



## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE to the Strategic Review of Australia's Occupied Palestinian Territories Humanitarian and Development Program

In June 2023, DFAT commissioned an independent review of Australia's humanitarian assistance and development program in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), with the in-country component occurring in September 2023. One month later, in October 2023, the Israel-Hamas conflict started.

The review was intended to provide both an important accountability mechanism to DFAT, as well as to provide evidence that will support the further development of DFAT's humanitarian/development approach to the OPT. The evaluation report was completed in November 2023 and includes a number of useful findings and practical recommendations which helped inform Australia's emergency response to the Israel-Hamas conflict and will be used to help inform future programming.

DFAT agrees with all recommendations in-principle, noting that no decision has yet been made on the design or scope of the future program.

### End of Program Evaluation Recommendations and Management Response

| Recommendation  | Response | Explanation   | Action Plan  | Timeframe |
|---|----------|---|--|-----------|
| 1. Focus on two pillars – humanitarian and resilience in line with Australia's International Development Policy; and advance these priorities with partners through a nexus approach that supports both humanitarian and development investments. | Agree    | DFAT recognises the suggested sectoral approach for the OPT program. DFAT agrees that continued focus on humanitarian with some resilience programming is appropriate. Flexibility remains important to support the changing situation, however longer term programming also allows stronger risk management and more effective shaping of program outcomes in line with Australia's International Development Policy. Responsiveness and effectiveness | This recommendation will be considered as part of DFAT's design for the next phase of the program, including the objectives of the Development Partnership Plan when published, and is informing emergency programming during the Hamas-Israel conflict. | 2024-25   |

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|  |              | remain important. Given the situation in Gaza and the fluid environment across the OPTs, the program may develop rapidly and there may be a focus on other areas for intervention if required,.   |  |         |
| <b>2. Engage stakeholders and constituents in a design process to select implementing partners for future activities.</b>  | <b>Noted</b> | DFAT agrees in-principle that a competitive design process would be beneficial but this will need to take into account security considerations and Australia's counter-terrorism requirements. DFAT has expanded the number of partners it is working with as a result of the Gaza crisis, including renewing its partnership with UNICEF and working with UNFPA. | DFAT's current focus is on consolidating existing partnerships through multi-year funding and where relevant, new investments will be in line with the Development Partnership Plan and any new program designs. | 2024-25 |
| <b>3. In line with Australia's enhanced gender equality requirements for ODA investments what potential partners/investment platforms will enable gender to be effectively integrated or mainstreamed into future investments?</b> | <b>Agree</b> | DFAT is establishing partnerships with UNICEF and UNFPA to focus on gender-sensitive and transformative programming.  | This recommendation will be considered as part of DFAT's design for the next phase of the program and is informing emergency programming during the Hamas-Israel conflict.                                       | 2024-25 |
| <b>4. Mainstream climate change interventions into future investments</b>  | <b>Agree</b> | DFAT agrees in principle with mainstreaming climate change and to looking at increasing the proportion of Australia Awards scholarships for climate change courses, while taking into account broader needs given the current conflict environment.   | This recommendation will be considered as part of DFAT's design for the next phase of the program and through the Development Partnership Plan for the OPTs.   | 2024-25 |

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| <b>5. Move to multi-year funding in the fluid and fragile context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.</b>  | <b>Agree</b> | DFAT agrees to move to multi-year funding in the next phase of the program.   | This recommendation will be considered as part of DFAT's design for the next phase of the program and through the Development Partnership Plan for the OPTs.               | 2024-25 |
| <b>6. Maintain the high levels of attention to risk management in humanitarian and development investments.</b> | <b>Agree</b> | DFAT agrees to continue the high levels of attention to risk management and will maintain sufficient resourcing to ensure risk management processes are followed. | This recommendation will be considered as part of DFAT's design for the next phase of the program and is informing emergency programming during the Hamas-Israel conflict. | 2024-25 |