

Annex 1: Terms of Reference - Review of the Australia Awards Program (Tonga) (Summary)

Overview

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Tonga requires a consultant to review the current Australia Awards program for Tonga Post and to develop a Scholarships Implementation Framework. The document will assist Post in the effective and efficient implementation of the Australia Awards Scholarships and the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships provided for Tonga.

Background

Australia Awards are prestigious, transformational scholarships and short courses offered to emerging leaders from developing countries for study, research and professional development in Australia and the region so they can return home and contribute to their nations' development, prosperity, and resilience. The program is guided by the [Australia Awards Global Strategic Framework](#) and its four objectives. There has not been a Tonga specific framework to inform its implementation of the Australia Awards Program.

Scholarships are a significant component of Australia's bilateral program to Tonga. In FY23, expenditure is estimated at AUD3.9 million, around 18 per cent. Bilateral allocations on scholarships are complemented with funding from Canberra through the Australia Awards section and new financing streams, particularly regional aviation. Scholarships are awarded under the Australia Awards Scholarships (AAS), (for study in Australia), the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarships (AAPS) (for study in the region, primarily Fiji).

Since 1999, 431 scholarships¹ have been provided to Tonga scholars: 326 have studied through the AAPS scheme, the remainder through the AAS. Majority (239) have graduated with Bachelor's level degrees, followed by Masters; Around 1 in 4 have studied in the health sector (94). Management, education, and social studies are the next most popular fields of education.

The Australia Awards are currently managed in-house by the DFAT Post in Nuku'alofa through one LES, under the Education program with the support of the Senior Program Manager. The Post uses the OASIS, a centralised information management system, to manage and administers all scholarship schemes, and encapsulates the lifecycle of the Scholarship process.

The Australia Awards are an essential and significant component of Australia's soft power diplomacy, however there is room to improve on maximising these outcomes. Alumni networks are important tools to strengthen the capability of our government, private sector and NGO partners as well as strengthening their ongoing linkages with Australia.

The Australian High Commission (AHC) in Tonga is in the process of preparing its Development Partnership Plan (DPP) for Tonga. Ascertaining the impact of the Australia Awards Program, including alumni engagement, is critical to inform future programming as

¹ The Review Team notes that these figures are not consistent with the data (recording 525 awards offered from the 2001 intake) provided from OASIS (as in Annex 7, Table 6)

well as objectives for the DPP, such as the role scholarships play in contributing to local livelihoods, skills and economic opportunities.

However, as a result of the low resourcing at the Post for the scholarships program, DFAT has yet to effectively track and harness its alumni network, or to routinely conduct MEL on the program.

Purpose

The purpose of the Review is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the Australia Awards program in Tonga, as well as the efficiency of its management. Drawing on this evidence, the Review will make recommendations to strengthen future implementation of the program including its management, prioritisation of focus areas and target groups including women and marginalised groups. The consultant will also be expected to produce a Tonga Scholarship Implementation Framework.

The primary user of the review report and Scholarship Implementation Framework will be the AHC management and program team in Tonga. Secondary users include the Government of Tonga, the Australia Awards Section, AHC posts across the Pacific as well as other scholarship program teams.

Review questions

The review questions will be confirmed with the Australian High Commission during assignment planning. Indicative key review questions include:

1. Relevance: To what extent are the Australia Awards relevant to Australia and Tonga's development priorities?
2. Effectiveness: How effectively is the program in Tonga in meeting the four objectives under the Global Strategic Framework for the Australia Awards?
3. Inclusion: How well have the Australia Awards been implemented in Tonga to support Australia's GEDSI objectives?
4. Efficiency: How efficiently is the Australian Awards program being implemented?
5. Recommendations: What recommendation can be made to support to improve future programming and alignment with the Australia's Development Partnership Program?

Review components

In responding to the review questions, and undertaking the review, the review team will:

- Analyse existing M&E data on the Australia Awards in Tonga collected in OASIS and by the Australia Awards teams in Tonga and Canberra.
- Conduct contact tracing and a short survey of alumni to determine their current contact details, employment and location.
- Undertake in-country consultations (through key informant interviews and FGDs) with key stakeholders and with alumni.
- Write-up selected case studies on selected alumni.
- Prepare a review report, including recommendations to strengthen the effectiveness of the program.
- Develop a Scholarships Implementation Framework to guide delivery of the program by the DFAT Post.

The review recommendations should consider the strategic directions provided by Australia's new International Development Policy, Australia Awards Global Strategic Framework,

Australia Awards Guidelines, DFAT policies regarding inclusion, the Development Partnership Plan and Tonga's human resource development priorities.

The Scholarships Implementation Framework will take into consideration opportunities for outsourcing and harmonised activities, such as with DFAT Posts in other Pacific countries, the provision of services under the AAGSM (that will be operational in the second half of 2024), or with New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

Review team

The Review Team shall comprise a Lead Reviewer and a Local Review Coordinator. The Review Team will report to and carry out the assigned tasks under the overall supervision of the DFAT Tonga Senior Program Manager for Education and Scholarships with the support of the Scholarships Program Manager. The Tonga Post will agree the review workplan with the Review Team, assist with organising provision of the necessary reference material and OASIS data and facilitate access to Post staff, alumni, and other key stakeholders. They will also provide feedback on draft deliverables.

The Lead Reviewer will have primary responsibility for ensuring the timely and quality submission of all deliverables. This includes responsibility for reaching agreement on the review questions, all review activities and drafting of the recommendations and concept note, and for making adjustments based on feedback. The Lead Reviewer will also supervise the work of the Local Review Coordinator who will provide agreed support in collating review data, organising interviews, focus groups or surveys and arranging logistics for the review as required. The Local Review Coordinator will also advise on relevant aspects of the local Tonga context and use this to provide input into drafting of the review deliverables.

Duration of the review

The review will be conducted between July to December 2024. The Lead Reviewer will be contracted for up to 43 days (with at least part of the assignment conducted in Tonga) and the Local Review Coordinator in Tonga will be contracted for up to 35.5 days. The daily rates for the review team members will be separately agreed. The Lead Reviewer will also be provided with allowances/reimbursement for travel, accommodation, daily per diem, travel insurance and other agreed reimbursables.

Annex 2: Review Questions and Sub-Questions

Key Review Question 1 - Relevance

To what extent are the Australia Awards relevant to Australia and Tonga's development priorities?

Sub-Questions:

How well is the program aligned with Australia's overarching aid policy, DFAT's public and economic diplomacy strategies and Australia Awards global strategy?

To what extent has the program achieved an adequate focus on Government of Tonga priority sectors and skills shortages?

Are the levels of education, locations for study and fields of education provided most appropriate to contributing to economic and social development in Tonga? How well is the AAS preparing Tonga for the workforces of the future (green economy, digital economies)?

To what extent are key DFAT and Tonga stakeholders contributing to the strategic direction and oversight of the program?

How well is the program aligned with Australia's bilateral development portfolio with Tonga, including with its other investments?

How well is the program aligned to the Government's own financial investment in tertiary education, and other development partner investment? Are our numbers on par with expectations as Tonga's lead development partner? Is the program competitive?

Key Review Question 2 – Effectiveness

How effectively is the program in Tonga in meeting the four objectives under the Global Strategic Framework for the Australia Awards?

Sub-Questions:

What evidence is there that alumni have used their skills, knowledge, and networks to contribute to sustainable development in their home agency/ sector/country?

What evidence is there that alumni have developed and sustained positive people-to-people links, and have contributed to cooperation between Australia and Tonga?

To what extent is the program impacting the quality and preparedness of leadership in Tonga (disaggregated by gender and disability, public and private sectors, academia, and civil society)?

Are the selection methods appropriate?

Are pre-departure activities providing adequate preparation for studying and living in Australia? How satisfied are alumni with the support provided to them on return to Tonga?

What sort of support and ongoing training and connection do Alumni want (short courses, seminars, capacity building and other alumni activities?).

2.8. To what extent is the program and its participants/alumni generating positive public diplomacy results for the Australian and Tongan governments?

Key Review Question 3 - Inclusion

How well have the Australia Awards been implemented in Tonga to support Australia's GEDSI objectives?

Sub-Questions:

What efforts have been made throughout the scholarship cycle to enhance Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion, including identifying and addressing barriers to inclusion? What has been successful? What challenges and opportunities are there?

To what extent has the program benefited women, people with disabilities, and people from outer islands? How has the program promoted ongoing diverse leadership in Tonga or improvements to GEDSI within organisations led or staffed by Alumni? Have there been any unintended consequences for minority groups upon return?

To what extent is English language a barrier to improving access to the scholarships and successful study in Australia? What other barriers inhibit people from applying and being accepted to AAS?

Key Review Question 4 - Efficiency

How efficiently is the Australian Awards program being implemented?

Sub-Questions:

Is the balance/ratio of the program spend among the program streams appropriate? Are there opportunities to enhance these investments compared to other Australia Awards or global models?

How efficient are implementation arrangements across the scholarships cycle? How could these be improved?

How well is the MEL system producing robust data which to manage the program and to communicate and assess the outputs, outcomes, and longer-term impact of the program?

Key Review Question 5 - Recommendations

What recommendation can be made to support to improve future programming and alignment with the Australia's Development Partnership Program?

Sub-Questions:

What is an appropriate ratio and level of awards relevant for Tonga's development (i.e. Diploma, Bachelors, Masters and PhD, in-Australia, and in-region)?

How can DFAT improve targeting of awards to address key skills gaps, select future leaders most likely to contribute to the development of their country and region and the bilateral relationship? How can DFAT extend the benefits of the Australia Awards investment through strengthening professional networks, building capacity and providing opportunities for Australia Awards alumni on return home?

What is the appropriate ongoing financial commitment for Australia Awards scholarships over the next five years?

What is the minimum M&E system that should be introduced for a program of this size by Nuku'alofa Post, that would support data capture and analysis for decision making and improvement, and reporting, including against the global Australia Awards core indicators?

Annex 3. Review Methodology – Key components

The review undertook a utilisation focused approach - that the recommendations arising from the review are useful for its intended users – primarily the AHC. The review was conducted in accordance with the DFAT's [M&E Standards](#) (2023) and the principles in the DFAT's [Ethical Research and Evaluation Guidance Note](#) (2021). Consideration was given in review planning and implementation to participation in the review of women, youth, people with disability and people from outside of Nuku'alofa (including through conducting FGD in Vava'u and Ha'apai). This annex provides further details on the review methodology undertaken by the review team.

1. Desk-Based Research

To guide review activities and inform the review findings, the review team read background documents on the development context (as listed in Annex 4), the global Australia Awards and on the Australia Awards in Tonga. The review team also analysed the Tonga Australia Awards (AAS/AAPS) data extracted by the AHC from the DFAT Online Australian Scholarship Information System (OASIS). This included analysis of application (2020 and 2024 intake) and award offer data (2001-2024 intakes). This data is summarised in Annex 7.

2 Alumni Tracer Survey

To inform further AHC engagement with alumni and understanding of award outcomes, the review team also conducted an online tracer survey of AAS/AAPS alumni to determine their current complete contact details, employment and location. The survey also included questions on skill/knowledge utilisation and ongoing connections with Australia. The survey was conducted online between September to October 2024, using the online Survey Monkey tool. Each alumni with an email recorded was emailed a unique link to the survey and responses were monitored in real-time, with reminder emails sent at appropriate intervals during fieldwork. Following the survey period, data was coded, cleaned, and prepared for analysis and reporting.

The survey scope includes alumni from the Australia Awards Scholarship (or earlier Australian government scholarship for study in Australia) and the Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship ((or earlier Australian government scholarship for study in the Pacific)². The survey scope did not include Tongan alumni from the DFAT Australia Awards Fellowships of from the ACIAR John Allwright Fellowships (both also under the Australia Awards umbrella) as lists and email addresses for these alumni were not available in time for inclusion in the survey.

2.1 Survey instrument

The survey instrument contained questions designed to collect data on alumni:
current employment of (employment status/sector, occupation type, leadership role)
use of their knowledge and skills (K&S) to contribute to sustainable development (Outcome 1): alumni reintegration experience; sharing of knowledge and skills; use of knowledge and skills; promotion of inclusion (GEDSI); challenges using knowledge and skill
contributions to cooperation between Australia and Tonga (Outcome 2): Engagement with people met during award; Ongoing engagement with Australian organisations; Interest In engaging with other Tongan alumni
perceptions and sentiments about the scholarships
contact and demographic/award data (as required for updating the Alumni Database).

To provide comparisons with other countries where relevant, the Tonga survey questions (and response frames) correspond, as relevant to the questions in the GTF 2022 and/or to collect data for the AHC to report on DFAT's Australia Awards Monitoring and Evaluation

² Predecessor awards include Australian Development Cooperation Scholarships; Australian Development Scholarships; Australian International Development Assistance Bureau Australian Leadership Awards

Framework Core Global Indicators. In the interest of keeping the survey as short as possible, and to include questions on employment and alumni association engagement, the GTF was not replicated in full (e.g. with fewer questions in the survey on re-integration and voluntary activities).

2.2 Alumni database

As the first step in conducting the Tracer Survey (and for future alumni engagement), an AAT Alumni Database was created as follows:

The initial list of alumni was compiled using records on AAS and AAPS awards offered (and completed) as extracted from the DFAT OASIS database (which contains data on award intakes from 2001).

This data was supplemented with additional names (as available) of alumni that completed their award prior to the 2001 intake. These additional names of alumni prior to 2001 are not a comprehensive list (and further work will be needed by the AHC to include these earlier alumni in the AHC alumni database (for alumni engagement and MEL purposes).

Where the data included records on individuals who had been offered more than one award, only the most recent award was included in the alumni database. Alumni were asked to report on their most recent completed award (resulting in a few alumni reporting as AAS/AAF fellows). Duplicate records were also deleted.

Records of alumni known to be deceased are separately recorded in the alumni database.

Alumni whose awards were not completed (withdrawn on scholarship/award terminations) are separately identified. These 29 alumni were sent a separate survey to complete, to which there were no responses.

To note that the number of records in the Alumni Database is progressively increasing as pre-2001 alumni are identified, and newly completing awardees are added to the database.

2.3 Alumni contact tracing

To maximise survey responses (and future alumni engagement), where there were phone details, an initial contact tracing of alumni was conducted by phone to collect email addresses of the alumni with no emails or with university email addresses unlikely to be active. The AHC is still progressing the collection of current alumni email addresses.

2.4 Survey distribution and response

As a result, of these above activities, of the 529 alumni (who completed their course of study records in the database (as of 24 September 2024), 475 alumni were invited by email (from Survey Monkey) to participate in the survey. The AHC also placed a Facebook post to promote the survey to the alumni without email addresses (who would not be contacted through Survey Monkey) or to pre-2001 alumni not on the alumni database.

Of the emails sent by Survey Monkey, 106 were invalid addresses (bounced), meaning that there were 369 alumni contacted to respond to the survey. It is noted that even if an email address was recorded as being delivered (valid), this address may not be currently monitored by alumni. This is especially the case where only a university email address was recorded on OASIS. In some cases, emails may have been automatically moved to an alumni's email "junk" or "spam" folder and not seen by alumni. Survey Monkey records that

197 of the alumni actively opened the survey request in their email client (but did not necessarily “click-through” to commence the survey).

Following data cleansing (to remove duplicate or largely incomplete responses from the analysis), there were 99 alumni responses recorded. This reflects a response rate of 27% of the target population³, or an effective 50% response rate of those alumni who opened the survey request email. These rates compare favourably with those of comparable ACER GTF surveys.

Alumni contact status and survey response rates

Below summarises alumni contact coverage and response rates for the tracer surveys:

- Total Alumni database: 529 (19% response rate to survey)
- Alumni with email addresses: 475
- Alumni with contactable email addresses (not bounced): 369 (27% response rate to survey)
- Alumni who opened the survey request email: 197 (50% response rate to the survey)

Open-ended responses added depth to the responses and were analysed thematically according to the different areas of focus. The survey analysis considered disaggregated data by gender, award program (AAS/AAPS) and level of study. Given the small number of respondents with a disability, data disaggregation was not able undertaken by disability. As the AAS are mainly awards for postgraduate study and the AAPS mainly for undergraduate study, given the number of respondents it was not possible to meaningfully disaggregate the data to determine whether a reported outcome or perception was related to whether an alumni was an undergraduate or postgraduate, or instead whether the response reflected whether the alumni had undertaken their award in Australia or the Pacific.

3. Key stakeholder interviews

The review team conducted 24 (17M/7F) semi-structured consultations with the purposively sampled stakeholders listed in Annex 5 to collect stakeholder perspectives on the review questions, and how the Australis Awards program in Tonga could better achieve its objectives. Stakeholder consultations included with: DFAT personnel (in Canberra and Tonga); Tonga government, private sector and NGO employers, and training institutions; as well as with other scholarship sponsors (e.g., the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade). Notes were taken during the interviews and discussed/analysed by the review team to identify patterns and exceptional/outlier responses.

4. Focus Group Discussions

The review team conducted FGD with alumni in Tongatapu, Vav’au and Ha’apai. These FGD provided in-depth data on alumni perceptions of their time in Australia, utilisation of the knowledge and skills gained, on-going engagement with Australia and interest in participating in AHC alumni activities.

5. Case study interviews

³ This is the “target population” (as used by ACER, GTF 2022) – all alumni who fit the population definition (in this case alumni with completed awards) and have a ‘valid’ email address.

The review team also conducted in-depth interviews/talanoa with six alumni⁴ who have made significant impact in Tonga resulting from the knowledge, skills and connections made whilst on their award. Their stories will be written up as case studies (1-2 pages) and provided separately to the AHC.

6. Sense-making workshop

The review team presented the preliminary findings and recommendations to AHC stakeholders responsible for the Australia Awards in Tonga (in meetings on 2-3 October 2024). This was an important step for the review team to gain further insight from the AHC regarding the review findings and to identify where further analysis was needed. This input was used in drafting the review report. The review report was then finalised following feedback on the draft from DFAT.

7. Review limitations

Although input was received from a broad range of alumni it is not necessarily representative of all of the alumni. The participation in the review of alumni whose intake was before 2001 (and likely to be in more senior positions or retired) was at a lower level than of alumni from more recent intakes. Some of the senior key GoT stakeholders/ alumni were not available to participate in KII/FGD due to leave/other heavy commitments post the Pacific Island Forum meeting in Tonga in August 2024. Although more female than male stakeholders were interviewed, their responses seemed representative of their role level and not their gender. Whilst a representative organisation of people with disability were consulted, only one alumni with disability was available to be interviewed by the review team (although a number of people with disability did respond to the Tracer Survey).

Those who took the time to participate in the review may also have a more positive perception of the Australia Awards than non-respondents. Whilst many positive development impacts were reported by alumni, it was not within the time available for this review to assess the relative contribution of the Australia Awards to these outcomes (particularly where alumni have had opportunities for multiple long-term scholarships and short-term training) from different development partners. Nevertheless, the review findings with respect to perceptions of Australia and award outcomes are largely consistent with the evidence collected findings of a range of ACER GTF surveys and studies across multiple Australia Awards countries.

Data USP enrolments by Tongan students at the USP campuses in Tonga and comparative data on the completion rate of Australia Awards Pacific scholars from other Pacific countries was not available in time for analysis in this report.

Overall, the evidence and input collected from the above sources provide a solid basis for the overall representative findings described in this report.

⁴ Hon Dr Pita Taufatofua, Governor Ha'apai; Hon Dr Taniela Fusimalohi, MP, 'Eua; Mr Timote Solo, Disability Alumni/Teacher; Magistrate Loupou Kuli, Chief Magistrate, Vava'u; Ms Mele Mangisi, Executive Director, Anti-Corruption Commission; Hon Dr 'Aisake Eke, Tongatapu MP.

Annex 4: Key reference documents

DFAT Strategic Direction

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Annex 5: Key stakeholders consulted

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Organisations and stakeholders consulted during the review listed below.

1. Australian High Commission, Nuku'alofa

Erin Gleeson, Deputy High Commissioner and Counsellor

Asi Vanisi, Program Manager, Australia Awards

Siaosi Lepuha Faka'osi, Program Manager, Skills and Alumni

Runte Likiafu, Program Manager, Agriculture and Private Sector

Elle Bradshaw, Second Secretary, Humanitarian and Energy

AHC - Elisapeta Fa'au, Senior Program Manager, Education

2. DFAT Canberra and Posts

Rhona McPhee, DFAT Canberra

Cynthia Ojiambo, DFAT Canberra

Akosita Rokomate, Suva Post

Betty Colati, Suva Post

Jovesa Veresi, Suva Post

Ariane Stevenson, Samoa Post

3. Government of Tonga

'Isikeli Oko, CEO, MET

Pelenaise Telefoni, Scholarship Officer, MET

Dorina Kioa, CEO, PSC

'Ana 'Akauola, Chief Medical Officer, MOH

Kolotia Fotu, DCEO, MTED

Opeti Pulotu, CEO, TNQAB

Lily Loni Fangupo, Acting Governor, Ha'apai

Mataki Paongo Tupou, Acting Governor, Vava'u

Lupe Matoto, DCEO, MEIDECC

Mele Mangisi, Executive Director, Anti-Corruption Commission

4. Other Tongan Organisations

Rhema Misa, Director, Lavame'a Ta'e'iloa

Sam Vea, President, Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industries

Vanessa Heleta, Director, Talitha Project

Ungatea Kata, Tupou Tertiary Institute/ Free Wesleyan School System

5. Other scholarship donors

Daishoji Toshiyuki, Japanese Embassy

Yukino Saigo, Japanese Embassy

Hiroko Oka, JICA

Alfred Vaka, JICA

Maryanne Saafi, Scholarship Counsellor, MFAT

Lesieli Nai, Development Program Coordinator, MFAT

6. Other

Jone Ravuikadavu, ACIAR

Bridget Gray, Team Leader, TASP
Rosamond Bing, Deputy Team Leader, TASP
Allan Illingworth, Post M&E Support
Ana Bing Fonua, Infrastructure Projects

Annex 6: Development Context for Australia Awards in Tonga

1. Overview

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy, comprising 171 islands grouped into three main clusters, with only 36 inhabited. Tonga is categorised as an upper-middle income country by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD.

Tonga faces significant development challenges due to its relative isolation and lack of economies of scale. Natural disasters affect more than 40% of the population in a typical disaster year, [resulting in economic losses](#) equivalent to 14% of gross domestic product (GDP).

Tonga is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including cyclones and changing rainfall patterns. [Tonga](#) is committed to building greater resilience to the risks of climate change through sustainable development. The Kingdom's Strategic Development Framework 2015 - 2025 expresses a commitment to mitigate climate change and to pursue inclusive and equitable economic growth.

The Tonga [Strategic Development Framework](#) (2015 - 2025) is structured into three thematic areas:

- Building National Resilience to external threats and risks
- Improving the quality services and affordability of government services
- Progressive Economic Growth.

One of the priority areas is an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the available opportunities in Tonga and overseas, by delivering improved Technical and Vocational Education and Training”.

The strategies include:

- Promoting skill development through appropriate development of domestic training institutions, and mobilisation of external training opportunities
- Improving the focus of education and training on increased productivity of the work force to increase production, exports and overseas employment of Tongans.

2. Education

2.1 Education system overview

The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) in Tonga derives its legal mandate from the Education Act 2013.

Its primary functions are rooted in the following objectives:

- Provision of skilled and competent students

- Policy advice to Government
- Effective implementation of education policies.

The Ministry's mandate is aligned with broader global and regional education goals, including Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." These target areas such as participation, performance, and quality across both formal and non-formal education settings. The Ministry's divisions incorporate these indicators into their programs to track progress towards these global objectives.

At the regional level, the Ministry supports the Pacific Regional Education Framework 2018-2030 (PacREF), endorsed by the Forum Education Ministers.

The PacREF framework focuses on four key policy areas:

- quality and relevance
- learning pathways
- student outcomes and wellbeing
- teacher professionalism.

In line with these objectives, the Ministry ensures that education including tertiary education programs meet international standards.

Programs are designed to be responsive to the needs of industries and stakeholders. This is done through compliance with the Education Act and the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) Act. The goal is to ensure that Tongan youth are:

- Able to earn a living
- Employable both locally and internationally
- Capable of contributing positively to Tonga's human resources needs after completing their education or training.

This focus on both national and international employability ensures that Tonga's education system not only meets domestic needs but also empowers students to compete in the global job market.

2.2 Pathways to tertiary education

The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) is the largest Ministry in Tonga and responsible for the administration and management of education and training in Tonga, through a range of agencies including schools. The Ministry coordinates the education of approximately 32,000 students, from early childhood education through to higher secondary (MET 2023).

Organisational Outcome 24 in the Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF) relates to education and training and states:

"Improved education and training which encourages life-long learning of both academic and vocational knowledge by all people, so better equipping us to make active use of the opportunities in the community, the domestic economy and overseas."

In Tonga, education is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 14. The 2013 Education Act in Tonga states that all children under the age of 19 have access to quality education, regardless of gender, religion, socio-economic status, disability, or location.

Girls tend to progress through the education system from primary to upper secondary at the expected age more frequently than boys, whose educational progression is more likely to stall during lower and upper secondary stages. UNICEF (2023) states that in Tonga, 16% of girls aged 16-18 do not progress to upper secondary education compared to 29% of boys.

This drop in attendance contributes to rising youth unemployment and concerns over alcohol and substance abuse. In 2023, 775 students graduated/passed year 7 TFSC. Literacy rates in Tonga show minimal gender disparity, with slightly higher rates among females.

Recent education support programs have focused on improving the quality of education including teacher competencies.

2.3 Post-secondary education and training

Tonga has 14 institutions offering post-secondary certificate and diploma-level technical and vocational education and training (VET). Among these, the Roman Catholic Education System and the Free Wesleyan Church oversees several post-secondary institutions, including the Tupou Tertiary Institute. University degrees can be earned from institutions like the University of the South Pacific (USP's) Tonga campus and technical institutes such as the Tonga Maritime Polytechnic Institute, Tonga Institute of Science and Technology, and Tonga Institute of Higher Education. In addition, Government ministries in Tonga provide specialised education and training programs aligned with their core functions (such as the Ministry of Health with the school of nursing). In addition, Tongans also have access to on-line education programmes, and many students study abroad.

The US\$20.9m [Skills and Employment for Tongans \(SET\) Project](#), which is jointly funded by the World Bank and Australian Government, aims to support Tonga to address secondary school dropout rates, as well as to increase employment opportunities through improved technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and international labour opportunities. The project has supported over 3,600 secondary and tertiary students by covering school fees for the vulnerable households unable to pay school fees for their children education. The project is expected to be completed in September 2024. A follow-on phase will be implemented under the new Tonga Pathway to Employment program, funded through World Bank IDA 20. The objective is to promote high school retention and graduation and to improve the employability of at-risk youth to facilitate the transition to the labour market.

Pacific TAFE is present but does not offer trades courses. Some major infrastructure programs also provide VET. For example, the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific provided funding for the Tongatapu port upgrade. The project is ADB led (co-financing) with a foreign contractor that employs mostly locals and do a lot of on-the-job training.

CSOs such as Tonga Women in ICT (TWICT) are providing training on digital skills, cyber safety and cybersecurity (in evening courses).

The USP is the region's pre-eminent tertiary organisation, is governed by 12 Pacific Island Countries. It supports around 30,000 university enrolments and 5,000 TAFE Pacific enrolments per year from across the region. Australia [has been investing](#) in the university for five decades. The current partnership is worth \$86 million over six years from 2019 to 2025. The partnership provides flexible core funding to support implementation of USP's Strategic Plan, including efforts to meet the tertiary education needs of the Pacific. USP is a key

source of graduates to industry and government in the region, providing the critical workforce for economic development, particularly in areas of new technology and responding to challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, renewable energy, and oceans, which are important to Australia's interests.

The USP [Annual Report](#) for 2022, records that the GoT paid FJD 1.5m as the government contribution to the USP in 2022. The Australian government also contributed FJD25.0 million in 2022 (in addition to payment of tuition fees for its AAPS awardees from across the Pacific). Tongan students have in-country access to the USP Campus⁵.

The GoT Budget Statement F24/25 indicates budget support towards the “upskilling and professional development of the young generation through the Tonga National University (TNU). The University comprises five faculties delivering over 50 programs ranging from Certificates to Diplomas and to Degrees. A total budget of TOP\$5.4m under MET’s recurrent budget was allocated in FY24/25 towards the operationalization of TNU, of which will be fully utilized by the end of the fiscal year.” TNU has an MOU with Manukau Institute, New Zealand for skills training.

2.4 Tertiary/other scholarships for Tonga

2.4.1 Government of Tonga

The GoT Budget Statement for FY24/25 noted “[Ongoing offering of scholarships](#) to give students more opportunity in higher education. The priorities for funding include candidates with high-quality research plans and five (5) scholarships were awarded for Masters-level research candidates in 2023-2026. Half of all the Government scholarships were allocated to the education sector.⁵ It is expected that the recurrent budget allocation for government-funded scholarships at TOP\$3.3m in FY2024 will be exceeded by 36.4% or TOP\$1.2m by the end of the year due to increased number of beneficiaries particularly identified technical capacity gaps such as civil engineering.” In 2024, the GoT provided 67 scholarships with the following profile: 67% UG; female 69%; 58% employed (the rest school leavers/currently studying); medicine 24%, education 22%, commerce 20%.

2.4.2 APTC

The APTC is a major Australian government foreign aid initiative that commenced in 2008, that has spent over \$350 million, and that has turned out over 15,000 graduates with Australian qualifications. DFAT invests around AUD 25 million per year and produces about 1,000 graduates annually with full Australian accredited qualifications in addition to non-accredited short courses and micro credentials.

Since 2007, 639 Tongans (51% female) have graduated from the [APTC](#) (at the main APTC campuses and also in Tonga). In 2023, 146 Tongan students (38M/108F) studied at the APTC in 2023 almost all (92%) on DFAT funded scholarships. 94 Tongans (48M/44F) have studied at the APTC in 2024 YTD (to September 2024). The APTC has also provided capacity strengthening of Tongan TVET institutions, and conducted GEDSI, climate change and skills for mobility training activities.

2.4.3 Other Development Partners

⁵ Data on Tongan student attendance at the USP campuses in Tonga was requested but not provided by USP

The largest award of scholarships to Tonga is by China. In 2017 it was reported that about [400 Tongans have graduated from China's universities](#), with significant escalation of awards offered since then (including by central Chinese agencies and individual universities). Although not able to be verified, the review team was advised there were at least 50-75 scholarships awarded annually by China. It is noted that one Ministry commented however that recognition of the courses studied in China (particularly if studied in Chinese) and the relevance of the studies (especially in the health area) could be problematic for alumni employment opportunities.

The following table summarises, based on the online information available, the scholarships offered by other development partners to Tonga:

Scholarship / Donors	Number per year	Level of study/duration	Country of study	Focus areas	Benefits	Other
Manaaki NZ Scholars hips	Pacific (10) NZ (10).	Undergraduate (3-4 years) Postgraduate Certificate (6 months) Postgraduate Diploma (1 year) Master's (1-2 years); PhD (3.5 years)	New Zealand or Pacific (Fiji or Vanuatu)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security and agriculture • Renewable energy • Governance • Peace and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full tuition, • monthly allowance • round-trip flight 	Centralised selection in NZ (with final validation by NZ High Commission in Tonga. Selection includes psychometric testing.
NZ Short Term Training Scholars hips	Not Available	One week to 12 months. Successful applicants:	Undertake a training course with a New Zealand-certified training provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must align with the human resource development needs of your country • Must align with the New Zealand priority themes and sectors: Climate Change and Resilience • Economic Resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full tuition, • monthly allowance, • round-trip flight 	Not Available
Japan Ministry of	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full tuition 	Not Available

Scholarship / Donors	Number per year	Level of study/duration	Country of study	Focus areas	Benefits	Other
Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate Specialized Training College College of Technology Teachers Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monthly allowance round-trip flight between Japan and Tonga. 	
China	At least 50 per year in different fields (by China Scholarship Council). Other awards offered by individual institutions etc	Awards are available at undergraduate to doctoral levels (with Chinese proficiency required for Chinese taught study programs).	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main problem is accreditation of their courses if they are conducted in Chinese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Available 	Number not at able to be validated as China scholarships are not directed through GoT channels. Ad hoc scholarships provided as requested (e.g. from visiting Chinese universities)
Chevening (UK)	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chevening scholarships managed through Fiji. 4 in 2023 and 3 in 2024 doing a post graduate degree in law. Many lawyers go into private practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Available 	Not Available
Fulbright	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Available 	Not Available

Regional organisations also provide tertiary education opportunities to Tonga. For example,

the Pacific Community funds a range of training in health-related courses for Tonga and the region.

3. Inclusion in Tonga

Tonga, an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, is composed of approximately 170 islands, of which only about 40 are inhabited. This geographical dispersion creates challenges for the equitable distribution of services across the islands, often leading to compromises in the availability and quality of certain services, particularly for those in remote or outer islands.

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy, with its governance and social structure deeply influenced by culture, customs, and Christian beliefs. These cultural values and religious tenets play a significant role in shaping everyday life and dictate how societal roles and responsibilities are distributed. Gender norms and expectations, rooted in traditional and religious frameworks, are prominent, with specific roles typically ascribed to men and women. This has a direct influence on what certain genders are socially permitted or encouraged to do, reinforcing gender roles that can limit opportunities for women and marginalised groups.

Tongan society is highly hierarchical, and social hierarchies and cultural norms create barriers for vulnerable groups such as the disabled, making it difficult for them to access resources, opportunities, and social mobility. These structural inequalities are further exacerbated by the lack of a systematic approach or dedicated resources for the inclusion of marginalised populations. The stigmatisation and negative attitudes toward marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities or individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds, remain entrenched in society. There are persistent social and behavioural attitudes that uphold discrimination, limiting the participation of these groups in public life and access to basic services, including education and healthcare.

The TSDf states that a skilled and educated population is essential for maintaining infrastructure, building dynamic businesses, negotiating on the global stage, and improving public services. Achieving gender balance is also vital, allowing both women and men to advance together. Any gaps in these areas can hinder personal development, limit equality, and slow overall progress for the nation.

Tonga scored 0.739 in HDI in 2018. Life expectancy at birth for Tongans is 71 years in 2019 and gender inequality index of 0.4 in 2019 (UNTAD 2021) and records a 99% literacy rate in 2021 (Tonga Statistics)

Gender. As of the 2021 [Tonga Census](#), 22.5% of those aged 20-49 hold a tertiary/university qualification. There are however significant gender differences with 13.6 women completing university compared to 10 men and 8. However, women remain underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated fields like maritime and technical sciences. This gender disparity is influenced by societal norms regarding career choices and perceived capabilities, with 8.4 females completing TVET compared to 10 men.

According to the 2018 Labour Force Survey, informal employment was widespread in Tonga. The agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector had the highest rates of informal employment, with 98% of women and 96% of men working informally. Notably, 39% of women and 53% of men worked in informal jobs within the formal sector. Female share of employment in [senior and middle management](#) in government accounts for 32% in 2021.

Disability. The 2018 Disability Survey revealed that 11.4% of individuals over the age of 18 in Tonga experience disability, affecting a total of 7,649 people (52% women)⁶. Children with disability face considerable barriers to attending and staying in school, with lower participation rates overall. Unfortunately, there are limited facilities available for children with disability, with none located on the outer islands. The 2018 survey reported that 61% of children with disability dropped out of school, and 8% never attended. Among those who never attended school, 78.6% of individuals with disabilities reported that illness or disability was the reason. Additionally, people with disabilities were more likely to show less interest in school or were needed to help with household activities (0.7%). For those who dropped out of school, 23.7% of people with disabilities did so to assist with household tasks. Further disparities reveal that people with disabilities are more likely to leave school due to illness, accessibility issues (such as distance to school), disliking the school environment, bullying, and corporal punishment, highlighting the complex challenges they face in accessing education. Limited access to mainstream education for children with disabilities contributes to lower literacy and numeracy skills among adults, which affects their confidence and ability to make day-to-day decisions.

The Disability Survey found 63% of persons with disability were not in the labour force; 35.3% of persons with disabilities were involved in skilled agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries occupations, notably men. Women with disability who work are most likely to be working in craft and related trades occupations. There were 12.8% of persons without disability in professional occupations compared to 10.4% with disability, whereas in the clerical support workers category, 5.3% were those without disability compared to 2.3% with disability.

Outer island inclusion. Most of the population, of 100,179 people (in 2021), reside on the main island of Tongatapu. For every 10 people, 2.1 live in towns. Urban areas show higher educational attainment compared to rural areas. There has been a steady net migration from Tonga's outer island groups to Tongatapu, with the population on 'Eua, Ha'apai and Ongo Niua saw decreases but population in Vava'u had increased by 1.8% from the census in 2016. The TSDf II claims that this movement is driven by the reality of limited education and employment opportunities in small communities.

According to the latest HIES 2021, the poverty data reflects the relative poverty decrease from 3.1 percent (2006) to 0.1 percent (2021).

4. Economic context

4.1 Tonga's economy

Tonga lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an area of dynamic geological activity. It is ranked the second most vulnerable country in the world to natural hazards (after Vanuatu). Most Pacific Island nations face significant development challenges due to their relative isolation and lack of economies of scale, and Tonga is no exception⁷.

Natural disasters pose a significant threat to Tonga, affecting more than 40% of the population in a typical disaster year, resulting in economic losses equivalent to 14% of gross domestic product (GDP). Climate change is expected to exacerbate these challenges. In

⁶ Baker (2022). PACIFIC REGIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION REVIEW, 2022

⁷ JRDS (2023). Labour Mobility Supply Management Strategy

recent years the economy was severely impacted by the dual shocks of the January 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai volcanic eruption and tsunami and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government provided various assistance during a challenging period, transitioning from survival to recovery and now focusing on increasing investment to enhance growth. Increasing investment is crucial for achieving sustainable development and macroeconomic stability.

Tonga experienced negative growth at -2.44 per cent in 2022, when GDP per capita was US\$4,548. However, the economy rebounded in 2023, growing by 2.8% after 2 years of contraction (ADB 2024). This was largely because of the resumption of tourism and public investment projects (ADB 2024). Visitor arrivals remain at less than 70% of pre-pandemic levels and are not expected to grow in the short term, because of limited flight connections and low accommodation supply (ADB 2024). The [GoT Budget statement for 2024-205](#) states that the economy is projected to maintain an average growth rate of 2.8% over the medium term, from FY24/25 to F26/27.

Tonga’s small economy is driven primarily by remittances, tourism, agriculture, and foreign aid. Tongans working or living abroad in the United States (US) are the primary source of remittances, followed by New Zealand and Australia. Remittances as a share of GDP is estimated to have increased from 39.1 percent in the previous year to 44.3 percent as of November 2023 (GoT Budget Statement FY24/25).

The economy is dominated by the public sector with small amounts of private sector activity in construction, services, manufacturing, fisheries, forestry, and tourism. A large share of agricultural production is for subsistence and own production, but this is declining. The GoT Budget Statement for FY24/25 states that the primary sector account for 17.5%, the Industrial Sector 13.9% percent and the services sector 50.3% of GDP. Economic growth is also supported by construction projects, largely financed by donor loans and grants.

The GoT [2024-2025 Budget Statement](#) identifies supporting economic growth initiatives in the agriculture, fisheries, and tourism sectors over the next three years. The statement indicated that the government will also continue to maintain a focus on social sector projects, particularly in improving healthcare standards, enhancing the quality of education, and implementing social safety programs to assist disadvantaged individuals and families in need.

The GoT [Budget Statement](#) for FY24/25, TOP 365 million will be provided to Tonga by development partners. Of this development funding Australia is the largest bilateral donor (16.4%), followed the People’s Republic of China (16.2%), Government of New Zealand (11%), pooled Australia and New Zealand (3%), Japan (2%). Multilateral funding is also provided by the World Bank (21%) and the ADB (15%)

4.2 Labour market

The most recent labour force information can be drawn from the 2021 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (and also the [Tonga Labour Force Survey](#) 2018. In 2021, the working-age population of Tonga was 64,900 and the [labour force participation rate](#) was 59.6 per cent, which was higher for men (70.1 per cent) than women (50.5 per cent). Employment is dominated by the public sector. Tonga has a small private sector with a small amounts of private sector activity in construction, services, manufacturing, fisheries, forestry, and tourism.

The 2018 Tonga Labour Force Survey highlighted the under representation of women in agriculture, forestry, and fishery (Government of Tonga 2019), possibly influenced by traditional attitudes (Tonga Civil Society Organisation, Human Rights Task Force 2022). Women are more likely than men to be employers and professionals but are underrepresented in the construction, transportation, and storage industries (Government of Tonga 2019). The most common occupation among women is craft and related trades, whereas for men it is agriculture, forestry, and fishery (Government of Tonga 2019).⁸

4.3 Skills gaps

The supply of skilled labour is acknowledged as a constraint on economic growth (ADB 2024)⁹. The ILO report that there are notable shortages in skilled professions such as teachers, engineers, healthcare professionals, and cooks. The GoT [2023-2024 Budget statement](#) states that the Tonga economy has a small population with limited skilled labour in certain areas for example, specialist healthcare. High staff turnover in the public service exacerbates this concern. Rates of out migration in Tonga are high (the net migration rate for [Tonga in 2024 is -7.332 per 1000 population](#)) exacerbating skill shortage in the labour force.

Tonga published its first [Tonga Labour Mobility Supply Management Strategy](#) (2023). The report states that “Tonga faces significant development challenges due to its relative isolation and lack of economies of scale and that there is “a serious under-skilling of the work force, with lack of sufficient educational and vocational options”.

The labour market analysis collected data from the most current occupational, skills and demographic data using the 2021 Tonga Census, other printed sources and consultations. Their analysis of demographic and labour market data identified that the Tongan labour market is both complex and under-developed, in the sense that there is a lack of skilled and qualified workers able to meet an expanding local and international demand for skilled labour.

Key findings relevant to labour management supply issues, are as follows:

High Skilled Shortages: There are significant shortages of skilled managers, professionals and associate professionals particularly in the sectors of IT, Health, Environmental and Energy occupations, and in Public Policy.

Strong Demand for Higher Qualifications: Further to this, over half of the jobs advertised in 2022 were in the managerial, professional and associate professional areas requiring at least Bachelor’s degrees or, in a number of cases, higher post-graduate qualifications for example in Law, Business, IT, Accounting, Economics, Commerce, Marketing as well as in Engineering and Science. Postgraduate qualifications were also often required for some technicians and associate professionals and for a few positions in skilled agriculture and fisheries.

Shortage of Qualified Engineers, Teachers and Nurses: There is also further evidence of shortages of qualified engineers, specialist and qualified nurses, as well as qualified teachers at the secondary school level and for educational support staff in both primary and secondary schools. It should be noted that there is only a small number of young entrants coming into these occupations.

⁸ PSDI (2024) Leadership Matters 2024: Benchmarking Women’s Business Leadership in the Pacific

⁹ ADB (2024) [Asian Development Outlook](#), April 2024.

Trades and Maintenance Skill Shortages: With respect to occupations in the trades and related areas, there are distinct shortages in a range of areas including for skilled air-conditioning mechanics and refrigeration mechanics, electricians generally, plumbers, riggers, sheet metal workers, building maintenance and repair, industrial and agricultural machinery repairers, and roofers. These shortages are affecting building and construction activities, the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure for recent natural disasters and the maintenance of key power and energy facilities.

Shortages of Chefs, Cooks, Retail and Service Workers: There are shortages evidenced by a number of non-Tongan residents working in these jobs – as was demonstrated in the census analysis, 8% of chefs are non-Tongan, and 12.5% of non-residents work in sales and services. Again, there is a need to maintain or if possible, increase TVET programs to address the lack of qualifications for skilled young people in these occupations. It should be noted though that in most cases, sales and services workers may only require skills learned on the job.

Lack of Qualified Technicians, Trades and Clerical Workers: For many skilled based occupations where a post-school qualification could be expected, a significant proportion of job holders do not have one. For example, chefs are an occupation in demand but only one in three aged 25-60 years have a post-school qualification. Only just over one-in-three plumbers & pipe fitters have a post-school qualification. Similarly, only three in ten cooks and vehicle mechanics respectively have a post-school qualification.

Core work skills and ICT skills and qualified labour are also needed across all sectors of employment.

“The labour market data analysis for this Strategy identified that there is a lack of skilled and qualified workers to meet an expanding local and international demand for skilled labour. A concerted, long-term effort is therefore urgently required to train, upskill and improve skills supply to meet demand for local sustainable economic development, as well as overseas labour demands.”

The government is responding by investing more in education and training programs, that help build a skilled and productive workforce and creating an enabling environment that supports the retention of skilled workers within the country. The GoT [2024-2025 Budget statement](#) indicates that this investment is through establishing the Tonga National University, and implementing initiatives like the World Bank-funded SET Project to ensure that those who have dropped out of secondary school have alternative vocational and learning in view of labour mobility pathways. [Youth](#) in Tonga face significant challenges transitioning from school to work,

4.4 Labour mobility

Labour mobility is a key factor in the Tongan labour market - typically in unskilled, low-skilled and semi-skilled roles. In 2020, there were 74,550 Tongans abroad and personal remittances accounted for 38.3 per cent of GDP – the highest that remittances contribute to GDP among the Pacific Island Countries. Migration is generally into seafaring and the maritime and fisheries sector. Two key labour mobility schemes also include the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme. Both of these schemes are designed to fill seasonal labour shortages, in largely in agriculture and horticulture industries (ILO, 2024).

The Government of Tonga Migration and Sustainable Development Policy, 2020 has the explicit objective of conceptualizing and mainstreaming migration into Tonga's national development planning.

The GoT budget statement for FY24/25 states that "Labour schemes abroad have a significant impact on the economy. Tonga's economic growth and development face a significant challenge because of the departure of skilled workers to labour programs in Australia and New Zealand. While the remittances sent by these workers are crucial for income, their departure has resulted in a labour shortage that is hindering productivity and innovation."

While acknowledging the economic benefits of remittances, the government is attuned to the social ramifications of emigration. A pressing concern is the "brain drain" phenomenon, where skilled individuals seek opportunities abroad, resulting in a loss of expertise critical for Tonga's development and innovation. To mitigate this risk, the government is intensifying investments in education and training, aiming to cultivate a skilled workforce capable of driving domestic growth.

The [Tonga Labour Mobility Supply Management Strategy](#) (2023) concluded that labour mobility provides a viable opportunity to overcome Tonga's economic challenges by enabling the temporary movement of Tongan workers to meet labour shortages in countries such as Australia and New Zealand.

4.5 Jobs of the future

Tonga's first ever [National Employment Policy](#) is being developed with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO). This policy will help generate quality employment opportunities and enhance the ability of workers and businesses to withstand future crises. It would also support Tonga as it seeks to exploit the benefits of trends such as digitization and eco-friendliness, as well as navigate the impacts of climate change."

4.5.1 The green economy

Tonga is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including cyclones, coral bleaching, and changing rainfall patterns. [Tonga](#) is committed to building greater resilience to the increasing risks of climate change through sustainable development. The Kingdom's Strategic Development Framework 2015-2025, and 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), express a commitment to mitigate climate change and pursue inclusive and equitable economic growth.

The green economy is an economic framework that aims to achieve sustainable development while minimizing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It emphasizes reducing carbon emissions, improving energy efficiency, and conserving natural resources while promoting social equity and economic growth. [Green jobs](#) of the future are positions that contribute to preserving or restoring the environment, often by promoting sustainability, reducing carbon emissions, or conserving natural resources. Green jobs that are likely to be in demand in the future: renewable energy technician, sustainability consultant, environmental engineer, energy efficiency specialist, climate change analyst, environmental

data scientist, green building architect, conservation scientist, marine biologist (conservation)¹⁰ .

4.5.2 'Blue economy'

The blue [economy](#), is a term used to describe the economic activities associated with the oceans and seas. The [World Bank](#) defines the blue economy as the “sustainable use of ocean resources to benefit economies, livelihoods and ocean ecosystem health”.

The [activities](#) commonly understood to represent the blue economy include maritime shipping, fishing and aquaculture, coastal tourism, renewable energy, water desalination, undersea cabling, seabed extractive industries and deep sea mining, marine genetic resources, and biotechnology. The blue economy is increasingly seen as a key driver for achieving sustainable development, particularly for coastal and island nations. The concept is closely aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water), which emphasizes the need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

Blue economy jobs focus on harnessing ocean resources while ensuring that the health of marine ecosystems is preserved and enhanced. The blue economy spans a wide range of sectors, including fisheries and aquaculture, marine tourism, renewable energy, maritime transport, marine conservation and management, marine biotechnology, waste management and pollution control

4.5.3 Digital economy

The IMF have [noted](#) that “Developing the private sector is critical to boosting Tonga’s growth potential. Notably, digitalization can be an effective way to overcome geographical limitations and widen economic opportunities”.

The digital economy refers to an economy that is primarily based on digital technologies, especially the internet and other related information and communication technologies (ICT). It includes activities such as e-commerce, digital platforms, digital payments, and the creation and distribution of digital content. It encompasses all economic activities that result from billions of online connections among people, businesses, devices, data, and processes. Key sectors include fintech, e-commerce, digital media, edtech and healthtech. It also brings challenges like data privacy and cybersecurity, while creating new job opportunities and influencing consumer behaviour.

Digital economy roles can be found across various industries where digital tools, platforms, and technologies drive economic activities and innovation. They include in areas of software development and engineering; data science and analytics, cybersecurity, digital marketing, e-commerce and online business management, cloud computing and IT infrastructure, artificial intelligence and machine learning, digital content creation and management, blockchain and cryptocurrency, telecommunications and network management¹¹.”

Annex 7: The Australia Awards

1. Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

¹⁰ UNEP (2011). Green Economy Report; World Economic Forum (2023) – “The Future of Jobs Report”

¹¹ World Economic Forum (2023) – “The Future of Jobs Report”

The Australia Awards are administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on behalf of DFAT and by the ACIAR. Australia Awards are delivered and supported by a range of partners who play a crucial role in contributing to the success of Australia Awards:

- DFAT: administers the Australia Awards through a devolved architecture, encompassing the Global Australia Awards Framework, country and regional programs, and posts. Awardees are also important stakeholders for State and Territory Offices. DFAT harnesses diplomatic leverage in foreign policy to promote development and soft power outcomes.
- ACIAR: The [Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research](#) offers scholarships for partner country scientists to obtain Australian postgraduate qualifications, aiming to enhance research capacity in ACIAR's partner country institutions. ACIAR's PhD and Masters scholarships for agricultural researchers are administered through the Australia Awards system.
- Partner country governments: Partner governments play an important part in the establishment of priorities and targets for Australia Awards in each country or region.
- Academic institutions and education providers: Deliver targeted, relevant and high-quality courses, and provide effective support across the scholar journey. Academic institutions provide scholarship management services according to contracts, including pastoral care by Student Contact Officers and others. Institutions also promote relevant on-award enrichment opportunities and share best practice.
- Awardees: Awardees at the centre of the Australia Awards. Successful completion of their academic studies to enhance qualifications is a primary goal, along with an enriching and rewarding experience that produces life-long personal and professional connections with Australia and each other. The study and research opportunities develop the skills and knowledge of individuals to drive change and contribute to development in their own countries.
- Alumni: Alumni use their skills, knowledge and networks to contribute to sustainable development and cooperation between Australia and partner countries. Alumni are a vital diplomatic asset contributing in various ways to Australia's influence and standing in our region and globally. Alumni are encouraged to nurture professional and personal connections post-award to harness the long-term benefits of the Australia Awards.
- MCs: DFAT engages MCs to provide program support, including business support services for scholarship and fellowship management; Leadership initiatives; On-award enrichment; Alumni engagement; Monitoring and evaluation; and Recruitment of specialised personnel. MCs manage the awards for individual countries (e.g. Fiji, Solomon Islands) or on a regional basis (e.g. South Asia). The contracts are just for management of the Australia Awards, or as part of a broader facility-type arrangement.

The DFAT Canberra Global Education and Scholarships Section is responsible for the overarching policy and strategic direction and provides regulatory oversight of the Australia Awards. Overseas Posts are responsible for managing their own budgets for Australia Awards activities. Posts either deliver Australia Awards programs or provide oversight of Australia Award investments when implemented by MCs. They are responsible for in-country communication, promotion, policy priority settings, administration and monitoring, and alumni activities

2. MEL roles and responsibilities

The following table indicates specific responsibilities with respect to MEL of the Australia Awards.

Organisation	Pre-Award	On Award	Post Award (0-3 years)	Long term Post Award (3 years+)
Country and regional programs – Posts and/or their MCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure OASIS is up to date • Maintain and monitor records of promotion, targeting, selection activities • Monitor trends in application and selection data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure OASIS is up to date • Maintain records of on award engagement (if applicable) • Media monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain records of alumni engagement • Media monitoring • Undertake Post-Award Evaluations, Alumni Development Impact Survey (ADIS), Case Studies and other evaluative exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Australia Global Alumni network is up to date • Maintain records of alumni engagement • Assist Global Tracer Facility with tracer studies as required • Maintain records of alumni engagement • Media monitoring
Global Education and Scholarships Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor trends in application and selection data • Monitor global trends in scholarships application and selection data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Award Surveys (via Contractor) • Maintain records of on award engagement (if applicable) • Analysis and distribution of OASIS data as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor automatic migration of OASIS data into Australia Global Alumni network • Add additional alumni details into Australia Global Alumni network as required • Activity Completion Report • Commission evaluation studies e.g., Periodic Linkages Evaluation • Monitor alumni engagement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission evaluation studies – such as Periodic Linkages Evaluation • Direct the activities of the Global Tracer Facility
Global Tracer Facility	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracer Studies, Impact Studies and Case Studies

Organisation	Pre-Award	On Award	Post Award (0-3 years)	Long term Post Award (3 years+)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Studies
Academic Institutions	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure OASIS is up to date Monitor activities related to support for awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share updated alumni details with DFAT (if agreed) Share results of activities with DFAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share updated alumni details with DFAT (if agreed)
Host organisations	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion reports shared with DFAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion reports shared with DFAT
DFAT State Offices	Not Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain records of on award engagement (if applicable) 	Not Available	Not Available

3. Tonga AAS and AAPS applications

Table 1: Applications by award program and intake round

Item	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
# applications	181	118	299	112	136	248

Table 2: Applications by award program, gender and intake round

Gender	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
Female	69%	70%	70%	67%	60%	63%
Male	31%	30%	30%	33%	40%	37%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3: Applications by award program, level of study and intake round

Level of study	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
Bachelor	80%	40%	65%	69%	28%	44%
Doctoral	1%	10%	5%	3%	6%	5%
Masters	10%	47%	24%	15%	64%	45%

Level of study	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
PGD	6%	3%	5%	13%	2%	6%
Cert/Diploma	3%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4: Applications by award program, applicant birthplace and intake round

Birthplace	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
Eua	2%	3%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Ha'apai	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Niuas	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Overseas	5%	5%	5%	4%	7%	5%
Tonga	12%	22%	16%	12%	12%	12%
Tongatapu	62%	59%	61%	63%	60%	61%
Vava'u	15%	8%	13%	15%	12%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 5: Applications by award program, island of Tonga birthplace and intake round

Tonga birthplace	2020 AAPS	2020 AAS	2020 Total	2024 AAPS	2024 AAS	2024 Total
Eua	3%	4%	3%	4%	6%	5%
Ha'apai	2%	5%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Niuas	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Tongatapu	75%	79%	76%	74%	74%	74%
Vava'u	18%	11%	16%	18%	15%	16%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4. Tonga AAS and AAPS award offers

Source: OASIS (extracted 14 August 2024)¹²

¹² These tables report 5 award offers less than shown on the OASIS records, where two records were merged where the awardee transferred from one course of study to another

These tables are for the AAS (includes predecessor development awards to study in Australia) and AAPS (including predecessor awards to study in the Pacific). They do not include award offers for AAF or ACIAR JAF (detailed data was not available for these programs).

4.1 Award offers

The number of awards offered has varied over time. Up to 2005, less than 10 per year; 2006-3009 increasing to 18 per year; peak of 38-46 awards in 2013-2015; 41 in 2023; only 21 in 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic that restricted travel/university course delivery. In 2024, 28 awards were made.

70% AAPS. The proportion of AAS awarded has increased over time with all awards being for AAPS until 2008, increasing to 56% between 2020-2024. In 2024, 57% of awards were to AAS.

Table 6: Award Offers by Scheme (and intake round)

The table below shows the number of awards offered by intake year and program.

Intake year	AAPS	AAS	Total
2001	2	NA	2
2002	6	NA	6
2003	2	NA	2
2004	3	NA	3
2005	9	NA	9
2006	12	NA	12
2007	14	NA	14
2008	16	NA	16
2009	17	1	18
2010	21	3	24
2011	20	6	26
2012	18	12	30
2013	32	8	40
2014	36	10	46
2015	32	6	38
2016	14	3	17
2017	21	8	29

Intake year	AAPS	AAS	Total
2018	17	13	30
2019	22	15	37
2020	22	19	41
2022	NA	21	21
2023	21	15	36
2024	12	16	28
Total	369	156	525

Table 7: Award Offers by Scheme (and intake year grouped)

Intake year	AAPS	AAS	Total
Pre-2005	13 (100%)	0 (0%)	13
2005-2009	68 (99%)	1 (1%)	69
2010-2014	127 (77%)	39 (23%)	166
2015-2019	106 (70%)	45 (30%)	151
2020-2024	55 (44%)	71 (56%)	126
Total	369 (70%)	156 (30%)	525

4.2 Inclusion

Number and percentage of Australia Awards allocated disaggregated by key diversity markers (Core global indicator 1.1)

Overall, 64% of awards were made female. There has been an increasing proportion of awards made to females over time. In 2024, 68% of awards were to females

Only 6 people with a disability are recorded on OASIS. The system shows that the first award offer to a person with a disability was in 2017. It is possible earlier such award offers were not recorded in OASIS. No awards were made to a person with disability in 2023 and 2024. Four of these awards were for AAPS and two for AAS. Four of these awards were for males and two for females.

Number and percentage of Australia Awards allocated to development sectors where women's skills and participation are most needed in each country. (Core global indicator 6.1)

Whilst it could well be argued that women's skills and participation are most needed in all sectors, have looked at % awards allocated for women in IT and engineering where most under-represented in awards offered in Tonga:

Table 8: Award Offers by Gender

Intake year	Female	Male	Total
Pre-2005	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	13
2005-2009	40 (58%)	29 (42%)	69
2010-2014	105 (63%)	61 (37%)	166
2015-2019	100 (66%)	51 (34%)	151
2020-2024	83 (66%)	43 (34%)	126
Total	335 (63.8%)	190 (36.2%)	525

4.3 Level and field of education

Considering the level and field of study of all awards:

38% at postgraduate level and 62% undergraduate. AAS were predominantly at the postgraduate level (92%). In 2024, 61% of awards were to postgraduates.

Reflecting the increasing offer of AAS over time, all awards to 2005 were at undergraduate level, with 67% between 2020-2024. In 2024, 61% of awards were at postgraduate level

Only 13 of the awards have been for research (7 Doctoral and 6 Master (Research) degrees. A similar proportion of males and females were made award offers for research study

Over time the highest proportion of awards was for study in health-related courses (29% - 154 awards), (19% - 100 awards), and society and culture, including law (18% - 92 awards). One third of the health courses (33%) were undertaken through AAPS (reflecting the relevance of the MBBS training at the Fiji School of Medicine).

In 2024, the highest proportion of awards were for management and commerce (21%), society and culture including law (21%) and health (14%)

A lower proportion of awards were offered to females studying IT, science subjects and engineering. A higher proportion of awards were offered to females in the area of society and culture, management and commerce, and health. An equal proportion was offered to males and females studying education.

Table 9: Award offers by level of study (and scheme)

Scheme	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total
AAPS	15%	85%	100%
AAS	92%	8%	100%
Total	38%	62%	100%

Table 10: Award offers by level of study (and intake year)

Intake year	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Total
Pre-2005	0%	100%	100%
2005-2009	12%	88%	100%
2010-2014	28%	72%	100%
2015-2019	40%	60%	100%
2020-2024	67%	33%	100%
Total	38%	62%	100%

Table 11: Award offers by broad field of study (and scheme)

Broad field of study	AAPS	AAS	Total
01 - Natural and Physical Sciences	9%	8%	9%
02 - Information Technology	5%	6%	5%
03 - Engineering and Related Technologies	4%	7%	5%
04 - Architecture and Building	0%	1%	0%
05 - Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	4%	7%	5%
06 - Health	33%	21%	29%
07 - Education	10%	8%	9%
08 - Management and Commerce	19%	19%	19%
09 - Society and Culture (Law)	7%	3%	6%
09 - Society and Culture (Other)	8%	20%	12%
10 - Creative Arts	1%	0%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 12: Award offers by broad field of education (and gender)

Broad field of study	Female	Male	Total
01 - Natural and Physical Sciences	7%	12%	9%
02 - Information Technology	2%	11%	5%
03 - Engineering and Related Technologies	3%	9%	5%

Broad field of study	Female	Male	Total
04 - Architecture and Building	0%	0%	0%
05 - Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	4%	5%	5%
06 - Health	31%	27%	29%
07 - Education	9%	9%	9%
08 - Management and Commerce	21%	16%	19%
09 - Society and Culture (Law)	7%	5%	6%
09 - Society and Culture (Other)	15%	6%	12%
10 - Creative Arts	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Number and percentage of total Australia Awards allocated to priority areas at a country level (core global indicator 1.3)

The governments of Australia and Tonga regularly together review the priority areas of study for the Australia Awards to adjust the emphasis of the program. As the priority areas have changed since 2001, it was not possible within the time available to analyse the allocation to the priority areas at the time the awards were offered. Instead, the analysis compares the percentage allocation of awards to the priority field of studies identified in:

The Development Cooperation Factsheet, May 2024 indicates priorities for Tonga in areas of economic sustainability, energy, security, infrastructure, social inclusion, health, education, climate change resilience, disaster preparedness and response, aviation, and agriculture. The percentage of awards offered for these priority fields of study for the 2001-2024 intakes was 49% (and 46% for the 2024 intake).

The priority areas targeted for the promotion of the Australia Awards for the 2025 intake were: Governance and Economics – including governance, public policy, economics, public financial management, and accounting; Health – all clinical qualifications, community and public health, and allied health qualifications particularly physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, exercise physiology, and nutrition and dietetics; Infrastructure – engineering, surveying, and aviation policy and management; Sciences – all scientific fields, including environmental management, agriculture, aquaculture / fisheries, energy, and climate change and disaster preparedness and resilience; Education – teaching qualifications, policy and management; Information Technology and Cyber Security; Community Development and Inclusion – community and social development, including gender equality studies and disability inclusion; Journalism and media. The percentage of awards offered for these priority fields of study for the 2001-2024 intakes was 78% (and 75% for the 2024 intake).

Table 13: Award offers by broad field of education (and whether an award priority area – 2025 intake)

Broad field of study	Yes	Other	Total
01 - Natural and Physical Sciences	47	0	47
02 - Information Technology	29	0	29
03 - Engineering and Related Technologies	26	0	26
04 - Architecture and Building	0	1	1
05 - Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	25	0	25
06 - Health	154	0	154
07 - Education	48	0	48
08 - Management and Commerce	68	32	100
09 - Society and Culture (Law)	0	31	31
09 - Society and Culture (Other)	7	53	60
10 - Creative Arts	3	1	4
Total	407	118	525

The percentage of awards offered for these priority fields of study green and blue economies This (included fields of study in agriculture and fisheries, environment, sustainability, climate change, and marine science) for the 2001-2024 intakes was 8% (and 7% for the 2024 intake)

4.4 Completion rates

Number and percentage of awardees who successfully complete an Australia Award course and obtain the course qualification (core Global Australia Awards indicator 1.2).¹³

375 have successfully passed their course of study, 58 did not complete their course of study, and 92 still on award or where results are pending.

Of the 433 awards that have finished, 13% did not pass their course of study. There was a higher percentage of awardees that did not pass their course of study: for AAPS (16%) compared to AAS (5%), males (17%) compared to females (11%); undergraduate (18%) compared to postgraduates (4%)

The percentage of awardees who do not complete their course of study has reduced to less than 10% since 2015. The main factor behind this improved completion rate is likely to be the higher proportion of postgraduates with a proven record for university study and

¹³ Data on completion rates of AAPS students was requested from DFAT Fiji but not available by report completion.

experience living overseas. Since 2015 there has been a similar failure rate (4-6%) for postgraduates at both AAS and AAPS; whilst for undergraduates it was 13%.

Table 14: Award Completion status (by scheme)

Completion status	AAPS	AAS	Total
Did not complete	53	5	58
Suspended	1	0	1
Terminated	36	0	36
Withdrawn On Scholarship	4	2	6
Finalised - fail	12	3	15
Completed - Passed	274	101	375
Completed	274	101	375
On-award/Other	42	50	92
Accepted	0	1	1
Deferred	1	2	3
Finalised Pending Results	3	1	4
On Scholarship	35	46	81
Withdrawn Pre-Scholarship	3	0	3
Total	369	156	525

Table 15: Course of study completion rate (of those whose award has finished)

Intake round	Completed - Pass	Did not complete	Total
Pre-2005	92%	8%	100%
2005-2009	87%	13%	100%
2010-2014	81%	19%	100%
2015-2019	90%	10%	100%
2020-2024	93%	8%	100%
Total	87%	13%	100%

5. Australia Awards Fellowships in Tonga

The Fellowships are open competitive grants for Australian organisations to host cohorts of awardees (usually midcareer professionals). The Australia Awards Fellowships (AAF) are available to Australian host organisations and institutions. The fellowships provide funding to bring current leaders from Timor-Leste (and the Asia-Pacific) to Australia for short-term study, research and/or professional development activities. Funding of up to AUD \$34,500 is available per fellow, to a maximum of 15 fellows per application. This funding can be used to cover:

- Return economy air travel and relevant in-Australia travel
- Costs to deliver training (excludes course development)
- Accommodation and living expenses
- Medical insurance costs when in Australia (for fellowship participant only)
- Special assistance for people with disability
- Program overhead fees

The AAF provide short-term opportunities for in-Australia study, research and professional development, hosted by Australian organisations – and do not lead to academic qualifications. The AAF target senior and mid-career officials and professionals who are in a position to advance development outcomes in priority areas and increase the institutional capacity of their country through their leadership. AAF application rounds are held through a competitive selection process managed centrally by DFAT Canberra. There have been 162 AAF recipients (54% female) from Tonga in 19 [rounds](#) (commencing in 2007, with a gap during the COVID-19 pandemic). The highest proportion of the Tongan fellows have been in the priority development sectors of education (53%) and health (21%). Almost half (44%) have had fellowships at an Australian university, 38% in a government agency and 18% in an NGO/other institution.

6. ACIAR in Tonga

6.1 John Allwright Fellowships (JDF)

The [JDF Program](#) the ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) Fellowships Scheme provides the opportunity for partner country scientists involved in ACIAR-supported research projects to obtain postgraduate qualifications at Australian tertiary institutions, through the John Allwright and John Dillon Memorial fellowships.

Immersive professional development workshop in country: 8- day face to face workshop covering key topics connected to leadership and management.

Short professional development projects undertaken in country: Over an 8 to 10-week period, teams of JDF will work collaboratively on short management and leadership projects focused on implementing learnings within their organisations from the program undertaken in their home country.

Final reflective workshop in Australia: An 8-day final workshop to reflect on learning journeys and focussing on the next steps with the development of a personal and leadership strategy. This is followed by site visits to Australian organisations including interacting with staff at ACIAR House in Canberra, where they will present the learnings of the program and an analysis of results of the professional development projects.

By the end of the program, it is expected that participants will have increased capability and confidence to lead and influence effective agricultural research in their organisations, particularly in the domains of Values-based Leadership; Collaboration and communication;

Project management; and Gender equity and social inclusion. In 2024, there were approximately 38 JAFs studying in Australia at 18 universities across the country.

6.2 ACIAR Pacific Agriculture Scholarships and Support Program

The ACIAR [Pacific Agriculture Scholarships and Support and Climate Resilience Program](#) seeks to provide the opportunity for partner country scientists associated with ACIAR-supported projects to obtain postgraduate research qualifications in an applied context within their own cultural settings.

By working in partnership with the University of the South Pacific, Fiji National Universities and affiliated Australian Universities, this scholarship scheme aims to provide Pacific Island students with enhanced learning and skills development outcomes, mentoring, and career developed opportunities, which better position scholarship graduates to gain employment in the national or regional agricultural innovation system.

Annex 8: Consideration of implementation resourcing options

Continued management and administration by AHC (in-sourcing)

Option	Advantages	Considerations
No change – 1 permanent Scholarships Officer at AHC	No additional program management cost	Reliance on availability/expertise of one person. Not able to undertake full scope of AA programming, especially Alumni engagement and other possible award modalities. No need for additional time and cost in making outsourced arrangements.
Plus continue role of 0.5 Alumni Officer at AHC	Alumni engagement remains with AHC Less reliance on one person. Would be greater flexibility if contract a staff member in next two years (e.g. from TASP or as recruited by AHC).	Some additional salary/on-costs, but no MC overhead. Possible limited space at Post. Would likely need to make separate arrangements for post-award MEL. Does not have advantage of access to on-award and other activities managed by MC for other countries

Outsourcing

Option	Advantages	Considerations
<p>AAGSM (selected activities)</p>	<p>DFAT Canberra have tendered for an AAGSM to provide services for central support and also through tasking notes for additional services as required (and paid for by Posts).</p> <p>Tasking for selected activities (e.g.) through AAGSM would be to an organisation already familiar with Australia Awards, has in-Australia capability and could bring expertise from range of countries to Tonga program. This could be used for example for the recruitment of an interview panel member/counselling expert, shared on-award activities etc.).</p> <p>A Tasking note would be simpler than a full MC arrangement.</p>	<p>Additional MC overhead cost compared to continued management by Post.</p> <p>Would need partial contract management in task design, implementation and reporting.</p> <p>AAGSM would not necessarily have access to local Tonga knowledge, expertise and contacts.</p>
<p>TASP (or its Tonga-based successor)</p>	<p>Existing Post contract with MC (TASP) already in Tonga, with local knowledge and expertise.</p> <p>Could do a range of activities through current Post Tasking Note arrangements. This could include in-Tonga event management, arranging alumni professional development events.</p>	<p>Additional MC overhead cost compared to continued management by Post.</p> <p>Would need partial contract management of task design, implementation and reporting</p> <p>TASP finishes in 2025. DFAT still to make decision on its extension.</p> <p>Lesser alumni contact directly with Post.</p> <p>Would likely be more effective and perhaps not significantly greater cost in contracting out an annual cycle of activities, rather than more ad hoc tasks</p>
<p>Tendered MC arrangement</p>	<p>MC could leverage on post-award activities from the other Australia Awards countries managed.</p>	<p>For effectiveness, this would need to be for a full range of activities (including conduct of short courses etc.).</p>

Option	Advantages	Considerations
		<p>Would be full procurement and contract management workload.</p> <p>Would be an additional contract. Given limited capability in Tonga, the contractor may need some supporting technical advice/quality assurance.</p>
<p>Local post-award MEL-specific contract</p>	<p>Would provide local context and support local capacity development in MEL.</p> <p>May increase level of participation by alumni and reduce positive bias in responses.</p>	<p>Would be an additional contract. Given limited capability in Tonga, the contractor may need some supporting technical advice/quality assurance.</p>

Partnership arrangement

Option	Advantages	Considerations
<p>Not Available</p>	<p>Not Available</p>	<p>Reliance on availability/expertise of one person.</p> <p>Not able to undertake full scope of AA programming, especially Alumni engagement and other possible award modalities.</p> <p>No need for additional time and cost in making outsourced arrangements.</p>

Annex 9: Comparison of findings of Tonga Tracer Survey (2024) with that of other Australia Awards countries (Global Tracer Facility Surveys, 2022)¹⁴

Question number	Question	Tonga	Fiji	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Global Alumni
3.2	As a result of my award I have used my new knowledge and skills to improve the organisation I work in	97%	98%	89%	100%	97%
3.2	As a result of my award I have used my new knowledge and skills to make contributions to development at a national level in my country	89%	97%	100%	100%	98%
3.2	As a result of my award I have used my new knowledge and skills to make contributions to development at a regional and/or global level	84%	83%	96%	83%	78%
5.1	Since returning from award how often are you in contact with individuals in Australian businesses, professional associations and/or organisations working in your field (always, often, sometimes)	66%	92%	77%	84%	89%
5.1	Since returning from award how often are you in contact with the Australian High Commission / Embassy / Consulate OR Awards Awards team in your country (always, often, sometimes)	-	79%	88%	78%	87%
5.1	Since returning from award how often are you in contact with universities and lecturers in Australia (always, often, sometimes)	64%	9%	18%	15%	-

¹⁴ Hsien, M., & Edwards, D. (2023). Australia Awards Alumni Global Tracer Survey 2022. Australia Awards Global Tracer Facility, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Question number	Question	Tonga	Fiji	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Global Alumni
5.1	Since returning from award have you developed professional partnerships with Australia	49%	67%	86%	79%	-
6.4	Do you hold a formal leadership role within your current employment	72%	-	58%	77%	- 69%
6.4	Do you hold an informal leadership role within your current employment	16%	-	25%	16%	- 17%