

# **TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH (TONGA SKILLS)**

## **FINAL REPORT OF THE MID TERM REVIEW**



**May 2018**

## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND TO TONGA SKILLS .....	1
1.2 METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE REVIEW .....	2
1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE REVIEW .....	4
<b>2 PROGRESS AND EMERGING EFFECTIVENESS – OUTPUTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 PROGRAM DELIVERY CONTEXT AND CONSTRAINTS .....	5
2.2 OUTPUTS RELATED TO PLANNING AND COORDINATION .....	5
2.3 OUTPUTS RELATED TO STRENGTHENING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND QUALITY .....	6
2.4 OUTPUTS RELATED TO DELIVERING TARGETED, INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE SDAs .....	7
<b>3 PROGRESS AND EMERGING EFFECTIVENESS – OUTCOMES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 OVERVIEW .....	9
3.2 EOPO1: DIVISIONAL PLANNING BODIES IDENTIFY PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEMAND AND ASSOCIATED SKILL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS .....	10
3.3 EOPO2: MET AND TNQAB COORDINATE A SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM THAT MATCHES DEMAND AND IS INCLUSIVE, FLEXIBLE AND QUALITY ASSURED .....	10
3.4 EOPO3: TONGAN PROVIDERS ARE ABLE TO DELIVER INCLUSIVE, FLEXIBLE, DEMAND DRIVEN AND QUALITY ASSURED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT .....	12
3.5 EOPO4: CLIENTS COMPLETE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THERE IS EQUITY IN ACCESS AND TAKE UP OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES .....	12
3.6 EOPO5: CLIENTS HAVE IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY IN NATIONAL AND OVERSEAS MARKETS .....	15
3.7 EOPO6: CLIENTS HAVE IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS AND INCOME .....	16
3.8 EOPO7: MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSINESSES (MSMEs) ARE ESTABLISHED OR IMPROVED .....	16
<b>4 GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 INCLUSIVENESS IN COORDINATION AND PLANNING .....	17
4.2 INCLUSIVENESS IN SKILLS SUPPLY .....	18
4.3 TARGETED AND INCLUSIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT .....	18
<b>5 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY .....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS .....	19
5.2 RESPONSIVENESS AND COLLABORATION .....	22
5.3 INNOVATION AND VALUE FOR MONEY .....	23
5.4 TEAM STRUCTURE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE .....	23
5.5 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN IMPLEMENTATION EFFICIENCY .....	24
<b>6 PROGRAM RELEVANCE AND FEASIBILITY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
6.1 RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS .....	25
6.2 FEASIBILITY .....	27
<b>7 REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>ANNEXES .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A GLOSSARY .....	1
B TERMS OF REFERENCE .....	2
C EVALUATION PLAN – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUESTIONS .....	7
D PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS MET .....	21
E TONGA SKILLS TRAINING DATA SUMMARY (MAY 2017 TO MARCH 2018) .....	24
F SUGGESTED REDEFINITION OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES .....	26
G EVIDENCE BASE .....	28
H SWOT ANALYSIS .....	29

The members of the Mid Term Review Team included:

Virginia Simmons – Team Leader/TVET Systems Specialist

Bernard Broughton – Evaluation Specialist

Meleoni Uera – Tongan Specialist

## Executive Summary

### **Introduction and Context**

This Report responds to the Terms of Reference for the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth (S4IEG) Program, commonly referred to as 'Tonga Skills'.

Tonga Skills is an Australian Government funded program to the Government of Tonga for the period of 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2021. The total investment is AUD7.575 million over the course of five (5) years comprising two stages of three (3) and two (2) years respectively. This Mid Term Review (MTR), commissioned by DFAT and undertaken by independent consultants, addresses the first eighteen months of the first stage.

The Program builds on the lessons of two previous Australian Government investments. These were the Tonga Technical Vocational Educational and Training Support Program Phase 1 (TSP1), (AUD3.4 million, January 2010 - June 2014) and the Interim Skill Development Facility (ISDF), (AUD2 million, May 2014 - October 2016).

The Theory of Change of the Program Design defined the goal of Tonga Skills as '*sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Tonga*' and identified three End of Program Outcomes:

1. A more coordinated, responsive, flexible and inclusive national skills development system
2. Participants improve livelihoods
3. MSME participants' business growth.

These EOPOs were supported by six intermediate Outcomes (IOs).

The Design also included three inter-related Key Result Areas (KRAs):

- KRA 1 – Strengthen Coordination and Planning
- KRA 2 – Targeted and Inclusive Skill Development
- KRA 3 – Strengthen Skills Supply.

The KRAs have remained constant during implementation and have been used as a basis for reporting. However, there has been some indecision about the EOPOs and the IOs. The Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MELC) Plan June 2017, amalgamated the EOPOs and the IOs into seven new EOPOs, which are used in this Report. The MTR suggests how these might be streamlined in future.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference for the MTR, the purpose of the Review is:

*'to assess the progress of the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth program; identify gaps and analyse solutions for improvement; and identify strengths and weakness in program management to guide DFAT decisions about program management during the next phase of implementation'.*

Under the headings of four key criteria, the MTR Team developed five evaluation questions as the structure for the Mid Term Review. These are:

#### **Progress and Emerging Effectiveness:**

1. Has satisfactory progress been made at the output level? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are how can they be addressed?
2. Are satisfactory results emerging at the outcomes level? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outputs reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?

*Gender Equality and Social Inclusion*

3. What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?

*Program Management and Efficiency*

4. Is the Program management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the Program team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the Program team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?

*Program Relevance and Feasibility*

5. Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET, TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?

The MTR Team developed these Key Evaluation Questions on the assumption that base-lines, targets, and analysis of achievement would be available as evidence of progress. This proved to only partly be the case. Hence, the Review Team was more reliant on stakeholder perceptions of progress than would ideally have been the case. The fact that there was a high level of endorsement among the stakeholders of the work of Tonga Skills went some way towards reducing this problem, but did not eliminate it. The MTR Team spent considerable time eliciting or generating the information required.

Against this background, a summary of the findings of the Review against the five Key Evaluation Questions is presented below:

***Progress against the Key Evaluation Questions***

*Progress and Emerging Effectiveness: Has satisfactory progress been made at the output level? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are how can they be addressed?*

Despite the data limitations outlined above, the MTR Team formed the view that satisfactory progress has been made to date overall. Unlike previous Australian-funded programs Tonga Skills is, and is perceived to be, Tongan driven. This is warmly welcomed by stakeholders and has enabled good relationships to be developed. Tonga Skills has facilitated progress in the policy work of its counterpart organisation, the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB), supporting the development of national qualifications and a streamlined approach to the process of accrediting community providers and short courses. A structured process is in place for the identification of demand as a basis for developing an approach to matching demand and supply. Acting as a training broker, Tonga Skills has accessed a reasonable range of training providers, public and private, formal and non-formal, with appropriate commitment to the flexibility and inclusiveness of training. There has been progress in efforts to improve the quality of training delivery in Tonga, for example, through providing Certificate IV in Training and Assessment for Tongan trainers.

Some internal delays have impeded progress such as slowness in the establishment of robust management information and monitoring and evaluation systems. This has been identified as the most critical weakness facing Tonga Skills at this time and is the subject of a key recommendation that calls upon Scope Global to take a series of steps to address it. There is also scope for improvement in the balance of training provision across industry sectors as the Program matures and to drive this through the development of a training strategy.

*Progress and Emerging Effectiveness: Are satisfactory results emerging at the outcomes level? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outputs reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?*

There is evidence of some progress in each of the seven end of program outcomes identified in the MELC Plan. (1) Divisional planning bodies have been involved in the identification of skill priorities. (2) While progress has been slower than hoped for with the TNQAB and there are resourcing issues in both TNQAB and the Ministry of Education, Tonga Skills has been active in supporting change. (3) Tonga Skills has had some success in exerting influence on both formal and non-formal providers to adopt the good practice characteristics of contemporary TVET systems. (4) Several hundred clients have benefited from skills development activities sponsored by Tonga Skills including women, people identifying as having a disability and people from remote geographic locations. (5) Good prospects exist for clients to improve employability in domestic markets but, at this stage, caution needs to be exercised in raising expectations about improved employability in overseas markets, outside of seasonal work, at this stage. (6) At the subsistence level, there appears to be evidence of improved livelihoods and income. (7) It is too early to determine whether Tonga Skills can achieve an increase or improvement in micro, small and medium enterprises.

*Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?*

As at March 30, 2018 Tonga Skills has reported significant achievements in promoting inclusiveness. Women are well-represented in decision-making bodies associated with the Program. Females represented 53% of training participants and 45% of trainers. People identifying as having a disability participated in 49% of the skills training activities, albeit with many of these involving multiple enrolments of the same persons. Importantly, the economic and social empowerment of women and people with disabilities has also been boosted through specifically targeted skills development activities. Those living in remote geographic communities, including those in the remote Outer Islands, have had greater access to training in quantitative terms than in any previous Australian program.

*Program Management and Efficiency: Is the Program management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the Program team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the Program team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?*

The Tonga Skills team has performed well to establish the Program and become fully operational although future challenges include resolving the balance between strategic and operational leadership; settling Program outcome statements and the management information system so that it can support an efficient and robust MELC process in time for the next Annual Plan; and systematically demonstrating value for money. The mix of Tongan-based, long-term and short term advisers has not yet been structured to ensure authority, responsibility and accountability are completely clear. Recommendations address these issues.

Tonga Skills has developed a reputation for responsiveness, of the ability to 'make it happen' and for a collaborative approach with other stakeholders and donors. Building on the experience of previous Tongan and Pacific programs, Tonga Skills is implementing an innovative and ground-breaking program in its own right. Stakeholders affirm that it has developed new forms of engagement, new ways of adapting to the Tongan culture and new skill development activities.

Key implementation strengths are (1) the integration of Tonga Skills operations with government and other key decision-making structures and (2) the flexibility, responsibility and cost-effectiveness arising out of relative independence and operating in a brokerage role. Implementation weaknesses include (1) failing to settle the management information and monitoring and evaluation systems in the first 6-12 months of the Program and (2) the lack of attention to key efficiency indicators. These

must be treated as high priorities so that data can be collected efficiently and analysed to inform strategic decision-making.

*Program Relevance and Feasibility: Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET, TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?*

The success of Tonga Skills is not entirely within the Program's own control. It is ultimately dependent on a wide range of stakeholders playing their part in the transformation and reform of the Tongan skills system and the extent to which the Tonga Skills Team Leader can influence them in this direction. As a respected Tongan, the Team Leader is well-placed to do this as a strategic priority of the role. During the consultations, stakeholders generally regarded Tonga Skills as relevant to their needs and priorities and were keen for success to be realised. This is a key element in the likelihood of the Program being feasible in the longer term and a firm indication that it is headed in the right direction.

### **Summary of Findings**

In essence, Tonga Skills is working on two levels. On the one hand it is assisting/influencing TNQAB/MET to establish and implement a more enabling policy and regulatory environment for accessible demand-driven technical and vocational education (TVET). On the other hand, it is taking a funding and leadership role in brokering the delivery of training. This is conceptually sound and very exciting in its potential. Substantial progress has already been made on both levels.

However, Tonga Skills faces considerable challenges and risks. Some of these challenges and risks are the result of failing to move efficiently from design to planning to implementation and review. Recommendation R1 addresses ways in which Scope Global might now rectify this situation.

For the first main strand of the program, improving the policy and regulatory environment for TVET, the risk is essentially that Tonga Skills is dependent on TNQAB, which has proved to be slow moving over several years and has a less than optimal reputation with the providers it has been established to assist. Recommendation R4 proposes actions for the Tonga Skills Team Leader to take to deal with this situation.

For the second strand of the program, the provision of training, mentoring and coaching, the challenges are more complex. It is entirely appropriate for Tonga Skills to have taken the approach of brokering training through a range of public and private providers. But this also presents considerable risks.

The core challenge more or less within Tonga Skills' control is in adopting an appropriate approach for the 2018/19 implementation year. Tonga Skills needs to build on the initial Skills Development Activities (SDAs) rather than provide more of the same by funding training providers to offer similar opportunities to others. Recommendation R2 proposes the development of a dynamic training strategy to guide this process.

In terms of implementation progress at mid-term, the MTR Team is able to report that progress is satisfactory at the output level. Tonga Skills has 'got runs on the board' by engaging with stakeholders to agree on priorities and by rolling out a significant level of training activity, much of it beyond Tongatapu. The 37 SDAs delivered to end March 2018 are significant outputs. The stakeholders are encouraged and participants have given mostly positive feedback.

However, the likely benefits for the individuals, businesses and island group economies remain to be tested. Understandably at the end of 18 months, the evidence available to the MTR was limited at this level. While progress at the output level can fairly be said to be satisfactory, it is crucial that Tonga Skills tests the benefit of the SDAs delivered and applies what can be learned to further investments through the Skills Development Fund (SDF).

Recommendations throughout the Report and summarised below are designed to smooth the operations of Tonga Skills for the second half of this Stage 1 and strengthen its position for Stage 2.

## Recommendations

The MTR Team recommends:

- R1      THAT **Scope Global** provide corporate guidance to ensure:
- an efficient *Tonga Skills* planning and management information system is developed to support implementation, including monthly work planning and reporting, and management of the SDF and SDAs
  - a more satisfactory statement of planned outcomes along with supporting outputs, targets and performance indicators is settled quickly without burdening staff and in time to be reflected into the forthcoming Annual Plan
  - MELC systems are designed to quantify benefit and contain measures that demonstrate value for money
  - some standard TVET approaches to measurement are introduced, including the adoption of a unique client code/identifier and a selection of additional measures, total and broken down by industry sector and cross-cutting, such as:
    - number of days/hours of training
    - number of client contact days/hours
    - average days/hours of training per client
    - average number of trainings per client
    - breakdown of clients by length of training (e.g. 0-5 days, 5-10 days, 10-15 days, etc.)
    - average cost per training day
    - average cost per client.
  - a sound approach to tracer studies is established as soon as possible.  
(Refer sections 3.5, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5)
- R2      THAT, in conjunction with Tonga Skills staff, **Scope Global** develop a dynamic three to five-year training strategy, addressing elements such as:
- indicative projected shifts in brokered training, including by industry sector and generic/cross-cutting training
  - likely changes in demand for training as Tonga Skills progressively addresses high priority areas
  - new targets or initiatives to support gender equality and social inclusion
  - movement in the range and level of providers, including the balance between the public and private training sectors, ways to expedite the registration of all providers and ways to avoid the risk of over-reliance on individual providers
  - the role and extent of national qualifications
  - the approach to building training pathways for clients
  - Tonga Skills' future role as a broker
  - any projected changes to the budget allocation for the SDF.  
(Refer sections 2.4, 3.5 and 5.3)
- R3      THAT, in the meantime and without limiting the overall aim of matching demand and supply, **Tonga Skills** amend the *Skills Development Fund (SDF) Guidelines, July 2017*, to include reference to ensuring a reasonable distribution of training across the four priority industry sectors, in terms of factors such as participant numbers, SDA numbers or budget allocations, as appropriate.  
(Refer sections 3.5 and 5.3)



- R4 THAT, in the next six months **the Tonga Skills Team Leader** adopt the following as strategic priorities:
- engaging with MET to promote the reactivation of the now expired National TVET Policy Framework 2013-17 to ensure an updated and workable version can be put forward for re-endorsement by the Government of Tonga
  - advocating with TNQAB to give consideration to reviewing and amending the *TNQAB Act 2004* and *Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations 2010* as a means to:
    - reference the national policy for TVET and its goals
    - ensure that the TNQAB has the power to prevent a provider that is not registered from continuing to operate
    - make any other changes required to update the Act and Regulations
  - influencing the TNQAB Board to commence a recruitment process for a permanent Chief Executive Officer with selection criteria that include strong leadership and facilitation skills; experience of TVET systems; experience of quality assurance systems; and demonstrated practical expertise in competency-based training and assessment
  - encouraging TNQAB to consider ensuring that in future recruitment to new and vacant positions, a TVET background be a pre-requisite for appointment
  - generally focussing on influencing the changes required by stakeholders to achieve the success of Tonga Skills.
- Assistance from DFAT in influencing MET and TNQAB on some of these priorities may be appropriate from time to time.'
- (Refer section 3.3)*
- R5 THAT, with respect to the mix of Tongan-based staff, long-term advisers and short-term advisers, **Scope Global** and the **Tonga Skills Team Leader** clarify the lines of authority, accountability, responsibility and delegation of authority in such a way as to empower the Tonga-based staff in the absence of advisers.
- (Refer section 5.4)*
- R6 THAT should the new position of Operations Manager be approved, **Scope Global** consider the following guidelines for recruitment:
- require the successful candidate to either already have, or complete within six months of appointment, formal qualifications/certification in project management methodology, such as Prince2 or similar
  - review the position description of the Team Leader to ensure that there is a clear distinction between the strategic and operational focus in the two roles, that is, the strategic role of the Team Leader outlined in Recommendation R4 is clearly defined, and to identify whether the appointment of the Operations Manager has any impact on the work value of the Team Leader
  - initially advertise within Tonga and only widen applications if no successful applicant is identified
  - specifically make the position open to both genders and people with disabilities.
- (Refer section 5.4)*
- R7 THAT **Tonga Skills** give consideration to reviewing the membership of the Skills Sector Steering Committee with the aim of achieving a better balance between the public and private sector members and to potentially include other donors investing in skills-related programs in Tonga.
- (Refer section 6.1)*

- R8      THAT **Scope Global** further investigate what Tonga Skills can realistically contribute to the labour mobility potential for Tonga Skills clients (outside of seasonal work in Australia and New Zealand) to ensure that expectations raised with clients are likely to be met and, as appropriate, end of program outcomes are modified accordingly. This might entail seeking advice from DFAT Canberra and other labour mobility and migration experts.  
(Refer section 3.6)
- R9      THAT **Tonga Skills** consult with DFAT about the focus and purpose of the Development Partners' Network (DPN) and give consideration to confining its own role to convening a periodic Vocational Education and Training Forum with the skills sector.  
(Refer section 5.2 and 6.1)
- R10     THAT **Tonga Skills** develop, and agree with partners, protocols for co-branding covering advertisement; participant recruitment; trainer identification; training certification; and reporting.  
(Refer section 3.5)

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Tonga Skills

The Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth (S4IEG) Program, commonly referred to as *Tonga Skills*, is an Australian Government funded program to the Government of Tonga for the period of 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2021. It responds to the overarching problem in Tonga identified in the Program Design, namely: *‘lack of access to quality based and demand driven skills training, which inhibits employment and self-employment opportunities for all working age Tongans and impedes economic growth’*<sup>1</sup>. The total investment is AUD7.575 million over the course of five (5) years comprising two stages of three (3) and two (2) years respectively. This Mid Term Review (MTR), commissioned by DFAT and undertaken by independent consultants, addresses the first eighteen months of the first stage.

The investment into Tonga Skills is part of continuing support by the Australian Government for Tonga and its skills development plans since 2010. The Program builds on the lessons of two previous Australian Government investments. These were the Tonga Technical Vocational Educational and Training Support Program Phase 1 (TSP1), (AUD3.4 million, January 2010 - June 2014) and the Interim Skill Development Facility (ISDF), (AUD2 million, May 2014 - October 2016).

Looking to the future, the Australian Government’s Pacific policy, as most recently outlined in the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, states that Australia *‘will engage with the Pacific with greater intensity and ambition’*. The Policy recognises that:

*‘An increased focus on skills and education will be vital if the Pacific is to realise its economic potential. ... Our support for vocational education and training ... will have a sharper focus on preparing graduates for employment and community engagement.’*<sup>2</sup>

The investment in Tonga Skills should be viewed in this light.

The Program is also consistent with the policy of the Government of Tonga. It contributes to the achievement of the national impact sought within the vision for Tonga outlined in the Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDFI) 2015 – 2025: *‘A more progressive Tonga supporting higher quality of life for all’*<sup>3</sup>. TSDFI outlines various national and organisational outcomes that Tonga Skills can advance. For example, TSDFI seeks to achieve:

*‘... improved educational and training of both academic and vocational knowledge by all people, so better equipping (the public) to make better use of opportunities in the community, the domestic economy and overseas’*<sup>4</sup>.

Tonga Skill’s goal as described in the Program Design is *‘sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Tonga’*. To achieve this, the Program Design identified three End of Program Outcomes (EOPO):

- 1) A more coordinated, responsive, flexible and inclusive national skills development system
- 2) Participants improve livelihoods
- 3) MSME participants’ business growth.

<sup>1</sup> Program Design: Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth, March 2016, p. ii

<sup>2</sup> Australian Government Foreign Policy White Paper, p. 101

<sup>3</sup> Government of Tonga, Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDFI), May, 2015, p.17

<sup>4</sup> TSDFI, p. 19

The Design also included three Key Result Areas (KRAs) that are inter-related:

- KRA 1 – Strengthen Coordination and Planning
- KRA 2 – Targeted and Inclusive Skill Development
- KRA 3 – Strengthen Skills Supply.<sup>5</sup>

As outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Mid Term Review (MTR), the purpose of the MTR is:

*‘... to assess the progress of the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth program; identify gaps and analyse solutions for improvement; and identify strengths and weakness in program management to guide DFAT decisions about program management during the next phase of implementation’.* (Refer Annex B).

Four key areas of inquiry were developed to respond to this purpose:

- Progress and emerging effectiveness
- Gender equality and social inclusion
- Program management and efficiency
- Program relevance and feasibility.

The MTR Team acknowledges that the Program had only been in operation for eighteen (18) months at the time of the Review. It also notes that it had operated and delivered its outputs against some key challenges, such as the sudden dissolving of Parliament in August 2017 leading to a snap election on November 2017, and the formation of a new Government in January 2018. Further, the impact of the Cyclone Gita on Tongatapu and ‘Eua in February 2018 caused disruptions beyond the control of the Program.

## 1.2 Methodology Adopted for the Review

The MTR Team developed an Evaluation Plan which outlines the methodology for the Review in detail. (Refer Annex C). Central to this was the development of five key evaluation questions to address the four areas of inquiry as outlined in Box 1. These were designed to ensure the MTR directly addresses the stated purpose while ensuring appropriate consideration of quality criteria. A series of secondary questions was developed for each of these primary questions.

The MTR also utilised the following sources of information:

- Review of documents
- Analysis of data
- In country consultations.

**Review of Documents:** The MTR Team received and reviewed documentation made available prior to the in-country mission. These documents included plans and reports for Tonga Skills, as well the original design for the program and the completion report from the previous DFAT funded program (ISDF). During the in-country consultations, the MTR Team obtained extensive further documentation to inform its findings.

<sup>5</sup> The intention of the EOPOs and KRAs as outlined in the Design have been amended and applied in different but not always consistent ways in the course of implementation. This is referred to, as appropriate in the body of this Report.

**Box 1: Criteria and Evaluation Questions**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>EVALUATION QUESTIONS</b>
<i>Progress and emerging effectiveness</i>	1. Has satisfactory progress been made at the <u>output level</u> ? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are how can they be addressed?
<i>Progress and emerging effectiveness</i>	2. Are satisfactory results emerging at the <u>outcomes level</u> ? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outputs reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?
<i>Gender equality and social inclusion</i>	3. What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?
<i>Program management and efficiency</i>	4. Is the Program management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the Program team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the Program team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?
<i>Program relevance and feasibility</i>	5. Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET, TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?

**Analysis of Data:** A data collection format was developed as part of the Evaluation Plan. (Refer Attachment 1 of Annex C). This was completed by the Tonga Skills staff in the early stages of the in-country mission. However, extensive further information was also sought in the course of the mission as the MTR Team pursued its investigations. This included feedback forms and completion reports prepared for Tonga Skills by the training providers, which proved an important source of evidence for progress in the delivery of skills development activities (SDAs) at mid-term and emerging effectiveness. The MTR Team assessed and rated this crucial evidence (see Annex G).

**In-country Consultations:** The MTR Team conducted in-country consultations over a two week period (April 9 – 25, 2018). Meetings were scheduled and held with key stakeholders to the Program including:

- Government ministries
- Key non-government organisations
- Formal and non-formal training providers
- Selection of trainees
- The World Bank.

At the end of each day of consultations the MTR Team developed and recorded a set of strategic issues and questions arising out of the responses from stakeholders to follow up on during subsequent meetings. A full schedule of persons and organisations met is contained in Annex D.

An Aide Memoire was prepared for DFAT at the end of the in-country mission. This was also used for a concluding stakeholder briefing.

This Report presents the MTR Team's findings against the developed evaluation questions and areas of inquiry, utilising the qualitative and quantitative information gathered.

The MTR Team acknowledges that there is some overlap between the evaluation questions and therefore some inevitable repetition in the sections that follow.

A summary of recommendations is included above. Because they are grouped according to the responsibility for implementation, they are not necessarily in number sequence in the body of this Report.

### 1.3 Limitations of the Review

The MTR Team notes several limitations to the Review.

Only limited documentation was made available to the MTR Team prior to the in-country mission. This being the first review of Tonga Skills, the team was unprepared for the level of information needed for the MTR so that obtaining, and in some cases analysing the necessary information took longer than might otherwise have been the case. This was compounded by the fact that the Management Information System and the approach to Monitoring, Learning, Evaluation and Communication are still not fully developed, so that some of the information was rudimentary. The format for data collection prepared by the MTR Team as part of the Evaluation Plan posed difficulties for the Tonga Skills team. In particular base-lines and clear targets had not been established, making it difficult to judge progress. There was also insufficient analysis of data and detail on expenditure from which to make a preliminary assessment of value for money.

Due to the recent elections in Tonga, some of the key government representatives associated with Tonga Skills have now been changed or have not yet been appointed. This meant that in some cases, there was no alternative other than to consult with previous incumbents.

The MTR Team also experienced two examples of the practical difficulties of working in Tonga. Firstly, one working day was lost due to Cyclone Keni in Tongatapu. The scheduled interviews for that day had to be cancelled. All the meetings originally scheduled for this day (11<sup>th</sup> April) were with key Government Ministries. The Team was grateful for the opportunity to work around this through these Ministries making themselves available at other times, including on the following Saturday.

Secondly, the MTR Team also missed out on conducting its scheduled interviews in Vava'u due to bad weather. The travel to Vava'u was cancelled when the plane was unable to land after two days of on-going bad weather in Tonga. This was partly overcome by conducting one consultation at Ha'apai airport as part of the return flight. Later, the Team was able to establish connection with and carry out two teleconferences with a Tonga Skills trainer and Tonga Skills staff member in Vava'u, but this in no way replaced actually visiting Vava'u and significant time was lost while waiting in vain for a possible alternative flight.

Apart from the above disruptions to the planned schedule, the MTR Team considered that the range of stakeholders included in the consultations organised by Tonga Skills was comprehensive and representative.

## 2 Progress and Emerging Effectiveness – Outputs

*Evaluation Question 1: Has satisfactory progress been made at the output level? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are what is their impact and how can they be addressed?*

### 2.1 Program Delivery Context and Constraints

Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in the delivery of outputs underpinning the program, although this may not have been the finding in the third and possibly the fourth quarter of 2017. Progress has been achieved against a background of delays in contract signing; the need to repair some negative legacy relationships; the time taken to recruit staff (including the Team Leader); the need to relocate the main office in Nuku'alofa; the time taken for traditional providers to understand and respond to a new approach; cyclones and flooding (physical damage and redirection of training priorities); the disruption of an unexpected election and gaps due to changing government officials; and the slow progress in the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) due to limited resources and increased demand. The Program was also constrained by its own caution through much of 2017 in relation to moving forward with its core business – funding and facilitating Skills Development Activities (SDAs). The three sections that follow address the outputs relevant to each of the three components of the program (Key Result Areas 1, 2, and 3).

### 2.2 Outputs related to planning and coordination

Satisfactory progress has been made in the delivery of outputs supporting planning and coordination (KRA 1). Good relationships have been established with government and other stakeholders. Tonga Skills is perceived to be Tongan-driven, is working within existing structures and has put in place a systematic process for the identification of demand and priorities. Tonga Skills is influencing TNQAB and Ministry of Education and Training (MET) policy and planning by modelling a more demand-driven, inclusive, flexible approach to skills development, and by championing the role of non-formal training providers and their aspirations e.g. for registration and accreditation of short courses.

The original Program Design included the output: *'Skills coordination structures are established/supported at national and divisional levels'*. This is expressed in more detail in the 2017 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Communication (MELC) Plan as EOPO 1 *'Divisional planning bodies identify priority economic demand and associated skill development requirements'* and EOPO 2 *'MET and TNQAB coordinate a skills development system that matches demand and is inclusive, flexible and quality assured'*.

At the national level, Tonga Skills reports several relevant outputs including holding monthly meetings between the Tonga Skills Team Leader and the TNQAB/MET counterpart where the TNQAB Action Plan is referenced and updated. This is where the Tonga Skills Team Leader needs to influence policy and planning, together with a leadership role in the National Skills Sector Steering Committee (SCCC). While MET is responsible for the overall coordination of vocational and educational training, it lacks a fully functioning training division. Change cannot be driven solely from within TNQAB.

Significant outputs realised at the divisional level include engaging with operational divisional planning bodies for each island group (excluding Niua) and agreeing skills development plans reflecting individual island group contexts to guide the identification of economic opportunities and skills gaps. These planning bodies include the Outer Island Development Committees for Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua and a body established by Tonga Skills for Tongatapu. The planning process is reported to have included government, industry, business and community input, which is reasonably apparent from the Skills Development Plans (SDPs) that were validated. National level priorities are reflected in all four SDPs, which include tourism, handicraft manufacturing, construction and agriculture (including forestry and fisheries). An updated version of the SDPs awaits validation, which

the change of government and government officials has rendered problematic. Looking ahead, re-engaging productively with the divisional planning bodies is critical because they are the primary means by which Tonga Skills seeks to maintain relevance and legitimacy and periodically update skills development needs and priorities.

Tonga Skills has also established Skills Development Fund (SDF) Committees in each of the four island groups with senior government representation. These committees are responsible for facilitating the preparation and processing of Skills Requests from industry/ productive sector stakeholders, and Skills Development Delivery Proposals submitted by training providers. These are clearly critical. A Chair of one SDF committee advised that MTR Team that the guidelines were working to ensure most proposals could be approved. Otherwise, the MTR Team had limited opportunity to test how well the SDF Committees are operating at present.

The bottom-up planning process adopted in 2017 was appropriate for engagement purposes but resulted in SDPs which require more finite prioritisation for selecting Skills Development Activities (SDAs) for funding through the SDF. To address this, Tonga Skills conducted follow-up consultations with industry and Government Ministries in November 2017, which yielded more specificity for priority skill sets<sup>6</sup>. Tonga Skills then played a more active role in SDA selection in 2018, which is evident from the internal planning matrix 'Action Plan and Summary Skills needs January-June 2018'. This change in approach (more top down) was also driven by a need, encouraged by DFAT, 'to deliver more training and spend more of the SDF'<sup>7</sup>. That is, there was a need accelerate training output (see following section).

### 2.3 Outputs related to strengthening skills development capacity and quality

Satisfactory progress has also been made in the delivery of outputs related to strengthening skills development capacity and quality (KRA 2<sup>8</sup> and EOPO 3). Tonga Skills, acting as a training broker, has accessed a reasonable range of trainers and training providers, public and private, committed to the flexibility of training. Tonga Skills has also made efforts to improve the quality of training delivery in Tonga, including for example supporting the development of national qualifications, streamlining the process for accrediting short courses, and funding the delivery of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE) through APTC for 20 trainees.

**Training providers and the SDF:** One of the aims of the SDF is to '*strengthen the capacity of local training providers in the development and delivery of their services*'<sup>9</sup>. To date, seventeen (17) trainers and training providers have been engaged through the SDF. Capacity strengthening is being undertaken to some extent and for some providers by advice given through the application process. Some assistance is also given in the delivery of SDAs, although this should not be overstated. Two of

<sup>6</sup> **Agriculture, fisheries:** Advanced business; Basic business (fishing & aquaculture); Basic Financial management; Entrepreneurship (dev new business); Exporting; Fishing & aquaculture. **Construction:** CAD skills; Carpentry; Financial records/book-keeping; IT skills – basic; Painting and plastering; Plumbing; Proposals/tendering/bidding/costings; Reading/interpreting plans; Staff management; Tiling; Work planning and estimation. **Handicraft:** Basic business skills; Sewing and tailoring; Tapa; Weaving; Wood carving/Bone & Pearl. **Tourism:** Basic/Medium cookery; Food safety/food handling; Hospitality - Front of house; Housekeeping and hospitality service; Tour Guiding; Whale watch guiding.

<sup>7</sup> Tonga Skills entry in MTR data capture matrix ('Logframe version 3')

<sup>8</sup> In the original design 5 significant outputs were specified for KRA 2 but these are not well reflected in the 2017 MELC Plan: 1. Tongan providers strengthened in areas of skills demand where required. 2. Partnerships with APTC and other international providers support Tongan providers as required. 3. TNQAB systems and processes strengthened to support more flexible, demand-driven skills training. 4. Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) contributes to MET/TNQAB policy and planning. 5. The Program modeling and learning contributes to national TVET policy and institutional reform.

<sup>9</sup> SDF Guidelines p 7



the most significant providers, Tonga Business Enterprises Centre (TBEC) and Tonga Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (TYEE), report delivering training much as they did previously, that is, with little or no value add from Tonga Skills.

Tonga Skills has relied considerably on TBEC (up to 40% of all training) which, judging by completion reports, performs relatively well. TBEC was previously funded by New Zealand but, with the cessation of funding in 2017, TBEC is struggling financially. This presents some risk to Tonga Skills.

Training provider capacity to deliver inclusive training is being strengthened. The Tonga Skills disability inclusion advisor has delivered training in inclusive skills delivery for 21 trainers from 12 training providers. Where there is sufficient lead-time, Tonga Skills reports engaging the Disability Taskforce to provide advice to training providers on how Tonga Skills and the training provider can support specific disability needs.

**TNQAB:** Substantial efforts have been made to support TNQAB's efforts to influence skills development capacity and quality. Outputs include helping TNQAB to update its register of training providers by sending 23 additional training providers for consideration and inclusion; and funding a technical adviser<sup>10</sup> to review TNQAB's existing training provider registration and course accreditation processes (Nov 2017 – Feb 2018). The latter has informed changes to policy and processes that are awaiting final endorsement by the Board. Once endorsed, these changes will make it easier for training provider registration and course accreditation (four training providers are ready to apply once the changes are endorsed). It will also support the development of national qualifications. The technical adviser returns in May/June 2018 to assist TNQAB to implement the new processes and communicate these to training providers.

A Tongan TVET consultant<sup>11</sup> with strong Tourism expertise and associated with the Auckland Institute of Studies was contracted in 2017 to develop seven tourism related national qualifications. The 'master sheets' used internally to report the progress of activities seem to indicate some slippage with the first module but Tonga Skills maintains that development is on track to be completed by July 2018 ready for TNQAB review and approval.

Overall progress with national qualifications is slower than anticipated. A Tonga Skills/TNQAB Action Plan developed in May 2017 and sighted by the MTR Team included plans for national qualifications in Electrical, Carpentry and Horticulture. The planned outputs were well behind schedule at the time of the in-country mission.

## 2.4 Outputs related to delivering targeted, inclusive and effective SDAs<sup>12</sup>

Satisfactory progress has also been made with outputs supporting the delivery of targeted, inclusive and effective SDAs (KRA 3). Considerable evidence exists for progress in SDA delivery, although emerging results have not yet been adequately analysed to inform decision-making and communication. At mid-term SDAs appear to be limited to 'trainings' (as they are described) with coaching and mentoring yet to be added. Tonga Skills has made a good start in gender equity and social inclusion in both mainstreaming and specific initiatives, breaking new ground in disability inclusion and promoting the inclusion of people from outer and their outlying islands more than has been the case in the past.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Sherwin

<sup>11</sup> Dr Semisi Taumoepeau

<sup>12</sup> In the original Program Design the most fundamental supporting outputs for KRA 3 were that participants complete relevant, good quality skill development activities and that MSME clients receive targeted coaching and mentoring. This was overlaid with outputs related to the flexibility, accessibility and gender and social inclusion of the training and mentoring. These qualities are now reflected as indicators in the 2017 MELC Plan and Results Framework.

Tonga Skills tends to target those who already have some skills or a nascent business, although there are numerous exceptions. Upskilling is presumably more likely to result in economic growth than imparting new skills. In line with its Inclusion Strategy, Tonga Skills has enacted reasonable accommodations to be inclusive e.g. to include a satisfactory proportion of persons identifying as having a disability. There may also be situations where there is a dearth of priority skills and it is necessary to begin by introducing them e.g. Plumbing in the Outer Islands. The training strategy recommended by the MTR should state to what degree Tonga Skills will focus on upskilling and how this is reconciled with other imperatives. (*Refer Recommendation R2*).

**Scope of training:** In terms of numbers to end March 2018, Box 2 shows that the number of SDAs was 37 and training throughput (with some overlap of individuals attending more than one SDA) was 1,043 persons. (However, as discussed below, the Cyclone Gita response distorts this number.) Indicative targets do not appear to have been set for this period, making it difficult to determine if this represents satisfactory progress. The MTR Team understands that the number of suitable applications to the SDF have been less than hoped and that the SDF budget is underspent, together suggesting a shortfall in anticipated SDAs and training throughput. Nevertheless, Tonga Skills has to be given credit for substantially scaling up training after a relatively slow and tentative start in 2017. The MTR Team acknowledges that much effort goes into realising each SDA and considers that progress is satisfactory to date.

**Box 2: SDF funded training activities and participants by sector, gender and island group**

Sector	SDAs	Trainees	% by sector	Male	Female	TT	EU	VV	HP
Agriculture, Fisheries	4	125	12.0	39	86	25	0	100	0
Cyclone Gita response	3	464	44.5	238	226	267	197	0	0
Generic	13	205	19.7	75	128	108	55	12	30
Tourism	9	131	12.6	62	69	56	3	47	25
Handicraft	7	84	8.1	39	45	58	0	26	0
Construction	1	34	3.3	33	1	0	0	34	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>55</b>

The Cyclone Gita response (funding to MAFFF for extension training events) falls under the Agriculture and Fisheries sector but has been presented separately. Although it represented only three of the 37 SDAs for the period, it constitutes nearly 45% of the training throughput, which distorts the data very considerably. (Large numbers attended the three MAFFF extension events which is uncharacteristic of other SDAs). Annex E provides more details on the scope of training delivery.

**Relevance of training:** In terms of progress aligning SDAs with demand (excluding the Cyclone Gita response), the 'spread' of SDAs and participants across sectors to end March 2018 appears roughly appropriate with the exception of Construction. Only one SDA was undertaken in this sector, in Plumbing. This reflects gaps in establishing training partnerships necessary to pursue some high priorities including Construction. The development of national qualifications and new provider partnerships may partly assist with this but the availability of equipment may well be an issue.

A Tonga Skills spreadsheet compares estimated demand for people to be trained in each skillset in each island group with SDA delivery. While tracking this is important, the data presented for the demand met by the SDAs is superficial at this stage. For example, for Plumbing the demand for people to be trained is 90 including 20 in Vava'u. One SDA was held in Vava'u for 34 participants. This is recorded as having satisfied 170% of demand in Vava'u (and 38% of demand overall). The SDA in Vava'u did not in fact satisfy the need for plumbing skills development in Vava'u.

In terms of relevance to the participants, all applicants are screened by training providers who/which are required to complete an Expression of Interest form. The MTR Team has not been able to ascertain how effective this is or how effectively it is applied. Immediately after training the provider is also required to request participants to complete an individual feedback form which amongst other things addresses the relevance and quality of the training. An MTR Team member read all the feedback forms available and judged that, by and large, participants seem to regard the training to have been relevant and of satisfactory or better quality. The MTR Team has not been able to test the reliability of the feedback forms but has some concerns including that they are in English not Tongan; that they are long; and that participants are required to complete them before leaving the training venue. Further commentary on this issue is included in Section 5. Judging by provider completion reports, participant completion rates are very high. The MTR Team did not sight data on coaching or mentoring.

**Effectiveness of SDAs:** This is very difficult to judge because tracer studies are yet to be undertaken. Participant feedback at the conclusion of skills training has generally been positive, indicating if nothing else a desire for skills training.

**Gender and disability:** Progress in relation to gender and disability inclusion is satisfactory overall. As at March 2018, 53% of all trainees were women, exceeding the 50% target (see Box 2 above). Tonga Skills also reports that 45% (10/22) of trainers involved in the delivery of SDAs were women. This is discussed in further detail in section 4.

SDA participants included 35 persons identifying as having a disability.<sup>13</sup> This represents 3.4% of the total. It includes some persons with a disability attending multiple trainings, having had little opportunity for training in the past. The target of 10% has not been reached but Tonga Skills deems the target unrealistic and intends to revise it. There is no Tonga-wide baseline data. Tonga Skills also reports that 49% (18/37) SDAs contained people identifying as having a disability. Again, this includes multiple attendances.

**Geographic inclusion:** Progress is also satisfactory in relation to geographic inclusion. The proportion of participants in training conducted beyond the main Tongatapu island group was 51% to end March 2018, exceeding the target of 50%. However, 'Eua is quite close to Tongatapu and not so remote and the proportion of participants beyond Tongatapu and 'Eua was only 26% to end March 2018. On the other hand, the Cyclone Gita response skews this data and excluding this the proportion of participants beyond Tongatapu and 'Eua was 47%. Tonga Skills intends to spend 50% of SDF outside Tongatapu but the MTR Team still awaits data on SDF expenditure.

### 3 Progress and Emerging Effectiveness – Outcomes

*Evaluation Question 2: Are satisfactory results emerging at the outcomes level? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outputs reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?*

#### 3.1 Overview

As already indicated, there have been several shifts in the approach to identifying the outcomes for Tonga Skills since the original Program Design of March 2016, leading to a lack of clarity in the monitoring and evaluation process. The Design contained both intermediate outcomes and end of program outcomes (EOPOs), six and three respectively.

<sup>13</sup> The MTR Team was advised that Tonga Skills has adopted the census questions on disability endorsed by the Washington Group, a United Nations Statistics Commission City Group. Positive responses to these questions may result in more persons identifying as having a disability than expected <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Washington-Group-Short-Set-of-Questions-on-Disability.pdf>

The Monitoring, Learning, Evaluation and Communication (MELC) Plan, June 2017 identifies seven EOPOs which it states are *'an adaptation of the end of program outcomes and intermediate outcomes contained in the program design document'*<sup>14</sup>. The Six-Monthly Progress Report, January 2018, reverts to the three EOPOs contained in the Program Design but reports against the KRAs. (Refer to further details in section 5.1.)

The MTR Team adopted the EOPOs contained in the MELC Plan for the purposes of assessing progress at the outcomes level.

### 3.2 EOPO1: Divisional planning bodies identify priority economic demand and associated skill development requirements

The MTR Team sighted documents that show solid progress on this EOPO to date. Utilising the approach of working within the existing Tongan government structures, Tonga Skills has produced Skills Development Plans (SDP) for the four island groups of 'Eua, Ha'apai and Vava'u and Tongatapu in conjunction with the relevant Island Development Committees (IDC). These Committees draw on 136 community development plans being developed at local level, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). The Plans also draw on desk research utilising key government documents. The Plans explain the development process, which includes consulting with key stakeholders of each island groups, including the community, District and Town officers, non- government organisations, businesses and individuals from the key industry sectors.

The Skills Development Plans are also intended as a tool for the Island Development Committees to prioritise, plan and coordinate skills development investments across the island group and as a guide for planning and developing training programs that respond to economic growth opportunities, whether these programs are offered by Tonga Skills or other donors such as the World Bank.

Tonga Skills has worked to ensure the Plans have already been updated but final endorsement has been delayed by some changes in government officials and other uncertainties following the recent election.

A degree of similarity between the Plans can in part be explained by the lack of reliable labour market data and the fact that they are still in the early stages of development.

### 3.3 EOPO2: MET and TNQAB coordinate a skills development system that matches demand and is inclusive, flexible and quality assured

Like some other EOPOs this outcome is not entirely within the control of Tonga Skills and requires ongoing influence and advocacy by the Tonga Skills Team Leader.

In accordance with the Education Act 2013, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) is primarily responsible for the administration of primary and secondary education (persons from age 4 – 18) and for oversight of higher education. Section 117 of the Act spells out the Ministry's responsibility in relation to TVET which focuses on TVET at secondary school level with some reference to facilitating pathways beyond school. Section 118 of the Act requires the Ministry to cooperate with the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) to *'ensure that there is a seamless transition from secondary school vocational training to post-basic vocational training for students who intend to pursue formal vocational qualifications in Tonga or abroad.'*

<sup>14</sup> MELC Plan, June 2017, p. 10

Against this background, despite the title Ministry of Education and Training (MET), the training component is limited, as are dedicated resources within the Ministry to address this outcome<sup>15</sup>. During the consultations, stakeholders referred to the fact that there is no clear legislative framework for post-school TVET in the form of either a Training Act (or similar) or a national TVET policy. The Investment Design Document for Tonga Skills notes that a TVET Policy was developed in 2013 under the first Tonga TVET Support Program (TSP1) but never ratified by Government. Further investigation by the MTR Team revealed that it had in fact been ratified as the *National TVET Policy Framework 2013-17*. However, since stakeholders appeared to be unaware of any policy, it is likely that it has not been enacted. In any event, the Policy has already expired. (Refer Recommendation R4).

As specified in the Program Design, the TNQAB is the counterpart organisation and its performance is therefore critical. Like MET, TNQAB's resources are limited. The Chief Executive Officer position has been an acting appointment for some years and staff lack the TVET experience required to drive change. While TNQAB operates in accordance with the *TNQAB Act 2004* and *Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Regulations 2010*, these documents emphasise the importance of quality assurance and regulatory processes, but they do not specifically promote inclusiveness or flexibility. There is a history of TNQAB having blocked the accreditation of national qualifications in Horticulture and Food Safety without any clear explanation for the reasons why, giving it a reputation for playing a policing rather than an enabling role. It was also noticeable during the consultations that several stakeholders commented on the difficulties they had experienced in dealing with TNQAB, using language such as 'onerous requirements', 'time-consuming processes', 'slowness to respond', 'no TVET experience', 'not flexible' and the like. Only one provider was overtly positive. In the absence of other changes, achieving this outcome is therefore likely to be highly reliant on Tonga Skills' capacity to influence the Ministry and the Board.

In the case of TNQAB, there are some signs of this happening with Tonga Skills supporting the following initiatives:

- the development of seven national qualifications in Tourism in close cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and due for completion mid-year
- processes to allow for the registration of community and non-formal education providers and courses in one process
- guidelines for the approval and accreditation of short courses<sup>16</sup>.

However, further work will be required to make TNQAB more responsive. One obvious possibility is for the Team Leader to engage with the Government of Tonga to ensure a permanent CEO is appointed with strong leadership and TVET experience and that sufficient TVET experience exists within the staff. Another possibility is for the Team Leader to engage with the Government of Tonga and TNQAB to encourage consideration being given to reviewing and amending the 2004 Act and the 2010 Regulations with a view to incorporating a national policy for TVET that leads to a demand-driven, inclusive and flexible system. Now that there are processes for all providers to be registered, the opportunity might also be taken to ensure that TNQAB has the power to prevent a provider that is not registered from continuing to operate as well as to make any other changes required to update the Act and Regulations. If necessary, the Team Leader might seek assistance from DFAT in advocating for these changes. (Refer Recommendation R4).

<sup>15</sup> The Program Design: Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth, March 2016, noted that 'In terms of budget, allocations for TVET equate to a relatively small proportion of total government expenditure, ranging between 0.5 and 0.6 per cent. At the Ministry level, funding for TVET accounts for approximately 2.5 to 4 per cent of the MET budget.' p.28

<sup>16</sup> *Guidelines and Application Forms for Recognition of Community Education in Tonga and a Policy and Guidelines for Approval of Short Courses, 2018* – recently approved.

It should be noted that while these recommendations were developed independently by the MTR Team, similar comments and suggestions to those above are made in the Investment Design Document for Tonga Skills as being foundational for the advancement of the TVET system in Tonga.<sup>17</sup> This further emphasises the need for action.

### 3.4 EOPO3: Tongan providers are able to deliver inclusive, flexible, demand driven and quality assured skills development

As a training broker, Tonga Skills is not in a position to model the characteristics relevant to this outcome. Its role is to influence the training providers to do so. In the consultations with both public and private providers in the formal sector and a range of providers in the non-formal sector, the MTR Team noted some progress in this regard. The following examples can be cited:

- The Skills Development Fund (SDF) is available for providers to submit training proposals to Tonga Skills. The SDF Guidelines specifically state the intention to *‘incentivize local training providers to deliver skills development that is demand-driven, quality-assured, flexible and inclusive’*. In completing application forms, providers must include information that demonstrates they have conducted some research into the demand for the training, that it will be consistent with Skills Development Plans and that it will be inclusive. The MTR Team was advised that formal providers have taken some time to submit proposals and that there is scope for more, but the expectation of an inclusive, flexible, demand-driven and quality assured approach has been set.
- In conjunction with the Australia Pacific Technical College (APTC), Tonga Skills has offered the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, the minimum qualification for teaching in TVET in Australia, with another group soon to be conducted. The importance and usefulness of this training was mentioned frequently with requests for more. Participation in the course was reported to have assisted in the delivery of competency based training and assessment methodology. Core units in the qualification address inclusiveness, flexibility and quality. It is possible that APTC might also offer more TAE training in its own right and this should be pursued.<sup>18</sup> Further, in partnership with an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO), Tonga Skills could consider offering the recently approved International Training and Assessment Courses (ITAC)<sup>19</sup> specifically designed for international settings.
- Although the processes for becoming registered as a community or non-formal education provider are relatively new, there was some evidence in the consultations that the potential to become registered was attractive and that, over time, there is likely to be take-up of the application process, provided that the TNQAB is responsive and the requirements do not prove to be onerous.

### 3.5 EOPO4: Clients complete skills development activities, and there is equity in access and take up of these opportunities

Reference to Annex E shows that, quantitatively, Tonga Skills has made considerable progress in facilitating this outcome in a relatively short time.

In general terms:

- Several hundred individuals have participated in skill development activities. The exact number is unclear because there are some multiple enrolments as clients build on skills acquired earlier.
- 31 skills sets have been offered through 37 training sessions, commonly referred to as ‘trainings’

<sup>17</sup> Program Design: Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth, March 2016, p. 41

<sup>18</sup> The APTC Annual Report and Plan 2016-17 states that since 2007, 100 Tongans (46 female and 54 male) had graduated from the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, 14 subsidised by DFAT and the other 86 non-subsidised.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/internationalskillstraining>



- 17 different providers are involved, although there has been considerable reliance on the Department of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), utilising its existing extension service, and the training arm of the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), the Tonga Business Enterprise Centre (TBEC), which had developed a suite of 92 courses under previous funding from New Zealand.
- Although Construction is a priority industry sector, only one training has been offered, consisting of 34 participants in Plumbing (3.3% of the total training throughput) in the northern island group Vava'u. In contrast, 12% of participants have been in the Agriculture sector with a further 44.5% trained in food security in response to Cyclone Gita. Arguably training in Construction might also have been relevant post Cyclone Gita.
- Nearly 20% of participants have been trained in generic or cross-cutting skills, particularly those related to business.

Solid progress has been made with respect to equity and access and Tonga Skills' stated aim of addressing the needs of women, people with disabilities and people from the Outer Islands of 'Eua, Ha'apai and Vava'u:

- Women represent 53% of the participants
- People identifying with having a disability represent 3.4%, although again there are multiple enrolments in this group
- 51% of participants come from beyond the main island of Tongatapu i.e. from 'Eua, Ha'apai and Vava'u. 26% come from Ha'apai and Vava'u alone and 37% of the SDAs were conducted in these two island groups.

In its relatively short time of operation, and as a result of concerted effort, Tonga Skills has done well with respect to training people in the Outer Islands. The two previous Australian programs - the Tonga TVET Support Program (TSP 1) and the Interim Skills Development Facility (ISDF) - were concentrated in Tongatapu. Tonga Skills' achievement can also be compared with that of the Tonga Business Enterprise Centre (TBEC) program operating out of the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) and funded by the New Zealand Government. The completion report for that program shows that, between 2011 and 2016, 32% of training deliveries were conducted outside of Tongatapu and 25% outside of Tongatapu and 'Eua<sup>20</sup>.

The above overview of training offered shows some good progress. However, as also referred to elsewhere, some further commentary is warranted:

**Lack of base-line information:** As noted above, Tonga Skills follows the two previous DFAT-funded skills programs in Tonga, TSP1 and ISDF, and the New Zealand Government funded TBEC Program (2011-16). During the course of TSP1 a Labour Market Study was conducted to identify the demand for training in Tonga<sup>21</sup>. Given this background, the MTR Team questioned why Tonga Skills had not identified base-line data for the key elements of its training. For example, the fact that the TBEC Program reported that 60% of its participants in training were female<sup>22</sup> sheds a different light on the Tonga Skills achievement of 53%. The TBEC Program also included base-line information that might have been used as a starting point and the ISDF completion report contained data that could also have provided guidance in this regard.

**Need for a unique student code:** The MTR Team was concerned that there are difficulties in establishing exactly how many clients have benefited from Tonga Skills training and noted that this will be exacerbated as the program continues unless it is addressed. One way to achieve this would

<sup>20</sup> TBEC Activity Completion report, 2017, p. 5

<sup>21</sup> Curtain, R, 2012, The Tonga and Regional Labour Market Review 2012: A study to identify the demand for skills training in Tonga

[http://repository.usp.ac.fj/5630/1/Final\\_edited\\_CurtainTonga\\_Skills\\_Review\\_05\\_Mar13.pdf](http://repository.usp.ac.fj/5630/1/Final_edited_CurtainTonga_Skills_Review_05_Mar13.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> TBEC Activity Completion Report, 2017, p. 11

have been to introduce a unique student code or identifier in the Management Information System at the outset. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

**Over-reliance on some training providers:** The MTR Team notes particular reliance on two providers, namely, MAFFF and TBEC, for the delivery of Tonga Skills Training. MAFFF reported that Tonga Skills funding enabled it to approximately double the amount of agricultural training otherwise offered through its extension service, with much of the training offered in response to Cyclone Gita. This gives rise to several risks including whether Tonga Skills can accurately assess the need for agricultural training; the extent to which the need for training might be saturated; and whether Tonga Skills funding might lead to cost-shifting within MAFFF. TBEC reported that following the conclusion of New Zealand funding, TCCI had become reliant on funds generated by TBEC for its existence, that is, the training arm of TCCI is supporting the Chamber itself. Since TBEC in turn, is heavily reliant on Tonga Skills, this makes both organisations vulnerable. In the case of both MAFFF and TBEC there is a risk of training being offered simply because training content and trainers are readily available. (*Refer Recommendation R2*).

**Imbalance of training across industry sectors:** The low level of training in Construction might in part be explained by the greater reliance on formal sector providers to deliver training in this industry sector and the demands of providing appropriate facilities and equipment. Formal providers report that they are already struggling in this regard and with the pressures of their existing students. These issues will need to be addressed if Construction is to be a priority training sector in reality. One way of achieving this is to amend the Skills Development Fund Guidelines to ensure there is a reasonable distribution of training across the sectors. (*Refer Recommendation R3*).

**Need for a Training Strategy:** Now that Tonga Skills has been established, the points noted above and elsewhere in this Report highlight an emerging need to address the future training strategy for Tonga Skills and the impact this might have on its role as a broker. The Program Design envisaged that Tonga Skills would operate fully within the policies and regulations of the TNQAB and the SDF would only be available for the delivery of accredited courses (or skill sets) by registered training providers and for the provision of MSME coaching/mentoring support services.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps optimistically, the Design also sets as targets that 100% of accredited skills training funded by Tonga Skills would use nationally accredited competency standards and that at least five national qualifications would be developed by TNQAB per year<sup>24</sup>. There is still much to be achieved before TNQAB is able to deliver this level of result. Current unevenness in training across the priority industry sectors points to the need to project shifts in brokered training, including by industry sector and generic/cross-cutting training. This could also include likely shifts in demand for training as Tonga Skills progressively addresses high priority areas. Over-reliance on some training providers suggests a need to more closely manage the range and level of providers, including the balance between the formal and non-formal training sectors. (*Refer Recommendation R3*). The introduction of a unique student code would facilitate a more formalised approach to building training pathways for clients for inclusion in the strategy.

**Branding:** Tonga Skills has already developed a strong brand and has used this effectively in its marketing materials. However, it was clear in the consultations that, where there is training delivery, the issue of co-branding should be considered. Examples supporting this are as follows:

- Formal providers expressed the view that their contribution to the training was not sufficiently recognised in Tonga Skills' marketing materials
- One employer was confused when a trainer handed over his personal business card in the course of promoting Tonga Skills. This left questions in the employer's mind about the legitimacy of the trainer's approach.

<sup>23</sup> Program Design: Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth, March 2016, p. i

<sup>24</sup> Program Design, p.61



- Some of the completion reports for Tonga Skills have the branding of the training provider, not always referencing Tonga Skills.

Clear protocols for co-branding would resolve these issues. (Refer Recommendation R10).

### 3.6 EOPO5: Clients have improved employability in national and overseas markets

In the context of Tonga, employability includes both becoming employed and self-employment and must be seen in light of overall limited opportunities for employment. Eighteen months into the Tonga Skills program it is difficult to identify any conclusive evidence of progress, especially in relation to employability in overseas markets. Training is short term and does not offer a full qualification making improved employability limited. Longer term, however, these short term training programs, if accredited and extended, could build towards an accredited course/qualification.

Feedback forms completed by participants in the training and completion reports prepared by the relevant training provider are currently the main source of evidence of progress and some of these were incomplete or sketchy (refer Annex G). However, the following examples suggest that some clients anticipate improved employability in national markets:

The completion report for Tour Guiding (SDF019 and 028) conducted by TBEC states:

*Most of the participants were tertiary students. They saw this opportunity as a way to earn money, not only while at school but a sure extra income for their family, twelve times a year when the cruise ships come to the shore of Vava'u. They also anticipate an increase of income from the tourists that arrive at Vava'u on their own personal trips and not part of a cruise.*

The completion report for Plumbing (SDF016 and 024) conducted by an individual trainer in Vava'u states:

*One of the positive attitudes demonstrated by the trainees from one village is that they started talking about setting up a small commercial unit to make themselves known to the community that they could help doing basic plumbing and repair work in their own area. The parents of these trainees are supporting the idea because this is an opportunity for employment.*

These examples are tentative and tracer studies would be required to determine if improvement is realised. Ideally, follow-up would also occur with employers to ascertain whether productivity had improved on the job, but this has not occurred to date.

Employment in overseas markets raises a different set of issues. It cannot be assumed that this is always regarded favourably. Comments during the stakeholder consultation included concerns about the danger of 'brain drain'. Doubts about the feasibility of Tonga Skills being able to facilitate labour mobility were also expressed.

The Australian Government's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper states:

*We are establishing a Pacific Labour Facility to connect workers, employers and training institutions, provide financial education for workers, and monitor the impact of labour mobility programs both in Australia and in Pacific economies. We will continue to work with the Australia Pacific Technical College to ensure that it and other Pacific training institutions provide the skills and qualifications needed by workers.<sup>25</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> Australian Government 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, p. 101. Tonga, along with Australia, New Zealand and nine other Pacific Island Forum Countries is also a signatory to the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus and a side *Agreement on Labour Mobility* for low skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Tongans already have opportunities for seasonal work in Australia<sup>26</sup> and New Zealand without training from Tonga Skills, but at this stage raising expectations of improved employability in international markets outside of seasonal work might be seen as imprudent. It will take time for short term training to be accredited and for training pathways to be established. The development of national qualifications that are recognised internationally and by international employers is still at a very early stage with only Tourism qualifications making any real progress. The Pacific Labour Facility is still to be fully established and it will initially focus on Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu.

The MTR Team therefore has some reservations about the likelihood of a significant number of Tongans benefiting from improved employability in international markets as a result of training brokered by Tonga Skills in the short to medium term. The Team suggests that this be further investigated to ensure that expectations raised with clients can realistically be met. (*Refer Recommendation R8*). Implementation of changes along the lines suggested in Annex 7 would also assist with this.

### 3.7 EOPO6: Clients have improved livelihoods and income

Given the nature of Tonga Skills training, it is possible to cite some evidence of improved livelihoods and income, particularly for subsistence level clients.

The completion report for Seed Saving (SDA56) states that:

- *95 per cent of attendees noted they could save seed for fruit and vegetable production.*
- *Saving money was possible by not needing to buy fruit and vegetables at a high price at the market.*
- *Increased small remote island food security and a greater ability to recover from natural disasters are all positive results for the Tongan economy* (edited).

The completion report for Sewing Finishing and Design (SDF017) conducted by an individual trainer states:

*Trainees have reported that one or two have sold some of the sewing to the locals and the tourists. One trainee is an unemployed person and is now fulfilling her dream of utilising the skills from the training. She reported that money collected went to school expenses for her children at the secondary schools. Amazingly, she has been struggling with going to the sea for seafood to sell it at the market. Since she has the skills, she changed her whole lifestyle and is now confident that she would sew more and expect more money to put bread on the table* (edited).

Again, tracer studies will be required before evidence of improved livelihoods is conclusive. The MTR Team also notes that individual feedback forms were in English, presenting real challenges for people with limited education and perhaps also affecting the strength of the evidence of benefit. Tonga Skills staff explained that there have been difficulties in translating the forms into Tongan and ways of addressing this were discussed. The issue requires attention.

### 3.8 EOPO7: Micro, small and medium businesses (MSMEs) are established or improved

As with EOPO 5 and 6, progress on this outcome is very difficult to assess at this early stage and evidence from the feedback forms and completion reports is limited.

The completion report for Marketing and Social Media (SDF072) conducted by a TBEC trainer states:

<sup>26</sup> *'For every six month placement (in seasonal work), workers on average send home \$5,000. In Tonga, the largest provider of seasonal workers in 2016–2017, this equated to over \$13 million that year—almost half of the value of Australia's annual development cooperation program to Tonga'.* Australian Government 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, p. 102.

*One of the trainees was a business owner. She had a hair salon business at the Market at Ha'apai, but the market has been closed down for rebuilding after Cyclone Ian. The course encouraged her not to wait for the market to be completed and to re-market her business by going back for a home visit to her regular customers and advising them that she can now bring her service now to the comfort of their own home, or they can come to her house. This she said she can do and she can see that she will earn straight away as she has been missing receiving a daily income (edited).*

The completion report for Upskilling Training for Wood Carving (SDF093) states:

*One participant is a seasonal worker at the whale-watching in Vava'u and one of the reasons why he joined the training was because after the whale watching season he has nothing to do to earn some income. After attending this training he said this would help to stabilize his family's income when the whale watching season is over for he can now do wood carving while staying at home with his family after whale watching season. He managed to finish a Kava bowl of about 20 litres. If he sells this product it will give him \$700.00 (edited).*

Follow up of these and other participants through tracer studies will be required if evidence of increases in the number and performance of MSMEs is to be substantial.

## 4 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

*Evaluation Question 3: What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. of women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?*

### 4.1 Inclusiveness in Coordination and Planning

As outlined in Tonga Skills' Inclusion Strategy<sup>27</sup>, the Program has adopted a twin track approach to gender equality and social inclusion. This entails both ensuring inclusiveness is 'mainstreamed', that is, integrated into all activities, and implementing specific interventions to address barriers to inclusiveness. The many examples of putting this into practice demonstrate good evidence of the Program progressing towards being fully inclusive.

Tonga Skills has effectively coordinated its Skills Development Plans through utilising fully the existing structures of the Government, namely the Outer Island Development Committees for Vava'u, Ha'apai and 'Eua. It has ensured that the Skills Development Plans align with the overall Outer Island Development Plans for each outer island group, which were drawn from about 136 community development plans. At this stage, the Program focusses only on Tongatapu, 'Eua, Ha'apai and Vava'u. Outreach to the most remote outer islands of Tonga, the Niuas, may be considered in Stage 2.

The National Disability Taskforce draws together key stakeholders to work towards strengthening service providers for disabled persons in Tonga. The Taskforce is administered by the Social and Disability Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Tonga Skills has assisted the Disability Taskforce at the operational level by providing funding for some of the monthly meetings as well as facilitating the meeting from time to time. The Program uses this platform to share information with other key stakeholders on the skills development activities that it has targeted for people with disabilities. The Program is able to align its Training Skills Plan to the Taskforce's Strategic Master Plan for Disability and in its participation contributes to the Taskforce being able to have what was described by a senior official as a 'more orderly and united' approach than had been the case in the past.

There is strong evidence of female representation in the Program's decision making bodies. Tonga Skills reported that females represented 47% of the membership of the SSSC as at March 2018. The

<sup>27</sup> The *Inclusion Strategy* is contained in section 5 of the Tonga Skills Guiding Program Strategy, 15 March, 2017.

Chairs of both the Tongatapu and Vava'u SDF Committees are female. The Tongatapu Skills Development Fund Committee consists entirely of women<sup>28</sup>.

## 4.2 Inclusiveness in Skills Supply

As already indicated, Tonga Skills has proactively improved female participation for both formal and informal training providers. As at March 2018, 45% of all trainers for the program were women.

A program to train trainers dealing with people with disabilities was delivered in October 2017, as an adaptation of the Vanuatu training package and using best practice examples. This program had strengthened the capability of Tongan training providers and been well-received. Currently, there is limited or no access to education in the mainstream school in Tonga for people with disabilities. Staff in the training providers have had close to no exposure to specific training and capacity building on how to assist people with a disability. This training of trainers provided a starting point for strengthening those service providers who intend to provide further training for people with disabilities in future. There is a general lack of resources available amongst training providers to provide capacity building specifically for targeted training on disability and Tonga Skills is addressing this issue. It also explains why people identifying with a disability often need to attend multiple trainings before deciding on a work pathway.

Tonga Skills has also provided one off support to the Tonga National Vision Impairment Association, the national body for vision impairment in Tonga. This was through the payment of school fees for one of its members who is sight-impaired to undertake the Diploma of Teaching delivered at the Tupou Tertiary Institute (TTI). DFAT-funded assistance to NATA had enabled the provision of the necessary equipment for the trainee to be able to attend the course and to complete the Diploma. The intended outcome is for the recipient to deliver educational programs for those who are visually impaired improving access to education for this marginalised group in Tonga. Although this initiative is yet to be completed, it is understood that its completion will be a first in strengthening the supply of skills for disadvantaged groups.

## 4.3 Targeted and Inclusive Skills Development

Tonga Skills data indicates that as at March 2018, 53% of all participants in SDAs were female. It is important to note that this participation needs to be seen in light of accepted norms in Tongan culture which to some extent predetermine female participation in certain industries. For example, the tourism related skills development activities are largely dominated by the participation of young girls, consistent with wide acceptance in the Tongan culture of females participating in service-related employment, such as marketing and selling. Box 3 below from four (4) selected tourism oriented training activities in the outer islands illustrates this point.

**Box 3: Female participation in Tourism-related SDAs**

SDA	No. females	% females
1 Vava'u Tour Guiding 1	10 out of 15	66%
2 Vava'u Tour Guiding 2	15 out of 15	100%
3 'Eua Marketing and Social Media	19 out of 26	73%
4 Ha'apai Tour Guiding	15 out of 19	78%

Over time, Tonga Skills may seek to address the issue of gender stereotyping but this is likely to be a gradual process.

<sup>28</sup> This includes the CEO for the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Deputy CEO for Finance, responsible for Procurement, the Deputy CEO for Labour Mobility and the Deputy CEO for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) responsible for Disability.

Tonga Skills has introduced a culture of disability inclusion which is evident by the strong participation of people with disabilities in skills development activities. Across all SDAs, 49% included at least one person identifying as having a disability and 3.4% of participants identified as having a disability. Although this involved multiple participation in SDAs by some of the same persons, it confirms the commitment of Tonga Skills to enhancing access of this group, otherwise excluded from training opportunities.

The Program provided access for training to those outside Tongatapu accounting to 51% of its total training throughput. In terms of remoteness, 'Eua Island has daily access to Tongatapu by ferry and air travel. If participants from 'Eua are excluded, there is a total of 26% of all training participants from Vava'u and Ha'apai only. The MTR Team was advised that training had been provided for eleven islands of the Vava'u group. Considering the challenges of coordinating activities in remote geographic locations, this demonstrates strong progress by Tonga Skills in ensuring that those living in remoter communities have access to training

Tonga Skills has created a platform for economic empowerment for some members of marginalised groups through targeted activities. A blind woman attending handicraft training has continued to use the skills transferred during the training to produce and earn an income from handicraft. A disabled woman in Vava'u, has improved her skills in sewing and is now having receiving a consistent income and circle of repeat clients through the production of Tongan outfits.

## 5 Program Management and Efficiency

*Evaluation Question 4: Is the project management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the project team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the project team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?*

### 5.1 Management processes and systems

The Tonga Skills team has performed well to establish the Program and become fully operational. This crucially includes bringing into operation the Skills Development Fund (SDF) from August 2017 and improving SDF systems thereafter. The SDF is of central importance because it is the mechanism for selecting, funding, coordinating and administering skill development activities/services by local training providers and business coaches. The Guidelines outline the criteria, policies, and procedures governing disbursement of funds, reporting requirements, and the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. In addition to guiding the Skills Planning Coordinator and other Tonga Skills staff the Guidelines inform the SDF Committees established for each island group, the Island Development Committee (IDC) or equivalent, and the national Skills Sector Steering Committee (SSSC).

However, the MTR Team finds that the project team does not yet have the planning or management information systems (MIS) it needs to plan and manage the Program, by which is meant the procedures, tools and software employed to collect, process, store, and disseminate information to support the planning and management of the program. There are systems, but they are poorly developed and fragmented and this is hampering implementation and frustrating national staff. The systems the MTR Team has focused on include work planning and oversight (essentially applying the annual plan and budget); SDF / SDA data management; and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

**Internal work planning and reporting:** The MTR Team requested information on work planning and reporting and received a work plan for 2017/18, last updated on 11 July 2017, and 'smart sheets' for December 2017 and January and February 2018. The former is a GANNT chart with activities listed under the three KRAs and other headings<sup>29</sup>. The latter are Excel spreadsheets that aggregate

<sup>29</sup> Including Inclusion, MELC, Program Management, Program Governance, Milestones, Cross-Cutting and Short-term Adviser Inputs

planned versus actual (or carried forward) activities for each national staff member (other than the Team Leader). The activities reported against in the 'smart sheets' include some, but not all of the relevant activities listed in the work plan and there is no simple way of comparing planned versus actual progress against the work plan (it would require updating the GANNT chart). While the 'smart sheets' are generally informative, they are not adequately linked to the work plan, some entries are perfunctory, priorities and risks are not highlighted, and there is no management response column. The MTR Team understands there were gaps in 2017 and no 'smart sheets' since February 2018. Time pressures and competing priorities are presumably a factor.

More attention has evidently been paid to identifying and developing SDAs, somewhat outside the work plan. Relevant documents made available to the MTR Team are a nine-page matrix entitled 'Action Plan and Summary Skills Needs Jan - June 2018' and the Skills Development Calendars for 2017 and 2018. These demonstrate a high degree of planning relevant to SDAs, but taken together with the work plan and 'master sheets' present a fragmented and not adequately developed system of work planning and updating management on progress. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

**Management of SDF / SDA data:** While it is positive that the SDF is operational and comprehensive guidelines are in place, it is apparent that data compilation processes are not yet efficient or reliable. This was most apparent from the 'master' Excel spreadsheet of funded SDAs made available for the MTR, which is incomplete and inaccurate. Staff are now faced with the time-consuming task of going back and 'cleaning' the data and strengthening the database. (It is apparent from 'smart sheets' entries for December 2017 and January and February 2018 that all SDAs were to be uploaded to *SharePoint* but there is no evidence that this was undertaken.)

Another current weakness is that information on individual SDAs is fragmented (e.g. client feedback forms, training provider completion reports, costings, etc.) and analysis is lacking. The MTR Team understands from a January 2018 'smart sheet' entry that all SDA completion reports were to have been assessed but there is no evidence that this has been undertaken. In addition, tracer (or 'outcome') surveys are yet to be undertaken on the earliest SDAs and there is now a large backlog.

At one level these gaps, weaknesses and delays are a function of time pressures. At a higher level it is evident that the managing contractor has not provided (or not been able to provide) adequate corporate guidance to 'smooth the way' for staff by helping put in place efficient management information systems at the outset. This includes not presenting data management controls which draw on TVET information management procedures e.g. applying unique client or trainee identifiers to eliminate double-counting. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

**Resolving design and performance measurement issues:** The original Program Design presented a 'conceptual framework' (sub-section 6.2.1) which was not amenable to efficient planning and implementation because it did not present a clear hierarchy of outputs and outcomes. Outputs are clustered (by colour coding) into three Key Result Areas (KRAs) that support the outcomes specified in a general but non-linear sense, creating a disconnect between outputs and outcomes. The Design further departs from conventional practice by treating the KRA headings in effect as program components (see sub-sections 6.2.2 and following).

The original End-of-Program Outcomes (EOPOs) and Intermediate Outcomes (IOs) were then more or less put to one side during implementation. This is evident from the 'Strategic Overview' of the program presented in the Guiding Program Strategy, March 2017. This includes a presentation of the program based solely on KRAs with no reference to outcomes at all. (It also presents a 'simplified' Theory of Change that was apparently validated at the Inception Workshop in January 2017).

A Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Communication (MELC) Plan was then presented in mid-2017 and approved by DFAT, which included a radically re-worked but clearer and more satisfactory Theory of Change. However, the MELC Plan did not translate this into a logical hierarchy of intermediate and end-of-program outcomes that would be fit for implementation. Instead it introduced seven new EOPOs in effect supporting three KRAs (no IOs are specified and instead are



said to have been subsumed by the EOPOs). But the new Results Framework (Annex 5 to the MELC Plan) makes no reference to the new EOPOs and continues to lead with KRAs, specifying indicators for each. The Six-Monthly Progress Report 2017-18 then reverts to describing the program with reference to the original three EOPOs but reports against the KRAs with only vague references to 'achieving the outcomes' related to each KRA. All of this chopping, changing and misdirection in the presentation of higher level objectives and performance measurement has confounded efficient planning and information management and been a burden on the national staff concerned.

Staff and the new short-term M&E adviser are now under pressure to resolve this and reflect a stable design and results framework in the upcoming Annual Plan. During the MTR the Team suggested to staff and the M&E adviser that the simplest and least time-consuming approach may be to present the three KRA statements as program component headings (i.e. remove reference to KRAs) and place the seven EOPOs endorsed in 2017 within this structure, as shown in Box 4. A more thorough rationalisation of KRAs and EOPOs is presented in Annex F, from which Box 4 is an extract.

**Box 4: Suggested Redefinition of Outcomes**

<b>GOAL: Equitable access to quality based and demand driven skills development contributing to sustainable economic growth in Tonga</b>
<b>COMPONENT 1: POLICY AND PLANNING REFORM</b> EOPO 1: Enabling national policy and quality assurance systems and procedures IO 1.1 Divisional planning bodies identify priority economic demand and associated skill development requirements. IO 1.2 2 MET and TNQAB coordinate a skills development system that matches demand and is inclusive, flexible and quality assured
<b>COMPONENT 2: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SUPPLY</b> EOPO 2: Improved access to and supply of inclusive, flexible, demand driven and quality assured skills development opportunities IO 2.1 Local training providers establish successful small-scale skill development models demonstrating how demand-driven, flexible training can improve inclusive economic outcomes for individuals and businesses. <sup>30</sup> IO 2.2 The program utilises pilot models to influence policy and processes so that innovations become systematised and sustainable within the national skills development system. <sup>31</sup>
<b>COMPONENT 3: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY</b> EOPO 3: The skills development activities supported by the program are inclusive and good quality and deliver economic and other benefits and value for money IO 3.1 SDAs are developed and funded in accordance with agreed priorities and a training strategy and indicative targets are met (number of events and participants) IO 3.2 Clients satisfactorily complete skills training and/or receive targeted coaching and mentoring IO 3.3 Benefits and value for money are assessed and communicated driving ongoing reform <sup>32</sup> [EOPO 5, 6 and 7 in MELC Plan to be reflected in performance indicators for the new EOPO 3]

This reduces the number of EOPOs back to three and re-introduces intermediate outcomes, several of which pick up key elements of the Theory of Change presented in the MELC Plan. If and when these changes are reflected in a revised Results Framework care would need to be taken to specify supporting outputs and performance indicators that do not confuse the two (as does the current

<sup>30</sup> See MELC Plan sub-section 2.2 Theory of Change second paragraph

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

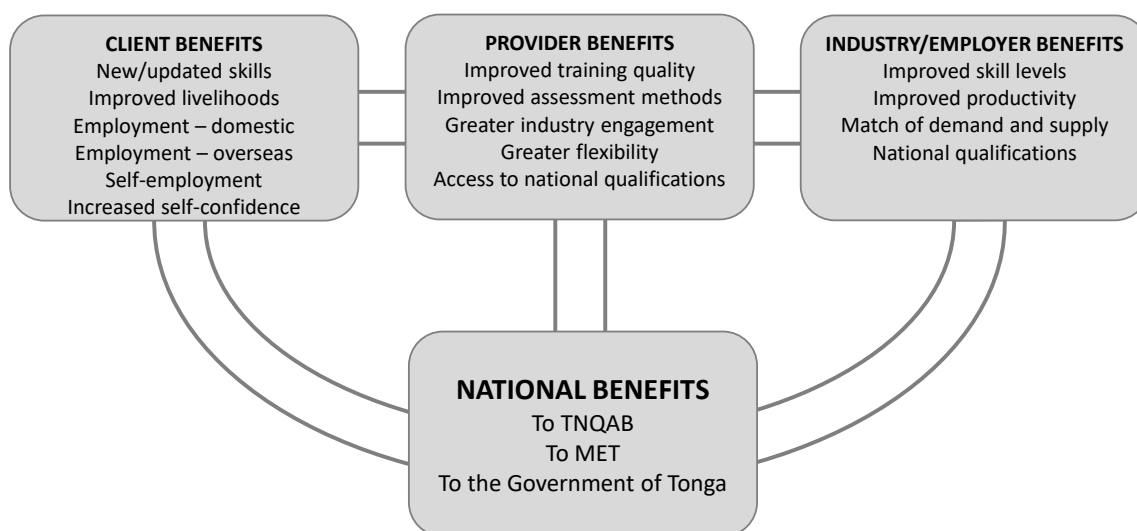
<sup>32</sup> See MELC Plan Figure 1 Theory of Change diagram and reference to 'Successful models inform further reform' at the bottom.

Results Framework). The MTR Team cautions against getting ‘bogged down’ in a re-design process. What is required is a swift and effective adjustment. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

In terms of intent, it was evident to the MTR Team, from the Six-Monthly Progress Report July to December 2017 and feedback from stakeholders, that the utilisation and presentation of the data collected on SDAs is focussed on the communication function (particularly presenting positive case studies) and insufficiently utilised to provide critical feedback to inform strategic decision-making. The communication products are, however, well developed for the purposes they serve.

**Setting training targets and measuring benefits:** During the MTR and in discussion with Tonga Skills staff it became apparent that there is reticence about setting training targets and measuring and comparing benefits across the industry sectors. There is a lot of emphasis on the characteristics of SDAs – flexible, inclusive and demand driven – but considerably less on impact. The MTR Team appreciates that setting targets is not straightforward and risks simplicity or worse. However, there has to be some attempt to estimate the scope or scale of training that would warrant the financial investment. It is also far from straight-forward to measure benefits not least because some benefits are pre-cursors to economic benefits e.g. increasing a trainee’s aspiration to get a job or start a business. (*Refer Recommendation R1*). Box 5 provides an overview of the multiple potential benefits that Tonga Skills might demonstrate.

#### Box 5: Measuring the Benefits of Tonga Skills



Demonstrating benefits is not only critical to ensuring DFAT’s confidence in the investment. As noted already, there has been considerable turnover of government officials in Tonga and much of the early work in developing positive relationships will have to be repeated. The effort involved can be substantially reduced if benefit can be readily evidenced. During the consultations, concerns were already being expressed that there was insufficient attention to this issue.

## 5.2 Responsiveness and collaboration

**Responsiveness:** Several stakeholders, ranging from training providers to government officials, told the MTR Team that the Tonga Skills team members are variously approachable, helpful, responsive and flexible. It is not just the Team Leader, staff and advisors. The Program is designed to exhibit these characteristics and this is what sets Tonga Skills apart from institutional providers. Following Cyclone Gita in February 2018, Tonga Skills responded to DFAT’s request to collaborate with MAFFF by funding its agricultural extension activities under the SDF.



**Collaboration:** Tonga Skills is also collaborating closely with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism, the World Bank and APTC. The CEO of the Ministry of Tourism described the relationship with Tonga Skills as “one of our best partnerships”.

Tonga Skills established the Development Partners’ Network (DPN), which meets monthly, and it provides the Secretariat. The DPN is intended to provide an opportunity for different donor organisations to share news and to provide a platform for Tonga Skills to pursue collaboration. The topics are wide-ranging and not necessarily related to training raising the questions: Is this the best use of Tonga Skills’ resources and is it the best body to leading this initiative? It may be more appropriate for Tonga Skills to confine its own role to convening a periodic Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Forum with the skills sector. (*Refer Recommendation R9*).

### 5.3 Innovation and value for money

**Innovation:** Building on previous Tongan and Pacific programs, Tonga Skills is implementing an innovative program which is applying new forms of communication and engagement; pushing the boundaries in terms of social and geographic inclusion; adapting processes to the Tongan culture; and experimenting with training in skills areas e.g. SDF 014 Fish-smoking Vava’u. The Program has in a sense stepped outside the usual comfort zone of providing curriculum based institutionalised training in the hope that participants will find jobs.

**Value for money:** The SDA proposal form (included in the SDF Guidelines) specifies that applicants must explain why the proposed SDA offers value for money and the SDA proposal assessment form (also in the Guidelines) includes ‘evidence of value for money including co-contribution arrangements’ as one of six criteria (a ‘yes’ answer to the value for money criterion provides 5 points towards an overall score of a maximum 25 points). Apart from mentioning possible co-contribution, there is no indication what should constitute value for money or evidence of it.

Cost per trainee per day would be a useful indication and starting point - a tracer study could later consider if the economic and less tangible benefits realised by trainees justified the sum invested in them (a crude measure of value for money). The MTR Team has requested the Tonga Skills Team Leader to ask staff to calculate cost per trainee per day for each of the four priority sectors for consideration by the MTR as a starting point. The MTR Team did not obtain access to detailed budget information and was therefore not able to attempt this calculation.

Apart from provision in the SDF, there is no meaningful reference to value for money in documents made available to the MTR. Value for money does not feature as a management concern in the Annual Plan 2017/18; there is no mention of it in the 2017 MELC Plan, or in the Six-Monthly Progress July-December 2017. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

Several respondents questioned why more of the Tonga Skills budget is not spent on training. Taking the SDF allocation as a proxy, training (and potentially mentoring and coaching) is approximately 25% (AUD371,050) of the 2017/18 budget. (*Refer Recommendation R2*).

### 5.4 Team structure, skills and experience

**Team structure:** The mix of Tongan-based, long-term and short-term advisers has not yet been structured to ensure authority, responsibility and accountability are completely clear and the balance between strategic and operational leadership is still not fully resolved. Delegations to the national staff in the absence of advisers also seem to be vague, especially in a situation where four short term advisers share the equivalent of 0.7 staff per annum. A case in point has been the over-reliance on the MELC short term adviser and the resulting uncertainty of national staff’s role in driving the MELC process. (*Refer Recommendation R5*).

Critically at this juncture, it is not clear who is responsible for ensuring Tonga Skills has sound planning and management information systems and what the Team Leader and national staff should reasonably expect from Scope Global in terms of corporate systems and advice.

In any event, there has been a failure on the part of Scope Global and possibly the Team Leader to fully recognise the seriousness of the ongoing lack of clarity around design structure and content, or the lack of functionality of management information systems. Not settling all of this in the first 6-12 months has negatively impacted on the utilisation and direction of staff and thus the performance of the program. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

The role of the short-term MELC advisers has proved problematic, due to a range of issues such as lack in continuity (there have been three in a short time), performance and limited time allocation. In terms of team structure, it is unsatisfactory that the critical function of resolving design and performance measurement issues falls to a short-term adviser based in Australia. This has not played out well, with the Results Framework again under reconsideration, leaving the national staff members responsible for M&E uncertain how to proceed. It appears all concerned believe the new MELC Adviser can and should solve all of these problems; but this is unrealistic. The program is at a critical juncture and Scope Global need to consider carefully what is at stake if planning and management information systems are not set right, ideally before the Annual Plan is presented lest it carry forward unresolved gaps and weaknesses. (*Refer Recommendation R1*).

**Skills and experience:** It was suggested to the MTR Team from more than one source that the Tonga Skills team would benefit from greater program management skills and/or experience, development assistance experience and knowledge of DFAT. To the extent that this may be true, Scope Global and the advisers play a critical role. However, Scope Global argue that there is a lack of resources in the contract to adequately support national staff. This places the onus on Scope Global to provide support in terms of corporate systems and advice.

In recognition of the need for more resources and the need to reduce the number of direct reports to the Team Leader, Scope Global has put forward a proposal to employ an Operations Manager, reporting to the Team leader and taking responsibility for day-to-day management of all local technical staff. The MTR Team was invited to provide comment on this proposal. There are obvious financial implications which are outside the scope of the MTR. However, in light of the points above the MTR Team considers that, should the position go ahead, the successful applicant should be required to have, or be prepared to obtain, formal project management skills<sup>33</sup>. It would also be advisable to review the position description of the Team Leader to ascertain the impact of the new position on this role, in terms of responsibilities and work value. Other selection criteria, in line with Tonga Skills' objectives would also apply. (*Refer Recommendation R6*).

Scope Global has also proposed to separate the Communications role within the MELC team. This appears to be a sensible move, enabling the monitoring and evaluation staff to focus entirely on that role at a time when this is critical.

## 5.5 Strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency

**Strengths:** Tonga Skills has coordinated its operations with government and the key existing decision-making structures and bodies. Many respondents, including government stakeholders, commented very positively on this. Strategically, this has been the correct approach and it has not been without risks given the political economy. However, it is acknowledged that the Team Leader, who is widely respected, has managed these risks well.

While closely linked to government, Tonga Skills has managed to retain an appropriate degree of independence in its operation, ensuring that program implementation (including utilisation of the SDF) can keep moving forward. In addition, the brokerage role adopted by Tonga Skills leads to flexibility, responsiveness and cost-efficiency.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Prince2 certification or similar.

**Weaknesses:** Not putting in place an efficient planning and management information system at the outset and not resolving issues with the original Program Design and the manner in which it was applied are the most serious weaknesses because they have negatively impacted on the utilisation and direction of staff, and therefore on program efficiency. It must also have undermined efficient decision-making to the extent that there were weaknesses in data compilation, analysis and presentation.

Another area of weakness is the reticence of the Team Leader and staff to measure efficiency and value for money e.g. to establish efficiency indicators like total cost to outputs ratios or cost per person per day of training. These should be regarded as opportunities to demonstrate the strength and value of the program. (Refer Recommendation R1).

A more detailed SWOT Analysis is contained in Annex H.

## 6 Program Relevance and Feasibility

*Evaluation Question 5: Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET and TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?*

### 6.1 Relevance to the Needs and Priorities of Stakeholders

Drawing on documentation provided and consultations with stakeholders during the in-country mission there is evidence that, overall, Tonga Skills is relevant to the needs of stakeholders. These stakeholders are addressed below.

**Ministry of Education and Training (MET):** As previously highlighted, Tonga Skills might have been housed within MET or another Ministry but instead it operates separately. This is generally seen as a strength, allowing Tonga Skills the ability to respond quickly and flexibly, enhancing its relevance. Having coverage of Education and Training, it is not surprising that during the consultations, senior MET officials conveyed a sense of proprietorship of Tonga Skills, especially if there was a need to continue its operations within a Ministry post-completion. It was stated that, although there had been some early establishment problems, a positive relationship between MET and Tonga Skills had now been achieved. MET officials stated that they appreciated being kept informed of developments at all times and that this was in contrast to earlier projects. The fact that Tonga Skills was led by Tongans was seen as enabling it to be fully connected to the local context and truly demand driven. Tonga Skills' role with Outer Island Development Committees; with efforts to meet the needs of industry; with assisting both public and private training providers; with TNQAB; and with coordinating the Skills Sector Steering Committee were all seen as valuable and commendable.

**TNQAB:** During the MTR consultations it was clear that, as a counterpart of Tonga Skills, TNQAB looks to Tonga Skills for assistance in coordination and planning and that Tonga Skills is highly relevant to its needs in this regard. The coordination of all parties involved in the development of national qualifications in Tourism is case in point. As well as TNQAB, these include the Ministry of Tourism, the developers, a New Zealand partner institution and an industry training advisory committee. TNQAB also valued Tonga Skills' role in coordinating other new initiatives such as the short course accreditation process and the support for the recognition of community and non-formal providers. It looked to Tonga Skills for further assistance, such as support for more Industry Training Advisory Committees, additional national qualifications and the development of a national assessment policy. There was particular mention of Tonga Skills' facilitation of the delivery of Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in conjunction with APTC. This was seen as not only important for the training providers but had also benefitted TNQAB staff, who generally lack experience in TVET. More such programs were anticipated. Tonga Skills' relationship with APTC was also seen as a potential vehicle for the delivery of additional programs such as the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management.

**Productive Sector Departments:** The MTR Team held consultations with the senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFFF), the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) and the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer, Trade, Innovation and Labour (MCCTIL). In all cases, while recognising that Tonga Skills was relatively new and there was still much to be done, comments about the relevance of its activities were generally positive. For example, MAFFF officials welcomed Tonga Skills' response to Cyclone Gita; MoT officials appreciated the cooperative approach of Tonga Skills and its role in supporting the national qualifications in Tourism; and MCCTIL officials expressed the view that Tonga Skills' independence from Government departments was enabling it to respond quickly.

**Skills Sector Steering Committee (SSSC):** The SSSC is the advisory body to Tonga Skills. A survey of members conducted by Tonga Skills in late 2017 and made available to the MTR Team, while not directly testing relevance, revealed that members considered that Tonga Skills has considerable strengths but perhaps needs more attention to Tongan values. Consultations with individual members through the MTR revealed that some held the view that SSSC meetings focussed too much on showcasing achievements rather than on facilitating strategic discussion and debate. The membership of the SSSC consists of thirteen persons and some observers<sup>34</sup>. The MTR Team noted that seven Ministries are represented but only two members represent private industry. Given that Tonga Skills emphasises being demand driven and that the private sector is critical to the four industry priority sectors, the membership may require review over time. (*Refer Recommendation R7*).

**Island Development Committees (IDC):** Tonga Skills involvement with the IDCs is outlined in Section 3.1. The MTR Team met with representatives of three of these Committees, who were very positive about Tonga Skills' proactive approach and its strategy of using the island priorities as the framework for determining training priorities.

**Development Partners Network (DPN):** The DPN was established by Tonga Skills in early 2017 to coordinate the work of development partners and donor programs. This was generally seen as a welcome initiative and as a means to avoid duplication maximise efficiency. However, it is clear from the meeting notes since inception that the topics covered by the DPN are wide-ranging and not always related to training. On that basis, and as further outlined in section 5.2., it may be questionable as to whether this is good use of Tonga Skills' resources. (*Refer Recommendation R9*).

**Training Providers:** Consulting with both formal and community or non-formal training providers, it became clear to MTR Team, that the perception of relevance is different in each case. Engagement with Tonga Skills meant that formal training providers often needed to adopt a more flexible way of working than had been the case in the past. Used to providing full qualifications for enrolled students, they were now having to move to much shorter and targeted training for individuals who may not have been involved in training for some time. It meant that trainers were working out of hours and during holiday periods, often in informal settings. While this opportunity was welcomed by some, it was proving a challenge for others. Tonga Skills role in supporting the development of national qualifications drew various responses and may not always have been fully understood. For example, one provider saw the national qualifications primarily as a solution for school drop-outs, whereas this is not the intention. On the other hand, community and non-formal trainers and training providers welcomed Tonga Skills' role in funding training programs they could conduct, facilitating the possibility of them becoming registered providers and providing a mechanism for the accreditation of short courses they might develop. In this respect, Tonga Skills is helping to build capability and employment in the non-government training sector in Tonga.

<sup>34</sup> Tonga Skills Annual Plan 2017-18, p. 43

**Trainees:** As far as can be ascertained from feedback forms from trainees, they generally found the training to be relevant to their situation. The MTR Team was also keen to speak directly with trainees but had little opportunity to do so. Plans to speak to a full group of trainees undertaking training as part of the trip to Vava'u were cancelled when bad weather prevented travel. The Team only had the opportunity to speak with a small group of five trainees who had separately completed training in business skills, sewing, pearl-carving and the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. One of these had already been interviewed as a trainer in another field. Comments from this small sample were generally positive. For example, the trainee in business development was a grower who found the training highly relevant to his vision of developing his business while the trainee in pearl-carving was wheel-chair bound and had gained skills to be able to operate from home. The availability of equipment during and after training was cited as a limitation to full utilisation of the skills gained. In future, tracer studies will be the most effective means of testing relevance of Tonga Skills to trainees.

**Employers:** The key questions for employers with respect to the relevance of Tonga Skills are whether training facilitated through the various training providers meets their skill requirements and gaps and whether it leads to greater productivity in the workplace. Tonga Skills has made efforts to consult with employers over the first of these questions. In November 2017, a series of workshops with private sector and government stakeholders in each of the priority industry sectors was held to identify skills gaps relevant for future training activity. The outcomes of these workshops were documented along with a potential training response. Early attempts have also been made to map demand against supply. However, the MTR Team only had very limited exposure to employers while in Tonga and it is too early to judge Tonga Skills' performance at this stage.

## 6.2 Feasibility

Setting aside the perception of relevance of the individual stakeholder groups, Tonga Skills is clearly an ambitious Program. The MELC Plan highlights that a fundamental aspect of the Program Design is 'to inform and motivate further reform in the Tongan system' and that this hinges on Tonga Skills being able to provide evidence that it has developed 'successful skill development models' i.e. evidence of broad benefit and value for money<sup>35</sup>. Bearing in mind that Tonga Skills operates in a brokerage role, it is heavily reliant on the success of the many and varied training partnerships it has developed, that is, on influencing rather than on direct control. It is imperative that each of these partners, especially training providers, as well as TNQAB and MET and the productive sector agencies share responsibility for this important endeavour in Tonga.

## 7 Reflections and Conclusions

Tonga Skills is essentially working on two levels. On the one hand it is assisting/influencing TNQAB/MET to establish and implement a more enabling policy and regulatory environment for accessible demand-driven technical and vocational education (TVET). On the other hand, it is taking a funding and leadership role in brokering the delivery of very basic units of training in areas of high demand across island groups which engage participants, often in their initial steps in skills development, and act as building blocks for ongoing skills development through mentoring and coaching and by accumulating units towards accredited short courses. This is conceptually sound and very exciting in its potential. Substantial progress has already been made.

However, Tonga Skills faces considerable challenges and risks. As described in earlier sections of this Report, some of these challenges and risks are the result of failing to move efficiently from design to planning to implementation and review. Recommendation R1 addresses ways in which Scope Global might now rectify this situation.

<sup>35</sup> Tonga Skills Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Communication Plan, June 2017, p. 10

For the first main strand of the program, improving the policy and regulatory environment for TVET, the risk is essentially that Tonga Skills is dependent on TNQAB, which has proved to be slow moving over several years and has a less than optimal reputation with the providers it has been established to assist. Recommendation R4 proposes actions for the Tonga Skills Team Leader to take to deal with this situation.

For the second strand of the program, the provision of training, mentoring and coaching, the challenges are more complex. It is entirely appropriate for Tonga Skills to have taken the approach of brokering training through a range of public and private providers. But this also presents considerable risks.

The core challenge more or less within Tonga Skills' control is in adopting an appropriate approach for the 2018/19 implementation year. Tonga Skills needs to build on the initial SDAs rather than provide more of the same by funding training providers to offer similar opportunities to others. Successful SDAs can be replicated, but the emphasis needs to shift to a more 'joined up' approach including a) following up with mentoring and coaching and b) providing pathways to further skills development and c) consolidating and building new effective training partnerships. Recommendation R2 proposes the development of a dynamic training strategy to guide this process.

In terms of implementation progress at mid-term, the MTR Team is able to report that progress is satisfactory at the output level. Tonga Skills has 'got runs on the board' by engaging with stakeholders to agree on priorities and by rolling out a significant level of training activity, much of it beyond Tongatapu. The 37 SDAs delivered to end March 2018 are significant outputs. The stakeholders are encouraged and participants have given mostly positive feedback.

However, the likely benefits for the individuals, businesses and island group economies remain to be tested. Understandably at the end of 18 months, the evidence available to the MTR was limited at this level. The feedback surveys conducted at the conclusion of training are generally highly speculative and while the training provider completion reports provide some tangible evidence of value, tracer studies are yet to be conducted. So while progress at the output level can fairly be said to be satisfactory, it is crucial that Tonga Skills tests the benefit of the SDAs delivered and applies what can be learned to further investments through the SDF. Regrettably, this seems unlikely to be achieved in time to inform the Annual Plan 2018/19. Some modification may well be required to the Annual Plan e.g. after a good number of tracer studies are conducted and the results are analysed.

Other recommendations throughout the Report and summarised above are designed to smooth the operations of Tonga Skills for the second half of this Stage 1 and strengthen its position for Stage 2.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The MTR Team wishes to convey sincere thanks to all the stakeholders in Tonga who gave so freely of their time to contribute to this Review, particularly those in the Tonga Skills office who went out of their way to respond to requests for assistance and information.

## ANNEXES

### A GLOSSARY

APTC	Australia Pacific Technical College
ATI	'Ahopanilolo Technical Institute
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DPN	Development Partners Network
EOPO	End of Program Outcome
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GoT	Government of Tonga
IO	Intermediate Outcome
ISDF	Interim Skills Development Facility
ITAC	International Training and Assessment Course
KRA	Key Result Area
MAFFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry and Fisheries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MELC	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Communications
MET	Ministry of Education and Training
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MCCTIL	Ministry of Commerce, Consumer, Trade, Innovation and Labour
MIS	Management Information System
MORDI	Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation (Tonga Trust)
MoT	Ministry of Tourism
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NATA	Naunau 'o 'e Alamaite Tonga Association
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RDC	Regional Development Committee
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SDA	Skills Development Activity
SDF	Skills Development Fund
SDP	Skills Development Plan
S4IEG	Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth (Tonga Skills)
SSSC	Skills Sector Steering Committee
TAE	Training and Assessment (as in Certificate IV Training and Assessment - TAE 40116)
TATVET	Tonga Association of TVET
TBEC	Tonga Business Enterprise Centre
TCCI	Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industry
TIHE	Tonga Institute of Higher Education
TIST	Tonga Institute of Science and Technology
TNCWC	Tonga National Centre for Women and Children
TNQAB	Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board
TSP1	(Tonga) TVET Support Program 1
TTI	Tupou Tertiary Institute
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training



## B TERMS OF REFERENCE

### MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM

---

#### **1. Background on the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth**

Australia has supported technical vocational education, and skills development in Tonga, since 2010. This new program builds on the lessons of these previous two investments – the Tonga Technical Vocational Educational and Training (TVET- January 2010 to June 2014) Support Program Phase 1 (TSP1), and the Interim Skill Development Facility (ISDF-May 2014 to October 2016).

Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth (S4IEG) adopts and extends the ISDF logic model which states that by facilitating access to quality assured skill development training that is aligned to labour market demand and economic growth opportunities, participants will have greater opportunity for productive growth employment and self-employment in national and international labour markets.

The S4IEG approach is a response to an overarching problem in Tonga namely, a lack of access to quality based and demand driven skills training which inhibits employment and self-employment opportunities for all working age Tongans and impedes economic growth. The S4IEG identified the overall goal to the program to be sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Tonga. The objective of the S4IEG is to both particularly those who are disadvantaged) at the same time ensure that these results can be sustained locally through systematic change within the TVET sector.

#### **2. Intended Users and Stakeholders**

The intended users of the evaluation and the information likely to be important for them will be a strong focus throughout this evaluation. The experiences and preferences of stakeholders will also be incorporated in the evaluation.

##### **2.1 Intended users (those likely to take action on the evaluation findings)**

DFAT has a direct and strong interest in the upcoming review and evaluation of the S4IEG. The changing education and training sector context in Tonga presents an opportunity to evaluate Australia's investments in the sector since the beginning of the S4IEG with a view to informing how Australia could best contribute to the sector past June 2018. Australia needs to adjust its programming to respond to changing priorities within its own aid portfolio to Tonga.

Provincial Governments in Vava'u, Ha'apai, Tongatapu and 'Eua. These four provinces are direct beneficiaries of the current program, and have a direct interest in how the S4IEG could improve its contribution to provincial economic development through integrated skill development and business development services.

The Skills Sector Steering Committee (SSSC) is the key governance/national coordination mechanism of the S4IEG and has a direct interest in the evaluation findings and in advising both the Government of Tonga and the Australian Aid Program on responses to those findings.

##### **2.2 Stakeholders (other interested and affected parties)**

Current and future program participants who want to maximise the value derived from their participation through increased income and employment opportunities. Providers who deliver skills development and business development services into the program include formal Government



funded national skills providers, non-Government providers offering both formal and non-formal skills training and Government ministries and departments who deliver non-formal skills training. All have an interest in the evaluation findings

**Program staff** working at national and provincial level need to be actively involved in the evaluation to ensure its credibility.

**Other donor stakeholders** (PSC, MoE, Contractor) to inform investment in the sector.

### **3. Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this mid-year review is to assess the progress of the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth program; identify gaps and analyse solutions for improvement; and identify strengths and weakness in program management to guide DFAT decisions about program management during the next phase of implementation’.

### **4. The Evaluation Team**

The evaluation team will consist of three members:

#### **4.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

a) **Team Leader / TVET systems specialist** who will:

- submit an Evaluation Plan in consultation with other team members that sets out the design and conduct of the evaluation including a sound methodology that reflects both acceptable professional practice standards and the time and resources available for the assignment and which meets DFAT M&E Standard 5
- Lead the evaluation process including: participating in an inception briefing; assigning tasks and responsibilities to team members; co-ordinating team inputs; and leading the mission in the field including consultations with government officials and other donor agencies
- Manage and direct evaluation activities and coordinate quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Ensure that the evaluation produces useful information for program improvements and decision making
- Use the expertise of all team members effectively in meeting the Terms of Reference
- Draft and finalise the Aide Memoire in consultation with other intended users
- Lead the presentation of the Aide Memoire to Australian Aid Program at an end-of-mission briefing
- Coordinate and quality assure the development of the draft evaluation report to ensure the report meets DFAT M&E Standard 6
- Lead the incorporation of DFAT feedback on the draft report in the production of the final evaluation
- Ensure timely delivery of the draft and final evaluation reports.
- Liaise with Tonga Post staff during the evaluation
- Represent the evaluation team in a peer review, if required

b) **Tonga representative** (National) who will

- Provide high quality inputs to the evaluation
- Organise preliminary meeting schedule in advance of arrival of international consultants
- Participate in meetings and field visits and other activities as specified by the Team Leader
- Ensure that the team has a comprehensive understanding of the context for the Program and the TVET sector more broadly, particularly in relation to Government policies and priorities
- Contribute to team reflection and analysis of evaluation findings

- Contribute to preparing and presenting the Aide Memoire
- Make written contributions to the draft and final evaluation reports as requested by the Team Leader and review those reports before their submission to DFAT.

c) **Evaluation Specialist** (International) who will:

- Work with the Team Leader in the preparation of the Evaluation Plan to ensure it meets DFAT's M&E standards.
- Ensure the optimisation of the methodological design while also ensuring that it remains flexible enough in order to accommodate last minute difficulties in the field.
- Provide technical leadership to the team on the identification and selection of appropriate evaluation tools to collect primary and secondary data needed to answer the evaluation questions, to analyse data, and to formulate value judgements (or reasoned assessments)
- Determine the Program and identify significant changes over time against the baseline
- Undertake quantitative and qualitative analysis, synthesis and drafting as requested by the Team Leader
- Assess the performance and quality of the Program's monitoring and evaluation system and make recommendations for cost-effective improvements
- Make written contributions to the production of the Aide Memoire, draft report and final report.
- Participate in debriefing sessions with government and partners.
- Participate in the evaluation peer review, if required
- Undertake any other tasks as requested by the Team Leader.

Post will engage the Development Economic section of DFAT for advice on this area.

**Tonga Post staff** may accompany consultants for selected meetings and field visits.

#### 4.2 **Person Specifications**

The **Team Leader/TVET systems specialist** (International) will have the following skills and experience.

- At least 15 years' experience in thematic and sector reviews at country and/or program level, ideally including developing country TVET systems.
- Expertise in TVET system strengthening in developing countries and the interface between skills development and labour market development.
- Significant experience in leading review or evaluation teams.
- Strong knowledge of service delivery issues in resource constrained environments, ideally with experience in decentralised service delivery.
- Skills in quantitative and qualitative data analysis, synthesis and reporting for evaluation.
- Extensive experience in the Pacific region, particularly in Polynesia, would be desirable.
- A thorough understanding of Australia's Aid program, or similar bilateral programs.
- Excellent written and spoken skills in English
- Excellent interpersonal and communication abilities, including a proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with multi-cultural colleagues.

The **local consultant** will have the following skills and experience.

- Comprehensive knowledge of national Government of Tonga policy systems and processes.
- Sound knowledge of policy and planning systems at provincial levels.
- Sound understanding of the education sector in Tonga, particularly the TVET sub-sector.
- Good English language skills (written and spoken).

- Good interpersonal and communication abilities.

The **Evaluation Specialist** (international) will have the following skills and experience.

- At least 10 years' professional experience in program monitoring and/or evaluation roles in international development contexts, including proven experience in impact analysis.
- Professional skills and experience in both quantitative and qualitative analysis and mixed method evaluations.
- Demonstrated technical expertise in data collection, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of development activities, preferably in the education and training sector.
- Experience in developing/reviewing M&E systems.
- Experience developing and/or using a range of evaluation tools.
- Experience using knowledge management software or database is highly desirable.
- Excellent written and spoken skills in English.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication abilities, including a proven ability to liaise and communicate effectively with multi-cultural colleagues.

## 7. Timing and Duration of the Evaluation

The mid-year review will commence on April 2, 2018 and will be completed no later than May 4 2018. An indicative table of input ceilings is set out below. Timing and duration for the scope of services will be negotiated with the team.

Key Task	Working Days	Dates (2018)
	TVET System Specialist/Evaluation Specialist/Development (up to 38 days)	
Document Review	Up to 3	April
Evaluation Plan and Methodology Design Including Questionnaires development	Up to 3	April
National Consultations; preparation and presentation of Aide Memoire	Up to 17 (17=total days in-country)	April
International travel	2	April
Draft report	Up to 5	May 7
<i>Sub-total Consultant days April</i>	<i>Up to 30</i>	
(Peer review of the report)	(3)	May
Final report	2	May 14
Presentation of the findings to Canberra or community of practice	(1)	May
<b>Total Consultant days</b>	<b>34</b>	

## Duration

The expected period for the evaluation process is from April 2- May 14, 2018 with up to 17 days in-country fieldwork. This evaluation period includes time for Desk review, preparation of the Evaluation Plan, in-country mission, preparation and presentation of the Aide Memoire, presentations in Canberra (if required) and preparation of draft and final evaluation reports.

## 8. Output and Reporting Requirements

The following outputs are to be provided in line with the **DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards 2014 Version, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, Australia**

(See: <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/publications/Pages/dfat-monitoring-evaluation-standards.aspx>):

- I. **An evaluation plan (DFAT Standard 5)** – summary of evaluation questions, methodology and report outline, no more than 10 pages in length, be submitted for agreement with the Australian Aid Program and GoT prior to mission. This should include a description of the approach to the focussed situation analysis, including the questions be addressed and the information sources. The deadline for submitting the evaluation plan to Tonga Post will be April 6 2018
- II. **Presentation in country (DFAT Standard 4)** – a feedback session to relevant information users are planned together or separately depending on the sensitivity of findings.
- III. **First draft report and annexes (DFAT Standard 6)** – overall report detailing key findings and recommendations, no more than 30 pages in length (excluding executive summary and annexes). An executive summary or 4-6 pages should be provided. The draft will be delivered to the Senior Program Manager, the Australian Aid Program in Nuku'alofa by May 7, 2018.
- IV. **Second and final draft report/annexes** – as above, revised to incorporate stakeholder feedback. The final draft of the report will be due to DFAT by May 14, 2018

## 9. Each Report should be:

- Of the highest standard of quality, including report content, format, spelling and grammar.
- Prepared in accordance with DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards 2016 Version.
- Provided in electronic format in Microsoft Word.
- Delivered by the required date.

## 10. Key documents

- Design of Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic
- 6 months progressive Report
- AQC 2017
- TSDF Completion Report

## C EVALUATION PLAN – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUESTIONS

### MID-TERM REVIEW

#### OF THE TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM (TONGA SKILLS)

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Evaluation purpose and criteria

The stated purpose of the mid-term review (MTR) is *‘to assess the progress of the Tonga Skills for Inclusive Economic Growth program (hereafter ‘the Program’); identify gaps and analyse solutions for improvement; and identify strengths and weakness in program management to guide DFAT decisions about program management during the next phase of implementation’.*

The design of this Evaluation Plan responds to this purpose, while also addressing as appropriate DFAT aid quality criteria including effectiveness; efficiency; gender equality and social inclusiveness; relevance; monitoring and evaluation; sustainability; risk management and safeguards; and innovation and the private sector.

##### Primary intended users

As specified in the ToR the primary intended users of the MTR include DFAT, Provincial Governments, and the Skills Sector Steering Committee (SSSC). DFAT will use the MTR to inform how Australia could best contribute to the education and training sector past June 2018 and to adjust its programming to respond to changing priorities within its own aid portfolio to Tonga. Provincial Governments in Vava’u, Ha’apai, Tongatapu and ‘Eua are direct beneficiaries and have a direct interest in how the program could improve its contribution to provincial economic development through integrated skill development and business development services. The SSSC which is the key governance/national coordination mechanism of the program has a direct interest in the evaluation findings and in advising both the Government of Tonga and the Australian Aid Program on responses to those findings. The MTR will also of course be used by the contractor and program staff to strengthen program implementation.

##### Evaluation questions

The Evaluation Plan has been organised around five key evaluation questions, which are designed to ensure the MTR directly addresses the stated purpose while the quality criteria are also taken into account. The five evaluation questions will provide the framework for most interviews (the exception being interviews of clients, discussed below). In the final report, findings will be presented as responses to the key evaluation questions.

##### Methodological approach

Quantitative and qualitative information collection will start with the team’s review of the program’s plans and reports, including further documentation to be requested on arrival and the completion of a matrix capturing current progress in relation to program outcomes (refer to attachment 1). This matrix may need to be amended in light of changes apparently made to the original program design (the review team is yet to see the change frame).

Information available from plans and reports will be complemented and verified by qualitative and quantitative information collected through extended interviews in the capital (Nukua’alofa) with the Program team and Program counterparts (the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board); as well as interviews of at least an hour with (ideally all) key stakeholders, including Ministries and industry representatives on the SSSC and training providers.

It is expected that there will only be limited opportunities to interview clients due to factors such as time constraints and training schedules (further details in attachment 3).

### **Management of interviews**

Each of the interviews in Nuku'alofa will commence with the following introductory questions (i.e. preceding the five evaluation questions):

- *What do you regard as the program's three biggest achievements over the last 6 months?*
- *What do you regard as the biggest three risks to the program over the next 6 months?*

These questions are intended to elicit frank and focused observations from respondents and, in the case of program stakeholders, to provide an indication to their knowledge of, attitude to, and engagement with the program. The review team will allow the discussion to proceed initially on the basis of the responses to these questions, while ensuring by the end of the interview that the five evaluation questions and the sub-questions relevant at each interview have been addressed.

### **Evolution of sub-questions**

Sub-questions have been drafted as a checklist for interviews (refer to attachment 2) however these will evolve as a better understanding of what needs to be asked of each respondent is gained as the mission proceeds and issues arise. To manage this methodically, the review team will convene at the end of each day for an hour to consider what has arisen in the information gathered and to draft bullet point sub-questions to incorporate in subsequent interviews, including further questions for respondents already interviewed and revised questions for those not yet interviewed.

### **Specific methodology relating to each evaluation question**

The specific approach to each evaluation question is discussed below. The higher-level headings A to D are indicative of the quality criteria and the specific aspects of the evaluation purpose addressed by each group of evaluation questions.

#### **A. Progress and emerging effectiveness**

---

**Evaluation question 1:** *Has satisfactory progress been made at the output level? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are how can they be addressed?*

**Evaluation question 2:** *Are satisfactory results emerging at the outcomes level? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outputs reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?*

#### **Methodology**

- a) **Documentary evidence of progress and effectiveness to date**  
Utilising the 2017-18 Annual Plan (August 2017), the Six-monthly Progress Report (January 2018) and additional data that should be available from the Program staff and the contractor (Scope Global), an assessment will be made of current progress, where there are delays or gaps and how these are being or can be addressed. This examination will be in two parts – KRAs and related outputs (evaluation question 1) and End of Program Outcomes (evaluation question 2). In addition to quantitative and qualitative data available in the Six-monthly Progress Report on KRA related progress, data will be requested from the Program in the format outlined in the Program Design, March 2016 (refer to attachment 1) or as amended.
- b) **Perceptions of stakeholders**  
A structured approach to consultations with stakeholders will be used to elicit their perceptions of progress, limitations, constraints and areas for improvement (refer to attachment 2 and the indicative sub-questions for key evaluation questions 1 and 2). These draw on the Program Logic and are allocated to specific stakeholder groups. The sub-questions will not necessarily be presented to respondents in the style of a questionnaire – they are indicative and will be used as a checklist of matters to be covered. The feedback from stakeholders will be used to enrich and verify (triangulate) quantitative and qualitative data supplied by the Program. Every attempt will

be made to ensure the consultations include a cross-section of trainees and MSME clients. – see also section on limitations.

c) Consideration of longer term outlook

On the basis of a) and b) and consideration of risks (below) the reviewers will attempt to provide commentary on the likely prospects for End of Program Outcomes and sustainability.

**B. Gender equality and social inclusion**

---

**Evaluation question 3:** *What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. of women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?*

Methodology: The methodology will be similar to that for evaluation questions 1 and 2 i.e. there will be an examination of quantitative progress based on the Program data as well as a qualitative assessment by asking structured questions of key informants and stakeholders (refer to the sub-questions specified for evaluation question 3 in attachment 2). In this context, ‘fully inclusive’ means ‘relevant to representation in the wider population’.

**C. Program management and efficiency**

---

**Evaluation question 4:** *Is the Program management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the Program team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the Program team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?*

Methodology:

a) Evident management capacity

This assessment will be made on the basis of management information systems in use and the progress the Program has been able to make to date (essentially a quantitative assessment of progress against work plans) triangulated with feedback related to program management from counterparts and stakeholders (refer to sub-questions specified for evaluation question 4 in attachment 2).

b) Capacity building and relationships formed

The review team will consider if any systematic capacity building the Program is achieving, and how it’s brokering relationships between government, private sector and community stakeholders, as well as whether or not these are productive and sustainable arrangements.

c) Risk management

Specific emphasis will be placed on risks that were classified in the Program Design as ‘high’ or ‘moderate’ (refer Program Design, pp 66-69) and the Program’s ability to address/mitigate these. Discussion will occur with the Program staff on the risk management approach and the consultations with stakeholders will also explore how well identified risks are being addressed/mitigated. As appropriate, any other emerging risks will be identified.

d) Value for money and innovation

The review team will determine if there is evidence that the Program is pursuing value for money and innovation.

**D. Program relevance and feasibility**

---

**Evaluation question 5:** *Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET and TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?*

Methodology: This will be a qualitative assessment pursued in interviews with appropriate respondents (refer to sub-questions for evaluation question 5 in attachment 2). Essentially this will be a ‘reality check’ type exercise and it will include consideration at interview of to what degree the design might prove to be overly ambitious and how this can be addressed.

### ***Review limitations***

---

The Tonga Skills Program commenced in September/October 2016 and the MTR is taking place 18 months into implementation. It may thus be difficult to reach conclusions about the longer-term prospects for the Program i.e. in terms of risks over time, End of Program Outcomes and sustainability. The other major limitation will be the relatively short duration of the mission. It will be very helpful in this regard if the Program staff can be responsive in terms of providing data requested and facilitating access to a range of trainees and MSME clients.

### ***Data analysis and ethical issues***

---

Any changes or caveats the reviewers intend to apply to the quantitative data presented will be discussed with the Program staff before inclusion in the MTR report. Qualitative data (mainly responses to questions in attachments 2 and 3) will be analysed to identify common themes and issues. Data will be disaggregated for gender and disability and where appropriate and if possible for age group and district. The reviewers will make professional judgements based on the evidence gathered and the criteria and standards expressly applied and strive to deliver a product that can be utilised to strengthen the Program.

Sources will not be attributed without clear prior approval. Confidentiality will be respected e.g. for trainees interviewed. The reviewers will be sensitive to the cultural context and political economy. It is not anticipated that any children will be interviewed for the MTR.

### ***Scheduling and team member responsibilities***

---

The schedule (refer to attachment 4) will be confirmed and amended as necessary on advice from DFAT. The tasks for each of the two team members will be as per the ToR.

### ***Publication***

---

It is understood DFAT intends to publish the MTR, presumably on its website.

**Virginia Simmons – Team Leader/VET Systems Specialist**  
**Meleoni Uera - Tonga Representative**  
**Bernard Broughton – Evaluation Specialist**

**April, 2018**

Attachment 1: Primary Format for Data Collection

Attachment 2: Key Evaluation Questions, Indicative Sub-Questions and Respondents

Attachment 3: Specific Questions for Tonga Skills Clients



**Attachment 1**

**MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM (TONGA SKILLS)**

**PRIMARY FORMAT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

Intermediate Outcomes (Refer Program Design, March 2016, p.59-60)					
Logic Reference	Indicative Result Indicator	Measurement Tool	Baseline	Achievement to Date	Target
Micro, small and medium enterprises are established and improved	# new enterprises started by participants; # enterprises reporting improvements utilising new skills, knowledge, networks # business clients recording increased revenue	Follow-up outcomes survey - 6-month post training (or Program staff's estimate if not conducted) and any other available data			
Participants employability improved	# and % of Program participants that are employed or self-employed after participation in Tonga Skills funded activity % employer satisfaction with quality of graduates from Tonga Skills funded activities % of employers reporting improved participant performance in the workplace	Follow-up outcomes survey - 6-month post training (or Program staff's estimate if not conducted) and any other available data			
Equitable participation of women in skill development activities as trainees, trainers/coaches and sectoral decision-makers	% of women involved in skill development activities (as trainees and trainers) % of women in key decision-making bodies Evidence of changed attitudes towards gender roles in the skills sector	Baseline surveys Program database Case studies			

*Mid Term Review of Tonga Skills*

Equitable representation of people with disabilities relative to population - as trainees, trainers/ coaches and sectoral decision-makers	<p>% of people with disabilities involved in skill development activities</p> <p># of trainers/BDS coaches with a disability</p> <p># of people with a disability in key sectoral decision-making bodies</p>	<p>Baseline surveys</p> <p>Program database</p> <p>Case studies focused on barriers and enablers for participation by women and people with disabilities– potentially through a DVD</p>			
MET and TNQAB systematise flexible and inclusive training provision and planning and industry engagement processes	<p>Evidence of regular, evidence-informed planning within the TNQAB and MET;</p> <p>Evidence of formalised structures for industry engagement and utilisation of industry input</p> <p>Evidence of MET/TNQAB processes and policies that support greater inclusion in the skills sector</p>	<p>Action research</p> <p>Case studies and thematic evaluation studies, including policy analysis</p> <p>Qualitative stakeholder interviews</p>			
Training providers systematise policies and practices to enhance increased participation by women and people with disabilities.	<p>Evidence of delivery practice and institutional policies that enhance successful participation by women and people with disabilities in skills training</p> <p>% of female trainers within institutions</p>	<p>Case studies</p> <p>Policy/QMS analysis</p> <p>Qualitative stakeholder interviews</p>			

## Attachment 2

## MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM (TONGA SKILLS)

## KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS, INDICATIVE SUB-QUESTIONS AND RESPONDENTS

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
1.	<i>Has satisfactory progress been made at the output level? How good is the evidence base? Are there gaps or delays and if there are what is their impact and how can they be addressed?</i>								
1.1	What improvements in coordination and planning for skills development have been made across Ministries? How effective is the SSSC in facilitating improvement in coordination and planning for skills development across Ministries? What other processes are in place? Please give specific examples.		√	√	√		√	√	
1.2	What improvements in coordination and planning for skills development have been made at Divisional level and across Divisions? Please give specific examples.		√	√	√		√	√	
1.3	What processes and policies have been put in place to ensure improved gender equality and disability inclusion? How effective are they?		√	√	√	√		√	
1.4	What processes are in place (nationally and at Divisional level) to put skill development plans in place and what specific steps are being taken to ensure that they are demand driven?		√	√	√		√	√	
1.5	To what extent has training content and delivery methods used by Tongan training providers changed as a result of Tonga Skills?		√	√	√	√		√	
1.6	What are the key strategies that have been adopted to improve gender equality and disability inclusion in Tonga Skills activities? What evidence is there of innovation in this regard?			√	√	√		√	

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
1.7a	How satisfied are trainees with the quality of skill development activities offered by Tonga Skills as evaluated immediately after training and at subsequent intervals?			√	√	√			
1.7b	To what extent is data available on completion rates of trainees and satisfaction rates of trainees and employers for both Tonga Skills and Tongan providers and what does this data show? Alternatively, how is this assessed?		√	√	√	√	√	√	
1.8a	How satisfied are MSME clients with the content and relevance of their BDS coaching and mentoring to their immediate business requirements?			√	√	√	√		
1.8b	To what extent is data collected on the quantity and quality of BDS mentoring and coaching and what does this data show? (not included in Attachment 1)	√		√	√	√	√		
1.9	What changes have occurred in the way local training providers engage with industry and enterprises as a result of Tonga Skills?		√	√	√		√	√	
1.10	What specific policy and process improvements are taking place within local training providers to ensure program provision responds to skills and labour market demand? What is the likelihood of these being sustained?		√	√	√		√	√	
1.11	What training partnerships are in place with APTC and how have they benefited Tongans beyond what APTC might have done as part of its own activities?		√		√			√	
1.12	What partnerships exist with other international providers and what specific value have they added for Tongan trainees/students?	√	√	√	√			√	
1.13	What specific changes have occurred in the way TNQAB systems and processes support more flexible, demand-driven skills training?		√	√	√			√	
1.14	To what extent has the Skills Sector Steering Committee had influence on MET/TNQAB policy and planning?		√	√	√		√		

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
1.15	What steps has Tonga Skills taken to influence and contribute to national TVET policy and institutional reform?		√	√	√			√	
2.	<b><i>Are satisfactory results emerging at the outcomes level? How good is the evidence base? Are projected outcomes reasonably clear and likely to be sufficient to support outcomes being realised and sustained by completion in 2020?</i></b>								
2.1	Is participant employability improving (IO level) and will this in turn improve their livelihoods (EOPO level)? What are the social changes experienced by trainees post skill development completion?				√	√	√	√	
2.2	Are MSMEs being established and/or improved (IO level) and will this result in business growth (EOPO level)?			√	√	√	√		
2.3	Is MET and TNQAB systematising flexible and inclusive training provision and planning and industry engagement processes (IO level) and will this result in a more coordinated, responsive, flexible and inclusive national skill development system (EOPO level)?		√	√	√		√		
2.4	How are MET and TNQAB drawing from models established by Tonga Skills? What systemic and policy changes have taken place within TNQAB and MET to improve relevance, quality and access of the national training system?		√	√					
3.	<b><i>What progress has the Program made towards becoming fully inclusive - i.e. relevant to population – of women, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities?</i></b>								
3.1	Has the Program systematised policies and practices to enhance increased participation by women, youth, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities (IO level plus reference to youth and geography)?		√		√			√	

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
3.2	Is there equitable participation of women, youth, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities in skill development activities as trainees, trainers/coaches and sectoral decision-makers (IO level plus reference to youth and geography)?		√		√	√			
3.3	What differences exist across the four priority industry sectors in accessibility for women, youth, people with disabilities and those living in remoter communities? What conclusions can be drawn from these differences and/or what steps need to be taken to reduce them?		√		√	√	√	√	
3.4	What evidence exists of innovation in the way inclusiveness is being promoted within the Program and with Tongan agencies and providers?		√	√	√			√	
4.	<b><i>Is the program management efficient and effective in terms of management processes, responsiveness and collaboration? Is the Program team pursuing innovation and value for money? Does the Program team have appropriate systems, skills and experience to manage the Program? What are the strengths and weaknesses in implementation efficiency?</i></b>								
4.1	Is implementation proceeding smoothly and does the Program team appear to have sufficient staff and resources to implement the Program? How effective is the in country Program leadership? How clear are lines of accountability and responsibility? How does this relate to the responsibility of the short term advisers?	√	√		√				
4.2	Are monitoring, evaluation, learning and communication (MELC) processes efficient and effective, particularly in terms of drawing and applying lessons?	√	√		√				
4.3	What constraints and limitations does the Program team need to address in the immediate future and how will these be monitored?	√	√		√				
4.4	Are the risks identified in the design and currently reflected in the risk register manageable? Have any major risks been omitted?	√	√	√	√		√	√	

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
4.5	How are Tonga Skills program management processes and modalities supporting value for money?	√	√		√				
4.6	Are performance-linked payments being used across Tonga Skills, including with respect to agencies and individuals being contracted as training providers?				√				
4.7	How efficient and effective are the governance structures established by Tonga Skills? What are the limitations?		√		√				
4.8	How is the Program brokering relationships between government, private sector and community stakeholders and have productive and sustainable relationships been established?		√	√	√		√	√	√
4.9	What steps have been taken to establish new partnerships between Tongan and international training providers, what are the challenges and how can results be improved?		√		√			√	
4.10	How is the Program working with the private sector, other donors and other Australian Aid initiatives, both bilateral and regional, to maximise efficiency (i.e. maximise use of available resources and reduce duplication)?	√	√	√	√		√	√	
5.	<b><i>Is Tonga Skills proving relevant to the needs and priorities of key stakeholders, specifically trainees, employers, MET and TNQAB and productive sector departments/agencies? Is the design realistic given the context?</i></b>								
5.1	Is Tonga Skills still relevant to the Tonga Strategic Development Framework and other priorities of the GoT?		√	√	√			√	
5.2	Is Tonga Skills implementation reflecting the strategies and directions of key Australian Government policies, particularly in relation to matching skill development to labour	√			√				

EVALUATION QUESTIONS		DFAT	MET/TNQAB	Other GOT Ministries	Tonga Skills RO1/RO2	Trainees/ MSME Clients	Employers/ Industry	Tongan training providers	Other
	market demand, emphasizing opportunities for women and people with disabilities and strengthening of the private sector?								
5.3	What evidence exists of the relevance and potential benefits for trainees from Tonga Skills with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• availability of appropriate skills training</li> <li>• achievement of improved skill levels</li> <li>• improved employability and self-employment</li> <li>• Improved earning capacity</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
5.4	What evidence exists of the relevance and potential benefits to employers/industry from Tonga Skills with respect to improved alignment of available skills to broader labour market requirements and increased productivity of employees?	√		√	√	√	√	√	
5.5	What evidence exists that TNQAB has improved accreditation processes, increased the number of training programs accredited and developed greater capacity to ensure the skills development system is responsive to industry requirements? To what extent is this a direct result of engagement with Tonga Skills?		√		√				
5.6	To what extent have the productive sector agencies become engaged with Tonga Skills and the approaches the Program has adopted?	√		√	√		√	√	
5.7	Are the outcomes and KRAs clear and realistic and if not how should this be addressed?	√	√		√				



**Key Result Areas - for cross-referencing**

KRA 1 - Is the program strengthening coordination and planning and is it on track in the delivery of the following related outputs:

- Skills coordination structures are established/supported at national and divisional levels
- Inclusion Strategy for the Program prepared for gender equality and disability inclusion, including baseline
- Demand-driven skill development plans prepared at national and divisional levels?

KRA 2 - Is the program delivering targeted and inclusive skill development and is it on track in the delivery of the following related outputs:

- Tongan providers deliver demand-driven skills training flexibly at national and divisional levels
- Implementation of gender equality & disability inclusion strategies in the Program activities
- Participants complete relevant, good quality skill development activities
- MSME clients receive targeted BDS coaching and mentoring?

KRA 3 - Is the program strengthening skills supply and is it on track in the delivery of the following related outputs:

- Tongan providers strengthened in areas of skills demand where required
- Partnerships with APTC and other international providers support Tongan providers as required
- TNQAB systems and processes strengthened to support more flexible, demand-driven skills training
- Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) contributes to MET/TNQAB policy and planning
- The Program modeling and learning contributes to national TVET policy and institutional reform?

### Attachment 3

## MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE TONGA SKILLS FOR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM (TONGA SKILLS)

### SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR TONGA SKILLS CLIENTS

#### Introduction

Because of the specific nature of the clients of the Program's training activities, specific questions are useful in informing the MTR.

In this context:

- **clients** include trainees and MSME clients - prospective, current and completed
- **training** includes participation in any of training programs, coaching and mentoring.

The Evaluation Team has limited opportunity to consult with clients on the benefits of training due to:

- time constraints
- the uncertainty of client availability
- the relatively short duration of the training offered
- the breadth of training content
- the geographic distances involved.

These factors also prevent the use of sampling as a tool to collect reliable data on client perceptions of Tonga Skills

The questions below are therefore indicative only, will need to be adjusted to the context and will give at best a snapshot of client views. This snapshot is however considered important, despite its limitations.

#### Questions

1. What is your current job/employment?
2. How did you become aware of Tonga Skills?
3. What motivated you to become a participant in Tonga Skills training?
4. How relevant was the training – to you personally and/or your place of work?
5. How could the training have been improved?
6. Are you intending to participate in any further training and if so, what?
7. Compared with prior to the commencement of the training, has it had any impact on your employment status or future employment opportunities?
8. Has the training had any impact on your income? Do you expect it will in future?

## D PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS MET

NAME		ORGANISATION	ROLE
1	Rhona McPhee	Australian High Commission Tonga	Deputy High Commissioner
2	Runte Likiafu	Australian High Commission Tonga	Program Manager
3	Telusa Tu'i'onetoa	Australian High Commission, Tonga	Senior Program Manager
4	Dr Uhilamoelangi Fasi	Tonga Skills Program	Team Leader
5	Anthony Bailey	Scope Global	Program Director
6	Francis Howes	Tonga Skills Program	Skills Supply Support Adviser
7	Tu'ifua Takapautolo	Tonga Skills Program	Skills Supply Support Coordinator
8	Kasa Kilioni	Tonga Skills Program	Skills Supply Coordinator (Temporary)
9	Kepreen Ve'etutu	Tonga Skills Program	Skills Planning Coordinator
10	Pelenatita Kara	Tonga Skills Program	MELC Manager
11	Sivi Liva'i	Tonga Skills Program	MELC Officer
12	Kalo Ngingingini	Tonga Skills Program	Finance Coordinator
13	Pitisi Ngalu	Tonga Skills Program	Finance and Admin Officer
	Claude Tupou	Ministry of Education and Training	Chief Executive Officer
14	Kalolaine Moeaki	Ministry of Education and Training	Chief Education Officer (Program Management)
15	Pauline Moa	TNQAB	Acting Chief Executive Officer
16	Vilimaka Foliaki	TNQAB	Principal Qualification Officer
17	Amelia Tohu'ia	TNQAB	Qualification Officer
18	Fololina 'Ikani	TNQAB	Senior Qualification Officer
19	Emele Petelo	Civil Society Forum	Capacity Development Officer
20		Ahopanilolo Technical Institute	Principal
21	Faakilele Manu	Ahopanilolo Technical Institute	Deputy Principal
22	Brother Cru Mecias	Montfort Technical Institute	Principal
23	Emeline Tuita	Ministry of Tourism	Chief Executive Officer
24	Adelina Maileseni	Tupou Tertiary Institute	Acting Principal
25	Tupou Moala	Tupou Tertiary Institute	Lecturer
26	Dr Aisake Eke	Former MP Tongatapu 6	Former Chairperson Tongatapu Skills Development Committee

27	Samiu Vaipulu	Current MP Vava'u	Current Member of Vava'u Skills Development Committee
28	Maloni Havea	Acting Government Representative 'Eua	Current member of 'Eua Skills Development Committee
29	Nonga Soakai	Ministry of Education and Training	Deputy CEO, TIST
30	Talanoa Hafoka	Ministry of Education and Training	Principal, TIST
31	Poli Tuaileva	St. Joseph Business College	Principal
32	Paea Finau	Montfort Technical College	Instructor
33	Bruce Hodgen	Tonga Institute for Science and Technology	Australian Volunteer
34	Atunaisa Kali	Private Trainer	Pearl Carving
35	Sateki Tongi	Private Trainer	Wood Carving
36	Lopeti Filo	Private Trainer	Food and Beverage
37	Manaia Halafihi	MAFFF	Acting CEO
38	Tevita Tukunga	MAFFF	Head of Extension Services
39	Mafoa Leleifi	MAFFF	Acting OIC for Livestock Division
40	Edgar Cocker	MCTILL	CEO
41	Claudia Fotu	MCTILL	Deputy CEO for Labour Mobility
42	Lakai Fonua	TBEC	Acting CEO
43	Ilaisaane	TBEC	Trainer
44	Sinai Tu'itahi	Growers Federation	CEO
45	Siua Vaea	Trainee	Small Business Management Skill
46	Apitanga	Trainee	Sewing Training Activity
47	Sione Te'e	Trainee and Representative of Disability Group	Pearl Carving
48	Sateki Tongi	Trainee	Pearl Carving
49	Tohu'ia Manuofetoa	Trainee	Certificate IV in TAE
50	Luisa Latu Jones	Tonga Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (TYEE)	President
51	Dr Lia Maka	Public Service Commission	CEO, PSC
52	Unaloto Halafihi	NATA	President
53	Ofeina Leka	Visual Impairment	President
54	'Eva Tuuholoaki	MIA	Deputy CEO for Local Government
55	Fuiva Kavaliku	TNCW	President
56	Betty Blake	Ma'a Fafine mo Famili Organisation	President

*Mid Term Review of Tonga Skills*

57	Anna Gilbert	Tonga Skills	Short Term Adviser
58	Sally Baker	Tonga Skills	Short Term Adviser
59	William Tovehi	Tanoa Hotel	Food and Beverage Manager
60	Simana Kami	Oholei Beach Resort	Owner
61	Luisa Manuofetoa	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Deputy CEO for Disability
62	Alison Wells	Scope Global	Program Manager, Pacific
63	Francis Howes	Tonga Skills	Long Term Adviser
64	Minoru Nishi	Managing Director	Nishi Trading
65	Wendy Jarvie	World Bank	World Bank Project team for Tonga
66	Jesse Doyle	World Bank	World Bank Project team for Tonga
67	Binh Thanh Vu	World Bank	World Bank Project team for Tonga
68	Malakai Kaufusi	World Bank	Tonga Office for World Bank
69	Semisi Taumoepeau	Tonga Skills	Consultant for Tourism National Qualifications
70	Anna Addison	Curriculum Writer	Auckland Institute of Studies
71	Leody Vainikolo	Ministry of Agriculture	Officer in Charge, Vava'u
72	Sapate Toke	Tonga Skills	Officer in Charge, Vava'u
73	Martin Pritchard	Tonga Skills	MELC Short term adviser
74	Seilosehina Fifita	Ministry of Education and Training	Chief Education Officer
75	Salote Selui	Ministry of Education and Training	Deputy Principal, TIHE
76	Andrew Ford	Australian High Commission, Tonga	Australian High Commissioner
77	Takuro Steel	Australian High Commission, Tonga	First Secretary Development
78	Taniela Hoponoa	MORDI	Live and Learn Technical Officer

## E TONGA SKILLS TRAINING DATA SUMMARY (MAY 2017 TO MARCH 2018)

Sector and 'skillset'	SDF application number	Participants	% of total	Gender		Island Group			
				Male	Female	TT	EU	VV	HP
<b>Agriculture, fisheries, forestry</b>		125	12.0%	39	86	25	0	100	0
Farmer Field School 3 (FFS 3)	001	25		15	10	25			
Seed Saving 1	015	60		10	50			60	
Seed Saving 2	056	22		3	19			22	
Fish Smoking (Post Harvesting)	014	18		11	7			18	
<b>Cyclone Gita response</b>		464	44.5%	238	226	267	197	0	0
Promotion of Sustainable Food Security	123	104		49	55		104		
Promotion of Sustainable Food Security	126	93		72	21		93		
Promotion of Sustainable Food Security	131	267		117	150	267			
<b>Tourism</b>		131	12.6%	62	69	56	3	47	25
Whale Watch Skipper	002	16		15	1	4		11	1
Whale Watch Swim Guide	003	14		10	4	1	2	6	5
Whale Watch Swim Guide Refresher	004	9		7	2	2	1	6	
Food and Beverage	118	15		1	14	15			
Food and Beverage	119	15		1	14	15			
Food and Beverage	120	19		5	14	19			
Tour Guiding	067	19		4	15				19
Tour Guiding	075	15		12	3			15	
Tour Guiding	019	9		7	2			9	
<b>Handicraft (manufacturing)</b>		84	8.1%	39	45	58	0	26	0
Finishing Designs	017	9			9			9	
Kafa Manufacturing	029	17			17			17	
Pearl Carving	006	11		9	2	11			
Sewing for Beginners	032	6			6	6			

Mid Term Review of Tonga Skills

Tapa Printing	044	11		1	10	11			
Upskilling of Training for Carving	040	18		17	1	18			
Wood and Bone Carving	030, 038	12		12		12			
<b>Construction</b>		34	3.3%	33	1	0	0	34	0
Plumbing SDF 016	016	34		33	1			34	
<b>Generic - cross-cutting</b>		205	19.7%	75	128	108	55	12	30
Basic Business Skills	068	29		2	6		29		
Basic Business Skills	070	8		8	21				8
Business Canvas Model	046, 047	6		3	3	6			
Business Entrepreneurial for MSME champions	045	10		7	3	10			
Business Planning beginners	037	22		4	18	22			
Financial Literacy 1&2	073	14		5	9				14
Marketing and Social Media	069	26		6	18		26		
Social Enterprises	008	11		4	7			11	
Social Media	072	7		3	4				7
Cert. IV Training and Assessment (TAE)	007	20		9	11	19		1	
Training in Disability for Private Sector	059	15		4	11	15			
Work Readiness 1	005	17		1	16	16			1
Work Readiness 2	050	20		19	1	20			
<b>Grand Total (participants in trainings)</b>		<b>1043</b>		<b>486</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>55</b>

**Trainings**

31 skillsets  
 37 trainings  
 17 providers  
 < 1,000 individuals involved

**Inclusion**

Women 53%  
 Disability 4% (31)  
 Beyond TT i.e. EU + VV + HP = 51%  
 More remote i.e. VV + HP = 26% (but 37% based on # of trainings rather than participants)

## F SUGGESTED REDEFINITION OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Original Design (2016)	MELC (2017)	Suggested Changes (2018)
Goal: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Tonga	Goal: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Tonga	Goal: Equitable access to quality and demand driven skills development contributing to sustainable economic growth in Tonga
<p>KRA 1 Strengthen Coordination and Planning</p> <p>End of Program Outcome (EOPO) 1 A more coordinated, responsive, flexible and inclusive national skill development system</p> <p>Intermediate outcome (IO): MET and TNQAB systematise flexible and inclusive training provision and planning and industry engagement processes</p>	<p>KRA 1 Strengthen Coordination and Planning</p> <p>EOPO 1 Divisional planning bodies identify priority economic demand and associated skill development requirements.</p> <p>EOPO 2 MET and TNQAB coordinate a skills development system that matches demand and is inclusive, flexible and quality assured</p>	<p><u>Component 1 Policy and planning reform</u></p> <p>EOPO 1: Enabling national policy and quality assurance systems and processes</p> <p>IO 1.1 as per EOPO 1 in MELC (opposite)</p> <p>IO 1.2 as per EOPO 2 in MELC reform</p>
<p>KRA 2 Strengthen Skills Supply</p> <p>No EOPO directly associated</p> <p>IO: Training providers systematise policies and practices to enhance increased participation by women and people with disabilities</p>	<p>KRA 2 Strengthen Skills Supply</p> <p>EOPO 3 Tongan providers are able to deliver inclusive, flexible, demand driven and quality assured skills development</p>	<p><u>Component 2 Skills development supply</u></p> <p>EOPO 2: Improved access to and supply of inclusive, flexible, demand driven and quality assured skills development opportunities</p> <p>IO 2.1 Local training providers establish successful skill development models demonstrating how demand-driven, flexible training can improve inclusive economic outcomes for individuals and businesses.<sup>36</sup></p> <p>IO 2.2 The Program utilises pilot models to influence policy and processes so that innovations become systematised and sustainable within the national skills development system.<sup>37</sup></p>

<sup>36</sup> See MELC Plan sub-section 2.2 Theory of Change second paragraph

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*



<p>KRA 3 Targeted and Inclusive Skill Development</p> <p>EOPO 2 Participants improve livelihoods</p> <p>IO: Participants employability improved</p> <p>EOPO 3 Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) participants' business growth</p> <p>IO: MSMEs are established and /or improved</p> <p>Other equity and social inclusion intermediate outcomes applied in the design:</p> <p>Equitable participation of women in skill development activities as trainees, trainers/coaches and sectoral decision-makers</p> <p>Equitable representation of people with disabilities relative to population - as trainees, trainers/coaches and sectoral decision-makers</p>	<p>KRA 3 Targeted and Inclusive Skill Development</p> <p>EOPO 4 Clients complete skills development activities, and there is equity in access and take up of these opportunities.</p> <p>EOPO 5 Clients have improved employability in national and overseas markets.</p> <p>EOPO 6 Clients have improved livelihoods and income.</p> <p>EOPO 7 Micro, small and medium businesses are established or improved</p>	<p><u>Component 3 Skills development delivery</u></p> <p>EOPO 3: The skills development activities supported by the program are inclusive and good quality and deliver economic and other benefits and value for money</p> <p>IO 3.1 SDAs are developed and funded in accordance with agreed priorities and a training strategy and indicative targets are met (number of events and participants)</p> <p>IO 3.2 Clients satisfactorily complete skills training and/or receive targeted coaching and mentoring</p> <p>IO 3.3 Benefits and value for money are assessed and communicated driving ongoing reform<sup>38</sup></p> <p>[EOPO 5, 6 and 7 in MELC to be reflected in performance indicators for the new EOPO 3]</p>
---	--	--

<sup>38</sup> See MELC Plan Figure 1 Theory of Change diagram and reference to 'Successful models inform further reform' at the bottom

## G EVIDENCE BASE

See separate Excel spreadsheet.

## H SWOT ANALYSIS

## MID-TERM REVIEW OF TONGA SKILLS

## STRENGTHS

S1	The implementation of <i>Tonga Skills</i> is not constrained by government approval processes. This assists its speed of response. Under other circumstances it may have been located in a Ministry with less buy-in from other Ministries. <i>Tonga Skills</i> has developed a reputation for being able to 'make it happen'.
S2	<i>Tonga Skills</i> is seen as Tongan driven and responding to Tongan needs, albeit funded by Australia.
S3	<i>Tonga Skills</i> does not operate as a parallel skills system. It has coordinated its operations with government and the key existing decision-making structures and bodies. As such it is positioned to be involved in shaping the future Tongan skills system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has established relationships with all key Ministries.</li> <li>• It is linked to the Outer Island planning processes and documentation.</li> <li>• It is part of the Disability Taskforce and assisting to strengthen it.</li> <li>• TS appears to be building some important decision-making structures that have the potential to become part of the skills system.</li> <li>• TS established and provides secretarial support for the Development Partners Network, which meets monthly.</li> </ul>
S4	<i>Tonga Skills</i> is having some influence on improving the quality of the TVET system through its role in developing national qualifications and short course accreditation processes.
S5	Training achieved to date demonstrates an enormous amount of work and commitment. It consists of trainings in 31 skill sets through 17 providers reaching over 1,000 individuals with good gender equity (53) and the inclusion of a significant number of people with disabilities (4%).
S6	The ambitious goal of conducting SDAs in the Outer Islands breaks new ground and is being progressively worked towards (54% outside of Tongatapu, although only 22% if 'Eua is also excluded). This includes training in venues in the remote islands.
S7	Overall, <i>Tonga Skills</i> has established positive relationships with the stakeholders.

## WEAKNESSES

W1	The approach to management information systems is fragmented and the program results framework is only now being satisfactorily resolved.
W2	The Program still lacks a framework and integrated processes to systematically quantify benefits and demonstrate value for money.
W3	There appears to be some lack of clarity as to how authority, responsibility and accountability is handled including with respect to the above weaknesses.
W4	There is some inconsistency with the branding of training, especially with respect to how co-branding should occur with partners delivering training - formal providers, training organisations, Ministries and individual trainers. This causes confusion with clients and the community.
W5	Distribution of training across industry sectors is currently uneven, in part but not solely due to Cyclone Gita. Construction training represents only 4% and has mostly been in Plumbing in Vava'u. MAFFF training currently represents 56% of total participants and although most of this is accounted for by the response to Cyclone Gita, this creates a risk of ongoing distortion in agriculture training, given the expectations now created in MAFFF.
W6	Seeking to influence the TVET sector as a whole, while commendable, has tended to create expectations of support beyond what the Program was designed to deliver. Provider dependence on <i>Tonga Skills</i> for training delivery, and in some cases for their survival, may be an issue in future.
W7	The training strategy over the longer term has not been clearly articulated. Acknowledging the need for flexibility, broad planning parameters should be in place for future brokered training, including by industry sector and generic/cross-cutting training; likely shifts in demand for training as <i>Tonga Skills</i> progressively addresses high priority areas; the range and level of providers, including the balance between the formal and informal training sector; the role and extent of national qualifications; the approach to building training pathways for clients; and <i>Tonga Skills</i> ' ongoing role as a broker.

THREATS	
T1	High turnover of government officials and staff may slow momentum for change.
T2	The lack of a clear policy or legislative framework for training/TVET in Tonga creates an uncertain environment for change.
T3	Important aspects of the program's success lie outside of <i>Tonga Skills'</i> control e.g. such as initiatives and reforms within TNQAB, MET and formal training providers.
T4	Natural disasters, such as cyclones and flooding, lead to disruption to the training program and the reallocation of resources, potentially jeopardising the end of program outcomes.
T5	Unmet expectations about opportunities for labour mobility (beyond seasonal work) could damage <i>Tonga Skills'</i> reputation.

## INDICATIVE APPLICATION OF THE SWOT ANALYSIS

