

Fiji-Australia Institutional Partnerships Program (IPP)

Strategic Review

DFAT Management Response

The IPP Phase 2 (AUD \$22million, 2020-2025) has supported Fiji's stability, prosperity, and resilience to shocks through the strategic use of partnerships, policy dialogue and financing. It has built on the success of the first phase of governance support to Fiji through IPP Phase 1, 2015-2019.

The IPP Phase 2 has become increasingly demand driven to support GoF's evolving civil service reform priorities. It has fostered and progressed trusted working relationships between Fiji and Australia.

IPP Phase 2 activities have been implemented by selected partners in sub-sectors including: Public Financial Management through the Asian Development Bank (ADB); parliamentary strengthening through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); public service reform with the Ministry of Civil Service and the Ministry of Finance through the Fiji Program Support Facility (FPSF), and institutional capacity building through twinning arrangements between the Government of Fiji and Australian Government counterparts (Australian Taxation Office, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Victorian Parliament, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australian Electoral Commission, Australian Public Service Commission).

In 2024, DFAT commissioned a Strategic Review of the IPP for the period 2020-2024, focusing on its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability, as well as providing recommendations to support DFAT's management decisions on any future phases.

Key findings: The IPP Strategic Review (2024) found the second phase of IPP is well regarded by Fijian, Australian and other stakeholders, and is making relevant, effective, and useful contributions to its two intended EOPOS. The review found all partners involved in implementing the IPP are supportive of the program to continue largely as is, given the value they place on the current modality and the partnerships established.

DFAT's response to the Strategic Review: As outlined below, DFAT accepts the evaluation's findings and agrees with seven of the ten 10 recommendations, and partially agrees to the remaining three. Details of the Management Response to each recommendation is included in the table on the next page.

Individual management response to the summary of recommendations

Recommendation	Responsible	Response	Action Plan
Recommendation 1 A new phase of IPP should occur, with design commencing in mid-2025. Given that the program is very well regarded by the Government of Fiji and has made strong progress towards its two EOPOs, consideration should be given to increasing the scope and budget for the new phase.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with the recommendation in principle, noting DFAT's intention to develop a new phase of the IPP from September 2025, subject to budget and other approvals.
Recommendation 2 A new IPP phase should maintain an appropriate balance between enabling partners to respond to specific technical priorities of each Fiji agency, while being alert to opportunities to work in more coordinated ways that model and progress whole of government public service reform.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with the recommendation and will use design update process to explore ways to enhance coordination to strengthen whole-of-government reform.
Recommendation 3 A new IPP phase should maintain the program's use of a mix of complementary partnership approaches to consolidate reform outcomes, with an emphasis on institutional twinning between Fijian and Australian public sector agencies, and continuation of funding for selected relevant, and complementary activities of multilateral agencies in Fiji.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with the recommendation and will use the design update process to ensure implementation arrangements for any new phase continue to be a mix of modalities, such as of institutional twinning and multilateral agencies.
Recommendation 4 The current management structure should be remodelled to enhance capacity for more proactive	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation noting the benefits it could deliver for any new phase of IPP, particularly around efficiency and effectiveness. DFAT will

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<p>and strategic program management able to better contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthened capacity to progress outcome-level governance-type results monitoring and engagement of emerging opportunities for rapid response assistance capable of keeping the reform ball rolling, including the leveraging of synergies between pillars ensure responsiveness to timebound opportunities such as preliminary planning for the upcoming census and elections identify synergies and efficiencies and build linkages between activities (i.e. slightly expand communities of practice approach), when useful, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing lessons about effective capacity-strengthening and partnership approaches alignment of Flexifund efforts within MCS with work being undertaken by other ministries e.g. collaboration between MoF, MCS and FBOS in relation to HRMIS and FMIS trial ‘partnership brokering’ of two selected partnerships to help better understand the quality of these 			<p>use the design update process to revise the current governance and program management structure.</p>

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partnerships and ways to further strengthen partnerships in future, given their current stage and experience			
Recommendation 5 Increase cross-program resources and attention to identifying opportunities and implementing progress on GEDSI.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation and notes that while several activities and processes related to gender equality, disability inclusion and other forms of social inclusion have been supported across IPP, there may be opportunities to strengthen GEDSI integration. DFAT will explore opportunities for better integration of GEDSI through the design update process.
Recommendation 6 Strengthen and better resource program MEL to generate shared learning about what works well and success factors, and better collate information about the program's overall contribution to strengthened institutional partnerships, individual agency capacity, development outcomes and progress in terms of Australia's standing as Fiji's partner of choice.	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation and will use the design process to revisit IPP's MEL ecosystem to streamline and strengthen the approach, including options to better resource program MEL.
Recommendation 7 To inform the next phase of IPP, consider the benefits and costs of using the Fiji Program Support Platform to add value (without risking loss of direct government-to-government relationships), including the degree to which it can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assume responsibility for some administrative tasks undertaken by AHC officials 	DFAT	Agree	DFAT agrees with this recommendation and will use the design update process to explore how the Fiji Program Support Platform can assist and/or assume responsibility for elements of program management and support, MEL, GEDSI and climate programming and policy support.

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<p>b. Contribute to more proactive GEDSI programming</p> <p>c. Contribute to strengthening MEL capacity of IPP partners.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Consider the potential for a future IPP to actively facilitate and strengthen Fiji's contribution to governance reform in the Pacific region through funding of opportunities for other PICs to observe and benefit from IPP twinning activities.</p>	DFAT	Partially agree	DFAT partially agrees with this recommendation. As the IPP is demand driven and locally led, DFAT will explore this further and consider programming or policy interventions, as well as necessary resources to support this through the design process, if a priority for the Government of Fiji.
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>Within a future phase, a more structured Flexifund with clearer outputs and outcomes identified, and a robust, cross-government steering committee should be put in place to identify appropriate activities and steps needed to progress each focus area towards an agreed development outcome. This should be complemented by a 'flexible fund' that can both support key activities, but also other relevant, sometimes ad hoc initiatives given their diplomatic value and ability to position Australia as a first port of call and partner of choice.</p>	DFAT	Partially agree	DFAT partially agrees with this recommendation. As the IPP is demand driven and locally led, DFAT will consider appropriateness of any future flexi-fund intervention, and its related governance arrangements, through the design process.
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>For the remaining period of IPP implementation, the following activities should be considered:</p>	DFAT	Partially agree	DFAT partially agrees with this recommendation and notes each proposed activity's contribution to the design update. DFAT intends to undertake these or similar activities as part of the consultation with IPP stakeholders in the design update process. DFAT will also consider ways

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated discussions across Fijian participating agencies on their own learning about partnerships/twinning arrangements, transitioning to different ways of working with international partners, and other topics of relevance (this may be understood as a Fiji community of practice event, equivalent to the Australian version) Facilitated discussions among both Australian and Fijian partners about priorities for a subsequent phase, to inform the design process Facilitated reflections within each partnership area, perhaps using a qualified partnership broker, about the quality of partnership and ways to strengthen partnerships in future, given their current stage and experience <p>Commissioning more detailed case studies about institutional partnerships to showcase governance reform achievements and Australian and Fiji relations for promotion and diplomatic purposes.</p>			<p>to enhance strategic communications under the revised MEL plan for any future phase.</p>