



Australian Government
AusAID

Annual program performance report for Samoa 2007–08

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Abbreviations

ANZSOG	Australia and New Zealand School of Governance
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
ICT program	In-Country Training Program
NZAID	New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PSIF	Public Sector Improvement Facility
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization






Summary

Samoa has benefited from the economic reforms initiated in 1993 and has recorded annual real economic growth since then. Samoa is well advanced in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in this regard is a stand out amongst its Pacific neighbours. However, pockets of real disadvantage and poverty remain. The Government of Samoa is currently guided by the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008–2012 released in April 2008. Australia's bilateral aid program is operating under the Joint Samoa Program Strategy 2006–2010 between the governments of Samoa, New Zealand and Australia. In 2007–08 Australian official development assistance to Samoa is estimated at \$22 million.

RATINGS

The Samoa aid program was assessed against the objectives of the Joint Samoa Program Strategy. The annual program performance review identified a number of challenges in meeting the objectives. Notwithstanding areas requiring improvement, on the whole the performance ratings indicate that program activities are being managed and implemented satisfactorily (Table 1).

TABLE 1 RATINGS OF THE SAMOA AID PROGRAM IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT SAMOA PROGRAM STRATEGY 2006–2010

Objective	Rating
1. Facilitate community level income and small business opportunities	Not rated
2. Improve the enabling environment for private sector growth	Not rated
3. Improve Public Sector delivery	 (amber)
4. Strengthen social cohesion and civil society	 (amber)
5. Improve access to and quality of education	 (amber)
6. Improve health focussing on primary and preventive health	 (green)
7. Strengthen law and justice to support a safer Samoa	 (green)

Note:  denotes the objective is on track to be fully achieved within the timeframe.  denotes the objective will be partly achieved within the timeframe.

MAJOR RESULTS

Major results of the Samoa aid program in 2007–08 include:

- > the development of good working relationships with other donors, particularly NZAID through the implementation of the joint strategy, the Asian Development

Bank through the education sector program, and the World Bank through the health sector program

- > the refocus of the Samoa Police Project to achieve real results in the remaining time and increased engagement with the Australian Federal Police
- > the development and launch of the education and health sector-wide approaches with particular emphases on learning lessons from previous projects in the respective sectors
- > increasing support for the Government of Samoa's own internal systems, most notably through the Public Sector Improvement Facility
- > the use of incentive funds to support the Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

Major challenges remain and include:

- > working with the systems of other major donors
- > developing robust systems and processes to collect data for monitoring and evaluation
- > aligning the aid program with the Government of Samoa's Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008–2012 within the context of developing the Pacific Partnership for Development between Samoa and Australia.

Country performance

Samoa's progress in human development can be summarised by the improvement in its Human Development Index from 0.709 in 1985 to 0.785 in 2005.¹ There is no official figure for the incidence of poverty in Samoa. However, participatory poverty assessments confirm that a significant number of households experience hardship arising from 'poverty of opportunity', which is manifested in three ways:

- > a lack of access to basic services
- > a lack of adequate resources to meet basic household needs and customary obligations
- > a lack of opportunities to participate fully in the socioeconomic life of the community.²

Groups identified as most vulnerable include landless individuals and families, the unemployed (especially unskilled youth in the newer settlements near Apia), single income households, isolated rural households, and families with many children. Elderly people without family support and the disabled are also vulnerable.³

There have been rising concerns over the inequality of income distribution, the lack of formal employment and income generation opportunities (especially for school leavers), the limited access to quality education, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and emerging social problems.

Samoa's economic reforms launched in 1993 resulted in macroeconomic stabilisation and comprehensive structural reforms and contributed to the real economic growth of 4 per cent a year in the period 1993–2006. Real growth of 3 per cent was realised in 2007. Economic growth is expected to be lower in 2008 as agricultural expansion moderates after a recovery from hurricane damage in 2006 and construction growth eases as a result of the completion of major building projects (including the facilities for the South Pacific Games held in 2007). Tourism earnings are projected to grow by 6 per cent and exports of automotive parts (one of the few export-orientated industries in Samoa) is projected to increase by 8 per cent. The current account deficit is forecast to narrow to US\$24.5 million.⁴ Inflation is expected to be 3 per cent a year over the period 2008–11, much lower than the 7.9 per cent in 2003–04.⁵

¹ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, New York, 2007, p. 245.

² Government of Samoa, *Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008–2012*, 2008, p. 4.

³ Centre for Samoan Studies, *Samoa human development report 2006: sustainable livelihoods in a changing Samoa*, National University of Samoa, Apia, 2006, p. 30.

⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Asian development outlook 2007*, Manila, 2007, p. 261.

⁵ World Bank, Report No. 41130 – WS Program Appraisal Document, In Support of Health Sector Management Program, 2008, p. 1.

While the economic growth means that the income per person (estimated at US\$6170 in 2005)⁶ is steadily rising, the ability of government to increase expenditure remains constrained because total revenue and grants are expected to decline over the period 2006–07 to 2010–11.⁷

Remittances are the major source of external income and have increased significantly since 2004 to more than 20 per cent of gross domestic product. Development aid has averaged more than 10 per cent of gross domestic product over the past three decades. Aid flows to Samoa in 2006–07 are estimated to have been US\$47.1 million, up from US\$44 million in 2005 and US\$27 million in 2000.⁸ The possible loss of its status as a least developed country in 2010 will add to budgetary pressures, particularly around the hardening loan repayment terms of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.⁹

Samoa's economy is vulnerable to external shocks, particularly with its persistent trade and current account deficits. Such shocks could include cuts in aid flows and remittances as well as natural disasters, particularly the devastating effects of cyclones.¹⁰

Samoa is well advanced in the achieving the eight **Millennium Development Goals**. In this regard, Samoa is a stand out among its Pacific island neighbours. The reported incidence of poverty has fallen faster than the targeted rate, universal primary education is achievable, gender disparity in primary and secondary education has been eliminated, and child mortality has been reduced. Less progress has been made in achieving the goal of environmental sustainability.¹¹

The Government of Samoa has been guided by the **Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2005–2007**, which articulated the vision of an 'improved quality of life for all'. The government's own assessment is that this first strategy for development achieved many of its objectives and was a solid base on which to develop the recently released (April 2008) **Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008–2012**. This new strategy has seven national goals: sustained macroeconomic stability, private sector led economic growth and employment creation, improved education outcomes, improved health outcomes, community development, improved governance and environmental sustainability, and disaster risk reduction.¹²

Australia's aid program in Samoa is operating under the **Joint Samoa Program Strategy 2006–2010** between the governments of Samoa, Australia and New Zealand.¹³ Support to Samoa in 2007–08 focused on improving opportunities for employment and

⁶ United Nations Development Programme, 2007, p. 2.

⁷ World Bank, Report No. 41130, 2008, p. 1.

⁸ World Bank, Samoa Data Profile, 2008, <<http://go.worldbank.org/DCITSVW2R0>>.

⁹ Asian Development Bank, *Continuing growth and stability: Samoa social and economic report 2007*, TA 6245-REG, Samoa PIER, 2007, p. viii.

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank, *Asian development outlook 2007*, Manila, 2007, p. 261.

¹¹ Government of Samoa, 2008, p. 2.

¹² Government of Samoa, 2008, p. 14.

¹³ Government of Samoa, Government of Australia and Government of New Zealand, *Joint Samoa Program Strategy 2006–2010*, November 2006.

investment—by reforming the enabling environment for private sector development and improving service delivery—through support for the education, health and legal areas.

In 2007–08 Australia’s estimated **bilateral assistance to Samoa** was \$12.4 million, \$12.9 million in 2006–07 and \$12.6 million in 2005–06. A further \$8.3 million was programmed regionally in 2007–08. Australia is the largest donor to Samoa, followed by Japan, New Zealand, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme. Lesser grants are made available by China, the World Health Organization, Canada, UNESCO, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the Global Fund. OPEC provides some grant and loan assistance.¹⁴ Both the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have large development loan programs with Samoa.

Reflecting Samoa’s continued commitment to economic and social progress and reform, new programs are building in performance incentives to improve the quality of service delivery, as in the energy sector. Part of Australia’s support for the Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project (total value of US\$100 million) is a performance incentive of \$4 million to ‘buy down’ part of the Asian Development Bank’s loan when agreed performance milestones are met.

In August 2008, the Prime Ministers of Australia and Samoa signed the Samoa-Australia Partnership for Development framework at the Pacific Forum meeting in Niue.

¹⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Asian development outlook 2007*, Manila, 2007, p. 60.

What are the results of the Samoa aid program?

The Joint Samoa Program Strategy 2006–2010 between the governments of Samoa, Australia and New Zealand identifies seven objectives against which Australian and New Zealand development assistance are programmed:

- 1 Facilitate community level income and small business opportunities
- 2 Improve the private sector enabling environment
- 3 Improve public sector service delivery
- 4 Strengthen social cohesion and civil society
- 5 Improve access to and quality of education
- 6 Improve health focusing on primary and preventive health
- 7 Strengthen law and justice to support a safer Samoa.

Australia takes the lead donor role in public sector reform, law and justice, and rural development. New Zealand takes the lead in the private sector, particularly tourism, civil society and community development, and health. Australia and New Zealand agreed to work jointly with the Asian Development Bank and other donors in the education sector.

OBJECTIVE 1:

FACILITATE COMMUNITY LEVEL INCOME AND SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

RATING

There is not enough information to rate this objective.

Although there is a considerable amount of activity facilitating community-level income and small-business opportunities, there is not a lot of hard evidence to judge whether the objective is on track to being achieved. The collection of evidence is hampered by the lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the joint strategy. This objective has therefore not been rated.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

AusAID has two programs that work towards this objective:

- > Small Grants Scheme
- > In-Country Training (ICT) Program.

In 2007–08 the Small Grants Scheme for community projects benefited, in the main, registered non-government organisations—38 per cent of beneficiaries. Their projects

ranged from organic certification to programs and publications targeting community groups. About 31 per cent of the community grants went to youth and church groups, which funded mainly sports and multipurpose facilities, rubbish bins and activity workshops. About 11 per cent of the community grants were allocated to women's committees, which funded multipurpose facilities for their activities.

A review of the of the scheme carried out in May 2007 indicated that the current model operates effectively, as proposals that do not satisfy requirements are redirected to other schemes, that the Ministry of Finance administers. In 2007-08 about 90 per cent of all projects funded under the scheme were completed.

The ICT program has assisted three priority sectors identified in the Strategy for the Development for Samoa. The training provided to the private sector, the public sector and non-government organisations has increased and diversified. The vast majority of courses were rated 85 per cent or better in terms of match between training delivered and what was required, the performance of the trainer and the administration of the training. In tracer studies an improvement in the level of skills and knowledge was reported among private, public and non-government organisations. An increasing number of locals were co-trainers in the courses. About 90 per cent trainers were rated 90 per cent or better in terms of training methods, chance to participate, appropriateness and language level of course materials, skill, cultural and gender sensitivity and language.¹⁵

As agreed in the joint strategy, NZAID takes the lead role in supporting small-scale investment in the tourism industry and small-scale business sector, including through the Small Business Enterprise Centre.

Other activities in support of this objective include the following.

- > Efficient and effective public administration has been promoted by the completion and adoption of service charters by most of the ministries and corporations, which have encouraged customer feedback as a means of monitoring performance.
- > Efforts are under way to streamline and operationalise a common fund, the Private Sector Support Facility, to assist small to medium enterprises.
- > The adoption of the computerised ASYCUDA system has simplified customs procedures, and port charges for cruise ships have been reduced to encourage more frequent visits to Samoa. Selective incentives have been provided to support hotel, motel and beach resort development and manufacturing for the export scheme, and the Private Sector Support Facility provides assistance.

An agro-forestry program designed to support this objective was put on hold by AusAID, but is now being re-considered within the new Partnership for Development.

¹⁵ Managing Services Contractor Report, November 2007.

OBJECTIVE 2:

IMPROVE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH

RATING

There is not enough information to rate this objective.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

The joint strategy explicitly states that the partners:

... lack the resources to play a substantial role in developing particular industries but will continue to provide a range of supportive policy and institutional strengthening initiatives.¹⁶

AusAID has little in place to support this objective.

However, the enabling environment for private sector growth in Samoa was recently boosted by the opening of the Australia–Pacific Technical College in January 2008. The college’s main objective is to support skill development in the Pacific in response to national and regional labour market requirements. Enrolments to date reflect a growing interest in Samoa. As of February 2008, 53 local students have enrolled. The number of private sector applicants is increasing; they will be attending campuses in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. It is too early to assess the impact of the college on private sector growth.

AusAID’s scholarship programs could also be contributing to an increased pool of skilled and qualified professionals, which in turn could be fostering private sector growth. However, the scholarships program is having difficulties tracking the progress and impact of the program, especially in the private sector, due partly to the absence of baseline data.

OBJECTIVE 3:

IMPROVE PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY

RATING



The objective will be partly achieved within the timeframe.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

The Government of Australia together with the governments of New Zealand and Samoa have been able to harmonise and co-fund a number of initiatives that contribute either directly or indirectly to improving the delivery of public services in Samoa. These initiatives include:

- > Public Sector Improvement Facility (PSIF)

¹⁶ Government of Samoa, Government of Australia and Government of New Zealand, 2006, p. 18.

- > Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project
- > In-Country Training Program
- > Small Grants Scheme
- > Australia and New Zealand School of Governance (ANZSOG)

The PSIF is a fund established to support a program of public sector reform-oriented governance activities identified as contributing to the goal of the facility¹⁷. The purpose of the facility is to strengthen cooperation and collaboration—between public service agencies and between the public and private sectors and civil society—in identifying and addressing critical constraints to effective service delivery through a range of institutional strengthening initiatives.

The Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project, which commenced in January 2008, aims to support the Government of Samoa's overarching objective of providing sustainable, reliable and affordable electricity services to all consumers. It has three components:

- 1 Energy Power Corporation's 2008–15 investment plan
- 2 promotion of renewable energy
- 3 power sector reform.

The ICT program offers specialised short-term training courses for employees in public, private and non-government organisations in Samoa. The program is given high priority by the Government of Samoa as evidenced in its Cabinet Minute that called for the ICT transition to Oloamanu Training Centre of the National University of Samoa. AusAID and NZAID confirmed their support for a localised project in high-level discussions in Wellington in 2007.¹⁸

The Small Grants Scheme is now wholly administered by the Aid Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Finance. The scheme's goal is to contribute to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development through small-scale interventions in education, health and community development as well as private sector assistance. It aims to promote economic and social development by directly assisting small-scale community development activities.

ANZSOG was established in 2003 by a consortium of Australian and New Zealand governments, universities and business schools to address the significant challenges for all governments in enhancing the breadth and depth of policy and management capability within the public sector.

While the achievements of each of these initiatives are substantial, there is still no strong independently collaborated evidence to suggest that the objective of improving the delivery of public sector services is being achieved. Substantial issues still need to be addressed.

¹⁷ Samoa Public Sector Improvement Facility, A case study in capacity development.

¹⁸ Samoa In-Country Training Program quality-at-implementation report, 2008.

Achievements under PSIF

- > The initiatives under PSIF that were completed and implemented within various agencies ranged from designing institutional strengthening projects to drafting and implementing new legislation. This enabled lead agencies to gain skills and knowledge relating to the design and tendering process and enabled legal officers to draft agency legislation. Activities being developed under the facility include whole-of-government initiatives—for example, the projects to improve records management and strengthen the institutions for audit and statistics.
- > The Public Administration Sector Plan funded by the facility sets out an ambitious sectoral reform program that will be implemented with financial and technical assistance provided under PSIF. The plan builds on previous reforms—including the 2003 restructuring, the introduction of corporate planning and service charters for government agencies and the formulation of a staff code of conduct—to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration.¹⁹
- > PSIF identified potential areas for improvement in government systems. One example was the issue of value-added and goods and services tax identified in the Public Sector Improvement Facility Tripartite Agreement. The facility together with the Attorney General's office took the initiative to work through the issue and brought it to the attention of the donors (AusAID and NZAID). The issue was discussed and resolved by having the tripartite agreement amended by AusAID's Contracts Section on behalf of all the parties.
- > Activities and contracts are in line with Government of Samoa requirements and achieving objectives.²⁰

Achievements under the Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project (start-up phase)

- > The Energy Power Corporation and the Government of Samoa met all conditions for loan effectiveness and disbursements.
- > There was a reduction in government arrears, bringing down total accounts receivables to below two months of electricity sales. Since May 2007 there has been a positive trend of reducing arrears (rather than a one-off reduction).
- > The Project Management Unit was established and is going well.

Achievements under the Small Grants Scheme

- > A total of 126 projects were funded from 2001 to 2006 totalling \$2.9 million. Grants ranged from \$1000 to \$50 000, depending on the size and nature of the project requested. The bulk (slightly over \$2 million) of the grants provided under the scheme went to the education sector, which comprised the majority (68 per cent) to the total projects funded.

¹⁹ Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008–2012.

²⁰ Review of Transitional Support, 2007.

- > Eighteen new proposals were approved in 2007, amounting to under half a million. Education accounted for 70 per cent of the proposals.
- > The review of the scheme in May 2007 indicated that the increase in the number of proposals received each year led to funds being exhausted in the first half of the financial year.
- > The current model operates effectively, as proposals that do not satisfy requirements are redirected to other schemes that the Ministry of Finance administers.
- > About 90 per cent of all projects funded in 2007-08 have been completed.²¹

Achievements under the ICT program

- > In the period July–October 2007, 206 people attended 10 courses—41 per cent of participants being women. Almost 40 per cent of the participants were from the public sector, 39 per cent from state owned enterprises, 13 per cent from the private sector and 8 per cent from non-government organisations. The majority (92 per cent) of the participants lived on Upolu. Of these 80 per cent lived in urban areas and 12 per cent lived in rural areas. Others came from Savaii. All lived in villages.²²
- > An improvement in the level of skills and knowledge was reported by all three sectors.

Achievements under ANZSOG

- > As of February 2008, ANZSOG had provided four scholarship awards under the Pacific Executive Scholarship Program to middle managers within the Samoa public sector to further enhance their management and policy skills.
- > Two people from the public sector took part in and graduated from the Pacific Islands Scholarship for Governance Program, which is delivered by the Australian Public Service Commission and ANZSOG.

Issues to be addressed

At the mid-point (2007) of the five-year Public Sector Improvement Facility, only 6 per cent of the \$15 million funding had been spent. However, a suite of activities are about to commence. PSIF uses processes and systems of the Government of Samoa. This led to some delays in implementation; however, capacity is gradually being built by PSIF. Although using government processes and systems slowed down the rate of expenditure it ensured government ownership.²³

Staffing of the facility is an issue for sustainability. In January 2008 the Facility Managing Unit consisted of only two officers. The facility's Project Officer's absence for a year (scholarship award) will see the implementation of activities slow down. A concern has also been raised by PSIF stakeholders about the number of experienced staff available to

²¹ Samoa In-Country Training Program quality-at-implementation report, 2008.

²² Managing Services Contractor ICT report, 2008.

²³ Review of Transitional Support, PSIF report, October 2007.

support them throughout the activity cycle as demand for the services of the Facility Managing Unit increases. Most partners acknowledge that they still have much to learn about the activity cycle and consider the Facility Managing Unit to be one source of information to help them. The Government of Samoa needs to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to PSIF by addressing the staffing issue.²⁴

A lack of ownership of the Public Administration Sector Plan is threatening achievement of objectives and needs to be addressed by the Facility Steering Committee and the Public Service Commission.²⁵

Rising oil prices represent a significant risk to the sustainability of the Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project which has been designed to pass on the real costs of power generation to consumers. There are indications that the ability of many consumers to pay rapidly rising costs is limited and the government might need to consider a subsidy scheme.

The ICT program is going through a transitional period—from being managed by the Government of Samoa and NZAID to being managed by the Oloamanu Training Centre at the National University of Samoa—so new staff have been recruited to manage this project. Delays in getting the right personnel to manage this project will also mean a delay in the transitional process. Otherwise, the Oloamanu Training Centre is happy to take on the challenge of managing the ICT program.

Issues noted in the Small Grants Scheme are that it is not widely known to the public and does not reach isolated or vulnerable communities.²⁶ There needs to be more public awareness of the scheme and how it can aid various sectors and communities.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE

In 2007-08, \$2.3 million was spent on the start up phase of the Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project, \$616 000 on PSIF, \$400 000 on the ICT program and \$252 000 on the Small Grants Scheme which together represented 29 per cent of the year's bilateral assistance. This expenditure covers initiatives relating to objectives 1, 3 and 4.

OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION AND CIVIL SOCIETY

RATING



The objective will be partly achieved within the timeframe.

²⁴ PSIF quality-at-implementation report and Review of Transitional Support, PSIF report, October 2007.

²⁵ PSIF quality-at-implementation report, 2008.

²⁶ Small Grants Review, 2007.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

AusAID manages four initiatives that have some relevance to the achievement of this objective: the Human Rights Small Grants Scheme, the Australian Youth Ambassadors in Development Program, the In-Country Training Program and the Small Grants Scheme. In addition, AusAID supports several programs led by NZAID.

Human Rights Small Grants Scheme

The Human Rights Small Grants Scheme provides funding for the best proposal to conduct activities that promote and sustain work on human rights at the grassroots level and in the community in general. The scheme's grants are offered across Asia and the Pacific and of all the applicants in 2005–06 the Samoan non-government organisation Mapusaga o Aiga was the first Pacific regional recipient of this grant. The second recipient (in 2007–08) was another non-government organisation—the Samoa Aids Foundation. The maximum amount of each grant is \$50,000 a year.

Mapusaga o Aiga believed its trained trainers gained a broader understanding of the relevant human rights legislation and United Nations conventions and were able to deliver the appropriate message to the communities in the Samoan language in a manner acceptable to the local people. Despite this, a key issue remains—the high profile of serious domestic abuse in the local media over the past two years. The impact of the training seems to have been negligible given its small scale, and there is no way to measure how successful the training was.²⁷

Australian Youth Ambassadors in Development Program

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program is a regional program that places skilled young Australians aged 18–30 years on assignments of 3–12 months in countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. This program is an important part of Australia's development partnership with Samoa.

In the early years of the program (from 1998), up to 20 per cent of volunteers tended to be placed in non-government organisations. Over the past two years, however, there has been a steady increase to about 35–40 per cent of a total of 105 in these organisations.²⁸

On a national scale the impact of this program may be very small, but there is anecdotal evidence that there is an immediate positive impact on civil society.

In-Country Training Program

As already noted, the ICT program offers specialised short-term training courses for employees in non-government organisations, as well as in the private and public sectors

²⁷ *Samoa Observer*.

²⁸ In-country manager's figures.

in Samoa. Funding is divided equally between the three sectors. Australia's contribution includes project management, personnel and direct funding.

The ICT program is the main source of local in-service training and is well received and respected by all communities. Its strength is in its approach to training adults and its relevance. The skills and knowledge provided to participants can be applied 'on the job', directly contributing to the increase of skills and knowledge in civil society.

Small Grants Scheme

In terms of achieving this objective the Small Grants Scheme has assisted agencies, groups and communities that are unable to obtain other formal means of assistance to complete smaller stand-alone projects and activities. In this way it has provided complementary support to other AusAID projects such as the Samoa Health Project and the Education Sector Project. Its support has reached the communities and villages not served directly by the bigger projects. In this way the scheme contributes directly to strengthening the civil society by making bigger initiatives more sustainable, depending on what type of activities are funded.

Other programs supported

Under the joint strategy, NZAID has taken the lead with the following programs that support this objective:

- > Samoa Umbrella Organisation for Non-government Organisations (SUNGO)—core funding to facilitate the work of all non-government and community-based organisations in Samoa
- > NGO Support Fund—core funding for selected non-government organisations (15) to deliver their services to the communities and focus groups
- > Private Sector Support Allocation—funding for private sector development focusing on marketing support, technical advisory services and capacity building
- > Tourism Support Facility—funding for small tourism-based facilities and activities.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE

In 2007-08, \$616 000 was spent on PSIF, \$400 000 on the ICT program and \$252 000 on the Small Grants Scheme, which together represented 10 per cent of the year's bilateral assistance to Samoa. This expenditure covers initiatives relating to objectives 1, 3 and 4.

OBJECTIVE 5:

IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- The objective will be partly achieved within the timeframe.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

Deficiencies remain in the quality and efficiency of Samoa's educational sector despite the achievements cited in the reviews of the first 10-year policy and strategic plan (1995–2005). There are relatively high dropout and repeater rates, high teacher turnover and low literacy rates.²⁹ Basic skills in literacy and numeracy gained during primary schooling have improved since 2003 but the SPELL tests show that literacy and numeracy achieved in the early years is poor.³⁰

To address these issues, the Samoa education sector is supported by Australia through the Education Sector Program II, which is jointly funded with the Government of Samoa, the Asian Development Bank and the governments of Australia and New Zealand. A Partner Harmonisation Framework was signed by the development partners and the Government of Samoa in May 2006, committing all signatories to working as partners in a six-year US\$30 million program in support of the education sector in Samoa.

This agreement between bilateral and multilateral partners on pooling grant and loan funds and harmonised processes is a significant achievement. The Education Sector Project II is the first program-based approach in Samoa where delivery is through national systems.

The Education Sector Program II is tracking well against the PHF [Partner Harmonisation Framework] principles. There is pooled funding of loan and grant funds harmonised to a common strategy, one system of reporting and extensive use of GoS [Government of Samoa] procurement systems. The four partners emphasise a partnership approach built on regular communication and this is progressing very well. Interactions are solution-oriented, and emphasise GoS ownership and decision making.³¹

Community ownership continues to improve under component 1 of the project, with more and more people attending consultations for the Community Learning Centre at Fagaloa, a remote area in Samoa. Members of the community have been proactive in identifying courses for the centre to offer, and these areas promote equality in education.

The willingness of Samoa's Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture to develop a medium-term expenditure framework is promising. This will be developed soon under the project and will help to address sustainability of the project's outcomes as well as assist the ministry to identify sector-wide needs and get these supported financially.

Increased alignment of the Education Sector Project II with partner government systems was also noted in a February 2008 review.

The JRM [Joint Review Mission] Team compliments MESC [Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture] efforts to integrate ESP II [Education Sector Project II] activities into overall

²⁹ Government of Samoa, 2008, p. 30.

³⁰ Education for all report, 2007, p. 146

³¹ Joint Review Mission III, February 2008, p. 10.

MESC planning, with clear interaction with annual plans, the Corporate Plan and the Strategic Plan.³²

The partnership among donors for the project is working very well, and effort is continually being made to discuss and resolve issues that may have an impact on implementation. The flexibility of donors was clearly witnessed in agreeing to alternative options when a team of consultants were fast tracked to address implementation delays. As well, donors agreed to provide a second transfer into the Special Purpose Account to respond to a concern from the Government of Samoa about sufficient replenishments for activities in the first half of 2008. The transfer was subject to approval by the Steering Committee of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture's Quarterly Program Progress Report (January–March 2008).

The agreement signed by the donor parties and partner government requires the appointment of a Coordinating Development Partner to support coordination among the donors and Samoa and to act as the focal point of communication between the parties. AusAID took on this role in January 2008 and has been proactive in ensuring that donors are well informed on issues and that efforts are made to resolve issues when and where necessary. Recent correspondence from NZAID and the Asian Development Bank clearly reflects their appreciation of AusAID's efforts in implementing the coordinating role.

Considerable delays experienced at the start of implementation have been addressed reasonably well. However, there are concerns about using systems of the Asian Development Bank, because they are usually time consuming, as reported in the latest Quarterly Program Progress Report from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

Another critical issue is the capacity of staff to analyse data. The technical assistance provided under the project will start to address this gap.

AusAID supports post-basic and tertiary education through in-country and external short-term training programs and tertiary scholarships (Australian Development Scholarships, Australian Leadership Awards and Australian Regional Development Scholarships). Educational opportunities were enhanced with the establishment of the Australia–Pacific Technical College in Samoa in late 2007 and there is evidence within Samoa that communities are aware of the college, as reflected in the number of local students attending. About 20 Samoans have gone overseas for courses and, of the 89 students studying at the local campus, 37 are local students.³³

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE

In 2007–08, \$493 000 was spent on the Education Sector Project II, which represents 4 per cent of the year's bilateral assistance.

³² Joint Review Mission, May 2007 record, p. 7.

³³ Post briefing notes, 2008.

In 2007–08, \$3 million was spent on scholarship programs and in-country training, which represents 24 per cent of the year’s bilateral assistance to Samoa. Note that the in-country training program is also included in objectives 1, 3 and 4.

OBJECTIVE 6:

IMPROVE HEALTH FOCUSING ON PRIMARY AND PREVENTIVE HEALTH

RATING



The objective is on track to be fully achieved within the timeframe.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

Samoa Health Project

AusAID funded the Samoa Health Project from 2001 to December 2005. It then co-financed the remaining 18 months—the extension phase of the project—with NZAID. Throughout most of the project there was scant evidence of its success due more to the type of data documented (little on the impact of project activities and more on the description of inputs) than its failure to achieve results. Some of the issues identified are now outlined.

Delays were experienced in the first five years due to:

- > the lack of counterparts in key areas
- > financial problems in administration
- > a doctors strike
- > the lack of support from senior management, including the chief executive officer until replaced in 2005
- > the lack of strategic advice when needed.

During the extension phase of the project, problems arose due to:

- > new relationships (the introduction of NZAID as co-funder, and new coordination and decision-making structures)
- > new priorities (while the extension phase was intended to focus on bedding down the realignment of the governance arrangements, at the request of the Ministry of Health, it was expanded to provide technical support and capacity-building opportunities to many sections of the ministry and the National Health Service.)
- > the lack of baseline data to set benchmarks from project inception, and later at the beginning of the extension phase, against which progress could be measured—raising questions about the reliability of monitoring and evaluation methods used and whether they had been effective.

Even though the independent completion report concluded that the full impact of improved capacity on health service delivery and health outcomes was not yet clear and was unlikely to be so for some time, there were some short-term ‘wins’. Some of the key achievements noted before the end of the Samoa Health Project in early 2007 were:

- > the development of the capacity of middle and senior management, particularly in planning and financial management
- > strengthened policy, planning and budgeting processes (for example, the Health Finance Manual, the human resources policy, and the Health Sector Plan)
- > some improvements in community health services and information systems (The Community Health Nursing Information System was established but has not yet been integrated into Ministry of Health systems.)
- > more effective hospital infection controls (An advisor was brought in to teach cleaning standards.).

While the managing contractor managed the project well, and AusAID and the Government of Samoa provided reasonable oversight, problems arose with the forms of monitoring. This was partly due to the challenges associated with monitoring something as intangible as capacity building and partly because of the mechanisms employed. Important lessons were learned about the need for both strategic and operational oversight. Lessons were also learned about the complexities of joint donor projects where the partner government takes a driving role.³⁴

Health Sector-Wide Approach

In 2007 Australia, New Zealand and the World Bank with the Government of Samoa, plus other donors (the World Health Organization, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and China), agreed during a health sector roundtable to discuss better coordination of support to the health sector as a whole and to be guided by a sector plan. In 2007 the final version of the plan was endorsed by all and finalised by the Government of Samoa. The sector plan outlines the priorities of the health sector and was the culmination of several meetings, which inevitably built relationships between key partners in the donor community and across stakeholder partnerships.

AusAID and NZAID are co-funding preparatory activities for a sector-wide approach, formalised in July 2008. These activities include funding for technical assistance to establish a medium-term expenditure framework, a monitoring and evaluation framework and advisers to assist the Ministry of Health with its role as regulator of the service providers in the health sector.

AusAID, NZAID and the World Bank are pooling funds that will be drawn down to support priorities collectively agreed by the stakeholders. Other non-pooling partners such as the World Health Organization, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and

³⁴ Independent completion report, 2007.

China will be drawn in to provide different types of technical resources such as technical assistance, scholarships and equipment.

One of the issues likely to need close monitoring is the lack of open participation by the private and community organisations in the health sector. Those present are mostly from the public sector, including the National Health Service, which was formerly part of the Ministry of Health.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE

In 2007–08, \$1 million was spent on the Samoa health project and preparatory activities for developing the health sector approach, which represents 8 per cent of the year's bilateral assistance to Samoa.

OBJECTIVE 7:

STRENGTHEN LAW AND JUSTICE TO SUPPORT A SAFER SAMOA

RATING



The objective is on track to be fully achieved within the timeframe.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE

AusAID supports two main initiatives in law and justice—the Samoa Police Project and Samoa Law and Justice Sector Program.

The Samoa Police Project began in 2004. In March 2006 the mid term review raised major concerns about the scope and implementation of the project and recommended a Refocus mission. The challenges in significantly changing the culture of the Samoan Police Service had been underestimated. The Refocus Mission in March 2007 recommended key changes to the project for the remaining 18 months.

The main concerns raised in the mid-term review were the lack of community access and police visibility, and the need for better collaboration across key service providers, improved police responsiveness to emerging crime issues and more use of up-to-date policing expertise to address these. It was recommended that the Samoa Police Service focus more on 'fewer' and more technical areas such as investigations and prosecutions, as well as improve executive management, leadership and planning functions.

Since the Refocus Mission, the project has been refocused and the following achieved.

- > The new police headquarters were completed, offering a pleasant working environment. Anecdotal reports suggest that this has resulted in better workflows, improved police morale and better community access to police services. However, as yet there is no hard evidence to show that these changes have been embedded in the police service.

- > The introduction of a mobile police unit and bicycles has increased police visibility and access in the villages and provided a more ‘people friendly’ image.
- > A new Samoa Police Corporate Plan was launched, enhancing business planning processes. It aligns with the annual plan of the Samoa Police Project to ensure progress against the corporate plan is monitored through regular tracking of the project’s progress, in turn increasing supervisory oversight by managers and the executive.
- > Joint working groups were established with key partners in law and justice such as the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration, and the Attorney General’s Office using joint work plans that have improved knowledge/coordination of services to the public, improved working relationships and increased collaboration. These working groups are piloting a community policing model to demonstrate the partnership between police and the cultural mechanisms used in the villages.
- > An internal data management system and other administration policies/procedures (in human resources and finance) were implemented, increasing the tracking of resources and assisting in picking up fraud and misuse practices.

An increase in the project’s refocused annual plan budget for 2007–08 enabled the project to source more short-term experts to provide training in prosecutions (evidence management) and investigations, which was completed in the first quarter of 2008. Relevant sections are now implementing new skills/practices with the support and oversight of adviser counterparts in the Samoa Police Service and the team leader of the Samoa Police Project.³⁵

It was made clear through the mid-term review and a community perceptions survey undertaken in January 2006 that the key success factors for the Samoa Police Service as far as the community is concerned is an obvious increase in the rate of ‘criminals’ caught (reduction of burglaries, etc.) and the timeliness of responses to complaints (assault, etc.). A follow-up of this survey was undertaken in April–May 2008 and should provide data to indicate how the police are addressing concerns. It will also produce data to indicate how safe the people of Samoa feel and how they perceive the Police Service’s role in providing safety.

A particular success of the project to date has been the implementation of a gender policy, which has significantly raised gender issues within the police force.

Work in the Samoa Law and Justice Sector Program began in July 2007. The program focuses on achieving a coordinated approach between all stakeholders and facilitating better collaboration between all donors to support law and justice priorities identified in a sector plan. The sector, led by the Attorney General’s Office, has endorsed a sector plan and work to refine this into strategies for monitoring purposes.

³⁵ Samoa Police Project monthly and quarterly reports.

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE

In 2007–08, \$3.2 million was spent on the Samoa Police Project and \$201 000 on the Samoa law and justice sector plan, which represents 26 per cent of the year’s bilateral assistance to Samoa.

What is the quality of AusAID activities in Samoa?

In 2007-08, nine initiatives in the Samoa aid program had their quality at implementation assessed and overall the quality was mixed. Two initiatives were progressing well and on track to achieve objectives. But in broad terms, all of the program's initiatives were considered to be making satisfactory progress towards their objectives and performing satisfactorily in terms of ensuring sustainable outcomes. Almost 80 per cent of the initiatives were assessed as making satisfactory progress in implementation. Nevertheless, around half of the initiatives required some improvement in progressing implementation and achieving objectives, and two-thirds needed some improvement in producing sustainable outcomes. But just over three-quarters needed to improve their monitoring and evaluation.

Issues that prevented initiatives recording higher ratings included the following.

- > **Recruitment of good project staff**

There were a number of examples where poor performance management had serious impacts on project outputs. Careful procurement of staff and performance managers needed to be addressed early in project implementation. Systems needed to be in place to monitor performance, and efficient systems needed to be in place to remove and replace poor performers early. Consultants and technical advisers performed better if they were familiar with—or who could adapt quickly to—the Samoan context, which again pointed to the need for careful selection of project staff with Samoan input to the selection process.

- > **Working with other donors systems**

AusAID needed to clearly understand how to use other donors' internal systems from the outset of a project and what advantages and constraints these systems brought. For some projects there were particular issues around procuring and mobilising staff. Design documents needed to address these issues and AusAID needed to be stronger in addressing issues at the joint reporting sessions.

- > **Concerns about sustainability**

Where the Government of Samoa systems were strong and processes had been transferred, there were good grounds to expect that sustainability ratings would increase. There were more concerns about the sustainability of the Samoa Police Project, with perhaps the need to ensure that transitional arrangements were clearly articulated.

- > **Implementation issues**

Other issues identified by initiative managers as being problematic were delays to the commencement of initiatives, staffing shortfalls in critical agencies of the

Government of Samoa, the availability of technical assistance and the difficulty of engaging with AusAID's thematic support systems.