Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Design document for TALA KEI KAPA: Prepare, Respond, Recover

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Acronyms

AHC	Australian High Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CPR	Commonwealth Procurement Rules
CPRD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSFT	Civil Society Forum of Tonga
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DME	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPP	Development Partnership Plan
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguard
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GNI	Gross National Income
GOT	Government of Tonga
HDI	Human Development Index
HLC	Humanitarian Logistics Capability
HTHH	Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai (Volcanic Eruption and Tsunami)
IDD	Investment Design Document
IMR	Investment Monitoring Report
IO	Intermediate Outcome
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Other Diverse Identities
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs (GoT)
MOF	Ministry of Finance (GoT)
MTR	Mid Term Review
NDRMO	National Disaster Risk Management Office (GoT)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
OTP	Office of the Pacific (DFAT)
PHWP	Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program
PIEMA	Pacific Islands Emergency Management Alliance
PLGED	Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration
PSEAH	Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
P4SP	Partnerships for Social Protection
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics
TSDF	Tonga Strategic Development Framework
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VEC	Village Emergency Committee
WAGED	Women's Affairs for Gender Equality Division

A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Tala Kei Kapa: Prepare, Respond, Recover Investment (the investment) will support the Government of Tonga and civil society partners to strengthen disaster preparedness actions and provide immediate response and early recovery assistance to those affected by disasters. It will be an important part of Australia's overall development assistance to Tonga, demonstrating Australia is a consistently reliable partner, particularly in times of disaster, and proactively assisting on building disaster and climate change resilience. The investment brings together a range of activities to streamline Australia's support for improved disaster risk management in Tonga in line with Australia's Development Partnership Plan (DPP).

2. Significantly, the investment will directly contribute to the operationalisation of Tonga's Disaster Risk Management Act (2021) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Policy Framework 2023-2030 (DRM Policy) by improving national level preparedness, response and recovery coordination through the established cluster system, and supporting community led emergency preparedness planning, response and recovery. The investment directly addresses the current development challenge of a lack of sufficient support and resources for the implementation of the DRM Policy. The Tongan Government views this investment as a primary support to the DRM Policy, by strengthening National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) disaster risk management capacity, informing policy development and facilitating improved cluster participation by all stakeholders. The NDRMO demonstrates good engagement and buy-in to the Investment and will be an active partner in the delivery.

3. Tonga is one of the most at-risk countries globally for disasters due to its high exposure to cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, as well as potential sea level rise. Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, Tonga is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, underwater volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. Tonga's landmass sits at a low level, in some instances below sea level, making it susceptible to flooding and sea water inundation. Tonga is also regularly struck by cyclones, causing damage and economic losses.

4. Humanitarian assistance is a vital component of Australia's bilateral relationship with the Kingdom of Tonga. Australia's ability to effectively respond to humanitarian disasters in Tonga is critical over the next 5-15 years as climate change events worsen and become more frequent, and as Tonga's fiscal situation continues to face external financing risks. With a 5-year timeframe, the investment aims to deliver interventions to directly support Australia's International Development Policy (2023) which reinforces the importance of enhancing nations' resilience to external shocks for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific. In addition, the policy commits Australia to prioritise response to international humanitarian crises, particularly in the Pacific. Australia is doing more to address climate risks, and supports partner governments before, during and after times of disaster. These commitments are underscored in Australia's Humanitarian Policy (2024) priorities, which include (1) building readiness and preparedness for disasters, and (2) responding to crises and disasters effectively.

5. This investment builds from learning from recent humanitarian response programs for the Hunga Tonga Hunga-Ha'apai Response and Cyclone Gita and seeks to consolidate ongoing Australian Government support to the Government of Tonga, particularly strengthening the capacity and capability of the NDRMO.

6. The Investment is intended to be scalable with the proposed budget allocation from the Tonga program fund being AUD10 million over five years (FY2025-2030), delivering activities with a value of approximately AUD2 million per year. This is approximately the same value per year as the current humanitarian investment.

7. The investment will be flexible to accommodate surge funding provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Canberra for response and recovery in the event of a significant disaster or multiple disasters. This may be reflected in the eventual budget summary as 'throughput' funding. The budget will include a 3.5 per cent indicative allocation each to monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) and gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI), as well as operational costs.

Goal, Objectives and Expected Outcomes

8. The investment goal is: Australia supports the Kingdom of Tonga to further develop its resilience and well-being.

9. The investment objective is: The Government of Tonga, together with civil society and communities in Tonga, leads effective and inclusive response to disasters and climate change.

10. The investment end of program outcomes (EOPOs) are:

- The NRMDO improves their coordination of responses to disaster and climate change impacts in line with DRM policy.
- CSOs better represent and support community DRM and climate priorities prior, during and following DRM and climate related events.
- Stronger DRM coordination in Tonga supports effective, inclusive and locally led responses to disaster and climate change.

11. The first EOPO focuses on government preparedness, response and recovery; the second on civil society preparedness, response and recovery; and the third on strengthening connectedness across the humanitarian and disaster response architecture in Tonga.

12. The initial MEL Framework has incorporated the goal, objective and outcomes with draft indicators (including relevant DFAT Tier 2 and Tier 3 indicators).

13. DFAT will use a range of modalities for investment delivery. These will be planned, implemented and managed by Tonga Post. These include partnering with aligned DFAT programs such as PHWP, PIEMA, P4SP, HLC and Australia Assists. DFAT will provide direct financing to the NDRMO using a direct financing agreement model that allows NDRMO to prioritise the type of support they need. Post will provide grants to Tongan civil society organisations, either directly or through a partner organisation; and will contract an implementing partner to deliver investment management activities such as MEL services, GEDSI and support due diligence processes.

14. The investment governance structure will operate at two levels: (1) GoT and Post oversight and policy direction of the investment – the Tala Kei Kapa Steering Committee; and (2) a working level partnership forum among DFAT, GoT and delivery partners that focuses on implementation – the Tala Kei Kapa Working Group. Leadership opportunities for women and people with disability in investment governance and management structures will be pursued and prioritised by Post, as will the identification and proactive management of risks.

15. The investments risk and control measures are captured in a single risk register and will be guided by a risk management plan (including fraud control plan) to be developed by Post in the inception phase. The current investment Risk Register at Design has been developed with Post and draws on a) current experience implementing humanitarian preparedness and response programs in Tonga and b) analysis in this design document. The investment currently has a high 'inherent' and a medium 'residual' risk profile.

16. The risk register currently identifies 14 risks across 7 primary risk categories and outlines how the investment will manage each of these risks (avoid, treat, or accept). The key risks that need to be managed are as follows:

- Use of Australian funds contracted to local partners are delayed and / or not used for intended purposes.
- Community beneficiaries of Australia's funding and resources through the Tonga HPPR are exposed to various types of safety hazards, risk and harm including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- Partners funded by the investment do not have the capacity or capability to absorb programming.
- DFAT does not have the requisite time to effectively directly manage and monitor such a complex program comprising so many individual contracts and partners.

17. The following mitigation measures are proposed to address these risks:

- Post engages with reliable and reputable partners by conducting proper due diligence and regular performance assessments, as well as close monitoring of the activity implementations.
- Post will procure a fiduciary risk assessment of NDRMO to assesses risks in their financial governance processes and identify safeguards and risk mitigation strategies, controls and treatments needed to ensure financial accountability is robust and there is an effective use of public resources.
- Non-Government partners have appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines in place, particularly for Child Protection and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment.

- Post works with partners to build capacity and capability and only enters into programming agreements where partners can demonstrate their ability to absorb the funding offered by Post and meet DFAT's due diligence standards.

Box 1: Naming Rationale

Tala Kei Kapa refers to the longer Tongan proverb *"Tala kei Kapa nake to ki Mala"* which tells of the need to be prepared for the future. The direct translation of the proverb into English is *"Notify them at Kapa, before you get to Mala."* The proverb refers to a treacherous passage between islands in Vava'u where travellers were cautioned to prepare in the village of Kapa before facing the dangerous conditions on their way to Mala. This proverb serves as a reminder to stay alert, heed warnings, and prepare for potential risks. The proverb has deep cultural connection with disaster preparedness and communicates the wisdom and history of local traditional knowledge while clearly communicating the program's proactive mission: to strengthen community resilience, reduce disaster risks, and empower people to act before disaster strikes.

B: DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

18. This is the Investment Design Document (IDD) for a new humanitarian initiative to strengthen humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery activities in the Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga). Working with key stakeholders from the Government of Tonga (GoT) and Tongan civil society, the investment, will provide reliable and consistent support to deliver a stronger, climate-resilient disaster preparedness system which enables effective and efficient response and early recovery assistance to affected populations, prioritising women, people with disabilities, people with diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) youth and older persons.

19. Over the next five years, the Investment will support the GoT and civil society organisation (CSO) partners to strengthen disaster preparedness actions and provide immediate response and early recovery assistance to those affected by disasters and humanitarian crises. It will be an important part of Australia's overall development assistance to Tonga, demonstrating Australia is a reliable partner, particularly in times of disaster, and proactively assisting on climate change resilience. The investment aligns with the Australia Tonga Development Partnership Plan (DPP).

20. Investment activities will target two levels: the national level, working with the National Disaster Risk Management Office (NDRMO) on the implementation of the Disaster Risk Management Act (2021, enacted 2023) (DRM Act) and Disaster Risk Management Policy Framework 2023-2030 (DRM Policy); and the community level, strengthening community led preparedness planning and response, and building resilience.

Development and Humanitarian Context

21. Tonga is a small Pacific Island nation of approximately 106,000 people and comprises 172 islands (36 inhabited), divided into four main island groups. Most Tongans live on the main island of Tongatapu, followed by Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niuas. As of 2021, around half of the population was under the age of 20.

22. With a gross national income (GNI) per capita of AUD7,307 in 2024, Tonga is classified as an upper middle-income country. The country has achieved a relatively high Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.739; extreme poverty has been virtually eradicated; access to safe water and sanitation is reasonably secure; and gender parity has been achieved in the basic education system. Tonga has a very high adult literacy rate of 99.4% as of 2021 and literacy is nearly universal across genders, with 99.5% of women and 99.4% of men literate.

23. Tonga's state-led social protection system reaches more than 7,000 elderly and disability recipients (indirectly reaching almost a third of Tongan households), in addition to strong community safety nets. It has some of the best health outcomes in the Pacific and has achieved substantial reductions in communicable diseases and maternal and

child mortality. However, Tonga continues to grapple with a growing burden of non-communicable diseases, which account for 8 in 10 deaths and strains the national health system.

24. Tonga has made national, regional and international commitments, and enacted laws and policies that address some discriminatory practices against women and girls, and against people with disabilities. There has been more progress in enabling greater access for women and girls to education and addressing domestic violence than in addressing barriers preventing people with disabilities from achieving their full potential.

25. Tonga is the only Pacific Island country not to have signed or ratified the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) nor ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (signed in 2007).

26. Tonga has two main phone and internet providers: Digicel and TCC. TCC offers broader coverage across islands but slower speeds; Digicel provides faster speeds in urban areas. Most areas have at least 2G coverage, with 5G slowly becoming available in parts of Tongatapu and Vava'u.

Tonga's National, Regional and International Commitments

27. Tonga's Strategic Development Framework (TSDF) II, 2015-2025[1] identifies key priorities in human capital development, gender equality, responsive good-governance, effective land administration, environment management, improved infrastructure and technology, and balanced urban and rural development across island groups. The TSDF is the foundation for integration of Tonga's commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the national outcomes of the TSDF aligned with the SDGs and particular focus on environmental management, water and energy. Tonga's Joint National Action Plan 2 on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (2018 – 2028) is the strategic plan for climate change and disaster risk management initiatives in Tonga. Tonga is a signatory to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and has developed a Low Emission Development Strategy and a Second Nationally Determined Contribution (2020) as part of its commitment to the Paris Agreement.

28. Tonga plays a significant role in regional efforts to address shared development and humanitarian challenges. Tonga is the country of domicile for the Pacific Resilience Facility, hosts the Polynesian sub-office of the Pacific Community (SPC) and will host the Pacific Games in 2031. Tonga's commitment to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent focuses on climate action, disaster risk management, infrastructure development and sustainable economic management.

29. Tonga is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and has agreed to several international and regional commitments focused on rights, equality and inclusion including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD),), the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration (PLGED) and the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (SPC, 2018–2030). Nationally, Tonga is guided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Women's Affairs for Gender Equality Division's (WAGED) National Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (2019–2025). The government has not signed or ratified the Convention of the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and gender equality remains a sensitive issue. In August 2025 the Government of Tonga passed the National Policy on Disability aiming to create a barrier-free society where persons with disabilities have full participation, economic, and political inclusion. This policy builds on previous efforts, including the 2018 National Disability Survey. The policy aligns with the CRPD and emphasizes a whole-of-society approach to disability inclusion.

Humanitarian Issue Analysis: Economic and Social Impact of Disasters

30. While Tonga appears to be on an upward trajectory in terms of social and economic improvements, these gains remain fragile and can be easily reversed by extreme weather events and disasters. Tonga is one of the most at-risk countries globally for disasters due to its high exposure to cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, as well as potential sea level rise. On average, Tonga anticipates 3 tropical cyclones annually, with one severe cyclone (Category 4 or higher) striking Tonga approximately every 2 years.

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[1] Consultation meetings and strategies are in progress to develop the third Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2026 - 2036

31. Consecutive extreme weather events and disasters are having compounding impacts. Located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, Tonga is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes with more than 65% of the world's deepest earthquakes experienced in Tonga, underwater volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. Tonga's landmass sits at a low level, in some instances below sea level, making it susceptible to flooding, storm surge and king tides with 84% of the population living within 1km of the coast and Nuku'alofa, home to about 20% of the population, being only 1-2 meters above sea level.

32. Tonga experiences a high degree of economic and social shock during disasters – it is estimated that over 40% of the population is affected during a typical disaster. The risk of disasters, including those related to climate change, has doubled in the last 20 years and is expected to continue to increase, bringing greater potential economic losses. The social and economic impacts of compounding crises is testing the resilience and capacity of the GoT and communities, and further support is required to bolster humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery support.

> ### Box 2: Impact of Disasters in Tonga
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> *Current estimated average annual loss for Tonga by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery is USD15.5 million (approximately AUD24 million) with the following major events impacting the economy:*
>
> - *Cyclone Gita (2018): USD164 million in damages (38% of GDP)*
>
> - *Cyclone Harold (2020): USD124 million in damages (23% of GDP).*
>
> - *HTHH Eruption and Tsunami (2022): USD90.4 million in damages (18.5% of GDP)*
>
> *The sectors most affected by disasters in Tonga are:*
>
> - *Agriculture, tourism, commerce: ~54%*
>
> - *Education, health, housing: ~38% of damage*
>
> - *Transport, water, electricity, communications: ~8%*
>
> - *Tourism and agriculture are particularly vulnerable due to geographic exposure and reliance on natural resources.*

33. Climate projections include less frequent but more intense cyclones and more frequent and intense extreme rainfall impacting human health through increase of vector and water borne diseases and risks to physical safety, and damage to infrastructure and settlements; sea level rise of 17-30cm under a low emissions scenario by 2050, and 21-37cm under a high emissions scenario, impacting coastal settlements and infrastructure and groundwater, and increased temperatures and more heat waves.

34. The January 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai (HTHH) volcanic eruption, tsunami and ashfall affected around 85,000 people, with more than 600 buildings destroyed or damaged, and crops, livestock, and fisheries impacted, causing estimated economic damage of USD90.4 million. It had a more intense impact on the poorest and most vulnerable families in Tonga. For example, the World Bank found that recovery of incomes following the HTHH disaster were lower for women and those involved with informal work.[2] Australia responded rapidly and comprehensively to the HTHH disaster, guided by the requests and priorities of the Tongan Government, and in close coordination with likeminded partners, providing a sound foundation for this investment to build on.

35. Tonga uses a risk-layered financing strategy to manage disaster recovery costs:

- National Emergency Fund (NEF): this was established under the Emergency Fund Act 2008 and is used for immediate response and recovery support.
- Contingent Financing Instruments such as catastrophe-deferred drawdown options (Cat DDOs) and investment in disaster insurance, such as with Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company.
- International Support: Medium-Long term programming with traditional development partners such as Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), ad-

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[2] Nakamura, S. and Pape, U. March 2023. 'Uncovering the untold impact of the 2022 Tonga volcano and tsunami: How phone surveys reveal crucial insight'. https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/uncovering-untold-impact-2022-tonga-volcano-and-tsunami-how-phone-surveys-reveal

hoc support from a variety of non traditional donors, Asian Development Bank, World Bank and technical assistance and grants for recovery and resilience building.

- Budget Reallocation: The government reallocates funds from other sectors during disasters.
- Community and NGO Support: CSOs and NGOs contribute to rebuilding efforts.
- Remittances from Tongan Diaspora: with a diaspora in Australia and New Zealand larger than its population, Tonga relies heavily on remittances (more than 50% of its GDP in 2023) and this increases during times of disaster as overseas family send funds back to the affected households in Tonga.

36. This investment proposes to support and enhance all options available for the Tongan Government to draw on. The investment will also consider the government's Disaster Risk Financing Strategy which is currently being reviewed with the support of the Asian Development Bank. The DRF Strategy is an alignment point for the investment, rather than providing direct support at this point.

The Development Problem the Investment will address

The challenge for the Government of Tonga

37. Design consultations confirmed that the highest priority for NDRMO, to achieve a better enabling environment for cluster participation is the implementation of the DRM Policy and strengthening NDRMO capacity- which will inform policy development across clusters. The NDRMO demonstrates good engagement and buy-in to the investment and will be an active partner in the delivery.

38. The DRM Act establishes that the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC), through the NDRMO, will lead and monitor the implementation of the DRM Policy, report annual results, be responsible for reviewing and updating the policy, and will guide Ministries, Departments and Agencies to prepare detailed DRM implementation plans based on the policy.

39. The Government of Tonga is in a financial deficit. Additional consistent and reliable funding is needed for NDRMO to sufficiently plan and budget for the implementation of the DRM Policy.

40. While the NDRMO demonstrates a strong foundational capability, recent workshops and requests for assistance, such as the 2025 Australia Assists country planning workshop, have highlighted a significant capacity gap and only a minor capability gap, primarily in strategic direction setting. The Capacity and Capability Strengthening Strategy Roadmap (Australia Assists, 2025) identified the value of established national and community structures, but also gaps in preparedness, information management and the integration of lessons learned in to ongoing planning.

41. The NDRMO currently operates with five full-time staff dedicated to the DRM Policy implementation and a small logistics team managing the National Humanitarian Warehouse in Tongatapu. This limited team is supplemented by external support.

42. Despite the advisors' contributions, the absence of national counterparts has hindered one-on-one knowledge transfer and sustainable capacity building. This situation reinforces the need for increased staffing and resourcing to ensure the NDRMO can independently manage its responsibilities and reduce dependency on external personnel.

43. Tonga's outer islands are statistically more likely to be impacted by a disaster, with Ha'apai the most at risk. However, there is a lack of NDRMO presence in the outer islands to ensure that DRM sub-national committees are prepared for, and can respond to, a disaster.

44. The DRM Policy directs the finalisation of all DRM plans for villages within the next 4 years, so there is a pressing need for the NDRMO to be more present in the outer islands to complete this tasking. The MFAT funded warehouse in Ha'apai will soon be operational, followed by the Vava'u warehouse (funded by DFAT through the Pacific Humanitarian Warehouse Program) so demand for an increased NDRMO presence is growing. Funding to support the NDRMO to sufficiently resource the outer islands is a priority.

45. To address this priority, the program aims to reduce long-term reliance on international technical assistance (TA) being treated as in-line positions. However, transitioning to nationally held in-line roles will require continued support from international TA to provide training, mentoring, and knowledge transfer. Increased direct financing to

the NDRMO will enable the recruitment of additional national staff, allowing for more comprehensive delivery of DRM Policy objectives. This will also allow AA advisors to shift from operational roles to providing more targeted, strategic technical and policy support

The challenge for Tongan civil society organisations

46. The DRM Policy identifies Tongan civil society organisations (CSOs) 3 as key stakeholders, delivering training, services and TA across preparedness, response and early recovery phases, particularly at sub-national level. CSOs are recognised for their knowledge of community priorities and commitment to supporting communities through disasters and humanitarian crises. Reviews and learning from the HTHH Response highlighted the significant role Tongan CSOs play in reinforcing local leadership, strengthening community resilience and localising humanitarian action.

47. While there are increasing expectations for CSO engagement in implementing the DRM Policy, gaps in CSO organisational capacity persist. CSO perspectives and recommendations are often lacking at national level dialogue and coordination mechanisms, partly due to a lack of resources to engage. There are limited international non-government organisations (NGOs) in Tonga offering partnership and funding opportunities to Tongan CSOs.

48. The NDRMO intends to strengthen the effectiveness of Village DRM Committees and wants to engage a small group of DRM-experienced CSOs to support this undertaking. The design process has confirmed that there is a range of CSO's available in Tonga to support this process who have near universal coverage and good relationships and reputation with communities. Several have successfully programmed DFAT funding previously, either directly or through Australia-based NGO partners, and demonstrate potential to meet DFAT's due diligence requirements.

49. The Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT) is the umbrella group for Tongan CSOs and is endeavouring to improve coordination and engagement with the government. It has developed an engagement framework to support these efforts, including promoting cluster engagement by its members. The investment proposes to support the CSFT in these efforts.

50. To promote Tongan CSO engagement in the DRM space, fit-for-purpose support is required in operational scaffolding, governance strengthening and compliance support that empowers them to independently access and effectively manage DFAT and other donor funding, deliver TA and participate in DRM policy processes. Meeting these requirements costs money and requires skills and resources that are not available locally. This context offers a unique localisation opportunity for the investment to program funds directly with Tongan CSOs, provided they can meet and manage DFAT's due diligence requirements.

The challenge of coordination

51. Preparing for and responding to disasters is a shared responsibility in Tonga, but lessons from recent disaster responses tested through the design process demonstrate there is a need to improve coordination mechanisms and functions between government, faith-based groups, NGOs/CSOs and United Nations (UN) agencies. These groups are all active in DRM and there is a strong foundation of lessons learnt from the HTHH Response and Tropical Cyclone Gita (2018) on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of coordination to support the timeliness of response activities and reduce needless suffering. The Investment responds directly to these lessons and recommendations from recent response activations.

52. Tonga has an established humanitarian cluster mechanism based on the UN cluster system. There are 11 clusters in place, each lead by a representative Ministry. During times of disaster response, the cluster system appears to function relatively well in terms of directing response activities, sharing information and preventing duplication. The potential to access funding through a cluster is also an incentive for participation, particularly for CSOs. Outside of disaster response periods, most clusters are not operational due. This is despite the GoT and other DRM stakeholders consistently highlighting preparedness activities as a priority for improved response. The UN has a presence in Tonga – UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP – but programs often have a regional focus or are managed from

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[3] For this investment CSOs in Tonga include church and faith-based organisations, local non-government organisations and Tongan organisations with an international affiliate.

Fiji with limited presence in Nuku'alofa. The primary global cluster coordinator – UN OCHA – does not have a Tonga presence.

53. CSO participation in the clusters is mixed. Design consultations highlighted concerns about information shared through the cluster mechanism, while also recognising that information sharing through coordination needs to improve. Interviews with the Government confirmed their commitment to improving coordination and recognition of the important role CSOs play in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The design findings indicate investment in a co-lead model for clusters will potentially reap benefits for strengthened preparedness and recovery activities by clusters, closing gaps in the DRM cycle.

54. Current cluster coordination mechanisms operate with limited women's leadership outside of response periods. Strengthening women's leadership within cluster systems would increase representation and decision-making and likely strengthen the effectiveness of preparedness planning and response.

Supporting more inclusive DRM

55. Humanitarian disasters exacerbate existing inequities and unequal social norms. The impacts of these events are expected to disproportionately affect women, who represent 32% of senior management positions, earn 23% less than men, whilst 37% experience physical or sexual violence (see Annex C Gender Analysis). These crises exacerbate the risk of violence, which can prevent women and girls accessing essential supplies and infrastructure.

56. Tonga's disaster risk and climate change policy frameworks include commitments to equity, fairness and inclusion in participation and leadership, and to meeting the different needs of diverse and vulnerable groups. However, these commitments are not consistently implemented, with recent assessments indicating staff within the NDRMO needing technical skills to prioritise GEDSI considerations and activities across the DRM cycle.

57. Partnerships with CSOs focused on inclusion, such as organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and women's organisations will sharpen focus on key equality and inclusion priorities identified in the DRM Policy, particularly though enabling leadership of diverse or vulnerable people and communities in setting DRM priorities.

Alignment with Australian Government Investments

58. The investment provides an opportunity to augment connectivity and harmonisation with current Australian Government investments in Tonga and the region.

59. The design process identified an opportunity to use state-led social protection systems in times of disaster to provide one-off or top-up payments to disaster-affected individuals. Collaboration with the Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP) Program will enhance the quality and coverage of these systems and likely increase access to cash top-up schemes in times of disaster. The design will also explore opportunities to enhance anticipatory action in Tonga, in line with Australia's Humanitarian Policy (2024) and the pilot program under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP).

60. There is a strong DFAT interest in ensuring this investment is aligned with and enabling other Australian Government investments in Tonga, as well as being clear on what the investment will and won't deliver. Ideally, aligned investments will be able to leverage this investment's capability and vice versa. This will support flexibility, value for money and a positive return on investment. The following Australian programs are of most relevance:

- **Pacific Humanitarian Warehousing Program (PHWP):** Pre-positioning supplies for current warehouses and building warehouses on the outer islands are priorities for the NDRMO. The PHWP will continue to lead on this with the construction of the Vava'u Warehouse, but there is a potential role for the investment to support identification of appropriate and standardised national relief supplies though a stronger cluster system - which will be shared with the PHWP.

- **Partnerships for Social Protection (P4SP):** P4SP is supporting the Government of Tonga to strengthen its social protection system. This includes advising on reforms to two significant social protection schemes for the elderly and people with disabilities. Tonga and Australia have been channelling humanitarian cash through the social protection system in Tonga since the response to Tropical Cyclone Gita. The two schemes indirectly reach almost a third of Tongan households and provide a ready mechanism to reach two groups that are disproportionately affected by hazard events and their households. As part of

Australia's commitment to adaptive social protection, P4SP can support the strengthening of top-up payment processes to enable quick support in anticipation of or following a disaster event. It makes sense to provide humanitarian cash assistance through existing social protection systems in Tonga and share some of the evidence of past top-up arrangements by Australia in Tonga[4].

- **AHP - Disaster READY**: Disaster READY is a climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and resilience program, implemented through the AHP. It represents a significant investment by the Australian Government in disaster preparedness in the region and sees AHP partners delivering locally led programs through their networks in Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. There is potential for a Tonga-specific Disaster READY model to be delivered in the future, particularly if there is increased NGO activity that is coordinated well; this investment provides a pilot opportunity to display Tonga's ability to implement Disaster READY. This investment has been designed in a way that were Disaster READY be implemented in Tonga, both programs would run separately but complementary to the current AHP Disaster READY program. Both programs are designed to offer reliable and consistent funding to a potential overlap of recipients. To mitigate potential duplication of activities, this investment will ensure consistent alignment with the AHP, including activations for a response.

- **AHP - Activations:** Following a disaster, an AHP activation remains a possible mechanism for support as part of Australia's response. The activations, as standard practice, will be housed in Post's humanitarian investment (this investment) and managed by the AHP Support Unit. Activities under this investment (such as the proposed NDRMO CSO Desk Officer position), will be able to provide support to any activation - including coordinating the activation. This will build on lessons learnt from the HTHH Response to contribute to the clusters by reinforcing local leadership, strengthening community resilience and localising humanitarian action.

- **Australia Assists:** There are AA placements within the NDRMO. While these are working well and making effective contributions to coordination and cross-cutting considerations such as gender and inclusion, some are being absorbed as in line roles and lack local counterparts to participate in knowledge sharing. There is a clear role for AA deployments to continue to provide TA within the NDRMO and clusters to strengthen the quality of DRM cycles. But this needs to be undertaken in concert with bolstering more permanent NDRMO positions and strengthening NDRMO capability by on the job learning through coaching and mentoring.

- **Climate Resilient Communities (CRC)**: supports implementation of the Australian Government's climate change commitments under Australia's *International Development Policy*, in line with partner government priorities. CRC incentivises funding towards gender-responsive, inclusive climate and disaster resilience programming, particularly in the water, food, nature-based solutions, and energy sectors. The investment may draw on CRC TA, guidance, tools and training in strengthening NDRMO and CSO climate resilience capabilities and ensuring they are considering climate thoroughly.

- **Tonga Australia Defence Co-operation Program:** supports HMAF through capability development, maritime security, training, infrastructure and advisory assistance, including the gifting and ongoing operation of three Guardian-class Patrol Boats. The program contributes to Tonga's disaster preparedness and response capacity in ways that intersect with this investment's focus on coordination, logistics and strengthened national systems. Stronger links between the DCP, NDRMO and civil society partners will help ensure complementary use of capabilities and more coherent whole-of-government engagement.

- Other **relevant Australian investments** include PIEMA for Pacific Incident Management training, Emergency Operations Centre training and train the trainer packages. This could be a way to help connect CSOs with the NDMRO in a more coordinated way. A partnership with bilateral gender programs will ensure alignment with gender equality policy initiatives and leverage connections with Tongan women's organisations. The HLC will provide additional logistics surge capacity in the event of a

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[4] Post Disaster Rapid Assessment, Tropical Cyclone Gita, February 12, 2018, Government of Tonga.

disaster depleting positioned stock in Tonga, as well as transportation support for GoT and CSOs. Opportunities for Tonga-specific logistics capability strengthening through the HLC will also be explored.

Lessons Learned

66. As part of the design process, a desk mapping exercise examined recent reviews, evaluations and surveys from the HTHH and Cyclone Gita responses to identify lessons. Lessons learned that this investment seeks to address focus on cluster strengthening, appropriate humanitarian supplies and strengthening community level preparedness and response:

- Clusters are often only active during a disaster response. There is a need to support and resource clusters outside of response periods to ensure appropriate planning processes are in place and momentum maintained.

- Cluster leadership is often overwhelmed and needs support to coordinate and engage with all partners.

- CSOs are often not invited to participate in clusters or have inconsistent levels of participation. Technical discussions at clusters may create barriers to participation by smaller groups.

- Access to funding through clusters can be inconsistent, particularly for CSOs. There is a need to provide reliable and consistent funding to CSOs.

- Ensuring that supplies are fit for Pacific contexts and meet needs of women and girls, people with disabilities, and others likely to be most affected.

- Supporting Village DRM Committees in their preparedness activities such ensuring communities are aware of the nearest evacuation centres and that a plan is in place to relocate vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities and other marginalised populations.

- Supporting communities to continue to apply anticipatory action approaches such as cleaning water tanks, securing homes and preparing resources ahead of cyclone season.

67. A successful Investment will leave:

- A robust and capable NDRMO which has successfully delivered DRM Policy objectives of stronger resilience to disasters and climate change, community driven DRM and enhanced and inclusive coordination across disaster preparedness, response and recovery.
- CSOs representing and advocating for community DRM priorities at national and cluster level which are then incorporated into response plans.
- Rapid assessment and response decisions through the clusters supporting more timely, relevant and effective distribution of supplies to affected communities following a disaster, with vulnerable individuals and groups prioritised, and suffering reduced.
- CSOs with the organisational architecture to successfully receive, program and report on DFAT funding and leveraging this support to attract other sources of funding.

C: STRATEGIC INTENT AND RATIONALE

68. Today's global challenges are complex, interconnected and compounding, with climate change driving more frequent and severe disasters. The financial impacts on nations are substantial and intensify with consecutive events; in Tonga, average annual disaster losses are estimated at up to USD 15.5 million (around AUD 24 million), and major events in the past five years have caused damages of 18–38% of GDP. These escalating economic shocks place pressure on national systems, erode household resilience and deepen existing vulnerabilities, making it harder for communities to recover between disasters. As these pressures grow, the gap between acute need and global response capacity continues to widen; by 2030, there could be an average of 1.5 medium-to-large-scale disasters per day. When national systems are strained and household

resilience weakens, the disproportionate impacts on those already facing structural disadvantage become more pronounced. Disasters heighten social and economic inequalities, particularly for women and their children, older persons, people with disabilities, people of diverse SOGIESC and other marginalised groups, and increase the risk of violence against women and vulnerable people, further limiting their ability to access timely and appropriate support.

69. In this context, Australia's International Development Policy (2023) commits Australia to enhance nations' resilience to external shocks for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Australia is doing more to address climate risks, and supports partner governments before, during and after times of disaster. These commitments are underscored in Australia's Humanitarian Policy (2024) priorities, which include (1) building readiness and preparedness for disasters, and (2) responding to crises and disasters effectively.

70. Tonga has a strong commitment to climate action and has developed a strategic climate and disaster policy framework. However, despite some progress, its climate-resilient critical infrastructure and services are generally lacking. Tonga faces an estimated USD289 million climate financing gap to 2030. Tonga's DRM Act emphasises preparedness activities as the key to ensuring that international humanitarian assistance following a disaster is considered a last resort.

71. Humanitarian assistance is a vital component of Australia's bilateral relationship with the Kingdom of Tonga and there is a long history of working together to address shared social, economic and security priorities. Australia remains Tonga's largest bilateral development partner and a trusted security partner. The overarching goal for the Australia – Kingdom of Tonga Development Partnership Plan (2024-2029) is a peaceful, stable and prosperous Tonga. This investment directly contributes to Australia and Tonga's shared development objective for improved national resilience to climate change impacts and disasters. It supports Tonga to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. It will help to mitigate the negative impact future disasters may have on people's lives, and the economic losses incurred through compounded crises. This investment is one small measure contributing to global efforts to adapt and build resilience to climate impacts and defend against climate-induced loss and damage. Tala Kei Kapa's design and delivery is informed and guided by the Climate Background Brief which underpins and informs all DFAT investments in Tonga and is aligned to Australia's Climate Change Action Strategy (2020 – 2025). Given Tonga's disaster risk profile, investments in preparedness and disaster risk reduction make sound economic sense as, "DRR contributes to *strengthening resilience and the achievement of risk-informed sustainable development. Every 1 dollar invested in DRR can save up to 8 dollars in post disaster recovery and loss.*"[5]

72. Regionally, the investment aligns with the Pacific Islands Forum Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and ensures approaches to disaster risk management integrate climate action. It contributes to the implementation of the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, Boe Declaration Action Plan 2019, and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent by supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness. The Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Declaration of Commitment to Action (the "Nadi Declaration") references the need for greater preparedness to realise its aim of a safer and more resilient region in the face of disaster risk and climate change. Internationally, the investment is consistent with Australia and Tonga's endorsement of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

73. Design consultations highlighted women's networks and community knowledge are essential for identifying vulnerable households, coordinating community-based early warning systems, and ensuring culturally appropriate assistance reaches those most in need. The investment is designed to better integrate gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion (GEDSI) considerations in preparedness, response and recovery. This helps implement Australia's commitments to GEDSI made in its International Development Policy (2023), International Gender Equality Strategy (2025) and International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (2024). It also supports Tonga to implement disaster risk and climate change policy frameworks which

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[5] Humanitarian Strategy 2016 Report; The Global Assessment Report 2015; International Journal of DRR 2014

include commitments to equity, fairness and inclusion in participation and leadership, and to meeting the different needs of diverse and vulnerable groups.

74. The investment also adopts and integrates local leadership and processes - as described in DFAT's Guidance Note on Locally Led Development (2023) - which is an important principle within Tonga's DRM Policy. It may provide opportunities for integrating and connecting traditional knowledge practices, including First Nations' perspectives. It will also enhance Australia's national interest and security to be a partner of choice and first responder.

D: PROPOSED OUTCOMES AND INVESTMENT OPTIONS

Theory of Change

75. The theory of change is focused on the following:

- Tonga is a highly disaster-prone country and climate change is exacerbating the impacts of disasters. While the country enjoys a high HDI and high standards in education, health and poverty reduction, climate change and disasters risk undermining the social and economic achievements across the country.

- The Government of Tonga has committed itself to building resilience and responding in a comprehensive and effective way to disasters and to the impacts of climate change. Like other Pacific nations, it has committed itself to an inclusive and resilient future which sees all citizens able to achieve their potential. This is articulated in the DRM Policy

- Tonga has developed its own system to respond to disasters and climate change impact. This includes a comprehensive DRM policy, the NDRMO - tasked with implementing the policy, and Tongan CSOs which are active in crises, working directly with communities and representing their priorities and needs to others. Finally, it includes the Tongan people themselves, who have long experience of disaster response and recovery.

- Tonga finances the DRM system in various ways, including support from development partners. Development partners recognise the challenge for Tonga from disasters and climate change impacts and provide funding across various programs and initiatives. However, additional consistent and reliable funding is needed for NDRMO to sufficiently plan and budget for the implementation of the DRM Policy.

- Australia has supported Tonga through previous disaster response and recovery with a principled approach to support the priorities and leadership of the government and people of Tonga. This approach was demonstrated through the HTHH response and is respected and valued.

- There is opportunity for Australia, as a trusted and respectful partner, to further strengthen DRM systems and the implementation of the DRM Policy in Tonga.

- Consultations and previous experience suggest that Australian support will be most useful if directed at capability and capacity strengthening of existing stakeholders, primarily the NDRMO and CSOs, as well as support to improve coordination and information flow.

Program Logic

76. The program logic is as follows:

- The investment goal is: Australia supports the Kingdom of Tonga to further develop its resilience and wellbeing.
- The investment objective is: The Government of Tonga, together with civil society and communities in Tonga, leads effective and inclusive response to disasters and climate change.
- The investment end of program outcomes (EOPOs) are:
  - **EOPO1:** The NRMDO improves their coordination of responses to disaster and climate change impacts in line with DRM policy.

- **EOPO2:** CSOs better represent and support community DRM and climate priorities prior, during and following DRM and climate related events.
- **EOPO3:** Stronger DRM coordination in Tonga supports effective, inclusive and locally led responses to disaster and climate change.

77. The first EOPO focuses on government preparedness, response and recovery, the second on civil society preparedness response and recovery and the third on strengthening connectedness across the DRM architecture in Tonga. The investment Program Logic diagram can be found below at Figure 1, page 24.

End of Program Outcome 1: Government preparedness, response and recovery

78. EOPO1 has two intermediate outcomes:

- **IO 1.1:** NDRMO has sufficient staff with appropriate technical expertise to implement DRM policy.
- **IO 1.2 :** NDRMO has operational plans to coordinate inclusive and countrywide disaster response.

79. To achieve the outcomes, the following outputs will occur:

- In line positions established and filled, according to technical, capacity and locational requirements.
- NDRMO utilises inline and in house capacity to identify and fulfil core responsibilities in line with DRM policy.
- NDRMO establishes working relationships with other relevant GoT ministries.
- NDRMO establishes working relationships with relevant CSOs and community level DRM implementation.

80. Proposed inputs and activities to deliver the outputs under this IO include in line positions, direct financing, AA deployments, leveraging aligned DFAT investments, training and limited administrative support.

81. Notes on EOPO1 are as follows:

- Design findings indicate strong GoT interest in DRM technical advice through placement of long-term technical advisers, particularly in building climate resilience. In line positions will be placed nationally at the discretion of NDRMO. Based on design discussions, in line positions will be the CSO Desk Officer, and two outer island NDRMO Officers. Other in-line positions will be dictated by the needs of the NDRMO.
    - Funding will be contingent on the NDRMO submitting annual work plans and progress reports.
    - This will be accompanied by a program fund that the NDRMO can draw down on to fund activities agreed to between the NDRMO and DFAT through the annual work plan. This program fund could include:
        - NDRMO hiring CSOs to develop village emergency / DRM plans
        - Training courses and hosting seminars
        - New technology, for example, tsunami sirens, EQ monitors
- The investment will coordinate with the AA program to identify and deploy technical advisers for short- and long-term placements with the NDRMO. The investment will be responsive to emerging technical advice priorities of the government and in line with the AA country plans.
- Building on previous government experience and effectiveness in providing cash top-ups through established social protection mechanisms, the investment (led by DFAT) will partner with P4SP to assess the viability of standardising this as a response option. P4SP provides social protection policy and program advice to the GoT, including on reforms and system strengthening of the schemes for the elderly and people with disability. As part of P4SP's commitment to system strengthening, it is proposed P4SP facilitate the development of operational processes for top-up payments before or during a disaster response and support implementation of these arrangements. These top-up payments will target those most in need, which may include female- or child-headed households. Any eventual top-up funding would come from this investment. The recommended approach is for P4SP as technical social protection lead to review the existing social protection schemes, support the development of standing operating procedures for top-ups, and support implementing arrangements and policy reform if required. The Ministry of Finance and National Retirement Benefit Fund, as well as the NDRMO, are identified as key stakeholders and decision makers in this process.

- Response and recovery support to the GoT will be 'opened' as activities under the investment as surge support following a disaster. Post's funding is likely to be augmented with funding from DFAT Canberra to implement response and recovery activities, depending on the size of the disaster. When supporting the response and recovery phases, the investment will respond to government needs based on consultation with the NDRMO, relevant cluster appeals and government-led assessments. Prepositioned humanitarian emergency relief supplies will be made available to government through a range of mechanisms: a) financial support to purchase their own supplies, b) through the PHWP, and c) the HLC. (see Conditional Outcome 4)
- A fiduciary risk assessment of the NDRMO will be undertaken given the increase in their funding proposed by this investment (see Section J: Risk Management and Safeguards).

End of Program Outcome 2: society preparedness, response and recovery

82. EOPO2 has two intermediate outcomes:

- **IO 2.1:** Select Tongan CSOs are better able to serve their communities drawing on a comprehensive range of DRM capabilities, including protection and inclusion.
- **IO 2.2:** Communication and support systems for village DRM committees is improved.

83. To achieve the outcomes, the following outputs will occur:

- CSOs utilise grant funding to support DRM mechanisms including at village and community level to prepare, respond and recovery from disaster and climate change impacts.
- CSOs establish systems to collect and represent community level DRM needs and experience to GoT and other DRM stakeholders.
- CSOs utilise grant finding to continue to develop their expertise and capacity in DRM related areas with particular attention to protection and inclusion.
- CSOs develop their program management systems to meet Australian government minimum requirements.

84. Notes on EOPO2 are as follows:

- DFAT will provide and manage small-to-medium size grants for civil society partners. Grants will be awarded through an annual / semi-annual competitive process for CSOs. It is anticipated each funding round will have a maximum pool of AUD500,000, with each grant valued at a maximum of AUD500,000 over a maximum of five years. CSOs interested in applying for the grants will be invited to submit an expression of interest (EOI) as part of the inception activities for the investment and then a proposal as outlined below in paragraph 5.
- The following sectors and themes will be eligible for the grants scheme: anticipatory action interventions, inclusive disaster preparedness actions, adaptation to climate change, capacity training (for both community and CSOs for upskilling), protection and psychosocial services, education and shelter programming. These areas have been identified through the design process, but the investment will include other sectors and / or themes as priorities evolve.
- A panel of NDRMO, DFAT, CSFT representatives will determine successful proposals through the investment's Steering Committee. The grants will cover operational costs and consider a modest management fee to foster self-sustainment within the CSOs.
- One activity is the delivery of DRM planning and training at village level using established government policies, processes and approaches. Some organisations are already doing this work and have the absorbative capacity to expand scope, for example, MORDI, Tonga Red Cross, Act for Peace and Tonga Trust.
- Organisations will be invited by Post to submit a proposal to participate in preparedness activities based on the following criteria:
    - Established presence, program portfolio and relevant networks across Tonga.
    - Foundational skills and experience in contract and program management including procurement, reporting, communication, knowledge sharing, risk management and change/adaptive management or demonstrated capability to develop skills and experience in these areas.

- Capability to meet DFAT due diligence requirements including child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse, and a proactive risk management approach.
- Active members of key clusters relevant to organisation sector or thematic focus / specialisation.
- A letter of support from the proposed recipient's village's DRM Committee agreeing the program can be implemented in their village.
- Some experience in designing, implementing, and monitoring GEDSI and climate resilient approaches.
- Demonstrated commitment to locally led humanitarian action and localisation.

- This support for CSOs by the program is intended to provide an additional opportunity for funding. It does not preclude CSOs from partnering with Australian or international NGOs through established mechanisms such as the AHP.
- Support for civil society response activities will be provided by DFAT through the investment as surge support in the event of a disaster. To ensure a timely response, organisations already pre-approved and funded under the preparedness workstream will be invited to submit a response proposal based on their pre-existing response capabilities. The intent of the grant process is to create a CSO pool that hold a pre-existing relationship with DFAT (including a pre-existing due diligence assessment) in both preparedness and response. In principle, eligible CSOs will be able to work within and demonstrate compliance with DFAT systems and policies, based on the support they have received through the preparedness workstream. (see Conditional Outcome 4)
- As part of the response proposals, civil society partners may request supplies from DFAT's stockpile, logistics support to move their own supplies (internationally or domestically) or funding to purchase humanitarian emergency relief supplies or provide cash programming (or an alternative proposal). These proposals will offer a cohort of funding options for DFAT in the event of a disaster and will expand DFAT's response capability and support a localised approach.
- Response activities will be for a maximum period of 3 months for implementation to ensure these grants are specifically used for surging during a disaster. A response activity will also house any agreements funded by the Humanitarian Emergency Fund such as deployments, the purchase of emergency relief supplies, or partnerships. Importantly, this investment does not alter current Humanitarian Division processes. In the case of a small to medium response, Post may choose to reallocate bilateral funds to support response capabilities.
- Recovery activities may be 'opened' under the investment following a disaster or disaster. Funding for recovery activities will likely be sourced from available and additional DFAT budget lines. Post may also choose to reallocate bilateral funds to support recovery activities implemented by CSOs. In this case, recovery proposals will be required to focus on long term recovery and could include psychosocial support, food security, community reconstruction, livelihood and economic recovery, protection, shelter and resettlement. Recovery proposals may be multi-year up to the end of the investment, depending on recovery need following the disaster response.

End of Program Outcome 2: Strengthening System Connectedness

85. EOPO3: has two intermediate outcomes:

- **10 3.1:** NDRMO DRM and cluster Standard Operating Procedures are reviewed and updated at least every six months.
- **IO 3.2:** Coordination mechanisms and GoT have timely access to information on DRM related matters, including attention to inclusion and protection.

86. To achieve the outcomes, the following outputs will occur:

- Comprehensive roles, responsibilities and expectations for all DRM stakeholders are established and communicated by GoT.
- An information management process that provides relevant DRM related information is established and maintained.
- All DRM stakeholders regularly communicate their activities, plans and results to the GoT.
- Relevant DFAT programs regularly share information and capacity with NDRMO and Tonga CSOs.

87. Notes on EOPO3 are as follows:

- Activities under this IO are focused on strengthening connectedness across the DRM architecture in Tonga, with a concentration on improving cluster and working group (e.g., Tonga Cash Working Group) participation and coordination by government, CSOs and other key disaster stakeholders. This investment intends to bring civil society and the GoT together to strengthen disaster management with better coordination and communication. Per IO1 DFAT will fund a position within the NDRMO as a CSO Desk Officer, with initial support from AA to build capacity.
- Additional focus will be on ensuring clusters are active outside of disaster response periods to work on preparedness activities. This will be achieved by funding cluster co-chairs to deliver improved secretariat functions, particularly consistent engagement of cluster members. Design findings indicate a strong potential return on investment through funding a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) position at inter-cluster level to support more systematic lessons learnt and adaptive management capacity within the cluster leads. These options will be explored in consultation with the NDRMO during the inception phase of the investment.

Conditional Intermediate Outcome

88. Through the design process, an option for a conditional intermediate outcome focused on DFAT's surge support through Post and Canberra was developed:

- **IO4**: DFAT's surge support is coordinated, locally led, and delivered through the Investment.

89. To achieve the outcomes, the following outputs will occur:

- Mechanism established to provide additional funding to GoT and CSO, as required, during a disaster response and recovery.

90. This provides the opportunity to measure surge response support in the event of a significant humanitarian response. The design process recommends testing the feasibility and relevance of this fourth IO during the inception period as stakeholder engagement continues and the MEL Plan is being drafted.

Assumptions

91. The following assumptions underpin the program logic and delivery approach for the investment:

- Better coordination and information sharing between the GoT and other disaster stakeholders will lead to improved disaster preparedness.
- The training and capability strengthening activities offered by the investment will be sufficient to meet the identified capability gap.
- Senior leadership have the space and resources to engage in DRM sector reform.
- The investment can sufficiently incentivise stakeholders to participate in and strengthen information sharing mechanisms through the cluster system as the primary DRM coordination mechanism for Tonga.
- The value of CSOs and their existing capability in DRM programming is understood and appreciated by the GoT and UN.
- CSOs are prepared and capable of meeting DFAT's due diligence standards and DFAT's due diligence standards are not so onerous as to undermine the locally led and managed approaches used by CSOs.
- Women's organisations, OPDs, and other civil society representative groups have the capacity and availability to engage with and support efforts under this investment to improve inclusion, equity, and rights.
- This investment can work in ways which increase national and local leadership of disaster preparedness and response. Increasing national and local ownership will increase the sustainability of investment interventions.

Delivery Approach

92. DFAT will be flexible and use a range of modalities to deliver the investment and meet expected outcomes. These will be planned, implemented and managed by Nuku'alofa Post:

- Nuku'alofa Post may partner and leverage other DFAT programs including PHWP, HLC, Australia Assists, P4SP and CRC. Where possible, Post may seek to contract these programs through additional Service Orders under DFAT's existing head agreements.
- DFAT will continue to provide direct financing to the NDRMO and other aligned departments using one direct financing agreement and established mechanisms for identifying and prioritising the type of support.
- Nuku'alofa Post will manage the grant making process for CSOs.
- Nuku'alofa Post will contract an implementing partner to deliver MEL, GEDSI and due diligence processes and services for the investment and may draw on this expertise to deliver training to GoT and CSOs as required. A Statement of Requirements will be prepared to facilitate this procurement. In the event that a single implementing partner cannot deliver across all three areas, Post will take a flexible approach in contracting a few partners through DEV+ panel to deliver MEL, GEDSI, and due diligence processes and services for the investment.
- Nukualofa Post will also draw on Canberra resources such as the Gender and Disability help desks.
- Noting the potential time required to procure and contract implementing partner(s), Post will directly progress some investment activities such as the government support activity and an early/targeted grants round to CSOs who are already on DFAT's due diligence register (up to 5 currently). This ensures the investment is prepared to manage the onset of the next cyclone season (November 2025 – April 2026).
- Nuku'alofa Post may consider contracting discreet investment management activities to independent consultants to deliver other services and processes as required.

93. Providing consistent budget support to NDRMO under this investment will alleviate a burden on Nuku'alofa Post caused by ad-hoc NDRMO and humanitarian requests. The investment will work in pre-established modalities (partner systems) that through experience Post knows to be low effort/high reward. Taking this approach will create capacity for Post to manage the CSO grant administration. Post currently manages five agreements with humanitarian partners in an ad hoc and uncoordinated way. This investment provides a more coordinated and streamlined way of managing the same number of agreements.

94. The proposed program management team at Post are highly experienced in grant management as they are currently responsible for all community grants in the AHC. Continuing to capitalise on the embedded skills and experience of this team is more efficient than outsourcing the grant management. Post is increasing its A-based presence with an additional A-based being onboarded in the next 3-6 months. While this role will not be responsible for this investment, it will absorb other taskings of the team proposed to manage this investment.

95. The design process carefully assessed other delivery approaches. This included Nukualofa Post delivering all the investment which likely would have overwhelmed current capacity.

96. The design process assessed the feasibility of contracting some investment activities to the Tonga Australia Support Platform (TASP) but this is deemed unviable due to the following factors:

- Contract ceilings limit the amount of new work TASP can absorb for the next 2.5 years.
- The current TASP grants mechanism has struggled to maintain a grants manager role as these skills are in short supply in Tonga. As noted in the first section, Post has a strong team that specialises in grant management to implement this activity.
- TASP is a development facility with no mandate for humanitarian action. Given this is a new humanitarian investment, there is a strong preference for Post to maintain strategic direction and control to ensure it remains humanitarian focussed.

97. There is a possibility to incorporate the management of this investment into a future iteration of a Post facility (TASP phase 3). With a new TASP design estimated in the next 12 - 18 months, this provides sufficient time to assess Post's performance in managing the investment.

98. The design process also considered a managing contractor or International/Australian NGO to manage and deliver the investment in its entirety however this would undermine the investment's unique opportunity to deliver a locally led approach to DRM. The design process recommends the hybrid approach outlined above in

paragraph 1 to provide flexibility for bringing in TA where needed, while remaining Tongan-led and -determined in day-to-day program and operations.

99. As the investment will fund priority needs of the GoT, primarily the implementation of the DRM Policy, Post will host consultations with the government every six months through the investment's steering committee meeting to ensure requests are mapped out early so funds can be allocated appropriately. GEDSI, localisation, climate change, resilience, MEL and risk management are to be core elements of the proposed workstreams.

100. Other than the investment-specific governance and working groups proposed in Section E (below), all other coordination meetings outlined in the IDD related already occur on a regular basis. The design just seeks to capture the outcomes of these meetings - such as FRANZ meetings, broader regular donor coordination meetings, and regular (monthly) meetings with NDRMO - in a more systematic way.

Figure 1: Program Logic

Image depicts the program logic outlined in chapter D.

Goal	Australia supports the Kingdom of Tonga to further develop its resilience and well-being.				
Objective	The Government of Tonga, together with civil society and communities in Tonga, leads effective and inclusive response to disasters and climate change.				
EOPO	1. The NDRMO improves their coordination of responses to disaster in line with DRM policy.		2. CSOs better represent and support community DRM and climate priorities prior, during and following DRM and climate related events.		3. Stronger DRM coordination in Tonga supports effective, inclusive and locally led responses to disaster.
IO	1.1 NDRMO has sufficient staff with appropriate technical expertise to implement DRM policy.	1.2 NDRMO has operational plans to coordinate inclusive and countrywide disaster response.	2.1 Select Tongan CSOs are better able to serve their communities drawing on a comprehensive range of DRM capabilities, including protection and inclusion.	2.2 Communication and support systems for village DRM committees is improved.	3.1 NDRMO DRM and cluster Standard Operating Procedures are reviewed and updated at least every six months. / 3.2 Coordination mechanisms and GoT have timely access to information on DRM related matters, including attention to inclusion and protection.
Initial outputs	• In line positions established and filled, according to technical, capacity and locational requirements. • NDRMO utilises inline and in house capacity to identify and fulfil core responsibilities in line with DRM policy. • NDRMO establishes working relationships with other relevant Got ministries. • NDRMO establishes working relationships with relevant CSOs and community level DRM implementation.		• CSOs utilise grant funding to support DRM mechanisms including at village and community level to prepare, respond and recovery from disaster and climate change impact. • CSOs establish systems to collect and represent community level DRM needs and experience to Got and other DRM stakeholders. • CSOs utilise grant finding to continue to develop their expertise and capacity in DRM related areas with particular attention to protection and inclusion. • CSOs develop their program management systems to meet Australian government minimum requirements.		• Comprehensive roles, responsibilities and expectations for all DRM stakeholders are established and communicated by GoT. • An information management process that provides relevant DRM related information is established and maintained. • All DRM stakeholders regularly communicate their activities, plans and results to the GoT. • Relevant DFAT programs regularly share information and capacity with NDRMO and Tonga CSOs.
	• Mechanism established to provide additional funding to GoT and CSOs, as required, during a disaster response and recovery.				
Indicative Inputs	TA support Direct financing Surge funding mechanism Facilitation with other DFAT programs		DRM CSO grant system		Information management process established. Funding for coordination clusters. Facilitation of DRM stakeholder meetings.

E: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Governance Arrangements and Structure

101. Well-formed internal governance and management operations are important for the successful delivery of the Investment. Key considerations include the role of governance bodies and DFAT's management of the investment, as well as ensuring effective risk identification and management actions are included in the mandates and agendas of the investment governance structure to ensure these become an effective vehicle for sharing insights on risk between DFAT and stakeholders.

102. Strengthening the cluster system as the primary mechanism for dialogue between the GoT and CSOs for preparedness is a priority of the investment and DFAT will be mindful of not setting up parallel meetings and mechanisms which duplicate the cluster system or place an additional meeting burden on stakeholders.

103. The investment governance structure will operate at two levels: (1) GoT and Post oversight and policy direction of the investment – the Tala Kei Kapa Steering Committee; and (2) a working level partnership forum among DFAT, GoT and delivery partners that focuses on implementation – the Tala Kei Kapa Working Group. Leadership opportunities for women and people with disability in investment governance and management structures will be pursued and prioritised by Post, as will the identification and proactive management of risks.

104. As the primary governance tier, Post will establish the Tala Kei Kapa Steering Committee. Membership of the steering committee consists of NDRMO representatives, Nuku'alofa Post and CSFT to provide oversight of, and policy direction to the investment, prioritise requests, address significant risks and identify and action lessons learned. The Steering Committee will not be involved in day-to-day operational matters but will convene every six months to review Tala Kei Kapa strategic direction, emerging significant risks and annual reports and workplans. Resource support will be provided to representatives of OPDs and women's CSOs to facilitate their participation in the meetings, as well as preparation and consultation outside of the meeting periods.

105. Risk is a standing agenda item at Steering Committee meetings and significant risks will be consistently escalated to the Steering Committee by the Working Group. Risk will be a factor in determining CSO grants and approval of NDRMO work plans.

106. A second level of governance will be the Tala Kei Kapa Working Group established by Post to coordinate and provide advice on decisions made at the activity level. The Working Group will convene quarterly and be tasked with advising on implementing the decisions made by the Steering Committee. Risk identification and management will be a standing agenda item for the Tala Kei Kapa Working Group, with significant risks escalated to the Tala Kei Kapa Steering Committee. This group is responsible for providing advice, feedback, and expertise on NDRMO annual work plans and CSO approved applications to make them more gender and climate responsive. DFAT will aim for 50% women's representation on the Working Group and support women's meaningful participation through dedicated preparation time, and rotating meeting locations to accommodate different women's availability.

107. Membership of the Working Group will include: NDRMO, Nuku'alofa Post, CSO, GEDSI specialist (implementing partner) and may include other specialist members as required such as climate (CRC) and infrastructure (GoT Ministry of Infrastructure).

Management

108. The investment will be managed by Post with a 0.3 FTE A-based staff and 0.8 FTE Locally Engaged Staff anticipated to oversee the investment. This reflects the arrangement for managing the current humanitarian investment, including CSO grant making. However, it is anticipated the investment will be delivered and managed in a more strategic, organised and streamlined manner. To test this assumption, a key evaluation question has been included so an eventual mid-term review can assess DFAT management arrangements and provide recommendations if required.

109. Post's deep understanding of Tonga DRM settings remains central to investment management. It will be important for the investment to capture learning on what works, what doesn't, and why—including partner performance—to inform DFAT decision-making, sustainability and effective adaptive management of the investment.

Early Activities December 2025 – March 2026

110. The following early activities will establish the investment and set it up for success.

- Design and facilitate an inception workshop for key stakeholders for the Investment in Tonga. The purpose of the workshop will be to socialise the investment with key stakeholders and further test investment alignment with related GoT and CSO priorities and programs.
- An inception meeting with representatives from aligned Australian investments such as AHP Disaster READY, P4SP, PHWP, Australia Assists, PIEMA, CRC and HLC to determine early sight of potential entry and leverage points and provide strategic input to help shape possibilities and reduce the potential for overlap and duplication.
- A Fiduciary Risk Assessment (FRA) of the NDRMO systems will be completed by an independent contractor (at the request Nuku'alofa Post) to identify safeguards needed within the Direct Financing Agreement with NDRMO to ensure financial accountability and effective use of resources.
- Scoping and sequencing activities, with a prioritisation of activities that deliver visible, near-term results and / or support existing reform actions and government priorities. This includes prioritising cluster planning for the cyclone season.
- Initiating procurement for the implementing partner.
- Developing a 'light touch' MEL Plan and systems (data collection, analysis and sense-making processes) for the investment. The MEL Plan will build on and update the MEL Approach and Framework described in this IDD and will align with DFAT's Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Standards. The systems will support DFAT to collect the necessary data to monitor, understand and report on investment performance through DFAT's Investment Monitoring Report (IMR) process.
- Supporting the CSFT to complete due diligence processes to be eligible for grants and strengthen its CSO coordination and leadership role.
- Develop a set of due diligence tools for use by the investment and Post to provide to local CSOs to meet DFAT's due diligence requirements.
- Establish the Steering Committee and Working Group with an agreed Terms of Reference and membership.

Policy Dialogue

111. The implementation of Tonga's Disaster Risk Management Policy remains a critical priority to the Government of Tonga, yet progress has been slow due to competing national priorities. Government will continue its current live engagements in a range of policy dialogue mechanisms to influence key DRM reform, including:

- Bilateral strategic dialogues where DRM priorities can be elevated and linked to broader development cooperation, including milestone payments of this investment. In particular, the regular informal monthly meetings between Post and NDRMO.
- The FRANZ Partnership (activated during the HTHH response in 2022) continues to be an important cooperative arrangement for coordination of humanitarian assistance between France, Australia and New Zealand.
- Supporting NDRMO to influence other Government agencies to incorporate the DRM Policy in their Corporate Plans and Sector Frameworks.
- Leveraging policy dialogue through other Australian investments such as Australia Assists and Climate Resilient Communities.
- Public diplomacy and advocacy, including support for civil society engagement and media campaigns that promote the importance of DRM policy implementation.

112. The focus will be on practical improvements where there is an appetite and capacity for change to occur, particularly the DRM Act and Policy as the primary instruments for DRM reform. The investment will directly support the DRM Act and DRM Policy implementation and operationalisation.

113. A policy priority for DFAT will be to engage the GoT in dialogue to ensure additional roles in the NDRMO are absorbed as the "off ramp" to Australia's support and there remains a sufficiently resourced NDRMO.

114. The investment will also bridge the gap between the NDRMO and CSOs by facilitating dialogue and contributing to more trusting relationships. As CSOs need Village DRM Committee approval of their proposals, this strengthens locally led decision making and improves the governance and accountability of CSOs.

115. Policy dialogue will be informed by DFAT's technical and contextual analysis and supported by program-generated evidence and performance data. DFAT will engage in sectoral and cross-sectoral dialogue in partnership with other donors and local reform champions using evidence to advocate for inclusive and sustainable reforms. Processes for agreeing policy priorities will be iterative and grounded in regular engagement with stakeholders. The Policy Dialogue Matrix (Annex A) outlines potential entry points for policy engagement across investment areas, including indicative roles for DFAT and other key actors.

Profile and Public Diplomacy

116. The investment will provide a platform to continue to elevate Australia's humanitarian profile in Tonga and the region. Post will identify key opportunities for public diplomacy aligned with investment milestones and outcomes. These may include launch events, knowledge-sharing fora, media engagements, and digital storytelling that highlights Australia's contribution to improved humanitarian action. In the event Tala Kei Kapa -specific signage, branding, and communication materials are developed, these will adhere to DFAT's accessibility guidelines, and Post will ensure regular content production for use in Australia's domestic and international platforms.

Sustainability

117. A central goal of the investment is to enhance sustainability by strengthening systems, institutions, and local leadership capacity. Recognising that donor support is time-bound, the program will focus on embedding sustainable practices into the design and implementation of all activities. This includes policy dialogue with the GoT to ensure budget provision for government positions is increasingly accounted for over the life of the investment.

118. Climate change impacts—such as disaster risk, displacement, and increased economic volatility—pose additional challenges to sustainability. These will be partially addressed by integrating climate risk management into institutional planning and supporting locally led adaptation strategies which will reduce the impact of climate change.

F: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

119. MEL will support accountability and demonstrate the effectiveness of the investment delivery and results. An initial MEL Framework has been developed to IO level. The investment's MEL Framework purposefully aligns with the DRM policy MEL framework to ensure it is supporting local systems reporting.

120. An implementing partner will be procured to deliver investment MEL, including systems, plan, data collection, analysis and reporting. In implementation, indicators will be tested with stakeholders and confirmed, and the MEL Framework updated with details on how to track each indicator. A MEL Plan with associated tools will be developed at implementation in line with DFAT's Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Standards. The MEL Plan will specify how DFAT will work with implementing partners to collect GEDSI data and apply it to program management and decision making. The MEL Plan will be quality assured against these standards at 6 months from the start of the investment. All MEL activities will be conducted in accordance with DFAT's privacy, ethics, and safeguarding policies.

121. The MEL Framework has the program goal, objective, outcomes and draft indicators (with reference to relevant DFAT Tier 2 indicators). An investment baseline will be developed within 6 months of beginning

implementation, drawing heavily on documents for after action reviews and evaluations of recent responses. Details of the responsible parties and the approval processes for each MEL action of the program will also be included in the MEL Plan.

122. The MEL Plan will be designed, implemented, and overseen by qualified MEL practitioners with input from GEDSI practitioners to ensure collection of sex- and disability- disaggregated data at a minimum. The plan will include activities to monitor the effective implementation of risks, risk mitigation, and safeguarding procedures.

123. The primary users of the MEL Plan will be DFAT, the GoT and CSO delivery partners. Data will be shared transparently to facilitate a collective understanding of targets and performance. MEL data will feed into governance structures and DFAT quality processes.

124. Monitoring data will be collected and analysed every 6 months, producing a balance of quantitative and qualitative data, recognising that the latter can provide additional context that enables more comprehensive analysis, including on gender and disability.

125. Governance and management meetings will also provide a formal opportunity to reflect, learn, and refocus. Learning will focus on each stakeholder's role in contributing to the investment's EOPO. It will identify what has worked, what has not worked, and how it can be improved. DFAT will initiate events to share learnings more formally with stakeholders where it will add value.

126. The investment will be independently reviewed at the mid-point of the five-year investment period, with the option of an evaluation at the end of the five years. These processes will assess performance against outcomes and select DFAT quality criteria. A focused review of the investment or individual partners may be conducted at any time, should the monitoring processes identify a cause for concern.

127. The following principles underpin the approach to the MEL Framework:

- Focused on understanding and building knowledge of the broader DRM landscape: The investment is committed to building an evidence base around DRM in Tonga and understanding how its work can support contextually appropriate change.

- Utilisation-focused: Data collection and analysis will be designed to directly meet the needs and interests of key stakeholders, monitor risk, and support learning, adaptive management, and decision making.

- Responsive to GEDSI considerations: Investment will seek to understand who is / is not engaged in its work, how its activities impact on diverse groups, and to build evidence that supports policy advocacy and programming to elevate diverse voices and meet their needs.

- Committed to locally led development and humanitarian action, and supporting genuine enabling environments for localised practice: Using contextually relevant and culturally responsive methods and tools across the MEL cycle of the investment. Tongan or Pacific MEL capability should be utilised in the first instance.

Key Evaluation Questions

128. A selection of questions has been formulated and may form the basis for review or evaluation at the mid-point and the end of the investment. It is assumed these will be adapted as the investment matures.

- To what extent has the GoT been able to provide the leadership and resourcing to progress the DRM Policy and associated actions?

- In what ways have CSOs championed community priorities and locally led preparation and response?

- In what ways are cluster stakeholders changing their communication or behaviour? Is there evidence of more cohesion and collaboration amongst stakeholders?

- To what extent is the investment locally owned and influenced at all stages of the DRM cycle (preparedness, response, recovery)? How have DFAT and other international DRM partners supported local leadership? (ALNAP)

- To what extent did the investment work in ways that were efficient, maximising outcomes from available time and resources?

- To what extent and how has the investment increased the number of people with disabilities, women, and other socially disadvantaged groups participating in investment activities?

- How effective is the investment's MEL Plan for reporting and for providing data and evidence for prioritisation and adaptation?

- To what extent is the investment fulfilling its value proposition as described in its design?

- Are DFAT's management arrangements for the investment providing effective and efficient delivery of activities, including proactive risk management? What changes are recommended?

Processes and Reporting

129. During the inception phase the following activities are expected:

- MEL practitioners engaged; full MEL Plan and tools to be developed.

- GEDSI practitioners engaged as required to ensure the MEL Plan that includes GEDSI markers and tools.

- Investment baseline developed.

- MEL Plan and tools quality assured.

130. Alongside this, there will be a series of ongoing, bi-annual, annual, mid-point and ad-hoc activities:

131. Ongoing activities include an opportunity for regular engagement and monitoring in-country, including with investment participants as appropriate.

132. Bi-annual activities include

- Progress reporting: These reports should adhere to DFAT Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Standards but may be infographic/ presentation based and report against EOPO and IOs utilising case studies.

- In-country progress discussions: formal opportunities for all stakeholders to report on progress and standards, peer review others' work and build mutual accountability. This establishes a process for locally led accountability for when a disaster strikes.

- Partner performance meetings.

133. Annual activities include: DFAT's annual Investment Quality Reporting processes including IMRs and Tier 2 and 3 indicators.

134: Mid-point and end activities include: Independent review/evaluation and End of program report (Year 5).

135. Ad-hoc activities include:

- After Action Reviews.

- Whole-of-program and/or partner review if concerns are identified.

- Monitoring visits.

G: GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY EQUITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND OTHER CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender Equality, Disability Equity and Social Inclusion

136. This investment will contribute to the achievement of GEDSI priorities shared by Australia and Tonga through its focus on improving GEDSI outcomes across the disaster management cycle. The approach aligns with Australia's commitment to inclusive humanitarian action, recognising that addressing gender inequalities, the marginalisation of people with disabilities, and social exclusion is fundamental to achieving sustainable progress.

137. The following analysis draws on a literature review and in-country consultations with women's organisations and OPDs. Humanitarian crises exacerbate existing inequities and unequal social norms, increasing the risk that women and girls will be subject to gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual assault and harassment. This heightened threat of violence also prevents women and girls from accessing essential supplies and infrastructure, including water and sanitation facilities, menstrual health and hygiene products, and vital, life-saving nutrition. By limiting access to essential sexual and reproductive health care services, disasters and post-conflict crises also precipitate higher rates of maternal and child mortality. These deprivations are so extreme that the WHO estimates 60% of preventable maternal mortality occurs in countries affected by humanitarian crises.[6]

138. These gendered deprivations are exacerbated and compounded by other social identities, norms, and relations to which women and girls may be subject, including poverty, LGBTIQA+ identity, ethno-linguistic heritage, age, and disability status, among others.[7] These intersectional experiences of relative privilege and oppression create complex needs to which adequate and appropriate humanitarian interventions can and must respond. At the same time, women with the appropriate support, resources and leadership roles can contribute to more inclusive preparedness, response and recovery.

139. People with disabilities face disproportionate risk and their specific needs are seldom catered for as most preparedness activities focus on a "one size fits all" approach. Approximately 15% of the world's population has some form of disability, however, at a country level, official statistics may state substantially differing and much lower estimates. This is often due to the methodologies used to estimate numbers of people with disabilities. Additionally, disability is extremely varied both in impairment type and severity so, particularly in a rapid onset disaster, it is extremely difficult to know the scale and particular types of assistive devices and other supplies that may be needed.

140. Gender and disability responsive disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response through the investment can socialise equitable disaster preparation, management, and response practices and approaches. In pre-disaster phases, programs can engage women and people with disabilities in planning, preparation, and response activities through ensuring comprehensive and inclusive consultation and participation, inclusion targets for staff and contractors, and gender aware and disability inclusive approaches, training, briefing, and coordination (including distribution protocols). Throughout crises, and in immediate post-disaster conditions, programs can promote gender responsiveness by targeting assistance to female-heads-of-households, remaining sensitive to women's unpaid care and labour, and ensuring assistance and community engagement is scheduled in ways that enhance safety and protection for women and girls, including by ensuring these processes occur during daylight hours. Similarly, these programs can also embed disability responsiveness by ensuring reasonable accommodations are made in the targeting, collection processes and location of HERS, including by maintaining close coordination and communications with OPDs throughout preparation for, and during, disaster events.

141. The investment enables GEDSI mainstreaming as being a fundamental approach underlying and informing all workstreams. Key areas where GEDSI will be integrated and addressed include:

- Partnerships with CSOs, including OPDs and women's organisations.
- Promotion of GEDSI awareness raising material through investment activities.
- Support for government to strengthen leadership and management systems to better enable participation of diverse people.
- Partnering with bilateral gender programs to promote good practices through case studies and communications to influence harmful social norms.

[6] CARE. "Gender in Emergencies." CARE Emergency Toolkit, 2023. https://www.careemergencytoolkit.org/gender/gender-in-emergencies/
[7] UN Women & UNPRPR. 2021. Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf

- Strengthening representation of diverse groups and ensuring consideration of GEDSI issues within the investment governance structure.
- Explore a partnership with *Women Weather Watch* to provide insights and model women's leadership in disaster preparedness and climate resilient communities.

142. Based on the design's gender analysis, this investment would likely qualify for a 'Significant' score based on the OECD-DAC gender policy marker. Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the investment.

143. The investment will contribute to Australia's *International Gender Equality Strategy (2025)* by:

- Delivering gender equitable climate action and humanitarian assistance, including enabling women's leadership of disaster preparedness and response efforts.
- Supporting locally led approaches to women's leadership.
- Engaging with traditional leaders and government officials to address documented barriers including cultural restrictions on women's (public) participation. This includes supporting policy dialogue and working with churches to promote positive messaging about women's leadership.
- Promoting women-only consultation spaces for disaster planning, whilst separate engagement strategies will ensure meaningful participation of fakaleitis community members and men as gender equality advocates.
- Promote emergency shelters and distribution sites to include women-only areas with lockable facilities, adequate lighting, and female security presence. These spaces will provide privacy for breastfeeding, feminine hygiene needs, and confidential reporting of protection concerns.

144. While the investment is not specifically focused on children, they are a priority group intended to benefit from investment outcomes. Design findings recommend this investment supports current child protection protocols established for community engagement, disaster response, and recovery activities by the clusters, as well as government and CSOs. The investment will seek opportunities to suggest and promote improvements to child-responsive disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities as required.

145. The investment will contribute to Australia's Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (2024) by:

- Mainstreaming disability equity principles across humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery activities.
- Ensuring all clusters prioritise disability-responsive planning and coordination activities; invite OPDs to participate in clusters.
- Resource OPD participation in clusters through accessible venues, communication formats, transport, and other reasonable accommodations to ensure OPDs can actively participate.
- Reimburse OPDs for their time if they do not have dedicated personnel to attend cluster meetings and contribute their expertise.
- Ensure that government support and CSO training includes accessibility across all aspects of preparedness planning, including information and communication (e.g. early warning systems), facilities, services and processes.
- Promoting and providing technical support to the government to improve their reporting of disability, gender and age disaggregated data through monitoring of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.*
- Promotion of accessible humanitarian supplies and inclusive supply chains, as part of the role the investment plays alongside PHWP and HLC. This includes appropriate assistive technology that address the needs of people with different types of disabilities. Coordinate with HLC to review the outcomes and lessons learned from its pilot study, to apply to investment planning.

Locally led humanitarian action

146. The investment also adopts and integrates local leadership and processes - as described in DFAT's Guidance Note on Locally Led Development (2023) - which is an important principle within Tonga's DRM Policy. The design process has integrated locally led development principles through its engagement and consultation with diverse local actors, a co-design approach with key stakeholders and embedding local leadership as a key program outcome. There is strong evidence of Tongan actors and institutions demonstrating leadership in determining priorities for improved humanitarian planning, response and recovery. This is a sound and sustainable localisation foundation for the investment to build from, and it is expected that implementation will continue to be grounded in locally led intention and approach.

147. It will be important to monitor and assess the impact DFAT's due diligence standards and other compliance measures have on CSOs and locally led and managed approaches more broadly. This has been identified in the MEL Framework at design and will be expanded on in the MEL Plan.

148. The investment will value local knowledge, priorities, networks, and cultural understanding in its design and delivery, recognising that this engenders more effective, relevant, and efficient disaster risk management with more sustainable outcomes. The investment will seek to integrate indigenous wisdom, customary practices, and traditional skills into its approach. The work by Tonga Meteorological Services documenting traditional forecasting and early warning knowledge and practices was highlighted in design consultations as a means of promoting greater local and Indigenous participation in the investment. Embracing the leadership of local actors and communities is one of the principles for addressing climate and environmental crises.

149. The design process has developed these localisation principles to guide implementation; centring local decision making and supporting development of capacity as driven by local actors at multiple levels/in multiple sectors.:

- Build on existing national mechanisms, initiatives, and systems.
- Ensure a Tonga-led and -owned approach – working at an appropriate pace and timeframe.
- Creating opportunities for local suppliers to participate in the investment.

Climate Change

150. This investment will contribute to Australia's *Climate Change Action Strategy 2020-25* primarily by supporting the GoT to adapt to climate change, and to plan, prepare for and respond to climate related impacts. Climate resilience has been woven throughout the Program Logic starting with the goal and down to activity level. Integration of climate change adaptation activities at the community level and promotion of climate risk analysis through the cluster system will be prioritised through the cycle of activities from preparedness to response and recovery.

151. The investment's support for operationalising the *DRM Act* inherently means a focus on climate change strategy, given the integration of climate adaptation and disaster risk management for joint consideration. Climate change is a secondary objective, and the investment is designed to thrive in the face of a climate related disaster. Resources and expertise for technical support in climate risk assessment and adaptation planning may be made available through aligned DFAT investments such as Australia Assists or the Climate Resilient Communities Support Unit.

152. CSOs will be supported in sharing their expertise in climate adaptation, and to localise capacity and resilience building. They will also be encouraged to explore adaptive action and resilience building and uncovering opportunities for collaboration with aligned climate change programs.

Private Sector Engagement and Innovation

153. While the investment's primary stakeholders are the GoT and CSO partners, opportunities to work with the local private sector will be encouraged by Post. This could take the form of procuring humanitarian supplies from local suppliers or expanding cash assistance through banks. Exploring the use of mobile top ups with telecom companies has been trialled by other programs and could be a useful foundation for the investment to expand on.

An emerging opportunity may be working with local media companies and journalists to promote community preparedness activities and disseminate key preparedness messaging through social media, radio and television networks.

154. The investment's focus on Tongan civil society as a key stakeholder and implementing partner represents an innovative departure from the status quo of delivery though International or Australian NGOs. It also represents more dedicated focus on supporting locally led humanitarian action, providing a valuable learning opportunity for DFAT and the sector. The investment will ensure, through its MEL Plan and processes, that a focus on research and learning is prioritised and that sharing and dissemination of lessons is built into management and governance activities so successes can be replicated.

H: BUDGET AND RESOURCES

155. The investment is intended to be scalable with the proposed budget allocation from the Tonga program fund being AUD10 million over five years (FY2025-2030), delivering activities with a value of approximately AUD2 million per annum. This is approximately the same value per year as the current humanitarian investment. An initial, indicative budget summary can be found below (Table 1). The summary makes provision for 3.5% each for MEL and GEDSI costs and a 5% allocation for operational costs. The total amount allocated to MEL, GEDSI and operational will be used to procure the services of an implementing partner to deliver MEL, GEDSI and due diligence services for the investment.

156. The investment will be flexible to accommodate surge / throughput funding provided by Canberra for response and recovery in the event of a significant disaster or multiple disasters. This may be reflected in the eventual budget as 'throughput' funding.

157. The investment will be managed by Post using existing DFAT resources, with approximately 0.3 FTE A-based staff and 0.8 FTE Locally Engaged Staff dedicated to day-to-day management, implementation oversight and CSO grant administration. Oversight will sit with the Head of Development (DHOM), ensuring strategic alignment across the Tonga program and consistent whole-of-government engagement. These resourcing levels reflect the current arrangements for managing the existing humanitarian investment, noting that this new investment is expected to be implemented in a more strategic and streamlined manner.

158. To manage DFAT's resources effectively Nuku'alofa Post will engage an implementing partner as the primary mechanism for program management, with costs fully provisioned in the investment budget (including MEL & GEDSI). The partner will support day-to-day implementation, coordination with government and CSOs, and surge requirements during disaster events.

Table 1: Initial Budget Summary

Budget Category/Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	%
Operations Costs	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	**500,000**	5
Program Activity Costs	1,730,000	1,730,000	1,730,000	1,730,000	1,730,000	**8,650,000**	86.5
GEDSI Costs	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	**350,000**	3.5
MEL Costs	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	**500,000**	5
TOTAL	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	**10,000,000**	100

I: PROCUREMENT AND PARTNERING

160. Post will procure an implementing partner through a competitive open tender process to deliver the investment's MEL, GEDSI and due diligence services in compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules

(CPRs). Contracted services are described in the investment's Statement of Requirements (under development) through a Deed and Service Order model.

161. Post will look to use procurement to address inequalities by promoting local, disability-inclusive, gender-responsive, and First Nations' procurement. Post may from time to time procure specific technical advice such evaluation services from the DFAT Panel or by going out to market. This will be done through a Service Order model with tasking notes or a terms of reference as appropriate.

162.Post will continue to provide support to the NDRMO and other government agencies through already established investments separate to the investment. As this investment increases direct financing to the NDRMO Post will procure a fiduciary risk assessment of NDRMO to assesses risks in their financial governance processes and identify safeguards and risk mitigation strategies, controls and treatments needed within the Direct Financing Agreement with NDRMO to ensure financial accountability is robust and there is an effective use of public resources.

J: RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFEGUARDS

163.The investment's approach to risk management is guided by the Australian Government's Development Risk Management Policy and Practice Notes (August 2023) and complies with the:

- Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 Cth (section 16) (the 'PGPA Act').
- Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 2023.
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (31000:2018) Risk Management Guidelines.

164. In accordance with the above policy, all investment risk and control measures are captured in a single risk register and will be guided by a risk management plan (including fraud control plan) to be developed by DFAT in the inception phase. The current Risk Register at Design has been developed with Post and draws on a) current experience implementing humanitarian preparedness and response programs in Tonga and b) analysis in this IDD. The risk register was developed using the Australian Government's Risk Factors Screening Tool template with the investment currently having a high 'inherent' and a medium 'residual' risk profile.

165.The risk register currently identifies 14 risks across 7 primary risk categories in the Risk Factors Screening Tool and outlines how the investment will manage each of these risks (avoid, treat, or accept). The risk register is a dynamic document that will be reviewed and updated by Post in AidWorks on a quarterly basis throughout implementation. The key risks that need to be managed are as follows:

- Use of Australian funds contracted to local partners are delayed and / or not used for intended purposes.
- Community beneficiaries of Australia's funding and resources through the Tonga HPPR are exposed to various types of safety hazards, risk and harm including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- Partners funded by the investment do not have the capacity or capability to absorb programming.
- DFAT does not have the requisite time to effectively directly manage and monitor such a complex program comprising so many individual contracts and partners.

166. The following mitigation measures are proposed to address these risks:

- Post engages with reliable and reputable partners by conducting proper due diligence and regular performance assessments, as well as close monitoring of the activity implementations.
- Partners have appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines in place, particularly for Child Protection and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH).
- Post works with partners to build capacity and capability and only enters into programming agreements where partners can demonstrate their ability to absorb the funding offered by Post and meet DFAT's due diligence standards.

167. DFAT owns the risk for the investment and will deploy the roles and resources to manage this risk effectively. Key roles are outlined below; however the investment will engender a strong risk management culture where staff across DFAT, government partners, CSOs and stakeholders actively monitor risks and raise issues for discussion. Nuku'alofa Post will be responsible for ensuring the investment's safeguards work is aligned with DFAT risks and safeguards policies. They will hold the implementing partner accountable for developing and implementing child protection, PSEAH, and other relevant safeguarding policies, consistent with current (2025) and future DFAT standards. There are high expectations of safeguarding compliance and effective management. There are also shared global commitments around safeguards such as Do No Harm principles with which the investment will adhere. Governance arrangements will include explicit oversight of safeguard implementation, ensuring even application across sectors and delivery partners. Likewise, all contracts under the investment will include explicit modern slavery provisions, aligned with Australia's Modern Slavery Act (2018).

168. Post will review and update the investment risk register monthly (and then in AidWorks quarterly), and risk management will be a standing agenda item at all investment management meetings, including Steering Committee and Working Group meetings.

169. The investment will be included in the internal escalation protocol, with the investment manager meeting with the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Development (DHOM) monthly to update the Tonga Australia Development Program Risk Register. This provides an opportunity to discuss with the SRO and also grants an opportunity to escalate to HOM to work through issues. Primary DFAT roles responsible for risk management:

- SRO: overall accountability for engaging with the investment's risk, including safeguarding and fraud/corruption risk.

- Investment Manager: responsible for overseeing day-to-day implementation. "Owns" operational/programmatic and DFAT policy compliance risks on the risk register.

- Agreement Manager: reviews and discusses changes to the risk register with the Investment Manager and updates the risk register in AidWorks.

170. Additional effort will also be made by Post to work with the GoT and CSOs to ensure they have an appropriate level of risk and safeguarding management processes that meet DFAT standards. This will provide assurance and engender a collective responsibility for managing and reducing potential risk and harm.

171. A fiduciary risk assessment of the NDRMO will be undertaken in the first 6 months given the increase in funding provided by this investment.

Child Protection, Sexual Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse and Environmental and Social Safeguards

172. The design has analysed the child protection, SEAH, and environmental and social safeguard (ESS) risks and found there to be a moderate rating after controls and treatments are applied.

- Child protection: Direct contact with children in the day-to-day investment activities is relatively unlikely, there is the potential for contact with children as part of monitoring visits and consultation processes.

- SEAH: The investment will create and sustain more inclusive policy and practice. It is anticipated this will support a reduction in the potential for power dynamics, particularly between men and women, to lead to exploitation and abuse.

- ESS: It is not anticipated there will be significant environmental or social risks created by the investment. One potential risk could be any infrastructure on the surrounding environment however the investment will not be directly engaging in construction activities.

- Safeguarding risks have been identified in the risk register. Post will ensure that safeguarding risk management is incorporated into governance and MEL processes and extends to government and downstream partners.

173. Mitigation measures to address what is likely to be an ongoing moderate rating will include:

- Mandatory child protection, ESS, and PSEAH training for all government and CSO staff and partners, and regular refresher sessions.

- Policies / Codes of Conduct include explicit references to child protection and PSEAH are signed by all staff and contractors.

- Incident reporting and investigation systems and procedures are in place.

- Recruitment screening measures are in place and utilised by DFAT and all investment partners.

- Mandatory reporting of child protection and SEAH incidents that meet DFAT timelines and standards.

- Criminal penalties for notifications and breaches are specified.

- Confirmation of staff accountabilities for safeguards management, and for handling complaints and notifications.

174. Post will be responsible for ensuring the investments safeguards work is aligned with DFAT risks and safeguards policies. There are high expectations of safeguarding compliance and effective management. There are also shared global commitments around safeguards such as Do No Harm principles with which the investment will adhere.

175. An investment Environmental Social Impact Report (ESIRs) and an Environmental and Social Safeguards Management Plan (ESMPs) will be developed by Post to support a more robust safeguarding environment. The ESMP will identify mitigation and management measures for environmental and social impacts of the investment activities and be prepared against the requirements of DFAT's Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy. The plans will include a thorough risk analysis considering Tonga's context, planned activities (people-to-people contact, involvement of women, people with disabilities), and the stakeholders (public sector, private companies, labour market etc.) so that there is a good understanding of these risks and appropriate ways of handling them.

Fraud Control

176. The investment will be delivered in a context with moderate to high fraud risks. Post will have mechanisms in place to proactively monitor, report, and manage fraud risks and will operationalise fraud requirements such as those outlined in DFAT's Fraud Control Toolkit for Funding Recipients and Risk Management Guide for Aid Investments. Key requirements:

- Evidence of organisational fraud control policies and anti-corruption and bribery policies.

- Making fraud and anti-corruption expectations known up-front with GoT, investment partners and stakeholders.

- Undertaking due diligence assessments to identify potential deficiencies and building in improvement measures using a capacity building approach (e.g. assisting the development of fraud risk assessments, providing training on policies / procedures).

- Ongoing communications/dialogue about zero tolerance and use of case studies, including in local languages and using context-specific examples.

- Maintaining robust and fit-for-purpose financial monitoring systems to prevent, detect, and correct instances of fraud and non-compliance with fraud controls, including commissioning independent audits.

- Robust financial controls and testing of controls (e.g. spot checks/sampling of invoices and receipts, procurements, overriding of any

ANNEX 1:

Alt text for image 1.

Line 1- Goal: Australia supports the Kingdom of Tonga to further develop its resilience and wellbeing.

Line 2- Objective: The Government of Tonga, together with civil society and communities in Tonga, leads effective and inclusive response to disasters and climate change.

Line 3- EOPO: (left column) 1. The NRMDO improves their coordination of responses to disaster and climate change impacts in line with DRM policy (middle column) 2. CSOs better represent and support community DRM and climate priorities prior, during and following DRM and climate related events. (right column) 3. Stronger DRM coordination in Tonga supports effective, inclusive and locally led responses to disaster and climate change.

Line 4- IO (left column) 1.1 NDRMO has sufficient staff with appropriate technical expertise to implement DRM policy. 1.2: NDRMO has operational plans to coordinate inclusive and countrywide disaster response. (middle column) 2.1: Select Tongan CSOs are better able to serve their communities drawing on a comprehensive range of DRM capabilities, including protection and inclusion. 2.2: Communication and support systems for village DRM committees is improved. (right column) 3.1: NDRMO DRM and cluster Standard Operating Procedures are reviewed and updated at least every six months. 3.2: Coordination mechanisms and GoT have timely access to information on DRM related matters, including attention to inclusion and protection.

Line 5- initial outputs (left column) In line positions established and filled, according to technical, capacity and locational requirements. NDRMO utilises inline and in house capacity to identify and fulfil core responsibilities in line with DRM policy. NDRMO establishes working relationships with other relevant GoT ministries. NDRMO establishes working relationships with relevant CSOs and community level DRM implementation. Mechanism established to provide additional funding to GoT and CSOs, as required, during a disaster response and recovery. (middle column) CSOs utilise grant funding to support DRM mechanisms including at village and community level to prepare, respond and recovery from disaster and climate change impacts. CSOs establish systems to collect and represent community level DRM needs and experience to GoT and other DRM stakeholders. CSOs utilise grant finding to continue to develop their expertise and capacity in DRM related areas with particular attention to protection and inclusion. CSOs develop their program management systems to meet Australian government minimum requirements. Mechanism established to provide additional funding to GoT and CSOs, as required, during a disaster response and recovery. (right column) Comprehensive roles, responsibilities and expectations for all DRM stakeholders are established and communicated by GoT. An information management process that provides relevant DRM related information is established and maintained. All DRM stakeholders regularly communicate their activities, plans and results to the GoT. Relevant DFAT programs regularly share information and capacity with NDRMO and Tonga CSOs.

Line 6- Indicative inputs: (left column) TA support, Direct financing, surge funding mechanism, facilitation with other DFAT programs. (middle column) DRM CSO Grant system. (Right Column) Information management process established, funding for coordination clusters, facilitation of DRM stakeholder meeting