

Management Response

This review was drafted and delivered as the COVID 19 pandemic continued to cause social and economic upheaval across our region. In this context, a robust, independent Pacific media sector is vital for promoting informed public discussion, disseminating reliable public health and emergency updates and supporting governance and accountability. Yet, as documented in this report, many Pacific media entities are struggling to maintain their viability and independence in the face of reduced revenues due to COVID 19, on top of existing pressures and challenges to business models.

Australia's Pacific Step-up places people-to-people links at the heart of our Pacific partnerships and recognises the critical role the media plays in fostering our cultural connections. DFAT welcomes the evaluation's findings that Australia's longstanding work in media capacity building is trusted and appreciated by Pacific stakeholders. Having supported PACMAS for over a decade, Australia will seek to broaden the next phase (4) of our investment to better address the emerging issues covered in this review, including misinformation and disinformation.

The expertise ABC International Development has brought to PACMAS has contributed to the effectiveness of the current phase of PACMAS, building on its earlier phases. This review will inform the design of the next phase. Given the critical Pacific development and strategic issues currently at play, DFAT agrees with the reviewers that any gap between the Australian media development initiatives across the Pacific would be undesirable and has agreed to extend PACMAS 3 until December 2022 to ensure continuity of activities while the design and procurement process for PACMAS 4 is finalised.

The action plan identified in this management response will be progressed by DFAT's Office of the Pacific in consultation with ABC ID, Pacific bilateral Posts and Pacific Media Associations.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Recommendations	Response	Action Plan	Timeframe
Maintain tradecraft training and issues-specific workshops but with greater use of on-the-job and shorter out-of-hours modules	Agreed	PACMAS will seek to expand 'on -the-job' training activities, building on support provided for Pacific journalists to cover key events such as the PIF Leaders Meeting.	Phase 3 and 4.
Continue to expand cohort of local trainers through training of trainers	Agreed	PACMAS will continue refresher programs for existing trainers and training-of-trainers programs for a new cohort of Pacific media experts.	Phase 3 to be continued into Phase 4
Due to high newsroom attrition rates, bridging programs in collaboration with National Media Associations (NMAs) to	To be considered	DFAT will consult with Pacific NMAs and media organisations through the Phase 4 design process to	Phase 4

cover journalism basics for incoming recruits		better understand and respond to their requirements to deliver bridging programs and wider trainings.	
Existing mentoring strengthened and formalised drawing on well-respected senior local and regional media practitioners including in Australia	Agreed	Expanded mentoring activities will be included in the design of Phase 4.	Phase 4
Training beyond the newsroom extending to media business managers, broadcasting technicians and other relevant disciplines	Agreed	Based on a 2021 pilot activity with Splice Media, PACMAS will continue working with Pacific media businesses looking to develop new media products and extend work with Broadcast Australia to provide trouble shooting support and training to Pacific broadcast technicians.	Phase 3 and Phase 4
Regional practitioner networks encouraged to reap the greatest ongoing and sustained benefits of peer to peer interaction	Agreed	PACMAS will place a stronger emphasis on existing work with NMAs to support regional practitioner networks as well as the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) to boost peer to peer interaction.	Phase 3 and Phase 4.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Recommendations	Response	Action Plan	Timeframe
State of the Media Report repeated to provide comparative analysis with state of Pacific media since last report in 2013	To be considered as an activity separate to PACMAS	DFAT will consider additional funding outside of the existing PACMAS budget for a new State of the Media report.	TBC
Strengthened capacity building framework	To be considered	Striking a balance between the program's flexible and responsive funding model and a longer-term, strategic capability framework advised in this evaluation will be considered through the design of Phase 4.	Phase 4 design process

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OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Recommendations	Response	Action Plan	Timeframe
Greater interaction with senior managers to address the business model issues including digital transition challenges	Agreed	The work with Splice Media noted above includes a mentoring component to media business managers seeking to build a media product strategy. The design for Phase 4 will consider how to build on this work.	Phase 3 and Phase 4
More support for local media's ability to operate more effectively in response to regulative and legislative restrictions on the media	To be considered.	This will be considered as part of the design for Phase 4.	Phase 4.
Strengthen opportunity for collaborative productions with Australian media entities	To be considered	DFAT will scope what resources would be required for such an activity as part of the design for Phase 4.	Phase 4 or as an activity outside of PACMAS.