

## Independent Progress Review of the Technical Assistance Facility for Social Protection Reforms

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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#### Initiative Summary

Initiative Name			
AidWorks initiative number	INI428 / activity number 11A661		
Commencement date	3 February 2009	Completion date	30 June 2017
Total Australian \$	\$5,000,000		
Total other \$			
Delivery organisation(s)	DSWD		
Implementing partner(s)	DSWD		
Country/Region	Philippines		
Primary sector	Social Protection		
Initiative objective/s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) DSWD has the technical capacity to deliver enhanced CCT and NHTSPR program expansions.</li> <li>2) Contribute to better donor coordination in the identification, provision and management of technical assistance for DSWD's social protection reform agenda.</li> </ol>		

#### Evaluation Summary

**Evaluation Objective:** Assess the progress of the DSWD Technical Assistance Facility for Social Protection Reforms at the midpoint of its implementation and identify areas for improvement

**Evaluation Completion Date:** 30 April 2014

**Evaluator:** Rey Gerona

#### DFAT's response to the evaluation report

*Brief overview of DFAT's assessment of the quality of the report (including any issues with evidence, findings, etc.)*

Overall, the Independent Progress Review (IPR) report is of average quality particularly on the structuring and presentation which were eventually addressed after numerous iterations with guidance from Post. The report was able to inform DFAT with an assessment on the progress of the Technical Assistance Facility, and recommendations to address weaknesses and enhance its implementation moving forward.

The report established that Australia's engagement with DSWD in social protection is highly relevant. It rated the program satisfactorily as far as effectiveness, and prospects on activity continuation beyond program completion. However, the report noted the below satisfactory performance of the TAF on efficiency. The

M&E has also been rated as satisfactory but the Evaluator has suggested enhancements in the design which will contribute to the Facility's efficiency.

DFAT has no significant issues as far as the findings of the IPR. We note the difficulty encountered by the Evaluator in gathering data given the assessment coincided with Typhoon Haiyan which occupied DSWD respondents due to surge of activities related to disaster response.

**DFAT's overall response to the findings and recommendations**

DFAT notes the IPR findings and agrees mostly with the recommendations put forward by the Evaluator. DFAT has already implemented a number of the recommendations as of this writing. On critical areas like weakness in efficiency and enhancing the monitoring and evaluation, DFAT modified the funding arrangement for the Technical Assistance Facility and has provided assistance to DSWD in revisiting the TAF framework and improving the M&E.

**Brief comments on future direction of sector/program/initiative**

DFAT will continue to engage in social protection activities (e.g., conditional cash transfer, community-driven development) to influence Philippine policies on inclusive economic growth cognisant that such interventions like CCT are important to attain inclusive growth and ensure that the poor benefit from and participate in economic opportunities. DFAT has provided an additional \$12.2 million to DSWD for the construction of classroom and day care centres using the community-led approach in CCT program areas to help meet the demand-supply side requirements.

Australia's assistance to DSWD Technical Assistance Facility, which is the subject of this evaluation, will be extended for another year through FY 2015-16, under a new funding arrangement. This will allow Australia to continue supporting DSWD in the expansion of its major social protection and poverty reduction programs until the end of President Aquino's administration. Australia will enter into a Direct Funding Agreement with DSWD which will supersede the current Subsidiary Arrangement governing GoA-GPH partnership. The Direct Funding Agreement will reflect the new arrangement of disbursing funds based on an agreed annual technical assistance work plan.

**DFAT's response to specific recommendations made in the report**

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility
1. Extend DFAT's funding for Technical Assistance Unit's operations to coincide with the DFAT's support to Technical Assistance Facility originally scheduled for June 2015.  2. Study the possibility of extending the DFAT-DSWD cooperation on Technical Assistance Facility to 2016 (last year of the current Philippine Development Plan) or to 2017 (last year of the current Australia-Philippines Development Cooperation Program)	Agree.  The current Subsidiary Arrangement governing the establishment of the TAF provided a 5-year timeline of implementation. Since the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) serves as the secretariat for the TAF, it is imperative that the TAU should continue to be mobilised to support the activities of the TAF until its completion.	Education and Social Protection team is in consultation with the Working in Partner Systems Branch in Canberra for the drafting of the Direct Funding Agreement (DFA) between Australia (DFAT) and the Philippines (DSWD).	DFAT Education and Social Protection team

<p>3. Revisit the Technical Assistance Facility design framework and accompanying plans with the objective of strengthening the Technical Assistance Facility project management.</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The IPR identified a number of issues on the current TAF framework and operations arrangement which contributed to the less than satisfactory efficiency and M&amp;E.</p> <p>Revisiting the design framework and accompanying M&amp;E plan and management arrangement aims to address the issues and improve the efficiency of the TAF.</p>	<p>The Evaluator's engagement included the provision of assistance and inputs to TAU on improving the TAF design framework based on the findings of the IPR.</p>	<p>DSWD Technical Assistance Unit to work with the Evaluator and DFAT Team to participate in key discussions on the design framework, M&amp;E and program management.</p>
<p>4. Study the possibility of extending technical assistance to determine the organizational preparedness of the DSWD Resource Generation and Mobilisation Office (RGMO) and based on the assessment results, formulate the RGMO results-based framework and operational plan.</p>	<p>Agree that the RGMO should have a results-based framework and operational plan. However, future plans and activities for the RGMO should be initiated by DSWD since the RGMO is an organic unit of the Department.</p>	<p>DFAT to continue to monitor updates on the progress of the RGMO.</p>	<p>DSWD TAU to provide updates to DFAT on progress of the RGMO.</p>
<p>5. Formulate a training intervention plan for OBSU staff</p>	<p>Agree that DSWD OBSU staff should have a learning and development plan. However, this should be initiated by the respective OBSUs and DSWD, and not through the Technical Assistance Facility.</p>	<p>DFAT to monitor progress of DSWD in this area.</p>	<p>DSWD TAU to provide updates to DFAT.</p>
<p>6. Revisit the current arrangement and determine the most practical and feasible option about governance arrangement of DFAT's commitment funds of \$5million for technical assistance on social protection.</p>	<p>Agree. Efficiency of the TAF must be improved and revisiting fund disbursement arrangement is necessary. However, this need not be done through a separate study as the IPR recommends.</p>	<p>To improve efficiency on budget utilisation, Manila Post will utilise a "single-tranche" download of funds based on a jointly agreed work plan.</p>	<p>DFAT Education Team 2</p>