

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE- REVIEW OF THE PACIFIC WOMEN SHAPING PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT (*PACIFIC WOMEN*) FIJI COUNTRY PLAN

Summary of management response

A review of the Fiji country plan was conducted February – June 2017 to assess the extent to which the program remains relevant and is operating efficiently and effectively. The review focused on the extent to which women's economic empowerment and women's leadership and decision making funded activities have contributed to positive change for women in Fiji. Violence against women was not a focus of the review. There has been multiple reviews and evaluations of violence against women in Fiji and the area is well programmed under the Fiji country plan portfolio.

The review found that the Fiji country plan is operating on time and on budget. The country plan invested in a consultative design process, which included a public call for proposals. There has been ongoing communication and relationship building between country and regional DFAT staff, the *Pacific Women* Support Unit and implementing partners. The program remains highly relevant and well aligned to Fiji Government policy and Australia's commitments to progressing gender equality in the Pacific. The program's scope and flexibility has contributed to its relevance for a range of implementing partners.

The effectiveness of the program has been examined in the context of the two outcomes areas of women's economic empowerment and women's leadership and decision making. There is strong evidence that funded activities are supporting women to take on leadership roles and build the capacity of women leaders. This also includes increased support for the inclusion of women's views. There is moderate evidence that funded activities are contributing to increased women's economic opportunities. While there is increased access to financial services and program activities are expanding women's work choices, the actual impact on women's income, sense of agency and improved working conditions is hard to determine.

The challenge for the next phase of *Pacific Women* in Fiji is to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning at several levels to enable the program to better assess contribution to broader intended outcomes of the *Pacific Women* program. Establishing monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems at the design stage of funded activities are also relevant to the newly established Fiji Women's Fund.

The other main challenge for the program is the issue of program identity and the extent to which ownership- at the level of government, implementing partner or beneficiary level, is considered important. The program will invest in processes that promote learning, information sharing and create an enabling environment to build great ownership of the program.

DFAT accepts all of the review recommendations. The management response represents DFAT's commitment to program improvement for the next phase of the Fiji country plan (2017- 2020). The review highlights areas for improvement including monitoring and evaluation, increasing program reach to vulnerable groups such as women and girls with a disability and those in rural and remote areas and developing a clearer strategy to address women's economic empowerment in Fiji.

Individual management response to the recommendations

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 1 The recently established Fiji Women’s Fund should be used as an opportunity to clarify the Fund’s objectives with the program’s stakeholders including how it operates across the broader Fiji <i>Pacific Women</i> program and the <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>One of the intended outcomes of the Fiji Women’s Fund (the Fund) is to become an independent entity by the end of June 2022. The Fund has developed its own logo and branding to help establish an identity and will implement a strategy to achieve its independence.</p> <p>The Fund’s communications strategy (due November 2017) will articulate how the Fund will engage stakeholders across the Fund’s activities and the broader remit of the <i>Pacific Women</i> program.</p> <p>Recommendations from the <i>Pacific Women</i> Year Three evaluation provides further guidance on how <i>Pacific Women</i> is communicated at a country level.</p>	<p>Ongoing till June 2020</p>

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 2 Sustainability measures and processes need to be built into the terms of reference of short-term advisers and technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation and learning projects</p>	Agree		<p>Terms of reference of future advisers and technical assistance will include explicit measures so that advisers have a local counterpart (s) to work with during their assignment. This will ensure transfer of skills and knowledge to local counterparts and institutions.</p> <p>Partners will also be required to demonstrate sustainability measures for capacity development in their program proposals and implementation plans when they request funding for it.</p>	Ongoing till June 2020
<p>Recommendation 3 The activity designs of larger partners need to incorporate and reflect a mix of partner as well as program level capacity building, monitoring and evaluation priorities and indicators.</p>	Agree		<p>This recommendation was tested through design processes for the We Rise¹ and Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC) activities that involved a joint approach to program design. Both We Rise and FWCC developed M&E frameworks in close consultation with DFAT, the <i>Pacific Women</i> Support Unit and the M&E adviser for the Fiji country plan.</p> <p>The Fiji Women’s Fund is an opportunity to ensure the Fund implements a similar approach to program design and M&E across the Fund.</p>	Ongoing

¹ We Rise is a program implemented by a coalition of four women’s human rights organisations: Fiji Women’s Rights Movement, femLINKpacific, Diverse Voices and Action for Equality and the International Women’s Development Agency. The program aims to promote and progress women’s rights by influencing women, lawmakers and policy actors at both local and global levels.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 4 The Fiji Women’s Fund should be explored as a mechanism to build the capacity of smaller partners and promote a community-of-practice that sustains partner capacity building.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>One of the key objectives of the Fund is to work with smaller, less established organisations and groups that have reach to rural, remote and marginalised groups of women and girls through the provision of grants and capacity building.</p> <p>The Fund has a Capacity Building Specialist to develop and lead implementation of the Fund’s capacity building strategy.</p> <p>Building on lessons learned from previous DFAT programs, the Fund’s capacity building and monitoring and evaluation approaches will invest in approaches that promote peer-to-peer exchange and mentoring toward building a community of practice. Grants provided will included targeted capacity support for organisations.</p>	<p>Ongoing till June 2022</p>
<p>Recommendation 5 A review and/or annual reflection of existing WEE activities is required and the next Country Plan should include a portfolio of activities that address the links between WEE and WLDM. The review and/or annual reflection might consider coherence and linkages with other DFAT funded WEE activities as well.</p>	<p>Agree in part</p>	<p>The review will also include looking at the connections between WEE and EVAW, acknowledging the connections between violence and women’s economic empowerment.</p>	<p>The review will be expanded to review the current portfolio of country plan activities across the program to ensure the interconnections between WEE, WLDM and EVAW are integrated into partner M&E frameworks and reporting.</p> <p>For current WEE activities that are showing positive change to increasing women’s incomes such as the Spa Academy activity, links between women’s agency and their ability to take up leadership roles will be addressed.</p> <p>This approach is also relevant for future WEE programming under the Fiji country plan. Future reflection workshops will also include participation from relevant DFAT funded WEE programs to foster collaboration and coherence amongst partners.</p>	<p>Ongoing till June 2020</p>

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The Fiji MEF should be revised to better reflect realistic change pathways for WEE and WLDM including updating short term and medium intended outcomes.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>This is currently underway based on recommendations from the <i>Pacific Women</i> M&E system review workshop and recommendations from the broader <i>Pacific Women</i> Year Three Evaluation.</p>	<p>January 2017</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>The Enhancing Agency outcome for the Fiji country plan MEF should be revised based on outcomes of the <i>Pacific Women</i> Program M&E system workshop held in May 2017 and recommendations from the broader <i>Pacific Women</i> Year Three Evaluation.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>This is currently underway based on recommendations from the Pacific Women M&E system review workshop and recommendations from the broader Pacific Women Year Three Evaluation.</p> <p>An updated Fiji country plan MEF will be finalised and shared with partners.</p>	<p>January 2017</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Planned program management and accountability mechanisms (such as the annual reflection process) should be implemented to strengthen coalition building and advocacy strategies.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>The first country reflection workshop scheduled for November 2017 has a focus on learning and sharing experiences across the range of partners the program works with.</p> <p>The Fiji Women's Fund's annual reflection processes also provide an opportunity to build partnerships with the Fund's stakeholders and promote connections between partners.</p>	<p>November 2017</p>

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action plan	Timeframe
<p>Recommendation 9 Program partner MEF development and evaluation led approaches should continue to be supported with more focus on developing and sharing lessons learnt at the country as well as outcome level.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>The program will continue to engage a short-term M&E adviser to support overall program MEF implementation and provide targeted support to the Fiji Women’s Fund Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.</p> <p>The program will also consider developing an annual report of the Fiji country plan program to highlight lessons learnt and progress against outcomes.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 The review findings (gaps in analysis, lessons learnt, etc.) should be used to develop the agenda for the program’s reflection workshop in November 2017.</p>	<p>Agree</p>		<p>The agenda for the reflection workshop will include a discussion on the review findings and lessons learnt.</p>	<p>November 2017</p>