

Management Response to the Independent Mid-Term Review of SPRINT IV

In mid-2023, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) commissioned an independent review of the ***Sexual and Reproductive Health Program in Crisis and Post-Crisis Settings*** (SPRINT IV, 2022-2024) to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the continuing relevance of the program approach.

Australia has invested in IPPF's humanitarian activities since 2007 through the SPRINT initiative which assists crisis-affected communities in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, to access essential sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) services. IPPF integrates humanitarian action as a global priority across the Federation and country-based Member Associations (MAs). IPPF's approach to humanitarian assistance focuses on the delivery of the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in Crises (MISP), an international standard which guides lifesaving SRH services to affected communities from the onset of crises.

SPRINT IV consists of four pillars: Advocacy and Policy, Preparedness, Emergency Response and Recovery. Through SPRINT, IPPF supports eight priority countries in Asia (Indonesia, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka) and six in the Pacific (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu). In addition, SPRINT can respond to humanitarian crises in other regions/countries where IPPF Member Associations have humanitarian capability.

The purpose of the SPRINT IV mid-term review was to:

1. Provide an independent assessment of the progress towards the SPRINT IV goals/outcomes, particularly around the newly introduced Outcome 4 – Recovery.
2. Assess the effectiveness of SPRINT IV at all levels of implementation.
3. Recommend how implementation of SPRINT IV can be improved for the remainder of the program, including addressing any identified issues.
4. Recommend whether a costed extension should be considered, and present suggestions for further streamlining of the SPRINT IV program model to drive further impact and efficiency.

The independent review produced 19 strategic and operational recommendations (17 for IPPF and 2 for DFAT) that were intended to support IPPF's humanitarian programming and help inform DFAT management decisions on future investments beyond SPRINT IV.

Both DFAT and IPPF acknowledged the findings of the review which highlighted the progress, successes and challenges of SPRINT IV implementation. The review confirmed the effectiveness of SPRINT IV on humanitarian preparedness and emergency response, and made recommendations for strengthening the advocacy component. The review also recommended redesigning the recovery component to include outcomes on the recovery of affected populations.

For DFAT's consideration of possible future support, the review recommended a costed extension of SPRINT IV, highlighting the relevance of DFAT's continued investment in IPPF's humanitarian programming, in particular in the context of growing climate impacts in the Indo-Pacific region.

This document outlines the management response by DFAT and IPPF to the recommendations.

Q1. How can SPRINT IV increase the impact of pillars one, two and three?

a. At the policy level, how can SPRINT IV strengthen SRHR in crises?

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
1. Prioritise advocating for implementation: Focus on advocating for the costed implementation of existing laws, national plans, and programs related to SRHiE. The emphasis should be on translating policy into action, ensuring that these initiatives have political will and sufficient budget to be implemented lead to achieve tangible outcomes.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Partially agree	Rec 1 refers to supporting the implementation of existing laws, rather than advocating for new ones. According to key informants, many relevant laws are in place but not being implemented. MAs will need to work in partnership with other like-minded actors to achieve this recommendation, especially to achieve government budget commitment.	All SPRINT IV priority MAs will work more closely with respective UNFPA country office and other partners to advocate for the implementation of existing laws, plans and programs related to SRHiE at national and sub-national levels. At the same time, there are critical legal restrictions that hinder access to SRHiE such as safe abortion. MAs together with other like-minded actors will continue advocating with and sensitising decision makers for policy change.	MAs to engage in national strategic dialogues led by UNFPA in Indonesia and Nepal. Further countries TBD.	By 31 December 2024 By end of 2025 (for inclusion in the Cost Extension phase, if awarded)

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
2. Diversify advocacy efforts: Focus on increasing collaboration with stakeholders to maximise existing MA limited human resources, supporting government priorities aligned to SPRINT IV and ensuring participation in national consultation exercises.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	Rec 2 is related to going beyond the usual advocacy areas, e.g. health, to include SRHiE in other government areas. As per rec 2, this will require partnerships for advocacy and influence.	All SPRINT IV priority MAs will become more active in advocacy on the links between SRH, climate change and disaster risk reduction at national and sub-national levels, participating in national consultation processes etc. in closer collaboration with a UNFPA country office and local DFAT posts.	Indonesia, Sri Lanka & Philippines to participate in national consultation exercises led by UNFPA. A minimum of 3 MAs to participate in APMCDRR in 2024. Further countries TBD.	By 31 December 2024 Further countries TBD by end of 2025 if an extension is provided
3. Enhance evidence on the need and impact of delivering SRHiE: Showcase the impact of delivering SRH in crises and generate additional data for improved decision-making.	Noted. Activities already included in work plan.	Agree	Rec 3 is due to the limited generation and/or use of evidence to date, and it is an area for significant improvement	IPPF is planning to initiate a research project in 2024 which could be utilised to support advocating the importance of SRHiE at national and sub-national levels. MAs will conduct research work which could be utilised to sensitise policy makers. To strengthen communication, MAs will strengthen their use of data for decision-making and advocacy. MAs will also be supported to increase their communication outputs highlighting their response work to share with key stakeholders for advocacy and resource mobilisation.	One robust impact analysis completed following an MA SPRINT emergency response.	By 31 December 2024

b. At the policy level, how can SPRINT IV strengthen capacity to deliver lifesaving SRH services in crises?

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
4. Enhance inclusivity and accessibility of capacity building activities: Prioritise inclusivity and accessibility by providing sensitisation training for MA staff, volunteers, and stakeholders on effectively supporting individuals/communities in vulnerable situations. The nature of this activity places it in the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and hence this could be done in collaboration with other initiatives and/or stakeholders.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	Regarding 1 (Rec 4), there is limited targeted training addressing discrimination of and stigma towards communities in vulnerable situations. Staff from government units and some community leaders were identified as presenting high levels of discrimination towards these populations.	Under the preparedness outcome work, MAs will more deeply engage organisations representing communities in vulnerable situations such as persons with disabilities and people of diverse SOGIESC ¹ , to better understand their specific needs and how they can better provide SRH services to those communities in an inclusive way during a crisis. In the Pacific, some work is already underway. Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu have informal partnerships and regularly engage both disability organisations and local diverse SOGIESC groups in their preparedness activities. As reaching marginalised communities is one of the key priority actions in IPPF's Strategy 2028, a nexus approach will be taken to reinforce inclusion in coordination with other initiatives and stakeholders.	At least 50% of priority MAs will have formalised engagement ² with NGOs/CBOs working with or representing those who are most marginalised and excluded. Further targets to be incorporated into the CE design to better capture MA inclusion efforts with groups representing marginalised and excluded populations.	By 31 December 2024

¹ Sexual orientation, gender identity, expression & sex characteristics

² Formalised engagement includes partnership MoUs for partnerships, representation on steering committees, participation in capacity building activities (NB: this will vary from country to country)

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
5. Strengthen stakeholder engagement in preparedness activities: MAs should actively involve relevant stakeholders, including representatives from communities in vulnerable situations, in the development of the Emergency Preparedness Plans (EPP) and Emergency Response Plans (ERP).	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	Regarding 2 (Rec 5), the majority of MAs develop their EPPs and ERPs without input from targeted communities.	MAs will consult organisations working for communities in vulnerable situations when revising the EPPs/ERPs to ensure plans are more inclusive. All MAs involved in SPRINT IV preparedness activities have EPP/ERPs currently in place.	All SPRINT IV priority countries will revise their EPPs/ERPs to be more inclusive of marginalised and excluded groups.	By end of 2026 if an extension is provided
6. Conduct surge roster workshops, prioritising MAs with large staff numbers and / or with numerous chapters.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree		All the large MAs will conduct surge workshops to establish a structured surge roster system at national level	India, Sri Lanka, Nepal Indonesia & Philippines to establish national surge rosters.	By 31 December 2024

c. At the policy level, how can SPRINT IV strengthen the delivery of lifesaving quality essential SRH care during emergencies?

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
7. MAs to conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise across their respective countries and include scenarios for responses in areas vulnerable to disasters in their EPP and ERPs	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	Current EPP/ERPs lack scenarios for different kinds of disasters. These should be based on country risk & vulnerability index (i.e. likelihood of scenario)	MAs will add stakeholder mapping and disaster scenarios when revising EPPs/ERPs if these have not been included in the existing plans.	All SPRINT IV priority MAs will have revised EPPs/ERPs to include stakeholder mapping and disaster scenarios.	By end of 2026 if an extension is provided

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
8. Adopt the model of conducting information sessions in affected areas during the evening and deliver services in the morning (where safe to do so).	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Partially agree	n/a	MAs will take this recommendation into account in planning their service provision schedule during an emergency response, where it is safe and feasible to do so.	All SPRINT IV funded responses will consider the most appropriate timing for delivery of information sessions and service provision.	By 31 December 2024
9. Consider alternative ways to provide services to people who are in vulnerable situations.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan - in conjunction with Recs 4, 5.	Agree	n/a	MAs will be encouraged to devise various ways to reach communities in vulnerable situations. Consultations with organisations representing communities in vulnerable situations in stable times will also inform how MAs could reach them with services during an emergency and alternative approaches to provide services will be identified.	At least 50% of SPRINT priority MAs will have identified alternative approaches to provide services to marginalised and excluded groups (i.e. communities in vulnerable situations). This could include door to door service provision for people with disabilities, designated clinic days for people of diverse SOGIESC, etc. Further targets to be incorporated into the CE Design to better capture MA reach to people of diverse SOGIESC and other marginalised and excluded groups.	By 31 December 2024 By 31 December 2025

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
10. Diversify supply chain sources: While continuing the collaboration with UNFPA to address supply chain challenges, IPPF should concurrently explore alternative supply sources to mitigate risks associated with potential commodity shortages in humanitarian settings, including the provision of buffer stock.	Noted.	Agree	n/a	IPPF is already procuring commodities to the MAs through the Business Plan (core program) process. Further, IPPF has been strengthening coordination with UNFPA APRO to address supply chain challenges, including a joint regional capacity building workshop with MAs in Asia by end 2024 and individual country support for Pacific MAs in addition to pre-positioning. IPPF humanitarian team is also working with the supply chain team in the London office, with the aim of strengthening supply chain management capacity at MA level.	<p>Joint IPPF - UNFPA regional SCM capacity building workshop with MAs in Asia</p> <p>Supply chain management strengthened in PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga & Samoa.</p> <p>Further targets to be incorporated into the CE Design.</p>	
11. Strengthen safety, dignity, and confidentiality to increase reach to people in vulnerable situations.	Noted. Encourage IPPF to consider additional means for verifying.	Agree	n/a	Safety, dignity, and confidentiality of services will be emphasised in every regional and national training. IPPF will ensure that ALL emergency responses prioritise and it will be verified by technical visit at an early stage of an emergency response & real time reviews to see if these aspects are well incorporated in the response sites.	All SPRINT IV funded emergency responses prioritise safety, dignity, and confidentiality of services at all service delivery sites.	By end of 2025 if an extension is provided

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
12. Implement comprehensive Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) mechanisms from the beginning of a response and ensure a Real Time Review (RTR) is conducted four to six weeks after the commencement of the response.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	n/a	IPPF will strengthen AAP mechanisms for all responses by undertaking regional capacity building jointly with UNFPA APRO, as well as enabling country level engagement in AAP workshops in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Philippines in collaboration with UNFPA, integrating safeguarding and PSEA issues. IPPF will conduct a real time review within the first 1-2 months of a response and assess the AAP mechanisms.	AAP mechanisms strengthened in Indonesia, Sri Lanka & the Philippines. Further targets to be incorporated into the CE Design.	By end of 2025 if an extension is provided

Q2. What is the future of Pillar 4 – Recovery under SPRINT IV?

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
13. Adopt a strategic shift towards an extended intervention approach: Given that international resources tend to diminish beyond the response phase, this underscores the importance of sustained efforts during the recovery period. Funding activities in the recovery phase, rather than a limiting funding to the three to six months response will provide stability and continuity in post-crisis scenarios, while strengthening state and community long-term resilience, aligning seamlessly with Australia's International Development Policy. This funding could be included in the MA's work plan for the following year.	Partially Agree As IPPF MAs are working in countries before, during and after crises, recovery coordination and funding should not be exclusively from SPRINT (or from humanitarian teams/budgets). As this is a new area for IPPF, an approach can be piloted through IPPF's redesign of the Recovery component under a possible costed extension of SPRINT IV.	Agree	n/a	IPPF will support extended recovery phase for a smoother transition through MAs' annual workplans in SPRINT countries. In the case of non-SPRINT countries, coordination efforts will be made with regional offices to ensure that service provision for recovery will continue in response areas. Further, Humanitarian team in collaboration with RO colleagues will ensure provision for recovery is included in the MA's revised/ next Business Plan	All MAs who undertake an emergency response will seek to ensure that recovery activities in affected areas can be resourced beyond the response period, either through core funds, other donor funding streams, or in conjunction with national government service delivery points (where they exist).	By end of 2025 if an extension is provided – targets to be incorporated into CE design

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
14. Strengthen efforts to plan, implement and monitor the continuation of services to affected communities after the emergency: A Recovery Plan should be discussed, designed, and agreed upon with all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from those in vulnerable situations. It should provide an agreed roadmap with responsibilities and timelines on how to transition to regular services, ensure SRH data collected by stakeholders is centralised, and incorporate a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the plan's determined activities and indicators.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.	Agree	n/a	All MAs who undertake an emergency response will develop a recovery plan in consultation with local stakeholders and plan a follow up visit to monitor the continuation of services to affected populations after the emergency response has concluded. Humanitarian team will collaborate with RO colleagues to ensure recovery activities are supported through core or other funding streams	All MAs who undertake an emergency response have recovery activities resourced	By end of 2025 if an extension is provided – measures to be incorporated into CE design
15. Redesign 'Pillar 4 – Recovery' to have a stronger focus on the recovery of affected populations: This pillar should provide clear guidance on how to support the transition from emergency to stable situation ³ , while ensuring the continuation of services to affected populations, particularly new and underserved communities	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan.\	Agree	n/a	IPPF will organise an online meeting with MAs to redesign the Pillar 4 – Recovery and discuss what follow up activities could take place under this outcome.	At least 2 SPRINT IV priority MAs from each sub-region (Pacific, SE Asia, South Asia)	By end of August 2024

³ For example, identifying relevant stakeholders,

Q3. What is the outlook for the SPRINT program in the future?

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
16. Provide a two-year costed extension to SPRINT IV: Providing a two-year costed extension to the current iteration of the SPRINT program will allow IPPF and MAs not only to continue supporting preparedness activities, but to consolidate achievements and efforts, work in new areas and implement new activities, and most importantly, redesign and implement a new Pillar 4 focusing on the recovery of affected populations.	DFAT – Agree Subject to funding and approvals.	n/a	DFAT's support has been a strong contributor to the success of IPPF's humanitarian efforts. The collaborative approach advocated by IPPF, involving strategic partnerships and capacity strengthening at the national level, aligns with the broader vision of building resilience and addressing humanitarian needs.	DFAT is considering an extension of SPRINT IV for an additional two years, subject to program alignment with Australia's priorities, funding availability and approvals. SPRINT IV is currently well aligned with Australia's International Development Policy, particularly in relation to the prioritisation of localisation, the building of robust country-level systems, and strengthened humanitarian response. Alignment with forthcoming strategies (Humanitarian, Gender Equality, Disability Equity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion) will be examined.	Robust cost extension phase program design prepared for consideration by DFAT.	By end of 2024

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
17. DFAT to continue investing in the IPPF Humanitarian Program: Given the impacts of climate change is resulting in more intense natural disasters, an increased number of small-scale disasters and slow-onset disasters affecting SRH in an already disaster-prone region, and the valuable contributions of IPPF in this context, it is strongly recommended that DFAT continues its ongoing support to IPPF's humanitarian work beyond the completion of SPRINT IV. To enhance the effectiveness of this support, it is recommended exploring a more flexible funding approach, resembling close-to-core financing for IPPF's humanitarian programs. By allowing a portion of the funding to be partially earmarked for the Indo-Pacific region, DFAT can strategically contribute to addressing the challenges faced by women, girls and communities in vulnerable situations.	DFAT – Partially Agree Insufficient evidence in the MTR for this recommendation.	n/a	n/a	DFAT will consider ongoing support and funding approaches for IPPF's humanitarian work beyond the completion of SPRINT IV. This will be subject to program alignment with Australia's priorities and funding availability at the time.	n/a	n/a

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
18. Tap into additional funding streams: Explore conventional and non-conventional channels to secure further funding to diversify funding streams ⁴ .	Noted.	Agree	n/a	<p>IPPF will encourage and support MAs' resource mobilisation efforts beyond SPRINT to help them diversify funding sources for the continuation of humanitarian programming including from UNFPA.</p> <p>The Secretariat continues to support MAs with pursuing national funding opportunities from bilateral donors, as well as leveraging in-kind and/or direct financial support from their governments. This includes in-kind and financial support for SRHiE responses wherever feasible including commodity supply, govt health workers joining response teams, provision of testing equipment etc.</p> <p>IPPF's Stream 3 mechanism (funded by core funds) is providing an additional funding option for under-resourced emergency responses in neglected countries. IPPF will continue to pursue increase core funding to maximise the size of the Stream 3 funding allocation available to MAs.</p>	<p>At least 25% of humanitarian preparedness activities will be cost shared with regional level development programming – further targets will be incorporated into CE design.</p> <p>At least 25% of SRHiE responses will include a portion of in-kind and financial support mobilised at national level.</p> <p>IPPF's Stream 3 funding stream allocation (for dedicated humanitarian responses) increased by 10%.</p>	<p>By 31 December 2024</p> <p>By 31 December 2025</p> <p>By 31 December 2026</p>

⁴ For example approaching for-profit organisations or crowd-funding

Recommendations	DFAT Response	IPPF Response	Explanation	Action Plan	Target (if applicable)	Timeframe / Deadline
19. Increase engagement with people in vulnerable situations across the four pillars: Based on the principles accountability to affected populations, it is recommended to involve people and / or representatives from communities in vulnerable situations in all phases of SPRINT IV.	Noted, and agree with IPPF's action plan. Links to Recs 4, 5, & 9.	Agree	n/a	IPPF will increase the engagement of people in vulnerable situations across all phases of the program, from advocacy, ERP/EPP revision, surge roster development, training activities to emergency response, real time review and post emergency reviews.	Documented engagement of organisations/ representatives of people in vulnerable situations across all phases of SPRINT IV at country and regional level.	By end of 2026 if an extension is provided - targets to be incorporated into CE design