



Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea: Mid-Term Review

14 August 2025

Oxford Policy Management

Oxford Policy Management and the BCEP mid-term review team acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and the Pacific and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

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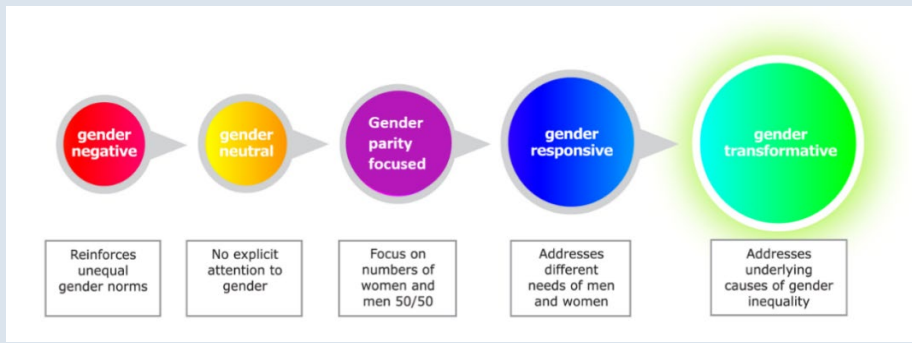
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List of abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AHC	Australian High Commission
AWP	annual work plan
BCEP	Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea
BCFW	Business Coalition for Women
BUPNG	Baptist Union PNG
CfC	Coalitions for Change
CIMC	Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council
CPP	Church Partnership Program
CSO	civil society organisation
DCP	decentralisation and citizen participation
DD	due diligence
DDA	District Development Authority
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIRD	Department for Implementation and Rural Development
DfCDR	Department for Community Development and Religion
DNPM	Department of National Planning and Monitoring
EE	economic empowerment
ELCPNG	Evangelical Lutheran Church PNG
EPOO	end-of-program outcome
GBV	gender-based violence
GEDSI	gender equality, disability and social inclusion
GET	Gender Equality Theology
GoPNG	Government of Papua New Guinea
INGO	international non-government organisation
IO	intermediate outcome

KEQ	key evaluation question
KUSWA	Kafe Urban Settlers Women's Association
LLD	locally led development
LLG	Local-Level Government
MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
MDI	Media Development Initiative
MI	Melanesian Institute
MTDP	Medium Term Development Plan
MTR	mid-term review
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NRI	National Research Institute
NCEC	National Churches Education Council
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OGP	Open Government Partnership
OPM	Oxford Policy Management Australia Pty Ltd
PAGP	PNG–Australia Governance Partnership
PDIA	problem-driven iterative adaptation
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNGCC	PNG Council of Churches
PEA	political economy analysis
PWD	people with disability
SA	social accountability
SARV	sorcery accusation related violence
SIP	Service Improvement Program
TSA	The Salvation Army
ToR	terms of reference
VfM	value for money
WoW	ways of working

Glossary of key concepts¹

Concept	Definition applied in this report
Adaptive management	A systematic management approach for responding to situations of high uncertainty and rapid change. The approach provides an alternative to either giving up trying to plan in such situations, or trying to use tools and processes intended for more well-understood, stable and predictable contexts. The management approach goes beyond just changing the details of how activities are implemented, to include changes to the types of activities, the strategies and even the intended outcomes and how the theory of change is understood. It uses an iterative process of adaptation that is informed by indicative theories of change and contributes to revising them. Collaboration and learning are essential features for success. ²
Coalitions for Change	The core of the approach for implementing 'issues-based projects' under component 1. Coalitions bring together sufficiently powerful actors around a common understanding of a problem to explore and test approaches to solve the problem. Successfully facilitating coalitions is difficult – they do not exist naturally, and there is no set recipe for success. However, three basic ingredients are essential: first, choosing the right partners to create a powerful coalition; second, effective coordination once the coalition is formed; and third, the provision of effective support for the delivery of influential outputs. Each of these functions needs to be informed by a deep and ongoing analysis of the politics and power around any given issue).
Gender transformative	A gender transformative approach is one that addresses the root causes of gender inequality by transforming unequal gender norms, and aims to change structural power and social relations.
Gender continuum	<p>A continuum³ of development approaches that move from 'gender negative' at one end, where work actually reinforces damaging stereotypes, to 'gender transformative' at the other end, where programs seek to change the socio-cultural and economic structures and norms which reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities.</p>  <p>The diagram illustrates a gender continuum with five stages, each represented by a colored circle and a corresponding description box below it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gender negative (red circle): Reinforces unequal gender norms gender neutral (yellow circle): No explicit attention to gender Gender parity focused (purple circle): Focus on numbers of women and men 50/50 gender responsive (blue circle): Addresses different needs of men and women gender transformative (green circle): Addresses underlying causes of gender inequality

¹ BCEP Final Investment Design Document, pages v–vii.

² Rogers P & Macfarlan A (2020), 'What is adaptive management and how does it work?' *Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptive Management Working Paper Series No. 2*, p. 3, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

³ https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IGWG_2017_Gender-Integration-Continuum.pdf

Concept	Definition applied in this report
Non-state actors	Broad term used to cover all organisations formed on a voluntary basis, independent of the state, including: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSO) or networks, research or academic institutions, community or faith-based organisations, media outlets ⁴ , worker representative bodies (e.g. trade unions), private sector organisations and business associations (e.g. chambers of commerce).
Social accountability	<p>A process in which informed citizens hold governments to account for delivering quality public services and resources. Social accountability refers specifically to the relationship between those who manage and provide public services (e.g. health or education) and citizens who use these services. Social accountability is different from what are defined as 'higher level' accountability relationships that focus on national level policy making or election cycles. Social accountability is therefore locally experienced: it is a relationship that is most relevant to the daily life of citizens at the community level who are concerned with getting access to local government officials, monitoring local budget spending and discussing the quality of services.</p> <p>Those supporting social accountability believe that when citizens engage with service providers – for example, through participating in planning local services, attending public meetings to improve quality or involvement in oversight bodies – their views are more likely to be heard and to influence government policy and practice leading to better quality services. Critics of social accountability, however, point to an 'accountability trap' in which the contribution to improved services remains localised and short-lived if social accountability initiatives are not part of a more strategic intervention in policy making⁵.</p>
Social norms	Social norms are rules of conduct or models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. These are rooted in customs, traditions, and value systems that develop and change over time. Social norms do not necessarily uphold ethical, fair, or inclusive values or behaviour.
Thinking and working politically	An approach to international development, particularly in relation to governance work, which recognises that effective development requires programming that does more than simply understand the political realities on the ground, but is able to effectively engage with these realities to achieve tangible outcomes. The original term 'thinking and working politically' was developed by group of leading development practitioners that formed a community of practice in Delhi in 2013 to develop this approach. ⁶ The approach has been continuously developed into a number of practice

4 In the PNG context, and for the purposes of this design, the PNG National Broadcasting Corporation is included as a non-state actor because it is constitutionally independent from government.

5 Hughes C (2017). What works for social accountability? Findings from DFID's macro evaluation. Itad. <https://www.itad.com/article/what-works-for-social-accountability-findings-from-dfids-macro-evaluation/>

6 *ibid.*

Concept	Definition applied in this report
	<p>variations⁷ and successfully applied to DFAT programs, particularly Coalitions for Change in the Philippines and the Pacific Leadership Development Program. Across the various strands of practice, Rogers and Macfarlan (2020) identify four common elements of a thinking and working politically approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attention to political analysis and engagement at multiple levels adaptation to local conditions and local ownership framing work around problem solving adaptation to changing conditions and new information.

⁷ Types of adaptive ‘thinking and working politically’ approaches include: ‘highly responsive, politically informed, iterative, “searching” models of assistance’ (TAF, Sidel & Faustino 2019); ‘supporting development leadership’ (DFAT Development Leadership Program 2008–17); ‘re-thinking governance for development’ (World Bank 2017); ‘doing development differently’ (Wild 2015), ‘politically smart, locally-led development’ (Booth & Unsworth 2014) and ‘problem-driven iterative adaptation’ (PDIA, Andrews et al. 2012).

Executive summary

Oxford Policy Management has conducted a mid-term review (MTR) of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea (BCEP) program. This report presents the review team's findings and covers the period between 1 March 2022 and 31 December 2024. It is based on a review of program documentation and consultations with DFAT, BCEP staff and BCEP partners, with in-person consultations conducted in Papua New Guinea during March 2025.

BCEP is a four-year (2022–2026) AUD 87.5 million governance investment managed by DT Global on behalf of the Australian Government and is in its third year of implementation. The current contract ends on 28 February 2026, with a four-year extension possible. BCEP aims to strengthen citizen–government engagement to improve the delivery of services and provision of public goods to meet the needs of all citizens, including women and marginalised groups. The program works with a diverse portfolio of Papua New Guinean implementing partners (currently 27 partners) from government, civil society, churches and the media. It has five distinct but inter-related thematic components: Coalitions for Change (CfC); media partnerships; social accountability (SA) partnerships; church partnerships; and Government of Papua New Guinea (GoPNG) partnerships. During implementation, a strategic focus has emerged on Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) and Economic Empowerment (EE) across multiple components.

BCEP's overarching goal is to strengthen citizen–government engagement to improve the delivery of services and provision of public goods which meet the needs of all citizens, including women and marginalised groups. The program has three end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs):

- EOPO 1: Selected state and non-state actors collaborate effectively to tackle targeted development problems.
- EOPO 2: Selected state actors and churches deliver development solutions which promote GEDSI and better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups.
- EOPO 3: Selected non-state actors are more effective, inclusive, and ready to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches.

The review team found that BCEP was increasingly demonstrating results across an impressive array of themes. Major changes in direction are not required at this stage. Yet several areas can be further enhanced. The review team has developed findings and recommendations as follows.

Overview of findings

EOPO 1 and EOPO 2 are largely as formulated in the design and remain highly relevant. Evidence of BCEP partners' influence on key policies and processes is increasing, brought about through an emphasis on constructive state and non-state collaboration that seeks to shift perceptions of the roles and potential contribution of civil society. The addition of EOPO 3 - which addresses the organisational capacity of partners - is a welcome response to identified gaps within civil society. Good progress has been made in establishing the systems, strategies and capacities necessary for partner organisations to operate effectively and sustainably. The interventions enable partners to adopt the innovative processes promoted by BCEP. The support is valued by partners. The framing of the outcome,

however, is quite narrowly focused and does not allow for reporting on the impact of BCEP on the wider civic space in Papua New Guinea.

As is common in governance programs, early reporting prioritised description of process and system change over tangible results that can be easily demonstrated to the public or government counterparts. Later reporting has a greater emphasis on outcomes but still there remains scope for BCEP to do more to communicate achievements. The growing imperative for visibility of aid outcomes is understood across BCEP. With results coming onstream there is now an opportunity for BCEP to strengthen its support to AHC diplomatic activities and other in-country engagements and to public diplomacy. That objective would be supported by a better flow of information and regular meetings to identify specific opportunities for AHC to support the BCEP team. That applies in particular to engaging at senior levels to identify and support emerging government priorities.

The MEL and adaptive management processes help BCEP maintain relevance over time, but there is scope to improve how the existing strategic advisory capacity is used. BCEP is committed to its adaptive management approach and has enacted changes based on learning and contextual analysis, primarily at program level. However, the level of delegated authority presents BCEP with barriers to making decisions quickly. This fact reduces the incentive to assess which elements of the program should be dropped and which are worthy of greater investment.

BCEP has made clear efforts to mainstream gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) across all partnerships, including GoPNG partnership initiatives. The program does, however, lack connection with wider policy-level and institutional efforts to address GEDSI and does not explicitly align with broader action for change in relation to gender equality. There has been a good level of consciousness raising within partners, with all demonstrating greater understanding and ambition on the gender continuum. No partners remain gender blind. However, resources to support the implementation of strategies on inclusion have been stretched. There is scope for wider progress with increased technical support for GEDSI-responsive approaches alongside the intense focus on gender-transformative ones.

The SA investment has led to a satisfactory quantity and quality of results at a local level, commensurate with the ambition in the original design. The sharing between partners in the community of practice has catalysed momentum. The SA strategy presents a thorough analysis of the possible routes to wide-scale adoption. Most significantly, there are signs of progress on church partners adopting the concepts and methodology. The Church Partnership Program (CPP) is supporting the development of a theology that will boost the confidence and commitment of individual churches. The different denominations are being given the space and time needed to adapt the approach to their particular circumstances. By this steady and differentiated approach, BCEP could be set to achieve a significant breakthrough in improving church service delivery and in bringing the most influential non-governmental actor into a relationship with government that encourages greater accountability.

Still, BCEP recognises that without strategic interventions to tackle systemic problems through policy change, the demand initiated, and responses achieved, through SA could remain localised and short-lived. In that context the GoPNG commitment to a national SA policy framework is highly encouraging. BCEP's support to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) has been instrumental in securing that commitment. In summary, the groundwork has been laid to enable the local level SA based engagement to be linked to higher level policy change.

BCEP has a high number of partners compared to the predecessor program and is promoting innovative practices. As such, the program has required substantial time and effort to put appropriate staffing and tailored systems in place and to build relationships. Although this resulted in an extended establishment process, the investment has been worthwhile. The systems developed are robust and fit for purpose, and relationships have been built on a strong foundation of consultation and growing trust. The existing partners will require significantly less capability investment going forward, which could enable the focus to shift to the capability of the wider collective civic space. There is, however, a balance to be struck. The level of investment represents a strong incentive to stay with the current group and to add very few new organisations. But for BCEP to maintain the dynamic nature of its engagement with civil society and to support specific issues-based goals, the flexibility to add new partners should be retained.

BCEP facilitation of space for collective action and synergies, its sharing of evidence and information, and promotion of genuine engagement and partnerships (over contractual obligations) is appreciated. However, it could more effectively tell stories of change around shared thematic or sectoral focus areas to highlight how collaboration works and the cumulative impact of aligned approaches to shared focus issues.

BCEP has assembled an impressive, diverse range of external advisers who make inputs on a drawdown basis to provide specialist insights. There is scope to go further in harnessing the power of this group by constituting them into a standing advisory panel. The group would support the BCEP leadership to make sense of the formal and informal political economy analyses to support decision-making. Drawing on the panel systematically would harness the power of the informal networks the members possess, including women's networks.

BCEP has been highly effectively in supporting learning (though documentation of the decisions that stem from learning could be improved). A MEL approach that builds on partners' existing systems has strengthened ownership. Good progress has been made in capturing complex change through qualitative and partner-led approaches. However, the MEL system has shortcomings in its ability to provide a consolidated and proportional view of progress toward outcomes in a way that would make implementers fully accountable.

Key Recommendations

1. The AHC and BCEP Senior Leadership should review their respective roles and responsibilities in the engagement with GoPNG and with other components of the Australian aid program. The refresh should be designed to exploit BCEPs ability to generate contextual information and the greater convening power of the AHC at high levels of GoPNG. The aim should be to bolster strategic alignment with government priorities where that is appropriate and to respond more effectively to the needs of public diplomacy.
2. The BCEP leadership team should develop the existing group of external advisers (which at present operates in an on-demand modality) into a standing advisory panel that meets regularly. This would provide an opportunity to make sense of the wealth of contextual information available and provide broader strategic guidance. This arrangement would provide validation of the quality of the analysis being generated, link to contextual opportunities, ensure the continued relevance to the dynamic Papua New Guinea context and strengthen coherence with wider change processes. The cost would be minimal, in the range of 60 days consultancy per year.

3. BCEP should conduct a Political Economy Analysis that reviews the prospects for Bilum to achieve greater accountability in the use of Service Improvement Program (SIP) funds over the medium to long-term. The PEA should examine the potential for other components of BCEP to support and exploit the potential of the platform. That assessment should be the basis of future investment decisions on the platform. The cost implications are around 40 days consultancy fees.
4. BCEP should revitalise the coalition change strategy process to ensure lessons learned lead to revision of approach and tactics. This is of particular relevance to the CfC component, but it may have value in other interventions. BCEP should deploy coalition facilitators to ensure local coordination of the actors. These may be existing staff or part-time consultants recruited to the roles. The cost implications of hiring additional staff should be assessed and weighed against potential savings in international fees.
5. BCEP should update its strategies on inclusion and expand its resourcing to support partner implementation of their individual strategies and annual work plans on GEDSI. That will increase pace and scale and ensure high quality implementation across both gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches.
6. BCEP and the AHC should develop more fit-for-purpose decision-making structures to support adaptive management. The level of authority delegated to the BCEP team to make programming changes should be clarified.
7. As part of the annual planning process, BCEP should agree annual targets with the AHC, to demonstrate its progress toward the Intermediate Outcomes (IOs). The process should incorporate a high degree of flexibility so that targets that have become irrelevant do not lead to sub-optimal programming choices.
8. BCEP should support public diplomacy by doing more to publicise the results it is achieving in ways that the Papua New Guinea public and leadership will relate to.

1 Introduction

Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea (BCEP) is a four-year AUD 87.5 million governance investment managed by DT Global on behalf of the Australian Government. It focuses on the relational state-citizen aspect of democratic accountability, seeking to foster a constructive two-way relationship between state and society. The current implementation period is 2022–2026, with a potential extension period from 2026–2030. The Australian High Commission (AHC) in Papua New Guinea (PNG) engaged Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to conduct a mid-term review (MTR) of BCEP between January and August 2025. As stated in the terms of reference (ToR), the review seeks to provide a summative assessment of BCEP’s progress to date and also to inform future decisions on the program’s structure, approach and focus to enhance outcomes. The review covers the mobilisation, inception and implementation phases between 1 March 2022 and 31 December 2024.

The review has multiple purposes as defined in the review plan:

- To understand the ongoing appropriateness of BCEP to the PNG context and alignment with the Australia-Papua New Guinea Development Partnership Plan 2024 and Medium Term Development Plan IV 2023-2027 (MTDP IV);
- To review the assumptions and theory of change in the BCEP design, especially its highly adaptive components (CfC and SA);
- To inform program management decisions for the future of the portfolio;
- To understand how the program-supported activities and principles are contributing to the end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs), including the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) strategy;
- To assess key value for money (VfM) measures / assumptions identified during design and/or during implementation;
- To assess the extent to which gender equality and disability-inclusive strategies are being implemented; and
- To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of highly adaptive and politically informed components of BCEP, including understanding how BCEP has adapted since it’s design and how it might continue to adapt to maximise effectiveness.

The principal audiences for this report include:

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) accountability and citizenship engagement team in Papua New Guinea
- BCEP program management team
- BCEP monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) team.
- The Government of PNG.

This report presents the review team’s findings in relation to the agreed evaluation criteria and KEQs (further detailed in Section 4 Review findings). It assesses progress across BCEP’s three EOPOs, paying special attention to the CfC and SA components, and presents findings and recommendations to improve delivery for the remainder of the contract period and potential extension option.

2 Overview of BCEP

BCEP's overarching goal is to strengthen citizen–government engagement to improve the delivery of services and provision of public goods which meet the needs of all citizens, including women and marginalised groups. It has three end-of-program outcomes (EOPOs):

- EOPO 1: Selected state and non-state actors collaborate effectively to tackle targeted development problems.
- EOPO 2: State actors and churches deliver development solutions which promote GEDSI and better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups.
- EOPO 3: Selected non-state actors are more effective, inclusive, and ready to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches.

The BCEP design sets out five components, each designed to foster inclusive partnerships among state and non-state actors. Integrated management and potential to amplify impact by achieving synergies between components was a defining feature of the original offer.

Coalitions for Change (CfC): A highly adaptive and innovative component supporting CSOs to build coalitions around issues of national and subnational significance. Partners include The Voice Incorporated (TVI), Melanesian Institute (MI), National Research Institute (NRI) and Transparency International. This component also includes the Responsive Fund, which supports local organisations, such as the Business Coalition for Women (BCFW) and the Christian Professionals Network, enabling them to undertake timely research and advocacy activities that respond to emerging 'windows of opportunity'. CfC is a new aid modality and the theory of change has not been tested extensively in Papua New Guinea.

Media partnerships: The Media Development Initiative (MDI) program goal is to see a more professional, free and diverse media in Papua New Guinea that serves the public interest and supports democratic processes. MDI also collaborates and supports across BCEP program partners in engaging with the media more effectively. ABC International Development implements MDI and works with various media partners, including the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the Media Council of Papua New Guinea. MDI has its own design.

Social accountability (SA) partnerships: This component seeks to empower community voices to hold the government and other service providers (including churches) more accountable for delivering public goods and more inclusive services. Implementing SA measures captures a mix of strategic options for action. The aim is to test and expand the application of SA initiatives in the local context. Partners include the Department of National Planning and Monitoring (DNPM), the OGP, Department for Community Development and Religion (DfCDR), CARE and the Member for Wau-Waria, the Hon. Marsh Narewec.

Church partnerships: This component engages with Papua New Guinea's seven mainline churches, the Papua New Guinea Council of Churches (PNGCC) and the National Churches Education Council (NCEC). Phase 4 of the CPP is focused on organisation strengthening, collaborating to solve local development issues, SA, and promoting GEDSI. Churches also have embarked on using policy influencing as a tool to increase citizen and state engagement. CPP has its own design and MEL strategy, building on 18 years as a distinct partnership prior to integrating within BCEP.

GoPNG partnerships: This component works with selected GoPNG departments interested in improving their transparency and citizen engagement. Partners include the government's key department coordinating development assistance (DNPM), the department responsible

for coordinating with the churches and promoting GEDSI (DfCDR), and the department responsible for monitoring key subnational government finance flows (Department for Implementation and Rural Development [DIRD]).

BCEP's work is guided by a set of program principles or ways of working which are seen as critical to its effectiveness in contributing to its EOPOs:

- maximise synergies
- GEDSI-transformative approaches
- adaptive management
- building respectful partnerships
- promoting sustainability.

BCEP is implemented adaptively through a twin-track approach of bedrock (minimally adaptive) and adaptive (highly adaptive) programming based on high-level assessments of partner capacity. The ambition for adaptive management in the CPP, MDI and government partnerships elements of the program is lower, with the focus being on institutional strengthening and improving program quality. A higher level of adaptive management for the CfC and SA was built into the design. The focus on testing, developing evidence and bringing partners together to learn, was reinforced during BCEP's inception phase.

Key phases of the BCEP investment are:

- Planning (approved 10 September 2021)
- Concept development (approved 20 September 2021)
- Design phase (approved 7 October 2021)
- Mobilisation phase (1 March 2022 to 31 May 2022)
- Inception phase (1 June 2022- 31 August 2022)
- Delivery phase (1 September 2022 to 28 February 2026)
- Potential extension phase (2026–2030).

As well as incorporating existing civil society partners, several components of BCEP pre-date the program and therefore have their own institutional history and identity in addition to BCEP. Several components transitioned from the Papua New Guinea–Australia Governance Partnership (PAGP) implemented from 2016–2022 with an overall spend of AUD 616.8 million.⁸ These include the CPP, Catalpa/Bilum, Care, MDI and TVI. CPP and MDI have long histories as Australian-funded programs, and the partners have a high degree of ownership and their own designs. TVI became a partner towards the end of PAGP and, although it is incorporated within CfC, it also has a distinct design that pre-dates BCEP. This history results in a degree of independence within these components such that building linkages within BCEP has required a slow process of reflection and identification of ways to align with common goals.

⁸ See: Final Review of the Papua New Guinea – Australia Governance Partnership

3 Approach and methodology

3.1 General approach

The MTR has been guided by a utilisation-focused⁹ approach, aiming to ensure that its process and outputs support BCEP's strategic goals and DFAT's requirements for the review, with a focus on enabling decisions to shape future implementation and enhance outcomes.

The MTR draws on BCEP's complex underlying theory of change (ToC) and articulation of how change is expected to happen, leading the review to focus as much on change mechanisms and causal pathways as results themselves.¹⁰ Based on the underlying ToC, the review specifically seeks to understand: how community engagement contributes to development outcomes, how BCEP's components singularly and collectively drive change (including through synergies between components), and whether adaptive management and responsiveness to the context steer those changes appropriately.

The approach assesses BCEP against the key criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and inclusion. Our review also takes a politically informed approach, recognising that the success of BCEP engagements is constrained or enabled by complex external factors as well as power dynamics between BCEP partners and the wider context. The team referred to the BCEP-generated Political Economy Analysis (PEA)¹¹ to understand the specific contextual factors that BCEP components have been designed to respond to. Our team also included a political economy expert to ensure that the team considered more broadly how BCEP responds to the PNG context as it changes over time and how activities take into account power structures in seeking to drive change. This approach helped the MTR team to identify how key actors and institutions shaping the governance environment in Papua New Guinea affect the implementation of BCEP's initiatives, and how the institutional relationships and socio-political factors influence program outcomes.

3.2 Key elements of the methodology

During the planning phase, the review team reviewed core program documentation and held an inception meeting with DFAT and separately with BCEP. An evaluation matrix was then developed which set out KEQs and sub-questions against the identified criteria. The matrix guided data collection and analysis, grounded in BCEP's program logic. The review applied a theory-based design to explore the contribution of BCEP's activities to observed outcomes, paying attention to causal mechanisms and change pathways identified in the program logic. The methodology combined qualitative methods, primarily document review and semi-structured interviews with targeted political economy insights to ensure findings reflected both evidence and context. We relied on secondary quantitative information

⁹ We used utilisation-focused approach as a guide, prioritising the information needs of key stakeholders including DFAT and BCEP. The review team developed a tailored evaluation matrix based on BCEP's theory of change and DFAT's key questions. Analysis was politically informed and adaptive, designed to generate actionable findings to inform decision-making and strategic direction.

¹⁰ Theory-based evaluation (TBE) is an approach that uses a program's underlying theory to guide the evaluation process. It focuses on understanding how and why an intervention is expected to work by examining the causal links between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. TBE goes beyond measuring results; it seeks to understand the mechanisms of change and the context in which the intervention operates.

¹¹ Initial Political Economy Analysis, BCEP December 2022

obtained from the BCEP team. We included specific evaluation questions of interest to DFAT alongside general evaluative questions.

KEQ 1: In what ways do the BCEP strategies and their implementation reflect a) the intent of the original design; b) the evolving context; and c) emerging knowledge on how governance and collaboration support service delivery and development outcomes?

KEQ 2: To what extent is BCEP making adequate progress towards the EOPOs?

KEQ 3: What are the main contributions of social accountability and Coalitions for Change to achievement of the EOPOs and how have these been achieved?

KEQ 4: What in BCEP's overall approach and ways of working enables or hinders effectiveness in achieving the EOPOs?

KEQ 5: To what extent is BCEP's approach efficient?

KEQ 6: To what extent is BCEP's approach and implementation of the strategies on inclusion contributing to achievement of the EOPOs?

KEQ 7: To what extent, and how, does BCEP demonstrate its value as an investment?

These KEQs are listed together with the sub-questions in full in Appendix A.

The team set about answering the KEQs by drawing on a range of sources. This included review of a wide range of program documentation (see Appendix C for the full list) and key informant interviews conducted both remotely and in Papua New Guinea during March 2025 (see Appendix B for stakeholder details). The team consulted broadly across BCEP partners in Port Moresby and capitalised on a gathering of partners for a SA community of practice event in Goroka during the review period.

Table 1: Document review

Document type	No.
Core program documentation	39
Additional program documentation	28
DFAT policies and guides	9
Total	76

Table 2: Key informant interviews

Gender disaggregation of interviewees	No.
Male	32
Female	49
Total	81

The review sought to follow the DFAT evaluation policy and Standard 10 on independent evaluation reports in the DFAT Design and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning standards.

The findings and analysis presented below result from triangulation across the range of sources. The team's initial deductions drawn from project reporting having been tested through consultation with a wide range of BCEP staff and partners. In some cases, multiple consultations were held with the same stakeholders to probe further into key issues.

See Appendix A for further details about the MTR methodology.

3.3 Methodology limitations

Consultations were held in Port Moresby, Goroka and online. The team was able to capitalise on a BCEP partner event held in Goroka as an opportunity to consult partners whilst they were gathered together. Most partners were represented, though in some cases the partner program staff present were not senior/management level and could only speak for some parts of the partners work rather than the whole. The short timeframe available in Goroka for the consultation process and the competing demands on participants who were attending a BCEP Social Accountability Community of Practice event, limited how many individual interviews the team could conduct. The team was able to hold some consultations in small groups, such as consulting multiple church partners together, allowing a higher number of partners overall to be consulted, though limiting potential to explore sensitive issues at an individual level.

Time, budgetary and security constraints prevented the team from consulting at community levels (i.e., with the communities that some of the partners work with) which limited potential to understand the working and the impact of specific partner-led approaches that engage communities, particularly those around SA.

Given the complex operating context in PNG and the nature of BCEP, with innovative and evolving approaches within the program, some elements are hard to assess at this stage as the program team and partners are still developing their own approaches for defining and measuring results.

The relative complexity and scale of the program meant that some elements could not be assessed in depth, including the CPP and MDI. Thus, these components are largely considered as they relate to BCEP overall and synergies with SA and CfC.

During the development of the evaluation plan, the team identified significant overlaps between criteria in the evaluation matrix. These overlaps are in part a natural result of the inter-connectedness of BCEP's activities, goals and ways of working – its principles are integral to what it achieves and how it relates to the context. This was particularly clear in relation to the SA and CfC partnerships. BCEP's responsiveness to contextual changes, PEA and lessons learnt, for example, illustrates relevance, efficiency and effectiveness questions. Observations around GEDSI are related to questions under effectiveness, efficiency and inclusion. The questions and approaches were structured to address this overlap as much as possible, and the report structure aims to avoid repetition and, more importantly, seeks to convey these linkages which are key to BCEP's design. The team has given evaluative judgement on progress after assessing the balance of evidence.

4 Review findings

4.1 Relevance

KEQ 1: In what ways do the BCEP strategies and their implementation reflect: a) the intent of the original design; b) the evolving context; c) emerging knowledge on how governance and collaboration support service delivery and development outcomes?

Key findings on relevance

EOPO 1 and EOPO 2 remain highly relevant. The addition of EOPO 3 responded to an identified gap in the Theory of Change: enhanced capacity of civil society partners being both a means and an end. Building that capacity will help achieve the program's impact and presents public diplomacy opportunities through the celebration of stronger PNG-led organisations. There is also scope to broaden the framing beyond strengthened BCEP partners to capture the impact of BCEP on the wider civic space in Papua New Guinea.

The growing imperative for visibility of aid outcomes is understood across BCEP. Program reporting is increasingly focussed on tangible results that can be easily demonstrated to the public or government counterparts. There is scope to maximise the public diplomacy benefits of publicising these results through increased coordination between the AHC and the managing contractor.

In general, the potential to align and amplify BCEP activities, AHC diplomatic activities or wider in-country engagements is recognised by both BCEP and AHC. There has been caution, however, about how to balance direct engagement of the AHC with BCEP partners against the precepts of locally led development (LLD) engrained in BCEP. Regular frank discussions between AHC and BCEP leadership around pros and cons leading to a careful selection of events will overcome these concerns.

BCEP has a range of mechanisms and capacities which offer potential for maintaining relevance over time, including a focus on PEA, introduction of a Responsive Fund component, external advisory capacity and adaptive capacity. However, these mechanisms are not fully utilised. Opportunities are being missed for adaptations at strategic level and for responsiveness to the evolving political context beyond specific focus areas – more regular and structured engagement with external analytical capacity is a key opportunity.

4.1.1 Key changes to the implementation approach/design

While the overall intent of the original design remains relevant to Papua New Guinea and the implementation strategy remains largely consistent with it, there have been some changes made to EOPOs and the approach to implementation, as discussed below.

These changes to the EOPOs are the result of scrutiny of the design during the BCEP inception phase (see Table 3: EOPOs in the design and post inception).

Table 3: EOPOs in the design and post inception

EOPO No.	EOPOs in approved design	EOPOs approved post inception
1	Selected state and non-state actors collaborate effectively to tackle targeted development problems.	Selected state and non-state actors collaborate effectively to tackle targeted development problems.
2	Targeted Papua New Guinean decision-makers explicitly integrate gender equality and inclusive social norms into efforts to address development problems.	State actors and churches deliver development solutions which promote GEDSI and better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups.
3	NA	Selected non-state actors are more effective, inclusive, and ready to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches.

The wording of the original EOPO 2 emphasised that changes in societal norms were critical to achieving development, aiming for a change in process rather than tangible outcomes. The wording of the revised EOPO conveys the importance of both tangible GEDSI outcomes and inclusive processes. This change enables reporting of results at outcome level, such that the development outcomes realised through BCEP's approach can be conveyed clearly.

The rationale for adding a third EOPO, is that strengthened organisations are required to sustain the approaches BCEP introduces beyond the life of the program. In the context of a program that seeks to effect constructive engagement between state and non-state actors, strengthened capacity is both a means and an end. The inclusion of this sustainability-focused outcome increases the relevance of BCEP. Reframing the EOPO to capture BCEP's contribution to the long-term strength, diversity and sustainability of civil society in Papua New Guinea more generally would add further relevance.

Other additions and departures from the BCEP's original design have been to:

- *Reframe the inception phase PEA as an opportunity assessment.* This built on a context analysis to identify programming entry points and strategic themes as a means for BCEP to achieve collective impact – a key original justification for the investment.
- *Develop a 'Responsive Fund facility' after finding that the original structure's flexibility was limited.* This supported adaptive management ambitions given the facility could respond to new opportunities. At 2 per cent of the total, the changes in budget allocation were minor but enabled additional approaches to be trialled and new partnerships to be tested.
- *Take a different approach to the CfC budget (initially largely absorbed by a forward commitment to TVI).* The approach was changed during the inception phase when BCEP created space to support coalitions to tackle two other issues that the opportunities assessment identified. Thus, the strategic themes for the program as a whole have become the issues to be addressed within the CfC component.
- *Adjust the mode of implementation of the social accountability component.* The ambition to partner with three to five international non-government organisations (INGOs) has not been realised due to the absence of feasible partners. In practice, only one INGO is implementing the component at present.

- *Expand the application of social accountability beyond the partners funded under the discrete social accountability component.* This reflects less caution about an explicit focus on accountability programming than there was at the design stage. The focus has turned to embedding the SA approach across components and extending its use beyond mainstream service delivery, such as areas related to sorcery accusation related violence (SARV) and EE.
- *Emphasise ‘positive deviance’ alongside problem-based programming.* In both SA and GEDSI interventions the strategy has shifted to embrace and scale-up existing good local practice.

In combination, the changes have increased program relevance. In particular, through the greater emphasis on results that can be easily communicated under EOPO 2, the adaptations have the potential to support the relevance of BCEP in the context of an increased requirement to support public diplomacy.

4.1.2 Responsiveness to a changing strategic environment for aid

BCEP is a key element of the delivery on the longstanding shared commitment of Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) to strengthen PNG’s growth as a stable and secure democracy. In August 2020, Papua New Guinea and Australia renewed their joint vision through the Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP). The commitment to deepen engagement on democratic governance and service delivery has since been reaffirmed at leader and ministerial levels, including at the 30th Papua New Guinea–Australia Ministerial Forum in July 2024. The GoPNG vision for improving the governance and accountability of its public institutions has been outlined in successive medium term development plans, including most recently in the 2023–2027 plan.

The Australian Government is Papua New Guinea’s largest donor, providing around 40 per cent of the country’s Official Development Assistance (ODA), with an aid investment of more than AUD 600 million this financial year. These investments are guided by the commitments in the *Australia–Papua New Guinea Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029* (DPP),¹² which aligns with the *Papua New Guinea Vision 2050, Development strategic plan 2010–2030* and *Medium Term Development Plan IV 2023–2027*.¹³ The MTDP IV outlines Papua New Guinea’s aspiration to protect its democratic institutions and improve the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the public sector.

The underlying issues addressed by BCEP and the shared strategic intent of ensuring a stable and prosperous region remain highly relevant. Changes in the wider strategic environment for aid are reflected in a growing emphasis on public diplomacy, an imperative to demonstrate tangible results, and a desire for deeper direct engagement between the AHC and BCEP’s partners. This sometimes sits uneasily with the nature of BCEP programming where changes are often incremental, intangible or politically sensitive.

As noted earlier in the report, the growing imperative for visibility of aid outcomes is well understood across BCEP. Program reporting is increasingly focussed on tangible results that can be easily demonstrated to the public or government counterparts. There is scope to maximise the public diplomacy benefits of publicising these results through increased coordination between the AHC and the managing contractor.

¹² <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-papua-new-guinea-development-partnership-plan-2024-2029>; <https://treasury.gov.au/publication/p2025-622411>

¹³ Government of Papua New Guinea, *Medium Term Development Plan IV 2023–2027*, 2023. <https://mtdp.gov.pg>

Implementation has remained faithful to the original Theory of Change and is based on a constructive and problem-solving engagement with GoPNG driven by BCEP's own analysis of where the opportunities lie. There is scope to discuss issues and share approaches with other Australian-funded programs without compromising that orientation. For instance, the policy interventions of all parties could be made more effective if more closely coordinated with wider sectoral programs. For example, it is worth exploring opportunities for greater synergy and exchange between Australia-funded health and education programs¹⁴ and the health and education sector engagements under CPP.

BCEP also provides the AHC with a chance to engage with a range of influential figures in PNG civil society. CSO and Church leaders, academics, journalists and other civil society figures engage with actors within the state; with some becoming figures with authority in their own right within the state. To fully engage with this network of influence, the BCEP leadership and the AHC must ensure a regular flow of information in both directions. At the same time the sensitivity of processes to shift broader state–society relationships also mean that public diplomacy initiatives need to be implemented with awareness of partnership dynamics, relationships between stakeholders, careful timing and considered messaging.

4.1.3 Mechanisms for ensuring responsiveness to contextual changes

BCEP has undertaken PEA in several forms: at strategic level and within individual components to ensure that programs are responsive to needs and dynamics within the context. The framing of the initial Political Economy Analysis (PEA) was modified to become an opportunity assessment and is augmented by Quarterly Insight Updates.¹⁵ This had the explicit aim of identifying issues and entry points that go with the grain of Papua New Guinean politics (arguably a marker of relevance) among other criteria. Twelve potential themes and issues were assessed against a number of criteria. This was a thorough evidence-based exercise. The strategy of making political salience and/or relevance to existing partners the key drivers in the choice of issues increased likelihood of successful outcomes. It also increased the potential value of BCEP in terms of opportunities for engagement by the AHC in support of public diplomacy.

BCEP has impressive internal capabilities to understand the operating context among its staff and implementing partners. In a context where personal relations are vitally important, senior BCEP team members have valuable long-standing connections that enable them to engage at different levels of the Papua New Guinean governing system and across civil society. In line with DFAT policy and priorities, BCEP places a strong emphasis on LLD¹⁶, including a focus on capacity building and empowerment with the intent of enabling BCEP staff and partners to harness their knowledge, analysis and networks to shape BCEP's understanding of the context it responds to.

BCEP has put in place systems to embed the knowledge and networks of staff into the program's strategic thinking. At Tok Politic sessions¹⁷ the team discusses current political issues relevant to BCEP, such as the media policy or the economic context, and attempt to distil the implications for programming. These sessions are supported by frequent informal discussions of political developments. The weakness observed by the MTR lies in extent to which information is captured through the MEL system to document these discussions to produce an account of why decisions are taken. This is important for reasons of

¹⁴ For example, Papua New Guinea Australia Transition to Health Program (PATH) and Partnerships for Improving Education (PIE)

¹⁵ Initial Political Economy Analysis, BCEP December 2022

¹⁶ BCEP locally led development framework 2023–2030 (2023).

¹⁷ Informal discussion around politics intended to articulate the tacit knowledge among the BCEP staff

accountability and to learn lessons. For instance, the accounts of the Tok Politics sessions indicate these are valuable discussions, but the key learnings and their implications have not been documented.

BCEP includes partners that can mobilise in response to key events and pivot to address emerging events and issues. All MDI partners are driven by current affairs and the desire to represent and influence on issues of topical concern. The MTR were given convincing accounts of the Churches and the CfC participants reacting to emerging opportunities in the political context. The quarterly Minds Meet forum, hosted by the Christian Professionals Network (CPN), is a useful mechanism for mobilising decision makers and experts to address emerging challenges. This was convened to respond to the January 2024 riots by considering underlying factors that could be addressed. Another meeting of the forum, on taxation, was convened in response to the increasing prominence of the issue in government policy making, which led to CPN gaining access to key officials to lobby for reduced rates while growing the tax base. This demonstrates a valuable capacity to mobilise BCEP partners, wider civil society, government and private sector stakeholders to generate analysis and responses to emerging challenges.” Multiple respondents noted that they found the forum useful for learning, sharing, meeting other civil society actors and government representatives, and remaining responsive to events.

BCEP benefits from a range of intellectual capital within its staff, partners, and from external advisers. However, there is a risk of disconnection from challenges and opportunities in Papua New Guinea over time. The external advisers, in particular, provide a ‘critical friend’ role, they are a sounding board for new ideas and provide suggestions on how to solve leadership challenges. However, it was noted that these interactions tend to be one-on-one to enable the BCEP Team Leader to explore specific operational and implementation challenges, missing the potential to reflect back the wider strategic context. There is an opportunity to harness the power of BCEP’s external advisers to connect to informal networks with influence, such as women’s networks, and influential individuals. Another opportunity is to engage this group of short-term and occasional expert advisers collectively to enhance the robustness of insight and debate that shapes political economic analysis over time and to identify various opportunities for collaboration, partnerships and effective coalitions.

The GoPNG departments consulted for the review reported positive views of BCEP but noted low levels of regular strategic engagement with the program. GoPNG representatives said their capacity to engage in the BCEP Joint Steering Committee had been limited because of similar commitments across multiple DFAT-funded programs, as well as personnel changes and competing priorities, with engagement on larger investments taking precedence. Thus, the visibility of BCEP’s work was low among these respondents. Whilst a desire to engage in more depth and more strategically was stated, some caution about the capacity of busy civil servants to fulfil that promise is needed. In particular, the level of immediate interest in a program that implements largely through non-governmental actors, will be lower for officials at all levels than one that directly supports government. However, strong GoPNG engagement is needed for the approach to be fully effective in forging government-citizen collaboration. In Section 0 Efficiency, we discuss how a more strategic engagement by the AHC, that draws on its convening power, could help BCEP identify and respond to additional opportunities to work together with government departments. One example would be ensuring an effective engagement for the program and partners with the planned CSO policy.

In summary, BCEP has a robust system to generate information on the context and on which it can base decision-making. As noted above, the documentation could be improved. But it is from the processing of that information that more added value could be derived.

Recommendations to enhance relevance

The AHC and BCEP Senior Leadership should review their respective roles and responsibilities in the engagement with GoPNG and with other components of the Australian aid program. The refresh should be designed to exploit BCEPs ability to generate contextual information and the greater convening power of the AHC at high levels of GoPNG. The aim should be to bolster strategic alignment with government priorities where that is appropriate and to respond more effectively to the needs of public diplomacy.

The BCEP leadership team should develop the existing group of external advisers (which at present operate in an on-demand modality) into a standing advisory panel that meets regularly. This would provide an opportunity to make sense of the wealth of contextual information available and provide broader strategic guidance. This arrangement would provide validation of the quality of the analysis being generated, link to contextual opportunities, ensure the continued relevance to the dynamic PNG context and strengthen coherence with wider change processes. The cost would be minimal, in the range of 60 consultancy days per year.

BCEP should systematically document the recommendations of Tok Politic sessions' recommendations to enhance responsiveness to the context based on the tacit knowledge of staff and advisers.

EOPO 3 should be reframed to also capture the contribution of BCEP to developing an effective and sustainable civil society more widely within PNG. There is also potential to disseminate BCEP approaches more widely in PNG civil society. The cost implications should be assessed carefully in advance. This may be an action for a future phase of BCEP.

BCEP explore with other Australian programs the potential for synergy between policy interventions for instance in the health and education sectors.

BCEP should support public diplomacy by doing more to publicise the results it is achieving in ways that the Papua New Guinea public and leadership will relate to.

4.2 Effectiveness

KEQ 2: To what extent is BCEP making adequate progress towards the EOPOs?

KEQ 3: What are the main contributions of social accountability and Coalitions for Change to achievement of the EOPOs and how have these been achieved?

The MTR team determined that progress towards each intermediate outcome (IO) is the appropriate signifier of progress towards each EOPO and overall program effectiveness. As far as possible, where findings could be allocated to more than one IO, we cross-reference rather than restate the point.

Key findings on Effectiveness

There is strong progress overall in fostering collaborative processes within and between partnerships, which is beginning to demonstrate onwards effects on policies and practices more widely.

The building blocks are in place for Bilum to support the achievement of improved transparency and efficiency. The route to achieving those outcomes at scale may rely on the example of reformist districts incentivising other districts to follow suit in exploiting the potential of the platform. The review finds, however, that the prospects for the platform to improve

Key findings on Effectiveness

accountability are at best uncertain. The politics surrounding Service Improvement Programs (SIPs) mean that highly ambitious objective is unlikely to be attained within this phase of BCEP.

The SA investment is leading to returns at a local level of the sort envisaged at design, improving citizen-state engagement. Progress in embedding the process in church partners is slower but promising. The foundations have been built for productive budget and policy engagement.

The CfC component has chosen vital issues around which coalitions of influential actors have formed. On both SARV and EE well-targeted research has been conducted and advocacy strategies are in place that provide the basis for influence.

There is good evidence of progress in supporting women leaders to influence policy formulation and implementation of programming in selected thematic or sectoral areas. There is, however, little evidence of coherence or contributions to the wider context of women's rights machinery, or programs and policy supporting gender equality in PNG.

The commitment to a politically-informed way of working is becoming embedded amongst the BCEP partners which is aiding the adoption of BCEP supported approaches. This is amongst the most significant of the program's effects.

The overall partnership approach strengthens trust in BCEP as a PNG-led program, builds institutional and technical approaches needed for sustained influence of civil society and allows BCEP both stability and flexibility in its partnership base which in turn enables strategic approaches to influence. However, BCEP will have to plan for future challenges, in particular exiting when a partnership becomes less relevant to the future agenda.

4.2.1 Assessment of Progress towards EOPO 1: selected state and non-state actors collaborate effectively to tackle targeted development problems

IO1.1: National GoPNG partners take action to strengthen accountability, transparency and efficiency of government work

Progress Rating: Good Progress

The review of IO1 addresses those actions that Government Partnership has taken independent of other BCEP partnerships. Under the remaining two intermediate outcomes this review met evidence of a wealth of instances where non-governmental partners have worked with government to influence policies and practice.

The most significant engagement with GoPNG has been on the Bilum Platform, which aims to address systemic information gaps in subnational reporting. Making information more accessible to the public and to civil servants should have a direct impact on transparency and effectiveness, the latter through evidence-based planning and resource allocation. Improved access, planning and resourcing should eventually support improved accountability. Significant technical progress has been made, aided by a high degree of ownership within the relevant departments. Key elements are:

- The DIRD Corporate plan 2023–2027 recognises the Bilum Platform, embedding it within GoPNG's national digital governance strategy. GoPNG has allocated almost K9 million across the life of the investment.

- The platform has proven potential to improve access to useful information for district level staff. The Bilum project has trained over 500 staff in 60 districts to navigate the platform and to input data. The feedback from the training indicates that 90% were able to use the platform after the training. The useability has been enhanced by over 120 changes to the system following feedback from users. A team is currently working on SIP performance reporting which will assist in assessing district performance.
- One district, Nuku, has used the Platform to generate and submit a SIP report. Two others have submitted trial reports. These are districts where the leadership, the Open MPs, can be counted as reformers in terms of a desire to improve the effectiveness of SIP investments. In Nuku, adherence to the SIP guidelines has improved with the use of the platform, aided by the attitude of the leadership.

Discussions with DIRD officials reveal how decentralised data-entry could significantly increase the prospects for the delivery of this IO. Data entry at a central level can take place several years after the implementation of projects at district level. Those kinds of delays hinder the achievement of all three elements of this outcome. In districts where the political will exists to use the system as intended, more timely and accurate information should become available. Decentralising data entry will also enable DIRD to focus on its core mandate: oversight, compliance, and quality. This is a potentially positive scenario; still previous analysis¹⁸ suggests it is likely that districts where the political will currently exists to use SIP funds effectively are in the minority.

The other major limitation is the limited access that the public has to the platform, impacting the return on the investment against all three elements of the IO. Public access and the potential identification of misleading entries on SIP projects would also represent a cost-effective check against falsified data. The review heard differing accounts of the prospects for public use of the platform in future. One view is that the current rules governing government statistics make the release of data difficult, if not illegal. By that account, in the absence of an Access to Information law, the public will not gain assured access to the platform. An alternative account is that even without such a law, Section 51 of the National Constitution grants citizens' rights to reasonable access to official documents. That condition would at least allow the pilot districts to release information even if others wished to restrict access. Moreover, through its OGP commitments, GoPNG, is committed to enacting an Access to Information law. This is a complex area. BCEP should deepen the understanding of the incentives and forces at play so that an informed position can be taken on the prospects for transparency and accountability resulting from further investment.

Key finding:

- The building blocks are in place for Bilum to support the achievement of improved *transparency* and *efficiency*. Achieving those outcomes at scale relies on the example of reformist districts incentivising other districts to follow suit in exploiting the potential of the platform. The review finds, however, that the prospects for the platform to improve *accountability* are at best uncertain. The politics surrounding SIPs mean that highly ambitious objective is unlikely to be attained within this phase of BCEP.

¹⁸ For instance, a deep-dive conducted into the Decentralisation and Citizen Participation Program as part of Annual Review of the Papua New Guinea–Australia Governance Partnership highlighted the insufficiency of technical solutions in addressing the political problems with SIP.

Recommendation:

- BCEP should conduct a Political Economy Analysis that reviews the prospects for Bilum to achieve greater accountability in the use of SIP funds over the medium to long-term. The PEA should examine the potential for other components of BCEP to support and exploit the platform. That assessment should be the basis of future investment decisions on the platform. The cost implications are around 40 days consultancy fees.

IO1.2 BCEP partners develop and implement social accountability interventions for constructive engagement between government and communities**Progress Rating: Good Progress**

The MTR conducted a deep-dive into the SA component. The full case-study is presented at Annex D.

There is strong evidence of results emerging from BCEP's core work in SA, most notably CARE International's work on local health services. CARE has applied four SA tools to improve community understanding and assertion of rights. This has improved citizen participation and strengthened relationships between community leaders and local frontline staff of health centres. In turn, this has led to a range of improvements within local health centres, including better staffing, increased drug supply, health boards, and new ambulances. As an example, CARE worked with the communities and staff associated with six rural health facilities. It reported reaching 274 people with these activities (119 male, 65 female, 1 PWD, 89 youth) in the Bulolo, Markham, Nawae and Lae districts of Morobe Province. In Morobe Province, it supported the local community and village chiefs to engage with local authorities to improve access to health services, resulting in Markham District Health Services re-opening the Insti Aid Post and assigning a health worker. This outcome will directly improve access to health services for Insti and the surrounding villages and remove the need for local people to travel long distances to access services.¹⁹

CARE's approach is deliberately a problem-solving one, building consensus and strengthening relationships between providers and communities. The investment has shown that it is possible to change the attitudes and behaviours of local health workers. Reports that health-care staff feel greater professional pride as a result of the improvements are particularly encouraging. As discussed under EOPO 2, the core SA initiative is demonstrating the potential to improve inclusion in development outcomes through the participation of women and people with disability (PWD).

CARE is also making progress in supporting the original design objective of proving the concept and promoting adoption. It is training local CSOs to use SA techniques. Similarly, there is anecdotal evidence that district officials are adopting these processes. The engagement with BCEP has also resulted in CARE addressing SARV with SA processes. It does so in a way that holds communities as well as service providers accountable. Future BCEP engagement on SARV – now that the issue's salience has started to rise and progress on provincial and church policy has begun – could intensify its' focus on accountability of those inside and outside government that have made commitments.

Progressing SA within the churches presents unique challenges, but adoption is now progressing. The original design was partly predicated on the assumption that the investments in INGOs would cross-fertilise the adoption of SA by the mainline churches through CPP. This was always recognised as a steeper challenge that would require careful

¹⁹ A case study of the outcomes of this work is currently being documented by CARE

management of the churches special position in PNG. In particular, there is understandable wariness about a role in holding government service providers to account given the reliance on government to finance their own services. CPP is adopting a steady and differentiated strategy that allows individual churches to apply SA to suit their own context.

It is improving the churches' own delivery of services – mainly health and education – where progress has so far been most significant. Among the early signs of progress on SA through CPP is the decision of the Baptist Union (BUPNG) and United Church to review its health and education policies to incorporate SA principles. BUPNG has trialled community score cards and service monitoring tools, which it is now expanding more broadly although it is too early to see subsequent results.

To underpin an engagement with government, CPP has supported the churches to develop SA approaches centred on theological concepts of 'stewardship' in seeking to ensure sound use of the resources. All CPP partners described how they have designed initiatives that fit with their sectoral focus as well as the institutional, political and social dynamics of individual churches and their development partners. Some are displaying greater levels of confidence than others in introducing what is a fairly radical departure to how they engage with government. Promising examples are emerging. For example: BUPNG has engaged provincial education boards to improve the quality of education: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has engaged local police and hospital staff as part of its SARV survivor counselling training; and TSA has engaged with health authorities and courts to improve services for SARV survivors as part of its Restorative Justice Program. The church partners demonstrate strong levels of reflection on the purpose and process for SA that bodes well for further development and roll out once approaches have been tested.

The groundwork has begun to enable the local level SA based engagement to be linked to higher level policy change. BCEP partners recognise that without strategic interventions to tackle systemic problems through policy change, demand could remain localised and short-lived.

Examples of action taken are as follows:

- BCEP is a supporter of the OGP in PNG and through that is championing the development of a national framework for SA.
- With BCEP support, the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC) and DNPM have implemented four regional budget forums and one national forum. DNPM has also developed a policy submission on institutionalising the regional budget forums.
- CIMC has taken community leaders and frontline health staff through a participatory budgetary process. The intent is to then influence an increased distribution to health centres and boards from the District SIP budget. This will take community leaders and frontline health staff into a highly politicised space, where they will need to compete against a wide range of other interest groups lobbying for assistance.

BCEP has the foundations in place to engage with national policies to exploit the potential in SA. This engagement will be challenging but is essential to fully gain the returns on the investment. Until now, the emphasis has been on engagement with budgets and with local-level government (LLG) or District Development Authorities (DDA), however, the BCEP design also envisaged taking evidence into national level sectoral policy processes relating to health and education. As evidence on issues that are systemic in origin emerges from the SA work, there is now a chance to engage effectively in those processes. BCEP possesses policy influence expertise in the CfC and media components. The churches are gaining

confidence in the policy arena and will soon begin to generate evidence from their SA work. BCEP is well-placed to use its SA evidence to take forward policy engagement.

Key finding:

- The SA investment is leading to returns at a local level of the sort envisaged at design. It is producing important results that are improving citizen-state engagement at the local level. The foundations have been built for productive budget and policy engagement. Progress in embedding the process in church partners has been slower but promising signs of adoption are emerging. The use of SA concepts and approaches by churches to improve their own service delivery and as they engage with government is a highly significant contribution.

Recommendation:

- Review the structure of the components within BCEP to exploit the full synergy between SA and CfC.²⁰

IO1.3 BCEP partners collaborate together and with others to tackle targeted development problems

Progress Rating: Good Progress

This section of the report addresses the specific contribution of the CfC component to this outcome (noting this IO is very similar to the overall EOPO statement). The MTR conducted a deep-dive into the CfC component. The full case-study is presented at Annex D.

The CfC component has been implemented through three initiatives – TVI, the SARV coalition and the EE coalition. One of these, the support for TVI, was the subject of a separate review in 2024. That review concluded, in broad terms, that:

- The experiment with problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA), supported by training from Harvard School of Governance, was yielding results in the field of SARV but less so in economic empowerment. On SARV, the coalition has established a provincial legal helpdesk, and churches in the locality are changing how they support survivors.
- More impact would be achieved for TVI and BCEP as a whole if opportunities for synergy were exploited. An opportunity to draw on BCEP's expertise, in particular in PEA and gender, had been missed. That should be applied in selecting future issues around which TVI coalitions would be built.
- The level of commitment to a single organisation to implement the bulk of the CfC component was high and had constrained other efforts in this component.
- A reset of relations between the AHC, the managing contractor and TVI was needed, a fact recognised by all parties.

Since that review, TVI has continued to work collaboratively with established networks²¹, focused on engaging power holders and influencers on youth-focused reform issues and helping to amplify youth voices in government decision-making. TVI signed a memorandum of agreement with the DfCDR aiming to influence community development priorities and address systemic challenges in SARV and youth empowerment. TVI has facilitated the

²⁰ This recommendation is explored in more detail under IO 1.3.

²¹ TVI's LLCAP was recently reviewed in depth and was therefore not explored in as much depth as the rest of CfC during this MTR

establishment of the SARV help desk in collaboration with local authorities, the Catholic Church and other civil society partners in Kundiawa, Chimbu Province. TVI also engaged with the National Youth Development Authority to influence development of the National Youth Policy and National Youth Development Authority Act. Several informants noted that instances of engagement, sharing and learning between TVI and other BCEP supported work had increased.

The starting point for the BCEP approach to coalition building (which is highly consistent with the original design) is that the choice of issue is critical. This approach is consistent with good practice: if the political context does not present a plausible route to reform, the potential benefits of a coalition approach are unlikely to be realised. It is also essential that partners with some degree of capacity and willingness to address the issue are available. The issues selected, Economic Empowerment (EE) and SARV, were the best fit at the time. As explained below, these issues differed in strength against the two key criteria.

The decision to engage on SARV was driven by its relevance to existing BCEP partners. SARV did not score highly in terms of political salience. But it is an issue on which the churches can play both positive and negative roles and it speaks to the imperative to support excluded people that is at the heart of many CSOs' missions. The results being achieved together with the degree to which SARV has united actors across BCEP justify the decision to proceed with this issue.

An effective coalition that has actors with the capacity to fulfil the different functions required has been formed. This coalition is distinct from the TVI interventions. It consists of one 'anchor' partner, the MI, together with five CSOs working at provincial level at the time of the review. These CSOs were supported by the BCEP GEDSI team to proactively engage with their provincial leaders in preparation for the Highlands Leaders SARV Summit.

Strategic lobbying and advocacy at provincial level, supported by emerging research findings through the MI, has garnered significant commitment and support from the police and provincial and district administration. Kafe Urban Settlers' Women's Association (KUSWA)²² engaged and supported the Deputy Provincial Administrator and District Administrators for Okapa and Henganofi who tabled the Summit Outcomes Statement at the Eastern Highlands Province annual budget meeting in Port Moresby in September 2024. The Provincial Administrator requested KUSWA to re-submit its project implementation document for funding to the Provincial Administrator's Office. This was KUSWA's first engagement with the high-profile provincial leader after more than four years of trying to secure a meeting with his office. BCEP's support and capacity building in advocacy strategies has been key to this progress. The coalition partners interviewed for this review noted the value of BCEP's support in becoming effective advocates. In conducting their research, the emphasis on uptake means the coalition has an evidence base that is tailored to its advocacy strategy.

The central aim has been to achieve recognition of the importance of the issue. An important marker of increased salience would be the allocation of resources (especially funds) to support survivors. Importantly, the resources and services provided should be distinct from support allocated to gender-based violence, as needs vary. The conflation of the two problems is itself a failure to understand the causes and consequences of SARV and it is a mistake that leads to inappropriate policy responses and resource allocations. The coalition has achieved SARV-specific commitments from four provinces. This is an important step in itself, and one which presents opportunities to shift to an approach rooted in SA. It is also a marker that heightened prominence is being achieved. A particularly notable example of

²² Part of the Highland's SARV Coalition

increased salience came during the Pope's visit to Papua New Guinea: the decision that he address the issue of SARV (as he did in speeches in Port Moresby and Vanimo) can be partly attributed to the coalition. The evidence that the coalition has elevated SARV as a public policy issue through media, church engagement, and policy briefs is convincing.

Economic empowerment, in contrast, was chosen for its existing political salience that would mean positive solutions would be in demand. The starting point for BCEP's 'economic empowerment' work through the CfC component was quite different to SARV. Within that broad term the specific objective is job creation, including through positive change on labour market policy. This is not a classic CSO issue. It was also selected for its potential to raise gender up the political agenda. Taking a tangential approach and making the link to jobs offered the prospect of getting an aspect of gender onto the radar of politicians. This engagement has required partnerships with a new set of actors, quite distinct from the traditional constituency. It was also thought to be ideal ground on which to develop an innovative approach to policy influencing, which would help make a reality of the ambitions for politically informed adaptive management.

The formation of a complementary coalition of partners for economic empowerment with a suitable range of policy influencing capabilities has been a painstaking and time-consuming process. This is an area on which the expertise available within the traditional CSO partners would be insufficient to produce the required evidence or to engage and influence key players within government. NRI is the "anchor partner", essentially the lead organisation in terms of conducting the prime research. The other partners are also of a non-traditional development partner type and include:

- The Christian Professionals Network – chosen for its links to decision-makers and ability to convene topical debates, as well as for its existing interests in social enterprise and employment for youth.
- The BCFW, a women's advocacy organisation comprising Papua New Guinean businesses – added to provide a gender perspective in the labour market debate.

BCEP is managing this coalition in an appropriately adaptive manner. The BCEP design and best practice points to the centrality of a flexible and adaptive approach to successful coalitions. The initial lines of research on technical and vocational education and training in PNG colleges and on financing of small to medium enterprises yielded interesting results but were judged not to be central to an influencing strategy that would resonate. The approach shifted to building on a labour market survey spearheaded by BCFW (in collaboration with Digicel and the World Bank). This generated an evidence base that was otherwise missing, providing a basis for impactful forward advocacy on e.g. reform of the Employment Act and changes to the Minimum Wage.

There are initial signs that senior decision-makers are paying heed to the debate. The Prime Minister participated in a session on skills training for young people and the Minister of Labour has been keen to engage on how to get more women into the workforce. Treasury officials have also engaged on the labour market proposals. BCFW met with Minister for Labour and shared findings which they will also be presenting to the Minimum Wage Board and to the National Tripartite Consultative Council.

The coalition has reached the stage where it can make informed choices on the focus of advocacy. With BCEP advisory support the partners will narrow focus to three or four specific policy issues. These will be selected based on the demand for change, and where coalition members have the most potential to achieve impact at either central or sub-national government level. The focus of BCEP support will then be on coordinating activity and facilitating collaboration across the coalition. This coalition has evolved more slowly than the SARV coalition and is still carving out a cohesive space for collective action.

BCEP has invested heavily in the capacity development of its partners, taking a very hands-on approach. The review team found strong appreciation across both coalitions for BCEP's approach to policy-focused research and its commitment to stakeholder engagement and uptake. All the partners consulted for this review expressed a high level of appreciation from partners for the politically informed approach to developing viable policy solutions. This has been noted as a mindset change.

The GEDSI team has made significant resource commitments to support building the capacity of non-state actors responding to SARV. SARV is a heavily gendered issue, both in terms of those who experience SARV (overwhelmingly female) and many of the drivers being related to patriarchal norms and power. The Highlands SARV Coalition, TVI, The Salvation Army (TSA) and the MI each work to prevent and address the needs of individuals and families who have been stigmatised and marginalised because of sorcery accusations. TSA supports survivors of SARV and gender-based violence through its network of safe houses and facilitates modern slavery and human trafficking response training. This seeks to build strong collaborations between both state and non-state actors in Kundiawa and the Women's Human Rights Defenders Network. One of the identified needs in this space was access to justice, which has been supported by state and non-state actors in the province. Effectiveness has been measured through the increase in cases now being registered for legal support through the legal help desk set up through support from BCEP.

The EE coalition has identified GEDSI-related focus areas. NRI is applying a strong GEDSI lens to the research studies they are undertaking, including on youth employment, and will develop an advocacy strategy. BCFW are focused on women's economic empowerment and women in formal employment – such as policy change to address gender pay gaps.

There are some gaps in coordination and learning at the coalition level. The capacity building of individual partners is vital, and program and component level reflection events are useful. However, in terms of achieving change on the specific issues, the members of individual coalitions need to reflect on what is working on their specific issue. The MTR encountered little evidence of this happening at issue/coalition level.

BCEP could make an important contribution to the body of knowledge on coalition approaches by documenting the strengths and weaknesses of contrasting approaches. The two specific CfC coalitions themselves provide a useful contrast: one built around the interests of existing partners, the other for existing political salience. The CfC component takes a highly managed and tightly coordinated approach to achieving impact. At the same time, BCEP also works with other organically formed but looser coalitions. The most obvious of these is CPP, but in some respects MDI is also a coalition of media outlets.

Synergies between SA and CfC have been exploited, demonstrating the added value in addressing an issue through multiple channels. Work on SARV demonstrates the value of addressing issues through multiple approaches, with coalitions working through CfC and other BCEP components to affect the policy sphere and higher-level discourse around SARV, complemented by SA approaches at local levels to monitor government commitments.

There is scope to revisit the original opportunity assessment to renew the issues and cross-cutting themes. Even though the time is not ripe to declare the saliency battle won, gradually giving SARV more accountability focus makes sense. It is also the case that BCEP, if the TVI investment is included, applies significant resources to SARV and it is time to also invest in other areas. The emerging BCEP analysis is that job creation and livelihood opportunity enhancement within the agriculture sector would be strong on many fronts and could potentially build on the work already being done on job creation. It would play to the interests and strengths of several existing partners. Labour market policy is not an area to which

many in CPP would gravitate, but many of the mainline churches have experience in the wider livelihoods arena. At the same time, the job creation coalition should be supported to take its program of influence forwards.

Key finding:

- The CfC component has chosen vital issues around which coalitions of influential actors have formed. On both SARV and Economic Empowerment, well-targeted research has been conducted and advocacy strategies are in place that will provide the basis for influence. The component is making a significant contribution towards developing a new approach to achieving influence that is relevant to rest of BCEP and to civil society in general in PNG.

Recommendations:

- Revitalise the coalition change strategy process to ensure lessons learned lead to revision of approach and tactics. BCEP should deploy coalition facilitators to ensure local coordination of the actors. These may be existing staff or part-time consultants recruited to the roles.
- Capture the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches to coalitions to support BCEP's own effectiveness and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.
- Consider the amalgamation of SA and CfC so that issues can be addressed under the most appropriate component and so that the combined expertise can be brought to bear.
- Revisit the opportunities assessment and consider the addition of a new issue to the combined workstream.

IO1.4 Media partners produce and disseminate better quality and more inclusive media reporting on citizens' rights and responsibilities and government performance and increase positive representations of women and marginalised groups in the media.

Progress Rating: Good progress

MDI initiatives to shape the quality and focus of media coverage and to improve inclusivity across different groups have addressed key barriers to a free and balanced media that can support democratic processes. MDI's most significant achievement has been their technical advisory support to partners to inform the Media Development Policy. This is a central policy with potentially wide-ranging benefits. As earlier indications were that policy could be restrictive, strengthening the protection for independent journalism is an important policy gain. It will help safeguard the ability of the media to report on rights and responsibilities and government performance.

MDI convened stakeholders to comment on the draft policy whilst providing technical advice to government. The approved policy is seen as progressive and includes provisions for training, professional development, and accreditation to enhance media industry standards. MDI has complemented the policy work with direct support to build media capacities and standards, including helping to strengthen the Media Council of PNG through a Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.

Much of the progress against this outcome has involved MDI's support of the other components of BCEP. Underpinning that support is the research undertaken to understand how issues are approached in the media and how that affects the impact on different social groups. This research has created valuable synergies with other partnerships, and the

evidence is now being used to inform advocacy and program planning aimed at engaging youth.

MDI support across BCEP partnerships has helped civil society partners to better utilise media channels to support advocacy and influencing. Notable examples include:

- Support to the MI in presenting its' research findings and recommendations on SARV. MI testified that the interaction with MDI had helped them get the attention of the media. The lessons MI took away were to ensure that policy asks are specific, targeted and realistic: free healthcare for SARV survivors; record SARV as distinct from gender-based violence (GBV) to enable tracking; and ensure comprehensive referral pathways. The support to change thinking on SARV amongst both citizens and power brokers - including a feature on [EMTV's InFocus Program](#) which remains available online²³ - has led to solution-oriented coverage.
- Media-CSO networking events facilitated by MDIs. The five events attended by 305 people, deepened the media's understanding of development issues. The incentive for media is the ability to generate stories through the networks being formed.
- A church media partnership - Radio Maria and Wantok Radio Light – has led to strengthened technical skills and story-telling capabilities. This supports churches to inform and connect communities.
- Press clubs have provided a platform for informed public dialogue, helping directly to achieve the outcome. The three events held so far have convened leaders, policy makers, CSOs and media around critical national issues. Events have addressed people trafficking and the future of the media. MDI has ensured that background briefings enable media partners to produce high-quality coverage.

Key findings:

- MDI initiatives to shape the quality and focus of media coverage and to improve inclusivity across different groups have addressed key barriers to a free and balanced media that can support democratic processes.
- MDI support across BCEP partnerships has helped civil society partners to better utilise media channels to support advocacy and influencing, particularly around the uptake of research findings, efforts to raise awareness of social issues and specific policy asks arising from research. This has created valuable synergies with other partnerships.

Recommendation:

- Ensure that media strategies are supported across all partnerships to maximise the sharing of research, policy messaging and content to shape understanding, norms and behaviours across the range of focus areas under BCEP.

Summary of progress on EOPO 1

The assessment of the Intermediate Outcomes leads to the finding that progress towards EOPO 1 is good. BCEP's interventions are leading to multiple and diverse collaborations among state and non-state partners across all component partnerships. The emphasis on constructive problem solving is leading to solutions being found to a range of

²³ Infocus Episode 38- Sorcery Accusation-Related Violence in PNG, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR06EQiDWsl>

development issues. The consultations for this MTR also provide evidence that this constructive stance is leading to more positive state-civil society relationships.

Progress is more evident on collaboration and process as a mechanism for change than on consequent development outcomes. Still, the evidence presented above suggests that outcomes are now emerging from collective action. In the BCEP theory of change, collective action is foundational to solving development problems: it is to be expected that progress is more advanced on collaboration. As engagements have matured the achievement of outcomes is gaining pace and can be expected to intensify over the rest of the program. BCEP's own reporting has undergone a notable shift in emphasis. The initial Six-Monthly Reports focused heavily on describing improved processes. As implementation has progressed, a much greater focus on outcomes is evident. That is partly a function of the stage the program has reached. It also stems from the MEL capacity building that raised awareness in partners across the components that results in terms of tangible changes in policies and services should be central to reporting.

4.2.2 Assessment of Progress towards EOPO 2: selected state actors and churches deliver development solutions which promote GEDSI and better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups.

Progress Rating: Good Progress

EOPO 2 is intended to be achieved by BCEP partners integrating GEDSI-transformative approaches into their interventions.²⁴ The aim is to influence how the needs of marginalised groups are addressed in key policies and programs, and to increase the participation of these marginalised groups themselves. The achievement of this outcome has been partly determined by progress on EOPO 1. As BCEP itself notes "the pathway for achieving EOPO 2 is expected to be mostly through EOPO 1."²⁵

IO2.1 Targeted women and marginalised people are actively participating, playing greater leadership roles and effectively engaging with decision-makers

Progress Rating: Good Progress

Several partners demonstrate effective initiatives to increase the participation and leadership of women and other marginalised people in efforts to influence decision makers at different levels and through different channels. The support to partners has included skills development, lesson sharing, creating channels of engagement and providing logistical/financial support to enable participation, as well as supporting key pieces of research that can strengthen platforms for influence.

The Women in Media Leadership Initiative has built capacity of PNG women as leaders within the media, improving the quality and focus of coverage to influence attitudes around issues relevant to marginalised groups. They supported women to participate in talanoas (stories) with the Fijian Women in Media Initiative and a Women in Media conference in Australia, to build capacities. The AHC published a story profiling Belinda Kora, the secretary of the Media Council of Papua New Guinea, articulating how this has supported women's influence. There has been clear progress in putting these capacities in place at senior leadership level and improved approaches to research, analysis and advocacy were

²⁴ As noted in the BCEP Progress Report Jul-Dec 24

²⁵ BCEP Progress Report Jul-Dec 24, p23

described by media partners and BCEP staff. It is difficult to quantify the onward impact but there is evidence that the needs of marginalised groups are better reflected within media channels (including through several BCEP partners having work featured in broadcasts/print).

BCEP supported the women-leaders of the Highlands SARV coalition to advocate more effectively on SARV and on GBV more generally. This included logistical, financial and technical advice to build skills and confidence in advocacy and to establish channels of influence with gatekeepers and decision makers. One woman leader explained that this enabled them to lobby local officials more effectively, and that they now had a channel of communication with district government after many years of trying. They are now using this to influence budget allocations to support response and referral pathways for survivors. BCEP has also supported the women from the SARV Coalition to develop a publication documenting their efforts on SARV prevention and response. The BCEP gender team noted that this was a transformational approach with potential to shift attitudes and practices. They have also been enabled to link with national efforts to end SARV and GBV, including review of the PNG National Strategy on GBV, SARV National Action Plan and Human Rights Defenders Bill. This provides avenues for the voices of women survivors and those supporting them to be heard in wider debate and policy formulation.

BCEP supported the BCFW to conduct research on women in the labour market, providing additional leverage for women from BCFW to engage government.²⁶ Research findings on the gender pay gap have subsequently been used to engage government. Whilst BCFW demonstrates strong pre-existing awareness of advocacy approaches, the BCEP support enabled them to be more targeted in their influence. The research was presented at a meeting with the Department of Labour and Industrial Relations and DfCDR.

There is little evidence in reporting to trace connection between BCEP's efforts to empower women and the wider machinery promoting gender equality and women's rights in PNG. There is existing national machinery of women's rights, such as the Office of the Development of Women and the National Council of Women, supported by aid programs like the Australian-funded PNG Women Lead. Although these mechanisms are included in background analysis within strategies there is little reference in reporting. Greater complementarity with the machinery directly supporting women in PNG would enable BCEP to have higher level influence on the policies specifically affecting women's rights and to align their efforts under EOPO 2 with the wider state and non-state efforts to promote gender equality, including through more explicit engagement with the PNG Women Lead program.

Key finding:

- There is good evidence of progress in supporting women leaders to influence policy formulation and implementation or programming in selected thematic or sectoral areas. There is, however, little evidence of coherence or contributions to the wider context of women's rights machinery, or programs and policy supporting gender equality in PNG.

Recommendation:

- The BCEP GEDSI team should explore opportunities to better engage with the Office of the Development of Women and to include women's networks such as the National Council of Women to raise engagement to a higher systemic level and increase sustainability. This should re-focus on a broader strategic approach to affecting change

²⁶ PNG Labour Market Survey: Earnings, Gender, and Ambitions Findings, Analysis, and Policy Implications November 2024, <https://www.pngbcfw.org/resources/case-studies/png-labour-market-survey-earnings-gender-and-ambitions-findings-analysis-and-policy-implications-november-2024>

for GEDSI, enabling it to build on the current integration primarily at thematic and activity level.

IO2.2 Targeted community members and coalition members support the participation and leadership of women and marginalised groups

Progress Rating: Good Progress

Work to support broader participation of women and other marginalised groups in addressing development challenges, is evident across a wide range of partners. This includes efforts to support the engagement and influence of women, youth, people with disability and the marginalised rural poor who often lack basic government services. This has taken place within the SA partnership through CARE, as well as through a range of initiatives piloted by other partnerships. The MTR team witnessed a vibrant sharing and learning between a range of initiatives at the SA Community of Practice event, where partners were able to explore ways to engage different social groups and the benefits of doing so in different social and programming contexts. Achieving success in support for marginalised groups may require a change in attitudes or norms that takes time to realise, as well as shifts in ways of working within partner organisations that will need time to take root.

CARE has promoted local level women's participation effectively within SA initiatives to influence decision makers to better address women's health needs and perspectives. They did this by targeting women to engage in community score card, citizen charter, and complaint / feedback box activities and creating a 'safe space' to raise and discuss issues. This has demonstrated results in influencing the available goods and services at health posts, such as health workers hours, drug availability and financing for an ambulance. Interviews with CARE staff confirmed good results that validate previous project reports and demonstrate a well-considered approach that is sensitive to the potential barriers to influence of women at local levels. This now has potential for scale up beyond Morobe and Eastern Highlands. CARE is also beginning to make progress on training local CSOs to use SA techniques. Similarly, there was anecdotal evidence that district officials are adopting these processes.

Compared to previous phases, CPP partners have integrated a stronger GEDSI-focused programming lens into their plans and activities, particularly around education and health. Together with a shift in thinking towards SA practices, this has encouraged increased activities by church partners to mobilise and give voice to marginalised groups.

Overall, the shift towards GEDSI sensitivity is evident across the churches, with policies in place and staff able to articulate a mindset shift towards mainstreaming inclusion. The United Church (UCPNG) invited other CPP partners to participate in workshops on how to use the Pacific Council of Churches' gender status scorecard tool and hosted Women's Ministry Leaders seminars. On gender specifically, the church partners continue to develop and utilise Gender Equality Theology (GET) to ensure a strong underpinning for promoting gender equality through church networks. Each church partner has defined its own GEDSI priorities, with some focusing more on women's empowerment and others on youth or people with disability. The Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCPNG) and the Baptist Union (BUPNG) demonstrate effective empowerment of youth to influence services, supporting activities to influence health and education services to better target young people and included roll-out of training to support youth advocacy. Church partners have also developed Disability Inclusion Policies and implemented a training of trainers. The Lutheran and Adventist churches had led on disability-inclusion, forging links with organisations representing people with disability. ADRA, for example, has targeted people with disability

for literacy training as well as working with the NCEC to integrate disability inclusion across the curriculum and delivery of training. The ELCPNG has also led work to integrate disability inclusion into the curricula of theological colleges to ensure wider effects.

Work under MDI has further supported the engagement with marginalised social groups. The 2023 Papua New Guinea citizen media engagement report²⁷ evaluated media coverage for inclusivity, and highlighted issues related to vulnerable groups such as youth, people with disability, women, and rural residents. A key finding was that ‘people with disability need to be included at the centre of coverage and representation about them’. This strengthens the ability to utilise media to reach diverse groups, to reflect their needs and ensure appropriately targeted advocacy towards decision makers.

On SARV, efforts to empower marginalised voices extended across partnerships, with partners and BCEP staff articulating how efforts on SA, CfC, MDI and CPP all contribute to wider efforts. This demonstrated the value of BCEP’s multiple components and initiatives to foster working relationships between them (such as the All Partner Meeting or Communities of Practice) as well as the thematic strategy that enables multiple partners to contribute towards common goals.

Key finding:

- There is good evidence of progress in support for the participation of marginalised people, with good efforts to showcase these initiatives. There is scope to showcase these more widely.

Recommendation:

- BCEP should further support partners to showcase initiatives that give voice to marginalised people, including articulating how these link to wider change processes.

IO2.3 BCEP partners integrate measures to promote GEDSI through their work (e.g. addressing GEDSI attitudes, building the participation and leadership of women, working on issues affecting these groups)

Progress Rating: Good Progress

BCEP’s strategic intent to support actors to move from gender blind to gender transformative approaches has been applied across interactions with BCEP partners and all have increased the integration of GEDSI across their work to various extents. There has been strong support for capacity building, planning and strategy development among partners to expand and clarify their ambition for change related to GEDSI issues. This was described by the BCEP GEDSI team and by individual partners as well as being reflected in reports and plans.

There has been an increase in the mainstreaming of GEDSI into approaches for tackling development problems and, to a lesser extent, some clear initiatives specifically targeting inclusion such as church partners support to disability inclusion in adult literacy or BCFW advocacy on the status of women in the labour market. All partners articulated how their thinking and practice had changed due to BCEP capacity support. This included some partners shifting from gender blind to gender sensitive approaches, whilst some moved further on the spectrum towards gender responsive and gender transformative approaches. Whilst some partners are now demonstrating a transformative approach to GEDSI, many

²⁷ PNG Citizen Media Engagement Study, 2023 <https://www.abc.net.au/abc-international-development/citizen-media-engagement-study-2023/103176554>

partners remain at the gender-responsive stage in the GEDSI continuum. For some this has entailed building a general awareness of GEDSI issues and considering how to take them into account, for others it involves designing activities to address gender inequality directly.

Within CPP, partners have been engaged in the GET Review and have integrated stronger gender-focused programming into annual work plans (AWPs) and activities, including educational and health focused programs. Several partners have also initiated GEDSI specific initiatives. For example, TSA conducted a GEDSI Awareness and Mentoring program in Sepik Division, to enhance community knowledge about the importance of integrating GEDSI into church programs.

Good progress has been made toward strengthening the GEDSI approaches of BCEP's non-state actors as they engage state actors at different levels. Those partners have made efforts to introduce the concepts to governmental partners. There has been less focus on strengthening the GEDSI-sensitivity of BCEP's GoPNG partners directly. To date, there has also been less focus on intersectional approaches.

At the time of the review, the BCEP GEDSI team was stretched thinly with a strong focus on supporting the SARV coalition and related transformational approaches taking a disproportionate amount of their time compared to supporting implementation of other partners GEDSI mainstreaming plans. Whilst transformational approaches are a goal, the efforts of partners to become GEDSI-responsive are equally important to progressing outcomes for women and other marginalised groups.

The BCEP approach to GEDSI capacity building is discussed further under Section 4.4 Inclusion.

Key finding:

- There is good evidence of progress in planning appropriate integration of GEDSI within the approaches of individuals partners as a step towards realising GEDSI-transformative approaches, but partners are at different stages on the gender continuum. Whilst good practice and influence has been demonstrated, the majority of efforts remain gender responsive rather than gender transformative. However, BCEP technical support has focused increasingly on the GEDSI-transformative approaches and there is a desire to increase capacity to enable more support to a broader range of approaches.

Recommendation:

- Ensure that partners aiming to achieve gender-responsiveness receive sufficient technical support to implement their strategies, alongside the gender-transformative initiatives of select partners.

Summary of progress on EOPO 2

The assessment of the Intermediate Outcomes leads to the finding that progress towards EOPO 2 is good. Partners have developed strategies that raise their levels of ambition on GEDSI, supported by capacity building from BCEP. Some partners demonstrate a transformational approach whilst the majority are aiming to become more gender-responsive and they identify specific ways that this will be demonstrated within their individual mandates and needs of their constituencies. A range of efforts are evident to engage marginalised groups in local level influencing and to promote leadership of women and others in influencing policies to be more inclusive.

The MTR recommends that BCEP considers how to foster greater connections between a shift towards participation of marginalised social groups in local level influencing and

bringing these voices and experiences to inform policy processes at national levels, including tracing contributions to wider changes for women and marginalised groups at a national level.

4.2.3 EOPO3: Selected non-state actors are more effective, inclusive, and ready to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches

IO3.1 BCEP partners have the organisational capacity and incentives to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches

Progress Rating: Excellent Progress

The specific BCEP supported approaches that are relevant to this outcome are: SA, working collaboratively in coalitions, and adaptive management. Under IO 3.2 we address the generic capacities needed to sustain the organisations to take forward these approaches in the long term. The progress under these categories is largely addressed in other sections of this report (primarily Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 on progress towards EOPO 1 and EOPO 2) and can be summarised as follows:

- The core implementing partner for Social Accountability, CARE, came to BCEP with significant specialist capacity (and was selected for this reason). CARE is making progress in training local CSOs and in supporting government officials to adopt the process. A Community of Practice supports the dissemination of understanding and expertise in SA across BCEP. Progress was initially slow through CPP, but there are now promising signs in the church partners adapting the approach to their circumstances. The development of a theology is a key step in making the adoption sustainable. Some churches have begun to implement – most commonly to improve their own service provision but with some signs they are developing the confidence to hold government officials to account on specific issues.
- The progress on collaboration across the program is rated good under EOPO 1. That has been underpinned by a range of interventions to strengthen linkages between BCEP partners. The mutual support available through those networks will be valuable going forward. The particular style of coalition-based working adopted by BCEP is received very positively by CfC partners. The capacity to tailor research to address specific problems and to use it in effective advocacy is a notable gain. The spread of the capacity to utilise the methodology across other elements of the program has started but is so far limited. Making the expertise more widely available to build that capacity is one reason for the recommendation to merge the SA and CfC components.
- The BCEP design envisaged that the CfC and SA components would be the most adaptive in their management. As noted above, the churches are taking critical steps to adapt the SA process to their needs; the SARV coalition is doing similarly. The two CfC coalitions are working in a highly adaptive manner, but one in which changes in strategy are largely driven by BCEP personnel. Nevertheless, progress is being made on building the capacity of the partners to be more in charge of driving adaptation to strategy and tactics. As noted in Section 4.3.3 Adaptive Management, revitalising the Change Strategy process is one way to drive that forward.

The key competence that underpins the application of these approaches is Thinking and Working Politically. Building that capacity has been a specific theme of the on-the-job training conducted as part of the support to the SARV and EE coalitions. Political thinking

was a central theme of the technical working group meeting that resulted in the churches developing Policy Influencing Roadmaps. How to work in a politically adept fashion is a central theme of BCEP's learning events at program and component level focus. In BCEP's own survey of the Adaptive Management Community of Practice, partners made the following comments:

"I developed a simple power mapping tool to identify different levels of power/decision-making at DDA, LLG, and community level. This analysis guided my discussions with decision-makers."

"We had to change a lot to accommodate different interests and views on how we conduct the Organisational Capacity Assessments"

"Targeted advocacy [on GBV] worked well because it aligned with their immediate concerns and demonstrated clear benefits."

Key finding:

- The commitment to a politically informed way of working is becoming embedded amongst the BCEP partners. That is supporting the adoption of BCEP-supported approaches. This is amongst the most significant of the program's effects.

Recommendation:

- BCEP should develop a strategy that enables organisations in the wider CSO community in PNG to develop the competencies to adopt successful approaches, including through sharing lessons on capacity building with partners.

IO3.2 BCEP partners improve both their organisational capacity and incentives in priority areas, including strengthening GEDSI policies, practices and attitudes

Progress Rating: Excellent Progress

The interventions under this outcome have been largely driven by the conditions attached to participation in the program. Some of these are related to the standard due diligence (DD) that organisations need to go through to receive funding. A range of capacities are required of partners in the areas of organisational governance, human resources management, financial management and safeguarding. Others relate to being an efficient and effective partner to the program with MEL and GEDSI being the prime examples.

An initial organisational capacity assessment underpins the process. The assessment leads to the development of a tailored Capacity Action Plan that addresses specific needs and priorities. BCEP handles the DD aspect of this process sensitively, recognising that many organisations will fail to meet the required conditions and finding ways to enable work to continue whilst the necessary improvements are made. Assessing an organisation's strengths and weaknesses is a process that carries the risk of friction developing between the parties. The TVI review of 2025 revealed how that risk had been realised, particularly stemming from the spot-checks. The discussions for this review were, however, more positive about the process with the strong Papua New Guinean staff identity helping BCEP navigate this territory.

A mix of approaches has been used to develop capacity. Training courses are generally a good value for money approach. These have been used in BCEP to develop some of the basics in a range of DD related topics training and in MEL and GEDSI. But standard training

courses alone are often insufficient to embed new processes. In BCEP, training is supported by tailored (often on the job) support to the individual organisation. The partner learning and reflection meetings also allow sharing of experience between partners in areas including MEL, GEDSI, strategic planning and management. The MTR finds that BCEP has achieved a good degree of efficiency in what is an area of significant investment. It is notable, for instance, that all 23 CSO partners that received grants have made progress in the quality and accuracy of financial reporting.

The MEL section highlights the gains being made in partners' willingness and ability to report on outcomes as well as process. Organisations that are able to provide evidence and publicise their achievements are inherently more sustainable – they are more likely to attract support. There have been clear gains in GEDSI capacity, with no partners remaining gender blind, and all partners showing some level of commitment. However, the BCEP GEDSI team noted that they had been stretched thinly and there was not always enough time to fully support partners as they moved towards GEDSI-transformative approaches. This observation is discussed further under Section 4.4 Inclusion.

Key finding:

- Capacity building has been systematic and thorough, based on a clear assessment of needs. The partners have found the conditions attached to being part of BCEP challenging but also testify to the benefits in terms of better functioning and more sustainable organisations.

Recommendation:

- Bolster capacity building support with an emphasis on mentoring partners to implement their own strategies on inclusion, balancing support to responsive and transformative approaches, and considering how to enhance outcomes as well as processes.

Summary of progress on EOPO 3

The assessment of the Intermediate Outcomes leads to the finding that progress towards EOPO 3 is excellent. The impact of BCEP on its partners on both organisational basics and the will and ability to implement new approaches has been significant. BCEP could now consider how it can foster capacity improvements more widely within civil society, potentially through sharing lessons. On inclusion specifically, this could be further enhanced through bolstering technical accompaniment as partners implement their own strategies on inclusion.

As first raised in Section 4.1 Relevance, the MTR recommends that BCEP consider whether the framing of the EOPO represents the appropriate level of ambition. BCEP has the potential to have an impact on the broader civic space. In particular, the politically informed, coalition-based approach to engagement that presents realistic options to power-holders to solve problems, is of wider relevance. It would be a mistake for BCEP to dilute its impact by taking on the responsibility to transform how PNG CSOs overall engage with government. Nevertheless, there is scope to do more on the dissemination of these concepts and approaches. The Results Framework should be adapted to enable the capture of an impact on civic space.

4.2.4 Approach and Ways of Working

KEQ 4: What in BCEP's overall approach and ways of working enables or hinders effectiveness in achieving the EOPOs?

This section considers BCEP's ways of working (WoW) and principles, including BCEP's approach to partnership, locally led development (LLD), cross-BCEP synergies and capacity development. It provides analysis and evidence to determine if the current model is appropriate and effective.

Approach to respectful partnership

BCEP has invested heavily in brokering partnerships, developing organisational capacity and building trust through a respectful partnership-building approach over an extended period. This has been highly appreciated by partners and provides a strong basis for future collaborations. That level of effort – putting staffing and systems in place and building relationships – in the context of many partnerships – means the process of establishing BCEP was slow. However, given low partner capacities in a range of aspects and the intention to support sustainable CSOs as an end in itself, the investment is worthwhile. This type of institutional investment in partners, however, provides a disincentive to flexibility that must be borne in mind, although BCEP has managed this risk well to date. BCEP may need to consider different forms of broader partnership and engagement where opportunities require engagements beyond the existing BCEP partners in order to influence change, as well as ensuring fluid levels and forms of engagement with existing partners over time.

BCEP's approach to issue selection and coalition building has implications for the number and nature of partnerships. As described in the CfC case study it is largely the nature of the issue that determines the coalition. This approach enables BCEP to ensure it works on issues where there are plausible prospects for change. But it does have implications for partnerships – it may require an investment to support new partners to improve their systems and governance to make them eligible for funding. Where it becomes apparent that progress on an issue is not forthcoming, some partnerships logically should be downscaled or dropped, although this has not happened significantly to date, it will be needed to ensure responsiveness to new needs and opportunities. These would be hard choices that could run counter to Australia's commitment to be a reliable, long term partner.

Given the investment made in the existing partners, there are strong incentives to select future focus issues to which a range of existing partners can contribute, while retaining some flexibility to engage wider civil society through various modalities. It is useful to have anchor partners, partners under the responsive fund and partners who engage in other ways that do not involve direct receipt of funds as this takes into account different interests, needs and capacities. Some anchor partners have unique functional roles that may apply across a wide range of themes and issues, particularly research partners like NRI and MI. The willingness to fund modalities that enable organisations to participate without controlling funds themselves has been crucial. This has enabled engagement with some partners who had low management and compliance capacities but who demonstrated potential for impact. BCEP is working towards organisations having capacity to manage funds, but this model allows engagement where this capacity is not yet strong enough. Currently, BCEP has not fully addressed the future challenges of fluid partnerships as opportunities and needs change. Planning for this could include defining an exit plan where support to some partners would need to end, or by defining new ways of engaging with BCEP beyond funding for specific activities.

BCEP supports partners individually as well as bringing them together to foster cross-learning and to work collectively on core thematic and technical approaches. All partners interviewed expressed appreciation for these opportunities to meet, learn from and forge working-relationships with other civil society actors as well as engaging government partners in informal spaces. The approach supports partners to co-create new approaches in line with their mandates, strategies and strengths, rather than expecting them to deliver specific

activities. This approach to partnership enables BCEP and its partners to focus where there are opportunities, energy and capacities, and to implement strategies through a diverse range of contextualised approaches. This was evident at the SA Community of Practice event where diverse partners shared approaches they were implementing in different institutional contexts and sectors, based on their own capacities and constraints. The emphasis on learning and reflection in these partner forums harnesses the experience of partners as a group.

The diversity of partners with different institutional histories and different relationships to BCEP has required complex management of partner relationships. Some legacy program partnerships – which have their own institutional histories, existing networks and established development approaches – have been slower to engage in cross-partnership collaborations. The program has, in the main, managed these challenges sensitively and the partner base now offers a good springboard for collaborative initiatives.

The implications of adding and dropping certain partners is an area where a frank discussion of the trade-offs between the program and AHC is important. The original criteria used in the opportunity assessment remains highly relevant. In the interests of a LLD approach, which also incorporates the principles of thinking and working politically, these criteria should be central to joint decision-making about, and with, partnerships.

Locally led development

BCEP's overall approach reflects LLD as envisaged in Australia's International Development Policy and guidance note on LLD.²⁸ This centres support to local CSO's, fostering space for them to engage with each other, the media and policy processes to ensure that development is informed by diverse local voices and that mechanisms are in place to sustain this influence and role within the planning and delivery of development over time.

BCEP's LLD strategy also places a large focus on its own staffing and supporting the capacities, visibility and influence of PNG staff within the delivery of BCEP.²⁹ BCEP has strong and highly capable PNG senior leadership, supported by a range of PNG and international advisory capacities. Whilst other senior management roles are currently filled by international staff, discussions on when and how to localise key roles are ongoing and the staff overall appeared very cognisant of how to empower PNG staff across a range of roles. BCEP has reflected on the power and influence of its PNG program staff and is adjusting its structure and job specifications to help some capable individuals operate at a more strategic level. PNG staff are encouraged to utilise their existing networks and to contribute substantively to regular analysis and reflection.

BCEP's partners across civil society and government all noted an appreciation for the PNG identity of BCEP, with some noting that this is very different than the norm for aid programs. One partner commented that it made them think better of Australia for shifting from more traditional aid delivery models and because of this, they had a high degree of trust in BCEP.

BCEP has specifically supported greater localisation within CPP compared to previous phases. Prior to the current phase, all CPP funds were channeled to Australian church agencies before reaching PNG churches or their associated development organisations. In the current phase, Caritas in PNG has received funding directly for the first time and other church partners are working towards this. BCEP has a good sense of the capacities needed to achieve this and partners are working at their own pace. This transition involves a

²⁸ Australia's International Development Policy FOR A PEACEFUL, STABLE AND PROSPEROUS INDO-PACIFIC, 2023; DFAT guidance note: Locally led development, 2024

²⁹ BCEP Locally-Led Development Framework, 2023

redefinition of the relationship with the Australian counterpart agency, towards one of partnership and solidarity rather than being primarily a financial and oversight relationship. The inclusion of the PNGCC as a formal partner under CPP4 has further added to the sense of PNG ownership and collective voice of the PNG churches. The Apex Governance Committee of CPP is also developing into CPP's strategic body for engaging church leaders in national policy issues such as climate change and SARV, bringing greater strength to the local voice of the churches.

Collective working, synergies and collaborative approaches

It was also clear from speaking with partners that they have a good awareness of different approaches under BCEP and that many partners were working on similar themes and approaches that complement each other, particularly around SARV and around SA in the health and education sectors. Many of these are noted in Section 0 Efficiency. However, the benefits of this synergy are not yet fully apparent in reporting. Partners pointed out that the All Partner Forum was helpful in establishing relationships and networks, learning more about the program and other partners and sharing information - all important pre-cursors for working well together under the BCEP banner. Collaborations to date have enabled individual partners to align and benefit from the different identities and opportunities that individual partners bring, often enabling the connection of evidence with opportunities for influence. Some organisations have broad research mandates, such as NRI or MI, and an ability to reach key audiences. Others have narrower issue-specific and/or localised focus areas and deep first-hand knowledge of problems and solutions, such as SARV frontline defenders. Initially collaboration relied on facilitation by BCEP staff, building on the opportunities BCEP has presented for sharing, learning and networking. The MTR team heard accounts from partners such as TVI, MDI, and CPP of how networking at learning and sharing events had enabled them to form productive partnerships. Increasingly, collaboration is partner-led, drawing in a range of organisations and power holders such as reform-minded Members of Parliament.

BCEP is undergoing internal restructuring to optimise roles, strengthen program management, and foster a more holistic approach across components. This offers promising prospects for capitalising on the linkages between partners in a more strategic way and enabling greater influence.

Approach to capacity building

BCEP is developing organisational systems to support the long-term sustainability of individual CSOs and to strengthen the networks between them that should sustain and expand civil space more generally over the longer term. As detailed under EOPO 3, this appears to be very effective. As a result, several partners have demonstrated an increasing ownership of the planning and implementation of program activities, which bodes well for future success and sustainability. In addition to institutional management capacities, BCEP has built capacities for advocacy, including designing, implementing and utilising advocacy-oriented research, and developing and delivering policy messages. Both NRI and MI expressed that this support had made a big difference to their ability to increase the uptake of research within policy discussion.

The churches remain the source of greatest influence available to BCEP. This potential has to be managed carefully and in a way that respects the pace at which the churches individually and collectively are comfortable to take on a policy role. These could be leveraged to a greater extent as long as such efforts take into account the unique position of the churches in relation to the government. There is evidence of good progress overall in

recognising the collective influencing power of the churches and the role of their leaders in this, as reflected in a PNG Church Leaders Advocacy Message posted on the PNGCC website. This is entitled 'Call for Collaboration to Address Social and Development Challenges'³⁰ and features all church leaders making the case for change around key development issues. With increasing realisation of this role, Apex leaders have specifically requested policy influencing training for church leaders. This is a highly positive step. Public diplomacy opportunities exist through this partnership.

Key findings:

- The overall partnership approach strengthens trust in BCEP as a PNG-led program, builds institutional and technical approaches needed for sustained influence of civil society and allows BCEP both stability and flexibility in its partnership base which in turn enables strategic approaches to influence. Stakeholders within PNG appreciate Australia supporting this approach.
- BCEP facilitation of space for collective action and synergies, its sharing of evidence and information, and promotion of genuine engagement and partnerships (over contractual obligations) is appreciated by all partners. However, it could more effectively tell stories of change around shared thematic or sectoral focus areas to highlight how collaboration works and the cumulative impact of aligned approaches to shared focus issues.
- Currently, BCEP has not fully addressed the future challenges of fluid partnerships as opportunities and needs change. Planning for this could include defining an exit plan where support to some partners would need to end or defining new ways of engaging with BCEP beyond funding for specific activities.

Recommendation:

- BCEP should clarify the process for reducing or pausing support to partners where they have achieved sustainability or where their potential to influence change has diminished. Flexibility is key to BCEP's underlying theory and there should be guidelines to support hard decisions that enable this. Developing an exit plan which could include transition to a different mode of engagement or support, through to graduation from the program, will give clarity and confidence to all parties.

Overall findings and recommendations on effectiveness

There is strong progress overall in fostering collaborative processes within and between partnerships, which is beginning to demonstrate onwards effects on policies and practices more widely. Progress against EOPO 1 and EOPO 2 is bolstered by the excellent capacity building delivered under EOPO 3. Throughout, there is very good attention to inclusive processes and key initiatives focus directly on transformational approaches to GEDSI.

³⁰ <https://pngcc.org.pg/png-church-leaders-advocacy-message/>

Selected Recommendations on Effectiveness

BCEP should conduct a Political Economy Analysis that reviews the prospects for Bilum to achieve greater accountability in the use of SIP funds over the medium to long-term. The PEA should examine the potential for other components of BCEP to support and exploit the potential of the platform. That assessment should be the basis of future investment decisions on the platform. The cost implications are around 40 days consultancy fees.

BCEP should review the structure of the components within BCEP to exploit the full synergy between SA and CfC. Consideration should be given to the amalgamation of SA and CfC so that issues can be addressed under the most appropriate component and so that the combined expertise can be brought to bear.

BCEP should revitalise the coalition change strategy process to ensure lessons learned lead to revision of approach and tactics. This is of particular relevance to the CfC component, but should also be explored in relation to other interventions. BCEP should deploy coalition facilitators to ensure local coordination of the actors. These may be existing staff or part-time consultants recruited to the roles. The cost implications of hiring additional staff should be assessed and weighed against potential savings in international fees.

The BCEP GEDSI team should explore opportunities to better engage with the Office of the Development of Women and to include women's networks such as the National Council of Women to raise engagement to a higher systemic level and increase sustainability. This should re-focus on a broader strategic approach to effecting change for GEDSI, enabling it to build on the current integration primarily at thematic and activity level. The cost implications of technical support to government agencies would have to be assessed. This action may be more suited to a future phase.

Ensure that partners aiming to achieve gender-responsiveness receive sufficient technical support to implement their strategies, alongside the gender-transformative initiatives of select partners.

BCEP should clarify the process for reducing or pausing support to partners where they have achieved sustainability or where their potential to influence change has diminished. Flexibility is key to BCEP's underlying theory and there should be guidelines to support hard decisions that enable this. Developing an exit plan which could include transition to a different mode of engagement or support, through to graduation from the program, will give clarity and confidence to all parties.

4.3 Efficiency

KEQ 5: To what extent is BCEP's approach efficient?

Key findings on Efficiency

BCEP has 23 CSO partners. This relatively large number is driven by an approach in which the issue largely determines the composition of the coalition. A smaller number of partners would have delivered cost savings, however, given the benefits to the approach BCEP takes, the MTR finds that the investment in this number of partners has been an efficient allocation of resources.

The MTR interviewed four of the external advisers who provide input on a drawdown basis. These are experts recognised in specific fields, with the majority deeply involved in driving social change in PNG. They provide BCEP with specialist insights, primarily where there is a need to understand deep contextual dynamics. These are professionals who are highly respected in their fields. There is scope to go further in harnessing the expertise of this group to connect to informal networks with influence, such as women's networks, and influential individuals, as well as engaging this group collectively to enhance the robustness of insight and debate that shapes political economic analysis.

The MTR finds that BCEP has been highly effective in supporting learning (although documentation of the decisions that stem from learning could be improved). The approach has strengthened partner ownership and good progress has been made in capturing complex change through qualitative and partner-led approaches. However, the system has shortcomings in its ability to provide a consolidated and proportional view of progress toward outcomes in a way that would make implementers fully accountable.

BCEP is committed to its adaptive management approach and has enacted changes based on learning and contextual analysis, primarily at program level. However, it faces systemic barriers to swift and decisive action to adapt approaches.

4.3.1 Efficiency in partnerships and human resources

BCEP has complex range of partner and partnership types in its portfolio. Some partners have broad mandates and clear functions, particularly those with a defined constituency, such as TVI representing youth. Others perform essential functions within an influencing space, such as NRI and MI on evidence-based advocacy. Others have quite limited functions in relation to a specific focus area, such as the SARV partners.

In comparison to the predecessor program components under PAGP, BCEP shifted towards a number of actively managed partnerships, with sustained relationship building underpinning BCEPs collaborative approach. As noted elsewhere in this report, this approach has required a significant investment in a capacity building effort that provides a combination of financial, managerial and technical assistance tailored to the capacities, identities and aspirations of individual organisations. To receive funding, organisations are required to go through a standard DD process. In combination, these factors require BCEP staff to invest a high level of effort getting to know the partners, to develop a strong understanding of their differing capacities and expectations from the engagement with BCEP. This hands-on approach has higher costs per organisation than a simple grant-making approach would entail, and it has implications for the level of staffing required. However, this level of effort is justified by longer-term sustainability benefits. Table 4: Disaggregated BCEP staffing, below captures the breakdown in staffing that BCEP deploy.

Table 4: Disaggregated BCEP staffing

Period	Total	Male	Female	National	International	Delivery	Admin	% Delivery
Jul 2024 - Dec 2024	38	14	24	32	6	25	13	66%
Jul 2023 - Jun 2024	39	16	23	33	6	25	14	64%
Jan 2023 - Jun 2023	31	12	19	26	5	19	12	61%
APR 2022	28	No data	No data	No data	No data	18	10	64%

To the extent possible within the standard DD requirements, BCEP has made attempts at efficiency by calibrating its investment in particular partners to the role it plays and the importance of the issue on which it works. The level of human resources deployed by the program is necessarily a function of the approach taken and in particular the number of grants and the support given. The MTR team have personal knowledge of similar programs³¹ that operate with fewer full-time staff. That said, a fair comparison would need to factor in the short-term consultants deployed alongside a number of other factors. Given the complexity of the factors at play it is beyond the ability of the MTR to take a definitive stance on whether the staffing levels represent value to the client. Rather, the MTR recommends that BCEP agree with the AHC an appropriate basis on which to calculate a ratio of overhead costs to funds disbursed to partners. The two parties should further agree a suitable ceiling for the overhead ratio.

Going forward, retaining the bulk of the current partners will lower the investment required in capacity building and deliver greater efficiency. This should also enable the focus to shift to capability of the wider collective civic space. Still, it is important that maintaining existing partnerships base does not restrict BCEP's adaptive approach. Maintaining flexibility will remain a key success factor.

BCEP has sought to achieve an appropriate balance of Papua New Guinean and international staff. Table 4: Disaggregated BCEP staffing, above, illustrates that the raw ratio of local to international has moved slightly in favour of the former over the period of the program (albeit within an expanded establishment). The senior Papua New Guinean leadership is supported by international support staff. The MTR were given convincing accounts of the rationale for the international presence along with plans to transition to greater local presence in these roles. The senior leadership describe clear plans to further empower local staff; for example, creating senior program manager roles and restructuring responsibilities to enable these individuals to operate at more strategic levels. The approach has marked BCEP as a program committed to LLD. Several partners articulated a strong appreciation of BCEP's strong Papua New Guinean identity due to its staffing composition and the respectful relationships fostered. Establishing this type of credibility within civil society heightens ownership and promotes sustainability.

4.3.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Based on assessment using the DFAT Design and MEL Standard 5, the MTR finds the MEL system to be innovative and adaptive, tailored to the program's components and diverse

³¹ The current 6-year, £25m FCDO accountability program in Tanzania operates with a core local team of 8 and 2 support staff. A similar sized FCDO program in Kenya that ran 2010-15 also had a core team of less than 10.

range of partners strategy, program logic, and partner MEL plans. Over time, the system has become more structured, with regular reflection sessions and after-action reviews. Innovations include integrating qualitative approaches and MEL tools such as storytelling through Folktale and Umben³² data tagging, allowing for nuanced tracking of change processes in a complex program.

In promoting the adoption of its processes BCEP has emphasised the benefits of a highly functional MEL system. The BCEP MEL strategy outlines clear KEQs, learning processes, and activities that provide partners the opportunity to drive their own MEL. This has been supported through capacity development, MEL planning, and initiatives such as a MEL Working Group and community of practice. Several partners have developed their own MEL plans with BCEP support, incorporating learning and adaptive elements suited to their operating contexts. For example, partners engage in regular reflection sessions and report against KEQs using evidence tables and stories of change captured through Folktale and Umben. Partners have also begun to adopt more culturally grounded and participatory approaches to programming and MEL, moving away from top-down reporting.

Given the challenges of written reporting in the Papua New Guinean context, BCEP's MEL leverages verbal communication, digital tools, and participatory learning approaches to ensure wider engagement with partners. The program partners input qualitative data, generating a large pool of narrative evidence. The downside is these tools require the program team to spend time and effort on making sense of the large amount of qualitative data from their MIS and the videos they receive through the Folktale platform.

The partners are improving in their proficiency in documenting how their own activities and results contribute to BCEP's program outcomes. It is still early in the grant/contract implementation cycle for most. As a result, their MEL systems and processes have not fully matured. Moreover, the partners operate as independent CSOs with their own mandates and existing programs of work and MEL processes to support these. Alignment with BCEP's goal and EOPOs is a factor in selecting partners and enters into the design of the joint engagement. Nevertheless, embedding the BCEP support into the MEL processes takes time.

The scope accorded to partners to develop and use MEL approaches suited to their own contexts has led to a high level of ownership. However, as many partners are still building their ability to document contributions to BCEP EOPOs, this approach requires an increased level of support, interpretation, and aggregation by BCEP staff. This reflects the reality of working with independent organisations within an adaptive, partnership-driven model.

BCEP will need to continue to support partners to implement and strengthen their MEL and reporting, with the aim of capturing and understanding planned and unplanned outcomes and communicating these in progress reports. This will include support for developing simple yet effective MEL tools, such as photo narratives, videos and most significant change stories. The table below provides an overview of the evolution of BCEP's MEL system, processes and tools to highlight support to partners and evolution of capacities for reporting.

³²Folktale is a platform that organisations use to gather qualitative insights via video storytelling. Umben is BCEP's MEL MIS to support the operationalisation of their MEL Strategy. It is an online platform that uses Bubble IO, and enables the BCEP team to collect, store, analyse and visualise data (BCEP MEL Strategy).

Table 5: MEL system progress over the period

Report	Key MEL progress
Mar – Dec 2022	Focus on foundational systems: MEL strategy, program logic, and partner onboarding. Early signs of coalition formation and interest in GEDSI.
Jan – Jun 2023	Operationalisation of MEL tools and strategies. First-time development of MEL plans by partners. Introduction of EOPO-aligned reporting and political economy analyses.
Jul 2023 – Jun 2024	Strategic focus introduced (SARV, economic empowerment). Reporting maturity increases. Use of Umben/Folktale expands. Outcome-focused analysis becomes more visible.
Jul – Dec 2024	Use of annual progress markers and rubrics to assess progress systematically. Improved integration of MEL with strategic themes and program learning.

The program KEQs are aligned with DFAT’s MEL standards and are being addressed to varying extents in the latest B CEP reporting. The program uses the outcome achievement, KEQ 3, to demonstrate emerging results, particularly in areas such as SARV, SA, and coalition building as evidence that B CEP is influencing positive change. KEQs on delivery (KEQ 2) and ways of working (KEQ 4) are also addressed, but with less strategic depth. The KEQ related to learning and adaptation (KEQ 5) is not as strongly explored in the narrative.

The formulation of the KEQs provides a good basis for tracking delivery and supporting accountability. However, there is a need for a more consolidated results tracking approach disaggregated by KEQs alongside EOPOs. KEQs 2 and 3 are addressed across the program’s reporting with evidence that is fairly robust, particularly around reach, partner engagement, and contributions to EOPOs. The program reports show examples and instances of progress and collaborations. For instance, CARE’s SA tools’ influence on service delivery and the Highlands SARV coalition’s advocacy has led to provincial government commitments which are strong examples of collaborative influence (KEQ 3.1) and the Bilum Platform’s integration into government systems (DIRD corporate plan) illustrates movement toward sustainability (KEQ 3.3). These support DFAT’s ability to judge whether B CEP is on track. The progress reporting is designed to capture the evolving nature of the program, with an emphasis on sense-making and iterative learning. However, inclusive reporting – especially in disability and social inclusion – requires refinement to better reflect participation, outcomes, and change processes for marginalised groups, including people with disability in line with Australia’s evolving policy standards.

B CEP’s KEQs support learning at the program level. The design of the MEL system, where partners develop evidence tables and use a question-based approach, has encouraged reflection and iterative improvement. Over successive progress reports we see growing maturity in responses to KEQ 3 (progress toward outcomes), with nuanced accounts of coalition building, GEDSI integration, and locally led innovation. However, learning related KEQs (KEQ 5) remain underdeveloped in terms of synthesis and reporting. Potentially rich qualitative data exists – the synthesis of which is still developing. Sense-making remains largely informal. Going forward, the B CEP team has expressed interest in expanding analysis and better structuring of reflection logs, after-action reviews, and use of Umben data to capture and interpret learning more intentionally. The use of Umben and Folktale for story capture and data management shows digital tools can be very effective in supporting MEL (KEQ 4.3).

The BCEP program has instituted a range of spaces and processes for learning, both in terms of sharing technical approaches and in reflecting on how the program itself is functioning. Lessons on how BCEP is working, and what could work better, have been documented regularly in progress reports between 2022 and 2024. In addition, BCEP has created a series of learning events that bring together partners to discuss approaches to specific themes (such as SARV) or to collaborative influencing (such as the SA community of practice event). These events allow sharing of lessons from BCEP specifically, as well as sharing from partners' wider work and experiences.

The MTR finds that BCEP has been highly effectively in supporting learning (however, documentation of the decisions that stem from learning could be improved). An approach that builds on partners' existing systems has strengthened ownership, and good progress has been made in capturing complex change through qualitative and partner-led approaches. However, the system has shortcomings in its ability to provide a consolidated and proportional view of progress toward outcomes in a way that would make implementers fully accountable. The BCEP MEL team correctly point to the risk that targets will have the unintended consequence of obstructing adaptive management. In that view, delivery may be skewed to the pursuit of the targets in an unhelpful way. The absence of EOPO targets is also consistent with DFAT MEL standards. Still, it would be possible to annually negotiate targets against IO indicators with an understanding that when the course of implementation has made these irrelevant that they can be revised. Whilst retaining a reasonable degree of flexibility, the negotiation of targets would give additional clarity to all parties on expectations in terms of results. If the recommendation to adopt indicators and targets is taken forward, the structure and wording of the IOs in the current ToC should be revisited. The MTR has detected overlap in the statements, particularly under EOPOs two and three.

4.3.3 Adaptive management

This review has assessed BCEP's performance in adaptive management across three factors: learning, responsiveness and culture.³³ The performance in each, and the degree to which a program is able to connect these strands, will determine a program's ability to adapt. Overall, we find that BCEP is performing strongly in instilling a supportive culture and in responding at program level to develop understanding of the context. It has been less able to respond to learning about what works and what doesn't from implementation, although there are marked differences between components on that measure. There are strong foundations to build on, particularly given the improvements in MEL and the increasing emphasis on how outcomes are achieved. Still, a number of structural factors, detailed below, have inhibited adaptive management, some of which will be hard to overcome.

BCEP has been most responsive at the program level, reacting to identified changes in operating context. The program conducted an initial PEA in late 2022 to guide overall strategy making and inform choices on issues and themes. Subsequent QIU keep BCEP partners and wider stakeholders current on political, economic and social developments in BCEP's operating environment. The analysis is positively orientated around change, but does not shy away from issues of patronage or corruption. It seeks out entry points on issues where there is demand and political will for change and reforms to occur in the short term.

BCEP has also created a culture in which political developments are part of everyday discussion, enabling a rapid response to events. BCEP facilitates discussion and information

³³ This review draws upon the findings of the BCEP learning and adapting rapid review. It has validated these to form its own analysis and conclusions.

exchange quickly via messaging on WhatsApp and Teams, including sharing of media headlines. External experts working within BCEP positively described their approach of embedding themselves into the daily flow of the program, building a culture of thinking and working politically supported by a 'strengths-based approach' and 'learning by doing'. The program is deliberate in creating the informal space for its staff to reflect on PEA. The formal analysis that underpins those discussions, in particular the QIU process, is largely conducted by externally based experts (from Kivu International). The program gains from the objectivity which a distance from events tends to confer. But it is in the internal discussions of what these outputs mean in programming terms that the responses are formulated. The PEA support extends to the mentoring of the BCEP Team Leader. Still, as explained in Section 4.1 Relevance, there is scope to upgrade the group of on-call PNG experts into a standing advisory panel to strengthen to the strategic reflection, sense-making and opportunity identification.

BCEP has established an adaptive management community of practice for team members and partners. The feedback from participants is positive. However, it has tended to operate at a process level and has only engaged selectively with BCEP's programming. BCEP is one of three projects in DT Global's Tracking AM Initiative.³⁴ The community of practice has included facilitation by leading specialists in international development, including Duncan Green, a global thought-leader, author and practitioner on how change happens, currently at the London School of Economics. Two adaptive management community of practice forums were held in 2024, with others scheduled for 2025. Data was collected using an online survey, Folktale videos and a feedback survey. The focus so far has been on adaptive management as a process, with only selective engagement with BCEP's programming. An alternative approach would be to purposively engage with some of the complex implementation problems that BCEP is facing, which are in high need of an adaptive learning approach.

In general, the formal PEAs and the informal discussions of context have had a more marked impact on decision-making than discussions around the hard data and analysis emerging from the MEL system. The team works particularly well with tacit knowledge drawing on the networks and informal contacts of national staff and leaders working for BCEP and international partners. The weakness lies in the absence of a system to capture and document that analysis in the MEL system to guide decision-making. For instance, convincing accounts were given of the rich discussion in Tok Politic sessions involving staff, but key learnings have not been written up other than in note form. There would be gains in terms of transparency of decision-making if the basis for choices were captured in the 'reflection log' recommended in the 2024 MEL strategy.

The MTR's discussions with implementers provided evidence that the SA and CfC components are being responsive to context and lessons. This SA component has shown a high degree of adaptability in its overall strategy – the strategy document is deeply analytical, if rather complex. In CfC, implementation of the job creation work has been highly responsive to a deepening understanding of the context and the opportunities it presents. In making choices about partners and the roles they play, the CfC component leadership have been highly responsive to a developing understanding of the combined strengths and weaknesses and how to make sure the coalition covers all the bases. Still, as explained in the CfC case study, there is room for more learning and coordination to be done locally between the partners at coalition level.

³⁴ DT Global. (2024, August). Tracking Adaptive Management Initiative (TAMI). <https://dt-global.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/TRACKING-AM-INITIATIVE-v3.pdf>

While the original design envisaged an adaptive approach would be mainly the preserve of SA and CfC, MDI and CPP partners have also shown willingness and ability to respond to contextual changes, albeit slowly at times. This is apparent in adapting to emerging regulatory challenges for MDI and in subsequent inputs to national policy. MDI has also taken up the opportunities offered by BCEP to collaborate with CSOs. With its high degree of independence, most of the flexibility shown by MDI happens independently from BCEP's management. The CPP is another case. It has strong legacy structures and a culture of joint decision-making. With seven partners needing to achieve consensus, a rapid response is inevitably challenging and adaptation among CPP partners is notably slow.

BCEP's MEL foundations provide building blocks for Adaptive Management but one aspect of the way decisions are taken tends to inhibit responsive programming. The problem lies with the level of delegated authority. On the positive side, the BCEP management team had the authority and confidence to use limited flexible finance to fund the 'complementary' coalitions (i.e. the non-TVI element of the CfC component). Officially the team can issue contracts up to a value of AUD 100,000 but in practice it seeks no-objection signals from the AHC. In a context where public diplomacy is critical and proposed activities may cut across the remit of several AHC teams (e.g. the CfC economic empowerment activity potentially cutting across governance and economic section focus areas, and SA cutting across governance, health and education section remits), permissions can take time to come through. Wider AHC teams have an entirely justified stake in decisions and staying informed is key, yet consulting takes time and has, at times, caused bottlenecks in BCEP's ability to progress important work.

BCEP's uses the DAKI³⁵ retrospective approach using the process to think strategically about which elements of the program to 'drop, add, keep, improve'. In practice, however, the team has differential levels of control. Dropping has implications for relations with organisations some of which are sensitive; adding has budgetary ones. In reality, the decisions that can be made internally are to keep and improve. Also, the need for high quality documentation that can withstand scrutiny is having a dampening effect on the willingness to innovate. In particular, this applies to team members who are developing their writing skills and may not wish to test them in this pressured environment. The AHC and BCEP should review the decision-making process and develop an agreement on levels of authority addressing which kinds of decisions need to be checked and which don't.

BCEP should also examine the locus of its adaptive management efforts. There has been a heavy, though not exclusive, emphasis on program-level decision-making. Most of the formal reflection sessions are program-wide events. These influence the decisions that apply to the program as a whole but are less valuable to support components or individual coalitions adapt. A focus on strategy and tactics at component and partner level would run into fewer authorisation barriers (in most programs, managers have increasing levels of authority at lower levels of the results chain). Early in implementation the CfC component developed change strategies for individual issues/coalitions. These were the basis for periodic discussions about strategy and tactics. This is a level of intervention at which the BCEP team and partners have the authority to make many of required changes without referring to the AHC. BCEP and partners have should reinvigorate the approach, adapting it to the needs of different components.

³⁵ The [DAKI retrospective technique](#), which stands for Drop, Add, Keep, Improve, was developed by Catherine Fitzgerald of Oak Innovation. It is a framework used in Agile development for team retrospectives to identify areas for improvement by reflecting on past activities and processes.

Recommendations on efficiency

In the interests of ensuring a balance between the cost of BCEP's support to partners and the funding provided to partners to deliver outcomes, BCEP should develop and agree with the AHC an appropriate methodology to calculate an overhead ratio and agree an appropriate target.

BCEP and the AHC should develop more fit-for-purpose decision-making structures to support adaptive management. The level of authority delegated to the BCEP team to make changes should be clarified.

The BCEP team should move the focus of its adaptive management towards the component, partnership and issue levels. It should revisit the change strategy process as a means to review and revise the strategy and tactics of coalitions and other interventions.

As part of the annual planning process, BCEP should agree with the AHC annual targets to demonstrate its progress toward the Intermediate Outcomes. The process should incorporate a high degree of flexibility so that targets that have become irrelevant do not lead to sub-optimal programming choices.

4.4 Inclusion

KEQ 6: To what extent is BCEP's approach and implementation of the strategies on inclusion contributing to achievement of the EOPOs?³⁶

Key findings on inclusion

BCEP's implementation of its GEDSI strategies³⁷ has been central to all three EOPOs, providing a common thematic focus, commitment to transformative processes and participation of marginalised groups in shaping development. A framework has been developed for building capacities amongst partners to move from gender blind to gender transformative programming.

There is good evidence of progress in integration of GEDSI within the approaches of individual partners, with the majority of efforts gender responsive rather than gender transformative.

The scope of ambition is high relative to the technical resources to support this. BCEP technical support has increasingly focussed on delivering the GEDSI-transformative approaches and there is a desire to increase or rebalance capacity to enable more support to a broader range of approaches across partners. Overstretch of GEDSI technical resources, coupled with a lack of recent strategic guidance, means that initiatives currently appear disparate and miss opportunities for synergies both within BCEP and with wider movements for change in PNG.

³⁶ As GEDSI has been considered above, particularly in Section 4.2.2 Effectiveness (EOPO2), this section seeks to add to what has been stated already.

³⁷ Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Strategy 2023-2026; BCEP Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy, 2023-2030

BCEP's strategies on GEDSI focus on improving the approaches within BCEP as well as those by partners. The BCEP GEDSI Strategy models the Gender at Work Framework and DFAT's twin-track approach (mainstreaming GEDSI and incorporating GEDSI specific programming), focusing on five key pillars: robust foundations (GEDSI capabilities and resources); coalition building and social accountability; GBV (including SARV) prevention and response; attitude and norms change; and disability and social inclusion (DSI). The DSI Strategy complements the GEDSI Strategy, emphasising church-led inclusion, inclusive economic empowerment, and policy related research, all developed through extensive consultations with persons with disabilities.

These strategies contribute to achievement of all EOPO's. Under EOPO 1, much of the collaborative working that brings partners together is focussed on GEDSI, particularly the coalition working around SARV and around economic empowerment of women. Thus, commitment to a gender-transformative approach informed identification of common issues that support coordinated approaches. Under EOPO 2, the strategies provide a guide to specifically support the voices of women and marginalised people in influencing decision makers and in participating at different levels to shape development processes. Under EOPO 3, capacity building of partners has included training on gender equality and disability equality, helping partners to understand different ways to approach GEDSI and to understand how different approaches may help achieve development goals. These are detailed under effectiveness.

BCEP has a strategic intent to support actors to move along a continuum of ambition from gender blind to gender transformative approaches.³⁸ The BCEP GEDSI team have worked with all partners to understand current levels of understanding, intent and capacity, developing a capacity baseline. BCEP's GEDSI strategy notes that partner capacities were, in most cases, better than expected and thus enabled a good level of ambition in most partner approaches. Tools to support partners have been developed in response and the majority of BCEP core partners have developed action plans aligned to BCEP's GEDSI strategy and incorporated GEDSI into their planning³⁹. While some are more advanced than others, no stakeholder remains GEDSI blind. This is good progress. However, some partners require further assistance to capture instances and stories of change related to GEDSI so that progress is more easily assessed.

Implementation is, however, limited by current resourcing. There is potential to implement at a faster pace and greater scale if more technical support was possible from BCEP to partners. A five person GEDSI team, including a GEDSI Transformative Adviser, GEDSI Lead, GEDSI Program Manager, CPP GEDSI Manager and a GEDSI Officer supports the implementation of the GEDSI strategies and partners. They are supported by short-term advisers. The team described the challenges of supporting gender transformative approaches, with multiple barriers to overcome. They also noted that the strong cross-cutting nature of GEDSI within BCEP requires them to support 23 CSOs receiving grants and government partners, and that this was not optimal as focus on gender transformation has left relatively little time for the bulk of partners who are at an earlier stage of ambition on the gender spectrum. The GEDSI twin-track approach is evident – mainstreamed strategies into sector activities, and targeted empowerment strategies for women, people with disability and marginalised groups. However, there is currently not enough evidence on how these add up. While the GEDSI team have the technical capacity to do more, the extent to which they are able to implement the strategy could be constrained by resources. Perhaps as a

³⁸ Refer to the BCEP GEDSI strategy, final approved 27 Nov 2022 (Version 1)

³⁹ Refer to BCEP Annual IMR: 01 March 2023 – 28 Feb 2024

result of this, there appears to be relatively little GEDSI specific learning documented given the large focus. This was recognised by BCEP in their self-rating in the Annual Report 2024.

The team has clear ambitions to move beyond basic level training, mainstreaming and disaggregation as building blocks to ensure a basic level of GEDSI-sensitivity in programming⁴⁰. In order to integrate GEDSI across all partnerships and progress EOPO 2 with greater focus on transformative approaches, a significant effort to bring all partners up to a satisfactory basic level of GEDSI awareness and capacity has been required. This relied heavily on the GEDSI team's inputs because of the technical expertise required. Although, this intense period has now been completed. There is still scope for greater technical support to implementation by partners.

At the same time, the intense focus on influence around SARV – while successful – has been disproportionately time-consuming for the GEDSI team compared with other themes and sectoral approaches across the partners. The team has not had enough time to foster further transformative approaches on GEDSI across the wider landscape – to integrate behaviour change and empowerment, and challenge power, systems and structures.

The BCEP GEDSI strategy⁴¹ has not been refreshed since 2022 and does not therefore reflect lessons learnt since then or the specific needs and potential of partners now that they have increased skills and defined goals on GEDSI. The over stretch, coupled with a lack of recent strategic guidance, means that initiatives can appear disparate and miss opportunities for synergies both within BCEP and with wider movements for change in PNG.

The focus of resources on one key development problem, such as SARV, without a clear exit strategy to phase out of this focus, reduces efficacy in adapting to shifts in political, economic and social dynamics which bring about other priorities, and further limits capacity to ensure more strategy focus on areas such as GEDSI mainstreaming across the program.

Recommendation on inclusion

BCEP should update its strategies on inclusion and expand its resourcing to support partner implementation of their individual strategies and annual work plans on GEDSI. That will increase pace and scale and ensure high quality implementation across both gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches.

⁴⁰ Refer to the BCEP GEDSI strategy, final approved 27 Nov 2022 (Version 1)

⁴¹ BCEP GEDSI strategy, final approved 27 Nov 2022 (Version 1)

5 Conclusion, lessons and recommendations

The MTR concludes that BCEP is a significant and valuable investment, demonstrating commendable progress in fostering advocacy, influence, and collaboration across a diverse range of stakeholders and critical issues. Despite an initial slow establishment phase, the program has gained substantial momentum, successfully interpreting its design, developing robust strategies, and forging strong partnerships. The program's commitment to locally led development and its emphasis on strengthening the organisational capacities of non-state actors have been particularly successful, laying a strong foundation for the sustainability of BCEP-supported approaches. The progress in integrating gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) across all partnerships, moving them towards more gender-responsive and transformative approaches, is also highly encouraging.

Several lessons have emerged throughout the MTR that could inform BCEP's future as well as comparable civil society programs:

- Respectful partnership and meaningful engagement fosters co-creation and ownership, enhancing credibility and enabling the program to address politically sensitive issues. This approach builds trust and allows for effective navigation of complex relationships, which is crucial for a civil society-focused program.
- A strong locally led development (LLD) approach is highly beneficial. It builds credibility and a sense of local ownership within the program and the wider civil society. LLD also leverages tacit knowledge and staff networks to maintain relevance and ensure that responses are politically informed.
- Strategic patience is vital for initiatives aiming for systemic change, as such processes are often complex, slow, and intangible. A balanced portfolio approach can help demonstrate short-term progress, reduce risk, and show value while longer-term results develop.
- Thinking and working politically is an effective core tactic for leveraging engagement with government through embracing strategic windows of opportunity.
- Responsive programming requires strong and streamlined decision-making systems, backed up with high levels of communication and trust. An adaptive management system requires heavy resourcing, clear systems and appropriate delegation of authority.

BCEP is well-positioned to further strengthen citizen-government engagement and contribute meaningfully to development outcomes in Papua New Guinea for the remainder of its current phase. The review finds that BCEP is increasingly demonstrating results - major changes in direction are not required at this stage.

The review team also recommends that BCEP be extended. The program is already delivering important results for PNG whilst supporting Australia's national interests. The delivery of results will accelerate now that the foundations have been laid in terms of proven operating methods and approaches and strong partnerships. However, there are several areas which can be further enhanced. The most critical of the recommendations being made by the MTR are listed below.

Key Recommendations:

1. The AHC and BCEP Senior Leadership should review their respective roles and responsibilities in the engagement with GoPNG and with other components of the Australian aid program. The refresh should be designed to exploit BCEPs ability to

generate contextual information and the greater convening power of the AHC at high levels of GoPNG. The aim should be to bolster strategic alignment with government priorities where that is appropriate and to respond more effectively to the needs of public diplomacy.

2. The BCEP leadership team should develop the existing group of external advisers (which at present operates in an on-demand modality) into a standing advisory panel that meets regularly. This would provide an opportunity to make sense of the wealth of contextual information available and provide broader strategic guidance. This arrangement would provide validation of the quality of the analysis being generated, link to contextual opportunities, ensure the continued relevance to the dynamic PNG context and strengthen coherence with wider change processes. The cost would be minimal, in the range of 60 days consultancy per year.
3. BCEP should conduct a Political Economy Analysis that reviews the prospects for Bilum to achieve greater accountability in the use of SIP funds over the medium to long-term. The PEA should examine the potential for other components of BCEP to support and exploit the potential of the platform. That assessment should be the basis of future investment decisions on the platform. The cost implications are around 40 days consultancy fees.
4. BCEP should revitalise the coalition change strategy process to ensure lessons learned lead to revision of approach and tactics. This is of particular relevance to the CfC component, but it may have value in other interventions. BCEP should deploy coalition facilitators to ensure local coordination of the actors. These may be existing staff or part-time consultants recruited to the roles. The cost implications of hiring additional staff should be assessed and weighed against potential savings in international fees.
5. BCEP should update its strategies on inclusion and expand its resourcing to support partner implementation of their individual strategies and annual work plans on GEDSI. That will increase pace and scale and ensure high quality implementation across both gender-responsive and gender-transformative approaches.
6. BCEP and the AHC should develop more fit-for-purpose decision-making structures to support adaptive management. The level of authority delegated to the BCEP team to make programming changes should be clarified.
7. As part of the annual planning process, BCEP should agree with the AHC annual targets to demonstrate its progress toward the Intermediate Outcomes. The process should incorporate a high degree of flexibility so that irrelevant target that have become irrelevant do not lead to sub-optimal programming choices.
8. BCEP should support public diplomacy by doing more to publicise the results it is achieving in ways that the Papua New Guinea public and leadership will relate to.

Appendix A – Mid-term review approach

General approach

The MTR combined a theory-based design with a utilisation-focused lens to ensure its process and findings directly inform BCEP's strategic decisions and satisfy DFAT's MTR requirements. It traced how BCEP activities contribute to outcomes by explore the causal mechanisms and change pathways set out in the program logic, and judged performance against the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, inclusion and VfM. The MTR recognises the centrality and complexity of BCEP's underlying theory of change (ToC) at different levels, including the contribution of community engagement to development outcomes overall, the various potential roles of BCEP components in driving change at different levels, and the potential roles of adaptive management and responsiveness to the context in steering this change.

A politically informed perspective underpinned the analysis. Drawing on BCEP's own political-economy analysis (PEA), the team considered how PNG's governance dynamics and BCEP's internal political economy shape implementation, especially in citizen–government engagement. This process helped us understand the institutional relationships and socio-political factors that influence program outcomes at all levels and ensures that this is integrated into our questions and analysis. This is important, as in addition to the political economy that BCEP faces with the PNG public finance system, BCEP itself brings its own political economy, which influences how external stakeholders interact with it, and internally among its own implementing partners. Finally, the review looked at adaptation within the Context for Change (CfC) and SA components to gauge whether management adjustments are timely and appropriate.

Mid-term review planning and evaluation framework

The review commenced with activities to clarify its scope and approach. This included a document review to familiarise the team with the BCEP program and identify key issues and stakeholders, as well as consultations with the AHC and BCEP to refine the evaluation focus and logistics. KEQs were developed, stakeholders mapped, and evaluation management arrangements clarified in preparation for data collection.

The MTR assesses the program in terms of the key criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and Value for Money (VfM), as well as focusing in-depth on gender and inclusion. Under each of these criteria, KEQs were defined in the evaluation ToRs together with proposed sub-questions. These were reviewed and amended during the planning stage. Some sub-KEQ's are tailored to explore specific EOPOs, and some explore broader implementation issues.

The Evaluation Matrix developed during the planning phase, provides the main framework for the evaluation, setting out the relationship between the different analytical components of the evaluation and providing a structure for presenting the evaluation findings.

Table 6: Evaluation matrix**Relevance**

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p><i>KEQ 1: In what ways do the BCEP strategies and their implementation reflect a) the intent of the original design; b) the evolving context; and c) emerging knowledge on how governance and collaboration support service delivery and development outcomes.</i></p> <p>1.1 What has changed in context from the design to now (including PNGAus priorities, GoPNG priorities, partners) and what are the implications of this change to the ongoing relevance of the overall design, theory of change and EOPOs?</p> <p>1.2 How has the program adapted in response to the evolving context? [including response to analysis and key events, contextual challenges and opportunities]</p> <p>1.3 How has the program adapted based on lessons from how BCEP support works? [based on interrogation of the ToC, learning and emerging evidence etc]</p> <p>1.4 Are there appropriate processes in place to ensure that BCEP maintains relevance over time?</p>	<p>Document review to assess alignment and changes over time, including BCEP design document, BCEP strategies, and project reporting, Australia-PNG partnership plan and GoPNG plans.</p> <p>Consultation with DFAT – to explore adaptations as well as shifts in priorities.</p> <p>Consultations with GoPNG to explore how BCEP responds to the evolving context and priorities.</p> <p>Consultation with BCEP leadership to understand what adaptations have taken place and why.</p>

Effectiveness

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p><i>KEQ 2: To what extent is BCEP making adequate progress towards the EOPOs?</i></p> <p>2.1 (EOPO1) Are state and non-state actors, including women's networks, collaborating more effectively to tackle targeted development problems because of BCEP support? How?</p>	<p>Document review to understand reported progress, challenges and lessons and early indications of change achieved, including BCEP annual reports and DFAT reporting.</p> <p>Consultations with DFAT, BCEP and partners to assess progress.</p>

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p>2.2 (EOPO 2): Are state and non-state actors delivering development solutions which promote GEDSI and better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups? How?</p> <p>2.3 (EOPO 3): What progress has been made towards improving non-state actors' organisational capacity to be more effective, inclusive, and ready to sustain successful BCEP-supported approaches?</p>	
<p><i>KEQ 3: What are the main contributions of Social Accountability and Coalitions for Change to achievement of the EOPOs and how have these been achieved?</i></p> <p>3.1 How do these two components each contribute to achievement of the EOPOs?</p> <p>3.2 What lessons can be drawn from how these components are working?</p> <p>3.3 What opportunities are there to strengthen the contributions of these two programs?</p> <p>3.4 How do the BCEP principles enable these components to contribute to the EOPOs? [including partnership approaches, adaptation, GEDSI etc]</p>	<p>Joint consultation with Social Accountability stakeholders.</p> <p>Consultations with CfC stakeholders.</p> <p>Review of reporting for SA and CfC for indications of results and lessons on how change has been achieved, including review of BCEP case studies and rapid reviews.</p> <p>Consultation with members of the SA CoP.</p>
<p><i>KEQ 4: What in BCEP's overall approach and ways of working enables or hinders effectiveness in achieving the EOPOs? [including both short-term results and longer-term change]</i></p> <p>4.1 How does the approach to partnership contribute to effectiveness?</p> <p>4.2 How does BCEP's locally led development contribute to effectiveness?</p> <p>4.3 How does BCEP's approach to GEDSI support effectiveness?</p> <p>4.4 How are components and partners working collectively (synergies, cross-learning, collaborations) and how does this contribute to achievement of the EOPOs? Does collaboration amplify results as intended? What could BCEP and partners do collectively to be more effective?</p>	<p>Review of documented lessons on ways of working, including adaptive management, PEA, GEDSI, collaborations, communications, and capacity building.</p> <p>Consultation across a range of BCEP partners and BCEP staff.</p> <p>Consultation with external stakeholders active in SA and CfC who are not currently an implementing partner within BCEP.</p> <p>Consultation with technical advisory staff in BCEP and DFAT and partners, on adaptive management, GEDSI, locally led approaches etc.</p>

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p>4.5 Is BCEP's reach sufficient and appropriate to influence broader change in PNG?</p> <p>4.6 How is BCEP's approach to organisational and capacity development contributing to achievement of results and sustainable change in governance?</p>	

Efficiency

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p><i>KEQ5: To what extent is BCEP's approach efficient?</i></p> <p>5.1 How are BCEP's governance, implementation, partnership approaches and management arrangements contributing to efficient decision making, programming and outcomes in different parts of BCEP? What could be done to make them more efficient?</p> <p>5.2 How efficiently has BCEP delivered against its work plans and budgets?</p> <p>5.3 How does BCEP's approach to MEL, PEA and adaptive management support efficient program delivery? [including the efficiency of adaptation in response to both successes and 'failures']</p> <p>5.4 Is BCEP appropriately and sufficiently resourced, and using resources appropriately, to make the desired impact?</p> <p>5.5 How are BCEP and partners capturing, communicating and responding to lessons?</p> <p>5.6 To what degree is evidence informing decision making, including with regards to current approaches and (dis)continuing activities?</p>	<p>Document review of project reporting.</p> <p>Consultations with BCEP management and DFAT.</p> <p>Consultation with BCEP staff on overall management / governance of the program.</p> <p>Consultation with Managing Contractor MEL staff.</p>

Inclusion

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p><i>KEQ 6: To what extent is BCEP's approach and implementation of the strategies on inclusion contributing to achievement of the EOPOs?</i></p> <p>6.1 Is BCEP's approach to gender appropriate, sufficient and influential? Is it changing attitudes, behaviours and practices or is it likely to over time? [include consideration of how the highly adaptive approach contributes]</p> <p>6.2 Is BCEP's approach to disability and social inclusion appropriate, sufficient and influential? Is it changing attitudes, behaviours and practices?</p> <p>6.3 Is BCEP's approach to child protection appropriate, sufficient and influential? Is it changing attitudes, behaviours and practices?</p> <p>6.4 What evidence is there for the transformative potential of inclusive approaches?</p> <p>6.5 What evidence is there for greater participation and leadership by women and marginalised people as a result of BCEP activities? How has this been achieved?</p> <p>6.6 What evidence is there that Government, churches and civil society partners are delivering development solutions that better meet the needs of women and marginalised groups as a result of BCEP support? How has this been achieved?</p>	<p>Review of BCEP design and inclusion strategies to assess how inclusion is integrated across BCEP.</p> <p>Review reporting on GEDSI, and BCEP guidelines on GEDSI.</p> <p>Inclusion of GEDSI questions across all consultations with DFAT, BCEP, partners and wider stakeholders as well as KII's specifically focused on GEDSI components.</p>

Value for money

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
<p><i>KEQ 7 To what extent, and how, does BCEP demonstrate its value as an investment?</i></p> <p>7.1 Are the approaches to achieving and demonstrating VfM in BCEP appropriate?</p>	<p>Review of VfM approach detailed in the BCEP design and subsequent reporting.</p> <p>Consultation with BCEP staff on the VfM approach and specific elements that could be enhanced to increase VfM.</p>

Key evaluation questions (and sub-questions) refined from the TOR	Data sources, and methods of collection and analysis
7.2 What emerging evidence is there that BCEP's structure and various approaches to partnership represent good value for money, based on economy, effectiveness, efficiency and equity? 7.3 What could be done to enhance the value for money of the investment?	

Data collection

We used a mixed-method evaluation approach that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative information and data to answer a series of KEQs. Quantitative data was obtained primarily through review of secondary sources including program reporting, whilst qualitative data was obtained from both primary and secondary data collection. As sources (such as documents, transcripts, notes) are reviewed, key qualitative and quantitative evidence were recorded in an evidence tracker for further analysis.

Document review and analysis

The program generated a large number of documentations, briefs and reports. Key programmatic documents from BCEP were systematically collected and analysed at portfolio, component and activity levels, drawing out key data to answer KEQs. The MTR team members reviewed a set of key program documents, including the BCEP design, AWP, previous evaluations of components within BCEP, and a sample of reports. A list of documentation reviewed is presented in Annex D.

Our approach is also informed by our familiarity with existing external analyses and reflections on SA and community engagement in PNG and elsewhere, including academic literature and publications INGOs and research think tanks.

The MTR team also consulted the program MEL Team and reviewed the BCEP MEL strategy and platform to understand the design and management of the MEL systems and their relevance and application for the program, including disaggregation by gender and disability. This helped assess the quality of the data produced by the MEL system and consider future program strategies.

Table 7: Document review

Document type	No.
Core program documentation	39
Additional program documentation	28
DFAT policies and guides	9
Total	76

Stakeholder consultations

Key informants are priority stakeholders or program participants who are central decision-makers or knowledgeable about BCEP therefore we interviewed all relevant key informants. Due to the large number of stakeholders, we clustered some consultations, for example, holding collective/group discussions with relevant DFAT staff, BCEP staff and GoPNG to answer specific questions. Following this, we consulted a selection of partners from within each BCEP component to enable a wider set of perspectives to be gained initially. KIIs were conducted both in-person during the evaluation team's in-country visit, and remotely from Australia and the UK, with remote consultations particularly focussed on informants not based in PNG. We conducted a set of KII's with SA-related stakeholders with members of the SA Community of Practice (CoP) held in Goroka during the data collection period.

Table 8: Key informant interviews

Gender disaggregation of interviewees	No.
Male	32
Female	49
Total	81

Sampling strategy

Across the different methods of data collection, our sampling was purposive – an approach where key informants are selected for their ability to provide insightful perspectives based on their characteristics, roles and who/what they represent. An initial set of stakeholders was proposed by DFAT and BCEP. Discussions with both DFAT and BCEP and early remote interviews with program advisers have helped to identify priority stakeholders.

After our initial prioritisation of stakeholders for consultation, recruitment of additional stakeholders was snowballed both from the interviewees and from the analysis as it emerged. Towards the end of the process, recruitment was targeted to triangulate and confirm key findings, and to address any gaps.

Analysis and synthesis

To answer the KEQs, the MTR team systematically collected and analysed data from all sources. We used an evidence repository to which all team members referred when analysing data and making judgements. We held regular reflexive discussions between MTR team members, where observations are discussed and cross-checked with the other team members, and particularly sense making. We held these discussions daily at the end of the day in-country, and weekly when working remotely interviewing various stakeholders and while drafting the report. The team used AI research tools (Google and Otter.ai) to refine and cluster emerging themes and findings for the team to then sense check and add. Traditional (non-digital) approaches to collective analysis were also used amongst the team during collective discussions to help order findings as they emerge, such as mind maps and prompt cards.

Reporting and dissemination

Reporting was done in three stages:

Aide memoire: We produced a presentation of initial findings on completion of in-country interviews which was presented in-person to AHC. Following this initial discussion of findings, remaining remote interviews and some additional validation or deeper exploratory interviews were conducted to address and outstanding questions.

Draft evaluation report: We started with an exposure draft to elicit DFAT feedback. Next, we drafted the full draft submitted to DFAT for review and comment. We endeavoured to ensure the full report is fewer than 30 pages with additional material in annexes.

Final evaluation report: The report has been finalised by responding to comments from DFAT, aligning with DFAT's Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Standard 10 Independent Evaluation Reports.

AHC will be responsible for dissemination of the final report to stakeholders, including any production of printed copies for primary stakeholders. The report will be published on the DFAT website and will meet defined accessibility standards.

Key contributions of team members to the approach

The MTR team comprised of the following:

Team leader – Michelle Spearing had the overall responsibility for delivering a high-quality MTR in line with the plan through providing technical oversight and leadership throughout the process, leading consultations, technical engagement of team members, analysis and writing. She led on overall vision and approach, ensuring that the process reflected the principles outlined, particularly rooting the assessment in the theory of change, portfolio approach and strong, transparent and diverse stakeholder engagement.

Governance and program adaptive management specialist – Steve Bertram was the lead governance expert, focusing on adaptive management approaches employed in the Coalitions for Change and SA components. Steve assessed the effectiveness of BCEP's governance strategies in strengthening collaboration between various PNG actors. He provided insights into integrating adaptive management practices across highly adaptive program activities, identifying opportunities to enhance their responsiveness to the PNG context. He focussed on how adaptive approaches have contributed to achieving BCEP's EOPOs and guiding principles. Steve also led assessment of overall management of BCEP and particularly coordination between BCEP components.

Political economy analyst – Mark Moran applied a PEA approach to enhance the team's understanding of the institutional and socio-political dynamics that shape BCEP outcomes and integrate PEA thinking into the process of assessment of BCEP's adaptive components, ensuring that this considered key aspects of the political economy at all relevant levels. During in-country consultations, Mark supported the team to explore how BCEP externally responds to the socio-political realities of PNG, and internally between the different implementing partners and stakeholders that it itself convenes. **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) specialist** – Pamela Kamyia focused on integrating GEDSI across the design of the MTR, enabling all team members to capture GEDSI issues arising during consultations. She led on review of documentation specific to GEDSI and on consultations with GEDSI-focussed components or stakeholders. to ensure that focused findings and recommendations are presented to enhance GEDSI within BCEP.

MEL specialist – Quadratullah Jahid advised on DFAT expectations for the MEL process and standards, support coordination of inputs, including taking the lead on security arrangements to enable the team to work safely within PNG, provided quality assurance for the draft and final evaluation reports, ensuring that these meet expectations defined in the Design and MEL Standards, specifically Standard 10 on Independent Evaluation Reports.

Project manager – Dee Hartvigsen facilitated contractual, practical, communication and logistical requirements that support efficient delivery.

Appendix B – Key stakeholder list

Position	Organisation	# F	# M
Minister Counsellor, Governance	Australian High Commission	1	0
Counsellor, Subnational and Accountability	Australian High Commission	1	0
Second Secretary	Australian High Commission	1	0
Second Secretary	Australian High Commission	1	0
Assistant Program Manager	Australian High Commission	0	1
Program Manager	Australian High Commission	0	1
Senior Program Manager	Australian High Commission	1	0
Team Leader	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Program Quality Director	Building Community Engagement in PNG	0	1
Program Implementation Director	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Strategic Adviser – DT Global PNG	DT Global	1	0
BCEP Technical Director	DT Global	1	0
Operations Director	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
MEL Lead	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
CPP Lead	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
GEDSI Lead	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
GEDSI Transformational Adviser	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Program Manager – GEDSI	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Senior Program Manager: GoPNG and SA	Building Community Engagement in PNG	0	1
Social Accountability Specialist	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Senior Program Manager – Social Accountability (left post in Dec 2024)	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
CPP Grants Manager	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Senior Policy Manager	Building Community Engagement in PNG	0	1
Social Accountability Consultant	Building Community Engagement in PNG	0	1
Advisers to BCEP- CfC	Kivu International	0	3
Adviser Program Strategy and Gender	Australian High Commission	1	0
Senior Program Manager	Australian High Commission	1	0
First Secretary – Gender	Australian High Commission	1	0
Program Manager	Australian High Commission	1	0
Head of Open Government Partnerships (OPG)	Department of National Planning and Monitoring – OGP	0	1
Executive Officer	CIMC	0	1
First Assistant Secretary – Foreign Aid Desk	Department of National Planning and Monitoring	0	1
Deputy Secretary	Department of National Planning and Monitoring	0	1

Position	Organisation	# F	# M
Deputy Secretary	Department of Implementation and Rural Development	0	1
First Assistant Secretary	Department of Implementation and Rural Development	1	0
Deputy Secretary	Department for Community Development and Religion	0	1
Director/Co-Founder	Catalpa	0	1
Team Leader	Catalpa	1	0
Team Leader	ABC International Development	1	0
Project Director	ABC International Development	1	0
President – PNG Media Council	PNG Media Council	0	1
Managing Director	National Broadcasting Cooperation	1	0
Executive Director	The Voice Inc	0	1
Program Manager	CARE	1	0
Executive Director	Melanesian Institute	0	1
Director	Kup Women for Peace	1	0
Director	Kafe Urban Settlers Womens Association	1	0
Co-Director	Voice for Change	0	1
Director	Hela Rural Women's Foundation Inc	1	0
Team Lead	Highlands Women Human Rights Defenders Movement	1	0
CPP – Program Manager	Baptist Union	1	0
Senior Program Manager – CfC and MDI	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Assistant Director	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	0	1
Team Leader	Western Province Program	0	1
Senior Program Manager	The Voice Inc	1	0
Coalitions and Legal Manager	The Voice Inc	0	1
Contracts and Compliance Lead	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Program Manager – Safeguarding	Building Community Engagement in PNG	1	0
Country Representative	Oxfam PNG	1	0
Director of Programs	The Salvation Army	1	0
CPP Coordinator	The Salvation Army	0	1
Independent consultant		1	0
Development Secretary	United Church	0	1
Country Director	ADRA PNG	1	0
National Coordinator	Caritas PNG	1	0
CPP – Coordinator	ADRA PNG	0	1
Caritas PNG	CPP-Program Manager	1	0
CPP – Coordinator	Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG	1	0
General Secretary	Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG	0	1
Program Lead (temporary until Feb 2025)	Building Community Engagement in PNG	0	1

Position	Organisation	# F	# M
Critical Friend for BCEP	LSE	0	1
Critical Friend for BCEP	Independent consultant on gender equality	1	0
Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	Clear Horizon	0	1
Assistant Director	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	1	0
CEO	Transparency International PNG (TIPNG)	1	0
Senior Research Fellow / Program Leader of the Economic Policy Research Program	National Research Institute (NRI)	0	1
Senior Research Fellow / Program Leader - Informal Economic Research Program	National Research Institute (NRI)	1	0
Executive Director	Business Coalitions for Women (BCFW)	1	0
CEO	PNG Christian Professionals Network (CPN)	0	1

Total: 81 / Female: 49 / Male: 32

Appendix C – Documents reviewed

Core program documentation for review

BCEP design document + Annex K
BCEP – design summary
BCEP annual report: March–December 2022
BCEP six months progress report: January–June 2023
BCEP six months progress report: July–December 2023
BCEP annual report: July 2023–June 2024
BCEP six months progress report: July–December 2024
BCEP inception plan: June–August 2022
BCEP annual workplan: September 2022–June 2023
BCEP annual workplan: July 2023–June 2024
BCEP annual workplan: July 2023–June 2024
BCEP annual workplan: July 2024–June 2025
BCEP political economy analysis documents (various)
BCEP quarterly insights papers (various)
Adaptive management and learning rapid review report
Program vignettes: (i) CPN, (ii) National Literacy Policy and (iii) SARV support
Progress updates: Social Accountability and Coalitions for Change
BCEP/DFAT ways of working document (x 2 old and new)
Two documents. DFAT/BCEP to conduct another workshop soon.
BCEP adaptive management strategy, final 30 Sep 2022 submitted (Version 1)
Adaptive Management – dt-global-guidance-note-introduction-to-adaptive-management
BCEP GEDSI strategy, final approved 27 Nov 2022 (Version 1)
BCEP Disability and social inclusion strategy September 2023 and annexes
BCEP locally led development framework, updated Nov 2023 (version 1)
BCEP MEL strategy_submitted_8 Dec 22
BCEP MEL strategy and separate annex (version 2 June 2024)
Executive summary – BCEP MEL MIS 23062023
BCEP communications strategy 22 June 2022 submitted
BCEP budget documents
Social Accountability strategy v1.1 28 April 2023
Care – a sample of project documents for all three phases
BCEP Annual IMR: 01 March 2022 – 28 Feb 2023 Provided by DFAT
BCEP Annual IMR: 01 March 2023 – 28 Feb 2024 Provided by DFAT
BCEP independent financial audit report (March 2022 to June 2024)
A sample of partner reports, AWP, MELPs and GEDSI Strategies
BCEP economic empowerment influencing strategy
All approved proposals
Local Leadership and Collective Action for Change Program (LLCAP) Mid term review

Additional program documentation for reference on specific issues

Core program documentation for review

Oxfam proposal – illustrative but not funded

Adaptive management community of practice reflection note (submitted to DFAT January 2025)⁴²

GET evaluation (if available within the MTR period)

TVI LLCAP design document

Bilum Project: independent rapid review report

After action review: Bilum Project independent rapid review

CPP design document

CPP mid-term review report 2019

CPP MELP version 1 (28 Feb 2023)

CPP MELP version 2 (Sept 2024)

CPP learning plan (version 1, March 2024)

Collaboration rapid review report

Rapid reviews concept note

BCEP program survey slide pack (updated Feb 2025)

Final review – PNG–Australia Governance Partnership

BCEP operations manual version 5, December 2024

Design brief – BCEP MEL MIS 23062023

Guide to branding and communications for partners May 2023

Responsive fund facility concept DRAFT for DFAT_V2

All approved proposals

BCEP Social Accountability Community of Practice concept note

BCEP SARV influencing strategy

Demonstration of BCEP’s Umben (MIS)

A sample of BCEP folktale stories

Risk and safeguarding screening tool (FY4 Q2 Oct to Dec 24)

BCEP PPA: 01 March 2022 – 28 Feb 2023

BCEP PPA: 01 March 2023 – 29 Feb 2024

Australia–PNG Development Partnership Plan 2024–2029

For reference

International development programming guide

DFAT design and monitoring, evaluation and learning standards

International development policy

Australia international development policy summary

Performance delivery framework

Monitoring evaluating development factsheet

DFAT guidance note: locally led development

PNG Medium Term Development Plan IV: 2023–2027

PNG–Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership

⁴² The brief includes reflections on decision making relevant to adaptive management.

Appendix D – Case studies

Social accountability case study

BCEP is implementing social accountability on a range of fronts, with promising results. The original rationale for the inclusion of social accountability was to influence local service provision. It sought to create space within a dedicated program component to pilot and learn from innovations in social accountability, as well as establish cross-partnership learning that would support partners within other components to adopt its principles and approaches. BCEP demonstrates a range of pilot social accountability approaches at community level implemented by component and CPP partners. The principles of the approach have been shared more widely across BCEP through the social accountability community of practice event held in March 2025. These initiatives foster constructive engagement between local communities, local government and local services in a range of ways.

There is strong evidence of results emerging from BCEP’s core work in social accountability, most notably CARE International’s work on local health services.

CARE has successfully applied four social accountability tools to improve community understanding and assertion of rights: citizen rights charters, community scorecard, service user feedback forms, and complaint mechanisms. This has improved citizen participation and strengthened relationships between community leaders and local frontline staff of health centres. In turn, this has led to a range of improvements within local health centres, including better staffing, increased drug supply, health boards, and new ambulances. As an example, CARE worked with the communities and staff associated with six rural health facilities. It reported reaching 274 people with these activities (119 male, 65 female, 1 PWD, 89 youth) in the Bulolo, Markham, Nawae and Lae districts of Morobe Province. In Morobe Province, it supported the local community and village chiefs to engage with local authorities to improve access to health services, resulting in Markham District Health Services re-opening the Insti Aid Post and assigning a health worker. This outcome will directly improve access to health services for Insti and the surrounding villages and remove the need for local people to travel long distances to access services.⁴³

Pilot social accountability initiatives have demonstrated the potential to improve inclusion in development outcomes through the participation of women and people with disability (PWD). Women’s leadership in local-level social accountability initiatives have been promoted, while female health needs have been better addressed by purposefully targeting women to engage in community score card, citizen charter and complaint/feedback box activities and creating a ‘safe space’ to raise and discuss issues. CARE also sought to strengthen collaboration on SARV and gender-based violence case management to address the specific needs of women through initiating discussions with Kafe Urban Settlers Women’s Association (KUSWA) and Femili PNG in Eastern Highlands.

These are important results that demonstrate the power of social accountability processes to improve citizen-state engagement at the local level. CARE is a leading practitioner in community development planning in Papua New Guinea. It has staff adept at stepping deliberately through a participatory community development process, by raising awareness, reconciling differences, repairing relationships where necessary, and building consensus. It has successfully extended this process to frontline health workers, making explicit the constraints that they face, raising awareness among the community of those

⁴³ A case study of the outcomes of this work is currently being documented by CARE.

constraints, opening dialogue between community and service providers, and putting in place two-way feedback mechanisms. Reports that health care staff feel greater professional pride as a result of the improvements is particularly encouraging.

CARE is also beginning to make progress on training local CSOs to use social accountability techniques. Similarly, there is anecdotal evidence that district officials are adopting these processes. The engagement with BCEP has also resulted in CARE addressing SARV with social accountability processes. It does so in a way that holds communities as well as service providers accountable. Future BCEP engagement on SARV – now salience has been raised and progress on provincial and church policy has occurred on the issue – may well lie in an accountability focus.

The investment has led to returns at a local level of the sort envisaged at design. However, constraints on the applicability of social accountability processes have to be recognised. In many villages in Papua New Guinea, it is still possible for communities to hold local service providers to account through mechanisms like those successfully demonstrated by CARE, but this potential is not universal. Patronage politics can reach into village communities, from district and higher levels, aided by the lack of financial controls operating within decentralised finance systems. If local leaders and service providers become beholden to patronage networks, the power of parents and communities to hold them to account can be limited.

Scaling down the intended social accountability investment to one INGO curtailed the momentum and scale of the results and the additional learning and evidence that could have been generated from a plurality of implementers. The original ambition could not be realised due to the lack of INGOs with social accountability experience in Papua New Guinea. However, BCEP has successfully pivoted to support locally led options for delivery of social accountability (like the SARV Highlands Coalition) and develop entry points for regional budget consultations (supporting CIMC to deliver these).

Progressing social accountability within CPP presents unique challenges, but there are signs of progress based on a steady and differentiated approach that allows individual churches to apply social accountability within their own approaches. The other element of the original design intention was to involve the mainline churches in social accountability. This was always recognised as a steeper challenge that has proven to be the case, with it taking a long time to build momentum on the approach within CPP overall. Church partners have also explored and incorporated ways to increase citizen and state engagement, piloting social accountability innovations that align with each churches' thinking and positioning, particularly centred on theological concepts of 'stewardship' in seeking to ensure sound use of the resources. The churches' position as providers of services, heavily subsidised by government, adds a layer of complexity. There is understandable wariness about a role in holding government service providers to account given their reliance on that source of finance. Thus, it is improving the churches' own delivery of services – mainly health and education – where progress is most likely. BCEP has supported CPP to develop a bespoke social accountability framework, customised tool and a roadmap for each church.

CPP partners have, to date, engaged in a wide range of sector-specific collaborations and advocacy towards government. Among the early signs of progress on social accountability through CPP is the decision of the Baptist Union and United Church (BUPNG) to review its health and education policies to incorporate social accountability principles. BUPNG has trialled community score cards and service monitoring tools, which it is now expanding more broadly, and has engaged provincial education boards to improve the quality of education. ADRA has engaged local police and hospital staff as part of its SARV survivor counselling training. TSA has engaged with health authorities and courts to improve services for SARV survivors as part of its Restorative Justice Program.

GoPNG is committed to developing a policy framework for Papua New Guinea under the Open Government Partnership. This offers a potential platform to test the framework in key sectors such as health, utilising experiences from CARE's social accountability engagement with health bodies to scale the approach in health policy and service delivery at sub-national levels. BCEP has become a partner to GoPNG in relation to transparency and the National Action Plan. To date, with BCEP support, CIMC and DNPM have implemented four regional budget forums and one national forum. DNPM has developed a policy submission on institutionalising the regional budget forums.

Building on these openings, CIMC aims to take community leaders and frontline health staff through a participatory budgetary process. The intent is to then influence an increased distribution to health centres and boards from the District SIP budget. This will take community leaders and frontline health staff into a highly politicised space, where they will need to compete against a wide range of other interest groups lobbying for assistance. It will also take it into a public finance space that is penetrated by patronage politics. Proponents could be inadvertently drawn into securing a deal, which could work against the sustainability of the initiative, should the Open Member not be returned at the next general election. An alternative would be to seek an allocation from the Provincial Health Authority (PHA) budget, but most PHAs are also seeking SIP funding to support their recurrent expenditure.⁴⁴

Social accountability has been shown to be an effective demand-side tool. But its capacity to tackle supply-side and political problems in Papua New Guinea is untested. Success in changing the attitudes and behaviours of local health workers is possible but leaves the possibility that policy change at higher levels of the system remains out of reach. Demand could therefore remain localised and short-lived if not accompanied with more strategic interventions in policy.⁴⁵ In that context, potential higher-level influence through CfC and other components are an important complement to the changes affected through social accountability.

Engagement at national policy level will be challenging. The BCEP design envisaged taking evidence into national level sectoral policy processes relating to health and education. In practice, BCEP has also applied social accountability approaches to its other focus areas, particularly around SARV as it sought to build synergy with its advocacy approaches. As evidence on issues that are systemic in origin emerges from the social accountability work, there is now a chance to engage effectively in those sectoral policy (and not just budget) processes. Combining the social accountability evidence generation capacity with the CfC policy expertise could maximise the extent to which BCEP exploits both and could also draw in the churches, using their social accountability derived or other evidence sources.

In that context, amalgamating the social accountability and CfC components makes sense. As discussed in the Coalitions for Change case study (below), there is already a valuable interaction between the two on SARV and other issues. Even though the time is not ripe to declare the saliency battle won, gradually giving SARV more accountability focus makes sense. It is also the case that BCEP, if the TVI investment is included, applies significant resources to SARV – considering the investments within the two components collectively will support making judgements on where best value can be obtained from the portfolio as a whole.

⁴⁴ <https://devpolicy.org/working-with-patronage-in-papua-new-guinea-20241112/>

⁴⁵ Hughes, C. (2017). What works for social accountability? Findings from DFID's macro evaluation. Itad.

Coalitions for Change case study

The CfC component has been implemented through three initiatives – TVI, the SARV coalition and the economic empowerment coalition. One of these, the support for TVI, was the subject of a separate review in 2024. That review concluded, in broad terms, that:

- The level of commitment to a single organisation to implement the bulk of the CfC component was high and had constrained other efforts in this component.
- The experiment with PDIA, supported by training from Harvard School of Governance, though expensive, was yielding results in the field of SARV but less so in economic empowerment. On SARV the coalition has established a provincial legal-help desk; churches in the locality are changing how they support survivors.
- More impact might be achieved for TVI and BCEP as a whole were opportunities for synergy exploited. An opportunity to draw on BCEP's expertise, in particular in PEA and gender had been missed. That should be applied in selecting future issues around which TVI coalitions would be built.
- A reset of relations between the AHC, the managing contractor and TVI was needed, a fact recognised by all parties.⁴⁶

TVI has continued to work collaboratively with established networks⁴⁷, focused on engaging power holders and influencers on youth focused reform issues and helping to amplify youth voices in government decision-making. TVI signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department for Community Development and Religion (DfCDR) aiming to influence community development priorities and address systemic challenges in SARV and youth empowerment. One result of this was establishment of the SARV Help Desk in collaboration with local authorities, the Catholic Church and other civil society partners in Kundiawa, Chimbu Province. TVI also engaged with the National Youth Development Authority to influence development of the National Youth Policy and National Youth Development Authority Act. While TVI and the broader CfC activity base have largely evolved in parallel, several informants noted that instances of engagement, sharing and learning between TVI and other coalitions had increased. This offers prospects for greater collaborative influencing on issues of common concern, notably SARV, in future.

The starting point for the BCEP approach to coalition building (which is highly consistent with the discussion in the design) is that the choice of issue is critical. The inception phase opportunities assessment was undertaken with the knowledge that the CfC budget was tightly constrained, and the program had to choose wisely. If the political context does not present a plausible route to reform, the potential benefits of a coalition approach are unlikely to be realised – in terms of learning how to achieve policy change and exploiting the civic space by bringing in new actors and equipping them with the tools to achieve influence. It is also essential that partners with some degree of capacity and willingness to address the issue are available. The issues selected, economic empowerment and SARV, were the best fit at the time. But it was recognised that each coalition issue was strong on only one of these conditions.

The decision to engage on SARV was driven by its relevance to existing BCEP partners. The churches can play both positive and negative roles in relation to SARV. And because it is classic CSO issue, it is likely to appeal to the constituency with which BCEP would work. The coalition, which is distinct from the TVI interventions, consists of one

⁴⁶ A Ways of Working guide in development between TVI and BCEP more widely paves a good way forward.

⁴⁷ TVI's LLCAP was recently reviewed in depth and was therefore not explored in as much depth as the rest of CfC during this MTR.

'anchor' partner, the Melanesian Institute, together with five CSOs working at provincial level. These CSOs were supported to proactively engage with their provincial leaders in preparation for the Highlands Leaders SARV Summit under the social accountability component. This strategic lobbying and advocacy at provincial level, supported by research through the Melanesian Institute, garnered significant commitment and support from the police, presenting prospects for a more robust and coordinated approach to addressing SARV at local levels. With KUSWA support, the Deputy Provincial Administrator and District Administrators for Okapa and Henganofi tabled the Summit Outcomes Statement at the Eastern Highlands Province annual budget meeting in Port Moresby in September 2024 and the Provincial Administrator requested KUSWA to re-submit its project implementation document for funding to the Provincial Administrator's Office. This was KUSWA's first engagement with the high-profile provincial leader after more than four years of trying to secure a meeting with his office. This highlights BCEP's support and capacity building in advocacy strategies as key to this progress. Partners noted the added value that BCEP support brought in helping them identify effective advocacy approaches, as well as integrating a research-uptake perspective into research so that advocacy drew on an evidence base.

The central aim has been to achieve recognition of the importance of the issue. An important marker of increased salience would be the allocation of funds to support survivors. Importantly, the financing and services provided should be distinct from support allocated to gender-based violence as needs vary. The conflation of the two problems is itself a failure to understand the causes and consequences of SARV. It is a mistake that leads to inappropriate policy responses. The coalition has achieved commitments from four provinces. This is an important step in itself, and one which presents opportunities to shape an approach rooted in social accountability. It is also a marker that heightened prominence is being achieved. A particularly notable example of increased salience came during the Pope's visit to Papua New Guinea: the decision that he address the issue can be partly attributed to the coalition. In general, we conclude that the coalition has elevated SARV as a public policy issue through media, church engagement, and policy briefs.

Economic empowerment, in contrast, was chosen for its existing political salience that would mean positive solutions would be in demand. The starting point for BCEP's 'economic empowerment' work through the CfC component was quite different to SARV. Within that broad term the specific objective is job creation through positive change on labour market policy. This is not a classic CSO issue. It was also selected for its potential to raise gender up the political agenda by making the link to jobs – an issue that does count for politicians. This engagement has required partnerships with a new set of actors, quite distinct from the traditional constituency. It was also thought to be ideal ground on which to develop an innovative approach to policy influencing, which would help make a reality of the ambitions for politically informed adaptive management.

The formation of a complementary coalition of partners for economic empowerment with a suitable range of policy influencing capabilities has been a painstaking and time-consuming process. The contact point in the anchor partner, the National Research Institute (NRI), has changed. The initial lines of research on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Papua New Guinea colleges and on financing of small to medium enterprises yielded interesting results, but were judged not to be central to an influencing strategy that would resonate. The focus shifted to a labour market survey led by researchers with extensive links to policy makers able to lead a debate on minimum wage policy. The other partners are also of a non-traditional type and include:

- The BCFW, a women's advocacy organisation consisting of Papua New Guinean businesses – chosen to provide a gender perspective in the labour market debate.

- The Christian Professional Network – chosen for its links to decision-makers and ability to convene topical debates, as well as for its existing interests in social enterprise and employment for youth.
- The Business Council – a prominent private sector umbrella body thought to have an influence with policymakers.

The Economic Empowerment Coalition has demonstrated several initial collaborations through partners with existing mandates for influence. The PNG Christian Professionals Network (PNGCPN) organised a series of Minds Meet events, at which policy-making entities like the Office of the Prime Minister, the Department of Agriculture and Livestock, and the Internal Revenue Commission, and others spoke and participated. BCFW presented research on the gender pay gap to the Minister of Labour, Treasury officials, the First Secretary of the DNPM and others.

There are initial signs that senior decision-makers are paying heed to the debate. The Prime Minister participated in a session on skills training for young people. The Minister of Labour has been keen to engage on how to get more women into the workforce. Treasury officials have also engaged on the labour market proposals. Still, the achievement of identifiable policy reforms will require more engagement. The coalition is undertaking a funnelling process to narrow the focus of advocacy to three to four specific policy issues. These will be selected based on the demand for change, and where coalition members have the most potential to achieve impact at either central or sub-national government level. The focus of BCEP support will then be on coordinating activity and facilitating collaboration across the coalition. This coalition has evolved more slowly than the SARV coalition and is still carving out a cohesive space for collective action.

BCEP has invested heavily in the capacity development of its partners, taking a very hands-on approach. The review team found strong appreciation across both coalitions for BCEP's approach to policy-focused research and its commitment to stakeholder engagement and uptake. There is a particularly high level of appreciation from partners for the politically informed approach to developing viable policy solutions. This has been noted as a mindset change.

The GEDSI team has made significant resource commitments to support building the capacity of non-state actors responding to SARV. SARV is a heavily gendered issue, both in terms of those who experience SARV (overwhelmingly female) and many of the drivers being related to patriarchal norms and power. The Highlands SARV Coalition, TVI, TSA and the Melanesian Institute each work to prevent and address the needs of individuals and families who have been stigmatised and marginalised because of sorcery accusations. TSA supports survivors of SARV and gender-based violence through its network of safe houses and facilitates modern slavery and human trafficking response training. This seeks to build strong collaborations between both state and non-state actors in Kundiawa and the Women's Human Rights Defenders Network. One of the identified needs in this space was access to justice, which has been supported through state and non-state actors in the province. Effectiveness has been measured through the increases in cases now being registered for legal support through the legal help desk set up through support from BCEP. The state actors have benefited from this institutional support from BCEP, as indicated by KUSWA in Goroka.

The economic empowerment coalition has identified GEDSI-related focus areas. NRI is applying a strong GEDSI lens to the research studies they are undertaking, including on youth employment, and will develop an advocacy strategy. BCFW are focused on women's economic empowerment and women in formal employment – such as policy change to address gender pay gaps.

There are some gaps in coordination and learning at the coalition level. The capacity building of individual partners is vital, and program and component level reflection events are useful. However, in terms of achieving change on the specific issues, the members of individual coalitions need to reflect on what is working and what is not amongst themselves. The renewal of coalition change strategies would provide the vehicle to revise strategy and tactics and ensure coordination of interventions. Even though the coalitions have anchor partners, this kind of facilitation and coordination may be best done by the BCEP team. Those skills would be transferable to other elements of the program.

The CfC component has its own definition of coalition working – one that involves a highly coordinated approach to achieving impact. At the same time, BCEP also works with other organically formed but looser coalitions. The most obvious of these is within the longstanding CPP, which has highlighted the work of churches as agents of faith-based development, as well as their powerful advocacy in tackling focal issues, including gender-based violence and SARV, but also peacebuilding and climate change. Another example of an existing coalition is MDI, which is already working across its coalition of media outlets, including work to ensure that media reporting does not exacerbate SARV and conflict.

BCEP could make an important contribution in this area by capturing the successes and failures of contrasting approaches to achieving influence through coalitions. The two specific CfC coalitions themselves provide a useful contrast. In SARV, whilst there are cultural sensitivities, BCEP partners had a traditional campaign type issue on which all agree something must be done and around which most could convene. In that sense it has been useful in providing the program a common purpose. But there is also a case that work was happening in this area anyway, not least through the BCEP-supported TVI work. There has been value added by making SARV a coalition and a strategic theme. However, an explicit aim of graduating SARV towards accountability, in a context of merged components, would ensure there is an exit strategy with space and resources freed up for the addition of other issues. It has been harder to create common purpose across the program on economic empowerment when it is defined as job creation (though none would argue this was not a good thing). But it has brought new kinds of partners into the BCEP fold. It has opened up scope for a thoroughly political approach to gaining influence. And it has the potential to change thinking in government on the role and relevance of civil society.

There is scope to revisit the original opportunity assessment to renew the cross-cutting themes. The emerging BCEP analysis is that job creation and livelihood opportunity enhancement within the agriculture sector would be strong on many fronts. It could potentially build on the work on job creation being done already. It would play to the interests and strengths of several existing partners: labour market policy is not an area to which many in CPP would gravitate. But many of the mainline churches have experience in the wider livelihoods arena. At the same time the job creation coalition should be supported to take its program of influence forwards.

Synergies between social accountability and CfC have been utilised, demonstrating the added value in addressing an issue through multiple channels, but there is scope to align further. Work on SARV demonstrates the value of addressing issues through multiple approaches, with coalitions working through CfC and other BCEP components to affect the policy sphere and higher-level discourse around SARV, complemented by social accountability approaches at local levels where there is limited government service reach.