

Fiji Community Development Program
Mid Term Review

FINAL

Mid Term Review Report

Submitted by

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Acronyms

APTC	Australian Pacific Technical College
ASSP	Australian Civil Society Support Program
CAP	Community Action Program
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CfPs	Call for Proposals
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FCDP	Fiji Community Development Program
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GES	Government Engagement Strategy
GoF	Government of Fiji
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MELF	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework
MTR	Mid Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	Non State Actor
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WSMP	Water Supply Management Plan

Executive Summary

A Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Fiji Community Development Program (FCDP) was commissioned by DFAT and conducted October – November 2014. The purpose of the MTR was twofold: “to ensure accountability in assessing contractor performance” and to support DFAT in “determining whether to take the option to extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2-year phase of the program (2015-17).” The MTR Terms of Reference (TOR) also noted the “review will also be used to inform DFAT on how to effectively improve program performance for FCDP Phase 2, with a focus on management systems and the quality of the program delivery”.

The overarching goal of the FCDP is to “deliver social and economic benefits to the people of Fiji through strengthened civil society organisations”. The PDD defines two main objectives:

Objective 1: To mitigate social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji by funding the community development work of CSOs.

Objective 2: To strengthen CSO capacity to deliver relevant and efficient programs for poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji.

The FCDP is a 5 year program. The Program Design Document (PDD) sets out a 3 years + 2 years timeframe. The first phase (May 2012-May 2015) is worth AUD 13 Million (AUD 15 million over 5 years). The Program is run from three field locations – Labasa in the north, Lautoka in the west and the Suva-Nausori corridor in the central/eastern Division with the intention “to expand the reach of CSO services particularly in rural Fiji and informal urban settlements.”¹

The Program is being implemented through the managing contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD. The managing contractor is responsible for distributing and tracking a variety of CSO grants for service delivery, as well as strengthening the capacity of CSOs to deliver effective, demand-driven services. At the time of the MTR, the Program has successfully disbursed grants through three mechanisms to date: Core funding; Call for Proposals (CfP); and the Community Action Program (CAP). As at June 2014, 65 grants to 40 CSOs totalling over FJD 6 million have been disbursed.²

The MTR response to the evaluation purposes need to be understood in relation to changing contexts, in which the Program has been designed, implemented and expected to continue. The FCDP builds on a long history of Australian support to the Fiji CSO sector and was designed to supersede the Australian Civil Society Support Program (ACSSP) managed at Suva Post from 2000-2012. The FCDP was implemented during the time of constrained Australia-Fiji government relations. FCDP was designed in part as a response to the suspended Australia-Fiji relations and has been implemented within this context. The implementation has been appropriate to date given this context; however future implementation will need to be cognisant of resumed Australia-Fiji relations with the recommendations provided in this MTR responsive to this change in context.

The Australian aid policy agenda has also changed from the time of design and recommendations in this MTR are responsive to the changes in strategic focus of the Australian aid program. In particular the recommendations seek to leverage aid through improved cooperation within the CSO sector and through strengthened CSO partnership with the Government of Fiji (GoF).

The MTR was exploratory and used a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to reveal perspectives and views from key stakeholders in relation to the five main areas of inquiry defined through the Key Evaluation Questions. The MTR also sought to reveal stakeholder perspectives and views on the preferred future of DFAT support for CSOs in Fiji. The MTR consultations were conducted over 11 days in Suva, Labasa and Lautoka. 101 individuals (men: 44 women: 57) participated in the MTR. CSOs, the FCDP staff and DFAT staff were given priority opportunity to participate recognising

¹ FCDP PDD, p.4

² FCDP Annual Report 2013-2014

their primary stake in the Program and MTR. Specific cohorts of CSOs who have participated in a range of FCDP activities and who have specific experience to speak to different aspects of the FCDP were identified and invited to participate.

Key findings and recommendations of the MTR have been informed by stakeholder responses and were reinforced by multiple (diverse) stakeholder groups and across the three locations which give the MTR team confidence in the presentation within the MTR Report.

Key findings in relation to the 5 areas of inquiry are noted below:

1. Mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities:

The MTR found that the FCDP is achieving its first objective to a good extent, recognising that change is incremental, complex and behaviour change associated with community development is a long term investment which can often only be assessed beyond the life of grant periods, which at this point in the Program are relatively short.

The Program has disbursed and is managing a portfolio of grants across five thematic areas which are relevant to economic and social hardship: community development planning, health, food security, livelihoods and environment, climate change and disaster response.

The Program responded to learnings from the First Call for Proposals (CfP) in November 2012 to better target CSO grant activities within the last round of grants disbursement. Efforts have been made to target rural and remote communities, representing the most poor and excluded communities in Fiji, often with limited access to services. Efforts have also been made by the Program to increase community voice and identification of needs in line with the Program objectives.

2. Strengthened CSO capacity:

The MTR revealed different views on the effectiveness of CSO capacity building within the FCDP, highlighting that capacity building has been effective for some CSOs but not others. This finding is informed by the fact that the CSO sector in Fiji is diverse and multifaceted.

The MTR identified the absence of an overarching strategic approach and framework to guide 'CSO strengthening'. The MTR found that capacity building to date has been focused on grants management with little focus on improving CSO cooperation and generating evidence based practice. The MTR identified the need for a broader strategic focus towards strengthening CSOs beyond grant management.

3. Managing contractor model:

The MTR identified a wide range of experiences and understandings of the FCDP and the Australian aid program, recognising the diverse range of CSOs which FCDP is partnering with. Views expressed by more established CSOs were somewhat different to less established CSOs and CAP recipients. Experience of CSOs receiving core funding under ASSP and FCDP also revealed both perceived benefits and challenges of the intermediary model. Overall the MTR found that benefits of the intermediary model outweighed risks. Risks identified to date have been managed but there is a need for DFAT to adequately communicate to CSO partners and the broader CSO community the strategic intent of the Australian aid program and within this the FCDP. A planned sector wide assessment of the CSO sector by DFAT Suva is expected to support future DFAT strategy regarding CSO relations.

4. Program management systems:

The MTR assessed three aspects of program management, the grants management system, human resources and appropriate balance of budget. Whilst a number of issues within program management were identified which have mitigated achievement of Program objectives, in the main program management was found to be efficient and effective. The MTR identified ways in which program management can be streamlined in Phase 2 to better support the achievement of Program Objectives.

5. Program outreach:

Outreach offices in the west and north have supported the achievement of Program outcomes especially under the CAP, though their capacity was not fully realised through CSO partnerships in the first CfP. CSOs value the accessibility, support and local knowledge of FCDP staff in the outreach offices. The offices have enabled DFAT to expand the reach of CSO services particularly in rural Fiji and to support them in their work in rural and remote populations. The MTR found effective practice in relation to monitoring and capacity building, though there was only limited evidence of “crafting of location specific innovations”. The outreach offices provide an important contribution to achieving Program objectives in FCDP Phase 2 including a continued focus on poverty mitigation in rural and remote areas; enabling opportunities for CSOs networking and increased cooperation and enabling strengthened relations between CSOs and local government (administrative and line ministries). The MTR recommend that informed by the overarching strategic framework and direction of the Program to meet objectives, each outreach offices develops a localised plan taking into account the unique make up and priorities of CSO partners.

Key recommendations which emerged from the MTR are listed below:

Recommendation 1: That DFAT extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2 year phase of the Program (2015-17) inclusive of refinement of the strategic approach and program implementation as defined in the MTR recommendations.

Recommendation 2: That FCDP continue to focus on rural and remote communities as the primary focus area for ‘mitigating economic and social hardships faced poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji’.

Recommendation 3: That FCDP develop a strategic capacity building strategy for ‘strengthening CSOs’. The capacity building strategy should address the following:

- orientate capacity building beyond grant management to strengthening the CSO sector as legitimate and valuable partners in development
- enhance sector based collaboration of CSOs and encourage consortiums in the implementation of grant supported community development work
- focus on partnering with CSOs already engaged with the FCDP to date, including CSOs who requested capacity building support
- support replication of the community profiling and community development planning process (CAP) amongst the broader CSO sector following thorough review and revision
- prioritise research and learning to scale-up Program and CSO initiatives within the broader CSO community, private sector and GoF and strengthen CSO engagement in partnerships with government and policy dialogue

Recommendation 4: That FCDP develop a Government Engagement Strategy (GES). The GES should address the following:

- strengthen and facilitate collaboration and partnerships of CSOs with relevant government ministries at national and sub-national level

- promote and influence with CSOs scale up of FCDP initiatives and CSO programming within the GoF
- explore opportunities with the Pacific Risk Resilience Program (PRRP) and the GoF Ministry of Strategic Planning to align government requirements for community profiling
- link and contribute to the Government of Fiji mandate for poverty reduction in line with the established GoF monitoring framework

Recommendation 5: That FCDP revise the Program Executive Committee (PEC) Terms of Reference (TOR) to maximise the expertise and experience of the PEC members (external advisors) by expanding their role to provide oversight of the strategic direction and monitor consistently during the remainder of the Program.

Recommendation 6: That FCDP revise job descriptions and task definitions for Program Officers, and Finance and Administration positions. The Learning and Development Officers contracts should not be extended for Phase 2.

Recommendation 7: That FCDP develop field office strategy plans taking into consideration the unique characteristics and interests of local CSOs and sector approach and Government/ CSO partnership.

1. Introduction

This document presents findings of an independent Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Fiji Community Development Program (FCDP) conducted October – November 2014, commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

1.1 Evaluation purpose

The MTR Report responds to the evaluation purpose set out in the MTR Terms of Reference (TOR):

“The purpose of this MTR is to ensure accountability in assessing contractor performance for the first 3-year phase of the FCDP program (Phase 1: May 2012-May 2015). The MTR will be a key independent assessment that will be used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Aid Program (DFAT – AAP) to determine whether to take the option to extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2-year phase of the program (2015-17).”

As defined in the TOR “the review will also be used to inform DFAT on how to effectively improve program performance for FCDP Phase 2, with a focus on management systems and the quality of the program delivery”.

The five Key Evaluation Questions for the MTR as set out in the TOR are noted in the findings section and further detailed in Annex I.

1.2 MTR Report Structure

This report is structured into four parts. First, background of the Program is provided including a description of the context in which it was designed and implemented. In addition comment on the context in which the MTR was conducted including the change of the Fiji government, following democratic elections in 2014 and its impact on the bilateral relationship between Fiji-Australia relations is provided. Second, the approach and methods employed to carry out the MTR are described and limitations noted. Third, evaluation findings in response to the Key Evaluation Questions are provided and recommendations noted. Fourth and lastly, a conclusion is provided including a summation of recommendations relevant to a 2nd phase of the FCDP.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The MTR team acknowledge the support of DFAT and the FCDP team in the preparation and conduct of the MTR activities in Fiji. The team would also like to thank the numerous individuals who participated in interviews, focus group discussions and completed the questionnaire during the 11 days of consultations. These individuals generously provided their time and provided rich learnings which inform the MTR findings.

2. Program background and context

2.1 Program description

As stated in the TOR for this MTR:

“The FCDP builds on a long history of Australian support to civil society in Fiji and supersedes the Australian Civil Society Support Program (ACSSP) which was managed at Suva Post from 2000-2012. The FCDP design is based on lessons learnt from previous civil society support programs in Fiji and the findings from the January 2011 Office for Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluation of CSO programs. It also takes into account the constrained political and economic environment in Fiji”.

The FCDP started on 16th May 2012 and is a 5-year program. The Program Design Document (PDD) sets out a 3 years + 2 years timeframe. The first phase (May 2012-May 2015) is worth AUD13 Million (AUD 15 million over 5 years). By July 2012, the FCDP Suva office was fully staffed, and by mid-October, the Lautoka and Labasa offices were staffed.

The Program is being implemented through the managing contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD. The manager contractor is responsible for distributing and tracking a variety of CSO grants for service delivery, as well as strengthening the capacity of CSOs to deliver effective, demand-driven services. At the time of the MTR, the Program has successfully disbursed grants through three mechanisms to date: Core funding Call for Proposals (CfP); and the Community Action Program (CAP). As at June 2014, 65 grants to 40 CSOs totalling over FJD 6 million have been disbursed.³

The Program is run from three field locations – Labasa in the north, Lautoka in the west and the Suva-Nausori corridor in the central/eastern Division with the intention “to expand the reach of CSO services particularly in rural Fiji and informal urban settlements.”⁴

The overarching goal of the Program is to “deliver social and economic benefits to the people of Fiji through strengthened civil society organisations”.

The PDD defines two main objectives:

Objective 1: To mitigate social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji by funding the community development work of CSOs.

Objective 2: To strengthen CSO capacity to deliver relevant and efficient programs for poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji.

Key issues identified in MTR TOR in relation to the Program include⁵:

- the need to “ascertain whether the Program is on track towards achieving the first objective of the Program and if current grant activity outcomes will help contribute to mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities”
- to need to determine “how effective the FCDP has been so far in addressing the capacity building objective of the program with a particular focus on the systems and processes that have been developed and whether these are effective in building capacity of CSOs in Fiji”
- the need to “find out what the benefits, shortcomings and risks of this new way of working have been since the inception of a managing contractor model and the extent to which the relationship between Fijian civil society and Australia has changed as a result of the managing contractor model”
- the need to “find out if current resourcing and personnel is appropriate to meet the objectives of the Program and whether the current Program management systems are effective”

³ FCDP Annual Report 2013-2014

⁴ FCDP PDD, p.4

⁵ MTR of the FCDP

- the need to determine “whether the field offices have been able to effectively support and monitor CSOs working in and around their respective locations”

2.2 Contexts for design, implementation and MTR

The FCDP was designed and implemented during the time when Australia – Fiji relations were suspended and sanctions were imposed in response to the military coup in December 2006. During this time, development assistance was maintained mainly through intermediary Management Contractors who managed the relationship between the Australian Government and development partners in Fiji including Government and CSO. In March 2014 the Australian Government introduced a policy of re-engagement and normalisation of bilateral relations with Fiji as elections were called for later in the year. Following elections in Fiji in September 2014, all remaining sanctions were lifted by the Government of Australia. This was announced during a visit from the Australian Foreign Minister to Fiji, during MTR consultations in Fiji (31 October 2014). FCDP was designed in part as a response to the suspended Australia-Fiji relations and has been implemented within the context. The implementation has been appropriate to date given this context; however future implementation will need to be cognisant of resumed Australia-Fiji relations with the recommendations provided in this MTR responsive to this change in context.

The Australian Government Aid Policy framework has also changed since the FCDP was designed and initiated. In September 2013, following the election of the coalition government AusAID was integrated within DFAT. Subsequently in June 2014 “*A new strategic framework for the aid program*” was launched which sets out the purpose of the aid program “to promote Australia’s national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction”⁶. The framework focuses on two development outcomes: supporting private sector development and strengthening human development as a means of achieving the purpose of the aid program. The aid program investments are defined within eight priority areas including education and health, agriculture, fisheries and water and effective governance. The recommendations in this MTR are responsive to the changes in strategic focus of the Australian aid program.

The MTR response to the evaluation purposes, Key Evaluation Questions and recommendations provided need to be understood in relation to these changing contexts in which the Program has been designed, implemented and expected to continue. The Program was designed and predominantly implemented under certain parameters and is now being assessed and recommendations made within a changing context. Informed by the original design and defined objectives, the recommendations provided take into account the potential of a strengthened CSO sector and the contribution that Australian aid can provide within Fiji’s changing context.

3. Mid Term Review methodology

3.1 Approach

This section outlines the methods of data collection, including sampling strategy, analysis, ethical practice and limitations and constraints and sets out the Mid Term Review schedule. Further details are provided in Annex 2.

The MTR employed the Key Evaluation Questions as the framework in which to examine and address the purpose of this evaluation: to assess contractor performance and make recommendations in relation to the next phase of the Program. The five areas of inquiry and Key Evaluation Questions were used as a lens through which to analyse stakeholder responses, present key findings and recommendations.

The MTR was exploratory and used a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to reveal perspectives and views from key stakeholders in relation to the five main areas of inquiry defined through the Key Evaluation Questions. The MTR also sought to reveal stakeholder perspectives and views on the preferred future of DFAT support for CSOs in Fiji.

⁶ *Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty enhancing stability*, p.1

The MTR team identified key stakeholders to the FCDP, with both direct and in-direct engagement and invited participation in the MTR. CSOs, FCDP staff and DFAT staff were given priority opportunity to participate recognising their primary stake in the Program and MTR. Specific cohorts of CSOs who participated in a range of FCDP activities and who have specific experience to speak to different aspects of the FCDP were identified. All core funding CSO recipients were identified and invited for individual interviews, whilst Call for Proposal (CfP) grant recipients and Community Action Program (CAP) grant recipients were invited to participate in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Consultations were conducted in Fiji (Suva, Labasa and Lautoka) over 11 days (Monday 20 – Thursday 30 October 2014). 101 individuals (men: 44 women: 57) were consulted across a range of stakeholder groups as noted in Table 1 below. 33 CSO representatives (12 core funding recipients; 11 CfP recipients, 10 CAP recipients also completed brief questionnaires.

Table 1: MTR consultations / participants

Stakeholder group	No. of individuals	Representation of stakeholder group
DFAT Staff	10	All staff with direct and in-direct engagement with FCDP
FCDP PEC members	7	2 FCDP staff, 3 DFAT staff, Fiji community representatives
FDCP staff	11	At time of MTR total 12 Fiji based staff
CSO representatives	49	8 CSO core funding grant recipients out of 9 total ⁷ . 15 CSO CfP grant recipients out of total of 19 9 CSO CAP grant recipients out of total of 16 8 CSO Emergency grant recipients out of total 9 12 in Suva, 7 in Labasa and 9 in Lautoka (Some CSOs may have received more than one of the following: CfP, CAP, Emergency funds)
FCDP contracted trainers	2	<i>Representation not relevant</i>
Community beneficiaries	12	<i>Representation not relevant</i> 3 CSOs (1 Suva, 1 Labasa and 1 Lautoka)
Donors	2	2 Fiji based donors providing support to Fiji CSO sector
CSO umbrella organisations	5	3 organisations

⁷ WAC does not exist anymore

Government officials	Provincial government official, Labasa	<i>Representation not relevant</i>
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3.2 Limitations

The MTR team identified three limitations in planning the MTR which were managed during the conduct of the MTR.

Firstly, availability of stakeholders to participate and fully engage was compromised by the time frame of data collection. Due to the limited time available, the grouping of stakeholders for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) reflected a diverse range of CSO capacities, which limited individual CSO feedback and response. However, the team was able to meet with a very high proportion of representatives from CSOs who have received a variety of grants from FCDP. This provided a rich and complex perspective on activities and achievements to date. The use of multiple forms of data collection was used to substantiate the learning as much possible within the short time frame.

Secondly, sensitivities in relation to the contractor arrangements of the Program were considered to be an issue by the MTR team since the MTR purpose is to provide guidance regarding a possible two year extension of the contract. However the team found all stakeholders to be open and honest, with individuals sharing both positive and negative perspectives on the FDCP. The team found the MTR process was an opportunity for reflection and learning, with numerous individuals sharing new insights as they responded to questions from the MTR team. This was particularly the case for FCDP staff. Representation of different and similar perspectives across the different stakeholder groups have been presented in this MTR report.

Thirdly, the time allocated within the TOR to carry out data-collection and analysis was extremely short. Effort was made to process and analyse data collected during the fieldwork and subsequently review interview and FGD notes and analysis of questionnaire responses to inform the write up of the report.

Key findings and recommendations of the MTR have been informed by stakeholder responses and were reinforced by multiple (diverse) stakeholder groups and across the three locations which give the MTR team confidence in the presentation within the MTR Report.

4. Findings and analysis

This section presents key findings and recommendations in relation to each of the Key Evaluation Questions.

Overall the MTR team found that the FCDP has contributed to achieving Objectives 1 and 2 at various levels. The Program has contributed significantly to addressing deficiencies in a broad range of CSOs in the area of financial management, governance, accountability and monitoring and evaluation (Objective 2). The initiatives implemented by CSOs through the FCDP managed grants have supported CSOs in their community development work and whilst grant activities to date have been relatively short, they have been able to mitigate social and economic hardship in poor, vulnerable and excluded communities with the potential for further impact within a two year extension (Objective 1).

The MTR team recommend an extension of the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2 year phase of the Program (2015-17) inclusive of refinement of the strategic approach and program implementation as defined in the MTR recommendations. FCDP provides an opportunity for DFAT to strategically assist the CSO sector in Fiji within the changing context of Fiji's return to democracy and in line with and contributing to the priorities of the Australian aid program. The position of the MTR team is that it would be detrimental to DFAT's engagement with the CSO sector in Fiji to terminate the Program at the end of 3 years of implementation. There are a number of factors which inform this decision:

- value the investment to date and potential of emerging practice and opportunity to maximise impact of these within a two year time frame

- opportunity of the Australian ODA to leverage mobilisation of local resources for development, this includes through:
 - strengthened cooperation and partnership of CSOs which will harmonise and leverage local resources, capacity, knowledge and resources of the CSO sector
 - strengthened cooperation and partnership of CSOs with the Government of Fiji (GoF) including recognition and value of the CSOs as legitimate partners in the development agenda and leveraging GoF resources to support community based work of CSOs
 - support knowledge production and dissemination of innovative CSO practices to inform and contribute to stronger CSO policy dialogue and partnership with GoF
 - generate knowledge production and lessons learned for ongoing ODA for DFAT and other donors.

The MTR found that the FCDP would benefit from a stronger articulation of its development intent and strategic approach to achieve Program objectives. The Program should have a clear articulation of its contribution to poverty mitigation in line with GoF. It should also clearly describe its contribution to strengthening the Fiji CSO sector beyond the disbursement and management of grants. The Program should also describe measurable outcomes from generating knowledge of innovative practice, to influence scale up initiatives initiated through the FCDP and/or CSO programming.

Within Phase 2, the Programs' development intent should also connect with and contribute to the GoF mandate for poverty reduction. The GoF *Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010 – 2014*⁸ sets out a medium term strategic focus which is to strengthen good and just governance, raise economic growth and improve socio-cultural development. Within the Road map it identifies a strategic priority: *Developing an Integrated Development Structure at Divisional Level*. As noted in the Roadmap:

“The Integrated Rural Development Framework is designed to incorporate i-Taukei development interests into national development plans and programmes. It involves the devolution of decision-making powers to the divisional levels. Partnerships with Non-Government and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) will be strengthened to complement Government’s outreach programmes and projects. These are critical to ensure local participation and to improve delivery of development programmes to raise living standards of people in the rural areas. This will assist communities in identifying resources and formulating community development plans directed at income-generating skills and initiatives that maximize the returns from available resources” (p. xiii).

Other aspects of the Roadmap to which FCDP can align include the strategic priority for poverty reduction and a monitoring framework which is set up with multi stakeholder participation. The FCDP can work with partner CSOs to ensure that work on the ground is being captured and reflected in government monitoring. Within Phase 2, the FCDP will need to conduct an analysis describe its comprehension of GoF agenda for poverty reduction and CSO collaboration and define areas for contribution which should be documented in a Government Engagement Strategy (GES).

⁸ *Roadmap For Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014*, 2010, GoF

Informed by the MTR findings a summary of recommendations are provided below:

Recommendation 1: That DFAT extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2 year phase of the Program (2015-17) inclusive of refinement of the strategic approach and program implementation as defined in the MTR recommendations.

Recommendation 2: That FCDP continue to focus on rural and remote communities as the primary focus area for 'mitigating economic and social hardships faced poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji'.

Recommendation 3: That FCDP develop a strategic capacity building strategy for 'strengthening CSOs'. The capacity building strategy should address the following:

- orientate capacity building beyond grant management to strengthening the CSO sector as legitimate and valuable partners in development
- enhance sector based collaboration of CSOs and encourage consortiums in the implementation of grant supported community development work
- focus on partnering with CSOs already engaged with the FCDP to date, including CSOs who requested capacity building support
- support replication of the community profiling and community development planning process (CAP) amongst the broader CSO sector following thorough review and revision
- prioritise research and learning to scale-up Program and CSO initiatives within the broader CSO community, private sector and GoF and strengthen CSO engagement in partnerships with government and policy dialogue

Recommendation 4: That FCDP develop a Government Engagement Strategy (GES). The GES should address the following:

- strengthen and facilitate collaboration and partnerships of CSOs with relevant government ministries at national and sub-national level
- promote and influence with CSOs scale up of FCDP initiatives and CSO programming within the GoF
- explore opportunities with the Pacific Risk Resilience Program (PRRP) and the GoF Ministry of Strategic Planning to align government requirements for community profiling
- link and contribute to the Government of Fiji mandate for poverty reduction in line with the established GoF monitoring framework

Recommendation 5: That FCDP revise the Program Executive Committee (PEC) Terms of Reference (TOR) to maximise the expertise and experience of the PEC members (external advisors) by expanding their role to provide oversight of the strategic direction and monitor consistently during the remainder of the Program.

Recommendation 6: That FCDP revise job descriptions and task definitions for Program Officers, and Finance and Administration positions. The Learning and Development Officers contracts should not be extended for Phase 2.

Recommendation 7: That FCDP develop field office strategy plans taking into consideration the unique characteristics and interests of local CSOs and sector approach and Government/ CSO partnership.

4.1 Mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities

I. To what extent is the program achieving its' first objective of mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji?

The MTR found that the FCDP is achieving its first objective to a good extent, recognising that change is incremental, complex and behaviour change associated with community development is a long term investment which can often only be assessed beyond the life of grant periods, which at this point in the Program are relatively short.

A number of aspects have been considered in assessing the extent to which objective I has been achieved as detailed below.

Disbursement of grants to support CSO activities

The Program has successfully disbursed grants through three mechanisms to date: Core funding Call for Proposals (CfP); and the Community Action Program (CAP). As at June 2014, 65 grants to 40 CSOs totalling over FJD 6 million have been disbursed.⁹

June 2012	9 Core Funding grants were issued at the request of DFAT (then AusAID) to a group of CSOs which were considered to require funding support during the transition period from Australia's Civil Society Support Program (ACSSP) to FCDP.
November 2012	23 grants issued under first Call for Proposals (CfP)
November 2012	7 grants issued for first Call for Proposals (CfP) – capacity building
December 2012	10 emergency response grants were provided to CSOs following Cyclone Evan
March 2014	16 grants within the under the Community Action Plan (CAP)

CSO representatives consulted during the MTR valued the contribution that grants disbursed through the FCDP have provided to their work. Common views expressed included (1) being able to continue CSO activities, including livelihoods projects, community health, small business and skills development training, (2) extending reach into rural and remote areas, (3) strengthened and new practice to identify and respond to community needs (through the CAP process).

MTR questionnaire responses from CSO representatives reinforced the views expressed during interviews and FGDs. Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Program is *reducing social and economic hardship* of poor and vulnerable communities through CSOs (45 % agree, 48 % strongly agree (n=29)). Almost all respondents agree or strongly agreed that changes brought about by FCDP grants are *sustainable* (48 % agree, 24 % strongly agree (n=29)).¹⁰

Sector focus of grants targeted at 'economic and social hardship'

The FCDP has identified five thematic areas which represent the range of activities funded through the FCDP grants to date which are consistent with the objective focus of 'economic and social hardship'. As noted in the latest Annual Report¹¹ 'more themes may arise during project implementation'. CSO activities to date are in the areas of: community development planning, health, food security, livelihoods and environment, climate change and disaster response. During interviews and FGDs with CSOs a variety of examples were provided in how the grants were reducing economic and social hardship. Examples

⁹ FCDP Annual Report 2013-2014

¹⁰ It is valuable to note that 2 responses (7%) 'not agreed' were from CAP recipients, who have yet to receive grants for community development activities and 6 responses (21%) were from CORE funded CSOs and emergency grant recipients who no longer receive funds

¹¹ FCDP Annual Report 2013-2014, p.5

included extending reach of CSOs to remote and vulnerable communities in livelihood and health projects, provision of counselling and medical support and community health.

MTR questionnaire responses from CSO representatives reinforced the views expressed during interviews and FGDs. Almost all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Program is *reducing social and economic hardship* of poor and vulnerable communities through CSOs (45 % agree, 48 % strongly agree (n=29)). Almost all respondents agree or strongly agreed that changes brought about by FCDP grants are *sustainable* (48 % agree, 24 % strongly agree (n=29)).¹²

Targeting of 'poor, vulnerable and excluded communities'

The FCDP PDD sets out expected outcomes for objective I in general terms yet the Program has made efforts to improve targeting through CSO activities. The PDD defines expected outcomes for objective I: "In the first three years of the Program at least 50,000 people throughout Fiji will benefit from quality community development services". As defined in the last FCDP Annual Report, this target has been exceeded, with more than 72,029 beneficiaries reached through CSO grant activities.

However the Program has come to further define understandings of 'poor vulnerable and excluded'. Within the recent development of the *Community Action Program (CAP) Manual*, June 2014, the Program seeks to more specifically target rural and remote communities. As described by stakeholders (FCDP staff and DFAT staff) during the MTR and also described by Program documentation this was in response to the recognition that grants awarded through the first CfP were Suva centric and a concern that "CSOs provide support in line with capabilities rather than community needs."¹³ This reflection was also noted in the 2013-2014 FCDP Annual report:

"Lessons learned from the First Call for Proposals indicated that activities were not effectively reaching into rural and remote communities and that a more focussed strategy was needed to make FCDP funded CSO service delivery accessible to these target populations" (p.5).

In line with the refined understanding and targeted approach of the CAP, CSO grant recipients are predominantly carrying out activities in rural and remote areas. There is only one CAP grant recipient focused on an informal settlement. The majority of CSO partners for the CAP approach are based in the north.

The MTR team consider the Program focus towards rural and remote communities to be appropriate and relevant. Whilst recognising the multiple dimensions of poverty, including poverty in growing informal settlements, disability and gender, the focus on rural and remote areas is in line with GoF priorities and issues related to social and economic hardship (objective I). The Roadmap¹⁴ makes specific mention of social disadvantage and issues related to development or rural and outer islands. Recognising the distribution of poverty in these areas is also aligned to the GoF 'Look North Policy'¹⁵ which seeks to support development in the northern islands recognising the relative social and economic disadvantage of these communities. Whilst the nature of poverty is complex it is deemed appropriate to continue to focus on rural and remote areas, recognising that this approach can support depth of impact and sustainability of CSO grant initiatives to 'mitigating economic and social hardship'. This focus is also appropriate considering that NZAID is commencing CSO activities in informal settlements, the alternate focus of FCDP enables harmonisation of and extension of reach of ODA in Fiji.

Objective I Result Areas

¹² It is valuable to note that 2 responses (7%) 'not agreed' were from CAP recipients, who have yet to receive grants for community development activities and 6 responses (21%) were from CORE funded CSOs and emergency grant recipients who no longer receive funds

¹³ FCDP Annual Report 2013-2014, p.5

¹⁴ *Roadmap For Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014*, 2010, GoF

¹⁵ <http://www.grubsheet.com.au/fijis-other-look-north-policy/>

The MTR assessed achievement against the three result areas under Objective 1 detailed in the FCDP PDD and also noted in the most recently prepared CAP Manual (June 2014).

As already noted above, the view expressed by CSOs is that grants are supporting them in their work to 'reduce hardship of poor and vulnerable communities' (result area 1). In relation to results areas 2 and 3, there was a consistent view shared across multiple stakeholder groups including DFAT, FCDP staff and CSOs themselves that the recent introduction of the CAP has provided a significant contribution to meeting these. As detailed below, the CAP specifically seeks to equip CSOs to lead a community profiling process to identify and prioritise community needs (result area 3) and through subsequent grants respond to 'immediate and urgent needs of communities (result area 1). As described by one CSO representative the CAP process has strengthened capacity to identify and meet needs of the community:

"The profiling we did with FCDP was done more in detail than any other profiling done in communities by the government and this was a very useful exercise for us because we managed to do good strong profiling of our 2 communities which can be further used by the communities to share with future projects who can address the other needs down in their prioritised needs list. This is also sustainable because we can use the same method for profiling the future communities we will be working with too" (Suva FGD)

The CAP has also enabled community members to better express their needs (result area 3).

"Through the CAP and the profiling exercise that [CSO] did in our community, our relationship and correspondence with the government has been strengthened which speeds up the process to finally meet our long-standing need for water to reach out 29 homes at Tagi settlement" (Beneficiary, Labasa).

A positive view towards CAP was universally expressed by all stakeholders consulted during the MTR. An indicative response is provided below:

"The CAP has helped us reach outside of the box and identify the needs of vulnerable, rural communities. Prior to the CAP, we implemented projects in an ad hoc manner, but the CAP is helping us to do things right. We have learnt skills that we can transfer to other projects and that can be sustained by our organisations" (CAP FGD participant, West).

Within the MTR questionnaire questions were asked of CSOs in relation to Objective 1 result areas. The majority of responses reinforced views expressed in the interviews/FGDs and indicated that CSOs felt that the Program has contributed to achieving these:

Almost all CSO respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to increasing resilience of poor and vulnerable communities through CSOs (59 % agree, 28 % strongly agree (n=29)). 2 responses 'not agreed' from CAP recipients who have yet to receive grants for community development activities and 2 CORE funded CSOs who no longer receive funds.

Almost all CSO respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to helping poor and vulnerable communities to better express their needs through CSOs (59 % agree, 31 % strongly agree (n=29)) 3 responses (10%) not agreed, 1 each from CORE funded, CAP recipient and Call for Proposal recipient.

Factors which mitigate demonstration of achievements of Objective 1

The MTR identified factors which mitigate demonstration of the achievement of objective 1, related both to development practice in general and more specifically to management of the FCDP. Challenges identified include:

- Measuring change in relation to Program objectives was not detailed in the Program design beyond quantifiable measures. The articulation and definition / meaning of the Program objectives and how achievement will be assessed beyond quantitative measures was only defined in the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF), prepared in March 2014, a few months before the MTR.

- Recording changes related to outcome objectives of the FCDP is difficult within a relatively short time, recognising that the Program has only been implemented for 2.5 years with CSO grant periods even shorter. Transformational change relevant to FCDP outcomes is also challenging to measure, as described by the former head of USAID:

“A central principle of development theory—that those development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable”¹⁶

- CSO capacity is relatively weak in reporting higher level changes, which makes it then challenging for FCDP to report to DFAT. Weak CSO capacity in M&E was cited by representatives of multiple stakeholder groups during the MTR including some CSOs themselves, as well as DFAT, FCDP staff, donors and CSO umbrella organisations.

The Community Action Plan (CAP)

The MTR was tasked to examine the extent to which the CAP will contribute to Program outcomes and found that the CAP is appreciated, appropriate and relevant to the Fiji context and provides a valuable contribution to the FCDP in meeting program outcomes. Consistently positive views of the CAP were expressed by representatives of different stakeholder groups (DFAT, FCDP and participating CSOs).

Stakeholder views of results achieved to date include:

- community have identified and prioritised development needs
- participation of men, women and youth and for these different voices to be heard and taken into account as part of development planning
- community driven development rather than CSO decided (supply driven)
- stronger link between CSOs and government (described by FCDP staff and DFAT as unintended outcome of CAP)
- CSOs equipped to lead community development activities and facilitate processes for community to identify their own priorities
- target of locally based CSOs participating in the CAP process has meant that FCDP has increased its reach to rural and remote poor communities and widened range of CSOs in regions who are participating in FCDP, and more broadly in development/donor programs.

Stakeholders described a range of changes that they expect CAP to make in the future. Whilst CSOs primarily described the immediate potential of addressing community needs through project grants, DFAT staff and some FCDP staff described the potential of CAP to broadly support the CSO sector and forge stronger links between CSOs and government. Strengthened relations and partnerships was described in relation to (1) CSOs sharing community development plans with subnational government administrations (Provincial and District levels) and (2) through implementation and support by sector based ministries for CSO led community development activities (eg WASH programs). One comment during a FGD which was indicative of the common view expressed is noted below:

“In order for our water project to be implemented in our 2 communities we needed to fill in the government’s WSMP template that needs to be approved in order for us to install the water systems in the communities. Going through the community profiling with CAP has not only helped us understand more how to meet these government criteria but it has also built our relationship with government officials through our regular correspondence” (CSO FGD, Suva)

10 questions were asked of CSO CAP recipients within the MTR questionnaire. Responses indicate a positive view of the contribution of CAP to their CSO practice. All respondents ‘agreed or strongly agreed’ to the positive contribution of CAP, with only 1 respondent who consistently disagreed.

¹⁶ The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development Andrew Natsios July 2010

Whilst stakeholders consulted during the MTR viewed the CAP as providing a significant contribution to achieving the FCDP program outcomes they also recognised and articulated challenges of CAP and the current strategy of CAP implementation which mitigates achievement of Program objectives. These challenges became evident to the MTR team during consultations and were also reflected upon by some senior FCDP staff and also DFAT staff. Limitations of the CAP and current implementation strategy to meeting program outcomes include:

- skills of CSOs have been improved through the CAP but to the extent to which this will translate to longer term strengthened CSO capacity is uncertain, especially since many CSOs participating in CAP have low capacity. This challenges the extent to which objective 2 of the program will be met
- lack of capacity of some smaller less established CSOs to access funds to replicate community profiling and development of community plans in other communities
- low budget of CAP projects means that identified community needs can only be partially addressed through FCDP grants
- potential duplication of existing government community profiling activities (many ministry specific community profiling activities are already undertaken)

The MTR team propose responses and recommendations to capitalise on the potential of CAP and mitigate risks and limitations which undermine its contribution to achieving the Program objectives. These recommendations are noted here but further explored in detail in Section 4.2.

- The CAP approach is thoroughly reviewed and lessons learned from implementation to date inform a revision before next round of implementation. For example in future call for proposals which are focused on a livelihoods project, it would be valuable to incorporate a community business planning and feasibility assessment. The assessment process would need to be practical and in line with the scale of the grant activity and capacity of the implementing CSO. The Community Support Network (CSN) has relevant resources related to feasibility assessments which may be relevant for the FCDP to adopt as part of livelihoods programs with CAP.
- Employ a consortium approach and promote linkages of smaller less established locally based CSOs with larger more established CSOs in the implementation of projects to provide management and technical support. This builds on emerging practice to date. For example Habitat for Humanity will be providing technical support in WASH to the Catholic Women's League in implementation of a water supply project in the west.
- Strengthen partnerships between CSOs and government in implementation of projects.
- Explore options for FCDP to act as catalyst in efforts to streamline community profiling and preparation of development plans with local government and line ministries. This would be of value to communities, rather than duplicating processes with a variety of agencies they could articulate needs comprehensively which would then be available to all relevant agencies. This is also in line with GoF policy.

How the Program is addressing Objective I

The MTR was tasked to examine *how* the FCDP is addressing Objective I which has revealed issues in the design logic. The two objectives of the Program are equally positioned in the design and more

recently, in the FCDP program theory¹⁷, yet Objective 1 is dependent on the successful completion of Objective 2. The FCDP team need to manage these issues in order to achieve the Program objectives.

The MTR has identified a shift in prioritisation of these objectives within the implementation of the Program to date, but suggests there needs to a greater balance to achieving both objectives within Phase 2. This is necessary to equally meet both objectives and contribute to the Program goal. A view expressed by some CSO representatives and FCDP staff was that the Program was initially focused on strengthening CSO capacity for grant management especially in relation to financial management and monitoring and evaluation. In response to learning from the First CfP (perception of supply driven CSO projects and Suva centric programming), the Program has more recently sought to strengthen contributions to Objective 1 Result Areas related to community identification of needs and addressing social and economic hardship in poor (remote and rural communities).

The strategy of partnering with locally based smaller, less established CSOs to achieve Objective 1 potentially undermines and mitigates the achievement and sustainability of outcomes in Objective 2. Whilst the MTR team recognise a variety of benefits in partnering with community-based organisations including faith-based organisations (FBOs) such as: (1) extending the reach (of FCDP grants and community development) to rural and remote areas; (2) long term connection and commitment of CSOs to communities strengthens local ownership; (3) broaden the range of CSOs as development partners; there is also the need to identify the limitations and mitigate these in order to meet Program objectives. The MTR team provide recommendations which draw on the value of partnering with community-based CSOs to achieve objective 1, but within a strategy that ensures contribution to objective 2 is also made.

The MTR considered the extent to which the Program theory, as defined in the MELF is understood by different stakeholders. Objectives 1 and 2 dominated individual's description of the FCDP. Grant funding and CSO capacity building was defined as the way FCDP creates change. 'Visibility and communications' noted as an output in the FCDP program theory was not described as stakeholders consulted during the MTR as an output or means through which change is achieved. The MTR team recommendations the need to strengthen research and learning as a key component of the FCDP strategy and means to achieve program outcomes. This is discussed in the next section in more detail.

4.2 Strengthened CSO capacity

2. How effective is the CSO capacity building component of the program?

The MTR revealed different views on the effectiveness of CSO capacity building within the FCDP, highlighting that capacity building has been effective for some CSOs but not others. This finding is informed by the fact that the CSO sector in Fiji is diverse and multifaceted.

The MTR identified the absence of an overarching strategic approach and framework to guide 'CSO strengthening', and within this framework a targeted and responsive approach to CSOs recognising differences of capacity, scale and the strategic direction of individual CSOs. Instead as described by various stakeholders the approach was "ad hoc", "scattered", and 'one size fits all' in relation to the training events and workshops.

A number of aspects have been considered in assessing the effectiveness of CSO capacity building.

Capacity building approach

¹⁷ Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF), March 2014

The MTR sought to explore stakeholder understandings of the capacity building approach of FCDP which was defined in relation to a variety of activities, but with no clear identification of a specific approach. Stakeholders described a range of activities including 1-1 mentoring, coaching, training events and workshops and provision of in-house technical support. FCDP staff described capacity building primarily in relation to grant management particularly financial management and monitoring (reporting); CSOs described a range of activities and as noted already above, with a range of different perceptions expressed of the value of this to their organisations. DFAT staff questioned the approach with a focus on the 1 size fits all training and workshop events, ad hoc and lack of strategic direction.

The MTR team noted a different approach to capacity building of small community based CSO under the CAP, which included two 10 ten day training sessions with the Australian Pacific Technical College (APTC). This was followed up with 1-1 mentoring provided by Program Offices to CSOs in the field offices. This was identified as a more strategic approach to capacity building which was informed by lessons learned from the first call for proposals carried out by FCDP.

Different CSO perspectives of the FCDP capacity building approach and effectiveness

The MTR revealed different perceptions on the effectiveness of the FCDP capacity building by the different CSO cohorts who have engaged with the FCDP to date. Capacity building through the FCDP was described by representatives from more established CSOs, primarily Suva based, as not relevant to their needs. This was particularly in relation to training workshops and events. A 'blanket' or 'one size fits all' approach to training workshops was described as assuming low capacity which CSO representatives did not appreciate. This view is captured in one statement by a CSO representative; "Coming in with an assumption that there is a problem with capacity is a problem for us". Another noted "It takes more than a 2 day workshop to build capacity." Other comments included: "If FCDP had done some assessment of the capacities of the CSOs before providing capacity buildings then they would have realised that the blanket treatment would not have benefited stronger CSOs" and "No more one size fits all treatment for capacity building of CSOs please".

Whilst training events and workshops were not valued as relevant or beneficial to capacity building of more established CSOs, representatives consulted during the MTR did identify the value of targeted efforts addressing specific issues. Benefits cited included strengthened organisational governance, improved monitoring and evaluation systems and financial systems with one established CSO expressing a significant change from their participation in the CAP, with the community profiling now introduced to the organisation as a whole.

Whilst negative perceptions of training events and workshops was described by a few larger and more established CSOs, other CSO cohorts (CAP grant recipients and 'mid strength' CSOs) described the benefit of training events, particularly in the case of CAP recipients who valued being brought together, to learn, share and exchange with each other:

"The Community Profiling training has been very thorough and it helps us to be very detailed and to identify important things that contribute to community development and project implementation. As participants we are trained to adopt a bottom up approach and to allow time for individuals to express their needs and to identify what the needs are" (FGD North)

"This is the first time for us to work directly with communities and to do a profiling was a great experience for us and to learn from other CSOs and build on our network" (CSO Labasa)

"We really needed the capacity building that FCDP offered at the time and we are very grateful for it because FCDP helped to build our organisation's capacity and broaden our networking with stronger CSOs" (CSO Suva).

Grant management focus

A key finding of the MTR was that capacity building activities to date have been primarily focused on grant management, especially financial management. FCDP staff predominantly spoke of the need to strengthen financial management and also challenges of CSOs reporting effectively for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This is not a surprising finding considering that the FCDP PDD identified a self-

assessment of CSO capacity building priorities including financial management (70%), monitoring and evaluation (over 62%) and human resource development (70%). The need for strengthened capacity in financial management was also cited by representatives of CSO umbrella organisations and donors consulted during the MTR. As noted by one individual “poor financial management and accountability is a legacy of the AusAID funding”.

A view expressed by a few larger more established CSOs was that capacity building was aimed at aligning CSO practice to the FCDP approach. This was mainly in relation to financial management and M&E as noted by a few individuals: One stakeholder comment indicative of others is noted below:

“CSO are not all the same and it seems that FCDP requires an enormous amount of reporting for tiny amounts of funding. There is an assumption that there is a lack of capacity which is patronising. Some CSO are running credible programs under different donors and FCDP would be better served to categorise organisations and people based on performance and need. While FCDP were conducting training to try and assist with M&E, there still remains a conceptual gap around M&E and not only that it needs to be developed as a requirement. Organisations need to understand it as useful tools for their organisations and only when it is recognised as such, will the M&E capacity be sustained within the organisation” (CSO representative Suva).

Another CSO representative noted: *“Aligning our systems and templates with FCDP requirements is not capacity building but interfering, we needed more strategic and sustainable capacity buildings” (CSO, Suva FGD).*

A few individuals from larger CSOs also commented on how DFAT policies related to child protection were also transferred to CSOs with little translation or contextualisation to the practice and relevance to local CSOs. This issue was also commented on by 1 FCDP staff member. The MTR team suggest that there is an opportunity for the FCDP within Phase 2 to translate and contextualise these policies such that they make better sense and of value to CSO partners rather than a ‘tick the box’ activity as described by some CSOs consulted during the MTR.

Stakeholders consulted during the MTR, especially FCDP staff responsible for grant management cited incremental improvements to financial management, which was also described by core funding and CfP CSOs as well. “The one-on-one financial assistance was very helpful for us in improving our financial capacity” (CfP grant recipient) and also noted by FCDP “there has been improvements in financial management, we can see the changes between the different reports received” (FCDP staff member). Recognising changes achieved to date, there is an opportunity to extend capacity building beyond a grant management focus, and promote the value-add of grant management to broader CSO strengthening.

The MTR team recommend that within Phase 2, the FCDP adopt a strategic approach to capacity building which recognises the value of capacity building to broader ‘CSO strengthening’ beyond grant management. Disbursement and management of grants through the FCDP should be recognised as an opportunity to value-add to the CSO sector and the contribution that CSOs can provide as long term development partners especially to the GoF. This will also ensure that Australian ODA is leveraged to create change beyond the scope of the Program. A strategic approach should include a consortium approach, building on the practice of emerging (1) partnerships between CSOs in sector based project implementation and (2) sector based communities of practice in local areas, as detailed in Box 1 below.

Box 1

Consortium approach to CSO implementation of grant supported community development activities

The MTR team propose a consortium approach to CSO implementation of grants linking smaller, less established CSOs with larger more established CSOs as a strategic approach to strengthening CSOs. This practice is emerging already between some CSOs, which the FCDP can enhance and catalyse through its resources. The consortium approach will enable:

- transfer of skills from larger more established CSOs to smaller emerging CSOs
- utilise relative strengths and added value of a range of CSOs in managing and implementing grants (i.e. technical competencies and management (including financial) expertise of larger CSOs with local knowledge and presence of CSOs in local communities

- strengthen CSOs (collective expertise, experience and voice) for engagement with other stakeholders including donors and government (especially at subnational level but also national)
- develop locally based CSOs in divisions
- recognise competency and strength of established CSOs

FCDP is adequately positioned to work with CSOs in a facilitator, broker role to support consortiums. Through this process FCDP will provide minimal oversight and support to CSOs in the consortium as larger CSOs take the leadership role in effective and efficient program delivery.

Local sector based communities of practice

The MTR team propose that the FCDP prioritise the development of sector based communities of practice in local areas as a strategic approach to strengthening CSOs. Consultations with CSOs revealed the desire to have more opportunities to share and learn with each other. FCDP field offices are well placed to provide a forum and space for CSOs to come together around sector based practice. Sector based communities of practice will enable:

- sharing of practice between CSOs as a means of promoting best practice
- create opportunities for partnerships and consortium approach between CSOs
- strengthen the collective voice of CSOs in partnerships and policy dialogue with subnational and national government

Objective 2 Result Areas

The MTR assessed achievement against the three result areas under Objective 2 detailed in the FCDP design document and also noted in the recently prepared FCDP CAP Manual (June 2014).

Stronger CSOs:

Stakeholders consulted during the MTR described a range of areas of strengthened capacity. Areas of CSO capacity building most commonly described as strengthened during the MTR interview and FGDs by CSOs themselves included: financial management, improved monitoring and evaluation practices, improved governance and skills to conduct community profiling and identify community needs (CAP recipients only). As noted by one CSO representative: “FCDP has made a great difference, they ran an M&E workshop with our staff and made us reflect on our objectives and helped us measure outputs. Our M&E has since improved and our staff have learnt how to capture records effectively” (CSO interview, West). FCDP staff similarly cited improvements to financial management, M&E, preparing communications and also increased confidence to deal with FCDP (as representatives of donors)

Within the MTR questionnaire almost all CSO respondents ‘agreed/strongly agreed’ that the *Program strengthened their CSO through assistance from FCDP* (57 % agree, 37 % strongly agree (n=30)). 1 response strongly disagreed from CORE recipient and 1 response from CAP recipient.

Within the MTR questionnaire, CSO representatives were also asked 8 questions to self-assess changes to capacity building as a result of FCDP. The majority of responses indicate a positive contribution of FCDP to strengthening capacity to CSOs, though responses to some questions were mixed. These responses were affirmed and reinforced through interviews and FGD with CSO representatives. Mixed responses were provided on the topics of ‘stronger networks’ and also the ‘sustainability’ of capacity developed:

Mixed responses were recorded against the statement “*I have been able to develop stronger networks through my engagement with FCDP*” (43 % agree, 37 % strongly agree, 20% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).

Mixed responses were recorded against the statement “*I have been able to develop stronger networks through my engagement with FCDP*” (43 % agree, 37 % strongly agree, 20% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).

A full summary of analysis of CSO responses is provided in Annex 3.

Improved cooperation in the sector:

Whilst the Program has made some efforts in improving cooperation in the sector (Result Area 2) there is significant need to strengthen this aspect of the Program and was an expressed need of CSOs consulted during the MTR.

Evidence of improved cooperation was cited by various stakeholders during the MTR, though activities and results achieved to date do not seem to be systematic or routine. Examples of activities and achievements to date described by stakeholders during the MTR include:

- exchange visits of CSOs and community representatives in the northern division between Live and Learn and the World Wildlife Fund
- partnership of the Catholic Women’s League and Habitat for Humanity in implementation of CAP project
- bringing together of CSOs in training events and forums (especially valued by CAP recipients)

During the MTR CSO representatives from across the three cohorts (Core funding, CfP and CAP) called for stronger networking and cooperation between CSOs, and suggested that FCDP could have a role in doing this. A statement from a FGD in Lautoka highlights this point:

“[We need] more interaction amongst CSOs more networking...community development work results to be shared to benefit from each other and FCDP can do this to build synergy. CSO territorial and hold back info not sharing because we may be competitive is a risk but we also see the duplication is a much higher risk” (CSO FGD, Lautoka)

Within the MTR questionnaire almost all CSO respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to *improved cooperation with the CSO community* (50 % agree, 33 % strongly agree (n=30)). 3 response strongly disagreed from CAP and CfP, emergency and 2 responses neither agreed nor disagreed (Core and Call for Proposals).

While CSO respondents look to FCDP to drive improved cooperation within the CSO sector the MTR recognise the complexity and challenges of FCDP taking on this role. The Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) is recognised by the GoF as the umbrella organisation of Fiji CSOs, yet as described by various stakeholders during the MTR it has lost confidence of its members. The FCDP has sought not to fill that void, recognising the complexity of the local context. However the MTR team suggest that there is an opportunity for the FCDP to work with FCOSS in Phase 2, in improving cooperation of CSOs with a focus on outreach offices and cooperation related to coordinated efforts in development programming around same sectors. FCDP also have an opportunity to work alongside FCOSS and strengthen their organisational capacity to function more effectively in this role.

Evidence-based practice:

The MTR found little evidence of ‘relevant research material and community needs analysis reports’¹⁸ though the Program has recently commenced in-depth studies’ as described and planned in the MELF. Lack of evidence was also reiterated through responses to the MTR questionnaire. CSO respondents provided a mixed response in assessing achievement of *FCDP in providing research materials to strengthen CSO programming* (3% strongly disagree, 20% disagree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 40% agree, 7% strongly agree) (n=30)).

¹⁸ Result Area defined in PDD and CAP Manual

The MTR team recommend that the production and dissemination of evidence based practice be a priority in Phase 2 as a means of leveraging ODA provided through FCDP and to support CSOs in dialogue and policy influence with government. This will promote the scale up of innovative practice of the FCDP and CSOs. This goes beyond the current intent of ‘in-depth studies’ which are described to “provide robust information about the effects of FCDP funding and to test key elements of the program theory”.¹⁹ The MTR recommendation seeks to engage with a wide range of audiences as a means of influencing scale up of innovative practices. Again this intent is not currently present in the MELF which states “external communication is largely for the purpose of program accountability and to enhance the visibility of the program and the achievements of CSOs working with communities.”²⁰ Evidenced-based practice can be an important resource for CSOs to use in strengthening their legitimacy as development partners.

The MTR recommend that research and learning through the FCDP be supported through a variety of approaches, but have ‘strengthening CSOs’ as a core principle and aim in the conduct of research and learning. Different approaches include: FCDP to conduct and lead research activities; FCDP to support CSOs to conduct and lead their own research; and CSO FCDP partnering. Where appropriate the FCDP can work with local research institutions and groups in carrying out research.

Factors which mitigate achievement of Objective 2

The MTR has identified a range of factors which have mitigated the effectiveness of capacity building activities to date. These include:

- lack of overarching framework for strengthening CSOs: the Program has predominantly focused on capacity building for grant management, with only more recent efforts to strengthen broader capacity of CSOs to deliver programs in poor, vulnerable and excluded communities
- lack of appreciation of target audiences for capacity building especially in relation to training events and workshops: the Program has delivered a variety of events which were consistently described by various MTR stakeholders as inappropriate. These include:
 - some more established CSOs did not appreciate, find relevant or appropriate training events and workshops, which did not take into consideration the varied expertise and experience of CSO representatives.
 - some CAP training participants were unable to engage effectively in the training due to the level of training / lack of recent experience in training events / processes
- lack of strategic and ongoing investment in CSO partners and capacity building – instead the FCDP has sought a different cohort to partner with as part of the CAP instead of building on existing strengths and capacities of CSOs who had requested support from FCDP under the First Cfp.

Box 2:

FCDP Phase 2 ‘Call for Proposals’

The MTR team recommend a strategic approach to a further round of grant disbursement within Phase 2, consolidating on existing relations and work to date.

The FCDP should conduct a ‘mapping’ process of CSOs. This information will inform (1) a ‘closed call’ for proposals using the CAP approach (2) promotion of a consortium approach inclusive of a sector based approach and (3) _ improved CSO cooperation in regional locations.

. The mapping process should include characteristics of CSOs including: years of operation; strength of CSO capacity; sectors of focus; targeted areas and communities where operates; existing partnerships and collaborations with other CSOs and/or GoF. Mapping should include not only CSOs FCDP partners

¹⁹ FCDP MELF, p.18

²⁰ FCDP MELF, p.21

with but also other CSOs operating in areas relevant to FCDP field office locations. This will promote 'strengthening CSOs' beyond grant disbursement and support strengthened CSO cooperation focused on geographical areas. The MTR team understand a mapping exercise supported by UNDP was conducted 2008-09. Where appropriate the FCDP team should build on this earlier work. The mapping process should be focused on CSOs working in rural and remote areas in line with the focus area of the Program.

Two tracks of grants disbursement are suggested:

1. Extension of existing grants under the 'Call for Proposals'
 - Grants will be extended on the basis of merit and alignment with the FCDP objectives
 - Demonstration of consortium approach (partnerships with other CSOs) will be preferred – this may already be happening or be additional to the grant extension. Existing grantees will be the main applicant and responsible for grant management with FCDP.
2. Closed call for 'Expressions of Interest' (EOI) from CSOs who have already engaged with FCDP to date in 2nd round of CAP (CSOs who requested capacity building support)²¹.
 - Based on a successful EOI, the FCDP will provide initial funding to enable (1) preparation of organisational snap shot assessments, (2) training for community profiling and community development planning (2) project proposal preparation and submission
 - Demonstration of consortium approach (sector based approach and collaboration / alignment of CSO activities in same locations) will be preferred in approval of grant applications.

This 2nd track of grants seeks to:

- *strengthen capacity of 'mid-range' CSOs within the Fiji CSO sector (who have requested capacity building support)*
- *widen the pool of CSOs to be supported by FCDP (to increase CSO capacity to support poor, vulnerable excluded communities)*
- *reach poor, vulnerable and excluded communities through CSO programs*

CAP recipients under Phase 1 will be supported by FCDP in the ongoing implementation of projects. Recognising the short duration of Phase 2 and expected delays of CSO project implementation, it is recommended that no further grants be disbursed to initial CAP grant recipients but they be supported to successfully monitor the implementation of their funded projects. The MTR team recognise the fluid nature of the CAP with many organisations required to fulfil other requirements before the Projects are successfully implemented e.g. Water shed planning. These requirements are expected to delay implementation. Promotion of consortiums in project implementation (as is already emerging) should be promoted as part of CSO implementation within the current CAP grants.

4.3 Managing contractor model

3. What have been the benefits and risks of employing an intermediary (managing contractor) to the relationship between Fijian civil society actors and the Australian Aid program, and Australia more broadly?

The MTR identified a wide range of experiences and understandings of the FCDP and the Australian aid program, recognising the diverse range of CSOs which FCDP is partnering with. Views expressed by more established CSOs were somewhat different to less established CSOs and CAP grant recipients. Experience of CSOs receiving Core funding under ASSP and the FCDP also revealed both perceived benefits and challenges of the intermediary model. Key issues identified during the MTR are noted below.

²¹ Note to include CSOs 'red' in earlier assessment process

Two questions were asked only to CSO Core funding recipients in relation to the intermediary model to reveal any perceived differences or similarities between the ASSP and the FCDP. The majority of respondents had a positive view of the intermediary model, though more mixed responses were provided in relation to its perceived benefit to Fiji CSOs.

Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that *FCDP has brought about positive change to the delivery of the Australian aid program* (58 % agree, 33 % strongly agree, 8% neither agree/disagree (n=12)).

More mixed views expressed by respondents as to whether *Fiji CSOs have strongly benefitted from the introduction of an intermediary to manage CSO grants* (42 % agree, 33 % strongly agree, 17% neither agree/disagree, 8% disagree (n=12)).

Benefits

Managing risk on behalf of DFAT: DFAT staff and also senior FCDP staff generally identified the value of an intermediary model as managing risk on behalf of DFAT. Ensuring due diligence and effective management of funds were cited as benefits of the intermediary model. Though as commented on by one individual and also noted above in relation to objective 2, “managing risk has meant that the biggest area of capacity building is in financial management” (DFAT Suva). This benefit is also described below in a relation to limitation of an intermediary model.

Managed risk was also described in relation to the management of CSO communications (re DFAT funding) by CSOs. As noted by one DFAT staff member, “some CSOs are trail blazers; we had to work with FCDP to manage this, they have managed the risk well so far” (DFAT Suva).

Reduced administrative burden for DFAT enables opportunity for building relations and monitoring: DFAT staff also identified the value of reduced administrative burden which has enabled staff to develop stronger relations with CSOs and conduct more monitoring activities. Though not all agreed that this has been fully realised. Challenges of using an intermediary which were described by other donors were not identified in relation to the FCDP. ‘Loosing touch’ of the CSO sector was not described as an outcome of the intermediary model.

Established systems and resources to be responsive to changing context: The intermediary model was described as responsive and was used effectively in response to Cyclone Evan. The established communications and financial systems meant that funds were disbursed quickly to fund CSO partner responses.

Australian aid program is more accessible, approachable and relevant to CSOs: The intermediary model was described by numerous CSOs as meaning that Australian aid was available and accessible to CSOs, especially in the outreach locations. CSOs described the value of available and local staff who understood their context and were approachable. FCDP staff were also described as more approachable and less intimidating as well, since they were not the ‘direct donor’.

Increased visibility through managed staff and offices: The operations and management of the outreach offices have increased the visibility of Australian aid in divisions.

Risks

Ensuring compliance to contract obligations has increased scrutiny of CSOs: The contractor has ensured accountability of financial and M&E requirements of its CSO partners in order to ensure accountability to DFAT, however this has changed expectations and relations between some CSOs and their view of the Australian aid. More established CSOs described FCDP as requiring “more hoops to jump through” whereas “AusAID used to give the money”. The view expressed by some more established CSOs is that the intermediary is more focused on donor accountability, rather than accountability to CSOs.

Lack of clarity of Australian aid strategic direction: The move from Core funding to project funding has meant that some larger, more established CSOs are confused about the Australian aid commitments to CSOs. This was expressed by a few larger more established CSOs, as expressed by one; “we are wondering what DFAT is doing...is DFAT killing off CSOs”

Role of private contractor in aid: Mixed views were expressed by CSO representatives consulted. The view was expressed by some more established CSOs that the intermediary ‘takes money’ that is provided for CSO grants. Whilst some others expressed the value and contribution of the private sector increasing efficiencies and effectiveness of the CSO sector.

Lack of distinction between managing contractor and donor: Some CSOs who are engaging with donors for the first time, revealed through the MTR consultations a blurred understanding of FCDP and Australian aid. The MTR consultations revealed that some smaller, less established CSOs especially in the north and west did not describe a strong distinction between FCDP and DFAT. Some CSOs described FCDP as the donor. Lack of distinction between the FCDP as an intermediary and DFAT as the donor was also described by other external (non primary) stakeholders.

Defining strategic direction of aid relations: The MTR team identify that a risk for DFAT of the intermediary model is that the strategic direction for the Australia aid program and the Australian aid program relations with the CSO sector are defined by the managing contractor not DFAT. A constructive working relationship between DFAT Suva staff and managing contractor staff has mitigated this risk. DFAT Suva staff and FCDP staff independently talked of effective working relations, (between managing contractor staff and DFAT staff in Suva), which has ensured that the FCDP has been guided by DFAT direction. However there is a need to ensure that DFAT effectively communicate to CSOs its interest and intent of the Fiji CSO sector – Australia aid program relationship and its understanding of how the FCDP fits within this. The MTR team understand that DFAT Suva is planning to carry out a situational assessment of the CSO sector which will inform the future strategic direction to which the FCDP Phase 2 will need to contribute. It will be important that these findings, together with MTR findings are effectively communicated to the CSO sector to inform future relations.

Whilst donors and CSO umbrella organisations consulted during the MTR did not know details of the FCDP they did value the contribution of DFAT support through the Program to the Fiji CSO sector. Within Phase 2 there is an opportunity to strengthen these relationships, especially to support development effectiveness principles, including donor harmonisation and use of partner systems. There is a need to ensure that DFAT does not depend on the managing contract to build, manage and maintain these relationships, but that they do and in line with DFAT policy and strategic direction.

4.4 Program management systems

4. How effective and efficient are current program management systems in terms of supporting the intended outcomes of the program? Consider both achievements and challenges.

The MTR found that overall the program management systems are effective and efficient to supporting program outcomes. The MTR was tasked to assess a number of aspects which are detailed below.

Grant management systems

Governance and approval process: The review process was described by PEC members as a highly intensive process for both FCDP and PEC. The extent to which this is proportionate to the amount of money being granted was raised as an issue by some individuals consulted, especially for the CAP. However the review process was described by some PEC members and also CSO representatives as a process for strengthening CSOs. The opportunity for improvement rather than final decision through the approval process was valued by many CSOs consulted with. In terms of governance, as described in the MTR recommendations, the MTR team consider that the PEC should be more engaged at a strategic level, not just at stage of approval of grants. The PEC TOR should be revised to emphasize a strategic oversight role including the approval of key strategic documentation including capacity building plan and government engagement strategy. This will ensure that the direction of the FCDP fits within a broader understanding, and appreciation of contribution to the CSO sector.

Quality assurances to ensure community support/buy in: The Program developed and initiated the CAP in part as a response to the view that proposals (under Call for Proposals) were supply/CSO driven.²² The community profiling and community development plans explicitly seek to ensure “articulation of needs of poor and vulnerable communities”²³

Link between FCDP reporting overall achievements and CSO reporting: The Program is effectively supporting links between CSO and FCDP reporting. Improvements in M&E were described as a key area of capacity building by CSOs. The FCDP has a detailed and thorough management system to link CSO reporting to Program reporting defined in a set of management procedures and tools.

Progress is being made despite CSO monitoring and evaluation which is described by FCDP staff and also DFAT and Fiji based donors as an area of weakness within the Fiji CSO community. For CSOs the challenge is to move from activity and outputs to higher level results. The Program undertakes significant investment in strengthening CSO monitoring including: M&E training, regular (routine) community site monitoring visits, FCDP staff review of monitoring reports and discussion to revise and finalise report, FCDP M&E officer review, support in development of M&E plans and support in communications.

Delayed preparation of the MELF did mitigate achievements in linking CSO program reporting, and CSO reporting requirements were described by some as onerous. Changing formats and requirements was described by CSOs as a challenge since they had to change M&E and reporting mid-way through grants. The need to ensure that M&E standards and processes support CSOs, are user friendly and effective for CSOs, and not focused on the Program requirements was described as an issue by some FCDP staff and also CSOs. For example formats in excel was described by some as not user friendly and easy to engage with for many CSOs

Compliance to Commonwealth grant guidelines: The program invests heavily in financial oversight of the CSOs to ensure compliance. Incremental improvements in financial management cited by the staff and CSOs.

Human resources

Whilst the MTR found the overall human resource management to be appropriate, efficient and effective within the country context, a number of key issues were identified in human resources management which the MTR team suggest can be improved in Phase 2.

Staff recruitment and retention:

- Induction - Coffey provides relevant and appropriate induction programs and management to all local and international staff. Online induction programs are provided, though this seems to be generic for all Coffey employs. Some areas of the induction material would benefit from contextualised content especially relevant to the Fiji and CSO context. For example information on cross cutting issues could be contextualised to the Fiji CSO sector to ensure relevance to staff and their own work in supporting CSOs in the mainstreaming.
- Cross-cultural training - Staff are provided with cross-cultural training and local staff act as context advisers for international staff. Whilst this was deemed to be appropriate numerous stakeholders including DFAT, CSO representatives and FCDP staff themselves identified cultural challenges regarding the former Senior Program Manager which highlights the need for ongoing appropriate management and cross-cultural sensitivities. Negative perceptions of the Program need to be managed and cultural sensitivities affirmed. FCDP senior management and CSOs consulted during the MTR identified and valued the necessary perspectives and input of the local staff to the Program which should be affirmed in Phase 2.

²² This assumption was not tested with Call for Proposal grantees – to check/in with Call for Proposal beneficiaries that CSO programs were addressing community needs, community support/buy in was evident.

²³ Objective I Result Area C, PDD, p.21

- Staff turnover – The Program has experienced relatively high turnover of staff for a range of reasons, beyond management control. In terms of the managing contractor experience this was noted to be within the higher range of normal, in comparison to management of other development programs. As noted in the latest FCDP Annual Report a range of reasons have resulted in turnover of staff including immigration and individuals accepting other jobs. Challenges in retaining staff were identified by FCDP staff during the MTR which included limited contracts which are not viewed as attractive despite relatively high salaries and lack to opportunity for promotion with the Program. FCDP staff valued peer support and a good working environment as contributing to their effective work practices. There is an opportunity for the managing contractor and the FCDP to provide professional development opportunities²⁴ and incentives within Phase 2 to support staff retention. A staff survey could identify professional development opportunities.
- Specialised skills in sector – A key challenge identified by some FCDP staff was recruiting individuals with both technical skills and CSO experience. On the job training and coaching was described as the primary way to ‘up skill’ new staff in the CSO sector. However there is a need for the FCDP to invest further in staff to ensure relevance and competency to the CSO sector. As noted further below, there is an opportunity to develop specialised skills within the FCDP team, taking into account specialist understandings and skills to work with and support the CSO sector.

Task definitions:

- Roles of Learning and Development Officers and Project Officers are unclear – The MTR revealed a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities which was expressed by a number of FCDP staff and also CSO representatives. Views expressed included ‘duplication’ and ‘shadowing of roles’ and general lack of clarity of task definitions. As one CSO representative in Suva noted “one hand of the FCDP doesn’t know what the other one is doing”. The MTR team recommend a refinement and streamlining of roles within Phase 2 and that the Learning and Development Officer positions are not extended.
- Finance and Administration staff are working across both internal Program and CSO activities, limiting opportunity for specialised practice with CSOs – The MTR revealed that staff are taking on dual roles which limits opportunity for specialised engagement with CSOs regarding financial management, coaching and support. It is recommended that finance and administration positions are streamlined. Under the Operations Manager, a Finance and Administration Officer should focus on internal program management, whilst a Finance Manager should work with Project Officers (in field offices) in CSO grant management and capacity building. This builds on and more clearly defines emerging practice of the FCDP to date.

Ongoing staff management and support:

- Staff management to date has been primarily focused on grant management, and there is an opportunity to broaden staff direction to focus on a wider perspective of ‘strengthening CSOs’ – As already noted above, the MTR team found a lack of strategic direction in ‘strengthening CSO capacity’ beyond grant management. Staff expressed capacity building efforts primarily in relation to grants management. In Phase2 there is an opportunity to strengthen the FCDP contribution to broader areas including improved CSO cooperation and CSO engagement with government.
- Staff management practices – FCDP staff who participated in the FCDP spoke positively of a range of management practices including weekly and monthly staff reporting, whole of office (including outreach offices) weekly Skype meetings and peer support. In Phase 2 there is an opportunity to strengthen staff management in relation to a broader understanding of the strategic direction and

²⁴ In-house staff training was noted by some staff, but more opportunities were requested.

support longer term ‘big picture’ planning and implementation which might be supported by quarterly and monthly planning relevant to each outreach office.²⁵

The MTR recommend a refined staffing structure for Phase 2 which would reduce the program staff by 4 positions. Phase 2 positions should include:

- Team Leader
- Senior Program Manager
- Operations Manager
- Finance and Administrative Officer (internal program administration)
- M&E Officer
- Communications Officer
- Program Officer x 3 (Labasa, Lautoka, Suva)
- Finance and Administration Manager (CSO grant management and capacity building)

- M&E Advisor (short term)

Budget allocation

A Key Evaluation Question for the MTR was to ‘determine the appropriate balance of budget allocation of operational, grants and capacity building to deliver the end of program outcomes’.

The MTR team has sought to identify ‘appropriate balance’ by comparing FCDP with similar programs. The MTR team has requested from DFAT Suva, designs/ budgets of like DFAT CSO/NGO programs to conduct comparisons. At the time of preparing the final report, only one document was received. The MTR team has also requested documentation from other donors based in Fiji which has not yet been received at time of preparing the final report, though some general information has been provided.

Comparisons of FCDP budgets with the Australian Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Scheme (ACCESS Phase II) have been conducted and indicate a comparable budget balance, though FCDP has a higher proportion of funds allocated to milestones and fees. ACCESS is a similar program to FCDP supporting CSOs through the provision of grants and support by local staff. The Activity Completion Report states:

“The core statement of ACCESS was to empower citizens and their organisations (specifically the poor, women and other marginalised groups) in these districts so they could engage with local governments and other stakeholders to bring about changes in local democratic governance and thereby improve local development impacts”.²⁶

Cost types noted in the End of Activity report are compared to FCDP expenditure to date (2012-2013 and 2013-2014) in the table below. Since only summary cost types are provided in the ACCESS document, more detailed comparison is not possible. ACCESS grants are provided for “three groups of activities: local development projects, innovations/knowledge generation, and capacity building services”. Since ‘capacity building’ is included in the cost type grants for ACCESS II, if the capacity building budget is added to ‘grants category’ for the FCDP, the comparative balance (same to ACCESS Phase II) is 49.3% of total budget.

Table 2: Comparison of program budget allocations

% of budget balance	ACCESS Phase II	FCDP (actual 2 year budget)
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²⁵ See Section 4.5 for further details.

²⁶ ACCESS Phase II Indonesia Activity Completion Report May 2008 – April 2014, March 2014

Grants	51.7%	45.8%
Operational Costs	35.5% ²⁷	34.1% ²⁸
Milestone and Fees	12.8%	16.6%

Initial comparative analysis of FCDP budgets with ‘like’ AusAID supported NGO programs in the Pacific indicate that balance of budget allocation for FCDP is comparable with ANGO-local partner NGO activities. Personnel costs are proportionally large within the FCDP budget (25% within the total expenditure (2012-2013, 2013-2014). Across a range of three (first year) annual project budgets from the Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement (SINPA), personnel costs ranged between 22-39%. Project support costs for FCDP are at the lower end (9%) in comparison to SINPA project budgets, which range between 10-21%. Within the Actual Expenditure FY 2013-2014 Milestones and Fees account for 16.6% of the total FCDP budget which is comparable for ANGO support costs/overheads/fees which range between 14-24%.

Comparisons of the FCDP with other CSO donor supported programs in Fiji indicate a mixed outcome in relation to balance of budgets. Information provided by the EU indicates different approaches for CSO grant support. The grants program for human rights and democracy, (actions on support to return to democracy, women's right and economic and social rights) allocated (between 2010-12) 10% to a capacity building and support: ‘help desk’ to support NGOs (Non State Actors) in preparation and compliance of EU documentation; audit coaching and logical framework training; and between 5-10% to support NGOs at the call for proposals stage. This amounts to 20% of the total budget. EU personnel costs are not known. The remaining budget is allocated to grants. Whereas the ‘Accompanying Measures for the Sugar Protocol Programme’ employs a consultancy firm to manage grants, support capacity development and monitoring and evaluation of locally based CSOs, similar to the FCDP. Whilst requests were made to the EU, at the time of writing this report budgets were only available for 2008. Analysis of the budget notes 49.5% for grants; services and support are spread across three cost items (Allocation for Short term TA, Studies, Workshops, training, communication and visibility; Capacity building and support for agricultural Diversification; and Monitoring, Evaluation, audits and visibility) amounting to 42.5%. A further 4% is allocated to contingencies. From the information available, the balance of budget allocation for the ‘sugar support programme’ is similar to FCDP balance of budgets.

Whilst personnel costs are proportionally high for the FCDP, they should be valued as contributing to program outcomes. FCDP personnel costs are predominantly associated with grants management (large focus of project implementation to date) and capacity building. Therefore whilst personnel costs are associated with operational costs, they should be valued as contributing to end of program outcomes.

The FCDP capacity building budget is relatively small considering the focus of the Program, however the budget is considered an appropriate balance, recognising that key stakeholders and CSOs described formal capacity building events or workshops not necessarily as best practice and during MTR consultations 1-1 mentoring was valued by CSOs which is enabled through ongoing personnel costs.

A response in relation to ‘appropriate balance of budget’ should also be considered in relation to the efficient and effective use of these resources in contributing to end of program outcomes. The MTR team have assessed that in the main, Program resources have been effectively used, though there is a need to refine the strategic focus and direction of the FCDP to maximise resources within Phase 2.

²⁷ Operational Cost, noted as “including program personnel, administration and procurements costs (travel, office costs, workshops), and technical assistance

²⁸ Includes personnel, office running costs and other running costs

4.5 Program outreach

5. To what extent have the establishment of the two outreach offices in Lautoka and Labasa achieved the intended outcomes?

The two outreach offices in Labasa and Lautoka have added value to the achievement of Program objectives, particularly in relation to the CAP, though they were underutilised as part of grant management under the first Cfp. The MTR team consider the outreach offices to provide an important contribution to achieving Program objectives in FCDP Phase 2.

The intent of the outreach offices was defined in the FCDP PDD:

“The program will run from three field locations – Labasa in the North, Lautoka in the West and the Suva-Nausori corridor in the Central/Eastern Division – in order to expand the reach of CSO services particularly in rural Fiji and informal urban settlements” (FCDP PDD, p.4).

The PDD goes on to note the field offices will “ensure that the program and its key staff and resources are located close to field operations and remain accessible to CSOs, relevant, responsive and focused upon development issues and outcomes” (FCDP PDD, p.25).

The offices have been in operation since October 2012. The Labasa and Lautoka offices opened in October 2012, a few months after an FCDP office was opened in Suva (FCDP Annual Report 2012-13, p.15).

Different views on the outreach offices were expressed by stakeholders consulted during the MTR. Suva based stakeholders including DFAT and some CSOs questioned the extent to which outreach offices had sufficiently contributed to achieving Program outcomes. Mixed views were expressed by Suva based CSOs who received grants under the Cfp. One Suva based CSO had only become familiar with the offices within the last few months, whilst others valued the local monitoring of Programs and a few others described little engagement up till now with the outreach offices. One CSO described the value of the outreaches offices to their own strategy to decentralise and extend their reach to rural/remote areas, recognising the predominance of poverty in these locations.

CSOs based in Labasa and Lautoka valued the contribution of the outreach offices to supporting their work. Outreach offices were described as accessible, a place to drop-in; staff were accessible and provided I-I mentoring which was described as valuable. CAP recipients and FCDP outreach staff felt that the outreach offices provided an important contribution to the CAP process, in supporting community profiling and community development plans as well as intensive support to project proposals. Establishing rapport, building relations and being available has been an important part of building capacity process. As described by a few local CSO representatives, the local offices have also meant that local CSO staff have not had to travel to Suva, saving expense and time for community-based organisations.

The offices have enabled linkages between of CSOs and government as part of community profiling, community development plans and preparation of project proposals which has been an unintended outcome of the CAP process. Being locally based has meant that relationships are built and developed over time. Regular meetings have been scheduled between FCDP staff and government officials to communicate the work of CSOs in the division. In the north the FCDP office was described by local government officials as providing a linking role of CSOs to government, with FCDP providing updates on CSO activities in the area. This was described as a positive new practice, with few CSOs currently going to/through the Provincial and District offices, whilst many go straight to the communities. The practice of outreach offices facilitating local linkages between government and CSOs should be enhanced and strengthened as part of Phase 2.

Strengthening CSO-government linkages during Phase 2 is considered to provide contribution in a variety of ways. CSO government linkages can ensure alignment and harmonisation of resources and leveraging of local government resources for poverty mitigation. Increased linkages can also

increase the profile of CSOs and champion their contribution and legitimate role in the development agenda and offer potential partnerships and funding to CSOs through government ministries (practice which is already emerging).

Five questions were asked in relation to outreach offices in the questionnaire and results indicated generally positive views of CSOs towards the FCDP outreach offices. Though results against some areas were more mixed than others and Core funded CSOs generally had a less positive view of the outreach offices than CAP recipients.

Response to the question “*The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa add value / contribute to the work of your CSO*” were spread evenly, (33%) across neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree (n=30). Responses to neither agree nor disagree were predominantly from Core funding recipients (8 responses Core funding, 1 response CAP, 1 response Cfp).

A number of issues were identified in relation to outreach offices as detailed below:

Staffing adjustments

The intended staffing structures for the outreach offices as defined in the PDD were found not to be appropriate and have been revised through the course of Program implementation. The outreach offices were to be staffed by a Program Officer, Learning and Development Officer and Finance and Administration Officer. Under the first CfP, whilst implementation was carried out in the divisions, CSO offices were based in Suva. For example - under the First CfP only 1 CSO was located in the North – Labasa. This meant only monitoring could be conducted locally, but engagement with CSO for grant management and capacity building was done when the Project Officer visited Suva. The finance and administration officer for Lautoka was similarly relocated back to Suva where CSO offices were based.

The MTR team propose further staffing adjustments for the outreach offices in Phase 2. As already noted above, the task definitions of the Learning and Development Officer and Project Officers are unclear and it is proposed that the Learning and Development Officer roles are not extended for Phase 2. It is further proposed that a Finance and Administration Manager support outreach offices in a ‘roaming capacity’ as is already happening for the western office. This would mean that the office is operated by only one person in the north and west and has implications in terms of ensuring availability and accessibility of the office as a drop-in resource for local CSOs. Implications would not be an issue in the west where the FCDP office is shared with EU PMU which can ensure that the office is open and accessible to local CSOs. This limitation would need to be managed, especially in the north. The team has identified a number of options including:

- relocating the FCDP office to sit with government
- relocate the FCDP office to sit with a locally based CSO
- invite a (or number of) locally based CSOs to rent offices in the building, making the FCDP office a local hub for CSOs²⁹
- organise a twinning arrangement with locally based CSOs who take on responsibility for ensuring the office is opened when FCDP staff are aware

The FCDP Project Officer would need to ensure transparent and accountable communications of local and Suva based activities to ensure that the office functions as a resource to CSOs, not just as an office for the FCDP. Recognising the single role in the outreach offices the FCDP senior management will need to take particular care to effectively manage and support these positions and individuals. Field Offices should be prioritised as the primary place of operation for the Program in Phase 2, and dedicated support to staff should accompany this focus.

Appropriate and added value under CAP approach

²⁹ This option is preferred by the MTR team

The outreach offices are supporting achievement of the Program outcomes under the CAP approach, more so than the First CfP. This is because CSOs are locally based and FCDP staff are able to provide support in capacity development in relation to community profiling and preparation of community development plans and support preparation of project proposals and budgets. FCDP staff are also linking CSOs with government departments through the registering of community development plans with local government. In early October 2014 a workshop was held in Labasa bringing together CSOs and relevant government staff to share requirements of WASH programs and water safety.

The evaluation questions set out in the MTR TOR sought to investigate 4 aspects of the outreach office performance as noted below:

Monitoring program delivery and their respective areas

Some but not all CfP recipients valued the role of the FCDP in providing monitoring support to their programs. Some described the value of travelling to the field with FCDP staff whilst others suggested that they already did the monitoring, as noted by one “all the monitoring is done by us, they come along as observers” (CSO core and CfP funding, Suva). The FCDP staff valued the opportunity to visit the sites of implementation, this helped them in their review of reports and subsequent discussions with the CSOs in finalising the reports.

Questionnaire responses to the question “*The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa contribute to improvements in monitoring of your CSO*” were mixed, spread across four categories: 40% agree, 40% strongly agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=30). Again core funding recipients had a less positive view of the contribution of outreach monitoring (6 responses recorded from Core funding recipients for disagree and neither agree or disagree).

Building capacity of CSOs to deliver improved performance

CSOs engaged with outreach offices provided a mixed assessment of the contribution of FCDP capacity building efforts to their programs. Some but not all CfP recipients in Labasa and Lautoka valued the role of the FCDP in providing capacity support to deliver improved programs, whilst CAP recipients were more positive about capacity support they have received to date. A negative response by one CSO representative in the north noted: “We don’t really see much of the FCDP staff because our organisation is established so we don’t really need assistance on an ongoing basis” (CfP recipient West). Positive views were expressed in relation to financial management and also monitoring and evaluation of proposals:

“FCDP staff member] came, they had looked through the proposals we had submitted, identification of the need for more capacity to refine our proposals. They follow through, training, advising. The System is responsive to the need” (CSO FGD North).

Responses to the statement “*The FCDP ‘outreach offices’ contribute to building the capacity of your CSO*” were also mixed across five categories: 40% agree, 23% strongly agree, 23% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree, 3% strongly disagree (n=30). Negative responses were recorded by Core funding recipients, whilst the most positive responses were recorded by CAP recipients; responses by CfP participants were more mixed.

Identifying and reaching a wider range of CSOs within their location

The FCDP has succeeded in reaching a wider range of CSOs and supporting CSOs within their locations. The most recent FCDP Annual report states that:

- 50% of CSOs (20 out of 40) are receiving funding for the first time (have not been funded by DFAT in the preceding 5 years).
- 21 CSOs funded are Suva-based and 19 CSOs are non-Suva based.
- Of the 40 CSOs supported, there are 26 CSOs, 7 CBOs, 4 FBOs and 3 INGOs
- 29 CSOs are working in rural communities and settlements.
- 11 CSOs are working in urban communities and settlements.

Responses to the statement “The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa contribute to identifying and reaching a wider range of CSOs within your local area” responses were also mixed: 40% agree, 27% strongly agree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree, 3% strongly disagree (n=30). Whilst negative responses were recorded predominantly by Core funding recipients (6 responses), CAP recipients and CFP recipients also recorded negative responses (3 responses).

There are implications of extending the reach of FCDP to a wider range of CSOs as already noted above. This is an issue within the original design which needs to be effectively managed in implementation to ensure that Program objectives are achieved. Reaching a wider range of CSOs may compromise sustained achievements in relation to Objective 2, recognising that these CSOs might have relatively less capacity. As already noted within this report, the MTR team recommend a strategic approach be employed to manage the design tensions, build on existing capacities, competencies and relationships and strengthen CSO cooperation and engagement with government to manage the risks associated with ‘reaching a wider range of CSOs’ who may have relatively less capacity.

Crafting location specific innovations to improve the responsiveness and performance of the program

The MTR found only a few examples of locally developed initiatives by outreach offices. In Labasa a workshop to support WASH programs was organised for CSOs recognising that many project proposals under CAP are WASH related. The workshop brought together government, CSO representatives and technical experts from the water sector. It identified a list of mandatory requirements prior to the implementation of any community water project and provided opportunities for partnerships to be developed within the sector. In Lautoka white ribbon day was cited as a local initiative³⁰ and also a forum for CSOs to discuss sustainability. Communications workshops and Disaster Risk Management workshops had been conducted in both the west and the north providing opportunities for networking and partnerships.

Response to the statement *The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa are responsive to the local context and lead local specific initiatives* responses were mixed (47 % agree, 27 % strongly agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree, 7% strongly disagree (n=30)). Negative responses were recorded by Core funding recipients.

The MTR recommend that informed by the overall strategic direction of the Program, locally defined strategic plans be prepared to prioritise locally defined innovations in Phase 2. Based on consultations, the MTR team suggest that the outreach offices can provide an important contribution to achieving Program objectives. There is a need to develop localised plans within each office, taking into account the unique make up of CSO partners. For example, in Lautoka CSOs are larger and more established and have different interests and priorities to CSOs in Labasa who tend to be smaller and less established. Outreach offices should seek to engage beyond grant partners in strengthening localised CSO communities, and sector based communities of practice. FCDP can play a strategic role in conducting forums, gatherings and events to bring CSOs, government and technical experts together under specific sectors.

Contributions of the field/outreach offices can include:

- enable focus on rural and remote on poverty mitigation in rural and remote areas – staff working directly with locally based CSOs in the area
- enable networking, increased cooperation between CSOs in Divisions
- enable relationship building, linkages and partnerships between CSOs and local government (administrative and line ministries)

³⁰ Though noted in the 2013-2014 annual report as being held in all offices.

- A point of contact for all CSO's which augurs well for DFAT visibility and reflects DFAT commitment to rural development.

The MTR revealed a range of ways to create local and innovative responses through the field offices. One idea for Phase 2, suggested by a FCDP staff member was a calendar of events to be prepared in consultation with CSOs to address local needs and priorities and for this to be made available to local CSOs as an opportunity for them to participate. Another idea was the preparation of quarterly Program planning which would then be contextualised and developed specific to each location.

5. Conclusion

The MTR team recommend an extension of the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2 year phase of the Program (2015-17) inclusive of refinement of the strategic approach and program implementation as defined in the MTR recommendations.

The recommendation is based on an assessment and recognition of progress to date in achieving Program objectives, as well as the potential to build on and expand these contributions to leverage Australian ODA in Fiji in the future. Within the extension there is a need to ensure a strategic focus to maximise Program resources. The strategic approach is informed by key areas to ensure sustained contribution beyond the life of the program including: (1) build on the investments already made in strengthening capacity of CSOs, (2) strengthen cooperation within the CSO sector in implementation of community development activities, (3) strengthen cooperation and partnership of CSOs with government in community development activities in order to champion legitimate and sustained role and contribution of CSOs to the development agenda, (4) generate and disseminate innovative practice and lessons learned of CSOs to leverage ODA beyond the confines of the FCDP.

The strategic approach for Phase 2 should be well articulated by the FCDP. Clear milestones should be put in place to achieve and measure progress and be communicated transparently to key partners and stakeholders. The strategic approach should be defined and clearly understood and operationalised by Program staff. DFAT should be responsible for messaging the strategic direction to the CSO sector and broader stakeholder groups in Fiji.

The PEC, with an emphasis on local CSO sector advisors, should be tasked to support development and guidance of strategic direction for the Program within the 2 year extension. The PEC should ensure that the Program maintains relevance and is contributive to the broader CSO sector in Fiji, especially recognising the changed GoF context and opportunities for the CSO sector to contribute to the development agenda.

To meet Program objectives within Phase 2, focus should be directed at outreach offices as an opportunity to improve CSO cooperation and engagement with government (administration and line ministries). Informed by a Program strategy, localised plans should be developed with CSO partners to achieve the Program objectives, recognising the unique make up of CSOs and local priorities.

The MTR identified achievements in relation to Objective 1 though at this point in time, aggregated results have not been identified at outcome level. This is reasonable considering the limited time frame of Project implementation and even shorter grant periods. It should also be noted that demonstrating contribution is compromised by low capacity of CSOs to report on outcome level changes (beyond output and activity levels).

Mixed views were expressed by CSOs in relation to Objective 2, with capacity building activities being viewed as highly beneficial to some CSOs but not others. The mixed views highlight the diverse range of CSOs to which the FCDP is engaging with. These views also highlight the complex and complicated nature of the CSO sector in Fiji within which the FCDP operates and the diverse range of expectations which are expressed for the FCDP and DFAT more generally. Consultations conducted with CSOs during the MTR identified a range of benefits and contributions from capacity building activities which suggest that sufficient achievements have been made, though there is opportunity to improve capacity building efforts, employing a broader perspective of 'strengthening CSO capacity' beyond grant management.

Within Phase 2, there is a need to ensure that whilst the FCDP supports improved cooperation within the CSO sector, it supports local and indigenous structures, processes and relationships which can be sustained beyond the life of the Program. A longer term vision of how the FCDP contributes to the CSO sector, employing an approach which includes a facilitator, broker and enabler role will ensure that FCDP is not a 'gap fill' now but contributes to locally sustained changes beyond the Program. Phase 2 of the FCDP can demonstrate 'models of practice', identify and disseminate lessons learned and invite scale up as appropriate within the broader Fiji CSO sector.

The recommendations defined in this MTR align with and a contributive to key lessons and recommendations set out in the ODE evaluation of civil society.³¹

ODE report key points and recommendations	FCDP Phase 2 recommendations
<i>"Linking civil society with partner governments can expand the reach of basic services"</i>	* emphasis in Phase 2 to strengthen CSO (sub national) government collaboration
<i>"Longer-term, core funding and improved partner selection can improve development results and mitigate the risks of working with civil society" (R7)</i>	* recommend to extend existing CfP grants (on merit)
<i>"Develop a clear basis for selecting individual civil society organisations. Choose partners through targeted rather than competitive approaches, where appropriate" (R7)</i>	* targeted approach (closed call for EOI) to partner with 'middle range' CSOs in 2 nd round of CAP
<i>"Support initiatives to strengthen the enabling environment for civil society as part of strengthening civil society, where the context is appropriate" (R6)</i>	* promote improved cooperation within CSO sector and with GoF * emphasis on generation and dissemination of evidence based practice to promote CSO practice to GoF and other stakeholders
<i>"Harmonise more efficiently with other donors so that the benefits accrue to both recipients and donors" (R7)</i>	* alignment of community development planning with DFAT/UNDP program * explore opportunities for alignment with EUPMU

5.1 Recommendations

This section lists the MTR recommendations found in the main body of the report.

³¹ Working Beyond Government, Evaluation of AusAID's engagement with civil society in developing countries, March 2012

Recommendation 1: That DFAT extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2 year phase of the Program (2015-17) inclusive of refinement of the strategic approach and program implementation as defined in the MTR recommendations.

Recommendation 2: That FCDP continue to focus on rural and remote communities as the primary focus area for 'mitigating economic and social hardships faced poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji'.

Recommendation 3: That FCDP develop a strategic capacity building strategy for 'strengthening CSOs'. The capacity building strategy should address the following:

- orientate capacity building beyond grant management to strengthening the CSO sector as legitimate and valuable partners in development
- enhance sector based collaboration of CSOs and encourage consortiums in the implementation of grant supported community development work
- focus on partnering with CSOs already engaged with the FCDP to date, including CSOs who requested capacity building support
- support replication of the community profiling and community development planning process (CAP) amongst the broader CSO sector following thorough review and revision
- prioritise research and learning to scale-up Program and CSO initiatives within the broader CSO community, private sector and GoF and strengthen CSO engagement in partnerships with government and policy dialogue

Recommendation 4: That FCDP develop a Government Engagement Strategy (GES). The GES should address the following:

- strengthen and facilitate collaboration and partnerships of CSOs with relevant government ministries at national and sub-national level
- promote and influence with CSOs scale up of FCDP initiatives and CSO programming within the GoF
- explore opportunities with the Pacific Risk Resilience Program (PRRP) and the GoF Ministry of Strategic Planning to align government requirements for community profiling
- link and contribute to the Government of Fiji mandate for poverty reduction in line with the established GoF monitoring framework

Recommendation 5: That FCDP revise the Program Executive Committee (PEC) Terms of Reference (TOR) to maximise the expertise and experience of the PEC members (external advisors) by expanding their role to provide oversight of the strategic direction and monitor consistently during the remainder of the Program.

Recommendation 6: That FCDP revise job descriptions and task definitions for Program Officers, and Finance and Administration positions. The Learning and Development Officers contracts should not be extended for Phase 2.

Recommendation 7: That FCDP develop field office strategy plans taking into consideration the unique characteristics and interests of local CSOs and sector approach and Government/ CSO partnership.

Annex 1: Mid Term Review Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid Term Review of the Fiji Community Development Program

Initiative: INK130

Background

The Fiji Community Development Program (FCDP) builds on a long history of Australian support to civil society in Fiji and supersedes the Australian Civil Society Support Program (ACSSP) which was managed at Suva Post from 2000-2012. The FCDP design is based on lessons learnt from previous civil society support programs in Fiji and the findings from the January 2011 Office for Development Effectiveness (ODE) evaluation of CSO programs. It also takes into account the constrained political and economic environment in Fiji.

The goal of the FCDP program is to support service delivery to underserved communities by strengthening and resourcing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Fiji. In line with this goal there are two main objectives. The first objective is to mitigate social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji by funding the community development work of CSOs. The second objective is to strengthen CSO capacity to deliver relevant and efficient programs in their target communities.

The FCDP started on 16th May 2012, and is a 5-year program, with the first phase (May 2012-May 2015), worth AUD13 Million. The program is being implemented through the management contractor, Coffey International Development PTY LTD.

Purpose

The purpose of this Mid Term Review (MTR) is to ensure accountability in assessing contractor performance for the first 3-year phase of the FCDP program (Phase 1: May 2012-May 2015). The MTR will be a key independent assessment that will be used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Aid Program (DFAT – AAP) to determine whether to take the option to extend the existing contract with Coffey International for the next 2-year phase of the program (2015-17).

The review will also be used to inform DFAT-AAP on how to effectively improve program performance for FCDP Phase 2, with a focus on management systems and the quality of the program delivery.

Issues

The FCDP program is designed to help DFAT deliver support to CSOs in Fiji in an effective and efficient way. The following provides background to help inform the MTR team on what DFAT would like the review to focus on under the key evaluation questions:

Australian CSO support to poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji

The first objective of FCDP is focused on mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji by funding the community development work of CSOs. The first call for proposals by the program was held in October 2012 and a total of 92 proposals were received. The first call for proposals was a general call and therefore proposals received encompassed a range of organisations implementing various types of community development projects. The program has provided grants to 25 CSOs since 2012.

The program is also currently piloting a new approach called the Community Action Program (CAP), which is focused on quality assuring community development proposals by first providing training and accreditation to selected CSOs in effective community engagement and then encouraging these CSOs to work with their target communities to develop project proposals that will be considered for grant funding by the program. There are currently 15 CSOs involved in the CAP.

It is important for DFAT to ascertain whether the program is on track towards achieving the first objective of the program and if current grant activity outcomes will help contribute to mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities. The review will assess whether the program is achieving, or is on track to achieving, this objective by examining grantee activity outcomes and approaches employed by the program to address Objective 1.

b. CSO capacity building strategy

The second objective of FCDP has a deliberate focus on strengthening the capacity of CSOs to deliver services to poor and vulnerable communities. In line with this objective, FCDP has developed capacity assessment tools and conducts both targeted and generic training in key thematic areas.

It is also important that these capacity building strategies are based on best practice and approaches that enable reflection and institutionalisation of learning and skills. Capacity building for sustainability is reflected as one of the program's key principles. It is important civil society partners and stakeholders understand the intent of the capacity building strategy and feel that it is meeting their needs.

The MTR will review progress on how effective FCDP has been so far in addressing the above within the capacity building objective of the program with a particular focus on the systems and processes that have been developed and whether these are effective in building capacity of CSOs in Fiji.

c. FCDP Management Contractor Model

Prior to FCDP, support to CSOs was managed directly by DFAT at Suva Post over a twelve year period from 2000-2012. An independent evaluation of this support found that this model was administratively burdensome and DFAT was unable to effectively monitor progress and outcomes of its funding support to CSOs in Fiji.

The FCDP managing contractor model is designed to reduce this administrative burden to enable DFAT to engage in a more strategic way with the civil society sector in Fiji and ensure funding is delivered in a more effective and efficient way. The transition to a managing contractor model has meant that DFAT has a less direct engagement with CSOs in Fiji in terms of administration and management of grant funding.

It is important that civil society partners in Fiji and DFAT have a mutual understanding of this new form of engagement and are able to discuss with each other what the impact of having an intermediary like FCDP has been. The MTR will find out what the benefits, shortcomings and risks of this new way of working have been since the inception of a managing contractor model and the extent to which the relationship between Fijian civil society and Australia has changed as a result of the managing contractor model.

d. Program management systems

FCDP administers a mixture of project specific and core funding to CSOs. This is in line with the program's focus on service delivery through strengthened CSOs. The program has also established a grant management system and capacity building strategy and is resourced with personnel located across three offices in Suva (Central), Lautoka (West) and Labasa (North). In addition, the program has a governance process to assure accountability and transparency of the program.

The MTR will find out if current resourcing and personnel is appropriate to meet the objectives of the program and whether the current program management systems are effective.

e. Program outreach

In addition to the head office in Suva, FCDP also has field offices in Lautoka and Labasa. The field offices are designed to provide more accessible support services and capacity building to CSOs working in rural and remote communities in western Viti Levu and on Vanua Levu. The 2 field offices were also setup to ensure that the program is able to better monitor the implementation of CSO projects funded by FCDP. The field offices are a key feature of the FCDP program, which is the only bilateral program that has field offices in Fiji.

The review will look at whether the field offices have been able to effectively support and monitor CSOs working in and around their respective locations.

Key Evaluation Questions

The five (5) Key Evaluation Questions for the MTR are:

a. To what extent is the program achieving its first objective of mitigating social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji?

- i. How is the program addressing the first objective of the program?
- ii. To what extent do current grant activity outcomes contribute to achieving the first objective of the program?
- iii. To what extent will the CAP contribute to achieving program outcomes?

b. How effective is the CSO capacity building strategy of the program?

- i. To what extent do stakeholders have a shared understanding of what the capacity building outcomes and approaches of the program are?
- ii. How likely is the documented capacity building strategy (including the design) to meet its expected outcomes?
- iii. How effective has the capacity building strategy been during implementation?

c. What have been the benefits and risks of employing an intermediary (managing contractor) to the relationship between Fijian civil society actors and the Australian Aid program, and Australia more broadly?

- i. To what extent do stakeholders have a shared understanding of the desired features and outcomes of the relationship between Fijian civil society actors and Australia?
- ii. To what extent, and how has the relationship between Fijian civil society and Australia changed as a result of using an intermediary?
- iii. What have been the major benefits of this change?
- iv. What have been any risks that have emerged, or could potentially emerge, as a result of this change?

d. How effective and efficient are current program management systems in terms of supporting the intended outcomes of the program? Consider both achievements and challenges.

Grant Management System with a focus on:

- i. Governance and approval system for CSO grant funding
- ii. Quality assurances of CSO projects to ensure community support/buy-in
- iii. Link between FCDP overall results measurement system and CSO reporting
- iv. Alignment of FCDP Grants Manual with best practice, including Commonwealth grant guidelines

Human Resource Management System with a focus on:

- i. Job descriptions or task definition
- ii. Recruitment and selection processes (right person for the right tasks)
- iii. Ongoing staff management and support to achieve strong performance

Program resourcing with a focus on:

- i. Determining what an appropriate balance of budget allocation of operational, grants and capacity building to deliver the end of program outcomes.

To what extent have the establishment of the two outreach offices in Lautoka and Labasa achieved the intended outcomes, with a particular focus on:

- i. Monitoring program delivery in their respective areas
- ii. Building the capacity of CSOs to deliver improved performance
- iii. Identifying and reaching a wider range of CSOs within their location
- iv. Crafting location specific innovations to improve the responsiveness and performance of the program.

As a result of data collection, processing and analysis of data, the review team will propose ways of building on successes of the program, and improving performance for the remaining period of the program. Recommendations must be costed, feasible for DFAT and/or the implementation team to respond to, and it should be clear how an effective response will make substantive contributions to program outcomes.

Process

The timeframe for the MTR is outlined below.

Process	Team Leader Days	Team Member 1 Days	Team Member 2 Days
Review Documents	2	2.5	2.5
Desk study review to assess the extent to which current grant activity outcomes contribute to achieving the first objective of the program		1	
Evaluation Plan	3	8	8
Submission of Draft Evaluation Plan		By 16 October 2014	
Meeting to discuss DFAT comments on First Draft Evaluation Plan	0.5	0.5	0.5
Incorporation of DFAT Comments on Draft Evaluation Plan	1	1	1
Travel days			
In-country Briefing and team final preparation	0.5	0.5	0.5
Data Collection	8	8	8
- Collecting Data	1	1	1
- Team Discussions	2	2	2
- Preliminary data processing in country			
Aide Memoire preparation and presentation	1.5	1.5	1.5
Report Writing	5	3	3
Submission of First Draft		By 10 November 2014	

Teleconference Meeting to discuss DFAT comments on First Draft	0.5	0.5	0.5
Incorporation of DFAT Comments on Draft	Up to 2 days	0.5	0.5
Final Report	By 14 November 2014		
TOTAL	28 days	29 days	29 days

Deliverables

This Independent Completion Review shall have the following reporting outputs:

- i. Evaluation Plan by 16 October 2014. The Plan is to be developed by the Team Leader, in consultation with members of the Review team. The plan must reflect the DFAT M&E Standard 5, and the evaluation plan will be formally assessed against that standard. Standards will be provided.
- ii. Presentation on the Review team's initial findings to relevant DFAT-AAP staff on 31 October 2014, in country.
- iii. Provide an Aide Memoire to DFAT by 31 October 2014.
- iv. Draft MTR Report by 10 November 2014. The report must reflect the DFAT M&E Standard 6, and the reports will be formally assessed against this standard. Standards will be provided.
- v. Final MTR report by 14 November 2014 incorporating comments from DFAT

All documents will be delivered to DFAT in electronic format. Draft reports will be clearly marked as drafts and will have the revision date and authors noted on the cover. Note that processed data from the review may also be requested by DFAT.

Team Composition	Roles
Team Composition	
Team Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Performing the role of team leader and effectively using the expertise of team members in meeting the Terms of Reference and contractual obligations; <input type="checkbox"/> Submitting an Evaluation Plan following consultation with team members, that sets out the design and conduct of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) including a sound methodology for the mission that reflects acceptable practice standards, and the time and resources available for the mission; <input type="checkbox"/> Leading the evaluation process including participating in an inception briefing; assigning tasks and responsibilities to team members; leading the mission in the field and ensuring mission efficiency and performance; <input type="checkbox"/> Processing and synthesising of raw data collected by team members. <input type="checkbox"/> Leading team discussions and reflection <input type="checkbox"/> Leading the presentation of preliminary findings to Australian Aid Program at an end of the in-country mission; <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting and finalising the aide memoire; <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting and finalising the MTR report; <input type="checkbox"/> Delivering a quality evaluation report to DFAT's Aid Program; and <input type="checkbox"/> Other duties in the TOR and as directed by DFAT's Aid Program.

<p>Team Member 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the development of an Evaluation Plan following consultation with team members; <input type="checkbox"/> Providing intellectual insights and feedback to the Team Leader on in-country consultative meetings and preparation of the Aide Memoire and draft MTR. <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating local community and CSO consultation as part of the evaluation process <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the drafting and finalisation of the aide memoire; Contribute to the drafting and finalisation of the MTR report; <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in the in-country mission as directed by the Team Leader
<p>Team Member 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the development of an Evaluation Plan following consultation with team members; <input type="checkbox"/> Providing intellectual insights and feedback to the Team Leader on in-country consultative meetings and preparation of the Aide Memoire and draft MTR. <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating local community and CSO consultation as part of the evaluation process <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the drafting and finalisation of the aide memoire; <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to the drafting and finalisation of the MTR report; <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in the in-country mission as directed by the Team Leader

ANNEX A: KEY DOCUMENTS

DFAT will make available to the team information, documents and particulars relating to FCDP and DFAT’s requirements for the review. These will include but not be confined to:

- Fiji Community Development Program Design Document June 2011
- Australian Civil Society Support Program Independent Completion Report 2012.
- Working Beyond Governments: Evaluation of Australia’s Engagement with Civil Society in Developing Countries March 2012
- AusAID Civil Society Engagement Framework June 2012

Annex 2: Mid Term Review methodology

Extracted from MTR Evaluation Plan.

Approach

This section outlines the methods of data collection, including sampling strategy, analysis, ethical practice and limitations and constraints and sets out the Mid Term Review schedule.

The MTR approach will use the Key Evaluation Questions as the framework in which to examine and address the purpose of this evaluation: to assess contractor performance and make recommendations in relation to the next phase of the Program. A mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods will be employed to seek responses from key stakeholders in relation to the five main areas of inquiry defined through the Key Evaluation Questions (and as set out in the TOR for the MTR). The MTR is exploratory and seeks to identify multiple stakeholder experience and perspectives of the FCDP to date and identify perspectives and views on the preferred future of DFAT support for CSOs in Fiji. The MTR team has identified key stakeholders to the FGDP, with both direct and in-direct engagement who will be offered opportunity to participate in the MTR. CSOs and the FCDP have been given priority opportunity to participate recognising their primary stake in the Program and MTR. The five areas of inquiry and Key Evaluation Questions will be used a lens through which to analysis stakeholder responses, present key findings and recommendations.

Methodology

The MTR is informed by principles and practice which guide the conduct of the MTR evaluation team.

Informed by the TOR for this MTR the team will employ a strengths-based approach. The TOR states the “the review team will propose ways of building on successes of the program and improving performance for the remaining period of the program”. The methods of data collection include questions to reveal achievements to date and identify enablers in relation to the program objectives and program management in addition to identifying areas and practice for improvement.

A collaborative approach has been employed. Consultations with DFAT have informed the preparation and finalization of the Evaluation Plan. A collaborative approach will be employed with FCDP in the conduct of the MTR. The MTR team appreciates the administrative and logistical support provided by FDCP in organizing consultations with CSOs through the three program sites and the availability of all staff to participate in the MTR.

The approach includes some scope for flexibility and response to emerging issues. Whilst recognising the schedule is confined due to time constraints with limited scope for flexibility, time is provided especially at the end of the field work to follow up and respond to any emerging issues. As and if issues emerge the team will assess the situation in relation to the overall purpose of the evaluation and determine if there is a priority to revise the schedule. Any revisions will take care to ensure that team debrief, processing and analysis is not compromised during the field work and that all relevant stakeholders have been provided reasonable opportunity to participate in the review. The team is well equipped to respond to unexpected issues in the conduct of field work. Both Ana Laqeretabua and Eleni Levin-Tevi are familiar with the Fijian context to identify and know best ways of responding. Keren Winterford has had extensive experience conducting research and evaluation activities in similar contexts to Fiji and is well equipped to address any emerging issues. The team will employ a collaborative team approach to ensure that any issues are identified are shared and appropriate actions are decided and acted on. The team will continue to liaise with DFAT and FCDP management throughout the MTR field activities.

The MTR draws on the wealth of program documentation to guide assessment of progress to date in achieving program objectives. In particular the FCDP Program Theory³², Program Objectives³³ and

³² FCDP, *Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning Framework*, March 2014

³³ FCDP, *Program Design Document*, June 2011

Result Areas³⁴ will be employed as framework by which to assess extent of achievement to achieving project objectives (Key Evaluation Questions (1) and (2)). (See Annex 3 for details). Relevant FCDP documentation to support management systems will be drawn on in responding to Key Evaluation Question (4).

Multiple stakeholders will be engaged and both qualitative and quantitative methods employed to strengthen confidence in the findings. Engagement with a wide range of stakeholders who have had both primary and secondary engagement with the Program provides an opportunity to reveal multiple perspectives. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods enables a depth of inquiry to explore 'what' has happened (according to different stakeholder perspectives), primarily through questionnaires with a mix of open and closed questions and 'how' and 'why', primarily through interviews and Focus Group Discussions using open ended questions.

Stakeholders will be consulted in 'like-groups' in Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) to maximise a focused discussion on specific areas of experience and to provide a safe space for people to share their perspectives. This is especially the case for CSOs who have participated in the FCDP through a variety of different activities.

The MTR purpose and Key Evaluation Questions focus the MTR to prioritise the FCDP and CSOs as primary stakeholder groups. The MTR purpose of 'assessing contractor performance for the first 3-year phase of the FCDP' guides the MTR to primarily explore and assess the role of the program in supporting CSOs to contribute to the program objectives, rather than an assessment of CSO contribution to beneficiaries in achieving the program goal and objectives. Though the MTR will include a 'snap shot' of beneficiaries experience through consultations with few beneficiary groups. These consultations will be used to compare with and augment existing Program documentation on beneficiary experience to date.

The MTR team will ensure that gender considerations are incorporated into the MTR as appropriate. Whilst the FCDP has no specific gender specific targets and the TOR does not define gender specific MTR questions. The MTR will review progress towards gender equity as part of a broader assessment of program objectives. The review will include gender focused questions as part of its data collection methods. The MTR will include sex disaggregated data as part of its methods of data collection.

Method of data collection

Four primary methods will be employed to collect data: document review, key informant interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) and questionnaires. All data collection methods will be used across the five areas of inquiry for the MTR.

Most questions will be relevant to ask all stakeholder groups, though it is recognised not all questions will be relevant to each group. Specific data collection tools (interview/focus group discussion guide and questionnaire) will be prepared for each stakeholder group recognising the particular relevance / appropriateness of questions to each group.

The preparation of interview guides, focus group discussion guides and questionnaires is informed by the MTR evaluation questions noted in Annex 2. Aligning every question within the data collection tools (interview guides, focus group discussion guides and questionnaire) to Key Evaluation Questions, sub-questions and sub-sub questions will ensure that all MTR questions are responded to by the relevant stakeholders.

Document review: A review of documentation from a range of stakeholders relevant to responding to the Key Evaluation Questions will be conducted. Stakeholders include but are not limited to DFAT, the FCDP, CSOs and donors and other external stakeholders relevant to the CSO community in Fiji. The

³⁴ FCDP, *Community Action Program Manual, Version 2*, June 2014

document review will support inquiry through the other data collection methods and also augment and validate evaluation findings. A reflection guide informed by the five areas of inquiry / Key Evaluation Questions and data collection sheet will be prepared to guide the document review process.

A review of Program Most Significant Change (MSC) stories will be included as part of the document review and will provide an opportunity to explore progress towards achieving Objectives 1 and 2. A thematic analysis will be undertaken using the Program Objectives and Result Areas as a framework to assess the extent to which stories represent progress towards achieving the Program objectives.

The document review will assist the Team in developing an institutional understanding of the project, its status and its effectiveness. This will allow for deeper exploration of the Program in the other methods of data collection.

Documentation for review will include the following main documents:

- FCDP project governance documentation starting from the program's design and including annual reports and QAIs.
- Australian Civil Society Support Program Independent Completion Report 2012.
- Working Beyond Governments: Evaluation of Australia's Engagement with Civil Society in Developing Countries March 2012
- AusAID Civil Society Engagement Framework June 2012
- FCDP project management documentation
- CSO documentation (including M&E plans, records, reports)

A list of documents to be reviewed is included as Annex 4. It is expected that this will be expanded on as further documents are sourced through the MTR exercise.

Key informant interviews: Informed by the Key Evaluation Questions, question guides (See Annex 7) will be prepared to facilitate key informant interview and FGDs for all stakeholder groups. The question guides will employ same questions for each group, though there will be slight variation recognising the unique and specific experience and perspectives of each stakeholder group to the FCDP.

Key informant interviews will be conducted with the Core funded CSOs to enable in-depth discussions. This strategy is in response to the multiple ways in which they have participated in the FCDP and previously engaged with DFAT and recognition of the depth of perspective and learning they will be able to provide across all 5 areas of inquiry. The key informant interview will also be employed for other stakeholders groups who have a common experience (work closely together) or have a common area of expertise (DFAT, donors, trainers). The key informant interview format will also be used for key FCDP staff who will be invited to meet in small groups around common work practices.

A separate guide will be prepared to support consultations with community-based beneficiaries of CSO grants / FCDP program support. The focus of discussion will primarily focus on the extent to which the CSO/FCDP support contributing to achieving Objective 1 of the program.

Stakeholder groups: CSOs – Core funding recipients, DFAT, other donors, Fiji civil society umbrella organisations, FCDP staff, PEC, FCDP (external) trainers, community-based beneficiaries

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Facilitator guides (see Annex 7) will employ same questions informed by the Key Evaluation Questions but will be prepared separately recognising slight difference for each stakeholder group. FGDs will be held with multiple groups of CSOs who have participated in FCDP activities to date through the three program offices. CSOs have been grouped into 'like groups' within each location to ensure focus of discussions in their shared experiences relating to the FCDP. Through discussion, a deeper understanding of issues will be explored through the contribution of multiple stakeholder perspectives and by the use of probing questions. Participants of the FGDs are expected to range between 10 - 20. The FGDs will be facilitated by two team members, to ensure that quality facilitation and note taking is achieved.

Stakeholder groups: CSOs – Round 1 recipients, capacity building recipients, CAP recipients, emergency relief funding recipients

Questionnaires: Printed questionnaires will be provided to all stakeholder groups participating in the MTR at the commencement of the interview / FGDs and collected before the interview/FGD starts (see Annex 7). It is expected that the questionnaires will take maximise 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaires will employ same questions informed by the Key Evaluation Questions but will be prepared separately recognising slight difference for each stakeholder group. The questionnaires will include primarily closed questions to provide quantitative data but will also provide few opened ended questions to reveal individual perspectives. The questionnaire responses will be analyzed concurrently with interview/FGD responses and provide a snap shot of CSO experience and perspectives of the FCDP from all relevant stakeholders.

Stakeholder groups: All stakeholder groups

Analysis

The Key Evaluation Questions will provide a framework to guide analysis of data collected. The analysis, including the identification of key themes and findings, will involve four components:

Component 1 - Document review: FCDP activities are extensively documented. The review of relevant documentation will provide an understanding of the current status of the project, its current governance and institutional arrangements and a basic evaluation of its current levels of progress and success. The document review reflection guides will be used by the team to inform use of document review analysis in preparing MTR findings.

Component 2 Qualitative Data: The qualitative data collected, including key informant interviews and focus groups, will provide stakeholder perspectives in relation to the five areas of inquiry for the MTR. Notes will be taken during the interviews and FGDs and will be used by the MTR team to conduct a thematic analysis of stakeholder responses. This will identify contention, commonality relevant to informing overall research findings. Analysis of qualitative data will be supported by ongoing MTR debriefs and allocated time in the schedule to systematically process the data.

Component 3 Quantitative Data: The quantitative data collected through questionnaires will also provide stakeholder perspectives in relation to the five areas of inquiry for the MTR. The primary use of closed questions will provide a snap shot of stakeholder experiences and perspectives which will be used to augment and triangulate thematic analysis of qualitative data. Other quantitative data will be collected and analysed in order to respond to the Key Evaluation Questions. This will include program documentation such as records of key activities including management of grants, capacity building activities, human resources data and financial records. This information will be used to substantiate evaluation findings.

Component 4: Critical Comparison of Data: A key component of the analysis will be to compare and contrast the data across the multiple data collection methods, stakeholder groups (including different types of CSO participation in the FCDP) and locations. The compare and contrast analysis will help to reveal similarity of difference of stakeholder perspectives and similarity/difference of these perspectives to the Programs' documentation of progress to date. The compare and contrast will also offer insights between primary and secondary stakeholders of the program and also different locations of the FCDP. Compare and contrast analysis aims to ensure that there is a fair representation of different perspectives, that there is a strong evidence base.

Critical comparison of data will be conducted systematically and routinely during the field work and across the three sites of the FCDP program / MTR. Responses from each consultation will be synthesized to generate emerging themes for stakeholder group in specific locations, relating to each of the five main areas of inquiry. Periodic team processing included in the MTR schedule will enable team members to conduct and share critical comparison initially between stakeholders in same location and then additionally between stakeholder groups at different locations.

Critical comparison of data will be supported by multiple individual team and group team activities. The team will conduct ongoing debrief, reflection, process and analysis together with dedicated processing

within the duration of field work. The team will conduct nightly debriefs to process and synthesis learning from each day. Focused approach to reflections will be supported by a reflection guide focusing on the Key Evaluation Questions. Dedicated reflection processes are scheduled following consultations in the three program sites and at the end of field work. It is expected that further conversations following the in-country mission relating to analysis of the data and reflection will continue between the team via Skype in preparation of the Draft MTR.

Triangulation is supported through the use of multiple methods of data collection and the use of same questions across different stakeholder groups and the use of document reviews to respond to the Key Evaluation Questions. Both qualitative (interviews and FGDs) and quantitative methods (questionnaires) will be used to collect data. The two data collection methods will be used to explore the same five areas of inquiry for the MTR. The data sources will complement each other in providing quantitative data in response to closed questions (ranking) and qualitative data in response to open ended questions.

Informed by the Key Evaluation Questions, sub-questions and sub-sub questions (See Annex 2) a 'generic' question guide has been prepared with all questions linking back to sub-sub questions. In most cases all questions are relevant to all stakeholder group and will be used to inform the preparation of interview guides, FGDs and questionnaires. The use of triangulation (through multiple methods, employing same questions across different stakeholder groups) and using document review as well as stakeholder perspectives will provide the means to conduct analysis comparing and contrasting different stakeholder perspectives and to give confidence to the evaluation findings.

Annex 3: Summary analysis of MTR questionnaire (CSO response)

33 questionnaires completed by CSO representatives (CORE n=12, CAP n = 10, CfP / Emergency n = 11).

Not all questionnaires were completed correctly. Responses have been analysed in relation to each question.

Objective 1

4 questions were asked of CSOs in relation to Objective 1. The majority of responses indicated that CSOs felt that the Program has contributed to meeting Objective 1 and associated result areas, with only 1 or 2 outliers, mainly CAP recipients who have not received grant funds yet. There was no significant difference between responses across the 3 CSO groups.

1. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is *reducing social and economic hardship* of poor and vulnerable communities through CSOs (45 % agree, 48 % strongly agree (n=29)).
 - 2 responses 'not agreed' from CAP recipients, who have yet to receive grants for community development activities.
2. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to *increasing resilience* of poor and vulnerable communities through CSOs (59 % agree, 28 % strongly agree (n=29)).
 - 2 responses 'not agreed' from CAP recipients who have yet to receive grants for community development activities and 2 CORE funded CSOs who no longer receive funds.
3. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed changes brought about by FCDP grants are *sustainable* (48 % agree, 24 % strongly agree (n=29)).
 - 2 responses (7%) 'not agreed' from CAP recipients, who have yet to receive grants for community development activities and 6 responses (21%) from CORE funded CSOs who no longer receive funds and emergency grant recipients.
4. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to helping poor and vulnerable communities to *better express their needs through CSOs* (59 % agree, 31 % strongly agree (n=29)).
 - 3 responses (10%) not agreed, 1 each from CORE funded, CAP recipient and Call for Proposal recipient.

10 questions were asked of CSO CAP recipients. Responses indicate a positive view of the contribution of CAP to their CSO practice. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the positive contribution of CAP, with only 1 respondent who consistently disagreed.

1. As a result of my participation in the CAP I am confident to do needs analysis in communities.
 - (60 % agree, 30 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).
2. As a result of my participation in the CAP I am confident to prepare community profiles

(40 % agree, 50 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

3. As a result of my participation in the CAP I am confident to prepare a project proposal for funding support under FCDP.

(50 % agree, 30 % strongly agree, 10% neither agree/disagree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

4. The lessons I have learned from participation in the CAP can be sustained in my organisation.

(40 % agree, 50 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

5. As a result of my participation in the CAP I am more confident about monitoring and evaluating projects.

(80 % agree, 10 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

6. The CAP is practical for Fiji based CSOs.

(50 % agree, 40 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

7. CAP activities are replicable by the CSOs. (i.e. can be sustained beyond the life of this program).

(70 % agree, 20 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

8. CAP activities are relevant to the Fiji Context.

(90 % agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

9. CAP has the potential to strengthen CSOs in addressing social and economic hardship.

(50 % agree, 40 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

10. CAP has the potential to strengthen CSOs in working with poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji.

(30 % agree, 60 % strongly agree, 10% disagree (n=10)).

Objective 2

3 general questions were asked to CSO representatives in relation to Objective 2 and Result Areas, responses indicated that CSOs felt that the Program has contributed to meeting Objective 2, though there has been less achievement in relation to production of evidence base practice (Result Area 3).

1. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program *strengthened their CSO* through assistance from FCDP (57 % agree, 37 % strongly agree (n=30)).

1 response strongly disagreed from CORE recipient and 1 response from CAP recipient

2. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the Program is contributing to *improved cooperation with the CSO community* (50 % agree, 33 % strongly agree (n=30)).

3 response strongly disagreed from CAP and CfP, emergency and 2 responses neither agreed nor disagreed (Core and Call for Proposals).

3. Respondents provided a mixed response in assessing achievement of FCDP in *providing research materials to strengthen CSO programming*
(3% strongly disagree, 20% disagree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 40% agree, 7% strongly agree) (n=30)).

CSO self-assessment of capacity built

8 questions were asked of CSOs to self-assess changes to capacity building as a result of FCDP. The majority of responses indicate a positive contribution of FCDP to strengthening capacity to CSOs, though responses to some questions were mixed. Less positive responses were predominantly provided by a few Core funding recipients.

The responses indicate areas for improvement including strengthening CSO networks, and institutionalising learning into core CSO practice.

1. The learning from the capacity building activities is practical and easy to apply.
(65 % agree, 26 % strongly agree, 10% neither agree nor disagree (n=31)).
2. The learning from the capacity building activities has changed the way that your CSO delivers services to poor and marginalised communities.
(58 % agree, 32 % strongly agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
3. The learning from the capacity building activities is long lasting and will be sustained in our organisation.
(55 % agree, 26 % strongly agree, 16% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
4. I have gained specific skills from participating in capacity building activities through FCDP which I use as part of my CSO work.
(45 % agree, 35 % strongly agree, 16% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
5. I am able to provide better services to the community as a result of capacity building through FCDP.
(58 % agree, 35 % strongly agree, 3% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
6. I am able to provide better services to my organization as a result of capacity building through FCDP
(57 % agree, 30 % strongly agree, 13% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).
7. If given an opportunity I would like to participate in more capacity building activities through FCDP
(43 % agree, 53 % strongly agree, 3% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).
8. I have been able to develop stronger networks through my engagement with FCDP

(43 % agree, 37 % strongly agree, 20% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).

Intermediary Model

2 questions were asked to CSO Core funding recipients only in relation to the intermediary model. The majority of respondents had a positive view of the model, though more mixed responses were provided in relation to its perceived benefit to Fiji CSOs.

1. Almost all respondents agreed/strongly agreed that *FCDP has brought about positive change to the delivery of the Australian aid program* (58 % agree, 33 % strongly agree, 8% neither agree/disagree (n=12)).

2. More mixed views expressed by respondents as to whether *Fiji CSOs have strongly benefitted from the introduction of an intermediary to manage CSO grants* (42 % agree, 33 % strongly agree, 17% neither agree/disagree, 8% disagree (n=12)).

Grant Management

5 questions were asked to all CSO representatives in relation to grants management. The majority of responses valued the grant management system. Less positive responses were predominantly provided by a few CSO Core funding recipients.

1. The FCDP governance and grant approval process strengthens my CSO.
(52 % agree, 32 % strongly agree, 13% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
2. The FCDP governance and grant approval process helps my CSO address social and economic hardship faced by poor, vulnerable and excluded communities in Fiji.
(48 % agree, 35 % strongly agree, 16% neither agree nor disagree (n=31)).
3. The FCDP grant management system ensures my CSO gets community support for our activities.
(52 % agree, 42 % strongly agree, 6% neither agree nor disagree (n=31)).
4. The FCDP grant management system links our CSO monitoring to the overall FCDP reporting.
(74 % agree, 19 % strongly agree, 3% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=31)).
5. The FCDP grant management system ensures my CSO complies with Government of Australia standards for grant management.
(63 % agree, 30 % strongly agree, 7% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).

Outreach offices

5 questions were asked to all CSO in relation to the outreach offices. The majority of responses valued the contribution of the offices, though against some questions the responses were more mixed. Less positive responses were predominantly provided by a Core funding recipients.

The responses indicate areas for improvement include strengthening capacity building through the outreach offices, extending reach to local CSOs and developing localised responses and specific initiatives.

1. The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa add value / contribute to the work of your CSO.
(33 % agree, 33 % strongly agree, 33% neither agree nor disagree (n=30)).
2. The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa contribute to improvements in monitoring of your CSO.
(40 % agree, 40 % strongly agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree (n=30)).
3. The FCDP 'outreach offices' contribute to building the capacity of your CSO.
(40 % agree, 23 % strongly agree, 23% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree, 3% strongly disagree (n=30)).
4. The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa contribute to identifying and reaching a wider range of CSOs within your local area.

(40 % agree, 27 % strongly agree, 20% neither agree nor disagree, 10% disagree, 3% strongly disagree (n=30)).

5. The FCDP offices in Lautoka and Labasa are responsive to the local context and lead local specific initiatives.

(47 % agree, 27 % strongly agree, 17% neither agree nor disagree, 3% disagree, 7% strongly disagree (n=30)).

Annex 4: Documents consulted

FCDP

FCDP Program Design Document, June 2011
FCDP Community Action Program Manual, June 2014
FCDP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, March 2014
FCDP Annual Report (2012-2013), July 2013
FCDP Annual Report (2013-2014), August 2014
FCDP Annual Work-Plans 12/13, 13/14, 14/15
FCDP Human Resource Management Plan, August 2012
Programme Procurement Manual, August 2012
FCDP Operations Handbook, August 2012
FCDP Grants Manual, October 2012
FCDP PEC TOR, Undated

In addition sample *Snap Shot Reports*, *Capacity Building Reports* and *Field Reports* were also reviewed. The FCDP Portal of reporting was also reviewed with FCDP staff during the MTR consultations.

AusAID / DFAT

QAI 2012
QAI 2013
CPA 2012
CPA 2013

Australian Civil Society Support Program Fiji Transitional Support-Fiji Community Development: Independent Completion Report, April 2012

ODE evaluation series, Working Beyond Government: Evaluation of AusAID's engagement with civil society in developing countries, March 2012

AusAID's Civil Society Engagement Framework, June 2012

Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability, June 2014.

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development Fiji Country Plan Summary, April 2014

External

IDSS, ACCESS Phase II Project Completion Report, March 2014
Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement, August 2009
The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development, Andrew Natsios July 2010
A Better Fiji For All: Roadmap For Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development, 2010-2014, Ministry Of Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics, December 2010