DFAT Management Response
Independent Completion Review of the Enhancing Child Protection System to Keep Filipino Children Safe Online Program (SaferKidsPH)

DFAT commissioned an Independent Completion Review (ICR) of the Enhancing Child Protection System to Keep Filipino Children Safe Online (SaferKidsPH) program (AUD 8 million, 2019–2025) to assess the program's effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The findings of this review will inform DFAT's approach to future programming in the Philippines across relevant sectors. Conducted from October 2024 to January 2025, the review drew on document analysis, interviews, focus group discussions, and field visits to key program sites.

The ICR found that SaferKidsPH made substantial progress in strengthening the national child protection system to address online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) in the Philippines. The program contributed significantly to legal and policy reforms, including the passage of Republic Act 11930 or the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Materials (Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM) Act, and the development of key policies such as the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Child Online Safeguarding Policy, PNP Child Protection Strategy, DepEd Child Protection Policy, and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Family Court Act.

The consortium model, led by UNICEF in partnership with The Asia Foundation (TAF) and Save the Children Philippines (SCP), enabled effective coordination with government agencies, private sector actors, and civil society organisations. This collaboration enhanced law enforcement capabilities, improved service delivery, and strengthened advocacy.

The ICR underscored that, while the program has been both effective and efficient, a strong and deliberate program completion strategy is essential to sustain its achievements.

Summary of DFAT Management Response

DFAT welcomes the recommendations of the Independent Completion Review (ICR) of the SaferKidsPH program and is committed to supporting a strong program completion. DFAT acknowledges the program's substantial contributions to policy reform, government capacity-building, and systems strengthening to combat online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) in the Philippines.

To ensure that the program's results and lessons endure beyond its completion, DFAT has agreed to key actions aligned with the ICR recommendations:

- <u>Knowledge repository</u>. DFAT supports the creation of a knowledge repository to preserve SKPH learnings and outputs. In lieu of maintaining the SaferKidsPH website, UNICEF will host all materials on its Situation of Children website, ensuring public accessibility post-program.

- <u>Legal reform operationalisation</u>: DFAT reaffirms its commitment to supporting the integration of legal reforms introduced under SKPH, including Republic Act 11930. Final year activities include technical support to government agencies for costed implementation plans and strategic action plans.

- Celebrating wins. A final wrap-up event on 3 June 2025 will showcase SKPH's achievements and honor key partners and champions. The event also provides an opportunity to announce the long-term home for SKPH's digital resources.

- Sustainability and transition: A sustainability plan, embedded in the final program report, will outline how capacities built under SKPH will be transitioned to local actors. This includes continuing engagements with national stakeholders such as the Presidential Office for Child Protection and the National Coordination Center on OSAEC/CSAEM.

- Future programming and MEL. DFAT acknowledges the need for robust, fit-for-purpose monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks in future investments. Lessons from SKPH have already been applied to new investments developed by the Embassy. The Embassy will ensure all current and succeeding programs has sufficient budget allocation for MEL and gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI).

Post, in partnership with the SaferKidsPH consortium, will oversee the implementation of these actions from February to August 2025. While Australia remains committed to combatting OSAEC, future investments will be guided by evolving needs, stakeholder commitments, and priorities articulated in the Australia – Philippines Development Partnership Plan.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
Recommendation 1 Prioritise the finalisation and dissemination of a knowledge repository that captures key lessons, best practices, and successful GEDSI integration (including quantitative and qualitative evidence). Update the SKPH website as a central hub for IEC materials, training modules, and research outputs to ensure that the program's assets remain accessible after closure.	Agree	DFAT acknowledges the need for a comprehensive repository of SKPH's knowledge products to ensure the accessibility of program outcomes and resources beyond its completion.	UNICEF has agreed to house the IEC materials, training modules, and research outputs in the microsite of their Situation of Children – Philippines: Empowering Child Rights through Data, Evidence, and Knowledge | Situation of Children Philippines website as part of program completion. Stakeholders were made aware of this at the SaferKidsPH Culminating event on 3 June, contained in the media release afterwards, and included in completion discussions with Philippines Government national and subnational partners.	By 30 June 2025 By March 2025
Recommendation 2 Continue working closely with government partners to ensure that the legal reforms (e.g., Republic Act 11930, its IRR, and Executive Order No. 67) are on-track to being fully operationalised and integrated into existing institutional frameworks, particularly in the judiciary and local government units. Facilitate final consultations or briefings with key stakeholders to confirm continued government ownership and to document transition plans.	Agree	SKPH has been catalytic in working with the Philippine Government on the passage of critical legal reforms to protect children from online abuse and exploitation. It is imperative to complete the work by ensuring that the reforms are implemented and sustained.	In its final year Saferkids PH continued to provide additional support to relevant government agencies to ensure the legal reforms introduced are operational and sustained. These include supporting the National Coordination Center on Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (NCC-OSAEC/CSAEM) in the development of the Multi-Year Strategic Action Plan; supporting the DepEd, DICT, and PNP in the development of the costed implementation plans of their respective child protection policies to guide them in advocating for budget to implement these policies in their respective agencies. After SKPH completion, support to any follow-up activities will be dependent on the availability of budget from individual consortium members.	Ongoing By May 2024.

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
Recommendation 3 Design and execute a final wrap-up event to publicly showcase SKPH's achievements, share success stories, and highlight key recommendations for future DFAT investments.	Agree	DFAT acknowledges the need to showcase the wins of the program and celebrate it with the champions who supported SKPH and its activities.	The SKPH Culminating Event will take place on 3 June 2025 to showcase the accomplishments of the program, acknowledge the champions of the program and its activities from the Philippine Government, the Judiciary and Legislative branches of government, subnational governments, law enforcement, civil society, and the private sector. The event will also have a ceremonial declaration of commitment from relevant Philippine Government agencies to continue supporting advocacy and activities on combating OSAEC. This event can also be utilised to announce that the SKPH website will be housed in the SitAn website.	By 3 June 2025 By February 2025
Recommendation 4 Develop a transition document that outlines how capacities built during SKPH (e.g., in advocacy, capacity building, private sector engagement and MEL) will be sustained by local actors and future programs.	Agree	To ensure long-term sustainability, DFAT recognises the need for a structured transition document.	A component of UNICEF's final deliverables for the program is a sustainability plan imbedded in the final SKPH report to be submitted within 60 days of program completion. This will capture the activities of the program and consortium members to ensure sustainability of activities such as: A. Work on the costed implementation plans with NCC, DepEd, PNP and DICT B. Details on how consortium members, as a group or individually, can support the Presidential Office for Child Protection (POCP). C. Details on next steps on the Manual on on Remote Counselling of OSAEC Survivors forward including expansion of pilot sites to provide broader evidence. This will also be endorsed to the NCC as part of its mandate under the Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Law is the establishment of a national research program on OSAEC and CSAEM.	31 August 2025 By March 2025

Recommendation	Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Timeframe
			D. Inclusion of the modules used for capacity building of service providers in the LGU Toolkit.	
Recommendation 5 Development programs are designed on the basis of a program logic which provides the foundation for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). The SKPH program is no exception. Building on the experience of SKPH, future iterations of the program or future Australian programs/investments (in other sectors or thematic areas) need to develop a fit-for-purpose, simple and realistic MELF that is founded on a clear program logic. Given the nature, scale and complexity of the OSAEC issue, such MELF should be able to generate information needed to support program management and promote learning especially in relation to OSAEC threats and drivers and effective approaches towards strengthening the child protection system in the Philippines. Allocating resources for MEL and GEDSI also needs to be considered in programs addressing complex, evolving and multi-dimensional issues such as OSAEC, and in ensuring sufficient analysis, identification and implementation, and reporting of gender, disability, and social inclusion activities. In addition, the feasibility of conducting a longitudinal cohort study in future programming to track efficiency as well as the medium / long-term impact of interventions may need to be explored.	Agree	Agree the importance of appropriately resourced and robust results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems.	Lessons on M&E from the Saferkids program have already been applied to new investments developed by the Embassy. The Embassy will ensure that all current and succeeding programs have sufficient budget allocations for M&E and GEDSI. DFAT is open to conducting longitudinal cohort studies for investments aiming to track medium to long-term impacts where feasible.	Ongoing By January 2024