

**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**  
**INDEPENDENT COMPLETION REVIEW OF THE SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR DISASTER RESPONSE**

**Summary of Management Response**

DFAT welcomes the findings of the independent completion review and acknowledges its recommendations for similar programs, several of which have already been implemented. DFAT will consider the key lessons learned in future programming. More detailed responses to each recommendation are included in the table below:

**Response to Recommendations**

***On Program Management***

Recommendations for Similar Programs	Response (Agree/Partially Agree/Disagree)	Action Plan/Timeframe
<p>1. Establish a Project Management Team (PMT) for each partnership to ensure that sufficient human and other resources are allocated to the program. Contributions from both parties should be specified in the partnership agreement.</p>	<p><i>Partially Agree.</i> DFAT acknowledges the value of establishing a dedicated PMT to ensure that a specific program's activities are implemented as planned. However, establishment of a full PMT will depend on the complexity of the program as well as the capacity of the implementing partner to absorb additional responsibilities. As the goal of the SPDR was to enhance DSWD capacity to lead disaster response, the initial arrangement of having DFAT support only one program staff member was intended to build the capacity of DSWD permanent staff.</p> <p>While contributions from both DFAT and DSWD were included in the agreement for SPDR, DFAT agrees that particulars of the contributions should be detailed in future agreements.</p>	<p>Moving forward, DFAT and the implementing partner will assess any capacity gaps to determine the appropriate staffing and other resources needed to implement DFAT programs effectively.</p>

Recommendations for Similar Programs	Response (Agree/Partially Agree/Disagree)	Action Plan/Timeframe
2. The PMT should be allocated in the relevant bureau to ensure effectiveness and continuity of capacity building initiatives.	<i>Agree.</i> Lodging the SDPR under the Technical Assistance Unit of DSWD was deemed appropriate at the time the agreement was signed, as the unit was responsible for coordinating DSWD's programs with several development partners, including DFAT. Nonetheless, DFAT agrees that allocating the PMT to the most relevant bureau/office of the implementing partner will facilitate the sustainability of program outputs and outcomes beyond the program period.	In future direct engagements with Philippine Government agencies, DFAT will consult with the implementing partner to determine the bureau/office that could both effectively implement and sustain the program. DFAT will also consider potential risks based on the experience in implementing SPDR.
3. Release funds in tranches based on performance.	<i>Partially Agree.</i> DFAT recognises the value of performance-based funding and already has several multi-year arrangements with humanitarian partners in the Philippines that release funds in tranches based on accomplishments/milestones. However, this is not always the most appropriate mechanism. For humanitarian programs that involve prepositioning arrangements front-loading funds will ensure that relief items are immediately available for deployment.	Ongoing. Manila Post releases funds for multi-year humanitarian programs in tranches based on performance, where appropriate.
4. Proactively engage with the program to ensure continuity and inclusion of the required activities in the work and financial plans.	<i>Agree.</i> DFAT acknowledges that the program could have benefitted from more proactive engagement with DSWD and the PMT.	Ongoing. DFAT is making progress towards the inclusion of governance arrangements with partners for various humanitarian and disaster risk reduction programs, including regular (at least quarterly) information-sharing on key progress updates and issues.

### On Monitoring and Evaluation

Recommendations for Similar Programs	Response (Agree/Partially Agree/Disagree)	Action Plan/Timeframe
5. The program needs to have a comprehensive, complete logical framework. Deviations need to be well-justified and documented.	<i>Agree.</i> The absence of a monitoring and evaluation system and sound logical framework for the SPDR undermined the program's ability to assess progress towards outcomes and utilise performance information to support decision-making.	Ongoing. A monitoring and evaluation framework was recently developed for the Response and Recovery Assistance to the Philippines (RRAP) investment to track the progress and outcomes of its ongoing programs.
6. Allocate dedicated M&E staff within the PMT.	<i>Agree.</i> DFAT agrees that having dedicated M&E staff/coordinator for multi-year or complex programs will facilitate the review of the effectiveness of program interventions and help program teams in providing timely information for reporting and decision-making.	Ongoing. Several programs under the RRAP investment have dedicated M&E staff. DFAT will review new agreements to determine the need for this and other M&E resources.
7. Design, during the inception stage, an M&E toolkit to be used throughout the implementation. Include baseline studies for any project longer than two years, and a midterm review if three years or more.	<i>Agree.</i> DFAT supports evidence-based decision-making and agrees that the M&E framework for multi-year programs should be guided by baseline information and include tools to measure progress against the baseline. This includes conducting midterm reviews, but programs should be of sufficient length that reasonable progress can be made before a midterm review is undertaken.	Ongoing. Several agreements under the RRAP investment include program-specific M&E matrices that have been harmonised in a single M&E framework. The investment will undergo an independent completion review in 2024.
8. Elaborate a standard progress report template for the duration of the intervention, including the documentation of cumulative results.	<i>Agree.</i> DFAT acknowledges that the content, quality and frequency of reports it received varied throughout the duration of SPDR implementation.	Ongoing. As part of the new M&E framework for the RRAP investment, DFAT has developed guidance documentation to standardise reports among different partners. DFAT will disseminate the document in the first quarter of 2022.

### ***On Procurement***

<b>Recommendations for Similar Programs</b>	<b>Response (Agree/Partially Agree/Disagree)</b>	<b>Action Plan/Timeframe</b>
9. Finalise the list of non-food items (NFIs) with clear specifications of the products – conduct participatory research, if necessary, to inform such specifications.	<i>Partially Agree.</i> DFAT agrees that specifications of NFIs for prepositioning should be compliant with the Sphere Standards and other additional standards set by the Philippine Government. However, there needs to be some flexibility in the types of NFIs to be procured in order to respond to changes in humanitarian situations.	Within the first quarter of 2022, DFAT will review the current NFIs prepositioned with the Philippine Red Cross and the United Nations Population Fund to ensure that these are up to standard. DFAT will also include these considerations when initiating new prepositioning arrangements.

### ***On DFAT's Key Policy Priorities***

<b>Recommendations for Similar Programs</b>	<b>Response (Agree/Partially Agree/Disagree)</b>	<b>Action Plan/Timeframe</b>
10. DFAT to provide an orientation on the priority policies and standards to potential fund recipients.	<i>Agree.</i> DFAT programs would benefit from a common understanding among partners of Australia's policy priorities. Briefing to partners should be refreshed throughout the implementation of each program.	DFAT will host/arrange/conduct a coordination meeting with humanitarian partners in the Philippines by June 2022 to brief them on DFAT's policy priorities.
11. Include DFAT's key policy priorities in proposal and reporting templates.	<i>Agree.</i> Both DFAT and implementing partners have the responsibility to ensure that policy priorities are embedded in program activities and reports.	Ongoing. Reporting on DFAT's policy priorities are included in the guidance document mentioned above, which will be shared among humanitarian partners in the first quarter of 2022.