MID TERM REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIA-SOLOMON ISLANDS PARTNERSHIP FOR GOVERNANCE

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE – APRIL 2026

The Australia-Solomon Islands Partnership for Governance (ASIP-Gov) commenced in January 2022 and is an AUD35.8 million, four-year program (2022-2025) which has a two-year option to extend. The main goal of ASIP-Gov is to work with the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) to strengthen public financial management. The investment also aims to incentivise economic reform, improve ICT systems, support democratic processes and expand opportunities for stakeholder engagement in public policy dialogue. Australia's objective for this program is to strengthen accountable and inclusive governance in partnership with SIG and other stakeholders.

The program is separated into three pillars: (1) Economic Governance, (2) Democratic Governance, and (3) ICT & Cybersecurity and is managed by two teams at the Australian High Commission: the Economic Section (Pillar 1) and the Governance and Stability Section (Pillars 2 and 3). Abt Associates Pty Ltd has been engaged by the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to implement, manage and operate the Program.

The program has four End-Of-Program Outcomes (EOPOs):

- **EOPO1:** SIG has strengthened public financial management and oversight.
- **EOPO2:** SIG has improved domestic revenue generation and improved capability in targeted areas.
- **EOPO3:** SIG has strengthened inclusive democratic processes and expanded opportunities for stakeholder engagement in public policy dialogue.
- **EOPO4:** The program generates strengthened relationships between SIG and the Government of Australia.

DFAT is responsible for providing strategic direction to the in-country Abt Associates Implementation Team. Some aspects of the program, including engagement with SIG and other partners, are managed by DFAT through direct arrangements.

A Mid Term Review (MTR) of ASIP-Gov was conducted from March to May 2025 by Equity Economics in partnership with Cowater. The MTR covered the period from commencement of the program in 2022 to March 2025. The MTR analysis used document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Overall, the MTR found that ASIP-Gov has demonstrated its value as a flexible, responsive, and strategically important mechanism for advancing governance reform in Solomon Islands. The review found that ASIP-Gov is likely to fully achieve EOPO3 and EOPO4, related to democratic governance and institutional relationships. Based on current progression, the program is expected to partially achieve the more technically complex EOPO1 and EOPO2, which focus on public financial management and revenue reform, largely due to contextual constraints such as staffing and resourcing shortfalls.

DFAT welcomes the MTR's findings and accepts 9 of the 10 recommendations. More detailed responses to each recommendation are included in the table overleaf.

Mid Term Review Recommendations and DFAT responses

Recommendation	DFAT Response	Action and Timing
Recommendation 1: Consideration be given to an ASIP-Gov redesigned to consider alignment of its three pillars, reflecting the scale of its activities and DFAT's broader portfolio in Solomon Islands.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 1. Based on the MTR's findings and recommendations, a design refresh of ASIP-Gov is appropriate to optimise operational efficiencies, refine the program's objectives and ensure continued strategic alignment with Australian and Solomon Islands' priorities.	The design refresh will commence in Q3 2025.
Recommendation 2: An additional senior leadership resource in ASIP-Gov under the Economic Governance pillar should be appointed to enhance strategic thinking across the range of economic Governance activities, and reduce pressure on AHC in developing activities, while maintaining the AHC leadership role in engaging the SIG and guiding strategic priorities.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 2. A dedicated Economic Governance Activity Lead will help realise broader synergies across the program portfolio, assist with portfolio planning, reduce pressure on the AHC to develop activities and support better budget management.	The Economic Governance Activity Lead position description / Terms of Reference (ToR) will be jointly developed by Abt and DFAT in Q3 2025.
Recommendation 3: A future program should consider whether and how to integrate strategic priorities – including the cross-cutting priorities of gender, disability and climate – more explicitly in the program logic while remaining realistic about the natural entry points available within the program's mandate.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 3 noting ASIP-Gov is largely a demand driven program and there is limited scope within existing activities to directly address disability or climate resilience goals.	A review of the program logic – including consideration of how to integrate the crosscutting priorities of gender, disability and climate – will be conducted through the design refresh process which will commence in Q3 2025.
Recommendation 4: A future program should ensure dedicated support to public diplomacy and stakeholder engagement functions, including the addition of a communications role within the program team.	DFAT notes Recommendation 4. The recent loss of a dedicated communications staff member in ASIP-Gov created challenges. DFAT will work with the managing contractor to ensure this capability is maintained in any future iteration of the program. Consideration will be given to whether the new Economic Governance Activity Lead can fulfil this function (in full or in part).	Program team roles and responsibilities will be refined through the design refresh process which will commence in Q3 2025. This will determine whether the addition of a full-time communications role is required.

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Recommendation 5: A future program should review the current EOPOs and IOs to assess continued relevance, feasibility, and alignment with evolving strategic priorities.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 5.	A full review of the program logic, Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) and End-of-Program Outcomes (EOPOs) will be conducted as part of the design refresh process which will commence in Q3 2025.
Recommendation 6: A future program should consider the program's ongoing value for money (VfM), especially if scope and pillars are realigned.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 6. As demonstrated through the MTR, the program's lean operating structure and high operational efficiency have supported VfM outcomes. The actioning of Recommendation 5 – particularly the feasibility angle – will support this objective.	The program's existing VfM Framework defines VfM as 'maximising the impact of each dollar spent to improve governance and development outcomes.' This ethos will remain front and centre throughout the design refresh process. The program's VFM framework will also be reviewed as part of the design refresh.
Recommendation 7: A future program should explore options to promote greater synergies and programming efficiencies across DFAT's development portfolio in Solomon Islands.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 7. Options to support greater synergies and realise programming and operational efficiencies across DFAT's development portfolio in Solomon Islands will be explored through the design refresh process. Realising opportunities to support DFAT's budget support programming and the associated reform agenda will be a key focus.	Options to promote greater cross-program synergies and efficiencies will be considered as part of the design refresh process which will commence in Q3 2025.
Recommendation 8: The impact of capacity building efforts and training should continue to be tracked or monitored to test if the outcomes are being sustained and capture lessons from these valued efforts to help guide decisions around further investment in this area, including through any re-design of the program.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 8. Case studies and activity-level monitoring will continue to be an important part of the refreshed program's Monitoring, Evaluation (MEL) and Learning system, to inform decision making in any program extension period. Reflection workshops – already a key way lessons are captured and used to improve programming – will be streamlined and targeted in the refreshed program to help guide decisions around further investment.	"Ways of working" documentation is currently being jointly revised by DFAT and Abt. Roles, responsibilities and processes will be defined through this process, including DFAT's expectations around case study development and activity tracking. The activity tracking process will be further refined in Q3 and Q4 2025, as part of the design refresh process.
Recommendation 9: ASIP-Gov should strengthen GEDSI efforts, particularly under the Economic Governance pillar, in	DFAT accepts Recommendation 9, noting the sustainability and impact of the program depends on deep SIG buy-in. For this reason, efforts to strengthen GEDSI	Options to support other gender equality programming – through the adviser pool or discrete interventions – will be

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a contextually appropriate manner, given Australia's large investment in GEDSI through the Gender Equality program and with opportunities identified in recruitment, workplace policies, public financial management, and digital access, amongst others.	outcomes will need to be informed by the local context and supported by SIG counterparts.	explored in Q3 and Q4 2025, as part of the design refresh process.
Recommendation 10: MERLA activities should continue, with an enhanced focus on value for money (VfM) approaches.	DFAT accepts Recommendation 10. MERLA activities are central to continuous improvement in program delivery.	The way MERLA activities are used to inform investment and programming decisions will be optimised through revisions to the current "ways of working" document (a process which has already commenced) and the design refresh (which will commence in Q3 2025).