

# Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and was undertaken by Tetra Tech International Development (Tetra Tech). The team consisted of Richard Bell as Team Leader and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialist, Nicole Haley as the Elections and Governance specialist, Mercy Masta as the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) specialist and Hellen Moliki as the Evaluation Analyst.

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# List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIMR	Annual Investment Monitoring Report
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AEC	Australian Electoral Commission's
AFP	Australian Federal Police
ANU	Australian National University
APEM	Assistant Provincial Election Manager
AQC	Annual Quality Check
COVID-19	Novel Coronavirus
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee [OECD]
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [Australia]
EOIO	End of Investment Outcomes
EON	Electoral Outreach Network
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
ESP	Electoral Support Program
FIFO	Fly-In Fly-Out
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GoA	Government of Australia
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
HQ	Head Quarter
ICAB	Information and Community Awareness Branch [PNGEC]
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDD	Investment Design Document
IDEC	Interdepartmental Election Committee
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMR	Investment Monitoring Reporting
IPO	Investment Program Outcome
IPPCC	Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission
JSS4D	Justice Services and Stability for Development
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
LLG	Local Level Government
LTA	Long Term Adviser
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NECC	National Election Coordination Centre
NGE	National General Election
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NRI	National Research Institute [PNG]
NZEC	New Zealand Electoral Commission
OAF	Overall Assessment Framework

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OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAN	Performance Assessment Note
PATO	Provincial Awareness and Training Officer
PEM	Provincial Election Manager
PLWD	Persons Living with Disability
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGDF	Papua New Guinea Defence Force
PNGEC	Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission
RedR	RedR Australia
RPNGC	Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
SAGE	Strengthening Advances in Governance and Elections
SEP	Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea
SPC	Special Parliamentary Committee
STA	Short Term Advisor
TEW	Temporary Election Worker
TIPNG	Transparency International PNG
TOR	Terms of Reference
VACE	Voter Awareness and Civic Education
VAWE	Violence Against Women in Elections
VfM	Value for Money
WOG	Whole of Government

# 1 Executive Summary

This is the report of the Evaluation of the Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea Program (SEP) 2019-2024, carried out July-September 2023. SEP is a bilateral development program between the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), and the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) under the broader partnership between the Government of PNG (GoPNG) and Government of Australia (GoA). The current phase of the program extends on previous iterations of Australia's electoral assistance to Papua New Guinea (PNG), including the PNG Electoral Support Program led by the AEC in Phase 1 (2002-2005) and by Cardno in Phases 2 and 3 (2005-2013), The AEC-PNGEC Twinning Program (2005-2018), and IFES' PNG Electoral Systems Strengthening Project (2015-2017), and was valued at \$30m AUD.

The original intent of the investment design document (IDD) was to deliver a more integrated and coordinated program of electoral support underpinned by a single strategy. The appointment of a program coordinator with overall responsibility for delivery and coordination of the program, including the inputs of the specialist delivery partners, was envisaged. However, this role was not ultimately recruited, and IFES took on some, but not all, program coordination functions.

The evaluation seeks to assess the extent of program achievement and progress toward End of Program Outcomes (EPOs); as well as to provide recommendations for future programming. The evaluation was overseen by the Political Team at the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby. The evaluation team undertook an in-country mission to Port Moresby from 31 July – 11 August 2023, though was unable to conduct interviews outside of Port Moresby due to uncertain flight traffic in PNG at the time. This was followed by further follow up interviews conducted in Canberra and via teleconference, as well as analysis and provision of a draft evaluation report.

The SEP Goal is stated as: ***The administration of electoral events in PNG is better equipped to identify and address significant obstacles to the delivery of elections; ensuring more timely, orderly and efficient preparations; contributing to a more credible electoral process.*** Six EPOs, all largely focussed on election delivery, were designed to contribute to this goal:

1. Electoral administrators and donors can prepare for elections in a more orderly way through the strengthening of coordination arrangements across all critical aspects of election management.
2. An electoral system that has a strengthened “whole of polling cycle” approach with better connections between HQ and local polling stations.
3. The capacity of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups to participate in electoral processes are enhanced, with election delivery systems being more accommodative of the needs of marginalised groups when preparing for elections.
4. Electoral coordination mechanisms allow for the timelier identification of election delivery problems and provide a better basis for more effective interventions to address them.
5. Electoral management systems are better positioned to support more orderly electoral preparations over the election cycle, helping to increase the legitimacy of elections and contribute to a reduction in election-related insecurity.
6. Increased technical capacity within the PNGEC in relation to specific election processes and administrative systems.

**Findings** There are three main, interconnected findings that arise from the evaluation. First, the need for a greater level of coherence across the EPOs and program Components. Second, the need for closer coordination of the multiple program partners under a single, joined up theory of change and annual reporting. And third, the need for a whole-of-government approach to program implementation, which would reinvigorate the planned whole of electoral cycle approach originally laid out in the SEP design.

The Results Framework, Election Cycle Roadmap Tracking Instrument, Practice Influence Report, and other recommended monitoring and evaluation tools developed in the IDD were not ultimately used by the SEP. As such, it is difficult to fully assess the program. Further compounding this, there appears to be some tension between the EPOs and the Program Components. The SEP program, as designed, has six constituent components, although the IDD made clear that Component 1 – Support for Election Delivery – was to be the primary focus of the program. That all six EPO relate in large part to election delivery further affirms this.

Investment in the other five components was expected to be much more modest. Indeed, the other program components appear to have provided scope for additional, opportunistic programming, with DFAT agreement, in areas where the GoPNG had demonstrated clear leadership, genuine political and financial commitment and willingness for reform including: Voter Roll Maintenance & Updating; Voter Awareness & Election Monitoring; Support for Electoral Reform; Gender & Social Inclusion; and Knowledge Support for M&E and Learning. Ultimately the main specialist delivery partner, IFES, reported against the six components rather than the EPOs. Given the lack of relationship between the Components and the EPOs, as well as the overall lack of a Results Framework, it

has not been possible to assess how activities under each component have contributed to EOPOs or the overarching program goal.

Consistent with the findings of previous reviews of Australia's electoral assistance to PNG,<sup>1</sup> electoral administration and support for election delivery should, in our view, continue to provide the core focus of the program. As SEP is redesigned in the coming months, critical decisions will need to be made to clarify the extent to which the five additional components are a subsidiary focus, or if they are integral to the program. Decisions concerning the relative importance of programming in particular areas should be made on an ongoing basis subject to assessment in a more rigorous results framework. If this were the case, there would be a need for a flexible approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) such as using indicators that provide adequate flexibility for the more opportunistic approaches suggested in the IDD. Either way, the need for more clarity around the results framework links to the second major finding: the need for clearer coordination of the program.

The coordination of the SEP was intended to be conducted by a long-term Program Coordinator who would hold dual roles of helping the PNGEC implement its corporate plan, while also supporting DFAT with the strategic management of its support. Such a role would have enabled greater accountability around program reporting against a results framework, management of the grants component of SEP, and the tailored, direct support requested by PNGEC. Indeed, the PNGEC Deputy Director John Kalamoroh noted that previous support was a mix of advisory and direct support, but this phase has been more advisory which has meant that direct support was lacking.

While the major delivery partner, IFES, was clearly concerned about impinging upon areas of GoPNG sovereignty, there is a clear need for a shift away from advice towards training, institutional strengthening, and continuous planning support. This needs to be clarified for future designs to ensure that program partners are supported to provide workshops, training, and direct operational/programming support, and less advisory support. Such support cannot simply be focussed on PNGEC headquarters but must work with staff based in the provinces and work in a substantive way to strengthen linkages between headquarters and the provinces. This is essential as the delivery of elections in PNG is increasingly decentralised.

Support of this kind could plausibly come from one or more appropriately resourced long-term advisers (as set out in the IDD for SEP). These advisers might be mobilised in-country via one of the existing bilateral Australia-PNG programs (the IDD has planned for the PNG Governance Facility to fulfill this role) or through a managing contractor appointed to implement SEP.

Finally, a major finding from the evaluation is the need for whole-of-government programming to complement the whole of electoral cycle approach that has already been designed. The evaluation team has found evidence that the whole of cycle approach should continue with a focus on mitigating the surge of support that occurs around the election year. However, what is apparent is that the planning and capacity development focus on the PNGEC does not account for the political realities of PNG where the election budget was delivered too late to enable timely planning and logistics.

As a result, GoA was put in a difficult position wherein the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) received a last-minute request for support to print the ballot papers for the 2022 National General Elections (NGE). The PNGEC in particular emphasised the need for elections to be seen as a whole-of-government activity that included cooperation with overarching bodies such as the Interdepartmental Election Committee (IDEC), the Department of national Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), the Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council (PMNEC), as well as with both the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) and Royal PNG Constabulary (RPNGC) so as to have a more joined-up approach to funding, logistics and security.

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<sup>1</sup> See DFAT (2013) *Australian Aid for Electoral Assistance in Papua New Guinea 2000-2012* and DFAT (2018) *Evaluation of Australia's Electoral Assistance to Papua New Guinea 2015-2017*.

## 2 About the evaluation

### 2.1 Purpose and Scope

This evaluation provides an assessment of Australia's electoral assistance to Papua New Guinea (PNG) as delivered through the Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) program (2019-2024). It considers the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender equality, disability and social inclusion and overall impact of the program, having regard to the SEP Investment Design Document.<sup>2</sup> It also considers the extent to which the program's intermediate outcomes, namely outcomes at the 2022 PNG National General Elections (NGE), were achieved and provides an assessment of progress towards the SEP's end-of-program outcomes.

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to identify lessons learned and provide recommendations that might inform the design and implementation of future support, including the next phase of SEP. The evaluation took into account the evolving context, considered performance to-date, the connection between performance outcomes and EOPOs, and assessed whether the current EOPOs remains suitable for the next phase, or if new EOPOs are needed. By looking at the nature of Australia's support for PNG's elections, the evaluation complements other reports and assessments concerning elections in PNG, including most notably observation reports and debrief assessments of the 2022 PNG NGE. It is hoped the evaluation may inform PNG's own policy development and election reform processes, but it is expected to be more useful to guiding the design of Australia's future assistance.

A secondary purpose of the evaluation was to provide independent evidence of the investment's performance for external accountability. It is expected the evaluation will inform the Final Investment Monitoring Report to be drafted in early 2024 and will supplement evidence gathered by the program's internal monitoring and evaluation system.

The scope of this evaluation is focused on the current implementation period of SEP, which encompassed the 2022 Papua New Guinea (PNG) National General Elections (NGE). The period under review is from October 2019 until the time of the fieldwork (August 2023), noting the program will continue until June 2024. Several by-elections, supplementary elections for Lagaip Open electorate, the Motu-Koita Assembly elections and the Local-level Government elections are all anticipated between now and the program's expected end date.

#### 2.1.1 Key Users

This evaluation has been principally prepared for DFAT (Post and Canberra–investment managers and Executive). Its key findings will be shared with DFAT's whole of Government partners, key PNG government (GoPNG) stakeholders, including the PNG Electoral Commission and Interdepartmental Election Committee (IDEC), and with the program's implementing partners (eg. AEC, IFES, RedR, etc). The evaluation conforms with DFAT's [Monitoring and Evaluation Standards](#) and [Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance](#) and will be published in line with DFAT's [Development Evaluation Policy](#) and the [Aid Transparency](#) requirements.

#### 2.1.2 Information necessary for the evaluation

A series of primary and secondary evaluation questions guided this evaluation. These were informed by the indicative evaluation questions included in the original SEP Investment Design Document and included those set out by DFAT in the terms of reference (TORs) for this evaluation. The evaluation criteria DFAT employs in its Investment Monitoring Reporting (IMR) is utilised herein to ensure the evaluation findings are consistent with DFAT's information requirements.

The empirical evidence on which this evaluation is based is primarily qualitative, and was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Program partner documents and stakeholder interviews were the primary data sources. To the extent this was possible, these were augmented by quantitative analysis of program budgets and available election data.

The evaluation team used a phased evaluation approach comprising inception and planning (including the production of the evaluation plan, methods and research tools appended to this document). The evaluation team conducted consultations and data gathering through interviews with Australian and Papua New Guinean stakeholders both in PNG and Australia and conducted desktop research from relevant documents provided by DFAT. A full listing of the documents reviewed can be viewed in Appendix 1.

A total of 55 key informants, including from DFAT, the PNGEC, IFES, AEC, other whole of government election delivery partners (RPNGC, PNGDF, AFP, ADF, IDEC), program delivery partners (TIPNG, IFES, NRI, ANU) and a small number of candidates (including the chairman and deputy chair of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 PNG NGE) participated in semi-structured interview guided by the key evaluation questions set out in the following section. Further contextual information was gleaned from a field visit with various temporary election

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<sup>2</sup> DFAT 2019 Investment Design Document – Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024.

workers and volunteers during the Motu Koita Assembly roll update. Additionally 29 documents were analysed including: program-related documents, program outputs, DFAT program and strategic documentation, and various election reports relevant to this evaluation.

## 2.2 Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ)

The KEQ were informed by the indicative evaluation questions included in the original SEP Design Document and those provided by DFAT in the terms of reference (TORs) for this evaluation. The evaluation plan then identified appropriate sub-questions that were used to elicit and collate evidence against the KEQ using an evidence matrix, as shown in Table 1.

The evaluation questions utilised were principally retrospective in nature, focusing on performance, relevance and achievement to date. Some prospective questions, which aim to inform DFAT's decisions regarding a future phase of the program, were also included.

### Evaluation criteria: Relevance

#### Key Evaluation Question:

- Were the SEP investment EOPOs appropriate, practical and achievable?

#### Evaluation Sub-Questions:

- How well does SEP align with GoPNG priorities?
- How do the SEP EOPOs deliver on GoPNG priorities?
- How well does SEP align with Australian priorities?
- How do the SEP EOPOs deliver on Australian priorities?
- Does the overarching program goal remain relevant?
- Are the SEP EOPOs coherent? Do they translate into practical achievable outcomes?

### Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness

#### Key Evaluation Question:

- What has been achieved as a result of SEP? What has not been achieved?

#### Sub-Questions

- Were the 2022 NGE outcomes achieved?
  - Are PNG electoral delivery systems more orderly and efficient? If so, how?
  - Has coordination between HQ and the provinces improved? If so, how?
  - Has voter confidence in the roll increased?
  - Do voters have a better understanding of the electoral system, voting processes and their rights and responsibilities? Did this result in improved voter behaviour?
  - Have there been improvements in voting day processes which have made elections more inclusive? If so, what improvements have been made?
  - Has political participation on the part of marginalised groups improved?
  - Was the EBC process evidence-based?
- To what extent did SEP outputs, activities and interventions lead to achievement of intended end of program outcomes achieved?
- Have there been unexpected outcomes?
- Are the outcomes achieved sustainable? Have they consolidated past investment gains?
- How has the program dealt with contextual change, particularly in relation to COVID-19?
- What are the most critical ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities to inform subsequent Support to Elections in PNG?

#### Key Evaluation Question (2)

Which SEP components, partners and modalities performed best?

#### Sub-Questions

- To what extent has election delivery been strengthened?
- To what extent has coordination between HQ and the provinces been strengthened?

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- To what extent has the Voter Roll been strengthened?
- To what extent have there been improvements in voter awareness?
- To what extent has electoral reform been supported by SEP?
- To what extent have governance and procurement arrangements enabled a well-functioning relationship between DFAT and major implementing partners (IFES, AEC, RedR)?
- To what extent has recruitment and management of individual advisor inputs through the PNG Australia Governance Partnership been successful?

### Key Evaluation Question (3)

Did the monitoring and evaluation system provide the evidence needed for program improvement and to assess progress?

#### Sub-Questions

- To what extent were M&E System generated learnings (both Overall Assessment Framework and Results Framework) used to improve SEP overall?
- To what extent did the SEP program logic and results framework guide implementation of SEP?
- To what extent has research informed evidence-based program interventions?
- To what extent have Reflexion Workshops enabled improvement?

### Evaluation criteria: Efficiency

#### Key Evaluation Question

- To what extent has SEP been delivered in an efficient manner, and how could this be improved?

#### Sub-Questions

- Is the program structured in such a way that it can be considered operationally efficient?
- Were the funding and timeframe sufficient to achieve the program outcomes?
- Is the program adaptive and responsive to the needs of GoPNG/PNGEC?
- To what extent has the Strategic Management Committee been able to assess the state of electoral preparations?

### Key Evaluation Question (2)

- To what extent does the investment represent value for money? Is there a way to measure this for the investment as a whole?

#### Sub-Questions

- To what extent do the different modalities used by SEP foster efficiency and drive value for money?
- To what extent has the investment reduced duplication of effort?
- To what extent was the investment able to moderate the intensity of the surge through better planning?
- To what extent has strategic and operational planning lead to PNGEC being better placed to resource its own election preparations?
- Have there been other identified avenues for gaining value for money throughout the investment?
- Is there a way to measure this for the investment as a whole?

### Evaluation criteria: Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

#### Key Evaluation Question

- What are the key lessons for GEDSI, and what might be recommended to better address this in the next phase of the investment?

#### Sub-Questions

- What are the project's contributions to gender equality and social inclusion? (Inclusion of women, youth, people with disabilities, socially and economically disadvantaged people, elderly groups, settlers and the geographically isolated)
- What GEDSI interventions have been made through SEP? Have these worked?
- How can the project improve, enhance or do better in supporting or including women, people with disabilities, youth, etc in the next investment?
- How can existing GEDSI interventions be improved?
- Have GEDSI activities been mainstreamed across program components? If so, how?
- To what extent has SEP worked with other programs to include GEDSI-targeted activities?



## Evaluation criteria: Impact

### Key Evaluation Question

- What difference has the intervention made?

### Sub-Questions

- To what extent did the SEP cause higher-level changes in PNG electoral norms or systems?
- Are these changes enduring?
- To what extent has the SEP supported transformative change to enable unsupported delivery of PNG's electoral processes?
- Alternatively, has SEP unintentionally resulted in any negative outcomes?

## 2.3 Approach and Methodology

This section describes how information was collected and analysed to address the KEQ. It covers an overview of the methodological approach underpinning the evaluation, identifies the main types of data and its respective sources, presents a summary of the analytical framework used to develop the findings, and describes how analysis was done.

### 2.3.1 Overview of the methodological approach

Information gathering by the evaluation team included a document review, semi-structured interviews, and roundtable interviews.

While the evaluation utilised a mixed methods approach, there was an emphasis on qualitative methods. There was some limited scope for quantitative analysis from budget documents as relevant. This balance is appropriate, noting the dual focus of the evaluation on discerning the level of achievement of program outcomes; and identifying any ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities.

A list of recommended stakeholders for interview was initially provided by DFAT. The evaluation team employed a purposive approach to sampling in order to ensure coverage of key identified stakeholders, with some additional referrals gained during the fieldwork process uncovering non-identified stakeholders.

Evidence was gathered through rigorous methods from multiple sources to reliably answer the KEQs. Where possible the evaluation criteria DFAT uses for its Investment Monitoring Reporting (IMR) was used in the definition of the evaluation questions as this ensures that the data generated meets DFAT's information requirements. The report narrative clearly indicates the data sources that support the findings for each KEQ. The data sources for this evidence are detailed further in section 2.3.2 below. Evidence of moderate strength and above were acceptable to guide decisions and recommendations. Occasionally, weak evidence is utilised, but where recommendations and/or judgements are made using weak evidence an explanation is included.

The evaluation approach consists of three phases:

- Planning and preparation (by 28 July 2023)
  - Finalise evaluation plan, including evaluation methodology, drawing on terms of reference
  - Conduct desktop research/literature review
- Consultations & data gathering (31 July to 11 August 2023)
  - Consultations: PNG and Australia
  - Finalise consultation schedule; virtual/remote consultations, where appropriate; further desktop review
  - Initial summary of findings and insights
- Report Development (by 29 September 2023)
  - Prepare draft evaluation report and recommendations
  - Circulate report for DFAT comments and feedback
  - Finalise evaluation report

### 2.3.2 Summary of data sources

The IDD outlined the program logic, theory of change and results framework that was used to guide the assessment of the extent to which the program achieved EOPO, as well as to guide inquiry into ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities.

Primary data sources are as follows:

#### Literature review

The desktop/literature review took place across phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation. The review informed the interview questions, as well as provided evidence for each of the key-evaluation questions as set out in the evidence matrix below. The desktop review included:

- Final Design of SEP
- PNGEC Corporate Plan 2018-2022
- SEP AIMRs 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23
- SEP AQC 2019-20
- PNG AEC Activity Schedule 2020-2023
- PNG AEC Final Report 2020-21, 2021-22
- IFES PNG SAGE Proposal
- IFES PNG Annual Report 2020-21, 2021-22
- IFES PNG Milestone Reports: First, Second and Third
- Civil society partner reports as follows:
  - Caritas PNG Electoral Awareness and Education Program
  - TIPNG 2022 Domestic Election Observation Report
  - TIPNG Building Elections Integrity 2021-2022
- Reports from TIPNG and NRI
- Budget documents

### Roundtable discussions

The team conducted a roundtable to integrate Australian Defence Force (ADF) perspectives on Operation Kimba as well as Australian Federal Police (AFP) perspectives on their support to RPNGC provision of security.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in order to uncover new insights relevant to each of the key evaluation questions, and to confirm or extend findings from the desktop review and survey. This method is most suitable when there is unlikely to be more than one chance to interview a respondent, and allows respondents the freedom to express their views in their own terms, while providing reliable, comparable qualitative data. An interview guide was further developed, comprising of an introduction to the purpose of the evaluation, and a list of questions and topics that need to be covered during the conversation, ideally in a particular order. However, interviews are an evolutionary process and early analysis can indicate the opportunity to test developing theories or springboard ideas from previous interviews.

### 2.3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is an iterative and reflexive process that begins early in a research process and continues throughout the process of the evaluation. Regular team meetings, and debriefings ensured that the benefits of the approach are achieved. The team responded when it appeared that additional concepts needed to be investigated with an appropriate method for collecting further relevant data and analysing it.

The evidence matrix contained in Annex 3 outlines the sub-questions that have been devised to inform the key evaluation questions agreed upon in the Official Order (see also section 2.2 above). The matrix consists of a description of the assessment criteria/factors for consideration, the relevant documents for review and an indication of the targeted stakeholder groups and interests for the interview. The matrix was continually developed throughout the literature review/planning of the consultation schedule.

Data derived from a variety of sources of the evaluation findings have been verified and triangulated; with the use of multiple perspectives to interpret the data; and the use of a team of evaluators, each of whom comes to program evaluation from a unique standpoint (see Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members below). Populating the evidence matrix enables the team to ensure triangulation of evidence; and make a judgement on strength of evidence available. The preliminary findings and draft recommendations were presented, discussed, and validated at the preliminary findings' presentation on 11 August 2023 at the High Commission in Port Moresby.

### 2.3.4 Contextual analysis

Contextual analysis enabled the evaluation team to better understand, in a holistic way, the context and environment in which SEP operates. This is important, especially when seeking to evaluate the appropriateness, practicality and achievability of SEP's EOPOs. Here context includes relevant policies, institutions and processes, as well as the social, cultural, fiscal and security environment in which the SEP investment operates. Fortuitously

the evaluation team was able to undertake a field visit as part of the evaluation. This involved observing the Motu Koita electoral roll update activity conducted by the PNGEC. While this activity was not supported or funded by the SEP in any way, it was an opportunity to observe the work of the PNGEC on the ground and to hold discussions with non-core staff members including volunteers and temporary election workers (TEWs). Past election observation work undertaken by one member of the evaluation team also provided for important contextual analysis.

At the outset, and in consultation with DFAT the evaluation team determined to use the theory of change and both an Overall Assessment Framework (OAF), as well as the SEP Results Framework included in the Investment Design Document (IDD) to guide the overall assessment. Ordinarily such an approach would have provided an effective basis against which to judge the program. However, what the evaluation team did not foresee, was the extent to which the program had departed from its original design. Indeed, this was not evident in documents initially provided to the evaluation team.

Throughout the course of the evaluation it became clear that SEP had been refocused to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, that the actual running of the program departed dramatically from the IDD, that it had morphed from a well calibrated development program to more of an emergency assistance program, and that revisions to its approach had been inadequately documented, in particular due to a lack of an assessment or results framework of any sort. In the absence of a revised SEP assessment or results framework, the evaluation team continued to use the original results framework included in the IDD as the basis for this assessment.

### 2.3.5 Reporting

Initial findings were presented to stakeholders on 11 August 2023, in consultation with DFAT in Port Moresby for the timing and invitations of key stakeholders. As anticipated by the evaluation team, the presentations for the Evaluation Reference Group enabled the team to identify conclusions and recommendations for future program design.

The draft and final reports, submitted respectively on 08 September and 29 September 2023, were written in accordance with Standard 6 for Independent Evaluation Reports, as outlined in DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards December 2022.

For the most part, quotes are attributed to interviewees. However, some have been anonymised.

## 2.4 Limitations and Challenges

The evaluation encountered some limitations and challenges, summarised below.

### Difficulties making contact with key stakeholders

Interviews with key personnel involved in delivering SEP's constituent components were in some instances conducted after the main fieldwork had been completed. Some had moved on from their positions in Port Moresby. These included the Director and Deputy Director of the IFES program, key advisers from IFES, and RedR short-term advisers.

### Delays in obtaining key documents

Several program partners were delayed in providing key documents, including Caritas and ANU. This resulted in the need to continue document review even after the completion of the draft evaluation.

### A lack of comprehensive documentation

The major program partner, IFES, did not maintain a monitoring and evaluation framework, nor comprehensively report on the rationale for programming decisions. As such, linking outputs to outcomes has been heavily constrained.

### Personnel turnover and lack of institutional memory

During the initial four years of this program there has been considerable personnel turnover, amongst those managing and implementing SEP. This is true both of DFAT and the major implementing partner IFES. Many of those interviewed in country lacked critical knowledge concerning programming decisions and actual program pivots. As a consequence follow-up interviews and enquiries were made.

### SEP's limited visibility

SEP as a program has limited visibility. Indeed, many of those implementing the program had never seen the IDD and were not familiar with SEP's EOPOs. Program activities and program components were not designed having regard to the SEP IDD and its EOPOs

### Conflict of interest

SEP funding to the ANU was made via allocations to the Pacific Women. Work conducted by ANU is therefore to be evaluated under that program rather than under SEP given that one of the evaluators of the SEP is an ANU staff member.

## 3 About the Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea Program (SEP)

### 3.1 Background to SEP

Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) is an Australian Government-funded program that commenced in 2019 and will run through to June 2024. Unlike the electoral assistance programs which preceded it, SEP was designed with a clear overarching goal namely that “***the administration of electoral events in PNG is better equipped to identify and address significant obstacles to the delivery of elections; helping ensure more timely, orderly and efficient preparations; contributing to a more credible electoral process.***” The program had an initial budget of \$20 million, although this was subsequently increased to \$30 million in 2022 to respond to urgent requests from the PNG government relating to the 2022 national election.

DFAT required an independent evaluation of SEP's implementation, in anticipation of a re-design of the program's next phase, and in recognition of flaws with the implementation approach.

#### 3.1.1 Program objectives

The program aims to achieve the following end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs):

1. Electoral administrators and donors can prepare for elections in a more orderly way through the strengthening of coordination arrangements across all critical aspects of election management.
2. An electoral system that has a strengthened “whole of polling cycle” approach with better connections between HQ and local polling stations.
3. The capacity of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups to participate in electoral processes are enhanced, with election delivery systems being more accommodative of the needs of marginalised groups when preparing for elections.
4. Electoral coordination mechanisms allow for the timelier identification of election delivery problems and provide a better basis for more effective interventions to address them.
5. Electoral management systems are better positioned to support more orderly electoral preparations over the election cycle, helping to increase the legitimacy of elections and contribute to a reduction in election-related insecurity.
6. Increased technical capacity within the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission (PNGEC) in relation to specific election processes and administrative systems.

The SEP Investment Design Document (IDD) sets out a results framework on pages 68-69 with a series “outcomes at the PNG 2022 elections”, which are taken to be representative of intermediate outcomes. These include:

- PNG electoral delivery systems support more orderly and efficient election delivery
- Better connections between HQ and provincial staff delivering elections on the ground
- Improved management of the voter roll update process by PNGEC
- Fewer disputes /challenges evident with respect to the electoral roll
- Voter understanding of electoral system and voting processes, and rights, improved
- Orderly conduct during voting day reduces disruptive behaviours
- Improvements in voting day processes lead to a more accessible election for women and people with disabilities
- Better access encourages increased voting participation by women & others
- Reforms more responsive to evidence-base, and implemented more smoothly, avoiding disruptions
- Better knowledge improved understanding leading to smoother, more acceptable processes, and increased public confidence

The evaluation considered the extent to which these intermediate outcomes were achieved and assessed progress towards the end-of-program outcomes.

The SEP program, as designed, has six constituent components, each of which lists activities in the IDD designed to achieve the EOPOs:

- Component 1 – Primary Program Focus: Support for Election Delivery
- Component 2 – Support to Strengthen the Voter Roll
- Component 3 – Improved Citizen Participation in Elections through Voter Awareness
- Component 4 – Electoral Reform
- Component 5 – Gender and Social Inclusion
- Component 6 – Knowledge Support for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Program Learning

The problems facing the PNG electoral system are profound, with many of the critical challenges arising from the broader operating context and being beyond the scope of the program to influence. Support for election delivery (Component 1) is the core program focus. The IDD envisaged at least 56% of the total program resources, and over two-thirds (69%) of the programmed activity budget being utilised to support election delivery on the basis that this is one area over which a degree of systemic control remains. Support for the five remaining components was expected to be more modest and saw only 26% of the total program resources allocated to election activities considered to sit outside of what might be considered “core” election delivery.

Indeed support for the voter roll (component 2), voter awareness (component 3) and electoral reform (component 4) was envisaged as being largely conditional upon preparatory diagnostic work and genuine political and financial commitment on the part of the PNG government and key electoral stakeholders, while the GESI interventions (component 5) were intended to be evidence based and informed by new analytical work examining why past initiatives have struggled to deliver tangible outcomes for women, those with disabilities and other marginalised citizens including those living in geographically remote areas.

## 4 Key Evaluation Findings

Each of the ten key evaluation questions are detailed below against the five evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and impact. Sub-questions against each of the evaluation questions have been reproduced as headings where relevant, though some have been joined together to improve flow.

### 4.1 Relevance

DFAT considers an investment relevant if it is consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, national priorities and partner and donor policies.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt SEP remains relevant and is aligned with both Australian and PNG Government priorities. Having regard to the deteriorating electoral environment, deficiencies evident in the delivery of the 2022 NGE, the ongoing challenges associated with delivering elections in PNG, and perhaps most importantly the growing momentum for more credible elections and electoral reform, SEP could arguably be considered more relevant now, than when it was designed.

#### 4.1.1 Were the investment EOPOs appropriate (in terms of translating the broad SEP aims into practical outcomes and being achievable)?

##### Findings:

- **The EOPOs remain relevant and appropriate and are aligned with both Australian and GoPNG priorities. SEP was designed having regard to the changing electoral context and the many challenges faced in delivering credible elections in the PNG context.**

Delivering credible elections in PNG is no easy task, given among other things extreme cultural diversity, immense logistical challenges, poor transport and communications infrastructure, far-reaching resourcing and capacity constraints and a deteriorating electoral environment. The SEP program, as designed, recognised and sought to respond to the profound challenges of PNG’s complex electoral environment. It expressly acknowledged that elections are a sovereign responsibility and that “it is beyond the capacity of Australia or any other donor to “fix” PNG’s electoral process and guarantee credible elections”<sup>4</sup>. Importantly it also acknowledged the strong national

<sup>3</sup> See DFAT Aid Programming Guide Glossary

<sup>4</sup> See *Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2014* Investment Design Document, page 4.

interest Australia has in PNG holding credible elections, citing this as the basis upon which Australia has provided electoral support to PNG for over two decades.

The SEP design adopted a modest program ambition centred upon “**supporting PNG electoral authorities to deliver elections in a more orderly and inclusive manner**” and “**to a better standard than would otherwise have been achieved in the absence of such support**”.<sup>5</sup> The overarching program goal that “*the administration of electoral events in PNG is better equipped to identify and address significant obstacles to the delivery of credible elections; ensuring more timely, orderly and efficient preparations; contributing to a more credible electoral process*” is reflective of this. Importantly the design envisaged targeted and well-calibrated support across the election cycle, focussed on areas of greatest need, with a view to mitigating the need for a large surge in support ahead of the election. Put simply the design sought to avoid a large, last minute and very costly surge.

There was broad agreement amongst those interviewed for this evaluation, and in particular the specialist implementing partners, that SEP’s whole of election cycle and electoral delivery approach was entirely appropriate. SEP was designed having regard to the 2012 and 2017 election experiences.<sup>6</sup> It was informed by Observer Reports and post-election diagnostic reports concerning both the 2017 and 2012 national general elections,<sup>7</sup> past reviews of Australia electoral assistance<sup>8</sup> and DFAT’s 2018 evaluation of Australia’s electoral assistance between 2015 and 2017.<sup>9</sup> It took into account the changing electoral context (increasingly decentralised election delivery) as well as the deteriorating electoral environment (increasingly characterised by money politics, political violence and electoral malfeasance) and recognised the need to focus primarily on election delivery and to strengthen the linkages between the PNGEC headquarters and the provinces (where elections are actually delivered).

Certainly the SEP design didn’t address all areas of elections support (for example the ADF and AFP efforts, or issues to do with election related security, women candidates training or work with political parties and candidates). As a consequence it was necessary for SEP to work with other non-SEP partners.<sup>10</sup> As described to the evaluation team, IFES, the major delivery partner, saw its remit as having expanded over the life of the program to include aspects of this work. Such a role had not been envisaged in the design, rather it was premised on SEP Program Coordinator (a role which was never established) developing cross-program partnerships with, for example, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (to advance women’s political participation), the Decentralisation and Citizenship Program (to enhance local election delivery and disability inclusion), the Pacific Research Program (with respect to election related research that could support SEP initiatives) and with the Justice Services and Stability for Development (JSS4D) Program (in areas related to election security and in the training of security personnel). In the absence of the SEP Program Coordinator, such cross-program partnerships never eventuated, thereby diminishing the overall impact of the program.

In terms of relevance and focus, a number of those involved in delivering SEP and/or in supporting delivery of the 2022 NGE, highlighted the need for a more explicit focus on election-related security and for enhanced and early security planning. It was noted that no-one in the PNGEC is responsible for security and that the security forces, both RPNGC and PNGDF, have an important role to play and their expertise largely underutilised. Early dialogue around the security planning and logistics is considered essential to orderly and effective election delivery, and to less costly elections. It was suggested that security (RPNGC and PNGDF) and logistics experts (PNGDF Air Transport Wing) be seconded into the PNGEC to support this early planning work.

- *How well does SEP align with and deliver on GoPNG priorities?*

The support provided towards elections is contributing towards the PNG governments’ aspirations of promoting good governance as stipulated in the Medium-Term Development III goals in specifically in *Strengthening the electoral processes and systems*.<sup>11</sup> In his inaugural address to the 11th Parliament in August 2022, PNG’s Prime Minister, James Marape, acknowledged that the 2022 PNG National General Elections (NGE) failed to deliver upon citizen expectations and demonstrated the need for substantial election reform. Since then, he has made clear that the work of reform must start early to ensure the government delivers an improved electoral system by the 50th anniversary of PNG’s independence in 2025, and well ahead of the next NGE which is constitutionally mandated to occur in the early-mid 2027. A more credible election process is considered a fitting gift to the nation as it approaches this milestone anniversary.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Former IFES Country Director, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, 15 August 2023.

<sup>7</sup> ANU (2018), *2017 Papua New Guinea General Elections: Election Observation Report*; Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) (2017), *TIPNG Observation Report: 10th National Parliamentary Elections 2017*; PNGEC (2017), *Report to the Tenth National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2017 National Election*; The Commonwealth (2017), *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group: Papua New Guinea National Election, June-July 2017*; ANU (2012), *PNG General Elections Observation Report*; PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) (2013), *2012 National General Elections Report for Parliament*.

<sup>8</sup> DFAT (2013), *Independent Evaluation of Australia’s Electoral Support in PNG 2000-2012*; DFAT (2017), *“Making it Count” Lessons from Australia’s Electoral Assistance 2006-16*.

<sup>9</sup> DFAT (2018), *Evaluation of Australia’s Electoral Assistance to Papua New Guinea 2015 – 2017: Final Report*.

<sup>10</sup> Former IFES Country Director, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands, 15 August 2023.

<sup>11</sup> PNG Medium Term Development Plan III Key Result Area 6: Improved Governance, 6.1 Promote good governance

To this end the government established a Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 NGE, chaired by East Sepik Province Governor, Hon. Allan Bird, while PNG's Inter-departmental Election Committee (co-chaired by the Chief Secretary to Government and the Electoral Commissioner) has conducted its own election audit by way of a three-day National Election Summit held in May 2023. The work of both these committees is intended to provide options to the Government and to the Parliament. Contributing to a more credible election process is SEP's overarching goal and as such the program and its end of program outcomes remain relevant, appropriate and aligned with PNG Government priorities.

The SEP EOPOs are certainly intended to deliver on PNG Government priorities, in that they work to support more orderly, efficient and more credible elections. That said progress towards the end-of-program outcomes has been modest at best and is difficult to demonstrate, while the anticipated outcomes at the 2022 PNG NGE, as set out in the results framework included on pages 68-69 of the SEP IDD, remain largely unattained.

In many respects SEP represents a lost opportunity. This is largely because its constituent parts were designed without explicit reference or regard to SEP's EOPOs. Ideally the programs and activities delivered by each of SEP's specialist implementing partners should have cascaded from the SEP design. Likewise output and outcomes reporting should have been benchmarked against SEP's EOPOs.

According to the former IFES Country Director, implementation of IFES's SAGE program has over time, "moved away from enhancing election delivery to preventing backsliding". In many respects what was delivered under SEP was more akin to a crisis response rather than a development program.

While stakeholders invariably welcomed the PNG Governments post-election calls for better elections and its apparent commitment to electoral reform, they also noted that several factors within the government's direct purview hindered timely, orderly and efficient preparations for the 2022 elections. These included the delayed appointment of a permanent Electoral Commissioner (he was appointed in December 2021, just 6 months before the issue of writs), failing to ensure funding to support critical preparatory work including the electoral roll up date and procurement of big ticket item was made available to the PNGEC when needed,<sup>12</sup> and distracting and diverting attention away from critical election preparation "when it decided part-way through 2021, that a biometric roll should be established for use in the 2022 elections". In its Report to Parliament on the 2022 NGE, the PNGEC identifies the funding delays as the single most important factor influencing the election, in that it "resulted in delaying all subsequent operational events".<sup>13</sup> At interview, one key stakeholder reflected as follows: "everything we tried to do to ensure the electoral roll was better came to naught due to the lack of funds".

- *How well does SEP align with and deliver on Australian priorities?*

Support for elections in PNG is consistent with Australian foreign policy objectives as set out in the *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*.<sup>14</sup> These include Australia's commitment to advancing democratic norms and the rule of law (p.2) and its commitment to work with PNG to improve governance (p.7) and to support its stability and prosperity (pp.99-100). Orderly well-managed credible elections enhance political stability while poorly managed and executed elections contribute to instability.

Support for orderly, well-managed and credible elections in PNG also aligns directly with Australia's International Development Policy,<sup>15</sup> in that good elections contribute towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. Indeed, as outlined in the SEP design, "elections have the potential to impact upon national development trajectories by strengthening government accountability".<sup>16</sup> By working to improve the quality and credibility of elections in PNG, Australia is supporting PNG to build an effective, accountable state better equipped to drive its own development.

While the SEP EOPOs are intended to deliver on Australian Government priorities, there is little to suggest they have actually done so. Indeed it is difficult to establish that the elections were delivered in a more orderly and inclusive manner and there is much to suggest otherwise. That said, there was a widespread view across the stakeholder spectrum that the elections were of a "better standard than would otherwise have been achieved in the absence of such support". Indeed, there was agreement that without donor support the elections would have failed or simply not happened:

*The last election almost failed, but the donors stepped in and the election went ahead. That support was critical to delivering the election.*<sup>17</sup>

*The support we received from the AEC helped us deliver the election. The AEC came to aid in November/December. We couldn't have done it without them. The government was surprised that we*

<sup>12</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.7

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Australia (2017), [Foreign Policy White Paper](#).

<sup>15</sup> Government of Australia (2023) [Australia's International Development Policy](#).

<sup>16</sup> DFAT (2019) *Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024* Investment Design Document, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> PNG Electoral Commission, Mr Simon Sinai

*got the ballot papers from Australia. But we did not receive the funds to source them ourselves. We didn't receive the funds to prepare the electoral roll. But the AEC came to our aid. The ballot papers as well as 22 printers and consumables were given to us by the AEC.<sup>18</sup>*

*If there had not been assistance the election would have been worse.<sup>19</sup>*

- *Does the overarching program goal remain relevant?*

The overarching program goal, namely that “*the administration of electoral events in PNG is better equipped to identify and address significant obstacles to the delivery of elections; helping ensure more timely, orderly and efficient preparations; contributing to a more credible electoral process*”, remains entirely relevant and as noted above aligns directly with Australia’s new International Development Policy in that well delivered credible elections underpin good governance and stability. That said there is a need to revisit the EOPOs in order to enhance the likelihood of the program fulfilling its ambitions. Likewise there is a need to ensure program inputs and funded activities work individually and collectively towards achievement of SEP’s end-of-program outcomes. Linked to this there is a need to revisit the types of support provided.

For reasons that remain unclear to the evaluation team, the SAGE component of the SEP intervention has been focussed very much on the provision of technical assistance by short-term advisors. A consistent message conveyed by those in the PNGEC and by the locally engaged IFES staff is that there needs to be more of a focus on training and capacity building activities. Certainly there is nothing in the IDD that precludes this type of support.

*Australia’s previous electoral support under ESP (The Electoral Support Program) was better. It was a mix of advisory and direct support. The current approach through IFES has been more advisory. This is a problem. The approach is not sustainable, especially when the institution is weak... Better trained officers is what we really need. We wanted training. We requested training for our staff, but IFES said their role is only to advise.<sup>20</sup>*

*IFES should train people rather than come and do the work. What we need is a training concept type program. The advisors they send here are more or less election experts. But they have to learn our ways and the PNG context. They are good at preparing reports, directing and advising. But what we need is direct activities which build capacity.<sup>21</sup>*

*The program needs to be more focussed on building institutional capacity and more focussed on the provinces... There needs to be activities that are focussed on the provinces. Providing them with training and getting them on board. The Regional Operations Managers are based here in POM. We work with them but really how much can they do by sending WhatsApp messages on an ad hoc basis. There is a huge gap between the ROMs and the provinces. IFES helped develop reporting tools so the provinces could feed back information on their progress. But that didn't work. We really need to be out there, working with them.<sup>22</sup>*

- *Are the SEP EOPOs coherent? Do they translate into practical achievable outcomes?*

SEPs EOPOs are largely coherent, and relate directly to the overarching program goal. Yet as acknowledged in the IDD, the extent to which a program like SEP can achieve its outcomes is very much dependent on factors beyond the control of the program, including the broader electoral and political environment. For this reason, SEP as designed, adopted a program focus that centred upon “strengthening the key systems necessary to the orderly delivery of elections”. Consistent with the recommendations of the 2018 *Independent Evaluation*, it was envisaged that the program would work principally in “election delivery areas where there is a degree of systemic control”.<sup>23</sup> SEPs core support was intended to be focussed on election operations and voter awareness, with more modest assistance in areas of electoral system reform and voter registration.

Importantly, the SEP design also recognised that elections in PNG are not delivered by the PNGEC alone and are increasingly decentralised. It envisaged that SEP would work with the PNGEC and other electoral actors, including the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPPC), the PNGDF, RPNGC, and IDEC as well as provincial authorities. Consistent with the findings of observer reports and post-election diagnostic work undertaken in 2017, it was also envisaged that the support provided by IFES would include a focus on “strengthening systems

<sup>18</sup> PNGEC, Director of Operations, Mrs Margaret Vagi

<sup>19</sup> Former IFES Country Director Paul Rowland,

<sup>20</sup> Interview with PNGEC Deputy Director, John Kalamoroh

<sup>21</sup> Interview with PNG Electoral Commissioner, Mr Simon Sinai

<sup>22</sup> Interview with locally engaged IFES staff.

<sup>23</sup> DFAT (2019) *Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024 Investment Design Document*, p 15.



connecting PNGEC HQ to provincial election authorities”.<sup>24</sup> The extent to which it has worked with this broader group of stakeholders has been limited as has its sub-national engagement.

With the design of IFES’s Strengthening Advances in Governance and Elections (SAGE) program, these focus areas fell away to some extent, and work in the areas of electoral roll management, legal and regulatory framework development and electoral reform (Electoral Boundaries Review) were elevated while the work of strengthening the capacity of provincial election officials to plan, prepare and deliver orderly elections was simply included as a sub-objective. Based upon past learning it had been included in SEP as a core end-of-program outcome.

Such shifts have contributed towards program activities drifting away from SEPs core focus. The lack of direct alignment between SAGE’s seven core objective and SEPs six end-of-program outcomes and relative attention afforded each of objective/EOPO has meant that activities pursued appear largely ad hoc. While the SAGE objectives broadly accord with SEP components, the relative attention afforded to each objective and lack of explicit linkage between SAGE objectives and SEP outcomes has resulted in a drift away from the overall program theory of change. Strikingly they have also been very much input focussed and as such have not translated into practical achievable outcomes.

Given SEP’s core focus on election delivery the existing EOPOs, which are very much aligned to aspects of service delivery, are relevant, however they don’t fully account for the other program components. As such, there would be benefit in adopting EOPOs related to the other program components, particularly those concerning improved citizen participation in elections through voter awareness and electoral reform, especially given the centrality of this support to IFES’s SAGE program as delivered.

#### Recommendations:

- **Greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening linkages between HQ and the provinces, noting that election delivery is increasingly decentralised.**

#### 4.1.2 How might SEP EOPOs be reframed to better reflect the program aims?

##### Findings:

- **The program would benefit from an EOPO focused on whole-of-government coordination, because while the PNGEC is charged with the constitutional responsibility to deliver elections it cannot do so alone. Elections are a whole-of-government and whole-of-society exercise.**

The SEP EOPOs are listed in the IDD as follows:

1. Electoral administrators and donors can prepare for elections in a more orderly way through the strengthening of coordination arrangements across all critical aspects of election management.
2. An electoral system that has a strengthened “whole of polling cycle” approach with better connections between HQ and local polling stations.
3. The capacity of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups to participate in electoral processes are enhanced, with election delivery systems being more accommodative of the needs of marginalised groups when preparing for elections.
4. Electoral coordination mechanisms allow for the timelier identification of election delivery problems and provide a better basis for more effective interventions to address them.
5. Electoral management systems are better positioned to support more orderly electoral preparations over the election cycle, helping to increase the legitimacy of elections and contribute to a reduction in election-related insecurity.
6. Increased technical capacity within the PNGEC in relation to specific election processes and administrative systems.

These EOPOs were explicitly designed in recognition of the fact that “delivery challenges in PNG reflect deep-seated structural and political-economic factors, [and that] the capacity of an election support program to achieve specific outcomes will be highly dependent on factors outside the control of the program”.<sup>25</sup> The focus on *contribution* to these six end-of-program outcomes is considered a sound approach and should be retained. The program logic outlined in the IDD acknowledges that while Australia is an important partner to the delivery of elections in PNG, “not so important that it can guarantee elections will be credible” and should instead focus on addressing specific technical limitations or overcoming major logistical challenges (including through deployment of ADF assets). This evaluation upholds findings from previous evaluations and the IDD that it is indeed beyond the

<sup>24</sup> DFAT (2019) *Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024* Investment Design Document, p 18.

<sup>25</sup> DFAT (2019) *Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024* Investment Design Document, p. 13.

capacity of the program to “fix” the electoral process and guarantee credible elections. The EOPOs are therefore rightly aimed at enhancing the technical delivery of the elections.

The evaluation team supports the retention of the EOPOs in their current form. However, there is some difficulty in assessing their contribution to the overarching program goal given the lack of alignment between the EOPO and full suite of program components. The program as it was implemented and to the extent it was reported against provided far more evidence in terms of contributions to program components rather than towards achievement of the EOPOs. This issue is addressed in the first sub-question below.

The next question is then whether the six EOPOs sufficiently capture the key areas which can be targeted for enhancing technical delivery of the elections. That is, whether there are any other areas of technical delivery that could/should provide for more judicious spending of Australia’s support to PNG’s elections. The evaluation team has found evidence that a further EOPOs could be added in relation to whole-of-government coordination across the GoPNG. This is laid out in the second sub-question below.

- *To what extent do the SEP EOPO’s contribute to achievement of the overarching program goal.*

SEP’s overall program goal as stated is: “The administration of electoral events in PNG is better equipped to identify and address significant obstacles to the delivery of elections; ensuring more timely, orderly and efficient preparations; contributing to a more credible electoral process.” This goal builds on the six EOPOs described above and is consistent with the focus on contributing to technical improvements in election delivery. This is an appropriate level of ambition. However, there appeared to be less clarity on this level ambition among stakeholder interviews. In particular, there was a concern expressed by IFES staff around ensuring the program did not impinge upon PNG’s sovereignty. To an extent, this concern appears to have resulted in a reticence to fully engage with the PNGEC in driving reforms that could have contributed to the EOPOs. Instead, IFES’s SAGE program was more focused on adhering to the six additional components:

- C1 Focussed Support for Election Delivery
- C2 Voter Roll Maintenance & Updating
- C3 Voter Awareness & Election Monitoring
- C4 Support for Electoral Reform
- C5 Gender & Social Inclusion
- C6 Knowledge Support for M&E and Learning

IFES’s SAGE design broadly aligns with these components. However, the extent to which each component contributes to the EOPOs has not been advanced beyond what was originally developed in the IDD (due to the lack of M&E undertaken on SEP throughout the life of the program). The constituent components of SEP as delivered by each of the specialist delivery partners would benefit from a strategic realignment with the programs EOPOs. Moreover having each of the delivery partners explicitly align their program activities to one or more EOPO, and setting out how the activity supports achievement of the EOPO would increase the likelihood of the EOPO being achieved and by extension would contribute to achievement of the overarching program goal. A shift to outcomes based reporting would also assist in this regard.

We note that the first component, namely focussed support for election delivery, is listed in the IDD as being the primary program focus, with subsequent components recognised as “issues of fundamental importance to elections in PNG, [but] areas where Australia has faced significant difficulty in providing effective support and where strong PNG leadership is required before further assistance should be considered”.<sup>26</sup> It is notable that the six EOPOs are far more related to component one and should have made up the bulk of resource allocation. A future redesign should therefore aim to clarify the relationship between the additional components and the EOPOs. The intent of the original IDD appears to be a provision of options for the program to take advantage of opportunities for reform as they arise across the components. Additional components are clarified in the IDD as being areas of modest support and only where there is “evidence of significant commitment on behalf of the PNG government”. This balance should be reinforced in future designs to ensure any future program continues to focus on technical support to the administration of electoral events.

For example, Component 3 on Voter Awareness has been a major focus of IFES activities both in the SEP design and in practice.<sup>27</sup> However, there is not a clear linkage made in either the IDD nor in subsequent reporting on how voter awareness and civic education should contribute to any one of the EOPOs or to the overarching program goal. The indicative Results Framework and Theory of Change set out in the IDD would therefore need to be revised to ensure that there is a greater level of coherence between components, EOPOs, and overarching goal. If the intent of the additional components is to provide flexibility to opportunistically support reform efforts, this should be made explicit. If there is, however, a sense that voter awareness is an integral part of the program, then it

<sup>26</sup> DFAT (2019) Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024 Investment Design Document, p. 14

<sup>27</sup> DFAT (2019) Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea 2019-2024 Investment Design Document, p. 23; SAGE Objective 3: Effective Voter Awareness and Civic Education

should be built into a coherent theory of change that allows for measurable EOPOs resulting from efforts in this area.

Separately, the “Outcomes at the PNG Election 2022” are somewhat more related to the Components. These have been taken by the evaluation team to be mid-term outcomes. They are listed as follows:

- PNG electoral delivery systems support more orderly and efficient election delivery
- Voter understanding of electoral system and voting processes, and rights, improved
- Improvements in voting day processes lead to a more accessible election for women and people with disabilities
- improved management of the voter roll update process by PNGEC
- Fewer disputes /challenges evident *cf* prior elections
- Better voter understanding of electoral system and voting procedures, including reform implications
- Orderly conduct during voting day reduces disruptive behaviours
- elections due to better understanding
- Reforms more responsive to evidence-base, and implemented more smoothly, avoiding disruptions
- Improvements in process enables better access and experience of voting for women, disabled, other marginalised voters
- Better access encourages increased voting participation by women & others
- Better knowledge improved understanding leading to smoother, more acceptable processes, and increased public confidence

These “Outcomes at the PNG Election 2022” track more closely with the program components, but are not as fully developed as the EOPOs are in the IDD. Future designs should look to address the Results Framework in a more comprehensive manner in order to better articulate how components add up to outcomes. This would also help to address the lack of M&E during the actual program implementation, which appears to have resulted in an overly responsive SEP, contrary to the whole-of-cycle, planning-based intention of the design. Again, there needs to be clarity from the outset on the extent to which ‘Additional Components’ should be seen as targets of opportunity and measured in an opportunistic results framework. Measuring opportunistic lobbying achievements could be done through expanding on the Practice Influence Reports (PIR) modality developed in the IDD and accepting that the process of policy making will never be simple enough for purely statistical approaches to measurement.<sup>28</sup>

- *How might EOPOs be reframed to better reflect SEP’s aims and achievement of the overarching program goal?*

While the PNGEC is charged with the constitutional responsibility to deliver elections it cannot, with a staff-ceiling of 104 permanent staff, do so alone. Delivering elections “requires a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach”, as the Electoral Commissioner described it.<sup>29</sup> Given’s SEP’s focus on election delivery the program would benefit from an EOPO focussed explicitly on whole-of-government coordination. Similarly, there would be merit in rewording EOPO 2 to emphasise strengthened linkages between headquarters and the provinces (the current wording is “local polling stations”) noting that elections are in effect delivered at the sub-national level. Achieving this will require programmatic engagement with the provinces.

The current IFES Country Director, Mark Silva, posited that the EOPOs don’t sufficiently address the institutional functionality issues of the PNGEC, and that there should be a separate EOPO that addresses this:

*The institutional functionality of the organisation governs everything else... There is a view that ‘we can’t let PNG not have an election’ or that ‘we can’t let the election fail’. But the challenges to election delivery here are profound. Without the presence of an external actor who can plug the gaps there wouldn’t have been an election... There needs to be a separate EOPO that deals with institutional capacity... But that would require a much longer and a much more complete intervention.*

A point well-made by many of those interviewed as part of this evaluation is that support for orderly, well-managed and credible elections in PNG, extends well beyond the provision of technical assistance. A consistent message from those within the PNGEC, was the need for further training and capacity building. To this end an EOPO explicitly focussed on strengthened institutional capacity may be warranted, although achieving this would certainly require sustained long-term engagement.

A whole-of-government coordination EOPO is certainly warranted and would help to integrate the various GoPNG departments and agencies involved in delivering the elections beyond the PNGEC. This finding is based on

<sup>28</sup> See Jones, Harry (2011) A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence, ODI, <http://cdn-odi-production.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/media/documents/6453.pdf> for a brief overview

<sup>29</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.7.

interviews from the PNGEC, TIPNG, RPNGC, PNGDF, and various members of the IDEC. Revising the program such that it would address both technical capacity to deliver the elections (principally with PNGEC, but also with both PNGDF and RPNGC in recognition of the security role), as well as overt focus on coordination and lobbying through, for example, the Chief Secretary to Government, Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council's office.

#### Recommendations:

- **A future SEP Design should provide greater clarity on the relationship between program EOPOs and additional components to ensure that the major focus of the program is on technical support to administration of electoral events.**
- **The next iteration of SEP should include an EOPO focussed explicitly on whole-of-government coordination**
- **EOPO 2 should be reworded to emphasise strengthened linkages between headquarters and the provinces**
- **The inclusion of an EOPO explicitly focussed on strengthened institutional capacity within the PNGEC should be considered in the next iteration of SEP**

## 4.2 Effectiveness

DFAT defines effectiveness as the extent to which the expected results (outcomes and objectives) of an investment have been achieved, relative to progress expected<sup>30</sup>. DFAT's definition of effectiveness includes four criteria which are pertinent to this evaluation<sup>31</sup>: 1) whether outcomes are realistic and clearly defined; 2) whether the outputs delivered have been of sufficient quality and quantity to contribute to the achievement of the stated intermediate and End-of-Program Outcomes (EOPO's); 3) whether the M&E system has supported effective delivery; and 4) whether results are sustainable.

Overall, the effectiveness of SEP has been difficult to measure because the objectives defined in the original design were not ultimately measured against a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The following sub-sections draw on milestone reporting and interviews from partner organisations that feed into the broader SEP objectives.

### 4.2.1 What has been achieved as a result of SEP? What has not been achieved?

#### Findings

- **Anecdotally, the 2022 NGE elections did not represent any improvement on 2017**
- **There are however indications that reform efforts undertaken by GoPNG and supported by some SEP partners may represent opportunities for change. This represents both an unexpected outcome and the most critical ongoing development opportunity**

The evaluation team developed a series of sub-questions around the achievements of SEP drawing on the original investment design. Of note, the original design was not followed as planned due to the inability to deploy a Program Coordinator (later renamed a strategic operations adviser), M&E Adviser, GEDSI STA and Finance Management Adviser under the PNG Governance Partnership. Attempted resolutions such as deploying these roles through RedR/Australia Assists, and finally through IFES were not ultimately realised.

The inability to deploy these advisers stemmed from the COVID-19 restrictions as well as the novation of the PNG Governance Partnership to a new suite of programs.<sup>32</sup> Because the original design was not closely followed, the ability to measure what has been achieved is deeply constrained. Nonetheless, there are some key findings associated with achievements of outcomes.

This section draws on the sub-questions set out in the evaluation plan to ask: whether the 2022 National General Election (NGE) outcomes were achieved, whether outputs, activities and interventions led to achievement of intended end of program outcomes, whether there were unexpected outcomes, whether outcomes were sustainable and consolidated past investment gains, whether the program dealt with contextual change, particularly in relation to COVID-19, and what were the most critical ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities to inform subsequent support to the elections in PNG.

- *Were the 2022 NGE outcomes achieved?*

<sup>30</sup> See DFAT Aid Programming Guide Glossary and DFAT Investment Monitoring Report Guidance

<sup>31</sup> See DFAT IMR Ratings Matrix

<sup>32</sup> See the 2019-2020 AQC, and 2020-2021 AIMR. Confirmed via consultation with Australian High Commission staff.

The Outcomes at PNG 2022 NGE were largely not achieved. Evidence for this is anecdotal due to the lack of rigorous monitoring and evaluation conducted either by a SEP Program Coordinator, or by any of the funded partners. These outcomes and anecdotal evidence on the extent to which they are achieved are listed as follows:

### **Electoral delivery systems support more orderly and efficient election delivery**

The overall sense is that the 2022 NGE was less orderly and less efficient due to the late arrival of funds for the election itself, lack of a permanent PNG Electoral Commissioner for nearly 2 years, and a lack of adequate preparatory funding in the years leading into the 2022 NGE.<sup>33</sup> The available evidence includes: observer reports concerning the 2022 NGE, interview responses provided by stakeholders upon interview, inference and deduction, and to some extent the anecdotal reporting by IFES. It should be noted that IFES reporting does not directly align with SEP outcomes. IFES reports against different criteria which pertain more to advisory and/or support roles than actual PNGEC capacity.

### **Improved management of the voter roll update process by PNGEC**

The lack of funding for the voter roll update (which did not commence until early 2022 – a year later than initially planned) was a major hindrance to this outcome. The compressed enrolment timeline meant that the preliminary roll was not displayed for public scrutiny and verification. Results in relation to the electoral roll are mixed and largely difficult to assess. IFES reporting indicates it supported a PNGEC focus on youth enrolment. Roll data reported by IFES and the PNGEC indicate a net roll increase of 9.4% between 2019 and 2022 and 10.6% since the 2017 NGE. The 2022 roll update saw 696,696 enrolments processed of which around 689,000 were new enrolments. Of these 396,500 (57%) were voters who had recently come of age (18-24 years).

The 2022 electoral roll has been widely criticised by observer groups and by those interviewed for this evaluation. Frequent instances of “roll inaccuracy” and/or voters not finding their name on the roll were cited. Overall confidence in the roll remains very low. The current arrangements for managing the electoral roll are less than ideal. Development of provincial application software (utilised to update the roll) and management of the roll database was outsourced to an external contractor (Minsoft Ltd) ahead of the 2022 NGE. Consequently the PNGEC no longer manages the data directly and has no visibility in relation to changes made.

The PNGEC Report to Parliament on the conduct of the 2022 NGE acknowledges “funding of the election was a significant challenge”, which ultimately delayed “all subsequent operational events, including the roll update, procurement, logistics, nominations, voter awareness, training, polling and counting”.<sup>34</sup> Other issues experienced included “a constrained timeline for field enrolment and data processing, issues with implementing a new software system for processing enrolment data, and lack of public display of the preliminary roll”.<sup>35</sup> PNG’s 2000 Census recorded 725,618 citizens aged 5-9 years (17-20 in 2022) and 619,383 citizens aged 10-14 years (22-26 in 2022).<sup>36</sup> Having regard to these figures some 700,000 young people would likely have come of age since the 2017 NGE, meaning only 57% of these young men and women managed to enrol despite the focus on youth enrolment. Of the 4861 citizens surveyed post polling by the ANU only 10% considered the electoral roll accurate.<sup>37</sup>

### **Fewer disputes/challenges evident with respect to the electoral roll and prior elections**

The 2022 NGE saw a significant increase (29%) in the number of election petitions filed. A total of 102 election petitions were filed, and the results in 81 of 118 electorates challenged.<sup>38</sup> This was significantly more than in 2017. The 2017 NGE saw final results in 70 of 111 electorates challenged and a total of 79 election petitions filed. (Evidence base: Multiple evaluation interviews as well as IFES reporting. Court Records and PNGEC reporting makes evident 29% more results were challenged in 2022.<sup>39</sup>)

### **Voter understanding of electoral system, voting processes, and rights, improved**

Not measured – verbal confirmation from Caritas that target of 1,000,000 citizens was reached, but not confirmed.

The PNGEC’s Information & Community Awareness Branch developed a Voter Awareness and Civic Education (VACE) strategy. In 2022 voter awareness was decentralised to the provincial level “through the recruitment and training of 22 Provincial Awareness and Training Officers (PATOs)”.<sup>40</sup> Awareness was delivered by PATOs and civil society partners.

IFES supported voter awareness efforts by developing a PATO and EON survey designed to inform voter awareness messaging in May 2022. They also assisted the PNGEC to develop a Nomination Awareness Toolkit, a

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<sup>33</sup> PNGEC Review of the 2022 National General Elections Submission to the Special Parliamentary Committee

<sup>34</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.17.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.10.

<sup>36</sup> NSO (2003) 2000 National Census: National Report, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> ANU (forthcoming) 2022 PNG National General Elections Report.

<sup>38</sup> PNGEC Review (op cit)

<sup>39</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.39.

<sup>40</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.41.

Polling and Counting VACE toolkit and a #YouthEnroll2Vote campaign. Neither IFES nor the PNGEC sought to evaluate these VACE efforts, although anecdotal evidence suggests materials did not arrive in time and/or were poorly targeted.<sup>41</sup> Only 57% of young people who had come of age since the 2017 NGE managed to enrol in 2022.

### **Increased participation of prior elections due to better understanding**

There is a lack of analysis to link better voter awareness to improved citizen participation. Caritas reported having over 1,000,000 people reached through its Electoral Awareness roll-out<sup>42</sup>. Much of this data collected was through anecdotal information, head counts and estimates from radio and TV audiences.

Interviews with PNGEC staff suggest that the VACE toolkits developed by IFES were poorly targeted, delivered too late, and insufficiently resourced to be effectively distributed prior to the election.

IFES staff confirmed that there had not been any attempt to assess the impact of materials delivered.

During the campaign period ANU observers interviewed in excess of 5000 citizens. As in previous elections survey respondents were asked whether they had attended any voter awareness activities and separately whether they had seen or been exposed to any PNGEC media concerning the elections.

The proportion of citizens who reported attending awareness in 2022 was down from 39% in 2017 to 24% in 2022, while the proportion of respondents who had been exposed to PNGEC media awareness was down from 66% nationwide in 2017 to 58% in 2022.<sup>43</sup>

### **Orderly conduct during voting day reduces disruptive behaviours**

Widespread violence reported by observers<sup>44</sup> and by those interviewed for IFES's recent Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE) assessment.<sup>45</sup> See also figures 2, 3 and 4 at Appendix 4. Figure 2 shows a country level map which overlays two sets of findings. It maps observer views about RO competency and voting methods used at polling stations. It shows that captured polling stations and polling stations where the process totally collapsed tend to be in districts where observers had concerns about RO competency. Figure 3 displays a synthetic measure of 10 separate set-up measures and four procedural measures and considers how well the polling station was set up at the start of polling. It shows a significant degree of non-compliance in the Western or upper Highlands provinces.

Figure 4 displays the voting methods employed at each polling station. Maps three and four displayed together show that capture and collapsed polling stations are often ones which were set up poorly. It suggests that in some places, the fate of a polling station was sealed even before it opened.

In its report to Parliament on the 2022 NGE, reports that "electoral violence severely affected electoral operations" in some areas. The PNGEC also noted "an increase in security threats to election officials in most provinces as well as incidents of ballot box destruction and burning of ballot boxes ... and more organised forms of violence, including attacks on the electoral process in several provinces."<sup>46</sup>

### **Increased participation of prior elections due to better understanding**

5.6m voters participated, increase from 5.1m in 2019 LLG elections, however according to TIPNG "large swathes of the country could not freely, fairly or safely exercise their democratic right to vote and consequently not represented in the 11<sup>th</sup> National Parliament".<sup>47</sup>

The figures provided herein relate to the number of enrolled citizens, rather than actual participation in the election. Observer reports and the recent IFES VAWE assessment highlighted that block voting by young men effectively disenfranchised women, people with disability and the elderly as such it is difficult to ascertain the true level of participation.

### **Reforms more responsive to evidence-base, and implemented more smoothly, avoiding disruptions**

Election monitors, media analysis, and voter surveys resulted in the overall conclusion that "it is clear that the accumulated failings in the preparation, conduct, delivery and conclusion of the 2022 NGE have resulted in significant procedural issues impacting the quality of the elections".<sup>48</sup>

### **Improvements in process enables better access and experience of voting for women, disabled, other marginalised voters**

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<sup>41</sup> Interviews with IFES and Caritas staff

<sup>42</sup> See Caritas Activity Completion Report, Annex 1 M&E indicators summary

<sup>43</sup>

<sup>44</sup> TIPNG report (op cit)

<sup>45</sup> IFES (2023) Violence Against Women in Elections Papua New Guinea, pp. 27-28.

<sup>46</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.28.

<sup>47</sup> TIPNG (2022a) Summary Paper on the 2022 National General Election

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 51

This is one area in which some gains have seemingly been made. Although the PNGEC adopted a policy of separate queues and voting compartments for women voters in 2007, adherence to the policy had been mixed. In 2022 additional measures such as separate entrances, gender segregated electoral rolls and processing stations were adopted.

In 2022 the practice of separate voting lines for men and women was again implemented to “to enhance the opportunity for all voters to vote freely and in secrecy”.<sup>49</sup> Concurrent measures implemented included gender-split ward rolls and separate voting compartments for women.<sup>50</sup>

TIPNG and ANU observers reported the presence of the gender segregated polling measures at 76% and 64% of polling stations respectively. This represented an increase on 2017 where such measures were reported at only 30% of polling stations visited. That said, ANU observers further observed that the measures were utilised and respected at only one third (34%) of polling stations visited by ANU observers.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, ANU observers noted an increase in the proportion of female citizens who reported having voted (76% in 2022 as opposed to 68% in 2017) and a decrease in the number of women who reported experiencing intimidation when voting (20% in 2022 as opposed to 27% in 2017).

### **Better access encourages increased voting participation by women, people with disability and others**

TIPNG observers reported separate polling queues for women at 76% of the polling stations visited, while ANU observers reported separate lines at 64% of polling stations. In 2017 TIPNG reported separate polling queues for women at only 30% of polling stations. While the proportion of polling stations with women-only voting queues increased in 2022, ANU observers witnessed interference by men at close to half (47%) of those polling stations where separate lines were seen (see figure 1 at Appendix 4).

Anecdotal evidence from the PNG Disabled Persons Forum suggests that PLWD in NCD were less able to vote in 2022 than previously due to removal of specified voting places and issues with the roll. Observers also noted a worsening of the situation for women in the Highlands, as well as for PLWD in general.<sup>52</sup> The lack of genuine engagement with PLWD by the operations team and the failure to provide designated polling stations for people with disabilities (as had been provided in urban areas in previous elections) was seen to be a major failing.

Eight percent of citizens surveyed by the ANU post-polling identified as a person with disability. More than a quarter (27%) of PWD interviewed reported not voting in the 2022 NGE, while 34% of those who did vote reported that they experienced intimidation when doing so. Less than half (48%) of all citizens with disability surveyed voted and did so freely.

Interviews revealed that requests for further inclusionary measures (including for designated polling stations) were made by PLWD, although these were not actioned.

### **Better knowledge improved under-standing leading to smoother, more acceptable processes, and increased public confidence**

IFES provides some support to the M&E team members of the PNGEC policy branch as outlined in the second annual report. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the PNGEC has improved its own knowledge creation processes.

SEP has supported a broader array of knowledge creation including the TIPNG, NRI and ANU observations reports. These products, while not aggregated into a coherent deliverable under SEP, have nonetheless provided critical information leading to future reform processes (see IMPACT section below).

- *To what extent did SEP outputs, activities and interventions lead to achievement of intended end of program outcomes achieved?*

Overall, it is not possible to say with confidence whether SEP outputs, activities and interventions lead to achievement of outcomes identified at the PNG Elections, nor for that matter the intended end of program outcomes. This is because the SEP did not ultimately seek to measure the impact of its programming against the original program logic. This is discussed further below at section 4.2.3.

Moreover, the 2022-23 AQC states that “While the program design recognised it was beyond the capacity of any donor to remediate the electoral process and guarantee credible elections in PNG, **some of its end of investment outcomes (EOIOs) tie the program’s performance to the capacity of the PNGEC.** The EOIOs are difficult to measure. They do not account for the capacity constraints within the PNG system and electoral authorities, nor the reality of the PNGEC’s politicisation.

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<sup>49</sup> See PNGEC (2023) Report to the Eleventh National Parliament on the Conduct of the 2022 National Election, pp.9.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p.22

<sup>51</sup> ANU (Forthcoming) 2022 PNG National General Elections Observation Report.

<sup>52</sup> TIPNG 2022 Domestic Election Observation Report; interview with PNG Disabled Persons Forum.

More effective aspects of the program relate to engagement with other partners, particularly those delivering voter education and awareness”.<sup>53</sup> This statement underscores the decision to delink much of the program from the end of program outcomes. The evaluation team assesses that this decision was made in part due to the difficulty of not having a dedicated program coordinator/strategic program manager role, which was originally envisioned to provide such coordination and oversight of the M&E systems. It is further related to DFAT’s stated intent to ensure PNG’s sovereignty is respected at all times and the program focuses on practical aspects of election preparations<sup>54</sup>. This overall concept is discussed more fully in terms of Impact at section 4.5 below.

- *Have there been unexpected outcomes?*

Because the original program logic was not followed, the program and in particular IFES support took on a very responsive approach. That is, IFES provided a drawdown capability from which the PNGEC could make certain requests and, providing the requests were deemed to fall within the broader remit of the program, many of these activities were able to be funded.

Examples of this support from IFES include: support to provide cybersecurity after the PNGEC website was hacked and subsequently turned off in 2017, support to the creation of the National Election Coordination Centre (NECC) and Joint Security Task Force to enable real-time national sitreps from the PNGEC Commissioner, provision of research pieces such as the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE) report and an overarching reporting on patterns from the last four elections.

Likewise, there are examples of unexpected outcomes from the research inputs via NRI, TIPNG and ANU. As stated in the 2022-23 AQC, “a concerted effort to emphasise among all stakeholders the structural issues that impeded credible election delivery in 2022 led to an unprecedented political commitment by PNG to deliver critical reforms. The program cannot take sole credit for this, but it was instrumental in enabling the PNGEC to gather, analyse and collate findings from multinational observers and local authorities and prepare detailed recommendations for reform efforts.”

The evaluation team can confirm this to be the case, with a major opportunity opening up through the efforts of various CSO, PNGEC, IFES and GoPNG stakeholders, first during the NRI summit, and subsequently through the establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee (SPC), as well as broader plans for strengthening coordination mechanisms via IDEC. The increased political engagement is creating flow on opportunities for researchers to engage with electoral reform, thus increasing the likelihood of the research uptake/realisation of recommendations. These fragile gains/grass shoots will need to be nurtured.

- *Are the outcomes achieved sustainable? Have they consolidated past investment gains?*

Sustainability of any gains is again extremely hard to assess given the lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation. However, overall sustainability for the program has been mixed. The following are some key examples that form the basis of recommendations at the end of this section.

On balance, the predominantly short-term advisory nature of inputs, while respecting elements of sovereignty and PNGEC independence, had the drawback of lacking a fuller partnership approach expected of development programming. This is clear from interviews with PNGEC staff who questioned “why can’t we have advisers who can work together with us to build processes?”<sup>55</sup>. Other comments reflected on having RedR logistics support, including an adviser who coordinated flight schedules who “did the work because we lacked manpower and needed to just get the job done”.<sup>56</sup>

While the RedR response was always anticipated to represent a short-term drawdown role, the lack of longer-term advisory roles undermined the ability to engage in capacity-building and partnership creation, notwithstanding a generally positive view of former deputy director Robert Irish. The resounding perspective from PNGEC was that they wanted more partnership and whole-of-cycle support to the key functions across the department, as opposed to surge support at the time of the election.

There is a clear finding that there is far too much focus on ‘crisis response’ during the surge period around elections. This was reflected in PNGEC interviews, including multiple respondents who believed that IFES was not operational as of August 2023<sup>57</sup>, interviews with IFES leadership, which emphasised that the program became a

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<sup>53</sup> 2022-23 AQC

<sup>54</sup> 2021-22 AQC

<sup>55</sup> Acting Policy Director, 2 Aug 2023

<sup>56</sup> Operations Director, 2 Aug 2023. This was triangulated through discussion with the RedR adviser, Franck Boulay.

<sup>57</sup> Electoral Manager and Assistant Electoral Managers, 3 Aug 2023. Technically, IFES was still operational and providing some support in document review, but it is important to note that they were perceived as being shut down. This is reasonably clear from a lack of staff presence in Port Moresby and a lack of clear ongoing programs, noting that a new tranche of money was in the process of being agreed upon for further operations.



crisis response<sup>58</sup>, and interviews with a RedR logistics support officer who confirmed his late engagement undermined any longer-term sustainable change to emerge.<sup>59</sup>

Specific technical inputs provided by IFES appear to have been done in a piecemeal manner without any recording of project impact or sustainability from IFES. For example, work done on developing a secure website for the PNGEC in response to the hacking of the website in 2017 does not demonstrate good principles of sustainability.

“Once they [IFES advisers] left, there is no more support and they did not leave any documentation. Capacity building was challenging because they worked to a timeframe to get the website online. The lack of final report meant that it lacks sustainability. And Pious [PNGEC ICT Adviser] can't reach Positive Internet because the relationship is with IFES.”<sup>60</sup>

A further example of piecemeal work relates to IFES' Objective 3: effective voter awareness and civic education (VACE). This component was delivered alongside the PNGEC ICAB team. However, the reporting against this objective is entirely output-led, with a major focus on delivering of pamphlets, advertising and communications campaigns. There is no information available on the impact of these campaigns – that is, no attempt to judge the extent to which the information penetrated target areas, resulted in behavioural change or new learning. Nor has there been any assessment of the sustainability of such activities given they were in many instances conducted in isolation from PNGEC partners at ICAB.

Further examples can be seen in proposed future funding for 'edutainment' activities, which according to a concept note for further SAGE work in the final year of SEP would prioritise the use of toolkits developed in the Solomon Islands around games and interactive activities led by CSOs. It is unclear from the SAGE concept note how this activity will be conducted in a way to achieve meaningful, sustainable change. That is, there is no clarity around how this activity, at this time of the election cycle, without reference to PNGEC capacity or priorities, represents an appropriate intervention in line with the SEP theory of change. And given SAGE does not have a theory of change or M&E Framework, it is very likely to be another output-focused intervention without clear reference to planned outcomes.

There did appear to be some sustainable outcomes highlighted by IFES STA who have been providing inputs over a number of PNG Elections. In particular, the improvements to PNGEC ability to conduct corporate planning was highlighted. However, in the absence of or use of a Results or M&E framework in the first four years of programming, such a finding is hard to triangulate.

Whether past investment gains were consolidated is also questionable, given the major disruptions to the program caused by COVID, changes in key leadership at the PNGEC and SEP, as well as regular changes in DFAT staff guiding the program. From the program side, the continuation of both IFES and AEC was seen as mixed. On the one hand, a number of IFES and AEC staff have established relationships with PNGEC counterparts. On the other, PNGEC staff reflected on having less hands-on support than they had previously received from AEC and other long-term advisers (a Financial Adviser, Tony Carbry, in particular).

While there is no way to guarantee continuity of individual staff, many PNGEC staff expressed concern that replacements were in many instances unable to rapidly integrate their global expertise to the challenges and opportunities faced by elections in PNG. Indeed, there was often a sense that the PNGEC staff were losing time on educating advisers on PNG context resulting in valuable time being lost in the lead up to the 2022 elections.

- *How has the program dealt with contextual change, particularly in relation to COVID-19?*

The program did not respond well to contextual change and COVID appears to have severely damaged the ability to conduct the program in line with the Design. IFES moved out of the PNGEC building for a period of time, resulting in only email access. A brief history was provided by two locally engaged staff members who were judged to have the best institutional knowledge of the program, and was subsequently triangulated through discussions with DFAT's local officer responsible for SEP with reference to DFAT AQC/AIMR, and former SEP staff. The below sets out IFES' staffing profile changes over time:

- **2018:** Program shrunk down under ESSP as a review was completed on 2017, and preparations were made for SEP. Robert Irish continued his role from ESSP into SEP
- **2019:** IFES started SAGE in 2019 with a skeleton staff. The Country Director and Deputy started leaving around Christmas 2019 and didn't come back due to COVID restrictions. The planned recruitment of the PNG Governance Partnership recruitment of the Strategic Operations Adviser and Financial Management Adviser was still underway at the time of the 2019 AQC.
- **2020:** IFES only had 3 Locally Engaged Staff (LES) in the office by themselves until Aug 2020. Paul Rowland and Robert Irish returned to PNG in late 2020 (Oct/Nov) to re-join. Ongoing COVID restrictions meant working from home/remotely continued. The Strategic Operations Adviser and Financial

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with Deputy Director IFES 2 Aug 2023, and former Deputy Director IFES 17 Aug 2023

<sup>59</sup> Franck Boulay, 28 Aug 23

<sup>60</sup> ICAB Director, 7 August 2023

Management Adviser recruitment was acknowledged to have been delayed, with plans for a recruitment via Australia Assists to be completed in the following year (July 2021-2022). DFAT reported entering into negotiations with TIPNG and Caritas based on proposals received<sup>61</sup>.

- **2021:** IFES started to get fly-in TA from February onwards. Jo McCallum (election operations, legal, TEW alongside NZEC), George Carmona (policy, legal framework), Steve Canham (enrolment) started coming in early 2021. There was also some remote work. The Strategic Operations Adviser and Financial Management Adviser was not referenced in the AIMR this year with IFES taking on a larger proportion of the program, though still under the SAGE program, not the larger SEP.
- **2022:** IFES advisers came in for months at a time with a major surge for the election proper. The final major input was Nov 2022 final workshop was the National Election Workshop for all EM/AEMs. RedR deployed three advisers to support the IFES logistics adviser, who subsequently left the program. The three RedR advisers were then directly linked to the PNGEC logistics director. TIPNG, NRI, ANU conducted election monitoring. The Strategic Operations Adviser role (referred to as program coordinator) was acknowledged as no longer being part of the program.

As can be seen, there was a major loss in face-to-face interaction due to COVID-related restrictions that undermined the ability to deploy the Strategic Operations Adviser, as well as many of the technical advisers from IFES.

In addition to the COVID pandemic, the loss of the PNG Electoral Commissioner in November 2020 who was indicted on corruption charges, the appointment of Simon Sinai as Acting Commissioner only for a two year period, the PNGEC decision not to elevate a second Deputy Commissioner to replace Mr Sinai, but instead only have one Deputy Commissioner and ongoing lack of new staff appointments meant that the 2022 election was run by a far smaller PNGEC than even the 2017 election.<sup>62</sup>

This was coupled with less in-country support from the AEC. The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly the AEC was unable to provide as much support due to concurrent Australian Federal Elections and secondly had decided to shift away from a model of providing longer-term staffing support due to the difficulties associated with “matching expertise and personal circumstance with PNGEC needs”.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, the cycle of DFAT staff responsible for SEP through the High Commission was also raised as a point that resulted in challenges to program continuity. During the course of the SEP, five different First Secretaries have been primary point of contact. The usual DFAT positing cycle of 3 years implies most five-year programs such as SEP would encounter a minimum of one change, though two could be reasonably expected as well. That there were five different individuals responsible naturally works against best continuity practices.

When combined with the fact that a strategic program coordinator or managing contractor was not part of the implementation of SEP, there is a real lack of institutional coverage, is likely to have caused some disruption to momentum across the program.<sup>64</sup>

- *What are the most critical ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities to inform subsequent Support to Elections in PNG?*

Finally, the most critical ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities to inform subsequent support to the elections in PNG are listed as:

**Decentralising the Voter Roll into provincial systems.** There were some claimed improvements across the voter role for 2022, and a notable focus on engaging with first-time and youth voters<sup>65</sup>. Overall, however, feedback suggested that the voting roll was inadequate due to the lack of funding available to getting the common roll updated in a timely manner.<sup>66</sup>

**Working with the provinces.** With election delivery increasingly there is both a need and opportunity to work with the PNGEC's permanent staff based in the provinces. One of the Regional Operations Managers, explained the need in this way: “You can't just bring knowledge of what works well in other countries and expect that we can do that here. It won't work. We don't have the resources. The program needs to engage with our officers in headquarters and in the provinces. We need to build the linkages between HQ and the provinces. You can't just

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<sup>61</sup> Note that there was not a formal call for proposals. Caritas heard about the possibility via IFES, while TIPNG, NRI and ANU funding was made as part of broader, ongoing partnerships between the High Commission and those organisations. The grant arrangements were managed by the High Commission.

<sup>62</sup> As noted by former Deputy Director, Robert Irish, who was present for both 2017 and 2022 elections.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with AEC, 24 Aug 2023

<sup>64</sup> Robert Irish reflected on this as a difficulty in that it meant regular re-learning of the program for in-coming DFAT staff and lost institutional knowledge.

<sup>65</sup> IFES interviews with: Deputy Director, 2 Aug, Former Director 15 Aug, and former Deputy Director, 17 Aug; IFES second annual report 2021

<sup>66</sup> Mavis Tito, Caritas, 8 Aug, Electoral Manager group discussion 3 Aug, Director Operations 2 Aug, ROM group discussions 3 Aug, PNGEC Commissioner, 10 Aug,

send out bulletins at the last minute and expect that to have an impact... Don't just feed us. Teach us how to feed ourselves".<sup>67</sup>

**Photo identification.** A number of interviewees expressed concern that the PNGEC would engage too hastily with biometric voting. This does not appear to be a current issue pursued by the GoPNG<sup>68</sup>. There was, however, indication from PNGEC staff that a photo identification roll was considered something that would enhance the credibility of the voter roll and as such should be considered an area PNGEC will continue to explore.

**Need for consultants to come earlier and work outside of peak busy election period to learn/teach.** PNGEC Commissioner spoke about needing support two years in advance to plan together and implement the plans. A clear example of this was provided by the Director of ICT who noted that "our pilot/test approach is always implemented too late, not fully and so we are always fixing bugs in live systems".<sup>69</sup> This appears to be a systemic issue across the PNGEC.

**The PNGEC need a budget for ongoing training,** face to face activity with PEM/APEM. Because there is not ongoing budget for training, the only way it occurs is through bringing other PEM/APEM to by-election to watch pilot and learn new approaches (e.g. LLG). That is, linking training to a budget for an activity. This is a reasonable add on, but should be consistent.

**Recruitment of new staff.** Many PEM/APEM positions have not been filled, some vacant for more than 5 years. There does not appear to be a clear reason why, although positive reference was made multiple times to a round of recruiting that occurred during a previous iteration of the program (the Electoral Support Program or ESP) and included a major drive to recruit women.<sup>70</sup> Support to recruiting is a fairly urgent priority given the compulsory retirement age of 65, current vacancies in APEM posts, and plans for increasing staff members at the Provincial level.<sup>71</sup> Another aspect of reorganising provincial staff would be to reintroduce the previous practice of rotating PEM/APEM.<sup>72</sup>

**Website and social media support.** This links to both the development of capacity in the Community Awareness Branch, as well as ensuring security for the website.

**Politics and coordination.** This was raised multiple times by various different stakeholders. The one reservation around it relates to the issue of sovereignty, which must be appropriately worked with the PNG government. Noting, however, that there are elements of close coordination in both the military and police spaces, there is some precedence for a greater focus on political and coordination work with the electoral commission and supporting bodies.

As stated by the PNGEC Commissioner, "Election is a whole of government, whole of society approach. The Coordination between AEC, PNGEC, NZEC has been ongoing since 1990s. We started discussing capacity building. Anything that is done must be coordinated nation to nation"<sup>73</sup>. Interviews with TIPNG focused heavily on the role of IDEC, noting that "IDEC, if it's run properly, is where the WOG can be represented".<sup>74</sup> Most importantly, there is a broad agreement that SEP needs to work far more at the political level to ensure that the structures are put in place to provide funding as agreed to.

## Recommendations

- **Future investments should ensure ownership of overall SEP EOPOs, which in the current iteration were lost when a Strategic Program Manager was unable to be recruited. The circumstances leading to this may be mitigated through the use of a managing contractor**
- **While it is understood that AEC is not well positioned to continue to commit to deploying longer-term staff, and that IFES' strength lies in deployment of short-term independent international expertise, a clear need exists for capacity building at the leadership/management level.**
- **Future investments should ensure either a program coordinator or managing contractor role is in place so that coordination of grants and overall reporting is not unduly placed on the Political Team at the High Commission.**

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with PNGEC Regional Operations Managers.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with SPC, IPPCC, IDEC

<sup>69</sup> Director ICT, 2 Aug 2023

<sup>70</sup> Regional Operations Managers spoke about the ESP having worked with PNGEC to specifically recruit female Electoral/Assistant Electoral Managers during previous iterations (3 Aug 23). Former IFES Deputy Director, Robert Irish, suggested this is an area for future support.

<sup>71</sup> At the time of interview, a major reorganisation was said to be underway with an increase in recurrent budget proposed for both the recruitment of new staff at Province level and for an increase in salary for existing staff.

<sup>72</sup> One PEM interviewed noted that "In the Highlands, we need to rotate the Election Managers. Some have been around for 20 years. Some of the problems are instigated by PEMs"

<sup>73</sup> PNGEC Commissioner, 10 Aug 2023.

<sup>74</sup> TIPNG interview, 7 Aug 2023

## 4.2.2 Which components, partners and modalities performed best?

### Findings

- Difficult to measure due to a lack of M&E for the major components
- On IFES, we note:
  - Output-focused approach across all yearly reports, as well as proposal for fifth year
  - Appears to be more substitutive than capacity-building, over-reliant on FIFO
  - Does not appear to build on 2015-17 investment
- The lack of a strategic program manager has severely hampered the delivery of the Design
  - The Election Cycle Roadmap Tracking Instrument was to measure the Concept of Operations led by IFES and was to be developed as a quant tool to assess periodic progress. This would have been an early warning system and vital to SEP.
  - A Strategic Management Committee does not appear to have been established.
- Which components performed best?

As indicated in section 4.2.2 above, the lack of usage of the M&E framework has meant that measuring which components performed best is extremely difficult. Initially, the evaluation had sought to answer questions on each component as follows: To what extent has election delivery been strengthened? To what extent has coordination between HQ and the provinces been strengthened? To what extent has the Voter Roll been strengthened? To what extent have there been improvements in voter awareness? To what extent has electoral reform been supported by SEP? These components would in principle have tracked from the Outcomes at the 2022 NGE set out in **Error! Reference source not found.** above. The major components against which the NGE 2022 Outcomes were set therefore did not receive adequate reporting or tracking. It is therefore not possible to fairly assess which component performed best. This forms the basis of one of the recommendations below related to the final phase of the program.

Many interviewees were critical of the reliance on short-term technical assistance, and provided several examples of ill-fit, with respect to the technical assistance sourced and the advice provided. In relation to IFES, one external stakeholder had this to say: “*They were in the wrong sea. It’s like they were in the Atlantic and we are in the Pacific... It seems that they provide advice but that advice is not linked to PNGEC resources and capacity*”. Similar sentiments were echoed by another key stakeholder:

*It’s not just about TA. It’s about training and funding workshops. Bringing people together for lesson’s learned workshops. I don’t think IFES is the right tool for that job. There is a role for IFES but it needs structure around it. It needs to be coordinated.*<sup>75</sup>

- To what extent has recruitment and management of individual advisor inputs through the PNG Australia Governance Partnership been successful?

The recruitment of individual adviser inputs through the PNG Australia Governance Partnership was ultimately unsuccessful. As detailed in **Error! Reference source not found.** above, the planned recruitment was delayed by first COVID, then by a novation of the Governance Partnership to a separate contract, and ultimately abandoned under agreement with IFES to take over this role. While IFES has been vital to ensuring the SEP could continue in some form or another – especially noting their deployment support services for RedR– the coordination function and overall delivery of SEP Objectives does not appear to have been something that the organisation was willing to take on. Instead, it appears that the expansion of IFES’s role was more related to an expansion of the SAGE program than to delivering the SEP. This is further detailed below in relation to the use of M&E systems.

- To what extent have governance and procurement arrangements enabled a well-functioning relationship between DFAT and major implementing partners (IFES, AEC, Australia Assist)?

A further disadvantage of failing to recruit individual adviser inputs outside of IFES’s SAGE program has been the lack of coordination to enable a well-functioning relationship between DFAT and major implementing partners (IFES, AEC, Australia Assist, as well as grants partners). DFAT staff appear to have been required to complete substantial coordination roles such as grant assessment, contracting, supervision, monitoring and evaluation; coordination of partner inputs; and overall planning requirements for the broader SEP program.

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<sup>75</sup> Stakeholder interviews

This level of work, which is generally completed by Program staff and managed by managing contractors, could plausibly have been done by IFES, but as above does not appear to have been considered as part of their remit. A fairly poignant quote on this reflects on how the SEP has differed from previous iterations of the program:

“When ESP 1 and 2 was on, we used to have external support that rather than just give personnel, they should also be willing to spend funds on workshops, on purchasing assets/infrastructure, and funds for supporting other election work. Training in particular would be great. ESP was really good. When it left, we really started struggling. When IFES came, it was like starting again. Cardno coordinated ESP nicely. Officers from AEC came and knew what we were talking about. IFES came in, they were private, had to learn our systems. We've moved on. But we'd like to go back to AEC support. When that program was stopped, we went back to square one”<sup>76</sup>

Overall, it can be surmised that the 2019-2024 cycle of support, despite a well-regarded design, was undermined by the loss of a clear coordination mechanism, major personnel changes and fewer human and financial resources at the PNGEC, as well as a constrained ability for the SEP and major partners to provide long-term and consistent partnership-style advisory deployments.

### Recommendations

- **Engage a Strategic Operations Adviser as originally envisaged in the SEP Design. This role could provide several key benefits including:**
  - **Coordination and organisation of the Strategic Management Committee function (since morphed into the donor coordination committee);**
  - **enhanced coordination between key political reform bodies such as IDEC and the SPC, and the PNGEC;**
  - **regular political economy reporting on the rapidly-evolving context of the reform recommendations currently underway between IDEC, SPC and NRI; and**
  - **support to major program partners to conduct more rigorous program planning and evaluation against the original SEP theory of change and Results Framework.**<sup>77</sup>

### 4.2.3 Did the M&E system provide the evidence needed for program improvement and to assess progress?

#### Findings

- **There has been no use of an M&E system against the SEP EOPO**
- **The M&E framework developed in the SEP design appears to provide vitally important tools for tracking progress towards a smoother electoral process, as well as to ensure continual improvement of operation**
- **The EOPOs as developed are very much in line with DFAT Design and Monitoring & Evaluation Standards (Dec 2022); the content of the EOPOs is closely aligned to DFAT's Governance Performance Assessment Note (PAN).**

The evaluation team designed a sub-question to ask to what extent M&E System generated learnings (both Overall Assessment Framework and Results Framework) were used to improve SEP overall. However, given that there was not an M&E system in place either for SEP overall, or for SAGE, which expanded to take over the overall program, this question becomes quickly redundant.<sup>78</sup> Instead, the evaluation team has chosen to provide advice on the program M&E overall and the extent to which it can be used for both the remainder of the SEP, as well as reformed for future iterations of the program.

- *To what extent did the SEP program logic and results framework guide implementation of SEP?*

The evaluation team acknowledge the comments made in the 2022-23 AIMR which noted that “While the program design recognised it was beyond the capacity of any donor to remediate the electoral process and guarantee credible elections in PNG, some of its end of investment outcomes (EOIOs) tie the program's performance to the capacity of the PNGEC. The EOIOs are difficult to measure. They do not account for the capacity constraints within the PNG system and electoral authorities, nor the reality of the PNGEC's politicisation”.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> From Oscar Pomaleu, Director HR and Francis Tekeni, Logistics Director Logistics, 9 August 2023

<sup>77</sup> See page 54 of the original IDD for a draft TOR that could be updated for this purpose.

<sup>78</sup> Note also that Reflection Workshops planned in the IDD were not used, so despite forming a sub-question have now been removed from the evaluation.

<sup>79</sup> AIMR 2022-23, p. 4.

However, the team found that the M&E Framework designed in the IDD broadly conforms with best practice and provides a good basis for guiding implementation of the SEP (noting it was a tentative framework only, and the design identified the need for it to be refined as one of the first tasks of the Program team). The design conforms with OECD DAC guidance, and the tentative indicators track closely with DFAT's Governance Performance Assessment Note under the political representation and accountability sub-sector.<sup>80</sup>

As discussed under Relevance at section 4.1.2, however, there are some key recommendations around reforming EOPOs which may be of use for subsequent iterations of the SEP. The evaluation team was not required to determine why the SAGE component of the program did not have an M&E Framework. However, it is noteworthy that interviews with the current Deputy Director, Former Director and Deputy Director, as well as current High Commission staff did acknowledge that an M&E framework would improve planning and performance management – even if it was not part of the SAGE deed.

This point is further reflected in the 2022-23 AIMR, which indicates a need for quantifiable data “as the program shifts to a clearer focus on capacity development and institutional strengthening”.<sup>81</sup> This idea that the SAGE program was pivoted towards provision of material support is discussed further below in relation to efficiency.

- *To what extent has research informed evidence-based program interventions?*

A further question related to whether research informed evidence-based program interventions. This in large part relates to the concepts around commissioning research.<sup>82</sup> The research grants were achieved to a degree via funding to each of Transparency International PNG, NRI and ANU. This has been a highlight of the SEP program and is addressed in further detail under Impact at section 4.5 below.

However, none of the research grants were tied into the broader program logic – as outlined throughout this report, there was a lack of knowledge of the SEP as an overarching program. The three listed institutions were in many instances unsure of the source of their funding, beyond knowing that it derived from the High Commission. As such, opportunity was lost to ensure that the research would be fed back into the program to influence program interventions.

IFES did provide some research inputs – specifically the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWE) assessment and responded to a request from PNGEC for IFES to provide a report on the patterns of the last 4 elections showing what has continued to be the major impacts on the elections. This second document still in draft and hasn't been provided for this evaluation. Again though, there have not been concrete plans made to analyse the impact of this report, whether PNGEC took recommendations from it onboard, or whether it has provided guidance for future activities.<sup>83</sup>

- *To what extent have Reflexion Workshops enabled improvement?*

Finally, the team asked a sub-question related to Reflexion Workshops, which were planned alongside six-monthly, annual and periodic reporting (PIRs) to help guide updates against the program. This would have been a very useful tool to enable the sort of updates to the EOIOs and to identify challenges around the PNGEC's politicisation and capacity constraints. Such workshops are strongly recommended to be revisited for future iterations of SEP.

### Recommendations

- **Conduct retrospective work on the SEP Results Framework. There is still a strong possibility for the SAGE objectives to be tied back in to SEP Outcomes using an 'outcome harvesting' approach. Such an effort would be useful to help develop a more comprehensive stocktake of the program than the evaluation team was able to achieve.**
- **Ongoing SAGE programming should utilise a more rigorous M&E framework, including collecting data on beneficiaries, impact and linking outputs to outcomes.**

## 4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency of an intervention is measured by how well resources (funds, expertise and time) are used and converted into program outputs.<sup>84</sup> The IDD has spelt out the Value for Money approach that was to be taken by SEP for the duration of the project. That was to provide for more “effective, efficient and economical use of Australian government funds through an enhanced focus on orderly election planning and timelier risk management”.

<sup>80</sup> See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/governance-performance-assessment-note.pdf> p. 24

<sup>81</sup> AIMR 2022-23, p. 8

<sup>82</sup> See pp 24-25 of IDD

<sup>83</sup> Interview with IFES Senior Program Officer for Inclusion and Gender, 4 Aug 2023.

<sup>84</sup> See DFAT Aid Programming Guide Glossary

SEP had an initial budget of \$20 million which was later increased to \$30 million in 2022. This increase was to respond to the urgent requests from the PNG government relating to the 2022 national election. This shift reflected a broader movement away from capacity building and towards more responsive support to ensure the elections would run at all. This had a major impact on efficiency,

#### 4.3.1 To what extent has SEP been delivered in an efficient manner, and how could this be improved?

##### Findings

- **Delivery considered by key stakeholders to be more in line with crisis-response or humanitarian disaster than aid programming**
  - **In part due to COVID pandemic years lost**
  - **In part due to inability to respond to a lack of timely funding from GoPNG**
- **Can be considered responsive to PNGEC needs in the sense that the election was delivered**
  - **Intent to conduct long-term preparation was, however, lost.**
  - **There is an opportunity now with COVID over to re-evaluate support outlined in the design to achieve greater efficiency**
- *Is the program structured in such a way that it can be considered operationally efficient?*

On a positive note, the SEP was able to ramp up assistance quickly and enabled the delivery of the PNG NGE 2022. However, the way in which the program reporting has been provided makes it difficult to fully determine efficiency of the program.

The program was structured in a way that enabled a significant ramp up of assistance, funds required, design and delivery of technical assistance, training and logistics to ensure the delivery of the 2022 election. In that sense, it can be said that, yes, it was operationally efficient. However, if considering SEP as a traditional aid delivery model that required capacity building, early diagnostic and targeted support, the program was not able to support the projected Program Logic. Whether this would have been achievable had it not been for the impacts of COVID and the inability to appoint a strategic program coordinator is not possible to speculate upon.

As mentioned throughout, it is impossible to say whether the planned tools and governance systems might have enabled a program structure that could address some of the financing and personnel issues at the PNGEC. The challenges arising from the delay in funding from the GoPNG and changes/vacancies of key PNGEC staff are may well have undermined the overall program logic and ability for PNGEC to prepare elections in a more orderly manner, regardless of the SEP structure.

The program was structured in the design with a clear focus on Component 1: Focused Support for Election Delivery (54% of resourcing). This component was designated as the main area of expenditure for each of IFES, AEC and Australia Assists. As detailed in section 4.1 above, there is some tension over the extent to which the Additional Components should be considered targets of opportunity or inherent parts of the program.

As part of practical implementation, program reporting has been disjointed in that the major partners IFES and AEC provided reports and financial acquittal separately and the lack of a program coordinator meant that there has not been overall SEP reporting. As such, there is no available breakdown of actual resource expenditure against components. It is therefore not possible to measure the extent to which resource allocation has been in line with the original program Design.

Future SEP programming should reinforce the need for either a managing contractor or a strengthened program coordinator role to ensure that program reporting provides a clearer breakdown of expenditure against individual program Components.

- *Were the funding and timeframe sufficient to achieve the program outcomes?*

Whether the funding and timeframe were sufficient to achieve the program outcomes is impossible to say given that the program outcomes were not measured from the beginning. The counterfactual of whether these might have been achieved with appropriate attention paid to the governance mechanisms and structures proposed in the IDD is also impossible to judge given the intervening role of COVID.

Finally, the contextual challenges around a lack of funding and changes in PNGEC staff further undermine the ability to forecast whether the funding and timeframe would have been sufficient to achieve program outcomes. To be clear, the IDD did highlight “that it is beyond the capacity of Australia or any other donor to “fix” the electoral

process and guarantee credible elections in PNG, [therefore] it adopts a modest Program ambition focused on supporting PNG electoral authorities to deliver elections in a more orderly and inclusive manner”<sup>85</sup>.

With that being said, a constant highlighted by program partners is the unpredictability of politics and elections in PNG. This was conceptualised multiple times as a reality of ‘crisis response’. This has a knock-on effect of removing money from longer-term evaluation, reform and capacity building elements of the program.

Overall then, it would appear that it was not possible to efficiently deliver on development outcomes, but instead, perform a role far more focused being adaptive and responsive to the needs of GoPNG and PNGEC.

It seems reasonably clear that there will always be an element of response to PNGEC shortfalls for the delivery of elections, even with a program goal of modifying the intensity of the surge. For the 2022 elections, the surge support did indeed enable the election to be achieved and it is widely agreed that it could not have gone ahead without the substantial support it received through SEP – particularly with the ballot printing. Notably “the technical and material support provided by the AEC in 2022 exceeded that of previous electoral cycles”.<sup>86</sup>

However, a common theme from IFES and Australia Assists partners related to the lateness of their inputs. As noted by the former director of IFES, “If there had been more funding and we'd been on the ground sooner, we'd have had a greater impact.”<sup>87</sup> The idea of getting staff on the ground sooner was repeatedly echoed by PNGEC staff.

- *Is it adaptive and responsive to the needs of GoPNG/PNGEC?*

The program was indeed adaptive in the sense that it encountered enormous contextual challenge and was still able to provide support remotely, and then ramp up considerably during the election. Interviews and documentation from the PNGEC made clear the appreciation for the enormous support of the AEC in the provision of ballots papers, security seals, polling kits, and plastic ballot boxes.<sup>88</sup>

The role of both IFES and RedR in providing backstopping and working together was also highlighted by PNGEC staff members as critical to the delivery of the elections.<sup>89</sup> With that being said though, there has been recognition that the program did not adequately respond to the needs of PNGEC in terms of developing internal capacity in a sustainable way. Both IFES staff themselves, as well as PNGEC partners, reflected that there was a tendency for the Commission to approach IFES to backfill or provide capacity ‘because they were there’. However, both parties recognised the need to “train people instead of trying to come and assist and do the work.”<sup>90</sup>

- *To what extent has the Strategic Management Committee (SMC) been able to assess the state of electoral preparations?*

The planned SMC was to “to periodically assess the state of electoral preparations against an electoral cycle baseline” and would have been made up of high-level officials from PNGEC, AEC and DFAT.<sup>91</sup> The evaluation team were informed that this started well with the establishment of relationships between the Commissioners, however the lack of a program coordinator to provide the secretariat function, COVID constraints, and the lack of a substantive PNG Electoral Commissioner between November 2020 and December 2021 severely undermined the ability for the SMC to reach its full potential.

The evaluation team learned that the Donor Coordination Meeting process which was instigated by the AEC in April 2021 did largely fill that role of the SMC. Relevant people such as the DFAT Deputy High Commissioner were then able to attend. Chaired by the AEC, Donor Coordination Meetings were convened monthly to April 2022. Of critical importance was that these coordination meetings allowed AEC/DFAT to be brought up to date on PNGEC’s readiness and preparation for the elections. “The donor coordination was important as it highlighted issues and enabled donors to increase their support as required”.<sup>92</sup> For instance it highlighted the need for AEC to step in and print ballot papers.

### 4.3.2 To what extent does the investment represent value for money?

#### Findings

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<sup>85</sup> IDD, page 4.

<sup>86</sup> Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Australian Electoral Commission

<sup>87</sup> Interview IFES, 17 Aug

<sup>88</sup> PNGEC Report to Parliament, p. 25

<sup>89</sup> In particular: Commissioner Sinai, 10 Aug, Director HR and Director Logistics, 9 Aug,

<sup>90</sup> Commissioner Sinai, 10 Aug.

<sup>91</sup> IDD, p. 17

<sup>92</sup> Interview AEC, 24 Aug



- **There is broad agreement that a whole of government approach should be taken towards supporting elections in PNG**
  - **There is some anecdotal evidence of gains made in terms of greater institutionalisation of corporate processes and procedures represent possible avenues for further investment at a leadership/managerial level**
  - **Tied to this, the upcoming retirement of many senior PNGEC staff as they reach compulsory retirement age presents both challenges and opportunities for SEP to engage both emerging leaders with PNGEC, and to advise on the recruitment of new staff into vacant and newly built positions.**
- *To what extent do the different modalities used by SEP foster efficiency and drive value for money?*

The current phase of SEP re-engaged implementing partners and in many cases individual advisers from the previous program. The ongoing use of IFES and AEC in particular has enabled the establishment of good person to person relationships, which was considered valuable by PNGEC.<sup>93</sup> IFES' presence in country and experience in working in PNG represents a value add for the program. Likewise, the long-established relationships between AEC and PNGEC are vital to program success.

This finding is somewhat uneven in the sense that not all short-term advisers have been considered successful. There is a key lesson learned for IFES in particular, and to a lesser extent (because of a smaller role) Australia Assists in the importance of selecting short term staff who have knowledge of the PNG context. While it is a key strength of IFES to be able to provide international, independent advice from across the globe, this is less useful in a context of very short-term inputs being conducted at late stages and without regular interaction.

For example, the support offered to the Logistics Team has been highlighted as one area where the incoming STA was not adequately versed in PNG's complex logistical context and as such was not as effective as PNGEC or other partners would have liked. This could be mitigated by more appropriate selection of advisers with Melanesian/PNG experience. A linked point made was in the physical dislocation of the STA and PNGEC staff. A simple means of improving relationships would be collocation of advisers and PNGEC staff in the same office space, rather than in a separate section of the building.

For the most part, the SEP was located firmly at the headquarters of the PNGEC. This ran contrary to plans to decentralise the SEP in line with PNGEC decentralisation. Having key people on the ground in provincial areas earlier to provide training and support was not achieved due to the constraints imposed by COVID-19.<sup>94</sup> The evaluation team has not observed any plans for operationalising support at the sub-national level. It is reasonably clear that the funding of SEP is insufficient to place advisers at each of the 22 provinces.

Future iterations of SEP should copy and coordinate with other Australian interventions which have sought to highlight 'demonstration provinces' in which to work.<sup>95</sup>

- *To what extent has the investment reduced duplication of effort?*

Duplication of efforts did not seem to be evident in documents reviewed however, anecdotal information from interview suggests there is a requirement for better coordination between grant partners to prevent duplication of printed materials. Each implementing partner including grant partners had their own set of objectives which were not tied to the broader program logic, meaning that duplication of effort was avoided more through the Donor Coordination Mechanism at the higher level (AEC, IFES and other non-SEP donors).

These meetings were considered vital in the lead up to the election where they occurred monthly and were co-chaired by the AEC and PNGEC. More recently, IFES has continued to provide secretariat support to these meetings enabling an ongoing mechanism to reduce duplication of effort.

For future SEP programming, there is a greater need for a coordination role at all levels (strategic engagement, intergovernmental, broad stakeholder, management, security, and operation)<sup>96</sup>. IFES provided technical and advisory support, AEC provided the twinning program as well as overall mentoring, and Australia Assist provided short term logistics deployment. The use of Caritas and TIPNG also provided a demand-side element, though as noted throughout, inputs were not integrated into an overarching SEP program logic.

The evaluation team was not able to interview any of the program management team from RedR, implementers of the Australia Assists program. Interview with one of the Australia Assists deployees suggested that there was not a great deal of duplication, however the coordination of the Australia Assists and IFES Logistics Adviser was ad hoc.

<sup>93</sup> SEP Annual Investment Monitoring report 2022-2023, p. 5

<sup>94</sup> Confirmed by former IFES staff members during interviews

<sup>95</sup> See for example the Subnational Program (APSP), Health Program (PATH), Education Program (PIE) and the forthcoming Law and Justice Program (APLJ).

<sup>96</sup> IFES-SAGE June 2020-May 2021 Annual Report

Future programming would benefit from an overall managing contractor/program coordinator role to better ensure coherence between these two key partners.

- *To what extent was the investment able to moderate the intensity of the surge through better planning?*

There is no evidence to show that the surge was moderated for the 2022 NGE. According to the AEC the technical and material support they provided in 2022 exceeded the support they had given in any previous election cycle. The significant surge in support immediately ahead of the 2022 NGE likely comes down to both contextual factors undermining the ability for the planned focus on whole of election cycle support and a lack of available evidence due to the program not having an M&E Framework.

Anecdotally, however, there is some evidence that PNGEC engagement with planning and developing procedures has improved from 2017 to 2022. Advisers commented that the PNGEC is now more likely to conduct planning sessions across the organisation – for example developing the Corporate Plan or creating a warehouse procedure – than it was during the 2017 elections when decisions were often left to an individual Director.<sup>97</sup>

- *Have there been other identified avenues for gaining value for money throughout the investment?*

There are several lessons learned that have contributed to or could plausibly enable future value for money gains. These relate to both the focus of the technical assistance, as well as the way in which it is delivered. First, there was a major focus on delivering ‘corporate’ style technical assistance. It was repeatedly established that the planned financial management advisor from the IDD would have represented a major gain for the PNGEC given the capacity constraints around budgeting and financial management. The original design had envisaged this role to be performed by a specific adviser, Tony Carbry, who had a history of involvement with the PNGEC.

However, the delays and problems with SEP contracting individual LTA meant that he was not ultimately brought onto the program. The loss of this function was mentioned by other advisers familiar with the history of Australia’s support to elections in PNG, as well as PNGEC staff.<sup>98</sup> Future iterations of the program may wish to reconsider this type of long-term technical assistance, especially in relation to key corporate functions, as a means for institutional capacity building.

Another important lesson was highlighted by Jeff Pope, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, AEC: “Elections are cheaper when planned earlier. You need to invest across the election cycle. If you don’t have funding and there are immutable deadlines things are done at the last minute and you won’t get value for money.”

A further lesson for program VfM relates to the short-term nature of many advisers. As above, some long-term adviser roles should be reconsidered for the next phase of SEP. However, there will always be a place for more short-term advisers as well. This is the nature of the broad array of support needed for elections, as well as the periodic nature of the required inputs.

This STA approach appears to have been more successful where there was: the ability to establish relationships through the same adviser having multiple short-term inputs throughout the program; a combination of remote and face to face engagement<sup>99</sup>; and engagement of LES personnel to maintain relationships while advisers were not present.

The use of in-country LES personnel as a means to maintain face-to-face contact could have been improved through collocation of these personnel in PNGEC office space (instead of a separate office in the same building), and clearer expectations around what LES roles actually were – whether they were providing backstopping to PNGEC capacity, advice, or simply monitoring and acting as a conduit for remote advisers. Whatever the case, this needs to be fit clearly into a program rubric rather than the current reactive model.

### Recommendations

- **Future SEP programming should reinforce the need for either a managing contractor or a strengthened program coordinator role to ensure that program reporting provides a clearer breakdown of expenditure against individual program Components.**
- **The PFM adviser function planned in the IDD but not ultimately contracted should be considered again for future investments as a means to support corporate functions at PNGEC.**

<sup>97</sup> Interview with JO McCallum and Steven Canham, 5 Sep 2023.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Jo McCallum and Steven Canham 5 Sep 2023, PNGEC Finance Director

<sup>99</sup> This aspect was said by Jo and Steven to have worked surprisingly well and is a key area to sustain beyond the initial requirement of COVID restrictions forcing meetings to be done online.

## 4.4 Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)

### Findings

- **GEDSI is a low priority for PNGEC due to competing priorities and crisis-mode nature of elections in PNG**
- **PNGEC gender focal point (GFP) appointed in 2022 is currently suspended. A key role for the PNGEC GFP is to track the implementation of GEDSI policy under the PNGEC 2023 – 2027 Corporate Plan**
- **More input at pre/during/post-election processes by women, young people, people with disability or special needs should be prioritised**
- **More support given to PNGEC GFP for whole of organisation intervention and with other key stakeholders**
- **The SPC on Election Reform is a good step to reflect on pervasive elections issues that affect vulnerable populations to create accessible and positive electoral environments for everyone**

The SEP was designed with gender, disability and social inclusion considerations as a core priority underpinning the investment's priority components. The design of SEP anticipated to work across its components to improve the participation of women and people with disabilities who are often marginalised from electoral processes and for them to experience the elections as voters, candidates and electoral administrators.

The SEP design also acknowledged the electoral system as an important social infrastructure relevant to the pursuit of broader social and development objectives and will seek to strengthen links with other programs to help pursue broader social and development goals.<sup>100</sup>

To ensure that GEDSI issues are accorded sufficient and sustained priority across program activities, the SEP design recognised that dedicated Program resources needed to be allocated to drive GESI considerations and ensure they are implemented throughout the Program cycle. These include:

- mainstreaming of GEDSI considerations as a key responsibility of the Program Coordinator who will ensure, amongst other things, GEDSI considerations are included in their work plans and activities, and monitored through the M&E process;
- strengthened cross-program collaborations between SEP and other donor programs; and
- inclusion of dedicated short-term gender advisory inputs throughout the Program to be drawn on to develop and implement specific gender policies and activities.<sup>101</sup>

The evaluation found that these undertakings were largely not achieved due the lack of deployment of the Program Coordinator. As noted previously, the Program Coordinator played a significant role in the implementation of the SEP. If recruited, the Program Coordinator according to the design document would provide strategic coordination across electoral system which will provide a better basis for electoral architecture to be used by other stakeholders to pursue cross-cutting issues and achieve a better coordinated and orderly election system will in theory be more explicable to outside actors and thus more accessible.

### 4.4.1 What are the key lessons for GEDSI?

- *What are the project's contributions to gender equality and social inclusion? (Inclusion of women, youth, people with disabilities, socially and economically disadvantaged people, elderly groups, settlers and the geographically isolated)*

The evaluation team assessed that the EOPO of the SEP relating GEDSI remains useful in that the capacity of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups to participate in electoral processes are enhanced with election delivery systems being more accommodative of their needs when preparing for elections. However, the SEP investment design outcome of the 2022 elections on GEDSI were not fully achieved.

The evaluation found that while there were pockets of effort by the PNGEC in partnership with IFES, there was no evidence of the mainstreaming of GEDSI considerations into electoral cycle. This finding is attributed to the absence of a Program Coordinator. In accordance with the SEP design, an immediate priority of the Program Coordinator was to commission a gender stocktake, working alongside IFES to review lesson learned from past

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<sup>100</sup> IDD, p5

<sup>101</sup> IDD, p25

gender initiatives and to ensure gender strategies of implementing partners were mainstreamed under the work plans for each SEP component.

There is a gap in understanding the challenges faced and lessons learned in existing gender-focused policies (e.g. provisions regarding separate polling booths for men and women) due to the absence of a Program Coordinator. As a consequence, the PNGEC has not been able to identify reforms in the existing electoral regulations and guidelines to improve the ability of women, people with disability and socially marginalised people to vote in varying electoral contexts across PNG.<sup>102</sup>

- *What GEDSI interventions have been made through SEP? Have these worked? How can existing GEDSI interventions be improved? Have GEDSI activities been mainstreamed across program components? If so, how?*

Another key lesson identified by the evaluation team was that GEDSI is a low priority for PNGEC due to competing priorities and the crisis-mode nature of elections in PNG. In 2022, PNGEC organised a post-election national workshop to address GEDSI and further ways of mainstreaming GEDSI in and across PNG EC various program components. However, the GEDSI agenda was sidelined completely and redirected to discuss the formation of the Special Parliamentary Committee (SPC) on elections reforms.

The lack of prioritisation of GEDSI was emphasised throughout interviews and was unrelentingly attributed to the funding delays and shortfalls inhibiting the ability of PNG electoral authorities to prepare for elections in a comprehensive and timely manner. The electoral system as an important social infrastructure is capable of strengthening linkages and collaboration with other programs to achieve broader social and development goals. Strengthened linkages with other programs maximises inclusivity of GEDSI in election process.

Regardless, the PNGEC did not manage to give precedence to GEDSI considerations in congruent to the SEP design.

In addition, the capacity deficit within the PNGEC as an institution, has meant that institutionally there is no capacity to develop a continuous program of gender-sensitisation of activities for all electoral staff (including temporary polling). IFES managed to recruit a short-term Gender Advisor to work with PNGEC to ensure GEDSI issues are accorded sufficient and sustained priority across program activities.

The Advisor's key milestone was the development of GEDSI engagement strategy. However, this was not achieved as the Advisor's input was cut short due to the COVID19 pandemic. Without a GEDSI engagement strategy, dedicated Program resources were not allocated to drive GEDSI considerations and ensure they are implemented.

In addition, the Program Coordinator, if recruited, would have provided strategic direction on the allocation of dedicate Program resources to drive GEDSI considerations and ensure that they were implement were implemented during the election cycle, and identify and establish new partnerships with other donor programs that will support the objective of the SEP. The evaluation determined that these considerations were not achieved.

### 4.4.2 Recommendations for addressing GEDSI better in the next investment

The following are the key recommendations for DFAT to address GEDSI better in its future investment. The evaluation team asked a number of questions to capture the recommendations needed to improve, enhance or better the GEDSI in the electoral process in PNG.

- *How can the project improve, enhance or do better in supporting or including women, people with disabilities, youth, etc in the next investment? How can existing GEDSI interventions be improved? Have GEDSI activities been mainstreamed across program components? If so, how? To what extent has SEP worked with other programs to include GEDSI-targeted activities?*

#### The key recommendations from this evaluation include:

1. A gender stocktake and development of the gender engagement strategy should be the first and immediate outcome of the new design. This should be done alongside the Violence Against Women (VAW) Report of the 2022 PNG Elections and the ANU Observation Report (*forthcoming*). This should be carried out by a team of GEDSI experts working alongside the PNGEC GFP.
2. Revive and strengthen a gender network among donor programs and key stakeholders that focuses on intervention at every stage of the election cycle.
3. Prioritise better coordination and collaboration on greater input pre/during/post-election processes from women, people with disabilities or special needs and socially marginalised people.

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<sup>102</sup> Similar view and response held by DFAT officer in Political team (interview on 4 Aug 2023) and IFES Senior Project Advisor (interview on 2 Aug 2023)

According to key stakeholders such as the PNG Assembly for Disabled Persons, people with disabilities and special needs continue to be marginalised greatly. They noted that some of their key suggestions for improvement put forward to PNGEC/IFES have not been taken into consideration or implementation was not consistent.<sup>103</sup> These suggestions include braille on ballot papers and information sheets, infrastructure adjustments e.g., lowering booths, early voting, sign interpretation assistance and designated voting areas.

Furthermore, there was strong emphasis by PNG EC Regional Managers for support to be given the Election Violence Task Forces to be better resourced and linked with GBV providers in the provinces to be able to respond appropriately to GBV.<sup>104</sup> This was also a recommendation in addressing Women's access to the electoral process in the VAW Report of the 2022 PNG Elections.<sup>105</sup> The lessons and recommendations from VAW Report of the 2022 PNG Elections and the ANU Election Observation Report can provide guidance to dealing with issues and experienced of women, people with disabilities or special needs and socially marginalised people.

4. Prioritise more support to PNGEC GFP for a whole of institutional approach. A recommendation would be to support efforts towards analysis or learning on GEDSI concerns and themes within PNGEC as well as with partners at the national and provincial offices. Start with discussing the VAW in the 2022 Elections report. Capacity support to be provided by a Program Coordinator or advisory team to support the work of the GFP in implementing the gender engagement strategy. Mentoring and supporting knowledge generation and critical analysis should be provided for staff at the national or provincial offices on an ongoing basis.
5. The SPC on Election Reform and the Gender Based Violence are good platforms for reflection on pervasive election issues that affect vulnerable populations and to create accessible and positive electoral environments for everyone. PNGEC should be supported to continuously spotlight GEDSI issues with these committees. A good place to start is to look at the findings and recommendations from the VAW Report on Elections in PNG and the ANU Election Observation Report and for the SPCs to discuss strategies for a whole of government response.

## 4.5 Impact

DFAT defines impact as the overall long-term effect of an investment. "This includes positive and negative changes (directly or indirectly, intended or unintended)."<sup>106</sup>

### 4.5.1 What difference has the intervention made?

- **With support from the Australian Government through SEP, the 2022 PNGNGE was delivered. However, SEP has not achieved its intended outcomes.**
- **Many of the activities delivered were delivered too late to be effective.**
- **Supported activities were not necessarily well targeted or focussed on the areas of greatest need or those that might have best helped achieve the IPOs or EOPOs.**
- **In many respects SEP represents a lost opportunity.**

Absent an effective M&E framework and outcomes focused reporting, it is difficult to assess the overall impact SEP has made. Certainly many of those interviewed for the purpose of this evaluation were insistent that the election would have been worse, much worse, but for Australia's assistance.

Australian Government support through SEP was instrumental in ensuring the 2022 PNG NGE was delivered. Without Australia's support, there is every likelihood that the elections would have failed or not have happened in the constitutionally required timeframe, thus sparking a constitutional crisis.

Could PNG have delivered the 2022 NGE within the constitutionally prescribed timeline? Perhaps but it is highly unlikely. Certainly the PNGEC ran the 2019 Local Level Government elections without Australian assistance, but the stakes and level of political risk were entirely different. It is also the case that the LLG elections were permitted to fail in parts of the Highlands in 2013 and 2019. In the context of the national general elections there are strong political imperatives to ensure this does not happen.

It is unrealistic to expect that SEP could remediate PNG's electoral process and guarantee credible elections. Reflecting on his time in PNG, Paul Rowland, Former IFES Country Director, had this to say: "this particular

<sup>103</sup> Interview with PNG Assemblies of Disabled People Secretariat, 02 Aug 2023

<sup>104</sup> Interview with PNG EC Managers, 03 Aug 2023

<sup>105</sup> VAW Report on the 2022 PNG Elections: An IFES Assessment, page 6

<sup>106</sup> See DFAT Aid Programming Guide Glossary

election environment is the most difficult and most fraught I have worked in over the past 25 years. It is difficult to deliver a development program in this context, let alone an election program.”

All things considered the evaluation team is confident the 2022 NGE was delivered “**to a better standard than would otherwise have been achieved in the absence of such support**”. However, it is not possible to say with any confidence whether SEP outputs, activities and interventions are leading towards the achievement of the intended end of program outcomes. This is because none of the implementing partners or grantees sought to measure the impact of its programming or activities against the original program logic and in fact none of the grant awardees had seen the SEP design prior to the evaluation.

With activities being developed in an ad hoc, largely reactive way, without regard to either the overarching program goal or the stated end-of-program outcomes, achievements and gains are likely to be largely serendipitous.

Consistent with the views expressed by many interviewed, the evaluation team concludes that many of the activities delivered under SEP were delivered too late to be effective and were not well aligned to PNGEC capabilities and resources. The decision to decouple activities from the end of program outcomes and align them with the program components meant that supported activities were not necessarily well targeted or focussed on the areas of greatest need.

Similarly, they were not designed with achievement of the EOPOs in mind. In this respect SEP represents a lost opportunity, in that the evaluation team finds the design, and the assumptions underpinning it to have been sound.

- *To what extent did the SEP cause higher-level changes in PNG electoral norms or systems?*

As evidenced through this evaluation there is little to indicate that SEP has been responsible for higher level changes in electoral norms and systems. The evidence pointing to gains, even modest ones, is largely anecdotal and difficult to triangulate. That said, the electoral observation activities funded through SEP and previous iterations of Australia’s electoral support have contributed to and have to some extent informed the growing call for electoral reform. Certainly, these activities have highlighted in an evidence-based way deficiencies in the 2022 NGE.

Drawing upon the evidence collected by TIPNG, NRI and ANU observers, all three organisations have substantively engaged with the Special Parliamentary Committee enquiring into the 2022 NGE and participated in the IDEC election summit thereby contributing to these important review and reform processes.

It should also be noted that the nature of the reporting provided by the SEP’s specialist implementing partners and the lack of an effective M&E framework have meant that it is difficult to attribute gains made to SEP. Indeed it is hard to know whether policy and system shifts have come about because of SEP interventions or whether they were more organic in nature.

PNGEC staff interviewed during this evaluation claimed to have orchestrated several of the key policy and operational changes. For example, the evaluation team were told that the LLG batch counting and additional measures introduced to institutionalise gender segregated polling originated from within the Electoral Commission and that they were trialled at the Goroka by-election in September and October 2020 and then refined following a reflection and lessons learned exercise. That being the case, these initiatives were trialled during COVID when the IFES staff were not on the ground.

The additional gender measures introduced in 2022 such as separate entrances, gender segregated electoral rolls and separate processing stations for women voters do seem to have supported increased participation on the part of PNG’s female citizens. What is particularly heartening about this is that the initiatives look to have been initiated by PNGEC staff themselves and not in response to technical advice, suggesting that attention to the issue of women’s political participation has been normalised to some extent within the organisation.

In relation to the 2022 PNG NGE, the ANU reports an increase in the proportion of female citizens who reported having voted (76% in 2022 as opposed to 68% in 2017) and a decrease in the number of women who reported experiencing intimidation when voting (20% in 2022 as opposed to 27% in 2017). Gains in relation to composition of polling teams were also evident in some parts of the country, most notably in NCD and in Southern Region.<sup>107</sup>

- *Are these changes enduring?*

It is impossible to assess whether the above gains will be enduring. At the current time there appears to be considerable political will for electoral reform and the various post-election review activities have provided and opportunity for SEP grantees to present their findings and engage directly with processes likely to lead to administrative and legislative reforms. Provided SEP, through its specialist implementing partners and grant awardees can continue to support these efforts, there is a possibility of some enduring change.

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<sup>107</sup> ANU (forthcoming) 2022 PNG National General Elections Report.

- *To what extent has the SEP supported transformative change to enable unsupported delivery of PNG's electoral processes?*

Notwithstanding that the 2019 LLG elections were delivered without Australian support there is little evidence to suggest SEP has supported the sort of transformative change needed for PNG to deliver credible national general elections without donor support. Without guaranteed and appropriate levels of PNG government funding across they electoral cycle, and without more concerted donor support it is unlikely that PNG will be able to deliver more orderly, inclusive and credible elections unsupported. And to be fair that was never the intention of SEP.

Both of the specialist delivery partners opined that transformative change of the kind envisioned or desired is unlikely given the current resource constraints under which the PNGEC operates and were it to occur would require a further ramping up of the level of support and engagement and a different type of intervention.

Indeed according to the current IFES Country Director Mark Silva, genuinely strengthening institutional capacity within the PNGEC "would require a much longer and a much more complete intervention"<sup>108</sup> AEC Deputy Commissioner expressed similarly sobering assessment when reflecting on the nature of Australia's support.

*Support elsewhere is working. OBEC is a good example. After several years of concerted support there is very little need to support them. Fiji, Tonga, OBEC are all good examples of where capability has been successfully transferred. Within the region, PNGEC is the standout, both in terms of its size and the extent of the challenges. This is an ongoing conversation that needs to be had. Elections with integrity are the key to good governance. Stability rests on this. The problem is elections are never the crocodile closest to the boat. They are never seen as the most pressing development challenge. However if we don't do more, they will soon become the crocodile closest to the boat. More needs to be done now to prevent this.*

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – List of documents reviewed

1. AEC PNG 22-23 Annual report July 2023
2. Attachment A 2022-23 Financial acquittal IA089 PNG
3. SEP 2019-2023 Annual Quality Check 2019-20
4. SEP 2019-2023 Annual Investment Monitoring Report 2022-23
5. SEP 2019-2023 Annual Investment Monitoring Report 2021-22
6. SEP 2019-2023 Annual Investment Monitoring Report 2020-21
7. PNGEC Report to Parliament 2017
8. PNGEC Report to Parliament 2022 Version 2
9. PNGEC Corporate Plan 2018-2022
10. PNGEC submission to SPC on electoral reform in PNG (revised)
11. PNG AEC Final Report June 2020-June 2021
12. PNG AEC DFAT Activity Schedule 2020-2023\_Oct2021
13. PNG AEC Final Report July 2021-June 2022
14. PNG AEC Annual Report July 2022 v3
15. NRI 2022 PNG NGE Observation Study Report (NRI Other Publications No3)
16. IFES SAGE Third Milestone Report: June-November 2022
17. IFES SAGE Third Annual Report: September 2022 - May 2023
18. IFES SAGE Second Milestone Report: June-November 2021
19. IFES SAGE First Milestone Report: June-November 2020
20. IFES SAGE Second Annual Report: June 2021-May 2022
21. IFES SAGE First Annual Report: June 2020-May 2021
22. IFES SAGE Proposal for DFAT
23. IFES SAGE DFAT Concept Note Budget
24. IFES SAGE Concept Note 11 Months 23 May 2023
25. Australian Aid for Electoral Assistance in Papua New Guinea 2000-2012
26. Evaluation of Australia's Electoral Assistance to Papua New Guinea 2015-2017
27. Caritas Activity Completion Report
28. Caritas Proposal to the Australian High Commission
29. TIPNG Domestic Election Observation Report 2022
30. Building Elections Integrity through Partnership (BEIP) Project Completion Report

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<sup>108</sup> Mark Silva, IFES Country Director PNG

31. Violence Against Women in Elections Papua New Guinea: An IFES Assessment



## Appendix 2 – Stakeholders consulted

Organisation	Personnel
AEC	Deputy Electoral Commissioner – Jeff Pope
AEC	Acting Director, International Engagement Section – Joanne Ridolfi
IFES	Acting Country Director - Mark Silva
IFES	Former Country Director - Paul Rowland
IFES	Former Deputy Director - Robert Irish
IFES	Senior Program Officer, Inclusion and Gender - Aileen Sogo
IFES	Program Officer, Policy - Iamo Vaname
IFES	Program Officer, Operations - Nona Diya
IFES	Voter Enrolment STA - Steve Canham
IFES	Operations STA - Jo McCallum
PNGEC	Electoral Commissioner - Simon Sinai ML
PNGEC	Deputy Commissioner – John Kalamoroh
PNGEC	Director, Operations - Margaret Vagi
PNGEC	Director, Policy - Kila Vaname
PNGEC	Director, ICT - Isaiah Aire
PNGEC	Director, ICAB - Alice Guguna
PNGEC	Director, Finance - Nigel Bouauka
PNGEC	Director, Human Resources - Oscar Pomaleu
PNGEC	Regional Operations Manager, MOMASE - Bura Maro
PNGEC	Regional Operations Manager, NGI - Serah Yanderave
PNGEC	Regional Operations Manager, Highlands - Thomas Teine
PNGEC	Election Manager, NCD - Kila Ralai
PNGEC	Acting Assistant Election Manager, WHP - Wesley Tiane
PNGEC	Manager, Logistics - Francis Tekeni
PNGEC	Manager Enrolments - Grace Badira
PNGEC	Systems Administrator - Claude Laki
PNGEC	M&E Officer – Moses Kome
PNGEC	Website Developer, ICAB – Pious N'Dromoi

Evaluation of Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) Program

Organisation	Personnel
<b>PNGEC</b>	Various volunteer and temporary staff engaged in the Motu Koita Assembly Elections
<b>Australian High Commission - Port Moresby</b>	Program Manager (Political) - Lesley Possiri
<b>Australian High Commission - Port Moresby</b>	First Secretary (Political) - Tom Battams
<b>Australian High Commission - Port Moresby</b>	Counsellor (Political) - Lisa White
<b>Australian High Commission - Port Moresby</b>	Former First Secretary (Political) - Alex Storrie
<b>DFAT - Canberra</b>	Assistant Secretary – PNG Political & Strategy Branch - Bassim Blazey
<b>PNG Government</b>	Governor, East Sepik Province, Chairman SPC – Allan Bird
<b>PNG Government</b>	Member for Abau Open, Deputy Chairman SPC - Sir Puka Temu
<b>PNG Government</b>	Chief Secretary to Government – Ivan Pomaleu OBE
<b>PNG Government</b>	Advisor, Office of the Chief Secretary, PMNEC - Joseph Nobetau
<b>PNG Government</b>	Adviser, Office of the Chief Secretary, PMNEC - Kevin Pullen OBE
<b>ADF</b>	LT COL John Leathley
<b>AFP</b>	Acting SUPT James Armstrong
<b>IPPCC</b>	Registrar of Political Parties - Emmanuel Pok
<b>IPPCC</b>	Senior Policy and Research Officer, Policy Division - Madeline Saga
<b>PNGDF</b>	Chief of Joint Operations - COL Michael Banda
<b>PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons</b>	Admin and Finance Officer – Manuka Edo
<b>PNG Assembly of Disabled Persons</b>	Secretariat – Ross Tito
<b>RPNGC</b>	Commander - Steve Francis
<b>Australia Assists</b>	Helicopter STA – Franck Boulay
<b>NRI</b>	Chairman, NRI Council - Wilson Thompson ML OBE

**Evaluation of Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) Program**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Personnel</b>
<b>NRI</b>	Research Fellow – Jeremy Goro
<b>Caritas</b>	Director - Mavis Tito
<b>Caritas</b>	Diocese Coordinator (NCD) - Clement Waika
<b>TIPNG</b>	Founding Director - Richard Kassman OBE
<b>TIPNG</b>	Deputy Director (Partnerships & Policy) - Yuambari Haihuie
<b>Youth with Disabilities</b>	Secretary – Patrick Thomas
<b>Other</b>	Female Candidate 2022 PNGNGE - Diane Unagi-Koiam
<b>Other</b>	Female Candidate 2022 PNGNGE – Sylvia Pascoe

## Appendix 3 – Evidence Matrix

Key question 1		Were the investment EOPOs appropriate (in terms of translating the broad SEP aims into practical outcomes and being achievable)?							
Sub-questions	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD						
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC	
<p><b>How well does SEP align with GoPNG priorities?</b></p> <p><b>How do the SEP EOPOs deliver on GoPNG priorities?</b></p>	<p>Alignment of SEP goals and outcomes with PNGEC/GoPNG priorities</p> <p>Partner perceptions of implementation</p>	<p>IDD, PNGEC Corporate Plan 2018-2022</p>	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	
<p><b>How well does SEP align with Australian priorities?</b></p> <p><b>How do the SEP EOPOs deliver on Australian priorities?</b></p>	<p>Alignment of SEP goals and outcomes with Australian priorities</p>	<p>IDD, DFAT docs</p>	yes	no	no	yes	no	No	
<p><b>Does the overarching program goal remain relevant?</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>SAGE reports, IDD, PNGEC report, NRI report</p>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
<p><b>Are the SEP EOPOs coherent? Do they translate into practical achievable outcomes?</b></p>	<p>How do EOPOs work together?</p>	<p>IDD, SAGE reports</p>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Key question 2		How might EOPOs be reframed to better reflect SEP aims?							
Sub-questions	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD						
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC	
<p><b>To what extent do the SEP EOPO's contribute to achievement of the overarching program goal?</b></p> <p><b>How might EOPOs be reframed to better reflect SEP's aims and achievement of the overarching program goal?</b></p>	<p>Utility of program logic</p>	<p>AIMRs, SAGE, IDD</p>	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	
Key question 3		What has been achieved as a result of SEP? What has not been achieved?							

Evaluation of Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) Program

Sub-questions	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD					
			GoA	PNGEC	Go PNG other	IFES/NGO/AEC	NGO/political parties	SPC
<p><b>Were the 2022 NGE outcomes achieved?</b>  <b>To what extent did SEP outputs, activities and interventions lead to achievement of were intended end of program outcomes achieved?</b>  <b>Have there been unexpected outcomes?</b></p>	Make reference to 2022 NGE outcomes and EOIOs from IDD	IDD, implementing partner reports, PNGEC report	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<p><b>Are the outcomes achieved sustainable? Have they consolidated past investment gains?</b></p>	Whether changes have been transformative/ behavioural	Implementing partner reports	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<p><b>How has the program dealt with contextual change, particularly in relation to COVID-19?</b></p>	Strength of program response to COVID disruption	Implementing partner reports	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
<p><b>What are the most critical ongoing development cooperation needs and opportunities to inform subsequent Support to Elections in PNG?</b></p>	Forward looking towards critical gaps/opportunities	Implementing partner reports, PNGEC, NRI	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Key question 4</b>	Which components, partners and modalities performed best?							
Sub-questions	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD					
			GoA	PNGEC	Go PNG other	IFES/NGO/AEC	NGO/political parties	SPC
<p><b>To what extent has election delivery been strengthened?</b>  <b>To what extent has coordination between HQ and the provinces been strengthened?</b>  <b>To what extent has the Voter Roll been strengthened?</b>  <b>To what extent have there been improvements in voter awareness?</b>  <b>To what extent has electoral reform been supported by SEP?</b></p>	Assessment of each component individually and relatively	Partner reporting, AIMRs PNGEC reporting	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Evaluation of Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) Program

<b>To what extent have governance and procurement arrangements enabled a well-functioning relationship between DFAT and major implementing partners (IFES, AEC, Australia Assist)?</b>	Assessment of delivery partners	Partner reporting	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no
<b>To what extent has recruitment and management of individual advisor inputs through the PNG Australia Governance Partnership been successful?</b>	Not ultimately achieved – assess why	N/A	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
<b>Key question 5</b>	Did the monitoring and evaluation system provide the evidence needed for program improvement and to assess progress?							
<b>Sub-questions</b>	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	<b>Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD</b>					
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC
<b>To what extent were M&amp;E System generated learnings (both Overall Assessment Framework and Results Framework) used to improve SEP overall?</b>	M&E strategy wasn't ultimately developed – assess impact	IDD, SAGE reports,	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
<b>To what extent did the SEP program logic and results framework guide implementation of SEP?</b>	How did SAGE framework square with SEP's?	IDD, SAGE reports	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
<b>To what extent has research informed evidence-based program interventions?</b>	Planned research fund use	IDD, SAGE, NRI, ANU	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
<b>To what extent have Reflexion Workshops enabled improvement?</b>	Or similar?	IDD, SAGE	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Key question 6</b>	To what extent has SEP been delivered in an efficient manner, and how could this be improved?							
<b>Sub-questions</b>	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	<b>Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD</b>					
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC
<b>Is the program structured in such a way that it can be considered operationally efficient?</b>	Does it make efficient use of resources?	IDD, partner reporting, PNGEC	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no

Evaluation of Supporting Elections in Papua New Guinea (SEP) Program

<b>Were the funding and timeframe sufficient to achieve the program outcomes?</b>	N/A	N/A	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
<b>Is it adaptive and responsive to the needs of GoPNG/PNGEC?</b> <b>To what extent has the Strategic Management Committee been able to assess the state of electoral preparations?</b>	Assuming SMC has been in place	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
<b>Key question 7</b>	To what extent does the investment represent value for money? Is there a way to measure this for the investment as a whole?							
<b>Sub-questions</b>	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	<b>Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD</b>					
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC
<b>To what extent do the different modalities used by SEP foster efficiency and drive value for money?</b>	Partner delivery, research institutes, NGOs, AEC	IDD, partner reporting, PNGEC	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no
<b>To what extent has the investment reduced duplication of effort?</b>	N/A	UNDP reporting	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
<b>To what extent was the investment able to moderate the intensity of the surge through better planning?</b>	N/A	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
<b>To what extent has strategic and operational planning led to PNGEC being better placed to resource its own election preparations?</b>	N/A	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Have there been other identified avenues for gaining value for money throughout the investment?</b>	Is there a way to measure this for the investment as a whole?	SAGE reporting	yes	no	no	yes	no	no
<b>To what extent has the donor coordination working group enabled cohesive support to elections in PNG?</b>	Assuming donor coord working group in place	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
<b>Considering lessons learned, value for money and the PNG operating context which modality (or modalities) would best suit a future iteration of SEP?</b>	Forward looking question	N/A	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
<b>Key question 8</b>	What are the key lessons for GEDSI, and recommendations for addressing this better in the next investment?							
<b>Sub-questions</b>			<b>Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD</b>					

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	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC
<b>What are the project's contributions to gender equality and social inclusion? (Inclusion of women, youth, people with disabilities, socially and economically disadvantaged people, elderly groups, settlers and the geographically isolated)</b>	Geographically remote communities	SAGE reporting	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>What GEDSI interventions have been made through SEP? Have these worked?</b>	N/A	Partner reporting	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
<b>How can the project improve, enhance or do better in supporting or including women, people with disabilities, youth, etc in the next investment? How can existing GEDSI interventions be improved?</b>	Forward looking	Research reports	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Have GEDSI activities been mainstreamed across program components? If so, how?</b>	Mainstreaming	PNGEC report	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>To what extent has SEP worked with other programs to include GEDSI-targeted activities?</b>	Cohesion w/ other prog	Other prog reports	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Key question 9</b>	What difference has the intervention made?							
Sub-questions	Assessment criteria/factors for consideration	Desktop review	Stakeholder interviews and/or FGD					
			GoA	PNGE C	Go PNG other	IFES/ NGO/ AEC	NGO/ political parties	SPC
<b>To what extent did the SEP cause higher-level changes in PNG electoral norms or systems?</b>	Are these changes enduring?	PNGEC reporting, research	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>To what extent has the SEP supported transformative change to enable unsupported delivery of PNG's electoral processes?</b>	N/A	PNGEC reporting, research	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Alternatively, has SEP unintentionally resulted in any negative outcomes?</b>	Counterfactual	PNGEC reporting, research	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes



## Appendix 4 – Maps

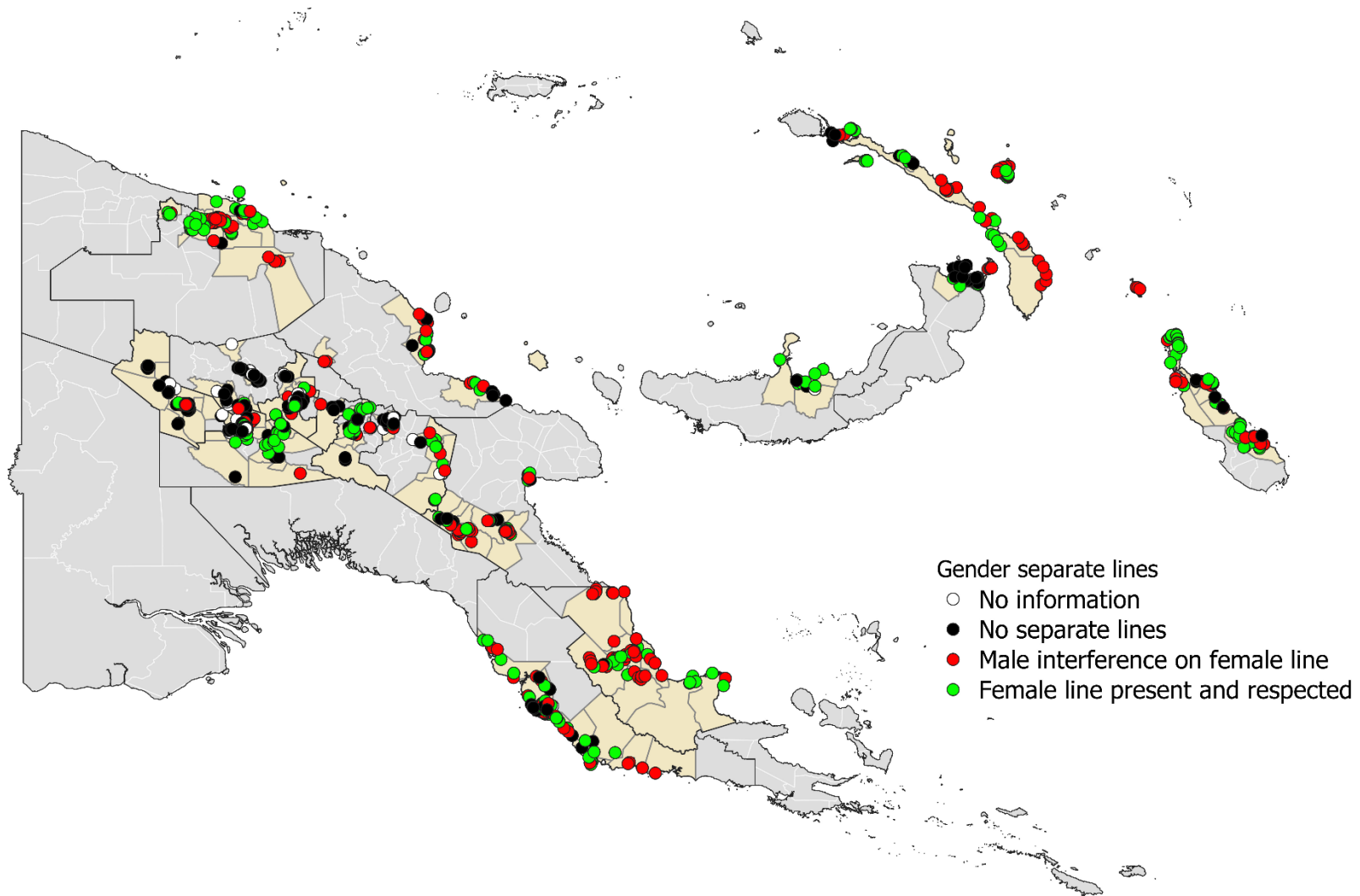


Figure 1 Gender separate polling lines (ANU, forthcoming)

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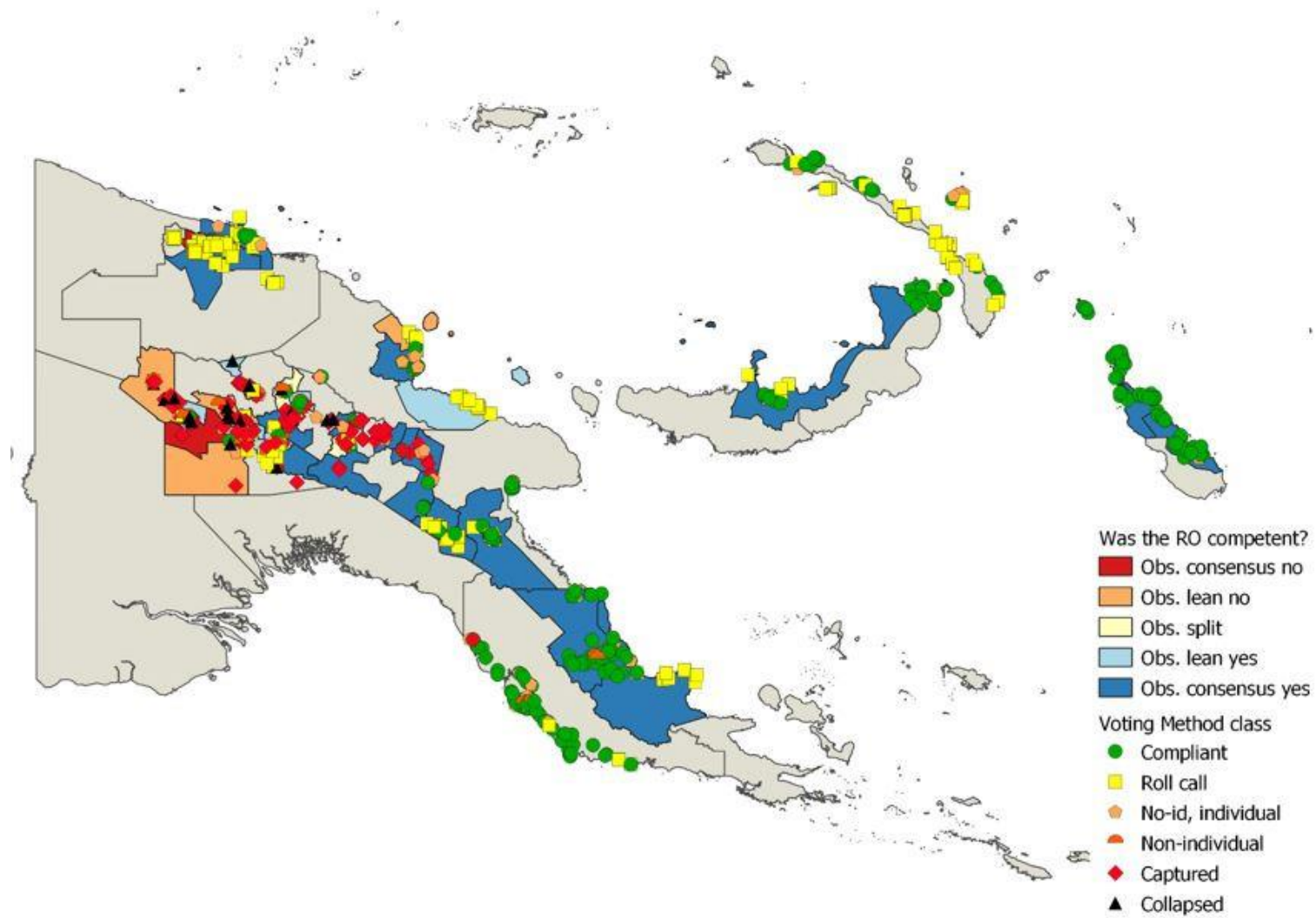


Figure 2 - Returning Officer Competence and Voting Method

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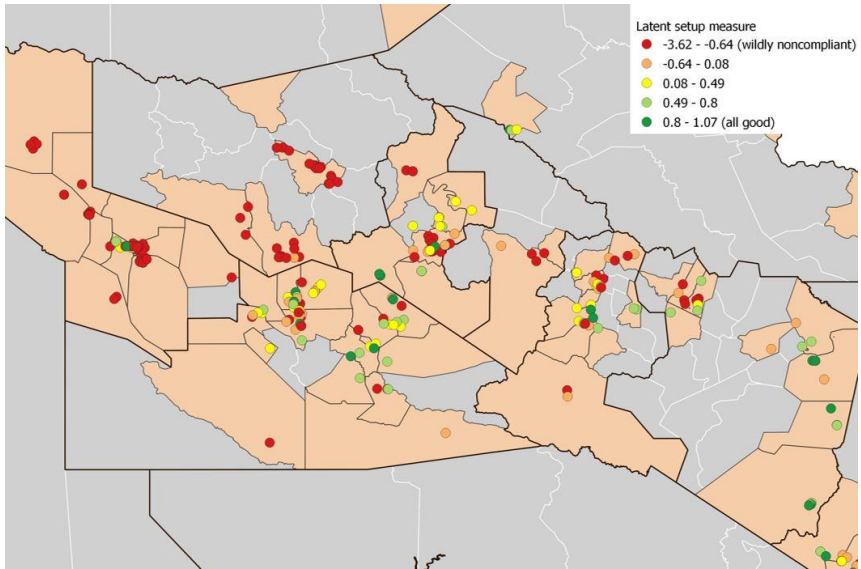


Figure 3 Latent Setup Measure

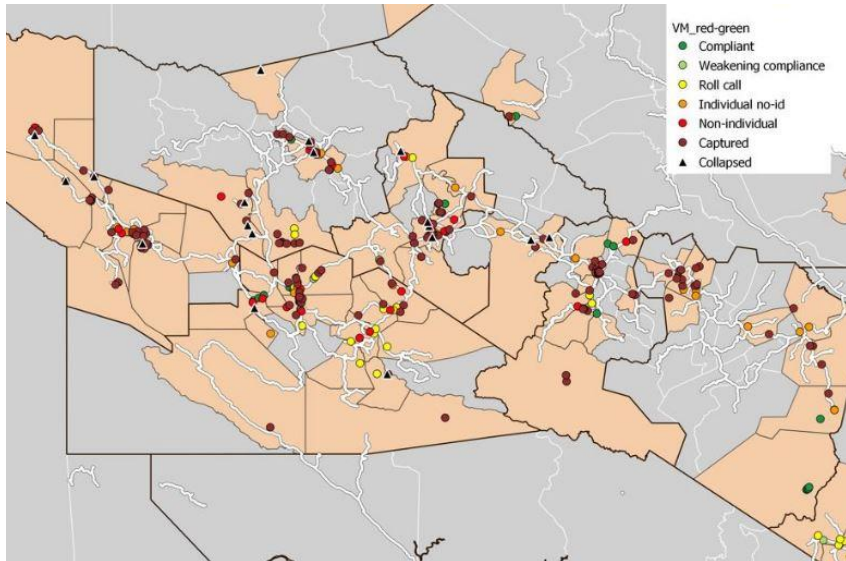


Figure 4 - Voting Method