

DFAT Management Response

Mid-Term Review of the Enhancing Child Protection System to Keep Filipino Children Safe Online Program (SaferKidsPH)

DFAT commissioned a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Enhancing Child Protection System to Keep Filipino Children Safe Online (SaferKidsPH) program (AUD 8 million, 2019-2025) to assess program implementation and management, and inform program improvements in the remaining years. The MTR findings will be used to inform DFAT's next steps in relation to future programming in the child protection space. The review was conducted by Clear Horizon through a combination of document review, interviews, and participatory workshops from October to December 2022.

The MTR found that SaferKidsPH has made substantial progress in combatting online sexual abuse and exploitation of children in terms of achieving its intermediate outcomes. There has been improved knowledge and awareness of Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) nationally and in target areas. In addition, SaferKidsPH utilised its gender equality, diversity, and social inclusion (GEDSI) strategy to engage with the youth, women, LGBTQI+, and persons with disability sectors to inform advocacy messaging and inclusion of gender-sensitive, disability and inclusive provisions in laws and policies. This contributed to the improvement of the policy and legal framework of the country including the drafting of the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) law, Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR) of the Family Court Act and associated Bench Book, the Department of Information, Communication and Technology (DICT) Child Online Safeguarding Policy and the Philippine National Police (PNP) Child Protection Strategy.

One key factor contributing to the program's success is the consortium approach, with UNICEF as the consortium lead and with The Asia Foundation (TAF) and Save the Children (SCP) as consortium partners. The consortium model has been well received by stakeholders due to their extensive networks, established relations and experience to engage with relevant government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders. The consortium members also demonstrated great individual and collective credibility that helped raise the issue of OSAEC through the SaferKidsPH brand.

Overall, the MTR suggest that SaferKidsPH is performing well, but there is room for improvement in program implementation and management. Addressing these challenges will be crucial in ensuring that the program continues to make progress towards its goal of protecting children from online sexual abuse and exploitation.

Summary of DFAT Management Response

DFAT appreciates all the recommendations of the MTR to improve the program and address challenges in the remaining two years of the program. DFAT recognises that enhancing the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework is a top priority that requires immediate attention, as it has implications for the incorporation of GEDSI indicators in the program. Even though the program has a GEDSI strategy in place, it has been inconsistently applied aside from informing policies and advocacy. Program activities failed to capture indicators that would have informed intersectionality on gender, disability, culture, and socio-economic factors. An improved MEL framework with consistent GEDSI analysis of the whole program would better track the improvements of the program's target outcomes.

SKPH consortium should also revisit its private sector engagement strategy to improve ways of working with the private sector. SKPH consortium will need to review its sustainability plan to align the program more closely with the current political and governance landscape in the child protection space.

Given the delays of the Social Norms Study, DFAT agrees on the urgency of collecting data generated by the program to evaluate its effectiveness in bringing about behavioural change. This will enable DFAT to make better-informed decisions in achieving our targets. Moreover, DFAT recognises the crucial leadership and program management role played by UNICEF in steering the entire consortium towards achieving targets.

The action plans in this management response will help the program accomplish its remaining tasks and finish strong. The action plan will be progressed by DFAT's Manila Post specifically the Development Section – Good Governance and Civil Society Engagement (CIVIC) team together with SaferKidsPH Consortium Partners.

While Australia remains committed to combatting OSAEC, DFAT needs to further discuss the future of the program. For SKPH's remaining years, the focus should be on areas where the program provided significant contributions. Future investment will be based on the changing landscape of OSAEC, and efforts of various stakeholders in the child protection community.

[illegible]

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
Recommendation 3 The delay of the Social Norms Study means that all SKPH Consortium members should draw on other data that is available to inform behaviour change approaches.	Agree	DFAT agrees that other data should be drawn upon to help determine progress of the program on behaviour change.	<p>Aside from the preliminary findings of the Social Norms Study, SaferKidsPH Consortium will harness data from the program's work in the communities and schools and other program-supported research/studies to inform how the program is delivering on its behaviour change outcomes. UNICEF could also validate these data with the Ad Hoc working group on OSAEC.</p> <p>Once completed, DFAT will ensure that the SaferKidsPH Consortium, led by UNICEF, disseminates the Social Norms Study and other program-supported studies to government and relevant organisations including other donors, to generate greater understanding of the OSAEC issue and to better inform policies and programs.</p>	April-December 2023
Recommendation 4 SKPH Consortium, with support from DFAT where useful, should continue to implement the private sector strategy with a focus on facilitating private sector engagement (along with youth and civil society) in the IRR of the Anti-OSAEC law and consolidating gains made to date.	Agree in part	<p>DFAT agrees with the recommendation to facilitate private sector engagement towards supporting the IRR implementation (e.g., law provisions on role of private sector in preventing and reporting OSAEC, and in raising awareness).</p> <p>However, DFAT sees the value of the SaferKidsPH Consortium exploring and pursuing multiple ways of engaging private sector entities who wants to contribute to combatting OSAEC and promoting child online safety beyond the IRR implementation.</p>	<p>SKPH Consortium, in close coordination with DFAT, will revisit the private sector engagement strategy to improve ways of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with ANZCHAM and other private sector partners • supporting private sector role and contribution to the IRR implementation • responding to other innovative partnerships with the private sector 	August 2023

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Recommendation 5 While maintaining the consortium partnership approach, UNICEF should take on greater convening role of the overall program, with a particular focus on strengthening program cohesion, MEL and GEDSI.	Agree		<p>In response to this recommendation, UNICEF has advised that the Child Protection Chief will take a greater role in bringing together a cohesive narrative on the program, particularly enhancing MEL and more consistent integration of GEDSI.</p> <p>Informal discussions are already happening to improve cohesion at the PIT level. UNICEF and DFAT will encourage the PCC principals to replicate this informal mechanism at their level, and, where possible, include other like-minded organisations engaged in anti-OSAEC activities.</p>	
Recommendation 6 SKPH consortium partners, Australian Federal Police (AFP) and DFAT should harness existing champions and identify and engage new commitment and champions at local, national, and diplomatic levels (diplomatic community) to deliver an adaptive, strategic, and responsive program that recognises complexity and maximises the strengths of the members to progress the anti-OSAEC agenda.	Agree	DFAT continues to support the consortium in building and strengthening relationship with champions and partners from government and civil society, and other like-minded donors.	<p>DFAT will persuade SaferKidsPH Consortium to review the sustainability plan to better align with the current political and governance landscape in the child protection space and provide suggestions for strategic partnerships.</p> <p>DFAT will also suggest for SKPH knowledge products to be proactively shared by the consortium. This sharing could be helpful not only to further inform government interventions to address OSAEC but also to promote networking and partnerships between and among relevant stakeholders.</p>	May-December 2023
Recommendation 7 Considering the complexity of OSAEC, Australia's current leadership on the issue and the	Agree in part	Australia remains committed to support efforts in combatting OSAEC in the Philippines and in the region.	For the remaining years of the program, DFAT and SaferKidsPH Consortium to focus efforts and resources in areas where program is making significant contributions. These include the full implementation and strengthening of the:	Ongoing

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<p>access the program provides to the Philippine Government, Australia could consider continuing a similar-sized investment in combatting OSAEC, depending on the results and progress of the final years of the program.</p>		<p>DFAT recognises the contributions of SaferKidsPH in strengthening child protection policies and interventions and increasing awareness on the issue at national and subnational levels.</p> <p>Future investment will be based on the changing landscape of OSAEC, and efforts of various stakeholders in the child protection community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Online Safeguarding Policy led by the Department of Information and Communication Technology • Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Anti-OSAEC Law led by the Department of Justice • Family Courts Law and Bench Book on Family Cases through the Supreme Court • Child Protection Committees in targeted communities (cities of Cagayan de Oro, Iligan, Angeles, Manila, and Quezon City) <p>To maintain our leadership on the fight against OSAEC, DFAT will continue to play an active role in the coordination mechanisms on anti-OSAEC and human trafficking with the government and other donors (e.g., Manila International Dialogue on Human Trafficking).</p>	