

2018 INDEPENDENT EVALUATION – PNG INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Summary of Management Response

In 2018, DFAT commissioned the first in a rolling program of annual evaluations of the PNG Institutional Partnerships Program (IPP) to be undertaken by Oxford Policy Management's PNG Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG). The purpose of the evaluation is to collect evidence to demonstrate progress toward the following end of program outcomes:

1. Selected Australian and PNG government entities have stronger institutional relationships
2. Demonstrated benefits for both Australia and PNG government entities
3. Effective brokering of Whole of Government institutional relationships.

DFAT acknowledges the importance of the evaluation as a useful tool in identifying refinements to improve program effectiveness. The evaluation was undertaken at an opportune time, being conducted 6 months into the new design (introduced in July 2018) and at the start of the program management being devolved from the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby to DFAT Canberra.

The value of people-to-people and institution-to-institution links are recognised in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper and as such, DFAT recognises that there is a greater role for Whole-of-Government (WoG) senior level engagement in the program to help set and refine strategic priorities in this area. DFAT welcomes the opportunity to work with our WoG partners to implement a program that delivers benefits for both Australia and Papua New Guinea.

DFAT broadly accepts the findings and recommendations from the evaluation and welcomes the assessment that implementation of the IPP is on the right trajectory, noting that further work is required to improve communication and collaboration within the program. DFAT agrees to review key governance arrangements to ensure that they are facilitating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the program, and to identify opportunities to enhance IPP engagement within broader sector programs and strategies.

We note that further work is required on enabling gender equality within the program and we will be looking to finalise a Gender Equality Strategy which aligns to the Government of Papua New Guinea's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion policy, and supports agencies to deliver meaningful gender quality outcomes.

Individual management response to the recommendations

| RECOMMENDATION | RESPONSE | EXPLANATION | ACTION PLAN | TIMEFRAME |
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| <p>Recommendation 1</p> <p><i>The DFAT IPP management team should urgently develop a communication protocol and engagement plan, in collaboration with the Australian agencies and the IPP DSS team, so that all parties know who is communicating with whom, for what reason, and when. This would also assist information arriving to intended recipients in an appropriate sequence.</i></p> | Agree | <p>DFAT agrees that at the time of the evaluation there were deficits in communication. However, with the devolution of the program management to Canberra, which only commenced around the time of the evaluation, communication and coordination has improved, facilitating enhanced engagement between all actors.</p> | <p>The existing IPP Governance and Management Framework and IPP SharePoint system already provide a solid basis on which stakeholders are informed of others involved in the program and their respective roles. However a Communications Plan is referenced in the design document and will be undertaken.</p> | By June 2020 |
| <p>Recommendation 2</p> <p><i>IPP coordination activities in both Canberra and Port Moresby should be designed, in part, to enable better collaboration and knowledge-sharing between agencies.</i></p> | Agree | <p>DFAT agrees that improving coordination activities to enable better collaboration and knowledge sharing within the program is a high priority. Overall program effectiveness and the effectiveness of the individual partnerships will be further strengthened through maximising such opportunities.</p> | <p>IPP interdepartmental committee meetings (IDCs) occur quarterly in Canberra and regular deployee Team Leader's meetings occur in PNG. An IPP SharePoint has also recently been established. However we will look at how IDCs are structured to maximise collaboration and knowledge sharing.</p> <p>A Community of Practice for Team Leaders has been established in Port Moresby, designed to share information and discuss common issues. DFAT proposes to establish a similar one in Canberra for Program Managers.</p> | Ongoing and by end of first quarter 2020 |

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| <p>Recommendation 3</p> <p><i>It would be useful for DFAT to develop a succinct communication product, including an appropriate diagram that explains the concept of the broader partnership between the governments of Australian and Papua New Guinea and how the individual institutional partnerships theoretically contribute. This could be updated regularly to include a list of the current active partnerships. This communication product could be distributed and explained, to high level officials in all participating institutions so that they are better able to understand the bigger picture of which they are an important part. Ensuring partner participation in the development and operationalisation of the IPP monitoring and evaluation framework, as well as encouraging mutual accountability in analysis of data collected to inform the framework and co-development of findings and recommendations, at an annual partner learning.</i></p> | <p>Agree in part</p> | <p>DFAT agrees that further work can be done on enabling all partnership institutions to increase their understanding of their role in the broader partnership between governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea.</p> <p>Since the evaluation was completed, the Deputy High Commissioner has briefed all Australian agencies at an Inter-Departmental meeting on about priorities under and progress towards a new Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP), which was prioritised by Ministers at the 2019 Ministerial Forum in Port Moresby.</p> | <p>A one-page diagram will be circulated that explains conceptually how IPP agencies fit within the broader PNG development program.</p> <p>The IPP design required that a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning Framework would be developed and a first draft has already been prepared. It will explain relevant agencies' roles in the Framework.</p> <p>DFAT will continue to provide regular updates to Australian agencies as the CSEP negotiations proceed and the CSEP is developed.</p> | <p>By the end of first quarter 2020 and as CSEP develops</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 4</p> <p><i>Details about the IPP in-Papua New Guinea governance arrangements, or a plan to progress their consolidation, should be communicated to senior officials in Australian partner agencies as soon as possible.</i></p> | Agree | The IPP architecture includes high-level governance arrangements (Joint Operating Mechanism (JoM)) between the Government of Australia and the Government of Papua New Guinea. At the time of the Independent Evaluation, a JOM had not occurred. | The inaugural JoM occurred as part of a Strategic Management Committee meeting co-chaired by the Australian High Commissioner and the Chief secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and National Executive Committee on 23 October 2019. DFAT has provided updates to agencies on the JoM at IDCs. | Ongoing |
| <p>Recommendation 5</p> <p><i>An arrangement should be put in place for senior-level Australian partner agency officials to regularly (suggest annually) engage with DFAT senior officials about the concept of the whole-of-government partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea generally and specifically for IPP. This would be an information-sharing and strategy-setting dialogue, rather than a governance mechanism, with an emphasis on the mutual benefits that will underpin the program.</i></p> | Agree | DFAT acknowledges that senior-level engagement on the broader program strategy and objective is critical to ensuring effective delivery of the program, and improving opportunities for senior level engagement in the IPP is a high priority. Since the evaluation, the Deputy High Commissioner presented at an IDC to brief Australian agencies. | DFAT will consider dedicating one of the quarterly IPP IDCs specifically to strategic and information sharing issues, aimed at the SES Band 1 level, in the first half of 2020. | By June 2020 |
| <p>Recommendation 6</p> <p><i>IPP implementation needs to be responsive to specific and emerging issues around each partnership's authorising environment and will</i></p> | Agree | DFAT note that the IPP design acknowledges that the program needs to be sufficiently flexible and agile to meet changes in the PNG enabling environment. | DFAT will continue to engage regularly with IPP stakeholders to consider emerging issues in their authorising environment and discuss and review the implications of those changes for activities and timeframes with participating | Ongoing |

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| <p><i>likely require flexibility on the part of DFAT, as the overall ‘program owner’, including in terms of budgets, results and the timing and achievement of milestones. This could include several actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Implement regular communication, as scheduled in agreed communication protocols, between DFAT IPP managers and sector leads, and the Australian agencies, with agencies requested to escalate advice to DFAT, and vice versa, about any emerging issues in their authorising environment, and consequent possible implications for the achievement of agreed outcomes.</i> <i>DFAT IPP management to review program guidance materials to provide pathways for adjusting agreed workflows in the case of increased risk in operational circumstances.</i> | | | <p>agencies and more broadly at the IDC on an as needs basis.</p> <p>The IPP Risk Register will be updated quarterly (at a minimum) to identify emerging issues and mitigation strategies. The Agency Capacity Diagnostics (that reflect agencies’ ambitions for their partnerships) acknowledge that development is not a linear event but we will review whether these need to be tweaked in any way to reflect this issue.</p> | |

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| Recommendation 7 <i>IPP needs to be situated within broader sector programs and strategies, and opportunities for collaboration between different implementing actors need to be explored. This should include an explicit focus by AHC teams on the contribution that IPP can make to their broader sector programs.</i> | Agree | Including the IPP in broader sector policies and strategies, where possible, is a priority. To date, there has been a variety of modes and levels of engagement and collaboration between the IPP and sector programs within DFAT. This should be maintained and encouraged as the needs of each individual partnership are unique. | Through ongoing CSEP discussions and the development of the Aid Investment Plan (AIP), clear sectoral priorities will be articulated, along with the role each institutional partnership will play in enabling those objectives to be met. Subsequent year workplans should flow from such jointly identified priorities. | Ongoing |
| Recommendation 8 <i>Discussion about common success factors should be a regular focus of collaboration between all IPP partners. This discussion should be facilitated by DFAT in Canberra at the interdepartmental meetings and in Port Moresby at team leader's meetings.</i> | Agree | DFAT agrees that the IPP, as a partnership-focussed program, can benefit from shared learnings on what has worked and the reasons why, and acknowledge that there are common factors across the program and partnership which impact on program effectiveness. | As per Recommendation 2. | Ongoing and by end of first quarter 2020 |
| Recommendation 9 <i>Early lessons of successful initiatives to support gender equality, disability and social inclusion should be identified and shared across all IPP partners so that GESI can gain increased and early traction. These examples should be also used to inform the development of the GESI</i> | Agree | DFAT agrees that documenting early lessons of successful initiatives to support Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) will assist the program to gain traction on gender equality outcomes. | A GESI Community of Practice occurred in October 2019 and the development of a Gender Equality Strategy and associated practice based tool kit are currently in draft form. The IPP SharePoint is available to all agencies to share documents regarding their successes and lessons learned on GESI issues. GESI will | Finalise by end of first quarter 2020 |

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| <i>strategy and associated practice-based toolkit as soon as possible.</i> | | | be added to the IPP redesign when it is undertaken in July 2020. | |