

## DFAT-LED DESIGN – INVESTMENT DESIGN

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## Acronyms

AGE	Australia Government Entity
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CCTCP	Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPP	Development Partnership Plans
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
SEAG2G	Southeast Asia and Australia Government-to-Government Partnerships program
IO	Intermediate Outcome
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OPD	Organisation of people with disability
P4I	Partnerships for Infrastructure
ROU	Record of Understanding
SEA	Southeast Asia
SGE	Southeast Asia Government Entity
Posts	Australian embassies and high commissions
MAP	Mekong-Australia Partnership
MAP-TNC	Mekong-Australia Program on Transnational Crime
MC	Managing Contractor
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## A. Executive Summary

The *Southeast Asia and Australia Government-to-Government Partnerships program* (SEAG2G) is a new initiative to deepen institutional partnerships between Australia and Southeast Asia. It will be a key mechanism to contribute towards implementation of *Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040* ('the Invested Strategy') and forthcoming Southeast Asia Development Partnership Plans. SEAG2G provides significant new resources to deepen and broaden relationships between Australian and Southeast Asian countries across 4 thematic priorities. The program has an initial 5-year Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding commitment of \$50 million over 2024–2028, plus an additional 5-year option period. All Southeast Asian nations that receive ODA are eligible: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar<sup>1</sup>, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. The ASEAN Secretariat may also be funded as a partner and Singapore and Brunei could be included if non-ODA funding becomes available. SEAG2G is envisaged as a long-term whole-of-government program that is permanently housed within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. SEAG2G's value proposition is that by leveraging Australia's institutions and expertise, Australia can support partner countries to respond to critical economic development opportunities and challenges.

### Development challenge

Southeast Asia is at the centre of global growth, and the region's continued economic success is critical for Australia's prosperity and security. Southeast Asian governments are working to address increasingly complex and interlinked development challenges, including digital transformation, clean energy transition, and shifting patterns of trade, investment, and strategic cooperation. Responding to these challenges requires targeting of policy and institutional strengthening, alongside mobilisation of large amounts of public and private finance from domestic and international sources. Australian agencies have contributed to major reform processes in several Southeast Asian countries through modelling an evidence-based approach, influential analytical work, and advice on policy reform options. This program builds on longstanding institutional linkages between Australia and Southeast Asian nations, while providing space for Australian entities with less experience in the region to engage. The Australian Government can leverage a wealth of expertise, from within and outside government, to support Southeast Asian countries tackle their development challenges, and to increasingly anchor these institutional partnerships over time as part of Australia's commitment to deeper engagement in the region.

### SEAG2G's vision and thematic priorities

The SEAG2G program goal is: **Deeper institutional partnerships between Australia and Southeast Asia that support economic and social development and more effective, accountable, and inclusive government institutions in Southeast Asia.**

The objective of the program is: **Participating Southeast Asian Governments see the Australian Government as a reliable, trusted, and responsive partner for two-way technical and policy collaboration.**

The goal and objective will be achieved through 2 end-of-program outcomes (EOPO):

1. Broader and deeper partnerships between Australian and Southeast Asian government institutions in targeted areas of mutual interest.
2. Southeast Asia Government Entities (SGE) improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development.

The 2 outcomes recognise that SEAG2G seeks to achieve deeper, broader partnerships as an outcome, as well as the development change that comes from those partnerships. The SEAG2G program will be realistic about the pace of policy reform and the degree of influence Australia can have, recognising the long-term nature of institutional partnerships.

SEAG2G activities and partnerships will be delivered across 4 themes identified through consultation and alignment with key policies. The themes were identified through careful consideration of the sectors outlined in the Invested Strategy, Australia's International Development Policy, AGE and DFAT Post priorities, and policy areas that are in high demand from SGEs and capitalise on Australia's comparative advantage. SEAG2G will not require an even spread

<sup>1</sup> Myanmar will not be considered for involvement in the program in the short term but may be included at a later stage.

across all 4 thematic priorities but will instead be driven by demand from the region and their Australian Government Entity (AGE) counterparts. The 4 themes are:

1. **Climate change and energy transition:** Advancing climate action in the region by assisting countries to meet ambitious emissions reduction targets, build a clean and resilient energy sector and strengthen climate adaptation and mitigation planning and response. This will deliver on the announcement made at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit for a \$10 million climate and clean energy window under the SEAG2G program.
2. **Education and skills:** Partnering with countries to build education and skills to grow workforce capability in sectors that drive economic growth, especially in digital and green skills and through transnational education links. Building capability in these areas aims to increase workforce productivity, resilience to shocks and promotion of workforce diversity and inclusion in new economic sectors.
3. **Sustainable agriculture and food security:** Partnering with countries to strengthen agricultural systems, policies, and regulations, with flow-on effects for increasing two-way trade and investment, reducing emissions in the agricultural sector, and contributing to climate resilience.
4. **Effective and inclusive public institutions:** Partnering with countries to promote effective and accountable government systems and institutions in other priority areas including sectors outlined in the Invested Strategy; institutions that contribute to promoting inclusive sustainable development and gender equality; and institutions with mandates to deliver core governance and economic functions. This theme is deliberately broad in the design but may be further refined based on AGE and SGE demand.

A fifth priority, trade and investment, would be enabled if additional non-ODA funding or co-funding from bilateral programs becomes available in line with the Invested Strategy. This thematic priority would work with governments to unblock trade and investment bottlenecks or support Australia's commercial interests.

## Delivery approach, governance, and management arrangements

SEAG2G is a multi-country platform rather than regional program. The delivery approach is institutional twinning through partnerships led by AGEs to implement activities jointly agreed with SGEs. AGEs, at federal, State or Territory levels, will be responsible for delivering activities and will have access to quality assurance, administration and operational support provided through the Managing Contractor (MC). AGEs will be able to use program funding to draw on third-party providers (e.g. consultants, private sector entities, universities, and institutes) to manage and deliver activities in line with their internal procurement requirements. SEAG2G will consider partnerships with regional organisations beyond ASEAN on a case-by-case basis.

SEAG2G will support Australian agencies to engage with their Southeast Asian counterparts through 2 workstreams:

**Workstream 1: Core Partners workstream** (75 per cent of activity budget). Multi-year support to a small group of AGE partners to work in one or more countries to deepen Australia's relationships with counterparts and contribute to institutional change in one or more thematic priorities. Initial core partners identified to participate are Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. These agencies have indicated they see demand from: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. SEAG2G could initially focus in these countries, drawing in more countries over time. Noting that Australia does not have a bilateral development program with Malaysia and Thailand, SEAG2G will look to prioritise partnerships in these countries.

**Workstream 2: Country level workstream** (25 per cent of activity budget). Demand-driven, smaller activities based on requests from Posts assessed and approved 2 times a year and to be delivered within a 12 to 18-month period. The types of activities offered will likely include knowledge exchanges, short-term workplace attachments, applied training, benchmarking visits, policy dialogue, joint participation in conferences and sharing tools.

SEAG2G will be governed by an **Executive Steering Committee** designed to set the strategic direction and provide a mechanism for DFAT to coordinate and progress Australia's whole-of-government interests in Southeast Asia, comprised of DFAT, core partner agencies and Posts. The **DFAT G2G Section** will maintain oversight of SEAG2G implementation to ensure quality, visibility, and compliance with DFAT standards, while focusing on AGE relationship

management and policy dialogue. The **MC** will establish a SEAG2G implementation team to support DFAT by brokering partnerships with AGEs and ongoing relationship management, planning and delivery of activities (including operations/logistics, budgeting, and events management), as well as MEL and embedding GEDSI. **Posts** will ensure strong alignment between partner activities and bilateral priorities, introduce AGEs and SGEs, share knowledge of the local context and political economy. The SEAG2G program will connect other programs with government-to-government components for learning, to deconflict and to work towards a common approach.

## Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI)

The SEAG2G program has significant opportunities to positively engage on GEDSI with partner governments. SEAG2G will adopt a twin-track approach. For each core partnership, a GEDSI analysis will be undertaken, and action plan developed. For short-term activities, opportunities will be identified to advance GEDSI. Earmarked budget for GEDSI and access to experts, will also reinforce GEDSI expectations.

## Managing risk

The risk profile is medium and will be mitigated in part through oversight by the whole-of-government Executive Steering Committee. Key risks include AGE resourcing challenges, the challenging context in which to demonstrate impact, lack of coordination and lack of buy-in from Australian Government senior executive. They will be mitigated through enabling AGEs to use program funds for positions, contracted support through an MC, a partnership and engagement strategy to guide interactions between stakeholders and DFAT and the MC working collaboratively.

## **B. Development Context and Situational Analysis (What problem are we addressing?)**

### **B.1 Introduction**

The Southeast Asia and Australia Government-to-Government Partnerships Program (SEAG2G) is a new initiative to deepen institutional partnerships between Australia and Southeast Asia. It will be a key mechanism to contribute towards implementation of the Invested Strategy (refer indicative list at Annex 1) and forthcoming Southeast Asia Development Partnership Plans. The networks and peer relationships Australian agencies have with the region use Australian assets to deliver timely, effective, and tailored outcomes. Achieving deeper, broader partnerships is a SEAG2G outcome in itself, as well as the development change that comes from those partnerships.

Government partnerships is an aid modality that recognises the complementarity of development, trade, and diplomatic objectives, and provides an important platform for engaging with growing middle-income countries in the region. Interlinked economic, trade and development approaches enable deeper connections so that donors remain relevant, trusted partners able to influence regional and global standards and reinforce the regional architecture that promotes economic and security cooperation.

SEAG2G is envisaged as a long-term whole-of-government program that could be permanently housed within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. SEAG2G provides significant new resources and a central platform to deepen and broaden relationships between Australian and Southeast Asian policymakers across 4 thematic priorities. The program has a 5-year funding commitment of **\$50 million** over 2024–2028, which may increase through co-contributions from bilateral programs.

The SEAG2G design features outlined in this document have been rigorously tested through consultations with more than 30 Australian government agencies, 8 Posts and several DFAT sections and State offices, key bilateral program teams, some Southeast Asian Government agencies and the DFAT internal Design Reference Group. These consultations confirmed high levels of interest from Posts and AGEs to participate in the program; affirmed the program's dual vision of building relationships and achieving development outcomes; thematic priorities; implementation approach; and governance arrangements. Several important operational issues were highlighted by AGEs and Posts during consultations which have informed the design of SEAG2G's key features and approaches including enabling AGEs to play a lead role but also selectively use third-party providers such as private sector firms, consultants, and universities, within an overarching SEAG2G partnership to deliver activities.



## B.2 Development context and situational analysis

The Southeast Asian region is at the centre of global growth and continued economic success is critical for Australia's prosperity and security. Southeast Asia, as a regional bloc, is projected to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2040, after the United States, China, and India. Good governance and strong institutions are the foundations to realising this prosperity, however governance and institutions in Southeast Asia are still evolving commensurate with the level of socio-economic development. Led by Singapore, the East Asia and the Pacific region is the most competitive in the world according to the World Economic Forum. But the region is also home to economies with significant competitiveness deficits. The quality of government institutions across the region is variable, with many still judged by business leaders as having constraints to productivity growth (Singapore is the exception).<sup>2</sup> These institutions also face ever increasing demands. Strong, effective leadership is needed to tackle complex and interlinked development challenges, including digital transformation, the clean energy transition and shifting patterns of trade, investment, and strategic cooperation.

There are many areas where partner governments have expressed interest in deepening collaboration and technical exchange with Australia. Common areas of high demand include managing the transition to low carbon economies, climate resilient agriculture and safeguarding food systems, repositioning workforce skillsets to respond to new opportunities and strengthening government functions and institutions to maximise inclusive economic growth.

Table 1 summarises these areas grouped into 4 themes and by country income group. These areas of partner demand are aligned to Australian institutional interest and capability to supply expertise. A fifth priority, trade and investment, could develop into a standalone theme if resources become available. Non-ODA funding for SEAG2G, as recommended in the Invested Strategy<sup>3</sup>, would enable Singapore and Brunei to engage, and support Australian commercial partnerships across all countries. Initial scoping for a trade and investment thematic priority is contained in Annex 1.

**Table 1 Example opportunities by theme and country income group**

	<b>High income Singapore, Brunei</b>	<b>Middle income Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam</b>	<b>Low income Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, (Myanmar)</b>
Climate change and energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sourcing renewable energy</li> <li>– Advancing cleantech and energy efficiency solutions (e.g. transport, buildings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Securing finance for transition</li> <li>– Investing in grid infrastructure, renewables, and new technology</li> <li>– Assessing climate vulnerability and adaptation frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Investing in grid infrastructure and renewables, particularly in rural areas</li> <li>– Assessing climate vulnerability and adaptation frameworks</li> </ul>
Education and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Policy and programs for adult learning and reskilling</li> <li>– Increased cooperation with Australian education and TVET sectors</li> <li>– Mutual skills recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Meeting growing industry needs for digital and green skills</li> <li>– Creating effective markets for TVET and micro-credentials</li> <li>– Enabling university sector to attract investment and talent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Investing in youth skills in high potential sectors (e.g. agriculture, logistics, digital)</li> <li>– Facilitating TVET and industry links</li> </ul>
Sustainable agriculture and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Technological innovations (e.g. urban farming, high-tech aquaculture)</li> <li>– Factors affecting price and supply of food (e.g. logistics costs, food security cooperation mechanisms)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improving agricultural productivity, diversity, and climate resilience</li> <li>– Insurance schemes and access to finance</li> <li>– Developing low-emission agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Promoting sustainable farming practices</li> <li>– Planning and delivery of rural infrastructure to connect markets (e.g. roads, irrigation, storage)</li> </ul>
Effective and inclusive public institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– High levels of government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and rule of law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mid-level performance on government effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Limited government effectiveness in service delivery, control of</li> </ul>

2 World Economic Forum (2019) Competitiveness Report – latest available. Competitiveness rankings were suspended during the COVID-19 response and have not yet resumed.

3 Recommendation 14 of the Invested Strategy is: 'Extend government-to-government technical assistance to other Southeast Asian countries through a new government-to-government partnerships program and other mechanisms.'

High income Singapore, Brunei	Middle income Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam	Low income Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, (Myanmar)
– Opportunities for mutual learning in public administration	– Mixed performance on control of corruption, rule of law, and accountability – Opportunities to increase effectiveness of public integrity and market institutions	– corruption, rule of law and accountability – Opportunities should have a long-run view and match with other development efforts

## Climate change and energy transition

Growing the clean energy economy and managing the transition to net zero emissions will require coordinated effort by Australia and its partners regionally and globally. 8 of the 11 Southeast Asian countries in the Invested Strategy have announced a net zero emissions target. There is great potential for Australia to support Southeast Asia's energy transition, through the sharing of expertise and experience on renewables, clean energy, and emerging technologies; as well as advice on environmental and climate responses and mainstreaming of climate considerations into broader policy and planning.

Australian federal, State and Territory agencies are working at the forefront of climate change and energy transition issues, including the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia and others. Indonesia and Vietnam are seeking Australia's policy advice and investment to develop green hydrogen projects. Vietnam looks to Australian expertise on integrating higher shares of renewable energy.<sup>4</sup> There are opportunities for Australia to collaborate with the Philippines on energy grids and deploying solar and battery storage.<sup>5</sup> Thailand aims to collaborate with Australia on energy and climate resilience policy development.<sup>6</sup> Singapore is interested in Australia's technical knowledge in carbon markets, skills and capabilities for green growth and decarbonising the shipping and maritime industry.<sup>7</sup> By catering cooperation to individual country climate priorities, Australia can enhance its regional clean energy leadership credentials.

Existing socioeconomic inequalities within a society affect how climate change affects women and marginalised groups, including people with disabilities. Though some Southeast Asian countries have begun to address climate change and the energy transition, most of the related policies and strategies do not consider the implications for women and marginalised groups.<sup>8</sup> Australia has an opportunity to support Southeast Asian countries to identify the different socioeconomic needs and conditions of both women and men from diverse backgrounds and ensure these issues are considered in climate change and energy policymaking.

## Education and skills

Global socio-economic trends are forcing the economies of the region to ensure their labour markets can provide the changing skillsets needed to adapt and succeed in times of rapid change. Boosting skills and labour productivity will also be needed to recalibrate value chains to shore up resilience. Policymakers in Southeast Asia are seeking Australia's experience in building skills for industry and the digital and green economy. Thailand, for example, aims to learn from Australia's competency-based training models, quality assurance systems and national qualifications frameworks to develop skills for Industry 4.0 transformation.<sup>9</sup>

4 Australia Vietnam Enhanced Economics Strategy, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/australia-vietnam/ees/en/strategy/overview.html#section9>

5 Energy Transition to Renewable Energies: Opportunities for Australian cooperation with the Philippines, 2020, Murdoch university. [https://www.energy-transition-hub.org/files/resource/attachment/philippines\\_eth\\_.pdf](https://www.energy-transition-hub.org/files/resource/attachment/philippines_eth_.pdf)

6 Thailand Country Profile and action plan, DFAT website. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/countries-economies-and-regions/southeast-asia/invested-australias-southeast-asia-economic-strategy-2040/appendix/thailand-country-profile-and-action-plan>

7 Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement. DFAT website. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/singapore/singapore-australia-green-economy-agreement>

8 UN Women. (2022) State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in ASEAN, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/State-of-Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-in-ASEAN-2.pdf>

9 Industry 4.0, also known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is the ongoing automation of traditional manufacturing and industrial practices using modern smart technology.

Australia has experience in preparing workforces for the digital economy shift. Thailand and Indonesia are keen to leverage Australia's expertise in policy settings that enable the digital economy to flourish, including building opportunities to support workforce transitions to digital. As several countries plan to phase out coal power, policymakers seek to collaborate with Australia on just transition policies, including redeployment, reskilling, and social protection schemes for affected workforces transitioning into renewable energy jobs. Vietnam also seeks to partner with Australia to strengthen skills recognition frameworks and facilitate skilled labour mobility between the 2 countries across areas such as digital trade and clean energy.<sup>10</sup>

Southeast Asia is also one of Australia's largest transnational education markets, with increasing opportunities for Australian education providers to meet demand in the region through offshore campuses, offshore partnerships with local providers, and hybrid and online offerings.<sup>11</sup> Australian transnational tertiary education providers have already established campuses in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. The Philippines is easing legal restrictions on international education operation and investment, and Thailand is prioritising transnational tertiary education partnerships and reforming its vocational training system to allow further opportunities for providers to deliver training.

Across Southeast Asia, female labour force participation is mixed, ranging from 74 per cent in Vietnam to 46 per cent in the Philippines.<sup>12</sup> Most governments see increasing female labour participation and mobility across sectors as important drivers of economic growth but seek support on designing government skills and job activation programs. Similarly, digital advancements have the potential for skills initiatives to reach more people with disabilities and support them in the workplace.

## Sustainable agriculture and food security

Amidst the pressures of climate change, continuing population growth and urbanisation, agriculture remains a crucial element for many Southeast Asian nations to ensure food security, support livelihoods, and sustain economic growth. Australia's expertise is sought in formulating policies to strengthen food security while adapting agricultural systems to climate change. Vietnam seeks to collaborate on scaling climate-smart farming practices.<sup>13</sup> Thailand looks towards Australia to jointly develop agricultural policies to boost resilience to climate impacts.<sup>14</sup>

In Laos and Thailand, cooperation with other countries is sought to develop climate risk finance regulations that increase smallholder farmer access to insurance products protecting against climate impacts. Indonesia is keen on partnerships with Australia for policy reforms centred on mobilising climate finance, fostering enabling environments for public-private investment into low-emission agriculture. By supporting policy initiatives across areas from sustainable land use to climate information services, capacity building and green financing mechanisms, Australia has an opportunity to significantly shape regional efforts towards building climate-ready and reliable agri-food systems.

Climate change has contributed to the feminisation of agriculture across Southeast Asia, with men migrating to urban areas for work, leaving women with the double burden of farm work and domestic responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> Women also play a significant role in local food systems and agriculture value chains that support households and communities in food production and security. Despite the impact of climate change on women farmers being greater, women are generally not included in decision-making processes and climate-smart agriculture efforts. There is an opportunity to support the development of gender-responsive agriculture policies and programs that strengthen food security, enhance women farmer incomes in agriculture value chains, and promote gender equality.

10 Australia Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy and various project documents.

11 Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/southeastasiaeconomicstrategy>

12 Percentage of female population aged 15-64 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.ACTI.FE.ZS>

13 Australia Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/australia-vietnam/ees/en/implementation-plan/agriculture-forestry-and-fisheries.html>

14 Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between the Kingdom of Thailand and Australia. DFAT website.

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/thailand/joint-declaration-strategic-partnership-between-kingdom-thailand-and-australia>

15 UN Women. (2022) State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in ASEAN, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/State-of-Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-in-ASEAN-2.pdf>

## Effective and inclusive public institutions

Governance and the effectiveness of public institutions varies across Southeast Asia, commensurate with the level of development, and a range of country-specific political, economic, and social factors. As a broad summary, drawing on Worldwide Governance Indicators<sup>16</sup>, high-income countries Singapore and Brunei have high levels of government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and rule of law. There are opportunities for mutual learning in public administration and addressing emerging issues.

In middle-income countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam that have mixed performance across governance indicators, there are opportunities to support increased effectiveness of public integrity and market institutions. This also encompasses financial and digital entities which are critical for inclusion and trust in public institutions. Lower income countries Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste, and Myanmar face challenges in service delivery, control of corruption, rule of law and accountability. SEAG2G partnerships could potentially augment other development initiatives as institutional change is a long-term, resource intensive endeavour.

One common thread across Southeast Asian governments is a growing awareness of the need for inclusive and equitable public institutions. Australian government agencies have policies, ethos, and practices to share in cultivating a public service that understands and reflects communities served; and, in ensuring policies and programs take account of the needs of women and men, people with disabilities and socially marginalised people. Similarly, Australia has a range of integrity institutions to ensure accountability and transparency of public administration. Indonesia has sought to learn from Australia's independent audit and assurance system, while both Indonesia and Singapore seek Australia's lessons on building public sector leadership, including women's leadership and human resource management capability. While the potential scope of this work is wide, SEAG2G will focus institutional capability building efforts on SEAG2G's thematic priorities, sectors identified in the Invested Strategy and on institutions with core economic management functions.

## Development themes supported by other government-to-government mechanisms

Southeast Asia governments have access to government-to-government partnerships across a range of other themes. These themes have not been prioritised for SEAG2G, including:

- › **Security, defence, and law enforcement.** Australian Federal Police and Department of Defence already have government-to-government relationships across the region and budget appropriations. This includes access to DFAT programs for cybersecurity (Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program/CCTCP) and combatting transnational crime (Mekong-Australia Program on Transnational Crime/MAP-TNC).
- › **Infrastructure and water management.** Existing DFAT initiatives with government-to-government partnerships are Partnerships for Infrastructure (P4I), Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP) and the Australia Water Partnership. SEAG2G and P4I will work closely to deconflict work around energy infrastructure and the energy transition throughout the life of the program.
- › **Labour mobility support** to partner governments is channelled through Home Affairs and Border Force.
- › **Health.** Partnerships for a Healthy Region builds on a prior health security initiative and Australia's COVID-19 assistance and is the focal point for government-to-government health partnerships.
- › **Emergency response.** There are well established government-to-government channels for cooperation on emergency response, including safety, search and rescue and humanitarian response.

## B.3 Political economy

The next decade is critical for the region as several countries seek to fulfil ambitions to join upper-middle and middle-income status. To fulfil these aspirations, these countries require renewed sustainable growth models underpinned by domestic economic and financial reforms, increased private sector investment, modern and transparent public institutions, and must arrest waning economic productivity and competitiveness rates. Significant policy challenges have emerged around the energy transition to low carbon economies and climate change and ASEAN's regional economic integration agenda. Additionally, shifting economic, political, and strategic trends have created geostrategic competition, creating complexity for policy-makers.

16 Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay (2023). Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023 Update ([www.govindicators.org](http://www.govindicators.org)), Accessed on 14 February 2024

## Achieving significant policy reform

In the context of geostrategic and economic change, the political economy of policy reform remains complex in Southeast Asia. While it is difficult to generalise across these diverse countries at differing stages of economic growth, policy making arises out of complex interactions between bureaucratic and political actors, as well as interactions with business and civil society. In more technical domains, public service officials have greater opportunity to drive reforms using technical analysis and evidence, as was the case in Indonesia where technocrats drove recent reforms to fiscal policy, tax administration and education reform in the districts.<sup>17</sup> However, final policy and regulation formulation is often dependent on political agreements amongst competing interest groups. For example, during the formulation of Indonesia's Job Creation Law in 2020, substantial revisions were made late in the process to accommodate competing interests.<sup>18</sup>

Within this policy making context, external stakeholders remain important in influencing and supporting domestic policy processes. For example, private sector and US government engagement contributed to amendments to Malaysian film industry intellectual property protections.<sup>19</sup>

Partnerships between governments have similarly demonstrated valuable contributions to support leaders to navigate complex policy challenges. There was no playbook for the response to COVID-19 and government officials in Indonesia highly valued real-time policy dialogue with agencies such as Australian Treasury on stability measures for the financial system and the economy along with the Australian National Audit Office on pivoting to performance audits of higher volumes of social security, for example. In Vietnam, where analysis of international experience is a mandated step within policy making processes, Australian Treasury and Vietnam's Ministry of Finance are exchanging insights on budget management and fiscal policy, financial market regulation, macroeconomic stability, and other economic reform policies. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and Vietnam's National Competition Commission are cooperating on boosting consumer protections. Cooperation has included hosting Vietnamese officials on short-term attachments, 10-week in-country inputs conducted by ACCC staff, online seminars, and senior executive visits. Australian Securities and Investments Commission and State Securities Commission have developed an initial program of work consisting of online peer exchange on topics such as regulatory approaches to digital financial technology, climate disclosure, and equity market surveillance, along with senior executive visits.

This highlights the potential contribution other governments can make through engaging domestic 'agents of change' in peer learning, sharing real-world practical advice, modelling modern management practices, building up local analytical capability, and sharing tried and tested tools. See Policy Dialogue Matrix at Annex 2 which provides an indicative summary of the kind of policy dialogue possible under SEAG2G.

## Supporting durable institutional reform

The political economy of institutional reform and capability building is that it must be locally-led – whether the reform is of a whole agency or a department. Capacity building of individuals (skills) must be reinforced at the organisational (department) and systems (agency and networks) level to be durable, and Australian agencies operate at all these levels. Australian agencies are a potent vehicle to motivate and reinforce a change, providing opportunity for exchange of views at senior executive level.

Australian government agencies in Indonesia have contributed to several changes within counterpart institutions that include attitudinal, leadership and management style, as well as policy changes.<sup>20</sup> The Heads of Australian Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Indonesia have reinforced the importance of diversity in leadership for performance of their organisations. Through the Australian Bureau of Statistics' leadership training and mentoring program, Statistics

17 The Political Economy of Public Reform Adoption: Patterns in Twenty Indonesian Districts. (2016). Anna Wetterberg Derick W. Brinkerhoff. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2015.1066907>

18 Indonesia's omnibus law on job creation: reducing labour protections in a time of COVID-19. Working Paper 23. (2021). Petra Mahy.

19 Intellectual property law in Southeast Asia: recent legislative and institutional developments. Christoph Antons. (2006). Journal of Information, law and technology, vol. 1. file:///C:/Users/tanya/Downloads/antons-intellectualproperty-2006.pdf

20 Prospera Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2021)

Indonesia adopted new equal opportunity measures so that female officers have greater opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and professional development programs.<sup>21</sup>

## B.4 Evidence base and learning

Australia's longstanding whole-of-government engagement in the region offers rich lessons for SEAG2G, particularly relating to AGE readiness to engage and institutional mandates. Lessons from consultations and government-to-government investments across the Indo-Pacific that have informed this design are contained in Annex 3.<sup>22</sup> Key lessons include:

- › **Brokering core government-to-government partnerships requires DFAT leadership.** DFAT engagement with both technical and senior executive levels in AGEs is important to secure buy-in. While a skilled MC can certainly help, DFAT cannot fully outsource government-to-government partnership relationship management and internal processes. Incentives for AGEs to participate in government-to-government programs can come from leveraging AGE motivation to join whole-of-government efforts, pre-existing international orientation of the AGE, and mutual benefit. Funding alone is usually not the driving factor for international engagement but is important to ensure a well-resourced- and effective partnership.
- › **AGEs differ in their readiness to work internationally and in the support, they need to work effectively with SGEs.** The program will need to scale support for engagement. For example, some AGEs have dedicated international units, others do not. Support to SGEs can work well when government-to-government partnerships collaborate with other Australian development initiatives, especially when other initiatives have a deep understanding of the country and SGE institutional context.
- › **Strong internal communication is vital and operational support is highly valued.** Structured and coordinated communication from DFAT Post and Canberra is expected by AGEs. Communication channels can be supported by the MC, as well as sharing know-how on operational issues such as how to arrange a successful official visit.
- › **Clarity over the program's ultimate goal and the strategy to reach that goal is important.** Outcomes may be partnerships, development results or both. For example, the Indonesia Government Partnerships Program 2005–2018 had twin goals of government-to-government partnerships and institutional development outcomes. This evolved towards partnerships as the means to achieve development outcomes under Prospera 2018–2026.
- › **MEL should leverage existing government accountability systems,** and reflect the scale of the investment, especially for small partnerships. Good reporting can be incentivised by sharing with partners how the information is used by DFAT, through communication of program-wide results, including to senior officials and Ministers.
- › **A proactive approach to GEDSI** is necessary to achieve outcomes. Inter-departmental committees can encourage AGEs to see promoting GEDSI as behaviour change for improved performance and outcomes (rather than cultural change), just as other technical reforms. Other success factors include earmarked budget, and hands-on support from GEDSI experts in the subject matter.

Several important operational issues were highlighted by AGEs and Posts during consultations which have informed the design of SEAG2G's key features and approaches. AGEs noted several constraints to expanding their international engagement ranging from limited staff resources, limited availability of existing personnel to manage and deliver technical exchanges, limited or no activity budgets, competing and busy domestic policy agendas, and limited buy-in from executive leadership teams. Posts noted while engagement with regional and multi-country programs was highly regarded, effective Post engagement required significant staff resources on top of already high workloads.

AGEs and Posts encouraged DFAT and the SEAG2G program to adopt several measures to assist AGE and Posts to effectively engage in the program. AGEs and Posts suggested the program:

- › Adopt simple design and reporting procedures.
- › Assist with logistical and operational support.
- › Allow AGEs and Posts to contract in program management and other resources.

<sup>21</sup> Prospera Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2021)

<sup>22</sup> Lessons are drawn from Comparative Review for Partnerships for Infrastructure G2G Models (2022), AIPJ2 Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2019), Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program, Independent Review (Draft, 2023), PNG Institutional Partnerships Program Evaluation Phase 1 (2019), Prospera Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2021) and operating experience G2G partnerships in Southeast Asia.

- › Foster linkages between AGEs and other DFAT programs.
- › Provide pre-deployment support such as country political economy briefings.
- › Offer design, GEDSI and MEL resources.
- › Create space for recently retired AGE officers to be engaged as mentors and/or short- or long-term deployees into SGEs.
- › Enable AGEs to selectively use third-party providers such as private sector firms, consultants, and universities, within an overarching SEAG2G partnership to deliver activities, as long as the AGE remains in the lead.

## C. Strategic Intent and Rationale (Why?)

### C.1 Why this investment?

SEAG2G's value proposition is that by leveraging Australia's institutions and expertise, Australia can support partner countries in Southeast Asia to respond to critical economic development opportunities and challenges, and strengthen Australia's relationships in the region, with flow on effects for trade and investment. It is a unique modality to contribute to the Invested Strategy and forthcoming Southeast Asia Development Partnership Plans.

Southeast Asia is central to Australia's national interests and Australia has committed to deeper engagement with partner governments to advance a shared vision for a region that is stable, prosperous, and respectful of sovereignty. As Foreign Minister, Senator Penny Wong, observed in her National Press Club address on 17 April 2023, 'We deploy our own statecraft toward shaping a region that is open, stable, and prosperous. A predictable region, operating by agreed rules, standards, and laws... where sovereignty is respected, and all countries benefit from a strategic equilibrium.'

Australia seeks to work in partnership with governments in the region to support a rules-based international order and implement policies that maximise economic growth and two-way trade, address climate change, reduce poverty and provide effective and inclusive services to their citizens. Australia's federal, State and Territory level agencies and departments have a wealth of expertise and lessons to share, with many institutions already working with counterparts to share lessons, provide expertise and analytical tools. Australia's government institutions are powerful national assets for building and extending Australia's support for economic development in the region.

Australia's commitment is timely with DFAT Posts and Australian agencies reporting high levels of demand from partner governments. Across Southeast Asia, governments play a sizeable role in State-led development, and they are seeking to engage more closely with Australian counterparts. SEAG2G will support a Southeast Asian region where our governments cooperate across a range of priority areas.

### C.2 Building on success in government-to-government engagement

Government partnership programs have been a consistent component of Australia's foreign policy in Southeast Asia and remain an important platform for advancing Australia's policy interests over the long-term. Government partnerships build economic, strategic, and political capital and relationships of reciprocal value. The modality of twinning between government agencies is often preferred by governments in Southeast Asia over commercially contracted technical assistance models, due to the ongoing institutional relationships that are built between agencies. SEAG2G program builds upon Australia's position and comparative advantage as a long-term, trusted donor in the region with longstanding institutional relationships in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and elsewhere. Many Posts report that Australia has a reputation as a collaborative, pragmatic and respectful partner, interested in two-way exchange as peers.

There is strong and increasing demand from Southeast Asian government ministries for knowledge exchange and technical assistance in areas where Australia has a clear value-add. Countries are seeking partnerships and exchange in high-priority sectors, such as clean energy, climate resilient agriculture, digital connectivity, and economic management. There are also partner requests to share norms and governance mechanism pertaining to fostering accountable institutions and democratic rights that serve long-term partner and Australian interests. Australian institutional engagement across these areas can deliver benefits for people and offers avenues to integrate Australian services into fast growing regional markets.

### C.3 Strategic and development objectives

The **Invested Strategy** aims to boost economic engagement between Australia and Southeast Asia. It positions government partnerships as an important mechanism through which Australia and partner countries will advance their mutual interests. For example, the Mekong Foreign Investment and Critical Infrastructure Initiative works with Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam to build their capacity to attract high-quality- foreign direct investment. The Australian Treasury promotes openness to investment through sharing experience with government counterparts on measures such as investment screening to crowd in ‘good quality’ investment. SEAG2G will enable this strategy by supporting AGEs to work with SGEs, ASEAN and other regional entities to strengthen policy and technical capability incapability in support of transparent, accessible and responsive public services and equitable economic growth.

There are several ODA-eligible areas where SEAG2G can support these efforts including working with regional counterparts on technical challenges to meet net zero, deepening cooperation on sustainable agrifood systems and increased cooperation on qualification recognition. SEAG2G has been designed to be able to incorporate non-ODA funds (under a trade and investment thematic priority), should they become available during implementation. This would expand the potential for SEAG2G to support the recommendations of the Invested Strategy including drawing on regional clean energy supply chain initiatives to support partners in battery, electric vehicle and solar sectors, agricultural trade and investment advocacy to drive growth and raising awareness of Australia’s education offerings. Annex 1 lists several recommendations from the Invested Strategy that SEAG2G could contribute towards. The criteria for core partnerships will also ensure that proposals align with the Invested Strategy and strategic and development outcomes.

Australia’s **International Development Policy** recognises the role of development assistance in advancing Australia’s long-term economic, security and development interests in the region and elsewhere. Australia will support government and other partners to drive their own development and generate collective action on global challenges that impact the Southeast Asia region and Australia. SEAG2G aligns with all 4 areas of the International Development Policy: effective and accountable states, state and community resilience, connections with Australia and regional architecture and collective action on global challenges. The program will support policy and practice reforms that are agreed to in forthcoming Southeast Asia Development Partnership Plans and the related Performance and Delivery Framework including: improved governance, economic policy reform, climate change, food security, education and skills, gender equality, disability equity and trade.

### C.4 A platform to bring government agencies together

SEAG2G provides a central platform to bring together federal, State and Territory institutional assets and resources around shared agenda in 4 thematic areas. SEAG2G is a multi-country platform rather than a regional program. It aims to advance bilateral relationships while working through one mechanism across the region. SEAG2G aims to broaden and deepen engagement with the region. To deepen, Australia will help AGEs already working in the region to deepen relationships and enhance existing programs of work. For example, expanding CSIRO’s extensive work in Vietnam to other countries or building on relationships DAFF has with Indonesia to cement an ongoing partnership in agriculture and food security. To broaden, SEAG2G will look to draw new AGEs into the region by supporting them to engage in strategic, impactful cooperation on policy and institutional capability in the short term and grow enduring partnerships where it makes sense to do so in the medium term. By incentivising and enabling diverse quality engagements with regional peers, SEAG2G can serve as an effective platform for cooperation, relationship building and development policy impact.

At an operational level, a central SEAG2G platform offers several advantages for DFAT and partners. For DFAT, a central platform generates efficiencies through streamlined processes and approvals across multiple partners. For AGEs, a central platform simplifies coordination and reduces the need to manage multiple DFAT relationships and reporting requirements allowing AGEs to direct resources towards substantive policy engagement with counterparts. The SEAG2G model enables DFAT and AGEs to share lessons, build a coherent narrative and gain greater insight into the dynamics and commonalities across the region that would not be possible if managing individual partnerships through separate bilateral programs.



## Other Australian programs incorporating government partnerships in Southeast Asia

Prospera, Australian Water Partnerships, the Mekong Australia Partnership and Partnerships for Infrastructure have built practices for scoping, building, and sustaining partnerships between AGEs and counterparts. SEAG2G will work collaboratively with DFAT's Office of Southeast Asia to create a portfolio of government partnerships that builds on the experience of these programs and extends good practices across government-to-government programming. These programs provide valuable lessons on generating a pipeline of government partnerships, sustaining AGE executive buy-in for international engagement, achieving outcomes, and supporting government-to-government partnerships by DFAT program managers and MC teams.

Other Australian programs offer important synergies (see Annex 4 for a list of other DFAT programs). SEAG2G will coordinate with Partnerships for Infrastructure and Mekong Australia Partnership to work in adjacent sectors so as not to overlap. Where overlap does occur, SEAG2G will work with these programs to provide consistent messaging to AGE partners to minimise transaction costs and invite these programs to participate in SEAG2G partnership and activity development processes to minimise the potential for duplication. Additionally, SEAG2G aims to support the Office of Southeast Asia to coordinate and connect the Office's suite of programs to influence the establishment of common standards and approaches across government partnership programs.

### C.5 Other donor government initiatives in Southeast Asia

Other donors have active government-to-government programs in Southeast Asia, including:

- › The European Union's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange and Green Economy Program that supports member States to share lessons and practices with Southeast Asian counterparts through workshops, expert missions, and study visits.
- › New Zealand's support to government exchanges in the Philippines on biosecurity standards and crop management, and development of transparent and common standards to promote two-way agricultural trade.
- › Canada's non-ODA funding to its network of Posts to support partnerships between Canadian line ministries and counterparts in Southeast Asia. Canada deploys both serving and retired public officials to provide technical assistance to counterparts.
- › Germany's bringing together of public servants from across its federal system to carry out knowledge exchanges with counterparts in areas of sustainable economic development, governance, environment, climate change and energy.

The SEAG2G program will support DFAT to keep abreast of other agency partnerships in Southeast Asia and to carve out niche areas of Australian engagement and support.

### C.6 Cross-cutting issues

The approach to cross-cutting issues is covered in depth in Section G.

## D. Proposed Outcomes and Investment Options (What?)

The goal of the SEAG2G program is:

Deeper institutional partnerships between Australia and Southeast Asia that support economic and social development and more effective, accountable, and inclusive government institutions in Southeast Asia.

The DFAT objective for the program is:

Participating Southeast Asian Governments see the Australian Government as a reliable, trusted, and responsive partner for two-way technical and policy collaboration.

The program logic is described in this section and summarised in Figure 1.

## D.1 Program logic

### End-of-program outcomes

The program has 2 **end-of-program outcomes**, applying across all thematic areas:

**EOPO1: Broader and deeper partnerships between Australian and SEA government institutions in targeted areas of mutual interest:**

The program will incentivise Australian institutions to become involved with their regional counterparts, establishing new relationships and expanding existing partnerships. AGEs with existing ties to the region will be supported to build and consolidate these relationships by planning and undertaking multi-year activities for deeper long-term partnerships. Over time this will involve increased numbers of officials from each side making connections and developing positive relationships with counterparts. Collaborative activities under the thematic priority areas will advance common understanding on how to address key challenges, and action on joint agendas.

**EOPO2: SGEs improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development:**

The program will make Australian expertise available to SGEs when it is relevant and needed and showcase the solutions AGEs have applied to policy challenges. This support will help influence approaches taken by SGEs, as they draw on Australian capability and experience to develop and implement evidence-based policy responses and improvements. The 'identified thematic priority areas' referred to in EOPO2 are those listed in this design document, namely climate change and energy transition, education and skills, sustainable agriculture and food security, effective inclusive public institutions.

### Intermediate outcomes

The program has 5 **Intermediate Outcomes**, 4 aligned with the thematic priorities, and in one cross-cutting intermediate outcome. The thematic outcomes will be subject to further refinement in the first year of the program once the detail of partnership activities is developed and agreed among relevant AGEs, SGEs and DFAT.

**IO1: SGEs advance their clean energy transition and strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change:**

Through the program, AGEs will share expertise and lessons from Australia's experience with climate change and energy transition challenges. This includes how climate change is addressed as a policy priority in its own right, as well as within and across other policy areas. This will help SGEs draw on good practice to develop initiatives and reforms in their own context.

**IO2: SGEs advance the workforce skills needed for a modern economy:**

Southeast Asian countries need increasingly skilled workforces to meet the shifting demands of modern economies (including technological advances, digital transformation, and the green economy). AGEs will share the experience of the education and training sector and other relevant specialist agencies to help SGEs develop appropriate policy settings and initiatives to facilitate labour market access to relevant education and training for skills development, and support transition of affected workforces.

**IO3: SGEs advance agricultural sector capacity to meet food security needs and international biosecurity standards:**

Agriculture is critical to sustaining the region's ongoing economic growth, ensuring food security, and contributing to livelihoods. AGEs will share experience and approaches to support SGEs to formulate policies to strengthen food security and adapt towards climate-smart agricultural systems, as well as meet biosecurity standards for sustainable agriculture and integration with international trade.

**IO4: SGEs demonstrate more inclusive and accountable government policy and practices:**

Through the program, a range of AGEs will share Australia's approaches to accountability and transparency of public administration, effective economic management, and policies and programs which take account of the needs of women and men, people with disabilities and socially marginalised people. Dialogue and technical support in these areas will help SGEs develop initiatives and reforms appropriate to local settings.

## **IO5: AGEs advocate to SGEs on addressing gender equality, disability and social inclusion in policy and practice:**

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion are important priorities for the Australian government. The program will enable AGEs to demonstrate how they have integrated these concerns into government programs across the key thematic areas, with the aim of helping SGEs identify opportunities to address these issues more effectively within government policy and operations.

### **Outputs**

The outcomes outlined above will derive from the following 4 **outputs**:

#### **O1: Multi-year AGE-SGE work programs agreed and delivered for mutual exchange and learning:**

Under Workstream 1 (as described below), selected Core Partners will be supported to develop workplans and implement longer term programs of activities under thematic priorities.

#### **O2: AGE-SGE initiatives implemented responding to emerging opportunities:**

Under Workstream 2 (as described below), Country-level activities will be identified and implemented to support new, emerging, and strategic relationships.

#### **O3: The SEAG2G platform coordinates and aligns its partnership activities for coherence across the broader SEA portfolio, avoiding duplication:**

Coordination and oversight mechanisms will help ensure SEAG2G activities contribute to Australia's whole-of-government policy priorities, as expressed in the International Development Policy, Development Partnership Plans, the Invested Strategy, and other key policy documents. Such mechanisms will also be used to avoid duplication with other bilateral and regional programs, build on existing government-to-government engagement and contribute to a more consistent and joined-up approach for government-to-government programming.

#### **O4: Learning and continuous improvement processes established for SEAG2G programming and for GEDSI:**

A Community of Practice mechanism will be established to share lessons among AGE partners, discuss achievements and challenges and improve effectiveness. This will cover the broader issues involved with SEAG2G programming, as well as a specific focus on the GEDSI agenda. Liaison and coordination with other SEA government-to-government programs will facilitate and feed into program learning and alignment. Findings from the MEL system will be shared with partners to support continuous improvement and course correction where needed.

### **Activities**

Outputs will be delivered as a result of the following **activities**:

#### **A1: Agreements brokered between DFAT and AGEs:**

Under the program, DFAT will use its convening role to help foster institutional links between AGEs and SGEs, working with AGEs through its offices in Canberra and State capitals, and linking with SGEs through its extensive network of Posts in Southeast Asia. SEAG2G may consider partnerships with regional organisations beyond ASEAN on a case-by-case basis. Planned collaboration will be formalised by agreements between DFAT and AGEs. For Core Partners under Workstream 1, agreements will draw on a partnership brokering process to agree key parameters, roles and responsibilities and ways of working.

#### **A2: Country plans agreed with Posts:**

DFAT is currently finalising country and regional-level Development Partnership Plans (DPP) which reflect agreed whole-of-government priorities with partner governments for development cooperation. To ensure coherence with these plans, the program will work with Posts to develop brief Country Plans to identify areas of expected and desired cooperation under SEAG2G. These will help provide Posts and partner governments an entry point across the 2 funding streams and support coordination between SEAG2G and relevant bilateral programs working in SEAG2G thematic priorities.

### A3: Robust whole-of-government management and governance arrangements agreed and in place:

Whole-of-government program governance arrangements will be established to set and review priorities, address new opportunities, guide funding and country allocations, and ensure coordination and alignment with other Australian government initiatives. To reinforce a strong 'Team-Australia' approach, consistent systems and standards for partner engagement will be agreed.

### A4: Quality, relevant technical, advisory, and logistical services provided to AGE and SGE partners:

Recognising the resource constraints faced by government agencies, the program will provide a range of contractor services to partners to facilitate engagement, strengthen approaches to gender equality and inclusion, enhance performance, and support partnership reporting and MEL.

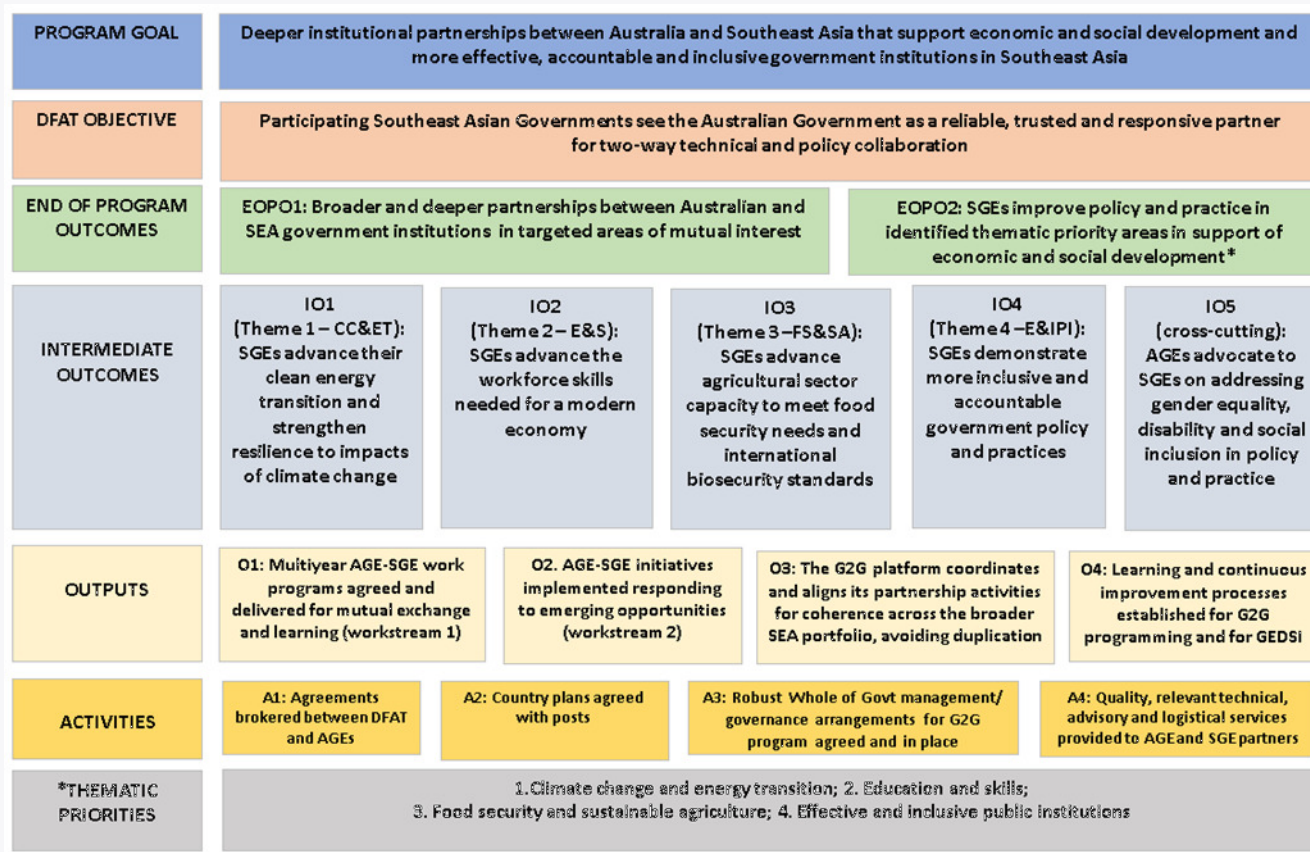
## Program assumptions

As informed through extensive consultation, the program design tested several assumptions, as outlined in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Program assumptions tested during the design consultations**

Assumption Tested	Result
Sufficient Southeast Asian institutions want to build partnerships with Australian counterparts and are open to sharing information about their challenges and opportunities.	Posts and SGE indicated demand for both longer-term, deeper partnerships and short-term responsive interactions.
Sufficient AGEs are interested and incentivised to work in the international space.	There is strong interest from AGEs. For some newer partners, it will take time and significant support to build the capacity for international engagement. Budgets will need to be managed accordingly and support services available and flexible.
With SEAG2G support and resourcing, AGEs will give appropriate priority and dedicate human and in-kind resources to achieving the objectives.	AGEs indicated they have the resources to engage with the support of a contractor for things like logistics, operational support etc. This is an issue to continually monitor through implementation.
DFAT will provide sufficient human resources (Canberra and Posts) to effectively manage the program.	The DFAT G2G Section have 3 confirmed FTE. The Inception phase will explore whether it would be viable to provide a support staff for Posts. If additional funds become available (e.g. non-ODA funds), commensurate resourcing will be required.
AGEs and SGEs can be incentivised to invest time and resources in initiatives to progress gender equality, disability, and social inclusion priorities.	AGEs are interested in this area but require dedicated support. A dedicated GEDSI resource has been included in the design.

Figure 1 SEAG2G program logic



## D.2 Delivery approach

The delivery approach for SEAG2G comprises:

- › **Institutional twinning** through partnerships led by AGEs to implement activities jointly agreed with SGEs. AGEs will be able to use program funding to draw on third-party providers (e.g. consultants, private sector entities, universities, and institutes) to manage and deliver activities in line with their internal procurement requirements. Activities may include knowledge exchange, secondments, training, study visits, policy dialogue, conferences and sharing of tools.
- › **MC** to provide facilitation, operations/logistics, and other support, including enhancing capability of AGEs to work effectively with SGEs, and GEDSI mainstreaming.

**Program-based approach** based on thematic priorities for results. Government-to-government partnerships are a flexible modality to meet high demand from Southeast Asian governments to engage with their government peers, and to advance Australia’s ambition to enhance economic ties through deeper government cooperation. Centralised support from a MC is designed to achieve cost efficiencies and cohesion as well as to ensure consistency and increase capability of delivery partners. Specific elements of the delivery approach to ensure effectiveness and value for money are<sup>23</sup>:

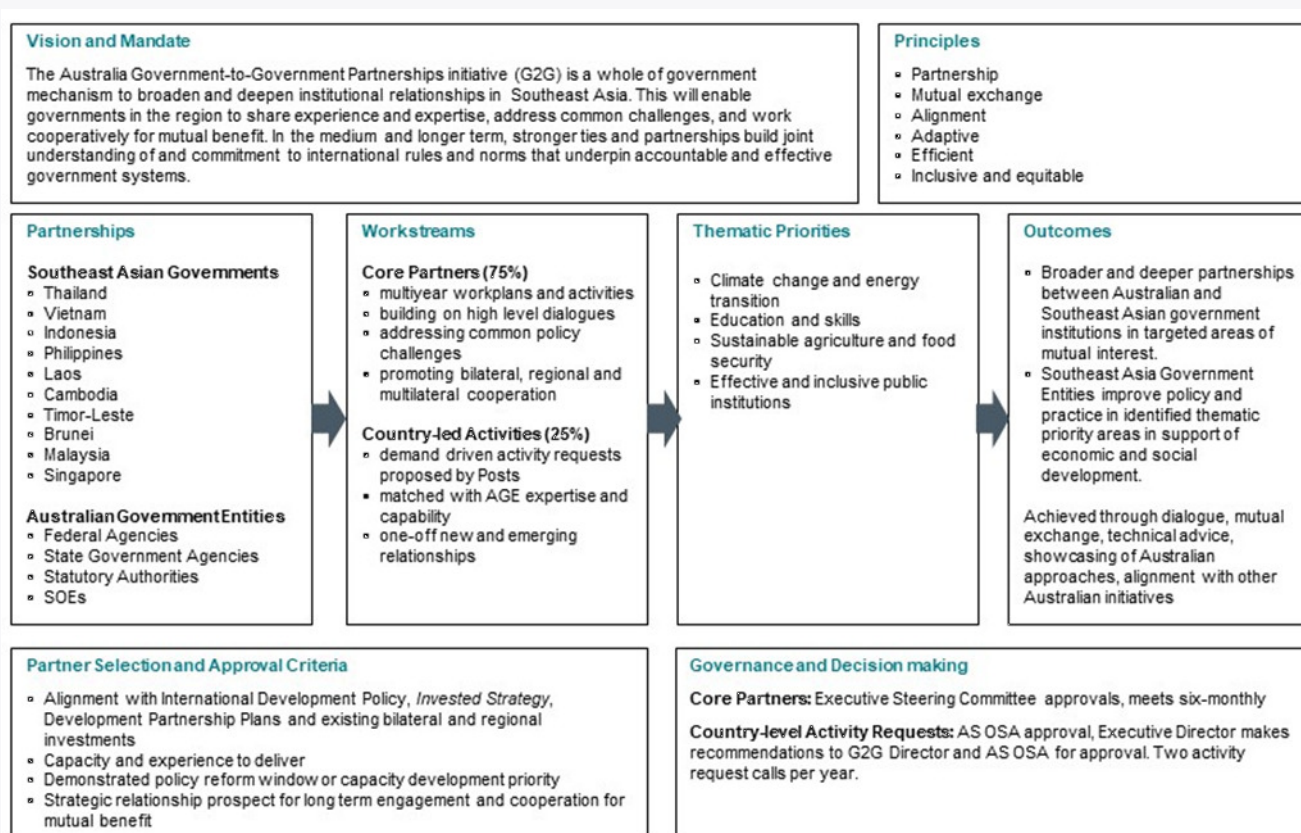
- › **Two workstreams:** 1) Core Partners with long term programs, and 2) responsive demand-driven individual activities based on partner government requests assessed and approved 2 times a year and delivered through Australian government agencies.
- › **Key thematic areas** as the focus for support, where Australia can best add value and not duplicate other existing programs.
- › **Guiding principles:** A set of principles for DFAT and the MC to ensure quality and strategic coherence (see below).

23 G2G’s delivery approach has been informed by widespread consultations with AGEs, Post, desks, and program teams within the Office of Southeast Asia.

- › MEL: An overarching monitoring and evaluation framework and approach to guide AGE planning and reporting and tell a meaningful narrative across the whole program.
- › Communications and public diplomacy arrangements that promote Australia’s role in the region and bilateral relationships.
- › Governance arrangements that will evolve over time and support whole-of-government buy-in and ownership, support adaptive and responsive decision-making and ensure partnerships are aligned with bilateral priorities.
- › Internal coordination mechanisms to support the broader government-to-government programming eco-system in DFAT.
- › Risk management: A shared model of risk management between DFAT and the MC, with support to partners to align with relevant safeguards.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the delivery model. This was consulted throughout the design process and attracted a high level of support from stakeholders.

Figure 2 Overview of the SEAG2G delivery model



## Principles for programming

SEAG2G programming and ways of working will be guided by a set of principles. Their weighting will depend on specific circumstances, but all are fundamental to achieving the desired outcomes and impact. SEAG2G programming principles are:

- › **Partnerships and partnering:** A cooperative model for AGE and counterpart activity implementation, and a collaborative approach across DFAT, AGEs and the MC, will best support bilateral and regional relationships in the region.
- › **Mutual exchange and learning to build relationships and deliver impact:** Fostering Australia’s engagement with Southeast Asian countries through two-way mutual exchanges, sharing lessons and building a shared understanding around common challenges and opportunities.

- › **Alignment with Australian and Partner Government priorities:** SEAG2G partnerships and activities must align with Australia's broader aid investments, bilateral priorities and programs, policies, plans, and strategic relationships rather than work independently of these. Partnerships and activities will be informed by partner government development and economic priorities and institutional reform agendas.
- › **Adaptive:** SEAG2G's processes will be adaptive to respond to critical time-dependent policy reform windows and political imperatives of AGEs and partner governments. A degree of responsiveness is useful as Southeast Asian government priorities evolve, while maintaining a clear line of sight to outcomes.
- › **Efficiency:** SEAG2G's design and implementation arrangements will be streamlined, efficient and not over-engineered to limit flexibility and innovation. The program recognises that AGEs are trusted Australian agencies with distinct mandates, accountability requirements and policy imperatives that are important assets for delivering the objectives of the program.
- › **Inclusive and equitable:** Gender equality, disability and social inclusion that incorporates First Nations perspectives are priorities for the Australian government and is essential to the expression of Australian values and commitment to international norms and systems for effective government systems.

## Geographic scope

SEAG2G is a multi-country program able to work in ODA-eligible countries in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam, as well as possibly Myanmar in the future), and with ASEAN (see ASEAN box below). If non-ODA funding is secured, Singapore and Brunei may also be added to the list of SEAG2G eligible countries. With non-ODA funding, priorities may also be added to enable activities of a more commercial nature in ODA-eligible countries. See Annex 1 for an outline of indicative non-ODA activities that could be supported by SEAG2G.

With the potential for a wide geographic scope, SEAG2G will need to be intentional in the partnerships and activities it supports to make the most impact within the available resource envelope. The program is not expected to deliver partnerships and activities against every theme in every country. Instead, SEAG2G will build a balanced set of AGE partnerships and activities across priority countries and themes, that are appropriately sequenced to meet AGE readiness to engage and respond to evolving Australian and partner country interest. The country-level workstream will also support DFAT to grow the program's geographic spread where there is strong partner government demand.

The roll out of SEAG2G to countries will occur over several stages. During inception and the early implementation phase, a first set of countries will be identified based on AGE readiness to engage including ability to rapidly mobilise and deliver activities and where there is clear Post and partner government demand. Other countries will be identified and added to the program through consultations with Posts and through work planning processes with AGEs and SGEs.

## Country and thematic budget allocations

The design does not recommend specific country and thematic funding level allocations. These resourcing decisions will be made annually by DFAT and considered by the Executive Steering Committee. This level of flexibility will enable the program to adapt to the fluid environment in which the program will operate and remain relevant to AGEs as they work with government partners.

While federal agencies will be early adopters of the program, building the interest of States and Territories in the program will require time and resources. Consultation with DFAT State Directors and P4I suggest that while State governments have strong interest in the region, the program will need to provide a clear rationale on the mutual benefits for States and Territories if they engage with the program, and how engagement aligns to their investment priorities. A non-ODA funding stream would provide significant incentives for participation by States and Territories.

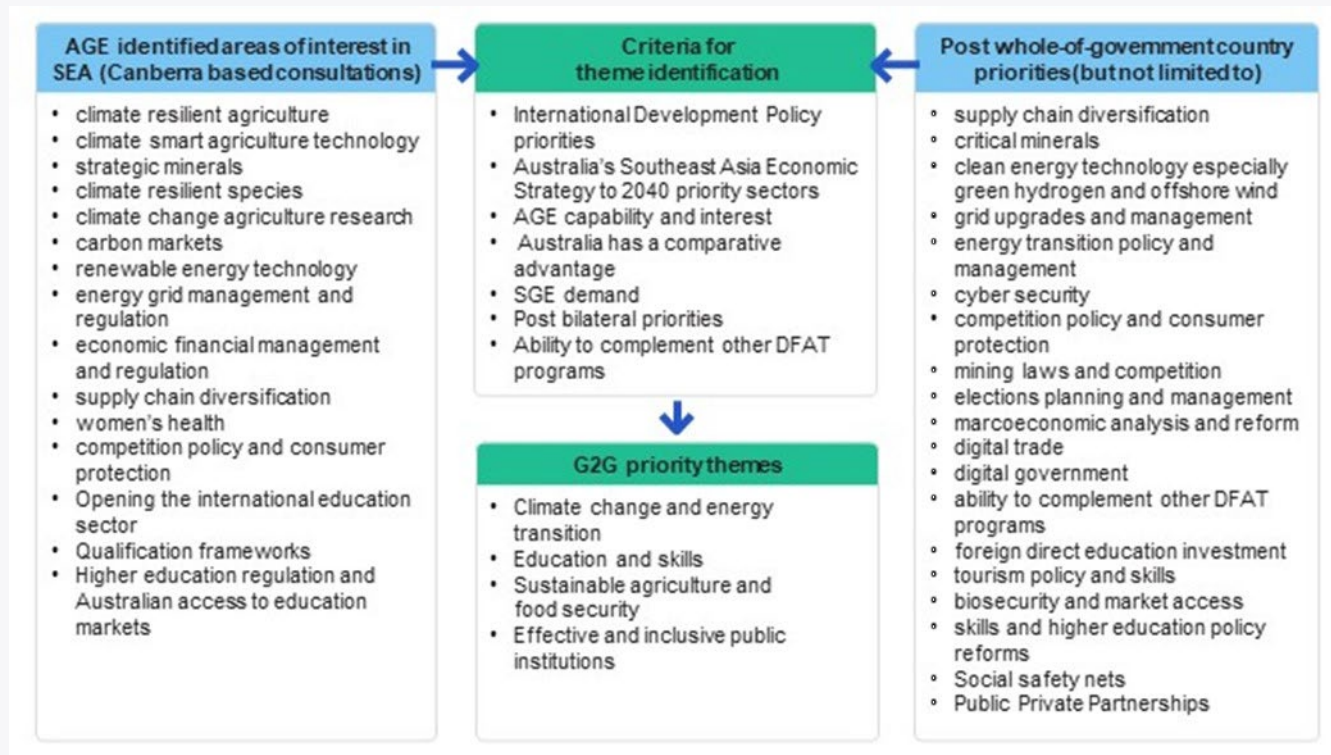
## ASEAN

Australia is committed to ASEAN centrality and the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific. In March 2024, Australia hosted a Special Summit to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations. The \$204 million Australia for ASEAN Futures Initiative is working with the ASEAN Secretariat and partners across Southeast Asia to help move towards an integrated ASEAN economic community. SEAG2G will complement these efforts by focusing on country-specific initiatives. Where SEAG2G partnerships are interacting with ASEAN regional initiatives (e.g. harmonisation of agricultural standards), the SEAG2G management team will ensure the Australian Mission to ASEAN is consulted. Similarly, small-scale, strategic SEAG2G activities between the ASEAN Secretariat and an AGE may conceivably be funded. Australian agencies have supported the ASEAN Secretariat in the past. For example, the Australian Public Service Commission worked with the ASEAN Secretariat to review civil service modernisation across Southeast Asian nations.<sup>24</sup>

## Thematic priorities

SEAG2G activities and partnerships will be delivered across 4 thematic priorities: climate change and energy transition, education and skills, sustainable agriculture and food security, effective inclusive public institutions. The themes were identified through careful consideration of the sectors outlined in the Invested Strategy, International Development Policy, AGE and DFAT Post priorities, and policy areas that are in high demand from SGEs and are aligned to Australia’s comparative advantage. The process for selecting the themes is outlined in Figure 3. SEAG2G will not require an even spread across all 4 thematic priorities but will be driven by interest and demand from the region and their AGE counterparts. It is expected a larger portion of the budget will go to priorities 1–3, and a smaller portion to theme 4. The themes are intentionally narrow enough to assess performance and results, but broad enough to allow for a wide spectrum of AGEs to participate and respond to partner requests for Australian expertise.

Figure 3 Process for selecting themes



24 <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-Study-Report-on-Civil-Service-Modernisation-in-ASEAN-9-Oct-21.pdf>



## Mechanism for building a portfolio of government partnerships and activities

SEAG2G will support AGEs to engage with counterparts through 2 primary workstreams – a Core Partners workstream and a Country-level workstream.

### Workstream 1: Core Partners workstream (75 per cent of the activity budget)

This workstream provides multi-year support to a small group of AGE partners to work in one or more countries to deepen Australia's relationships with counterparts and contribute to institutional change in one or more thematic priorities. The Core Partners workstream is designed to either build or deepen AGE relationships and/or joint programs of work. This workstream receives the largest share of the activity budget and is expected to make the most significant contribution to the EOPOs.

Design consultations have identified some potential core partners aligned with the 4 thematic priorities and SEAG2G's guiding principles. Discussions with these agencies are still in the early stages and will be progressed during the inception phase. Some of these potential core partners have expressed an interest in drawing in other agencies to collaborate under one partnership (indicated in brackets). Potential core partners include:

- › Theme 1 Climate Change and Energy Transition: Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- › Theme 2 Education and Skills: Department of Education (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations)
- › Theme 3 Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- › Theme 4 Effective and Inclusive Public Institutions: Australia Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Human Rights Commission and Department of Social Services (Services Australia, National Disability Insurance Agency).
- › Themes 1–4 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia)

These potential core partners vary in their level of maturity and experience working in the region which would impact their ability to establish and manage activities. CSIRO has established relationships, experience with DFAT programs and an ongoing presence in the region. DAFF, ACCC and AHRC also have a good deal of experience working in Southeast Asia through government-to-government programs. DCCEEW is newer but is looking to establish a presence in the region. DOE has a network of Counsellors in the region but has less experience implementing development programs and DSS established a small international section in December 2023 and is developing an international engagement strategy.

Potential core partners will submit a brief (2–3 pages) scope of work which will confirm the mandate of the agency to engage internationally and outline the types of focus areas and activities to be undertaken as well as the indicative annual budget and level of support required from the MC. This scope of work will be assessed, with input from relevant Posts, against the below set of criteria, considering the budget envelope and will be agreed by an early session of the Executive Steering Committee.

### Proposed selection criteria for Workstream 1

- › Alignment with bilateral strategic, economic and development priorities and development partnership plans.
- › AGE mandate to work in the international environment for the medium to long-term.
- › Mutual benefit for Australia and the Southeast Asian country, though not equally.
- › Capacity in the AGE to lead and implement the activity, with the potential to crowd-in complementary expertise from outside government if appropriate.
- › Demand from the SGE.
- › Commitment and ability to service a multiyear partnership.
- › No duplication of existing bilateral or regional programs operating in the region.
- › Ability to drive innovation and reform and/or meet emerging needs.
- › Potential to leverage additional funding and/or in-kind support of partners.
- › Commitment to supporting specific GEDSI activities and/or integrating GEDSI considerations within activities.
- › Experience in government-to-government partnerships an asset but not a requirement.

Selection will be followed by a detailed scoping and work planning process between the AGE and SGE with Post input, and support of the MC, at which point focus countries will be confirmed. Posts will play an important role in helping to ensure strong alignment between partner activities and bilateral priorities. SEAG2G will ensure Posts remain connected to Core Partner activities, their progress, and key events. A lesson from similar programs is that Posts are keen to understand, promote and participate in government partnership activities where time and resources permit.

The potential core partners have indicated they see demand from: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Further scoping is required, including with the SGEs and Posts, but SEAG2G could initially focus on these countries, drawing in more countries over time, including through workstream 2 (described below). Noting that Malaysia and Thailand don't have a bilateral program, SEAG2G will look to prioritise partnerships in these countries where the selection criteria have been met.

Where there is interest, AGEs may support trilateral engagements, however within these arrangements, partnerships and activities should benefit individual countries reflecting the multi-country focus of SEAG2G (as opposed to regional focus). Trilateral engagements may take on many forms, but the arrangement will need to be led by an individual AGE. For example, an AGE may wish to partner with SGE counterparts in 2 countries and bring partners together periodically over the life of the partnership.

DFAT will consider pilot activities during the inception phase where a partner can demonstrate progressed planning and existing relationships in the region that can be expanded. Entry points for State and Territory governments and other organisations will be explored through the activity work planning process.

Additional core partners may be identified through implementation, particularly if additional/co-funding becomes available.

## **Workstream 2: Country-level workstream (25 per cent of the activity budget)**

The Country-level workstream is intended to provide flexible support to enable Posts to respond to partner government requests for access to Australian government expertise and learning. This demand-led workstream seeks to capitalise on DFAT Posts' deep networks and knowledge of the local political, development and strategic context. It also intends to facilitate new AGEs, or those with limited experience working in the region, to develop new relationships with counterparts. The activities delivered under this workstream will cut across SEAG2G's 4 thematic priorities.

The activities supported under this workstream are expected to be smaller-scale and value, activities likely to be delivered within a 12- to 18-month period. Examples of activities include study visits to Australia, internships, and knowledge-exchange workshops. These activities are often already supported by stretched Posts to some extent; consolidation under the SEAG2G program will enable them to be more systemically supported and linked to country and regional strategies. The activities are expected, for the most part, to support delivery of wider bilateral strategies such as Strategic Partnerships and Development Partnership Plans and existing bilateral programs in areas aligned to SEAG2G's thematic priorities.

Requests under Workstream 2 may also be initiated by AGEs. In this case, SEAG2G will facilitate discussion between the AGE and relevant Post and SGE to confirm the viability of the idea in line with the selection criteria (see below). Entry points for State and Territory governments and other organisations will be explored through the activity work planning process.

Lessons from DFAT's Prospera program demonstrate the value that joint advisory and Australian Government teams can have on partner government reform processes. Prospera provides policy recommendations applicable to the Indonesia context alongside real-world examples of how these policies were implemented in Australia. This includes short-term or one-off government-to-government knowledge exchanges that augment longer-term advisory engagement. Also in Indonesia, Australia's justice program (AIPJ2) supported a collaboration between Australia's Home Affairs, the Indonesian Centre for Law and Policy Studies and Anti-Corruption-Commission to provide multi-agency anti-money laundering guidelines. Applying these lessons to the SEAG2G program context, a country level request could be made for a SEAG2G activity to complement or enhance an area of work under an existing bilateral program.

It is expected that the deeper multi-year partnerships under Workstream 1 will have greater overall contributions to program outcomes than the smaller, more discrete activities under Workstream 2. However, small Workstream 2 activities will still contribute, and may have multiplier effects, either through complementing other bilateral activities or catalysing new long-term partnerships. For example, P4I has brought several climate and energy AGEs into Indonesia and Vietnam for discussions ahead of 2 new bilateral programs. There is the potential, over the longer-term, for Workstream 2 activities to develop and grow into deeper partnerships towards the end of this phase, or into future phases of the program. SEAG2G will develop a proportionate MEL system to take account of the size and scope of Workstream 2 activities.

### Proposed selection criteria for Workstream 2

- › AGE interest in the engagement in the short term.
- › Mutual benefit for Australia and the Southeast Asian Government.
- › Alignment with thematic priorities, bilateral strategic, economic and development priorities / development partnership plans or the activity is deemed to be highly strategic.
- › Capacity in the AGE to implement the program.
- › Demand from SGE.

### Country Plans

Country Plans will be developed with Posts seeking to access support through Workstream 2. A Country Plan is a brief overview (1–2 pages) of how expected engagement is aligned with the country Development Partnership Plan, and bilateral and partner government priorities as well as the SGE demand for engagement with AGEs. The Plan can serve as a Post planning document to guide Workstream 2 activity requests, and to engage senior DFAT management and partner government representatives. The MC will support Posts to develop the Plan, including drafting initial versions of the document if requested by Posts. It is expected Plans will remain living documents and be updated over time.

### Capability building and coordination with other DFAT programs

Discussions with AGEs and Posts indicate SEAG2G could play a valuable role in supporting DFAT’s Office of Southeast Asia to connect similar programs to share lessons, and over time, develop consistent approaches to planning, implementation, and MEL of government partnership programs. Government-to-government activities currently under other programs could even be merged into the SEAG2G mechanism. Several AGEs welcomed this, noting that engaging with different DFAT Posts and sections at times generated transaction costs through varying reporting, funding and acquittal processes and requirements. SEAG2G will offer added value to programs operating under the Office of Southeast Asia as summarised in Figure 4. AGEs are also looking for advice from DFAT on how to prioritise the increasing number of requests they get from the region, this is something SEAG2G could look to facilitate advice on over time.

Figure 4 Building capability and coordinating with other government-to-government programs



As part of SEAG2G’s coordination and collaboration focus, the program will build processes that support strong coordination and knowledge sharing across relevant programs and Posts at key points in partnership and activity development stages. This is important in areas where several programs may converge, such as in the climate change and energy transition space. P4I is a major presence in these areas through initiatives to support Southeast Asia’s energy transition including the Lao Australia Sustainable Energy Partnership, Thailand Australia Energy Cooperation, Future Electricity Vietnam, and others. Other forthcoming large regional investments include Climate Resilient Communities, a redesigned Mekong-Australia Partnership (MAP), and several bilateral investments (Vietnam Aus4Growth and Indonesia Climate and Infrastructure Partnership).

In the climate and energy space, it will be essential for SEAG2G to invite P4I and other programs and Posts to participate in early concept discussions with AGEs. Additionally, Posts and DFAT sections managing P4I and other programs, will be invited to review draft proposals once they are developed. These processes will be further outlined in SEAG2G’s Partnership and Engagement Strategy, to be developed during the inception phase.

## **E. Implementation Arrangements (How will DFAT engage?)**

### **E.1 Governance arrangements and structure**

#### **SEAG2G Executive Steering Committee**

The Executive Steering Committee is designed to set the strategic direction and provide a mechanism for DFAT to coordinate and progress Australia’s whole-of-government interests in Southeast Asia. The Committee will provide senior executive level oversight and a forum for inter-agency policy discussion.

The Executive Steering Committee will:

- › Oversee the strategic direction of the program.
- › Provide policy advice on Australia’s national interests in the region, ensuring alignment between SEAG2G and key policies and strategies, including Australia’s International Development Policy and the Invested Strategy.
- › Enable sharing of lessons and experience across AGE partnerships and the use of those lessons for continued improvement.
- › Approve the core partnership (including AGE, country, and thematic priority) and provide high level oversight of Workstream 2.
- › Champion the program across broader whole-of-government forums, including engaging with senior executives from other departments as needed.
- › Consider overall portfolio coherence, including the spread of sectoral and geographic investments.
- › Promote gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as a priority focus across all program and activity levels.
- › Consider exception reporting concerning:
  - › Sensitive or high-level rated program risks including PSEAH and child protection risks.
  - › GEDSI progress and performance.
- › Discuss overall program performance, including the findings from independent evaluations and reviews.
- › Approve key program documents as required.

The Committee will not be a forum for discussion of individual AGE performance. Issues relating to under-performance of specific activities will be discussed with individual agencies under the framework of the individual partnership/funding agreements. The Committee’s functions will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.

The Committee will be chaired by First Assistant Secretary, Southeast Asia Strategy and Development Division from DFAT’s Office of Southeast Asia (OSA) and comprise representatives from other Office of Southeast Asia divisions, Core Partner agencies, central agencies (subject to availability) and Posts. The Committee will include representation from DFAT’s Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch to ensure GEDSI is elevated throughout the program. Additionally, the Committee will aim to comprise equal representation of both women and men and ensure diversity and inclusion is reflected across its membership with regard to disability, age, ethnicity, and gender diversity. Gender equality and diversity within the Committee membership contributes to better decision-making processes and outcomes. DFAT may appoint additional Committee members to cover specific interests or strategic

positioning. Additional members may come from the private sector, DFAT's Trade Division and/or First Nations Taskforce.

The Committee will meet at least twice per year in February (to review planning) and September (to review progress and performance) with the potential for meetings more frequently in the first year, including to agree Core Partners. Progress against gender equality, disability inclusiveness and inclusion of First Nations perspectives will be standing agenda items in both meetings.

February meetings will be future-oriented confirming Australia's geographic and other priorities for the year and budget weightings across workstreams and core partnerships. Core Partners will be invited to brief the Committee on their plans for the forthcoming year. Additionally, Post executives will be invited to present their ideas on where SEAG2G supported activities could make a strategic and developmental differences in their countries, in line with country plans.

The September meetings will reflect on program performance data, the balance of portfolio investments spread across sectors and countries, positioning of country-level allocations and will be an opportunity to share lessons between partners.

The Committee will review exception reporting, including risks deemed to be sensitive in nature or high-level, and consider the adequacy of mitigation strategies. It may be necessary for the SEAG2G Executive Director or the DFAT G2G Section Director to elevate risk issues to the Committee between meetings. This will occur on an as-needs basis. The Committee secretariat functions will be supported by the MC, in consultation with the DFAT G2G Section.

## **E.2 Other governance arrangements**

### **AGE and SGE governance arrangements**

Regular opportunities for AGE and SGE partners to reflect on the mutual benefits arising from engagement is critical for sustaining and deepening relationships. DFAT, Core Partner AGEs and the MC will meet monthly/quarterly, as required, to discuss program operational issues as they emerge. Core Partners and their SGE counterparts will be supported to establish partnership-level governance arrangements to monitor the effectiveness of engagement. For Core Partners, establishment of such arrangements will be a funding requirement and, where possible, involve Post participation in these arrangements. For activities supported under the Country-level workstream, governance arrangements will be commensurate with the level and nature of the engagement. AGEs experienced in international work already have in place governance mechanisms, some of which are quite innovative and could be expanded to include SEAG2G.

### **DFAT Posts**

DFAT's Posts are well placed to advise on how best to draw in partner government perspectives in response to the level of SEAG2G programming occurring within their countries. Posts will actively identify priorities and opportunities for engagement. They will play a role in providing introductions between AGEs and SGEs, sharing knowledge of the local context and political economy, attending events, and ensuring alignment with Australia's interests in a particular country. Posts may decide to establish new governance arrangements or incorporate SEAG2G-related discussions within existing bilateral arrangements and/or annual development dialogues. Any arrangements will be proportional to the size and nature of SEAG2G programming in-country. Posts will also have an opportunity to periodically participate in the Executive Steering Committee, and present ideas to the Steering Committee on the direction of country-level activities to be supported through SEAG2G. Posts will also be encouraged to participate in AGE and SGE governance arrangements as time permits.

## **E.3 Management**

SEAG2G's scope and nature requires a strong management approach that draws on the strengths of DFAT and the MC team. Based on lessons from other similar programs, effective management relies on strong communication and management coordination across teams, institutionalising a culture of collaboration, effective risk management systems and early warnings of impending risks. Key management risks are inconsistent messaging to partners,

unclear communication lines and responsibilities across the teams and communication gaps. These risks will be mitigated through an early ways of working process to clarify roles and responsibilities using a partnership broker and fostering a culture of collaboration across teams.

## SEAG2G Management

Building on the clarification of roles and responsibilities through a ways of working process, a weekly management meeting will be established between DFAT and the MC to prioritise program-level activities, review risk and financial performance, review workplans, country-level activities, GEDSI priorities and risks, and other program and operational matters. There will be equitable representation of both women and men from diverse backgrounds where possible. A key will be to coordinate engagement and develop consistent program messaging to ensure DFAT and the program engages effectively and efficiently with AGEs and Posts. DFAT and the MC will work collaboratively to ensure SEAG2G is implemented as smoothly as possible in the context of managing a complex array of relationships.

## DFAT Management

The Assistant Secretary, Southeast Asia Development Policy and Programs Branch in OSA will be the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the program. The SRO will play a key role in de-conflicting and prioritisation of countries and partnerships within the context of OSA and considering other regional programs. In DFAT, SEAG2G will be managed by the DFAT G2G Section Team, overseen by the DFAT G2G Section Director (EL2), and staffed by a team of 2 FTEs (APS 6 and EL1), located within the Office of Southeast Asia (positions already approved and in place). The Section will maintain oversight of SEAG2G implementation to ensure quality, visibility, and compliance with DFAT standards, while focusing on AGE relationship management and policy dialogue. An important part of this work will be to negotiate Record of Understandings with AGEs where not currently in place. Table 3 outlines DFAT’s roles and responsibilities.

**Table 3 DFAT SEAG2G roles and responsibilities**

Role	Responsibilities
G2G Section Director	<p>The Section Director will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– lead AGE relationships, including building and sustaining relationships with partners</li> <li>– lead on strategic direction as defined by the Executive Steering Committee</li> <li>– lead strategic discussions with Posts</li> <li>– monitor and elevate risks to the Executive Steering Committee</li> <li>– undertake policy coordination functions within DFAT</li> <li>– exercise decision-making responsibilities for approvals linked to selection processes and other decisions</li> <li>– elevate decisions to higher levels as required</li> </ul>
G2G Section Team	<p>The Section Team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– support the Workstream 2 EOI process</li> <li>– support the Section Director on operational and planning matters</li> <li>– manage the SEAG2G contract</li> <li>– manage program risk systems and assessments</li> <li>– engage and support relationship management with partners</li> <li>– ensure alignment between DFAT and MC financial, budget, procurement, risk and safeguards, PSEAH and child protection systems</li> <li>– support policy coordination functions</li> <li>– undertake program management functions (e.g. performance management, quality reporting, whole-of-program budget management, monitoring and engagement, quality assurance of program documents)</li> <li>– facilitate connections between SEAG2G and other programs</li> <li>– negotiate and develop RoU/MoU/activity schedules with AGEs</li> <li>– manage contract payments through AidWorks</li> <li>– provide input into gender equality, climate change and indigenous engagement strategies</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibilities
Posts	Posts will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– identify and propose partnership opportunities for the Country-level workstream</li> <li>– vet Core Partner proposals and review Core Partner annual plans and reports</li> <li>– liaise with SGEs</li> <li>– identify the level and type of support Post requires from DFAT G2G Section and the SEAG2G implementation team to support in-country activities (i.e. logistical, administrative, technical support).</li> <li>– brief Post Executives on SEAG2G activities</li> <li>– support AGE in-country visits and/or outsource this support to the SEAG2G implementation team</li> <li>– participate in Core Partner and country-level activities (e.g. high-level visits, dialogues, other fora) as time permits</li> <li>– nominate a Post SEAG2G focal point, or a desk focal point if more appropriate</li> <li>– disseminate public diplomacy materials generated by the SEAG2G program</li> <li>– participate in learning events and partnership reflection sessions as time permits</li> </ul>

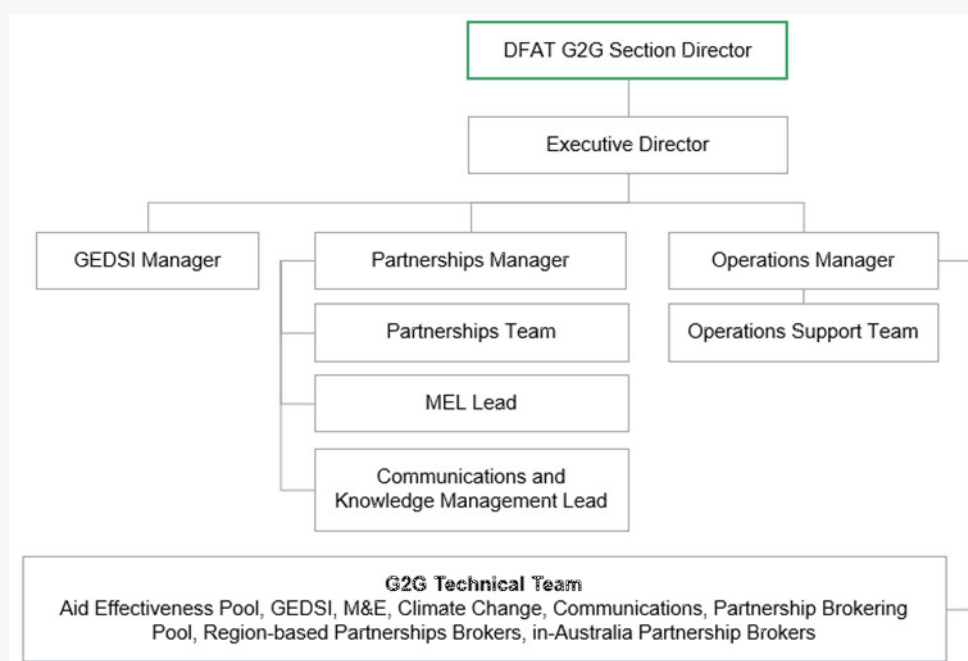
### Australian Government Entities

AGEs will be responsible for delivering activities and will have access to quality assurance, administration and operational support provided through the MC. AGEs will be responsible for managing relationship and activity delivery risks as part of individual funding agreements. Where possible, AGEs will develop work programs that build on existing dialogue and engagement with SGE counterparts. AGEs can draw on third-party providers (e.g. consultants, private sector entities, universities, and institutes) to manage and deliver activities in line with their internal procurement requirements, provided the AGE remains the strategic lead of the partnership. AGEs will also contribute data and insights to the MEL processes overseen by the MC, and participate in activities for learning and continuous improvement, including partnership health checks where appropriate, and Community of Practice sessions with other AGEs. AGEs will be accountable through the Executive Steering Committee, terms and conditions within funding agreements with DFAT, and specific management and governance arrangements established with SGE counterparts.

### Managing Contractor

At the MC level, roles and functions will be managed and delivered through a program structure, as depicted in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 Organisation chart



The SEAG2G implementation team will be led by an Executive Director and supported by a senior leadership team consisting of a Partnerships Manager, GEDSI Manager and Operations Manager. The MC will lead on program implementation. The Executive Director will report to the DFAT G2G Section Director and will have experience working in the Australian government system at a senior management level. The MC team will also establish aid effectiveness and Southeast Asia and Australia partnership resource pools (comprised of short-term personnel) to provide partners, as needed, with a range of quality assurance and development services, as well as partnership brokering support.

The MC team will use inclusive recruitment approaches to ensure women and people from diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities have opportunities to be engaged as short-term advisers on SEAG2G activities via inclusion in the technical resource pools.

**Table 4 Key positions and capabilities required for the program**

Role	Capabilities
Executive Director	Senior-level public service experience in Australia, relationship building, leadership, problem solving, relationship management, creativity, strategy development, risk and safeguards management and mitigation, program management, partnership brokering.
Partnerships Manager	Understanding of government systems, including policy and service delivery systems, relationship management, consensus building, partnership brokering, project management, risk and safeguards management and mitigation, development policy, event facilitation.
GEDSI Manager	Gender equality, partnership brokering, disability and social inclusion technical specialist, consensus building, stakeholder management, creativity, event / training facilitation, Southeast Asia experience.
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Lead	M&E methodology and approaches, policy and practice measurement, problem solver, report writing, mentoring, training, relationship management, translation of complex concepts, facilitation, written communication, and risk management (including safeguards).
Operations Manager	Finance management, program management, procurement, logistics and administration, client service minded, relationship management, problem solver, security management.
Technical Expertise Pool	Identified experts with expertise in GEDSI, design, MEL, thematic areas (e.g. climate change, agriculture, education), PSEAH, risk, safeguards and child protection. <i>To be sourced from existing panels where possible and on an as needed basis.</i>
Southeast Asia and Australia Partnership Pool	Partnership brokers in the region and Australia to provide partnership training and facilitation services to DFAT, AGEs and SGEs. Brokers will undertake periodic 'check-ins' with SGEs on the status of activities and other aspects of the partnership. Support is to be provided through partnership and/or activity scoping and implementation phases and on conclusion of partnerships and activities. <i>To be sourced from MC's global partnership panel on an as needed basis.</i>
Operations Team	Team of logistical, administrative, and finance officers to support delivery of activities and provide operational support to partners.

### Services provided by Managing Contractor

The MC will undertake a range of key functions spanning strategy, planning, governance, risk and safeguards management, budget management and operations. A detailed list of services is provided at Annex 5.

Posts, DFAT Canberra and AGEs may identify other needs (beyond those in Annex 5) and the MC will have in place mechanisms to respond to ad-hoc requests where it is in line with SEAG2G priorities. This could include tasking by DFAT to manage new or existing government-to-government programs within or outside of the thematic scope of this design. If non-ODA funding becomes available, the MC will establish mechanisms to deliver and report on non-ODA funded activities.

To effectively deliver services to DFAT, Posts and AGEs and subject to DFAT approval, the MC may establish an office in Southeast Asia. The office will provide rapid administrative and logistical support to partners delivering activities in the region, providing further value to SEAG2G partners. The location of the office will be informed by value for money considerations and the MC will provide DFAT with a comprehensive cost benefit analysis of the costs involved



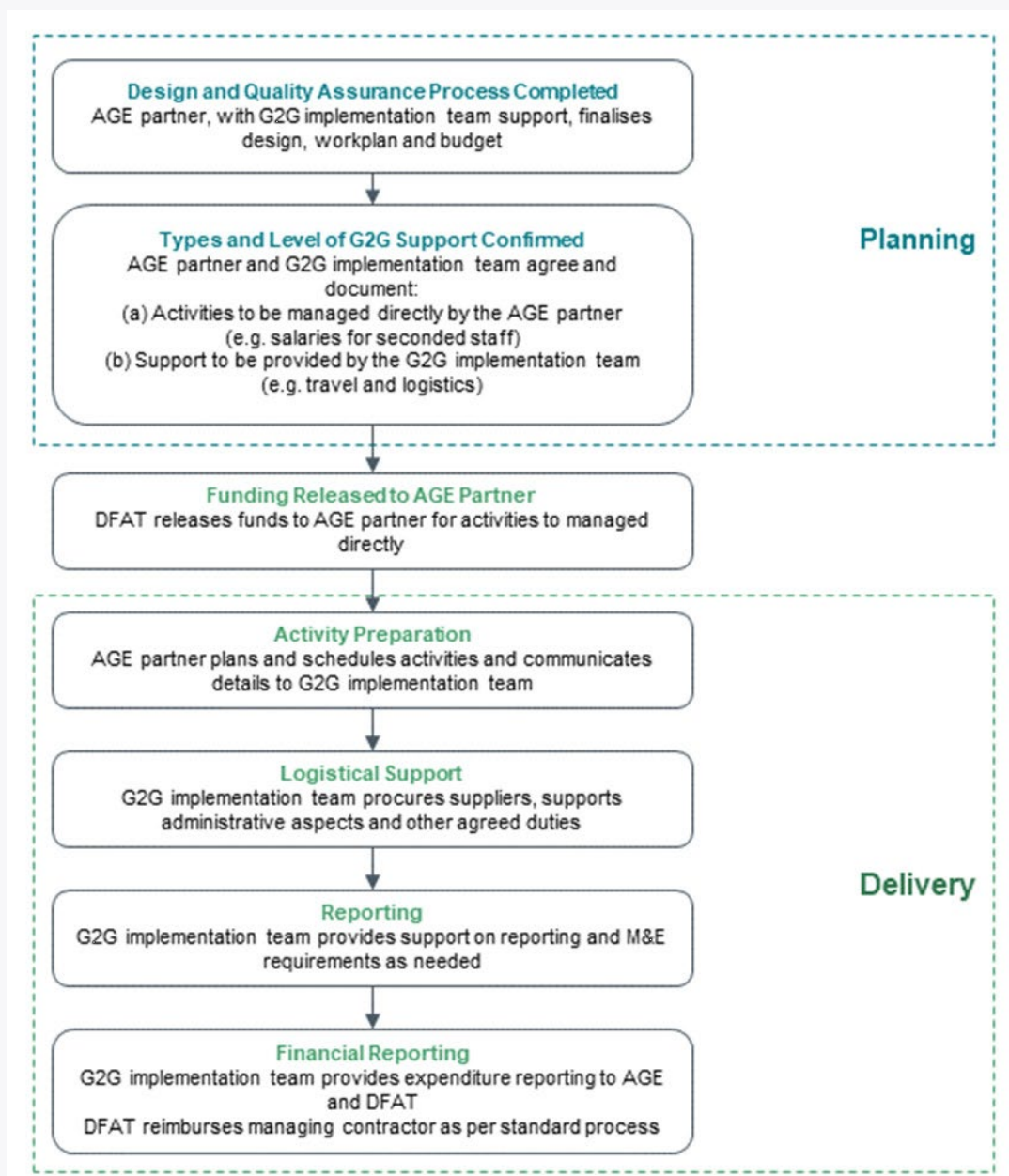
in setting up operations in different locations. This will enable the MC and DFAT to select the most suitable location for the program.

### Managing Contractor logistics and administrative workflow process

Lessons from AGE consultations and MAP-TNC is that AGEs highly value MC in-country support for the planning and delivery of activities, including logistical and administrative support to AGEs and their SGE counterparts.

To ensure AGEs and Posts are provided with the best possible administrative and logistical support across both workstreams, the MC will need to provide a seamless and integrated planning and delivery process as outlined in Figure 6 below. This process will be further defined in the SEAG2G Operations Manual to be developed during the inception phase and improved in response to ongoing feedback from partners.

Figure 6 SEAG2G planning and delivery workflow



## Calls for Workstream 2 requests, annual budget allocations and activity selection process

The DFAT G2G Section, with support from the MC, will manage Country-level ‘calls for activities’ 2 times per year under Workstream 2. While 2 calls will provide a regular mechanism for Posts to respond to government partners, the DFAT G2G Section will determine the number of calls in any given year based on budget availability and level of partner and Post interest. It will also determine whether out-of-session submissions are accepted. As part of the call for activities, Posts will only be required to provide brief information on the nature of the activity. Posts and AGEs will not be required to develop activity workplans until after the activity is approved to minimise the potential administrative burden on Posts, AGEs and SGEs. Figure 7 outlines the selection process for the Country-level workstream.

## Workstream 2 review process, variations, and assessment of impact

To retain flexibility to respond to Australia and partner policy environments, changing AGE engagement profiles and mitigate budget management risks, it may be necessary to vary the proposed budget splits across workstreams (i.e. 75 per cent for Core Partners and 25 per cent for the Country-level workstream). The 75/25 per cent split will be trialled for the first year of the program and then reviewed. Variations greater than 10 per cent are to be approved by the Executive Steering Committee, while smaller variations (up to 10 per cent) will be discussed by DFAT and the MC through the regular management meeting, and subsequently approved by the DFAT G2G Section. Variations will occur on an annual basis and be reviewed during annual planning processes and at quarterly points during program meetings. These approval levels allow DFAT to retain visibility and management control over workstream variations and provides the Steering Committee with oversight on program direction.

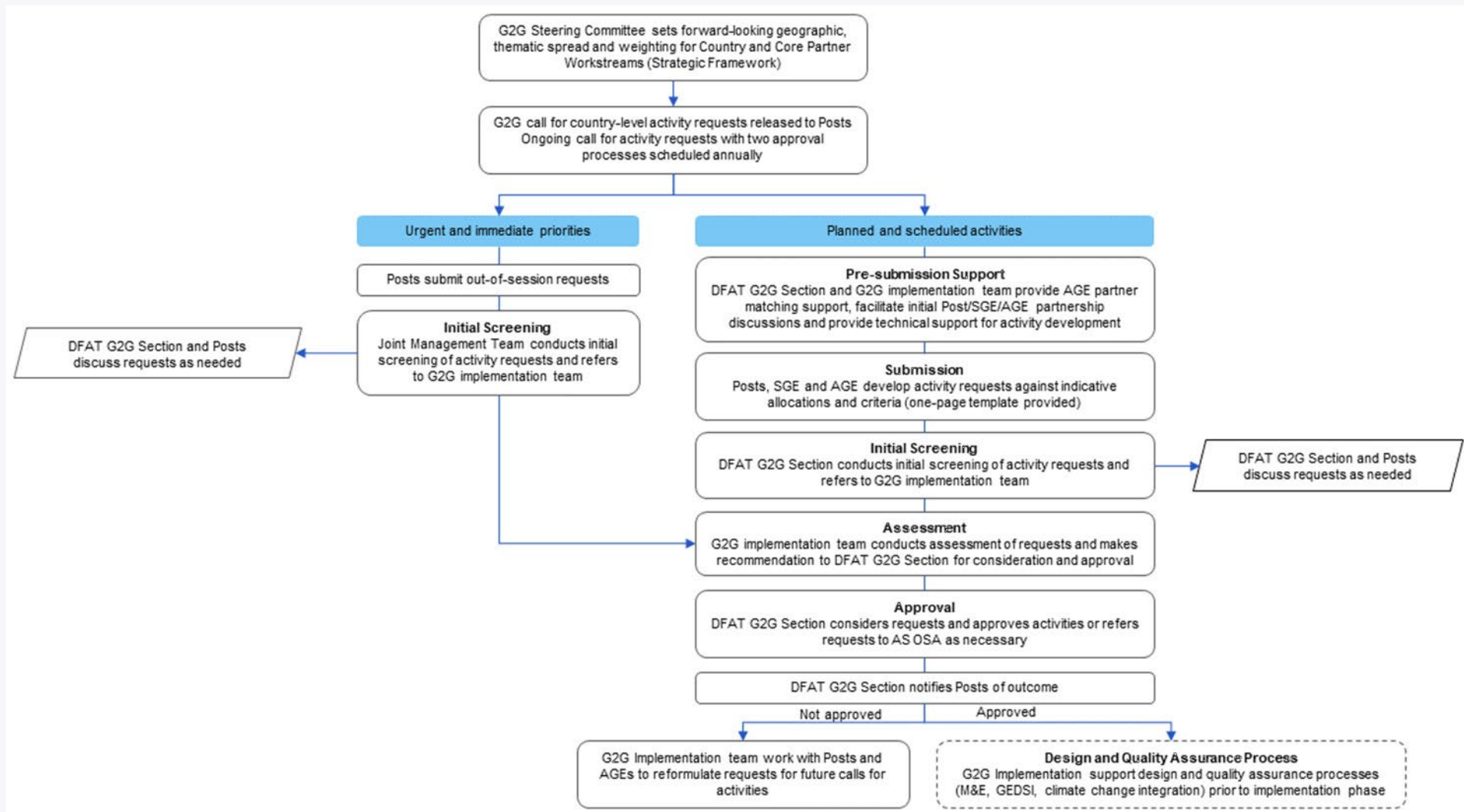
## Management of co-funding arrangements

SEAG2G’s centralised platform provides an opportunity and incentive for DFAT Posts and Desks to utilise SEAG2G’s services through a co-funding arrangement. For example, Phnom Penh Post may wish to fund a partnership between Australian Treasury and the counterpart ministry in Cambodia. SEAG2G will have the systems and governance mechanisms to support this type of arrangement where it is aligned to SEAG2G outcomes. At the point a request is received by either the DFAT G2G Section or by the MC, SEAG2G will work with the requesting Post/ Desk to define the partnership concept and ensure alignment with SEAG2G’s themes, workstreams, principles and selection criteria. As part of this early work, the MC may support initial outreach and early discussions between Post and the prospective AGE. DFAT’s G2G Section will have final approval of any co-funding arrangement. Once agreement for the partnership to proceed, the MC will support the Post/Desk to move through the indicative workflow outlined in Figure 7. Through this workflow process, the MC will agree with Post/Desk the funding contributions and split, and details of the operational and technical services (e.g. logistics, GEDSI, MEL, communications) to be provided by the MC. The SEAG2G Operations Manual will further define the management arrangements for co-funding with Posts and Desks.

## Annual Reflection Workshop

DFAT, AGEs and the MC will hold an annual reflection workshop to test the program logic, thematic priorities and geographic spread drawing on performance information generated through the M&E system and other data sources. The MC will be responsible for coordinating, facilitating, and documenting the outcomes of the workshop. The DFAT G2G Section may report back to the Steering Committee on any high-level learning, risks or other issues that emerged through the workshop.

Figure 7 Country-level selection process



## E.4 Inception phase foundational activities

SEAG2G will have a four-month inception phase to mobilise staff, establish the support systems, and progress the activities required to commence the program. The inception phase will include key implementation activities agreed between DFAT and the MC agreed in the amended scope of requirements. These foundational activities and a notional timeline are outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5 Foundational activities**

Foundational Activities	Indicative timeline
1. Mobilise and office set-up including an operations manual and establishing systems and procedures. Development of the AGE Partners – Activity Implementation Guidelines	July 2024
2. SEAG2G DFAT and MC Ways of Working Workshop resulting in a Ways of Working document.	July 2024
3. DFAT and Core Partners Ways of Working Workshop resulting in a Partnership Agreement document.	Sept 2024
4. Operational planning – this will include the development of SEAG2G’s core plans including: GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan, First Nations plan, Partnership and Engagement plan, Public Diplomacy Engagement plan, MEL plan, Partner Activity Workplan and Reporting Framework including workplan, MEL, reporting and GEDSI templates, and Sustainability and Localisation plans. Other items to be developed include ROUs, country plans, activity schedules, Core Partner and SGE partnership agreements and reporting templates.	Operational plans and templates prioritised and sequenced for delivery during the first 12 months
5. An Annual Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– detailed SEAG2G overarching workplan and budget for July 2024 to June 2025</li> <li>– core partner annual activity schedule and detailed budget as annexes</li> <li>– program wide risk management assessment and mitigation</li> <li>– a GEDSI and knowledge and learning components.</li> </ul>	September 2024
6. MEL Framework and PAF, quality assured centrally by DFAT.	December 2024

## E.5 Policy dialogue

Within the framework of the Invested Strategy, SEAG2G has the potential to make significant contributions to policy across the region. This is particularly the case in new policy fields, such as the energy transition and climate change, where AGE capability building can significantly shape new policies, regulations, and governance in new markets. In other areas, AGEs can support SGEs to shape reforms of existing policies and standards, such as common standards enabling greater investment and trade that benefits both countries. For example, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries’ technical advice to counterparts on biosecurity protections is of benefit to protecting country-based domestic agriculture systems and has flow on effects for enabling Southeast Asian exporters to safely access Australian markets. See Annex 2 for the indicative Policy Dialogue Matrix.

DFAT Posts and AGEs will lead policy dialogue with Southeast Asian government partners as part of activity planning and delivery. The DFAT G2G Section will engage in policy dialogue with AGE Core Partners, especially through scoping and co-design of partnership workplans. The DFAT G2G Section, with support from the program, will support whole-of-government policy dialogue on advancing the Invested Strategy and broader interests in key forums (e.g. Executive Steering Committee, SEAG2G learning forums and events). Members of the Executive Committee will elevate policy matters around the key themes as part of discussions with donors and Southeast Asian leaders.

SEAG2G will be realistic about the pace of policy reform and the degree of influence Australia can have. It will acknowledge incremental gains and be agile enough to respond to policy windows as they arise.

## E.6 Profile and public diplomacy

Promoting Australia’s official government engagement in the region will be an important focus of the program. SEAG2G will work in high profile areas, enabling the program to showcase how the Australian government is partnering with countries in areas such as trade, sustainable economic growth, and transition to a low carbon

economy. SEAG2G will develop an easily recognisable whole-of-government brand, underpinned by consistent message and quality communication materials. The program will leverage public communications, such as joint AGE and SGE announcements, press releases and high-profile bilateral meetings and events, to signal shared positions and close ties between Australia and partners. SEAG2G's approach and tools will be outlined in a Public Diplomacy and Engagement Strategy. Importantly, the Strategy will outline how the program will contribute to public diplomacy strategies at Posts, for example by providing case studies and evidence to be used in social media posts.

## E.7 Sustainability

Australia's ambition to deepen government agencies' relationships with counterparts in Southeast Asia and support the region's economic and development agenda is a long-term endeavour. Within this context, SEAG2G's vision for sustainability has 2 interlinked strands:

- › **Sustainable partnerships:** The program will work towards building enduring relationships between select AGE's and their counterparts. Support for partnerships is positioned so that AGEs *continue* engaging with their counterparts beyond the life of the program (rather than withdrawing once funding has ceased). SEAG2G support is positioned to be both a catalyst to AGE engagement in Southeast Asian countries, as well as supporting existing partnerships to evolve and mature. For example, ASIC exited a formal partnership with its Indonesia counterpart under the Prospera program in 2021. The ASIC partnership had reached a level of maturity where the financial regulators could engage as peers, through regional fora and Australian Treasury engagement.
- › **Sustainability in development outcomes:** the program will support sustainable outcomes and change in key thematic priorities while being realistic about the pace of policy reform and the degree of influence Australia can have. SEAG2G aims to support inclusive partnerships between AGEs and SGEs, with a focus on SGE ownership and leadership over developing solutions to policy and technical needs, and institutional strengthening with enduring relationship and development benefits. But SEAG2G also recognises the long-term nature of institutional partnerships, that relationships will need time to grow and for trust to be built. Especially in the first phase of the program (first 5 years), SEAG2G will recognise effort and incremental gains on the path to longer term, more sustainable development outcomes.

Sustainability across the 2 strands in this SEAG2G program will be addressed through governance, planning and MEL processes and promoted by:

- › **Selection of thematic priorities** that bring together convergence of AGE interest and capability, Post and SGE demand for mutual exchange, and connections with priority areas to offer the greatest prospect for supporting sustainable reforms and/or practice change within institutions.
- › **Embedding whole-of-government oversight** and engagement at multiple program levels (governance arrangements, position of workstreams, selection of sectors) so that SEAG2G remains responsive to Australia and partner government priorities to enable the program to maintain its relevance to partner interests.
- › **AGE and SGE agreements that set out a vision** for the partnership, which in some cases will have a long-term horizon, and reflecting on progress over time. Development of partnership agreements will support SGE and AGEs to jointly shape the nature and scope of the partnership including the issues to be jointly addressed and the type of support to be provided. Periodic partnership health checks will be considered as a space for AGE and SGE to reflect on the status of the partnership.
- › **Building program learning platforms** to spotlight good practices in sustaining capability development and embedding change. For example, building executive-level engagement in technical training to authorise change in practices.
- › **Multi-year resourcing** (funds, management, and logistical support) for AGEs to offer the best prospect for consistent and long-term institutional engagement with counterparts.

- › **Monitoring and evaluation** that captures AGE and SGE co-contributions, often in kind by reaching into whole of agency expertise and encourages reflection on sustainable models of engagement.

Sustainability will vary across partnerships. It is more likely where AGEs have an ongoing presence in the region (CSIRO, DOE, DAFF) or where an agency is looking to establish that presence (DCCEEW). Sustainability is also more likely under the Core Partnerships of Workstream 1, due to the intentionally responsive nature of Workstream 2.

## **F. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) (How will DFAT measure performance?)**

MEL products will provide information on SEAG2G performance against outcomes for program accountability to DFAT as donor, and for DFAT in turn to senior whole-of-government officials. The MEL system will also produce the necessary program data to contribute to DFAT's performance reporting on the aid program. Information produced by MEL will support effective management by the MC and the DFAT G2G Section Team, to inform program decision-making, course correction as needed and recommendations to the Executive Steering Committee. Insights from MEL will be shared with stakeholders through the program's learning agenda. This will include Community of Practice sessions with participating AGEs for mutual exchange on experience and peer learning.

Lessons from the design phase indicate that SEAG2G's approach to MEL should be streamlined and flexible and avoid over-engineering. Stakeholders place high value on the MEL system providing concise and compelling accounts of effective partnerships and their achievements, and where Australia has contributed to changes in SGE policy and practice, as a prime means to illustrate and communicate the value of the program. Stakeholders placed importance on being able to obtain results by country and theme, as well as reporting results at the overall program level (including through DFAT's Tier 2/3 indicators, and against the Southeast Asia Regional Development Partnership Plan). At the same time, they also emphasised that the MEL system should not overburden partners. Important principles emerging for the MEL system include:

- › **Ensuring clear strategic focus of MEL within a diverse portfolio:** The program will consist of a disparate range of activities, across different countries, sectors, and stakeholders. Rather than getting bogged down in simplistic aggregation of diverse data, the program will identify strategic priority areas for in-depth assessment and pose related questions which can be analysed by drawing on available MEL information. The program will also take a proportional approach, recognising differences in the scope and scale of partnerships, within and across workstreams.
- › **Understanding AGE resource constraints:** AGE partners will play an important role in MEL and will benefit from strong ownership of MEL results. At the same time, AGE partners do face significant resource constraints, including various human and financial constraints, and may have less familiarity with DFAT MEL requirements. The program will streamline MEL and reporting requirements and identify where it can support partners to meet MEL requirements. This will include: embedding data collection into standard program processes, such as proposal formulation and workplans and activity reporting; ensuring reporting requirements are easily understood, and providing support to help partners complete reporting (e.g. program team using partner interviews as a basis to prepare draft reports); drawing where possible and appropriate on AGEs' existing internal reporting and accountability mechanisms; supporting partners' understanding of DFAT requirements in less familiar areas such as MEL and GEDSI; and using program learning activities to distil and document partner experience and achievements.
- › **Flexibility for informing key audiences:** MEL arrangements will ensure that key audiences receive the type and level of reporting required. This will include brief high-level reporting on key thematic outcomes for senior Australian officials involved in oversight of initiatives such as the Invested Strategy; reporting to Posts on country-level engagement and outcomes; or informing learning and program improvement among AGEs such as through the Community of Practice forum.

The MEL system will be geared to report primarily on strategic areas of interest to DFAT and whole-of-government stakeholders. The program will collect data to measure against all outcomes, as described in detail below. This will enable reporting to then focus primarily on development of partnerships and their effectiveness, and analysis of impacts in the major policy areas where AGEs and SGEs are working. Reporting will also consider

the effectiveness of program arrangements which facilitate the collaboration between partners. Knowledge products will be developed and disseminated through the program, such as policy briefs developed from specific partnerships or activities where appropriate, case studies illustrating partnership achievements and benefits, or good practice notes on partnership approaches.

## F.1 MEL methods and draft framework

The MEL system will use and test a mix of approaches and methods to measure progress at partnership, country, and thematic levels, and assess the program's contribution to changes. These include:

- › **Quantitative data tracking** through implementation processes. The program will collect and track core activity -level data such as numbers of partnerships and activities, numbers of AGE/SGE representatives engaged in partnerships, numbers of activities implemented, key meetings, learning events and participants.
- › **Qualitative approaches** for assessing change and contribution. These methods will be important for surfacing and understanding the changes observed within core partnerships or under thematic priorities. Because change in government policy or practice is influenced by multiple variables, the emphasis will be on assessing the extent to which the work of Australian partners has plausibly contributed to observed changes. The following methods may be used as part of developing reports, partner case studies or within evaluations of elements of program activity, with approaches streamlined or simplified where possible to avoid undue burden on partners:
  - › Contribution Analysis, aiming to critically build a 'contribution story' based on evidence which demonstrates how SEAG2G's partnerships have contributed to observed changes in policy or implementation, while also understanding the relative importance of other influences on outcomes.
  - › Outcome Mapping, used to clearly define targeted stakeholders, anticipated changes, and the approaches deployed in the SEAG2G partnerships. Results are measured in terms of the changes in behaviour, actions or relationships that can be influenced by the team or program.
  - › Outcome Harvesting, to collect evidence of policy or practice changes achieved by SGEs (potentially using Most Significant Change approach) and work backward to determine whether and how the program contributed to the change.
  - › Case Study, describing and analysing changes achieved by selected partnerships with a view to understanding what has worked and why, and in what context.

Tools to be used include:

- › Surveys, including for example, brief participant pre-/post-surveys of key training sessions, learning events or other selected activities, to assess learning outcomes and improvement areas.
- › Interviews, conducted periodically with stakeholders, will be an important building block for the MEL system, for hearing directly from those involved in collaboration, drawing on various perspectives and triangulating findings.
- › Focus groups, including some Community of Practice sessions which may take the form of focus groups for guided open-ended discussion on aspects of partnerships practice, successes, and challenges.

The draft MEL Framework at Annex 6 provides indicative indicators for measurement against program outcomes, as well as performance questions against each outcome, links to DFAT Tier 2/3 performance indicators, possible data sources, assumptions, and uses and users of data. As per DFAT guidance, indicators will be reviewed and updated as needed when finalising the detailed MEL Framework during inception. Baselines and targets will be established where appropriate as part of this process, in consultation with core AGE partners. A further review in first 12–18 months of program implementation, after core partnerships have been established, will allow overall objectives in each thematic priority area to be more clearly defined. It will also allow for any newly agreed thematic priorities to be included, as well as any changes in approach arising from potential additional program funding, including non-ODA funds. An estimated 5% of program cost is allocated to MEL, as further outlined in Annex 8.

## F.2 Research

While the design process has not surfaced any major priorities for new commissioned research, this will be tested in early consultations with core AGE partners. Any research undertaken is likely to be action-oriented, looking to inform key areas of partnership and approaches to implementation. Given the diverse sectors covered by SEAG2G, any research priorities are more likely to emerge at the thematic level, rather than the program level. As core partnerships are being established in the first year of the program, core AGE partners will be consulted on whether there are specific priorities for contextual studies to inform collaboration with SGE partners (e.g. a rapid scan of approaches to current policy challenges for Southeast Asia in that sector), for consideration for program funding. In addition to this, joint AGE-SGE proposals for research may arise as part of the work programs for core partnerships.

## F.3 Key evaluation questions

Below are some questions which may form the basis for evaluation at the Mid Term Review or the end of the program presented below against evaluation themes:

- › **Relevance:** What are the major areas of policy, governance or regulatory improvement being targeted by AGEs and SGEs through SEAG2G? To what extent are these aligned with mutual Australian/regional strategic interests?
- › **Impact:** Has SEAG2G contributed to stronger economic ties between Australia and Southeast Asian governments, and to commitments to effective, accountable, and inclusive government? Are the partnerships supported by SEAG2G contributing to positive perceptions by Southeast Asian governments of Australia as a valued technical and economic partner?
- › **Effectiveness:** To what extent has SEAG2G facilitated the efforts of AGEs to strengthen engagement with regional counterparts? How has the program contributed to improvements in policy or institutional capability in each of the thematic priority areas? What were the key enabling factors where activities were highly effective, and what were the hindering factors where things failed to take hold?
- › **Efficiency:** To what extent did SEAG2G work in ways that were efficient, maximising outcomes from available time and resources?
- › **Sustainability:** Are the institutional relationships supported by SEAG2G moving towards a more sustainable basis beyond ODA funding? Are the development benefits of partnerships likely to be sustained and leave a legacy after completion?
- › **Value for Money:** Does SEAG2G provide a high value model or framework for extending to other DFAT initiatives based on government-to-government cooperation?
- › **Cross-cutting priorities:** To what extent did SEAG2G work in ways that contributed to advancing development priorities outcomes including gender equality, disability inclusion and First Nations engagement?

## F.4 Risks for the MEL system

The main risks around the MEL system include partner bandwidth to prioritise MEL activities, and challenges in obtaining consistent performance information from a diverse activity portfolio.

Table 6 MEL system risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Mitigation measures
AGE partners lack the bandwidth, will, expertise or staff continuity to provide necessary data, analysis, and reporting for MEL purposes	Partners are resourced/supported by SEAG2G to provide necessary data and reporting; use of MEL methods requiring less effort by AGE partners (e.g. SEAG2G conducts interviews with partner representatives and documents draft report for partner clearance); SEAG2G assesses extent to which AGE's existing internal reporting and accountability mechanisms can meet SEAG2G requirements



Risk	Mitigation measures
Proposals for AGE-SGE collaboration lack coherent workplans and clear objectives	SEAG2G resources and supports co-design approaches to support quality development of streamlined activity workplan templates which encourage coherence and clear focus
Multiple, diverse activities across different countries, themes and workstreams provide inconsistent data, inhibiting synthesis of program results	SEAG2G establishes standardised approaches to core elements of activity design, setting and measuring objectives, data collection and reporting to ensure appropriate degree of consistency; SEAG2G uses range of MEL methods to capture key performance information
AGE partners do not prioritise addressing GEDSI aspects of thematic collaboration and performance measurement	Develop a GEDSI strategy for SEAG2G that reinforces the importance of GEDSI outcomes with senior AGE stakeholders (e.g. GEDSI as standing agenda item at Executive Steering Committee meetings); provide GEDSI expertise needed for activity workplans; inclusion of GEDSI as standing item at Community of Practice sessions for sharing of experience, challenges, and solutions
Partners are unwilling or unable to prioritise participation in learning activities, such as Community of Practice sessions	Community of Practice participation is included as a requirement within partnership agreements; SEAG2G ensures Community of Practice agenda includes issues relevant to AGE partners; Community of Practice sessions are designed to be participatory, relevant, and useful to partners

## F.5 Performance review and evaluation

SEAG2G's timeline will offer several strategic points for review and evaluation of the program's performance, as identified in the table below.

**Table 7 Possible strategic points for performance review and evaluation**

Focus	Timing	Purpose and comment
Formative review	Early Year 2	Joint review by MC and DFAT of Program Logic, including refining strategic objectives for thematic priorities, and assessing extent to which SEAG2G is on-track in establishing partnerships, and selection and management processes.
Case studies of thematic partnerships under Workstream 1	Late Year 2 to mid-Year 3	Internal review of work undertaken against each thematic priorities, identifying progress and achievements to date, challenges and opportunities encountered, and lessons/recommendations for remainder of program.
Review of country-level activities under Workstream 2	Late Year 2 to mid-Year 3	Internal rapid review of country-level activities identifying progress and achievements to date, challenges and opportunities encountered, and lessons/recommendations for remainder of program.
Review of GEDSI contribution	Mid-Year 3	Independent analysis of extent of SEAG2G's contribution to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion.
Evaluation of SEAG2G	Early Year 4	Drawing on prior reviews and updated data from MEL system, and additional inputs as needed, an independent assessment of overall results, effectiveness of partnerships, and suitability of management arrangements. Make recommendations on whether to extend SEAG2G and any proposed changes to thematic focus, partnership arrangements and management.

## F.6 Reporting

Reporting schedules will be established to fit with DFAT management and corporate reporting requirements. 6-monthly and annual reports will be timed to feed into the 2 Executive Steering Committee meetings each year, with the annual report due each February ahead of DFAT's Investment Monitoring Report process. The program will draw on reporting to provide summary analysis to the Executive Steering Committee for each meeting, covering issues such as:

- › New partnerships established under each workstream.
- › Highlights from recent partnership activity, by country and theme (priority and cross-cutting).
- › Opportunities arising and challenges encountered, and recommended actions.
- › Data on budget allocations by country and theme, and any recommended adjustments.

- › Emerging evidence of influence on SGE policy and implementation.

## **G. Gender Equality, Disability Inclusiveness, Climate Change, and Other Cross-Cutting Issues**

### **G.1 Gender Equality**

SEAG2G broadly aligns with DFAT's *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* under its pillar to enhance women's voice in decision-making, leadership, and peace building. The program will support the participation of women from government agencies in the development of policies and programs by addressing factors that limit the consideration of women's perspectives, priorities and lived experiences. SEAG2G's long-term ambition is to work with AGEs and SGEs to ensure that women have opportunities to contribute to decision-making, ensuring there is equal participation by women and men, and working with SGEs to develop policies, programs and operating systems that respond to the needs of both women and men from diverse backgrounds. As SEAG2G initiatives are identified and designed, there may be opportunities for the program to align with DFAT's other pillars – promoting women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls – via policy and program development work with AGE and SGE partners across the thematic priorities.

Within the SEAG2G program, the design acknowledges that driving meaningful and sustainable change is a long-term, perhaps generational, endeavour that requires perseverance and incremental progress. Experience from similar programs indicates there are many challenges to achieve program wide GEDSI impact. It takes continuity of program effort across political cycles and leadership transitions to build AGE commitment and momentum to make the transformative shifts in policies, processes, and mindsets required to advance GEDSI outcomes with counterparts. Even with strong intent, developing the required technical capacity and GEDSI competencies across AGEs and SGE officials takes dedicated investment over many years.

Despite these challenges, GEDSI entry points at the activity level show promise for the program. Based on consultations, there are several good practices adopted by AGEs working within government-to-government programs that support GEDSI to be considered at this level. For example, targeted activities that address GEDSI have been more effective due to both AGEs and government partners having a clearer understanding of the objectives of activities as they focus on a specific area of concern. The Australian Water Partnership program implemented flagship activities related to disability in 2 countries, which linked organisations of people with disability (OPD) in the program country with Australian OPDs to support water management. Design consultations also highlight the need for GEDSI technical advice to be available from the program team as most AGEs do not have this expertise. Programs, such as the Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation, Partnership for a Healthy Region, and Australian Water Partnership programs, have had GEDSI advisers who review proposals and support partners to integrate GEDSI in activities; this has been essential for ensuring GEDSI is considered. Many government-to-government programs require partners to undertake a GEDSI analysis during the initial proposal stage to understand GEDSI opportunities. GEDSI Action Plans have ensured there is an ongoing focus and commitment to GEDSI in government-to-government initiatives, with specific GEDSI indicators and objectives assessed through the program's MEL processes.

SEAG2G will develop a GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan to define the approach to GEDSI and identify initiatives, entry points and resources to support GEDSI across the program and activity levels and delivered in each thematic area. The Strategy will be informed by a GEDSI analysis to examine gender equality, disability and social inclusion across the Southeast Asia region and identify the interconnecting factors that contribute to inequality and exclusion. The Strategy will outline how gender issues will be considered and integrated at both the program and activity levels, using a twin track approach of mainstreaming and targeted initiatives. The Strategy will include GEDSI indicators to monitor the effectiveness of initiatives. The Strategy will be informed by consultations with key partners (DFAT, AGEs, women's organisations, and OPDs to understand the barriers, opportunities, and necessary support. The GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan (including the GEDSI analysis) will be developed during the inception phase and supported by a dedicated budget of approximately \$80,000. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

For each Core Partner, a separate GEDSI analysis will be undertaken and a GEDSI Action Plan developed. Local women's organisations, OPDs and relevant civil society organisations will be consulted to understand the barriers and enablers for GEDSI relevant to thematic areas.

A full-time GEDSI Manager will lead the implementation of the program's GEDSI Strategy and initiatives. The GEDSI Manager will be a member of the SEAG2G Leadership Team to ensure GEDSI is a key consideration in all program decision-making processes. A representative from DFAT's Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch will be part of the Executive Steering Committee to support the inclusion of GEDSI in the program and enable GEDSI strategic priorities to be advanced. A funding allocation phasing up to approximately 10 per cent of the annual program will be allocated to support GEDSI initiatives.

Increasing awareness of AGEs regarding the importance and relevance of gender equality in priority themes through regular training and mentoring sessions will be essential for GEDSI to remain a key focus in SEAG2G initiatives. For this reason, the program will ensure there is a culture of learning and continuous improvement in GEDSI via targeted initiatives that address GEDSI in thematic areas. The program will develop toolkits, resources and guidance notes that support the integration of GEDSI in AGE and SGE activities. The program will provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities to showcase the work of AGEs and for AGE peers to learn from each other about approaches and activities adopted to address gender inequality in their initiatives. Time will be allocated during AGE partnership meetings, annual planning events, and design workshops to present and discuss GEDSI activities as a way for AGEs to increase their awareness, exchange ideas, identify and resolve problems, and generate new ideas about gender equality in SEAG2G initiatives.

Annex 7 contains more detailed GEDSI analysis.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Gender Equality Marker for SEAG2G is classified as significant. The design has been informed by a GEDSI analysis, with targeted GEDSI analyses to be conducted to inform the design of thematic priority initiatives and identify relevant areas to address gender inequality. SEAG2G will adopt a 'do no harm' approach and ensure activities consider child protection issues and the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

SEAG2G has a significant opportunity to affect positive influence on partner government systems by addressing the underlying socioeconomic challenges that reinforce gender inequality. By showcasing Australian systems and policies that address gender equality and disability inclusion, SEAG2G can support SGEs to progress GEDSI policy and planning commitments. Australian government requirements for AGEs to conduct a gender analysis when developing policy proposals, budgets, and cabinet submissions, also provide an opportunity for sharing experience and insights.

## **G.2 Disability inclusiveness**

Australia is a leader in disability inclusive development and the Australian Government is committed to ensuring the rights of people with disabilities under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD). Australia is committed to supporting disability rights initiatives and ensuring international development policies and programs are inclusive of people with disabilities and their organisations. Australia's International Development Policy outlines Australia's commitment to advance the rights of people with disabilities and disability as a core issue for action in all international development initiatives.

Design consultations indicate that the limited capability of AGEs in disability inclusion is the main barrier to ensuring the rights and needs of people with disabilities are addressed in government-to-government initiatives. There has been limited integration of disability in government-to-government activities, although targeted 'flagship' activities that directly address disability exclusion have been more effective. This barrier will be addressed by the GEDSI Manager working with AGEs and SGEs to identify entry points. SEAG2G will deliver disability training for AGEs and SGEs to increase awareness about relevance of disability inclusion across the thematic areas and increase knowledge and skills in disability inclusion. The program will develop tools and guidelines to support the integration of disability in activities. The GEDSI Manager will work with AGEs and SGEs to implement and monitor disability-focused activities.

### G.3 Climate Change

Australia and its Southeast Asian partners face the urgent need to adapt and build resilience to climate change impacts, and manage the challenges and opportunities involved in the transition to clean energy. Rising temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns and extreme weather events are impacting countries in Southeast Asia.<sup>25</sup> Southeast Asian countries are especially at risk due to large and growing population, long coastlines, abundant low-lying areas, reliance on agriculture and dependence on natural resources. At the same time, to move away from traditional reliance on fossil fuels, countries are accelerating their energy transition to meet ambitious emissions reduction targets against a context of rising energy demand, with energy use in Southeast Asia expected to double by 2050.<sup>26</sup>

The 2021 ASEAN State of Climate Change Report identified the needs for ASEAN Member States to raise capabilities in climate science, to cooperate and collaborate on knowledge and information transfer, and to focus on an energy transition to net zero emission targets. Additionally, climate change impacts are not neutral, but rather exacerbate gender and other inequalities. Within Southeast Asia, existing social stratifications make those who were and already marginalised particularly vulnerable, as they often lack access to key resources to adapt, or the power to make decisions about how to protect themselves.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, women and other social groups are important agents of change in the energy transition.

Australia's experience in addressing climate change to support climate adaptation and mitigation action in Southeast Asia is of value to the region. Specifically, Australia's leading science bodies, such as CSIRO and Geoscience Australia, can share tools for more accurate climate projection, spatial mapping, and weather disaster modelling to inform planning. Sharing Australia's experience in disaster response, coastal protection, climate-smart agriculture, and renewable energy integration, assists partner governments to implement resilience measures.

As announced at the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March 2024, SEAG2G will include a \$10 million climate and clean energy window. This recognises the critical enabling role of government-to-government partnerships and the opportunities and challenges of the clean energy transformation and will come from the existing \$50 million budget.

Climate change is integrated into SEAG2G's program logic through the following thematic priorities:

- › **Climate and energy transition.** Advancing climate action in the region by assisting countries to meet ambitious emissions reduction targets, build a clean and resilient energy sector, and strengthen climate adaptation and mitigation planning and response.
- › **Sustainable agriculture and food security.** Partnering with countries to strengthen agricultural systems, policies, and regulations, with flow on effects for reducing emissions in the agricultural sector and contributing to climate resilience.

Opportunities for positive climate action are outlined in this design under Section B (Development Context) and Section D (Thematic Priorities).

To operationalise the program logic and ensure the program maximises its impact, additional climate analysis may be commissioned through the life of the program. Specific climate analysis could be conducted to support AGEs to consider climate impacts, risks, and opportunities as part of the development of individual partnerships and supporting activities and/or during activity implementation.

### G.4 First Nations perspectives

Through Australia's International Development Policy, DFAT is committed to placing the perspectives of First Nations Australians at the heart of its diplomacy and development cooperation to enhance collaboration between

25 World Meteorological Organization (2023) State of the Climate 2022.

26 International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), Renewable Energy Outlook for ASEAN: Towards a regional transition, IRENA, and ACE, 2022, pp. 40, 43. <https://www.irena.org/publications/2022/Sep/Renewable-Energy-Outlook-for-ASEAN-2nd-edition>

27 ASEAN and UN Women (2022) State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in ASEAN <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/State-of-Gender-Equality-and-Climate-Change-in-ASEAN-2.pdf>

First Nations Australians and its partners to address shared challenges. SEAG2G will develop a First Nations Strategy during program implementation. Areas to explore will include work with domestic agencies to offer opportunities to Indigenous Australian agency personnel to engage in SEAG2G supported international engagement programs and in other areas connected to agency goals. There is also opportunity to draw on indigenous businesses to deliver program learning and leadership events as well as provide goods and services especially in support of in-Australia events. These and other areas will be explored through consultations with AGEs and indigenous stakeholders. SEAG2G will explore the potential of working with the National Indigenous Australians Agency and similar bodies operating at the State and Territory level. This work will be informed by DFAT's First Nations approach to foreign policy.

## **G.5 Private sector engagement and innovation**

There are several opportunities for SEAG2G to support the role of the private sector and promote innovation as envisaged by the Invested Strategy; and if non-ODA funding is secured, there will be further opportunity to bring in a more explicit commercial focus to the program. There is a real opportunity for SEAG2G to support AGEs to work on policy and regulatory blockages inhibiting deepened two-way trade. This could include enabling Southeast Asian firms to access Australian markets through improved standards in biosecurity and disease management or Australian education providers to access new markets in the region through updated regulations.

On the policy making front, there are several opportunities to engage with AGEs that are already known for deploying innovative public and private collaborative approaches. For example, through partnering with proposed Core Partner, CSIRO, SEAG2G can build on Aus4Innovation successes in incentivising private sector firms to develop solutions that address government policy and service delivery challenges. There is also opportunity in the digitalisation space to support partnerships and knowledge exchanges on digital transformation initiatives. For example, the Digital Transformation Agency's knowledge and expertise is in high demand from Indonesia and Vietnam, who seek to learn the lessons of whole-of-government wide procurement platforms and IT bulk purchasing arrangements.

Governments can catalyse and maximise private sector contributions to climate solutions. Businesses will play an important role in reducing emissions and protecting vulnerable habitats, while creating jobs and income. The private sector is a key source of technical solutions, expertise, innovation and resources for climate solutions, and Australian institutions, such as CSIRO, have partnered with the private sector to deliver innovative approaches. Demonstrating how to successfully harness the private sector through government policy and practice, reinforces Australia's reputation as a valuable contributor to climate change management efforts regionally.

SEAG2G will also support AGEs to draw on their private sector networks to deliver selected activities as part of a partnership where this is most appropriate.

## **G.6 Local leadership capability**

Government officials in Southeast Asia seek more than technical assistance, they want to be directly connected to peers who face similar challenges, to learn from practical experiences on the 'how-to' of development and policy reform. This interaction can enrich analysis and understanding of their own contexts, opportunities, and constraints. Lessons from other programs demonstrate knowledge exchange is particularly effective when programs engage leaders who can influence their institutions or initiate and drive change processes which may contribute to local development goals.

SEAG2G will contribute towards DFAT's localisation strategy by building the leadership and capability of Southeast Asian government entities to boost resilience and growth in priority thematic areas. SEAG2G's ambition is to respond to SGE demand for mutual knowledge exchange and access to Australian institutional technical expertise to learn from Australia's practical experience on the 'how-to' of policy reforms. SEAG2G will not engage in capacity substitution or deliver activities through contractors or specialists in ways that can undermine local agendas. Where contractor expertise is deployed, they will be mobilised by AGEs as they would draw on contractors to work within Australia's domestic systems. To effectively support SEAG2G partnerships in-country, the SEAG2G program will pursue local procurement and engagement of local staff with important networks and know-how.

## H. Budget and Resources (What will it cost?)

The *indicative* budget parameters for SEAG2G will be confirmed in consultation with DFAT. Indicative figures are<sup>28</sup>:

- › \$50 million over 5 years. It is likely a significant proportion of funds will flow directly from DFAT to AGEs through inter-government agreements.
- › An optional further 5 years with an equivalent or increased budget.
- › 75%:25% approximate activity budget split between Core Partner workstream and Country-level workstream.
- › Approximately 5 per cent allocation for monitoring and evaluation, comprised of personnel directly involved in MEL and MEL activity costs.
- › Phased allocation for GEDSI programming (e.g. training, learning events, AGE activities, partnership activities) and directly related personnel costs, commencing at approximately 5 per cent and building to 10 per cent.

### H.1 Resources

Resources for program management and operations, and for core teams in GEDSI, MEL, partnership brokering, and communications are essential to realise this design. Minimum required positions include:

- › Executive Director
- › Managers for Partnerships, GEDSI and Operations
- › Monitoring and Evaluation Lead
- › Partnership support officers
- › Communications and Knowledge Management Lead
- › Operations support officers for procurement and recruitment (including contracting core team and expert panel specialists), logistical and administrative support (including support for activities) and financial management.

Provision for expert panels servicing partnership brokering and other areas able to support the functions of the program, is a proven efficient and effective means for responding to requests quickly with the right expertise. While the intention is to draw on existing DFAT technical panels in the first instance (e.g. gender equality, climate change, MEL), DFAT panel managers have indicated there is a risk that high demand will impede the capacity to expertise through these panels. Therefore, provision for technical experts, including to support PSEAH, risk and ESS management and child protection, to be used on a reimbursable basis will be included in the budget.

DFAT's resources include:

- › G2G Section Director (EL2)
- › Executive Level 1
- › APS 6

The inception phase will explore whether it would be viable to provide a support staff for Posts. If additional funds become available (e.g. non-ODA funds), commensurate resourcing will be required. DFAT will draw on additional resources to conduct evaluations, reviews and other analysis as required.

In recognition of the limited resources many AGEs have for international work, AGEs will be able to use the activity budget to fund staff time or contract in staff resources. A value for money assessment, including the proportion of the activity costs to be used for staff resources, will be conducted for each partnership before an agreement is signed with the AGE.

### H.2 Budget

A summary of the SEAG2G budget for program management, operations and activity programming is provided in Annex 8. DFAT resources are budgeted separately under departmental costs.

## Program management and operations

Key aspects of the program management and operations budget include:

- › Small operations team able to deliver logistical and operational services throughout Southeast Asia.<sup>29</sup>
- › Note that where funds flow directly from DFAT to AGEs, the MC will still provide the full suite of support services to enable the delivery of activities with those funds.

## Activity programming

Funding for the 2 workstreams will initially be divided as follows:

- › 75 per cent of the activity budget to the Core Partner workstream.
- › 25 per cent of the activity budget to the Country-level workstream.

At partnership and activity levels, the individual detailed workplans with AGEs will scope budgets and resourcing, including consideration of DFAT capacity and administrative support for Posts, and capability development needs of AGE and SGE partners.

Learning from similar programs, it is anticipated that much of the Core Partner workstream may flow directly from DFAT to the AGE. As partnerships build, it is anticipated that the Core Partners would reach their optimal budget by the end of the first phase of the program. To maintain the tempo of the partnerships, a similar quantum will likely be required in a follow-on phase.

Under the Country-level workstream, AGEs may have less capacity to manage funds and provide operational or delivery support. In which case, the MC through the SEAG2G implementation team, will be able to provide operational support to enable delivery. For these activities, the AGE and the SEAG2G team will agree the activity budget split for funds to flow directly from DFAT to the AGE, and funds to flow to the MC on a reimbursable basis from DFAT for support services (refer to Figure 6 for further details of the workflow).

## I. Procurement and Partnering

SEAG2G is delivered as a design and implement program. DFAT selected a MC through a competitive tender and the MC was awarded the contract in compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. The approved program design document will inform a revised statement of requirements between DFAT and the MC, that will guide the inception and implementation phases.

SEAG2G will provide grants to Australian government partners for the implementation of activities (either directly or through the MC). Grants will be managed in accordance with DFAT's Aid Grants Framework. The DFAT G2G Section Team will manage the contractual arrangements and funding flows with AGEs, with support from the MC. DFAT will not provide grants or other sources of direct funding to SGEs to participate in activities.

All program -level procurement will comply with Commonwealth procurement policies and the program will look to use procurement as a means to address inequalities by promoting disability-inclusive and gender-responsive procurement. The MC may contract third party providers to support AGEs to deliver activities. These procurements will occur at the direction of AGEs and comply with Commonwealth procurement policies.

Based on the experience of Prospera, providing AGEs with clear and consistent procurement information can decrease AGE and DFAT transaction costs while promoting transparent practices across partners. Activity implementation guidance will outline procurement processes and approval mechanisms for AGE activities. The guidelines will complement the MC's Operations Manual.

<sup>29</sup> Location of operations support team will be determined during the Inception Phase. Options for a program office in Southeast Asia are likely to provide better value-for-money than Australia-based alternatives.

## J. Risk Management and Safeguards (What might go wrong?)

The program has a medium-risk profile once controls and treatments have been applied. The key SEAG2G risks are due to AGE resourcing challenges, long-lead times to build partnerships, challenging context in which to demonstrate impact and limited DFAT executive-level availability to lead AGE relationship management.

The key areas in which the success of SEAG2G is at risk are:

- › Achievement of EOPOs.
- › AGEs and Posts overcoming resource constraints to participate in the program.
- › Promoting gender, disability, and social inclusion across AGE partnerships.
- › DFAT and the MC team working seamlessly as one team to engage with AGEs and Posts.

An initial Risk Register for SEAG2G is provided at Annex 9 (refer separate spreadsheet). This is to be reviewed and enhanced during the inception phase.

### J.1 Risk management roles and responsibilities

The senior responsible officer in DFAT, Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia Development and Programs Branch, Office of Southeast Asia, will be the ultimate risk owner for the investment. The DFAT G2G Director (EL2), G2G Manager (EL1 or APS), MC's Executive Director, Partnerships Manager, Operations Manager, and corporate staff will have central roles in risk identification and management.

#### Day-to-day risk management

The DFAT G2G team, under the leadership of the DFAT G2G Section Director, will ultimately be responsible for ensuring all risks are identified and managed in accordance with DFAT policies, PGPA Act and Commonwealth Grant Guidelines. However, the MC will be responsible for identifying, managing and escalating operational risks that they are managing. The split in risk management responsibility is as below:

- › DFAT G2G Team: Strategic, reputational, political, development, and stakeholder relationship risks.
- › MC including Executive Director, Operations Manager, Partnerships Manager and Contractor Representative: Technical assistance; finance, grants, procurement; compliance with DFAT policies, including environment and social safeguards, fraud control, child protection and prevention of sexual abuse and harassment, gender equality and social inclusion, and health and safety.

The DFAT G2G Section is responsible for ensuring the MC performs their day-to-day responsibilities around risk. The MC will set up risk processes in accordance with DFAT's Risk Management Guide for Aid Investments and the Fraud Control Toolkit for Funding Recipients.

The MC will be responsible for the following risk processes:

- › Conducting police checks on all national and international candidates for positions as part of the recruitment process.
- › Establishing and training all staff in a code of conduct, which includes PSEAH.
- › Communicating with, and training of, all program staff and sub-contractors/grantees in DFAT policies to ensure their adherence throughout implementation.
- › Fiduciary risk and fraud control management process, including auditing and financial reporting requirements.
- › Monitoring and reporting on risk in progress toward achievement of development outcomes.

The DFAT G2G Section Director, the DFAT G2G Manager and the MC will meet monthly, or more frequently as risks emerge, to review, update and manage risks in their areas of responsibility. At a minimum every 3 months the MC will submit and discuss with DFAT G2G team an updated SEAG2G Risk Management and Screening Tool, the DFAT G2G Manager will then add additional DFAT-managed risks to the SEAG2G Risk Factors Screening Tool and upload any changes into AidWorks.



## Risk oversight

The DFAT G2G Manager will be responsible for updating the SEAG2G Risk Factors Screening Tool on DFAT's AidWorks system at least every 3 months. The DFAT G2G Section Director will report to the Assistant Secretary, Southeast Asia Development Policy and Programs Branch OSA about any changes in risk status. If required, the Assistant Secretary will escalate to the First Assistant Secretary Southeast Asia Strategy and Development Division OSA and the Executive Steering Committee including on fiduciary risk such as fraud cases through the regular risk control mechanisms.

SEAG2G's Executive Steering Committee will oversight strategic, technical, and political risks and risk management will be a standing agenda for meetings of the Committee. At the biannual meeting of the Executive Steering Committee, the MC Executive Director will summarise the latest Risk Factors Screening Tool including changes to key risks since the last meeting. Discussion and actions on risk management will be recorded in the meeting minutes. The DFAT Manager and/or the MC will facilitate discussion and ownership of risks and obtain advice from Posts and AGEs on potential new risks and how to manage them.

## J.2 Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH)

SEAG2G strongly supports the involvement of women and people with disability in program activities and their inclusion in program benefits. The facilitation of women into male-dominated activities poses risks for sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Examples of potential risks include the involvement of women on majority-male delegations or courses, including with travel and social components where women may be vulnerable to sexual harassment, abuse, or assault. Women participating in delegations may also be pressured to perform traditional gender roles for the majority-male groups, such as shopping, secretarial and catering tasks, and not be treated as an equal. Women with disability, especially if they have communication-based disability, may be more vulnerable to these risks.

The DFAT team will be expected to comply with, DFAT's internal policies for PSEAH. The MC will give practical effect to DFAT's PSEAH Policy through identification and analysis of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment risk as part of the inception period risk management plan and MEL framework. The MC will develop organisational policies and controls to prevent, manage, monitor, and report on the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. The MC will ensure that all relevant partners have in place PSEAH policies and systems (including pre-departure awareness training), and devise strategies for supplementation, where needed. The governance mechanism will periodically review program and partner risks, and the MC will be expected to immediately report to the governance group any alleged incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment and measures taken in response.

## J.3 Child protection

While SEAG2G will not work directly with children and does not have any reason to contact them online, personnel may encounter children as part of any consultation or visits associated with the agriculture and food theme. For example, assessments in Thailand, Vietnam and Philippines have highlighted the presence of child labour in in the agriculture sector.<sup>30</sup> SEAG2G will take due diligence measures and remain current with child labour issues and risks, especially when supporting AGEs to engage in policy and technical work in the sector and efforts to channel investment to the private sector. Another potential risk is that several partners countries in Southeast Asia are child sex tourism destinations, including for Australian travellers.<sup>31</sup>

In the inception phase, the implementation team (including the DFAT program director and MC) will be responsible for producing an expanded risk analysis, mitigation, and management approach, guided by DFAT's Child Protection Guidance Note.<sup>32</sup> The team will also operationalise DFAT's Child Protection Policy, including integration within the program's human resource systems and screening of organisations and individuals. The MC will ensure that all relevant partners have in place policies and systems (including pre-departure awareness

30 Anti-Slavery International and Embode, *Sitting on Pins and Needles: A rapid assessment of labour conditions in Vietnam's garment sector*, 2018.

31 US Department of State, *2023 Trafficking in Persons Report: Vietnam*, US Department of State website, June 2023.

32 DFAT, *Child Protection Guidance Note: Establishing Child Protection Risk Context*, January 2018.

training) that protect children from abuse and exploitation, and devise strategies for supplementation, where needed. SEAG2G's agreements will have mandatory clauses dealing with child protection.

#### **J.4 Environmental and social safeguards policies**

The MC will develop an environmental and social safeguards policy for SEAG2G based on DFAT and international standards. All personnel, whether short or long term, will be required to follow DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy that came into effect 1 January 2018. Activity selection includes Environment and Social Safeguards Criteria as a specific investment screening tool. Environmental and Social Safeguards standards will be incorporated in implementation, monitored, and complied with the MC undertaking annual reviews of partner policy adherence.

#### **J.5 Managing fraud and corruption risk**

SEAG2G will adopt a strong approach to the management of fraud and corruption risk in line with DFAT requirements. The following section outlines DFAT expectations around fraud and corruption risk management that the MC will be required to meet and maintain throughout program implementation.

On completion of the design and on contract amendment, it will be important to highlight to the MC that whilst SEAG2G will primarily utilise grant modalities to disseminate funding to Commonwealth, State and Federal government agencies which have a low fraud risk profile, the program will still be operating in countries that have a medium to high risk of fraud and corruption. The MC will still need to design a fraud and corruption control strategy, support AGEs to outline fraud and corruption risk and mitigation in their proposals and ensure fraud and anti-corruption clauses are included in agreements. Other controls can also be embedded in activity schedules, such as tying early payment of tranches to the delivery of key milestones; minimising large tranche payments; and establishing a very clear 'basis of payments' that defines clearly what each tranche will cover.

Lessons from other DFAT government-to-government programs indicate that receiving acquittals from AGEs can be a drawn-out process with ongoing follow-up required. In these circumstances, reliance on the inclusion of fraud clauses in grant agreements is an ineffective strategy. There is a need to proactively engage with AGEs to comply with activity schedules. Effective fraud control mechanisms in this context include:

- › Ensuring there is ongoing communication with AGE grantees.
- › Allowing AGE grantees to build in costs for an annual external financial audit.
- › Good financial controls and testing of controls (e.g. the MC may sample invoices and receipts and procurements).

The MC will put in place a fraud and corruption control strategy that will outline the approach to fraud and corruption risk assessment, and processes for preventing and managing suspected cases of fraud and corruption. It will be based on the Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework and DFAT's Fraud Control Toolkit. This strategy will include:

- › Definition of 'Fraud' and 'Corruption'.
- › Roles and responsibilities of the MC, DFAT and others (including AGEs and SGEs).
- › Fraud context and risk assessment (including a Fraud Risk Assessment Matrix with source, impact, and control strategies).
- › Fraud risk awareness raising measures.
- › Fraud prevention measures (including the screening, engagement and on-boarding of personnel and subcontractors, and supplier controls).
- › Managing conflict of interest (paying special attention to the procurement of goods and services; tendering for, awarding, and managing subcontracts; recruiting personnel; and monitoring the provision of goods and services and confirming processes are in place at AGEs).
- › Managing financial and physical assets.
- › Fraud and corruption detection (including process for conducting financial audits, non-financial reviews, and electronic monitoring).
- › Fraud and corruption reporting (including appropriate escalation processes; and the monitoring of the fraud and corruption control strategy).

- › Fraud Investigation (including outlining how the MC will investigate detected, suspected, attempted, or alleged fraud, in cooperation with DFAT).
- › Fraud response and recovery (in the event of fraud).

The Executive Steering Committee will be responsible for the governance of fraud matters alongside other risks. The efficacy of the Fraud Control Strategy will be monitored on an annual basis by the DFAT G2G Section Team, who will draw on the expertise of DFAT's Fraud Control Section as needed.

## **J.6 Terrorism resourcing**

The risk that the program's resources will be diverted to finance terrorism activities is extremely small given no funding will flow to SGEs. However, noting that the program will operate in several countries that are considered a high risk for terrorism resource diversion, the MC will, as a matter of course, develop robust partner due diligence processes and cross-check personnel and organisations, including downstream partners, against proscribed lists before entering into a funding arrangement.

## Annex 1. Non-ODA funding and Trade and Investment

### Non-ODA funding

The Invested Strategy recommends extending SEAG2G to non-ODA eligible countries:

*'Recommendation 14: Extend government-to-government technical assistance to other Southeast Asian countries through a new government-to-government partnerships program and other mechanisms.'*

SEAG2G has therefore been designed to be able to draw on non-ODA funding (alongside ODA funding) should it become available in the future. This reflects Australia's ambition to deepen relationships across trade, investment, and institutions. It also recognises the important role that governments play with investors and business in Southeast Asian countries and opportunities for Australia to deepen institutional relationships with a commercial focus.

SEAG2G's non-ODA funded activities could include initiatives that do not meet the criteria for ODA-eligibility like:

- › Promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries is not the primary objective.
- › Country/ies is not on the list of OECD-DAC ODA recipients (relevant to this program are Singapore, Brunei).
- › Initiatives that relate to security, including cyber security and biosecurity (may still be ODA-eligible but requires a formal assessment).
- › Initiatives that include non-grant financing such as loans, guarantees or private sector instruments.

More specifically, the Invested Strategy highlights the key sectors in which assistance could be offered. At the country-level, Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste seek expertise to increase international tourism and improve cross-border efficiency for agricultural trade. Indonesia and Vietnam are interested in growing critical mineral industries by drawing on know-how from Australia. Singapore and Thailand seek to harmonise food standards and increase air services agreements. Across many countries there is interest in improving the government customs and logistics services to facilitate more efficient trade.

Empowering women and girls to participate in formal workforces, addressing income gaps and the unequal distribution of unpaid care is critical to improving economic outcomes.<sup>33</sup> Across Southeast Asia, young women are leading business innovation in sectors such as agriculture, professional and financial services, the digital economic and creative industries. Guided by Australia's new International Development Policy and proven approaches through programs such as Investing in Women, the SEAG2G trade and investment theme can provide opportunities to develop better business linkages, increase women's economic participation, improve gender equality outcomes, and contribute to economic growth across Southeast Asia.

Non-ODA initiatives must still pass through DFAT's internal authority to spend processes and demonstrate advancement of Australia's foreign diplomacy, security, trade, and investment interests. Initiative may be non-ODA funded even though they are ODA-eligible.

The Australia-Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy is an example of an initiative delivered through a combination of ODA and non-ODA funding, and AGE business-as-usual work. Some examples of non-ODA funded initiatives involving AGEs include:

- › Department of Industry Science and Resources industry training, energy and minerals dialogue, automotive supply chain feasibility study to identify mutual trade and investment opportunities, and feasibility study on emerging resource needs including critical minerals.
- › Department of Education hosted universities roundtable, promotion of joint bachelor and doctoral qualifications, and digital skills programs.
- › Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries collaboration on e-certification to increase mutual acceptance of electronic documentation, supporting primary industries to align with international practice.

<sup>33</sup> DFAT. (2023) Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/invested-southeast-asia-economic-strategy-2040.pdf>

More specific examples are set out on a country-by-country basis in *Invested: Australia Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040*. Table 8 provides an indicative list of the kinds of recommendations from the Invested Strategy that SEAG2G could help to deliver.

**Table 8 Potential for SEAG2G to support Invested Strategy recommendations**

	Recommendations - ODA	Recommendations – non-ODA
Climate change & energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 34 - Promote Australia’s capabilities in mining, energy, and METS to support sustainable development in the resources sector in the region.</li> <li>– 37 - Provide institutional capacity building through government-to-government engagement to promote the sustainable development of Southeast Asia’s resources sector.</li> <li>– 39 - Explore establishing standards and regulations to allow for a regional market in low-energy goods, including electricity and carbon, with interested Southeast Asian partners.</li> <li>– 41 - Develop a clean energy science and technology engagement strategy to work with regional counterparts on technical challenges to meet net zero.</li> <li>– 42 - Support industry and education and training providers to develop and promote green qualifications for the Southeast Asian market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 40 - Draw upon regional clean energy supply chain initiatives to support strategic projects involving Australian and Southeast Asian partners in the battery, electric vehicle and solar sectors.</li> </ul>
Sustainable agriculture and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 26 - Promote Australia’s environmental, social and governance credentials along the agrifood supply chain.</li> <li>– 30 - Develop and deepen cooperation on sustainable agrifood systems through existing mechanisms and development programs</li> <li>– 31 - Expand training programs to support regional farmers on world’s best agriculture practices (including water, soil, and broader environment and sustainability practices)</li> <li>– 32 Provide long-term support for Southeast Asian trading partners’ capacity to address biosecurity threats, including by in-country deployments of specialist technical capabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 25 - Pursue a targeted, sustained and modern ‘whole-of-nation’ agricultural trade and investment advocacy effort to drive growth.</li> <li>– 27 - Advocate for the establishment of ongoing ministerial and senior officials–level engagement on agriculture through ASEAN mechanisms to provide additional forums to reduce barriers to trade.</li> </ul>
Education and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 48 - Support expanded offshore delivery of education services through further Australian Government advocacy.</li> <li>– 50 - Australian and Southeast Asian governments to increase cooperation with professional bodies and education providers on qualifications recognition.</li> <li>– 53 - Encourage universities and vocational education providers to offer work integrated learning internships as part of course offerings to Southeast Asian students.</li> <li>– 54 - Australian Government to coordinate a whole-of-nation initiative to better engage alumni, including a scheme for connecting alumni with Australian and Southeast Asian businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 47 - Australian Government to invest in education promotion across Southeast Asia to raise awareness of Australia’s offerings and attract more Southeast Asian students.</li> </ul>
Effective and inclusive public institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 16 - Work with Southeast Asian partners to strengthen legal and policy frameworks on workplace health and safety, environmental standards and modern slavery.</li> </ul>	

Recommendations - ODA	Recommendations – non-ODA
International Trade and Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 11 - Expand collaboration on trade rules and standards harmonisation with Southeast Asian partners.</li> <li>– 14 - Extend government-to-government technical assistance to other Southeast Asian countries through a new government-to-government partnerships program and other mechanisms.</li> <li>– 20 - Establish a targeted program to support Australian First Nations businesses to increase trade and investment with the region.</li> <li>– 65 - Australian Government to work with Southeast Asian partners to expand coverage of ambitious digital trade rules and standards, and promote interoperability through digital trade rules negotiations, advocacy and capacity building.</li> <li>– 71 - Explore opportunities for the Australian Government to work with Southeast Asian partners in harmonising emerging digital cross-border payment systems.</li> </ul>

## Trade and investment

If non-ODA funding becomes available, SEAG2G could add Trade and investment as a fifth thematic priority. This would enable SEAG2G to work with governments to unblock trade and investment bottlenecks. There are a range of Australian initiatives across Southeast Asia to enhance international trade and investment, including the Regional Trade for Development program<sup>34</sup>, business-as-usual work of DFAT, Austrade and Export Finance Australia, and new deal teams being established under the Invested Strategy. SEAG2G’s value add will be government-led activities to advance the Invested Strategy that are not already covered by other initiatives.

Australia seeks to contribute to a rules-based international order, and trade and investment policies in the region that enable international businesses to compete on an even playing field, contribute to technological innovation and create quality jobs. Implementation of trade agreements is one instrument to contribute towards economic growth. Furthermore, there are potentially newer approaches to regional economic cooperation which Australia and some Southeast Asian countries are engaged in that will require a revised approach, such as the Indo Pacific Economic Framework.

<sup>34</sup> Supports implementation of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements.

## Annex 2. Policy Dialogue Matrix

AGE: Australian Government Entity, SGE: Southeast Asian Government Entity, SEA: Southeast Asia, DAFF: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, DoE: Department of Education, COP: Conference of Parties (UN climate conference), IPEF: Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, AHC: Australian High Commission  
HOM: Head of Mission, MC: Managing Contractor

End-of-Program Outcome	Problem/Issue	Policy outcome sought	Program entry points for policy dialogue	Influential stakeholders	Resources required	Policy dialogue lead within DFAT	Partnership lead within MC
1. Broader and deeper partnerships between Australian and Southeast Asian government institutions in targeted areas of mutual interest	Ongoing collaboration on shared government policy goals and capability building of SGEs is missing.	Policy goals bilateral dialogues (e.g. Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships), leverage work of SEAG2G partnerships.	Design of core partnership activities taking account of global/regional/bilateral policy goals, plus country-level/on demand activities.	DFAT, AGE and SGE Ministers.	Executive-level steering committee, annual strategic framework.	AGE/HOM/Ministers/Senior officials during high-level visits backed by relevant DFAT Counsellor	Executive Director
2. Southeast Asia governments improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development	<b>Climate change and energy transition:</b> Addressing the climate and energy transition requires significant joint-efforts and policy certainty for investors.	Policy frameworks accelerate an affordable and inclusive energy transition in SEA countries, with opportunities for international investors and suppliers.	SEAG2G partnerships with climate, energy and possibly finance agencies in SEA countries.	SEA counterpart agencies, private sector	Partnership agreements, and technical personnel.	AGE/ Relevant DFAT Counsellor, backed by HOM/Ministers during high level visits.	Executive Director
2. Southeast Asia governments improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development	<b>Education and skills:</b> Changing skillsets are needed for rapidly changing economies. Policies to enable labour mobility, and high-quality provision of education and training are key.	Policies to boost skills for growth industries, including digital and climate transitions. Mutual skills recognition. Skills policies to increase participation of women and people with disabilities.	SEAG2G partnerships with education and employment agencies in SEA countries. DoE/DEWR work with SGEs to update regulations to enable access for Australian education providers.	SEA counterpart agencies, professional associations	Partnership agreements, and technical personnel.	AGE/Relevant DFAT Counsellor, backed by HOM/Ministers during high level visits.	Executive Director GEDSI Manager

End-of-Program Outcome	Problem/Issue	Policy outcome sought	Program entry points for policy dialogue	Influential stakeholders	Resources required	Policy dialogue lead within DFAT	Partnership lead within MC
2. Southeast Asia governments improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development	<b>Sustainable agriculture and food security:</b> Agricultural productivity, food security and livelihoods need to adapt to urbanisation, growing populations and climate change.	Policies to strengthen food security in SEA while adapting agricultural systems to climate change (e.g. policies enabling uptake of technology and/or financial risk management products)	SEAG2G partnerships with agricultural and standards agencies in SEA countries. DAFF work on common standards and approaches in biosecurity and disease management for agricultural and livestock trade.	SEA counterpart agencies, agricultural industry associations.	Partnership agreements, and technical personnel.	AGE/Relevant DFAT Counsellor, backed by HOM/Ministers during high level visits.	Executive Director
2. Southeast Asia governments improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development	<b>Effective and inclusive public institutions:</b> Governance and effectiveness of public institutions needs to grow along with economic development and respond to new challenges (e.g. climate and digital transitions).	Agency-level policies to increase equity, accountability, and fair markets for inclusive growth.	SEAG2G partnerships with competition authorities and public administration agencies.	SEA counterpart agencies, citizen associations.	Partnership agreements, and technical personnel.	AGE/Relevant DFAT Counsellor, backed by HOM/Ministers during high level visits.	Executive Director
2. Southeast Asia governments improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas in support of economic and social development	<b>Gender equality, disability and inclusion:</b> SEA government agencies do not prioritise gender equality, disability and inclusion including in leadership, as a way to improve performance.	Agency-level policy changes to enhance gender equality, disability and inclusion, including women in leadership.	All SEAG2G partnerships	Leadership in AGEs and SGEAs.	Earmarked budget, experts in GEDSI/HR practices in public service.	AGE/Relevant DFAT Counsellor, backed by HOM/Ministers during high level visits (in partnership with Post GEDSI focal points).	GEDSI Manager



### Annex 3. Evidence base and lessons

Lessons from consultations and government-to-government investments across the Indo-Pacific region that have informed this design are summarised below.<sup>35</sup>

#### Incentivising AGE engagement

**Incentives for AGEs to participate in government-to-government programs can come from a range of sources** including leveraging AGE motivation to join whole-of-government efforts, pre-existing international orientation of the AGE, and mutual benefit. For example, CSIRO's incentive to partner with the energy regulator in Thailand under P4I was to solve an energy transition problem that may have lessons for Australia. Other AGEs such as AUSTRAC and the Australian Federal Police have incentives to work with SGEs to disrupt transnational crime, and this can be deepened and enhanced by ODA investment. Funding alone is usually not the driving factor for international engagement but is important to ensure a well-resourced and effective partnership.

**Brokering core government-to-government partnerships requires DFAT leadership.** Initial activities may be undertaken (e.g. webinars, benchmarking visits) to pique interest but need to be nurtured by DFAT to grow into something larger. Engagement with both technical and senior executive levels in AGEs is important to secure buy-in. Initial activities such as knowledge-exchange seminars were conducted to build experience, before growing into a funded work program.

**Selection of AGEs is important for results.** Small amounts of DFAT assistance will not necessarily bring them in, nor create the prerequisites for success, but a whole-of-government approach must involve fielding the best players. This may require senior interdepartmental negotiations, and even Cabinet consideration.

**Managing through cyclical engagement and domestic priorities is important.** AGEs face challenges responding to busy domestic agendas and managing a program of international engagement. Levels of engagement can vary over time with staff changes or evolving ministerial and departmental priorities. AGE engagement cannot be taken for granted and requires ongoing attention by DFAT and the MC, especially when there are changes in program staff or agency leadership.

AGEs with longstanding partnerships have measures to overcome constraints to international engagement. They include:

- › **Maintaining institutional buy-in:** An AGE institutionalised management buy-in to international work through establishment of an executive sponsor program. The executive sponsorship program twined managers from the AGE and SGE counterpart who were responsible for overseeing the partnership and program of works.
- › **Workforce professional development opportunity:** An AGE uses international work as part of its workforce professional development program and to attract new staff to the institution.
- › **Capitalising on other resources:** Several AGEs noted use of retired Australian Public Officials to augment internal capacity to deliver technical exchanges. Others reported their use of third partner providers such as universities and private sector entities to deliver activities.
- › **Increasing staff resources:** A few AGEs noted changing domestic priorities opened space to expand headcount resources including through successful NPPs and funding provided by DFAT programs for new A-based positions in key countries allowing them to deepen their engagement in-country.

#### Support that works well for SGEs

**AGEs provide a range of support** to SGEs unmatched by other aid modalities, including peer-to-peer mentoring, coaching, and 'learning on the job' opportunities, formal training, benchmarking visits, joint-participation at

<sup>35</sup> Lessons are drawn from Comparative Review for Partnerships for Infrastructure G2G Models (2022), AIPJ2 Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2019), Mekong Australia Partnership on Transnational Crime Mid-Term Review (Draft, 2023), Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program, Independent Review (Draft, 2023), PNG Institutional Partnerships Program Evaluation Phase 1 (2019), Prospera Indonesia Mid-Term Review (2021) and operating experience G2G partnerships in Southeast Asia.

official regional and international meetings, and joint strategic and technical operations. The high demand from Southeast Asian governments for this support across the region is evidence that this support is valued.

**AGEs differ in their readiness to work internationally and in the support they need to work effectively with SGEs.** The program will need to be flexible in scaling support for engagement. For example, some AGEs have dedicated international units, others do not. Nonetheless, a common thread from PNG institutional partnerships is the importance of engaging the right people to work with SGEs – culturally competent, technically capable, able to motivate and work collaboratively with counterparts.

Support to SGEs can work well when government-to-government partnerships collaborate with other Australian development initiatives, especially when other initiatives have a deep understanding of the country and SGE institutional context.

**Australian agencies may sometimes need to bring in State agencies on occasion** to respond to SGE issues not covered at federal level in Australia. For example, the Australian National Audit Office facilitated the Queensland Audit Office to work with PNG's Auditor-General Office, and the Audit Office of NSW to work with Indonesia's Audit Board.

**AGE presence, expertise, and adaptability to deliver high value outcomes beyond short visits will be important** in core cases. There is competition to be a government-to-government partner of choice in some countries. In Vietnam for example, the Danish government has seconded government officials to the energy department over many years. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has been an effective partner in Vietnam, working with officials on practical reforms such as changes to competition and consumer law, through month long secondments of officials in both countries, complemented by ongoing peer support.

## Effective partnerships

**Effective government-to-government partnerships require substantial investment by DFAT and the contractor in relationship management.** Coordinating government-to-government work is hard and sensitive and DFAT had to overcome AGE scepticism to prove value-add. Internal DFAT processes for budget appropriation and senior executive negotiation cannot be outsourced, but a skilled contractor can provide excellent support. Agreements need to be struck, documented, and reinforced in Canberra and at Post. Inter-departmental processes are effective for resolving operational and budget issues can increase in value if they are used to share ideas and identify collaboration opportunities across agencies.

**Operational support is highly valued by AGEs ranging from logistics to know-how on arranging a successful official visit.** A clear set of process documents ranging from security to visa requirements, through to cultural expectations is useful. In some programs, AGE posted officers have had access to courses under the DFAT Diplomatic Academy. Some AGEs will need DFAT support to negotiate agreements with counterparts, while other AGEs have dedicated units for establishing Memoranda of Understanding with international partners.

Clarity over the program's ultimate goal is important, namely relationships/partnerships as the end goal or development outcomes or both. Government-to-government partnerships for development outcomes work well when supported by a unit providing MEL, GEDSI and SGE capability building/public sector insights.

**Strong internal communication is vital in government-to-government programs.** Communication from both Post and Canberra is expected by AGEs and should be based on a coordinated communication protocol. Succinct communication products about SEAG2G objectives and initiatives should be available for high level officials in AGEs and SGEs to understand the whole-of-government bigger picture. Structured communication by DFAT through emails and periodic meetings, supported by the MC as needed, is important.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

In terms of MEL, it is important to recognise that AGEs and SGEs already have their own accountability requirements. The program MEL system should leverage government data and reporting already undertaken and supplement this with a straightforward reporting framework to cover any additional DFAT requirements. AGE partners emphasise that MEL and reporting should reflect the scale of the investment and not be

overcomplicated, especially for small partnerships. The MEL approach to workstream 2 (smaller country-level activities) should therefore be much simpler than workstream 1 (core partnerships).

**Good reporting can be incentivised by sharing with government-to-government partners how the information is used by DFAT** through communication of program-wide results, including to senior officials and Ministers. AGEs are incentivised to share good results if they are promoted and acknowledged by leaders.

**A combination of on-demand and proactive MEL support is useful.** For example, an AGE may request monitoring support to review secondments with a view to improving effectiveness. Similarly, several government-to-government programs have evaluation plans with periodic case studies, working with AGEs and SGEs to assess and describe change impacts. Organisational capacity building is an especially important area for MEL and learning given patchy effectiveness of development programs generally in this area, as noted by the Indonesia justice program mid-term review.

## GEDSI

**A proactive approach to GEDSI is necessary to achieve outcomes.** GEDSI considerations have been embedded in government-to-government partnerships successfully through an AGE community of practice in a facility, and capacity building of counterpart agencies via a contractor (ranging from hands on training to provision of guides and briefing materials). A community of practice or inter-departmental committee can be useful to help AGEs to see promoting GEDSI as behaviour change for improved performance and outcomes (rather than cultural change), just as other technical reforms. Other success factors include earmarked budget, support from GEDSI experts in the subject matter, and DFAT supporting AGEs to go beyond participation of women and men in training as GEDSI results (not of itself likely to generate a GEDSI outcome).

**Backing an AGE strong on GEDSI matched with SGE champions can achieve impressive results.** The Cambodian police service's women in leadership initiative under the Mekong Australia Partnership for Transnational Crime is driven by counterpart priorities with excellent support from Australian Federal Police leadership. DFAT funding has supported an emerging leader program, among other things, to cultivate a pipeline of women for leadership opportunities.

Disability-inclusion is typically not considered in government-to-government partnerships initially; DFAT and the contractor will need to be especially proactive with support. Options include prompting sharing AGE organisational diversity policies and practices with SGEs and addressing inclusion of people with disabilities in SGE service delivery. AGEs are unlikely to be set up to facilitate participation of people with disabilities in partner countries – this is an area where the program should assist.

Further lessons on resourcing and integrating GEDSI into government-to-government partnerships are contained in Annex 7 (GEDSI).

## Annex 4. Mapping of relevant DFAT programs

This is an indicative list of the relevant programs SEAG2G will need to consider and/or coordinate with during implementation. This list is a work in progress and will be updated over time.

Initiative	Value/Duration	Description	Main partners
<b>Regional and Global Initiatives</b>			
Mekong-Australia Partnership (regional), with a new phase under design	\$232 million, 2020–2024, ODA and non-ODA funding for Mekong sub-region MAP Phase 2 - \$222.5 million over 5 years	MAP is working with partners in the Mekong subregion (Cambodia, Laos Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) to respond to shared regional and transboundary challenges including: improving water security and responding to climate change; enhancing economic resilience of the Mekong subregion to external shocks and pressures; combatting transnational crime; and strengthening subregional leadership, institutions and partnerships. MAP Phase 2 will focus on water security, climate change responses and combatting transnational crime.	Mekong countries and ASEAN and subregional bodies such as ACMECS, the Mekong River Commission and Friends of the Mekong. Support for government-to-government engagements e.g. Vietnam Ministry of Finance – Australian Treasury; Vietnam Competition and Consumer Commission (VCC) – Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).
Partnerships for a Healthy Region (PHR)	\$620 million, 2022–2027	PHR helps build resilient and equitable health systems in the Pacific and Southeast Asia, supporting partner countries to reduce disease risks, burdens and respond effectively to health emergencies. The initiative is delivered in partnership with a range of development partners including Australian government agencies, multilateral and regional bodies, product development partnerships, and leading health institutions from Australia and the region.	Australian Public Service Agencies including Therapeutic Goods Administration, CSIRO, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and other academic and non-government entities.
Mekong Australia Program on – Transnational Crime (MAP-TNC)	\$15 million, 2021–2025	MAP-TNC builds deeper and stronger cooperation between Australian law enforcement, security, and border protection agencies work with their regional counterparts to enhance policy development and build technical and operational capabilities.	Mekong countries, Australian Border Force, Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre, ASIC, Australian Federal Police, Department of Home Affairs, Australian Tax Office, Attorney General’s Department, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime.
Aus4ASEAN Futures (regional)	\$124 million	Aus4ASEAN Futures-Economic and Connectivity (ECON), successor to the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II is part of the broader Futures initiative which advances the ASEAN-Australia Comprehensive Strategic	ASEAN Secretariat, other partners

Initiative	Value/Duration	Description	Main partners
		Partnership. It addresses regional challenges across all 3 ASEAN pillars and supports the practical implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.	
Climate Resilient Communities (CRC), design finalised, procurement underway	\$208.5 million, 2024–2029	CRC is a new investment that will support partner governments in the Indo-Pacific to implement their climate adaptation and resilience priorities. It will do this through co-funding and providing program-cycle support for climate programs in the water, food, and energy sectors; providing climate integration technical assistance; and supporting partner governments to mobilise additional climate finance.	Indo-Pacific. Further details to be provided on program commencement.
Partnerships for Infrastructure (regional)	\$134 million (2020–24) plus the newly announced \$140 million (2024-8)	P4I works in Southeast Asia to develop the enabling environment necessary for countries to plan, develop, procure, deliver, operate, and maintain infrastructure that will underpin a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future. A key focus is on support for the region’s energy transition. P4I is delivered through several partners including Ernst and Young and a mix of long-term and ad hoc government-to- government engagements with Australian Public Service agencies. Seeking to progress State and Territory engagements.	Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Timor-Leste, and ASEAN. Australian agencies include Australian Renewable Energy Agency, Department of Treasury, Australian Communications and Media Authority, Department of Home Affairs, Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR), DCEEW, the Australian Energy Regulator.
Australian Water Partnership (AWP) Phase 2 (Global)	\$30 million, 2019–2024, Phase 3 under design	AWP works with partners in the Indo-Pacific region to collectively improve sustainable and climate-resilient water resource management, contributing to international development and foreign policy objectives. It mobilises Australia’s water sector expertise to work in partnership with Indo-Pacific partners and international allies. Investments have ranged in scale and ambition, from short-term technical assessments of water security threats exacerbated by climate change to multi-year capacity development projects. AWP Phase 3 goal is enhanced climate-resilient water resource management in the Indo-Pacific region. The program’s objectives are 1) To promote and deliver water resource management solutions for enhanced climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience and 2) To build partnerships and expertise to address climate-related water challenges in the Indo-Pacific.	Partners include private; educational and research institutions; not-for-profits; Federal government agencies; State government departments or agencies; associations; and water utilities. Most partners in the commercial space are engineering and consulting firms and a lot of good climate experience sits with local level water management. Australian government agencies include DCCCEW, Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), CSIRO. Regional organisations: Asia Water Council

Initiative	Value/Duration	Description	Main partners
Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation Program (CCTCP) (Indo-Pacific)	\$20.5 million, 2020–2024, next phase under design	CCTCP works across the Indo-Pacific to strengthen cyber and critical tech resilience. Program works with regional partners to strengthen capacity to maximise the opportunities and mitigate the risks related to the use of cyberspace and critical technologies. Focus for Southeast Asia is support for technology standards and governance frameworks in the Mekong subregion.	Australian Federal Police, Australian Signals Directorate, eSafety Commissioner,
Marine Resources Initiative (MRI) (Southeast Asia)	\$42 million, 2020–2024, next phase under design	MRI supports countries to manage their maritime domains and the marine environment and sustainably develop their marine resources. Deploys technology and other support for marine spatial mapping and coral reef monitoring.	Geoscience Australia and the Australian Institute of Marine Science
ASEAN Scholars Leadership Program (ASLP)	\$1 million, 10 months	A one-off program under the WLI program. August 2023 to May 2024. ASEAN Summit in Melbourne in March – might be announced to continue. Focus on diplomatic relationships in the region. Has a three-tier program: 1. access to online programs on leadership 2. Women’s developmental leadership program with 16 participants, meet with coaches monthly 3. 5 selected for internships.	Potential for exploring internships in government departments, however noting that security clearance requirements can be problematic. Could provide access to online trainings on ASEAN related topics, internships for ASEAN govt agency scholars. ETMP have provided leadership programs.
<b>Bilateral initiatives</b>			
Prospera (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development) (Indonesia)	\$259 million, 2018–2026	Prospera works with more than 25 Indonesian government agencies, providing them with evidence on which to base policy to support private sector development, safeguard macroeconomic stability and improve governance. Prospera advice helps to improve government spending and revenue, markets, the financial sector, transport, and public-sector institutions in Indonesia. Prospera activities are delivered through partnerships with Australian Government agencies and by contracted advisers.	Government of Indonesia ministries, Australian Public Service Agencies including Treasury, Australian Tax Office, Department of Finance, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Public Service Commission, Civil Aviation Safety Authority, Australian National Audit Office.
Maritime Capacity Building Initiative (MCBI) (Indonesia)	\$13.2 million, 2018–2023	MCBI is a 4-year investment to strengthen maritime cooperation and capacity in the areas of law enforcement, combatting illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, improving maritime, port and ship safety and protecting maritime resources and the marine environment	Various Australian and Indonesian government agencies.

Initiative	Value/Duration	Description	Main partners
Australia-Indonesia Knowledge Partnership Platform (KONEKSI) (Indonesia)	\$50 million, 2022–2027	KONEKSI supports partnerships between Australian and Indonesian knowledge organisations to carry out and disseminate high-quality, multidisciplinary, and applied research on socio-economic problems in areas of mutual interest. Partnerships are with national research organisations in Australia. Potential government to government. linkages with AGEs such as with CSIRO and Department of Industry, Science and Resources.	Australian research entities and Government of Indonesia ministries
Australia Indonesia Partnership for Justice (AIPJ), Phase 2 (Indonesia)	\$74.5 million, 2017–2025	AIPJ aims to strengthen Indonesia’s justice and security institutions. AIPJ2 focuses primarily on leveraging Indonesia’s own resources to support a range of policy changes. AIPJ provides technical assistance to Government of Indonesia ministries and provides support to Australian government agencies to work with counterparts in Indonesia.	Australian Federal Police, Australian Birder Force, Department of Home Affairs, Family Court of Australia, Federal Court of Australia, CSIRO.
Aus4Growth (Vietnam) under design	\$90m, 2024–2033, under design	Aus4Growth is a partnership between Australia and Vietnam to support enhanced economic growth, trade and investment, clean energy and transport, inclusion, and digital acceleration. Includes support for a government-to-government component.	To be confirmed. Early partners likely to include Vietnam’s energy, economic and information communication ministries.
Aus4innovation (Vietnam), implemented by CSIRO	\$31.5 million, 2018–2027	Aus4Innovation supports Government of Vietnam to prepare for emerging challenges and technological transformation by building a stronger national innovation system. Program supports digital fore sighting and mega trends analysis, science commercialisation initiatives, competitive grants mechanism and a policy exchange program.	CSIRO, Ministry of Science and Technology, Private sector, research institutions and universities
Aus4Adaption (Vietnam), under design	\$75 million	A new program to support Vietnam to deliver a range of adaption focused programs through CSO and government partners.	To be confirmed.
Cambodia-Australia Partnership for Resilient Economic Development (CAP-RED) (Cambodia)	\$87 million	CAP-RED works with government and private sector partners in the domains of agricultural transformation, trade, investment, enterprise development and infrastructure services.	Various Cambodian government departments, Cambodian businesses.
Australia Awards	ongoing	All ODE-eligible countries in Southeast Asia have Australia Awards programs. Australia Awards short courses and Fellowships include some engagement with Australian agencies and State and Territory entities.	Australia Awards short course providers.

## Annex 5. Implementation – Managing Contractor services

### Services provided by managing contractor

The SEAG2G implementation team will undertake a range of key functions spanning strategy, planning, governance, risk and budget management and operations. These include:

- › Support DFAT develop program strategy and direction.
- › Develop and implement a Partnership Engagement Strategy, including partnership models, partnership identification, outreach, and scoping in collaboration with DFAT and AGEs.
- › Co-lead and support DFAT with day-to-day relationship management with AGEs, Posts, Canberra desks and other stakeholders.
- › Manage the SEAG2G sub-office office in Southeast Asia.
- › Lead budget management and reporting.
- › Develop and implement the MEL system, data gathering and analysis, and program-wide reporting on progress against program outcomes.
- › Develop and support integration of GEDSI across program and activity levels.
- › Support delivery of public diplomacy and strategic communication products.
- › Undertake risk management, mitigation and reporting.
- › Undertake environmental and social safeguards management, mitigation and reporting.
- › Undertake GEDSI analysis for each activity to identify key GEDSI areas to be addressed relevant to activity priority.
- › Coordinate the Annual Reflection Workshop, source workshop facilitator and document outcomes.
- › Provide a management information system, which includes a platform for management and oversight of Workstream 2 (Country-level) proposals and activities.
- › Provide quality assurance advice to the SEAG2G Section on core partner and country-level annual plans and annual reports.
- › Develop GEDSI tools and products to support AGEs and SGEs integrate GEDSI in activities.
- › Support AGEs and SGEs in annual planning processes and activity proposal drafting.
- › Support Posts in country-level planning for activities.
- › Deliver learning fora, training, and other events.
- › Support AGEs monitoring, and evaluation.
- › Manage technical support for AGEs to integrate development priorities, including GEDSI, climate change and First Nations perspectives, including use of existing DFAT technical panels complemented by an additional pool of experts.
- › Support implementation of AGE and SGE activities, including logistics and administration support for Southeast Asia based activities.
- › Support DFAT G2G Director with RoU/MoU negotiations.
- › Track status of AGE partnerships.
- › Manage Executive Steering Committee Secretariat functions.
- › Support connections and synergies with other programs.
- › Provide procurement and logistics services, including:
  - Small-scale procurement of goods and services such as sourcing and procurement of individual consultants and other third-party service providers.
  - Support for travel arrangements for AGEs and SGE officials, including booking and managing travel as needed, support to SGE officials on itineraries, and pre-departure and in-country briefings for AGEs.
  - Event management including sourcing and procuring hotels and conference venue, payment of per diems, and communications with attendees.

Posts and DFAT may identify other needs and the MC will have in place mechanisms to respond to ad-hoc requests where it is in line with SEAG2G priorities. This could include tasking by other DFAT areas to manage new or existing government-to-government programs within or outside of the thematic scope of this design. If non-ODA funding becomes available, the MC will establish mechanisms to deliver and report on non-ODA funded activities.



## Annex 6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

PROGRAM GOAL: Deeper institutional partnerships between Australia and Southeast Asia that support economic and social development and more effective, accountable, and inclusive government institutions in Southeast Asia

DFAT OBJECTIVE: Participating Southeast Asian Governments see the Australian Government as a reliable, trusted, and responsive partner for two-way technical and policy collaboration

EOPO = End of Program Outcome, IO = Intermediate Outcome, O = Output, A = Activity

Desired result	Performance questions	Indicative Indicators	DFAT Tier 2 and 3 indicators where relevant (and priority theme)	DFAT indicators from SEA Regional Development Partnership Plan (DPP) (to be included once finalised)	Assumptions for data collection	Data sources*	Who will use the info for what
<b>EOPO1:</b> Broader and deeper partnerships between Australian and SEA government institutions in targeted areas of mutual interest	Have Australian partnerships with the region broadened, in terms of growing numbers of AGEs and SGEs involved in collaborative activities? Have Australian partnerships with the region deepened, in terms of building longer term contact, continuous and growing collaboration, and two-way exchange? To what extent are AGEs outsourcing assistance under the partnership to third party providers? Which areas of policy, governance or regulatory improvement have been targeted for collaboration under thematic priority areas? How has the program contributed to greater cooperation between AGEs and SGEs on common challenges? Have partnerships evolved over time towards sustainability?	No of AGEs/SGEs involved in partnerships by workstream, theme and country. Assessments of extent to which individual partnerships have met agreed objectives. Percentage of AGE funding utilised for third party providers, and type of assistance provided. Examples of relationships consolidating through sustained collaboration and two-way exchange (WS1). Examples of continuing relationships established from the basis of one-off activities (WS2). Examples and analysis, by theme, of cooperation among agencies. Analysis of partnerships by type (single agency/co-lead/co-funded with existing programs/non-ODA elements) including changes over time.	T2 - 'Number of Government institutions, organisations or systems Australia has supported in the reporting period to strengthen accountability and/or inclusion, including examples of assistance provided and significant policy change achieved'. 'Countries supported with policy and technical advice on economic reform and management, including examples and results achieved'. 'ODA funding channelled to Women's Equality Organisations and Institutions'. 'Number of PWD organisations (regional/ national/ state/ local) receiving capacity building support' (Inclusive and Equitable Public Institutions / all themes).		AGEs have the motivation, bandwidth, and support to engage actively with partners on implementation and report back on benefits, successes, and lessons. SGEs are willing to participate in feedback mechanisms and make relevant people available for periodic interview.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions DFAT post observation and reporting Periodic SGE interviews Case studies of selected core partnerships	DFAT and ESC for oversight and reporting to high-level officials. DFAT for annual aid program performance reporting.
<b>EOPO2:</b> SGEs improve policy and practice in identified thematic priority areas* in support of economic and social development  (*climate and energy, education and skills, sustainable agriculture and food security, effective and inclusive public institutions)	What policy or implementation changes have SGEs made in areas related to partnership activities? Have AGEs influenced SGE shifts in policy or implementation? Are gender and social inclusion outcomes being realised?	Analysis of contribution of AGE assistance towards significant policy change achieved, by theme and country. Examples of AGE assistance provided towards more effective and inclusive policy and practice.	As for EOPO1 above		SGEs are willing to share info on their internal policy processes and influence of AGE support. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions DFAT post observation and reporting Periodic SGE interviews Case studies of selected partnerships, drawing on techniques such as Most Significant Change	DFAT and ESC for oversight and reporting to high-level officials. DFAT for annual aid program performance reporting.
<b>IO1:</b> SGEs advance their clean energy transition and strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change	What approaches and models are being showcased from Australia's experience in climate change and energy transition? Are partners seeing these as useful and relevant? Is this contributing to partners' formulation or implementation of policy?	No of partnerships showcasing Australian approaches to energy transition or resilience to climate change, by theme and country, including examples of practice being showcased and of SGEs drawing on these to inform policy or implementation reforms.	T2 - 'Number and value of investments that are: a. contributing to low-emissions development pathways or are supporting mitigation activities and b. improving climate change adaptation and disaster resilience.'	(	AGEs are able to make expertise available when relevant and needed and support SGEs to make effective use. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions SGE feedback from post-activity assessments DFAT post observation and reporting	AGEs, for learning from peer experience. Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement.
<b>IO2:</b> SGEs advance the workforce skills needed for a modern economy	What approaches and models are being showcased from Australia's experience in education and skills? Are partners seeing	No of partnerships showcasing Australian approaches to education and skills, by theme and country, including examples of			AGEs are able to make expertise available when	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews	AGEs, for learning from peer experience.

Desired result	Performance questions	Indicative Indicators	DFAT Tier 2 and 3 indicators where relevant (and priority theme)	DFAT indicators from SEA Regional Development Partnership Plan (DPP) (to be included once finalised)	Assumptions for data collection	Data sources*	Who will use the info for what
	these as useful and relevant? Is this contributing to partners' formulation or implementation of policy?	practice being showcased and of SGEs drawing on these to inform policy or implementation reforms.			relevant and needed and support SGEs to make effective use. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience.	CoP sessions SGE feedback from post-activity assessments DFAT post observation and reporting	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement.
<b>IO3:</b> SGEs advance agricultural sector capacity to meet food security needs and international biosecurity standards	What approaches and models are being showcased from Australia's experience in sustainable agriculture and food security? Are partners seeing these as useful and relevant? Is this contributing to partners' formulation or implementation of policy?	No of partnerships showcasing Australian approaches to sustainable agriculture and food security, by theme and country, including examples of practice being showcased and of SGEs drawing on these to inform policy or implementation reforms.	T2 - 'Australian support for improved food security and climate resilient agriculture practices via policy, technical advice and/or capacity building'		AGEs are able to make expertise available when relevant and needed and support SGEs to make effective use. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions SGE feedback from post-activity assessments DFAT post observation and reporting	AGEs, for learning from peer experience. Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement.
<b>IO4:</b> SGEs demonstrate more inclusive and accountable government policy and practices	What approaches and models are being showcased from Australia's experience in transparent, accountable, and inclusive government Are partners seeing these as useful and relevant? Is this contributing to partners' formulation or implementation of policy?	No of partnerships showcasing Australian approaches to transparent, accountable, and inclusive government, by theme and country, including examples of practice being showcased and of SGEs drawing on these to inform policy or implementation reforms.	T2 - 'Number of Government institutions, organisations or systems Australia has supported in the reporting period to strengthen accountability and/or inclusion, including examples of assistance provided and significant policy change achieved'. 'Countries supported with policy and technical advice on economic reform and management, including examples and results achieved'. 'ODA funding channelled to Women's Equality Organisations and Institutions'. 'Number of PWD organisations (regional/ national/ state/ local) receiving capacity building support'.		AGEs are able to make expertise available when relevant and needed and support SGEs to make effective use. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions SGE feedback from post-activity assessments DFAT post observation and reporting	AGEs, for learning from peer experience. Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement.
<b>IO5:</b> AGEs advocate to SGEs on addressing gender equality, disability and social inclusion in policy and practice	How are AGEs exposing SGEs to Australian approaches to GEDSI, across different thematic areas and countries? To what extent are AGEs integrating GEDSI into partnership activities? Is this contributing to SGEs' formulation or implementation of policy?	No of partnerships showcasing Australian GEDSI-related approaches within each thematic area, including examples of GEDSI practice being showcased and any subsequent SGE action.	T3 - '80 per cent of all development investments will address gender equality effectively, and all new investments over \$3 million will include gender equality objectives' (all themes). 'Percentage of investments effectively address disability equity in implementation' (all themes). 'First Nations' perspectives are embedded into development programming and policy' (all themes).		AGEs are supported to identify and share relevant GEDSI approaches with SGEs. AGEs are willing and supported to feedback on experience. SEAG2G can synthesise lessons and feedback to management and ESC in a timely way.	AGE proposals and reporting/ interviews CoP sessions SGE feedback from post-activity assessments DFAT post observation and reporting	AGEs, for learning from peer experience. Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. DFAT, for annual aid program performance reporting.
<b>O1:</b> Multiyear AGE-SGE work programs agreed and delivered for mutual exchange and learning (workstream 1)	What core partnership programs have been established under workstream 1 (by country, theme, and partner)? What activities have been delivered (In Australia, in-country, virtually)? Are partners leveraging additional resources for partnership work where appropriate and moving towards a more sustainable base?	No of core partnerships established with approved work programs, by theme and country. Number and type of activities delivered under work programs, and dollar value. Number / level of AGE and SGE officials engaged in key activities (disaggregated by gender and disability). Extent of additional funds, new funding sources or in-kind support leveraged within core partnerships.	T2 - 'Number of countries supported to engage productively with the multilateral trading system' (Trade and investment). 'Number and value of investments that are: a. contributing to low-emissions development pathways or are supporting mitigation activities and b. improving climate change adaptation and disaster resilience' (climate change and energy transition).		Effective co-design approaches result in coherent designs with clear objectives. Partners are resourced/supporte d to provide necessary data and reporting.	ESC agendas and minutes AGE proposals AGE reporting/ interviews	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. ESC, to inform oversight. DFAT, for broader aid program

Desired result	Performance questions	Indicative Indicators	DFAT Tier 2 and 3 indicators where relevant (and priority theme)	DFAT indicators from SEA Regional Development Partnership Plan (DPP) (to be included once finalised)	Assumptions for data collection	Data sources*	Who will use the info for what
			'Australian support for improved food security and climate resilient agriculture practices via policy, technical advice and/or capacity building' (ag and food security).				performance reporting.
<b>O2:</b> AGE-SGE initiatives implemented responding to emerging opportunities (workstream 2)	What country-led activities have been identified and implemented under workstream 2 (by country, theme, and partner)? Are new AGE-SGE relationships being established?	No of activities approved and implemented (approved in session / out of session) and dollar value. No of AGEs and SGEs commencing new collaboration. Number / level of AGE and SGE officials engaged in key activities (disaggregated by gender and disability).			Effective co-design approaches result in coherent designs with clear objectives. Partners are resourced/supporte d to provide necessary data and reporting.	ESC agendas and minutes AGE proposals AGE reporting/ interviews	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. ESC, to inform oversight. DFAT, for broader aid program performance reporting.
<b>O3:</b> The SEAG2G platform coordinates and aligns its partnership activities for coherence across the broader SEA portfolio, avoiding duplication	What other Australian initiatives are being implemented in similar space? What action has been taken to ensure complementarity and synergy, and avoid duplication?	Coordination mechanisms (formal or informal) in place to avoid duplication between SEAG2G partnerships and DFAT bilateral and regional programs, pre-existing AGE collaboration or other policy initiatives on SE Asia. No of activities undertaken in conjunction with existing programs, with examples of synergies facilitated between SEAG2G and existing activities.			DFAT and AGEs are motivated to identify relevant initiatives and support coordination where needed. Other bilateral/regional programs are willing and able to engage with SEAG2G to support synergies and eliminate duplication.	DFAT (Canberra and post) systems, communication, and reporting CoP sessions AGE communications and reporting	DFAT and AGEs, for continuing coordination. Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. ESC, to inform oversight.
<b>O4:</b> Learning and continuous improvement processes established for SEAG2G programming and for GEDSI	How are AGE partners learning from each other's experience and from SGEs? Are such lessons being applied in partnership activities? What are the main lessons arising for management of the program and for the GEDSI agenda, and how are these feeding back into planning and implementation? Are partners learning from their own experience and identifying improvement measures?	No of COP events conducted and CoP participants, by partner, gender, and disability. No of CoP events evaluated as useful by participants. Feedback from COP participants on how prior learning has been applied. Lessons from implementation and associated recommendations reported to ESC. Periodic partnership health checks undertaken, and results fed back.	T3 - 'Regular dialogues, in Australia and at Posts, to share emerging practices, exchange ideas and facilitate learning'		AGEs are willing to participate actively in CoP sessions and share successes and lessons. SEAG2G can synthesise lessons and feedback to management and ESC in a timely way.	Records of COP meetings Participant evaluations AGE interviews/ reporting ESC agendas and minutes	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. Reporting to ESC, to inform oversight.
<b>A1:</b> Agreements brokered between DFAT and AGEs	Which organisations in Australia (federal, State) have been in dialogue with regional counterparts with a view to collaboration under the program? Which SGE organisations in which countries? What role has DFAT played in fostering links?	Number of AGEs with agreements with DFAT. Number of Workstream 1 agreements based on partnership brokering processes. \$ value of agreements in place.			DFAT (posts and relevant Canberra branches) are motivated and supported to foster links and report on relevant meetings.	AGE communications and reporting DFAT communications and reporting	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. ESC, to inform oversight.
<b>A2:</b> Country Plans agreed with posts	Have posts identified where SEAG2G can best align with agreed whole-of-government priorities with partner governments for	Number of Country Plans agreed with posts, identifying areas of expected and desired cooperation under SEAG2G, and			Development Partnership Plans available and posts willing to discuss	DPPs, DFAT (Posts and Canberra)	DFAT and AGEs, for continuing coordination.

Desired result	Performance questions	Indicative Indicators	DFAT Tier 2 and 3 indicators where relevant (and priority theme)	DFAT indicators from SEA Regional Development Partnership Plan (DPP) (to be included once finalised)	Assumptions for data collection	Data sources*	Who will use the info for what
	development cooperation as reflected in Development Partnership Plans (DPPs)?	noting potential synergies with other development programs.			and identify priorities and possible synergies.		Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. ESC, to inform oversight.
<b>A3:</b> Robust Whole of Govt management/ governance arrangements for SEAG2G program agreed and in place	Are Whole of Government mechanisms in place, including the Executive Steering Committee (ESC), providing effective and timely program oversight (incl priority setting, funding and country allocations, coordination with other GoA initiatives)? Are consistent systems and standards for partner engagement being applied across partnerships?	No of ESC meetings held, and AGE representation at ESC meetings (by level / gender). SEAG2G thematic priorities and country/ theme allocations reviewed at least annually. Systems and standards for partner engagement agreed and in place under partner agreements.			WOG stakeholders are committed to prioritise engagement when needed, reflecting strong buy-in from senior officials from relevant departments and agencies.	ESC agendas and minutes Partner engagement standards document AGE reporting/ interviews	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT, for accountability and improvement. AGEs, to inform program engagement.
<b>A4:</b> Quality, relevant technical, advisory, and logistical services provided to AGE and SGE partners:	What services are being provided to partners? Are these helping facilitate effective and efficient partnerships? Are there gaps in services which should be addressed? Is technical support being provided to AGEs on GEDSI and MEL being effectively utilised?	No and type of service provided to partners (listed by partner). Feedback by AGEs on quality of support provided.	T3: 'No of local personnel, sub-contractors and staff engaged (Employment created) – MC. No and \$ value of local contracts and grants (local supply chains) – MC.		Services to partners help overcome resource constraints and facilitate engagement, strengthen GEDSI approaches, and support partnership reporting and MEL.	SEAG2G-partner agreements SEAG2G partnership records AGE feedback/ interviews	Program level 6- / 12-monthly progress reports to DFAT. ESC, to inform oversight. AGEs, for learning from peer experience.

\*Further information on possible data sources for the MEL system is provided in **Error! Reference source not found.** on the following page.

**Table 9 Possible data sources for SEAG2G’s MEL system**

Data source	Description and notes
DFAT-AGE meetings	Initial meetings will establish the parameters of collaboration and identify objectives, priorities, and challenges. During core partnerships, periodic meetings will address progress, achievements, challenges, and opportunities.
Partnership activity workplans and agreements	These will define activity objectives and anticipated benefits, to provide a benchmark for measuring performance. MEL approaches for the activity will be agreed, aligning with the broader MEL system where possible. Templates will integrate any requirements for common data collection to ensure consistency of reporting.
Pre-/post-activity surveys	For key activities, surveys of participants from AGEs/SGEs will assess learning outcomes and areas for improvement.
Agency action plans	Where participant or agency action plans have emerged from joint activities as appropriate, these will provide a basis for follow-up assessment.
AGE internal reporting and evaluations	SEAG2G will consult with partners to consider the extent to which an AGE’s own internal accountability, reporting and communications requirements can meet SEAG2G reporting needs and where supplementary reporting may be needed.
Partnership activity reports	Brief templates will reflect standard SEAG2G reporting and data requirements, including summary statements on progress, results, challenges, and opportunities. SEAG2G will explore ways to minimise burden on AGEs, such as using partner interviews as a basis to prepare draft reports.
Activity observation, monitoring, and engagement visits	SEAG2G staff and/or DFAT staff (Canberra or Posts) will take opportunities for observing selected activities and interacting with AGE and SGE representatives, for a first-hand view of collaborative work.
Performance and progress reports	6- and 12-monthly progress reports will provide documented data and analysis, providing useful points of reference as the program proceeds and evolves.
Executive Steering Committee papers	ESC agendas, meeting papers and minutes will document decisions taken on partnership parameters, and views on priorities and program/partner performance.
Learning events	Events such as Community of Practice sessions provide a vital opportunity for partner reporting, sharing of achievements and ‘stories’, discussion of common challenges and reflection on strategic issues and impacts. SEAG2G will use such meetings to document and distil key insights.
Thematic or partner evaluations	Evaluations of work undertaken under partnerships, as described below (section F7), will draw on other data sources and subsequently provide a reference source of summary analysis.
Interviews with DFAT stakeholders	Interviews at strategic points (e.g. for case studies) with representatives of DFAT Posts, Canberra-based geographic and thematic sections, and (where appropriate) State Offices, can provide information on the broader context in which partnerships are operating, and a perspective on partner achievements.
Interviews with AGEs	Periodic interviews with AGE partners will provide perspective on partnership achievements, progress, challenges, and opportunities. SEAG2G may also use these to populate reporting templates.
Interviews with SGEs	Interviews at strategic points with SGE partners (e.g. for case studies) will provide perspective and triangulation on partnership achievements, progress, challenges, and opportunities.
Interviews with other country / regional stakeholders	Where appropriate the MEL system will also consult at strategic points with other in-country or regional policy players beyond the Australian government (e.g. UN and multilateral agencies, other selected bilateral representatives) to triangulate other findings, and assess the potential and actual contribution of program activities in terms of policy influence.

## Annex 7. Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

### GEDSI policies guiding this investment

Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) are fundamental human rights and essential to achieving cohesive and prosperous societies. This is recognised in Australia's International Development Policy (2023), which puts gender equality at the centre of development so that all women and men have opportunities to thrive, thereby making countries stronger, secure, and more inclusive. The Policy supports the active and central role for people with disabilities and their organisations at all stages across the development program. In addition, the International Development Policy presents transformative opportunities to incorporate the perspectives and experiences of First Nations Australians in the government's international development policies and programs. Collaboration between First Nations Australians and regional partners is envisaged to address shared challenges.

The Australian Government's Invested Strategy recognises the importance of empowering women and girls for improving productivity and economic growth in Southeast Asia. This can only be achieved when women and girls have education and employment opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge that enable them to work in diverse and non-traditional industries. Australia's partnerships with Southeast Asian government partners offer opportunities to support the achievement of gender equality, which in-turn will stimulate strong and vibrant economies, boost private and public sector performance, and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>36</sup>

The Australian Government's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2016) and Development for All 2015–2020: Strategy for strengthening disability-inclusive development in Australia's aid program (2015) ensure GEDSI is a key component of all development programs. The gender equality strategy aligns with regional commitments to gender equality and identifies opportunities for Australia and our region to achieve stability, security, prosperity, and safety in achieving gender equality. The Australian Government has reinstated the target for 80 per cent of all development investments to address gender equality and a new requirement for new investments of more than \$3 million to include gender equality objectives. The Australian Government is committed to ensuring the rights of people with disabilities under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This is highlighted in Australia's international disability strategy, which identifies priority areas where Australia can advance disability equity and rights and performance measures by which the Australian Government will hold itself to account.

DFAT's Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda (the Agenda) elevates the perspectives and issues of Indigenous peoples in the work of the department. Through the Agenda, DFAT will ensure international processes and institutions consider the interests of Indigenous peoples in decision making, including in discussions on sustainable development. DFAT recognises that the soft power assets of Indigenous Australians can positively contribute to the Australian Government's international influence via the promotion of First Nations culture, expertise, and innovation to international partners. The Agenda commits DFAT to working with domestic agencies to promote a Commonwealth public sector and foreign service that champions the talent of Indigenous Australians.<sup>37</sup> The SEAG2G program offers significant opportunities to work with AGEs to achieve these commitments.

### Lessons learned from GEDSI in government-to-government programs

Design consultations and review documents indicate that addressing GEDSI in government-to-government programs has been difficult. Most AGEs are unfamiliar with GEDSI in development concepts. While many AGEs have their own gender and diversity inclusion plans or strategies, these are primarily internally focused and do not consider the specific gender inequality, disability, and social inclusion issues relevant to AGE sectoral areas and how AGEs might address these through their policies and programs. While the design consultations have shown that AGEs have limited capabilities to integrate GEDSI in government-to-government programs, all AGEs are now required by the Australian government to conduct a gender analysis when developing policy proposals, budgets, and cabinet submissions. The Australian government considers that the gender analysis will provide transparent

<sup>36</sup> DFAT. (2023) Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/southeastasiaeconomicstrategy>

<sup>37</sup> DFAT. (2021) Indigenous Diplomacy Agenda, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/indigenous-diplomacy-agenda>

information about the gender impact of AGE decisions related to their domestic work. The Office for Women has developed a gender analysis and gender impact assessment guide to support AGEs in this process.

Design consultations indicate that targeted activities that address GEDSI have been more effective due to both AGEs and government partners having a clearer understanding of the objectives of activities as they focus on a specific area of concern. For example, the Australian Water Partnership program implemented flagship activities related to disability in 2 countries, which linked OPDs in program country with Australian OPDs as a way to support water management. It will be important for the SEAG2G program to exploit opportunities for AGEs to work with SGEs to identify and develop initiatives that specifically address gender inequality and disability exclusion in their work. The SEAG2G program will need to support AGEs and SGEs to identify these opportunities.

Design consultations also highlight the need for GEDSI technical advice to be available on the program team as most AGEs do not have this expertise. Programs, such as the Cyber and Critical Tech Cooperation, Partnership for a Healthy Region, and Water Partnership Australia programs, have had GEDSI advisers who review proposals and support partners to integrate GEDSI in activities; this has been essential for ensuring GEDSI is considered. Many government-to-government programs require partners to undertake a GEDSI analysis during the initial proposal stage to understand GEDSI opportunities. GEDSI Action Plans have ensured there is an ongoing focus and commitment to GEDSI in government-to-government initiatives, with specific GEDSI indicators and objectives assessed through the program’s MEL processes.

While a GEDSI analysis is the first step in mainstreaming GEDSI in activities, programs have found undertaking the analysis at start to be challenging as partners did not see relevance of GEDSI to their initiatives. It will be important for the SEAG2G program to deliver regular GEDSI awareness training to AGEs, starting during the inception phase of the program so they understand the importance of GEDSI and its relevance to sectoral priorities. Ensuring GEDSI is a key focus of all events such as annual planning, learning events, and reflection exercises will highlight the Australian government’s commitment to GEDSI in its international development programs and enable AGEs and SGEs to continually increase their knowledge and skills in GEDSI.

## GEDSI opportunities in thematic priorities

The table below outlines opportunities within each thematic priority to address GEDSI. Examples of relevant research, which can guide the development and implementation of GEDSI activities in thematic areas are included. Additional opportunities specific to AGE activities with SGEs will be identified during the development of each partnership.

**Table 10 Opportunities to address GEDSI within SEAG2G’s thematic areas**

Theme	GEDSI opportunities	Research
Climate change and energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increasing women’s participation in climate change and energy sector</li> <li>– Increasing women in climate change and energy sector leadership and management</li> <li>– Improving gender/disability disaggregated data to understand GEDSI needs in climate change and energy sector</li> <li>– Understanding potential impacts of energy sector policies, programs, services on diverse groups of women, men, other gender identities, people with disabilities and marginalised groups</li> <li>– Women’s entrepreneurship in sustainable energy</li> <li>– Development/implementation of gender-responsive climate change and energy laws, policies, and institutions</li> <li>– Gender-responsive climate financing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ASEAN and UN Women. (2022) State of Gender Equality and Climate Change in ASEAN, Jakarta: The ASEAN Secretariat Community Relations Division (CRD)</li> <li>– ACE (2022). Roadmap on Accelerating ASEAN’s Renewable Energy Deployment through Gender-Responsive Energy Policy. ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE), Jakarta.</li> </ul>
Education and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GEDSI-responsive policy development</li> <li>– Increasing girls and women participation in STEM</li> <li>– Increasing girls/women and people with disabilities in TVET and nontraditional trades to address skills shortages and enhance technical capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– UNESCO. (2020) STEM education for girls and women: breaking barriers and exploring gender inequality in Asia, Bangkok: UNESCO.</li> </ul>

Theme	GEDSI opportunities	Research
Sustainable agriculture and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GEDSI-responsive agriculture policy and regulation development (e.g. policies related to women’s access to land, capital and credit, access to food)</li> <li>– Agricultural inputs and marketing knowledge targeted to women farmers</li> <li>– Increasing leadership opportunities for women and people with disabilities in government agriculture agencies</li> <li>– Increasing women’s and people with disabilities’ participation in agriculture sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– OECD. (2021) Strengthening Women’s Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in ASEAN Countries, Paris: OECD.</li> </ul>
Effective and inclusive public Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– GEDSI-responsive policy development (e.g. parental leave, equitable recruitment and promotion, equal remuneration, flexible work arrangements)</li> <li>– Increasing opportunities for women in leadership and management</li> <li>– Increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities in public sector</li> <li>– Development of disability support schemes</li> <li>– Harm prevention policy development (e.g. sexual harassment in workplace, discrimination against people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expression)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2019). Pathways to Influence: Promoting the Role of Women’s Transformative Leadership to Achieve the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific.</li> </ul>

## SEAG2G GEDSI Approach

The program will adopt a twin-track approach to address gender equality, disability, and social inclusion:

**Mainstreamed across all workstreams:** The program will support the work of AGEs and SGEs to integrate GEDSI in policy and programs. This is essential to ensuring all women and men from diverse backgrounds benefit from government policies and services, by making the concerns and experiences of both women and men an integral part of their design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

**Targeted initiatives:** The SEAG2G program will implement targeted activities that directly address gender inequality and disability exclusion in program initiatives. Targeted activities will be identified during the development of workplans and through a GEDSI analysis conducted to inform the workplan process. SEAG2G’s GEDSI Manager will work with AGEs and SGEs to identify and implement targeted activities.

The thematic priority of effective and inclusive public institutions offers a significant opportunity to develop policies, service delivery and operating systems that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of women and men from diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities. Key AGEs, such as the Office for Women, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, National Disability Insurance Agency, Department of Social Services, Australian Public Service Commission, National Indigenous Australians Agency and similar bodies at the State and Territory level, and Australian Human Rights Commission will be important AGEs to include in the SEAG2G program to showcase Australian examples of initiatives that work towards the development of GEDSI-responsive government systems.

**GEDSI strategy and action plan:** The program will develop a GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan that defines the program’s approach to GEDSI and identifies initiatives, entry points and resources required to support GEDSI across the different program areas. The Strategy will outline how GEDSI will be assessed and identify gender and disability indicators with which to assess the progress of activities. The Strategy will be informed by consultations with key partners including DFAT and AGEs to understand the barriers, opportunities, and necessary support required to ensure GEDSI is adequately addressed. The GEDSI Strategy will include an Action Plan, which will be revised annually. The GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan will be developed during the inception phase. A funding allocation scaling up to 10 per cent of the annual program budget will be allocated to support GEDSI initiatives.

**Core Partner GEDSI analysis and action plans:** A GEDSI analysis will be undertaken during the workplan process with each Core Partner. The analysis will identify opportunities and key areas for the integration of GEDSI in the partnership and adopt an intersectional focus to understand the interconnecting factors that contribute to inequality and exclusion in specific contexts. The GEDSI analysis will inform the development of relevant



approaches to address GEDSI via targeted and mainstreamed activities. A GEDSI Action Plan will be developed for each Core Partner which outlines activities, approaches, resourcing, and timelines for implementation. The GEDSI Manager (or GEDSI Adviser from GEDSI panel) will work with core partners to undertake the GEDSI analysis and develop the GEDSI Action Plan. Local women's organisations, OPDs and relevant civil society organisations will be consulted to understand the barriers and enablers for GEDSI relevant to thematic areas. These consultations will also identify potential partnerships with relevant women's organisations, OPDs, and civil society organisations to support GEDSI initiatives.

**GEDSI resourcing:** A fulltime GEDSI Manager will be responsible for leading the implementation of the program's GEDSI approach. The GEDSI Manager will be a senior member of the SEAG2G leadership team to ensure GEDSI is a key consideration in all program decision-making processes. Additional GEDSI technical resourcing will be sourced via the development of a SEAG2G GEDSI pool comprising of experts in the thematic areas and specific skills that may be outside the expertise of the GEDSI Manager.

**Developing AGE GEDSI capability:** Increasing awareness of AGEs regarding the importance of GEDSI in Australia's international engagement and its relevance in the program's core thematic areas will be essential for GEDSI to remain a key focus in SEAG2G initiatives. For this reason, the program will ensure there is a culture of learning and continuous improvement in GEDSI via targeted initiatives specifically focusing on addressing GEDSI in thematic areas. This will enable AGEs to confidently promote GEDSI and deliver outcomes within their program activities and SGE partnerships. The program will deliver regular capacity building activities to increase AGE awareness and skills in GEDSI. DFAT's Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch will provide GEDSI training and mentoring to AGE partners on relevant topics and themes. This will ensure there is a consistent whole-of-government approach to the delivery of GEDSI across activities. The program will initiate an introductory GEDSI training for AGEs during the inception phase to ensure AGEs understand the importance of and approach to GEDSI from the outset.

**GEDSI guidance and tools:** The GEDSI Manager will develop toolkits, resources and guidance notes that will support the integration of GEDSI into AGE-SGE activities. The tools will provide practical and easy-to-follow guidance in identifying GEDSI opportunities in activities and approaches to addressing inequality and exclusion within each of the program's core areas. The program will utilise DFAT tools such as GEDSI Good Practice Notes<sup>38</sup> to support the integration of GEDSI in AGE initiatives. The GEDSI Manager will provide training and practical support to AGEs to use the tools and resources. The GEDSI tools, guidelines, and trainings will be available on SEAG2G learning platform, where GEDSI will be included as a standing topic to foster peer to peer knowledge sharing.

**Peer-to-peer learning opportunities:** The GEDSI work of AGEs will be showcased at regular points of the program and time reserved to enable AGE peers to learn from each other about approaches and activities adopted to address GEDSI in their initiatives. Time will be allocated to present and discuss GEDSI activities during AGE partnership meetings, annual planning events, design workshops, and relevant AGE workshops/meetings. This will contribute to increasing AGE awareness about GEDSI and learn from others about alternate practical approaches to integrating GEDSI in SEAG2G activities. Discussion between AGEs will enable an exchange of ideas, identify, and resolve problems, and generate new ideas about GEDSI in SEAG2G initiatives.

**SEAG2G Executive Steering Committee:** A representative from DFAT's Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch will be part of SEAG2G's Executive Steering Committee to ensure GEDSI is continually promoted and considered in all decision-making processes. This is essential for reflecting Australia's commitment to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as part of the whole-of-government approach and enabling strategic priorities regarding GEDSI to be advanced.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** The monitoring and evaluation of SEAG2G activities will collect quantitative and qualitative disaggregated data (minimum: sex and disability) where relevant and identify GEDSI-specific indicators at different stages of the program to ensure GEDSI is addressed and measured. To understand the impact of activities in addressing gender inequality, disability, and social exclusion, it will be important for the program to

38 DFAT's GEDSI Good Practice Notes include Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in DFAT's Aid Program Good Practice Note, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis Good Practice Note, Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting Good Practice Note, and Disability Inclusion in the DFAT Development Program Good Practice Note.

commit to undertaking case studies, reviews, and evaluations at various points of the program. Information obtained from the evaluations should be communicated among AGE and SGE partners and fed back into the program to ensure activities can be adapted and improved.

**SEAG2G First Nations Strategy:** A SEAG2G First Nations Strategy will be developed during the inception phase of the program. The program will contract a First Nations specialist who will identify entry points for the inclusion of First Nations perspectives within the program and outline an approach to achieve this. Potential entry points include supporting AGEs to include First Nations Australians within their domestic programs, supporting AGEs to meet their own public service First Nations targets and goals with regard to public service targets focused on leadership and staff targets, utilising indigenous businesses in subcontracting and supply chains, and opportunities for the program's MC to include First Nations Australians within the program implementation team.



**Annex 8. Budget**

For internal use only – includes figures that are commercial in confidence.

## Annex 9. Risk Register

For internal use only