

Management Response to the Mid-Term Review of the Tautua: Human Development for All Program

In 2025, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) commissioned a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of its the Tautua: Human Development for All partnership with the Government of Samoa (GoS). Managed by Palladium International Pty Ltd, Tautua is an eight-year (2021-2029), AUD 40 million program that supports the GoS's pursuit of its human development priorities through partnerships with Samoa's Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), Ministry of Family and Social Affairs (MFSA) – formerly known as the Ministry of Community and Social Development, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

The MTR presents findings on the performance and impact of the Tautua program from November 2021 to November 2025, in particular its progress toward achieving its end of program outcomes (EOPOs) in line with GoS priorities, the effectiveness and efficiency of the 'facility' modality.

The management response outlines planned actions by DFAT and Tautua to address recommendations and findings from the MTR for strengthened performance and impact in Phase 2.

Review Recommendations	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Indicative Timeline
Recommendation 1 <i>Consider reframing the EOPOs to refer more directly to the complex social issues (CSI) and outcomes for intended beneficiaries.</i>	Partially agree	While Tautua was found to be very relevant and effective in supporting Samoa's human development needs, the review also found that the EOPOs are not easily-assessed through measurable indicators due to the perceived high level and generalised way in which they are framed. This necessitates a review to enhance clarity of what	While we recognise the need to review EOPOs, the review need not be as extensive as recommended. EOPOs 1 and 2 focus directly on the provision of services, and these require clarity through more specific framing. There is a perceived duplication in how EOPO1 and 2 are framed particularly with focus on inclusivity across the two outcomes. With Tautua, we will refine these outcomes for better clarity and focus, to support ease of reporting through a clear line of sight from projects to	2026-2027

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		EOPO is targeted to achieve.	intermediate outcomes and EOPOs. In comparison, a sharper focus on CSI outcomes as recommended is not possible for one program to achieve and therefore requires time and stronger cross sector collaboration than Tautua has the capacity to support.	

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Recommendation 2 <i>Review and refine the Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) to ensure consistency in focus and a clearer strategic pathway between Tautua's outputs (activities) and EOPOs.</i>	Agree	Tautua's current program logic outlines the delivery of outputs through eight change pathways or IOs and a growing number of interventions to achieve three EOPOs. This framework is complex and lacks clarity and a clear line of sight from outputs to IOs and EOPOs. Streamlining IOs to reflect short-medium term outcomes rather than factors that can support change, will create better clarity in the relationship between outputs and outcomes, supporting better reporting against EOPOs.	In conjunction with the review of EOPOs, we will review and refine the current IOs to provide greater clarity in programming, and to strengthen the measurement of results for more aligned reporting. Post will initiate this work, with advice from the relevant division in Canberra, and support from Tautua, to finalise and obtain approval by the relevant DFAT delegate.	2026-27

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Recommendation 3 <i>Consider opportunities for Post to be more engaged, where it has the capacity, in discussions with implementing agencies (IAs) and partners to shape and influence strategic programming broadly and at the level of individual activities.</i>	Agree	To strengthen the strategic approach to Phase 2, it is crucial that DFAT staff support the Tautua team during engagements with implementing partners. Planning engagements are important to shape partners' thinking on the medium-term objectives they want to achieve that Tautua could support. DFAT is already engaged in some implementation activities, but there could also be increased involvement in monitoring visits.	Tautua will provide DFAT with a schedule of planned engagements at the start of the calendar year including planning, implementation and monitoring visit to be updated as needed. Post will identify the strategic engagements for participation by relevant staff, based on capacity and availability. As part of efforts towards this recommendation, remaining Annual Work Plans for Phase 2 of the Tautua program will be presented to each of the main implementing government agencies' executive management, enhancing visibility of the program's approach to meeting goals and priorities of the three sectors.	Ongoing
Recommendation 4 <i>Continue and strengthen communication about the distinctive role and focus of the Tautua and Tautai programs.</i>	Agree	Increased communication and public diplomacy for both Tautua and Tautai has increased visibility of the two programs as Australia's flagship programs with Samoa. However, the role and mandate of each program is sometimes unclear for stakeholders that do not have direct engagement with either or both of the programs.	Tautua will continue to strengthen its communication about its role with its main stakeholders – MoH, MEC, MFSA and CSOs. In actioning recommendation 3 in this management response, there is opportunity for both Post and Tautua to leverage some of these engagements to deliver this message across different levels of government agencies.	Ongoing

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Recommendation 5 <i>Ensure that Tautai and Tautua support for specific activities clearly communicates and reinforces their distinctive mandates.</i>	Agree	Though Tautua's mandate is very clear at the strategic level, at the activity level there is a perceived overlap with Tautai. Examples of these include procurement training supported for MoH (Tautua) and MoF (Tautai), national surveys through the Samoa Bureau of Statistics and support for the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.	Although a few activities appeared to overlap, the focus of activities outlined in the report determined the alignment with the program that ultimately provided that support. Nevertheless, the two programs need to continue to make efforts to deconflict potential support, in collaboration with Post, including via the regular T2 meeting of both facilities and Post.	Ongoing

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Recommendation 6 <i>Continue and strengthen the focus on using a strategic approach to activity programming.</i>	Agree	The issues identified in Recommendations 1 and 2, coupled with the added layer of complex social issues, has led to Tautua's support being fragmented in some areas. Though the program is working within its remit of EOPOs and IOs, the scope dictated by the current program logic is extensive, with the added pressure of being responsive and flexible. This requires programming to be more strategic by focusing on achieving a few but substantial instances of change that can be sustained across the three sectors.	A Phase 2 Strategy has been developed to support a strategic approach to programming. The strategy creates a strategic shift using five key criteria to guide investment decisions, and focuses on 'big bets', or priority focus areas, in health, education and the community sectors. A cap will be placed on the proportion of the program dedicated to ad-hoc and/or emerging requests, while prioritising long term strategic support with deeper development impact. Post and Tautua will need to refine the big bets with the relevant agencies in the first year of Phase 2.	2026 - onwards

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Recommendation 7 <i>Continue support to partners and Tautua staff on using the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system and support to Tautua staff on using the Management Information System (MIS).</i>	Agree	Tautua staff and partners require additional support in the use of the MEL system, particularly in identifying the type of data required to assess the level of efficiency. With the MIS in place, additional training is required for staff to use this for reporting purposes, thereby allowing them to refine the system to align with reporting needs.	Tautua staff are now supporting MEL activities in their own patches, by contributing to the design of tools for MEL across the supported activities. A MEL advisor was recruited to support partners in the design and implementation of MEL activities, while also providing capacity building where required. The MIS system is being refined in collaboration with Tautua and Post to ensure the system supports effective MEL and reporting on the program's achievements.	Ongoing
Recommendation 8 <i>Prioritise the development of corporate systems to replace current manual processes.</i>	Agree	A number of Tautua corporate systems were found to be using manual processes, including timesheets, payroll and procurement tracking. This increases workload, create risks around accuracy and divert staff time away from higher value functions.	While some of these systems are already in development, Tautua continues to review and refine some of its procedures and processes as part of its ongoing corporate system improvement process.	Ongoing

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Recommendation 9 <i>Ensure that expectations of partner follow-up to Tautua activities are clear in activity design and implementation to strengthen sustainability of outcomes.</i>	Agree	Clarity on the importance of follow up to ensure sustainability of outcomes needs to be understood by partners. This is usually outside of the direct influence of the program or Post. This message needs to be embedded in activity design and decision-making meetings with implementing partners.	Tautua will build sustainability into activity design, implementation and monitoring. Decision-making needs to consider integration of MEL activities that looks at how lessons from supported activities have been applied, including progressing on recommendations from technical advisory support in policy work, and the application of acquired knowledge and skills from capacity building activities to strengthen service delivery and build capabilities of teams and colleagues.	Ongoing
Recommendation 10 <i>Continue to strengthen Tautua's integration of gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion (GEDSI) across programming, including in planning, resourcing and monitoring.</i>	Agree	As a significant objective of the Tautua program, GEDSI needs to be integrated across all facets of programming through mainstreaming or targeted initiatives. This needs to be applied across all three sectors.	New agreements have been signed with eight CSO's – 5 gender focused, 3 disability focused – to enhance the delivery of services for women and people with disabilities. A new GEDSI strategy is under development to guide the program's GEDSI work in Phase 2 including mainstreaming into supported activities with all implementing partners. The program continues to utilise GEDSI advisors who provide guidance to the program and partners on effective GEDSI programming	Ongoing