

# **Independent Review of the South Fly Resilience Plan**

## **DFAT Management Response**

**July 2022**

### **Background**

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) commissioned the Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG), implemented by Oxford Policy Management, to undertake an independent review of the South Fly Resilience Plan (SFRP) from April-May 2022.

The SFRP is an Australian-funded development program in Western Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG), which commenced in early 2021. SFRP will transition to the new Western Province Partnership (WPP) from early 2023, implemented through the Australia-PNG Subnational Program (APSP).

The SFRP was rapidly designed at the end of 2020 to strengthen food and water security in South Fly District at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its objectives are:

- strengthened resilience to water-related disasters in the South Fly District,
- targeted communities in South Fly have sustainable livelihoods and improved income, and
- a third objective, improved access to essential services for emergency patients, mothers and babies; this activity was put on hold to avoid creating additional pressure on the Western Provincial Health Authority during Covid-19.

This review sought to meet DFAT's commitment to transparency and performance improvement, and to inform the design of the WPP. Program activities under the WPP will be guided by, and support implementation of the proposed Western Province Strategy.

The review team was asked to assess the SFRP against questions on efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability and gender equality (the review's terms of reference are annexed to the report).

DFAT prepared this management response against the seven recommendations outlined in the review report in consultation with APSP managing contractor, Abt Associates, and implementing partners World Vision, the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC) and InLoc.

Number	Recommendation	Response (Agree, Partly Agree, Disagree)	Explanation	Action	Timeframe
1	Implementing partners and DFAT should consider how best to improve engagement with, and reporting to, District authorities and communities, while furthering the practice of adaptive management for gains in efficiency and effectiveness.	Partly Agree	<p>DFAT agrees there is a need to improve program efficiency and effectiveness. Program activities must be implemented in partnership with the Provincial and District administrations, Local Level Governments (LLG), Ward Development Committees and communities.</p> <p>Several lessons can be drawn from the rapid development and design of the SFRP, which was designed at the peak of the global COVID pandemic in 2020.</p> <p>However, since this time the level of engagement and reporting of the SFRP has improved through program implementation. The Australian funded Subnational Advisor (and team) based in Daru have built strong relationships and communication channels with the District Administration, Provincial Administrator and LLG Presidents and Managers, which has improved program effectiveness and transparency. The SFRP Steering Committee convenes every six months to report on program progress and is co-chaired by the Australian High Commission Minister-Counsellor and District Administrator.</p> <p>Since May 2022, DFAT has also shared the monthly SFRP progress reports with the Provincial and District administrations. Further, to better inform reporting, data collection and methodology was adjusted in close consultation with the District and Provincial Disaster Offices.</p>	Whilst not creating an administrative burden, the new Western Province Partnership (WPP) design will develop an effective communication mechanism and reporting approach to strengthen engagement with government partners and local communities. Nominees from the Provincial and District administrations will be sought to also participate in the WPP design process. The design will consider additional improvements to program governance mechanisms and how to embed a flexible and adaptive management approach.	July-December 2022
2	Should the ambitions of the plan remain, an increase in resourcing is justified. This should be directed, largely, to i)	Agree	<p>The SFRP was ambitious and delivered a rapid scale up of food and water security activities in the South Fly District and the scale up of activities will continue through 2023.</p> <p>The new WPP forecasts an annual budget of AUD15 million (up from AUD 10million) over the next 3.5 years (with a possible</p>	Strengthening local governance, economic development and food and water security will remain focus areas under the WPP. The design will help to inform resourcing in close consultation	Second half 2022 through to 2023

Number	Recommendation	Response (Agree, Partly Agree, Disagree)	Explanation	Action	Timeframe
	the implementation of activities in food, livelihoods and governance, ii) the Australia Papua New Guinea sub-National Program's administration and engagement function in Daru iii) a bolstered monitoring and quality assurance function and iv) activities to contribute to or progress gender equality.		<p>extension of 4 years). In addition, sector programs will continue to prioritise Western Province, informed by the proposed Western Province Strategy. This includes health security (PATH), infrastructure (ESIP), economic development (APEP), law and justice (JSS4D) and our whole of government partners .</p> <p>Appropriate resourcing and support through the managing contractor (Abt Associates) is being considered and addressed. This includes the recruitment of a Monitoring Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Adviser and a MERL Manager to support reporting. DFAT acknowledges the need for adequate office and staff facilities in Daru to support program implementation and other Australian funded investments operating in the region. A dedicated office space and appropriate staff housing will support ongoing Australian program operations and will improve resourcing into the future.</p>	<p>with the Western Provincial Administration and key stakeholders.</p> <p>The WPP design will incorporate support to women in leadership, women's economic empowerment and responding to gender-based violence. Sector programs (such as economics, health and infrastructure) will continue, but will be informed by the proposed Western Province Strategy.</p> <p>Given the scarcity of accommodation and office space in Daru and the level of Australian assistance forecast over the next several years, options will be explored to support appropriate facilities in Daru through APSP.</p>	
3	The Rangers should be more actively engaged in agricultural extension services and water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure delivery, in the short term. Value will also be found in INLOC (implementer of the Ranger program) recruiting Papua New Guinean male and female advisers.	Partly Agree	<p>The Community Rangers are a unique strength of the SFRP. Careful consideration will need to be given to ensure their role complements the district administration and community activities (such as agriculture and WASH). DFAT has commissioned an options paper to maximise the effectiveness of the program and to utilise Rangers more strategically. This could include options to build their capabilities, broaden community engagement, and strengthen linkages with PNG institutions.</p> <p>DFAT agrees that the Ranger program (currently implemented by Inloc) would benefit from a more diverse cohort of advisors, given the identified need to improve culturally appropriate community engagement and gender equality.</p>	Through the WPP design process, the APSP will develop a Ranger options paper to explore this recommendation. It is vital that the Ranger program complements rather than substitutes for government service delivery.	Second half of 2022

Number	Recommendation	Response (Agree, Partly Agree, Disagree)	Explanation	Action	Timeframe
4	Continue to strengthen existing coordination mechanisms. Meanwhile, facilitate, with District authorities, the establishment of a partner coordination platform, meeting at least biannually, comprising, among others, of the Sustainable Development Program, Ok Tedi Development Foundation, faith groups and implementers of Australian funded development initiatives.	Agree	<p>DFAT agrees with strengthening coordination mechanisms and is conscious of not duplicating existing government coordination mechanisms. The program should support the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs' (DPLGA) mandated Provincial Coordination &amp; Monitoring Committee (PCMC) rather than setting up parallel structures.</p> <p>Further, DFAT strongly agrees that development partners should be working closely with the provincial and district administrations and with each other. There has been some progress with the Ok Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF), which has supported the SFRP/District-hosted food security planning sessions and District WASH Committee meetings. Early discussions on potential collaboration with OTDF around WASH, agriculture and food security have been promising.</p>	<p>DFAT will pursue representation opportunities to discuss progress of the SFRP and transition to the WPP at the PCMC with the Provincial Administration.</p> <p>DFAT will use the design process to engage with OTDF and other donors (including PNG Sustainable Development Program) on potential partnership opportunities.</p> <p>The Australian funded Church Partnerships Program (implemented through the Building Community Engagement Program) will map church activities and locations in Western Province. This will help inform the WPP design to identify collaboration opportunities with church partners.</p>	Second half of 2022
5	Identify pathways to sustainability for identified outputs, that leverages and improves the position and capabilities of different levels of Government, the private sector and civil society.	Agree	DFAT agrees that more can be done to achieve sustainable programming. The proposed Western Province Strategy will support this by providing a foundation to underpin predictability and sustainability. DFAT has commenced support for an Organisational Capacity Assessment to assist the Western Provincial Administration with its planning. World Vision is also building social accountability of WASH investments, and the Community Ranger Program (managed through RRRC) is working across multiple stakeholders to develop a District owned and led food security plan.	DFAT will continue to work with the Government of PNG to agree and finalise the proposed Western Province Strategy. To support implementation of the Strategy the new WPP design will seek to define and articulate sustainability pathways. The design will include a stronger focus on sustainability that will include but not be limited to:	Second half of 2022 and 2023

Number	Recommendation	Response (Agree, Partly Agree, Disagree)	Explanation	Action	Timeframe
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provincial capacity building identified through Organisational Capacity Assessment of Provincial Administration</li> <li>- strengths-based community development (building on what's there), and</li> <li>- integration of community governance support.</li> </ul>	
6	Increase emphasis on facilitating gender equality through enhancing i) women's access to training opportunities and decision-making forums, ii) increasing consultation with women's groups to determine acceptable economic enhancement activities and iii) strengthen women's access to family sexual violence services and referral pathways.	Agree	Gender inequality impacts effective and sustainable economic and social development in PNG. While efforts have been made by implementing partners, DFAT agrees that greater gender expertise could be better applied to program activities.	<p>DFAT will address this recommendation through the WPP design process. Focus will be on the main entry points to support the three pillars of gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support women in leadership through access to training, strengthening ward governance and local election support.</li> <li>- revisiting consultations on economic development so it prioritises opportunities for women.</li> <li>- identifying how program activities can support DFAT's law and justice program efforts on addressing gender based violence, particularly strengthening women's access to family sexual violence services and referral pathways.</li> </ul>	Second half of 2022 and through 2023
7	Resource a gender equality and social inclusion function	Agree	In July, the APSP submitted a GEDSI stocktake, which provides a review of SFRP programming, strategies, research, technical assistance and grants. The stocktake provides practical	DFAT will support a comprehensive place-based gender and disability prevalence situation analysis	Second half of 2022

Number	Recommendation	Response (Agree, Partly Agree, Disagree)	Explanation	Action	Timeframe
	within the SFRP, and conduct a gender analysis and a disability analysis to inform current and future programming in Western Province.		recommendations for the WPP design to strengthen GEDSI mainstreaming and to identify opportunities for targeted activities to meet the APSP marker as a GEDSI significant investment.	and stakeholder mapping as part of the WPP design process.	