

# AUSTRALIA SOLOMON ISLANDS PROGRAM SUPPORT FACILITY PLUS (ASIPS+)

## INVESTMENT DESIGN DOCUMENT *REFRESH*

10 June 2024

**Start date:** 1 July 2023

**End date:** 30 June 2027 (with option to extend to 30 June 2031)

**Total proposed DFAT funding:** Up to \$120 million over 4 years, with the option of a \$120 million 4-year extension



# CONTENTS

|           |                                                                              |           |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>A.</b> | <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>                                                     | <b>7</b>  |
| A.1       | What is the Australia Solomon Islands Program Support Facility <i>Plus</i> ? | 7         |
| A.2       | What development challenges will ASIPS+ address?                             | 8         |
| A.3       | Why is ASIPS+ needed?                                                        | 8         |
| A.4       | What lessons have we learned?                                                | 9         |
| A.5       | What results are expected to be achieved?                                    | 10        |
| A.6       | What will be the governance and management arrangements?                     | 10        |
| A.7       | What resources will be invested by Australia?                                | 11        |
| A.8       | How was this design developed?                                               | 11        |
| <b>B.</b> | <b>DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS</b>                           | <b>11</b> |
| B.1       | Development context and problem                                              | 11        |
| B.2       | Relevance of facility modality for this development context                  | 13        |
| B.3       | Lessons learned about facility modalities                                    | 13        |
| <b>C.</b> | <b>STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND RATIONALE</b>                                       | <b>17</b> |
| C.1       | Australia's broader policy objectives                                        | 17        |
| C.2       | Rationale for ASIPS+                                                         | 17        |
| <b>D.</b> | <b>PROPOSED OUTCOMES AND INVESTMENT OPTIONS</b>                              | <b>18</b> |
| D.1       | Facility Outcomes and Logic                                                  | 18        |
| D.2       | Facility Delivery Approach                                                   | 31        |
| <b>E.</b> | <b>IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS</b>                                           | <b>33</b> |
| E.1       | Governance and Management                                                    | 33        |
| E.2       | Service Order development and delivery                                       | 38        |
| E.3       | Partnership engagement and policy dialogue                                   | 42        |
| E.4       | Sustainability                                                               | 42        |
| <b>F.</b> | <b>MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)</b>                             | <b>43</b> |
| F.1       | ASIPS+ PAF                                                                   | 43        |
| F.2       | ASIPS+ MEL Plan                                                              | 44        |
| F.3       | Strengthening and Aligning Service Order level MEL                           | 45        |
| F.4       | Use of MEL system information                                                | 45        |
| F.5       | MEL resourcing, roles and responsibilities                                   | 45        |



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|           |                                                                               |           |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>G.</b> | <b>GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY EQUITY AND RIGHTS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</b> | <b>46</b> |
| G.1       | Gender equality, disability and social inclusion .....                        | 46        |
| G.2       | Climate Change .....                                                          | 50        |
| G.3       | Localisation .....                                                            | 50        |

---

|           |                              |           |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>H.</b> | <b>BUDGET AND RESOURCES</b>  | <b>51</b> |
| H.1       | Budget.....                  | 51        |
| H.2       | DFAT's Human Resources ..... | 52        |

---

|           |                                   |           |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>I.</b> | <b>PROCUREMENT AND PARTNERING</b> | <b>53</b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|

---

|           |                                                |           |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>J.</b> | <b>RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDS</b>          | <b>53</b> |
| J.1       | Overview of risk assessment and controls ..... | 53        |
| J.2       | Management of risks and controls.....          | 54        |

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|           |                                                      |           |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>K.</b> | <b>ANNEXURES</b>                                     | <b>57</b> |
| K.1       | ASIPS+ Performance Assessment Framework (DRAFT)..... | 57        |
| K.2       | GEDSI Analysis.....                                  | 60        |

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## ACRONYMS

|        |                                                                |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| A\$    | Australian dollars                                             |
| AGB    | Aid Governance Board                                           |
| AHC    | Australian High Commission Solomon Islands                     |
| APA    | Adviser Performance Assessments                                |
| ASIPS+ | Australia Solomon Islands Program Support Facility <i>Plus</i> |
| ASIRF  | Australia Solomon Islands Resource Facility                    |
| DEH    | Development Effectiveness Hub                                  |
| DFAT   | Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  |
| DHOM   | Deputy Head of Mission                                         |
| DSS    | Deployee Support Services                                      |
| EOFO   | End of Facility Outcomes                                       |
| ESSP   | Education Sector Support Program                               |
| FSU    | Facility Support Unit                                          |
| FTE    | Full Time Equivalent                                           |
| FIMT   | (DFAT) Facility Investment Management Team                     |
| GBV    | Gender-based violence                                          |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product                                         |
| GEDSI  | Gender equality, disability, and social inclusion              |
| GESU   | Gender equality support unit                                   |
| HR     | Human Resources                                                |
| HSSP   | Health Sector Support Program                                  |
| IDD    | Investment Design Document                                     |
| IO     | Intermediate Outcome                                           |
| KPP    | Key policy priorities                                          |
| LES    | Locally engaged staff                                          |
| MEL    | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning                            |
| NGO    | Non-Government Organisation                                    |
| ODA    | Official Development Assistance                                |
| PGPA   | Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013     |
| PAF    | Performance Assessment Framework                               |
| QRAU   | Quality and Risk Assurance Unit                                |
| RAMSI  | Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands             |
| SIG    | Solomon Islands Government                                     |
| SO     | Service Order                                                  |
| SRO    | Senior Responsible Officer                                     |
| TN     | Tasking Note                                                   |
| TOR    | Terms of Reference                                             |
| VfM    | Value for Money                                                |

## DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

| Term                             | Definition used in this design document                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ASIPS+                           | <p>The Australia Solomon Islands Program Support Facility <i>Plus</i> (ASIPS+) is a DFAT-funded mechanism that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops/designs Service Orders (SOs) to meet the needs of the Australian High Commission (AHC) as well as ASIPS quality criteria</li> <li>• Provides tailored services to enable the effective delivery of SOs in: a) operations/enabling support; and b) development effectiveness/quality programming</li> <li>• Manages individual SOs and the SO portfolio to ensure delivery of quality work.</li> </ul> <p>ASIPS+ consists of the Facility Support Unit (FSU), managing under Service Order 1 (SO1), working in partnership with the DFAT Facility Investment Management Team (FIMT) (see below).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Service Orders                   | <p>Service Orders (SOs) are legal agreements (contracts) between DFAT and the Managing Contractor. Each SO sets out the scope of work for activities/investments to be delivered under ASIPS+, responsibilities for delivery, and budget/payment approaches.</p> <p>The ASIPS+ FSU is set up under SO1 to support ‘downstream’ SOs.<sup>1</sup> Downstream SOs are funded separately to SO1, with a total budget of up to A\$100 million over the four years of ASIPS+.</p> <p>Unless otherwise stated in this document, the term ‘Service Order’ refers to downstream SOs. ASIPS+ supports four types of SOs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development Programs (above A\$3m in overseas development assistance (ODA) funding)</li> <li>2. Deployee Support Services (ODA and non-ODA funding)</li> <li>3. Thematic Initiatives (between A\$1m and A\$3m in ODA funding)</li> <li>4. Flexible Funds (between A\$1m and A\$3m in ODA and non-ODA funding).</li> </ol> |
| SO Portfolio                     | <p>The portfolio of downstream SOs that are delivered and managed under ASIPS+ (supported by the FSU).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group | <p>The governance body that is responsible for strategic oversight of ASIPS+ and the SO Portfolio. The Deputy Head of Mission (DHOM) is the chair of the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group, with both representatives of DFAT and the Managing Contractor making up members of this body. The participation of both organisations on this body reflects the partnership approach being taken to implement ASIPS+. Under this approach, DFAT and the Managing Contractor share responsibility for achieving ASIPS+’s EOFOs, managing risks, and making operational decisions. However, DFAT retains responsibility for setting the strategic direction of investments that are delivered through ASIPS+, for decision-making related to Australian Government policy and strategic issues.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Senior Responsible Officer       | <p>The Australian High Commission’s Deputy Head of Mission (DHOM) is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the ASIPS+ investment and the portfolio of downstream SO investments. In accordance with DFAT policy, the SRO is ultimately accountable to DFAT Canberra for the effective delivery of ASIPS+ and downstream SOs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

<sup>1</sup> The current ASIPS+ SO1 will be amended to cover scope refinements stemming for this refreshed IDD.

| Term                                     | Definition used in this design document                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DFAT Facility Investment Management Team | <p>The DFAT Facility Investment Management Team (FIMT) works in partnership with the FSU to oversight SO1 and the whole SO portfolio to ensure good quality work is delivered (to ASIPS+ quality criteria). The FIMT also manages the Managing Contractor's performance in delivering SO1 (assessed through the annual Partner Performance Assessment process). The FIMT consists of DFAT staff<sup>2</sup> responsible for managing SO1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counsellor – Human Development</li> <li>• First Secretary – Gender and ASIPS</li> <li>• Senior Program Manager (Locally Engage Staff, LES).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Managing Contractor                      | <p>The Managing Contractor is the contractor selected through a competitive process responsible to deliver ASIPS+ (SO1 and downstream SOs). The Managing Contractor for ASIPS+ is DT Global Asia Pacific Pty Ltd (DT Global).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Facility Support Unit                    | <p>The Facility Support Unit (FSU), governed under SO1, is delivered by the Managing Contractor. The FSU provides relevant resources and expertise to deliver processes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SO development and design</li> <li>• SO support services in: a) operations; and b) development effectiveness/quality programming</li> <li>• management of individual SOs and the SO portfolio to deliver quality work.</li> </ul> <p>The FSU is led by an in-country Facility Director who works in close partnership with the DFAT FIMT to implement ASIPS+. The Facility Director is accountable to the Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative, who holds accountability for the delivery of ASIPS+. The Contractor Representative also plays a strategic role, with DFAT, to quality review downstream SOs for contracting/implementation, and with the Facility Director, participates as a member in the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group.</p> |
| DT Global's Head of Pacific              | <p>DT Global's Head of Pacific is ultimately accountable to the DT Global Board for the effective and successful delivery of the ASIPS+ Deed of Standing Offer to meet DFAT's expectations and DT Global performance standards and values. The DT Global Contractor representative is accountable to DT Global's Head of Pacific for the delivery of SO1 and other downstream SOs. The DT Global Head of Pacific will strengthen the partnership approach DT Global and DFAT are taking to implement ASIPS+ through regular meetings with the DFAT Counsellor (DFAT Facility Investment Management Team) and the DHOM/SRO (when they are available).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| DFAT Service Order Managers              | <p>The AHC member of staff that has commissioned a specific SO and is responsible for providing strategic oversight of SO implementation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| SO Leads                                 | <p>SO Leads are personnel engaged by the Managing Contractor to manage implementation of a specific SO. Leads may have different titles depending on the SO, including Heads of Program, Manager/Program Manager, Lead or Focal Point etc. Most Leads are paid for under the relevant SO.</p> <p>SO Leads are accountable to the relevant FSU supervisor for their performance in delivering quality programming (either the Facility Director or another FSU manager). SO Leads may also have direct engagement with relevant DFAT SO Managers for strategic direction and implementation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

<sup>2</sup> This structure was current as of the time of this IDD but may change in line with AHC resourcing requirements.



| Term                                    | Definition used in this design document                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cross-cutting approaches and strategies | <p>ASIPS+ develops and implements approaches and strategies to apply across the Facility's work, including the FSU, and all ASIPS-supported SOs, and promotes collaborative engagement between them. Under the direction of the DFAT FIMT, the FSU is responsible for development and implementation of most of these strategies. The key strategies relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI)</li> <li>Climate Change</li> <li>Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)</li> <li>Localisation</li> <li>First Nations Engagement</li> <li>DFAT's Key Policy Priorities (which could include the above topics and others to be determined).</li> </ul> |

## A. Executive Summary

### A.1 What is the Australia Solomon Islands Program Support Facility *Plus*?

The Australia Solomon Islands Program Support Facility *Plus* (ASIPS+) is a mechanism to support the Australian High Commission (AHC) in Solomon Islands deliver development outcomes and advance Australia's bilateral relationship with Solomon Islands. The Facility builds on the Australia Solomon Islands Resource Facility (ASIRF) and incorporates lessons from the way that facility operated. This new Facility is a four-year investment with the potential for a four-year extension, subject to performance, budget, and Australia's future priorities. The first four-year phase commenced in June 2023 and has a budget of up to A\$120 million.

The Facility is being implemented by a Managing Contractor, DT Global. The primary purpose is to deliver services requested by the AHC through Service Orders (SOs). SOs set out scopes of work, delivery responsibilities, and budgets. They constitute legal agreements between DFAT and DT Global and are funded by DFAT on a case-by-case basis, separately to ASIPS+ FSU (SO1) budget. In financial year 2023-24, 10 different AHC sections commissioned SOs through the Facility. The total budget for SOs over the first four years of the Facility is up to A\$100 million.

Compared with ASIRF's enabling facility, this new Facility represents an enabling 'plus model that will:

- Continue to **enable** SOs to operate by providing the logistical and administrative support services that were efficiently delivered under ASIRF. This includes services in procurement, logistics and office support, human resource functions, information technology, finance and risk management, etc.
- **Plus** improve the quality and development effectiveness of SOs through new services in a) specialist areas such as design, gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) and other cross-cutting issues, and b) relevant management expertise for promoting synergies across the SO portfolio while managing individual SOs' performance in delivering quality work.

ASIPS+ offers a new delivery modality that is a hybrid of DFAT's 'enabling' and 'development' facility models. Compared with ASIRF, ASIPS+ adds value by ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the programs delivered through SOs and will actively contribute to SOs' success in achieving their individual development outcomes.

ASIPS+ is designed to support four diverse types of SOs:

1. **Development Programs**, for achieving major development outcomes. For example, current multi-year sector programs in health, education and Australia Awards (these are above A\$3m in ODA funding).
2. **Employee Support Services (DSS)**, which mainly involve operational and enabling support services to employees from various Australian Government agencies (these are ODA and non-ODA funded).
3. **Thematic Initiatives**, for achieving more immediate development outcomes over a shorter timeframe than Development Programs. For example, the current gender equality support unit (GESU) and civil society capacity building initiatives (these are between A\$1m and A\$3m in ODA funding).
4. **Flexible Funds**, for quickly supporting small and discrete one-off activities the AHC requires, mainly in operational areas (each SO may have a budget between A\$1m and A\$3m in ODA or non-ODA funding).

The success of ASIPS+ in achieving end-of-facility outcomes (EOFOs) rests on DFAT and the Managing Contractor working together effectively in a partnership approach to design and manage SOs. This approach begins with clearly defined roles and responsibilities:

- a) The Managing Contractor is responsible for resourcing and managing the FSU to:
  - develop SOs (in the above categories) to meet AHC needs, ASIPS+ quality criteria (defined in this design in section D.1) and DFAT's relevant design, approval, and contractual/funding requirements;
  - enable the effective delivery of SOs through tailored services in: a) operations/enabling support; and b) development effectiveness/quality programming;
  - manage individual SOs and the overall SO portfolio to deliver quality work.
- b) DFAT (through a dedicated FIMT) oversees the FSU and works with them to improve the quality of SOs and promote synergies across the portfolio.

This design focuses on the role and operations of the FSU, as the main implementing organisation, but also describes DFAT's equally important role in ensuring the success of this investment.

## **A.2 What development challenges will ASIPS+ address?**

Solomon Islands is a small Pacific Island nation with a young and widely dispersed population, narrow economic base, and high vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. Although progress has been made in reducing poverty, there are significant disparities in development outcomes between central urban areas and remote rural areas. Solomon Islands is the world's tenth most vulnerable country to climate change, and faces multiple climate change hazards, including higher than average sea-level increases, significant increase in rainfall events and reduction in fish stocks. Gender inequality remains pervasive.

## **A.3 Why is ASIPS+ needed?**

Australia expects to deliver a large and increasingly complex development assistance program in Solomon Islands for the foreseeable future. Solomon Islands' fluid political and security context places considerable pressure on the Australian High Commission to respond to emerging opportunities and risks. ASIPS+ offers the Australian High Commission rapid access to high-quality specialist skills to deliver results in this challenging context.



While the use of managing contractors, rather than partner systems, reduces the overall risk of misuse of public monies, Solomon Islands has limited capacity to accommodate multiple separate managing contractor arrangements competing for limited resources on the ground. A facility managed by a single managing contractor offers economies of scale, particularly by concentrating and making available services and expertise which can be allocated to a range of Australia's priorities in Solomon Islands.

#### A.4 What lessons have we learned?

From DFAT's long experience in using the facility mechanism across the aid program, including in Solomon Islands since 2003, the following key lessons have informed the design of ASIPS+.

- **Strategic clarity:** Experience across DFAT facilities shows that fragmentation and strategic drift is a risk. This design seeks to avoid this risk through: a) anchoring the Facility's focus on the AHC's priorities; b) designing simple governance and management structures; and c) ensuring there is a clear high-level DFAT authority as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), the Deputy Head of Mission (DHOM), that will share accountability with the Managing Contractor for performance, development results and collaboration across SOs.
- **Service Order reform:** Recent experience from ASIRF highlights the need to reform the SO commissioning and management process to better define roles, responsibilities and decision-making points. Section E.2 outlines ASIPS+'s new SO process, which creates a new joint governance oversight group (between DFAT and the Managing contractor) and clarifies that the FSU is responsible for managing the performance of all SOs. To transition to this new process, a change management plan is also proposed to ensure multiple stakeholders within the AHC who access ASIPS+ services understand the role and responsibilities of the FSU and the SO personnel currently within SOs being implemented.
- **Robust monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL):** Experience across DFAT facilities, including ASIRF, found that MEL has often been under-valued. Strategic clarity, efficient management and overall value for money (VfM) are all underpinned by robust MEL systems, but MEL needs to be adequately resourced, and integrated into broader management processes to ensure data, insights and learning from the MEL system inform decision-making and adaptation. For ASIPS+, the MEL system will mainly focus on ASIPS+ results logic (End of Facility Outcomes and Intermediate Outcomes) but must also link with MEL at the SO level, so that it can tell a joined-up, higher level performance story incorporating all ASIPS+-supported SOs.
- **Partnership approach:** In producing this design, DFAT and DT Global discussed and agreed that shared responsibility is critical for the success of ASIPS+. <sup>3</sup> Both organisations have committed to a partnership approach based on principles of:
  - **Collaboration and coherence:** An open and cooperative performance culture based on clear, respectful communications and shared understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
  - **Mutual accountability and trust:** Sharing information in a transparent way and to collectively identify risks and identify mitigation steps and/or solutions to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of strategic and operational decision making.
  - **Learning and continuous improvement:** Engaging in a continuous process of documenting, reflecting, adapting and sharing to grow and improve effectiveness and efficiency.

<sup>3</sup> Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024. See DT Global, ASIPS IDD Revision Plans powerpoint, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

- **Equality and diversity:** An inclusive professional culture which respects and values diversity of thought, attributes, opinion and contributions of all personnel.
- **Support and appreciation:** Recognising the inherent value and contributions through different roles of all personnel.

The governance and management arrangements are based on these principles to promote and support the partnership approach.

## **A.5 What results are expected to be achieved?**

The higher goal of ASIPS+ is for Australia to contribute to the Solomon Islands 20-year national vision of *Improving the social and economic livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders*. The objective is for DFAT to *advance development priority outcomes through a strengthened Australia-Solomon Islands development partnership*. The AHC will review and revise the priority outcomes in consultation with the Solomon Islands Government (SIG). The priority outcomes will be reflected in the AHC's Development Partnership Plan, to be completed in accordance with Australia's new International Development Policy.

ASIPS+ will manage the performance of relevant SOs and support improved effectiveness, enabling them to achieve their development outcomes (in alignment with AHC priorities) through the following two EOFOs:<sup>4</sup>

1. ASIPS+ has delivered quality programming that responds to Australia's policy and development priorities.
2. ASIPS+ has efficiently and effectively managed operational processes and resources (in response to Australia's policy and development priorities).

## **A.6 What will be the governance and management arrangements?**

The ASIPS+ governance and management structure provides clear, simple and practical oversight and accountability arrangements in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (PGPA, 2013) and the recently updated Commonwealth Risk Management Policy (November 2022). The structure consists of:

- **An overarching governance body:** The ASIPS Strategic Oversight Group will have strategic oversight of ASIPS+ (that is, the work of both the FSU and DFAT's FIMT) and the portfolio of downstream SOs.
- **DFAT operational oversight and management of ASIPS+:** The DFAT Facility Investment Management Team (FIMT) is responsible for: a) managing the Facility Support Unit (FSU); b) endorsing new, downstream SOs for implementation; and c) coordinating with DFAT SO Managers to promote collaboration across the SO portfolio. The DFAT SO Managers are responsible for overseeing the individual SOs they have commissioned and working with colleagues to promote synergies across SOs.
- **Facility support services:** The FSU is responsible for: a) developing SOs to meet the requirements of the relevant DFAT SO Manager and ASIPS quality programming criteria; b) flexibly delivering FSU support services to each SO; and c) managing SOs to deliver quality programming against the relevant SO criteria.
- **Service Order delivery:** Each SO has a dedicated Lead that is responsible for quality delivery. SO Leads are accountable to the Facility Director for their performance and delivery of quality

<sup>4</sup> Intermediate outcomes under each EOFO are defined in K. Annexures K1

programming. SO Leads may also have direct engagement with relevant DFAT SO Managers for strategic direction and guidance.

#### **A.7 What resources will be invested by Australia?**

Over four years, Australia will invest up to A\$20 million in ASIPS+ through the FSU (SO1). The FSU has been designed with a sufficient level of resources to support Service Orders collectively worth up to A\$100 million. Separate investment design and approval processes will be undertaken for each SO commensurate with the scale of funding and in accordance with DFAT's Aid Programming Guide.

#### **A.8 How was this design developed?**

This Investment Design Document (IDD) is based on DFAT's ASIPS Investment Concept Note (September 2022), approved by the Aid Governance Board for development into a full IDD in November 2022, with instructions that:

- The Board's feedback on the Concept Note, as well as recommendations from a review by DFAT's Quality and Risk Assurance Unit (QRAU), be considered in developing the full IDD.
- The QRAU review the full IDD and advise the Board of any outstanding issues (through a Board minute).

By mid-January 2023, a DFAT design consultant completed an initial draft of the full IDD. This draft formed the basis of DFAT's competitive procurement process for the ASIPS managing contractor with finalisation of the IDD a requirement of the managing contractor. In the first half of 2023, DFAT selected DT Global as the Managing Contractor to deliver ASIPS (continuing from their role as the Managing Contractor for the delivery of ASIRF), commencing duties on 1 July 2023.

The FSU took forward the process to finalise this IDD. As nominated in the DT Global proposal for managing contractor, the FSU included a design team comprised of specialists in design, MEL, GEDSI, localisation and climate change. In January 2024, the full IDD was reviewed and approved by the QRAU. In February 2024, there was a change in leadership within the AHC (i.e. the Deputy Head of Mission and Counsellor responsible for ASIPS). The new leadership reviewed the IDD and proposed a refresh to strengthen and clarify the roles, responsibilities and process for development and management of SOs. The design team completed this refreshed IDD in June 2024.

### **B. Development Context, Challenges and Lessons**

#### **B.1 Development context and problem**

Solomon Islands faces similar development challenges to other countries in the Pacific Islands region. With a small and dispersed population, narrow economic base and high vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, Solomon Islands struggles to generate the economic growth required to provide social services, infrastructure and employment to its young and fast-growing population.

Solomon Islands' population (approximately 700,000) is growing at a rate of 2.3%<sup>5</sup> per annum. Although the country consists of 900 mainly small islands, most of the population live on the six largest. Much of the population is involved in mixed subsistence/cash crop agriculture, with less than a quarter involved in paid work. More than 50% of the population are under the age of 24. With an economy that is over 90% reliant on exports in agriculture and raw materials (including logging), Solomon Islands is vulnerable to global economic shocks.

**Solomon Islands is one of the poorest nations in the Pacific with significant inequalities.** Although progress has been made in reducing poverty, there are significant disparities between rural and urban

areas and across provinces.<sup>6</sup> Socio-economic disparities are overlain with ethnic differences which remain a source of significant conflict and exacerbates existing development challenges.

**Gender inequality remains pervasive.** Fewer women than men participate in the formal work sphere,<sup>7</sup> and Solomon Islands has one of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world, with approximately two thirds of women aged between 15 and 49 reporting having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some point in their life.<sup>8</sup>

**The country has experienced significant periods of ethnic conflict and economic contraction.**

Significant ethnic conflict occurred during the period 1998 to 2003 at the same time as severe economic contractions and stagnation. By 2002 the Solomon Islands Government was insolvent. Following the deployment of RAMSI (2003–2017)<sup>9</sup> to the Solomon Islands, the nation experienced relatively consistent levels of economic growth. However, since the withdrawal of RAMSI, Solomon Islands has not developed the strong state institutions required to deliver services and manage conflict, disasters or health emergencies.<sup>10</sup>

The economy contracted for three consecutive years from 2020 to 2022. In 2021–22, the economy contracted by 4%<sup>11</sup>, with gross government debt as a percentage of GDP increasing to 22.2% in 2023<sup>12</sup> and the volume of exports decreasing by 3% year on year.

**The adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Solomon Islands' economy and society were significant and are still being felt.** International and domestic border closures affected both exports and imports, inhibited SIG service delivery and were a barrier to development assistance. The cost of living increased, livelihoods decreased, education was interrupted with schools closed from January to June 2022 and reported rates of violence against women increased. The pandemic worsened gender poverty gaps, as women were less likely to have an income and, if they did have one, they were more likely to lose it.<sup>13</sup>

**Solomon Islands is vulnerable to the increased geo-strategic rivalry in the Pacific region.** The increased engagement of international actors in the Pacific (including China) has increased the country's access to much-needed finance. However, this interest has also meant the country is more vulnerable to external influences, including illegal activities, corruption, security challenges and political interference.

**Solomon Islands faces significant existing and future risks from climate change.** While the country is a very limited contributor to emissions that drive global heating, the region is disproportionately affected by climate impacts, including increased risk of severe rainfall variation and significant changes to agricultural yields and commercial fish stocks.

<sup>6</sup> Refer "Inclusive Development in Solomon Islands" Developmental Leadership Program, March 2022.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank Gender Portal, Solomon Islands profile. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/countries/solomon-islands>

<sup>8</sup> <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org>

<sup>9</sup> Australian-led, Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands involving representatives from Australia, New Zealand and 15 other Pacific nations.

<sup>10</sup> For complex political-economy reasons for this, refer World Bank Solomon Islands Country Diagnostic 2017; Economist Intelligence Unit <https://country.eiu.com/solomon-islands>; Personal Reflections on Political Economy and Nation-Building in Solomon Islands – Transform Aqorau with Stewart Firth, 19 December, 2022 Working Paper 2022/23 Department of Pacific Affairs, Australian National University.

<sup>11</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/SB>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/SLB>

<sup>13</sup> UN Women and Asian Development Bank, 2021, 'Two years on the lingering gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Solomon Islands' <https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/RGA%20Country%20Factsheet-Solomon%20Islands-Final.pdf>



## B.2 Relevance of facility modality for this development context

Australia's development assistance to Solomon Islands is likely to expand, both in size and scope, over the next four years (see section C), presenting significant challenges for the AHC in Solomon Islands. The ASIPS Investment Concept Note<sup>14</sup> identified and assessed the following options for delivery of this assistance:

- **OPTION A: Use of partners' systems:** The 2020 Assessment of National Systems and specific updates undertaken prior to the provision of specific budget support packages in 2021 found the risk associated with using SIG systems upstream as medium and the downstream systems as medium-high. DFAT therefore requires a careful consideration of the benefits of using budget support or partner managed programs as a modality for development assistance alongside robust risk mitigation measures.
- **OPTION B: Use of multilateral organisations (i.e. UN, ADB, World Bank):** While funding multilateral organisations would have the advantage of accessing in-house expertise, the challenges are DFAT Post would need to have time to manage the multilateral relationship and forge synergies between the multilateral organisation and the range of sector/thematic programs implemented under ASIPS+-supported SOs. Overall, this option will dilute Australian influence, increase delivery risks and be less flexible and responsive than a managing contractor option.
- **OPTION C: Use of a facility mechanism implemented by a Managing Contractor:** This option enables more easily accountable use of public monies to achieve designated results, while reducing the risk of funds being misappropriated, significant delays or cost overruns. Further benefits are:
  - Provision of on-demand operational/administrative support to the AHC, multiple Service Orders (including emergency/disaster response efforts);
  - Simplified and streamlined DFAT Post oversight of multiple SOs, by vesting management responsibility in a single managing contractor rather than multiple providers; and
  - Promotion of quality development programming with a focus on gender equality, disability equity and rights, MEL, localisation, climate change and risk management across all activities managed and enabled by the mechanism.

### **PREFERRED OPTION: OPTION C: Use of a facility mechanism implemented by a Managing Contractor:**

This is the preferred option as it enables more easily accountable use of public monies to achieve designated results, while reducing the risk of funds being misappropriated, significant delays or cost overruns.

## B.3 Lessons learned about facility modalities

This ASIPS+ design is informed by experiences from Australia's use of the facility modality across the aid program over the last 20 years as well as specific experience in Solomon Islands.<sup>15</sup> DFAT generally distinguishes between two main facility types: 1) a development facility focussed on managing activities to achieve development outcomes; and 2) an enabling facility focussed on the delivery of administrative and operational support to enable activities to be implemented. ASIPS+'s predecessor,

<sup>14</sup> DFAT, December 2023, ASIPS Investment Concept Note.

<sup>15</sup> Australia has used a range of facility mechanisms to support Solomon Islands since the commencement of RAMSI in 2003. Between 2015 and 2023, the Solomons Island's Resource Facility, followed by the Australia Solomon Islands Resource Facility (ASIRF) supported AHC Honiara's work in health, education, Australia Awards, gender equality, disaster preparedness and response, private sector support, lands and maritime and Deployee Support Services.

ASIRF, was an enabling facility. A value for money assessment of ASIRF completed in October 2022 found that ASIRF was **good** value for money, with **excellent** performance against the criteria of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethics.<sup>16</sup> The ASIPS Concept Note proposed to continue ASIRF's enabling facility modality, but with greater focus on development outcomes.

<sup>16</sup> ASIRF Value for Money Assessment 17 October 2022 p 21.



### **Lesson 1: Facilities increase risk of Fragmentation and drift.**

- Diverse activities have an incentive to work in silos, not collaboratively. Each SO sets distinct contractual requirements and obligations for service provision. Processes for SO Managers (within AHC Honiara) were unclear, with different instructions for SO implementation;
- Lack of coordination and leveraging synergies. Unclear processes/expectations for Australia-focused positions in SIG ministries for coordination with other aid activities.

**The implications for ASIPS+ design** at the strategic level is a Facility logic (framework for flexible, consistent support) which outlines how the FSU will support Australia's various SOs in Solomon Islands to promote ASIPS+ high-level goal and objective; build in regular Ways of Working reflection processes to partnerships and trust across DFAT, FSU and SOs. At the operational level, SO Guidelines (clarity/consistency) for AHC processes for SO design and implementation that complement/strengthen Ways of Working.

### **Lesson 2: Clarifying Governance and Management arrangements at each level.**

- Unclear split in management responsibilities between DFAT and the FSU in each SO. DFAT's level of responsibility for managing implementation varies depending on the type of facility (i.e. development facility: DFAT generally retains responsibility); potential for management 'grey zone' with SO Manager responsible for strategic management and technical performance and performance management of personnel delivery activities under the SO. FSU responsible for enabling support, contractual elements of personnel performance management resulting in confusion about responsibilities with unclear lines of accountability.

**The implication for ASIPS+ design** is that SO Guidelines (clarify/confirm) management responsibilities. Facility logic should outline how FSU and SOs will contribute to Facility objectives, define high-level accountabilities of AHC (FSU management decision making) and the managing contractor (provision of FSU services as directed by DFAT Post).

### **Lesson 3: Embedding risk assessment in day-to-day management.**

- Strengthened day to day risk management processes at the individual SO and personnel levels to protect Australia's investment in line with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy. Some large ASIRF supported SOs (e.g. multi- year sector programs) implemented risk processes in accordance with DFAT procedures, but many smaller ASIRF-supported Service Orders did not. The level of risk and level of management responsibility for each SO varies (some input only, some complicated sets of services with higher levels of risk management spread between DFAT, FSU and SO program leads).
- FSU (ASIRF) followed DFAT's risk procedures (regular risk identification, discussion with DFAT and updating risk register). DFAT SO Managers (ASIRF) were technical supervisors of long-term personnel with responsibility for assessing their performance using DFAT's Adviser Performance Assessments (APA) tool.
- Risk assessments not consistently applied at the individual SO level or at the individual personnel performance appraisals. APAs were (a) often not completed for international personnel and (b) not used to inform assessments of individual Service Orders of the FSU. DFAT did not have technical capacity to assess performance with no oversight of position.

**The implication for ASIPS+ design** is that SO Guidelines should clarify processes and responsibilities for managing and reporting risk (between DFAT/the FSU), starting from the development of the SO and running across implementation. SO Guidelines have clear responsibilities for personnel performance appraisals (between DFAT/the FSU) to include capability, time to perform the role is included in decision-making and responsibilities. Facility logic with measures for activity implementation progress and quality, based on personnel performance – see IO1.3. to report against this measure, develop MEL processes to systematically collect information from performance assessments. SO Guidelines

outline risk process interconnection with overarching risk processes in the FSU operations manual (see section J). Key programmatic risks identified as assumptions in the program logic and monitored via MEL.

#### **Lesson 4: Increasing MEL resourcing and capability to DFAT's standards.**

- MEL identified as a weak point across Australian aid program especially on facility mechanisms. Under-resourcing of MEL was a major factor contributing to ASIRF's weakness in this area. A PAF was developed but late in implementation, and information on the FSU's performance was limited. While data collection on core efficiency indicators and Value for Money (VfM) assessments occurred, limited tracking and performance assessments of the other elements of the PAF meant a lack of a coherent performance story.
- DFAT's MEL standards and guidelines developed to address limited DFAT staff capacity to demand good quality MEL and limited supply of MEL services. The quality of MEL was uneven, with no processes for feeding information up to allow a helicopter view of performance across the SOs.
- ASIRF's MEL did not meet DFAT's standards.

**The implication for ASIPS+ design** is that, at the FSU level, budget for the MEL function should be set at around 7% of the total FSU budget, the upper end of DFAT's standards for MEL resourcing, and common for DFAT facilities. Increased resourcing required to deliver effective MEL that aligns with DFAT's Facility PAF guidance, provides support to development SOs and report against the ASIPS PAF. At the Service Order level, all development SOs should have their own MEL budget (at least 4% of budget). SO Guidelines to make clear the responsibility of each SO for a) their own quality MEL process and b) how information from this level will feed into ASIPS+ PAF.

#### **Lesson 5: Inter-connected information management systems to better support decision-making.**

- Management did not have access to information in a readily digestible form for decision making purposes. The ASIRF end evaluation found that the Facility's use of multiple information systems was inhibiting effectiveness and efficiency.

**The Implications for ASIPS+ design** is that at a minimum, the managing contractor to develop a single information system for procurement, finance and HR to improve operational efficiency.

## C. Strategic Context and Rationale

### C.1 Australia's broader policy objectives

Australia is deepening its longstanding development commitment to the Pacific region. In October 2022, Australia committed an additional A\$900 million over four years<sup>17</sup> and the region is at the centre of Australia's new International Development Policy launched in August 2023. The objective of Australia's new development policy is *'to advance an Indo-Pacific that is peaceful, stable, and prosperous. A region that is predictable—where differences are resolved by international law and norms, and where we can cooperate, trade, and thrive'*. For each country, DFAT will develop bilateral Development Partnership Plans, outlining how Australia will support local priorities and shared aspirations, and develop capable and accountable state institutions.

Building climate resilience is a priority for the Pacific and climate risk will be considered in all Development Partnerships Plans. From 2024–25, at least half of all Australia's new investments valued at more than A\$3 million will have a climate change objective, reaching 80% by 2028–29.

Australia also recognises the urgent need for the Pacific to develop new and inclusive pathways to economic prosperity, by empowering women and girls, enhancing digital connectivity, and diversifying trade. Gender equality is to be addressed in 80% of development investments, with specific gender equality objectives in all new investments of more than A\$3 million. Similarly, Australia is committed to considering disability equity issues and actively promoting disability-inclusive development.<sup>18</sup>

### C.2 Rationale for ASIPS+

Australia and Solomon Islands are strong development, economic and security partners. Australia is the largest provider of ODA to the country, assisting SIG to implement its National Development Strategy (2016–2035). In recent years, Australia supported SIG to respond to the dual impacts of COVID-19 and the November 2021 civil unrest in Honiara. Given the highly volatile political economy context, the Australian aid program will likely need to continue supporting core services, including health, education, policing and infrastructure development. Economic growth, including job creation, will continue to be a priority. The program will grow with new and emerging priorities, including climate resilience, and include a focus on improving adaptive capacity in priority sectors to address climate change, support the transition to a low emissions economy, and promote investment in climate resilient activities.<sup>19</sup>

ASIPS+ will provide much-needed capability to complement AHC's staffing resources and the AHC to further build the bilateral partnership and contribute to Solomon Islands' development priorities. The proposed ASIPS+ investment builds on the foundations and learning of SIRF and ASIRF, as outlined in Section B.3.

<sup>17</sup> Budget highlights October 2022-23 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/portfolio-budget-statements/budget-highlights-october-2022-23>

<sup>18</sup> Australia is developing new international strategies for a) gender equality and b) disability equity and rights.

<sup>19</sup> These are key areas of focus under the existing DFAT climate action strategy.

## D. Proposed Outcomes and Investment Options

This section presents the proposed outcomes the investment expects to achieve through an enabling plus facility delivery approach. The first part describes the outcomes and the logic behind how they will be achieved (Section D.1). Most outcomes relate to the delivery of processes, in line with the enabling facility approach. The second part focuses on the enabling plus facility delivery approach (Section D.2).<sup>20</sup>

### D.1 Facility Outcomes and Logic

Section D.1 describes the outcomes at different levels, how they logically relate to each other and the key assumptions on which they are based. The section look in detail at the goal and objective, outcome stream 1 (quality programming) and outcome stream 2 (efficient and effective operational support).

#### D.1.1 Goal and Objective

**Goal: Improving the social and economic livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders**

The goal of ASIPS+ is to contribute to Solomon Islands' national vision as defined in the Government's National Development Strategy: 2016-2035:

- "Improving the social and economic livelihoods of all Solomon Islanders."

This vision will be achieved through the following mission and objectives. The SIG's mission is to:

- "...create a peaceful, harmonious and progressive Solomon Islands led by ethical, accountable, respected and credible leadership that enhances and protects people's culture, social, economic and spiritual well-being".

The SIG's five long-term priority objectives are:

1. Sustained and **inclusive economic growth**.
2. **Poverty alleviated** across the whole of the Solomon Islands, basic needs addressed and food security improved; benefits of development more equitably distributed.
3. All Solomon Islanders have access to **quality health and education**.
4. **Resilient and environmentally sustainable development** with effective disaster risk management, response, and recovery.
5. Unified nation with **stable and effective governance** and public order.

ASIPS+ can contribute to the Solomon Islands development goal through enabling and supporting quality delivery of SOs designed to achieve sector/thematic development outcomes.

**Objective: To advance development priority outcomes a through a strengthened Australia-Solomon Islands development partnership**

The objective of ASIPS+ is to assist the AHC achieve priorities and outcomes and strengthen Australia's development partnership with Solomon Islands. In the second half of 2024, DFAT will work with SIG to develop a *Development Partnership Plan*.<sup>21</sup> This Plan will identify shared priorities relating to the development of Solomon Islands as a peaceful, stable, and prosperous nation-state and member of the Pacific region. The Plan will deliver on Australia's policy commitments including genuine and respectful partnerships, supporting all people to fulfil their potential, promoting gender equality, disability equity and rights, addressing climate risks, supporting local Solomon Islands leadership and actors, and embedding the perspectives of First Nations Australians. The Plan will incorporate outcomes from SOs (development program and thematic initiatives) supported by ASIPS+ (i.e. large, downstream SOs), including in health, education, gender equality and Australia Awards.

<sup>20</sup> The approved DFAT Investment Concept analysed delivery options and identified the facility modality as the best (see Section B.2).

<sup>21</sup> This plan will be produced in line with Australia's new International Development Policy (August 2023).



### **D.1.2 Outcomes Stream 1: Quality programming**

**End of Facility Outcome 1: ASIPS+ has delivered quality programming that addresses shared policy priorities.**

The logic for EOFO1 is:

If:

- ASIPS+ effectively delivers the Intermediate outcomes under EOFO1, that is IO1, 2, 3, 4 (see below), and
- ASIPS+ delivers EOFO2, that is, effectively and efficiently manages Facility resources.

Then we would expect that:

- ASIPS+ will, at the end of four-years, be delivering quality programming that addresses Australia's policy priorities in Solomon Islands (EOFO1).
- EOFO1 (alongside EOFO2) will be contributing to the achievement of **sustainable development outcomes** (e.g. particularly under the large development program SOs).
- The Facility MEL system will collate evidence from these SOs to support claims of contribution to the Facility's Objective and Goal.

Because (the key assumptions underlying this logic):

- Facility leadership (DFAT and the Managing Contractor) will work closely together to ensure the FSU: a) develops SOs that address Australia's strategic priorities and meet quality criteria; b) provide services and support to enable the effective delivery of these SOs; and c) assures that quality work is delivered under these SOs.
- The FSU will facilitate productive working relationships across all SOs, as part of a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
- There will be adequate development effectiveness capacity and capability in the FSU<sup>22</sup> to provide quality support services to development programs and activities (as defined under SOs).
- The SO Leads and relevant DFAT SO Managers will work closely with the FSU to prioritise quality programming and promote synergies and collaboration between SOs.
- The Managing Contractor and DFAT Post work closely together through the agreed governance arrangements (section E) to meet Facility PAF performance expectations (section F).

In the development of the Facility PAF at the start of implementation, the above (significant) assumptions in this logic will be discussed with DFAT in setting performance expectations to be monitored during implementation.

**Intermediate outcome 1.1: ASIPS+ has delivered quality SO designs and strategies that incorporate cross-cutting issues and Key Policy Priorities.**

The Facility will deliver quality SO designs and strategies that respond to Australia's evolving needs and policy priorities in Solomon Islands, and which meet DFAT's Design and M&E Standards. In addition to in-house development effectiveness, the FSU will have the ability to engage specialised resources to develop designs and strategies in a flexible and responsive manner.

<sup>22</sup> Through the FSU's Development Effectiveness Hub (DEH) (see section E).



## Quality Designs

Design work could include the design of a new development SO (e.g. development program/thematic initiative). The FSU will lead on design processes, in close consultation with the relevant DFAT SO Manager (who is commissioning the SO, see section E.2). The FSU will provide technical expertise, and working with the DFAT FIMT, will ensure that all designs meet quality standards and integrate cross-cutting issues, as well as contributing to the Facility's EOFO, objective and goal. Any new sector investment will need to align with and contribute to the Facility's logic via the Facility PAF and broader MEL system.

## Quality Strategies

Quality strategies include strategies for cross-cutting issues, as well as Key Policy Priorities (KPPs) identified by DFAT Post. These strategies are key to ensuring a coherent and cohesive approach to key issues that cut across SO programming. They will be referenced under the Development Results (KPPs) and Learning and Adapting perspectives of the Facility PAF.

Cross-cutting issues are issues that DFAT has mandated need to be considered across all SOs (regardless of whether they address both EOFOs or only the operation issues under EOFO2). The specific ways in which the FSU will integrate these cross-cutting issues for SOs will be outlined in cross-cutting issues strategies (see Section G) to be completed at the start of implementation for:

- Gender equality, disability equity and rights
- Localisation
- First Nations Engagement
- Climate Change

Key Policy Priorities (KPPs) refer to specific policy engagement priorities that DFAT wants to progress through ASIPS+'s work in a joined up and coherent way, a requirement under DFAT's Facility PAF Standards. KPPs may relate to:

- a cross-cutting issue (e.g. advocacy for a National Action Plan around Disability Rights).
- a policy engagement priority at a sectoral level (e.g. advocacy around updating the national education policy to incorporate a strong gender lens)
- a broader policy engagement issue (e.g. elections).

The process of adding new KPPs and reviewing existing ones will usually be via annual performance expectations discussions, which is a DFAT requirement for facilities. New KPPs can also be proposed on an ad-hoc basis as they arise, following a process like that for DFAT's commissioning of Service Orders. In practice, several SOs together with DFAT Post's policy engagement efforts, will contribute to the KPPs. KPPs will be included in the Facility PAF. Progress towards the KPPs will be tracked through ASIPS+'s MEL system, and will include learning and reflection points, allowing DFAT to tell a clear performance story around the KPPs. The policy engagement matrix tool may also be used to manage DFAT and FSU contributions to the KPPs.

Strategies around key policy priorities will be developed as required. The delivery of these strategies is captured under IO1.2.

IO1.1 comes under the Development Results perspective (EOFO element) of DFAT's Facility PAF template. Additional IOs relating to specific KPPs or cross-cutting issues (such as IO2.4 on gender equality in the workplace) may be added during implementation, in consultation with DFAT, as new priorities emerge that require a joined-up approach across the Facility.

The logic for IO1.1 is:

If the activities are well delivered:

- DFAT FIMT, FSU and DFAT SO Managers collaborate effectively in design and strategy development processes.

Then we would expect that, within 2 to 3 years, IO1.1 will be achieved:

- SO Designs will be of good quality, in line with DFAT's Design and M&E Standards, and appropriate for the Solomon Islands context, and
- Strategies for cross-cutting priorities, Key Policy Priorities, and other strategies will be of good quality, in line with DFAT's policies and guidance, considering the Solomon Islands context.

Because the following key assumptions will have held true:

- Relevant DFAT and FSU staff followed the SO development process (see section E).
- The FSU had visibility of the DFAT pipeline and the strategic intent of any new SOs.
- The FSU brought specialist resources on board, as necessary and in a timely manner, to undertake quality designs and strategy processes.<sup>23</sup>

**Intermediate outcome 1.2: ASIPS+ has delivered coherent and consistent approaches across SOs including for cross-cutting issues and Key Policy Priorities.**

In addition to developing quality designs and strategies, to enable quality programming the FSU will work collaboratively to ensure coherent and consistent approaches to cross-cutting issues and Key Policy Priorities. The FSU will work closely with DFAT Post and Service Order Leads/teams to:

- Ensure strategies (aligned with the Facility PAF, with clear objectives and metrics to track performance across SOs, and dedicated budgets) are in place for cross-cutting issues and KPPs within the first six-months<sup>24</sup> (IO1.1).
- Ensure new designs integrate cross-cutting issues and key policy priorities (IO1.1).
- Ensure the MEL system effectively integrates cross-cutting issues, not just in what is tracked, but how MEL is undertaken and who is involved. This will include running regular cross-Facility learning events to discuss specific issues or to reflect on progress implementing cross-cutting issues and KPPs strategies, rolling out a small number of common indicators across SOs and developing simple tools to assist with reporting, undertaking specific analysis, research, or other products to fill gaps in knowledge or to inform DFAT's policy engagement agenda. This will be further fleshed out in the MEL Plan.
- Cross-cutting issues and KPPs are regularly discussed at management meetings at the different levels of the Facility, by including standing agenda items.
- Support DFAT Post to develop and implement policy dialogue matrices for each KPP, as appropriate.

<sup>23</sup> The FSU/DEH is adequately resourced with quality personnel is taken as a critical assumption of this and all intermediate outcomes.

<sup>24</sup> The first six months of implementation following the approval of this final IDD.

IO1.2 comes under the Development Results perspective (KPP element) of the Facility PAF template. The logic for IO1.2 is:

If:

- Strategies are in place for cross-cutting issues and key policy priorities (see IO1.1) – gender equality, disability equity and rights, localisation, climate change, First Nations engagement; and
- FSU is involved in key parts of the program management cycle for SOs, as outlined in the abovementioned strategies, in the ways of working and governance arrangements.

Then:

- ASIPS+ will be able to deliver coherent and consistent approaches to cross-cutting issues and KPPs.
- ASIPS+ will support DFAT's broader policy dialogue/advocacy agenda around key policy priorities including gender equality.
- Development programs and activities will be able to contribute to ASIPS+'s reporting on cross-cutting issues and key policy priorities.

Because the following key assumptions will have held true:

- Cross-cutting issues and KPPs were clearly defined by DFAT and delivery partners as part of the annual Facility PAF Performance expectations process.
- FSU with the SO Leads played an active role in the implementation of these strategies, including by making sure relevant implementers understood their role in progressing cross-cutting issues and KPPs.

**Intermediate outcome 1.3: ASIPS+ has managed SOs to deliver in line with their workplans/TORs/specifications.**

Performance management of SOs is a key activity that separates this enabling plus facility from a conventional enabling facility. The ASIPS+ Facility Director (with leadership team) is responsible for assuring the quality of work delivered under all ASIPS+ SOs, and that SOs are delivering in line with their workplans, TORs and specifications as relevant for each SO type.

This IO does not apply to employees (who are accountable to their Australian Government ministry) or personnel filling 'in-line' SIG positions (who are accountable to SIG).

IO1.3 contributes to EOFO1 on quality programming and aligns with the 'coherent and joined up' element of the Facility PAF template. This IO is placed under the development results element because in ASIPS+ logic contributions towards development outcomes are at the Objective level. In summary, the logic for IO1.3 is:

If the following activities are well delivered:

- Tools for the implementation of targeted development activities are in place, including work plans and proportionate reporting templates,
- SO workplans, personnel TORs, specifications, clearly set expectations for performance, MEL and reporting, and engagement with FSU are included in SO workplans, and
- The Facility Director works closely with other FSU leaders to provide oversight and manage the performance of SO Leads.

Then we would expect that IO1.3 would be achieved and that:

- ASIPS+ has managed SOs to deliver in line with their workplans/TORs/specifications.

Because the following key assumptions will have held true:

- SO Leads develop workplans/specifications with clear objectives for the assignment (including integration of cross-cutting priorities and KPPs); develop proportionate MEL arrangements; implement these workplans/specifications, including raising emerging risks to progress or achievement of objectives during implementation, and adjusting the workplans where appropriate in consultation with the AHC; participate in relevant training or fora relating to cross-cutting issues, KPPs, MEL etc.; complete reporting templates/processes, as agreed; adjust approaches in response to learnings or good practice as identified.
- Solomon Islands contextual factors do not prevent the implementation of workplans/TORs/specifications towards their objectives, noting that some adjustments are expected in line with continuous improvement, depending on changes in the context and windows of opportunity that may emerge.

**Intermediate outcome 1.4 ASIPS+ has generated knowledge and learning that informs continuous improvement across SOs.**

In working across all SOs, the FSU is positioned to share knowledge and learning that promote synergies, adaptation, and improvement across the portfolio. These improvements will support both coherent approaches across SOs, remove duplication, and support better quality programming. This knowledge and lessons will be surfaced through MEL and other activities on an ongoing basis.

A robust FSU MEL function is essential to foster learning and continuous improvement. A key lesson from ASIRF is that stronger investment in MEL capacity at both the FSU and individual SO levels is critical if ASIPS+ is to collect appropriate information to track progress against expected outcomes and inform decision-making and enable DFAT to tell the broader performance story.<sup>25</sup>

IO1.4 comes under the Learning and Adapting perspective of the Facility PAF template (Continuous Improvement). The logic for IO1.4 is:

If the following activities are well delivered and the FSU:

- has a quality MEL system in place, which aligns with DFAT Design and MEL standards, links Facility and SO MEL systems, and generates lessons and knowledge across SOs, and
- uses the Facility MEL system to facilitate cross-learning and coordination events, as well as delivers research, quality assurance for MEL systems in sectoral programs, capacity building, etc.

Then we would expect that intermediate outcome 1.4 will be achieved and:

- ASIPS+ has generated knowledge and learning that informs continuous improvement across SOs.

Because the key assumptions underlying will have held true:

- All levels of leadership actively build and support a performance culture (across the AHC, FSU, SO Leads etc.).
- All relevant stakeholders actively and openly participate in the FSU facilitated collaboration mechanisms.
- ASIPS+’ Service Orders deliver MEL activities staff in line with their plans that generate reporting for DFAT on development outcomes and collaborate with FSU for higher level Facility PAF reporting.

<sup>25</sup> ASIPS will play a role supporting the AHC in bringing DFAT programs together and coordinating and synthesising communication.

- Implementation of the MEL system has adequate resourcing – DFAT Standards are that 4-7% of the budget for the Facility and for the sectoral programs should be spent on MEL.
- DFAT does its own strategic external communications and public diplomacy work and does not require the Facility to take on this task, beyond producing communications ‘products’.

### **D.1.3 Outcome Stream 2: Efficient and effective operational support**

#### **End of Facility Outcome 2: ASIPS+ has efficiently and effectively managed operational processes and resources.**

At the end of four years, this EOFO will be achieved when ASIPS+’s operational processes are well designed for their purpose and are delivered to high standard that enables quality programming (EOFO1) and/or the achievement of AHC priorities (Objective and Goal).

The achievement of EOFO2 is premised on ASIPS+ delivering the following operational processes to a consistently high standard in accordance with DFAT’s requirements and Australian Government policies:

1. **Operational management processes** to facilitate efficient decision-making on the allocation of resources (IO2.1).
2. **Human resource and logistics processes** to identify appropriately qualified personnel and provide them the necessary resources to perform their duties safely and effectively (IO2.2).
3. **Procurement and grant processes** that provide value for money in the delivery of goods, services and (grant) projects (IO 2.3).
4. **Gender equality in the workplace processes** that promote gender equality and reduce the acceptance and impact of harmful gender and social norms across SOs (IO2.4).
5. **Financial and risk management processes** that ensure all taxpayer funds are efficiently managed and accounted for and proactively identify and mitigate risks across ASIPS+ and SOs (IO2.5).

The FSU will administer these five operational processes tailored to the needs of the relevant SO. The FSU’s efficient and effective delivery of these operational processes is based on three critical assumptions:

- That roles and accountabilities for delivery are clearly defined and followed (at FSU and SO levels). Most importantly is the complementary and inter-linked role played by the DFAT FIMT and the FSU. The responsibilities of each are outlined in the description of processes below (and further elaborated in section E: Implementation arrangements).
- That communication processes are understood, and good coordination and productive working relationships develop between the FSU and SO Leads (and relevant SO teams), and between the FSU and the DFAT FIMT/DFAT SO Managers. The FSU will facilitate clear communication that involves key internal stakeholders (including the DFAT FIMT) discussing and agreeing clear communication protocols and regularly meeting to reflect on the health of these processes.
- That Australian Government and DFAT policies requirements can be met in the different, unpredictable, and complex operating context of Solomon Islands.



### **Intermediate outcome 2.1: ASIPS+'s decision-making processes have been effective.**

ASIPS+ requires clear and transparent decision-making processes for efficiently allocating resources to promote AHC objectives. Section E.2 outlines new SO commissioning and management processes to provide the clarity required. Within three months of approval of this IDD, FSU will have transitioned ASIPS+ to these new processes. Indicators of efficiency and effectiveness of this new decision-making process will be developed within this three-month period, but could include the degree to which:

- SOs are commissioned in accordance with new SO process (i.e. all parties follow their role process).
- The SO process leads to:
  - better quality SO designs (including stronger MEL, GEDSI and risk management and stronger alignment with ASIPS+'s goal and objective);
  - reduced number and cost of transactions (e.g. through the creation of fewer, larger SOs);
  - improved responsiveness to AHC opportunities and needs as they emerge (e.g. time taken);
  - continued flexibility to allow the adaption of a SO and/or reallocation of resources to better meet AHC objectives; and
  - more robust (accurate) SO budgeting and risk identification/management.

The key assumptions are that:

- all stakeholders (DFAT SO Managers, DFAT FIMT, FSU, SO Leads etc.) will understand the SO process and perform their roles.
- ASIPS Strategic Oversight Group will oversight the SO process to check that it leading to the improvements expected and desired.

### **Intermediate outcome 2.2: ASIPS+ has provided efficient human resource support and logistics functions to enable personnel to perform their roles.**

ASIPS+ requires an efficient human resource and logistics function to attract, retain and support the high-performing team of professionals needed to achieve objectives. First, the FSU needs to be able to quickly and efficiently recruit specialist personnel to deliver a wide range of SOs. The aim is to recruit a balance of professionals, inclusive of younger professionals, women and people from diverse backgrounds, with a focus on Solomon Islanders and/or Pacific Islanders. Second, the FSU needs to deliver logistical support services tailored to a range of different positions to enable them to perform to a high standard. For example, the FSU will support DT Global-contracted personnel of specific SOs as well as AHC's Australian-based staff in areas such as security, property maintenance etc. These services will be documented in the ASIPS+ Operations Manual<sup>26</sup> (outlining policies for diversity and inclusion in recruitment and management processes and provides personnel with information on the deployment process, day-to-day HR management and management contact details).

The FSU will design and implement processes for:

- **Recruitment and contracting of diverse and high-quality personnel.** The relevant DFAT Post official will approve through the SO development and/or work planning processes the roles and positions that are required to deliver the SO they have commission (see section E.2). The FSU is responsible for running robust recruitment processes that:
  - identify diverse pools of candidates that include younger professionals, women, and people from diverse backgrounds,

<sup>26</sup> ASIPS+ Operations Manual has been developed and will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

- identify and nurture Solomon Islands talent as part of a localisation strategy that prioritises engagement of Solomon Islanders (or, if expertise is not available, then talent from other Pacific countries), and
- assess an intentional candidate's ability to work in a team in the Solomon Island's socio-cultural context (along with technical qualifications).

The FSU is also responsible for contracting personnel and arranging for their deployment to their place of work.

- **Personnel mobilisation and logistical support.** The FSU will enable ASIPS personnel to 'hit the ground running' through the provision of seamless logistics support services (e.g. travel and accommodation) and meaningful inductions at the start of their assignment period. The inductions will include details on the requirements of the position and aligning priorities with ASIPS+; performance and reporting expectations, introductions to work colleagues (Solomon Islands counterparts, fellow team members, and relevant DFAT colleagues), security briefings (see below) and administrative processes.
- **Personnel safety, security and welfare.** The FSU is responsible for ensuring the safety, security and welfare for all ASIPS+-supported personnel. The FSU will develop and maintain a Security Manual, undertake regular security risk assessments, and put in place processes to respond to security incidents. The FSU will train all staff in how to avoid and/or report security risks as well as provide training and due diligence on child protection and social safeguards, in accordance with DFAT policies (see IO2.5). The FSU will also put in place processes to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all personnel, that integrate approaches to shift workplace culture related to gender norms (see IO2.4). This will include culturally intelligent/competent pastoral care support.
- **Deployee Support Services.** The FSU is responsible for delivering a dedicated set of services to Australian Government deployees, consulting with, and keeping the DFAT FIMT and relevant DFAT SO Manager informed throughout. The FSU will provide services like those above in, logistical support<sup>27</sup>, safety, security but to the specifications defined by the Government of Australia under the relevant SO.

### **Intermediate outcome 2.3: ASIPS+ has effectively managed grants and procurement in line with Australian Government standards.**

To be effective, grants and procurement management must support the relevant SO objectives, deliver value for money and meet Australian Government standards. In accordance with these standards, the key features of procurement and grant processes are summarised below.

#### **Procurement and grant process summary**

**Procurement Purpose/Scope:** To deliver Goods and/or Services: e.g. technical assistance, skills training, applied research/maintenance, construction, information technology/legal advice, third party accounting.

- **Key Features:** Typically involves a vertical sub-contract arrangement between the supplier (normally a private business or company) and the buyer (i.e. ASIPS+).

**Grant Purpose/Scope:** To deliver objectives mutually agreed with a grant partner: e.g fund organisations in relevant areas to achieve outcomes, such as to improve the lives of poor beneficiaries.

<sup>27</sup> Excluding mobilisations

- **Key Features:** Typically involves a more horizontal relationship between the grantee (e.g. NGO) and the donor (i.e ASIPS+) where the focus is on achieving outcome-level results that both parties share an interest in.

*Common in both Procurement/Grant:* In both cases, due diligence of the partner organisation/supplier is important to assess risk down the delivery chain and to ensure compliance with all relevant Australian standards, including safeguards and other policies.

The FSU is responsible for developing ASIPS+'s Grant and Procurement processes and templates to meet Australian Government standards, including The Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 and the PGPA Act. These processes will also include measures for promoting and monitoring performance against DFAT's value for money criteria, localisation of suppliers/partner organisations, and environmental sustainability, including full life cycle costs and recycling at end of life.

### **Value for Money Criteria**

The Value for Money assessment framework is organised around four overarching dimensions: Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Ethics.

#### Economy

1. Cost consciousness
2. Encouraging competition.

#### Efficiency

3. Evidence-based decision-making
4. Proportionality

#### Effectiveness

5. Performance and risk management
6. Results focus
7. Experimentation and innovation

#### Ethics

8. Accountability
9. Equity (e.g. diversity and including diversity and inclusion considerations).

Once an SO has been endorsed, the relevant DFAT SO Manager has the authority to commence a grant or procurement process. In most cases, the FSU is responsible for directly managing the grant and procurement process from start to finish, including due diligence, and/or overseeing quality assuring processes being managed under other SOs (such as those for Australian Awards and the Education Sector Support Program). The FSU's role and responsibility for grant and procurement management will be defined in the relevant SO. However, all grant and procurement processes under ASIPS+ will follow the Facility's documented grant and procurement processes.

**Intermediate outcome 2.4: ASIPS+'s operations, workplace culture and practices have promoted gender equality and have reduced the acceptance and impact of harmful gender and social norms across SOs.**

Promoting women's engagement in policy development and service delivery, and supporting gender mainstreaming across government more broadly, is underway in Solomon Islands but remains challenging. Social and cultural norms regarding women and men's respective roles in decision

making, economic activity, family and caregiving (including disability), mean that inequality continues to hinder women and girls fulfilling their potential.<sup>28</sup>

Gendered social norms and high rates of gender-based violence were identified by the International Finance Corporation and 15 of the largest Solomon Islands companies in 2018 as two key drivers of workplace inequality and low participation of women in the workplace.<sup>29</sup> The Australian Government prioritises promoting gender equality both as a human right and as a means of achieving more effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Australian Government-supported programs working with companies both in the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea have demonstrated that structured workplace responses to gender-based violence and taking action to promote and value women as employees, customers and suppliers can shift attitudes away from acceptance of violence and increase the number of women in senior and leadership roles.<sup>30 31</sup>

The FSU, within the workplace, will actively seek to address barriers to gender equality and shift acceptance of harmful social and gender norms. The FSU and all SOs (with FSU support) will implement policies and practices that provide a safe, respectful and supportive workplace for all staff and contractors: women, men and any that prefer not to identify as either women or men.

ASIPS+ Gender Equality Specialist will review existing policies and practices and review/update/develop new human resources, procurement and operational workplace policies and practices to ensure they address barriers to gender equality to promote inclusiveness and enable women's leadership through its workplace culture.

Examples of activities include:

- Raising awareness of unconscious bias and promoting mixed gender shortlisting and interview panels for national and international recruitment processes.
- Providing training and skills workshops to potential local suppliers to raise awareness of GEDSI considerations and safeguards requirements and where possible, reward or incentivise local gender equality initiatives within local suppliers.
- Building a shared understanding of Solomon Islands legal protections, ASIPS+ workplace policies and the support services available for employees and family members experiencing violence or sexual harassment.
- Support staff and personnel to reflect on the harm to families, communities, and within workplaces of gendered social norms, and to practice different ways of behaviour and thinking.
- Provide professional development skills training and opportunities to build inclusive leadership skills, focused on local personnel.

<sup>28</sup> See Annex B: GEDSI Analysis for more detail.

<sup>29</sup> International Finance Corporation, 2019, *The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands*, p 5. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2019/solomon-islands-domestic-and-sexual-violence>

<sup>30</sup> International Finance Corporation, 2019, *Waka Mere Commitment to Action. Improving business outcomes in Solomon Islands through advancing workplace gender equality*. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2010/waka-mere-commitment-to-action>

<sup>31</sup> The work of the Business Coalition of Women in Papua New Guinea is available in cited in Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, 2021, *What Works for Gender Transformative Approaches in Papua New Guinea*, pp. 17, 29 and 35. <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/pwl-pacific-women-gender-transformative-change-brief-in-papua-new-guinea>. The benefits to employees and employers of workplaces responses to family and sexual violence has been measured and reported on in International Finance Corporation, 2023, *Workplace responses to Family and Sexual Violence in PNG. Measuring the Business Case. Endline Report*

This may include conducting regular gender pay gap analyses and conducting staff surveys to assess sense of safety, well-being and beliefs in relation to acceptance of violence and women's empowerment.

The logic for this intermediate outcome is:

If:

- The FSU ensures that all operational policies and practices to promote gender equality are followed by themselves and SOs and all DT Global-contracted personnel are supported to identify harmful social and gender norms and choose to act differently, and
- The FSU is adequately resourced with quality personnel to drive and monitor implementation of these policies and practices.

Then:

- Personnel would have clearer understanding of what domestic and family violence is and its harmful effects, and how to seek help if required.
- Acceptance of harmful gender and social norms would reduce.
- Personnel will feel safe and supported in the workplace, including women taking on more responsibility and positions of leadership.
- Personnel will behave in ways that demonstrate support for women and men and others to have equal opportunities and value.

Because the following key assumptions will have held true:

- All levels of leadership actively build and support a workplace culture that promotes gender equality.
- FSU personnel actively engage with opportunities provided to understand the harms caused by inequalities, especially gender inequalities, and how they can positively act to promote safe, respectful, and positive workplaces for all.
- Consistent and joined up practices across the Facility and SOs promoting gender equality and builds confidence in personnel to seek help if required and reduces the impact of harmful gender and social norms.

**Intermediate outcome 2.5: ASIPS+ has effectively managed financial risks and safeguards across SOs.**

ASIPS+ will deliver effective financial and risk management in accordance with responsibilities clearly defined in the Deed of Standing Offer across all SOs.

**Financial management**

To be effective, ASIPS+ financial management processes must:

- Comply with DFAT's financial standards, as verified in independent financial audits.
- Accurately forecast and report on budget expenditure (vs. actual) at both FSU and SO levels.
- Produce accurate and timely monthly financial reports at FSU and SO levels that: track actual expenditure against budget, identify variances in budgets and any anticipated, significant anomalies or budget overruns.
- Apply rigorous fraud and anticorruption measures, including fraud risk assessments, fraud control plan, and fraud awareness and reporting training for all staff, partners, and subcontractors.
- Include a financial information management system that can analyse and report on a core set of efficiency indicators and trends, including management fee, local contracts, international and local personnel, operations and staffing, indirect costs, and work plan spending.



The FSU is responsible for setting up and managing the above ASIPS+ financial processes, reporting to the DFAT FIMT and relevant DFAT SO Managers. They will follow these processes to budget and report on finances at an FSU-level and they will provide training and oversight to ensure that these processes are followed in the delivery of individual SOs.

### **Risk and safeguards management**

To be effective, the Facility's risk and safeguards (social and environmental) management processes must:

- Embed ultimate accountability for effective risk and safeguard management with DFAT Senior Responsible Officer (in accordance with the current DFAT policy). The SRO for ASIPS+ is the DHOM.
- The DHOM may delegate day-to-day responsibility to relevant DFAT SO Managers but retains ultimate responsibility. Responsibilities for day-to-day risk management will be defined in accordance with DFAT's risk processes and will include use of DFAT's Risk Factor Screening Tool template as the central tool.
- Define complementary roles for risk management between FSU and SO levels with clear lines of accountability and communication.
- Build a risk management culture across all ASIPS+ levels (DFAT, FSU, SO etc), as demonstrated through regular discussion of risks in meetings and proactive identification of potential risk and management measures (avoid, treat, accept etc.).
- Ensure risk management is integrated into the MEL system, by regularly and rigorously testing assumptions, undertaking analysis to fill knowledge gaps, and adjusting strategies in response to assumptions that are not holding, or risks that are emerging (noting that risk and assumptions are two sides of the same coin).

Across ASIPS+ different roles and responsibilities include:

- At the FSU-level, the DFAT FIMT and the FSU will share responsibility for day-to-day risk management. They will focus on managing risks in their areas of responsibility over which they have a clear line of sight:
  - DFAT FIMT: strategic, reputational, political and stakeholder relationship risks.
  - FSU: risks relating to SO quality programming (EOFO1) and management of resources, (EOFO2) as well as staff safety and security and compliance with DFAT policies, including environment and social safeguards, fraud control, child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, gender equality, disability equity and rights, inclusion, equity and diversity, and health and safety.
  - Managing Contractor (Contractor Representative): contractual, compliance and reputational risks, risks relating over overall ASIPS+ performance, achievement of contractual requirements and relationships management.
  - The DFAT FIMT and the FSU will review risks on an ongoing basis, and update the ASIPS+ Risk Register as required following monthly risk review meetings. Development Program SOs will develop and maintain their own Risk Factors Screening Tool. The FSU will document discussions in these meetings and update the tool as agreed but the DFAT FIMT will sign-off any changes (new risks/change in risk profile). They will also elevate for the immediate attention of the DHOM/SRO any changes in the nature and level of risks.

- At the SO level, responsibilities for risk will be specified in each SO. Relevant DFAT SO Managers and SO Leads for large SO (i.e. development programs with their own designs and governance bodies), will identify and track risks.

**DFAT SO Manager:** strategic, reputational, political and stakeholder relationship risks.

**SO Program Lead:** technical assistance; finance, grants, procurement; compliance with DFAT policies, environment and social safeguards, fraud control, child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, gender equality, disability equity and rights, inclusion, equity and diversity, and health and safety.

The DFAT SO Manager and SO Lead will meet as required to review risks. Once signed off by the DFAT SO Manager, the SO Lead will forward the risk assessment to the FSU for review in the monthly Facility-level risk meeting with the DFAT FIMT. Any changes to the risk profile of SO risks will be immediately reported through DFAT's FIMT to the DHOM/SRO.

## D.2 Facility Delivery Approach

ASIPS+ will operate as an enabling *plus* facility. This is an adaption from the enabling facility model on which ASIRF was based and is a hybrid of DFAT's 'enabling' and 'development' facility approaches. Under the enabling *plus* model, ASIPS+ will:

- **Enable:** by continuing to provide SOs with the operational support services that were efficiently delivered under ASIRF. This includes services in procurement, logistics and office support, human resource functions, finance and risk management, and information technology etc.
- **Plus:** improve the development effectiveness and quality of SOs' work by delivering a new set of services beyond those offered by ASIRF, such as providing specialist expertise (in design, GEDSI,<sup>32</sup> MEL and other cross-cutting issues), and relevant management expertise to manage individual SO performance in delivering quality work while promoting synergies across the SO portfolio.

ASIPS+ will track and report SO development outcomes (at the objective level in the program logic). But, unlike a development facility, is not responsible for delivering these outcomes. Responsibility for development outcomes remains at the individual SO level. Rather, ASIPS+ is responsible for: a) improving the quality and effectiveness of individual SO's work, enabling these outcomes to be achieved; and b) analysing and aggregating the performance of the SO portfolio in achieving development outcomes.

### ASIPS+ Key deliverables.

#### Plans and Reports and due dates

- Mobilisation/Transition Plan: 7 July 2023(*Note: completed*)
- ASIPS+ Inception Report: 28 February 2024(*Note: completed*)
- Monthly SO Financial Reports: By 20th of each month, with the first report due 20 August 2023
- Monthly ASIPS+ SO Reports: The format and monthly submission date to be agreed between DFAT and the Managing Contractor by 31 July 2023(*Note: format to be revised in line with changes to design, three months after design approved*)

<sup>32</sup> References to GEDSI throughout the document will cover gender equality, disability equity and rights in accordance with Australia's new International Development Policy (August 2023).

- Jointly agreed Annual Workplans and budgets (FSU): First six-month Work Plan due 14 July 2023. Thereafter, Annual Work Plans due 30 November each year(*Note: first six-month workplan [Jul-Dec 2023] submitted; annual workplan and budget [Jan-Dec 2024] submitted*)
- ASIPS+ Annual Portfolio Report: February annually, with first report due 28 February 2025
- Six-month Progress Presentation: September annually, with the first presentation due in September 2024
- ASIPS+ Handover Plan: 30 June 2024
- ASIPS+ Risk Management Plan: 30 August 2023. Thereafter at least every three months(*Note: policy to be reviewed and revised as required to bring in line with changes to design*)
- Activity Completion Report: 20 March 2027

#### Strategies and Papers and due dates

- Investment Design Document: 10 June 2024
- Facility PAF and MEL Plan: Within three months of approval of the Investment Design Document (and after completion of SO Guidelines). Thereafter, updated as required through the annual work planning process with revisions to the MEL Plan, as required.
- ASIPS+ Service Order Guidelines: Within three months of approval of the Investment Design Document.
- Election Preparedness Paper: 30 November 2023(*Note: completed*)
- Localisation Strategy: 30 November 2023 (*Note: completed*)
- GEDSI Strategy: Within three months of approval of the Investment Design Document.
- Climate Change Resilience Strategy: 30 November 2024
- First Nations Engagement Strategy: Within three months of approval of the investment Design Document.

#### MEL and evaluations and due dates

- DEH Health Check (Ways of Working workshop): October 2023(*Note: Completed*)
- Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Workshops: November annually, with first workshop due in November 2025
- Mid-term Review (including VfM assessment): August 2025
- End of Facility Evaluation (including VfM assessment): 31 January 2027

## E. Implementation Arrangements

### E.1 Governance and Management

#### E.1.1 Overall structure

The ASIPS+ governance and management structure provides clear, simple and practical oversight and accountability arrangements in accordance with the PGPA Act and the recently updated Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.<sup>33</sup> The structure consists of:

- **An overarching governance body:** The ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group will have strategic oversight of ASIPS+ (that is, the work of the FSU and DFAT's FIMT) and the portfolio of SOs (see Section E.2).
- **DFAT operational oversight and management:** The DFAT FIMT is responsible for: a) managing the FSU (SO1); b) endorsing new, downstream SOs<sup>34</sup> for implementation; and c) coordinating with DFAT SO Managers to promote collaboration across the SO portfolio. The DFAT SO Managers are responsible for overseeing the individual Services Orders they have commissioned and working with colleagues to promote synergies across SOs.
- **Facility Support services:** the FSU is responsible for: a) developing downstream SOs to meet the requirements of the relevant DFAT SO Manager and ASIPS+ quality programming criteria; b) flexibly delivering support services to each downstream SO; and c) managing downstream SOs to deliver quality programming against the relevant SO criteria.
- **Service Order delivery:** Each downstream SO has a dedicated lead that is responsible for quality delivery (e.g. Head of Program, Managers/Program Manager, Lead or Focal Point etc. as defined in the SO). The SO Leads are accountable to the Facility Director for their performance, in particular for delivery of quality programming. SO Leads may also have direct engagement with relevant DFAT SO Managers for strategic direction and guidance.

The ASIPS+ governance and management structure is explained in the sections E.1.2, E.1.3 and E.1.4 that follow.

#### E.1.2 Governance: ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group

The ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group provides strategic oversight of ASIPS+ and the SO portfolio, and is responsible for ensuring that all SOs are:

- a. designed and implemented to meet AHC needs and priorities;
- b. addressing Australia's strategic policy direction and development priorities in Solomon Islands; and
- c. effectively supported by the FSU.

The DHOM is the chair of the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group and will meet on a six-monthly basis. The DHOM is also the Senior Responsible Officer for ASIPS+ and the SO portfolio and is ultimately responsible and accountable to DFAT Canberra for the performance of investments through ASIPS+ (SO1 and downstream SOs).

<sup>33</sup> Implementation arrangements must ensure that Australian public monies are used in accordance with the provisions of the PGPA Act and that appropriate mechanisms for the identification of risk are in place, as well as proposed treatments. (Revised Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 2023)

<sup>34</sup> As explained in Section B: Downstream SOs are SOs 'downstream from SO1' (the FSU mechanism). Downstream SO fall into the following four categories: 1) Programs (>A\$3m), 2) Deployee Support Services, 3) Thematic Initiative (<A\$3m), 4) Flexible Funds

Both DFAT and DT Global, as the managing contractor, are members of the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group. The participation of both parties reflects the partnership approach DFAT and DT Global have agreed to take to effectively implement ASIPS+. Under this approach, DFAT and the Managing Contractor share responsibility for achieving ASIPS+'s EOFOs, managing risks, and making operational decisions. DFAT retains ultimate responsibility for setting the strategic direction and decision-making related to Australian government policy and strategic priorities.

The DFAT members of the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group will include the Counsellor responsible for SO1 (FSU) and a selection of DFAT Counsellors responsible for downstream SOs delivered through the Facility. The DT Global members of this body will include the DT Global Contractor Representative and the Facility Director.

The DT Global Head of Pacific will also join ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group meetings, as appropriate. The DT Global Head of Pacific is also the Escalation Representative for SO1 and downstream SOs for contractual matters. They are ultimately responsible to the DT Global Board for the effective delivery of ASIPS+ and will work to promote the partnership with DFAT through regular meetings with the Counsellor (DFAT FIMT) and the DHOM/SRO, as required. Within the organisation, the DT Global Contractor Representative is accountable to the DT Global Head of Pacific.

### **E.1.3 DFAT Operational Oversight and Management**

There are two inter-related layers of DFAT operational oversight and management:

#### **a) DFAT Facility Investment Management Team**

The DFAT Facility Investment Management Team (FIMT) is responsible for the management of the FSU (under SO1), and for coordinating the DFAT SO Managers overseeing their own SOs. The DFAT FIMT is led by the Counsellor and supported by the First Secretary (who is also the DFAT SO1 contract manager) and Senior Program Manager (locally engaged staff). The team is accountable to the DHOM, who will review and endorse decisions, including review and approval of the ASIPS+ risk register.

The Team's responsibilities include:

- Reviewing new SOs and endorsing them for DT Global-DFAT contracting and implementation (see section E.2.2 below).
- Reviewing and approving the FSU's annual work plans, six monthly progress updates, budgets, and other key milestone deliverables (as specified under SO1).
- Reviewing and assessing ASIPS+'s performance against the DFAT Deed of Standing Offer and relevant SO contractual requirements (for SO1 and downstream SOs) and relevant SO standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including annual performance discussions with the Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative.
- Reviewing and approving the ASIPS+ risk management plan and risk register (covering SO1 and all other SOs). The FSU will maintain and update an ASIPS+ risk register, using DFAT's excel template. DFAT will meet with the FSU monthly to consider the status of risks, elevating to DHOM any changes in the risk profile.<sup>35</sup> The DFAT FIMT will use the ASIPS+ excel risk register to update the corresponding ASIPS+ risk register in AidWorks.
- Coordinating DFAT SO Managers to promote synergies across the delivery of all SOs.

#### **b) DFAT SO Managers:**

DFAT SO Managers are responsible for:

- commissioning SOs in accordance with the ASIPS+ SO process (section E.2 below),

<sup>35</sup> The overall risk management plan will be reviewed every three months, but the risk register will be reviewed monthly.



- overseeing SO implementation progress and risk management,
- liaising with SO leads as appropriate in overseeing SO implementation progress,
- collaborating with DFAT colleagues and the FSU to promote synergies across SOs,
- raising any concerns regarding SO progress and risks and/or the performance of the SO Lead with the DFAT FIMT and the ASIPS+ Facility Director and Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative.

#### **E.1.4 Facility Support Unit**

The Managing Contractor resources and manages the FSU and is responsible to DFAT for its performance.

##### **FSU's responsibilities**

The FSU is responsible for:

##### **a) SO Development**

The FSU is responsible for developing/designing SOs as requested by DFAT SO Managers and that meet ASIPS+ quality criteria. The SO lays out the objectives, scope of works and risks of the proposed activity/investment; expectations of how the objectives will be achieved; the dedicated SO resources required; as well as the FSU's support services. The ASIPS+ quality criteria are based on the ASIPS+ program logic (section D.1) and explained in the SO development process and template defined under section E.2 below. The DFAT FIMT and the Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative will review and endorse all SOs, including confirming that SOs meet ASIPS+' quality criteria.

##### **b) SO Support Services delivery**

The FSU is set up to deliver:

- Operational support services, which include logistics, finance management, human resource management and recruitment, security, grants and procurement, specialist employee support, information technology and data management. These services contribute primarily to EOFO2 (efficient and effective operational support).
- Quality development programming services, which include GEDSI, localisation, design, MEL, communications, climate change, and indigenous diplomacy, as well as other KPPs. These services contribute primarily to EOFO1 (quality programming).

SOs can be provided with either or both services, as required to meet objectives. Technical Assistance (short-term or long-term) may also be provided as a part of any SO.

##### **SO Portfolio Management**

The FSU is ultimately responsible for ensuring the quality of work delivered under all ASIPS+ SOs. The key planning and reporting processes are:

- Facility Support Services (i.e. SO1):** For approval by the DFAT FIMT, the FSU will develop annual work plans and reports and one mid-year (six-monthly) progress update. These deliverables will be structured around the ASIPS+ program logic (EOFOs and IOs) and provide information on SO development, SO support services, and SO management activities.
- SO delivery (i.e. all downstream SOs, excluding SO1):** Where required in the SO, the relevant SO Lead will provide individual SO-specific work plans and progress reports to the FSU for quality review before they are shared with the DFAT SO Manager for approval.
- Portfolio outcomes performance:** FSU will prepare an annual ASIPS+ portfolio report that summarises the progress of all ASIPS+ SOs towards their specific development outcomes (recorded at the objective level in the ASIPS+ program logic) and DFAT key policy priorities.

Monthly ASIPS+ (SO1 and SO portfolio) reporting is also provided to the DFAT FIMT through the agree reporting template.

### FSU Team Structure

The FSU's organisational structure for delivery of the above services and the FSU's key leadership positions are:

- **ASIPS+ Contractor Representative (DT Global)** is ultimately accountable to DFAT for the performance of the FSU in delivering services in accordance with contractual requirements. Based in Australia, the ASIPS+ Contractor Representative will represent the Managing Contractor on the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group and on forums for review and endorsement of SOs for contracting and implementation (see section E.2 below). This position also has contractor representative responsibilities for all SOs under ASIPS+.<sup>36</sup>
- **ASIPS+ Facility Director** is a full-time position based in Honiara that is responsible for leading the FSU, managing performance and quality of service delivery and risk management. The Facility Director will work on a day-to-day basis with the DFAT FIMT to deliver FSU services as agreed and defined in SOs. The Facility Director is responsible for managing the performance of SO Leads, working closely with other FSU managers (listed here) to oversight and manage performance.
- **Deputy Facility Director** is responsible for managing operational support services in human resource management and recruitment, procurement and grants, IT and safeguards. Oversight of financial management will sit with the Facility Director, but this may transition to the Deputy Facility Director at a later time.
- **DEH and SO Manager** is responsible for managing the Development Effectiveness Hub (DEH) services, including in GEDSI, MEL, localisation, climate change etc. They will lead the process for developing SOs, working closely with the MEL Manager to define the ASIPS+ quality criteria (against which SO performance will be assessed). The DEH and SO Manager will also oversight the SO Leads who are responsible for managing Thematic Initiatives and Flexible Funds (SOs of under A\$3m in value).
- **DSS Manager** is responsible for managing the delivery of specialist support services to APS deployees.
- **Heads of Programs** are Leads for large development programs above A\$3m. They are recruited by the FSU (with DFAT approval) to manage and oversee the performance and delivery of the large development program SOs. The Facility Director is responsible for managing their performance.

<sup>36</sup> Except for the Education Support Service Program (ESSP), which currently has a separate Contractor Representative.

## Summary of FSU-DFAT Key management meetings

### Operations Meetings (Fortnightly)

- Participants: DFAT's Facility Investment Management Team, the Facility Director and Deputy Facility Director (other FSU leaders as appropriate).
- Topics:
  - Information sharing, updates on significant activities, implementation of cross-cutting strategies and key policy priorities and the MEL plan
  - High level SIG engagement updates including policy dialogue opportunities
  - Reviewing resource allocations, forecasting and expenditure
  - Discussing approaches to the FSU for new service orders and ensuring the FMIT's endorsement of new SOs before they progress for formal contractual review (see below)
  - Significant issues and/or improvements
  - Emerging risks, business continuity planning
  - On at least a monthly basis, reviewing the status of risks identifying changes or need for risks to be elevated to DHOM

### Contract Management Meetings (Fortnightly).

- Participants: DFAT's First Secretary (SO1 manager) and ASIPS+ Contractor Representative.
- NB: the ASIPS+ Contractor Representative will meet with other DFAT SO Managers (for Development Program and Thematic Initiative SOs) on a monthly basis, or as needed.
- Topics:
  - Head Deed, Service Orders and amendments, including budgets where appropriate, compliance and risks.
  - Strategic planning.
  - Milestone deliverables, key publications.
  - Ongoing performance and Partner performance assessment (PPA).
  - Check in on relationships.
  - Significant issues (risks, improvements, deployments/business continuity).

### High-level Partnership Meetings (Monthly).

- Participants: DFAT's Counsellor Facility Investment Management Team (and DHOM, as relevant) and DT Global Head of Pacific.
- Topics:
  - Significant issues or improvements in DFAT-DT Global partnerships as well the operating environment (political context and relationships).
  - Addresses emerging risks and problem solving.

## E.2 Service Order development and delivery

### E.2.1 The need for SO process reform

Under the previous program, ASIRF, except for development programs, the process for developing and managing SOs was only loosely defined around a broad SO template. While AHC sections followed the SO template, they normally did not have time to scope or manage the SO to ensure it was set up for success. The FSU's ability to advise the AHC or add value to the SO development process was also limited by ASIRF's operationally focused mandate and capacity. The general assumption was that the objective and scope of the SO would be clarified during implementation, but this approach created several risks and inefficiencies, including:

- delays to delivery: as extra time was required to clarify the scope, often negating the value of a quick start-up,
- mismatched recruitment: as resources recruited to deliver the SO not having the appropriate skills needed, as these needs were not clearly defined at the start,
- unclear definitions of success: as objectives were only broadly defined with unclear expectations of what success meant, leading to unclear expectations of performance and missed opportunities to maximise development outcomes
- reduced value for money: from budgets being not well aligned with intended outputs and outcomes (because these were unclear), inefficient procurement transactions (e.g. increased number of transactions associated with indistinct scope), and unclear management responsibilities (between DFAT and the FSU).

ASIPS+ is designed with an explicit mandate and resources to support quality programming and efficient and effective management. To deliver on this mandate, this section outlines a new SO commissioning and management process that addresses the above risks and inefficiencies through:

- **The categorisation of SOs into four different types (Section E.2.2).** These categories are based on a mapping and analysis of the SO portfolio over 2023–24). The categories are designed to guide the level of ASIPS+ FSU support to provide to SOs proportionate to their objectives, risk level and resources. In the past, except for development programs (category 1), most other programs were lumped together, leading them to being treated the same way.
- **Standardised SO development and management process with responsibilities for management clearly defined (Section E.2.3).** Previously, the FSU was required to quickly action SOs defined by the AHC with minimal input from the FSU and with management responsibilities often left ambiguous. Under ASIPS+, the process and responsibilities are clearly defined – the FSU takes responsibility for the development and management of good quality, well defined SOs, with the DFAT FIMT providing a strategic oversight function.
- **Standardised process for quickly commissioning activities under Flexible SO Funds (Section E.2.4).** Under ASIRF, additional resources were not made available for managing tasks or activities under the Flexible Funds SO resulting in DFAT SO Managers being burdened with management and planning responsibilities, resulting in even simple procurement exercises being inefficiently delivered. Over 2023–24 (by the end May 2024), ASIPS+ supported more than 30 distinct tasks under seven Flexible Fund SOs. The creation of a standardised process creates economic efficiencies and justifies dedicated FSU management resources to managing and service the Flexible Funds. This process will simplify and reduce the workload for DFAT SO Managers. The process will also identify whether an existing Flexible Fund could be used, or a new one needs to be commissioned (in 2023–24, flexible funds were underspent).

In the first year of ASIPS+ (2023–24), the old ASIRF SO process was still in place. Recognising that transitioning to this new process needs to be carefully managed, the final part of this section outlines a plan for a smooth transition (Section E.2.5).

### **E.2.2 Service Order categories**

Four types of Service Orders are proposed. These have been developed from an analysis of the 17 different SOs supported by ASIPS in the first year of implementation (2023–24).

#### **Category 1: Development Programs**

**Budget (total SO value):** Over A\$3m (ODA)

**Purpose:** Achieve long-term development outcomes (e.g. at sector level).

**Description:** Cohesive multi-year development program designed according to DFAT Guidelines. Dedicated Head of Program responsible for management of program delivery and performance, reporting to the ASIPS+ Facility Director.

#### **Category 2: Deployee Support Services**

**Budget (total SO value):** Open (ODA & non-ODA).

**Purpose:** Deliver operational support services to deployees.

**Description:** SO designed according to ASIPS+ SO process to deliver deployee support services, as defined in SO1, SO11 and SOD1. DSS Manager (under FSU) responsible for management of SO delivery, reporting to the ASIPS+ Facility Director.

#### **Category 3: Thematic Initiatives**

**Budget (total SO value):** A\$1m to A\$3m (ODA).

**Purpose:** Achieve immediate (or intermediate) development outcomes.

**Description:** Thematically based development initiatives designed according to ASIPS+ SO process and delivered over medium timeframes (≈12 months). Dedicated SO Lead responsible for management, reporting to the ASIPS+ Facility Director.

#### **Category 4: Flexible Funds**

**Budget (total SO value):** A\$1m to A\$3m (Fund), \$100k (per activity) (ODA & non-ODA).

**Purpose:** Enable DFAT to rapidly commission activities to achieve diverse immediate objectives (operational and development).

**Description:** Each Flexible Fund designed according to ASIPS+ SO Guidelines (normally for 12 months or more). The fund may support activities/investments with an average size of up to A\$100k per SO. To commission activities under a Flexible Fund SO, the ASIPS+ standardised Tasking Note process can be applied. Shared SO Managers responsible for management, co-funded by multiple SOs, and reporting to the ASIPS+ Facility Director



### E.2.3 Service Order Commissioning and Management

The Service Order commissioning and delivery process is summarised below in six simple steps. This will be the standardised process for all SO categories except for those in category 1 (development programs above \$3m) which follow DFAT's aid programming guidelines. In other words, the below process will be followed for the development and management of SOs for DSS (category 2), Thematic Initiatives between \$1-\$3million (category 3) and Flexible \$1-\$3million (category 4).

The SO commissioning and delivery process consist of the following six simple steps:

**Step 1—Initiate:** Any section within the AHC can identify the need for an SO. In ASIPS+'s first year of implementation (2023-24), 10 different AHC sections commissioned SOs. Counsellors in each section decide the need for an SO and appoint a member of their team to be the DFAT SO Manager (normally the First Secretary). The DFAT SO Manager then needs to:

- provide information and set expectations of the activity/investment to be delivered through ASIPS+ by completing the relevant DFAT sections of the ASIPS+ SO template, covering SO purpose/strategic intent, budget allocation and budget source,
- share the draft SO template with the FSU (DEH and SO Manager) and request an SO scoping meeting. The DFAT FIMT (First Secretary) and Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative should be CC'd in the email for information purposes.

**Step 2—Scope:** Through a scoping meeting, the FSU will discuss with the relevant DFAT SO manager requirements of the SO to address any gaps or queries to be able to finalise the SO. To facilitate the discussion, the FSU will use ASIPS+'s tools and strategies that contain ASIPS+ quality programming standards (such as in MEL, GEDSI, risk profiling, operations and procurement etc.). Depending on the complexity of the SO, follow-up discussions may be required to finalise the SO. Learning from ASIRF and the first year of implementation of ASIPS+ was that the inclusion of this scoping step is critical to improving the efficiency and quality of SO development. This step will also ensure that the SO is practical to implement, the most appropriate type of SOs is being developed to achieve the desired objective (in the past all SOs were lumped together), potentially including whether the activity could be delivered through an already established Flexible Fund SO, and to ensure the relevant DFAT SO Manager and the FSU agree on the respective roles and responsibilities of the SO.

**Step 3—Develop:** The FSU finalises the SO, drawing on specialist in-house expertise (in design, MEL, GEDSI etc through the DEH Panel). The focus will be on ensuring the SO provides:

- clear strategic focus/expected results (outputs, outcome etc.) with logic models and M&E frameworks (with indicators) outlining realistic pathways for achieving the results,
- clearly defined management responsibilities with appropriate resourcing (e.g. a SO Lead), practical and achievable scope,
- strong but proportionate risk identification, management and social safeguarding, and
- where possible, detailed budgets, linked to results.

The completed SO will be provided to the DFAT SO Manager for review and approval.

**Step 4—Endorse:** The DFAT FIMT and Managing contractor's Contractor Representative will undertake an internal quality review and assurance of the SO as meeting ASIPS+ quality standards and ready for contracting and implementation. If there are matters of concern with the SO, these will be discussed with the FSU and the DFAT SO Manager.

This is a new step in the process that is designed to strengthen the quality (and risk management) of work delivered and promote synergies across the SO portfolio. This step also provides an opportunity for DFAT and the Managing Contractor to assess and manage the demands on FSU resources at peak times.

The DFAT FIMT will report on endorsed SOs to the ASIPS+ Strategic Oversight Group and can also escalate endorsement decisions to this group, when they relate to large and/or sensitive SOs, such as for development programs above A\$3 million (which also have separate design approval process following DFAT's aid programming policies).

Once endorsed, the DFAT FIMT will send the SO template to DFAT Procurement (Canberra) to approve for contracting.

**Step 5—Contract:** The SO contract will be finalised between the Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative and the relevant DFAT SO Manager (who will liaise with DFAT Procurement in Canberra). Both parties will conduct their own standard legal and compliance review processes before finalising the SO contract for signing. Upon signing the contract, the Managing Contractor's Contractor Representative will instruct the FSU to commence the delivery process. In many cases, SO delivery will commence with the recruitment of professionals to lead/implement the SO and/or the procurement of goods and services.

**Step 6—Deliver:** Where there is an SO Lead (funded under the SO), that Lead will have responsibility for day-to-day SO management, implementation/delivery, reporting to the FSU (the ASIPS+ Facility Director or another FSU manager). The FSU will be responsible for overseeing the quality of delivery of the SO to quality standards and is responsible for performance management of the Lead (either the ASIPS+ Facility Director or another FSU manager). The DFAT SO Manager will have responsibility for providing strategic direction to the SO Lead and decision making and will lead engagement with senior government officials (as outlined in the SO).

#### **E.2.4 Flexible Fund Tasking Note process**

Flexible Funds (SO category 4) are designed to enable the AHC to rapidly commission diverse small tasks for achieving immediate objectives (i.e. activities, such as procurements, with an average budget of A\$100,000). All flexible funds will follow a standardised Tasking Note process:

**Step 1—Initiate:** The DFAT SO Manager for the Flexible Fund (or their delegate) fills in the Tasking Note form with as much detail as possible (on objectives, scope of activities/services, cross-cutting issues, risks and budget) This form is sent to the relevant SO Lead (CC: DEH and SO Manager). Where an SO Lead does not exist, the DEH and SO Manager may act as the Lead.

**Step 2—Review and Develop:** The SO Lead, supported by the DEH and SO Manager, will review the Tasking Note for compliance with the specific SO objectives, budget availability and ASIPS+ quality and risk standards (an internal ASIPS+ tool). They will discuss with DFAT any changes or additional information required to meet compliance requirements and update/revise the Tasking Note accordingly.

**Step 3—Endorse and contract:** The SO Lead finalises the Tasking Note with DFAT, who will provide a final review and approval by the DFAT SO Manager. The signed Tasking Note is countersigned by the ASIPS+ Facility Director or DEH and SO Manager to commence implementation.

**Step 4—Deliver:** The SO Lead manages the delivery of the Tasking Note in accordance with the executed Tasking Note, with the DFAT SO Manager regularly updated on progress until completion.

#### **E.2.5 Transition Plan**

The aim of this Transition Plan is to have all arrangements in place for the new SO commissioning process (including templates and associated Flexible Fund Tasking Note process) to commence from about August 2024.

Commencing from about August 2024:

- The commissioning of all new SOs will follow the new SO commissioning process and Tasking Note process, using the new templates. Existing SOs will not be amended solely to align with the new template. But where an amendment is required, new sections of the SO template may be incorporated into SO amendment.
- The management of existing SOs will be determined on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the relevant DFAT SO Manager. The FSU will offer to take over management based on agreement with the relevant DFAT SO Manager.
- Recruitment of a shared FSU SO (Flexible Fund) Manager will commence upon endorsement of this design. This will be cost-shared by participating SOs.

### **E.3 Partnership engagement and policy dialogue**

DFAT will lead policy dialogue and manage high-level relationships with SIG. DFAT will draw upon evidence and performance information produced by the FSU to engage key SIG officials in formal and informal settings.

The FSU will work with the DFAT FIMT to regularly review the policy dialogue opportunities emerging across SOs. At the start of implementation, as part of Intermediate Outcome 1.2, the FSU and the DFAT FIMT will develop an initial list of potential key policy priority areas, which could include climate action and the promotion of gender equality, disability equity and rights. In addition, through the SO process, DFAT can obtain assistance to quickly respond to policy dialogue opportunities by commissioning the FSU to generate evidence, document policy relevant front-line experience, and build partner understanding and skills.

The SO Leads will be drawn on to use their local networks and experience to identify emerging opportunities for policy change and bring technical knowledge and political understanding on policy issues. This support will enable DFAT to identify the issues of most salience while enhancing their credibility to engage on these issues with the right government officials.

The DFAT FIMT will coordinate with colleagues across the AHC (DFAT SO Managers and others) in the development of policy dialogue matrices as part of the design for each SO.

### **E.4 Sustainability**

#### **E.4.1 Enduring benefits from the achievement of SO outcomes**

The Australian aid program defines sustainability in terms of the likelihood that an investment will generate outcome-level benefits that endure. In the case of ASIPS+, most development outcomes will be delivered through the large development program SOs.

The role of ASIPS+ (FSU) is to assure that SOs are delivering quality programming that will achieve sustainable development outcomes. Through the SO commissioning process, quality standards will be set at the SO commissioning/design stage, including clearly defined outcomes, and MEL systems for monitoring the sustainability of these outcomes. The ASIPS+ MEL system will also capture and report on the sustainability of SO outcomes at the broader ASIPS+ portfolio level.

The greatest risk to sustainability stems from ASIPS+ focusing on small SOs (short-term responses to opportunities) at the expense of large development program SOs. The DFAT Strategic Oversight Group (chaired by the DHOM/SRO) has ultimate responsibility for mitigating this risk by:

- maintaining oversight of the allocation of ASIPS+ resources across SOs according to agreed budgets and human resource allocations; and

- assessing the potential benefit and strategic value of short-term responses to opportunities vis-à-vis the long-term development and strategic benefit of ensuring effective/efficient management of large SOs.

#### **E.4.2 Sustainability of the FSU**

The Aid Governance Board (AGB) raised questions about the sustainability of the Facility mechanism as such. However, in the absence of substantial increases to the AHC staff establishment and/or substantial reductions to the Solomon Islands aid and development budget, the need to sustain a mechanism of this type is high in the medium to long term.

Attention to DFAT's localisation agenda (as a KPP under intermediate outcome 1.3) will strengthen the capacity of Solomon Islanders to contribute to the implementation of FSU functions, as 'personnel on the FSU team' as well as 'suppliers' in ASIPS+'s delivery chain. Although this is a long-term objective, the extent that ASIPS+ can promote and increase localisation across a range of SOs will increase the credibility of the FSU as a mechanism that is well placed to achieve this important policy priority.

The development of a quality Facility PAF, which effectively monitors and enables reporting upon the contribution of the Facility to the achievement of AHC objectives and policy priorities in Solomon Islands, will increase the ability of AHC to tell the 'performance story'. This, in turn, will increase recognition within DFAT and SIG of the value add of this type of mechanism.

In addition, by building up a body of research and analysis to support more effective sector program design and implementation in Solomon Islands, ASIPS+ can contribute to improve the effectiveness of Australia's future development investments.

### **F. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)**

#### **F.1 ASIPS+ PAF**

Within three months of IDD approval, the FSU will review and finalise the indicative ASIPS+ Facility PAF contained in Annexure K.1 and develop the ASIPS+ MEL Plan. The indicative ASIPS+ PAF builds on the existing ASIRF PAF to address DFAT MEL standards and guidance more fully on the preparation of Facility PAFs.<sup>37</sup> In accordance with DFAT PAF template and guidance, the indicative ASIPS+ PAF shows:

- the four DFAT performance perspectives against which information will be collected, analysed, and reported (development results, learning and adapting, stakeholders and partnerships, and operations); and
- the 12 performance elements which sit under these perspectives.

In Figure 1 below, ASIPS+'s EOFOs and IOs have been mapped against the four Facility PAF perspectives and the 12 performance elements (Annexure K.1).

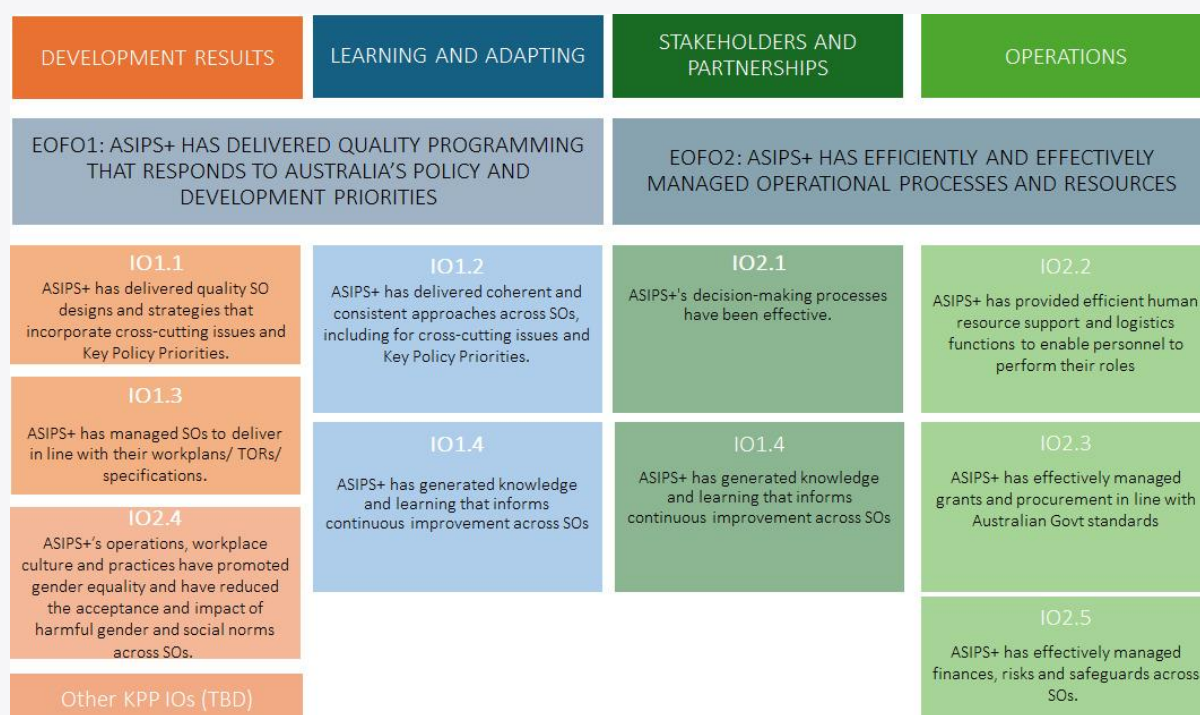
The draft ASIPS+ PAF (Annexure K.1) sets performance expectations, questions and indicators for each of these elements. Performance expectations will need to be reviewed and revised by DFAT and the FSU as a priority, and formally agreed within the first three months of implementation.<sup>38</sup> These performance expectations will inform management arrangements and underpin the finalisation of the Facility PAF.

<sup>37</sup> DFAT's Design and M&E Standards, December 2022; DFAT's Guidance Note and template on the preparation of a Facility PAF (required since September 2020)

<sup>38</sup> From the date in which this new IDD is formally approved.



**Figure 1 Mapping of Program Logic Against the Facility PAF Perspectives**



## F.2 ASIPS+ MEL Plan

The ASIPS+ MEL Plan will meet DFAT's Design and MEL Standards and include:

- **Purpose and key performance questions:** Confirm the purpose, underlying principles, intended uses and audiences of the MEL system, including Key Performance Questions around which data will be collected and analysed.
- **Methods:** Outline approaches and method for data collection, management, analysis, and reporting/visualisations,<sup>39</sup> including common work-planning, reporting and risk management templates for the SO categories.
- **Learning:** Articulate learning and reflection processes, including regular review and reflection workshops, Communities of Practice, and regular cross-Service Order fora<sup>40</sup> on KPPs.
- **GEDSI:** Outline the approach to ensuring ASIPS+ MEL is inclusive and accessible, and promoting GEDSI and localisation objectives.
- **Resourcing:** Ensure MEL budget meets DFAT Standards (4-7% at Facility level and within individual sector programs) and confirm human resourcing, roles, and responsibilities
- **Risks:** Highlight risks to MEL Plan implementation, and offers mitigation strategies.

The MEL Plan will also include a change management process to support an effective transition from the ASIRF MEL systems currently in place (for the FSU's operational support only) to ASIPS+ MEL (covering the FSU's operational and development programming support, as well as capturing the contribution of development program SOs to the ASIPS+ Objective). The MEL system needs to be fully operational within one year of implementation (12 months after design approval), and reviewed and revised annually thereafter, in line with DFAT's MEL Standards.

<sup>39</sup> As noted under sub-section E.2.2 the End of Facility Evaluation recommended the use of common templates for SOs to improve planning, performance and risk management, as well as reporting.

<sup>40</sup> These fora will involve DFAT Facility Investment Management Team, FSU, relevant Service Order staff (both implementers and DFAT SO managers).



The FSU will submit the MEL Plan (including Facility PAF) to DFAT Post for approval within the first three months of IDD approval.<sup>41</sup>

### **F.3 Strengthening and Aligning Service Order level MEL**

The FSU is responsible for strengthening MEL systems at the FSU and SO levels as one component of managing SOs to deliver in line with their workplans (see IO1.3) and generating knowledge and learning to support continuous improvement (see IO 1.4).

The Facility's MEL Manager will collaborate with DFAT SO Managers and SO Leads to assess existing MEL arrangements for SOs, identify areas for strengthening, and explore opportunities for increased alignment of indicators to enable reporting into the Facility PAF. Each SO will need proportionate MEL arrangements in place that provide information about progress towards the achievement of outcomes and program risk status to DFAT, and to contribute to the ASIPS+ PAF reporting.

### **F.4 Use of MEL system information**

To ensure active use of MEL information, ASIPS+'s performance monitoring approach will be closely linked to risk management arrangements (see Section J Risk Management and Safeguards) and integrated into ASIPS+'s governance and management arrangements. This includes FSU facilitating structured reflection around ASIPS' governance and management arrangements via the annual performance review process. Performance reporting will be aligned with DFAT Post's needs for reporting and learning (e.g. IMR, communication products) and DFAT's corporate performance reporting requirements (namely Performance Delivery Framework Tier 2 and 3 indicators and PERFORMS). The format of reports will align with DFAT's MEL Standards and be confirmed with DFAT Post but will likely include an annual written report and a six-monthly progress update, accompanied by dashboards or presentations to present performance information, key issues and risks for discussion.

All SOs will need to contribute to the Facility PAF in some way. Development Programs and Thematic Initiatives SOs (category 1 and 3 SOs, respectively) will contribute to EOFO1 and EOFO2, while DSS and Flexible Funds (category 2 and 4 SOs, respectively) will primarily contribute only to EOFO2. In addition to collating performance information against the PAF and broader MEL Plan, the FSU will also support synergies, learning and adapting across FSU and ASIPS+-supported SOs.

### **F.5 MEL resourcing, roles and responsibilities**

In line with DFAT MEL Standards, around 7% of the overall ASIPS+ budget will be allocated to MEL. The exact target for MEL expenditure for the FSU will be confirmed during the development of the ASIPS+ MEL Plan (and then tracked through the Facility PAF). The SO development process will provide directions on whether an SO requires additional resources for MEL (or other cross-cutting issues) integrated into the SO budget.

The FSU will include a MEL Manager and a MEL and Communications Coordinator (both full-time personnel, based in Honiara). The Facility MEL Manager will manage the implementation of the MEL system (including reporting) against the MEL Plan, in close collaboration with the DEH and SO Manager, Facility Director, and MEL/Performance and Quality Specialists (Clear Horizon Consulting).

The MEL/Performance and Quality specialists will provide upfront intensive support to develop the MEL Plan and will then provide 'critical friend' support services, including facilitation of review and reflection workshops, MEL support to SOs, and other strategic MEL advisory services as required.

The roles and responsibilities for ASIPS+ MEL functions will be defined in the MEL Plan. The DFAT FIMT and the FSU will play a critical role in building a learning and performance culture across all SOs,

<sup>41</sup> From within three months after this final IDD is approved.

ensuring the right incentives are in place to enable collaboration, learning and effective implementation of the MEL system.

## **G. Gender Equality, Disability Equity and Rights and Cross-Cutting Issues**

This section covers cross-cutting issues: gender equality, disability equity and rights, inclusion, equity and diversity, climate change and localisation. In the current year, the FSU has been developing a strategy for how localisation will be promoted throughout ASIPS+'s work. The development of this strategy and its implementation will be monitored under IO1.1 and 1.2.

### **G.1 Gender equality, disability and social inclusion**

Within three months of design approval, the GEDSI Adviser (short-term personnel) will work with the full-time local GEDSI Coordinator to develop an ASIPS+ GEDSI Strategy in accordance with current DFAT policies and building on the analysis and approaches below.

#### **G.1.1 Gender Equality Situational Analysis**

At the end of ASIRF, the AHC Solomon Islands conducted a GEDSI analysis to inform the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Strategy for Australia's Aid Program in Solomon Islands. This analysis was updated for this design and is contained in Annexure K.2. The key gender equality findings from the GEDSI analysis are:

- a) **Legal framework:** While Solomon Island's overarching legal framework provides for equality in rights, participation and representation,<sup>42</sup> gaps in legislation remain. For example, Solomon Islands scored 56.9 out of 100 in Women, Business and the Law's 2020 assessment of laws and regulations that impact women.<sup>43</sup> While there are laws and policies around GEDSI in the public service, in elections and political representation there still exists constraints to participation and empowerment. Around 44% of public service employees are women, however they hold only 25% of senior level positions (level 9 and above).<sup>44</sup>
- b) **Development outcomes:** Women and girls are disadvantaged against key development indicators:

Education: The 2019 Census found that overall, 23% of women and girls aged five and older did not have basic reading and writing skills (compared with 19% of men and boys).<sup>45</sup> In 2019, basic literacy rates were slightly higher for girls than boys younger than 19 and the gap in the rate of secondary school completion was closing. In 2019, 27% of women and 30% of men had completed secondary school,<sup>46</sup> up from 16% and 21% respectively a decade earlier.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Including the *National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (2016-2020)*; the *Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (2017-2021)*; Constitutional commitments to anti-discrimination; Solomon Islands ratification of the *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* (1982), the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and its *Optional Protocol* (2002), the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* 1995, and the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD)* (2023). Legislation is in place to criminalise domestic violence (*Family Protection Act 2014*) and protect children from commercial exploitation (*Penal Code Amendment 2016*).

<sup>43</sup> World Bank Group, 2020, *Women, Business and the Law 2020*  
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/solomon-islands/2023>

<sup>44</sup> Solomon Islands Government, undated, *Beijing +25 National Review Report 2014-2019*, p9.

<sup>45</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, *20109 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1)*, Solomon Islands Government p108.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p103

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p98

- Health: The World Health Organisation estimates the maternal mortality ratio to be 104 per 100,000 live births, compared to 6 in Australia and 72 in Vanuatu.<sup>48</sup> Only 29% of married women and 10% of sexually active unmarried women use a form of contraception<sup>49</sup>
  - Employment: Women in Solomon Islands are largely responsible for subsistence farming and for unpaid family work (56%). Women are much less likely than men to be engaged in formal employment, accounting for 35% of all paid employees.<sup>50</sup>
- c) **Disasters and crisis:** The burden of disasters and crises falls more heavily on women, such as:
- COVID-19: A 2020 UN Women study found that the mental and physical health of more women in Solomon Islands had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than in any other country reported, including Afghanistan. In Solomon Islands 94% of women, compared with 37% of men, reported that their mental health had been affected and 79% of women, compared with 14% of men, reported that their physical health had been affected.<sup>51</sup>
  - Climate Change and Natural Disasters: Vulnerability to climate change impacts can be increased as a result of gender norms and gender-differentiated access to social, economic, and financial resources. For example, as the primary food producers and carers, women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and natural disasters with increases risk of vulnerability in terms of physical safety, economic and social security. Further, the marginalisation of women from decision-making and positions of power limits their access to resources, including information, that can boost resilience to climate change.
- d) **Gender-based violence:** Solomon Islands has some of the highest rates of gender-based violence (GBV) in the world. Almost two out of three women in Solomon Islands had experienced physical violence from an intimate partner, according to research from 2009.<sup>52</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that the level of GBV increased during the pandemic in line with global trends. The 2015 Demographic and Health Survey found very high levels of acceptance among both women and men, that wife beating is sometimes justified.<sup>53</sup> These results confirm that women, as well as men, generally accept the subordinate status of women in marital relationships.
- e) **Household decision-making:** Responses to Demographic and Health Survey questions indicate that the majority of women and men jointly decide how to spend earnings of both husbands and wives and to make household purchases jointly.<sup>54</sup> However, 10% of women reported their husbands or partners controlled how money they earn is spent.<sup>55</sup> Less than a third of women reported making decisions about their own health care alone and for 18% of women, their

<sup>48</sup> World Health Organization, *Maternal mortality country profiles*, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/maternal-and-reproductive-health/maternal-mortality-country-profiles>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p106.

<sup>50</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, *2019 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1)*, Solomon Islands Government p.138.

<sup>51</sup> UN Women, 2020, *Unlocking the Lockdown: The gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on achieving the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific*, <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/unlocking-lockdown-gendered-effects-covid-19-achieving-sdgs-asia-and-pacific> p7

<sup>52</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community for Ministry of Women, Youth & Children's Affairs, 2009, *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children*. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2009 p61.

<sup>53</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015, Solomon Islands *Demographic and Health Survey 2015 Final Report*, <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/oai-www-spc-int-f5f42ae3-baef-4317-9f90-c6f7233ff7d2> pp269, 284-287. The number of women reporting that wife beating was justified at least sometimes was higher (77%) in 2015 than in either the 2006-2007 demographic and health survey (69%) or the 2009 Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study (73%). Women also report higher acceptance than men (56%) in 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p272 and p278.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p272.

husbands decide if they visit family and friends.<sup>56</sup> These questions indicate challenges to women's empowerment and agency.

- f) **Gendered social norms:** These reflect and perpetuate 'traditional' customs, as well as those of organised religion.
- g) **Church:** While perpetuating gender social norms, the five major Christian denominations in Solomon Islands have strong women's networks and there is evidence that Solomon Islander women have made inroads to assert their influence in the church.

### G.1.2 Disability and Social Inclusion Situational Analysis

The 2019 Census found that approximately 11% of the population over 5 years self-report some form of difficulty across each of the six Washington Group functional domains. Across all six functional domains and all levels of difficulties, there was a higher prevalence for women and for people in rural areas.<sup>57</sup> The 2019 Census also found that the most common disabilities in Solomon Islands are associated with: seeing (10.6% of people aged five years or older); remembering (8.4%); walking (7.8%); hearing (5.6%); self-care (4.7%); and communication (3.7%).<sup>58</sup> Around 1% reported a severe disability.<sup>59</sup>

In June 2023, the SIG ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), having signed the convention in 2008 and optional protocol in 2009. The ratification complements the *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2023-2031* and the *Rehabilitation Strategic Plan 2022-2031*. The policy and plan will guide decisions and implementation of activities to ensure Solomon Islanders with a form of disability can access services and participate meaningfully in the development of the country.

The UNFPA report, *A Deeper Silence*, argues that legislation on disability tends to be outdated or absent.<sup>60</sup> However, there are civil society groups advocating for the rights of persons with disability such as, People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI), a national disabled peoples' organisation. Moreover, change in the legislative and policy environment is ongoing. In November 2022, SIG Cabinet endorsed the *National Disability Inclusive Development Policy* and has indicated that they would value the Australian government's support to implement. In March 2023, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission's *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy 2022-2024* became the first government policy to be translated into braille.

### G.1.3 GEDSI Strategy for Australia's Aid Program in the Solomon Islands

The ASIPS+ GEDSI Strategy will align with the AHC Solomon Island's GEDSI Strategy (v.05 December 2022) which includes three pillars (or areas of effort):

1. **Political engagement and public diplomacy** to promote GEDSI in public and political engagements; engage with women's movement convenors; and ensure equitable gender participation and inclusion of youth and people with disabilities in AHC events, forums, and panels.
2. **Identifying entry points for GEDSI mainstreaming** by requiring all new program designs to contain targeted GEDSI components that address barriers; seeking comments from the AHC's Gender Equality team and/or the Facility's Gender Equality Support Unit on all new program

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p 278.

<sup>57</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, *2019 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1)*, Solomon Islands Government p 118.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p 119-120.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p 119.

<sup>60</sup> UNFPA, 2013, *A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga* <https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPAReport-ADeeperSilenceA4PublicationLR3%283%29.pdf> p84.



designs; considering GBV in all new investment designs or new phases of existing designs; including opportunities for women to exercise leadership in policy and decision-making in all new investments/new phases; establish a new Solomon Islands Women's Advisory Panel as part of all sector program design and quality assurance processes.

3. **Working with Solomon Islander women, youth, and people with disabilities** to improve gender equality, disability and social inclusion by enabling active participation of emerging leaders across government and civil society; creating opportunities for local and international partners to work in a collective manner; providing capacity strengthening support; supporting GEDSI initiatives beyond urban centres.

#### **G.1.4 ASIPS+ role in promoting GEDSI**

ASIPS+ plays an important role in providing a workplace that actively addresses harmful social and gender norms that act as barriers to gender equality. Gendered social norms and high rates of GBV were identified by the International Finance Corporation and 15 of the largest Solomon Islands companies in 2018 as two key drivers of workplace inequality and low participation of women in the workplace.<sup>61</sup> Australian Government-supported programs working with companies in both Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea have demonstrated that structured workplace responses to GBV and taking action to promote and value women as employees, customers and suppliers can shift attitudes away from acceptance of violence and increase the number of women in senior and leadership roles.<sup>62 63</sup>

Learning from the earlier *Waka Mere* program in Solomon Islands and the work of the Business Coalition for Women in Papua New Guinea, the ASIPS+ GEDSI Strategy will build on the ASIRF GEDSI Strategy 2022-2023 and promote women's leadership and inclusiveness through its workplace culture, embedded in policies and practices throughout procurement practices and processes, recruitment and administrative support through the Facility.

The ASIPS+ GEDSI Adviser will:

- Under the guidance of the Facility Director and working closely with the DEH and SO Manager, review all draft SOs seeking services from the Facility to ensure that GEDSI issues have been addressed in accordance with DFAT guidance and standards.
- Provide direct support to DFAT SO Managers and/or SO Leads to clarify the need for additional budget/human resources to ensure that GEDSI is adequately addressed in SOs in accordance with DFAT guidance and standards. This may include developing or revising GEDSI strategies under intermediate outcomes 1.1 or 1.2.
- Provide, as part of progress updates against IO1.2, information on the implementation of the ASIPS+ GEDSI Strategy to support AHC policy dialogue with senior SIG officials on Australia's efforts and achievements in the GEDSI space and advocate for progress.

<sup>61</sup> International Finance Corporation, 2019, *The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands*, p5. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2019/solomon-islands-domestic-and-sexual-violence>

<sup>62</sup> International Finance Corporation, 2019, *Waka Mere* Commitment to Action. Improving business outcomes in Solomon Islands through advancing workplace gender equality. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2010/waka-mere-commitment-to-action>

<sup>63</sup> The work of the Business Coalition of Women in Papua New Guinea is available in cited in Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, 2021, *What Works for Gender Transformative Approaches in Papua New Guinea*, pp. 17, 29 and 35. <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/pwl-pacific-women-gender-transformative-change-brief-in-papua-new-guinea>. The benefits to employees and employers of workplaces responses to family and sexual violence has been measured and reported on in International Finance Corporation, 2023, *Workplace responses to Family and Sexual Violence in PNG. Measuring the Business Case. Endline Report*.



The provision of these support services will align with Pillar 2 of the AHC GEDSI Strategy. However, for this support to be beneficial and achieve the intended improvements in cross-Facility performance on GEDSI, the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships between the FSU and SOs will need to be discussed and agreed during the development of SOs.

The ASIPS+ GEDSI Adviser will ensure they are fully cognisant of current DFAT policies, aware/familiar with the extensive resources, guidance and tools available to them through the Gender Equality Branch, as well as networks/channels for seeking further guidance, if required, during implementation.

## **G.2 Climate Change**

Solomon Islands faces demonstrable current and future risks from climate change.<sup>64</sup> In line with DFAT's ambitions in the new International Development Policy, ASIPS+, through its SOs, is well positioned to support key areas of the economy/priority sectors vulnerable to significant impacts from climate change. The Facility's capability to design and implement projects means that climate change measures can be systematically included from the start of an intervention and supported throughout implementation.

The ASIPS+ Climate Change specialist will review the FSU's organisational structure and processes, including at the SO level, to identify key gaps in capability to respond to climate change. Based on this analysis a Climate Change Strategy will be developed. The strategy will guide how ASIPS+, through its SOs, can support Solomon Islands to develop more climate resilient sectors and communities. The strategy will also look at how ASIPS+ can better manage climate risk within existing SOs, as well as internal FSU operations (financial control systems, procurement, logistics etc.). To strengthen support offered, ASIPS+ will develop partnerships with technical actors, such as the Australian Pacific Climate Partnership (APCP), to strengthen support offered.

## **G.3 Localisation**

Australia has committed in the new International Development Policy to investing more deliberately in locally led solutions, creating local jobs and economic opportunities and building genuine, respectful partnerships with local actors.<sup>65</sup> Supporting local leadership and local actors is one of seven key commitments under the new policy. In detail, the commitment includes reducing barriers to engaging with the development program by increasing program flexibility, supporting local leadership, solutions, and accountability, and prioritising job opportunities and procurement. The policy recognises that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution, and that programs will need to maintain robust risk-management processes and compliance with all relevant legislative requirements. The ASIPS Concept Note identified a range of constraints on the use of partner systems without significant oversight, difficulties experienced by private sector organisations in meeting Australian compliance standards and in delivering goods and services at the scale and quality required.

Within this context, ASIPS+ will support the delivery of Australia's commitments to locally led development through:

<sup>64</sup> This includes increased rainfall variability leading to periods of greater drought and sudden intense rainfall, increases in intense storms and cyclones causing significant damage to property and infrastructure, and increased movement of vector borne diseases (IPCC AR6 Technical Summary 2021). Solomon Islands is also expected to face more exaggerated coastal sea level rise than other countries of up to 18 cm by 2030 and up to 1.2m by 2100. Current and Future Climate for Solomon Islands, 2021. [www.rccap.org/uploads/files/89fce47b-24f9-4d92-abdc-63d670fa45b8/Solomon%20Is%20Country%20Report%20Final.pdf](http://www.rccap.org/uploads/files/89fce47b-24f9-4d92-abdc-63d670fa45b8/Solomon%20Is%20Country%20Report%20Final.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Penny Wong media release on Australia International Development Policy, 8 August 2023.

- offering leadership and advancement opportunities to locally engaged personnel and fostering an internal culture of respect, empowerment and support for locally engaged personnel,
- the way in which technical assistance needs are identified, shaped and filled,
- the extent to which locally available goods and services are utilised and opportunities to build or extend the capability of local providers are optimised, and
- the extent to which local organisations are provided with opportunities to access grants and supported through grant application processes.

The FSU, drawing on expertise from the DEH, will ensure the Localisation Strategy<sup>66</sup> is fit-for-purpose to guide and monitor implementation of these commitments.

## H. Budget and Resources

### H.1 Budget

The indicative high-level ASIPS+ budget for the 4-year period from the start of ASIPS+ on 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2027 includes annual FSU costs (set-up and operations, A\$20m over four years) and funds directly managed by DFAT Post of A\$750,000 per annum (A\$3m over four years).

Reflecting the limited Solomon Islands domestic market for suitability qualified technical and/or specialised professionals, the FSU is somewhat reliant on international expertise for certain roles. However, through the Localisation Strategy (section G.3), ASIPS+ will consider how best local professionals can be supported to progressively take over more program management and delivery positions.

The DEH is reliant on short-term international expertise engaged on a short-time basis. These technical experts/consultants in highly specialised areas (i.e. climate change) are only engaged to provide short-term inputs (in-country and remotely). As part of the Localisation Strategy, approaches to mentoring local professionals will be developed and implemented, as is already happening with the MEL and GEDSI positions. The DEH and SO Manager will coordinate with the Facility Director and SO Leads to ensure specialist/consultant inputs are efficiently managed to minimise burdens on SO implementation.

The indicative budget does not extend to the optional four-year extension period. Continuation into this period will be subject to the outcome of a Mid-term Review, the development of a design update and budget availability.

#### H.1.1 Budget for cross-cutting issues

One of the main ways in which ASIPS+ will deliver better value for money than its predecessor, ASIRF, is through the newly established DEH. The DEH provides a pool of specialist expertise in cross-cutting areas to drive quality programming across SOs. The DEH's costs are embedded in the FSU budget, but where it makes sense to do so will be costed into relevant SO budgets. In accordance with DFAT corporate reporting requirements, cross-cutting areas will be budgeted for as follows:

- MEL (personnel, personnel support and operations): 7% of the total FSU budget.
- GEDSI (personnel, personnel support and operations): 2% of the total FSU budget.
- Other DEH (personnel, personnel support and operations budget lines): 5% of the total FSU budget. The DEH positions include the DEH and SO Manager, Design, Climate Change and Risk Reduction, First Nations Engagement, Strategic Communications, and other unallocated positions.

<sup>66</sup> A Localisation Strategy has been developed and may be reviewed and updated in line with this IDD.

### H.1.2 Estimated Service Order budget

Service Orders are funded separately to ASIPS+ FSU:

- funding of up to A\$100 million over four years expected for all downstream SOs (excluding SO1),
- investments already committed through large ongoing Service Orders (education and health sector programs, and Australia Awards Solomon Islands),
- budgets earmarked for development program SOs that are in the pipeline, and
- budget yet to be designated (not yet committed/earmarked).

## H.2 DFAT's Human Resources

For ASIPS+ to realise its potential value add, strong oversight by the DFAT Strategic Oversight Group (chaired by the DHOM) is critical. This Group will ensure ASIPS+'s alignment with Australia and the Solomon Islands shared priorities. They will oversee the use and performance of the Facility in line with DFAT's priorities, exercise strategic oversight of SOs and report to the Facility Financial Delegate on the scope of SOs and expenditure under the Deed of Standing Offer.

Below are estimates the DFAT Post human resources required to manage ASIPS+. However, given the level of uncertainty around the potential range and value of SOs, the positions and time commitments are estimates only. When Australia's priorities and the available budget become clearer, the human resources required will need to be reviewed. The Managing Contractor's human resource to implement the FSU are in Section E.1.4.

### Deputy Head of Mission (also the Senior Responsible Officer)

*Functional responsibilities:* Chairs DFAT's Strategic Oversight Group Strategic oversight of the Facility and all SO

- Ensuring Facility implements Strategic Oversight Group directions
- Performs DFAT Senior Responsible Offer role for ASIPS+ and SOs

Estimated time commitment: Strategic oversight only.

### Counsellor Human Development

*Functional responsibilities:*

- Oversight of the management of ASIPS+ contract
- Approve Facility AWP and Six-Monthly Reports

Estimated time commitment: 0.2 FTE

### First Secretary Gender and Development Facility

*Functional responsibilities:*

- Track SO1 and budgets
- Review and advise DHOM/Counsellor on FSU Annual work plan and Six-Monthly Progress Updates
- Monitor and ensure achievement of FSU deliverables (contract milestone and strategies; finance management of Service Order 1)
- Engage with Contract representative on contractual and performance matters
- Conducts weekly management meetings with the FSU.
- Progress IDD finalisation, QA processes and delegate approvals

Estimated time commitment: 0.5 FTE

## LES, Senior Program Manager

### Functional responsibilities:

- Assists First Secretary as required
- Performance of a range of delegated functions

Estimated time commitment: 1 FTE

## DFAT SO Managers (First/Second Secretary Level or LES)

### Functional responsibilities:

- Responsible for clear tasking of individual Service Orders including allocation and approvals of budget/financial management, workplan, risk management and performance monitoring requirements
- Also responsible for reporting, through the Facility Contract Manager, to DHOM on progress of SO implementation and expenditure

Estimated time commitment: As required

## I. Procurement and Partnering

In early 2023, DFAT conducted a competitive two-step procurement process to identify the Managing Contractor to deliver ASIPS. Suppliers' proposals addressed a statement of requirements based on the draft IDD, including how they would finalise this IDD. DT Global was selected as the preferred supplier and commenced the role on 1 July 2023.

## J. Risk Management and Safeguards

### J.1 Overview of risk assessment and controls

ASIPS+'s *Inherent Risk Profile*<sup>67</sup> is rated high, with a rating of medium after controls are applied, reflecting the following factors:

- Solomon Islands is a conflict prone area with a history of significant civil unrest and the potential for further instability, particularly around election periods.
- Solomon Islands is prone to natural disasters which could delay program delivery and result in significant impacts on the management of Facility operations.
- AHC has limited staff resources to manage a growing and expanding portfolio of investments. This has the potential to lead to inadequate governance and management of Facility operations.
- The Managing Contractor contracted to deliver the FSU may face challenges in recruiting appropriate qualified and experienced personnel to work in this difficult operating environment which could inhibit performance and quality across multiple Facility functions.

The medium-level inherent risks relate to the risk of small value fraud, dysfunctional governance, and management arrangements (unclear accountability) and a breakdown in collaboration, coordination and cooperation across FSU, DFAT and Service Orders.

The *Residual Risk Profile* for this investment is Medium.

- External risks related to civil unrest or natural disasters cannot be controlled. The development of a Business Continuity Plan and building in event response/mitigation

<sup>67</sup> Facility risks assessments were reviewed and revised using DFAT's updated risk and safeguard screening tool in July 2023 (see Appendix K.5)

measures into the ASIPS+ Operations Manual can be partially effective in reducing delays in delivery and preventing threats to the safety of ASIPS+ personnel.

- Internal risks, such as limited DFAT Post staff, coupled with an expanding development program and fragmentation of the smaller SOs (outside of health, education, scholarships), can be controlled by: a) clear, streamlined governance and management; and b) SO decision-making processes which clarify roles and responsibilities and help to minimise workloads and inefficiencies. ASIPS+ Risk Management process includes mechanisms for swift escalation to DHOM (as the SRO and Chair of the DFAT Strategic Oversight Group) for changes in risk profiles and high-level, untreatable risks.
- The DHOM/SRO, through the DFAT FIMT, provides oversight of all Facility SOs to ensure alignment with Australia's priorities in Solomon Islands and reporting back to the Facility Financial Delegate on the scope of SO implementation and expenditure against the Deed of Standing Offer.
- Risks associated with the inability of the FSU to recruit personnel that meet DFAT's needs can be managed through ensuring thorough inductions of personnel, in-service training, and professional development for personnel to support continuous capacity improvements and will be particularly important for locally engaged personnel.
- The Deed of Standing Offer requires FSU operational personnel to undertake mandatory training in Commonwealth Government legislation, rules, and regulations relevant to their work, as well as DFAT-specific procedures and practices, while specialist technical personnel must undertake mandatory training in DFAT policies, procedures, and standards.

The Medium inherent risk of small value fraud will be controlled by clauses within the Deed of Standing Offer allowing DFAT to recover losses from the Managing Contractor; mandatory annual fraud training for Contractor Personnel;<sup>68</sup> clarity in personnel Terms of Reference and Scope of Works, and in all contracts (personnel, subcontracts, grants) to include responsibility for oversight of financial and other risks appropriate to the position/activity; inclusion of robust financial controls in the Facility Operations Manual; and exercise of due diligence in assessing the strength of processes and systems of subcontractors and grantees.

## **J.2 Management of risks and controls**

The DHOM/SRO is responsible for ensuring all risks are identified and managed in accordance with DFAT policies and the PGPA Act. The DHOM/SRO will oversight the DFAT FIMT in the management of risks using: a) the ASIPS+ DFAT Risk Factors Screening Tool and b) ASIPS+ policies for each of the five specialised risk domains of Child Protection, Counter-Terrorism Resourcing, Environment and Social Safeguards, Fraud Control and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).

Risk management is embedded into ASIPS+ governance and management structures, with the following roles and responsibilities:

### **J.2.1 Day-to-day risk management is shared between the DFAT Counsellor Human Development (DFAT FIMT) and the FSU Facility Director**

The Managing Contractor will implement day-to-day risk management processes. Day-to-day risk management is shared as follows:

- **DFAT Counsellor Human Development:** strategic, reputational, political and stakeholder relationship risks.

<sup>68</sup> In the ASIPS Deed, 'contractor personnel' means individuals who are officers, employees, agents, advisers or subcontractors.



- **FSU Facility Director:** technical assistance/development effectiveness support; finance, and operation support; compliance with DFAT policies, including environment and social safeguards, fraud control, child protection and prevention of sexual abuse and harassment, gender equality and social inclusion, and health and safety.

The DFAT Counsellor Human Development and the FSU Facility Director share responsibility for maintaining the ASIPS+ Risk Factors Screening Tool. They discuss risks in their weekly management meetings, with changes in the profile of risks immediately raised by the DFAT Counsellor Human Development to the DHOM for attention. The ASIPS+ Risk Factors Screening Tool is formally updated every month.

### **FSU Risks**

At an operational level, the Facility Director is responsible for managing the FSU and SO support risks. The FSU's risk management controls include:

- Police checks and screening of new engagements: ensuring all national and international candidates for positions provide police checks as part of the recruitment process and that sanctions checks are undertaken by the FSU HR and recruitment team.
- Mandatory compliance training: all personnel, including short-term personnel/consultants, complete mandatory compliance training in code of conduct, which includes PSEAH and Child Protection.
- Compliance pack for personnel, subcontractors and grantees: communicating with, and training of, all personnel, subcontractors and grantees in DFAT policies to ensure their adherence to compliance requirements throughout implementation/delivery of services.
- Fiduciary risk and fraud control management process, including auditing and financial reporting requirements.
- Due diligence/risk assessments for all ASIPS+'s downstream subcontractors/consultants, with responsibilities for risk management (mirroring those in the DFAT contract/deed) specified in all contracts.
- Performance management processes for managing SO Leads to deliver quality work.
- SO risks identified at the SO development stage, with plans for monitoring and mitigation.

These controls are documented in the ASIPS+ Risk Management Plan, including the fraud control plan. The ASIPS+ fraud control plan aligns with DFAT policies and should mirror the Managing Contractor's corporate fraud and anti-corruption policies. In accordance with his plan, all personnel, subcontractors and grantees are trained in:

- what constitutes fraud and corruption,
- zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption,
- fraud prevention strategies that help to help prevent, detect and report fraud and corruption,
- the existence and content of the Fraud Control Plan.

### **J.2.2 Risk management updates and changes reported to Canberra through the DHOM**

Following the meetings between DFAT Counsellor Human Development and the Facility Director (at least weekly or as required), the DFAT Counsellor Human Development will report back to the DHOM/SRO any changes in the status of risks and provide updates into AidWorks. Any significant changes will be immediately reported to the desk in Canberra. Otherwise, the updated ASIPS+ Risk Factors Screening Tool will be sent to the Canberra DFAT desk every three months.

### **J.2.3 Strategic, technical, and political risks will be oversighted by the DFAT Strategic Oversight Group**

Risk management will be discussed at six-monthly meetings of the DFAT Strategic Oversight Group. At these meetings, DFAT FIMT will present the latest ASIPS+ Risk Factors Screening Tool and provide an update on changes to key risks since the last meeting.

## K. Annexures

### K.1 ASIPS+ Performance Assessment Framework (DRAFT)

**Goal:** Improving the social and economic livelihoods of Solomon Islanders

Proposed Indicator:

- Instances of significant and meaningful changes to SI partner policy and practice as a result of Facility Engagement (coming from sector program and advisers) (categorised by sector, cross-cutting issue or KPP)

**Objective:** To advance shared development priority outcomes through a strengthened Australia Solomon Islands development partnership

Proposed Indicators:

- Instances of significant and meaningful changes to SI partner policy and practice as a result of Facility Engagement (coming from sector program and advisers) (categorised by sector, cross-cutting issue or KPP)
- Development outcomes achieved (categorised by sector, cross-cutting issue or KPP) Reported on using Tier 2 indicators as appropriate.
- Improvement of SI Government stakeholder perspectives of DFAT (tracked through DFAT's 2 yearly perception survey, starting 2024)
- % SOs that are on track to achieve their objectives (disaggregated by sector, cross-cutting issues and KPPs)

#### End of Facility Outcome 1

**Outcome/ objective:** ASIPS has delivered quality programming that responds to Australia's policy and development priorities

Proposed Indicators:

- Evidence of improved programming across SOs from independent sources (sources: IMRs; any reviews that take place)
- First Nations' perspectives are embedded into development programming (Tier 3)
- % development investments that are effective in addressing gender equality (Tier 3)
- % of investments effectively address disability equity in implementation (Tier 3)
- \$ and % SO expenditure on activity focused on gender equality, disability equity and rights
- \$ and % SO expenditure on activity focused on climate change

#### End of Facility Outcome 2

**Outcome/ objective:** ASIPS+ has efficiently and effectively managed operational processes and resources

Proposed Indicators:

- Evidence that ASIPS+ is consistently providing good value for money, and improving over time

- Number of local personnel, sub-contractors and staff engaged (employment created) – Managing Contractors (tier 3)

Note: As a facility, ASIPS+ is required to meet DFAT's facility PAF requirements. In DFAT's guidance, a facility PAF has four perspectives:

- Development Results: What are the prospects that the end of facility outcomes will be achieved?
- Stakeholders and Partnerships: How is the facility engaging stakeholders and partners and meeting their needs?
- Operations: How is the facility managing and delivering key operations?
- Learning and Adapting: How is the facility adapting to opportunities and improving?

Each PAF perspective comprises a defined set of performance elements, and performance expectations are defined for each element. The PAF is required to include every perspective, and every element unless sufficient justification is provided. The expectations for each element (i.e. what 'good' looks like for that element) can be modified depending on the context and focus of the facility.

Table 1: ASIPS+ Performance Assessment Framework -Perspectives

| Relevant EOFO               | Perspective                                                                                   | Element                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Performance Expectations<br>(to be confirmed with DFAT during inception)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Intermediate Outcome                                                                                                                                                               | Proposed Indicators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| End of Facility Outcome 1   | EOFO1: ASIPS has delivered quality programming that responds to Australia’s policy priorities | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                    | Indicator: Evidence of improved programming across SOs from independent sources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                             | Performance Questions for Development Results                                                 | To what extent is ASIPS+ achieving its intended EOFOs? Why? Why not? What can be improved?<br>To what extent is ASIPS effectively progressing key policy priorities, including for GEDSI, localisation and climate change?                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                             | Development Results Perspective                                                               | Progress towards End of Facility Outcomes (EOFOs)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | "Clear, specific, shared EFOs are agreed by stakeholders (DFAT and DT-Global), underpinned by clear strategies.<br><br>Strategies include intermediate (IOs) outcomes and address sustainability/institutionalisation.<br><br>To the extent relevant, EOFOs and their strategies integrate DFAT policy priorities (gender equality, disability, indigenous people/ethnic minorities, climate change/DRR, private sector, innovation).<br><br>The facility has established a structured, routine process to assess the prospects of achieving its EFOs. DFAT is engaged in the assessment process.<br><br>The facility can demonstrate progress towards achievement of its EOFOs and its contribution." | IO1.1: ASIPS has delivered quality SO designs and strategies that incorporate cross-cutting issues and Key Policy Priorities.                                                      | % designs and strategies that meet quality standards<br><br>% SOs with an objective related to cross-cutting issues (gender equality, disability equity and rights, climate change) (DFAT policy commitment + tier 3)<br><br>% designs that include local participation (tier 3)                                                                                |
|                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | IO1.3: ASIPS has managed SOs to deliver in line with their workplans/ TORs/ specifications.                                                                                        | % of SOs delivering in line with their workplans/ TORs/ specifications (disaggregated by SOs underway and complete)<br><br>% SO reports that meet quality standards                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | IO2.4 ASIPS+’s operations, workplace culture and practices have promoted gender equality and have reduced the acceptance and impact of harmful gender and social norms across SOs. | % staff (disaggregated by gender, disability, SI/international) who perceive improvements to workplace culture as relates to workplace gender equality and inclusivity (through annual culture survey of staff) (Leadership and Teams)<br><br>% gender pay gap<br><br>Changes in staff knowledge, confidence and competence in relation to cross-cutting issues |
|                             |                                                                                               | Progress towards Key Policy Priorities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | "The facility has identified and tracked progress against a limited number of specific KPP outcomes to be achieved by the end of the investment. These are the most significant KPP outcomes relating to facility’s work.<br><br>The facility identified IOs for KPPs and can demonstrate progress towards achievement of KPPs and its contribution. "                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Additional KPP IOs TBD                                                                                                                                                             | TBD as additional KPP IOs developed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                             | Performance Questions for Learning & Adaptive                                                 | To what extent is ASIPS+ facilitating SOs to be designed and delivered in a complementary and joined-up way as part of a coherent portfolio that advances AHC priorities and strengthens Australia’s partnership with the Solomon Islands?<br>To what extent is ASIPS flexible, responsive, and adaptive in response to contextual changes, DFAT requirements, and Facility learnings?           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                             | Learning and Adaptive Perspective                                                             | Flexible and Adaptive                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Strategies and management decisions are informed by active knowledge management: the facility learns effectively from its own activities and monitors and interprets changes in the external environment, to identify opportunities and threats for its EFOs.<br><br>The facility implements agreed adaptations efficiently and in a timely manner.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | IO1.4 ASIPS has generated knowledge and learning that informs continuous improvement across SOs                                                                                    | Instances of continuous improvement, synergies, or adaptation as a result of Facility MEL system data, insights, learning.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                             |                                                                                               | Continuous improvement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Key business processes are benchmarked, tracked and lessons actioned to improve effectiveness and efficiency.<br><br>The facility encourages the identification and testing of innovative approaches to improve its effectiveness (including application of new technology).<br><br>The facility is responsive to recommendations from evaluations/reviews.<br><br>The MEL system is producing high quality information that is used to support the assessment of efficiency in the delivery of outputs and expenditure for all intended EOPOs/IOs.                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                    | % budget spent on MEL on Facility and sectoral program budgets (target = 7%)<br><br>% evaluations which include local participation (tier 3)<br><br>% MEL products that align with quality standards                                                                                                                                                            |
| Coherent/Joined Up Approach |                                                                                               | The facility develops holistic/coherent approaches to cross-cutting and ‘wicked’ problems. Potential synergies between different activities/teams including ASIPS-supported Service Orders) are identified and actively exploited to maximise its overall influence and effectiveness.<br><br>In pursuing its End of Facility Outcomes (EFOs), the facility is ‘more than the sum of its parts’. | IO1.2: ASIPS has delivered coherent and consistent approaches across SOs, including for cross-cutting issues and Key Policy Priorities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | % SO implementation plans that meet quality standards                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



## K.2 GEDSI Analysis

Adapted and updated from the analysis prepared for the Governance program GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan.

### Introduction

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are severe and will have long-term, multi-generational ramifications. Women, people with disabilities and those who were already marginalised or experienced discrimination prior to the pandemic have been disproportionately affected through, among other things, decreased access to essential services, loss of income, increased unpaid care duties and increased gender-based violence. It is estimated that globally, 47 million more women will be living in poverty as a direct result of the pandemic<sup>69</sup> and we can expect that women in Solomon Islands will be among them.

Although Solomon Islands did not experience an outbreak of COVID-19 until 2022, the restrictions imposed in 2020 had a significant impact. A streamlining of the public service along with curfews, lockdowns, and movement of people back to their home islands was, overall, felt more by women than men. Of particular concern was the increase in gender-based violence which was accompanied by a reduction in access to the support services.<sup>70</sup>

In 2020 UN Women conducted rapid assessment surveys of the impact of the pandemic in 52 countries including Solomon Islands. The surveys found that the mental and physical health of more women in Solomon Islands had been affected than in any other country reported, including Afghanistan: in Solomon Islands 94% of women, compared with 37% of men, reported that their mental health had been affected and 79% of women, compared with 14% of men, reported that their physical health had been affected.<sup>71</sup>

Prior to the pandemic, gender inequalities and marginalisation of people with disabilities created obstacles to sustainable development. As the primary food producers and carers, women were already disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and natural disasters along with the associated loss of biodiversity.

The reversal caused by the pandemic of any earlier gains made in advancing the status of women, girls and marginalised groups will have serious consequences for Solomon Islands. Gender equality underpins peace and prosperity, both of which are essential to ongoing efforts to emerge from the impacts of civil conflict. Gender equality is essential to good governance, enabling diversity in decision-making and leadership: a growing body of evidence demonstrates that gender diversity on boards and in senior management improves productivity and profitability.<sup>72</sup> It is a driver of economic growth: in PNG it is estimated that gender parity in the formal workforce could increase national economic output by 14%<sup>73</sup>; the International Finance Corporation estimates that advancing gender equality in the Asia Pacific could add USD4.5 trillion to their collective GDP in 2025.<sup>74</sup> We know that

<sup>69</sup> UN Women, 2020, *The COVID-19 boomerang effect: New forecasts predict sharp increases in female poverty*, <https://data.unwomen.org/features/covid-19-boomerang-poverty>.

<sup>70</sup> Hall G., and Damon C., 2020, *Gender, Disability and Inclusion Analysis for Covid 19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold*, CARE Australia and Live and Learn Solomon Islands, p23.

<sup>71</sup> UN Women, 2020, *Unlocking the Lockdown: The gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on achieving the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific*, <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/unlocking-lockdown-gendered-effects-covid-19-achieving-sdgs-asia-and-pacific> p7.

<sup>72</sup> See for example, Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre, Workplace Gender Equity Agency, *Gender Equity Insights Series 2021: Making it a Priority* <https://investinginwomen.asia/knowledge/gender-equity-insights-series-2021-making-it-a-priority/>.

<sup>73</sup> Voigt-Graf, C. and Cornford, R., 2018, *The Business Case for Increasing Women's Participation in the Papua New Guinea Economy*, cited in Pacific Women, 2021, *What Works for Gender Transformative Approaches in Papua New Guinea*, p3.

<sup>74</sup> International Finance Corporation, website, IFC's work on Gender in East Asia and the Pacific, [https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region\\_\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/east+asia+and+the+pacific/priorities/gender-in-eap](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region__ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/east+asia+and+the+pacific/priorities/gender-in-eap).

women are more likely to invest in the education of their children, having a positive multiplier effect. Ultimately gender equality and social inclusion is a human right that will benefit all Solomon Islanders.

This analysis looks at the situation for women, girls and people with disabilities in Solomon Islands. The multicultural and diverse nature of Solomon Islands means that life experiences can vary widely, influenced by gender, age, educational attainment and other factors. People may experience privilege or marginalisation due to their place of birth or family connections.

### **Women and girls in Solomon Islands culture and tradition**

Prior to European exploration of the region, Solomon Islands was inhabited by two main indigenous ethnic groups, Melanesian and a minority of Polynesians. Although there is considerable diversity within these two groups, both tend to favour men in terms of spiritual and political authority. Even in clans where land rights are matrilineal - passed down through the female line – men have traditionally been the decision-makers and enjoyed higher status.<sup>75</sup> Patriarchal structures were reinforced by Christian missionaries and entrenched in church and government institutions during colonisation.

Today, understandings of the ways that social norms reflect and perpetuate ‘traditional’ customs as well as teachings of Christianity are complex. Gendered norms can result in distinct roles for women and men, often leading to male dominance and privilege. Women are less likely than men to participate in decision-making outside the home<sup>76</sup> and men are more likely to access economic resources, health care, education and leisure.<sup>77</sup> In addition, as the population has become more diverse due to migration, discriminatory behaviour and attitudes can play out in subtle and overt ways.

### **People with disabilities**

The 2019 Census found that approximately 11% of the population over 5 years self-reported some form of difficulty in at least one of the six Washington Group functional domains.<sup>78</sup> The prevalence is higher for women and people in rural areas across all six functional domains and all levels of difficulties.<sup>79</sup>

The 2019 Census found that the most common disabilities in Solomon Islands are associated with: seeing (10.6% of people aged five years or older); remembering (8.4%); walking (7.8%); hearing (5.6%); self-care (4.7%) and communication (3.7%).<sup>80</sup> Around 1% reported a severe disability.<sup>81</sup>

People with disabilities face numerous challenges that impede their ability to participate in Solomon Islands society on an equal basis. There is a tendency to treat people with disabilities as needing charity and care, rather than support that enables them to participate fully.

Disability carries significant stigma as it is often perceived as a bad omen or a mark of shame. For people with disabilities access to education, employment and justice is challenging. For example, children with disabilities are less likely to attend school than children without disabilities: the 2015 *Demographic and Health Survey* revealed that 45% of children with severe disabilities may never attend school compared with 10% of children with no disability.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Pollard A., 2000, *Givers of Wisdom, Labourers Without Gain: Essays on Women in Solomon Islands*, University of the South Pacific.

<sup>76</sup> See for example, Equality Insights, *Women’s economic empowerment in the Solomon Islands*, Australian National University and International Women’s Development Agency, <https://equalityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Womens-Economic-Empowerment-Sols-El.pdf> p11.

<sup>77</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2015, *Solomon Islands Country Gender Assessment*, p5.

<sup>78</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, *2019 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1)*, Solomon Islands Government pp.118.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.119.

<sup>80</sup> <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/oai-www-spc-int-f5f42ae3-baef-4317-9f90-c6f7233ff7d2>. Ibid pp.119-120.  
<https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/oai-www-spc-int-f5f42ae3-baef-4317-9f90-c6f7233ff7d2>. Ibid pp.119-120.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p.119.

<sup>82</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015, *Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey 2015 Final Report*, <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/oai-www-spc-int-f5f42ae3-baef-4317-9f90-c6f7233ff7d2> p267.

Lack of knowledge of the specific needs of people with disabilities along with often inaccessible health services, means that people with disabilities frequently experience poor health. For many families, a trip to a health facility is an expensive exercise, carried out only as a last resort.

People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI) is the national disabled peoples' organisation which promotes and advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Women and girls with disabilities**

Women and girls with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination because of their disability, gender and economic status. They are often the most marginalised group in society.

Women and girls with disabilities are at higher risk of rape and sexual abuse and access to justice is often denied. In the 2013 survey on women with disabilities in Solomon Islands, *A Deeper Silence*, women reported being raped on several occasions by strangers, men in their village or male relatives.<sup>83</sup> The Solomon Islands Police Sexual Unit noted that often charges of sexual violence are not laid or taken to court due to lack of skills within the police force to communicate effectively with people with disabilities.<sup>84</sup>

For women and girls with disabilities, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights is particularly difficult. Sex and menstruation are taboo subjects and there is a pervasive attitude that women with disabilities are asexual and that they should not have children.

While there has been increased use of inclusive language in government policies, there are few specific provisions and strategies for women with disabilities. *The Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study* had only one question on disability.

### **Legal and Policy Framework**

Solomon Islands has a legal framework that provides for equality in rights, participation and representation. Policies such as the *National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (2016-2020)* and the *Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (2017-2021)* are underpinned by the Constitution which states that no law shall be discriminatory based on 'race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex'.

Solomon Islands has ratified the *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* (1982), the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and its *Optional Protocol* (2002) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* 1995. The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD)* (2023). Legislation is in place to criminalise domestic violence (*Family Protection Act 2014*) and protect children from commercial exploitation (*Penal Code Amendment 2016*).

However, gaps in legislation remain. For example, Solomon Islands scored 56.9 out of 100 in *Women, Business and the Law's 2020* assessment of laws and regulations that impact women. The assessment identified that there are no prohibitions on discrimination in employment based on gender, no legislation or civil remedies on sexual harassment in employment, no laws mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value. However, the assessment noted that under the law women have equal rights to choose where they live, travel and seek employment.<sup>85</sup>

The UNFPA report, *A Deeper Silence*, argues that legislation on disability tends to be outdated or absent. It notes that, for example, the Penal Code refers to 'imbeciles' and 'idiots' and the Constitution does not refer to people with disabilities under grounds for protection from

<sup>83</sup> UNFPA, 2013, *A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga* <https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPAReport-ADeeperSilenceA4PublicationLR3%283%29.pdf> p76.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p114.

<sup>85</sup> World Bank Group, 2020, *Women, Business and the Law 2020*.  
<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreeconomies/solomon-islands/2023>

discrimination.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, the legal framework for sexual identity and sexual preference is arguably unclear, perhaps reflecting cultural sensitivities. Same-sex sexual activity is a criminal offence, and although the law is largely obsolete, it is considered by some to be a breach of human rights<sup>87</sup> as well as a basis for discrimination.

Critically, implementation of policies and legislation is constrained by a range of intractable obstacles including lack of political will, lack of resources (skills and finances), social and cultural norms and the challenging operating context in which small and remote communities are distanced from the operations of the state.

Public service policy is guided by the *Solomon Islands Public Service Transformation Strategy 2017-2021* which, among other things, calls for greater consideration of gender in governance. Alongside the *Transformation Strategy*, reform is underway in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury divisions of Customs and Excise, Information and Communications Technology, and Internal Audit. The new *Public Service Bill* has been submitted to Parliament in late 2022. Once passed, the Bill will replace the *Public Service Act* and, among other things, criminalise sexual harassment in the public service.

A *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy* for the public service was rejected by Cabinet and remains in draft form. In the governance program's design consultations, the Ministry of Public Service (MPS) requested support to progress of this draft policy and, in the absence of a formal policy, support action to progress GEDSI within the public service. Policies for human resourcing of the public service are gradually being reviewed and updated, providing opportunities to remove language that could contribute to discrimination based on sex or other characteristics – some of this work is being done with the support of technical personnel engaged through Australia's Governance program. In addition, MPS indicated that it would value Australia's support to implement the *National Disability Inclusion Policy*, endorsed by Cabinet in November 2022. (The Ministry of Health leads on disability but other departments, including MPS, have responsibilities for implementation of the new policy.)

Electoral laws include the *Constitution (Amendment) (Electoral Reform Act) Act 2018* which allows for mandatory representation of one female commissioner in the Electoral Commission. The *Political Parties Integrity Act 2014* requires political parties to retain 10% of seats for women and provides for a Temporary Special Measures (TSM) grant for parties with winning female members. The Solomon Islands Electoral Office (SIEO) has a GESI Policy and Action Plan in place. In addition, it is anticipated that electoral reforms currently underway will result in greater participation of women voters. Of particular significance is the synchronising of elections which will see national, provincial and local council elections held simultaneously. It is believed that women and people with disabilities, especially those who must travel long distances to polling stations and juggle competing priorities, will be more incentivised to participate if there are multiple candidates vying for their vote.

Some of the legislation and policies pertinent to GEDSI:

#### **United Nations human rights conventions ratified**

- International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1982)
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol (2002).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1995.
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2003 and its Optional Protocol 2009.

<sup>86</sup> UNFPA, 2013, *A Deeper Silence: The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga* <https://pacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPAReport-ADeeperSilenceA4PublicationLR3%283%29.pdf> p84.

<sup>87</sup> Human Dignity Trust website, [www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/solomon-islands/](http://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/solomon-islands/).

## **United Nations human rights conventions signed but not ratified**

- Optional Protocol CRC Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict 2009.
- Optional Protocol CRC Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography 2009.
- Optional Protocol ICESCR 2009.

## **Global and regional commitments and frameworks**

- Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.
- Pacific Regional Framework on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Solomon Islands Legislation**

- Constitution: states that no law shall be discriminatory based on 'race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex.' The Constitution recognises customary law as a source of law and allows it to be applied so far as it is not inconsistent with the Constitution of any Acts of Parliament.
- **Constitution (Amendment) (Electoral Reform Act) Act 2018: allows for mandatory representation of one female commissioner in the Electoral Commission.**
- Family Protection Act 2014: criminalises domestic violence, including physical, sexual, economic and psychological abuse.
- Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act 2016: provides for protection on sexual offences including child commercial exploitation.
- Child and Family Welfare Act 2017.
- Political Parties Integrity Act 2014 requires political parties to retain 10% of seats or women and a provides for temporary special measures grant for parties with winning female members.
- Public Service Bill (in draft) Once endorsed, the Bill will replace the Public Service Act and will criminalise sexual harassment.
- Solomon Islands Tertiary and Skills Act 2017 requires that the Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority governing body be comprised of three men and three women.
- The Solomon Islands National Provident Fund Amendment Act 2018 enables women who are not involved in the formal sector to set up a voluntary contributions scheme.
- Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Bill 2006 Still in draft form.
- Penal Code 1996 criminalises same-sex sexual activity and applies a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. The law appears to be largely obsolete in practice, but it underpins discrimination.

## **SIG Policies**

- Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030 recognises girls and students with disabilities in its strategic approach to equity, inclusion and gender equality.
- National Development Strategy 2016-2035 sets a vision for a 'community where tolerance and gender equality are encouraged'.
- National Disability Inclusive Education Policy 2016-2020.
- National Disability Inclusive Development Policy 2023-2031.
- National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) 2016-2020.
- National Policy on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG) 2016-2020 .
- National Strategy on Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls (NSEEWG) 2020-2023.
- Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP) 2017-2021.
- National Youth Policy 2017-2030.
- National Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020.



- Solomon Islands Electoral Commission Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy (2022-2024).
- Public Service Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy 2020-2025 (draft).
- Solomon Islands Public Service Transformation Strategy 2017-2021 calls for greater consideration of gender in governance.
- The Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) includes gender mainstreaming as a key result area. Gender and women's policies have been developed for Western, Malaita, Guadalcanal and Honiara.
- Affirmative Action Strategy (draft).

## **Representation**

### ***Parliament and provincial assemblies***

Solomon Islands currently has four women Members of Parliament (out of 50 MPs), the highest number in Solomon Islands' 44-year history as a nation state. Over the past three elections the number of women candidates has increased slightly from 4.9% (25 candidates) in 2010 to 5.8% (26 candidates) in 2014 to 7.8% (26 candidates) in 2019.<sup>88</sup> In March 2022, Isabel Province saw the first ever woman premier appointed through a Provincial Assembly vote. People with disabilities are also under-represented in Parliament.

A 2019 study on perceptions of women as political leaders found that, although there is theoretical support for women in politics (88% of respondents supported greater representation) this does not translate into votes – only 20% of respondents had ever voted for a woman candidate.<sup>89</sup>

In 2017 the Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA), UN Women and CSOs including the Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM), began a campaign to address women's political representation in Provincial Assemblies through legislative reform and the adoption of temporary special measures (TSM) in provincial assemblies. The proposal has been endorsed by all nine Provincial Government Assemblies by 2023.

### ***Church***

The majority of Solomon Islanders identify as Christian, and the church has a central role in influencing social and gendered dynamics. The five major denominations in Solomon Islands have strong women's networks and women are active in roles such as Sunday school teachers, fundraisers and through tasks such as cooking and catering. However, there is little room for women as decision-makers within church hierarchies, and church teachings can perpetuate concepts of male authority.

There is evidence that Solomon Islands women have made inroads to assert their influence in the church: for example, the United Church and Christian Fellowship Church have quotas for women's participation in decision-making bodies.<sup>90</sup>

## **Access to services**

### ***Education***

The Solomon Islands Government provides primary and secondary education, and the Education Strategic Framework 2016-2030 aims to reach gender parity in education and equal access to

<sup>88</sup> Pacific Women in Politics, Solomon Islands, [www.pacwip.org/country-profiles/solomon-islands/](http://www.pacwip.org/country-profiles/solomon-islands/).

<sup>89</sup> Women's Rights Action Movement and International Women's Development Agency, 2019, *Public perception of women as political leaders* p6. [https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/Public-Perceptions-of-Women-as-Political-Leaders\\_A-Multi-Country-Study-1-1.pdf](https://iwda.org.au/assets/files/Public-Perceptions-of-Women-as-Political-Leaders_A-Multi-Country-Study-1-1.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Tavola H., Billy A. and Kama J., 2016, Advancing Australia's work on leadership and decision-making "The Next level" Scoping study on women in leadership and decision-making <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/solomon-islands-scoping-study-womens-leadership-decision-making.pdf> p11.

education for children with disabilities.<sup>91</sup> School enrolment rates for girls and boys have substantially improved, with 61% increase in 2019 since 2009 with higher increase in girls' enrolment. The 2019 census also found that the gender gaps in education attainment are narrowing overall but continue at higher education levels. Only 27% of women (compared with 30% of men) had completed secondary school.<sup>92</sup> For both females and males living in rural areas educational attainments were lower than to the urban areas.

While progress has been made over the past two decades, literacy rates for women and girls remain low. The 2019 census found that 23% of women and girls aged five and older did not have basic reading and writing skills (compared with 19% of men and boys).<sup>93</sup> The census found a significant proportion of school children (10 to 14-year-olds) had not attained basic levels of literacy (20%)<sup>94</sup> which highlights the challenge of poor quality of education received by some children.

The disparity between literacy rates for women and men is attributed to gender norms whereby a girl may be kept at home to do domestic work while boys are prioritised for education. Access for girls is also impeded by lack of suitable infrastructure such as dormitories and separate toilets as well as lack of transportation especially in the rural areas.

## **Health**

Government health services in the Solomon Islands are free, however access remains a challenge. In rural areas people may need to walk for a day or more to get health services so, for many, they are a last resort.

Lack of access to services, along with social norms that discourage open discussion of sexual and reproductive health mean that women and girls in Solomon Islands experience relatively high maternal mortality rates as well as high numbers of births. The World Health Organisation estimates the maternal mortality ratio to be 104 per 100,000 live births, compared to 6 in Australia and 72 in Vanuatu.<sup>95</sup> The total fertility rate is 4.3 (births per woman) compared with 1.8 in Australia and 3.7 in Vanuatu.<sup>96</sup>

Knowledge of family planning is high – 94% of women and 98% of men surveyed in the 2015 *Demographic and Health Survey*<sup>97</sup> reported having knowledge of at least one method of contraception. However only 29% of married women and 10% of sexually active unmarried women use a form of contraception<sup>98</sup> and the total fertility rate of 4.3 was higher than the wanted fertility rate of 3.4.<sup>99</sup>

The *Demographic and Health Survey* found that 94% of women who had live births received antenatal care by a skilled provider and the rate was only marginally higher in urban centres<sup>100</sup> suggesting that

<sup>91</sup> Solomon Islands Government, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2016, Education Strategic Framework 2016–2030, p.5. <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/education-strategic-framework-2016-2030>.

<sup>92</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, 2019 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1), Solomon Islands Government. [https://www.statistics.gov.sb/images/SolomonFiles/Survey\\_Statistics/Census\\_2019/Solomon-Islands-2019-Population-and-Housing-Census\\_National-Report-Vol-1-1.pdf](https://www.statistics.gov.sb/images/SolomonFiles/Survey_Statistics/Census_2019/Solomon-Islands-2019-Population-and-Housing-Census_National-Report-Vol-1-1.pdf).

. p103.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p108.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p101.

<sup>95</sup> World Health Organization, Maternal mortality country profiles, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/maternal-and-reproductive-health/maternal-mortality-country-profiles>.

<sup>96</sup> The World Bank Data, Fertility rate, total (births per women)- Solomon Islands, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/maternal-and-reproductive-health/maternal-mortality-country-profiles>.

<sup>97</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistics Office, 2015, Solomon Islands *Demographic and Health Survey 2015 Final Report*, <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/oai-www-spc-int-f5f42ae3-baef-4317-9f90-c6f7233ff7d2> p101.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p106.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p99. A birth was considered wanted by the DHS if the number of living children at the time of conception was less than the ideal number of children reported by the respondent.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p137-138.

access to skilled providers is relatively good. However, 21% of women did not receive any postpartum care following their last birth.<sup>101</sup>

Women and men in Solomon Islands experience relatively high rates of non-communicable diseases including cardiovascular disease and cancer. Nineteen % of the population has type 1 or type 2 diabetes, higher than the regional average of 12%.<sup>102</sup>

### **Economic empowerment**

Women in Solomon Islands are largely responsible for subsistence farming and for unpaid family work and in 2019, women only represented 35% of all workers in paid employment.<sup>103</sup>

Women's economic participation is constrained by factors including time required for food production and family responsibilities, poor literacy and numeracy skills, workplace discrimination, poor health, geographic isolation and lack of economic infrastructure, lack of access to government business services, lack of decision-making power and control of financial resources and lack of access to banking and financial services.<sup>104</sup>

The impacts of this lack of active economic participation are far-reaching. At a national level, as noted above, women's economic participation is a driver of economic growth. At the household level, Solomon Islands women who engage in paid employment are more likely to take a role in financial decision-making.<sup>105</sup> And the evidence shows that, globally, women are more likely than men to invest in the education and health of their children, thereby creating pathways out of poverty. There are also linkages between employment and gender-based violence – for example, research undertaken by UN Women to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that unemployed women were more likely than employed women to experience violence, feel less safe at home and feel less safe walking alone in public at night.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p151.

<sup>102</sup> The World Bank, Human Capital Project – October 2020, Solomon Islands Human Capital Index 2020 [https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/hci/HCI\\_2pager\\_SLB.pdf](https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/hci/HCI_2pager_SLB.pdf). UPDATED: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/7c9b64c34a8833378194a026ebe4e247-0140022022/related/HCI-AM22-SLB.pdf> DATA file: [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fdatabankfiles.worldbank.org%2Fpublic%2Fddpext\\_download%2Fhci%2FHCI\\_Data\\_September\\_2020\\_SLB.xlsx%3Fcid%3DGGH\\_e\\_hcpexternal\\_en\\_ext&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fdatabankfiles.worldbank.org%2Fpublic%2Fddpext_download%2Fhci%2FHCI_Data_September_2020_SLB.xlsx%3Fcid%3DGGH_e_hcpexternal_en_ext&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

<sup>103</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistical Office, 2019 Population and Housing Census, National Report (Volume 1), Solomon Islands Government p.138.

<sup>104</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2015, Solomon Islands Country Gender Assessment p49.

<sup>105</sup> Equality Insights, *Women's economic empowerment in the Solomon Islands*, Australian National University and International Women's Development Agency, <https://equalityinsights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Womens-Economic-Empowerment-Sols-El.pdf> p10

<sup>106</sup> UN Women, 2021, Measuring the Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women During COVID-19, p5. <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/vaw-rga>

The SIG *National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020-2023* focuses on five strategic areas:

- Gender mainstreaming with a particular focus on the resource sector activities especially for rural women
- Financial inclusion through financial literacy, savings clubs, and access to affordable financial services – especially targeting the informal sector.
- Enterprise development and support and improved employment opportunities
- Creating an enabling environment through legislation and policy changes
- Institutional strengthening of MWYCFA (Ministry of Women, Youth, Children & Family Affairs) including monitoring, research, and knowledge sharing.<sup>107</sup>

A draft *Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy* for the Solomon Islands public service was rejected by Cabinet in 2021. It is currently with the MWYCFA for review.

### Gender-based violence

Solomon Islands has some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world and we can expect that, in line with global trends, prevalence increased during the pandemic. Data dating back to 2009 indicated that: almost two out of three women in Solomon Islands have experienced physical violence from an intimate partner<sup>108</sup>; women are much more likely to experience severe forms of physical violence such as punching, kicking or having a weapon used against them<sup>109</sup>; and 38% of women reported their first sexual experience as having been forced.<sup>110</sup> There is strong evidence of intergenerational transmission,<sup>111</sup> that is, children that witness or experience violence are more likely to become perpetrators.

The high rates of violence experienced today prolong the trauma from the past. Discrimination against women is evident in some customary practices and was reinforced during the period of British administration. The civil conflict between 1998 and 2003 resulted in around 75% of women suffering trauma from rape, armed violence, threats of armed violence and the death of family members.<sup>112</sup>

Young women and children are impacted by the consumption and production of pornography which can sometimes go unchecked in homes and workplaces. Child prostitution and sexual exploitation is experienced in logging camps and is perpetrated by, among others, overseas fishers.<sup>113</sup>

Cyber-crime is an emerging threat for women and girls that requires a response from the law and justice system. According to the *Beijing +25 Report*, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force has begun to address this issue through training on the investigation of online crimes and through awareness raising in schools.<sup>114</sup>

In 2018, the IFC worked with nine Solomon Islands companies to survey 1,248 employees to understand how problems at home affect employees. The survey demonstrated the high cost to workplace productivity and staff retention of domestic and sexual violence in the Solomon Islands.

<sup>107</sup> Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, *National Strategy on the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls 2020- 2023*, <http://www.mwycfa.gov.sb/resources-2/strategic-plans-policies/gender-equality-women-s-development.html>.

<sup>108</sup> Secretariat of the Pacific Community for Ministry of Women, Youth & Children's Affairs, 2009, *Solomon Islands Family Health and Safety Study: A study on violence against women and children*. Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2009 p61. <https://pacificdata.org/data/dataset/pwl-solomon-islands-family-health-and-safety-study>

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p61.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p91.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p87.

<sup>112</sup> Amnesty International, 2004, Solomon Islands: Women confronting violence. p.13 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/asa43-001-2004-en-2/>

<sup>113</sup> UN Women Asia Pacific website [asiapacific.unwomen.org](http://asiapacific.unwomen.org). <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/fiji/co/solomon-islands>

<sup>114</sup> Solomon Islands Government, undated, *Beijing +25 National Review Report 2014-2019*, p6.

The research found that in one year, for every employee, the impacts of domestic or sexual violence resulted in 7 days lost due to employees feeling distracted or unwell, 4.2 days lost due to absence, .6 days lost due to being late and 5.6 days lost responding to the effects in the workplace.<sup>115</sup> The IFC identified gendered social norms and gender-based violence as two key drivers of workplace inequality and low participation of women in formal employment.

The *Family Protection Act 2014* was landmark legislation that, for the first time, criminalised domestic violence including marital rape. Its requirements for the police, justice and health sectors provide a pathway for response and redress. However, the justice sector is challenged by financial constraints to service provision, a backlog of logging related issues, inactive local courts and a range of other factors<sup>116</sup> impeding access, especially for women in rural areas. Nevertheless, the Act was important for awareness and changes in attitudes: anecdotally the *Family Protection Act* contributed to greater condemnation of domestic violence by the public, particularly through social media.<sup>117</sup>

The National SAFENET Referral Network, established in 2013, is a network of frontline service providers in legal, health and other support services. SAFENET is now operating in five provinces (Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western, Temotu and Isobel) through the Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls, previously called the Essential Services Package. Service providers operate with limited resources, and these were further curtailed by COVID-19 restrictions.

The SIG National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016 to 2020 sets out five priority areas:

- Adopting holistic prevention strategies.
- Strengthening of legal frameworks, law enforcement and the justice system
- Providing better access to medical, legal, and protective services
- Perpetrators' accountability and rehabilitation
- Development of national commitments and improvement in coordination.<sup>118</sup>

SIG has limited resources – and arguably limited will or intention – to implement the EVAWG policy. Civil society and faith-based organisations are filling gaps in services, primarily funded by churches and donors but they operate with limited resources. The MWYCFA acknowledges that stronger coordination between national and provincial governments, NGOs and stakeholders is required for effective implementation at the provincial level.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>115</sup> International Finance Corporation, 2019, *The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands*, p26. <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2019/solomon-islands-domestic-and-sexual-violence>

<sup>116</sup> Solomon Islands Government, undated, *Beijing +25 National Review Report 2014-2019*, p7.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p3.

<sup>118</sup> MWYCFA, *National Policy to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls 2016 to 2020*, <http://www.mwycfa.gov.sb/resources-2/strategic-plans-policies/gender-equality-women-s-development/12-national-policy-to-eliminate-violence-against-women-and-girls-2016-2020/file.html>

<sup>119</sup> Solomon Islands Government, undated, *Beijing +25 National Review Report 2014-2019*, p4.



