deployees reported feeling supported and ‘in good hands’ with the DSS team. Accommodation and logistic support were also reported to be of high quality. Repeated statements were made from various sources that this support enabled the deployees to focus on their workplans and to be more productive. The quality of assistance had not dropped despite decreases in support staff numbers in 2020 and 2021.

Focus Area 2: Technical advisory support during COVID-19

COVID-19 and the lockdown of borders in both Australia and PNG inevitably had major impacts on IPP DSS, even in comparison with other partnerships. At DFAT’s request, deployees were rapidly sent back to their respective homes in March 2020, with the vast majority required to continue their deployments remotely. Five deployees returned to their positions in PNG in 2021. Reverse deployees were also sent back to PNG in 2020, and no reverse deployees have returned to Australia since.

The reporting and the key informant interviews indicated the positives and negative aspects of the remote working model. In general, impressive steps were taken to adapt across agencies and there were several examples of good practice. Deployees who had pre-existing relationships with their counterparts were better able to continue building capacity. Technological challenges and online proficiency presented very real barriers. Some agencies—particularly those involved in ‘reverse twinning’—were proactive about addressing these logistical challenges, providing funding for mobile data and arranging access to internet-connected conference rooms.

Deployees were able to identify several remote working strategies they employed with their counterparts to adapt to the context. Examples included different ways of modelling new information, employing adult learning principles, and placing a greater emphasis on revision

²² Note that this is expenditure without twinning, as this is under Strategic Objective 2. All financial data contained within this report was derived from the most recent updated figures received from the managing contractor on 18/03/22. Any costs after this date have not been incorporated.

when teaching a new skill. Deployees cited a strong desire to learn more across the various agencies and shared examples across different agencies. DSS contributed to an IPP GovTeams site but this was not found to be used regularly or to provide significant information.

Good practice was identified in communication and synergy between economic agencies and EGIG. Formal meetings, as well as regular informal communication across EGIG, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Treasury, and the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), reduced duplication and overlap in workplans and activities. Other agencies interviewed did not report similar connections with a relevant PAGP partnership (where one existed). This was similarly echoed in the QTAG evaluation of IPP DSS in March 2020, which found strong buy-in of individual partners to their own institutional partnerships, but less visibility of the broader whole-of-government partnership. This is a missed opportunity for modality of PAGP as a linked unit.

Focus Area 3: Capacity development and monitoring and evaluation

Capacity development provided in GEDSI and MEL by DSS was considered useful by deployees. MEL assistance, in particular, was identified as being highly beneficial, assisting agencies to develop stronger logic to their programs and increasing their capacity to meet DFAT standards of reporting. GEDSI capacity development was less advanced than the MEL training and focused primarily on awareness and attendance. Interviewees stated there was more to be done in this section but saw improvement over time of this review. General capacity development support focused primarily on capacity diagnostics as opposed to knowledge share as was identified by QTAG previously.

MEL processes were felt by some agencies as being not fit for purpose within IPP DSS. Several mechanisms intersected and overlapped and were reported as burdensome by the deployees. Agency six-monthly report templates were cited as overly long and repetitive, and feedback to and recommendations from the various monitoring products (e.g. rapid review; QTAG reviews) were not clearly connected. Some recommendations presented in previous reports did not appear to have been implemented. Stakeholders interviewed, including IPP deployees and program management teams, were often unclear about the implementation status of recommendations and the progress of particular documents. At times, review processes did not culminate in discussions around subsequent improvements to programming, leaving some perception of futility about stakeholders' contributions.

Commentary on IPP

The QTAG IPP Phase 2 Evaluation in March 2020 found that things were progressing on the right trajectory overall. DSS enabled advisors to concentrate on their workplans and encouraged deployees to return, building strong relationships between the two governments. The feedback given to this final review suggested that agencies deployed individuals who were passionate about building capacity across their sister agency and wanted to improve the longevity of their inputs. Sharing knowledge around the cultural and communicative skills required for successful inputs could bolster longer-term impact. Learnings that MEL products should build in greater specificity should be carried forward. Recommendations and subsequent actions from review products require transparency to encourage trust across various stakeholders.

Evidence on IPP was found to be moderately strong. Conclusions are primarily drawn from review of previous independent reporting from QTAG and other sources. The final review team held consultations to interrogate key points, but the number of agencies involved means that reporting relies on case studies of specific agencies. As such, high performing and high-profile relationships may be over-represented.

3.8 – Deep dive on GEDSI

The GEDSI deep dive assesses the development, integration, and implementation of GEDSI strategies at both platform and partnership levels, and early indications of their impact. The initial End of Program Outcomes for the facility included KRA 2: “Governance programs effectively addressing critical gender issues”. However, there was a lack of clarity or broad agreement at program commencement on how that outcome should be achieved or measured. Further, there was no clear articulation of what ‘critical gender issues’ were in the PNG context or how gender and governance are interlinked conceptually. As such, the PAGP approach to mainstreaming gender and inclusion took significant time to evolve and be defined at both platform and partnership levels, and it remains a work in progress. Change around GEDSI often happens slowly, particularly where capacity building and norms change is needed over extended periods. As such, we focus on progress along specified change pathways—a direction of travel towards GEDSI goals in line with the evolving GEDSI approach of the platform and partnership theories of change rather than the achievement of longer-term goals.

As the PAGP PAF was updated, the ambition on gender equality at platform level also evolved. In the 2020 revision, under Outcome 1 which aimed to enhance effectiveness of the platform, intermediate outcome 1.2 aims for ‘Strengthened collaboration to promote Gender Equality and Social Inclusion across partnerships’. The expected milestones were for regular reports and reviews or evaluations to identify GESI priorities, report on implementation and document lessons learned from collaboration on GESI. Additionally, under Outcome 2: Enhanced VfM and MERL systems, Intermediate Outcome 2.5 aimed to achieve ‘Enhanced gender equality, women’s empowerment and social inclusion outcomes, reporting and mainstreaming across the facility’. Milestones detailed included the development of GESI strategies and action plans, including related outcomes and indicators at partnership level (Yr1), development of GESI tools and training for partnership staff on these (Yr1), GESI financial tracking operationalised (Yr 1), partnerships to consider opportunities to increase programming expenditure with a direct principal GESI objective (Yr2), and implementation of GESI strategies (Yr2/3) and strengthened GESI capacities at partnership level (Yr2/3).

The review team explored GEDSI aspects across consultations with the MC, GoPNG, DFAT, and other external stakeholders. In addition to scrutinising GEDSI within the range of documentation for each partnership, this review considered GEDSI SAPs for all partnerships, as well as GEDSI-specific reporting at both partnership and platform levels. In consultations, we asked about overall progress in approaches to mainstreaming GEDSI, including how PAGP has integrated GEDSI at platform level. We also asked how individual partnerships had developed and implemented GEDSI strategies as recommended, and we explored particular examples where partnerships addressed specific gender issues. The consultations included discussions on the inclusion of disability, which was included alongside gender equality within GEDSI strategies. In this deep dive, disability inclusion is

primarily considered where it intersects with gender equality rather than where it exists in parallel.

GEDSI MERL

Broader weakness of PAGP MEL systems and capacity, as identified in the 2019 QTAG Review, created challenges for monitoring and evaluating achievement of GEDSI outcomes and for learning on GEDSI. The 2019 Annual Review recommended that *'all partnerships finalise strategies for GESI (incorporating gender, disability and broader issues of inclusion) and ensure complete integration within results frameworks, or PAFs, and MEL strategies so that reporting reflects progress towards GESI outcomes as well as reporting spend on gender as per DFAT requirements. Partnership workstreams should include specific MEL processes to capture outcomes on GESI, building on hard data where possible (e.g. survey data) or developing case studies to articulate change processes and outcomes as a basis for future programming.'* This direction was reflected in the final PAF outcomes outlined above.

Led by the Senior Program Manager, PAGP undertook a Gender and Inclusion Stocktake Report in 2019/20, which provided a baseline assessment of the integration of GESI across the platform and partnerships and a basis for monitoring of change. It also established four gender and inclusion priorities for PAGP. The process of undertaking the GESI stocktake also stimulated discussion around GEDSI across the partnerships and facilitated buy-in from its directors, who agreed commitments to prioritise GESI initiatives through both programs and operations.

Each partnership now has a GEDSI strategy. Since the gender stocktake, efforts have been made to define GEDSI targets and indicators at both platform and partnership levels, with some partnerships achieving this and others still evolving their frameworks. BP and KIP demonstrate good integration and clear targets and indicators, while other partnerships have only progressed to defining higher level strategies.

At the same time, the partnerships committed to tracking GEDSI-related spend, creating partnership-level accountability for incorporating and delivering GEDSI activities and their expected outcomes. GEDSI financial tracking, established in 2019, proved a useful tool for monitoring and informing GEDSI principal and GEDSI-integrated programming across partnerships and increased the visibility of GEDSI initiatives delivered. Expenditure to date demonstrated relatively consistent expenditure on GEDSI-integrated programs over FY 2020 and FY 2021. There was increased acknowledgement across the partnerships that achieving GEDSI outcomes required dedicated budget and, although it is too soon to determine impact, there have been significant increases in GEDSI spend that are expected to lead to longer-term changes in support of gender equality.

However, despite the significant uplift in commitment and delivery of GEDSI-related initiatives noted in the 2019 and 2020 Annual GESI Mainstreaming Reports, evidence of GEDSI outcomes is still challenging. Reporting at the level of activities and outputs has improved significantly, with gender disaggregation throughout and some identification of GEDSI-specific activities in all partnerships. However, where targets and indicators are defined, these have been relatively recent, and in many cases they are absent. At the same time, capacity to measure change in the GEDSI space is still limited. In 2021, the GESI and

MEL communities of practice were consolidated to enhance shared learning on GESI and MEL, while the GESI core team continue to provide technical GESI advice to partnerships.

Case study approaches used in the partnerships PCR reports were a useful approach in situating change in the lives of local women, describing the activities implemented and the changes these had brought to both individuals and communities. However, deeper studies could explore how that change was achieved, how activities may have contributed alongside other factors, and what the longer-term implications there might be.

Approaches to GEDSI mainstreaming

PAGP made significant efforts to improve mainstreaming of GEDSI during the period of implementation, including steps to implement recommendations from previous annual reviews.

The management of GEDSI mainstreaming through PAGP evolved significantly. In the original Papua New Guinea Governance Facility, gender and inclusion-focused roles sat within the now defunct Knowledge, Analytics and Learning (KAL) Team. The 2018 QTAG Annual Review acknowledged that good initial foundations for gender outcomes had been established, although progress had been limited by a lack of prioritisation at senior levels. Following the 2018 QTAG review, several structural changes raised the profile of GEDSI and created momentum towards mainstreaming across the facility and partnerships. PAGP established a Gender and Inclusion Community of Practice to provide technical analysis and advice, deliver training for staff, and support implementation of activities across partnerships. PAGP also appointed a Senior Program Manager for Gender Mainstreaming, reporting directly to the executive. Partnerships elevated the importance of GEDSI within PAGP more effectively than earlier attempts to progress GEDSI through nominated focal points within partnership teams. These had generally been more junior roles, without allocated budgets and lacking an overarching PAF or GEDSI strategy to guide collaborative efforts. Driven by the creation of lines of accountability outcomes and by the allocation of budget, the restructuring was a catalyst for significantly greater action to integrate GEDSI. The 2019 QTAG Annual Review subsequently noted improvements in terms of knowledge and articulation of GEDSI approaches across PAGP, well-designed training, and progress in developing partnership GEDSI strategies.

As noted above, there was little conceptualisation of gender and governance at the start of PAGP, and in the early years gender-related activities appeared as discrete learning initiatives or 'add-on' projects with a gender equality or women's empowerment focus, rather than as integrated gendered approaches to governance issues. A significant achievement was the development and rollout of the Skelim Pawa Analysis and Programming framework, supporting tools and training of partnership teams. This provided practical tools for program managers to integrate GEDSI analysis in program designs, and staff reported finding this useful in their work, particularly in terms of outlining contextually relevant approaches and giving staff the confidence to incorporate GEDSI when they did not consider themselves to have expertise in this area.

Significant momentum on GEDSI followed the appointment of the AHC GESI Advisor and the PAGP Senior Program Manager for Gender Mainstreaming, with their combined efforts contributing to building clarity, coherence, and alignment both within and across AHC and

PAGP. Having these roles provided focus and coordination to GEDSI mainstreaming and allowed increased capacity building and support to staff across the MC and within AHC teams. Having a senior GEDSI role within the MC was key to drive greater focus, resourcing and knowledge-based programming to address gender issues.

The COVID-19 pivot catalysed further focus on GEDSI-related activities. Health promotion and livelihoods interventions offered gender-specific opportunities, and the partnerships seized these to further integrate priorities from their partnership GEDSI SAP as they underwent program redesign. Several staff members felt that the presence of the SAPs had provided a roadmap for GEDSI integration at a crucial time, as expectations and potential approaches in each partnership context were already clear. There was increased expenditure on GEDSI-focused programs (reported from 2.49% in FY 2020 to 8.14% in FY 2021) delivered through COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives, primarily the MERI program, SME Business Continuity Coaching, and water and infrastructure projects.

The 2020 Annual GEDSI Report highlighted significant progress in achieving outcomes in the priority areas of women's leadership, women's access to economic opportunities, and strengthened social and disability inclusion. In the priority area of prevention and response to GBV, EGIG and PSLR collaborated on data and analysis on the economic impact of GBV in the public service. These gains demonstrate an improvement from the former trajectory of the facility and partnerships on GEDSI, albeit from a low starting point and with room for further improvement.

As PAGP progressed through its final year, there was natural attrition as staff move to new roles. Dedicated GEDSI-staffing at platform level declined, but greater responsibility for GEDSI passed to the partnerships and the commitment to GEDSI was reflected in the designs for new programs. This demonstrated influence from both previous GEDSI-focused staff, the existence of the GEDSI SAPs that were transferable in most cases to new programming. The new program designs allowed for dedicated GEDSI-focused positions, and in some cases, these are already in place. The input of the AHC GESI Advisor during the design phases of new programming was also a critical factor in drawing lessons from previous programmes and identifying ways to mainstream GEDSI within programme concepts and theories of change from the start.

PAGP continued to deliver gender and culture orientation training to all new starters across the partnerships. Initially delivered face-to-face, training shifted to a hybrid model due to COVID-19 SOE restrictions in 2020. An online training module was introduced to provide greater accessibility for staff in remote locations and in case restrictions are extended again - available at minimal cost in Tok Pisin or in local languages. It is hoped this provision will continue beyond PAGP.

The QTAG 2019 Review recommended that efforts to counter family and sexual and violence (FSV) should be intensified by all partnerships. This recommendation was reiterated in the 2020 Annual GESI Mainstreaming Report. Plans around 'do no harm' approaches were appropriate to the PNG programming in general but these did not go far enough. PAGP has not generally perceived addressing FSV-directly as a priority for governance programming. PAGP did not have a significant focus on FSV prevention or response. In the context of PNG (with exceptionally high rates of FSV), all GESI-integrated initiatives should as a minimum integrate a 'do no harm' approach that explicitly considers

FSV risks and takes steps to prevent increased FSV within communities as a result of program implementation. However, aspects of governance that impact on FSV should also be directly tackled. Where drivers and risk factors of FSV relate to policy and governance issues, or where governance can promote FSV prevention, this should be seen as core to governance programmes.

Changing emphasis within DFAT/AHC

Notably, AHC attention towards GEDSI and understanding of what this could mean for PAGP increased over the lifetime of the PAGP. The appointment of the AHC GESI Advisor was crucial in clarifying the GESI agenda and facilitating alignment across the Australian Aid investments and working with AHC colleagues to bring a GESI focus into different program areas. The AHC GESI Advisor also functioned as an effective bridge between AHC and the PAGP GEDSI Senior Program Manager, prompting a more regular ongoing dialogue that identified new opportunities and consolidated understanding of challenges and objectives on both sides.

Analysis, lessons, and recommendations

At the start of PAGP, there was an ambition to address critical gender issues, but little articulation of what those critical issues might be or how gender equality and governance are interlinked. There was also little initial guidance for realising this ambition. Over time, PAGP has incorporated clearer gender process outcomes into its results framework, requiring partnerships to have GEDSI strategies, to report spend on activity directly addressing gender and to provide regular reporting on GEDSI mainstreaming and achievements. At the same time, different partnerships have identified relevant issues and incorporated additional gender-focussed activity. However, this still falls short of fully integrating a gendered perspective to governance programming.

Given that behavioural change in support of gender equality takes time and subsequent benefits emerge only gradually, it is too early to assess longer-term impacts of PAGP approaches to GEDSI. Detailed data available on the long-term benefits of mainstreaming GEDSI is scarce. However, there is evidence of significant changes in the approaches taken at platform level and across partnerships. Based on understanding of what works in GEDSI mainstreaming and social development, the approaches taken present a positive picture, despite some limitations and areas where more could be done.

GEDSI priorities must be championed by senior leadership. The elevation of focused GEDSI roles within the hierarchy within PAGP, and also in AHC, allowed greater direct dialogue and the identification of new opportunities, and contributed to significant advances. It is notable that the GESI agenda significantly progressed in PAGP following appointment of a Senior Program Manager for Gender Mainstreaming, reporting directly to the executive.

Key recommendations for future programming are as follows.

- Clarity in program design should be ensured at the level of ambition on GEDSI, and this should be integrated into MEL frameworks from the start. The new programs beyond PAGP should prioritise full integration of GEDSI through their MEL frameworks, including (where possible) a longitudinal approach to measuring change

and longer-term impact on gender equality outcomes. Greater clarity, specificity, and agreement across all parties at program commencement on expectations—in terms of both resources required and expected outcomes—could have facilitated earlier progress in the development of the approach enabling more substantive progress in the achievement of GESI outcomes.

- New programs should ensure that GEDSI-focused staff roles are suitably filled, given adequate financial support to fully implement GEDSI SAPs and given suitable positions within management hierarchies to ensure influence on GEDSI at the strategic level.
- Specialist GEDSI expertise within AHC should be maintained to foster ongoing dialogue on how best to progress GEDSI outcomes and to further strengthen understanding within AHC and momentum in implementing Australia’s GEDSI priorities.
- Given the PNG context, mainstreaming of FSV prevention through a ‘do no harm’ approach should be implemented throughout future programs. FSV impacts both delivery teams and the ability of individuals and communities to engage with wider governance processes. Beyond this, governance related drivers, risks and responses to FSV should be included in analysis within new partnerships and activities responding to these incorporated wherever relevant across programmes.

3.9 – Deep dive on COVID-19

Social, economic, and health challenges of COVID-19 in PNG

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic posed context-specific challenges in PNG in terms of containing the spread of the disease, treating those infected, and addressing the social and economic impacts associated with SOE measures. GoPNG sought international support for the COVID-19 response early in the pandemic. In terms of prevention, access to clean water and handwashing facilities was a major barrier. According to the United Nations and Water Aid, only 41% of people across PNG had access to a basic water supply, making basic preventative measures impossible. The health service had limited capacity to treat COVID-19 cases or to roll out vaccination programs, while COVID-19-related health services further reduced GoPNG’s ability to provide other health services. Fear and stigma around COVID-19 also reduced the uptake of already limited services.

Lockdown restrictions and border closures slowed economic activity, reduced household incomes, disrupted education, and exacerbated poverty, gender inequality, and the exclusion of people with disabilities. Prior to COVID-19, around a quarter of the PNG population lived in extreme poverty (US\$ 1.90 a day). Even mild COVID-19 impacts could push 400,000 more people into extreme poverty, many of whom would be people with disabilities.

COVID-19 created additional burdens and risks for women and children. Most PNG health workers are women, and they were the frontline responders to COVID-19. Women also provided most unpaid care to sick family members. The rise in demand for WASH facilities led to an increased workload for women and girls who typically collect water. In addition,

women primarily work in the informal market, with no labour protection or support to cope with the restriction of livelihoods activity. The United Nations Fund for Population Activities also reported that incidences of family sexual violence (FSV) increased due to containment measures and economic stress, at a time when FSV service provision was disrupted.

GoPNG–Australia planning and response

The COVID-19 response in PNG required new finance and programming and urgent repurposing of existing resources to address priority needs. Within GoPNG, this strained existing institutional capacities and led to the deprioritisation of previously planned activities. Australia's COVID-19 support focused on working with PNG to support its priorities, while aligning with Australia's more broadly defined approach to COVID-19. The Government of Australia provided supplementary funding as part of a COVID-19 Response Package (CRP) and worked closely with GoPNG to allocate these funds to priority areas of health and economic support, as well as repurposing existing programs to meet new priority needs and the realities of a changed operating environment.

Supporting key responses to COVID-19

COVID-19 pivot activities reflected an assessment within different partnerships where they could add value in response to the following core needs.

Health provision: The GoPNG priority was support to health infrastructure and services to overcome the stretch on resources and additional COVID-19-related healthcare needs. The aims were to support the detection and response to COVID-19, while also ensuring continuing work on other health needs. Alongside support for government services, the Government of Australia also supported non-governmental organisation-led and church-led services with a focus on ensuring that marginalised groups, including people with disabilities, could access them. Dealing with COVID-related health challenges required PAGP collaboration with the new PATH programme. EGIG, for example, pivoted its health-related activities in a way that retained support for existing objectives as well as the response to COVID-19. EGIG supported a pilot of a TB patient management system expanded to support COVID-19 testing and response at key sites around Port Moresby. This allowed the pilot to continue testing the software application while navigating a changing health system, in which many TB clinics have been closed or reduced to treating only existing patients.

WASH and COVID-19 prevention: Several partnerships addressed the urgent need for clean water, coupled with health promotion, in COVID-19 prevention. In both Bougainville and Kokoda, water security projects were designed and provided new infrastructure to communities. PPF pivoted to focus on water supply within schools. These WASH projects adopted a strong GEDSI focus, recognising the roles of women in collecting water. They also took a strongly participatory approach rooted in community consultations. PPF pivoted underspent funds to COVID-19 response in schools, such as messaging on health and provision of basic handwashing facilities. This helped schools stay open and encouraged students to attend, as it was safe to do so. Improved WASH infrastructure was central to DCP's intervention in 12 markets.

Economic governance: Due to COVID-19, EGIG's strategic support to the Department of Finance executive team to promote effective public financial management (PFM) reforms

was scaled back and largely completed remotely as international advisors were repatriated and national advisors worked from home. Support shifted to meeting the immediate needs of the PNG Government's response to COVID-19. This involved scaling up certain investments, such as support to economic agencies implementing SMP or organisations providing COVID-19 support to the PNG private sector. EGIG directed support to COVID-related procurement processes at the national level, accelerating a PNG-first approach. EGIG also continued support to strengthening eGovernment and eCommerce initiatives, especially those focused on helping SMEs shift to online transactions during COVID-19. However, other investments were scaled back or paused as stand-alone portfolios, especially in the creative and cultural industries.

Livelihoods and inclusive growth: EGIG also pivoted its market opportunities work, adapting to the changed context. Supporting the inclusive growth of the SME sector was no longer a viable investment strategy for EGIG, with COVID-19 severely impacting on SMEs, as well as the delayed delivery of relief mechanisms like credit facilities for SMEs from the PNG Government. EGIG invested in scoping and piloting new activity areas during 2020 and early 2021. Whereas EGIG initially planned to support the growth of women-owned SMEs, the new priority was supporting women-led businesses to minimise revenue and job losses and increase the likelihood of post-pandemic economic recovery. Activities included partnering with the Women's Business Resource Centre to scale up business coaching and resources to support SMEs to 'weather' the impacts of COVID-19 and plan for recovery. EGIG's pivot also included the rapid design and implementation of programming to scale up COVID-19 responsive business coaching to 100 women-owned SMEs, coupled with expanded support mechanisms such as a COVID-19 phone hotline and a virtual resource library hosted by the Women's Business Resource Centre. Two hundred and one hours of coaching were delivered, with the MC reporting that 93% of participants agreed that it helped their business survive. Alternative livelihoods were also supported through BP and KIP, particularly engaging local labour and local businesses in water supply construction projects, including efforts to mainstream GEDSI across these activities. In most cases, these approaches were well integrated to meet multiple objectives across healthcare, prevention, and economic support with a GEDSI lens. For example, as part of the MERI project, the provision of WASH facilities opened opportunities to advance women's role in managing markets, as well supporting women's livelihoods.

Disruption and adaptation in PAGP activities

The PAGP and all partnerships were required to pivot and reallocate funding as part of an AHC-wide effort to align responses across their portfolio. Some activities were disrupted by COVID-19 and some were deprioritised. The PAGP and partnerships demonstrated an ability to adapt, redesign, and utilise structures, relationships, and systems developed to date to support new objectives. Key aspects included the following.

- **Safety in operations:** COVID-19 required PAGP to assess COVID-19 risks in its operations and to adapt its procedures to ensure safety of staff, partners, and beneficiaries. The MC developed a COVID-19 safe plan at PAGP level, which was enhanced to capture specific control strategies. Following the resurgence of COVID-19 throughout PNG, as well as findings identified in a review, there was significant enhancement to the COVID-19 control strategy and corrective action plans. These plans then guided adaptation of activities at platform and partnership levels.

- **TA and capacity building:** COVID-19 disrupted many TA and capacity building activities aimed at the institutional development and policy change objectives at the heart of PAGP. Many international advisors were repatriated, while many national advisors relocated to work remotely from elsewhere in PNG. Key training and capacity building activities were also paused. This impacted on institutional and policy change processes. In some cases, where TA was ongoing, the focus shifted towards new or more pressing needs. Historically, EGIG (for example) provided strategic support to the DOF executive team to promote effective PFM reforms, but this support was scaled back and largely completed remotely, while coordination support focused on meeting the immediate needs of GoPNG's response to COVID-19. This included support to COVID-19-related procurement processes at the national level.
- **Working with partners:** Challenges to advisor placement and reduced capacity of GoPNG to engage on institutional development required PAGP to explore alternative approaches to delivery of many activities, to incorporate new activities to meet emerging needs, and to allow continued progress in the changed operating environment. There was increased focus on local-level work rather than on national-level work; efforts to encourage public–private coalitions for change; and work delivered to and through civil society organisations.
- **Increased GEDSI focus:** As outlined above, COVID-19 brought specific direct and indirect affects for women and girls, particularly those living with a disability. The pandemic exacerbated and deepened pre-existing inequalities and exposed weaknesses in political, economic, and social systems and safety nets. There was a notable increase in focus on GEDSI across PAGP partnership programming, supported by the fact that all partnerships had a GEDSI SAP either fully developed or in progress at the start of the pandemic period. The COVID-19 pivot, a reduction in some activities, and an opportunity to redesign others allowed greater implementation of the GEDSI SAP. The KIP, for example, introduced disability screening to KIP-integrated health/COVID-19 patrols during 2020/21 in partnership with Callan Services. This brought frontline disability services to the Kokoda Track for the first time, including screenings for eyesight, hearing, and general disabilities, further bolstered by continuity of staff and management. EGIG, for example, integrated GEDSI considerations explicitly into its rapid COVID-19 response. This included analysis to understand the ways that COVID-19 impacts on different social and demographic groups. EGIG demonstrated this commitment through increased levels of GEDSI expenditure, 19.9% of expenditure from July 2020 to March 2021. This included the PNG GESI Policy Study by the University of Queensland, COVID-19 SME Business Continuity Coaching by TDI, the PNG Fashion Festival, bilum training, and technical advisory services.
- **Localisation and the 'PNG-first' approach:** Limitations to global travel accelerated EGIG's 'PNG-first' approach to both employment and the selection of delivery partners. EGIG has increased the number of Papua New Guinean personnel engaged in its management team, as well as in roles deployed within GoPNG. Similarly, EGIG has increased its engagement of PNG suppliers and delivery partners. Similar localised implementation approaches were adopted in other partnerships. This accelerated an emerging trend.

- **Stalled outcomes:** EGIG's PCR notes that the effects of COVID-19 undermined the realisation of some program goals, such as expanding SME growth during and after an economic recession. At the end of the program, the MC reported that it was not yet possible to confirm the full extent to which outcome areas have been undermined. EGIG programming in partnership with GoPNG institutions came under pressure as GoPNG faced COVID-19-related financial challenges to recurrent expenditure, capital investment plans and emergency response measures. Within other partnerships, it was also reported that institutional capacity building outcomes focused on GoPNG institutions stalled during the COVID-19 period, whereas more tangible outcomes with immediate health, social and economic benefits gained traction. This is not an unexpected result given the COVID-19 context, but the challenge will be to transition back to these longer-term and less tangible objectives, while maintaining momentum in more tangible delivery modalities.
- **Utilising PAGP relationships, structures, and systems:** The pre-existing structures of DCP were reported to have played a key role coordinating a number of factors in the MERI project, with the sub-national advisors getting the work established on the ground. The pivot was viewed as having provided an opportunity for the sub-national advisors, church leaders, and MDI to demonstrate their value in new and different ways. Similarly, in BP and KIP, strong governmental, civil society, and community relationships enabled high levels of consultation and identification and the delivery of new programming directions.

Key lessons from the CRP and recommendations for the future

- The established relationship between Australia and PNG through PAGP facilitated rapid decisions on repurposing and supplemental finance. However, there were challenges in maintaining working relationships across PNG institutions as the manifold challenges of COVID-19 put individuals and departments under strain.
- COVID-19 has been a strong driver of adaptation, with the coordinated response being potentially one of the most significant demonstrations of the value of the platform and of the suite of PAGP partnerships.
- The various responses of PAGP to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic are crucial to understanding the relevance and effectiveness of PAGP in terms of both tangible development outcomes and in demonstrating the value of the institutional structures, systems, and social capital built through the partnership. Utilisation of existing community and government infrastructure (facilities, staffing, and systems) and networks at local government and community levels enabled rapid adaptation, with new activities identified and designed with the participation of stakeholders.
- The adaptability, relevance, and effectiveness of PAGP in repurposing resources to a rapidly changing context was evident at facility level and within individual partnerships in response to COVID-19.
- The success of the initiative was supported by integrating social and economic benefits alongside immediate health priorities. The integrated approach to water

security and health in KIP and Bougainville, in particular, offered lessons for the delivery of similar integrated activities through a localised approach.

3.10 – Effectiveness

Principle 6 of DFAT’s VfM principles requires a focus on results and impact: ‘Effective contract, investment and program design, and robust implementation are essential to ensure DFAT’s objectives are met in a timely and cost-effective manner. Clearly identified objectives and performance targets are crucial to facilitating a strong results orientation. Decision makers need to balance anticipated outcomes and benefits with the potential for increased risk and manage these accordingly.’²³

While a sample of results and the effectiveness of the partnerships is discussed above, it is important also to consider how the platform delivered across the three core programmatic result areas: (i) enhanced effectiveness through greater cohesion and collaboration between the partnerships, and between the platform and the partnerships; (ii) enhanced VfM and MERL systems; and, (iii) enhancing strategic relevance and responsiveness to the Government of Australia, GoPNG, and local partners. A discussion of progress against these results areas follows below.

The platform did not have the ability to enforce cohesion and collaboration, either between the partnerships or between the platform and the partnerships. This reduced its ability to meet its first key result area. While examples were provided of the platform creating cohesion through partnership group meetings and MERL, GESI, and communications CoPs, this was most evident in GESI. Examples were provided of linkages between the partnerships, but in some instances, these were not clearly identified by the partnerships in consultations, indicating that, while efforts were made, the outcome of greater cohesion was not always met.

VfM and MERL systems were developed by the platform and adapted throughout the life of PAGP. While valid attempts were made to refine the systems to facilitate a results orientation, gaps in both frameworks—particularly on performance targets and their costing—reduced the ability of the MC to meet the VfM Principle 6.

The platform did achieve results in enhancing strategic relevance and responsiveness, largely through the COVID-19 pivot. This allowed the platform to work closely with the partnerships to pivot operations and respond to the needs of the AHC and GoPNG (Section 3.9).

While progress was made towards key result areas, the absence of systematic aggregation of *development results* from the partnerships created an accountability gap for PAGP as a whole. This, together with the lack of targets for indicators in some partnerships, and for the shared platform, has informed our judgement when considering Principle 6. While clear attempts were made to develop outcomes and indicators, our assessment is that they do not meet the DFAT VfM requirements for which ‘clearly identified objectives and performance targets are crucial’, under Principle 6.

²³ DFAT VfM principles.

3.11 – Equity

The MC's VfM framework included an additional VfM principle relating to equity - Principle 9: improved GESI mainstreaming, this section reviews the MC's progress against the Principle. The MC developed this principle further, as follows: 'Achieving improved gender and social inclusion outcomes are a fundamental purpose for development assistance programs. Hence improvements in VfM, which come at the expense of GESI outcomes, would be considered poorer VfM. Similarly, achieving greater GESI outcomes for the same investment would be considered achieving greater VfM.'

Based on our review of GEDSI (Section 3.9) our assessment is that the MC achieved greater GEDSI outcomes as proposed under Principle 9 of the VfM framework. However, there is insufficient data to determine whether 'greater GESI outcomes for the same investment' has been achieved and, as outlined in the GEDSI deep dive, GEDSI outcomes have yet to demonstrate longer-term impacts. It is therefore too early to make a sound assessment against the VfM principle of equity.

4 Stakeholder and partnerships perspective

This section uses several principles from DFAT PAF guidance to review the performance of PAGP from the stakeholder and partnerships perspective. We draw on that analysis to review DFAT's VfM Principle 8 (accountability and transparency).

The guidance indicates the following as key elements of good practice:

- governance arrangements should clearly delineate stakeholder's roles and contributions, particularly between DFAT and the Facility in terms of governance, strategic, and operational decision-making;
- communication should provide a clear, compelling narrative about its objectives and strategies to stakeholders and partners to build interest and influence and sustain stakeholder support; and
- engagement with other actors should build solid relationships, networks, and partnerships that advance the facility's objectives and/or increase efficiency.

4.1 – Governance arrangements and the delineation of roles and communication of plans and strategies

In the case of PAGP, the two elements are intimately linked. We will deal with them in a combined section.

The shift in strategy and emphasis marked by the transition of the original PGF to the PAGP platform, along with the parallel recognition of the partnerships as facilities in themselves, is the significant factor in the governance of the program. In its original configuration, DNPM would have been the primary partner for coordination to which the PAGP was accountable. The original design, with its emphasis on a central knowledge, adaptation, and learning (KAL) function driving adaptation, also implied that the MC at least shared the principal decision-making role with AHC.

There were sound operational reasons for decentralising the KAL function. Ensuring that the partnerships took their lead from the relevant officers in the AHC rather than from the leadership of PAGP recognises that those officers are ultimately accountable, including for ensuring that the Government of Australia–GoPNG relationship remains strong. These shifts changed the principal function of the platform to that of achieving synergy, collaboration, and coherence between the partnerships, rather than delivering development results *per se*. The accountability for those results largely fell to the partnerships and their reporting and interaction with partner organisations.

Consultations with DNPM indicated concern over the inability to coordinate governance work holistically. This raised the point that the original analysis highlighted the interlocking nature of governance issues, and that therefore the need for a holistic response was embedded in PNG culture (this view also emerged from discussions with SNG-level actors). The initiative PAGP took to start reporting on its contribution to the MDTF was a valuable contribution. There is, however, a significant difference between reporting after the event and being

responsible for specific objectives and targets that have been agreed in advance. There was in effect no central point in GoPNG to which PAGP as whole was accountable in a meaningful way.

Arrangements at partnership level took different forms. BP and KIP developed planning processes that drew government partners into an understanding of the roles of stakeholders. Reports on those plans created clear lines of accountability. The review also heard positive accounts of how those arrangements had drawn in AHC. Arguably, the place-based approach made such clarity easier. These arrangements did not provide insurance against external developments that held up the programs aiming to develop capacity in government partners. In both programs, components with strong elements of tangible inputs proved more resilient than institutional development (except at community level, where a combination of the tangible inputs with capacity building led to stronger structures). Nevertheless, they provided the sort of clarity on roles and objectives that underpins effective stakeholder management.

There was no formal DCP specific governance mechanism. DCP is a highly complex partnership with aims that are challenging to communicate in a context where terms like 'good governance' are not always well received. The DCP summary highlighted the problems with the central partnership that arose from its original conduct (in particular, the withdrawal of valued advisors) and the challenges in achieving the policy reform objectives. The partnerships with DIRD for both the SIP and the MERI program have so far been more productive. The latter was governed/managed through a taskforce, the effectiveness of which might partly be due to the clarity of its objectives, as well as how it was conducted. At SNG level, the ability of the advisors to maintain strong relations testified to their skills (which would be hard to reproduce in an outsider) and their recourse to funds, which could produce results of a kind that were locally valued. They maintained a regular dialogue with provincial administrations and DDAs and participated in quarterly meetings, giving them a chance to exert influence. The LPITs, which they supported were largely effective in both MERI and K+K in delivering projects, but there was less clarity about the full range of objectives to be achieved from the local solutions projects - with the exception of MERI.

EGIG did not have an overarching approach to governance with GoPNG. Rather, it had key counterparts in relevant departments, normally the secretary with whom it worked. Requests would be sent through to EGIG, often via AHC, and discussions would take place on support to a relevant area. Terms of Reference for specific pieces of work would then be developed. EGIG's approach was therefore highly responsive with broad aims, but the degree of responsiveness changed with the political context and the senior management team. The nature of EGIG as a responsive facility seems to have complicated the relationship with some departments that were unclear on EGIG's role in policy reforms (such as land and loan negotiations). Another department perceived decreased levels of support from EGIG in recent years, attributing this to a change in partnership staffing and to the impact of political challenges that may have reduced AHC's interest in the field of work. EGIG developed annual workplans, but the extent to which these were developed in partnership and communicated to departmental stakeholders is unclear.

Several responses to this review also reveal some confusion in GoPNG circles about the roles of AHC and the MC in relation to PAGP. The view was advanced that the access of high-level government actors to the high commission enabled the circumvention of plans

and decision-making processes (some of these examples did relate to issues that required swift resolution). To substantiate the extent of this issue would require a more thorough survey than has been possible in this review. The responses do, however, point to the need to clarify roles from the outset and to revisit any agreement to ensure it remains active and practical.

We discuss in the learning and adaptation section the evolution of the PAFs for the framework. That analysis accepts that significant progress has been made in complying with DFAT standards for PAFs, but these are necessarily long and complex documents: the EGIG PAF (MEL framework and explanation) runs to 41 pages, the DCP PAF to 49. Simplified versions would help a discussion on priorities and in being accountable to senior personnel in GoPNG.

4.2 – The conduct of engagements and how it builds solid relationships, networks, and partnerships

The degree to which the conduct of personal relationships abided by cultural norms was generally very positive. While the ability of locally recruited personnel to navigate the territory was noted several times, there was little sense that foreign advisors were unable to develop close relations. However, there was also appreciation for localisation, which was at least partly driven by the COVID-19 restrictions. EGIG is a particular example. The IPP training of deployees is a positive example of how to prepare personnel to work in PNG. The concern that came through in earlier reviews of dependency was less acute at the end of the program, but concerns remained in the key economic agencies. This is a difficult issue, as skilled PNG people have incentives to depart to the private sector—the call for more capacity building is strong, but it will not fix this issue on its own.

The positive impact of strong relationships was clearly seen in the DCP policy program. In this, the implementers built on the connection with the immediate minister. They also managed risk by briefing senior staff in DPLGA on the program and trying to involve the department fully. At SNG level, careful cultivation of relationships yielded particular returns in terms of the COVID-19 response. DCP also broke ground with Coalitions for Change initiatives regarding the lessons that will inform the successor program. The building of multi-stakeholder coalitions around specific reform areas is one area on which greater emphasis is needed.

EGIG also fostered strong relationships with stakeholders to achieve outcomes in complex and highly political work areas. EGIG advisors often had to balance the needs of GoPNG and of the Australian Government, particularly in the loan negotiations work where advisors provided support to both governments. This was done in a politically astute manner and ensured that relationships remained smooth. EGIG also worked closely with other donors, reducing duplication of support provided to PNG. In many cases, EGIG advisors partnered with advisors from the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank to achieve shared and common goals. While some difficult relationships were reported between advisors and some local stakeholders, it is QTAG's understanding that, in most cases, senior EGIG management helped improve these working relationships, ensuring that progress towards outcomes continued.

For PPF, a National Oversight Committee was established to guide, oversee, and learn from the results of the three education grants. The committee brought together representatives from National Department of Education, AHC, DNPM, grantees, provincial education officers, and the PPF Secretariat. This was instrumental in gaining formal approval for initiatives such as the development of in-service training manuals.

4.3 – Ethics

Principle 8 of DFAT's VfM framework requires partners to be accountable and transparent at all levels, and to facilitate honest dialogue about the overall impact of investments.

Our assessment is that individual partnerships put in place adequate accountability relationships in the context of Principle 8. The multiplicity of relationships that applied in DCP meant it faced the greatest challenges; but these were largely overcome in the later programming with DIRD. The greatest accountability challenge has resulted from the structure of PAGP and the limitations that has placed on the role of GoPNG in the accountability for the governance investments as a whole. DNPM sources indicated that the AHC shared information willingly. Nevertheless, the absence of a clear and aggregate statement of intended *development results* was a significant obstacle to GoPNG PAGP accountable at the apex level.

In terms of financial accountability, limited reporting on total expenditure was included in management reports submitted to the AHC. However, complexity in the structure of financial data and the absence of a consistent approach to data aggregation across the partnerships makes interpretation of financial data difficult across PAGP. In addition, limited data on the volume of inputs reduced accessibility to efficiency measures for PAGP.

Our overall assessment is that while steps were taken to provide accountability and transparency in the relationship between PAGP and AHC and GoPNG, the complexity and size of PAGP reduced opportunities for this to occur to the extent intended. In terms of financial accountability, greater effort should have been made at programme launch to ensure coherence in financial data and reporting across the programme, and adherence to Principle 8 of the VfM framework.

5 Learning and adaptation

This section uses several principles from the DFAT PAF guidance to review the performance of PAGP from the learning and adaptation perspective. We draw on that analysis to review DFAT's VfM Principle 3: evidence-based decision making.

The guidance indicates the following as key elements of good practice:

- the structure should be coherent and joined up—in pursuing its end-of-program outcomes, the facility is 'more than the sum of its parts';
- to be adaptive and flexible, strategies should regularly be reviewed and updated using robust processes; and
- continuous improvement should be sought, with key business processes benchmarked, tracked, and lessons actioned to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

The quality of the MEL system and processes are key determinants of the capacity to learn and adapt. This section presents an overview of progress in that area, before returning to these principles.

5.1 – PAGP's progress on MEL

The 2019 Annual Review noted significant progress on MEL, which had been an area of concern in 2018. The position of knowledge management services within PAGP had been one of the areas of concern. That had been resolved by 2019, with responsibilities devolved to the partnerships. The QTAG assessment, however, identified several other areas of continuing concern. In response, the MC undertook an externally moderated assessment, which informs the following discussion.²⁴

Clear, realistic, and feasible outcome statements within the logic models was the main area of concern. Correctly, the individual partnership level PAFs, where the development results are presented, were the focus of the response in this area. The MC was robust in its position that some partnerships were in effect flexible response mechanisms. In that case, given the evolving priorities and resourcing, broader performance assessment requirements applied than would be the case in traditional development programs. Trying to achieve precision about long-term outcomes would be inappropriate, and key results/focus areas instead provided an agreed evolving focus.

The MC's own assessment rated BP, KIP, and PPF as compliant on outcome statements. This review concurs: these partnerships developed traditional program logic models that presented measurable development outcomes and indicators with baselines and targets. The other partnerships were rated partially compliant; these adopted a process of producing

²⁴ QTAG (2020) 'Comparative QTAG and PAGP Reflection on Compliance with DFAT M&E Standards, June 2019–March 2020'. It is important to record that this study questions the validity of the QTAG assertion in 2018 and 2019 that the platform and partnership PAFs did not comply with DFAT standards.

rolling two-year estimates of deliverables to promote medium-term planning and accountability.

As noted in the stakeholder management section, BP and KIP benefited from a dialogue around annual plans and targets. Many of the MC's concerns about precision on long-term outcomes and targets were relevant. However, as noted in the stakeholder management section, there were concerns about GoPNG involvement in setting priorities and being able to hold PAGP to account. Clarity on outcomes and targets would be a foundation for greater accountability. There is potentially a balance to be struck through which an annual objective/indicator and target setting process benefits all parties by bringing clarity on the responsibilities of each. In that context, EIG's use of rolling annual design and implementation plans/frameworks could yield lessons.

The following is a short summary of the response in other areas.

- *Deep analysis of assumptions:* This is a partnership responsibility in the main. The DCP strategy testing process and the conduct of multiple reviews across the partnerships pointed to a willingness to revisit the assumptions underpinning Theories of Change. Enabling the review and adaptation of strategy is the main point of developing assumptions.
- *Commonality in language and standards:* The end-of-year review for 2019 assessed all partnerships as partially compliant in using DFAT terminology. The challenges were greatest on DCP (unsurprising given the nature of the work). Progress was being made on common standards but, as we note in Section 6.2, more would be needed to support an analysis of VfM beyond the economy level.
- *Integration of gender and inclusion principles:* The GESI Unit undertook two annual assessments of the success of mainstreaming/integrating GESI principles through the partnerships. These indicated that reasonable progress had been made.
- *Sharing of technical knowledge and learning:* Monthly CoP meetings were held with the attendance of MERL practitioners from across the partnerships and the PNG–Australia Transition to Health (PATH). The meetings enhanced internal discussion, learning, and exchange of ideas.

The achievement of coherence in pursuing outcomes so that the facility is 'more than the sum of its parts'

The requirement that PAGP should achieve coherence is discussed in Section 3.10, as this was a specific outcome for the platform. There were numerous examples of synergy being achieved across the partnerships, facilitated at least in part by the central platform. The response to COVID-19 was a prime example. What is clear, however, is that the platform leadership did not have executive authority to enforce cohesion and collaboration between the partnerships. Thus, in the context of dual reporting lines the MC's ability to achieve cohesion, at least to the extent that the original design had envisaged, was reduced.

In order to be adaptive and flexible, strategies should be regularly reviewed and updated using robust processes

While there were conflicting views on the dissolution of the central KAL function, making each partnership responsible for its own learning has yielded notable instances of adaptation. The PAGP review processes underpinning adaptation were varied. In DCP, strategy testing and outcome mapping guided the implementation of the local solutions program; the political economy understanding of the SNAs was a critical part of that process. At a strategic level, DCP expanded its national partnerships after identifying that an engagement with DIRD would yield policy alignment and that it had capacity to absorb support. A strategic review of EGIG commissioned by AHC led to significant changes in strategy; the introduction of new interventions was done through careful piloting before significant investment. EGIG claimed that the flexibility built into its Annual Workplans enabled it to cope with a changing external context.

The interventions presented in Section 3 include a range of examples of adaptation resulting from these learning processes. Others responded to demands for additional assistance that fitted with partnership objectives. The following are highlights.

- On the MERI program, in response to a deepened understanding of the variety of governance systems in markets, an initial standardised approach was replaced with a range of interventions and institutional arrangements that were able to respond to the reality on the ground. For instance, family-based businesses predominate in Western province, requiring a different response to markets where sole traders are the norm.
- The strong research focus that underscored the EGIG responses to its strategic review allowed for the review of interventions and updated strategies, as well as tailored interventions (CCI is a good example). This research, together with the use of pilot interventions, provides a wealth of knowledge to inform the next stage of programming.
- KIP and BP shifted resources progressively towards community-driven development as the returns from those investments become apparent and as institutional strengthening slowed. Under PPF, a starting assumption was that 2%–3% of children in the target population had disabilities. As work started, it became apparent that the real figure was somewhere between 11%–14%. In response to the high prevalence of hearing difficulties, awareness sessions had to be conducted in basic health, hygiene, and how to care for ears.

The number of examples of adaptation and the scale of the repurposing in the face of COVID-19 leads to a positive assessment of PAGP on this principle. The resources deployed to MEL have been of high quality. There are two caveats:

- There were concerns that the discretion of implementers to react to new knowledge or requests was constrained. To some extent, in a context where multiple partners had a stake in decisions—GoPNG, AHC, the MC, and sometimes a fourth partner, such as a non-governmental organisation—quick decision making was bound to be challenging. The MERI program provides a contrasting example. While DCP's effective management of the MERI program was a key enabler of progress, the chairing of the original meetings by the AHC meant that a quick and decisive response to the GoPNG request was possible.

- The DCP PCR noted that the opportunity cost of being responsive to emerging requests was not always taken into consideration. At times, the requisite skills were not available in-house and planned programs were delayed. Some interventions, such as the Local Solutions Program and national policy areas, might have benefited from clearer designs to provide overall program direction. These are important considerations.

Continuous improvement should be sought in key business processes

Whilst not traditionally considered a “business process” the approach to GEDSI is fundamental to the achievement of results on PAGP. We therefore use the progress made on GEDSI to examine how a key process has been rolled out.

- Specialist/dedicated staff. GEDSI-focussed roles, initially within KAL, highlighted weaknesses across the facility-level and partnership level approaches to mainstreaming GEDSI in initial plans and early intervention. The availability of specialist staff provided scope to identify both weaknesses and opportunities to incorporate new approaches and to advocate for changes in the levels of ambition on GEDSI, the position of GEDSI roles within the facility hierarchy and the allocation of funding to GEDSI initiatives at facility level.
- Introduction of common business processes to support GEDSI. Notably a commitment to develop and implement GEDSI Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) provided a consistent approach to support adaptation towards an increased and more appropriate mainstreaming of GEDSI within each partnership. Accompaniment of the SAP development process gave partnerships the confidence to do more on GEDSI, to articulate this ambition clearly and, in some partnerships, to monitor clear GEDSI results. Introduction of a system to monitor spend on gender equality programming further prompted acknowledgement of the need to provide adequate resourcing and highlighted where there is a need for further change.

5.2 – Efficiency

The learning and adaptation approach of PAGP aligned with Principle 3 of DFAT’s VfM framework: evidence-based decision-making. This required systematic, structured, and rational approaches to decision-making, framed around logical arguments, and informed by accurate analysis. At a strategic level, it required efficient systems to be established to gather, collate, and succinctly present empirical and qualitative evidence so that it could be utilised to inform contract and program management, as well as future management options.

There were many positive examples of adaptive management across PAGP, as outlined above, with many of the partnerships engaging in research and/or trialling innovative approaches to long-standing development challenges.

Processes were put in place to ensure that PAGP could review progress and pivot interventions based on analysis of evidence, as provided through strategic and internal review processes. These reviews provided the basis for strengthening the functions and processes of PAGP to achieve greater impact. The same can be said of the ANAO review, after which the MC closely monitored administrative costs to improve cost-effectiveness.

However, the operation of partnerships as separate entities within the programme hindered the effectiveness of evidence-based decision-making. While collaboration and cohesion between partnerships was encouraged, there were limited opportunities for advisors working in different workstreams to share knowledge and improve decision-making across the facility.

Our assessment is that PAGP has met the requirements for efficiency, given the evidence-based decision-making of the partnerships and the use of review functions to inform adaptive management. However, in our view, greater efficiency could have been achieved through stronger knowledge and lesson learning across the programme, enabling PAGP to operate as more than the sum of its parts.

As Principle 4 (proportionality) has not been reviewed, it is not possible to make a judgement on the allocative or input efficiency of PAGP.

6 Operations

The operations perspective of the PAF guidance considers contract and delivery management, financial and resource management, and the quality of leadership and teams. Within financial and resource management, there is a requirement for financial systems to produce accurate budget forecasts, to report expenditure against end-of-program outcomes to enable VfM decisions, and to use baselines and trends to track a core set of efficiency indicators.

The operations perspective aligns with DFAT's VfM Principle 1 (cost consciousness). Cost consciousness requires DFAT to seek reasonable opportunities to reduce costs at every level of operation. Decision makers are required to ensure that the most cost-effective options are pursued, but this should not be done without considering the impact on effectiveness or efficiency.

The following section reviews cost consciousness before providing a summary of the VfM results developed across the document.

6.1 – Economy

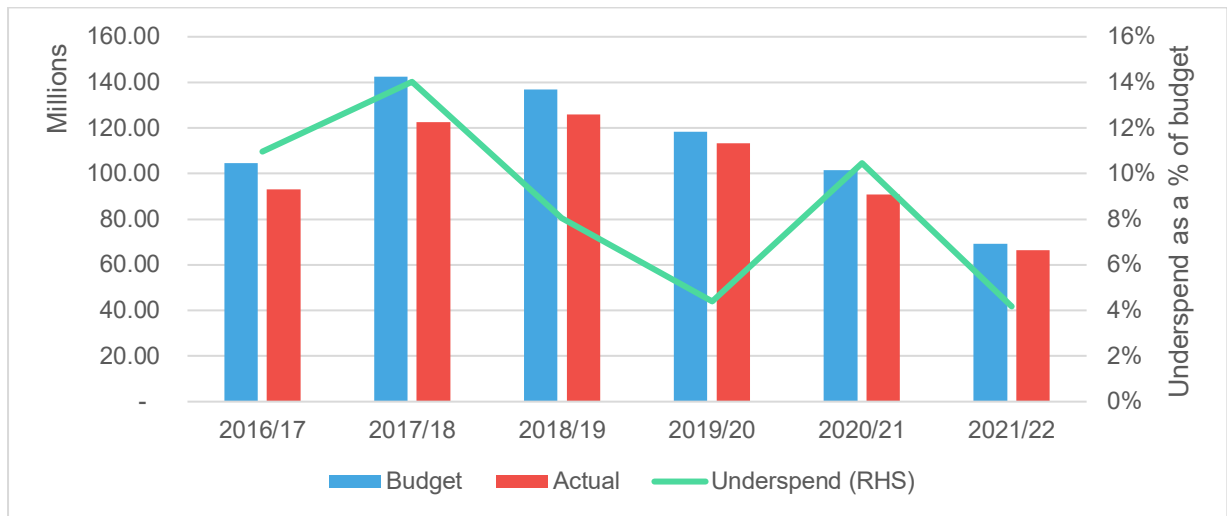
This review takes a two-pronged approach to reviewing cost consciousness to determine 'economy'. It considers the expenditure against budget before assessing a sample of cost-saving calculations reported by the MC.

The original budget for PAGP was AUD 310 million. This expanded over time with the addition of PPF (AUD 146 million), KIP (AUD 13.827 million), and EGIG, PSLR, and DCP (a total of AUD 127 million). All partnerships, except for IPP DSS and PPF, spent over the original budget for their service order: for example, EGIG, PSLR, and DCP in combination spent AUD 197 million, 55% above the original budget, indicating that additional budget allocations were made throughout the life of PAGP.

The following analysis compares expenditure with the budget provided by the MC in March 2022. Total expenditure on PAGP over the period 2016 to 2022 amounted to AUD 616.8 million, an underspend of AUD 61.2 million (9%) against budget. As seen in

Figure 1, the level of underspend was highest in 2017/18, before decreasing over the next two years and rising again to 10% in 2020/21. This pattern is consistent with the wider operation of PAGP: slower implementation as teething problems with the original design were addressed then an acceleration that was then curtailed by the pandemic.

Figure 1: Facility-wide expenditure, budget vs actual, and underspend as a percentage of budget



Of the partnerships, BP, DCP, and PPF had the highest expenditures, each surpassing AUD 110 million. Both BP and PPF reported slight overspends against budget over this time. KIP and IPP DSS were two of the smallest budgets within PAGP, spending AUD 21.5 million and AUD 19.9 million respectively.

The underspend in

Figure 1 is not evenly distributed across the partnerships. Underspends in 2016/17 were largely on programs that were discontinued or changed, such as ‘Core government functions’ and ‘Leadership and change’. Across the full period, despite its relatively small budget IPP was the largest contributor to the underspend at AUD 11 million, equivalent to 36% of its allocated budget over 2016/17–2021/22. This is explained by lower employee numbers under the partnership than planned; as an example, in 2016/17, 50 people were budgeted for, but only 20 people participated.

An ANAO report²⁵ on Facilities of 2020 recommends increased visibility, monitoring, and analysis of administration costs. Facility expenditure up to 30 June 2019 included 21% on administration costs compared to a budget allocation of 19%. However, over the whole program implementation period (2016/17–2021/22), administration costs were reported as 18% of total costs.²⁶ The extent to which partnership administrative costs were included in those figures is unclear.²⁷

The platform costs amounted to AUD 102.5 million over its six-year span. Detailed expenditure figures for 2016/17 were not available, but platform expenditure decreased from a high of AUD 27.6 million in 2017/18 to AUD 11.9 million in 2020/21,²⁸ averaging AUD 18.7 million per year or 17% across 2016/17–2020/21. Management costs decreased from 14% of total project costs in 2017/18 to 6% in 2020/21, moving from overspends in the first two years to strong underspends in the final two years. Office rent and security costs both came in below budget, largely due to sizeable underspends in 2020/21, presumably due to reduced advisor numbers in-country following COVID-19.

Expenditure on accommodation tells a slightly different story. As illustrated in Figure 2, there were significant overspends totalling AUD 1.3 million from 2017/18 to 2019/20, followed by a sizeable underspend in 2020/21. This was partly a consequence of the addition of a AUD 1.7 million budget for Australian Medical Assistance Team, of which only AUD 0.3 million was spent.

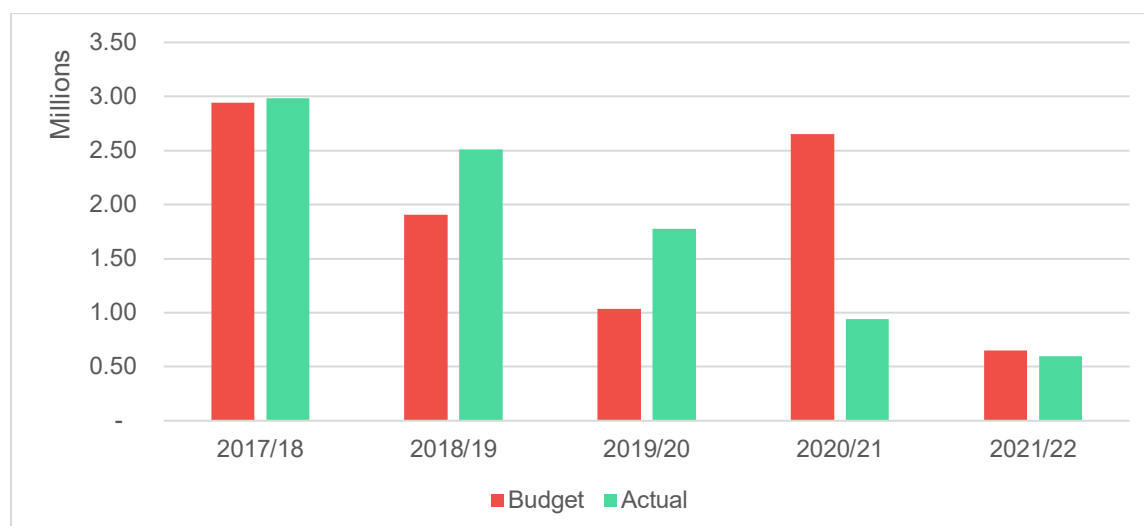
Figure 2: Accommodation budget and actual expenditure (2017/18 – 2021/22)

²⁵ ANAO. Value for Money in the Delivery of Official Development Assistance through Facility Arrangements. April 2020

²⁶ Abt PNG Management Services, PNG-Australia Governance Partnership Facility-Platform Completion Report, February 2022.

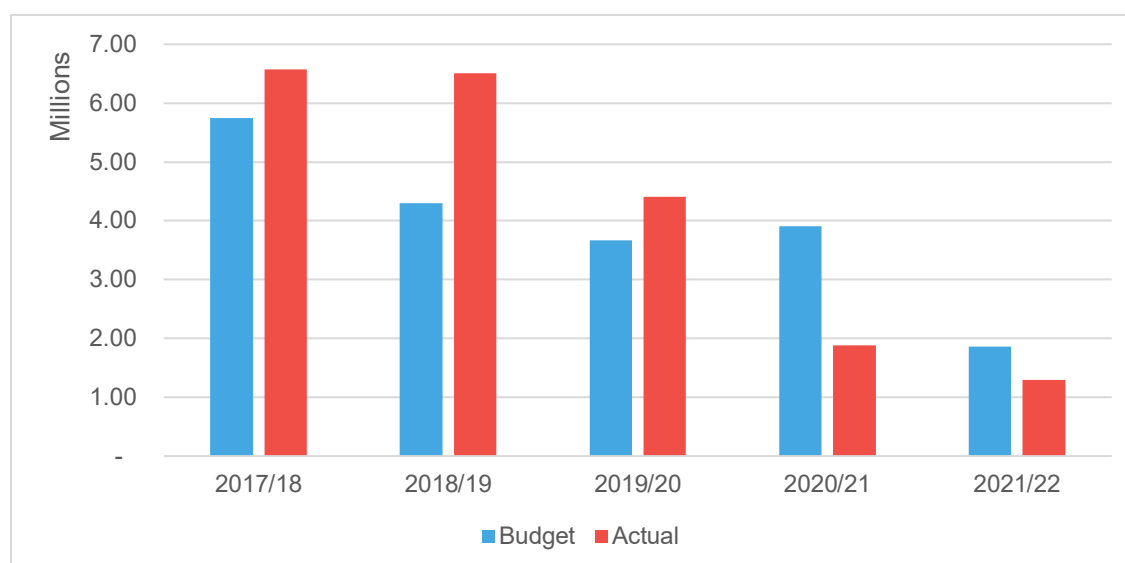
²⁷ In data received by QTAG, reimbursables and management fees related to PAGP (Service Order 1) comprised 17% of total expenditure. However, adding administrative costs requested (such as management costs, travel, accommodation, office rent, and security) resulted in higher costs each year when compared with PAGP costs.

²⁸ 2021/22 figures have not been used here due to the completion of the project mid-year.



Data on travel costs indicated that expenditure was AUD 1.2 million above budget. This was largely due to an overspend of AUD 2.2 million in 2018/19 (Figure 3). A more detailed breakdown of these data was not available to assess the cost per trip or the source of pressure on the travel budget.

Figure 3: Expenditure on travel, budget, and actual (2017/18–2021/22)



While this information provides a snapshot of PAGP expenditure, the data available are not sufficiently detailed to draw strong conclusions on cost consciousness. Changes in the structure of the partnerships over the lifetime of PAGP and differences in accounting structures between partnerships makes interpretation of expenditure data a significant challenge. The absence of expenditure breakdowns on short-term advisors and long-term advisors (LTAs), as well as travel expenses, constrain the depth of analysis possible on the economy aspect of VfM. Where data have been provided, the results vary significantly depending on the specific strategic objectives included, such as the impact of the addition of the AUSMAT budget on accommodation.

Cost savings claim

The PCR noted that the creation of shared administrative units and specialist technical support saved an estimated AIS 27.7 million between April 2016 and April 2022, and that this amounted to an efficiency dividend of 3.8%.²⁹ A review of the data suggests that cost savings, as calculated by the MC, were marginally overestimated due to calculation errors and amounted to AUD 26.5 million.

A brief analysis follows to investigate whether the main savings listed met the threshold set by DFAT for cost consciousness, which is not only to reduce costs and wastage, but also to ensure that there is no negative impact on efficiency or effectiveness.

Table 13: Selected cost savings (as reported by the MC)

Savings type	Amount (AUD, millions)
Closure of iPi Accommodation	3.0
Employment of international staff in PNG	6.1
MSU design	3.6
Relocation of DSS to Ravalian House	3.0
Remote working model	2.3 ³⁰

Employment of staff already based in PNG

Savings of AUD 6.1 million were identified by the MC arising from the recruitment of staff already based in Port Moresby. This reduced the costs associated with housing and mobility. It is fair to assume that, as the posts were advertised internationally, these advisors were the best people for the roles and so did not compromise VfM principles in other regards. However, some staff included in these calculations were regarded as locally engaged staff in other PAGP documentation, in which case they would not be eligible for allowances. This inconsistency in reporting gives rise to questions about the accuracy of the calculation of the scale of the savings.

Our assessment is that, while there is a *prima facie* case for savings, their extent requires further investigation.

Remote working model

Savings of AUD 2.3 million due to non-essential LTAs being evacuated from Port Moresby in March 2020 and returned to their home bases in Australia were identified. The saving was reported to have arisen from reduced mobility and accommodation costs, with the added benefit to the Government of Australia of additional tax paid by LTA consultants of AUD 400,000. The inclusion of these factors as VfM cost savings should be questioned based on

²⁹ It is also worth noting that (despite statements to the contrary in the PCR), while QTAG have been in close communication with the MC on the cost savings data, a final agreed 'quality assurance' did not take place.

³⁰ AUD 3.4 million in data provided to QTAG.

the impact of the support provided on efficiency and effectiveness, in addition to the inclusion of the economic benefits of new Australian paid tax in the calculation.

Our assessment is that the additional AUD 400,000 of Australian tax paid should not be included given that it is not a saving arising directly from PAGP which could provide additional funds to achieve PNG development outcomes, but rather a revenue gain for the Commonwealth. Insufficient data are available to test the impact of remote working on efficiency and effectiveness, given that the attribution of costs to outputs and results is lacking, on a purely cost-savings basis, the remaining AUD 1.9 million should be included.

Management support unit (MSU) design

A cost saving of AUD 3.6 million was reported for the MSU design. Our assessment is that this was calculated correctly by the MC and has not had a negative impact on the efficiency or effectiveness of PAGP. However, while there is a *prima facie* case for the savings, concerns were raised early in PAGP that the administration costs were overbudgeted, bringing into question whether this was a saving or a required readjustment.

Our assessment is that the MSU design should be included in the savings.

Closure of iPi accommodation

In January 2019, DSS as part of PAGP discontinued 23 accommodation leases with iPi, as almost half were unutilised and deployees were departing. PAGP shifted remaining deployees to alternative, cheaper accommodation, reducing the cost of rent and on-costs by AUD 3 million in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Based on the financial data provided, our assessment is that PAGP (DSS) made the correct choice in allowing the lease with iPi to expire, saving approximately AUD 25,000 per unit per month. If these savings had not been realised, the overspend on accommodation (

Figure 1) would have been AUD 1.2 million in 2018/19 and AUD 3.1 million in 2019/20.

Relocation of DSS to Ravalian House

In 2017, the DSS team was relocated to Ravalian House to co-locate with other PAGP partnerships. Our assessment is that the reported cost saving of AUD 3 million arising from the relocation is correct. In their calculation of cost saving, the MC included AUD 17,782 per month for a finance salary, proposing that this had been saved due to the shift. Given the cost savings identified in the MSU design, including the consolidation of finance staff, this may be a duplication. If this duplication is removed, the cost savings decrease to AUD 2.4 million.

Conclusion

Assessing cost consciousness for a program of the size and complexity of PAGP is an inherently difficult task. However, our assessment is that measures put in place to manage expenses delivered VfM on economy dimensions. This holds more for the final two years of PAGP implementation.

During the initial years of program implementation, administrative costs were above budget. These decreased at the platform level following identification by ANAO and QTAG. However, the extent to which this decrease occurred is not clear as some administrative costs at the partnership level were not included in the above analysis, giving rise to the potential for administrative costs to have been above the 18% level reported.

COVID-19 served as an opportunity for PAGP to reduce costs, allowing the program to achieve reduced levels of administrative expenditure, particularly through reduced accommodation and travel costs.

Despite this, claims that shared administrative units and specialist technical support saved AUD 27.7 million and that an efficiency dividend of 3.8% facilitated approximately the same amount in additional development investment are weak. The following are important considerations.

- While efficiencies may have been achieved by the Platform structure, given the sizeable underspend by PAGP of AUD 61 million, the arguments that AUD 27.7 million of savings were reinvested into additional development outcomes and that an efficiency dividend of 3.8% was achieved do not hold.
- Some savings were incorrectly calculated in the PCR, with the figure revised to AUD 26.5 million. Further questions remain over the inclusion of some cost savings identified above, dropping the result to AUD 26.1 million or lower.
- Some cost savings identified are in essence theoretical, as they were made against budgets that were in any case unrealistic in that they implied an overspend, such as the inclusion of accommodation.

6.2 – VfM results summary

The 2018 Annual Review recommended that the partnership should do more to assess VfM. In 2019, a VfM framework was developed based on a series of consultations and workshops in PNG. However, following a pilot of the framework, it was concluded that it was too complex, requiring a level of effort to implement that was not justified by the outcomes, and that a simplified framework was more appropriate in the context. A simplified framework was subsequently piloted using six principles to test its applicability. Despite demonstrating some benefits, the late timing of this pilot (late 2020), which coincided with the height of the pandemic, meant it was not rolled out.

The MC nevertheless proceeded to report against the framework on several occasions. The framework was broad in its approach in that it covered all DFAT principles. The framework and reporting against it focused on the existence rather than on the use of operational processes. The process of making changes through several iterations yielded valuable lessons to inform the development of a framework for future complex investments of this scale in PNG that would help all parties comply with DFAT's Principle 4 (proportionality).

VfM has been assessed across the breadth of this document, having been incorporated into the PAF framework. The results of the assessment are as follows.

Table 14: VfM results

VfM theme	Principle	Result
Economy	1: Cost consciousness	Measures put in place to manage expenses delivered VfM on economy dimensions
Effectiveness	6: Enhanced results focus	While clear attempts were made to develop outcomes and indicators, our assessment is that they did not meet the VfM requirements under Principle 6
Efficiency	3: Evidence-based decision making	PAGP has met the requirements for efficiency, given the evidence-based decision making of the partnerships and the use of review functions to inform adaptive management
Ethics	8: Accountability and transparency	Steps were taken to ensure accountability and transparency in the relationship between PAGP, AHC, and GoPNG
Equity	9: Improved GESI mainstreaming	Greater GESI outcomes were achieved but, given data gaps it is difficult to determine whether VfM has been achieved against the MC's principle.

These results present the opportunity for the following lessons to be learned to inform the design of future VfM frameworks.

- The development of *ad hoc* cost savings calculations reduces the ability to adequately consider cost consciousness. If this is to be used in future VfM frameworks, a standardised benchmark on what constitutes a saving in the context of the relevant program should be developed to reduce the subjectivity that is present in the current calculations. Requirements should also be in place to report on the unit cost of inputs.
- Clearly identified objectives and performance targets are crucial to facilitate a strong results orientation. Without these, it is not possible to meet the VfM requirement for effectiveness. Whilst PAGP's structure limited its ability to operationalise this, annual targets should be developed for future programs. This would allow the MC to meet

the effectiveness requirement while also helping operationalise efficiency via evidence-based decision-making.

- Consistent financial and governance reporting structures should be enforced across programs in future to improve accountability and transparency to AHC and GoPNG.
- Equity should continue to be considered in VfM frameworks to ensure that GESI responses are efficient and effective. Costed GESI outcomes should be developed to inform these assessments.
- VfM frameworks utilised by MCs should focus on the *use* (as opposed to the existence) of operational processes. Attention should be placed on collecting data across all VfM principles to inform greater assessments of efficiency and effectiveness.

7 Implementation of the 2019 Annual Review recommendations

The table in Annex V presents progress against the 2019 recommendations. In all cases progress is satisfactory. In some cases the initial review and analyses were conducted but implementation was overtaken by the pivot to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

In the case of the recommendation about the PAFs and compliance with DFAT standards the MC conducted a thorough review and has presented a reasoned case why the standards are not applicable in some instances. This represents an appropriate way to respond to an external review recommendation.

8 Lessons and Recommendations

Section 3 presents a range of lessons that are specific to individual partnerships and intervention areas. To avoid repetition, this section is restricted to lessons that have some commonality across the partnerships or that apply to the operation of a facility/platform. These recommendations are made with an awareness that future programs will take different forms and operate in different contexts and therefore may not be wholly applicable. That caveat having been made, the extent to which these themes were repeated in the consultations means the issues are certainly worth consideration.

The need for fit-for-purpose governance arrangements was a theme that recurred frequently in the consultations and that comes out in the MC's reporting. There are several parts to the problem. The fact that the remedy to one could make another problem worse demonstrates the complexity of the issue. Any change recommended here needs to be considered in the specific context of future programs.

- The request from GoPNG respondents that there be one central point to which governance programs as a whole are accountable would enhance the level and effectiveness of the high-level engagement. Whilst it is impractical to put the coordination of all the investments in the hands of a single body, it is a reasonable request that GoPNG be able to understand and engage with the governance program in a holistic way.
- The individual programs that replace the individual partnerships need clearer governance arrangements. Given the important differences between place-based programs, accountability interventions and PFM programs (to mention just a few), a range of governance structures and processes will be needed but the arrangements should at minimum:
 - o Have clarity on roles and responsibilities and on who makes decisions on what kinds of matters.
 - o Have clear targets signed off for an agreed period whilst allowing for appropriate levels of flexibility in plans. Hold implementers to account for the delivery of those targets.
 - o Ensure that implementers have the authorisation needed to deliver their plans.
 - o Retain some scope for the AHC and MC to reallocate resources dependent on what parts of the program are working and what isn't.
- A VFM framework with a clear set of standards is needed to reduce of the subjective nature judgements in this area. This would introduce a greater degree of certainty around claims of performance in, for instance, the achievement of cost-consciousness. A clear set of standards would enhance the accountability of the implementers.
- The modus operandi of an external reviewer such as QTAG should be carefully considered for future contracts. The first set-piece review was effective in providing clarity on a number of key issues at a time of some turbulence for PAGP (though it arguably made too many recommendations for them all to be fully considered and

implemented). The response by the MC to the second annual review was impressive – in carefully considering the recommendations and in implementing those it considered to be appropriate. The decision not to implement the PAF recommendations in full came after a thorough review. That is an appropriate way to deal with advice. It points to a wider conclusion: more effective support to learning and adaptation might be rendered by a process whereby the reviewers surface the issues and then moderate a process that identifies the means by which the most critical are resolved.

The following factors should be considered in building future partnerships. Some of these are common sense but are still worth stating again:

- Whilst strong institutions must be the aim of governance reform, strong personal relations are critical in driving the process of reform. That is true everywhere, but our PNG respondents made much of just how important it is in their country.
- In a context where development is seen primarily as tangible, incorporating elements that will have visible, easily recognised benefits early on can help gain support and deepen engagement with a range of stakeholders that, in turn, enables intangible changes to be implemented. Intangible aspects and wider benefits from discrete deliverables should be integral in discussions from the start but these are more likely likely to be gain traction and be productive longer term with something concrete on the table initially.
- Being responsive to the leadership of the partner agency is good practice but it can lead to confusion amongst less senior staff who need to understand how a change fits into an overall plan. It is important to keep a clear line of sight on the capacity of the organisation as whole and to communicate changes at all levels.
- There are fewer signs at the end of PAGP of advisers substituting for local capacity rather than being there to build it but this concern still remains. The incentives for all sides are hard to change so the role that advisers play should be revisited and scrutinised regularly.
- The closeness of the relationship between Australia and PNG makes some engagements extremely sensitive. The negotiations on debt finance needed careful handling and that seems to have been delivered. Decentralisation policy is central to PNG's cohesion; a formal request for engagement was never received. The entry points and the roles of different actors should be thoroughly thought through and frequently revisited.
- PAGP has led to some good examples of networking. But it is not clear that those opportunities were exploited to the full. More should be done to build coalitions for change across components and to let the advisors who are implementing projects learn from each other.

Lessons from PAGP point to the following factors as crucial to effective work on GEDSI in future programs:

- Specialist GESDI expertise within AHC should be maintained to foster ongoing dialogue on how best to progress GESDI outcomes and to further strengthen understanding within AHC and momentum in implementing Australia's GESDI priorities
- The level of ambition on GESDI should be clear within program design and this should be integrated into MEL frameworks from the start, including where possible approaches to measuring longer term impact.
- New programs should ensure that GESDI-focused staff roles are suitably filled, given adequate financial support to fully implement GESDI SAPs and given suitable positions within management hierarchies to ensure influence on GESDI at the strategic level. Senior program leaders should champion GESDI approaches.
- Mainstreaming of FSV prevention through a 'do no harm' approach should be implemented throughout future programs. Beyond this, governance related drivers, risks and responses to FSV should be included in analysis within new partnerships and activities responding to these incorporated wherever relevant across programmes.

The response of PAGP to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic suggest key lessons both for the ongoing pandemic response and recovery process and for future shocks that necessitate significant repurposing of aid:

- Responses to significant shocks can be facilitated rapidly through utilising existing communication and decision-making channels between GoPNG and Australia, including decisions on repurposing or programming of supplemental finance. Established individual relationships benefit this effort but additional effort to maintain such relationships may be needed over time as individuals and departments come under strain or undergo significant change.
- Shocks, such as COVID-19, can be strong drivers of adaptation. This change process can be amplified through coordination mechanisms whilst maintaining longer-term objectives and institutional capacity building. Delivering tangible short-term benefits in response to urgent needs can demonstrate the value of the institutional structures, systems, and social capital built through existing programming. Utilisation of existing community and government infrastructure (facilities, staffing, and systems) and networks at local government and community levels supports buy-in for appropriate rapid adaptation, with new activities identified and designed with the participation of stakeholders.

9 Annexes

All annexes are contained in a separate document.

Annex I – Terms of Reference

Annex II – Document List

Annex III - Individuals Consulted

Annex IV – Performance Assessment Framework Outcomes

Annex V – Reflection on 2019 Recommendations

Annex VI – Additional Information for DCP